

## ABSTRACTS

**Balázs Bazsalya**

■ ***Trianon's Memory in the Hungarian Public Opinion***

Keywords: *Trianon, memory, public opinion*

The intellectual and political debates surrounding the Treaty of Trianon continue to play a significant role in Hungarian public life today. However, findings from a representative survey conducted on the centenary of the treaty reveal that these debates are less prominent in public opinion, where a broader consensus appears to have formed regarding the perception of “Trianon”. According to this consensus, the treaty is viewed as unjust and excessive. At the same time, explanations emphasising external factors, particularly the nationalist movements in Central Europe and the geopolitical ambitions of the victorious great powers, dominate public reasoning regarding the causes leading to the treaty. Explanations focusing on internal factors, such as the poor decisions of the political elite at the time or Hungary’s prior nationality policies, appear far less prominently. Objective knowledge about the treaty is also lacking: more than half of the Hungarian population cannot recall the exact year of its signing. This suggests that while the perception of “Trianon” remains a significant topic within the intellectual and political discourse, it is more prominently represented as a form of cultural memory in public opinion and less as an event that shapes national identity.

**Andrea Fehér**

■ ***Genealogical Memory and Awareness: The Family Archives of the Pataki Family***

Keywords: *Pataki family, Transylvania, family archives, genealogical memory*

This article discusses a unique family archive from early modern Transylvania. The archive’s distinctiveness lies in the self-documentation efforts of

successive generations of the Pataki family – intellectuals, primarily doctors – who produced numerous introspective and chronicle-like ego documents. Above all, it highlights the “loving care” with which the Pataki family preserved the written memory of their ancestors over three centuries. I will explore the construction and curation of the family archive through an inclusive examination of the Pataki family archives and the personal legacy of Jenő Pataki, which is inextricably linked to it. By approaching the archive not only as an object but also as a subject of enquiry, this paper focuses on the motivations of the family members involved in its creation. It examines how and why these repositories came into being, as well as the reasons later generations restructured, reshaped, and refashioned family memory.

**Gábor Gyáni**

■ ***What Do Aristocratic Memoir Authors Remember, and How?***

Keywords: *emigrant Hungarian aristocrats, memoirs*

In examining the memoirs written by emigrant Hungarian aristocrats after 1945, it becomes evident that most are shaped primarily by a nostalgic memory of a once-existent Eden in which they were born, prior to the decline of the aristocracy at the end of World War II. Although these authors often lived in the West for several years or even decades, the image of their youthful past – connected to prewar Hungary – remained largely unaffected by the life experiences gained in the democratic Western world. The reason for this may partly lie in the fact that most of the memoirs were written during the Cold War, a period when the victimhood status of the prewar elite under Communist rule could render even the aristocracy an appealing social phenomenon. This suggests that the long-lasting effects of their original socialization provided a stable and enduring psychological foundation for both their personal and group identity.

Éva Kovács

■ ***“Post-testimony”: The Place of Witness in the Historical Narration of the Shoah***

Keywords: *“post-testimony”, Shoah, historical narration*

For a long time, the analysis of survivors' testimonies did not find its way into historical writing. When it did, these testimonies were often used merely as illustrations of victims' personal experiences within the Grand Narrative of historians. Over the past 20 years, however, with the opening of several digital oral history archives, these testimonies have become regular sources for historians. Additionally, the memory culture of the Shoah has fundamentally changed in the West since 1989, with the most significant change being the widespread introduction of the concept of trauma. It is widely recognised in psychological and sociological research on Holocaust testimonies and other ego documents that specific analytical methods are required for digital collections. However, Holocaust historians working with these sources have rarely applied such methods. This paper proposes sociological techniques for using and interpreting personal accounts in historical writing. It also examines the historical use of large testimony collections, drawing on current case studies of the Holocaust in Hungary.

