

ABSTRACTS

Péter Alabán: Rural Crises. Industrial Crisis Zone Phenomena after the Change of Regime through the Example of North Borsod Miners' Settlements

Rural Hungary appears to have been anything but homogeneous after the change of regime in Hungary. The transition from Socialism into a market economy created insurmountable problems in several regions, mostly in the fields of economic restructuring, employment, unemployment and social composition. The picture is especially depressing in the northern region of Hungary, in the once flourishing settlements relying on mining and heavy industries, which had provided them with certain livelihood. The study focuses on villages surrounding the city of Ózd, where the survival and sustenance of the population was directly threatened by the closure of factories, plants and mines in the area. Alabán concentrates mainly on Farkaslyuk and the village of Somsály on the periphery of Ózd. Here, the memory of the halcyon days survives only in nostalgic reminiscences. The factory and its facilities, the mine, reading club, swimming pool, choir, brass band and sports club are all mosaic pieces from another age, which had once defined the everyday lives of the people living in the Farkaslyuk Miners' Estate and Somsálybánya.

The common features of both Farkaslyuk and Somsálybánya include social restructuring, negative migration processes due to manifold reasons such as demographic processes and the lack of employment opportunities, deep poverty and subsequent social ghettoisation, the gradual deterioration and disintegration of cultural and educational facilities, and last but not least, a hopeless vision for the future. With the aim of instigating new research, the study examines crisis indicators in the field of economy, society and culture, which often appeared together and had cumulative effect. It also presents collective and individual life narratives and survival strategies, which are often different to the experiences of people in similar Hungarian regions.

János Mátyás Balogh: The Lloyd-Mechanism. Crisis and Pricing Strategies in Newspaper Publishing in the 1860s and 1870s

The study explores business strategies and decision-making mechanisms shaping the pricing policies of market-based daily papers in response to crisis. The

history of publishing from a corporate angle has not previously been studied by Hungarian researchers, so the media-economic approach in this study is unprecedented. The analysis is based on two market-based factors of newspaper publishing at the time, which are referred to as information trends and economic trends in this study. While the former had an impact on demand, the latter determined advertising budgets. Based on the analysis of business performance of *Pester Lloyd*, a German-language daily published in Pest, the author points out that the paper was a profitable enterprise in the 1860s and 1870s and it was an important medium both for the advertisement market and for the readers. Before the financial crisis of 1873, advertisement sales made up for nearly half of all revenues for several years. Following this, the study looks beyond the façade of performance indicators and examines the publisher's responses to the dramatic changes taking place in the publishing industry, as well as the steps taken to remain profitable in economically hostile periods. The study discusses five pricing decisions that took place between the beginning of 1866 and the end of 1873, such as raising the price per issue or advertisement tariffs, and reaches the conclusion that the publishers of *Pester Lloyd* alternated between market factors during crises, always choosing the one that looked more likely to preserve fiscal balance. This meant that when the information trend was in a more favourable position, they increased the price per issue, whereas a more positive economic trend meant they raised their advertisement tariffs, which is what Balogh describes as the 'Lloyd-mechanism'.

Krisztina Boa: „[F]amine exerted pressure to such an extent”.
Reflections on the Crisis of 1863–1864

Consistently warm weather from the year 1861 onwards caused drought and the ensuing famine of 1863–64, which affected at least 47 administrative regions in Hungary to a varying degree. The study explores this sustenance crisis through the eyes of a rather heterogeneous group, who either lived through these hard times or were aware of it through various channels. The multi-genre sources, such as diaries, daily chronicles, reminiscences, memoirs and letters, provide a glimpse into the geographical extent of the crisis. In addition, the sources also attest to a range of phenomena associated with the economic crisis, such as burnt-out crops, bad harvests, shortage of food and fodder, threat of famine and the loss of farm animals. The shared experience of weathering the crisis together amplified the awareness of contemporaries: many have realised the significance of money shortage and recorded the dramatic changes in the price of crops and animals. The study also discusses society's responses to the economic crisis, such as the consumption of famine food, migration and criminal activity directly triggered by food shortage. Boa gives examples for local crisis management efforts

by examining the measures taken by famine boards in Miskolc and Békéscsaba, where she focuses on the role of a Lutheran pastor, Lajos Haán, and the uncertainty surrounding his board membership. The study concludes with a description of various unique forms of crisis management, such as charity events and other initiatives, as well as the personal motivation of private individuals' that made these possible.

Éva Judit Bodovics: Voices of the Flood. Reminiscences by the Survivors of the 1878 Miskolc Flood

The sudden flooding that hit Miskolc at night time on 30 August 1878 changed the lives of thousands of people in a few hours. Despite the fact that out of all the natural disasters of the nineteenth century this flood claimed the most lives, neither the Miskolc disaster nor the one that took place seven months later at Szeged have received much scholarly attention, even at the level of general interest. On the contrary, contemporary media was acutely aware of the tragedy, recording events and the experiences of people, who had witnessed the terror of the summer disaster.

The study attempts to make the voices of flood survivors heard, by reconstructing who they were, their lives before the flood, their experience on the fateful night and how it affected their lives afterwards if they managed to survive. Fifteen stories of widows, elderly men, bachelors, children and family men have been reconstructed from narrative and statistical sources to shed light on the perceptions and experiences of the survivors.

