

ABSTRACTS

Anna Birkás: The Faces of Refugee Status. The Armenian Emigrants and the Evolution of the Refugee Cause

The question of refugees was one of the main social issues of the League of Nations during the first decade of its operation. The first official institution which was defining the term of refugee in international perspective was the High Commission for Refugees of the League of Nations founded in 1920 by Fridtjof Nansen. He was the inventor of the so-called Nansen-passport, an internationally accepted certificate for identification, aiming to let the stateless refugees cross the borders of the nation-states. While the general term of 'refugee' was not represented during the 1920s, there were a few refugee causes in the international discussion, which were distinguishing this type of migration from other emigrations. One of the recognized movements was the Armenian refugee's cause, concerning the Armenians running away from persecution in the territories of the former Ottoman Empire. Focusing on a less macro level, in this study, the social situation of Armenian refugees is approached by the analysis of a unique document, a registration book, which was composed in 1924–1925 by the delegation of the High Commission for Refugees in Greece. The document preserved some basic statistical data about the Armenian refugees temporary settled in Salonica area, who also appear in mini portraits on the pages of the register. The informations about the refugee families reveal the social effect of the refugee existence on the unwanted population, especially in the changes of roles in the family according to the gender. Being defined as an Armenian refugee and the experience of being unwanted by ethnicity deepens the senses of Armenianness for these people coming from a minority status. The process of the forced migration meant also a kind of individualisation, which could be described as a symbolic step from the traditional Ottoman society to Europe in a specific period of modernisation.

Kristóf Erdős: "I have arrived today..." Hungarian Refugees in Salzburg, 1945–1953

This paper introduces a new chapter from the history of Hungarian refugees after the World War II. Salzburg had been a transit place for many Hungarians until they emigrated to other countries, most of them to overseas. The refugees

spent their time in ‘Displaced Person’-camps in the city of Salzburg and even in the countryside. Based on research conducted in the archives and libraries of Salzburg and Budapest, this paper tries to reconstruct the everyday life of Hungarian refugees in Salzburg from 1945 up to 1953. My paper also attempts to give an overall picture on how people from completely different segments of the Hungarian society began a new life with the help of numerous organizations like UNRRA, IRO, NCWC, Joint etc., and how they started to work. It also describes their cultural programs and their spiritual life. János Mihályfi’s work and that of the Hungarian Caritas were remarkable: amongst many other activities they launched a self-support program (“Give, so that we could give, too.”) to support all the Hungarians residing in Salzburg. This paper delves into the conflicts of refugee life, too. According to the sources, the Hungarians emigrating from Salzburg settled down in Australia, Canada, United States of America and Venezuela.

Vera Hajtó: “My dear little son, I have received your letter.”
From the Family Correspondences of the Participants
of the Belgian and Hungarian Child Relief Project

After the devastation of World War I, in the framework of a humanitarian relief project, thousands of Hungarian children were transported to Belgium for a couple of months holiday. They travelled without their parents and stayed with Belgian host families. From the moment of their arrival to their host families, the Hungarian parents together with the Belgian hosts assisted the children to start up a written relationship between the two families. As the Hungarian parents were most anxious to watch over their children in spite of the distance that separated them, correspondences served parental purposes. Exchanging letters was probably the only possible, hence most significant communication channel for thousands of families to maintain their unity through time and space. The letters did more than just serving unity; they provided these families and their far-away children with a sense of continuity and bonding. They also facilitated the changing of family dynamics. Based on the content and textual analysis of personal correspondences of five Hungarian children and their families, this study examines the various ways correspondence sustained and developed family relationships – particularly parent-child relations – which were rendered vulnerable by separation. It explores how Hungarian families and Belgian families, in a joint enterprise, negotiated time, space and identity in their letters.

Adrienn Szilágyi: The Immigrant Nobility in Békés County in the 18–19th Centuries

The study examines the settlement of nobility in Békés county in the period of re-population in the eighteenth and nineteenth century that followed the end of the Ottoman rule. The main focus is placed on the reconstruction of the original domicile of the migrating nobles, as well as their motivation and the time of their settlement. As far as the number of nobles and noble families are concerned, the rejuvenation of the county is indisputable. However, the segmentation of nobility was far less successful since only a thin layer of middle nobility was established. Analysing the marriage strategies and kinship of the county's original high nobility, the study points out that the migrating nobles, constituting the largest part of the county's nobility, were of lower ranks in the hierarchy. Most of the registered nobles settling in the county arrived from Upper Hungary and neighbouring counties. They predominantly served in administration and the manor, or worked as teachers, craftsmen, or pastors. While their geographical and social mobility were both evidenced by the process of migration, the rise of the migrating nobles' social and financial standing was far from being the norm. While there are examples both for noble families rising in the hierarchy of administration and acquiring lands, many other families chose to remain craftsmen or tradesmen for generations. By the beginning of the Age of Reforms in Hungary, the nobility migrating from all over the country became a solid community that constituted the basis for reform opposition.

János Ugrai: Roundabout Ways in School. Patterns of College Studies in the Nineteenth Century

The study explores the patterns determining the academic careers of students studying to be pastors at the Sárospatak Reformed College in the first three decades of the nineteenth century. The main difficulty of research is that the paths to complete their courses (eight years in secondary school, eight or nine years in seminary) were significantly more varied than they are now. In addition, many students dropped out halfway through their studies. Thus the question arises whether those young people who did turn out to be pastors were the best students with the most regular academic career at the college. Evidence shows that they, in fact, were not. Looking at class registers, it is impossible to guess which student would become pastor ten or twelve years on, but those who were eventually ordained were rarely top students, but rather the mediocre, and at times the weakest of their cohort.

Furthermore, the study sheds light not only on the rather hectic academic career of these students, but also reaches the conclusion that students at Sárospatak in this period did not begin to consciously prepare for their career as a pastor until the second half of their study (from the fifth year onwards).