

AASHH

American Association for the Study of Hungarian History

December 2003

NEWSLETTER

1. Minutes of the last Business Meeting

The 2nd Business Meeting for the calendar year was held concurrently with the AAASS Conference in Toronto, CA on Friday, November 21, 2003.

The meeting was chaired by Alice Freifeld and began at 9 pm.

His Excellency, András Simonyi, Hungarian Ambassador to the USA, addressed the members present. He spoke of Hungary's success in total integration into NATO and expectations from full-membership in the European Union.

The decision of the Book Award Committee (Alice Freifeld, Lee Congdon and Paul Hatos) was to give the prize to Nora Berend's *At the Gate of Christendom: Jews, Muslims and 'Pagans' in Medieval Hungary, c. 1000-c. 1300*. (Cambridge Studies in Medieval Life and Thought, number 50.) New York: Cambridge U. Press. 2001. pp. xvii, 340.

During the month of December we have to hold elections. On December 31st Mario Fenyo's and György Peteri's term on the Executive Board, and my term as Secretary/Treasurer will expire. On January 1st Gabor Vermes will automatically become President of this association.

For VP _____ has been nominated, for the two Executive Board positions Beverly James and _____ has been nominated. I have been renominated as secretary. If you would like to serve or nominate someone, please email their names to me. (glanzs@stjohns.edu)

36th AAASS will be held in Boston, Marriott Copley Plaza, 3-6 December 2004. Organizers should observe the following rules:

- no participant may serve more than one role on a panel or roundtable
- no participant should present more than one paper
- no participant should appear more than twice in the convention program.

It is time to begin preparing proposals for the next year's panels and roundtables. Proposals should be submitted to the AAASS national office by **15 JANUARY 2004**. Two hard copies of the proposal form (available in the AAASS *NewsNet* and <http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~aaass>) and one copy of a brief C.V. for each participant should be sent to: WENDY WALKER, Convention Coordinator, AAASS, 8 STORY STREET, CAMBRIDGE, MA 02138.

To date the following proposals have been suggested:

1. **Tom Lorman:** (tomlorman@hotmail.com)"The Influence of the Army on Domestic Politics in Hungary, 1921-1924."
2. **Catherine Portuges:** (portuges@complit.umass.edu) suggested three potential topics
a) HUNGARIAN HISTORY ON FILM: PETER FORGACS' "A BIBÓ READER"

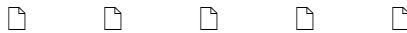
- b) CINEMATIC BUDAPEST
- c) THE HOLOCAUST IN HUNGARIAN CINEMA

3. **Mario Fenyo's** (mario.fenyo@bowiestate.edu) suggested topic is "East Europeans in Africa".

If you are interested in joining any of the suggested panels, please contact the panel organizer or me, so that we can put the panel together and submit it on time.

The meeting ended at 10.30 pm with a small reception.

Susan



In the previous issue of the *Newsletter* I asked members to submit short essays on their experiences on teaching. This submission is from János Bak.

Teaching (mainly not Hungarian) medieval studies at CEU

Since some of the members of AASHH may remember me, but may not have heard of (or at least from) me for a while, let me start by reporting that I became emeritus at UBC, Vancouver in 1993, by which time I had been for a few years ("commuting" from Canada) one of the directors of the 1989 (re-)founded Institute for the History of the 1956 Hungarian Revolution in Budapest. However, in that year the opportunity came up to work in my own field—in an English-language university of American style, to which I got used during the preceding 25 years. An offer I could not refuse. Thus, with a few younger Hungarian colleagues (mainly the historians Gábor Klaniczay and Gerhard Jaritz, and the archaeologists József Laszlovszky) we sat down to "dream up" a graduate program in interdisciplinary medieval studies within the recently founded and Soros-financed Central European University, and I changed over (back, as it were) to medieval from contemporary history. During the ten years, which we have just completed, more than 250 students from 30 countries (among them 62 Hungarians, including those from Transylvania) earned an MA and 22 a PhD in Medieval Studies. Our department is in fact the largest interdisciplinary one in this field (with annually 20-25 entering candidates for the one-year MA and 40-50 working on their PhD) and certainly unique in the region (and even in all of Europe). I hardly need to tell how exciting and exhilarating it is to build up a curriculum of one's own choice, with courses, requirements, and formats that one has always dreamt of.

