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The "New Majority" and the White Ethnics – The Involvement of László Pásztor in Richard Nixon's Reelection Campaign in 1972

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Abstract: The support of the "white ethnic" population was instrumental in Richard Nixon's landslide presidential victory in 1972. Whereas traditionally, urban, working-class Catholics had been voting mostly for Democratic candidates, in 1972, the majority of them defected to the Republican Party. One of the most important ethnic organizers was the Hungarian 1956 *émigré,* László Pásztor. Pásztor was the director of the Heritage Groups (Nationalities) Division of the Republican National Congress, and his work among the volunteers strongly contributed to the result. But from the perspective of the Nixon campaign, Pásztor was not the ideal ethnic—he was critical of *détente* and was actively promoting ethnic interests such as ethnic hirings. Whereas the Nixon campaign wanted to focus on the urban, working-class ethnic demographic referred to as the "New Majority," Pásztor was representing the anticommunist, captive nations narrative. Pásztor was predicting that this shift was going to hurt the Republican Party electorally, as the anticommunist ethnics would feel that their interests were ignored.

***Keywords**: Hungarian-Americans, Nixon, Republican Party, elections, ethnics, László Pásztor*

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In the 1972 U. S. presidential election, Richard Nixon defeated the Democratic nominee George McGovern in a landslide victory with a popular margin of 18 million votes, the largest in American electoral history—only to be forced to resign in disgrace two years later due to the Watergate scandal. In 1972, Nixon managed to win 49 states; only Massachusetts and Washington, D.C. went to McGovern, which resulted in an electoral vote count of 520-17 for Nixon (one dissident elector from Virginia voted for the Libertarian candidate). For his reelection, Nixon managed to increase the number of his voters from 31.7 million in 1968 to 46.7 million in 1972 (*The American Presidency Project*). The Nixon campaign could achieve this

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historic result by extending their electoral outreach to demographic groups whose majority had traditionally not voted for the candidates of the Republican Party. This was a major political realignment: as Pauline Peretz puts it, in the 1972 election, Richard Nixon successfully set out to "dismantle the New Deal coalition" (674). During the preparation for the election of 1972, the leadership of the Nixon campaign identified blue collar voters as a key swing voting group that needed to be targeted. They hypothesized that one of the potential ways to reach the urban, working-class, mostly Catholic demographic was through appealing to their ethnic background ("Report on the Ethnic Voter"). Whereas traditionally, working-class ethnic voters of immigrant background had been leaning more towards the Democratic party, at the presidential election in 1972, Nixon ended up receiving about sixty percent of ethnic and blue-collar vote (Zake, "Nixon" 53).

The aim of the Nixon campaign in 1968 and especially in 1972 was to make the Republican Party more attractive for "white ethnic" voters. Many of these people belonged to ethnic groups that originated in Southern and East-Central Europe, countries that were the major source of immigration to the U.S. before the First World War and the introduction of the national quota system in 1924. The passing of the Reed-Johnson Act created a new situation for the immigrants who had arrived from the aforementioned regions. Most importantly, it largely ended the stream of immigration from the "old country." After 1924, there were few new people who were allowed into the United States and join the already existing communities. There were a few exceptions when larger groups of immigrants were allowed to enter: for example, refugees during and after the Second World War, or Hungarians after the Revolution of 1956. Before the First World War, a large portion of the immigrants had considered their stay in the United States as temporary, as an opportunity to work and save as much money as they could, then potentially return home, which many of them did. This changed after the passing of the Reed-Johnson Act. Many of the immigrants came to view their stay in the United States as more permanent: they purchased property, acquired citizenship, and became more active in American politics. During the 1930s, white ethnics became part of the New Deal coalition, and became voters of the Democratic Party. After the Second World War, however, the Republican Party also made efforts to gain the support of this voting group.

