

HUNGARIAN LOBBYING EFFORTS FOR THE HUMAN RIGHTS OF MINORITIES IN RUMANIA: THE CHRR/HHRF AS A CASE STUDY

ANDREW LUDANYI

In April of 1988 Nicolae Ceausescu (General Secretary of the Rumanian Communist Party and President of the Socialist Republic of Rumania) unfolded a new policy for the "final solution" to the minority nationality question in Transylvania. He proposed a plan to bulldoze small village settlements in order to give social and economic "progress" a boost by forcing "backward" village inhabitants into newly constructed agro-industrial centers. In this way, by the year 2000, the roughly 13,000 village settlements of Rumania would be more than halved with the elimination of the 7,000 smaller settlements. As of the present writing about 20 villages have been destroyed in this fashion, but while the Ceausescu clan remains in power the prospects of a reprieve for the remainder remains dim. Behind this grand plan for "progress" is a hidden agenda nurtured by Ceausescu's personal chauvinism and his need to scapegoat the minorities of Transylvania. Of the 7,000 villages slated for destruction, at least 2,000 are Hungarian and Saxon or Swabian German settlements. The real objective is to break up their compact settlements and force them to depend solely on the social and cultural institutions of the majority Rumanian population.¹

This latest nightmare is but the most drastic plan that has been formulated to transform Rumania into a homogeneous nation-state. Ever since the Hungarian Revolution of 1956 the leadership of the Rumanian Socialist Worker's Party has been systematically undermining the institutions of the two and a half million Hungarians who inhabit the north-western and central regions of present-day Rumania (those areas which Rumania acquired from Hungary after World War I).² This policy has affected all areas of life, but has had the most adverse affect on the educational and cultural opportunities of the Hungarians and other minorities. Since Ceausescu came to power in 1965 conditions have deteriorated even further.

In response to the persecution of their cultural co-nationals, Hungarians living in dispersion throughout the West have attempted to intercede on their behalf by influencing the foreign policies of their adopted homelands toward the Bucharest administration. In the United States the most effective such lobbying group has been the Hungarian Human Rights Foundation (HHRF for short) headquartered in New York City. This organization and its activities will provide the focus for the present study.

The HHRF, in alliance with a number of other groups, was able to convince the U.S. Congress to "terminate" the MFN status of Rumania in 1987. This paper will

describe the role of HHRF as an example of an international pressure network which is able to influence American foreign policy in Eastern Europe. The activities of the group will be traced from the early 1970's to the end of 1988. By describing the tactics and strategies of the group over this time period, this study hopes to identify those situational factors and group traits which contributed to the success of 1987.

Method

The present analysis of the HHRF will depend on a variety of sources. First it will be based on the content analysis of the publications, correspondence and documents that reflect on the objectives and role of HHRF. It will also depend on an evaluation of published outside sources that have opposed or supported the work of HHRF. Finally, it is based on two different questionnaires, one that has tapped the commitments of certain sectors of the Hungarian-American public, and another which has tapped the commitments of HHRF activists, respectively. The former was a brief two-page questionnaire mailed out in January 1989 to the readership of *Itt-Ott* (Here-There) a quarterly publication of the Hungarian Communion of Friends (a politically prominent Hungarian-American organization). Of the 800 questionnaires mailed out to the U.S. and Canada readership of *Itt-Ott* 50 questionnaires (6.25%) were returned. The second was a more in-depth questionnaire (6 pages), meant for the activists of the HHRF to provide a self-evaluation, with ample opportunities for long open-ended responses. The latter questionnaire was mailed out during March 1989.

International Environment

The HHRF came into being to fight for human rights in Rumania in a time period that initially favored Ceausescu rather than the fate of Hungarians in Transylvania. Ceausescu had inherited the mantle of his predecessor as a "striver for independence" within the Soviet bloc. The foundations for this role had been laid by Rumania's rebellion against Comecon's tighter economic integration in 1964 and, more importantly, Ceausescu's refusal to break off relations with Israel in 1967 or to participate in the August 1968 Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia. The latter two commitments assured Rumania of American sympathies, which in concrete terms meant that President Johnson warned the Soviet Union "not to unleash the dogs of war" in Eastern Europe by expanding the interventionism of the Brezhnev doctrine to Yugoslavia and Rumania.³ This was followed by the Kissinger years of the Nixon and Ford administrations, which tried to expand the trend toward greater independence in the bloc. Rumania's Ceausescu was a direct beneficiary of these commitments. In 1968 Nixon selected Rumania to be the first Communist country to be visited by a U.S. president after World War II. In 1975 President Ford was also given an enthusiastic reception in Bucharest on his state visit. In the meantime Ceausescu visited the United States on

three occasions in 1970, 1973, and 1975. All this meant that Rumania had become the darling of Kissinger's own version of *Ostpolitik*.⁴ In concrete terms this meant trade benefits, finally including most-favored-nation status.

