The Eastern Edge: LDS Missionary Work in Hungarian Lands

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ON THE PERIPHERY OF HIS THOUGHTS, iron wheels clanked, March winds scratched past windows, a swaying passenger wagon groaned, and a steam engine chugged rhythmically. The tracks traversed the massive Iron Gate gorge, a slit in the Carpathians through which the Danube flowed on its way to the Black Sea. His destination, still a day's journey ahead, even after six days of travel, was an eastern European village, the Hungarian farming community then known as Szerb-Csernye (now Srpska Crnja, Yugoslavia).

Ferdinand Hintze, a Latter-day Saint missionary from Utah, traveled deeper into a realm as remote in beliefs from his faith as in distance from his homeland.[1] His March 1888 visit was the Church's first missionary effort and eventually led to a short-lived LDS outpost in Hungary. Missionaries encountered barriers that bent little and finally hardened against them. Only a handful of converts accepted baptism, and most of those emigrated to join the body of the Church in America.

Early missionary work in Hungary is the story of seed sown in a field not yet tilled, unlike the fallow soil of the present. In June 1988, Hungary officially recognized the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-

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[1] A native of Denmark, Hintze had emigrated with his family to Utah at the age of ten. Raised in the American West, he was a veteran missionary, having served two missions for a total of four years in the U.S. Northwest. He had two wives, and as a polygamist, he was in danger of arrest and imprisonment. His service in the Ottoman Empire placed him far from the grasp of federal officials in Utah.

day Saints, and in 1990 the Church established a separate mission there. Missionaries have returned to the unfinished task to find a nation much more attentive to their message. The conditions surrounding the Church's new beginning are fortuitous and promising.

Before his visit, Hintze had served for a year as president of the Turkish Mission headquartered in Istanbul. He was responsible for preaching in two empires, the Ottoman and the Austro-Hungarian, an expanse that stretched from Central Europe into Asia Minor. The person he sought in Szerb-Csernye was Mischa Markow, a native of Hungary whom he had baptized at Istanbul in February 1887. Following his baptism, Markow had returned to his native land and presented the teachings of the American missionaries to members of his family. When some of them responded positively, the elated Markow telegraphed Hintze to come at once (Markow n.d., 52).

Though heartened by Markow's message, Hintze faced a reality in this part of the world that offered little encouragement. Religious orthodoxy was entrenched in both society and government. Religious leaders had little tolerance for any creed that might threaten their hegemony, and civil leaders sustained them against any heretical intrusions. At the same time, the people were not generally disposed to question authority, either ecclesiastical or civil.

In February 1885, three years before Hintze's visit, LDS missionary Thomas Biessinger tested conditions in Budapest, capital of Hungary, after having been expelled from Prague and Vienna for preaching. He was joined in Budapest by fellow missionary James E. Jennings. To avoid confrontation with the authorities, they did not preach openly or go house to house but instead engaged others in casual conversation hoping to find a responsive ear and turn the discussion to religious matters. Although they avoided official censure, they were unable to interest anyone in their message. After a little more than a month, the two missionaries despaired and left Hungary (Kimball 1973–74, 156–57).

Three years had passed since Biessinger and Jennings had come from the west when Hintze entered from the east. Traveling first by steamer to the Bulgarian port of Varna on the Black Sea, he then journeyed by rail to Rustchuck (now Ruse, Bulgaria), crossed the frozen Danube on foot, and boarded a train to Bucharest, from Bucharest to the Hungarian border, and then over the border still heading west. The Hungary of that day included the northwestern provinces of modern-day Romania and the northeastern provinces of modern-day Yugoslavia. Detraining in Hatzfeld (now Jimbolia, Romania) just west of the larger metropolis of Temesvár (now Timisoara, Romania), Hintze walked south for the final five miles (Hintze, 10 March 1888, 175–76).

The week-long journey at an end, Hintze entered the village expectantly. To his "astonishment," Markow told him that his family's desire to be baptized had cooled (Hintze, 10 March 1888, 176); realizing that his summons had been precipitous, he explained that he had been unable to inform Hintze, as he was already en route (Markow n.d., 52). Hintze salvaged the journey by ordaining Markow to the priesthood. With Markow interpreting, he also preached to Markow's curious neighbors who began pouring in from the countryside the day after Hintze's arrival. Local priests soon informed the police, who escorted the two offenders to the local magistrate. Hintze was ordered to depart.

Whereas Biessinger had failed in the face of apathy, Hintze was foiled by the authorities. "No Elder can go there yet," he wrote, "the priests govern to [sic] much." Yet, he harbored the hope that "if the Lord opens the way, saints may yet be found in those places" (Hintze, 10 March 1888, 177).

