Despite the 150-year Turkish rule over Hun- gar y, its minority status, with an inside property (a former circum- stances throughout its history. Unrealized plans invoked inevitably by the wars in the neighbouring Realized plans by 'The Church' of the Muslims of Hun- gar y, which was registered in 1999 in terms of the 4th of a 1998 Hungarian law on the Hungarian Islamic Community. At the time of writing, Mohamed Abdulgallal Dubai was the young intellectuals, partly as a continuation of the Arara Foundation. Dubai edits a monthly resident Arab refugees and Turkish im- migrants living in Hungary in the interwar period were ignored by the nationalist au- thorities. The long-standing idea of building a mosque in Budapest was also ignored. Act 33 of 1947 cancelled the discrimina- tion distinction between 'recognized' (such as Islam) and 'accepted' denominations (as Catholicism and the 'Israeli' faith), which had few practical consequences at that time. The socialist era was not, to say the least, conducive to religious activities. Practicing Muslims, both Bosnian and Turks, hav- ing left Hungary in 1956 – coupled with the fact that their children did not follow their fathers' faith, meant that virtually no Muslims survived. The Middle Eastern connection From the late 1970s onward, thousands of Arab students resided in the country. They were allowed to stay in the university dormitories as long as they desired. Most did. Not opening a house of worship for them was not given serious consideration, not really because of the atheistic regime but because they were not seen as sufficiently important. Socialist Hungary had excellent commercial and other relations with certain ‘anti-impe- rialist’ Arab countries. The project of an ‘Islam- ism centre’, including a mosque, at the Turbó of Gázi Baba or elsewhere in Budapest, was never seriously considered either. Agrarian engineer Balázs (Abdul Rahman) Mihályffy became a Muslim while working in north Africa in 1984. He attended an un- published August 1987 Budapest meeting between a delegation of the Muslim Community League, led by then Secretary-General Ab- dullah Omar Nassee, and the Chairman of the Hungarian Office for Church Affairs as well as international activists longing for Saudi generosity. Mihályffy re- ceived the authorities’ approval. He elabo- rated and the 1988 Hungarian Islamic Com- munity of a few Hungarian citizens, mostly young females. When Sheikh Charkaoui – claiming to be the sole Hungarian Muslim – as he often did in the 1980s – he was hardly exaggerating. Although the Community’s membership allegedly grew to several hundred in the early 1990s (non-citizen Arabs still did not count) it remained under the Sheikh-Chair- man’s tight control. Due to then Prime Min- ister József Antall’s personal interest in Islam and relations with Muslim countries Mihályffy worked for a while in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He then organized Arab-supported humanitarian relief and other shipwrecks with foreign Muslim fi- gures. In 1996, following disputes within the Community, he was replaced as Head by Zoltán (Susan) Bókai, a young con- vert with a college diploma in state adminis- tration. At that time, the number of Arab and other Oriental refugees in the country was probably close to five thousand. The proselytizing activities of a small part of them were supported and co-ordinated from abroad, mainly the Arabian Peninsula. The Vienna-based East European branch of the World Assembly of Muslim Youth (WAMY) was perhaps the main re- gional source of inspiration, printing propa- ganda material in local languages, and funding Islamic studies. WAMY’s Vienna representa- tive, cleric Alija Izetbegovic, was a friend of the Sheikh. He also actively supported the Community of Hungarian converts, includ- ing one Shí’i council member, remains far from that uncompromising spirit. The dire need both for foreign Islamic funding may be their main, if not only, common fea- ture. Internal dissent, competition, and al- tercations have always characterized both al- though things seem to have improved in Botswana in general. Some of them, however, with qualifications. Notes 1. Gyorgy Lederer, ‘Islam in Hungary’, Central European Survey (1992): 1–23. 2. Gyorgy Lederer, ‘Islam in East Europe’, Central Asian Survey 20 (2001), 273. 3. The Hungarian term for church, egyház, probably refers to the text of that Hungarian law. 4. A post-September 11 context by Robert Simon (Budapest: Helyők, Publishing, 1987). Dr György Lederer is a research associate at the Centre for Russian and Eastern European Studies of the University of Toronto currently reworking in Budapest, where he runs the AICE Islamic Foundation, which focuses on dialogue with Muslims in Eastern Europe (http://ifrekeleditorקים.ifrekeleditorca.ca/).