

Háborúból békébe: a magyar társadalom 1918 után. Konfliktusok, kihívások, változások a háború és az összeomlás nyomán [From War to Peace: Hungarian Society after 1918. Conflicts, Challenges, Changes following the War and the Collapse]. Edited by Zsombor Bódy.

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The publication of the present volume is long-awaited, as there is a great need for in-depth research on the economic and social aspects of post-1918 Hungarian history. The contributors include historians, archivists and sociologists; their papers re-examine the forgotten and misunderstood aspects of the history of the 1920s.

Such an essential and usually misconceived aspect of the war is its demographic effects, which are re-examined by Gábor Koloh. He intends to disprove that from a demographic point of view, the war meant the end of an era. Koloh points out that the number of births in Hungary was already decreasing between 1900 and 1910, and this tendency only intensified in the next decade. This demographic transition, which also occurred in Western Europe, resulted in demographic crisis by the 1930s. In the second study of the volume, Béla Tomka deals with the economic influence of the Great War and the Trianon treaty. According to the contemporary approach, the economic difficulties were the result of the treaty, and, compared to the era of dualism, the decline in the economy was emphasised. This view was based on an economic approach that perceived natural resources (agriculture, mining, etc.) as the key factor in economic development. However, European research in economic history reveals that, in comparison with international tendencies, the economic achievements of Hungary after the Trianon treaty were no weaker than in the dualist period. Béla Tomka also agrees with the latter view, arguing that the real driving forces of development were the structural changes in the economic system, technological improvement, and human power. Ágnes Pogány examines the

financial politics of Hungary between 1914 and 1924. A false belief is that the significant inflation that occurred during the World War I was the result of intentional government action. However, this approach is disproven by the fact that none of the three finance ministers after the war could stop the inflation that was triggered by war expenses, the lack of food and stock, and mainly the prolonged payment of war reparations. Financial stabilisation finally occurred under the control of the League of Nations in 1924, when Hungary received an international loan and the independent Hungarian National Bank was set up.

Tamás Csíki seeks to identify what the appropriate name for the rural events that took place in the late autumn of 1918 would be. The author points out that the events are defined as a 'civil democratic revolution' in Marxist terminology, even though there were significant differences between the events that took place in cities and villages. Csíki argues that the events that occurred in villages can be defined as hunger strikes. He highlights that home-coming soldiers, along with the rural population that had been in need for four years, expressed their dissatisfaction in a traditional way, and no violent or Bolshevik characteristics can be identified in their behaviour. The author of the next piece, Zsombor Bódy, deals with the problem of food supply in Hungary during and after the Great War. As food supply came under governmental regulation during the war, it became a field of political conflict between interested social groups. Difficulties caused by military administration significantly contributed to the emergence of a civil war situation by the end of 1918, as depicted by the caricatures included in the study. Governmental control of the food supply finally ended in 1924, which promoted both the economic and political consolidation of the country. Péter Nagy analyses the issue of Hungarian coal stock during World War I and the following years. Although there were many coal mines on the territory of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, they did not even cover the country's needs before the war. In the second half of the war, the coal shortage became so severe that the government tried to remedy the situation with central regulations. A special coal commission was set up with recognised professionals as leaders. However, it was only in the first half of the 1920s that the situation was normalised thanks to increased coal production, austerity measures, and imports from abroad.

In the seventh study, Ágnes Nagy investigates housing policy and related initiatives during World War I, as well as the respective long-term changes in mentality. During the war, the renting of flats was also under governmental control, as opposed to under the earlier free-market conditions. Under the Hungarian Council Republic, control was even more strict: the government sought to determine the size of houses people could live in Budapest. Consolidation started under Teleki's

prime ministership, but in 1923 the latter started to reduce governmental control. However, although it may sound strange, the idea of a ‘bound housing policy’—inherited from the period of war and revolution—lived on into the later decades of the twentieth century. Katalin Sárai Szabó reviews the social aspects of women’s employment during the World War I and the following years. After the war, the concept of the ‘working woman’ came to the fore. However, the employment of women brought about significant changes in social life, and as men started to see women as rivals in the world of work, it generated numerous social problems, according to the contemporary perspective. The author points out that, despite their engagement in different jobs, the social esteem of women remained low. In the final study, Tibor Klestenitz introduces the situation of press and journalism during World War I, the time of the revolutions, and the first years of consolidation. The author emphasises that the phenomenon of anti-journalism, which had already appeared during the war, became more intensive after Trianon. The government and journalists fought for control of the left-wing elements of the press, with the former attempting to make it responsible for the war and related defeat. However, these actions were still far removed from those of the extreme right, which tried to totally mute the liberal press.

The significance of the above-introduced volume is that the topics of the studies perfectly describe both the short- and long-term effects of the Trianon treaty and not only on a macro but on a micro level. Another aspect that I highly appreciate about this book is that approximately half of the authors use tables and diagrams, which make it possible to understand the conclusions more easily. A further remarkable advantage of the publication is that the authors use the most relevant English and German literature and primary Hungarian sources to draw conclusions about the history of Hungary between World War I and the time of consolidation. However, in spite of the volume’s pre-defined aim, not every author manages to contradict the contemporary perspective and redefine a presumably more appropriate narrative instead.

