

BOOK REVIEWS

Miklós Kontra. ed. *Tanulmányok a határainkon túli kétnyelvűségről* [Studies on bilingualism beyond our borders]. Budapest: Magyarságkutató Intézet, 1991. 164 pages.

In the last few decades the linguistic problems of Hungarian minorities beyond the mother country's present borders attracted only limited interest. While the disastrous consequences of the Trianon peace treaty and the oppression of Hungarian minorities gradually gained acceptance as facts, the change of the language of these minorities was a relatively less discussed subject. As we know, ignorance can be dangerous. Therefore the importance of scholarly works presenting facts in a maximally objective manner is obvious. One of such works is the present volume: the eleventh in a series titled "Magyarságkutatás Könyvtára" [The Library of Hungarian Studies]. Kontra's volume consists of three studies examining the language usage of the Hungarian minorities in Slovakia and Austria between 1918 and 1991.

The first paper: "A szlovák nyelv árnyékában" [In the Shadow of the Slovak Language — pp. 11-72] was written by István Lanstyák, a professor at the University of Bratislava and a researcher of Hungarian-Slovak bilingualism. His sociolinguistic study gives a well documented survey of the language rights of the Hungarian minority in Czechoslovakia. His statements are based on official and often quite up-to-date data, such as those of the 1991 census of the Slovak Statistical Bureau. Developments are divided into five periods: 1918-38, 1938-45, 1945-48, 1949-89, 1989-91, of which the second one is not described in detail due to the insufficiency of sources. These periods are discussed in sequence.

After the prefatory section, the author reviews the different laws and regulations determining the legal rights of the Hungarians in Slovakia in the different periods. Perhaps the most striking data of this part are those indicating that the legal rights of Hungarians since the 1989 "velvet-revolution" have not been expanded — on the contrary, they have been reduced. Next, the reader learns about the situation of the Hungarian school system in Czechoslovakia, which went through repeated attempts

at "Slovakization" throughout the different periods. Unfortunately, the changes after 1989 have not been positive in this respect, either. The fourth part of the study examines the cultural and academic institutions of the Hungarian minority in Czechoslovakia, the role of this minority's language in the media, and the degree of governmental support these had enjoyed over the decades. The final section gives the author's conclusions: during the past 73 years the main ambition of Czechoslovakia's successive governments was to reduce, as much as possible, the rights of the country's minorities. The final goal of such policies is the creation of a "real national state." This study's conclusions have become especially relevant now, on the eve of the break-up of Czechoslovakia and the establishment of Slovakia as an independent state.

The second study: "Magyarul beszélők a mai Ausztriában" [Speakers of Hungarian in Austria Today – pp. 73-121] was written by István Szépfalusi. It examines the number of Austrian Hungarians according to censuses between 1920-71, 1971-81, 1981-90, and in 1991. Following this, the knowledge of foreign languages (especially Hungarian) in Austria is explored. The third part gives an account of official language use, and lists the Hungarian programmes of the media.

Szépfalusi's paper has two main conclusions. In the 1980s there was in Austria a sizeable influx of Hungarians from both Hungary and the neighbouring countries: altogether 11,000 Hungarians came, which number is approximately the equivalent to the number of Hungarians who settled in Austria in 1956-57. While the language shift from Hungarian to German continues among the Hungarian speakers in Burgenland, there is a growing demand for the teaching of Hungarian as a foreign language to Austrians as a result of the growing economic relations since 1989.

The third study: "Kódváltás és öntudat az európai periférián" [Codeswitching and Consciousness in the European Periphery – pp. 123-157] was written by Susan Gal. This article was first published in English in the *American Ethnologist* in 1987 (pp. 637-653). Gal analyses the codeswitching patterns of Italians in West Germany, Hungarians in Austria, and Germans in Romania. While this is an interesting paper, its availability in English makes its assessment less necessary within the frame of the present review.

