

## ABSTRACTS

### Angelika Bálint: Homeless Shelters: The Remit of Authorities and Civil Organisations after the Turn of the Nineteenth Century

Although civil societies, specifically the Association for Homeless Shelters, were the primary initiators of the establishment of the first shelters in Budapest, the capital's municipal administration also participated in providing aid to the homeless. The present study examines the institutional framework of helping the homeless from the angle of the agents participating in the provision of aid, with special attention to its transformation in the decades following World War I. In addition, it provides an insight into the personal background of the individuals involved in the upkeep and operation of shelters. In addition, the analysis of the shelters' accounts of funds received reveals some unique characteristics of private and municipal funding. The examination of the charitable organisations necessarily extends to the operation as seen from the angle of the shelters' users, the accessibility of the shelters, and the eligibility criteria for the users. In the decades directly after World War I, the institutional framework underwent a fundamental transformation. While at the turn of the nineteenth century, the above mentioned association and the municipal authorities coordinated their efforts on the basis of a general consensus, after the war this status quo was abandoned entirely. The Association for Homeless Shelters was disbanded and the running and maintenance of shelters were transferred into the remit of the municipal administration. At the same time, new organisations sprang up establishing shelters across the city: their activities can be interpreted as a response to the shortcomings of the municipal aid available for the city's homeless.

### Zsolt Bódán: The Casino of Békéscsaba in the Age of Reforms

Following the 1827 foundation of the social club named National Casino (*Nemzeti Casino*), the so-called Age of Reforms in Hungary was also a time of "casino fever." The debate clubs and book clubs also launched at this time were important forums for spreading the liberal ideals of the age. They played a defining role in helping the fundamentals of democracy gain foothold in Hungary, especially by their membership policies cutting across the categories of the estates system and dismantling the boundaries of feudal society. Their libraries contained Hungarian and international literature, and going beyond supporting the case of Hungarian language and literature, they also laid the foundations for an erudite Hungarian readership. The members of these societies had access

to the most important journals of the time, which meant that they were well informed about the political and economic news of Hungary and the world, as well as the most recent literary news of the country. These clubs and associations attest to the strengthening of civil society as well: besides their educational purposes, they strove to boost the local economy and social life, and they also proved to be a catalyst of social change through their patronage of charitable activities.

The study aims to deepen and nuance the generic picture of reform-age civil organisations found in scholarship, through the example of Békéscsaba's Casino, established in 1842. Following a detailed overview of the operation of this provincial casino before the 1848 revolution, the study provides a detailed insight into the circumstances of its foundation, the practical implementation of the projected aims and ideals, the organisational structure, the methods and strategies of the leadership, the composition of the membership and the subscription process, as well as the fabric of the casino (building, facilities, accounts), the library, and the reading habits of the members. The primary source for the study is the casino's proceedings between 1842 and 1848, augmented by other archival sources from this period and news reporting in the contemporary press.

### Dániel Bolgár: Soft Jews or P.E. Teachers' Bias? The Physical Weakness of Jews in Hungary at the Turn of the Century

Between the birth of the anti-Semitic political movement and the Holocaust, the discourse about Jews mostly concentrated on their successes. The disadvantages of Jews in physical competitions or in games associated with the body received less attention. The present study examines what produced the impression of the overall failure of Jewish students in high school physical education: did their actual substandard performance cause Jewish students' grades to be lower or did their teachers underrate their performance under the influence of the myth of inferior Jewish physique? The comparative analysis of the so-called physical strength charts used at the turn of the century sheds light on the differences between physical education grades of Jewish and non-Jewish students. The figures confirm that Jewish students compared to their non-Jewish peers were in fact better athletes than how they were perceived by their teachers: their low grades were a result of biased assessment.

## Zsuzsanna Kiss: Civil Society under the Interim Government 1861–1865: The Zala County Agricultural Association's 1863 Poverty Drive for People Living on the Great Plain

In the past few decades Hungarian research into the history of civic societies and associations have contributed a great deal to our understanding of the spread of different types of societies and their social significance. Less was said about their potential to fulfil their planned initiatives, the kind of conflicts they faced during their work, the support they could rely on, and the forms of resistance that hampered their operation. The present study, thus, focuses on conflicts. The main question deals with the ways in which Hungarian agricultural associations were able (or unable) to act as the civil relief organisation at the time of the most severe humanitarian crisis of the 1860s, the draught and famine on the Great Plain. As demonstrated in the present case study, the poverty drives of the Zala County Agricultural Associations and their difficulties reveal the contemporary civic society's potential for implementation within the restricted perimeters of civic action in the Interim Period. Upon a closer examination of the struggles between the association and the government, it becomes clear that despite its reservations about civil initiatives in general, in time of crisis the government could rely on their support to a great extent – perhaps because it was the only thing to be done to achieve anything at all.

## Miklós Konrád: Culture for Identity: Jewish Cultural Societies in the Age of Dualism

The study provides an overview of the history of the Israelite Hungarian Literary Society (est. 1894) and the National Hungarian Israelite Association for Public Education (est. 1909), both Hungarian Jewish cultural societies, from their foundation at the turn of the nineteenth century until 1914.

