
ABSTRACTS

Barna Ábrahám: Enrichment and Nation-Building: The Economic Efforts of the Romanian Elite in Transylvania in the Second Half of the Nineteenth Century

The study deals with the embourgeoisement of Romanians living in Transylvania between the 1860s and the First World War, a process characterised by the rising of a new elite who chose pragmatic careers (doctors, lawyers, bank employees) and usually acquired land estates as well. The author examines how these professionals pursued the idea (and a rather utopian one at that) of an independent national economy that would develop through its own efforts. This they imagined to achieve by simulating the modernization of their Saxon compatriots, but maintaining the least contact possible with the Establishment, which they considered oppressive and predominantly ethnic Hungarian. The author makes use of magazine articles (mainly from *Familia*, *Revista Orăștiei* and *Revista Economică*), public lectures, and pamphlets, which all suggest that it is possible to build a modern civilized society without a strong manufacturing industry. They maintain that this can happen exclusively through cooperation and solidarity (saving banks, rural co-operatives). The proposed way to achieve their goals also include the revival of handicrafts, which allows villagers to make money in the winter, commercial banks, individual and common foundations, as well as well-equipped schools, which emphasise the importance of a national spirit and teach practical agricultural and industrial skills in Romanian, and so on. Following the overview of the shortcomings and strategies of agriculture, domestic industry, commerce and finance, the study is concluded with special chapters on the role of comprehensive national exhibitions and general propaganda in creating a virtual Romanian community of consumption, financial affairs, legal and health services.

Károly Bozsonyi – Zsolt Horváth – Zoltán Kmetty: The Power Grid. The Social Network of the Hungarian Elite in the Kádár era Based on Hunting Habits

Hunting played a prominent role in the life of the political elite of the Kádár era. Besides recreation, it also provided an excellent opportunity for relationship building. The study explores features of the power dynamics and structural characteristics of the political system based on the trophy presentation lists

issued by *Egyetértés*, which was one of the most important hunting association of the era, founded exclusively for members of the political elite.

The results confirmed the initial hypothesis that the slow decomposition of the system is reflected in hunting habits. Over time the leading political members of *Egyetértés* began to hunt together less and less, and the density of the joint hunting network decreased. Signs of the system's decay are clearly reflected in changes of hunting habits and the hunting network. In addition, the data reveals much more: the actors' informal position within the power structure, at the same time outlining the path of power dynamics of given members.

Ferenc Eiler: The “Accountability” of Germans: Social and Economic Consequences in Harta, 1945–1959

The study discusses the social and economic consequences of political decisions regarding the accountability of Germans in Harta, which is a town of predominantly German population, located on the left bank of the Danube a hundred kilometres south of Budapest. Reconstructing the internal structure of society and economic environment of Harta between the world wars, the study provides an insight into a world that post-1945 events and processes transformed fundamentally. The study focuses on the displacement of Germans, the subsequent settlement of ethnic Hungarians, and the consequences taking place immediately and continuing well into the 1950s. The closing date of the analysis is 1959 when both private land properties and co-operative groups were eliminated and the first co-operatives, then seen as “social smelters”, were established. These developments ushered in a new era in the life of the town's predominantly agricultural population.

István Gaucsík: History and Myth-Making: Sketches about the “First” Slovakian Co-Operative

The study deals with the nation-centred nature of the Slovakian historiography of co-operatives. As an example for Slovakian myth-making, the author discusses the interpretations of the penny co-operative founded in 1845 in Ószombat (present-day Sobotište in Slovakia). While this association comprised an organic part of the Hungarian community of associations, Slovakian historians consider it not only the first “ethnically Slovakian” credit union, but the first credit union in the Monarchy and the Continent. Contrary to historians' charges, this association, which was founded to encourage self-help and savings and regulate the members' self-improvement and lifestyle, did not discontinue due to discrimina-

