

AASHH
American Association for the Study of Hungarian History

NEWSLETTER

Sep. 2003

1. Announcements

a. Business meeting - AAASS

The business meeting to be held at the AAASS Convention in Toronto, is scheduled for Friday, November 21, 2003, for 9 pm at The Fairmont Royal York Hotel.

I think I can speak for everyone when I say that this is an extremely inconvenient time. I will inform you if I can convince the AAASS to give us an earlier time slot.

b. Business meeting - AHA

The business meeting to be held at the AHA Convention in Washington, DC has been scheduled for Friday, January 9, 2004, for 5-6 pm in The Marriott Hotel's Congressional Boardroom. Please mark it in your calendar.

c. Book Award

To date five books have been nominated for the biannual book award. If you would like to nominate a book, you must do so by September 15, 2003. Please submit nominations to Alice Freifeld. (freifeld@history.ufl.edu). Thank you.

The nominated books are:

Béla Bodó, Tiszazug: A Social History of a Murder Epidemic. (East European Monographs), 2002.

Z. J. Kosztolnyik, Hungary Under the Early Árpáds, 890s to 1063. (East European Monographs), 2002.

György Péteri, Global Monetary Regime and National Central Banking, The Case of Hungary, 1921-1929. (Center for Hungarian Studies and Publications, Inc., East European Monographs), 2002.

Andrea Pető, Women in Hungarian Politics 1945-1951. (Budapest, CEU Press, 2002).

John C. Swanson, The Remnants of the Habsburg Monarchy, The Shaping of Modern Austria and Hungary, 1918-1922. (East European Monographs), 2001.

d. Nominations

Three positions on our executive committee (Mario Fenyo's and György Péteri's) and that of the Secretary/Treasurer (namely mine) will expire in December of this year. If you would like to serve or would like to nominate someone, please contact Alice Freifeld. (freifeld@history.ufl.edu). Thank you.



2. Publications by our members

István Deák's review of "Jews and Catholics: An Exchange" by A. F. Crispin and David Kertzer in the March 13, 2003 issue of *The New York Review of Books*.

(An interview with István Deák was published in the July 19, 2003 issue of *Népszabadság*. <http://www.nepszabadsag.hu/Default.asp?DocCollID=122074&DocID=109011#109011>)

Johanna Granville reported that she received the Campbell National Fellowship for 2003-2004, to conduct research on her second book at the Hoover Institution, Stanford University. (Only eight people received it this year (!)) The second book, is tentatively titled, International Influences and Repercussions of the Hungarian Revolution of 1956: The Roles of East Germany, Romania, Austria, and the United States. Her first book, The First Domino: International Decision Making in the 1956 Hungarian Crisis, will be published by Texas A & M U. Press in January 2004.

She also reviewed Zsuzsanna Kőrösi's and Adrienne Molnár's, Carrying a Secret in My Heart: Children of the Victims of the Reprisals after the Hungarian Revolution in 1956, (Budapest: Central European University Press. 2003) for HABSBUrg.

She also reviewed for *The Hungarian Quarterly* the documentary collection edited by Csaba Békés and Malcolm Byrne, The 1956 Hungarian Revolution: A History in Documents (CEU Press, 2002.)

Congratulations from all of us!

Tibor Frank: "Dreaming Peace, Making War, The Budapest Conversations of U.S. Minister John F. Montgomery, 1934-1941" (*The Hungarian Quarterly*, Winter, 2002)

Emese Ivan delivered a paper titled "Hungarian Sport Policy 1998-2004" at the Conference of the Hungarian Studies Association of Canada, in Halifax on June 28th, 2003.