As the number of narratives is insufficient for overarching conclusions about 'crisis management strategies', the aim of the study is simply to present the reconstructed life stories of survivors. In conclusion, however, the narratives do show that the chances to rebuild lives after the flood largely depended on the flexibility of the bread-winner's occupation and its adaptability to new conditions.

Gábor Koloh: Demographic Crisis in the Ormánság Region. Family Reconstitution in the Vajszló Registry District

The study is a preliminary report of a research project on the one-child family system that became prevalent in the Ormánság region of Hungary as a result of family planning becoming increasingly wide-spread in the inter-war years. This most telling evidence for the widening practice of family planning is analysed from a number of angles and placed in the context of the period's social

processes. The study is not wholly without previous foundations; preceding studies helped make this subject one of the most frequently studied questions of Hungarian historical demography. For example, this present research project also builds on the conclusions of Rudolf Andorka's work on the subject. The project picks up where Andorka left off and it covers the period from 1895 onwards, primarily based on public records providing data about heterogeneous social groups. The one-child policy of Ormánság families was one of the most important questions and the centre of attention in the so-called 'one-child discourse' between the world wars. Koloh's new study juxtaposes some of the statements of this discourse with actual demographic statistics from the region. The figures in the report are based on family reconstitution, which is one of the most valuable tools for this nominative analysis. It is important to stress that the report is preliminary, because calculating the age-specific fertility rate and the average birth intervals of women having children in the Vajszló registry district has been completed for only 111 families so far. The paper also entails an analysis of the distribution by number of children, concluding that the single-child strategy was a decision based on a new kind of appreciation of children rather than the result of financial considerations.

György Kövér: Economic Growth and Decline in the Historical Memory of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy

While the year 1873 had been imprinted into the memory of nearly everyone recording history, another year of crisis forty years later in 1913 left barely any traces in memory. What causes this difference and how can it be interpreted? One reason is the complexity and severity of the events that took place. In addition to the financial crisis in 1873, the last great cholera epidemic also swept across the Monarchy this year. In contrast, the later crisis, triggered in the autumn of 1912 by the Balkan Wars, mainly affected financial and credit markets and industrial and commercial turnovers. It is hard to escape the impression that historical memory is shaped by the perception of crisis at least as much as 'facts' and 'reality'. The study deals with the perception of crises on three levels: contemporary diaries and memoirs, the writings of contemporary economists and retrospective accounts by historians.

The personal experiences of three minor characters from 1873 belong in the first category: the study examines the memoirs of Avraham Meir (1830–1907), an Orthodox Jewish merchant and District Officer Péter Krasznay (1830–1916), as well as the diary of the attorney Sámuel Szűcs (1819–1889). It is clear that the short-term crisis perceptions of contemporary witnesses depend partly on their personal disposition and partly on external factors. Sources in the second category show that contemporary academics were not entirely unaffected by this

either. The study mentions pioneers of Hungarian crisis research Jakab Pólya (1844–1897), Béla Földes (1848–1945; known as Béla Weisz until 1881) and Sándor Tonelli (1882–1950).

Kövér then goes on to review the terminology used by leading figures of twentieth-century Hungarian historiography: Gyula Szekfű (1883–1955) referred to the whole pre-war period as “the age of decline”, and Ferenc Eckhart (1885–1957), the author of the first comprehensive economic history of the modern era, considered the years between 1873–1889 ‘the era of crisis and stagnation’ and 1890–1914 as ‘the heyday of economic development’. In the 1960s, the concept of industrial revolution was reinterpreted. The first GDP calculations for key years (1867, 1900 and 1913) were published by Péter Hanák, Iván T. Berend, György Ránki and László Katus. Katus, using the term ‘take-off’ as a synonym for ‘industrial revolution’, divided the post-1887 period into two phases of growth: one long and ‘very fast’ period (1887–1899) followed by ‘deceleration’ (1900–1913). Kövér concludes his brief history of crisis perception with a review of recent scholarship in macro- and micro-economic history.

Ágnes Tamás: Crisis Narratives through Humour. Economic Crises, Famine and Cholera in Contemporary Satirical Magazines

The study examines contemporary crisis perceptions in texts and cartoons published in political satirical magazines, such as *Borsszem Jankó*, *Az Üstökös*, *Bolond Istók*, *Ludas Matyi* and the Vienna-based *Figaro*, for the years 1869, 1873 and 1882. The analysis focuses on the economic crises of these years, and the ensuing disputes about the Hungarian Bank (1873), as well as other disasters such as the 1873 cholera outbreak, stem rust epidemic, and famine. The methodology is based on the categorisation of the devices of humour and satire in both text and image.

Regardless of the subjects of satire in these papers, whether revolutions, historical and Biblical events or the quotidian, the texts and images often contain recurring subject-specific devices and symbolism. It is apparent that the satirical representation of the lesser crisis of 1869 was not directly associated with Jews, and relevant cartoons also feature Jewish and non-Jewish characters equally. While the treatment of the bank question in 1873 still does not suggest a direct connection, the frequent mention of Ede Horn brings a Jewish character into the narrative. The subject of the stock market crash, however, definitely reflects the contemporary public’s views about the role of Jewish speculators. The satirical papers’ representation of the 1873 cholera outbreak, stem rust epidemic and famine also show the pedagogical intentions of the authors, and what is especially interesting is the authors’ ability to poke fun at severe problems that deeply affected most layers of society.