

## ABSTRACTS

**Mária Hidvégi – Tamás Vonyó**

### ■ Nationalism and Falling Behind: The Failure of National Industrialisation

Keywords: *Hungary, national industrialisation, stabilisation, failure*

Policy makers in Hungary faced a monumental challenge after World War I in trying to adapt the country's economic structure to new borders and to markedly different geopolitical conditions. Following a successful stabilisation in 1924, national income and industrial production picked up, and surpassed pre-war levels significantly by the 1930s. However, productivity growth was negligible due to depressed investment levels and sluggish technological progress. Industrialisation was promoted by the state, but output growth relied primarily on employment expansion and outdated technology. One of the main factors behind the unsatisfactory macroeconomic performance was that Hungary fell behind western nations in electrification and motorization, the locomotives of technical change in the interwar era. Limited access to capital and the lack of effective government coordination are mainly to blame, but the case of two major companies present evidence that successful adaptation models existed.

**Rudolf Paksa**

### ■ The Extreme Right in the Horthy Regime

Keywords: *far-right politics, Győző Istóczy, National Socialism, Hungarianism, Ferenc Szálasi, Arrow Cross Party*

The roots of far-right politics in Hungary, which is a widely varied phenomenon in itself, reach back to the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The birth of the “idea of independence”, nationalism, imperial ambitions and Turanism all date back to this century. The ideas were associated in the final third of the same century with anti-modernist concepts like anti-Semitism, directed against Jewish emancipation, the agrarian movement, built up against capitalism, as well as the idea of a Christian Renaissance. One of the precursors of far-right politics was Győző Istóczy, the father of modern Hungarian anti-Semitism, whose followers also took inspiration from Christian socialist thinkers like Ottokár Prohászka and Béla Bangha. The extreme right in its current form was born as a reaction against the revolutions of 1918-1919. The first national socialist

groups appeared in Hungary during the worldwide economic crisis. The most successful far-right political party was the Party of National Will, lead by Ferenc Szálasi, who published an overview of his ideas with the title *Út és Cél* (The Way and the Goal), in which he elaborated his views on “Hungarism”. Szálasi considered Hungarism the specifically Hungarian form of National Socialism. He also called his politics, directed at the “dejewification” of Hungary, in contradistinction to the anti-Semites who proposed the limitation of Jewish rights, anti-Semitism, which would have entailed the expulsion of Jews from the country without their fortunes. The Szálasi government, which came into office on 16 October 1944, promised the solution of the “Jewish question” and the establishment of a Hungarist state, which meant the totalitarian regime of a single-party state. Accordingly, at the beginning of November, Szálasi took up the title “Leader of the Nation”, concentrating the functions of head of the state and of the Arrow Cross Party's leader.

**Levente Püski**

### ■ The Political System of Hungary between the Two World Wars

Keywords: *administration, authoritarian regime, democracy, dictatorship, parliament, parliamentarism, political stability, regent*

After the fall of the Hungarian Soviet Republic on August 1, 1919, the coalition government of Károly Huszár set out to normalize the political situation after November 1919. By the middle of 1920, a dualistic political system had emerged which showed the characteristics of a parliamentary democracy as well as of a dictatorship. The transitional character of the system disappeared with the premiership of István Bethlen, who introduced a new state and governmental system in the first phase of his government between 1921 and 1926. This essay surveys the phases of this process and makes an attempt to define precisely the characteristics of the political system introduced by Bethlen. According to the author, a parliamentary political system emerged in Hungary by the mid-1920s with some characteristics of an authoritarian regime at the same time. This system had to face serious challenges during the 1930s, among which the emergence of the extreme right was the most important. Such reforms had been

incorporated into the system during the 1930s, as the result of which it can be described as an authoritarian regime after 1939. This system existed until March 1944, when Nazi Germany occupied the country.

