

INDUSTRIAL HERITAGE AND TOURISM  
IN NORTHERN HUNGARY AND IN SLOVAKIA

Györgyi NÉMETH

THE NIZHNY TAGIL CHARTER  
AND THE PHARE PROGRAMME

In 2003, the General Assembly of TICCIH (*The International Committee for the Conservation of the Industrial Heritage*) approved the text of the charter for industrial heritage. The General Assembly, convoked on the occasion of the 12th international conference organised in Russia, renamed the charter after Nizhny Tagil instead of Moscow, which was considered first, because according to its opinion the name of the Urals industrial town reflected the content of the charter more profoundly than the name of the capital. The Nizhny Tagil Charter was originated by TICCIH, but it will be ratified by ICOMOS upon the agreement of the two organisations, concluded in 2000.

Initially, the Charter emphasises the importance of industrialisation, and advocates the otherwise controversial notion of the Industrial Revolution. Citing the words of the Preamble:<sup>1</sup>... a change towards the end of the 18th century just as profound as that between the Neolithic and Bronze Ages, with developments in the social, technical and economic circumstances of manufacturing sufficiently rapid and profound to be called a revolution. The Industrial Revolution was the beginning of a historical phenomenon that has affected an ever-greater part of the human population, as well as all the other forms of life on our planet, and that continues to the present day.

The material evidence of these profound changes is of universal human value, and the importance of the study and conservation of this evidence must be recognised.

The Charter considers all remains related to industrial activities fundamentally important, and denominates them as industrial heritage: the buildings and structures, the processes and tools used within them, the towns and landscapes in which they are located, along with all the other tangible and intangible manifestations of industry. It declares that *the most significant and characteristic examples [of the industrial heritage] should be identified, protected and maintained, in accordance with the spirit of the Venice Charter, for the use and benefit of today and of the future.*

According to the Charter, public interest, affection, and appreciation of the industrial heritage are the surest ways to conserve it. Therefore, public authorities should be actively engaged in making the industrial remains known, then, they should provide access to important sites, and promote tourism in industrial areas. It is desirable that programmes for the conservation of the industrial heritage should be integrated into policies for economic development and into regional and national planning. International co-operation is considered by the Charter a particularly appropriate approach to conservation, especially if through co-ordinated initiatives and sharing resources tourist routes are established on the industrial heritage.

In perfect harmony with the declarations of the Charter, a Slovakian-Hungarian project was realised in 2001 with the financial support of the PHARE CBC Programme. The future aim of the

1. The English text of the Charter can be read on the web page of TICCIH.

2 Gerhard Sperl: Ein Führer durch die Steirische Eisentraße. Leoben, 1984.

3 The proceedings of the conference are in print.

4 For detailed analysis, see Barrie Trinder (ed.): The Blackwell Encyclopedia of Industrial Archaeology, Oxford, Massachusetts, 1992.

project was to promote the revitalisation of Northern Hungary, especially the Borsod and Nógrád industrial regions, and the neighbouring Slovakian areas as well, reusing the mining and metallurgical industrial heritage.

It was the idea of the Hungarian Mining and Metallurgical Society and its Slovakian sister organisation to establish in co-operation a cultural tourist route on Austrian pattern to discover the region so rich in iron industry remains. (Since 1978, the sights in Styria have been presented along the Steirische Eisenstrasse<sup>2</sup> the Styrian Iron Trail, to which other tourist routes were added later, in and outside Austria. At present, the iron industry sites of numerous European countries can be visited along the European Iron Trail.) The initiation was supported by the Hungarian National Committee of TICCIH, which organised an international conference in 1999 on the necessity and the different possibilities of the preservation of the mining and metallurgical industrial heritage.

The participants of the conference titled *Economic structure in change – industrial heritage in danger*<sup>3</sup> visited the major industrial heritage sites of Hungary and Slovakia during the guided tours. In order to elaborate the tourist route which will join the mining and metallurgical industrial heritage of the neighbouring regions in the two countries, the Development Agency of Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén County in Hungary made the first step, and presented a project to the PHARE Programme. The very aim of the project was the description of the tourist route in various publications: a guide-book, folding maps, and information leaflets.

According to plans, further information was to be given on sign boards set up in the three most important towns of the route (Miskolc, Ózd, Salgótarján) as well as on plaques placed on each industrial monument, and on an Internet site made specially for the project.

Besides the Styrian Iron Trail, the route was patterned also on the Route der Industriekultur, the industrial tourist route presenting the nineteenth and twentieth century remains of large-scale coal mining and iron metallurgy in the Ruhrgebiet as well as on the museum complexes, often called ecomuseums, which *in situ* present the heavy industrial heritage of Bergslagen in Sweden, of Ironbridge in England, and of Le Creusot-Montceau-les-Mines in France<sup>4</sup>. In the elaboration of the route, it was considered fundamental that the industrial sites offered for visit should tell the true history of mining and metallurgy, characterising the region from the Middle Ages until the recent past. It was considered also important that the sites should reflect the complexity of industrial production, from extraction to manufacturing, energy supply and transport included, as well as the many-folded nature of the material industrial heritage, consisting of machines, structures, buildings and sites, and the links which connected the regions. Some large-scale industrial remains, made redundant by the economic processes of past decades, are also among the presented sites, though, in spite of their cultural value, they have not been protected yet as monuments, or museum artefacts.