Domestic Environment

Against this kind of background Hungarian-American groups had very little impact on the State Department. The lack of Hungarian-American influence can be best explained by two other domestic considerations. One was internal to the Hungarian-American subculture, the other was the strength of competing interests that favored continued good relations with Rumania. The latter were mainly a limited number of business interests and some of the American Jewish groups affiliated with the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC). The former saw advantages for gaining some untapped markets in Eastern Europe, while the latter wanted to maintain contacts with the only East European bloc country that had not severed its diplomatic relations with Israel following the 1967 Middle Eastern war. Also of more immediate concern, was the desire to maintain contact with the East European country—besides the USSR—from which some of the Jewish population wanted to emigrate. To replenish its population in the face of a higher birth rate among the Palestinians became an ever pressing concern for Israel.⁵

On the other hand, the Hungarian-American subculture was not capable of fielding an effectively organized human rights lobby until the early 1970's. Although the Hungarian-American community includes about one million seven hundred thousand people according to the 1980 census, it lacked effective lobbying organizations. Their fraternal and church organizations were well-established, but avoided politics because they associated it with the fratricidal struggles that the post-World War II and post-1956 new political emigres brought with them. Thus, those who had the most established roots were the least willing to participate in influencing the American posture in foreign policy.⁶ The new emigres, on the other hand, had all the desire to participate, but they initially lacked citizenship and for a long time did not acquire the know-how that would make them politically effective in their new environment.⁷ It was not until the second generation came of age that the "week-end" old country politics of the 1945-ers and 1956-ers was replaced by the political pragmatism of a new, Americanized, younger generation.

This younger generation became the backbone for the human rights activism of the 1970's and 1980's. They became involved with lobbying not as an *ad hoc* endeavor to salve their conscience, but as an activity that was supposed to achieve concrete results. This was a totally novel approach, and required that Hungarian-American society undergo a process of reeducation. Henceforth they would no longer be pacified by purely symbolic payoffs, the days of the verbose election-day speaker or the wordy memorandum "promising liberation" were now numbered.

Human Rights Moves to Center Stage

It was probably a combination of forces that led to the involvement of the younger generation. The 1960's witnessed both the black power movement and anti-Vietnam War activism. Coming to a head at about this same time via Rumania's new international prominence, from 1968 to about 1975, there was greater opportunity for prominent Hungarian artists and writers from Rumania to travel in the West, while more and more Hungarians from the West had the opportunity to visit their relatives in Transylvania. The intersection of these two developments convinced members of the younger generation, that the stillborn politics of their forefathers must be replaced with the kind of political involvement that actually changes adverse government policy.

Two other more specific events also set the stage for Hungarian-American human rights activism. One was the passage of the Trade Act of 1974, while the other was the signing of the Helsinki Final Act in August 1975. The first provided the framework within which Rumania acquired access to American markets for its products following President Ford's granting (in 1975) of MFN status to it. The second provided for a means of monitoring compliance with the human rights requirements of basket III of the Helsinki Final Act. The latter provided a standard of behavior for all 35 "Helsinki" signatory states and follow-up conferences which could check up on the progress for keeping the promised guarantees.⁸ These two policy commitments of the United States and of Rumania, established the two mechanisms by which human rights activists might bring pressure to bear on Rumania.

One other important change took place. The Carter administration made human rights the centerpiece of its foreign policy. Although the State Department did not immediately abandon its commitments to the "realism" of the Kissinger era, it began to pay more lip-service to human rights. This verbal commitment was an important symbolic shift for human rights activists trying to influence American foreign policy.

Committee for Human Rights in Rumania

The pressure was first applied already during the spring, summer and fall of 1976 by a newly formed organization called the Committee for Human Rights in Rumania (CHRR for short).⁹ This organization challenged the renewal of Rumania's MFN status by President Ford, just one year after the status had been granted. This Committee, representing the younger generation of Hungarian-Americans was able to mobilize a significant number of U.S. representatives to speak against renewal of most-favored-nation status. While in this first challenge to MFN status renewal the CHRR allied itself with many more traditional and long-established organizations (i.e., the American Hungarian Federation) it already played the most important role in mobilizing opposition. Although this first challenge to the State Department professionals and the Executive Office was unsuccessful, it brought together the core support for an enthusiastic and talented organization. Important organizers for the group at this time were col-

lege-age second generation activists like László Hámos, Kinga Koreh, Jenő Brogyányi, and Ágnes Bodnár as well as more recent young emigres like Bulcsu Veress and Zoltán Harkó.¹⁰ Their effectiveness was in large part a consequence of their familiarity with the American political landscape, their enthusiasm, their English fluency in both writing and speech, and their willingness to be workhorses rather than showhorses.