On the basis of these studies one can distinguish between two basic models of language retention in general: a) under oppression, b) under the relative tolerance of a democracy. While oppression evokes self-defensive reflexes, such as resistance against the domination of the "official" language, relative tolerance often results in a higher recognition of the prestige of the official language. Of course, these are not the only factors influencing language use within a minority group. The prestige of a given minority group within the state is another important factor; it is largely influenced by the role played by this group in the local economy. The

level of consciousness of a given ethnic community also influences language use.

Although in the past few years there has been a growing interest in the problems of Hungarian minorities beyond the mother country's borders, the linguistic consequences of these problems still have not received sufficient scholarly attention. It would be desirable to survey the situation of the Hungarian language in all countries where there is a sufficient presence, in the neighbouring countries of Hungary, as well as in Canada and the United States.

Andrea Horvath
University of Toronto

"Gendered Identities: Women's Experience of Change in Hungary" by Chris Corrin, in *Women in the Face of Change: The Soviet Union, Eastern Europe and China*, eds. Shirin Rai, Hilary Pilkington and Annie Phizacklea. London and New York: Routledge, 1992.

Chris Corrin and other scholars of Eastern and Central Europe are eager to include women and women's issues in contemporary analyses of what Corrin and her colleagues call the "desocializing societies" in a recent British publication, *Women in the Face of Change*.

Now that the "Soviet Union" has crumbled, and state socialism no longer controls the Hungarian state and its economy, it has also lost a certain hold over its women. As Corrin's argument goes, this offers new opportunities for research and debate. Feminist scholars in the West are interested in more permanent links with Central European women. Corrin, for example, wants to address the specific concerns of Women in Hungary as they begin to experience the new freedoms (and burdens) which a "free market economy" can bring. At the very least, Corrin persuades the reader that it is now possible to discuss the politics of gender with Hungarian women and men in spite of the bad name (western) feminism has been given in Hungary.

The editors of *Women in the Face of Change*, Shirin Rai, Hilary Pilkington and Annie Phizacklea are British academics who aim to record the economic and social changes which are taking place in the former 'communist bloc' countries, including the former Soviet Union, China, Poland, and Hungary. Chris Corrin's specific interest in Hungary is not new. She has been visiting Hungary — largely Budapest — and researching the roles of women since 1982. It has always been her goal to "privilege women's experience of change," so that now her work coincides

with the sweeping political changes that effect women — such as no guarantee of paid labour, and increasing food shortages. Corrin believes that her interpretations of change can "feed back into some of the debates now developing in Hungary." Like the more recent publication, *Gender Politics and Post-Communism: Reflections from Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union*, edited by Nanette Funk and Magda Mueller (Routledge 1993), Chris Corrin and fellow contributors to *Women in the Face of Change* claim to redress the gender imbalance in contemporary analyses of the former communist bloc countries. This means that the researchers take gender into account when documenting recent political change; but it also means that the researchers apply a variety of feminist principles (influenced primarily by socialist and postmodernist theory) to their discussions. In so doing, it appears there are roadblocks in the discussions, and also the possibility that the western definitions of feminism are being revised.

In eighteen pages, Corrin begins an analysis of the position of women in Hungary since the most recent political changes of 1988-89. Corrin is cautious but optimistic that these changes have at least allowed the "feminist debate or dialogue" to emerge in Hungary. Corrin's methodology is feminist ethnography. First she met with as many women-subjects as she could, most of whom lived in Budapest. She attempted to interview a broad range of women — women of different classes and ethnicities, and she quotes from conversations she has taped with her subjects. She is conscientious enough to refer to the 2% of women in Hungary who are not of Magyar origin, including women of Romany origin, of German descent, and rural Slavic women, though it is not clear that she interviewed members of these minoritised cultures.

Corrin claims to be interested in women's "everyday concerns", not in pressing academic issues. She discussed work, childcare, money, sexuality and health with her subjects, even though no consensus was possible, and previous research slim.

