

## GEORGE A. LANYI, 1913–1981

On February 20, 1981, George A. Lanyi died at the age of 67. His death deprived colleagues and students at Oberlin College of one of its most esteemed scholars and teachers. Lanyi, an expert on the politics of Eastern Europe and prewar British appeasement policy, was a long-time member of the American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies and of the American Political Science Association.

George Lanyi was born in Budapest on April 30, 1913, the son of the publisher of the leading newspaper in Hungary. He studied at Heidelberg University and at the University of Berlin just before the Nazis came to power. With his wife, Susi, he went to England, where he earned a bachelor's degree at the London School of Economics in 1937. Then, on the advice of the late Harold Laski, he came to the United States, where at Harvard he did graduate work between 1941 and 1943. After a stint at the United States Office of War Information as an expert on East European affairs, he resumed his graduate studies, ultimately earning the Toppan Prize in 1949 for the best Ph. D. dissertation in government. Lanyi taught at Brown University from 1947 to 1950, before coming to Oberlin to stay in 1950. He continued teaching enthusiastically until two months before his death.

Lanyi was active in the affairs of his profession and Oberlin College. Perhaps his best known works are a seminal article in *World Politics* on appeasement in 1963 and *Crisis and Continuity in World Politics*, co-edited with W. Carey McWilliams. He was widely recognized as an authority in his field, not least through correspondence, consultation, and the instruction of numerous students who themselves became influential scholars. But what one remembers most about George Lanyi are his political wisdom, his humanity, his capacity for analysis, his acute sense of historical and personal context, and his utter lack of pretense. The value he placed upon good conversation and correspondence shows his belief that the life of a college professor should be lived in the open: if not in the political arena, then in at least a forum of ideas and shared experiences. George Lanyi was a truly rare person. His legacy is not one of grand gestures or heroic deeds, but rather one of savored memories of a constant kindly influence.

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