Béla Király, Iratok az Emmigrációról (Budapest, Atlanti Kutató és Kiadó, 2003)
_____, Forradalom folytatása Ázsiában, 1961. (Budapest, Atlanti Kutató és Kiadó, 2003)
(To order contact Béla Király directly through email: bela_kiraly@hotmail.com)

Ivan Sanders' review titled "Bittersweet Home" is an evaluation of In the Land of Hagar. The Jews of Hungary: History, Society and Culture. Edited by Anna Szalai. Tel Aviv, Beth Hatefutsoth, The Nahum Goldman Museum of the Jewish Diaspora and the Israeli Ministry of Defense Publishing House, 304 pp., illustrated. (*The Hungarian Quarterly*, Summer, 2003)

Steven Béla Várdy's review "Images, Perceptions, Individuals" is an evaluation of Tibor Frank's Ethnicity, Propaganda, Myth-Making. Studies in Hungarian Connections to Britain and America, 1848-1945. Budapest, Akadémiai Kiadó, 1999. 391 pp., name index. (*The Hungarian Quarterly*, Summer, 2003)

Gabor Vermes; "Tisza István Világnézete." *Történelmi Szemle* 43, no.3-4 (2001), 287-298.
_____; "Retreat and Preparation: The Prelude to Hungary's Age of Reform." *Hungarian Studies* 16, no.2 (2002), 263-276.

Jeffrey S. Kopstein and **Jason Wittenberg**, "Who Voted Communist? Reconsidering the Social Bases of Radicalism in Interwar Poland" in *Slavic Review*, Vol. 62, #1 (2003), 87-110.



3. To make this Newsletter somewhat more interesting, I would like to include short contributions by members on teaching. Barnabas Racz has agreed to start this column with this most fascinating article.

Teaching U.S. Government and Politics in Hungary 1988 – 2003

Under the lengthening shadows of the late Kádár years, the scope of free scholarship began to slowly grow but it was still a stifling atmosphere needing a lot of caution by academics. In the aftermath of the 1985 elections, I worked on several research projects, which put me in touch with the *Hazaifias Népfront* office on the Belgrád rakpart. Coincidentally, I met there, István Kukorelli who did some work for the Népfront while he was a faculty member at ELTE Constitutional Law Department.¹ We established that we were working along parallel lines about the 1985 elections and the parliamentary infrastructure, including the standing committees' expanding role. After several unplanned meetings, it came up that perhaps I could give some (informal) presentation on an ad hoc basis to law students about U.S. governmental/constitutional institutions. It was a cautious approach on both sides; the ELTE Law School was not ready for what could be dubbed in the eyes of political correctness as a "pro-America" approach, and I was hesitant to be too critical of the reform-communist system lest I lose the opening for an entree. However, my first presentation was very well received and it became the fountainhead of a new enterprise: regular invitations to various academic institutions.

On the first occasion – it was an evening class in an auditorium (Egyetem tér), I remembered very well from my student years, the professor who introduced me made it clear that they "did not invite me but I offered to talk to them". The aura of timidity was still there. The students were deadly silent and obviously awed by the sight of an American professor. It was not mentioned that I left in 1956. I myself felt the sensitive nature of talking to a still "socialist" university student body about the U.S. Constitution and separation of powers (the latter was a regular feature of MSZMP reform talks during these last years). I received tremendous applause (banging the desks). When walking home in the rain and looking down from the Vár at the sparkling lights of the City, I suddenly felt an euphoria: recalling crossing the border in November 1956 and here I was returning to my alma mater as a U.S. professor talking about American political institutions.

It was 1988 and soon my visits became regular, twice a year, at the ELTE Constitutional Law Department, the Public Administration Academy, the Anglo-American Institute, the Szeged University School of Law and Department of Philosophy, the Bibó College and Századvég seminar and some other ad hoc presentations elsewhere over a 15-year period. With the receiving academic institutes, we usually coordinated the preferred topics: the key principles of the U.S. Constitution, separation of powers and checks and balances, the federal judicial system, political parties, questions of federalism, congressional and presidential elections. In 15 years I worked with all elections.

In subsequent years I was not the only foreign visitor: there were quite a few guest lecturers from various Western countries, but perhaps I was almost the only one who could fluently present in Hungarian (up to the early 1990's the foreign language and especially English proficiency in Hungary was very weak) and who was familiar with the Hungarian culture, the Party-state world and who was

also thoroughly familiar with the American society and its political-social institutions. In the phase of early transition, I approached the Hungarian problems not from without but from within. I did not come to “teach down democracy” and paid respect to the legal and political culture of the country, which goes back to hundreds of years. Consequently, I did not “advise” them how to build a democratic system. Instead I used an institution by institution comparative method; I did not refrain from some criticism of American institutions and presented the issues as we deal with them at home in the U.S. I took a moderate empirical line and the response I received attested to the success of my careful approach.

