

Introduction

A little-noticed and even less-advertised 'revolution' seems to be taking place against the exclusiveness of old established academic disciplines. Instead of adhering, for instance, to topical and time-structured history or the traditional confines of geography, literature, sociology, anthropology, and on occasion, linguistics, cross-sectional disciplines often referred to as "studies" seem to be emerging. Thus, some time ago, the Canadian Studies Association was established, apparently to pull together the various related disciplines in one great effort. In a noteworthy way, its objectives appear to encompass the discussion of groups of Canadians of non-British and non-French descent. Some years back the Central and East European Studies Society of Alberta was formed, following the setting-up by the University of Alberta of a Division of East European Studies. Of course, that Division was not the first of its kind. By 1976, the Central and East European Studies Association of Canada came into being and it was under its aegis that the first versions of the papers comprised in this volume were presented at two conferences.

The term "Hungarian studies" has been known and applied loosely, depending on the context, for many years. One of its implications is the task for Hungarian Canadian and Hungarian American researchers of serving as mediators between their respective two cultures, "interpreters," if called upon in either direction. Until recently, this significant objective has not been carried out at all or only superficially. In fact, comparatively little is known about Hungarian Americans and Hungarian Canadians, either as urban dwellers or rural settlers. Even today there is a tendency to reduce their rich culture to the presentation of a few popular dishes and some "folk" dances in colourful costumes, declared by their makers as authentically Hungarian. Not much consideration is given to the fact that practically every region in Hungary has had its own folkloric characteristics.

The contributors to the present volume have been active for a comparatively long time in reviewing Hungarian studies, the scope of which has included what might be referred to as "Hungarian-Canadian" and

“Hungarian-American” studies. One may conclude from this practice that there is much common ground among these various types of “studies.” Nevertheless, there are great differences as well. Thus, for our purposes, “Hungarian Canadian (American) studies” implies the effort better to understand the immigration, settlement, cultural, and social adjustments, as well as achievements in humanities, science and other fields, of Canadians (Americans) of Hungarian descent, with the help of the methodology of the appropriate branches of knowledge. One of the foremost objectives for a student of Hungarian Canadian (American) studies to attain is the accumulation of sufficient data and materials for the determination of the nature and direction of the above processes and the factors affecting them.

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The Hungarian General Staff and Diplomacy, 1939-1941

N. F. Dreisziger

The subject of the role of the Hungarian General Staff in the formation of Hungarian diplomatic efforts on the eve of World War II has been at once neglected and abused. It can be regarded as "neglected" in that, despite the mass of literature dealing with Hungarian foreign policy before and during the War, only a handful of historians focus on this question and treat it in a scholarly manner; and as "abused" in that usually it has been tied to the highly politicized issue of war-guilt, a question which defies impartial analysis. There is no need here to review the historiography of the broader problem of Hungary's involvement in the Second World War; however, a few words should be said about literature that centres on the role of the Hungarian General Staff in foreign policy. In Hungary the theme has been treated by a number of scholars who, in general, condemn the "Horthyite military" for aspiring to political supremacy in Hungary and for outdoing the country's civilian leaders — often without the knowledge or prior sanction of the latter — in the appeasement of the Germans.¹ Opinions on this subject are not appreciably different in North America. The earlier works of Professor C. A. Macartney notwithstanding, it is the impression of recent North American students of pre-war and war-time Hungarian history that the military, in particular the General Staff, made a conscious effort to determine the direction of the country's foreign policy and that it was, by and large, successful in this effort.²

There are no grounds for quarrel with many of the observations of Hungary's best scholars, and even less for disagreement with the overall conclusions of recent western studies. Still, there is need for a general reassessment of some aspects of this question, for in many ways the impression created by Hungarian and Western works is somewhat misleading. A careful study of the evidence reveals that the hold Hungary's soldiers attained over their country's external policies was rather precarious, and that effective meddling by the military in the conduct of foreign policy was not a permanent feature of Hungarian war-time