The latter trait immediately set them off from the more traditional emigre organizations, where political activity had become a "status" game carried out by a few veteran emigré leaders who had their own channels of influence. These were, for the most part, based on personal contact and utilized mainly for their high visibility on an *ad hoc* basis. The CHRR also used some of these channels, but it began to go beyond this symbolic level, by establishing a permanent organization whose main and primary concern would be to influence American foreign policy relative to Rumania. For this it has focused on the most pragmatic issue possible: trade.

The human rights of Hungarians in Rumania was linked to trade via the Jackson-Vanik amendment. As Edward I. Koch (D-N.Y.) pointed out in his statement of October 1, 1976: "Romania is the first and, thus far, only Communist country to receive most-favored-nation treatment and other trade privileges under the terms of section 402 of the Trade Act of 1974, the Jackson-Vanik amendment. That amendment prohibits MFN treatment for any nonmarket country which denies its citizens the right to emigrate. Section 402 authorizes the President annually to recommend the waiver of the free emigration requirements, if the President determines that continuing the waiver will 'substantially promote the objectives' of Section 402. The President has recently recommended extending for another year the existing waiver for Romania, but prior to October 15 either House of Congress may disapprove this extension and terminate Romania's most-favored-nation status".¹¹

From 1976 to 1977, on the American domestic scene the CHRR (after 1984-HHRF) utilized this annual review as the means to focus attention on Rumanian human rights violations, and the Helsinki follow-up conferences (Belgrade, Madrid, Ottawa, Budapest, Vienna) to keep world attention on this issue. The remainder of this study will be devoted to how the CHRR/HHRF has kept the spotlight on the fate of Transylvanian Hungarians and how it finally won the struggle in Congress with the House and Senate votes ending MFN status for Rumania in the summer of 1987.

CHRR/HHRF Activities and Methods

The young people who became the backbone of the Hungarian-American human rights movement were first activated by the romanticism of organizing a demonstration in front of the Rumanian UN-mission in New York.¹² This demonstration took place on May 8, 1976. In the "Press Release" that was composed for this occasion, Zoltán Harkó states: "The Committee for Human Rights in Rumania, sponsor of the demonstration, is an *ad hoc* organization supported by all major associations of Hungarians in America".¹³ The success of this demonstration in bringing together young

people who "wanted to do something", convinced a number of them that the *ad hoc* status was not enough. During the summer of 1976 the CHRR was transformed into a loose coalition of committed young lobbyists. This group worked hard to convince members of Congress to take a second look at Rumania's MFN status. They were able to mobilize 78 U.S. Senators and Representatives to sponsor resolutions "urging that Rumania's MFN status not be extended until concrete measures have been taken to ameliorate the situation of minorities in that country".¹⁴ For a young organization without a paid staff this was a commendable result.

From the experiences of this first year emerged a certain division of labor among the activists. Some focused more of their attention on the work on Capitol Hill while others were already thinking in terms of the next demonstration. This tactic was useful in mobilizing an entire generation for human rights activism. However, it had the potential for becoming an end in itself and for this reason it became a serious concern later.

All varieties of demonstrations were utilized by the CHRR after the success of the demonstration of May 8th, 1978. The next opportunity for this tactic arose on March 31st, 1977 at Columbia University when five visiting lecturers from Rumania were scheduled to appear at a "Symposium on Romania". This provided the CHRR with the opportunity to gain additional attention for its concerns. As László Hámos, the organizer of the demonstration pointed out: "Our protest is in no way directed against the University. The University is and should remain a free forum for the expression of all points of view. But we do wish to call attention to the fact that in addition to representing a grossly repressive, neo-Stalinist regime, at least two of the visiting speakers ... practice a highly refined and ... ruthless form of academic intolerance [by] ... joining Rumanian President Ceausescu's mad drive to forcefully assimilate his country's Hungarian and other minority peoples ..."¹⁵ The demonstration was successful in providing the organization and its concerns with additional publicity. However, the amount of energy consumed in planning and implementation, again raised the question of priorities for the CHRR.

