

Other Book Reviews

The 1956 Revolution: Hungarian and Canadian Perspectives. Edited by Christopher Adam, Tibor Egervari, Leslie Laczko, and Judy Young. Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 2010. 304 pages. ISBN 978-077660705-4. Paper. \$39.00; e-book edition, \$19.00.

The volume is based on selected papers presented at the international conference “The 1956 Hungarian Revolution 50 Years Later: Canadian and International Perspectives” held at the University of Ottawa between October 12 and 14 in 2006, on the occasion of the revolution’s 50th anniversary. The anniversary was celebrated the world over remembering this watershed event in Hungarian, European and world history. In Canada, it marked a new appreciation and recognition of the numerous and multiple contributions that the 37,000-38,000 (some sources mention “37,000,” some “38,000” or “over 38,000” as the total figure, some offer an approximation such as “almost 40,000”). Hungarian refugees Canada had welcomed following the crushing of the uprising have since made to Canadian society and culture. In the editors’ words: “This would be the first time Canada would accept so many refugees of a single origin, setting a precedent for later refugee initiatives” (p. 1). This collection of selected and expanded papers from the conference complements two other Canadian publications, both special issues of the *Hungarian Studies Review* edited by Nándor Dreisziger, *1956 in Hungary: Precedents, Events and Consequences* (Spring-Fall 2007) and *1956 in Hungary and in Canada* (2008).

The 1956 Revolution: Hungarian and Canadian Perspectives begins with a preface and a brief introduction that includes the editors’ acknowledgments. This is followed by twelve chapters that present recent research about the 1956 Revolution from the point of view of history, political science, sociology, economics, gender, and oral history. The contributors are Canadian, US, Hungarian, and Finnish scholars and researchers, most of them established, some more junior. The twelve chapters are divided into two sections. Part I, entitled “The Revolution, Hungary, and the World,” comprises seven chapters that examine various political and economic factors that had led to the outbreak of the revolution, reasons for

its failure, the multi-party system that was briefly put into place, the role of women in the revolution, its perception by Shoah survivors, reactions to it in Argentina, and its place within the new, post-1989 political debates in Hungary. Part II, entitled “The Canadian Context,” looks at the reception of the refugees in Canada and its historical and political context, the place of this wave of Hungarian immigration within the history of Hungarian immigration to Canada since the 19th century, and, finally, how 1956 was portrayed in the Canadian-Hungarian press, most notably the *Kanadai Magyar Munkás*. In the following, I will briefly summarize Part I and Part II, respectively, while focussing on one chapter from each part in more detail.

The two opening chapters were written by János M. Rainer and Csaba Békés, respectively, two researchers from the recently (sadly) dismantled Institute for the History of the 1956 Hungarian Revolution in Budapest. Both Rainer and Békés use recent research data to shed a new light on the revolution’s causes and goals as well as commonly held misconceptions about its demise. In chapter 3, Susan Glanz examines the economic platforms of the various political parties that briefly re-emerged in 1956 and the legacy of this short period of a multi-party system in the ensuing Kádár-era.

Chapter 4, by Mária Palasik, offers a fascinating gender analysis of the revolution by taking into account mainly photographic sources and it is this chapter that I wish to present in more detail for its particularly original approach. Palasik uses a selection of photographs along with some court documents and memoirs of participants in the revolution in an attempt to illuminate the role women played in it. Despite the fact that not many pictures were taken that represent women in the various revolutionary activities (only about 10% of the 4,000 photos she examined had women in them), Palasik manages to group their participation along four themes: women taking part in the demonstrations on October 23 and 25, women in armed rebel groups, women in traditional roles, and, finally, women in atypical gender roles. We can thus see that women took part in the various phases and moments of the revolution, sometimes respecting their traditional roles (such as nursing the wounded or providing food), but also going beyond them, particularly the younger ones who can be seen carrying arms and marching in the crowds. In court documents about various sentences that were issued for participation in revolutionary activities, Palasik has found that only 2.1% of the people sentenced to death were female; however, women made up between 0.6% and 18.3% of various other indictments, ranging from participation in armed clashes

