

Hungarians in S. America

Hungarians Look at S. Amer

Cleveland, O.

By MARY HIRSCHFELD

The new fascination with Latin America, the course of its modern destiny, the history of its development, has even engaged the attention of the Association of Hungarian Students in North America.

Dr. Elemer Bako of Columbia University has delved into

research to find out what bonds Hungarians established with that part of the world and his findings have been published by that organization.

He discovered that a 16th century Hungarian was the first one to leave a record of that interest. He was Maximilianus Transylvanus (1490-1536), a diplomat who served in The



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Netherlands. He wrote about the voyage of Ferdinand Magellan around Cape Horn, the southern tip of South America. A relative of Max's wife had financed that first globe-girdling journey.

Baron Janos Retkay entered the Jesuit order in 1664 and went to Mexico to convert the Indians in the 17th century. In the 18th century, Laszlo Orosz, another Jesuit, spent 42 years teaching in Argentina and Paraguay.

THEN THERE WAS Karoly Kornis, who founded the first Hungarian newspaper in the United States, in 1852, according to Dr. Bako. Later Kornis went to Rio de Janeiro, where he wrote a book on inheritance laws and another on the civil marriage laws of Latin America.

Ede Szenger, a medical doctor, was a physician at the Mexican court of the Emperor Maximilian, the tragic Hapsburg prince.

Laszlo Madarassy (1840-1893), a popular writer, crossed the ocean for a visit to Panama, Colombia, Peru, Chile and Bolivia, then wrote several books concerning his experiences. He was one of the first Hungarian writers to produce fiction about Latin America for Hungarian youth.

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A CENTURY AGO the Cubans were fighting for their freedom, only then it was from the Spaniards. A Col. Janos Pragay was invited by Marcisco Lopez, a Cuban leader, to come to the island, as Dr. Bako tells it.

He arrived and the two set

up a democratic political program and in 1851 Pragay took to the battlefield and defeated the Spaniards at Las Pozas. Then he had to retreat to Cienfuegos where after a month of siege surrender was inevitable. Pragay and Lopez then committed suicide.

Gyula Popper mapped the regions of Tierra del Fuego in 1886 and 1888. Gabor Molnar, a zoologist, conducted research in the jungles of northern Brazil after World War I.

SINCE WORLD WAR II, Dr. Bako notes, tens of thousands of Hungarians have found homes in Latin America. Their number was swelled by those who escaped in the 1956 upheaval.

Several hundred, he writes, have built careers as educators, scholars and artists, economists and public administrators, who are gradually developing fresh contacts between Hungarian civilization and that of their adopted lands.

