
ABSTRACTS

Katalin Baráth: *Liverwort and Microprocessor: Chapters from the Cuban Adventures of Hungarian Researchers in the Socialist Era*

The Hungarian Academy of Sciences established a relationship with the newly founded Cuban Academy of Sciences in 1963. From then on, it became a regular practice to send Hungarian scientists – almost exclusively specializing in the natural sciences – to Cuba. Like scientists from other countries in the socialist camp, their aim was to act as a “catalyst,” advancing the scientific development of the Caribbean nation after it joined the ranks of socialist countries. The paper examines reports and correspondence by the researchers delegated to Cuba, as well as official documents of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, to determine how the scientific delegates approached their tasks and engaged with the host country. On one hand, the documents show that the scientists regarded their mission – sometimes lasting years – as a sacrifice, during which they were cut off from an advanced academic environment. On the other hand, the reports also reveal what made the task acceptable for them: first, the significantly higher salary compared to what they earned at home; and second, the opportunity to make genuine discoveries in an underexplored region. The findings also indicate that, unlike the documents of the higher academic administration, those produced by the researchers lack both ideological comments and signs of perceived civilizational superiority. At the same time, the researchers can be found to have occasionally complained about disorganization and the waste of resources, and often viewing scientists delegated from other so-called “friendly countries” as competitors.

Márkus Keller: *We Build for Libya. A North African Adventure of the Hungarian Construction Industry*

The study discusses Hungary’s shift in foreign policy toward the Third World from the 1960s onward, emphasizing the broadening of political contacts to encompass cultural and economic cooperation with the Global South. While these relations have traditionally been viewed as secondary to those with the Global North, recent scholarship suggests that they were part of a deliberate effort by socialist countries to develop an alternative form of globalization, distinct from Western practices.

The Libyan Housing Project, initiated by Hungary’s socialist construction industry, serves as a case study to examine Hungary’s relationship with the Arab

world. This project, which ultimately failed and resulted in severe financial losses for Hungary, offers insights into the practicalities and perceptions of cooperation between Hungary and Arab nations. The study incorporates internal expert reports, records of government meetings, and other sources to examine the motivations, operations, and eventual complications of engagement with Third World countries. The analysis highlights the stark contrast between the rigid, centrally planned economic practices of Hungarian firms set against a capitalist environment, as well as the Hungarian government's changing stance toward Libya and the broader implications of viewing socialist countries as proactive participants in globalization rather than mere recipients.

Milán Pap: *Between Two Worlds: The Admission of Chilean Refugees in Socialist Hungary, 1973–1974*

The reprisals that accompanied Chile's military takeover in September 1973, as well as the rising number of murders and disappearances, provoked global outrage. Eastern Bloc countries also offered their assistance, particularly by accepting Chilean communist and socialist immigrants. The Chilean immigrants, who arrived in Hungary in waves, adopted different life strategies: some viewed Budapest as a stopover on their way to Western Europe, while others appreciated the furnished apartment and work opportunity offered. Drawing on the self-narrative of a Chilean émigré and contemporaneous party documents, this study recounts the procedure and facets of the Chileans' admittance, as well as their subsequent experiences in socialist and post-socialist Hungary.

Zoltán Prantner – Abdallah Abdel-Ati Al-Naggar: *Marxist South Yemen through the Eyes of a Socialist Agent*

The People's Democratic Republic of Yemen, the only explicitly Marxist state in the Arab world, built dynamic collaborations with Eastern Bloc countries starting in the 1970s. This partnership involved substantial support from socialist nations, including Hungary, which sent experts to South Yemen to work on improving the state's infrastructure and underdeveloped economic sectors. One of these individuals reported to the III/I Directorate of the Ministry of the Interior under the code name "Dunhill".

The present study focuses on the portrait of the era discernible in the reports by "Dunhill" and contextualize the information recorded therein. The analysis addresses key themes such as the unique characteristics of South Yemeni society, the economic and social conditions of the Arab state, and the status and varying perceptions of foreign workers in the host country, with a particular emphasis on Hungarian representatives.

Additionally, the authors offer an introductory overview that characterizes the areas, intensity, and significance of South Yemeni-Hungarian cooperation in the early 1980s. Their findings aim to contribute to the international discourse on the goals, nature, content, and significance of the relations between Eastern European states and the “Third World.”

Attila Tokai: Algerian Students in Hungarian Vocational Schools

In the 1970s and 1980s, young people from Algeria took part in vocational training in a number of Hungarian towns. They faced similar social challenges, while their presence exposed teachers and locals to unprecedented intercultural issues of language and religion. Available sources are limited to contemporary newspaper articles, vocational school memorabilia (such as class photos and other images), and oral history collected from surviving teachers, Algerian students, and their friends. Algerian students were trained in various professions, such as technicians in water management, high-voltage electricity, food preservation, road and bridge construction, and so on. Joint events, exhibitions introducing the North African country, as well as Algerian–Hungarian sports competitions were of particular interest. The students integrated successfully; they even established a national Algerian student association with chapters in every city. Many of them started families in Hungary and continue to live there today.