Still, demonstrations as a tactic have not been abandoned, they have only been resorted to on a more selective basis—and linked primarily to the MFN review process in the U.S. Congress.

Three exceptions to the above, were the demonstrations organized in Plains, Georgia on January 9th, 1977, the demonstrations against Ceausescu in Washington and New York City during April 1978, and the demonstrations of November 15th, 1988. The first of these was an effort to focus the attention of the new President on the fate of the minorities in Rumania and to provide a link with the more overt commitments of the new administration for the role of human rights in foreign policy.¹⁶ Both the timing and the local publicity assured that the Carter administration would be aware of the problem. The lesson learned was that not the size and impressive organization of the demonstration, but the amount of media coverage received determines success.

On the occasion of Nicolae Ceausescu's state visit to the U.S.A. in April, 1978, media attention again became a major concern. However, the media probably would have

ignored the demonstrators, had Ceausescu himself not made a major issue out of their presence.¹⁷ Because the demonstrators caused him personal trauma and insecurity,¹⁸ he protested to the U.S. State Department. To pacify him the New York police chief and Mayor Ed Koch visited him in the Waldorf.¹⁹ These enhanced the "newsworthiness" of the demonstrations, and much more coverage was obtained than originally thought possible.

Finally, Ceausescu's village bulldozing plan led to the organization of a "global" sympathy demonstration for the victims. The demonstration was timed to coincide with the one year anniversary of the rioting and demonstrations that had swept through Transylvania, particularly the city of Brasov (Kronstadt, Brasso) on November 15th, 1987.²⁰ Since both the House and the Senate had already decided to suspend Rumania's MFN status, the objective of the demonstration in this case was educational. It sought world publicity for the human rights violations which were perpetrated by the Ceausescu regime. While media attention in the U.S.A. eluded the efforts of the demonstrators, they were generally more successful in obtaining Canadian and European coverage.

Access to Influence

The CHRR/HHRF has recognized that its major impact is not based on these demonstrations, but on access to influential policymakers. The demonstrations are merely supplemental to psychologically mobilize the committed support groups of CHRR/HHRF and to draw media attention to the problem. But the main objective is to get policymakers to pay serious attention to their concerns. To this end the HHRF has focused its activities on three major forums: the U.S. Congress, the Helsinki follow-up conferences, and the U.N. Human Rights Commission in Geneva. For the present analysis we only have time to consider the first of these forums. While the other two are also important in influencing the fate of minorities in present-day Rumania, only the activities in the U.S. Congress can enable us to measure the effectiveness of the HHRF as a lobbying group.

What standards can be used to reflect on the CHRR/HHRF in terms of lobbying effectiveness? We suggest that a number of factors should be considered. First, we should look at the actual results of the lobbying activities. Second, we should compare the activities and impact of this group to the activities and impact of its predecessors. And finally, we should compare its track record in influencing policymakers both in terms of the quality and the quantity of its efforts. All this can be brought together within the Congressional confrontations over Rumania's MFN status during the Spring and Summer of 1987.

From September 1976 until the Spring of 1987, the CHRR/HHRF consistently provided both the House and the Senate with extensive oral testimonies for their hearings on extending Rumania's MFN status. It became almost a ritual process for the administration (Ford, Carter, Reagan) to recommend renewal of MFN status, only to be chal-

lenged by CHRR/HHRF to show cause for such an extension. The Congressional Record consistently shows that the executive branch, through its State Department representatives, conveyed a relatively weak case with weak arguments.²¹ But they had the advantage of defending the *status quo* and apathy and inertia worked to their advantage for a while. However, the bulldog persistence of CHRR/HHRF is reflected in the number of their oral testimonies *and* in the number of the supplemental written statements that were provided both chambers of the legislature. During this time period more than 85 oral testimonies and 995 written statements were submitted by CHRR/HHRF to support suspension of Rumania's MFN status.²² The record shows that these testimonies and written statements were coherent, convincing and effectively documented.

Events and revelations also aided the human rights lobbyists. The Ceausescu administration continued to ignore the warning signals. It continued to abuse not just the Hungarian minority, but all minorities, both ethnic and religious. The personality cult combined with intensified repression continued relentlessly. After the signing of the Helsinki Final Act the existence of *all* inhabitants in Rumania deteriorated. Violence, brutality and persecution became an accepted pattern for dealing with any opposition whatsoever. The three events that brought this to the attention of the outside world, were the Károly Király revelations of 1978, the resignation of U.S. Ambassador Funderburk to Rumania in May, 1985 and the publication of Ion Mihai Pacepa's *Red Horizons* (1987).