The purpose of this study is to present the outreach of the Republican Party to the East-Central European ethnics during the 1972 presidential campaign of Richard Nixon, and the role of the Hungarian-American *émigré* politician László Pásztor in organizing the ethnics. While Pásztor's activity at the head of the ethnic organization of the Republican National Committee contributed to Nixon's victory, he himself did not fit the Nixon campaign's image of an ideal ethnic leader. Pásztor was a freedom fighter during the Hungarian Revolution in 1956, he was a committed anticommunist, and there were questions about his activity during the Second World War in Hungary. Nixon's staff believed that instead of focusing on the interests of the Republican Party and Nixon, Pásztor was using his position to push ethnic interests (engaging in ethnic lobbying), and his anticommunism was putting him at odds with Nixon's *détente.* But above all, they believed that this type of ethnic leader would not appeal to the former Democratic, urban, working-class demographic, the "New Majority" that Richard Nixon and the Republican Party tried to reach. Pásztor believed that turning away from the more activist ethnic leaders like himself would be detrimental to the Republican Party and could cost them heavily at the ballot box.

"White Ethnics" in American Politics

In an article titled "Anticommunist White Ethnics in Search of True Americanness," Ieva Zake provides an overview of the use of the concept of "white ethnics." She defines the term as "ethnic identification among racially white Americans who did not fall into the category of the WASPs." (1065-66). Zake notes that the people who belonged to these ethnic groups actually embraced the term, especially when they were attempting to gain influence in American politics. "White ethnics" were also referred to as simply "ethnics," "nationalities," or sometimes even "heritage groups" (for example, in the names of the organizations of the Republican Party discussed later in this article). In contrast, the term "minorities" was used to refer mostly to Jews and African Americans (Zake, "Nixon" 53). A large portion of white ethnics came from working class immigrant background, and most of them were Catholics or Orthodox. Whereas white ethnics were often lumped together into one category, it is important to note that they were far from being a unified group. A distinct subgroup within the white ethnics were those of East-Central European descent, who originated from the "captive nations," whose homelands fell under Soviet rule in the aftermath of the Second World War. In contrast to other ethnics (such as those of Irish or Italian descent), who tended to focus on domestic issues politically, people coming from the countries under communist domination often held strong anticommunist beliefs and were in favor of a more uncompromising opposition to the Soviet Union (Zake, "Anticommunist" 1066). But even though they mostly agreed upon the stance towards the Soviet Union, there were serious disagreements and nationalistic rivalries between the various East-Central European ethnic groups, which made it even more difficult to represent their shared interests (Garrett 323).

Before the Second World War, immigrant white ethnics were considered to be a stable part of the New Deal coalition—when it came to their voting patterns, the Democratic Party was "close to being a monopoly" (Peretz 673). The organization of the Democratic Party also reflected this: the Democratic National Committee (DNC) established its Nationalities Division already back in in 1932, more than thirty years before the Republicans did. The goal of the Nationalities Division of the DNC was twofold: to convey the views of the ethnic groups to the leadership of the party, and to explain to the ethnic leaders the positions of the party on the various policy issues (Garrett 312). At the end of the Second World War, a break appeared between the Democratic Party and come of these groups. This break was due to the Yalta conference and what some voters of East-Central European origin saw as the Democratic administration abandoning their homelands to become part of the Soviet bloc (or, in some cases, the Soviet Union itself) (Garrett 313; 710). The Republican Party saw this as an opportunity, and heavily campaigned to appeal to the ethnic vote at the elections of 1944, 1948, and 1952. They did not manage to gain the vote of the majority of ethnics, but they did attract the most committed anticommunists (Garrett 313). In 1964, Barry Goldwater made an attempt at winning over the ethnic voters, and Nixon also reached out to them in with some success in 1968 (Zake, "Nixon" 53). Up until this point, the Republican National Committee did not have a permanent national structure that would have represented the white ethnics. These election efforts were conducted by temporary organizations: campaign committees that existed on a state-by-state basis, and only for the duration of the election campaign.

After winning the 1968 election closely in a narrow three-way race against Hubert Humphrey and George Wallace, Nixon realized the need to expand his voter base before the 1972 election. (Peretz 677). His relative success among white ethnics in 1968 indicated the emergence of an opportunity to reach out to this demographic. The 1960s in the United States brought about a turn towards an interpretation of politics that was more centered on race and ethnicity, and with it emerged a new sense of consciousness for the white ethnic communities (Halus 138). To a certain extent, the success of the African-American Civil Rights movement in the beginning of the 1960s served as an example and brought about the mobilization of other ethnic and racial groups (Peretz 676). Initially, some white ethnics saw the Civil Rights movement as an organizational model. However, as certain African-American activists became more radical and, in some cases, took on an openly anti-white tone, the ethnics became skeptical of this type of political action (Halus 138). Some of the white ethnics felt that they were accused of having white privilege or even being racist, while being neglected by the Democratic Party and not given access to the same opportunities as African-Americans (e.g., affirmative action or ethnic studies centers). Halus claims that by the end of the 1960s, it became apparent that in certain cases, the Democratic Party's War on Poverty meant an alliance between the upper-class whites and the African-American poor, and the concessions were to be drawn from the working-class white ethnics (138). Economic and social issues, such as concern about American values, forced integration, and law and order, encouraged the defection of white ethnics to the Republican Party (Garrett 314). In the 1960s, minority rights became the focus of American politics, and white ethnics also wanted their common interests to be recognized. They did not want to be left behind by other, more organized minorities, and saw the assertion of their identity as a way of gaining access to resources (Merton 740).