I managed to pursue some of my old projects on the side, such as the continuation of the *Decreta Regni Mediaevalis Hungariae* series: vol. 3 for the time of Matthias came out in 1996; 2d revised ed. of vol. 1 in 1999; the *Tripartitum*, as vol. 5 is as good as done, while we have postponed the difficult vol. 4 for the Jagiellonian decades. (DRMH is now also distributed by CEU Press, but I am glad to arrange for copies for AASHH-members or their libraries at reduced price. Those who had purchased vol. 1, old edition and did not receive a revised one free, should let me know!) A surprise-Festschrift for my seventieth birthday in 1999 (B. Nagy, M. Sebök, eds., Budapest: CEU Press) contains a full bibliography of my minor writings up to that date. Among the honours I received for my gray hair was my election last years to Corresponding Fellow of the (British) Royal Historical Society. So much for personalia.

As I suggested in the title, I am not teaching much Hungarian medieval history, although one of our major research projects—connected to a number of MA theses and PhD dissertations—was about the nobility in central Europe, in which, of course, Hungary took center stage, but the participants came also from Croatia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovenia, and Ukraine. (A selection of papers from the "workshop of young historians" in this subject was recently published, in German,

in the journal *East Central Europe/l'Europe du centre-est: Eine wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift*, 29, 2002, 131-248)

“Teaching” at an exclusively graduate school means, above all, guidance and consultation for the research towards the theses and dissertations. As our visiting professor from UCLA, Patrick Geary put it (in an album we published earlier this year for the *Ten Years of Medieval Studies at CEU*) the strength of our department is that “the faculty is there, . . . and is there for the students.” Courses are in a way secondary, or in other words: they are serving as background for the research of the MA and PhD candidates—and indicate, what kind of things we like to talk about. While I am regularly coordinating a team-taught seminar on handbooks and bibliography of medieval studies (a rather heavy course, 4 credits, two 100-minute classes per week in the Fall semester) I also offer various special seminars usually on my hobbies, such as “Signs and Symbols of Power” and “Law and Custom in Central Europe.” What I enjoy most are the translation seminars, connected to our publication series, Central European Medieval Texts (CEMT, CEU Press, 1999 sqq.), usually held together with Latinist colleagues. We spent a couple of years on Simon of Kéza’s *Gesta Hungarorum*, less on the *Autobiography of Charles IV*, but an inordinate amount of time on the recently published third volume, the anonymous *Gesta principum Polonorum*. Discussing the implications of the Latin text, finding the best English words, preparing annotations by also discussing previous scholarship make up a real “seminar” in its classical style of common scholarly work. The international background of our students and the excellent Latin of many of them are unique resources. (My Grecist colleagues also have similar seminars on Byzantine texts or on the Greek Fathers.) We are now working on the *Historia Salonitana* of Thomas archdeacon of Split, on a hagiographic collection, and soon will turn (back) to Hungarian narratives, either to the *Gesta* of the Anonymus (*Bele regis notarius*) or to the “National Chronicle” (*Comp. chron. saec. xiv*). They, too promise to be interesting subjects for the seminars. We have now designed a pair of new research-methods’ seminars: MA candidates with a background in non-textual evidence (art, archaeology, etc.) will have to take a hands-on course on texts (similar to our translation seminars, but with a number of different type texts), and vice-versa, the textually trained historians and literary scholars will have to do the same on excavation reports, images, architectural studies. “Reading the Middle Ages”—in both ways. No feedback yet. But I am very much looking forward to the results in terms of interdisciplinarity as well as in the discovery of “hidden” diplomatic geniuses.

