

*The Historical Development of **Jarek***

(Bački Jarak, Tiszaistvanfalva) in Batschka

3. The Revolution of 1848 and the Destruction of the Village

by Inge Morgenthaler (nee Schmidt)

translated by Eleonore Oreskovich

"Hungary at that time wanted to separate from Austria under the leadership of Louis Kossuth and become an independent state. So a conflict arose, which lasted almost two years. The "revolution", as the conflict was also called, was subdued with the help of Russian armies, and Hungary remained a crown estate and thus part of the Austrian monarchy; the achievements concerning human rights (among others the abolition of patrimonial rule) had proved victorious." (1)

But what happened in the immediate surrounding of Jarek? If the war reports published by the "Schwaebischer Merkur" of 1848, which reprinted the bulletins of official Hungarian authorities, are correct, Jarek repeatedly was the scene of confrontations between the Hungarians and Serbian rebels.

First the report of August 17 says: *"Near Jarek Count Castaglione seems to have been defeated."* Here the enemy was said to have dared an attack from the Roman entrenchment with several thousand men and 8 canons on August 10 at 11 o'clock. The count was said to have beaten off the attack and only lost one horse. However, 10 infantrymen of the regiment were left wounded on the battlefield and reported missing. So the Hungarian regiment must have withdrawn." (2)

The reports concerning Jarek are continued on September 10: *"Near Jarek and Temerin there was a rather violent clash on August 28, in which both parties claim to have won. The Serbians, rushed forward from their entrenchments at such a speed that F. M. Bechthold, who was reconnoitring the area, almost captured."* (2)

About September 12 there is the following report: *"We have suffered losses near Jarek and Temerin." The Serbians, who pretended to attack the first place (Jarek) to make the garrison leave Temerin to defend the place in danger, have set fire to the mentioned town (i. e. Temerin) and occupied it.*“ This event has probably taken place on August 29. (2)

The report about the scene of war in Banat of September 13, 1848 (archive p. 14.18) says: *Temerin and Jarek no longer exist. "Yesterday, on August 30th, we were attacked at a quarter past midnight. The Serbians crawled towards the outposts, and when the latter withdrew because of the continued fire, the enemy pushed ahead together with them in an unstoppable way towards the village. Now it suddenly was in flames, offering a horrible sight. So far Jarek did firmly resist. The first Battalion of the National Guard from Herves retired behind the entrenchments and defended the village. Then the order arrived from the Temerin military command that troops should retreat to Oker. The National Guard obeyed this order in a painful mood. If the troops from Temerin had advanced towards Jarek, it could have resisted some more days."* (2)

So far the excerpts from the war bulletins. The following report on the events is taken from the "*Heimatbuch*". Here is no information as to military movements, which had certainly been going on for days. *"In any case the assault occurred in the early morning. From "Szoeroeg Puszta field" fires approached in a curve to the north west of Jarek, which looked like gigantic firebrands. The flames approached the village. The first houses were seized, and the reed-covered roofs with the lofts full of cereals burnt like tinder. Panic-stricken people ran out of their houses, leaving everything behind or grasping totally unnecessary things. Some even left their small children behind and had to return. They could not even rescue the live- stock in the stables. The cattle lowed pitifully when they were burnt alive. The whole community had fled, except a few men who had crept away in some cellars but then got out of danger in the surrounding fields because of the great heat. The fowl escaped to the fields in flocks and crawled under the bushes."* (1)

"In the morning of September 1 only a heap of debris and ruins was left in the place of a flourishing village, from which the lonely church tower was looming up like a faithful guardian." (1) So the whole village had been burnt down. Except the outside walls of the church and the tower there was not a single building left." (1)

The date, the assault and the complete destruction of Jarek are in accordance with the newspaper report. Temerin, too, must have suffered considerably from the fire, but did not burn down completely as had been described in the report.

The inhabitants of Jarek fled to the villages of Kisker, Schowe, Altker, Torschau and Werbas. They were literally as poor as beggars and only had what they wore on their bodies or had grasped in their panic. (Whether all the inhabitants actually left the village as late as in the morning of the fire has not been proved. There is some evidence that at least part of the inhabitants had already got out of danger in the villages mentioned above to escape the imminent military actions.) The war lasted two years, and in this period they were dependent on the hospitality of their compatriots in these communities.

