

The Lives and Struggles of Hungarians in America

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Béla Várdy and Ágnes Huszár Várdy. *Újvilági küzdelmek. Az amerikai magyarság élete és az Óhaza* [Struggles in the New World. The Lives of Hungarian Americans and the Old Country]. Budapest: Mundus Magyar Egyetemi Kiadó, 2005. Hard cover, 370 pp., table of contents in English and Hungarian, name and subject index, ISBN 963 9501 22 0.

Having red through the collection of essays by the prominent Hungarian-American historians and literary scholars, Professors Béla Várdy and Ágnes Huszár Várdy from Duquesne University, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, I am saddened by the book's apparent message. It seems to suggest that the days of Hungarians in America are numbered. And what is even more heartbreaking in this barely perceptible message is the possibility that their — and perhaps our — passing will not be bemoaned by anyone of our neighbours. This sad message appears to be present in the volume, even though there is not a single sentence about the approaching passing of the nation. The authors did not write about Hungarians of Hungary, but rather about Hungarian Americans and their relationship to the mother country. The twenty-three studies in the volume constitute an overview of the Hungarian presence in North America. This presence may reach back as far as the arrival of a certain Tyrker during the reign of King St. Stephen (997-1038) of Hungary, who is revered as the Christianizer of his nation. But this Tyrker episode is closer to a myth than to accepted historical truth. Different is the case with Stephen Parmenius of Buda (ca. 1555-1583), a prominent Protestant scholar, who reached the shores of North America as a member of the famed Gilbert Expedition in 1583. But this daring Hungarian became the victim of a shipwreck close to Nova Scotia.

The nearly two dozen studies in this volume give us an overview of the most important issues faced by Hungarian Americans in the course of the past several centuries. These include two summarizing essays on their history and literature; five studies on Louis Kossuth (1802-1894) and his famed visit to (1851-1852) to the United States; four studies on Hungarian-American literacy, historical scholarship, and centres of Hungarian Studies; five essays on the birth and development of Hungarian-American churches, the lives of

the turn-of-the century economic immigrants, and their relationship to the Slovaks who emigrated from what used to be Upper Hungary; five studies on the nature and effect of the Treaty of Trianon upon Hungarian Americans; and finally two studies on the changing American image of Hungary and Hungarians since the mid-19th century, and on their relations with the new Hungary that had emerged from behind the Iron Curtain following communism's collapse in 1989-1990. The collected studies in this volume permit us a glimpse into the lives and struggles of the Hungarian immigrants in the United States, and they also tell us how these immigrants have enriched American society by their contributions in many different fields, in many different ways. As an example, Hungarians have played a role in the American War of Independence that resulted in the birth of the United States of America. Similarly, they had a role in the American Civil War nearly a century later, which solidified the indivisible unity of the new nation, and brought about the liberation of the slaves. This also holds true for the turn-of-the-century economic immigrants contributed their "sweat and blood" to the building of America's industrial society. Moreover, they also produced a series of new generations whose members became hardworking and useful members of American society.

This process of migration and Hungarian contributions to America continued during the interwar years, when numerous internationally known scientists, scholars, and artists entered the country, fleeing from the spread of Fascism and Nazism. Although few in numbers, their contributions were so extensive that some observers began to speculate about the unique "mystery of the Hungarian talent." The most prominent scientists among these immigrants included: Theodore Kármán (1881-1962), Leo Szilárd (1896-1964), Eugene Wigner (1902-1994), Zoltán Bay (1900-1992), John von Neumann (1903-1957), and Edward Teller (1908-2003). But there were many others, in many different fields, a number of them becoming Nobel Laureates. Among them were George Hevesy (1885-1966), György Pólya (1887-1985), Gábor Szegő (1895-1985), George Békésy (1899-1972), Dénes Gábor (1900-1979), Charles Goldmark (1906-1977), and later John Kemény (1926-1992) and George Oláh (b. 1927) in the sciences and mathematics; Béla Bartók (1881-1945), Fritz Reiner (1888-1963), George Széll (1897-1970), Eugene Ormándy (1899-1985), Antal Doráti (1908-1988), and Sir George Solti (1912-1997) in music; Oscar Jászi (1875-1957), Ferenc Molnár (1878-1952), and Géza Róheim (1891-1953) in literature and the social sciences; Titus Bobula (1878-1961), Marcel Breuer (1902-1981), and William Fellner (1905-1983) in architecture; and members of the unusually gifted Polányi family, Charles (1886-1964), Michael (1891-1976), and John (b. 1929), who embraced a number of disciplines. Hungarian immigrants were also present in significant numbers in the birth and development of the American film industry. The most prominent among them were Adolf Zukor (1873-1976),

William Fox [Fischer] (1879-1952), and Sir Alexander Korda (1893-1956). This list of these names can fill us with pride. We believe there are not many nations in the world that have produced so many geniuses, and who have contributed so much to the New World in proportion to their numbers.