There are forty-six sites included in the guide book *Utikalauz a bányászat és kohászat emlékeihez Észak-Magyarországon és Szlovákiában*

(Guide to the Monuments of Mining and Metallurgy in North Hungary and in Slovakia) published in four languages: Hungarian, Slovakian, English and German<sup>5</sup>. Since 1993 on the World Heritage List, Selmechánya (now Banská Štiavnica), the centre of the mining area, also referred to as Lower Hungarian, by the River Hron, is the most attractive site in the guide book. During many centuries, precious metal mining in Hungary had a great importance on a European scale, a fact proved well by the old centre of the one-time royal mining town as well as the open-air mining museum and the system of artificial reservoirs, which supplied water to operate water engines.

The Košice gold treasure, one of Europe's biggest gold treasures, displayed in the Eastern Slovakian Museum, is also a proof of the above, because one-third of the 2,920 gold coins were made in Kremnica, in the most prominent mint of historical Hungary. The oldest depiction of medieval Hungarian mining and metallurgy, the Saint Anna altar piece from 1513, also known as Metercia, can be found in the Gothic cathedral of Rožňava. The Selmec Library of the University of Miskolc, one of the chosen sites in Hungary, is also closely connected to the mining in the surroundings of Selmechánya. The Library preserves three quarters of the book collection from between 1735 and 1918, initially owned by the university's predecessor, the Selmec Academy, one of the oldest European institutions of higher education in the field of technology.

The number one industrial

monument of Hungary, the charcoal blast furnace at Újmassa, in the vicinity of Miskolc, and the segment of the first Hungarian cast-iron bridge, on display at Hronec, present early nineteenth century metallurgy. The guide book includes also the historical remains of modern large-scale iron metallurgy: the nine buildings of the Diósgyőr iron and steel works, listed in 2001, as well as the Ózd factory's still surviving workshops, colonies, office and public buildings. However, future for them seems to be just as gloomy as for the remains of coalmining in Pereces, Lyukóbánya and Királd, of the mining settlements in the surroundings of Salgótarján, and of Hungary's first flotation dressing plant, which processed in Reesk the ores of the Mátra Mountain since 1926. Also, still a unique sight, the so-called Konczfalva 'royal washing plant', from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, related to the Telkibánya precious metal mining, seems to irretrievably perish soon.

The tourist route, elaborated in the realisation of the project, is already rich in sights. However, their number can be further increased by the remains of other industries in the region, like glass, paper, chemical, wood-working and forest industries, as well as by the archaeological findings of prehistoric 'industry', presented also in a new way.<sup>6</sup> Other sights of great historical, ethnographical, or natural value can be also included, because, being well-known, like the Dobó István Castle Museum in Eger, the Saint Elisabeth Cathedral in Košice, and even put on the World Heritage List, like the Old Village of Hollókő or the Baradla Cave

5 *Németh Györgyi: Útikalauz a bányászat és kohászat emlékeihez Észak-Magyarország on és Szlovákiában, Miskolc, 2001.*

6 See, for example, *Erzsébet Jerem, Zsolt Mester, Árpád Ringer & Zsolt Vasáros: Szeleta Museum and Archaeological Park. Praehistoria, 2002, 327-333.*

7 Kristóf  
 Ágnes: Egy  
 örökségvédelmi  
 projekt  
 születése.  
 « Örökségvéde  
 lem ». 2002,  
 No. 11-12, 10-  
 11; Somorjay  
 Selysette :  
 Értékvédelem  
 Ózdon.  
 « Örökségvéde  
 lem», 2003.  
 No. 2-3, 23-  
 24.

in Aggtelek, they have already been widely-visited.

As it has been proved in other countries, both domestic and foreign tourism can benefit from the sights, if proper plans, appropriate organisations, and last but not least, co-operation of partners are considered seriously. Tourism can be one of the surest means of the economic revitalisation of the declining region, which comprises the territories of two countries. Supposing,

there will be good solutions for the conservation of large-scale industrial heritage, still at great risk. In this respect, the so-called Ózd project can be a promising example<sup>7</sup>.

If the project presented as well as future projects are successfully realised, then monument protection will acquire new means to achieve its goals, in the spirit of the Venice and the Nizhny Tagil Charters.

School building  
 in the miners' settlement of Pereces





A senior clerk's home  
in the workers' colony of  
the Diósgyőr iron and steel works.

Doamna Gyorgyi Nemeth este profesor universitar la Universitatea din Miskolc și activează în domeniul arheologiei industriale /protecției patrimoniului industrial de mai bine de zece ani. Domnia sa este președintele TICCIH din Ungaria (organizație care funcționează și ca sub-comisie a ICOMOS-Ungaria pentru probleme de patrimoniu industrial) și, în același timp, este și membru în consiliul de conducere a TICCIH. Are numeroase publicații (cărți, articole, studii, cercetări) și numeroase participări la evenimentele internaționale legate de activitatea în domeniul patrimoniului industrial (Rusia, Slovacia, Japonia, recent Spania, Finlanda) reprezentând pentru noi, care ne aflăm la început de drum în acest domeniu, un posibil foarte bun colaborator și sfătuitor, cu o experiență bogată, vastă, utilă, dat fiind similitudinea problematicei în țările noastre vecine.

**Lucian FULGER SĂNDULESCU**