Gergely Romsics

■ ***Against the Empire: Retuned Memory Politics in Hungary***

Keywords: *retuned memory politics, Hungary*

Hungarian mnemonic practices have transformed over the past decade. Among these changes is a decline in the prominence of remembering communist crimes, alongside efforts to reposition the nation as a community of victims of crimes committed by great powers. Based on these observations, this paper argues that Hungarian public memory no longer aligns with the established post-communist me-

memory framework. It is more appropriate to label it as populist, as Hungarian government practices are comparable to populist movements and politicians from Europe and beyond. Moreover, this emerging memory culture is fundamentally configured around the notion of a struggle between a people and their supranational or imperial oppressors. This paper analyses how this threat is constructed, particularly through mnemonic practices, with specific reference to the recent government-driven reinterpretation of the Trianon peace treaty and its aftermath. This reinterpretation has become a signifier of the destructive effects of cosmopolitan liberalism on a Central Europe of nations.

Katalin Somlai

■ ***“The Regime Change Has Arrived”: The Memory of the Regime Change in the Life Histories of Intellectuals and Professionals***

Keywords: *regime change, Hungary, memory, intellectuals, professionals*

The memory of Hungary's political transition of 1989, particularly in the context of public discourse, attracted scholarly attention soon after the events due to perceived failures in parliamentary democracy and a decline in social solidarity. Ongoing political challenges, which shape and define social identity, have sustained persistent scholarly interest in the memory of this transition. This paper explores how the transition was remembered at the turn of the millennium from a middle-ground perspective. We investigate whether the revolution lost its significance for intellectuals from the middle strata of Hungarian society – those who, as part of the cultural, scientific, and bureaucratic sub-elite, did not play a central role in collective decision-making or institutional reform but nonetheless contributed to the transformation from a secondary position. By virtue of their social status, these individuals later influenced the perspectives that shaped the

memory of the regime change. Our findings are based on the analysis of 89 life-course interviews conducted between 1997 and 2010.

**Tamás Stark**

■ ***Memory of the Soviet POWs: From Silence to the Distortion of History***

Keywords: *Soviet forced labor camps, Hungary, memory*

The issue of approximately 700,000 Hungarian POWs who spent many years in Soviet forced labor camps was an absolute taboo under Communism. It gained public attention only in the aftermath of its collapse. Dozens of memoirs were published, alongside a few reports and documentary films. Additionally, organizations were established to preserve the memory of the former prisoners. However, early representations received little attention in the 1990s and 2000s, even in historical writing. The government declared 2016 and 2017 as Gulag Memorial Years, which provided new impetus for research in this field. New sources were made available through recollections. Regarding historical policy, the government incorporated the prisoners' stories into its anti-Western memory narrative, claiming that the USA was responsible for the tragic fate of the prisoners. However, these suggestions have not yet infiltrated academic historical discourse.

**Orsolya Völgyesi**

■ ***György Bulányi's Alternative Church History: The Relationship Between the Basis Communities and the Hungarian Catholic Hierarchy in the Decades After 1945***

Keywords: *György Bulányi, alternative church history*

After the Second Vatican Council, the community church model began to find followers even in Hungary at the underground level. These developments mainly took the form of the Regnum Marianum and the Bokor base community, founded by the Piarist monk György Bulányi in the late 1960s. A new way of experiencing belonging to the Church was closely aligned with the synod's vision of the Catholic Church, but this was precisely why the communist state considered it very dangerous, as it represented an autonomous organization and opposition to the official Church. The rhetorical structure of the alternative church history elaborated by Bulányi made it clear that the Bokor movement was intended to represent the common memory not only of the Piarist monk but also of the community as a whole. Our paper aims to present the cornerstones of this narrative, which defines the most important arguments for the identity and self-understanding of a religious community marginalised from the Church in the 1980s.

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(Gyáni Gábor)

ISSN 1222 8338



9 771222 128330 4 2 4 0 1 1

10 LEI  
950 FT

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