The younger members of the post-World War II political refugees and their descendants, as well as those who left Hungary during the anti-Soviet Revolution of 1956, have found their way into America's scientific, industrial, business and financial world in great numbers. In some instances, they moved into the highest levels in their chosen fields — such as in the case of George Soros (b. 1930), Andy Grove [Gróf] (b. 1936), Steven F. Udvar-Hazy [Udvarházy] (b. 1946), and Charles Simonyi (b. 1948) — demonstrating once again the talent and resourcefulness of the Hungarians. Today there exists something approximating a “Virtual Hungary” on the North American continent. But there are some questions in our mind: On the one hand, will the successful members of this “Virtual Hungary” be willing to help their small native country and their fellow Hungarians in the Carpathian Basin? And will the mother country have the courage to utilize the knowledge and achievements of its successful children, many of whom are waiting for the call for help? These questions are posed by the authors already in their introductory study to this volume. We must voice our agreement with them, but also our doubts about the Motherland's willingness to accept help, as well as her ability to aid the survival of the dwindling Hungarian population of North America. One can hardly deny that an intimate interaction between Hungary and the Hungarian-American communities is an essential precondition for the survival of those communities, and for the continuation of the Hungarian language and culture in the English speaking world of North America. Our doubts about Hungarian future in the New World is supported by data supplied by the authors themselves. Thus, we learn from their book that of the 800,000 Magyars (among nearly two million Hungarian citizens) who emigrated to the United States since the mid-19th century, in 1980 nearly 1.8 million (1,776,000) still claimed to be fully or primarily of Hungarian origin. But of these only 180,000 (10%) spoke Hungarian at home. Ten years later their numbers had shrunk to less than 1.6 million (1,582,000), of whom only 147,902 (less than 9%) spoke Hungarian within their families. We know from other source that the census of the year 2000 showed further decline among Hungarian Americans. Their numbers had shrunk to below 1.4 million (1,398,000), and the number of Magyar-speakers among them to 117,973 (barely over 8%). We can learn about the fundamental reasons for this astonishing decline from the extremely rich collection of notes that the authors have appended to their studies. (There are more than 650 notes that refer to the more than 230 printed sources. The reader is also aided by a detailed name and subject index that had been appended to this volume.)

Having read the book, we have become ambivalent about Hungarian future in North America, and this ambivalence is accompanied by a good dose of pessimism. This is all the more so, as we know that the two authors have approached their subject *sine ira et studio* (without anger and prejudice). Thus, while describing the successes and achievements of immigrant Hungarians, they also point out the latter's failures, disappointments, and personal tragedies. The most serious reasons behind these failures appear to be failed illusions. The resulting disappointments general become hotbeds of dissension, breach, and infighting among them; and this appears to characterize Hungarians everywhere. We cannot leave unmentioned the negative role that some of the non-Magyar nationalities of the Kingdom of Hungary — within Austria-Hungary — have played in the lives of Hungarian-Americans. This is particularly so with respect to the Slovaks from the former Hungarian Highlands. Most of them being semi-literate peasants, they first became conscious of their national identities only in America, where under the leadership of their nationalistic priests they began to work against Hungary. Thus, in a sense, they were among those who had laid the foundations for the Treaty of Trianon (1920), which codified the dismemberment of Historic Hungary, along with the whole Austro-Hungarian Empire. The result was birth of several small multinational states, motivated by extreme forms of nationalisms, which Balkanized Central Europe and lead to the outbreak of World War II. The resulting emotional conflicts are still around us everywhere, causing considerable problems not only for Hungarians, but for all nationalities in the Carpathian Basin.