After 1968, Nixon decided to make permanent the structures that were used during the election to reach out to the ethnics, which led to the creation of a new division within the Republican National Committee (RNC): the Nationalities Division, which was later renamed Heritage Groups (Nationalities) Division (Zake, "Nixon" 53). László Pásztor, who had been active in the Captive Nations movement and already participated in Nixon's 1968 campaign as an ethnic organizer, was chosen to be the director of the newly established division ("Republican National Committee News"). The Heritage Groups Division would publish a newsletter, organize conferences and meetings with ethnic leaders, rally voters, create an "ethnic talent bank" of candidates who could be promoted for positions, and deliver the complaints and requests of the ethnic groups to the White House. The focus of their publications was on anticommunism and the theme of law and order. Similarly to the organization of the DNC discussed above, the RNC's Heritage Groups Division also had a dual purpose. On the one hand, it assisted the White House with advising it on the ethnics' concerns, provided information on the ethnic demographics, ethnic events, and mobilized the ethnics in support of the president. On the other hand, the Heritage Groups Division informed ethnic leaders about the presidential administration and worked to bring them inside the White House and within the structures of the Republican Party (Zake, "Nixon" 56).

In 1970, Pásztor recommended the creation of a mobilization effort to support the Nixon administration that would be rooted in the Nationality Groups Division, who were already committed to the president but would also reach out to other groups ("Memorandum from Jeb S. Magruder to Mr. Dent"). Based on Pásztor's initiative, the National Republican Heritage Groups (Nationalities) Council was also established. This was an auxiliary made up of volunteers that worked together with the Republican Party. The Heritage Groups Council was an umbrella

organization that worked together with many local ethnic organizations. It had a large volunteer base, and was institutionally separate from the Heritage Groups Division, which belonged under the RNC, but closely cooperated with it. During the 1972 election campaign, both the Division and the Council were headed by László Pásztor. Pásztor proved to be an asset for the Republican Party, but his past affiliations and activity during the Second World War also needed to be addressed.

László Pásztor

László Pásztor was born in 1921 in Felső-Elemér (Elemir), a Serbian majority village in the Vojvodina region that had been ceded earlier that year by Hungary to the newly established Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes—also known as Yugoslavia—according to the terms of the Trianon peace treaty (*Magyar Sorsok*). Similarly to hundreds of thousands of other Hungarians who unexpectedly found themselves in one of the successor states after the new borders were drawn at the Trianon Palace, the Pásztor family also decided to flee to the Kingdom of Hungary in 1922. As a young man studying to become a pharmacist, Pásztor was politically active and became member of several patriotic youth organizations, including the youth organization of the far-right Arrow Cross party that later, during the Second World War, collaborated with the Germans. In 1944, Pásztor served as a junior diplomat at the Hungarian embassy in Berlin. After the war, in 1946, he was sentenced to five years in prison as a war criminal by the people's court,[1] but he was let go in 1948 after a retrial. Pásztor was imprisoned again by the communist regime in 1951, and in a mock trial for "initiating, organizing and leading a conspiracy to violently overthrow the people's democratic regime," he was convicted once again to six years of hard labor in the coal mine of Oroszlány as a political prisoner. It is important to note that after the fall of the communist regime in Hungary in 1992 and 1995, the Supreme Court of the Republic of Hungary cleared Pásztor's name, annulled the sentences against him, and he also received compensation for the wrongful imprisonment.