(14.8%), hiding weapons (3%) to participating in the women's demonstration (4.1%). The latter data does not, however, reflect women's real participation in this demonstration, as Palasik later states that "*several thousand women* placed their flowers on the tomb of the Unknown Soldier" (p. 113, my emphasis) during a silent demonstration on December 4, 1956, thus a month after the Soviet invasion. In this sense, the sentences that were issued to women for participation in various revolutionary (or "contra-revolutionary" in the Communist jargon) activities may not actually be a realistic measurement for the scope of their participation in the revolution. Palasik makes an important point when she asks questions regarding the veracity and reliability of historical documents: "what can be regarded as a historical source, and what may be missing from this 'source'? [...] In the end, if we aren't careful, a hundred years after the events, the day-to-day life during the revolution might be written based only on indictments and verdicts" (p. 112). Along the same lines, I would come to a different conclusion than the author herself who concludes that only "relatively few women participated in armed conflicts" (p. 114) and that most women who did participate in the revolution did so in their traditional roles. The various sources (photographs, court documents, memoirs) may instead be pointing to the need to examine women's role in the revolution in a more nuanced way, not solely based on some percentages in comparison to men. Such research, however, still remains to be done.

Chapter 5 by Júlia Vajda follows an oral history approach in that the author uses interviews with two Hungarian Shoah survivors and their respective experiences with 1956. Vajda comes to the conclusion that for these Shoah survivors, given the trauma they had lived through as teenagers, the revolution did not have the same meaning as it did for most Hungarians. In chapter 6, Judith Kesserű Némethy examines responses to and support for the revolution in Argentina heralded by Hungarian émigré circles but helped by many other Argentines as well. Chapter 7 by Heino Nyssönen concludes Part I with his analysis of how 1956 has fared in Hungary's recent (post-1989) political memory in comparison to other important historical events from the country's past.

Part II is written entirely by Canadian scholars and they deal with various aspects of the reception of the 1956-57 Hungarian refugee wave in Canada. In chapter 8, Harold Troper examines the arrival of the Hungarian refugees in Canada within the context of contemporaneous immigration policies shaped by a combination of Cold War rhetoric, racially and ethnically biased immigration practices and a labour shortage, and how it set a

precedent for Canadian immigration policies in the next decades. Troper concludes that the impact of this refugee wave was even felt in the drafting of the new Canadian immigration legislation in 1976, “which, for the first time, officially committed Canada, through its routine immigration procedures, to work to ease the distress of refugees, the displaced, and the persecuted” (p. 191).

Chapter 9 by Nándor Dreisziger looks at the profile of this unprecedented wave of Hungarian immigration to Canada, its reception in and impact on Canada and its Hungarian communities in the historical context of several, though smaller waves of pre-1956 immigration, concluding that the following decades “were the ‘golden age’ of Hungarian ethnic life in Canada” (p. 213). Peter Hidas, in chapter 10, examines the details of the arrival and reception of the Hungarian refugees in Canada, their “allocation” across the provinces, a “secret operation” (p. 227) ordered by then minister of immigration, Jack Pickersgill. Hidas includes several tables that illustrate the immigrants’ age and gender, their professional and religious background as well as an overview of the refugees’ numbers in countries across the globe. In chapter 11, Greg Donaghy analyses how the acceptance of the Hungarian refugees by Canada has to be interpreted within the larger context of its foreign policy and its relations with the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. Like Troper, Donaghy stresses the vital importance of the “Hungarian model” (p. 269) in the liberalization of Canada’s immigration and refugee policies.

The concluding chapter by Christopher Adam examines the response to 1956 and the Hungarian newcomers in *Kanadai Magyar Munkás* (Canadian-Hungarian Worker), which was, at the time, the second-largest Hungarian weekly in Canada. This chapter is very interesting in the context of the volume as it is the only one dealing with the reception of the new Hungarian immigrants by already established Canadian-Hungarians. Adam analyses the paper and its editorial policy from the background of how the Canadian-Hungarian press reflected and incited political infighting within the Hungarian immigrant communities. He chose this weekly as it was openly pro-Communist and supported post-1947 political developments in Hungary and was, thus, rather unsure as to how to respond to the revolution. The initial response was to brand it a “fascist reactionary” episode (p. 277) and to encourage the newcomers to return to Hungary, but soon this gave way to embarrassment in an atmosphere of a general condemnation of the Soviet clampdown. After some apologetic articles for the imperfections on the road to a perfect society under the new Kádár government, the paper began to highlight the allegedly negative