One of the largest sections of the book is entitled "Kossuth in America." It contains five slightly abbreviated and revised studies from three different publications. The first of these describes Kossuth's "Triumphant Tour" in the United States in 1851-1852. The leader of the defeated Revolution of 1848-1849 was received with great ovation as the anointed champion of liberty and as a prophet of human freedom. Yet, seven and a half months later he left the United States as a bitterly disappointed man. He returned to Europe incognito under the name Mr. Alexander Smith. He had come with great hopes, but he left filled with disappointments, for he was unable to achieve any of his goals. He came in the belief that he could gain the support of the United States for a renewed war against the Habsburgs. But in those days America was still under the Washingtonian principle of "non-intervention." Moreover, most of them expected that Kossuth, as the champion of liberty, would fight for the liberation of slaves in America. It did not happen, because these two goals did not mash. The authors of this volume explain the reasons for these mutual failures and disappointments.

A separate section, containing four different studies, deals with the development of Hungarian-American journalism and Hungarian-American studies at institutions of higher learning in the United States. After describing

the story of the ephemeral early Hungarian newspapers in America, the authors discuss in detail the establishment of the two major Hungarian-American dailies, the Cleveland-based *Szabadság* [Liberty] (1891) and the New York-based *Amerikai Magyar Népszava* [American Hungarian People's Voice] (1899). Both papers began as weeklies, but within a few years both of them became "national" dailies (1904, 1906). They competed against one another fiercely, even though they both represented the same basic Kossuthist Hungarian nationalism that was the dominant ideology of all of the turn-of-the-century economic immigrants, and remained so into the post-World War II period. Unfortunately, the coming of the post-World War II immigrants with their different tastes, social backgrounds, and political views, and the rapid decline of the number of Hungarian speakers among the "old timers," resulted in the decline of both of these newspapers. During the 1960s they both reverted to being weeklies, and in 1996 they merged into a single weekly. The merged newspapers, which in 2007 are in the 117th year of their publication, now function under the combined title *Amerikai Magyar Népszava/Szabadság* [American Hungarian People's Voice/Liberty]. In the course of the past century there were many other short-lived newspapers, but in the long run none of them could compete with these two flagships of Hungarian-American journalism. The two dailies became the "Bible" of the semi-literate early 20th-century economic immigrants. Circumstances in America forced most of these immigrants to sharpen up their literacy skills so as to survive in the very competitive industrial society. These newspapers and their short-lived rivals represented the main bond among the Hungarian immigrants, who were scattered in two dozen different states within the Union. They were the primary means of information from the homeland, they relayed job opportunities to the immigrants, and they informed the members of the various Hungarian-American communities about the goings on in their fraternal associations, social organizations, and religious congregations. Their content and language was generally of modest level, because they had to be geared to the educational level of the immigrants. At the same time they stood for a kind of Hungarian patriotism that fulfilled the needs of the immigrants, while also asserting their faithfulness to their newly found second homeland. The content and political orientation of the merged papers remained unchanged until 2006. But then, under a new owner and editor, it began to reflect more the political altercations in today's Hungary, than the needs and interests of the Hungarian-American community. While fulfilling their obligations to their communities and to their nation, Hungarian-American newspapers also carried on a defensive war against the Slovak-American press, whose tone during the period of economic immigration was increasingly anti-Hungarian. Emerging Slovak nationalism carried out a ferocious campaign against the Hungarians. They were depicted in the most unfavourable terms, and Hungary was castigated as a "prison of nationalities."

Eventually these accusations were also taken up by the English-speaking American press, defaming the Hungarians, and preparing the ground for Hungary's dismemberment following World War I.

Naturally, clashes went back and forth in these ethnic newspapers, each trying to destroy the other's reputation. Some of the most vicious Slovak attack appeared in the April 15, 1894 issues of *The Pittsburgh Dispatch*, which reads as follows:

A Magyar is regarded by the general public as a sort of fiend incarnate, who roams about the hills of Fayette and Westmoreland counties with a firebrand in one hand, a bomb in the other, and a knife in his teeth, leaving a trail of blood and ashes behind him. He is popularly supposed to subsist on the refuse of slaughter houses and to live in pig sty, and stables.... The ferocious act of the Magyar... has brought him the distinction of being a most intractable citizen.... [He] is a direct lineal descendant of that horde of wild men, who under the leadership of Attila swept over the Ural Mountains into the land of the Goths and Vandals, now Austro-Hungary, subduing the people and exacting tribute from those having dominion over it.... The Magyar, or Hungarian, first appeared in the Connesville coke region in 1885.... [He] is a short, stocky fellow... of repulsive countenance, a greasy, coffee-colored complexion.... The Magyar is always ready to fight, if he has friends to help him through..., [but if] resisted by determined officers they become abject cowards.... At the White mines... a few years ago, an old storeroom, about 30x60 feet... was transformed into barracks, in which 87 families of Magyars lived, ate, slept, drank, fought, and died.... Bed bugs were present in such numbers that they could be scooped up from the floor by the shovelful. On the mattresses of the beds there was a veritable glue made by crushing the vermin, as the Huns had rolled about in their troubled dreams. The floors were covered with a two-inch accumulation of filth, and the glass in the windows so begrimed with dirt as to exclude the light of the day.... It is quite certain that he [the Magyar] has acquired many of the vices and but few of the virtues of the people among whom he has sojourned, which, added to those inherent in his nature, render him an individual of whom almost any community would be glad to be rid.