However, the main point here is to be available for discussions about the students’ research projects. They have a very difficult task. The Masters’ program implies that besides taking courses (30 credits, i.e. so many times twelve 100-minute classes or rather seminars), many of which require weekly assignments or a major presentation, they have to prepare, present and defend viva voce an MA thesis within nine months’ time, in a language that is mostly not their native tongue, and is written in a format and style usually entirely new to them. Quite a task! This means that the MA candidates have to have from the outset a reasonably good idea—and some essential source material, be it written or archaeological-monumental—about their topic, otherwise they cannot succeed. And they need fairly good basic training, as we cannot offer that in the short time. Most Central and East European students have (still) a good professional basis upon arrival, however, usually in one specific field. But while at CEU, they have to get acquainted with “medieval studies” in general—beyond that basic technical introduction I described above. (I have to add that the few North-American MA candidates with a BA, whom we had in the program, had difficulty to match their fellows from this corner of the world—if they ever did. Several did not.) As you may appreciate, the most difficult task is to “liberate” our young colleagues from the limited national (and often nationalist) perspective of their earlier training. And acquaint them with those new approaches that have characterized medieval research west of the Odera (or the Rhine?) in the last half century.

Just a few examples. S.Rybak. arrived from Kiev with the (unrealistic but traditional) idea of writing a thesis about the landed properties of the Sangushko princes. Not only would that have needed years in the archives, but would have probably been rather boring, even if not useless. While discussing the topic, we decided to explore the legal procedure following the murder of one of the

princes. The end result was a very interesting study on the overlapping and conflicting jurisdictions of local and central courts and of the legal system in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and the Polish “crown,” as well as on the social and political conditions in late medieval and early modern Galicia. U. Kananovich from Minsk (who had already written at home one of the hundreds of well-researched theses on diplomatic history) recognized the use of historical anthropology, and presented interesting insights into the intricate use of symbology in the interaction of Christian (Orthodox) princes with “pagan” nomad (Mongol, etc.) rulers. G. Virágos, an archaeologist, started out with the description of excavations of a site in Pomáz, near Buda, and ended up with a dissertation combining archival evidence with material remnants on “noble residences” in medieval Hungary, suggesting (especially in comparison with England, where he was able to spend half a year on CEU scholarship) an appropriate new classification for these building complexes. Or R. Kostova from Sofia (who then wrote a fine dissertation on early medieval Bulgarian monasticism) explored first the meaning of graffiti on the walls (ruins) of monasteries, scribbled by pilgrims and monks, as a form of “non-verbal communication.” Then there are the discoveries due to the wide range of geographical-linguistic background of our students, who establish hitherto unstudied Georgian or Armenian versions of patristic literature or Caucasian sources for the early history of the proto-Hungarians, and so on.

On a more pedestrian level, it is a joy to see young people arriving in September, often (though nowadays less frequently) for the first time abroad from rather conservative surroundings (even if they are “post-Communist”), pretty lost in the new conditions (two foreign languages—English and Magyar—around them, a different style university, strange spicy food, and so on), and by April/May at the latest becoming what may be called “young Europeans,” in the jeans-and-T-shirt uniform of university folk between here and Los Angeles, ready to apply for scholarships around the world, and talking about international conferences in Leeds, Kalamazoo, Spoleto, whathaveyou. Are we “teaching” all this? In a manner of speaking, yes. By our way and mode of interaction between faculty and students, which we may call “American-informal,” we are still a rarity, even in Budapest. The amount of time and attention we are able to devote to them (surely, not unconnected to our salaries, still quite competitive in the region) is significantly more than is usual at most European universities. Take this, if you wish, as a mild complaint of one, who after half a century in academic service sometimes finds the burden a bit too much . . . but, to put it simply: it’s fun.

Finally, we perceive as a major task of our program to make issues and results of research on central Europe better known abroad. To begin with, by helping our young colleagues produce theses and dissertations in English (and also publishing some of their work in our *Annual of Medieval Studies at CEU*, vol. 1-9, so far) and to present these findings at international conferences. Then, we have compiled a number of bibliographies and other *Hilfsmittel* for the study of this region, mostly with the expert assistance of students from the different countries. Members of AASHH will know how useful those things may be. (Some of them are available on the department’s homepage: <http://www.ceu.hu/medstud>, more will be on it, soon.) And on a wider scale: by encouraging medievalists with a usually one-sided and conservative training to apply contemporary methods and address the up-to-date questions of the international discussions of the (with their own specific knowledge of local or regional data!) we hope to be able to place the region’s past on the “map” of worldwide scholarship. Or, as my friend Klaniczay put it (in his article in the Soros-Festschrift, *The Paradoxes of Unintentional Consequences*, pp. 251-64), invent or discover medieval central Europe. And that’s not an easy task for all of us.

