

NEWS OF THE PROFESSION

Institutional News

The Institute for the history of the 1956 Hungarian Revolution

After the imposition of state and party control over scholarly research in 1948 no independent historical study was possible in Hungary. Sources and resources were kept closely guarded by the ruling Communist Party. This was even more the case with the study of the 1956 revolution, its prehistory, and its consequences, about which only the official historians of the régime were allowed to publish.

With the collapse of Soviet-type Communism and after radical political changes in Hungary and in the neighbouring countries, there is hope that historians will be able to study freely the history of the past forty years, including the era of the reform that preceded the revolution, the uprising, and its brutal repression. It is the task of the Institute to pursue these studies and to ensure that all historians and social scientists are guaranteed freedom of research and publication.

Thanks to the work of scholars abroad and some historians in Hungary, who risked – mostly clandestinely – tackling these topics, the Institute for the History of the 1956 Hungarian Revolution can build on solid foundations. The Institute claims as its predecessor the Imre Nagy Institute for Political Research, which existed in Brussels from 1959 to 1963. George Heltai, its founding director, is president-for-life of our Board of Trustees, and several of his former colleagues are participating in the work of the new Institute.

Twenty-five years after the dissolution of the Imre Nagy Institute, the Committee for Historical Justice, founded above all to fight for the rehabilitation of the uncounted martyrs and victims of the post-1956 repression, proposed, together with the Publicity Club and the István Hajnal Society of Historians, the foundation of a non-partisan institute for the study of the revolution. A temporary Board of Directors was established the day after the historic re-burial of Imre Nagy and his fellow martyrs on June 16, 1989. In January 1990, the Institute was chartered as a non-profit society, together with a tax-exempt foundation which serves as the conduit for its financial support.

The main purpose of the Institute for the History of the 1956 Hungarian Revolution is to explore the origins, the course, the domestic and international repercussions of the revolution of 1956 and the tragic history of the subsequent repression – in the context of contemporary Hungarian and European history. Major research projects will focus on:

- liquidation of the post-war parliamentary system (1946–48)
- crisis of Stalinism and the reforms of 1953
- development of an intellectual opposition 1953–56

- Stalinist reaction against destalinisation
- detailed history, regional, institutional, and social analysis of the spontaneous uprising between 23 October and 4 November, 1956
- revolutionary events outside of Budapest
- reactions to the Hungarian revolution on the part of foreign governments, oppositional forces, and public opinion in East and West
- international context of 1956, particularly Suez
- political, military, and legal repression following the Soviet intervention (1956–1963)
- fate and activities of Hungarian emigrés abroad
- impact of the revolution and its repression on western intellectuals, the working-class movement, and east European dissidents.

These topics will be studied partly by the members of the Institute, partly by fellows and researchers on scholarships whose work will be coordinated by the staff of the Institute. At the present time several archivists are surveying the written sources in the depositories of the capital and provincial centres; the Oral History Archive, an integral part of the Institute, is receiving evidence through interviews with eye-witnesses and participants. Both projects are funded in part by the Soros Foundation.

The Institute also intends to establish a data bank of publications, written sources, oral history materials, and research projects related to its field of study, in cooperation with other institutions, such as the National Széchényi Library. The Oral History Archive's considerable collection (some 300 interviews conducted during the past ten years) will also be made accessible through computer-generated indexes and machine readable files.

The Institute's first publication was a detailed chronology and annotated bibliography for the history of the revolution, in Hungarian. Several books and articles appeared which were based on materials collected by the Oral History Archive. A textbook for high-schools and a number of other studies and reference works are under preparation. Foreign-language publications are also foreseen in the near future.

Annual national and international conferences will present the results of completed research and coordinate the work of scholars in the field. Finances permitting, the Institute plans to offer scholarships and prizes to students of contemporary history and politics, both in Hungary and abroad.

The Institute is directed by its independent Board of Trustees, chaired by Prof. emerit. György Heltai (Charleston SC, President for Life), Profs. Kálmán Benda, Péter Kende (Paris) and Béla K. Király (New York-Budapest). Members of the Board include F. Argentieri (Rome), P. Gosztonyi (Berne), P. Jonas (Albuquerque), B. Lomax (Nottingham), M. Molnár (Geneva), M. Vásárhelyi, M.P., Chairman of the Committee for Historical Justice, and several scholars as well as public personalities from Hungary and abroad. The directorate of the Institute consists of György Litván, András B. Hegedüs, János M. Bak and Gsaba Békés.

The Institute's main research group is affiliated with the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (MTA), through the Class of Historical Sciences and cooperatives with the Academy's Commission for Contemporary History. The presidium of the Board of

Trustees, the International Secretariat and the Oral History Archive are located near the offices of the Committee for Historical Justice (TIB), the better to coordinate the scholarly activities of the Institute with the Committee's work on rehabilitation. The Institute has also a working group in the Manuscript Division of the National Széchényi Library.

The address of the Institute is: 40 TIB, Zoltán-u. 14, Budapest 1054. Mailing address: Pf. 973, H-1386 Budapest 62, Hungary. Tel. 36-1-132-9503.

International Review of Social History Prize

The Editorial Board of the *International Review of Social History* will from 1992 award an annual IRSH Prize for the best essay on social and labour history by young academics, who are citizens of non-OECD-countries. Essays (preferably in English) must be submitted no later than 1 August 1992. Authors should be less than 40 years of age at the closing date. Essays (no more than 10,000 words including notes) should be original and of interest to the general reader. No essay will be considered which has previously been published or is being considered for publication elsewhere. The prize will consist of US\$ 500. Publication of the winning essay in the *International Review of Social History* is guaranteed. To enter the competition please send two copies with a short curriculum vitae to: Dr Marcel van der Linden, International Institute of Social History, Cruquiusweg 31, 1019 AT Amsterdam, The Netherlands.