Like many North American feminist anthropologists — such as Ruth Behar, Sally Cole, and Barbara Myerhoff — Corrin says she participated as an equal" in her interviews, not as the better informed social scientist. However, she also interviewed Hungarian sociologists who had examined what has been known since Frederick Engels' *Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* as the ambiguous "woman question" (see, for example, Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin's contributions to the discussion, and an appendix by Clara Zetkin, in *The Woman Question*, New York: International, 1951).

Corrin rightly explains that, for a number of reasons, the term "feminist" itself is problematic in Hungarian society. Firstly, feminism has very little history in Hungary, even among dissident theorists who offered a critical political economy of state socialism such as György Konrád, Iván

Szelényi, János Kiss and György Bencze; and former communist leaders, including János Kádár, did not appreciate any contribution the feminist movement in the capitalist west could make to an evaluation of state legislated equality in Hungary. Indeed, one angle of the Hungarian "men's rebellion" of the 1980s was that "men's rights have been injured by women's liberation." Secondly, Hungarian women do not see that it is in their best interests to join the feminist cause, insignificant as it may yet be. Hungarian women worry about the breakdown of the family, and about adding responsibilities to the already heavy double burden they carry in the workforce and in the family. As it stands now, the great majority of Hungarian women tend to work outside the home, and are also responsible for the house, the home and children.

For wage earning women, it is difficult to see from Corrin's analysis exactly how Hungarian customs are in effect so different from, say, Canadian customs, except that until now Hungarian women have been told by the state that they are equal because they have been guaranteed "full employment." "Full employment" is a double-edged sword. In her review of *Gender Politics and Post-Communism*, Mariana Katzarova quoted Enikő Bollobás from Hungary: "when in Hungary we hear about full employment, we know that it has the effect of killing ambition and initiative in millions of people, and that it masked unemployment" (*The Nation* July 26/August 2, 1993, p. 150). Moreover, "full employment" enslaves women in the Soviet mould of "mother heroine," a mould which also influenced Hungarian constructions of woman. In 1977, the Soviet government officially flattered its mother-heroines: "It is in woman's character readily to take on a large and varied load" (Women in Eastern Europe Group, Introduction, *Woman and Russia: First Feminist Samizdat*, London: Sheba, 1980).

Although Corrin does not state it explicitly, the implicit criticism of Western feminism by the women she interviewed is that it spends too much time fighting for the rights of the individual rather than the rights of the larger citizenry, a citizenry which would include men. Corrin explains that there is a trend in her research which she sees as hopeful; that is, women organized in favour of pro-choice legislation, such as the pro-choice group, *Igen* ["Yes"]. Members of *Igen* support "abortion rights" as a social issue, not solely as a women's issue. This idea led me to compare this nascent Hungarian feminism with American anti-racist theory. Bell hooks, too, for example, is eager to make the oppression of women the responsibility of men and women, and also to uphold the benefits of the family in an impoverished and suffering society (*Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center*, Boston: South End, 1984). Is there a link between the two positions, a link that may have something to do with a respect for the institution of the family, including its men and its children? In other words, even among women, individual freedoms go only so far in Hun-

garian society, and must be weighed against other rights and freedoms, including those of the larger group.

Corrin's final evaluation about such a trend is that it indicates the requirement that "de-socializing" Hungarian citizens participate in an active "civil society," thereby preventing the state from ever proclaiming "the truth" again.

Marlene Kadar
York University, Toronto

Romsics, Ignác, ed. *Wartime American Plans for a New Hungary: Documents from the U.S. Department of State 1942-1944*. Boulder, Colo.: Social Science Monographs; Highland Lakes, NJ.: Atlantic Research and Publications, 1992. 319 pages, tables, maps. \$45.00.