The judges in Hungary may have been prejudiced against LDS missionary efforts by events that had transpired a decade earlier. The practice of polygamy had created tension between the Church and the U.S. government. William Maxwell Evarts, secretary of state in 1879, published a circular for U.S. diplomatic officers in Europe. Evarts requested that U.S. diplomats encourage foreign officials to do what they could to thwart LDS efforts to convert their citizens to the Mormon "system of Polygamy." The Austro-Hungarian minister of foreign affairs, Count Gyula Andrássy, forwarded this advice to all governors in the empire (Kimball 1973–74, 147–49). Though this occurred years before missionaries appeared on the scene, it may well have lingered in the memories of many magistrates.

Soon after Hintze departed, Markow also left Hungary. He proselyted in Belgium for a year, emigrated to Utah, married, fathered two children, and grew in his new faith. He returned to Europe in the spring of 1899 as an official missionary of his Church and now a citizen of the United States.

In the Europe to which Markow returned, the missionaries were enjoying unprecedented success. The year before his arrival, a new German Mission had been created from the former Swiss and German Missions with Arnold Schulthess as president. It covered not only Germany but all of eastern Europe. Missionaries were enjoying a season of success, particularly as they probed eastward. They arrived at Koenigsberg, Prussia (now Kaliningrad, Russia), in March 1899. Within fourteen months, they had baptized twenty-nine people (*Millenial Star*, 25 April 1901, 268). Baptisms missionwide increased from 158 in 1899, to 301 in 1900, to 514 in 1901 (Schulthess n.d., [38]).

Some of this increase was in Hungary, and the main protagonist there was Mischa Markow.

Under the nominal control of President Schulthess, Markow labored first in Serbia. In June officials there gave him a train ticket and banished him. Crossing the border into Hungary, Markow ended up in Nagy Becskerek (today Zrenjanin, Yugoslavia), approximately thirty miles south of his hometown—Szerb-Csernye.

After forty days in Nagy Becskerek, Markov experienced scenes similar to those which had occurred during Hintze's visit to the Markow home eleven years earlier. The mayor appeared at his door with an escort of two policemen to arrest him for anarchy. The mayor raised his cane to hit Markow but was stayed when the missionary claimed American citizenship. Markow was searched, deprived of his possessions, and marched with a policeman on either side down the city's main street. Adding to the spectacle, an accuser tagged along yelling, "Anarchist! Anarchist!" (Markow n.d., 60).

Markow waited in a dimly lit cell while the authorities tried to decipher the English on his passport and missionary certificate. A local merchant who could speak English provided the translation. Having confirmed his citizenship, the authorities puzzled over a way to charge Markow with a crime sufficient to silence him. They decided to use his cell mate to offer Markow some liquor and lure him into a political discussion. Markow saw through the attempt to charge him with subversion and began to preach to his new acquaintance. The authorities failed to find charges that would stick; instead they banished Markow, escorted him to the railroad station, and gave him a ticket on an outbound train.

It was but a temporary setback. The dauntless Markow returned a year later after having been similarly expelled from Romania and Bulgaria for his preaching. He headed west in late August 1900 with the idea of proselyting in Orsova, a city on the Danube in southern Hungary. His plan was altered by a dream he had while traveling upriver. He beheld himself teaching in the city of Temesvár, not far from other Hungarian cities where he had previously labored (Markow n.d., 77).

In contrast to the apathy that Biessinger had faced in Budapest, Markow encountered in Temesvár a group of Catholics anxiously seeking new spiritual guidance (Markow n.d., 77). He wrote for assistance from President Schulthess and was joined on October 4 by Henry M. Lau.

The missionaries soon stirred opposition. The local Catholic bishop informed the high court about the undesirable missionary activity, and the court duly summoned the pair the week after Lau's arrival. Unsure of how to rule, the judge allowed the missionaries to continue their

work without restriction until the supreme court ruled on the case (Markow n.d., 78).[2]

The missionaries continued to prepare baptismal candidates and on 24 January 1901 baptized nine people, establishing the first LDS congregation in Hungary. The nine new members included an elderly couple, six middle-aged women, and thirty-five-year-old Franz Kortje, later to be called as a local leader.

With a small flock at hand, Markow requested official permission to hold meetings. The mayor denied the request and informed the court. The court then prohibited any further proselyting. Markow determined to continue work in Temesvár on the "sly," while sending Lau to Budapest to argue their cause and seek assistance at the American Consulate.

Markow began meeting without official permission thrice weekly after dark and at varying locations. Ten more persons, mostly young adults in their middle twenties, joined the Church in early March 1901. The group included Jacob Pfeiffer, Johann Schwerburger, and fifty-year-old Matthaus Sadorf. Pfeiffer and Schwerburger later emigrated to Utah, while Sadorf remained and served as a local leader.

The supreme court ruled against the missionaries in late March, and the Temesvár court ordered them to leave, allowing them three days to conclude their affairs. On the evening of Saturday, 30 March, a dozen prospective members took advantage of the darkness to be baptized. The branch now had thirty-one members.

