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# East European Literary Magazines 1945–2004 in Hungary and the German Democratic Republic

## ONLINE LECTURE 3

DATE: 24 March 2023, 11 AM (CET) via ZOOM

MODERATOR: **Tomaž Simetinger PhD., ethnologist and cultural anthropologist**

### First lecture

TITLE: **Resistance to Political Power –  
Hungarian Literary Magazines (1945-2004)**

LECTURER: **Jolán Orbán PhD., Professor at the University of Pécs, Faculty of Humanities,  
Department of Modern Literature and Literary Theory**

“There is no democracy without literature, nor literature without democracy” as Jacques Derrida famously wrote, and there is certainly no literary life without literary journals. Since the Second World War literary journals have played a major role not only in preserving Hungarian cultural, linguistic and national identity, but also in challenging political power. Three historical events from the period spanning 1945 and 2004 profoundly shaped the literary and political life of Hungary and of the countries of Central and Eastern Europe: the revolutions of 1956, 1968 and 1989. In the aftermath of the Hungarian Revolution of 1956 several representative members of Hungarian literary life were driven into political or voluntary exile, sentenced to forced labor, or silenced. The Communist regime put increasing pressure on journals by means of censorship, imprisonment (Tibor Szántó, *Dunántúl*, 1956) or the removal of editors (Tibor Tüskés, *Jelenkor*, 1964; Ferenc Kulin, *Mozgó Világ*, 1983; László Vörös, József Annus and Sándor Olasz, *Tiszatáj*, 1986) and the prohibiting of authors from publishing their texts (Miklós Mészöly).

From the sixties and seventies onwards the literary journals published an ever growing number of special issues and also organised public debates in Hungary (*Mozgó Világ*), in the cultural centers of the Hungarian minorities (*Utunk*, *Korunk*, *Echinox*, *Kolozsvár-Cluj*, Romania; *Irodalmi Szemle*, *Pozsony – Bratislava*, Slovakia; *Ex Symposion*, *Újvidék-Novi Sad*, Yugoslavia), in emigration (*Magyar Műhely*, Paris, France), that strengthened their connections and gradually turned the editorial offices in Hungary and across the border into sites of political resistance. The critical spirit – *esprit critique* – of literary journals and samizdat publications (*Beszélő*, *Médium-Art*, Budapest; *Ellenpontok*, *Nagyvárad-Oradea*, Romania) played a decisive role in the 1989 regime change and paved the way for the democratic transition in Hungary. In my paper I would like to focus on the role of the *Jelenkor* in this process.

## Second lecture

TITLE: **The Magyar Műhely as the publishing ground for artists living on both sides of the Iron Curtain**

LECTURER: **Bernadett Sulyok PhD., chief museologist at the Petőfi Literary Museum, Manuscript Department**

The Magyar Műhely journal was launched in Paris in May 1962 by young intellectuals who fled to Western Europe after the defeat of the Hungarian Revolution in 1956. To the founding editors, Pál Nagy and Tibor Papp, Alpár Bujdosó joined from Vienna in 1973. The three of them shaped and defined the image of the magazine until 1996. The magazine was repatriated to Hungary in 1989-90, retaining its links to Paris and Vienna, and gradually handing over the editorship to the younger generation.

The editorial correspondence of the Magyar Műhely magazine enriches the Manuscript Archive of the Petőfi Literary Museum. Pál Nagy, Tibor Papp and Alpár Bujdosó have deposited their vast and impressive correspondence in our public collection, together with a number of their poems in traditional forms and visuals. In the museum's outstanding emigration literature collection, this corpus primarily represents the editorial practices, and the literary and art theoretical orientations of the representatives of avant-garde artistic endeavours, thus making it possible to trace the history of the journal and the friendships and the confrontations of the artists who gathered around it. In my presentation, I will describe the history of the journal and the particular relationships between the internal and external Hungarian writers, poets and theorists.

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### Third lecture

TITLE: **“Dream and Escape Attempt” /  
“Traum und Fluchtversuch”  
(Ulrich Zieger) – Oppositional  
Literary Magazines in the GDR**

LECTURER: **Wolfgang Görtschacher PhD., Senior Assistant Professor at  
the University of Salzburg, Department of English and  
American Studies, editor of *Poetry Salzburg Review*,  
director of Poetry Salzburg, co-editor of *Moderne Sprachen***

Critics believe that the rise of GDR (German Democratic Republic) Samizdat literary magazines either starts in 1979 – with the publication of the anthologies *Papiertaube* (“Paper Dove”, ed. Dieter Kerschek, Lothar Feix, Gerd Adloff) and *Laternenmann* (“Lantern Man”, ed. Thomas Böhme), which are regarded as their precursors – or with the SED Central Committee’s resolution of 11 November 1981 on “The Concept for Working with Young Authors and Other Citizens Interested in Writing”. “This exclusion of half a generation of young authors from the GDR’s literary industry led to the opposite of what was intended – it strengthened the group cohesiveness of the excluded.” (Peter Geist 2009) Until the end of the GDR, 30 literary artistic little magazines were published with a print run of between 15 and 200 copies.

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