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Fifty Years Later, Bard College Remembers and Celebrates Student Refugees of the 1956 Hungarian Revolution

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Abstract (Abstract): The Hungarian students arrived at Bard on December 22, 1956, during Bard's Winter Field Period, while the Bard students were absent from campus. The College provided orientation to the United States for the Hungarian freedom fighters as well as English language instruction. The refugee students used their time at Bard to learn, teach, organize, and begin to adapt to what, for most, would become their new country. James case, then President of Bard College, was quoted in a January 1957 article in the New York Times, saying, "They are a magnificent group. You have to hear them sing and watch them in the classrooms to appreciate this. They are eager to learn... [and] have forced us to pick up the pace." The students ranged in age from 15 to 35 and were taught by 15 Bard faculty members.

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Full text: Headnote

February 13-16, 2007, Reunion of 300 Hungarian Student Refugees; February 14-16, Conference "The Hungarian Revolution of 1956 and After-Impact and Contributions"

ANNANDALE-ON-HUDSON, NY.-In February 2007 Bard College celebrates the more than 300 Hungarian refugee students who arrived on the Annandale-on-Hudson campus, fresh from the Hungarian Revolution, in December 1956. From February 13 through 16, 2007, Bard hosts an alumni/ac reunion of these students, their families, and faculty members. In conjunction with the reunion, Bard is presenting an international conference, "The Hungarian Revolution of 1956 and After-Impact and Contributions," from February 14 to 16, 2007. "Bard became a way station for many young people fleeing Hungary, who wished to enter the American university system," says Leon Botstein, President of Bard College. "Bard's initiative was unusual, if not extraordinary. It coheres with what we have continued to do and reflects our current commitments in the area of human rights."

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Fifty years later, Bard is inviting all the alumni/ae of the program to campus for a reunion. The College seeks to celebrate their time here, share their memories with current students and faculty, and remember the events of the Revolution. To coincide with the reunion, Bard is holding an international conference, "The Hungarian Revolution of 1956 and After-Impact and Contributions." The conference reconsiders the Hungarian revolution, its impact on the freedom fighters' future lives, and its legacy. The three-and-a-half-day event includes a concert, panel discussions, lectures, a film festival, an exhibition, and informal discussions with faculty and students.

For further information and to register for the reunion and conference, contact the organizers at hungary56@bard.edu or visit the website <http://hungary56.bard.edu/>. The conference is free and open to the public.

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