experiences the new immigrants were facing and claiming that many of them wanted to go back to Hungary. To this end, anonymous letters and statements were published that all reiterated the same disappointment in Canada, the regret to have left the homeland, and an ardent desire to return there as soon as possible. Moreover, the *Kanadai Magyar Munkás* presented the new Hungarian immigrants as a cheaper competition on the Canadian labour market and thus unwanted by Canadian workers, all within an ultimate plot scheme by the capitalist Canadian government against trade unions and the Soviet Union. Adam considers the unwillingness on the part of *Kanadai Magyar Munkás* and its editor to take on a more moderate stand and reach out to potentially left-leaning but not necessarily Communist Hungarian immigrants the main reason that would eventually lead to the paper's downfall.

An appendix and a list of contributors follow the concluding chapter. The appendix is a welcome addition as it mentions papers presented at the conference that, for various reasons, were not included in this volume. These papers, for the most part, highlighted the artistic and literary contributions of the Hungarian refugees, and it is, from the point of view of a literary scholar, a true pity that none of them made it into the present volume. However, the appendix represents an attempt to integrate this missing aspect somewhat. An index would have been another welcome addition to the book and, moreover, would have made its scholarly profile stronger. Yet on the whole, *The 1956 Revolution: Hungarian and Canadian Perspectives* presents original and recent scholarly work in an attractive and informative form that will no doubt be of interest to researchers and the general public alike.

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Minority Hungarian Communities in the Twentieth Century. Edited by Nándor Bárdi, Csilla Fedinec and László Szarka, Translated by Brian McLean. Boulder, Colorado: Atlantic Research and Publications Inc, Institute for Ethnic and National Minority Studies of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Social Sciences Monographs, 2011. 859 pages.

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It is an outstanding work of scholarship, shedding light on distinct communities and regions of Europe neglected for many decades. Most importantly, it is published in English as a part of the series published in the *Atlantic Studies on Society in Change*. The editors are distinguished scholars of the Institute for Ethnic and National Minority Studies of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. The preface to the volume is written by eminent scholar and historian Ignác Romsics who served as the volume's editor-in-chief.

Since 1920 in Hungary the study of Hungarian communities beyond the country's borders has gone from one extreme to the other. During the inter-war era, the subject was thoroughly studied, while, later, during the communist era, this area of scholarship was completely ignored. During the 1920s several institutions were established to gather data and to conduct analyses of these minority communities, eventually to support Hungary's ambitions for territorial revision. The issues of minority communities were widely studied by Hungarian researchers and historians, many of them members of academic institutions including the Institute of Governance and Public Policy, founded in 1926. (p. 22) Three years after the end of the Second World War at the time of the Communists' accession to power all of the institutions that focused on the study of Hungarians beyond Hungary's borders were disbanded and for several decades afterwards the issue of these Hungarian minority communities was shrouded in silence, as dictated by communist policy. This policy only softened towards the end of the 1980's, when research on Hungarian minorities abroad became once again acceptable, initially, however, only focusing on ethnographic, sociological and anthropological aspects of those communities.

In the introduction to the book under review the editors outline the volume's theoretical framework and provide clear definitions of national minorities in the European Union and throughout the world. Their definitions of national minorities are based on five criteria: historical emergence, geographical location, characteristics of language use, legal status and group identity. The distinguished editors, authors and writers from around the world have gone to great length to document the histories of these Hungarian minority communities through examining such issues as: the questions of autonomy, culture, art, science and scholarship, demography, education, language retention, assimilation, as well as comparing and contrasting the policies of successive governments in Budapest towards Hungarian communities beyond their borders. The volume also has a separate section examining the issues of Hungarian-speaking Jews in the

Carpathian Basin, the Csángos of Moldavia, Hungarian-speaking Gypsies, and the Hungarian Diaspora living in the West.