Parallel to these developments, the CHRR/HHRF also targetted certain Congressmen and Senators for special support if they had been sympathetic to the quest for suspending Rumania's MFN status. The group also exerted pressure on those of their colleagues who consistently supported continuing the MFN status for Ceausescu's regime. The special support manifest itself in fund-raising dinners or invitations to speaking engagements during election years. It also included letter-writing campaigns and phonathons—and for key committee chairmen and the swing vote, it included meetings with delegations from their home constituencies. These tactics were particularly effective in campaigns which took place in Connecticut, New Jersey and Ohio, where the size of the Hungarian-American constituency is above the 100,000 mark.²³

The effective coordination of all these tactics, in combination with Ceausescu's own blunders, eventually led to the Senate's adoption in October 1986 of the Tribble-Dodd Resolution. This resolution warned Rumania of the consequences for ignoring the human rights concerns of the American Congress. Just six months later, on April 30, 1987, the House voted 232 : 183 (with a 49 vote majority) to pass the Wolf Amendment which suspended Rumania's MFN status for half a year. It cited as a specific reason for the suspension the oppression of the Hungarian minority and religious believers. On June 26, 1987 after 2 1/2 hours of debate the Senate followed suit and passed the Armstrong-Dodd Amendment by a vote of 57 : 36. This commitment to suspending MFN status was then reinforced by the rejection of the Danforth Amendment by 53 : 44 in the Senate on July 15, 1987.²⁴ All three of these votes were in part a reflection of the CHRR/HHRF's effective coordination of tactics and timing.

To save face, on February 26, 1988, Rumania announced that it did not need MFN status.²⁵ It rejected the Senate and the House votes as unacceptable "interference in the internal affairs" of Rumania. To underline this rejection it unleashed a new and even more ambitious anti-minority policy, the village-bulldozing program made public in April, 1988.²⁶ Thus, CHRR/HHRF has won a victory on the American political scene, but the desired international consequences have not taken place. However, perhaps the extreme nature of the Ceausescu reaction, may in the long-run bring the needed changes. What else is responsible for the above outlined successes? Perhaps organization!?

Organization

The organizational structure of the CHRR had built-in limitations. It was a loosely structured coalition of active young people. While decisions and activities were made on an *ad hoc* basis this was not an insurmountable problem—in fact in some ways it was an asset. However, as the support base of the group expanded and as the concerns and activities increased, there was a more pressing need to establish a formal structure. Since March 23, 1984, the CHRR has become a working committee of the newly created Hungarian Human Rights Foundation (HHRF).²⁷ The latter has expanded its mission to include the fate of Hungarians in other East European states besides Rumania. It has adopted a formal governance structure and become a New York state chartered corporation, that "is an independent, not-for-profit, non-governmental organization".²⁸

The HHRF's organization is not based on its potential support constituency. It is action oriented and prefers to define itself as a "task-force".²⁹ In its own self-definition it stipulates that it is *not* a membership organization.³⁰ People affiliate with it simply on the basis of accepting its objectives and supporting its work. The leadership is composed of the activist core that had founded the CHRR in 1976. Although there has been some change in the membership of the "Board of Directors", the change has been minimal. The continuity of the leadership is ensured not just by the bylaws of the organization, which enables the present leadership to maintain control, but by the more practical consideration that only those people are continued in leadership positions who pull their own weight in doing the work of the organization.

This also holds for the executive post of the organization, which has been occupied in an unofficial or a formal capacity since 1976 by the same individual, László Hámos. His role has been particularly important in keeping the organization together as an effective "task-force". Although the organization has "aged", because the core activists have remained the same, the organization has systematically sought to maintain its youthful elan by recruiting younger activists for its work force. It has done this in two ways. First, by committing the organization to including younger members in its policy-making body,³¹ and second, by instituting an "intern" program which enables college-

age young people to gain lobbying experience by working for the HHRF for a set time period.³²

Besides this "central" organizational core, the HHRF has attempted to set up local support groups on an *ad hoc* basis. These have acquired a more or less permanent character in Washington, D.C. and Ottawa, Canada. In most other cities within the U.S.A. the local support is linked to key individuals rather than actual groups that claim affiliation with the HHRF in New York City. Demonstrations and lobbying activities create these linkages, again based on the practical objective of sharing in the performance of the defined tasks.