Pásztor was released from prison in 1954 but had to continue living under police supervision in Oroszlány, which he was not allowed to leave. During the Revolution of 1956, he became a member of the National Council of Oroszlány, then the Transdanubian National Council (Dunántúli Nemzeti Tanács) in Győr, where he was responsible for press contacts and international relations. As the Hungarian Revolution was crushed by the Soviet Union in November 1956, Pásztor left for Austria. Along with about 38,000 other Hungarians, László Pásztor and his family found refuge in the United States.[2] Pásztor was active in the Hungarian Freedom Fighters' Federation, first as a founding member, then as the secretary of the organization between 1964 and 1969. He participated in Goldwater's Republican presidential campaign in 1964 and Nixon's in 1968 before becoming the director of the Heritage Groups Division of the RNC between 1969 and 1973. As the head of the Heritage Groups, Pásztor was a member of the executive council of the RNC. When he became director of the Heritage Groups, Pásztor had to resign from his position at the Freedom Fighters' Federation, as the Federation was a nonpartisan organization. Nevertheless, he remained honorary chairman (Veress Dálnoki and Pogány).

[1] For more on the activity of the people's courts in the Hungarian People's Republic, see Szokolay, .
[2] For more on the refugees to the United States from Hungary in 1956, see Pastor

Pásztor's activity during the Second World War and his involvement with the Arrow Cross regime came up as an issue during the 1972 campaign. On November 10, 1971, famed investigative journalist Jack Anderson published an article in *The Washington Post* with the title "Nixon Appears a Little Soft on Nazis." In this article, Anderson went after several Republican ethnics who had ties to national socialist and fascist organizations during the Second World War, including Pásztor. Anderson's associate, Les Whitten interviewed Pásztor, who was presented in a rather sympathetic way in the article as someone who was trying to keep out the extremists from the Republican Party: "Pásztor insists he never took part in anti-Semitic activities and says in his GOP party post, he has tried to weed out the right-wing extremists from the Republican party groups." The allegations against Pásztor surfaced again about one year later on August 23, 1972, during the lead up to the election, this time in the Israeli newspaper *The Jerusalem Post*, under the title, "Hungarian ex-Nazi for post on GOP board." This time the Nixon camp—namely, White House Communications Director Herbert Klein and RNC Deputy Chairman Tom Wilck—demanded an explanation from Pásztor on September 11, 1972.

Pásztor responded to the allegations in a memorandum three days later, on September 14 (Pasztor to Wilck). He acknowledged that, among many other youth organizations, he had also been a member of the Arrow Cross youth movement but pointed out that he had never actually joined the party. Pásztor cited several examples for how he had resisted German influence and anti-Semitic measures during the Second World War. He had tried to help persecuted Jews in Hungary, including their Jewish employee at the pharmacy, for which he was arrested by the Germans after they invaded Hungary on March 19, 1944. He once again "got into trouble" after the Arrow Cross takeover in October 1944. Pásztor claimed that Anderson's research and articles constituted a political attack, pushed by the Democratic National Committee, and that a significant portion of the accusations against the *émigrés* in the Republican Party were based on materials sent by the communist governments from behind the Iron Curtain. As he wrote, "apparently the Iron Curtain countries, as well as the DNC, feel that they have much at stake in this election and are determined to discredit me among the ethnics I have organized for the Republican Party and the 1972 campaign." Pásztor also pointed out that the editor of the largest Hungarian Jewish newspaper, *The Menorah*, offered his support, and referred to Pásztor as "a true friend of Israel." Finally, Pásztor noted that he was disappointed that he had to defend himself against these claims. Eventually, Pásztor's explanation seems to have been sufficient for the Republican Party leadership and the Nixon campaign, as he was allowed to remain in his position and continue his work within the Heritage Groups and the campaign.

The Republican Outreach to the Ethnics

Hoping to get the attention of alienated Democrats, in a November 1969 speech, Nixon referred to white Americans irritated by lawlessness and racial liberalism as the "Silent Majority" (Peretz 682). The Republican Party intended to make inroads into the formerly Democratic electorate of urban, working-class whites—the question was, how to approach them? Towards the end of Nixon's previous presidential campaign in 1968, the Republican Party started a secret program to reach out to Catholic voters called the "Berkshire Operation," named after the hotel in New York City where they had their headquarters. Their "prime target" were Catholic voters (mostly white ethnics) in large industrial cities, and they emphasized advertising in ethnic and Catholic papers ("Berkshire Operation"). The Committee for the Re-election of the President decided to start a similar operation for 1972 as well, targeting the same demographic, but their angle would be somewhat different. In preparation to the 1972 campaign in 1971, a