To produce such a comprehensive volume on these disparate communities was a formidable task. Hungarians are defined as “involuntary minorities,” i.e. those separated from their ethno-cultural kin living in another country by border changes based on externally imposed political decisions. At the time of the break-up of historical Hungary, from one day to the next, 2.7 million Hungarians simply found themselves living as minorities in a different country. Some were transferred to completely new countries as Czechoslovakia or the Serb-Croat-Slovene Kingdom (later Yugoslavia), while others were attached to existing countries such as Austria (in the case of Burgenland) or the greatly enlarged Romania (in the case of Transylvania and adjacent territories). These minority communities represented 27.4 percent of the entire population of Hungarians in Central Europe.

This volume pays meticulous attention to the fact that these Hungarian communities were allocated to countries that, through the past ninety years, have undergone further dramatic border and socio-political changes and traces the effects that these changes have had on these minority communities. All these changes are illustrated with case studies for each minority community. For instance, the creation of the new state of Czechoslovakia involved over 800,000-850,000 Hungarians living in regions contiguous to Hungary, but separated by the newly imposed border of 1920. During World War II, Hitler demanded the return of the Sudetenland to Germany and backed a plan for the partial revision of the 1920 border between Czechoslovakia and Hungary. After the so-called Munich agreement and the dissolution of Czechoslovakia, Slovakia became a separate Nazi puppet state. Following the war, the borders reverted to their pre-war status and Hungarians in the re-established Czechoslovakia were subjected to state ordered deportations and the Benes Decrees that declared their “collective guilt” and empowered Czechoslovak authorities to confiscate their property. More recently, in 1993, the Czech and Slovak people decided, via a referendum, to separate, and Czechoslovakia again two distinct countries, the Czech Republic and Slovakia.

The easternmost territories of interwar Czechoslovakia also included the Rusyn and Hungarian regions of Transcarpathia. After the Second World War Transcarpathia was ceded to the Soviet Union, after which time it became an artificially isolated region with its Hungarian communities literally sealed off from any contacts with Hungary. Since the

break-up of the Soviet Union, the region of Transcarpathia has become part of newly independent Ukraine.

The complicated fate of Hungarians living in Voivodina is also clearly outlined in this volume, from the time when it was transferred to the Serb-Croat-Slovene Kingdom in 1920, through the country's metamorphosis into Yugoslavia, the mass killings of Hungarians following World War II and finally, to Yugoslavia's complete disintegration into much smaller countries in the early 1990's. The volume sheds light on how the Hungarian communities survived the political and social upheavals. Government policies in dealing with minority issues and minority rights are examined in depth, as are the many attempts at forced assimilation.

The chapters are organized chronologically, starting with two historical surveys entitled the "Dissolution of Historical Hungary" and "Hungary at the Peace Talks in Paris" — both written by historian Laszlo Szarka. These are followed by a comprehensive survey of the creation of Hungarian minority groups in Romania (by Nándor Bárdi), Czechoslovakia, i.e. Slovakia (by Attila Simon), Czechoslovakian Transcarpathia (by Csilla Fedinec), the Serb-Croat-Slovene Kingdom (by Enikő A. Sajti), and Austria (by Gerhard Baumgartner).

The section of the volume entitled "Between the Two World Wars (1921-1938)," examines the issues of the "National States and Minorities in Central Europe," the "League of Nations and its Role in Defending International Minorities," "Disputes and Proposals for Handling the Minority Question," and "the Effect of Territorial Revision on Minority Protection," "Minority Hungarians and their role in Central European Land Reform," "Minority Hungarian Societies and their role in Culture, Art, Science and Scholarship." The ten ground-breaking articles in this section written or jointly co-written by historians László Szarka, Ferenc Eiler, Nándor Bárdi, Attila Simon and Attila Kovács, Tamás Gusztáv Filep, Csilla Fedinec, Enikő A. Sajti and Gerhard Baumgartner.