The ethnic churches also joined in this fray. We can read about all this in the study titled "Hungarians and Slovaks in Turn-of-the-Century America." It is well known that in the late 19th and early 20th century many millions of European, including nearly two million Hungarian citizens of various nationalities migrated to America. Most of them came from the ranks of the landless or impoverished landed peasantry, who wished to make their fortunes in the New World and then repatriate. Until the years preceding World War I,

these migrant groups were made up mostly of young men, who wanted to work hard for a few years, spend as little as possible, then return home and become independent small farmers or craftsmen. A few of the immigrants did achieve this goal by accumulating enough "capital" to be able to repatriate and set themselves up as independent farmers. They built impressive houses and bought a few acres of land. In this way they emerged out of poverty and also rose in their social positions in their villages. The majority of the immigrants, however, stayed in the New World. Rapidly industrializing America simply offered them much more than their homeland. Life was still hard even in the United States, for it was filled with trials and tribulations. They had to work under awful conditions, and without the protective laws that were passed during the New Deal. But in America they still had a brighter future than in their homeland. Meanwhile, before the coming of the protective laws, only their fraternal, social institutions, and churches gave them a degree of protection. Although promising a better future, America in those days was still insensitive to major social issues.

Fraternal organizations came into being to fulfil some of the needs that contemporary American society was unable to provide. They became the immigrants' welfare institutions, and in the course of time they also assumed various cultural functions by becoming citadels of increasing literacy and national culture. We can also mention the role of the "boarding houses" that provided a "home away from home" for the immigrants. But at the same time they also became centres of debauchery under the inhuman conditions the immigrants were forced to endure. Thirty-forty young men were squeezed in a hostel run by a husband-wife team, which many times became the source of arguments, personal jealousies, fisticuffs, and even murders. On the other hand, they also constituted communities in which the immigrants tried to help each other.

In addition to the fraternals, Hungarian-American churches also played a key role in forming Hungarian communities, and in keeping their Hungarian identities. The role of the religious congregations cannot be overemphasized in the preservation of national identity and culture. This role was even greater than that of the fraternal groups. At the same time it must be pointed out that the role of the Hungarian churches in America has changed considerably, as compared to their role in the motherland. In the contemporary Hungarian village, the church was a holy place that concerned itself exclusively with religious matters. It was not a place for non-religious social events. Any form of profane expression or deed within its walls was regarded as a sin. The other important village institution was the village inn or pub, which was exclusively a male preserve. It was in the village inn where the men congregated after work and after Sunday church services, and found outlet for their socio-cultural needs. Women were excluded from this "fraternity." The latter usually congregated in front of their houses, and discussed in great detail the

goings-on and the ever changing personal relations in the village. All this changed drastically in America, where the two institutions — the church and the village inn — became interlocked. Whereas in Europe the church basement was occupied by the crypt, where the most important personalities of the village or town were laid to rest, in America this church basement became the social hall, where men and women met on common grounds. While those above were praying, those below were enjoying themselves and living it up. Social events, church dinners and even dances were held in the subterranean church basement, which would have been unthinkable in Hungary. It would have been regarded as profane act and a major sin. But mingling social and religious life in the church building was most natural in America, and it remains so even today.

Along with the changing role of the churches buildings came the changing role of the priests and pastors. They too had to assume various non-religious social functions, which would have been unthinkable back home. Moreover, the church members who financed the building of the church, also assumed greater role in running the affairs of the congregations, which resulted in the lessening of the powers of the clergy. As described by the authors of this volume,

Hungarian-American churches and priests have become essential components in the lives of the immigrants. In these Hungarian--American churches they could pray in Hungarian, they could talk to each other in Hungarian, they could practice their rituals in Hungarian, and they could speak to each other about their joys and sorrows in Hungarian. Hungarian-American churches, therefore, were really Hungarian churches, where at least as much emphasis was put on one's Hungarianness as on one's religiosity and religious affiliation. As such, these churches, parishes, and congregations were more 'national' in character than those in Hungary, where one's Hungarian identity was a given fact, and where emphasis was naturally on religion, and not on nationality.