Ignác Romsics is a young Hungarian historian best known for his biography of the conservative twentieth century Hungarian statesman, István Bethlen. He is a prolific scholar and dedicated researcher who spent the first half of 1991 examining government records in Washington D.C. and elsewhere in the U.S., on the subject of American wartime planning for a post-war Hungary. The result is this collection of documents, introduced by a 50-page essay written by Romsics himself.

The awakening of America's interest in Eastern Europe is usually dated from the fall of 1944. Indeed, there is little evidence to suggest that the Roosevelt administration was greatly concerned with the affairs of this part of Europe until the closing phases of the war. Never-the-less, the discussions of the problems of the lands between the Baltic Sea in the North and the Adriatic and Aegean in the South had started among the experts of the wartime Advisory Committee on Post-War Foreign Policy soon after America's involvement in the war late in 1941. Romsics's book offers selections from the records of two subcommittees of this agency: the Political and the Territorial. The volume also contains documents produced by the Advisory Committee's post-1943 successors.

Three problems received attention in the deliberations of the Advisory Committee's subcommittees and their successors: the issue of Hungary's role in the post-war international organization of Eastern Europe, the question of Hungary's post-war boundaries, and the problem of her future system of government. Everyone associated with the Political Subcommittee's work favoured the creation of some kind of a supra-national state in Eastern Europe, a federation or a number of federations, the primary

purpose of which would have been keeping German and Russian influence at bay in the region.

Two of the plans for an East European federation brought before the Subcommittee envisaged the establishment of a state organization similar to the defunct Habsburg Monarchy. One of these was known as Archduke Otto's proposal and the other, as the Eckhardt-Pelényi plan, named after two leaders of the conservative Hungarian emigration in the United States: politician Tibor Eckhardt and ex-diplomat János Pelényi. The former scheme envisaged a Danubian federation made up of the main constituents of the Habsburg realm in which "dynastic and national aspirations were reconciled in the spirit of the twentieth century" — to use the words of Romsics (p. 6). The second plan called for the creation of three federations in Eastern Europe: the Polish-Baltic, the Balkan, and a Danubian which would have included less of the Balkans than Otto's scheme.

The Subcommittee made short-shift of these plans. To some of its members, they smacked of attempts to restore the Habsburg Empire and, in case of the second, historic Hungary. The opponents of these plans favoured other plans that promised to create a larger East European federal state and were less "self-seeking" in terms of attempting to look after the interests of only one or two of the nations concerned. After much discussion, however, the experts of the Subcommittee had to admit that other federative schemes too, had problems of their own. In the end, all American discussions regarding the creation of an East European federation came to naught as the Soviet leadership categorically refused to agree to the establishment of anything that resembled a cordon sanitaire on the U.S.S.R.'s western borders.

The deliberations of the Territorial Subcommittee were similarly fruitless. Although on many occasions the committee's members had to admit that on ethnic grounds Hungary's post-Trianon borders warranted adjustments in her favour, political considerations negated such proposals. Nevertheless, when in 1943 the task of writing summaries of the Subcommittee's deliberations was given to the Advisory Committee's successor, the Division of Political Studies, recommendations emerged that were a little more respectful of the principle of ethnic fairness. Romsics attributes the reason for this minute shift in emphasis to the fact that the Division's staff was made up of the young research personnel of the defunct Territorial Subcommittee who disagreed with their former superiors.

The Division's summaries were next considered by the Inter-Divisional Balkan and Danube Region Committee, set up in the late summer of 1943. According to Romsics, this bureau made recommendations regarding Hungary's borders that were "more concrete and more unambiguous" than previous proposals, but did leave "room for some flexibility" (p. 26). In particular, the Inter-Divisional Committee suggested the adjustment of