The section entitled the "World War II Years (1939-1944)" deals with issues that arose following the restoration of the pre-World War II territorial status quo, such as the issues surrounding the "Returnee Hungarians" (by Tamás Gusztáv Filep). The autonomy promises made to Hungarians and further, by the Hungarians to the Rusyn minorities in Transcarpathia, are examined in depth by Csilla Fedinec. Case studies in this chapter explore the effects of territorial revisions on the Hungarian minority community, on those communities that were re-annexed to Hungary, as well as those that were not in the areas of revision. For instance in

the case of Romania, while northern Transylvania was re-annexed to Hungary, the Hungarian communities of southern Transylvania suffered further isolation and were subjected to outright ethnic persecution by the fascist Ion Antonescu regime. This study was written by Béni L. Balogh and Nándor Bárdi. The case study on war-time Slovakia is written by Árpád Popely, and that on Vojvodina by Enikő A. Sajti. The case of Burgenland as part of the German Reich, where Hungarians were forcefully “Germanized,” is examined by Gerhard Baumgartner.

The section entitled, “from the End of World War II to the Communist Takeover (1944-1948)” consists of two main articles, “Hungary” and the “Situation of the Hungarian Minorities in 1945.” Both of these are by László Szarka. The subject of the “Losses of Hungarian Minorities” is examined by Mihály Zoltán Nagy. These articles as well as the case studies provide a comprehensive look at the politics of retribution in Europe following the end of the war. Despite the attempt of the Horthy regime to switch sides late in the war, similar to what Romania had accomplished two months earlier, this attempt was thwarted by Nazi Germany, which had occupied the country by March of 1944. At the end of the Second World War the pre-war borders were reinstated by the Allies. Hungarian minorities in each of these countries were dealt with harshly — with deportations, confiscation of property, internment and outright killings (as in the case of Yugoslavia and Romania). The alleged “crime” of some of the victims was “being of Hungarian ethnicity”.

The volume’s next section is on “Eastern European Single-Party States (1948-1989).” In this period the issues of the Hungarian minorities were largely silenced by communist regimes. Contact was forbidden between Hungarians in Hungary and members of the Hungarian minority communities beyond Hungary’s borders. Communist dictators, such as Nicolae Ceaucescu of Romania, built heavy industry and apartment blocks and settled hundreds of thousands of Romanian workers into solidly Hungarian regions of Transylvania, thereby dramatically changing the region’s demographic landscape. The articles in this section include “Models for Communist Minority Policy” (by Stefano Bottoni and Zoltan Novak), “Hungary and Hungarians Beyond its Borders” (by Nándor Bárdi), “Demographic Features” (by Patrik Tatrai), “Collectivization and Rural Change” (Nándor Bárdi and Márton László), “The Education Question” (Csilla Fedinec) and the “Development of Cultural, Artistic and Scientific Institutions” (Tamás Gusztáv Filep).

The section of the volume with the title “From the Change of Regime to the Recent Past (1989-2005),” examines these communities and

their cultural survival since the end of Communism in east-central Europe. This era represented a tumultuous time, wherein Hungarian minority communities watched and waited as the countries, political entities they had lived in for several generations fell apart, such as Czechoslovakia (via a referendum in 1993) and Yugoslavia (via war) and dissolved into smaller countries. This section contains articles such as “Minority Rights in International Relations” (by Balázs Vizi), “Hungarian Minorities and the Change of Systems” (László Szarka), “The Policy of Budapest Governments towards Hungarian Communities Abroad” (by Nándor Bárdi), “The Demographic Processes in Minority Hungarian Communities” (by László Gyurgyik), the “Education Issue” (by Attila Papp Z.), the “Position of the Hungarian Language” (by Orsolya Nádor), “Cultural and Scientific Activity” (Nándor Bárdi, Csilla Fedinec and Attila Papp Z.). The case studies in this section also include insightful pieces written on Croatia, Serbia and Slovenia, all by János Vékás.