The authors devote a great deal of attention to the sketching the development of the various Hungarian denominations in the United States. Both Catholic and the Protestant churches appeared in America at the end of the 19th century. The number of the Catholic parishes spread through this continent-size country largely via the activities of Father Károly Böhm [Charles Boehm] (1850-1932). His actions were paralleled by those of Father Kálmán Kovács (1863-1927), who placed even more emphasis upon the preservation of the Hungarian national identity within the Catholic Church than did Father Boehm. Occasionally, this lead to disagreements between these two pioneers of Hungarian Catholicism in America. The Hungarian

Reformed (Calvinist) Church was also planted in America about the same time, toward the end of the 19th century. Hungarian Reformed congregations grew in numbers largely through the activities of Rev. Gusztáv Jurányi (1856-192?). Rev. János Kovács (1861-1921), and Rev. Zoltán Kuthy (1875-1821). As a result of their work, Hungarian national identity became almost synonymous with Hungarian Reformed identity. The two merged into the single idea of "Hungarian Calvinism." Personal disagreements among the various pioneers and their immediate successors, however, soon resulted in a breach within the Hungarian Reformed Church. Initially, the cause of this breach was the question whether Hungarian Reformed congregations in America should be under the Hungarian Mother Church in Hungary, or should they join one of the American Protestant denominations. This breach, which subsequently became even more intense, eventually split the Hungarian Reformed Church in America into half a dozen different sub-denominations. This split naturally created havoc among the Hungarian Calvinists. Yet, even so, they achieved great things for the various successive waves of immigrants. But with the rapid Americanization process in the second half of the 20th century, the number of the Hungarian Reformed congregations declined significantly, and those that survived also became ever smaller.

This decline and disintegration also became evident in case of the Hungarian Catholic parishes in America. This process can be demonstrated with the fate of St. Elizabeth Parish in Cleveland, Ohio. Founded by Father Charles Boehm [Károly Böhm] in 1892, by the interwar years this pioneer parish had 7,000 parishioners. All of them lived in the same section of the city, in the Buckeye Road region, in Cleveland's so-called "Little Hungary." Due to dying off of the old immigrant generations, and the influx of African Americans in the 1960s and beyond, the number of parishioners declined rapidly. By the end of the 20th century, St. Elizabeth parish members numbered barely 400, and even those lived mostly in the suburbs, attending the Sunday masses in their original church simply to keep the church and the parish from going out of existence. The rapid assimilation of the second, third, and fourth generations of Hungarians, and the decline of religiosity, makes the future of these Hungarian "ethnic churches" very bleak. The coming of two waves of post-World War II immigrants — the DPs and the 56-ers — infused new life into the Hungarian-American community and its institutions, including their churches. But because of the relatively small numbers of these political immigrants (26,000 and 42,000), and because of the 56-ers greater propensity to melt into American society, this revitalization was only temporary. This was true in spite of the fact that university-level Hungarian Studies Programs had their heyday in the 1960s through the 1980s. The collapse of communism and the disintegration of the Soviet Union ended these golden years very rapidly. By the early 21st century only a few major universities — especially Indiana University in Bloomington and Columbia

University in New York — were able to preserve some of what they used to offer by way of Hungarian Studies during the golden age of that discipline in the United States.

The two world wars created a peculiar situation for Hungarian Americans. They had to face the reality that their new country, the United States, had a role — however minor — in their old country's dismemberment at Treaty of Trianon (1920), and once more in the Treaty of Paris (1947). During the interwar years Hungarian Americans became reconnected to their Old Country, which also discovered them suddenly and unexpectedly. Their joint sorrow and pain brought them together once more. They also became involved in the protest movements that tried to reverse Hungary's dismemberment. These movements took various forms, including mass demonstrations, the unveiling of a second Kossuth statue in New York, the establishment of the "National Association of Hungarian Americans" at a "Hungarian National Congress" in Buffalo, New York, and a sensational ocean flight by György Endrész (1893-1932) in 1931, only four years after Charles Lindbergh's original feat in 1927.