A subdued congregation bid farewell on the Sabbath, 31 March (Markow n.d., 79), and the next day Markow and Lau departed, leaving local elders Franz Kortje and Matthaus Sadorf in charge of the branch.

The banished missionaries left Hungary to report to President Schulthess in Oderberg, Austria. Schulthess immediately made plans to send another missionary, Henry Mathis, to sustain the branch and make sure that the work proceeded cautiously to avoid further confrontations with the authorities (*Millenial Star*, 18 April 1901, 253).

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[2] Their activity momentarily drew international attention when, on 30 November 1900, a press dispatch datelined Vienna alleged that two Mormon elders in Hungary had been mobbed. According to the release, the pair was compelled to run a gauntlet of three hundred irate citizens pounding them with sticks, straps, and knotted cords. In conclusion, the report claimed that one elder had been unceremoniously dunked in a horse pond before the police arrived to rescue him. It may well be that the report was entirely fabricated inasmuch as Markow never mentioned the incident in his own account of his work in Temesvár. If the incident did occur, it did not preclude missionary success.

Markow proselyted in Munich for five months and then returned to America.

The arrival of Henry Mathis at Temesvár on 10 May 1901 temporarily restored the momentum of proselyting. For four months he taught earnest investigators, baptized two of them, and prepared others to receive baptism. Just after the start of an evening Bible class on 22 August, a stranger appeared at the door and asked Mathis to step outside. The stranger, a policeman in plain clothes, summarily arrested him. Mathis calmly accepted the court's penalty of a fine of thirty krone and banishment. The judge, however, reconsidered the fine and remitted it. Most of the branch turned out at the railroad station to send off the banished missionary ("Experience" 1901). With Mathis gone, Hungarian members were effectively severed from the rest of the Church for two years.

A local elder, Franz Kortje, performed a dozen baptisms after Mathis left, raising the total membership to forty-three. However, these successes were not a signal of things to come. Like a match struck, the flame would eventually die out as it consumed the matchstick. Missionaries returned in 1903, and even though efforts continued until the onset of World War I, success in terms of numbers never equaled the Temesvár conversions. Of the total number of persons converted in Hungary before the war, more than a third joined the first year.

In July 1903, Hugh J. Cannon, who had replaced Schulthess as the German Mission president, reinitiated efforts to seek legal recognition for the Church in Hungary (*Millenial Star*, 6 Oct. 1904, 636). While the decision was pending, a lone missionary reentered the country: Mischa Markow, returned from America for a second time. Although he had been called to preach in Russia, he nevertheless spent some time first in Hungary preaching in the city of Brassó (now Brasov, Romania), two hundred miles east of Temesvár. He approached the mayor, openly explained his purpose, and obtained permission to preach in the city for five weeks before leaving. Although he did not baptize any converts, he interested one Anna Wachsmann, who was baptized the following year. His work also anticipated the fact that Brassó would be the locus of missionary success in Hungary for the next seven years.

As Markow preached in Brassó, William A. Wetzel and Frank Pingree entered Temesvár and reestablished contact with the branch (Kimball 1973–74, 160). Greatly encouraged, Hugh J. Cannon created the Austro-Hungarian Conference of the German Mission in January 1904 to include Vienna, Temesvár, and Brassó. He appointed Clarence C. Jensen as president. By the end of January, missionaries entered Brassó to continue the work Markow had begun (Bernhardt

1933, 1). Authorities expelled Wetzel and Pingree from Temesvár during 1904, but other missionaries replaced them and a baptism was recorded before the year was out.

In September 1904, Count Tesza, Hungarian minister of the interior, rendered a verdict against the Church prohibiting further preaching on the grounds that it was "undesirable" to both state and religious interests (Smith 1904). President Cannon felt the prospects for missionary work were sufficient to justify a continued missionary presence in the country, even though this presence was technically illegal (*Millenial Star*, 6 Oct. 1904). The desire to operate openly continued to prompt efforts for recognition, but the religious imperative to proselyte took precedence over legal prohibition.

Missionaries pursued the work cautiously and clandestinely. In July 1905, Serge Ballif, successor to President Hugh J. Cannon, visited Temesvár, where he noted that the officers kept close watch. The missionaries had to be constantly on their guard. Two new members were baptized at a service conducted late at night. Ballif then traveled on to Brassó. Here he found the missionaries conducting most of their work in the guise of English teachers. In another late-night baptismal service, four people joined the Church. This group, plus a member who had been baptized a month earlier, constituted a branch of five (Ballif, 31 July–7 Aug. 1905).

No matter how intimidating the conditions in Hungary, Ballif found the prospects for missionary work much better there than in Austria. Even though the numbers were still modest, 1905 was the second most productive year in the early history of the mission. Severing Austria from the conference, he concentrated his efforts in Hungary. At the same time, he continued to seek legal status for the Church. Returning to Germany through Budapest, he consulted an attorney who advised patience for the present (Ballif, 31 July–7 Aug. 1905).

