

Paučo and Konštantín Čulen. He also consulted the papers and pamphlets published by past presidents of the Slovak League of America, such as Jozef Hušek, Ivan Bielek, and Peter P. Hletko, which have often been ignored by professional historians. Finally, he read virtually all the books and articles published by historians and Slovak-American activists on the subject of Czechoslovakia and the role of American Slovaks in its history. In looking at this wide variety of sources, Cude discovered that, while the majority of Slovak-Americans favored autonomy or federation in the newly created Czechoslovakia after 1918, and independence after 1945, the United States Department of State, from the beginning, favored the official policy of “Czechoslovakism” as propagated T. G. Masaryk, its founding president, and by various subsequent Czechoslovak governments in Prague. Cude concludes that “this was a lost opportunity” (199) for the U.S. government, because, if the State Department had supported Slovak-American calls for federation, Czechoslovakia might not have fallen apart.


As in most books that grew out of dissertations, this one has a few shortcomings. On page 125, Cude mixes up pastor Jaroslav Pelikán with his son, the renowned scholar Jaroslav Pelikán, Jr. On page 194, he erroneously identifies Alexander Dubček as the president of Czechoslovakia, whereas the latter was the first secretary of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia in 1968–69. Also on page 194, he lists Paul Hacker as the first U.S. ambassador to Slovakia in 1993 when, in fact, he was the first chargé d'affaires. Unfortunately, his notes appear at the back of the book, which makes it difficult to follow his sources; and, inexplicably, the book has no bibliography. The last two can be blamed on his publisher.

Despite the above shortcomings, Cude's book is a good corrective to the numerous histories of the ill-fated Czechoslovak Republic written by leading scholars in the West. Starting with R.W. Seton-Watson in England and with Louis Leger and Ernest Denis in France, and continuing with Robert J. Kerner and S. Harrison Thompson in the USA, most western scholars, and the students they educated, supported Prague's centralistic policies from the creation to the dissolution of Czechoslovakia (Carol Skalnik Leff's *National Conflict in Czechoslovakia* [Princeton, 1988] was the rare exception). And so did the United States Department of State. In choosing to support the “enlightened Czechs” versus the “backward” Slovaks, such scholars and diplomats distorted Czechoslovakia's history, and they misunderstood and lamented its demise. Cude, on the other hand, understands the situation very well and has set the record straight. Current and future scholars of Czechoslovakia will greatly benefit by reading his book, which won the Best Book Award of the Slovak Studies Association in 2022.

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Göllner, András B., ed. *The Forgotten Revolution: The 1919 Hungarian Republic of Councils*

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The Forgotten Revolution is an idiosyncratic book, its chapters diverging widely by genre (short autobiographic essay, translated excerpts of a published historical work, biographic introduction, proper thematic historical chapters, political polemics) while still clearly bearing the unifying imprint of a strong editorial hand. It is as much a historiographic intervention into a renewed debate over the place of the Hungarian Republic of Councils within the country's history as it is unmistakably a work with strong ambitions to shape the politics of memory. The Canadian-Hungarian political scientist editor András B. Göllner makes no secret of these intertwined goals: they are not only manifest

within the text but are also proudly announced in the introduction. The premise of this volume is that the memory of the Hungarian Commune has been distorted for political reasons. Hungarian historiography is uniformly disparaging and condemning regarding the event and its protagonists, with historians—regardless of their individual political affinities—largely portraying what happened in 1919 as a violent outburst of extremist politics. Thus, the role of this book is to recover a story that was almost immediately and permanently silenced.

The book's core argument is set against two narratives of the Commune: an anticommunist one, which condemns the event generally as an attempt of indiscriminate dictatorship, and what might be called the Leninist one, which presents 1919 as a copycat of the Russian Bolshevik power grab. In contrast to these interpretations, Göllner asserts—and this is a thread connecting almost all the chapters—that the Hungarian Republic of Councils was an exemplary effort to establish a political system with equality, fairness, the rule of law, sustainable economics, and direct democracy. The social democratic leaders among its founding fathers and the most important political force behind it, the Social Democratic Party of Hungary was much closer in its ideas to Rosa Luxemburg (and the German Left that was oriented toward councils) or to Austro-Marxism than to the practice of Soviet Russia. The most important factor of the failure of the Republic of Councils was precisely its abandonment of these goals and reliance on centralization and economic nationalization, which led to disappointment among the initially enthusiastic and supportive masses.

Almost all the chapters (with Christopher Adam's on the leftist emigration in interwar Canada as the sole exception) revolve around this theme. Marie José Lavallée's text on the German revolution serves as a parallel story of Social Democracy's betrayal of the revolution in favor of a parliamentary system—something that was the case in Hungary prior to 21 March 1919. Péter Csunderlik outlines the antecedents of the revolution, arguing that among the masses it was driven, first, by the idea of progressist emancipation after dualist Hungary's dire realities and the hardships of the war, and second, by the disappointment with the Aster Revolution and its unfulfilled promises. Lajos Csoma brings to attention the institution of the workers' councils, which sprang up all over the country promising direct democracy, only to be subordinated to the centrally planned and managed economy of the Republic of Councils. The chapter on the women of the revolution (Susann Zimmermann and Magda Aranyossi) complements these stories with a similar narrative of the activism of leftist women, who were at first critical of the half-measures of the Károlyi government (increasingly dominated by Social Democrats), only to see it integrated into a system that was too centralized to deliver on its promises to women. András B. Göllner's chapter on the "public policy universe" applies the opposite approach. He argues that the institutional design of the state was initially far from the Soviet model, and its much-maligned terror rather the exception and not the rule. Finally, Göllner draws a long arc of Hungarian history from the Republic of Councils to Viktor Orbán's authoritarian regime, claiming that Hungarian history is in a vicious cycle since the defeat of the Republic of Councils, always entering a counterrevolutionary movement because politics is based on the suppression of the memory of the true values of the Republic of Councils.

Obviously, these latter claims belong more to the realm of the politics of history than historiography, even if recent scholarship on the post-World War I revolutions in Hungary is not as far from some key elements of the book's argument as the editor asserts. (Most importantly, because one of the key scholars of this new scholarship, Péter Csunderlik, is one of the authors of this volume, too.) But the historical arguments are also not as solid as the editor wants them to be, especially as some of them are rather ahistorical. It is not just the crucial fact that the Republic of Councils itself suppressed important elements of this value system, such as fairness (in trials) or direct democracy. Some of the concepts, like sustainable economics, are anachronously transferred back in history from the present, making the reader easily forget the historiographic aspect of the book while being too aware of its politics of memory implications.