The Second World War caused even more difficulties for Hungarian Americans, when their Old Country became embroiled in the war on the side of the Axis Powers. Although the reasons for this alliance was simply Hungary's effort to regain some of the lost Hungarian-inhabited territories from the succession states of Austria-Hungary, it still placed Hungary and the Hungarians on the wrong side in this war. The great majority of Hungarian Americans supported Hungary's effort to regain the lost territories, but an equal number of them disliked its alliance with Germany and Italy. The struggle between the pro-revisionist majority and the anti-revisionist minority played itself out in the so-called "Eckhardt versus Vámbéry controversy," which created much havoc within the Hungarian-American community, but ultimately lead to nowhere. The only person who was able to represent Hungary on the highest level was Archduke Otto von Habsburg (b. 1912), the oldest son of the last king of Hungary, who during the first half of the war had a close relationship with President Roosevelt. Unfortunately, political-military developments in the course of 1943-1945 altered the situation to a point where Otto's influence declined and his views lost their significance.

We cannot leave unmentioned an astonishing study entitled "Hungarian Women in Soviet Concentration Camps 1944-1949." The author, Agnes Huszár Várdy, unveils many facts about the horrendous fate and tragedy of many tens of thousands of innocent Hungarian women. During the last phase of the war they were collected and deported to Soviet slavery. Their ranks included many young girls between the ages of 15 and 17, as well as women several months into their pregnancy. Their story will be told in several volumes to be published by the authors of the book under review.

The last section of this volume has two astonishing studies about the changing image of the Hungarians in the United States, and about the consequences of the fall of communism upon Hungarians at home and abroad, as well as upon their relationship to each other. The first of these studies demonstrates clearly the difference between the image and the self-image of the Hungarians — the latter being significantly higher than the former. But this is universally true for all nationalities and all individuals. What is interesting in case of the Hungarians is the fact that the highpoint of their national image in America was in the mid-19th century. It was connected with the American visit of Louis Kossuth in the course of 1851-1852. Thereafter, this image declined significantly, largely due to the coming of the semi-literate turn-of-the-century economic immigrants from Hungary. Almost two-thirds of them were not even Hungarians, but only citizens of Hungary. Yet, they were the ones who created the lowly “Hunky” image that persisted well into the post-World War II period. Only in the 1950s and 1960s did the Hungarian image begin to rise again, partially because of the many gifted Hungarians who immigrated to America, and partially because of the heroic image of the Hungarian Revolution of 1956.

The final study in this impressive volume has some daring conclusions about the regime change, following the collapse of communism in 1989-1990. After four decades of Soviet communist domination and misadministration — which ruined the country economically and transformed the nation morally — finally a “government with a national spirit” was formed under the leadership of Prime Minister József Antall (1932-1993). The fall of communism created a euphoria in Hungary, which was also taken up by Hungarian Americans. Tens of thousands were thinking about repatriating to the old country. However, these dreams never materialized. The Antall government made one mistake after the other, partly due to great external political and economic pressures, and partly in consequence of its inability or unwillingness to deal with the most important issues inherited from the Soviet-communist period. Nobody was held accountable for the criminal acts of the previous forty years. Hungarians at home, as well as Hungarians Americans were shocked to see that none of the vicious henchmen of communist rule were called to account. In point of fact, most of them remained part of the administrative system, and by helping each other, these communist (now ex-communist) *apparatchikis* were able to “privatize” many million dollars' worth of property into their own packets. In this way, in addition to escaping punishment, they were able to move from the ranks of “party aristocracy” into the ranks of “money aristocracy.” As a result, the new Hungarian society became increasingly polarized, with the decent Hungarian remaining on the bottom of society, while the former communist bureaucrats moving into the ranks of the *nouveau riches* [new rich]. Those who suffered the most were the intellectuals without party connections, and pensioners who

could barely establish a minimal existence for themselves. Given these realities, the plans for mass repatriation evaporated very suddenly. And this was all the more so, as prospective repatriates soon became aware that they were not really wanted at home. This was made absolutely clear to them by various semi-official pronouncements, which indicated that neither they, nor their expertise were needed in the new Hungary that the new regime was ready to build. This building process, however, was soon sidetracked, and by 1994 there was such a universal dissatisfaction in the country that Hungarian electorate returned the ex-communist Socialist Party into power.

This is an excellent book, which opens one's eyes, but also makes one sad. Its message is filled with pessimism, not only about the future of Hungarian Americans, but also about the fate of the Hungarians in Hungary, as well as in the former Hungarian territories of the Carpathian Basin.