

Gábor UJVÁRY

**Kulturális hídfőállások. A külföldi intézetek, tanszékek és lektorátusok szerepe a magyar kulturális külpolitika történetében.****(Cultural Bridge-heads. The role of foreign institutes, faculties, lecturers in the Hungarian cultural foreign policy.)**Budapest: Ráció Kiadó 2013, 304 pages  
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The first volume of the Cultural Bridge-heads book is an important endeavor. In his book, historian Gábor Ujváry discusses the Hungarian cultural foreign policy from its beginnings until the start of World War II. Today, the Hungarian cultural foreign policy is often criticized as being invisible, or at least not being a significant part of the Hungarian national-strategy. The author, who spent significant time in archives, has a declared objective to present this book as an example through the functioning of foreign institutes, faculties and lecturers, from which we can draw conclusions for today as well.

The book is about the period antecedent to World War I and the interwar Hungarian cultural policy, its effects-mechanisms, and especially wishes to provide an outline about the roles of the institutes based in Rome, Vienna, Berlin. A part is also dedicated to the short lived, but profoundly important Hungarian Scientific Institute of Constantinople, the Hungarian Historical Institute of Vienna, and the Hungarian faculty at the Sorbonne. Beside this, author Gábor Ujváry mentions those people as well, who achieved indefeasible merits because of their roles, undertook conflicts, sometimes even against their own political course. A clear picture arises from people like Bálint Hóman, Kuno von Klebelsberg, Gyula Szekfű, Róbert Gragger, Tibor Gerevich, Zoltán Gombocz or Zoltán Magyary, as well as about their foreign political activity, their vision, or their pragmatism. Ujváry quotes from Klebelsberg's numerous speeches, archive documents, and from the printed media of the period to prove that the culture-politician deemed important the simultaneous development of Hungary's competitiveness and general level of intellect, and to separate it from nationalism. He similarly emphasizes that Klebelsberg desired to build a stable basis for the cultural foreign policy, through the even higher scientific and cultural positioning of Hungary.

The book reflects a current tendency, as the contemporary social-science recessions tend to turn towards the historical periods which were less processed because of ideological reasons, like the cultural foreign policy of the interwar period, which saw the establishment of Hungarian institutes and faculties. The reason of the effacement of these institutions is that after the Second World War they significantly lost their weight, as the Hungarian cultural policy "entirely based itself on German science, as that was entirely the leader of its

ideas and the motivation of its intellect”.

It is important to emphasize that the reader holds a book, which not only deals with parts of a problem, cultural bridge-heads, not only discussing the forward-strongholds issues, but which draws an overall picture of the Hungarian culture policy of the era, ranging roughly from the Austro-Hungarian Compromise of 1867 to the World War II. The book can be boldly used as well by those who are not fully aware of the cultural and political heritage which characterized Hungary in the interwar period. Despite the fact that the book has a success story-like syllabus reading, in order to be politically correct, the author presents the criticism towards the Collegium Hungaricum institutes as well. Some of this criticism includes the luxury, the segregated and isolated situation of the Hungarian bursars (scholarship receivers), which made the connections quite difficult with the host country's culture. The book reveals that the Hungarian culture policy faced for the first time the problem of teaching Hungarian as a foreign language during the dualist period, already when several foreign universities announced Hungarian courses. The foreign Hungarian faculties and departments, lecturers had already successfully fulfilled the role of cultural bridge-heads. During the tenure of Minister Bálint Hóman, the instruction of the Hungarian language, literature and history was carried out in 27 foreign cities and 36 locations. This number is by far larger than today's numbers. The author points out that each student who studied with the Collegium Hungaricum institutes' scholarship, the vast majority of them after returning home, became an organic part of the Hungarian scientific elite. The history researchers usually went to Vienna, the artists and art historians went to Rome, while Berlin was selected by scientists. Ujváry attempts to create order in the knowledge of the reader, when he differentiates between collegiums, institutes and faculties. While the Collegium Hungaricum was purely maintained by the Hungarian state, the Hungarian Institutes and faculties of the universities were maintained by the host state. This difference between the maintainers might look negligible, but it was very important: the researchers arrived to the Collegiums with the purpose of being educated to be part of the elite, and undoubtedly they transmitted the Hungarian culture as well, the Hungarian Institutes educated the host states' students, with the purpose of "foreign studies". This is why a more important role was assigned to the lecturers and professors who were sent to these institutes, and to their publications in foreign languages (this is mentioned as good public relations today).