Trianon Hungary's borders in her favour in places where the majority of the population was Hungarian: along Slovakia's southwestern border, in southern Ruthenia, and in the northernmost areas of Serbia. In the East, concerning Transylvania, the Committee recommended that the borders established in 1940 be kept for the time being, until another solution could be implemented. This envisaged the ceding to Hungary of a strip of territory along her eastern border, and granting autonomy for the Székely districts in southeastern Transylvania. These recommendations were incorporated in a May, 1944, Department of State document: "The Treatment of Enemy Alien States: Hungary," with the exception of the business of autonomy for the Székely region. However, the new document resurrected an earlier proposal regarding the possible independence of the whole of Transylvania. Late in May, a high-powered committee, the Committee on Post-War Programs endorsed these recommendations. Later, the proposals were revised slightly and abbreviated. Minimal land concessions to Hungary were suggested and all mentions of possible further concessions were cut. The final summaries of these American plans were then taken, in September of 1944, by President Roosevelt to the second Quebec Conference, thereby to the higher level of inter-allied diplomacy.

The opinions of America's decision makers on the matter of Hungary's future system of government were somewhat divided, just as the American public had been divided on the question of the nature of Hungary's inter-war regime. Nevertheless, no one of influence in Washington contemplated the survival of Hungary's wartime government in power — not even of such respected members of the country's elite as István Bethlen. On the question of Habsburg restoration, opposition was equally firm. The reason for this, according to Romsics, was twofold: Otto was not seen as a man favouring far-going land reform in Hungary and, his elevation to the Hungarian throne was expected to be adamantly opposed by the country's neighbours. Unlike American expectations for border changes in the Carpathian Basin, which became disappointed even before 1944, Washington's hopes for the establishment of democracy in post-war Hungary lasted almost until the end of the war.

American plans for post-war Hungary disintegrated during the last year of the war and in the immediate post-war era. The prime reason for this was the success of the Soviets in establishing predominant influence in Eastern Europe, but there were other, contributing factors. Concerning the question of Hungary's boundaries, the proposed adjustments in Hungary's favour in the areas of Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia populated by Hungarians change came in the American plans because the governments of these two states by 1945 — contrary to their positions a year or two earlier — were adamantly opposed to any such changes. In fact, they made demands for additional Magyar territory, demands which the US administration resisted with partial success. Still another reason for the

abandonment of the earlier American stand on these issues was the fact that the British government supported the idea of restoring Hungary's borders to what they had been before 1938.

In the matter of the Hungarian-Rumanian border, American intentions to see a more equitable division imposed were not abandoned quite so swiftly, yet abandoned they were in face of persistent Soviet opposition, voiced at various conferences from 1945 to 1946. And, in the following year, even the hopes for a democratic government in Budapest faded, as the Soviets and their local collaborators embarked on the liquidation of the left-of-centre but anti-communist Smallholders Party. The "game was up" as Soviet hegemony was on its way to being established in the country.

The Americans, according to Romsics, never gave up hope of seeing the reduction of undue Russian influence in the area. Half a century later, these expectations are once more in the realm of the possible. "Far from being up," Romsics concludes his introduction to this volume, "perhaps the game is just starting." (p. 46). His book and, especially, his publications on this subject in the Magyar language in Hungary, are important contributions to the understanding of American attitudes to that part of the world, both in East Central Europe and elsewhere.

The volume is attractively produced, and Romsics's introduction is written in smooth, highly readable prose. One error that this reviewer was sad to discover, was Romsics's dating of János Pelényi's defection to December of 1941. Actually, it had taken place more than a year earlier. Pelényi's excuse was Hungary's adhesion to the Berlin-Tokyo-Rome Tripartite Pact, but we can suspect other reasons for his decision to become an emigre in America: he wished to take a part in the preparation of the ground for the possible establishment of a Hungarian government-in-exile in the U.S., an idea that he had originally suggested to Prime Minister Pál Teleki on the eve of the war. This minor mistake notwithstanding, Romsics's book is a valuable and timely contribution to the literature of wartime American attitudes to Hungary.

N.F. Dreisziger
Royal Military College of Canada