### **Ignác Romsics**

#### **■ The Horthy Regime's Character**

Keywords: *Miklós Horthy, Horthy regime, fascist, authoritative and traditionally liberal elements*

Although some contemporary analyses and historical reflections published immediately after 1945 could have provided a good starting point for a more systematic and archives-based research work concerning the character of the Horthy regime, the intellectual climate of the rigid Communist dictatorship established after 1947-1948 made this task totally impossible. According to the prevailing view on the time period between 1920 and 1945, succinctly stated by Erzsébet Andics, one of the leading figures of the communist historians, "there was an essentially fascist regime in Hungary too for 25 years". The brochures and the school textbooks of the first 10-15 years did in fact outline this view in detail and illustrated it with concrete material. Due to the more liberal atmosphere of the Kádár regime, real historical research began after the 1956 revolution, and its first results were published in the 1960s. According to the new approaches published in the late 60s and early 70s, the power system of the Horthy regime contained not only fascist but authoritative and traditionally liberal elements as well. By the late '80s it has been largely accepted that in respect of its political institutions and their functions the Horthy regime should be characterized as a limited parliamentary system with distinctly authoritarian features. Although the evaluations have recently diversified again, professional historians continue to consider the Hungarian regime of the inter-war years as one of authoritarianism with predominant party relations.

### **Balázs Sipos**

#### **■ Press, Press Policy and Public Sphere in the Horthy Era**

Keywords: *Horthy era, press policy, public sphere*

This study focuses upon the press policy of the Hungarian governments in the Horthy

era. The years of 1919–1921 were the period of state exception. The war times have not ended legally in 1918, because the Hungarian parliament ratified the peace treaty only in 1921. So the different governments had extra rights, and they could create basic executive decrees which restricted the freedom of the press. For example, a permit from the prime minister was needed to establish a journal or a magazine, and the Minister of the Interior had rights to ban any newspaper or literary magazine etc. Executive decrees of this kind were valid during the complete Horthy era, but censorship worked just in 1919–1921 and during World War II. On the other hand, the press could flourish between 1921 and 1938. Two anti-Jewish laws were established in 1938–1939, which restricted the work possibilities of so-called Jewish journalists and editors, and more than 400 journals were banned in 1938–1939.

### **Béla Tomka**

#### **■ Hungarian Social Policy in the Interwar Period**

Keywords: *social policy, social security, history, interwar Hungary*

The first social security schemes were introduced in Hungary relatively early, at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. These programmes, similarly to the practice of most of the European countries, only covered industrial workers, while the public employees were granted pension and other welfare benefits by separate schemes. The inclusion of other social groups into the welfare programmes took place fairly slowly and only accelerated during the Second World War. Thus, the welfare system of interwar Hungary was characterized by a serious contradiction. On the one hand, a major part of the industrial employees was covered by health, occupational injury and old age pension insurance, and the level of the benefits was also high in an international comparison. The public employees similarly received relatively generous benefits. However, the social rights of the agricultural population constituting the majority of the total population were very modest in that period. The social welfare system noticeably began to open up to the rural population as a result of the change in the political constellation from the mid-1930s.

**Dávid Turbucz**

■ **Miklós Horthy's Journey to Rome and Vienna (1936)**

Keywords: *Miklós Horthy, Regent of Hungary, the Horthy-cult, Horthy's journey to Rome and Vienna, Treaty of Trianon*

After the First World War, leader cults appeared in several European countries as a response to the critical social and political conditions. The Horthy-cult, a special type of this phenomenon, can be ranked among them. This paper attempts to analyze the role of Horthy's journey to Rome and Vienna (1936) in the cult-making process. According to the main message of the selectively constructed image of the leader Miklós Horthy, the Regent of Hungary was the only one capable of achieving the national goals and of restoring national glory. He showed the way to the revision of the Treaty of Trianon to the Hungarian nation. Consequently, his journey to Rome and Vienna was depicted as a step towards the so-called brighter future. The author attempts to identify the techniques of cult formation and the frequently used elements of the leader's image. Of course, there was a sharp contrast between the image of the Regent, manufactured by the propaganda, and the genuine Horthy.