The other major linkage is fundraising. Throughout the 1970's and early 1980's the CHRR/HHRF depended almost totally on contributions from the Hungarian-American community to meet its ongoing operational expenses. Even the President of the organization worked at a variety of jobs with legal firms to make ends meet. Only in 1985 did the organization acquire a base of funding that has enabled one individual, László Hámos, to become a full-time and "overtime" employee of the CHRR/HHRF. In that year Baron Thyssen-Bornemisza, the steel-millionaire from Switzerland, offered to support the human rights work of CHRR (later HHRF) by providing a major support grant to cover the costs of its ongoing operations. This grant is based on matching contributions that are designated for the work of HHRF. Any contribution of \$1,000 or more is automatically matched by an equal contribution from the Thyssen-Bornemisza grant. This means that at least the basic financial needs of the organization are assured for the next five years.³³

Activists and Supporters

Two questionnaires have been disseminated during the past few months to measure the involvement of the Hungarian-American community in human rights campaigns. The first questionnaire was sent out to the potential support constituency of the HHRF. It was a brief two-page questionnaire, the purpose of which was to identify the people who were most likely to support the activities of HHRF either financially or by their involvement in its campaigns. As has been noted above, of the 800 questionnaires mailed out only 50 (6.25%) were filled out and returned. Although it had been sent out to a group that is more involved and concerned about Hungarian-related developments, the return shows that only a small minority is politically active—at least in the human rights struggles for the Hungarian minorities. One could argue that the Hungarian language wording of the questionnaire may have been responsible for the low return. This is not the likely explanation, because the *Itt-Ott* readership is itself bilingual and is interested in following events in both English and Hungarian. The more likely explanation is that those people responded who had something to report. That, of course, confirms an otherwise well-established observation, that active minorities are the movers and the shakers—and this is also true for the readership of *Itt-Ott*.

The demographic profile of this activist core provides a number of additional in-

sights. Two-thirds of the respondents are above fifty years of age and one third of these are above sixty-five, most of whom already have retired. While almost 10% of the respondents were in their 80's only one respondent was under thirty. Most of the respondents (70%) were born in Hungary, while 16% were born in other neighboring East European states, and 14% were born in the U.S.A., Canada or some other "Western" country. Most of the respondents left Hungary or Eastern Europe between 1945 and 1957 (56%), while only six percent emigrated prior to 1945, and 14% have emigrated since 1957. (The remainder of the respondents were either born in the West [14%] or failed to indicate the time of their emigration.) Finally, 78% of the respondents were male and only 22% were female. Almost all were married (92%), with only 4% single, 2% widowed, and 2% divorced.

Overall, this small sample of respondents produced or participated in a phenomenally large number of activities to influence American and Canadian policy relative to the treatment of Hungarians in Rumania. In the two years (1987-88) for which the questions were asked, they tried to influence both public officials and the general attitudes of Americans and Canadians. To influence public officials (Congressmen/Representatives, State Department Officials, the President/Prime Minister, etc.) these fifty individuals wrote 349 letters, made 226 telephone calls, had 67 personal meetings with their public representatives, participated in 55 meetings of groups of delegations with representatives, sent more than 1728 documents to public officials, and contributed funds to the cause 154 times ranging in donations from \$1.-\$2000. per donation, with \$50.00 being the average amount.

This same group of fifty people also tried to influence public opinion, by reaching American/Canadian society through the mass media, through demonstrations, and through mass meetings. To this end they produced about eight articles for newspapers, gave ten interviews, wrote 283 letters to the editor, placed four advertisements and proclamations, made over 2000 telephone calls, and participated on five occasions in demonstrations by themselves and on 96 occasions in demonstrations with others. They were also responsible for delivering twenty lectures, disseminating written documentation on 121 occasions, and for organizing six charitable collections for Transylvanian refugees. In addition to the above (on thirteen occasions), some were able to draw attention to this question on TV or by some other form of exposure in the media.

This activism, and its relative success is undoubtedly a reflection of the social and educational background of the respondents. Of the sample who responded, practically every educational degree was mentioned, including five M.D.'s, six Ph.D.'s, sixteen MA's, MS's, MBA's or legal or engineering professional degrees, and nineteen other college/university degrees. Only four of the respondents had a high school education or less.

While a large (and growing) number are retired (26%), those who were still active in the workforce include seven educators at the University level, seven managers and directors in government or business employment, two psychiatrists, three physicians, one architect, twelve engineers, as well as one newspaper editor, one minister, one geographer, one pharmacist, two social workers, and two librarians. Only three of the res-

pondents indicated that their primary activity or occupation was "homemaking". In terms of their political affiliation, the impact of social class is also evident as most American respondents claimed to be Republican (44%), while only a minority (14%) claimed to be Democrats and (22%) claimed that they were independents. Among the Canadian respondents only four claimed Conservative or Liberal affiliation, while most of the others (nine) claimed to belong to no party at all.