When you try to imagine that, you will find: people moved closer together; the inhabitants of Jarek were no sluggards. The women helped with the housework and gardening, the men in the fields. Somehow arrangements were made. Everywhere there was great scarcity again, and people were glad when finally the war was over. But in contrast to the winter at Ruma 62 years before, nobody died of cold and hunger, nobody had to stay in cave homes. The inhabitants of Jarek did not forget about all that. On the contrary, they lived in great friendship with the families of these villages. The contacts were still kept up in the 20th century and mutual invitations to village festivities and weddings were arranged.

What should also be mentioned is that Pastor Korossy was able to flee with the church registers. He had reached Kula, and from there he wanted to go to Srbobran. On the way his column of carriages was assaulted by highwaymen. He succeeded in fleeing to the village, leaving all his belongings behind, probably the church registers, too. *"During this adventure the church registers are said to have been lost"*. (1)

Two years later the inhabitants of Jarek returned, and *"... had no houses and no shelter. Using boards and reeds, improvised roofs were built on the foundation walls of the houses, and people lived under them, until they could start reconstructing the village."* A cholera epidemic broke out and claimed a lot of victims. Unfortunately the exact numbers are not known, as the entries in the church registers of that time are very insufficient. (1) (Probably new registers had not been purchased yet, and there was no pastor either.)

The villagers called that period their "Ausreiss" ("run away"). They had indeed run away and rescued their lives. The rest resulted from their flight, and belongings could be replaced. But it was very hard time, and again there was a generation suffering from great scarcity. This proved the truth of the old saying again: For the first (generation), death; for the second, need, for the third, bread.

In every family there are stories about that hard time, which were passed on by one generation to the next. One of them was told by my grandfather about his great-grandfather, and his experiences can also be found in the "Heimatbuch" (pp. 23 - 24).

"My great-grandfather Nikolaus Mayer was among the men who could not make up their minds to abandon all things acquired by so much effort. They found a makeshift shelter in cellars and the church tower. Nikolaus Mayer, who was responsible for providing the manorial inn with food and wine, did not have the heart to leave his superiors' cellar recently filled with wine. But finally he fled from the completely destroyed village and remained among the small livestock that had fled to the fields. He hid between the bushes, but that proved fateful for him. When a soldier wanted to shoot a goose, the bullet hit his arm and wounded him severely" But he managed to make his way to Altker, where his family had found shelter. So far so good.

On page 108 of the "Heimatbuch" you can read: *"During the desecration of the altar the following incident is said to have happened. A German from a neighbouring village arrived with some adversaries and took part in destroying the house of God. He shot at the altar and was speechless from that very hour. Some old men, who had hidden under the roof, witnessed this incident. However, they were discovered, and the enemies first wanted to mutilate them by cutting out their tongues. As long as they lived they regarded the fact that finally nothing had happened to them as a miracle."* (1)

On page 25 of the "Heimatbuch Noogstuppelt", Theresia Helbig, nee Haug, tells the following story:

"My grandmother, Theresia Morgenthaler nee Siffermann told me a story which had happened to her great-grandmother Barbara Buekle. Barbara Buekle was born at Jarek in 1834 and was 14 years old, when the "Ausreiss" began. Her bedridden mother was transported on a carriage and only a few articles were taken along. At Kischker she and her three brothers and her mother were received by a large family. When the supplies of victuals there started running short, the refugees remembered that they had stored up stocks of cereals in a dry well shaft at Jarek. Barbara and her two elder brothers now went to Jarek with a handcart to fetch the cereals. In the well Barbara had to shovel the wheat into sacks. Her brothers heard some men approach and quickly covered the well hole with Barbara in it and hid in the ruins of a house. When the coast was clear again, the poor brave sister together with full sacks of wheat was pulled out of the well, and they went home. Tired and exhausted, they finally reached Kischker. People were overjoyed that the worst scarcity was now relieved." (abridged)

After the villager's return to Jarek that Barbara is said to have sung at funerals during the cholera epidemic and her brother to have acted as vicar, as there was neither pastor nor choirmaster and they had to do without them. She also was teacher Heinz's grandmother.

List of sources:

List of sources:

- (1) Schmidt, J. et. al :Batschki Jarak-Jarek , Werbas 1937*
 - (2) Newspaper: Schwäbischer Merkur, v. 25.8., 30.8., 12.9., 13.9., 1848*
-