**Gábor Ujváry**

■ **Positive Answers to Trianon: The Cultural Politics of Kuno Klebelsberg and Bálint Hóman**

Keywords: *Kuno Klebelsberg, Bálint Hóman, Minister of Religious Affairs and Public Education, Hungarian culture*

The two defining personalities of Hungarian cultural politics, Kuno Klebelsberg and Bálint Hóman, have served as the Minister of Religious Affairs and Public Education for nine years each (between 1922–1931, respectively 1932–1942). Although the Treaty of Trianon caused serious damage to Hungarian cultural institutions, this was negligible in comparison to the economic losses. Klebelsberg and Hóman were the ones to give positive answers to the cultural losses. Their program for the construction of elementary schools, from the period between 1926–1930 and 1935–1940, elevated the cultural level of the lower classes. Consequently, at the end of the 1930s, the percentage of illiterates in the population above the age of six was only 7%, which

roughly corresponds to Western European standards. Another important aspect of their contribution was in the field of cultural diplomacy. This was the period of the establishment of Hungarian cultural institutions abroad (Vienna, Berlin, Rome, Paris) and the beginning of the state funding of Hungarian departments at foreign universities. Kuno Klebelsberg and Bálint Hóman implemented a distinctly modern cultural politics at a European level within the confines of an outdated society, and therefore the time period between 1920 and 1944 was one of the golden ages of Hungarian culture.

**Krisztián Ungváry**

■ **The Role of Hungary in World War II**

Keywords: *Hungary, World War II Hungarian Honvéds, going to war, attempts to make peace, Holocaust*

The role played by Hungary in the Second World War is still in the focus of public attention, although the generation which actively participated in the events does rarely appear in public life. The present study analyses the participation of Hungary in World War II between the coordinates of historical choice and necessity. It re-examines five issues, still widely misunderstood by public opinion, from this double perspective: the performance of the Hungarian Honvéds and of the military industry, the question of going to war, the attempts to make peace and the choices leading up to the Holocaust. This examination is also motivated by the fact that Hungarian military and economic participation was far from being an issue of secondary interest from a German point of view, and it even counted as unavoidable in some periods during the war. Neither can the participation of Hungary in the war be regarded as a simple matter, as because of its revisionist goals formulated in a contradictory manner this country effectively became a belligerent already in the spring of 1941. The circumstances surrounding the attempts to make peace which condemned these efforts to failure from the very beginning are still relatively unknown. The most debated issues among the historical events pertain to the genesis of the Holocaust and the question of Hungarian responsibility associated with this. The present review of these issues attempts to bring new contributions to their interpretation.

**Miklós Zeidler**

■ **Interwar Hungarian Foreign Policy**

Keywords: *Hungarian foreign policy, Treaty of Trianon, restoration of Hungary's territorial losses, revision*

The foreign policy of interwar Hungary aimed at the revision of the Treaty of Trianon and at the possible most complete restoration of Hungary's territorial losses following World War I. The partisans of the so-called integral (complete) revision wished to restore Hungary's old frontiers, invoking „historical rights”, „administrative abilities” and the regional „cultural supremacy” of the Hungarians, along with their „self-sacrificing wars in defence of Western civilisation” against subsequent Eastern invasions. They also made reference to the economic and geogra-

phical unity of the Carpathian Basin and to the resulting organical regional cooperation, the disruption of which, as they maintained, brought unfavourable effects for all nations concerned. The spokesmen of ethnic revision, on the other hand, would have been satisfied with a readjustment of Hungary's political frontiers along the ethnic (or linguistic) lines. This concept was based on the principle of national self-determination, claiming that every (national) community had the right to decide about its own superior administrative institutions, and likewise the right to choose the state authority to which it wished to subordinate itself. The essay ventures to demonstrate the influences of these two different concepts on interwar Hungarian foreign policy.



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„A széles körű szakmai konszenzus ellenére, amely a Horthy-rendszer jellegével kapcsolatban az 1980-as évekre kialakult, és amely lényegében azóta sem bomlott fel, a public history különböző színterein korántsem uralkodik egyetértés. [...] A tényyszerűségetől elrugaszkodó és a szavakat önkényesen új tartalommal felruházó nézetek a szakmájukat professzionálisan művelő kutatók túlnyomó többségéről mindaddig leperegtek. Ők – mint e szám több tanulmánya is mutatja – arra törekednek, hogy a regionális és az európai perspektívájú összehasonlítás szempontjait érvényesítve jussanak közelebb a negyedszázados Horthy-korszak jobb megértéséhez, és ennek részeként a kötséghívó antidemokratikus és autoriter, ám ha korlátozottan is, de mégis parlamentáris és plurális politikai rendszer még pontosabb leírásához.”

(Romsics Ignác)

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