The profile of the HHRF "leader activists" is different in a number of significant ways. Their profile has been obtained from a second questionnaire that had different overall objectives. Instead of measuring activism alone, it was also an attempt at evaluating organizational cohesion and effectiveness. Unfortunately some respondents misunderstood the intent, and thereby the "organizational assessment" objectives of the questionnaire have not been achieved. Still, the responses allow us to draw some conclusions. Of the fifty questionnaires sent out to past and present leader activists of HHRF, thirteen (26%) sent back the completed (or partially completed) forms.

The most obvious difference between the HHRF leader activists and their supporters is that the former are much younger. Of the thirteen respondents the oldest was sixty-four while the youngest was twenty-three. However, the core members of the organization are in their 40's (46%), with twenty-three percent younger and thirty percent older. On the basis of the responses, we could also ascertain that there are two categories of activist leaders. One category provides the core of the "task force", which included/includes about a dozen names. These individuals provide(d) the heart and the brains of the organization, they are all in their thirties or forties. The second category of activist leaders is made-up of the network of local associates who work for/with the HHRF New York office. This second category of activists provides the "task force" with an extended presence, that enables it to exert pressure on various vulnerable legislators in their home constituencies. (The identification of this two layered *core* is based on question 6 of the questionnaire. This question requested a listing of up to *ten* other activists/leaders who should be provided with a questionnaire. The numbers of name *mentions* in the returned responses *and* the higher visibility of activists in Washington D.C. and New York City is the basis for the twofold classification.)

Inevitably, the second category of activists responded to the questionnaire—almost as if they were oblivious to the "central" organization and as if the requested responses related only to their own work locally. The first category of activists responded by focusing mainly on the HHRF's activities, without responding—aside from some sarcastic commentary—to the questions relative to the resources and governance of the organization. The latter may portend internal future difficulties within the HHRF, but at present this does not concern us. Toward the outside world the two categories of activists complemented each other's roles well in the struggles to deny Rumanian MFN status. The two categories of activists also tended to evaluate the success of the organization, relative to its major activities, in a surprisingly similar way (however, most of the second category activists left the evaluation question unanswered!).

On a scale of 1 to 10 (ten being the best), the activist leaders rated the HHRF as "very good" in two areas ("c. editing/writing informative materials" and "g. preparing

for hearings”) with a score average of 8.2 and 8.6, respectively. They rated HHRF as “good” in two areas (“e. contacting legislators” and “k. organizing demonstrations”) with a score average of 7.1 and 7, respectively. They rated HHRF as “satisfactory” in two areas (“f. contacting State Department officials” and “h. contacting other interest groups”) with a score average of 6.8 for both. They rated HHRF as “weak” or “unsatisfactory” in three areas (“a. fund raising”, “d. correspondence”, and “j. speaking engagements”) with a score average of 4.1, 4.2, and 5, in that order. Finally, they rated HHRF as totally inadequate in two areas (“b. membership drive” and “i. organizing lobby workshops”) with a score average of 2.4 and 3.8, respectively.

Conclusion

On the basis of the above review we can conclude that the 1987 successes are a consequence of changing international circumstances, domestic political re-alignments, the HHRF's ability to utilize the changed environment to press Congress to take its concerns more seriously. Effective organization of the group's limited financial resources, the mobilization of a committed support group in the Hungarian-American community, and the leadership talents of a young and enthusiastic staff, have enabled HHRF to maintain the sustained drive that culminated in the House and Senate votes against MFN in 1987.

With the successes of 1987 behind them, the activities of HHRF have also produced some contradictory results which should lead its leaders and activists to sit down to do a thorough soul searching *and* self-evaluation for the organization, its activities, and its contacts with its actual and potential support groups. The organization is definitely at the cross-roads and under pressure to reevaluate its goals and methods. The American and Canadian environmental conditions are also changing, mainly in HHRF's favor. Yet the challenges and dangers to the human rights of Hungarian minorities are more serious than ever before. In the last decade of the 20th century these challenges and dangers cannot be confronted on a shoe-string operation. The aging of the HHRF support group should in particular become a high-priority concern. If HHRF is to continue as an effective force it must be able to attract younger generations of supporters and find more effective organizational and communications links between the “leader activists” and the support constituencies.