The period between the second half of the 1880s and the outbreak of World War I was an extraordinary time in the pre-Holocaust history of emancipated Hungarian Jews. At this time, the intelligentsia of the integrationist Jews were more concerned about the disintegrating identity of the acculturated and secularised Jewish middle class than about external threats, that is, anti-Semitism. Jewish cultural societies were established to halt this process, which was perceived as disastrous at the time. Their founders were inspired by their conviction that the Jewish identity of the middle class can be sustained or reanimated by the presentation and laudation of their cultural heritage rather than of their religion.

While the two associations felt the continuous need to proclaim their usefulness for patriotic purposes, they repeatedly delved into discourses which defined Jewishness on an ethnic and 'racial' basis. This was in stark contrast both with

the official standpoint which aimed to reduce Jewishness to a religious category and with the Hungarian-Jewish assimilation ideals in general.

### Barbara Papp: „Fermenting Times”. Civil Self-Organisation and Psychoanalysis (1987–1988)

In the autumn of 1987, the Psychoanalytic Working Group organised the international conference “Trauma Processing in Adult and Child Analysis” in Budapest. The large-scale two-day conference, conducted in four languages, was interspersed with social events. It was significant not only because the last conference of a similar theme was held in 1937 but because it was a milestone in the renewal of the formerly much prized Hungarian Psychoanalytical Association. The conference reintegrated the association into international academic life even though it was formally not re-established until 1989 when the parliament passed the new legislation to regulate associations. The ambiguity of the relationship between the establishment and the forming and re-forming psychoanalytical society is amply demonstrated by the fact that the event was hosted by the Hungarian Academy of Sciences but was opened by József Antall. Antall, who later became prime minister, was at the time a medical historian and the director of the Library of the History of Medicine, known for his opposition views. While the public appearance of the Hungarian working group was a momentous event for the international psychoanalytical association, the affiliated exhibition about “The History of Psychoanalysis in Hungary” later served as a cornerstone for the foundation of the Sándor Ferenczi Association, created with the aim to foster the traditions of the “Budapest School” of psychoanalysis. Through the case study of the now thirty-year-old Ferenczi Association, the study presents the ways in which associations could be established in the late Kádár era, as well as the relationship between the establishment and civil organisations at the time.

### Erika Szívós: Poised on the Edge of Tolerated and Supported: The Budapest City Improvement Society as Mission and Civic Movement in the 1980s

The study analyses the history of the Budapest City Improvement Society (Budapesti Városszépítő Egyesület) – established in 1983 and later renamed as the Budapest City Preservation Society (Budapesti Városvédő Egyesület) – from the beginning to the 1990s, placing it in the cultural apolitical context of the 1980s. The activities of the society are interpreted as early civic activism, which, though not expressly in opposition to the government, was critical of the town

planning policy of the Socialist regime. The values they subscribed to and propagated, their efforts to preserve landmarks at risk, and the message conveyed by their publications did in many respects push the boundaries of political tolerance. At the same time, through activities designed to establish civic control and local advocacy, the society became a model for other civil associations and advocacy groups, and consequently indirectly promoted the development of the civil society in late Kádár Era Hungary.

The study focuses on the reasons for permitting its establishment, the compromises that allowed the society to be launched in the early 1980s, and the expected requirements to ensure its operation later. With regard to the reasons for and the history of its establishment, the essay highlights significance of contemporary media: the heritage preservation movement was borne out of the publicity of a popular TV show, *Our Grandchildren Will Not See This* (*Unokáink sem fogják látni*), which was given its own slot in 1981.

In the countries of the Eastern Bloc various similar preservation societies were founded around this time. Parallel to these, the Budapest City Improvement Society and other Hungarian organisations occupied a place somewhere between civil society and political opposition. For this reasons, although the regime did not consider preservation movements as such a threat, the movement's figureheads and administrative staff were subject of secret surveillance, primarily because of their connections with opposition movements and groups.

The study is based on interviews with the founder of the movement, Mihály Ráday, the publicly accessible episodes of TV shows such as *Pleas for the City 1* and 2 (*Városvédőbeszéddek I-II*), the analysis of the society's printed publications, as well as the surveillance reports and secret police files about the individuals associated with the society.

## Árpád Tóth: Lutheran Burghers in the Earliest Civil Associations in Hungary: Social Ambitions, Social Networks, Group Strategies

The study examines the extent of German Lutheran burghers' participation in pre-1848 associations in Hungary. Ranging from Free Masons' lodges, ladies' charitable societies, and Pest casinos (social clubs) to scientific-medical societies, the study explores the participation of Lutheran burghers as leaders, subscribers, or activists in various organisations from the Saxon towns to Pozsony/Pressburg, from Eperjes/Preschau to Pest. Although the figures and patterns of participation show great variation across the types of associations and the traditions of different towns, German Lutherans generally show higher levels of activity than others. The paper suggests that the reasons for this lie in the shared cultural conventions of the stakeholders, such as their access to information abroad and their educational preferences, as well as their already existing nationwide network.

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The study is a methodological experiment of sorts, as the analysis approaches the associations as vehicles of social organisation. In this sense, instead of the traditional analysis of estates affiliation and profession, the subject of the present inquiry is a characteristic “estatesque” group of Hungarian society in the age of the late estates system, which can be described in terms of shared culture, and is characterised by strong social ambitions and cohesive countrywide cooperation.