

The publisher, Zrínyi Kiadó, is the official publisher of the Defense Ministry of Hungary (in the interest of transparency, the reviewer has his own manuscript pending with Zrínyi Kiadó, with publication expected in the spring of 2014). The work seems to be a direct translation of a companion volume also published in 2012 under the title *Kis magyar hadtörténet*, with the the same chapters, photographs and illustrations, but with some slight variations, such as the English version containing a useful glossary of terms unfamiliar to the non-Hungarian reader.

Despite the high quality of its scholarship and the pleasant appearance of its colorful maps, illustrations, and photographs, the critical reader may find the occasional English language errors to be a slight annoyance. Infrequent as they are, probably due to translation mistakes, they are noticeable and detract slightly from the overall high quality of the rest of the work.

Taken as a whole, however, the book is an impressive volume of high quality work, fair and objective, with pleasant illustrations and photographs and useful maps, and is accessible both to the military historian as well as to the lay reader. The *Illustrated Military History of Hungary* is a worthwhile addition to any serious collection.

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Ildikó Barna and Andrea Pető. *A politikai igazságszolgáltatás a II. Világháború utáni Budapesten*. [Dispensing political justice in Budapest after World War II.] Budapest: Gondolat. 2012. 140 pages.

The history of Hungarian People's Court set up immediately following World War II has not become a major focus of Hungarian historians yet. This lack of interest is particularly important if we take into consideration the fact that this was the period when Hungary would have had to face the legacy of its active participation in World War II. This confronting of the past is still missing and this is why different narratives keep emerging on this issue in Hungary even today.

A pioneering research was conducted by Ildikó Barna, senior lecturer at Eötvös Loránd University, Faculty of Social Sciences, and Andrea Pető, associate professor at Central European University, Department of Gender Studies, in which they aimed to shed light on the working mechanisms of the so-called 'People's Court' (*népbíróság*) through the examination and statistical coding of archived resources about lawsuits.

People's Court was set up after World War II in order to explore the war crimes committed and to prosecute war criminals.

Previous historical studies on this topic were usually based on micro-level case studies in which only very few cases were analyzed thus the results could not be extended to all of the lawsuits. This time the researchers approached the available resources in a different way. They aimed to construct a random and representative sample from all the available lawsuit records material in Budapest from the period between 1945 and 1949. Throughout the research every single file of this sample was coded by using a standardized coding system in which several characteristics of the files could be recorded (for example, characteristics of witnesses, lawyers, victims, defendants). This coding made it possible to compile a database in which different multivariate statistical analyses could be conducted and the results could be generalized to all lawsuits of the People's Court in Budapest. This methodological approach rooted in quantitative sociology is quite unusual in historical sciences thus the implementation of this methodology itself is an innovative aspect of this research.

The reason the researchers' attention turned towards the People's Court's history is also notable. According to the authors the remembering of political jurisdiction in Hungary after the Second World War is in contradiction: the story shared by the public opinion and what the historians think differs significantly. This phenomenon has further consequences, for example, on the present debate on revising history curriculum or on the re-emergence of extreme right in Hungary. Furthermore, Hungarian historians are themselves divided along whether the history of People's Court is a story of jurisdiction or of political revenge perpetrated by Communists. Some believe that the People's Court was used for political purposes after the communist takeover instead of doing justice to the victims of the war while others argue that it was a tool for jurisdiction. Barna and Pető analyzed this controversial question by examining 500 tribunal cases from that period and found that from 1945 to 1949 the number of political cases was growing but it is an overstatement to say that People's Court was a tool of political pay-off. However, according to the book's conclusions many crimes committed during the war ended with acquittal. Because of this perceived failure the People's Tribunal could not fulfill perfectly its role in the jurisdiction after the world war.

The book consists of five chapters. The first one is a useful summary introduction to the Hungarian system of the People's Court for those who are not familiar with it. The development, the structure, the constantly changing legal background, and the changing working mechanisms of the

People's Tribunal are presented here. This chapter supports the argument of treating this period of time from 1945 to 1949 not as a homogeneous block as it has been the case in the previous literature but as a dynamically changing period. By treating the year of lawsuit as a variable statistical analyses are suitable for grabbing this change. As we will see the authors used this possibility in their analysis when they examined, for example, the differences in the types of lawsuits from one year to another.

The next chapter deals with the methodology of the research in details. The authors present the probability sampling method through which 500 (100 from each year) lawsuits were selected from the more than 22,000 available cases and the available information about each case were coded into a statistical database. Sampling is needed when there are no resources for examining all available cases. This sampling method applied by the researchers ensured that every case within a year had the same probability for being selected into the sample. No personal or researcher interest could affect this process like in case-study research thus the sample could be representative to all of the tribunal cases. However, this methodology doesn't explore deterministic relationships between factors but can shed light on stochastic relationships between them. It can answer the question whether one factor made more likely statistically to have a certain outcome or not. This attitude towards data is quite unusual in historical sciences. This chapter might seem to be too detailed for some readers, especially for those who are familiar with quantitative sociological methods, but this detailed description serves as a tool for forego the critics that, for example, questioning the appropriateness of using quantitative methods on historical sources by arguing that these methods are too rigid to be applied in such cases or questioning the generalizability of the results on the unexamined units of case population.

The presentation of the results of the research starts in the third chapter. The authors make a distinction between five types of cases discussed by the People's Court: 1. Crimes committed against Jews during World War II (43% of the cases), 2. Memberships in far right and/or Arrow Cross groups (26%), 3. Crimes committed against non-Jews during World War II (12%), 4. Political and ideological cases (12%), 5. Crimes committed against Jews after World War II (7%). The authors found that right after the war almost every case dealt with crimes committed during the war and as we head to 1949 more and more cases appeared to be political and ideological suits.

The authors give a statistical analysis of the cases. According to the results most of the defendants were male, mostly between 30 and 50

years old, usually coming from the countryside, having a bit higher educational level than the average, and half of them were members of Hungary's Arrow Cross Party. Besides the defendants' social-demographic profile authors were able to give detailed description of lawyers and witnesses and their possible impact on the outcome of the cases that is something that was out of previous studies' sight.

In the next chapter the authors examine the political jurisdiction and cases of People's Court from a gender point of view and focus on female participants, both as defendants or judges. According to the results one fifth of the defendants were female and they were overrepresented in cases of verbal anti-Semitism. Authors argue that the figure of female defendants as young and innocent victims of male influence was a misrepresentation of these women in the public opinion. The fact that female defendants were mostly middle-aged, had a higher-than-average education and that they were mainly from rural areas of Hungary suggests that women were active participants of these cases and not deceived victims.

In the fifth chapter the authors examine the Jewish victims and their possible experience during the suits with the aim of answering the question on how this experience contributed to the formulation of negative and reactive Jewish identity in Hungary. The main argument is that the People's Court became the symbol of the un-kept promise of jurisdiction. According to the results in half of the cases in which the victim was Jewish, the defendants were acquitted of the charge. According to the authors this fact gave the message that the ordinary members of the Hungarian society were not responsible for the deaths of 600,000 Hungarian Jews and for many criminal acts against others during World War II and rather, the country's — and Nazi Germany's — political elites could be considered as mainly responsible for the committed crimes.

The book fills a gap in the existing in social history of Hungary. The authors examine a rarely researched topic by using an innovative analytical tool. This book can be useful for a wide range of audiences. Historians, methodologists, sociologists, scholars in Gender and/or Jewish Studies will find it resourceful and thought-provoking. There is no doubt that scholars from these fields will get new insights and knowledge after reading this book and they will have an impetus for creating new innovative data collection methods, too.

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