The law faculty I was in touch with was generally receptive, especially the constitutional/comparative specialists, however, the overall reaction by students was mixed. Up to the early 1990’s there was a higher interest in U.S. politics and government than in the latter years. Furthermore it appeared to me that Hungarian ego-centrism and justified pride in their own legal culture began to produce some resentment. The President of the Parliament in 1994 commented: “there is an American lawyer delegation in Parliament today and they came to teach us how to fish in the Danube”. Undoubtedly, there was ample truth in this perception: the foreign emissaries usually had little or no insight about the history and (legal) culture of the country. As time went by in the late 1990’s and after 2000, the interest became more confined to constitutional law specialists who frequently set in on my presentations.

It was natural for me to state that I am politically independent in the U.S. and “party neutral” in Hungary; this helped me to establish my scholarly objectivity, but it was not a one hundred percent shield against some skeptics. The most fascinating aspect of my presentations was that inevitably I became a one-person United States: in the discussions I could count on almost any question about any aspect of the American life which interested the students tremendously. These questions could range from medical services to the local dog-catcher, from university costs to sexual relations. Usually, depending on my topic(s), I tried to anticipate the probable directions of such inquiries, but I never could be totally prepared for surprises. Overall, I felt it was undesirable to say, “I don’t know” but when I occasionally announced this, it was accepted with respect. Freedom of expression in academic institutions is wider than in the U.S., where political correctness and other sensitivities reduced the scale of uninhibited self-expression.

My continued work resulted in collateral benefits in expanding my political contacts so significant for my research of Hungarian politics. Through my faculty and administration ties, I was able to build working relationships with a wide circle of political elite(s). These included virtually the entire top echelons of the Socialist Party (MSZP), the free Democrats (SZDSZ) and to a lesser extent the Democratic Forum (MDF), the FIDESZ and the Workers’ Party (MP) – only the Smallholders

(FKP) were missing from the collage. I could sit in some parliamentary committee and party congress proceedings including the multi-party constitutional revision task force in the mid-nineties.²

I found it first surprising and then rather evident that there is almost nothing impossible in comparison between David and Goliath.³ There is no need to advocate American primacy in democratic procedures, but proposals for model studies both ways are well justified. The election systems are basically different due to the political cultures, but cross fertilizations ought not be excluded. Perhaps the U.S. is less ready to consider European examples of governmental structures, while the Hungarians are more willing to adjust to European and to a lesser extent American models (of political institutions).

By circumstance as well as my interest in law, I chose to work mostly with the schools of law and their constitutional law departments. I found that transitology models in their often artificial abstractions are not always helpful in comparative approaches; with due respect to theoretical models their authors often have but scant knowledge of the post-communist societies they write about. Thus I followed an approach centered on empirical and institutional analyses with a political behavior screen in the background. When I was able to demonstrate my knowledge of Hungarian sources as well as current happenings in their society, familiarity with their parties' infrastructure and inherent frictions, this helped me to reach my audience and make my American material better accepted. Occasionally I could argue for the more than satisfactory quality of the Hungarian political process (e.g. voter participation, campaign financing, the carefully calibrated electoral law) which was truly appreciated by the students and faculty. With the latter, we frequently continued our interesting brainstorming discussions at lunch or dinner where they were the hosts.⁴ I was thoroughly impressed by my colleagues' professional commitment and productivity; legal and political science literature is of high quality and they adapted themselves to the open western research methods remarkably fast and successfully. Furthermore, they are more free from academic snobbism and do not hesitate to use humor and self-humor more than our American academics here.

