

## EAST-EUROPEAN LITERARY EXILE IN THE 20<sup>th</sup> CENTURY A Workshop

Pasts, Inc. Inst. for Historical Studies, Central-European University & Collegium Budapest

### Organizers:

Prof. Sorin Antohi, Chair of the History Dept. and Director of Pasts, Inc. Inst. for Historical Studies, CEU;

Prof. John Neubauer, Professor Emeritus of Comparative Literature, Univ. of Amsterdam; Dr. Zsuzsanna Török, Pasts, Inc. Institute for Historical Studies, CEU.

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Contact person: Dr. Zsuzsanna Török,  
E-mail: torokzs@ceu.hu

While exile was a pervasive global phenomenon during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, perhaps no other region has exiled so many writers, in so many recurrent waves, varieties of form, grades of intensity, and multiple political and social motivations as Eastern Europe. Our three-day workshop will attempt to develop a typology of 20<sup>th</sup>-century East-European literary exile by exploring the variety of its social, historical, political, and institutional dimensions, and by formulating the conceptual and methodological tools to study it. Parallel sessions in workgroups or panels will alternate with plenary sessions involving lectures, readings, and round-table discussions among special guests. The panels will develop conceptual focal points and will consider exile as a particular case of polymorphic geo-cultural circulation.

Results of the workshop will provide the basic material for an application to the *Collegium Budapest* to invite 10 researchers to work for up to 6 months on the subject during the academic year 2007/08, focusing on the former Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland, Romania, and the former Yugoslavia. We encourage proposals from junior and mid-career scholars who are working on these topics; doctoral students in their final years may also apply. Participation in the workshop involves no commitment to participate in the project, but the organizers welcome indications of interest. The project team will be put together soon after the conclusion of the workshop.

### Panel 1: Forms of Displacement; the Dynamics of Movements

Panel 1 will approach literary exile in the context of intellectual migration from Eastern Europe during the past century. It will examine the various kinds of dislocations (e.g. legal emigration, ejection from the home country, refugee status etc.), and work out a scheme of periodization (e.g. inter-war migration; emigration during and immediately after World War II; exile during the consolidation of the Communist regimes (1947-1949); departures after the failed anti-Soviet movements in the 1956 and 1968; and exile due to the civil war and the disintegration of Yugoslavia).

### Panel 2: The Metropolitan Cultural-Geographic Sites of Exile

East-European exiles usually lived, and often developed literary cultures and cultural institutions (journals, publishing houses etc.), in foreign metropolitan centers. Next to the well-known cities of Munich, Paris, London, and New York, the panel will also consider important but neglected centers, such as Moscow (for the Communists and radical leftists in the 1920s and 30s), Sweden (for the Baltic exiles), Toronto (mainly for Czech and Baltic exiles), Chicago, and even Buenos Aires (e.g. W. Gombrowicz), and Istanbul (e.g. George Tabori). The panel will examine to what extent the various exiled national literary cultures mingled or stayed apart during exile. It will also examine the extent to which pre-existing linguistic-educational or market-oriented routes shaped individual trajectories of departure, aiming thus at a geo-cultural topography of the phenomenon.

### Panel 3: Exiles and Exilic Cultures in the Politico-Cultural Context of their Host Countries

Did the exile writers communicate only among themselves, in their mother tongue? Or, deprived of their public at home, did they attempt to reach a new, foreign public. What, if any, impact did they have on the cultural and educational institutions that often provided them with work? What, if any, impact did they have on the larger public? In what ways did the host countries exploit the exiles for their own political purposes? These and other questions will have to be examined in the larger historical context of cultural relations during the past centuries and their geo-political conjunctures. What >elective affinities<, or enmities, existed in a historical perspective between the home and the host countries, between the cultural micro-regions of East and West? Such affinities and enmities have shaped, after all, the migrants' trajectories from the native micro-regions towards the cultural metropolises.

#### Panel 4: Exile and Home Culture

During certain periods, certainly during the heydays of the Nazi and Communist dictatorships, exile writers were basically cut off from their native public, though even then radio broadcasting did offer a very limited channel of communication. In the Communist regimes, various underground and even some legal communication became possible during the 1970's and 1980's. Furthermore, there was a certain exile re-emigration, both after the end of World War II, and after 1989. In both cases, the return of former émigrés generated heated debates over the heritage of the inter-war and post-war period, and these debates contributed to the reinterpretation of this heritage and to the renegotiation of the literary canon. The return of the exiles or the home public's renewed access to their literary works represented (and continue to represent) challenges to the prevailing national literary-cultural canons in Eastern Europe. In what ways does the return of the repressed represent a delayed impact, forcing reconsider a nation's (or a region's) hitherto recognized literature?