While outside conditions hindered the work, circumstances inside the newly founded congregations of the Church militated against establishing a firm base in Hungary. Missionaries sought to attract new converts, but those converted soon left Hungary to join the Church in America. Half of the forty-five Temesvár converts who joined before December 1904 had already emigrated by that date. The pattern continued in 1905 as fifteen of the nineteen persons converted that year left Hungary before the year was out (MH, Hungarian District, 31 Dec. 1904; Hungarian Conference 1904–14).

Several factors contributed to emigration. The LDS doctrine of the gathering, less emphasized in the twentieth than in the nineteenth century, still motivated Church members to leave their homes. The prospect of a new life in a land of freedom, far from the unstable

politics of a Europe constantly teetering on the edge of armed conflict, appealed to Church members as well to other Hungarians who streamed to American shores. A total of 335,000 Hungarians emigrated to America between 1900 and 1910, three times more than in any other decade. In 1911, President Joseph F. Smith reported to a Hungarian visiting in Salt Lake City that of the seventeen Hungarian families in the city, fifteen of them were LDS (Paztor 1911, 815).

Of the Hungarian converts in Utah, Jacob Pfeiffer became a prominent metalworker. He founded the Utah Ornamental Iron and Bronze Works, and his work includes the balustrades at the Utah State Capitol Building and the vault of Zion's Bank in downtown Salt Lake City. Johann Schweberger, whose father was a shoemaker, became a leather merchant.

Back in Hungary, the combination of members emigrating and the lack of new converts apparently dimmed prospects. In March 1906, President Ballif temporarily closed the Hungarian Conference (Ballif, 30 March 1906). A lone missionary, L. Lambert Pack, remained in Brassó until May, when he left after having baptized a family of three. Although the nine members who made up the small branch sustained their faith alone for five months, there was a sense of relief and happiness when Elders Leland Accomb and J. E. Langford arrived in September to reinitiate the work (Bernhardt 1933, 2). Again the elders had success for a season. The nine baptisms for 1906 and 1907 occurred in Brassó as did nine of the sixteen baptisms registered in 1908.

Though baptismal numbers were up, internal problems began to affect missionary progress. During July and August 1908, President Ballif toured both Temesvár and Brassó. In Temesvár he spoke with local elder Franz Kortje about improving his leadership performance. In Brassó the missionaries related an unspecified circumstance that reflected "great discredit" upon the missionaries who had worked there in the past (Ballif, 30 July and 1 Aug. 1908). Still, in Brassó he was able to buoy the members at the Sabbath services. On the following Tuesday, a group went to the woods to hold baptismal services for five converts, afterwards frying meat on coals and enjoying a barbecue (Ballif, 2 and 4 Aug. 1908).

While emigration and internal discord weakened the Church, the missionaries were further hampered because they did not proselyte in the Hungarian language. They preached only in German and primarily to the German minority. Not until 1909 was an attempt made to remedy this situation. When newly appointed missionary John Ensign Hill arrived in Basel, headquarters of the Swiss and German Mission, President Ballif assigned him to Budapest: "You go down to Hungary. There is a grand work for you to open up" (Hill 1962, 28).

It was not until he arrived at Budapest that he discovered the nature of the grand work before him. Hamilton Gardner and Earl Davenport, already proselyting in the capital city, met Hill and informed him that he would be the first missionary to preach in the Hungarian language. Hill wrote home that the announcement "almost took my breath" (Hill 1962, 29). Later, he learned that President Ballif had requested a missionary to preach in the Hungarian language and that President Joseph F. Smith himself had selected Hill to be that person.

Hill began studying Hungarian at the local Berlitz school on 5 January 1909. The teacher did not speak English, and the other pupil spoke only German. After three hours, Hill left the class feeling "somewhat blue." Still, he began tracting in Hungarian the week following his first lesson. Using the two words he had learned—one for "Good day!" and one for "Please!"—he went from door to door handing out tracts. When asked "What is this?" he could offer no explanation but simply went to another door to repeat the process. Armed with his limited vocabulary he knocked at thirty-four doors his first day and left twenty-one tracts (Hill 1962, 30–32).

Hill arranged to meet privately with his instructor on the condition that he teach the man English while Hill learned Hungarian. The pair walked about pointing at items such as the street, buggies, and people and repeating the words in their respective languages. The only problem was that the Hungarian words all sounded the same to Hill. He lamented, "It is just like trying to climb a steep, slippery wall where there is nothing to get hold of" (Hill 1962, 30–32). Later, he consoled himself: "The horses and the dogs seem to understand this language, so there is still hope for me" (Hill 1962, 39).

