

Gyorgy Litvan, ed. *The Hungarian Revolution of 1956: Reform, Revolt and Repression, 1953-1963*. London & New York: Longman, 1996. Pp. xv, 221. Paper, \$19.31. ISBN 0-582-21504-8.

Hungarian historians have seized the moment that the collapse of Communism offered them--to tell the "first authentic" history of the 1956 Revolution as experienced by its participants. A largely primary resource resulted from reliance on eyewitness and participant accounts as well as previously unavailable classified documents. The exceptions consist of the first chapter, written expressly for this English translation describing the post-war period that culminated in the Revolution, and an Afterward that ties everything together.

Utilizing a team approach to the project, participants, eyewitnesses, and a younger group of historical researchers joined together to present the most accurate portrait of the Revolution and its aftermath possible. By including the younger researchers a nice balance was achieved, eliminating much of the possible distortion arising from reliance on forty-year old memories since it seems to keep a reader from questioning the accuracy of such old recollections.

Chapter one nicely lays out the postwar period that led to the Uprising. Within those pages were points that proved vital to getting the most out of the book--a clear definition of Stalinism, how it was applied, and why it was not appropriate for Hungary.

In addition to its usefulness as a primary source, the book could also be used effectively in several other ways. For example, as part of an extra credit reading list for high school history classes, especially honors sections, or as supplementary reading (excerpts) for a discussion of Stalinism for the same classes. Such uses would also be suitable for community college history or political science courses.

History and Political Science departments in four-year colleges and universities could use the book the same ways as well as primary or supplemental reading for upper-division classes such as Russian history, Eastern European history, or Europe after World War II. Graduate seminars on such topics as Communism or the fall of Communism could also use the book effectively as could students taking directed reading credits on such topics as the 1956 Revolutions of Eastern Europe, post-WW II Hungary, or even Stalinism.

Depending on a professor's interests the book could also be used in other contexts and situations, but it is probably too indepth and detailed to be of much use for anyone younger than high school Honors classes, although excerpts and the maps could be used with other classes. There is an excellent chronology that provides a reader with a detailed time line of when the events occurred. A glossary is also included, but it is more like a mini-encyclopedia, giving brief biographies on key people and places.

The book is a good read and relatively easy except for one thing--foreign words. Students and instructors would appreciate a phonetic pronunciation being provided.

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