

Foreword

This publication aims to present a cross section, within the limited scope of this volume, of Hungarian research into wartime economy and society carried out in the past decades. Though written at various points of time, the studies share the common feature of objective analysis based on empirical research results.

The earliest study in this collection is that of Professor Berend. He was somewhat reluctant when I asked him to offer a chapter of his unpublished doctoral dissertation for this volume, but thankfully, he accepted my reasoning. The examination of the wartime social structure would not have been complete without a study about the workers. This special area had been neglected by research during the communist era, either because it elicited excessively dogmatic associations among the younger generations of researchers or because it was heavily controlled by party ideology. Much could have been and still needs to be explored in this area through local historical research and through life-course interviews.

In recent years, the appeal of works tackling the social history and sociology of 1956 has greatly increased. It can only be hoped that this interest in the former taboo topic will not evaporate when it comes to the analysis of broader social-historical processes. Professor Berend deemed it necessary to note that the chapter cannot be regarded as a comprehensive treatment of the subject since he has not carried out more recent investigations in this area. Nevertheless, the analysis of the statistical and archival sources is a good starting point for further research.

The contribution of Ivan T. Berend and György Ránki to the historiography of the Hungarian economy in the past

decades has been decisive. There are, however, areas of interest that were beyond, or on the periphery, of their research. One such area is Lóránd Dombrády's investigations concerning the relationship between the army and the economy, based chiefly on the source material preserved in the Archives of the Institute for Military History. Another area of this kind is elite research, a new area of interest in Hungary. One of the first outcomes of this endeavor by sociologists and historians was Sándor Szakály's paper on the Hungarian military elite of the World War II.

Several social science researchers in the middle age bracket had gained inspiration to carry on archival research in the seminars of Professors Berend or Ránki. But Károly Szabó and László Virágó have been guided in their first research attempts by this middle generation. They decided to analyze the changes in the institutional system of forced delivery of supplies during the war and in the initial period of the planned economy. For this work they also tried to utilize the material of archives throughout the country. Like so many of their colleagues, they have been carried off by the whirl of recent political changes — abandoning their promising academic careers — assuming senior posts in the administration. Their thesis, whose chapters on the war economy are reproduced here is in an abridged form.

Another contributor is Tamás Stark, one of the authorities on an issue that stirred tempestuous debates on the war casualties. Some will question some of the research results, but one thing is certain: the legitimacy of his method — implying the meticulous, objective registration of facts and a comparison of data — can hardly be disputed.

We wish to thank Judit Pokoly for translating the manuscripts from Hungarian into English and Stuart Bernath for smoothing out the inconsistencies of the text.

Finally, allow me to say a few words about the peculiar circumstances of the genesis of this volume. When I first discussed the plan of this volume with Professors Béla K. Király and Peter Pastor, they agreed to proceed with the project on the condition that one of the academician authors of the volume be the editor. Since, at that time, Iván Berend was president of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, György Ránki was the obvious

choice. He was a highly respected scholar with great professional experience not to mention his congenial personality. I saw him as someone I could learn from. We agreed on the topics and the authors to be commissioned. Ránki wished to give the closing chapter of his book that he was working on for this collection, although he was also considering the idea of writing a separate study, but his unexpected death foiled those plans. Therefore, the job of editing this volume was again placed on me, but from that time on, it was a bitter task. The contributors of this volume and I wish to dedicate these studies to the memory of György Ránki.

The Editor