The police in Budapest reacted mildly to the presence of missionaries in the city. Missionary activity may have seemed less threatening in such a large cosmopolitan center than in the more provincial cities of Temesvár and Brassó. Summoned by the police to report the reason for his presence, Hill apparently charmed the authorities with his jovial disposition. Taking a liking to the friendly missionary, the police permitted him to buy a citizenship for a nominal fee and left him to continue his work. The other missionaries were summoned later, and when it was determined that they knew Hill, the police dismissed them to continue their work without any further questions (Hill 1962, 34–35, 41).

Hill worked as a lone Hungarian-speaking missionary for a year and a half. Although there was no rule at that time against missionaries working alone, apparently this was the exception and not the rule. Hill met with the other elders on occasion for meals and other visits.

In June 1909, Hill felt proficient enough in Hungarian to supervise the translation of missionary tracts. He was assisted by fourteen-year-old Ottille Franzen, a member of one month. Ottille was the stepdaughter of Karl Nemenz and the daughter of Anna Nemenz, the couple who boarded the two German-speaking missionaries in Budapest.

After several months, Hill, unsatisfied with the translation, obtained the assistance of his new landlord, Antal Weinzierl. An educated man, Weinzierl showed an interest in reading the translated tracts and offered to help reword them. Because the landlord was not available during the workday, they would begin work at 10:00 P.M. and continue until midnight or later. A bond of affection developed between the two translators as they labored together over the tracts. In December, the first results of their collaboration came off the press in a run of ten thousand tracts, two thousand each of five separate publications (Hill 1962, 41–44, 55).

During the time Hill was working on the translation project, he also preached the first LDS sermon in Hungarian. The occasion was a fast meeting on 8 August 1909. It was not until 28 November 1909 that a meeting was conducted entirely in Hungarian. The congregation included ten non-members, the most ever present at an LDS meeting to that date. Early the following year, Hill conducted the first baptismal service in Hungarian for Gustave Franzen, stepson of Karl Nemenz (Hill 1962, 53–58).

On his own initiative, Hill began on 3 November 1910 to translate the Book of Mormon into Hungarian, urged on by Weinzierl, who had assisted a year earlier in the translation of gospel tracts. Weinzierl translated from the German language edition of the Book of Mormon, while Hill worked from the English. They compared notes and then produced a single text.

After a week of working on the translation, Hill wrote to Thomas E. McKay (who had replaced President Ballif in 1909) about the translation and projected printing costs. McKay's response shocked Hill—the Church was not prepared to print a Hungarian language edition of the Book of Mormon (Hill 1962, 76).

It is impossible to determine from the available sources whether Church leaders felt Hill had overstepped his bounds by commencing the project without approval, if cost was the major consideration, or if some other factor influenced this decision. The LDS message had not had an encouraging reception in Hungary. Although a Hungarian Book of Mormon may have helped proselyting, perhaps the effort and expense of translation and printing could not be justified at that time.

Hill pleaded with President McKay to continue the translation, offering to pay for the printing himself. A second "no" came in the

mail on 1 December 1910. Hill wrote in his journal, "It was a blue day for me. I felt that half my life had been taken away" (1962, 28). He then sent his resignation as a missionary to the president. Evidently the depression passed; within a month McKay called Hill to serve as president of the Hungarian Conference.

The effort to preach in the Hungarian language lasted for five years but to little effect. The number of baptisms plateaued, then dwindled. After four baptisms in 1909, there were six in 1910, another six in 1911, two in 1912, one in 1913, and one in 1914.

From the beginning, the ban on LDS meetings severely hampered missionary work. Missionaries skirted the rule by holding public Sunday Bible classes and organizing choirs to learn songs in English. They met privately with members to partake of the sacrament. In Brassó, some missionaries avoided confrontations with the authorities by working in the countryside (Bernhardt 1933a, 3). Those who continued to preach in town played a game of cat and mouse with local officials. On 30 June 1910, the police forbade Elder Edmund L. Smith, working in Brassó, to hold public meetings. On 6 August, he recorded in his journal that his song class was attended by sixteen friends (non-members).

Members as well encountered difficulties when their allegiance was discovered. Young Helene Bammer, already baptized, was required by local tradition to be confirmed in the Lutheran Church. She attended Lutheran confirmation classes with others her age. One day, the pastor asked each student to choose a verse from the Bible that he would discuss with them privately. Helene's turn came. The pastor was impressed with her knowledge and asked her to pray at the conclusion of the interview. When the prayer was finished, tears welled up in the pastor's eyes as he said, "My dear child, I must admit, you are the first among my pupils to be confirmed who really knows how to pray." He asked for the source of her knowledge. When she truthfully revealed her religious affiliation, his countenance changed dramatically. In Helene's words: "Since that time benevolence on the minister's part towards me was gone" (Bernhardt 1933b).