The world of higher education changed dramatically since 1988. At that time, the authoritarian atmosphere still pervaded the universities and perhaps also due to tradition, the relationship between professors and students was distant and never confrontational. (Un)fortunately this became westernized too, and the influx of ever more students into the system contributed to the watering down of the standards and the changing relationship with faculty.⁵ The style of questions and the background motivations behind comments by 2002 was substantively different: challenging authority, questioning the usefulness of knowledge of the far away American institutions and so on. Politics also entered the picture: the spreading anti-Americanism in Europe found its way into student thinking, yet they all would want to come to see us if not staying with us. This phenomenon also ties to the changing

motives of higher studies: from pursuit of knowledge, they too went over to the pursuit of modern party membership cards: the diploma. Regrettably, they will be surprised when they find out that the party-card does not tie to a job secured. The most skeptical questions I received in the Fall of 2002 were, of course, about the Bush Administration, the policy of pre-emption, Iraq and the war.⁶ However, by no means do I suggest that this was the typical attitude. On the contrary, I found a lot of sympathy for the dilemmas of the U.S. superpower status, a lot of interest in international law/UN questions relating to the war in general and specifically in our constitutional principles governing the war power. Yet there were more open criticisms if not resentment expressed by students, often related to Hungarian political party differences in the issues.

Looking back on fifteen years' scholarly work, including both teaching and research, it appears to have been a productive enriching experience.⁷ Regular interactions with students and renown faculty, substantive contacts with different elite(s), politicians of various parties, cab drivers and countless "real people" at the grass roots, sculpted my empirical assessment of the continuing post-communist fermentation of the Hungarian society. The varied sources of information not excluding of course media and academic literature in Hungary and here, all met in focus and helped me to formulate hypotheses about current and anticipated trends. I rarely missed the expected U.S. election results and was mostly on target with the Hungarian equivalents with a notable exception: the 1998 replacement of the socialist-liberal coalition with the skillfully maneuvered right-of-center victory of Fidesz. In all honesty, the 2002 down to the wire campaign was also difficult to predict but eventually it turned out as I saw it.⁸

Today, teaching and research is less exciting than it was in the waning years of the party-state and the early transition times. Yet, if there is a sustained interest, I am ready to continue to transfer knowledge of the 200 plus year old American constitutional and political institutions and in turn, learn from the Hungarian experiences. The future will provide the answer - as it always does.

Barnabas Racz
Eastern Michigan University

Notes

- ¹ Professor István Kukorelli, later Head of the Constitutional Law Department, currently judge of the Constitutional Court (Alkotmánybíróság).
- ² These interview situations yielded fruitful results and included the presidents of the MSZP, SZDSZ and the MP. In the late Kádár years, I was able to meet János Péter, former foreign minister and then President of the Parliament, all standing committee chairs and Károly Grósz, prime minister. J. Péter offered me a seat in his office pointing out that "President Nixon set in this chair" and László Pesta, the Head of the Health Committee and also President of the Hungarian section of the Interparliamentary Union, declared to me in 1988: "I don't like parliaments where there are different political parties". Naturally the interviewer was not in a "democratic" situation to

generate a confrontation – but these scenarios were exciting and offered me an opportunity to look behind the facades.

- ³ See for example Kissné Novák Éva & Barnabas Racz, Nemzettudat és Kollektív Emlékezet Magyarországon és az Egyesült Államokban (Canadian Association of Hungarian Studies, CAHS, Toronto, 2001).
- ⁴ University faculty complain about their low salaries and limited research resources. My experience convinced me that this is overstated and that scholarly travels are relatively better supported than at U.S. academic institutions: the Hungarians are truly globe-trotters.
- ⁵ Note taking by students on the average was active especially when the host professor announced that the material will be subject of exams.
- ⁶ Sporadically right extremist, anti-semitic, and racist allusions could be also heard.
- ⁷ My teaching and research was supported by the Department of Political Science and the World College at Eastern Michigan University, as well as by the host institutions.
- ⁸ See Barnabas Racz, “The Left in Hungary and the 2002 Parliamentary Elections”, Europe-Asia Studies, 55, No. 5, 2003, pp. 747-769.



4. Miscellaneous

I was asked to share the following four announcements with everyone.

a. The University of Florida invites applications for a half-time lecturing position in introduction to modern Hungarian at the University of Florida.

The position would most likely be housed in the Department of Germanic and Slavic Studies, but would be funded by the new Center for European Studies (CES) at a nine-month rate of \$16,000 with some provision for fringe benefits. The position is envisioned as an opportunity for an advanced graduate student with sufficient language fluency and linguistic training to pursue their research while also assisting the University of Florida in establishing a program in Hungarian. Currently the position is funded at the 50% level for two to three years. The Center's goal is to make this a full time position, but no firm commitments can be made at this time and the ultimate deciding factors will be student interest and availability of funding.