The final section of this outstanding compendium of articles features studies on “Other Hungarian-Speaking Communities In and Beyond Hungary’s Neighboring Countries,” including Jews and Jewish communities (by Viktoria Bányai), “The Csangos of Moldavia” (Zoltán Ilyés), “Hungarian Speaking Gypsies in the Carpathian Basin” (Péter Szuhay), the “Hungarian Diaspora Beyond the Carpathian Basin” (by Ilona Kovács), “Some Social and Demographic Features of the Hungarian Diaspora in the West” (Attila Papp Z.), a very interesting article on the “Contact Dialects of Hungarian” (by Miklós Kontra) and “Population Movements in the Carpathian Basin” (by Tamás Stark). Viktoria Bányai also delivers a comprehensive article on the issues of assimilated Hungarian Jews and their fate, while Tamás Stark sheds particular light on the continued in-migration of Hungarians living in these minority communities to Hungary, particularly from October 1989, when Hungary acceded to the Geneva Convention which granted refugee status to those who could show that they were persecuted on national, political religious or racial grounds.

The editors state that the historiography of the Hungarian minorities presented in this volume “has been shaped to a great extent by an urge to record and document the numerous serious political, economic and social grievances that these communities have indubitably suffered, and the dominant historical narratives that have emerged in the course of the past nine decades reflect the centrality of those grievances and react to them. This volume shifts the focus from a discourse based on grievances and focuses instead on strategies of survival and interest-promotion, as it

was largely these that were predominantly responsible for shaping the evolution of minority communities during the twentieth century.” (p. 24)

This reviewer has worked with students from these minority communities for the past two decades through a program called Students Without Boundaries. Based on the oral testimony of hundreds of these young people, the most critical, most painful issue they have to face on an ongoing basis, is, as they say, “being ignored, marginalized by the country they live in as well as the country (in this case Hungary) with which they share cultural and linguistic ties.” As one young woman from Serbia stated: “I belong to two countries, but neither country wants to accept me.”

The volume being reviewed here has made a significant contribution towards documenting and publicising not just the past history, but also the present evolving history of these communities that have struggled quietly for their ethnocultural and linguistic survival for over nine decades. The editors have ensured that the articles are written in a clear, unbiased style. The volume is rich with references to the works of authors and historians from the surrounding countries themselves, in effect the authors and editors of this volume try to build bridges of understanding between Hungarian minority communities and the countries in which they live. It is a welcome, fresh perspective in the field of historiography, a volume shedding light on communities and peoples that have, until the past few decades, been denied the telling of their own history.

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Comparative Hungarian Cultural Studies. Edited by Steven Tötösy de Zepetnek and Louise O. Vasvári. West Lafayette, Indiana, Purdue University Press, 2011. 376 pages. (Comparative Cultural Studies series.)

In the Western world, the modernization of social studies and liberal arts studies (including literary studies) and their expansion into cultural studies has been an ongoing process since the 1970's, inspiring hope that after half a century of devaluation, the humanities may regain their lost prestige as they adapt to the circumstances. In Hungary, however, such survival-oriented adaptation has only started to surface in the last decade, which might explain why this volume of articles promoting such a paradigm shift, titled *Comparative Hungarian Cultural Studies*, was first published

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by Purdue University Press in Indiana, USA, in the series “Comparative Cultural Studies”, rather than in Hungary.

Although the number of cultural studies courses offered at Hungarian universities rises with each passing semester, this field of study is relatively unknown, and so editors Steven Tötösy and Louise O. Vasvári deemed it necessary to contribute an extensive and detailed theoretical and methodological paper to the volume as an addendum to the twenty-six cultural studies articles, the majority of which was written by scholars living abroad. Their paper, titled “The Study of Hungarian Culture as Comparative Central European Cultural Studies”, has reached the level of manifesto in certain circles, and is perhaps the most important article in the volume as it not only serves to introduce this new field and the branches of science that comprise it, but also seeks to explore the reasons behind the delayed realization of historical and cultural change in Hungary.