Unexpectedly, in January 1911, the missionaries in Brassó received the long-sought permission to hold public meetings (Bernhardt 1933a, 3). On behalf of the Church, John Hill had cultivated the American Consul General in Budapest, Paul Nash, apparently reversing the anti-LDS disposition stemming from the Evarts edict three decades earlier (Hill 1962, 76). Under the auspices of the newly achieved legality, ten missionaries and President McKay held a missionary conference in Brassó on 22 April. It was a festive occasion, with everyone gathering for a group picture. A member recorded: "These were days of blessing and joy" (Bernhardt 1933a, 4).

Following the change in legal status, missionary T. R. Jones reported in a letter to the *Improvement Era* that "the police and officers are generally friendly. They know every missionary personally and are glad when they can help them." Jones quoted one policeman: "We like you Americans, and the gospel of Christ is good for our people" ("Messages" 1911, 116).

Efforts to obtain legal recognition for the Church also succeeded. Josef Ritter Grieg von Ronse, representing the Church, carried a petition through the negative rulings of two lower courts to appeal to the supreme court, which reversed the lower court opinions and granted recognition in November 1911 ("Says" 1911, 2).

Yet the official recognition made little difference. The opposition of the authorities now gone, the apathy of the populace still remained. On 5 March 1913 a group of LDS leaders gathered in Budapest: Rudger Clawson, an apostle and the current president of the European Mission; Hyrum Valentine, who had succeeded McKay as president of the German mission; Spencer Felt, Hungarian Conference leader; and proselyting elders Samuel V. Spry, J. Elmer Johansen, S. Joseph Quinney, and Elmer P. Madsen. They solemnly decided to discontinue missionary work among the Hungarian-speaking people for the present (MH, Hungarian District, 5 March 1913). This decision did not preclude leaving a few missionaries primarily to tend to the needs of the few members, mostly ethnic Germans.

Apostle Clawson reported in the *Millenial Star* the reason for the decision—that missionaries had labored for four years in Budapest without success. In one specific instance, he noted that Elder Quinney had distributed eight hundred tracts over a period of nine months and had nothing to show for it. Apostle Clawson summarized: "We were driven to the conclusion that the Hungarian people are not ready for the gospel" (*Millenial Star*, 13 March 1913, 174).

Only one active Church member, Anna Kaufmann, was left in Budapest. Since 1909 seven others had been baptized there, but they had all moved out, emigrated, or lost interest. In the country as a whole, of the 106 persons baptized since the arrival of Markow, fifty-nine, or half, had emigrated to America, five had moved elsewhere in Europe, and three had died, leaving forty members on the rolls with only a few still active.

In the end, it was not the opposition of the authorities but the lack of response that precluded the Church's early growth in Hungary. The missionary force in Europe was small and widely scattered. Unrewarded effort simply dictated that the effort be expended elsewhere. President Valentine reported to Apostle Clawson in October 1913 that the mission in Germany had been favored with many good, solid converts,

while "our actions in Budapest have proven the right thing and a burden has been lifted from the shoulders of this mission and a millstone from our elders' necks" (Valentine 1913). If the work could not proceed in Hungary, it would elsewhere.

The last two missionaries to serve in Hungary before World War I were David Stoddard and Charles Martin. Elder Stoddard found the people there more friendly than any he had previously encountered in Germany. His one concern was that the majority of those attending their meetings were "young ladies" and "the different preachers in town don't love us too much . . . and if they know that several young ladies are coming to our meetings they will have some nice stories to tell" (in Taylor 1990, 40).

The two missionaries were in Brassó when Austria declared war on Serbia. Elder Stoddard observed the preparations for war: "The farm lads were brought into town and given uniforms very quickly. They were bedded down for two nights in piles of straw that had been brought in and dumped in the streets, . . . were drilled for a short time, outfitted with weapons, and sent to the front." One young man, wishing to be baptized before he left for war, called at 4:00 A.M. and made arrangements to be baptized before his anticipated departure at 10:00 A.M. The plan was thwarted when he was required to leave at 6:00 A.M. (in Taylor 1990, 42–43).

The missionaries left 10 August 1914. Helene Bernhardt, a member in Brassó who remained faithful, reported years later that "long and dreary years now began for us all—isolated, no connection with the Church whatsoever, only dependent on ourselves. But this time also went by. The Lord was with us and did not leave us" (Bernhardt 1933a, 5).

The wait in Brassó lasted twelve years. In 1926, the branch was again visited by Church representatives. Sister Bernhardt wrote later, "Can you realize what it means to be able to partake of the Sacrament and to enjoy the spirit of meeting after such a long time." She had kept a meticulous record of missionary work in her city and recalled that "in all these years we have had 48 missionaries here in Kronstadt [Brassó], and 38 baptisms were performed. Really not many for such a number of years" (1933a, 5).