Send letter of interest, CV, and letters of recommendation to Dr. Alice Freifeld, Search Committee Chair, Department of History, PO Box 117320, Gainesville, FL 32611. If applying from abroad, also email letters and CV to freifeld@history.ufl.edu. The deadline for application is November 15, 2003, but applications will be considered until the position is filled.

b. A HOLLANDIAI MIKES KELEMEN KÖR 2003 szeptember 11. es 14. között rendez meg 44. Tanulmányi Napok konferenciáját a hollandiai Elspeet-ben. A negy napos konferencia témája: 'UJ ATLANTISZ – Jelenünk es jövőnk kulturvilágaink tavlataiban'

A konferencia programja es tovabbi reszletes informacio a Mikes Tanulmányi Napok honlapjan olvashato. A meghivo, a jelentkezési lap es az eloadok rovid eletrajza PDF-formatumban letoltheto a honlaprol: <http://www.federatio.org/mikes3.html>

Tovabba felhívjuk figyelmet a 'Mikes International' internetes folyoiratunkra es elektronikus konyvkiadonkra: http://www.federatio.org/mikes_int.html

Ha szeretne kapni a 'Mikes International' korleveleit, kerjuk kuldjon egy email-t a kovetkezo cimre: mikes_int@federatio.org

A Tanulmányi Napokra szeretettel varjuk. A szeptemberi viszontlatas remenyeben, szives udvozzlettel, A Hollandiai Mikes Kelemen Kor vezetosege neveben

Csanady Agnes

c. Kedves Glanzs Zsuzsa! (Anna Légmán's email address: hold06@freemail.hu)

Frissen végzett szociológusok vagyunk és tervezett PhD. témánk szorosan kapcsolódik egy az Önök által szervezett konferencia témájához (Magyarok a nagyvilágban). Röviden: A kutatás címe "Akik elmentek és akik maradtak"- olyan testvérpárokka szeretnénk narratív életút interjút készíteni, akik közül az egyik fél a kádár-rendszer idején emigrált Amerikába, a másik testvér viszont itthon maradt. Bemutatnánk, hogy a hasonló családi, kulturális háttérű személyek életében hogyan jelenik meg az emigráció, vagy annak elutasítása, és hogy ez hogyan befolyásolja életútjukat, identitásuk alakulását, mai képüket a múlttól, Magyarországról..... A mikro megközelítés push és pull faktorait szeretnénk narratív interjú technikával készített interjúkon keresztül bemutatni. Hogy milyen eltérő stratégiákat alkalmaznak a testvérpárok egykori döntésük igazolására.

Szeretnénk a segítségét kérni. Minden olyan ötlet, amely a kutatási tervünk megvalósítását előre viheti óriási segítséget jelentene. (A kutatással kapcsolatban még annyit, hogy én készíteném az itthonmaradókkal az interjúkat, Bori pedig az Egyesült Államokban, mivel férje révén, (akit felvettek az Egyesült Államokban egy filmiskola posztgraduális képzésére) szeptembertől lehetősége lesz Los Angelesben tölteni egy évet, tehát tulajdonképpen "helyben" lesz.)

Előre is köszönjük a segítségét.

Tisztelettel:

Légmán Anna és Fernezelyi Bori

Please contact these young sociologists if you can participate or know of anyone who can. Anna Légmán's email address is hold06@freemail.hu

d. Hungarian Studies Review, Vol. XXIX, Nos. 1B2 (2002) is at the printers.

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e. The following members will participate at the AAASS conference in Toronto.