Based on a large body of literature, Tötösy and Vasvári discuss the definition of the term ‘cultural studies’ in extensive detail in their paper, and according to their definition, this new field rejects the traditional aesthetic, textual and hierarchical concepts of culture and aims to expose the relationship between diverse forms of culture, culture and society, and culture and politics by any given theoretical approach and methodology, rather than within the bounds of a uniform theoretical framework. When leftist British scholars introduced cultural studies in the middle of the last century, their approach took a clear ideological stance as their aim was not only analysis, but also the facilitation of social change. Although some current approaches are less politically charged than those before them, these, too, oppose the elitism and hegemonic structures of power that dominate in traditional fields of study (12). Cultural studies hold democratic views of culture, allowing them to study marginalized and popular cultures, and can be combined with several established (or newly established) fields in liberal arts and social studies, such as literary studies, literary theory, social theory, cultural sociology, media studies, communication studies, cultural anthropology, cultural history, geography, ethnography, sociolinguistics, translation studies, philosophy, law, pedagogy, history, museum studies, art history and criticism, political studies, gender studies and so on (12–13). Cultural studies can be used to examine, among other things, sexuality, national identity, minorities, colonialism and post-colonialism, consumer culture, the relationship between science and ecology, postmodern global culture, cultural institutions, urban life, (e)migration, immigration and diasporas as well — which means that it

could, for instance, intersect with Jewish Studies, another field that had been just as poorly received in Hungary until recent years.

After defining the newly emerging studies, the two authors argue against self-referential and thus potentially exclusionist single-culture studies, and in favor of comparative cultural studies — however, such an expansion does not exclude an ideological approach regardless of the fact that it is based on knowledge of several languages and cultures. Calling attention to other cultures creates inclusive, intercultural and interdisciplinary dialogue, and entails the analysis of all others, as well as all that is marginal, peripheral, or pertaining to minorities. The results of such research are then published in English, due to the fact that it has become the *lingua franca* of science, rather than due to a US-centric or Eurocentric approach (based on the presumed superiority of European culture). Tötösy and Vasvári argue that the decline and marginalization of liberal arts and social sciences may be reversed by the emergence of comparative cultural studies that are intra-disciplinary (within the humanities), multidisciplinary (intersecting with other studies), and pluri-disciplinary (done by consulting scholars of diverse disciplines) in their approach (16–17).

The Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, founded in Birmingham by literature professor Richard Hoggart in 1964, managed to spread the new hybrid discipline inspired by Marxist cultural criticism in most English-speaking countries within a few decades, while in certain European countries such as France and Germany, cultural studies remained relatively unknown. Vasvári and Tötösy argue that the reason lies in a Eurocentric view, suspicion regarding US-American scientific research, and the growing popularity of theoretical schools with different approaches to culture, at least on German-speaking soil. (The authors avoid using the term ‘American’, arguing that it implies the hegemonic role of the United States on the American continent, and instead introduce the term ‘US-American’ when referring to the USA.) They argue that, in addition to Eurocentrism, aversion towards the USA, and the impact of the *Kulturwissenschaft* and then the Frankfurt School in surrounding countries, the negligence of cultural studies in Hungary and in Central and Eastern Europe in general is also due to an aversion to ideological approaches as a result of Soviet oppression and a history of living under party-state rule. Tötösy and Vasvári also posit that there are several additional factors aside from those mentioned above that impede cultural studies from gaining ground in Hungary. For instance, the US PhD system may have been imported to postgraduate education in Hungary, but requirements regarding publishing research results have not yet been met.

Although it is not explicitly discussed, one may assume that they were hinting at the small number of foreign publications, which is likely due to another obstacle discussed in the paper, namely the lack of high-level foreign language skills. They also mention other obstructive factors such as lack of funds for importing foreign literature, and argue that one of the most fundamental problems is that the older generation of professors, appointed in the era of socialism, holding traditional and often old-fashioned views, and granted too much power over the student body, is still firmly in place (18–19). This somber picture is then contrasted with the achievements of the past few years – however, since they only offer a glimpse of the precedents of cultural studies before 1989 (although one of the papers in the volume, written by New York scholar András Kiséry, does discuss the groundbreaking merits of Tivadar Thienemann and István Hajnal with regard to comparative literary studies, a field related to cultural studies), they do not mention that, in 1981, Béla G. Németh had established a workshop at Eötvös Lóránd University (ELTE), the soon-to-be Cultural History Department, where historian Péter Hanák attempted to introduce cultural studies, which was still new and practically unknown in Hungary at that time. In the introduction to his volume of articles published in 1988 by Gondolat Press and titled *A kert és a műhely* (The garden and the yard), written in 1986 in Princeton (unsurprisingly), Péter Hanák offers his own definition of what he means by “cultural history” as a discipline, and his approach is similar to that of the editors of the volume discussed here: “...with regard to the limits of this discipline, I do not differentiate between ‘high’ culture and urban ‘mass culture’, or what is considered to be rural ‘folk’ culture. I believe that cultural history does not measure the value of art in terms of artistic merit and aesthetics, but rather in terms of its representative value and relevance to reality in a community’s life and way of thinking. Secondly, I would not exclude politics from this discipline either... Not just because of the rational and empirical consideration that political events, political decisions and cultural politics have always had a strong influence on the development of culture, ...but also because the different ways in which society is organized, sustained and renewed are the manifestations of unified human creative (and destructive) activities, which are closely interrelated and pervasive, and can only be separated in terms of thinking and process ecology.” (“Introductory thoughts on cultural history”). The English edition of the book is also listed in the last chapter of the volume edited by Tötösy and Vasvári, titled “Selected Bibliography for Work in Comparative Hungarian Cultural Studies”.) Although university reforms fol-