memorandum was prepared enumerating which issues were of interest to Catholics. Its conclusion was that Catholicism was less of an issue than it had been in, for example, 1960. Social and economic issues were more important for the urban working class demographic, and in the areas where there was overlap between ethnic and religious identification, ethnic identity was seen as stronger than being Catholic (Morey). Charles Colson, Special Counsel to the President, was responsible for communications with various constituencies, including citizens groups. He later served seven months in prison for obstruction of justice in the Watergate affair. In a memorandum to Pat Buchanan, who started his political career in the Nixon White House, Colson agreed with the aforementioned memorandum, and contemplated whether Catholics should be approached as Catholics or through other identities (Colson to Buchanan).

Eventually, reaching out to ethnic voters became one of the main priorities of the Committee to Re-Elect the President. Colson did not believe that Pásztor was necessarily the best man for the job: he saw Pásztor as being too oriented towards the captive nations (which could conflict with Nixon's *détente*), not a very effective organizer, and as a Republican employee, too partisan for many ethnics ("Ethnic Report"). In early 1972, Colson hired Michael Balzano to be the ethnic voter bloc coordinator for the CRP (Balzano 541). Balzano came from an Italian-American working-class background and also had an impressive life story: he had dropped out of high school, even worked as a garbage collector for a while, then returned to school, went to university, and eventually got a Ph.D. from Georgetown. Balzano quickly realized that there were conflicts between the leadership of the Republican Party and the ethnics. In his memoirs, he recalls talking to RNC chairman George H.W. Bush about László Pásztor and the Heritage Division that mostly consisted of people from the captive nations: "No one here knows how to work with them. They have trouble staying on the message we all agree on […] They constantly go to the Hill and try to create policy on their own." (Balzano 705). The leadership of the Republican Party felt that the ethnics were causing difficulties for the party by using their positions for ethnics lobbying.

In February 1972, Colson asked the coordinators for the various interest groups to each prepare a demographic study, in cooperation with their counterparts at the Nixon campaign (Howard). Bolzano's study was ready by March 15, and had two main parts ("Ethnic Study"). The first one was a demographic analysis, which came to the conclusion that (in addition to Florida and California), white ethnics were mostly concentrated in the large metropolitan cities of the northeastern states—a key area for the Nixon campaign. The Republicans also conducted their own survey on ethnic identification, which showed that there were "twice as many ethnics than are accounted for in the 1970 census." This information was especially valuable as the Democrats did not have access to it (Ibid.), thus, they underestimated the significance of appealing to ethnic voters. The second part of the study was about key ethnic leaders and activities for the campaign. In a concluding note, Balzano noted that the existing resources of the Republican Party were rooted in "captive nations," "old country" ethnics (Ibid.). Instead, he wanted to reach the "middle American ethnic," the second and later generation immigrants.

In "Nixon vs. the GOP: Republican Ethnic Politics, 1968-1972," Ieva Zake provides an account and analysis of what unfolded over the spring of 1972: a conflict between, on the one hand, the ethnic structures of Nixon and his campaign and, on the other, the traditional ethnic organizations of the Republican Party under the RNC. While the Nixon campaign did want access to white, urban, working-class ethnics, they did not see it necessary to specifically appeal to their ethnic identity. They considered ethnicity to be just one of the elements that created social status and lifestyle (72). A memorandum by Fred Malek, deputy chief of the CRP, sheds

light on the perspective of the Nixon campaign ("Reorganizing"). Malek describes what he sees as three distinct groups of ethnics, each of which should be addressed in a different way. The first one he referred to as "professional ethnics," who were heavily involved in their communities as well as in the activity of the Heritage Groups of the RNC. The second group, the "hard core ethnics," were to be the main targets of the campaign: largely Democrats, but associated with their ethnic traditions, often members of ethnic social and fraternal groups, and typically residing in ethnic neighborhoods in and around large cities. The third group, the "assimilated ethnics," had almost no connection to ethnic social structures, and would be difficult to reach with any organized approach. Eventually, at a meeting in June 1972, the decision was made to coordinate campaign efforts towards the ethnics in a more organized way, under the leadership of the CRP and Malek ("Assignment of Responsibilities"). Pásztor became responsible for gearing up Nationalities Councils, volunteers around the country, to participate in the re-election efforts. He also had to reach out to Eastern European as well as Greek and Asian ethnics (traditionally also anticommunist) who did not want to be openly associated with the Republican Party. Meanwhile, an "Urban Citizens' Campaign" was created under the leadership of the CRP to target urban Catholic ethnics.