Other visits followed. In 1929, newly appointed Czechoslovakian Mission president, Arthur Gaeth, passed through Brassó. Hyrum Valentine, the last mission president to preside over Hungary before World War I, visited the same year. Helene felt as if "good old times had returned" (Bernhardt 1933a, 5). Also in 1929, the lone member in Budapest since World War I, Anna Kaufmann, passed away (Geschichte 1965, 16).

President Oliver Budge of the German-Austrian Mission and Elder Don Corbett, a missionary, passed through in 1931. President Budge later noted that Sister Bernhardt was holding together as a Relief Society "a group of the best women he had ever met." With priesthood holders present to administer the sacrament, they were once again able to partake of the sacrament emblems, weeping for joy at the privilege (Budge 1933).

President Gaeth, visiting again in 1934, reported four members in the Brassó Relief Society: Helena, age forty-two, converted in her youth and group leader; Anna Wachsmann, age sixty-seven, a Markow contact thirty years previously; Reginal Wolf, age fifty-four; and Marie Welkens, age sixty-five. The women gave Gaeth the tithing they had saved in their isolation. Each bore "staunch" testimony to the "goodness of the Lord." Before Gaeth departed, he held a meeting with the four and fourteen of their friends (MH, Czechoslovakian Mission, 20 Dec. 1934). With this meeting the historical record ends, and the fate of this group can be traced no further.

President Gaeth revived the effort to translate the Book of Mormon into Hungarian. In 1931 he employed as a translator Etus von Haragos, a Hungarian member baptized that year in Romania (MH, Czechoslovakian Mission, 26 July 1933). By January 1933 the work was complete. Gaeth anticipated spreading the gospel from his headquarters in Prague throughout the Slavic countries of Europe. But he did not remain long enough to see his vision come to fruition, and the draft translation was never published.

Eastern Europe succumbed first to Hitler's onslaught and then to Stalin's grip. The heavy hand of internal authorities that had hindered missionary work in the early part of the century was replaced by the iron fist of external authorities who effectively abrogated missionary work for the middle part of the century.

The first Church presence in communist Hungary came in 1959. The Church's Genealogical Department was invited to film the genealogical records in the national archives. Over the next thirteen years, 10,600 rolls of microfilm preserved the faded pages of parish registers, military and census records.

Unexpectedly in late 1964, two Hungarians wrote to Church headquarters requesting information. One letter was in broken English and the other primarily in Hungarian. No one at Church headquarters had enough expertise in Hungarian to read the one letter or to respond to either. However, a staff member knew of a Hungarian-speaking Church member in New York named Otto Neu and forwarded the letters to him. For the next two decades, Neu corresponded with and on occasion visited several contacts in the country. He also translated

the Church's primary proselyting pamphlet, "Joseph Smith's Testimony," into Hungarian and distributed copies to his contacts. However, communist rule kept Neu from baptizing or openly proselytizing (Neu 1964–84).

In June 1965, Ezra Taft Benson, then serving as the European Mission president, learned of faithful members living in Debrecen on the eastern border of Hungary. He arranged for J. Peter Loescher, Austrian Mission president, and Elder Siegfried Szoke, a missionary fluent in Hungarian, to visit Janos (John) Denndorfer, a seventy-year-old native of Switzerland, and Sandorne Toth, a devoted member who had endured an unhappy marriage with an alcoholic husband. During decades of isolation from the Church, Denndorfer had maintained a private tithing account (Loescher 1975, 127–28).

In the 1970s contacts between the western and eastern blocs increased as international tensions began to relax. At the same time, native Hungarians who had been baptized in other countries began to contact their relatives and friends in Hungary to tell them of their new faith. Gustave Salik, Austria Vienna Mission president from 1976 to 1978, sought out his Hungarian relatives and taught them the gospel. An attempt was made to establish a branch in Budapest, but the members feared government reprisal if official sanction was not obtained and the effort was aborted (Morrell 1990; Merkeley 1991).

Still hopeful, the Church made the decision to establish an unofficial presence in the country. Under the auspices of the Church's International Mission, Joseph T. Bentley, a retired BYU professor and administrator, was appointed with his wife, Kathleen, to reside in Budapest for eighteen months. Their task was to make friends and prepare the way for regular missionary work (Bentley 1982, 141).

The couple arrived in Hungary in April 1978 with a list of people to contact. Some on the list were Church members who had been baptized in other countries, some were relatives and friends of Church members living elsewhere, some were people who might be able to help the Church become reestablished in Hungary. Members already living there needed much instruction since their knowledge of Church doctrine and procedure was minimal. One exception was John Denndorfer in Debrecen. In Bentley's estimation he was a "grand ole man . . . full of the gospel and excited about it" (Bentley 1982, 167). A few members on the list renounced their allegiance to the Church, while several nonmember contacts expressed the desire to be baptized as soon as the Church received legal recognition (the recognition of 1911 having been long forgotten).