tive Hungarian minority policies, but as a result of a natural process and adhering to the regulations laid down in its founding charter. The study focuses on the twentieth-century development of myth-making and the diminishing role of historical fact and archival research in the history of this particular association, as well as the foundation of actual associations in Ószombat in 1898 and 1902. It also addresses the nation-building concepts of Slovakian political elite. For Slovakian historiography the penny co-operative is not merely a subject of social historical research in the context of the local milieu of Ószombat. Slovakian historians also disregard the possibility of Habán (Anabaptist)-Slovak cultural interactions and have established a persistent historical construct to strengthen the Slovakian “small nation” identity.

Károly Halmos: Emporium and Empire: Nationalism in Business – Leó Lánczy

Leó Lánczy was the CEO of the Hungarian Commercial Bank of Pest, the largest Hungarian bank at the turn of the nineteenth century. This was an age when social Darwinism, coupled with an organic concept of society, provided a suitable terrain for connecting liberalism and nationalism. The banker viewed the matter of the nation as the issue of the central bank and financial markets. In the case of the former, Lánczy could not subscribe to the views of political nationalists. He dispensed his counsel much like a doctor advises prevention before cure, e.g. “should we decide on an independent central bank, we must be aware of such and such possible problem”. He did, however, wholeheartedly embrace the idea of south-eastern expansion. In this question he shared the ideology of Béni Kállay, a politician who presented his unique mixture of liberalism and imperialism as the preservation of the middle classes – or rather racial preservation, as it would be seen today.

András Tóth-Bartos: The Politics of Land in Northern Transylvania, 1940–1944

The most fundamental change in the life of the Hungarian minority in Transylvania between the world wars was brought about by the Romanian land reform, which was not entirely devoid of nation-building efforts and eventually resulted in a dramatic shrinkage of land held by Hungarians in Transylvania. Similarly to other territories re-annexed from 1938 onwards, all previous land re-parcelling was reassessed in the Northern Transylvanian territories, which were annexed to Hungary after the ruling of the Second Vienna Decision. In Northern

Transylvania the government chose to undertake this reassessment through civil procedure. On one hand, the point was to avoid the type of problems they experienced in northern Hungary. On the other hand, the extremely tense relationship with Romania was also a cause for concern, so measures suggesting broad state intervention were avoided.

The study focuses on those byways of the diverse land policies in northern Transylvania, which the Hungarian administration sought to increase Hungarian land properties in Transylvania, or more precisely, in order to solve problems of state pre-emption, free market exchanges and population settlement.

András Vári: Large Estates, Peasants and Nation: The Ideological Precursors of the 1919–1920 Central Eastern European Land Reforms in the Political and Economical Discourse

There are several detectable ideological precursors of Central and Eastern European land reforms of 1919–1920. However, these old “sherds” of ideology are not sufficient, even in their totality, to “explain” the advent of land reforms. As compared to the more forcible and larger scale confiscation of property in the course of the land reforms, any previous state settlement and similar precursors were inconsiderable. These ideas and ideological elements, however, may still serve as bridges in the course of events leading to land reforms in three distinct ways. First, they already contain the idea that the state is responsible for shaping the structure of society, even if it entails the intervention into private property or families. Secondly, these ideas also suggest that the state can consult “experts in this undertaking. Thirdly, the idea emerged that large estates serving as the essential basis for the old feudal elite should be replaced by a better distribution of land.

The logic of the world war brought three further catalytic factor into the equation. First, some land had to be allocated for the victims of war and the returning soldiers. Secondly, mass displacement began as early as the Second Balkans War, and this caused the rise of the opinion that foreign population poses military risk. Lastly, military administration has already imposed confiscation and used force on the population, which escalated by the catastrophic shortage of supplies in the last year of the war. Despite all this, it is safe to state that the aforementioned precursors had much less impact on the historical events between 1918 and 1930 than they did on the historiography of the subject between 1989 and 2011.