The book introduces the analyses of the official Hungarian cultural foreign policy, through the demonstration of the functioning of the Collegium Hungaricum based in Vienna, Berlin, and Rome and the Hungarian Institutes of Vienna and Rome. Similarly to the author's earlier works, like the "A harmincadik nemzedék" (33th Generation), this work of his also strengthens the statements that the failure of the Hungarian diplomacy to achieve its goals after the First World War was caused by the fact that Hungary didn't invest enough emphasis on representing its foreign policy and cultural policy. This is why the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy was still identified with the Habsburg Empire and Austria, even after the Compromise of 1867. Ujváry quotes Klebelsberg: "when the diplomacy of the old Austria and our own shiftlessness artificially segregated us from foreign states, the most impossible things were believed about us in Europe [...] and we did barely anything for our self-defense. Formerly it was dealt as a realistic fact that Hungary before the World War I, but the decade after the war grabbed all possibilities, in an ad-hoc modality, to establish international relations.

Even in this apparent disorder, Gábor Ujváry discovered an order, which had its stable foundations in their contemporary (currently re-discovered) culture-politicians, members of scholarship-comities, the supported and the scholarship receivers who traveled abroad. A significant element of the book is the representation of the human factor, to use today's expression, the HR or human resources. Beside the already mentioned culture-politicians, the author deemed important to highlight amongst others Zoltán Kodály, Béla Bartók, István Csók, Albert Szent-Györgyi, Pál Heim, Sándor Korányi, Ernő Dohnányi, Sándor Sík, all of whom played an important role in the selection of the scholarship recipients. The book gives further detailed description about the careers and works of directors, professors, lecturers and assistant-professors, all of this presented in order to clarify that several times these were personal actions, like the Hungarian endeavors in general, which were unified in an organized way by Klebelsberg or Gragger.

Meanwhile Ujváry draws attention to a momentum, which is forgotten in present (culture) policy discourses: despite the fact that the prominent figures of the period didn't share the same views, in order to achieve the common goals, they put aside their contrasts, and by doing so, they laid down the fundamentals of the Hungarian cultural foreign policy. Besides this, the author's historical work contains another element, which has a parallel with our present, and this is the notion of the eastern opening. The author quotes Károly Kocsán's contemporary vision: "they will be complete and perfect [the Collegium Hungaricum institutes] when the Hungarian young men will be sent for scientific education not only in four or six places in the west, but in the great, can I say, endless east as well, where young Hungarian scientists will be sent to educate themselves."

The style and narrative of Gábor Ujváry is polite to the reader. Throughout the book, the author pays attention to ensuring that his thoughts are well explained and simultaneously traceable as well. Good examples of this are the innumerable micro stories presented with explanations, which describe the everyday personal struggles of the book's actors or their stories, while they were struggling to build the cultural bridge-heads. The most important of these was the one in Germany. The reasons for this were the alliance during the World War I, the admiration towards the German performance, and Germany's rise after its fall. In Hungary – writes Ujváry – between the two world wars, it was seen that the country's future was inseparable from Germany's future. "To add to all of this, the role of the German language in the entire Eastern European region is determining. The educated people understand, and in many cases speak German, so the German cultural influence goes way beyond the borders." Excelling from the above mentioned micro stories, are the collegial and friendly relationship of Róbert Gragger, Kuno Klebelsberg and Carl Heinrich Becker. Becker, the German who was dedicated to the support of the Hungarian cultural foreign policy, wasn't elected to be a member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (MTA), despite the fact that his case was supported by the Hungarian Minister of culture, but later he was the first foreigner to receive the Corvin Wreath.

In the case of a scientific work, it is important that the author doesn't test the patience of the readers by using terminology in an egoistic way. The author explains in an academic, yet understandable way, dares to formulate conclusions, when he comments: until there are no integrated frameworks on a European level, boldly dreamed and mainly realized visions about the future of culture and science, like the ones Gragger, Klebelsberg and

Hóman had in their era. To react to the pessimism of these days: "we can feel sorry and sour for many things, except for the fact that we are still standing on the same place, or even lower in the state of Hungarology and foreign Hungarian institutes, faculties, lecturers, as at Róbert Gragger's death, which occurred in 1926. It is obvious that the Hungarian interwar structure of society was obsolete and anachronistic in almost everything, was even still bearing some signs of feudalism. But it is also true that despite all of this, our cultural-scientific institution system performed on a European level." To repeat my statement advanced in the preface, I am certain that an important work has been created.

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