János M. Bak (jmbak@ceu.hu)



Publications by our members:

Adair, Bianca L., Interest Articulation in Communist Regimes: The New Economic Mechanism in Hungary, 1962-1980. *East European Quarterly*, Spring 2003, Vol. 37 Issue 1, p101, 26p;

Bodo, Bela, Foreign Students in Nazi Germany, *East European Quarterly*, Spring 2003, Vol. 37 Issue 1, p19, 32p;

Frank, Tibor: Roosevelt követe Budapesten, John F. Montgomery bizalmas politikai beszélgetései 1934-1941 (Budapest: Corvina, 2002), 351 p.

_____ : Discussing Hitler: Advisers of U.S. Diplomacy in Central Europe, 1934-1941. (Budapest: CEU Press, 2003), 374 p.

_____ : From Habsburg Agent to Victorian Scholar: G. G. Zerffi (1820-1892) (East European Monographs--Columbia University Press, 2000), x, 469 p.

_____ : Ein Diener seiner Herren, Werdegang des österreichischen Geheimagenten Gustav Zerffi (1820-1892)(Wien-Köln-Weimar: Böhlau Verlag, 2002), 315 p.

[INTEREST ARTICULATION IN COMMUNIST REGIMES: THE NEW ECONOMIC MECHANISM IN HUNGARY, 1962-1980.](#) By: [FOREIGN STUDENTS IN NAZI GERMANY.](#) By: Bodo, Bela. **East European Quarterly**, Spring2003, Vol. 37 Issue 1, p19, 32p; (AN 9594672)

Hi Susan. There is a historian now living in Cincinnati who has published
>several articles on Hungarian history and has his degree from the
>University of London. His name is Tom Lorman. He wants to join AASHH. You
>can contact him at tomlorman@hotmail.com. He specializes in interwar
>Hungary, and would be interested in joining a panel at the 2004 AAASS
>meeting in Boston. His proposed paper is "The Influence of the Army on
>Domestic Politics in Hungary, 1921-1924," but he can do other topics as
>well. Perhaps there are others who would like to contribute papers to a
>panel on inter-war Hungary. I would be willing to chair such a panel.
>Could you send out this idea in your next newsletter? I will not be at the
>Toronto meeting (still bogged down here with my duties as department head)
>but will be in Boston for sure.

National Council for Eurasian and East European Research

Short-Term Travel Grants for Research in Central Asia, the Caucasus, and the Balkans

Public Announcement

Deadline: December 15, 2003

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Background

The National Council for Eurasian and East European Research (NCEEER) announces the creation of the Short-term Travel Grant Program for Research on Central Asia, the Caucasus, and the Balkans. This fellowship provides a maximum award of \$3,000 for research on the countries of Central Asia, the Caucasus, and the Balkans. To qualify, applicants must be U.S.-based scholars or researchers holding a Ph.D in any discipline of the humanities and social sciences or other professional terminal graduate degree.

Purposes and Requirements

Short-term travel grants are individual grants to scholars which may be used for up to two months for the following purposes: 1) enabling scholars to get quick access to research resources in the relevant subregions; 2) use the travel grant for refresher visits on particular topics for already established research work; 3) research planning with colleagues from the subregions on broader multi-year projects already funded or to be funded by other sources; 4) creation of databases or research aids such as archival guides; and 5) on an exceptional basis, inviting scholars from the subregions to the United States for conferences special collaborative research opportunities.

The Short-Term Travel Grant program is meant to support research that is relevant to United States policy towards Central Asia, the Caucasus, and the Balkans. Applicants may apply a broad definition of “policy relevance.” Research that is “policy relevant” does not necessarily need to focus directly on a matter of current and intense concern to U.S. government policy makers. Projects in fields such as history, popular culture, and other matters that may be outside the immediate purview of government officials are eligible for funding, as long as the applicant explains convincingly why the research is relevant at some level, even indirectly, to the formation of policy.

The deadline for submission of applications is December 15, 2003. NCEEER's peer review selection committee will judge the competition and applicants will be notified of the outcome by February 1, 2004.

