

SHARED/ENTANGLED HISTORIES:

Comparative Perspectives on Hungary and Romania

CEU & CBEES (Cluj)

Organizers:

Anders Blomqvist, PhD candidate in History, Sodertorn University College;
Constantin Iordachi, Associate Professor, History Department, CEU, Budapest; Balázs Trencsényi, Assistant Professor, History Department, CEU, Budapest.

Date: September 12-14, 2008.

Location: Cluj, Romania.

We welcome applications for thematic panels or individual papers. Application for individual papers should include a 500 word summary and a CV of the applicant and must reach the organizers by June 30, 2008. Each panel proposal should include a short description of the thematic focus, as well as the 500 word summary and CV of the proposed participant. Applications and inquiries should be addressed to Anders

Blomqvist:
hu-ro-comp@ceu.hu

The language of the conference is English. The proceedings of the conference will be published in a thematic volume, as well as in the peer-reviewed journal *East-Central Europe/L'Europe du Centre Est. Eine wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift*. Drawing on the experience of the conference, we hope to consolidate a transnational academic network dealing with shared/entangled histories in Central Europe.

Travel, accommodation, and other related costs for selected candidates will be fully covered by the organizers.

The project is supported by the Baltic and East European Graduate School, Sodertorns hogskola (University College) Sweden, the CEU-OSI Comparative History Project, and by Pasts, Inc. Center for Historical Studies, CEU.

The collapse of communist regimes in East-Central Europe has inaugurated sweeping economic and socio-political changes, marked by the conversion of state economies into market economies, political liberalization and democratization, and integration into European and Euro-Atlantic security and political organizations. These changes have also affected the pattern of interstate relations in the region. Countries in East-Central Europe are today linked by a dense network of inter-governmental agreements, which have worked for changing the nature of interstate relations by fostering cooperation rather than conflict. The relationship between Romania and Hungary is illustrative in this respect, having undergone a spectacular evolution in the last two decades, from intense diplomatic conflict to collaboration and politico-military partnership. Stimulated by the process of European integration, the political elites from the two countries have fostered political and economic interdependence.

Nevertheless, promoted mainly at the level of political elites in the two countries and fulfilled under the decisive influence of the international community, the Romanian-Hungarian reconciliation needs to be supplemented with, and consolidated by, a real and continuous dialogue and change of images at the level of cultural production or public opinion in the two countries. Addressing the problem of the lack of intensive mutual collaboration and communication between Romanian and Hungarian intellectuals, the current project aims at bringing together scholars from the two countries focusing on the Romanian-Hungarian bilateral relations and shared/entangled history in the united Europe. As the success of the post-1945 »historical reconciliation« between France and Germany after WWII shows, the way of overcoming the conflicting legacies inherent in the mutually traumatic perceptions of the others is to create a multi-layered framework of intercultural dialogue and exchange, involving different groups and widening the channels of interaction.

The current project aims at fostering new research on the shared history of Hungary and Romania by employing relational and transnational approaches, as part of a more general effort to rewrite continental history from an integrated perspective. East-Central European countries share a common historical past that goes far back in time to enduring medieval and early modern imperial legacies. After 1945, they experienced similar strategies of communist modernization, and a forceful integration into a common military and economic block. Post-communist countries in the region are now facing similar socio-political challenges. Despite these similarities, scholars in the region continue to focus on their »own« national histories, and have relatively limited knowledge of – or openness toward – the historical experience of their neighbors. Participants to the project are encouraged to relate to a broader historical discourse that transcends national lines of reference, by integrating new regional, continental, or global perspectives, in the light of recent trends in comparative, entangled, transnational, and regional history. A transnational and regional(ist) reconceptualization of the history of East-Central Europe would have a refreshing impact on the writing of European history as well. Currently, European history writing is in a process of transformation, moving away from its concentration on the historical experience of Western Europe and toward considering the history of – peripheral – areas. Countries in East-Central Europe can actively contribute to enhancing the plurality of historical and cultural experiences defying »Europeanness« and European values, by promoting a more integrative perspective.

Call for papers for an international conference in Cluj, September 12-14, 2008:

The project will open with an international conference that will take place in Cluj on September 12-14, 2008, organized in collaboration with the Department of Political, Administrative and Communicational Sciences, and the Department of Sociology and Social Work, Babeş-Bolyai University, Cluj. We are inviting applications from scholars working on projects with an intercultural and/or comparative edge related to Hungary and Romania in a (Central) European context, interested in developing a long-term framework

of cooperation. We also welcome applications dealing with similar cases of overlapping histories in Europe (French-German, Greek-Turkish, Polish-Ukrainian, Czech-German, etc.) to be grouped in introductory thematic panels.

Proposed papers should fall into the following thematic categories:

1. Dynamism of nation-formation. Looking at the complex process of nation-formation, components and regional actors, and challenges to the »nationalization« of society in the Romanian and Hungarian contexts.
2. »Canonization« of national cultures. Historical consciousness, national and multicultural canons – with a special emphasis on historical textbooks, national historiography, and literary canon-building.
3. Historical myths and representations. Cult of heroes, the image of the other, the heuristics of the historiographical approach concentrating on historical myths and imagology.
4. Overlapping spaces and historical memories. Political instrumentalization of collective memory, *lieux de mémoire*, the paradigm of »national heritage« in a transnational context.
5. Shared spaces and everyday life. Anthropology of intercultural communication and community-building - practices of everyday life, performances of »ethnicity«, migration, mixing of languages and cultures, multiethnic urban subcultures, etc.
6. Economic interaction, nationalism, and challenges. Ethnic economics, economic nationalism, state intervention, everyday economic experiences, the Europeanization and transnationalization of economic regions.
7. Political thought and practice. Citizenship and civic loyalty in multiethnic political frameworks, minorities and majorities in the media – representing cultural and political otherness; comparative political thought – local contextualizations of European ideological traditions, regionalization, and transnational cooperation in the EU; the »role of the outsider« – the relationship of the countries in the hands of great power politics and international organizations.