Bentley's BYU credentials helped him establish cordial relations with important leaders at the University of Budapest and in the gov-

ernment. He assisted the Church in seeking recognition through legal channels. The Bentley apartment became a waystation for other Church representatives visiting the country. One visitor was the Church's "ambassador," David Kennedy, who had come to talk with Imre Miklos, Hungarian state secretary and head of the State Office of Religious Affairs. Another decade would pass before these efforts bore fruit.

As the 1980s began, the lack of religious curiosity apparent in Hungary in the early part of the century seemed to have been replaced by a new spirit of inquiry. In the summer of 1984 Hungarian National Television filmed a documentary on Utah and the Mormons. Broadcast as a miniseries in November and December 1985, the program resulted in a flurry of requests for more information from Church headquarters in Utah. Unsure of the proper address, the correspondents addressed their mail in general terms to such locations as "Mormons, America," and "Missionary Center, Utah." Headquarters forwarded the mail to the Austria Vienna Mission president, Spencer J. Condie (Condie c1988, 1).

A Hungarian surgeon, interested by the broadcast, pored over back issues of medical journals to locate an article he remembered as being written by someone living in Utah. Assuming the author, R. Kim Davis of the University of Utah Medical School, to be LDS, Dr. Kereszti wrote requesting more information. Davis sent a picture of his family, their testimony, and an offer to have someone visit the Keresztis in Hungary. President Condie arrived at their home in Ajka, Hungary, in February 1986. He found a family that was not only anxious to learn more about the Church but one whose members spoke fluent English. Six months later the Keresztis traveled to Vienna to be baptized.

The desire of many Hungarians to learn about the Church and, concurrently, the improvement in East-West relations prepared the way for the visit of Elder Russell M. Nelson to Hungary in April 1987. Elder Nelson described the scene on Mt. Gellert, situated in a Budapest park, before he offered a prayer dedicating Hungary for missionary labor: "It was Easter Sunday. There had been a lot of people, a lot of traffic in the park. But all of a sudden, the people had gone home, and I had a sweet, peaceful feeling this [was] the spot" (in Van Orden 1988).

Elder Nelson told Imre Miklos of the dedicatory prayer. Miklos was well acquainted with the Church's intentions in Hungary, and his response was welcome. "He was visibly moved, even as I relayed that message to him through an interpreter, he was able to perceive that we were not there to exploit, but to bless the people of that country" (in Van Orden 1988).

Soon after, two missionaries and a missionary couple were transferred to Hungary. Wayne and Linnea Johnson of Sandy, Utah, came in from the Austria Vienna Mission as did Elder Jean-Marc Frey of Switzerland. The other missionary, Zoltan Nagy-Kovacs, a Hungarian linguist, came from the Germany Frankfurt Mission. In July 1987, the Austria Vienna East Mission was organized with Dennis Neuenschwander as president. It assumed jurisdiction over Church affairs in Hungary. Two new elders and another couple were brought in: Aaron Uppencamp from the Austria Vienna Mission; Christopher Jones, newly ordained missionary from Virginia; Alan and Ruth McFarlane from Salt Lake City, Utah.

On 1 June 1988, the long-awaited second recognition of the Church as a legal entity in Hungary was granted. Coincidentally, the recognition came on the centennial of Hintze's visit. Church membership has grown into the hundreds, fulfilling the hope expressed by Hintze a century earlier that saints would yet be found "in those places."

One of those places was Szeged in southern Hungary. Irute Meskiene, working at the Hungarian National Academy of Sciences in Szeged, met Utahn Marvin Smith, working there on sabbatical. She had previously read extensively on religion and formed her own opinion. She was surprised to find her belief similar to the faith which Smith espoused. When the Church was legalized, she requested baptism, and Smith flew back to Hungary to perform the service (Miasnik 1990).

In October 1989, the first meetinghouse in Hungary was dedicated in Budapest. A congregation of over a hundred, including many interested in learning about the Church, gathers there for meetings every Sunday (McFarlane 1990). Approximately three hundred baptisms had been performed in Hungary as of January 1991, three times the number performed in the entire pre-World War I period (Merkeley 1991).

Conditions in Hungary are the reverse of those of an earlier era. Civil authorities no longer hinder missionary activity. The decades-long suppression of religious liberty seems to have whetted rather than extinguished Hungarians' desire for religious fulfillment. The case of Ference Csapo, first branch president in Budapest, illustrates this new disposition. Seeking baptism, Csapo traveled sixty kilometers from Dunaujuvaros to knock on the missionaries' door (Jones 1989). LDS messengers are preceded by a positive image far removed from the grotesque public caricatures of the past. The days of Hungary as the eastern edge of missionary work recede as the gospel message is carried on to other lands and Hungary matures in its newfound faith.

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