Crossing the Finish Line: The EU and Hungary

Chair: Barnabas A. Racz, Eastern Michigan U

Papers: György Csepeli, Eötvös Loránd U (Hungary) “Europe as Superordinate Goal”
 Katalin Fabian, Lafayette College, “Changing Attitudes and Changing Laws On Domestic Violence in Central Europe”
 Susan Glanz, St John’s U “Social Cost of EU Accession for Hungary”

Discussant: Béla Bodó, U of South Florida

Political Kitsch in Nineteenth-, and Twentieth-Century Eastern Europe

Discussants: Alice Freifeld, U of Florida and Sarah Anne Kent, U of Wisconsin, Stevens Point

East Central Europe at the Threshold of the European Union Membership: Challenges

Papers: Zsuzsa Csergo, George Washington U and Kevin Deegan Krause, Wayne State U
 “What Happens to Liberalism on the Road to a United Europe? Hungary in a Comparative Perspective”

“Genre” in Russian Cinema

Discussant: Catherine E. Portuges, U of Massachusetts, Amherst

Imre Kertész, the 2002 Nobel Prizewinner for Literature

(Sponsored by us, the American Association for the Study of Hungarian History)

Chair: András Gerő, Eötvös Loránd U (Hungary)

Participants: Peter Bergmann, U of Connecticut
 Alice Freifeld, U of Florida
 Ivan Sanders, Columbia U
 Peter Szirak, Kossuth Lajos U (Hungary)

Images of Ukraine in Fiction and Art

Papers: Federigo Argentieri, John Cabot U (Italy) “Gogol’s ‘Taras Bulba’ and Its Adaptations: A Differentiated Approach to Ukrainian History”

Identities, Representations and Mediated Narratives

Chair: Katalin Fabian, Lafayette College

Papers: András Gerö, Eötvös Loránd U (Hungary) “Anti-Semitic Discourse in Hungary”

Beverly A. James, U of New Hampshire “Visual Media and Mythic Revision: Atrocities in Hungary’s 1956 Revolution”

Catherine E. Portuges, U of Massachusetts, Amherst “Ambivalent Trajectory: Imre Kertész and the Nobel Prize in Hungary”

Discussant: János Mazsu, KLTE U of Debrecen (Hungary)

Religion, Violence, and National Boundaries in Central Europe, 1880–1918

Papers: Paul Hanebrink, Rutgers U, “Religion, The Christian Nation, and the ‘Judaeo-Bolshevik Menace’ in Hungary, 1918–1920”

Robert Nemes, Colgate U, “Anti-Semitic Disturbances in Hungary in the 1880s”

Discussant: Howard Lupovitch, Colby College

New Research in Ukraine on the Famine of 1933

Discussant: Federigo Argentieri, John Cabot U (Italy)

Nationalism and Economic Development: Bohemia, Croatia, and Greece in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries

Paper: Sarah Anne Kent, U of Wisconsin, Stevens Point “Does Nationalism Promote Economic Development: Croatia under Count Karl Khun-Héderváry”

Emotions and Dictatorship: Emotional Codes and Affective Expressiveness in Stalinist Regimes

Paper: Árpád von Klimó, Humboldt U (Germany) “Hate and Love: Hungarian Stalinism and the Emotions of October ‘56”

Soviet and German Influence on Hungary, 1918–1956

Chair: Peter Pastor, Montclair State U

Papers: Johanna Granville, Stanford U, “The Influence of East Germany on the Hungarian Revolution of 1956”

Peter Kenez, UC, Santa Cruz, “Russians in Hungary in 1945”

John C. Swanson, Syracuse U, Utica College, “Germany’s Germans: The German Minority in Hungary, 1918–1945”

Hero-Models in Former Nazi Allied Countries

Paper: Béla Bodó, U of South Florida, “Fascist Parties in Nazi Allied States in Pre-World War II”

Hungarian-Russian Relations 1848–1941

Chair: Susan Glanz, St John’s U

Papers: Peter I. Hidas, McGill U, “Prelude to Crimea: The Russian Army in Hungary (1848- 1849)”

Peter Pastor, Montclair State U, “Hungarian-Soviet Diplomatic Relations, 1935–1941”

Graydon A. Tunstall, Jr., U of South Florida, “The Carpathian Winter War, 1915”

Discussant: Peter Kenez, UC, Santa Cruz

Images of Violence in Late Imperial Vienna, Prague, and Budapest

Chair: John C. Swanson, Utica College of Syracuse U

European Expansion and the States of Central and Southeast Europe

Discussant: Zsuzsa Csergo, George Washington U

Reaching a Wider Audience: Innovation in East European Historiography

Chair: Paul Hanebrink, Rutgers U, New Brunswick

Participant: Mark Pittaway, The Open U (UK)



Have a pleasant semester.

Susan