Following the collapse of socialism had seen the end of the Cultural History Department, the first Hungarian results in cultural research are now awaiting publication, as Tötösy and Vasvári note in reference to József Takáts's paper, published in 2004 in the journal *Jelenkor*, in which Takáts discusses the "shift in international literary studies" and its ties to Hungary. At ELTE, both the Hungarian Literary and Cultural Studies Institute, established from merging former literature departments, and its Comparative Literary and Cultural Studies Department (both headed by Ernő Kulcsár-Szabó) have undertaken cultural studies research – although, according to the outline of the founding professor's course on "The Definition of Culture and Trends in Cultural Theory," culture is still defined as "the relationship between language and the mediation of experiences of the world." As for other universities, the University of Debrecen also established a Hungarian Literary and Cultural Studies Institute from former Hungarian literature departments, the University of Szeged has a Visual Culture and Literary Theory Department within the Hungarian Language and Literature Institute, offering a Masters degree in Literary and Cultural Studies, and the Doctoral School of the University of Pécs runs a Cultural Studies Doctorate Program that aims to analyze the cultural representational systems of modern societies.

However, such a transformation does not guarantee the complete renewal of the discipline promoted by Tötösy and Vasvári. Their conclusion is that, while the issue of identity and 'Hungarianness' have once again become an issue of fundamental importance in Hungarian culture and politics after 1989, scientific research has yet to encompass the vast variety of ethnicities in Hungary, and the role of the Hungarian Jewish community is still largely ignored in discussions of Hungarian culture and history (22).

The editors divided the articles into six primary themes, the structure seemingly serving to highlight the view that cultural studies is by no means centered around literature analyzed from current perspectives using the most current methods. The six themes are as follows: history, theory and methodology for comparative Hungarian cultural studies (CHCS), CHCS and literature and culture, CHCS and the other arts, CHCS and gender studies, CHCS and contemporary Hungary, and the final chapter containing the bibliography mentioned above. The observations of the editors in the introduction are supplemented by Györgyi Horváth's paper titled "Contemporary Hungarian Literary Criticism and the Memory of the Socialist Past", which can be found in the section devoted to the relationship between literature and culture. According to Horváth, current

literary discourse on the role of literature is still influenced by an apolitical perspective that was formulated to ward off the pressure of pre-1989 socialist party politics. In reality, the world of literature is thoroughly permeated by politics, and while both sides attribute different social and political aims to this artistic field (the solidification of national identity, and safeguarding autonomy), the consensus on favoring an apolitical approach prevents the redefinition of the relationship between the aesthetic and the political. Moreover, the lack of reflexivity and the pretence of staying apolitical has also led to the poor reception of politically and ideologically motivated theories by academia, such as postcolonial studies, gender studies and cultural studies (92–93).

The volume contains several papers of interest. A few honorary mentions include Peter Sherwood's analysis of the German and English translations of Sándor Márai's novel *A gyertyák csonkig égnek* (The candles burn down to the stump), Megan Brandow-Faller's paper on the relationship between Art Nouveau and Hungarian cultural nationalism, and David Mandler's study of the acculturation of openly Russophobe Ármín Vámbéry (who even discussed his views with the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office) in the course of his career.

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