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ON THE TUMBLEWEED

THE PARIS YEARS OF TIBOR BARÁTH (1930–1939)

Tibor Baráth (1906–1992) is an oft-cited yet rarely analysed figure of Hungarian historical scholarship. His importance from the perspective of Hungarian historiography resides in the fact that, although an alumnus of the best educational institutions, as a university professor at Kolozsvár (1940–1944) he turned decisively towards national socialism, and after his emigration to France and then to Canada, he propagated ezoteric ideas of ancient Hungarian history. The present study explores the ideas that influenced Baráth during his almost ten-year-long sojourn at Paris, and the ways in which the thinking of a man who had originally disliked the Germans took a radical shift. It also examines the works written during the Paris years, the personal network Baráth created around himself, and the program he aimed to accomplish then. While the number of his works was not in keeping with his ambitions, Baráth maintained correspondance with a number of renowned Hungarian historians, and functioned as a permanent fellow of the Comité International des Sciences Historiques. On the basis of Hungarian and French archival and other unpublished material, the study reveals the constant features of Baráth's thinking (the modernization of Hungarian historical scholarship, the use of history as propaganda, the close interrelation between state and geographical space), which had been present since the 1930s, and, fuelled by the disillusionment and successive attacks against Baráth, gradually drove the historian of wounded ambitions towards the Hungarian national socialists.