Notes

1. “Romania Set to Eliminate 7,000 Villages by Year 2000”, *The Washington Times*, April 6, 1988; Peter Keresztes, “The Time Bomb in Romania's War on Its Hungarians”, *The Wall Street Journal*, July 18, 1988, p. 17; “7,000 Transylvanian Villages Appear Doomed”, *The (Cleveland) Plain Dealer*, Sept. 2, 1988, p. 5-A.
2. Present-day Transylvania comprises all the territory inside the arc of the Carpathian Mountains to the east of Hungary. It includes such other formerly separate provinces as Satu Mare (Szatmár, Sathmar) in the

- north, Crisana (Körösvidék or Pátrium) in the west, the Banat (Bánság) in the southwest, along the Yugoslav border north of the Danube, and historical Transylvania, in the easternmost part of the arc of the Carpathian Mountains, west of the Eastern Carpathians and north of the Transylvanian Alps.
3. Sidney Weiland, "Ceausescu Newsfeature". Reuters Wire Service Report reprinted in *Rumanian President Ceausescu's U.S. Visit and Human Rights* (CHRR; May 12, 1978), pp. 13-16.
 4. *Ibid.*, pp. 13-14.
 5. Susan F. Rasky, "Senate Suspends Special Trade Status for Rumania as Protest on Human Rights and Emigration Issues", *New York Times*, June 27, 1987, p. 5; Stephen Engelberg, "Rumanian Recalls Deal for Emigres", *New York Times*, October 14, 1987, p. 5.
 6. Steven Béla Vardy, *The Hungarian-Americans* (Boston, 1985), pp. 141-150.
 7. *Ibid.*, pp. 144-150.
 8. Janet Fleischman, *Destroying Ethnic Identity: The Hungarians of Romania* A Helsinki Watch Report (Human Rights Watch, 1989), pp. 59-64.
 9. "Erdély védelmében: évvégi beszámoló 1976 eredményeiről" (In Defense of Transylvania: Year-end Review of the Achievements of 1976) CHRR Brochure November 15, 1976.
 10. Interview with László Hámos on March 22, 1989 in New York City.
 11. Edward E. Koch, "Human Rights and Emigration Policy in the Republic of Romania", *Congressional Record-House*, October 1, 1976, p. H 12231.
 12. László Hámos interview
 13. "Demonstration to Protest the Oppression of Hungarians in Rumania", CHRR Press Release, May 8, 1976, p. 2.
 14. "Hungarian-Americans to Picket 'Symposium on Rumania' at Columbia University", CHRR Announcement, March, 1977, p. 2.
 15. *Ibid.*, p. 1.
 16. "Hungarians to Demonstrate in Plains, Georgia on January 9, 1977", CHRR Press Release.
 17. Jerry Schmetterer and Owen Moritz, "Ceausescu is Piqued by Pickets Here", *New York Daily News*, April 18, 1978, p. 3.
 18. *Ibid.*; Ion Mihai Pacepa, *Red Horizons: Chronicles of a Communist Spy Chief* (Washington, D.C., 1987), pp. 316-329.
 19. *Ibid.*
 20. "Fogjunk össze a végveszély óráiban" (Let's stand together to face the final threat) HHRF Announcement, November, 1988.
 21. For example see Jimmy Carter, "Recommendation for Extension of Waiver Authority", The White House, June 2, 1977, pp. 1-2.
 22. "CHRR Testimony at Congressional Hearings", CHRR/HHRF file on Congressional Hearings.
 23. László Hámos interview
 24. László Hámos, "U.S. Foreign Policy, Human Rights and Trade Sanctions: Rumania and Its Persecution of Europe's Largest National Minority", Lecture presented at Cornell University, March 16, 1988, pp. 11-12.
 25. *Ibid.*, p. 13.
 26. "Romanian 'Territorial Settlements' Program Noted" *FBIS Daily Report: East Europe*, FBIS-EEU-88-089 (May 9, 1988), p. 30; "FRG Worried by Romanian Village Reduction Plans", *FBIS Daily Report: East Europe*, FBIS-EEU-88-103 (May 27, 1988), p. 25.
 27. "Megalakult a Hungarian Human Rights Foundation" (The Hungarian Human Rights Foundation has been incorporated) CHRR/HHRF Press Release, March, 1984, pp. 1-5.
 28. *Hungarian Human Rights Foundation By-Laws*, Art. I, Sec. 1.
 29. László Hámos interview
 30. *By-Laws*, Art. I, Sec. 2.
 31. *By-Laws*, Art. II, Sec. 3.
 32. László Hámos interview
 33. "Közös ügyünk: HHRF Bornemisza Alap", (Our Common Concern: The HHRF Bornemisza Grant) *III-OIT (Here-There)*, Vol. XX, No. 4 (1987), pp. 46-47.