Applicants should emphasize in no more than four pages, double-spaced, 12-point font, the following information:

- 1) the nature of research to be conducted;
- 2) need for research to be conducted in-country and feasibility;
- 3) level of language proficiency in vernacular languages of the subregion, and/or Russian and;
- 4) in the case of an invitation to an international scholar travel to the United States, the stated purpose of the visit and a detailed research justification for such a visit

Cost-sharing by the applicant is strongly encouraged.

Successful applicants will be required to submit a final report to NCEEER, and may be asked to present the results of research and other programmatic experiences in a public forum sponsored by NCEEER and the Department of State. Costs associated with such a forum will not be borne by the applicant. Please note that research reports submitted to NCEEER for scholars' projects may be considered for publication in the journal *Problems of Post-Communism*.

About NCEEER

NCEEER was created in 1978 to develop and sustain long-term, high-quality programs for postdoctoral research on the social, political, economic, environmental, and historical

development of the FSU and CEE. From broad, cross-cultural analyses to more focused studies of particular economic problems that warrant attention, NCEEER supports research projects that facilitate an exchange of information between the scholarly and governmental communities that is mutually-beneficial. NCEEER emphasizes projects that produce readable analysis, reliable information, and lively debate about current economic, political, and international issues. Applicants must demonstrate, directly or indirectly, how their research impacts upon policy debates and research on such issues.

Funding

The Short-term Travel Grant Program for Research on Central Asia, the Caucasus, and the Balkans is made possible by federal funds under the Program of Research and Training for Eastern Europe and the Independent States of the Former Soviet Union (Title VIII), which is administered by the Department of State. Accordingly, grants are subject to Federal laws and regulations, including OMB Circulars A-21, A-110, A-122, A-128, and A-133.

Publications & Papers (Oral presentations) given in 2002-2003

N.F. Dreisziger, Dept. of History

Publications:

"Re-drawing the Ethnic Map in North America: The Experience of France, Britain and Canada, 1536-1946," in *Ethnic Cleansing in 20th Century Europe*, ed. S. B. Vardy, T. Hunt Tooley, and A. H. Vardy (New York: Social Science Monographs, Columbia University Press, 2003), pp. 45-62.

Invited lectures and papers presented at conferences:

"The Reception of Otto Habsburg in Wartime North America, 1940-45," a paper prepared for a panel of the annual meeting of the Southern Slavic Assoc. of the US, Savannah, Georgia, March, 2003.

"Hungarian Alliance Policies during the Second World War," a lecture given at a symposium on 20th Century Hungarian Foreign Policies, at Indiana University, March, 2003 (invited).

"Béla Bartók and the Political Left, 1919-1945" a paper given at the annual meeting of the Hungarian Studies Association of Canada, Congress of the Humanities and Social Sciences, Halifax, May, 2003.

Funding:

An ARP grant, \$3,400, to research Béla Barók's political attitudes and activities during his American exile, 1940-45.

(Rsws24847) Catherine Portuges, University of Massachusetts Amherst
April 2003, "Intergenerational Memory: Transmitting the Past in Hungarian Cinema"
Spectator (USC)(

The **University of Illinois** offers its annual Summer Research Laboratory on Russia, Eastern Europe and Eurasia for advanced research, June 14–August 6, 2004. Eligible associates are given full library privileges to conduct research in the University Library, which holds the largest Slavic collection west of Washington, DC, and is staffed by Slavic reference librarians. The Lab also offers programs from June 14 to July 9, which include: Fisher Forum/Annual Summer Symposium on "Remaking Postcommunist Cities"; inaugural AWSS conference; conference on "Masculinities in Russia"; annual Ukrainian conference; research practicum workshop. Other activities include thematic/regional workshops and discussion groups, lectures and films. Free housing grants: 28 days for graduate students; 10 for all others. (Associates are welcome to stay longer at their own expense.) Graduate students and government officials are encouraged to apply. Application deadline: April 1 for internationals; April 30 for US citizens/permanent residents. For more information contact: Russian and East European Center, University of Illinois, 104 International Studies Building, 910 S. Fifth Street, Champaign, IL 61820; Tel: (217) 333-1244; Fax: (217) 333-1582; reec@uiuc.edu; www.reec.uiuc.edu/srl.htm