In the interview with the author of this paper, Pásztor noted that one of the reasons for the success of the Republican outreach towards white ethnics was that the ethnic structures of the Democratic Party were non-existent or did not function. The Democrats seemed to have abandoned white ethnics for other constituencies, there was no national organization in that party that would reach out to them. Pásztor mentioned Monsignor Geno Baroni and Barbara Mikulski as Democrats who did make attempts to organize the ethnics on a local level in Pennsylvania and Maryland. Baroni was an influential Italian-American Catholic priest who participated in the Civil Rights Movement and the War on Poverty while trying to draw attention to the problems of the ethnics. Nixon also invited Baroni to the White House as president, and together they formulated a reform package designed to broaden Great Society to working-class Americans (Halus 745). Barbara Mikulski, of Polish descent from Baltimore, started her political career with Baroni and ended up becoming the longest serving senator from Maryland between 1987 and 2017 as a Democrat. In 1972, however, they were not able to energize ethnic voters for the Democratic Party. As Pásztor expressed in the interview, he had been hoping that they would continue their work, because he was sure that the ethnics were more receptive to the Republican Heritage Groups and other types of Republican outreach than to their Democratic rivals.

In spite of the many congratulatory letters that Pásztor received after the election for the work of the Heritage Division and the Heritage Groups (Pásztor Papers), the conflict between the ethnic structures of the RNC and Nixon's staff continued. The ethnic leaders were hoping for more acknowledgement, ethnic appointments, programs for ethnic studies—which were not forthcoming (Balzano 1535), and this led to frustration. In December 1972, Secretary of Transportation John Volpe, who had been involved in the ethnic efforts of the Republican Party himself, expressed his appreciation for the work of the Heritage Groups during the campaign, and recommended the expansion of the Division (Volpe). Colson disagreed, claiming that the Heritage Division did not conform "to the general philosophy of the New Majority" (Colson to Kehrli), that is, using a class-based approach to appeal to those white ethnics who used to be Democrats. Colson recommended replacing Pásztor with "a New Majority type," with a modern progressive outlook, "who can reach new groups and work within the framework established by the White House." In the past, such efforts had been "hampered by the professional ethnics controlling the Heritage Division." In early 1973, the RNC and chairman George H.W. Bush

were considering cutting the funding of the Heritage Division and reorganizing the ethnic structures of the Republican Party. Pásztor protested, and claimed that this would seriously affect the ethnic outreach of the Republican Party, "establish a dangerous credibility gap […] between the 40-80 million ethnics," "further destroy our chances to consolidate our gains," make it impossible to mobilize "our tens of thousands of volunteer workers and opinion makers," and "may affect our chances even in 1976" (Pasztor to Bush). Eventually, the Heritage Division remained a part of the RNC, but it was clear that the Republican Party was attempting to replace the *émigré*s with different types of ethnic leaders. Pásztor gave up the chairmanship of the Heritage Division and was appointed to a position at the Environmental Protection Agency in 1973, which he left in 1974 to work for the Dravo corporation. Nonetheless, he continued to be active in the Heritage Council. Later, he held various positions under Republican administrations and participated in Ronald Reagan's 1980 and 1984 presidential campaigns, continuing the recruitment of the ethnics. Pásztor also participated in Hungarian-American political life, he was the executive chairman of the American Hungarian Federation between 1979 and 1984. After some internal conflict, he became the chairman of the AHF's splinter organization, the National Federation of American Hungarians (1984-1991). László Pásztor passed away at the age of 93 in 2015, in Falls Church, Virginia (Pásztor Papers).

The Influence of White Ethnics

East-Central European ethnic groups were not particularly effective in ethnic lobbying during the Cold War: they were not able to influence American policymaking towards their homelands to a large extent. Stephen A. Garrett argues that when the captive nations ethnics could exert any pressure on the American government, it was primarily negative. This means that they could not force the government to do something that it did not want to do, but on occasion, they were able to prevent it from taking certain steps (Garrett 307). This was true, for example, with regards to the various attempts by Hungarian-American groups to prevent the returning the Holy Crown of St. Stephen to the People's Republic of Hungary during the Republican administrations in the 1970s (Glant, Balogh). Meanwhile, the leadership of both major political parties made promises to the ethnic minorities that they had little interest in keeping—especially regarding foreign policy such as fate of their homelands (Garrett 313). They estimated that this would have little to no bearing on the electoral behavior of the ethnics, who would focus on domestic issues that had a greater impact on their day-to-day personal lives in the United States. Garrett claims that, in 1972, these were: concern over the deterioration of traditional values in America, forced racial integration (e.g. busing), and law and order—which led the ethnics to vote for Richard Nixon. His analysis seems to support the expectations of the Republican party in the run-up to the 1972 election, that no specifically tailored approach was needed to reach the ethnics as ethnics.

However, as this paper has shown, Pásztor attributed larger political significance and influence to the traditional organizations of white ethnics and the ethnic approach. In doing so, he came into conflict with the GOP leadership, which refused to emphasize the anti-communist agenda in order to win over white ethnic voters. Nonetheless, Pásztor seems to have been right about the next presidential election of 1976. During his second presidential debate with Jimmy Carter on October 6, 1976, Republican candidate Gerald Ford claimed that the Soviet Union did not dominate Eastern Europe, and that the countries of the Eastern bloc were not under Soviet domination, that they were "independent, autonomous" nations ("Second Carter-Ford"). This was seen as a major "gaffe" by Ford that alienated a lot of the white ethnic voters who came

from the captive nations, and it is generally seen as one of the reasons why he lost the election. Meanwhile, in 1976, Carter and the Democrats made more of an effort to reach out to Catholic, working-class voters—as evidenced by Monsignor Geno Baroni becoming a senior adviser to Carter's Campaign. After the election, Baroni became Assistant Secretary at the Department of Housing and Urban Development, which many saw as a reward for his successful work (Merton 733–734). During the interview, Pásztor claimed that what Ford said during the debate with Carter about the Soviet Union was more than a gaffe. He argued that the Ford campaign ignored his advice to pay closer attention to white ethnics, did not understand their issues, their preferences, which cost Ford the state of Ohio, and eventually, the election. Focusing on the "New Majority" ethnics was apparently not enough; the Republicans also needed the help of the more activist captive nations ethnics to win.

After the Second World War, one of the major political aims of the Republican Party was to dismantle the New Deal coalition, one of the aspects of which was gaining the support of white ethnic voters. During the 1972 presidential campaign of Richard Nixon, the strategy of the Republican leadership, embodied by the idea of the "New Majority," was to use a primarily class-based approach to reach out to the ethnics, to extend some of the programs of Lyndon Johnson's Great Society to this demographic. Being the director of the ethnic organization of the Republican Party, Pásztor argued that approaching this voter demographic from an ethnic perspective would also be necessary and could be more effective, especially when combined with anticommunism. Pásztor's background explains why he considered anticommunism to be an important mobilizing force for the ethnics: he left Hungary during the 1956 Revolution, then became active in the captive nations movement and the Hungarian Freedom Fighters' Federation. Pásztor was a dedicated anticommunist, and saw no contradiction between the two strategies—rather, he considered them to be complementary. In contrast, the leadership of the Republican Party perceived the relationship of the class-based and the ethnicity-based approach to be mutually exclusive, especially as anticommunists were critical of Nixon's opening towards the communist countries during *détente.* The party leadership came to the conclusion that it was time to replace Pásztor and other *émigré* ethnic leaders with new ones, who would better represent the ideals of the "New Majority." This internal conflict did not seem to have affected the results of the 1972 election; in spite of the internal debates, Pásztor and the ethnic activists of the Heritage Groups Council campaigned for Nixon. In the lead-up to the 1976 election, Gerald Ford's campaign did not make any serious attempts to appeal to the anticommunist ethnics. This was a difficult campaign for the Republicans: they had to carry the burden of Nixon's resignation and the presidential pardon, and the primary race between Ford and Ronald Reagan was only decided at the National Convention. Ford still came very close to winning, which indicates that the Republican leadership's campaign strategy was relatively successful. Ford's "gaffe" and is aftermath indicates that, even if anticommunism was no longer a rallying force in the 1970s, making inconsiderate statements related to the issue could still turn away potential voters.

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