English abstracts

Edvy, Athina
Civilians in Defense of Neon Signs

In the 1970s and 1980s, during the Khrushchev era, the countries of the Eastern Bloc ordered the neonization of cities. Among the neon signs produced and displayed during this period, there were several works of urban significance. In contrast to capitalist countries, the neon signs did not advertise a single brand, but offered the sense of a better life and a brighter future that would lead to cultural and economic boom. They could only be used for "informing, educating, and entertaining" and they could be interpreted as a new kind of signpost in the urban socialist landscape. Despite these efforts, smaller and larger "brands" have developed in socialist cities in places marked by neon, for example Bambi in Budapest. The disappearance of neon, which is an ongoing process, is due to several factors: apart from being expensive to maintain, in the course of capitalist development, cities are seeing local, traditional businesses and retail shops and restaurants being squeezed out by larger companies. Small businesses are closing, and as a result, the colorful signs of the socialist period are disappearing from the cityscape. This study discusses the history of the Hungarian and Polish neons in a comparative framework to illustrate how neonization in the Eastern Bloc unfolded. In Europe, there is a growing trend among NGOs try to save and renovate neon signs, as public institutions do not collect or restore them. In Hungary, Bálint Forgách founded an NGO to preserve the signs in the early 2000s in cooperation with the Museum of Electrotechnics. However, after more than a decade, the NGO ceased its operation. In 2017, Luca Patkós began working with neons and her initiative to preserve iconic inscriptions in situ is still active. What these examples have in common is that they were founded on the initiative of civilians, who work to ensure that neons do not disappear from the cityscape. The article explores their objectives and operational structures based on interviews with the founders with the aim of illustrating through these two Budapest-based projects how NGOs can protect the built heritage of urban significance.

Horváth, Eszter
The Diversification of Hungarian Civil Society in the 1990s: The Case of Literary Associations

This paper examines the changes in the functioning and purpose of Hungarian civil society after the democratic change of 1989. It discusses the case of the

József Attila Kör [Attila József Circle] and Fiatal Írók Szövetsége [Young Writers' Association], two newly founded writers' associations to shed light on the challenges that the democratic transition brought with itself and offers a glimpse into the cultural politics of the era. The main research methodology of the paper was based on open-ended interviews with members of the two associations, while its main sources were archived media, such as newspapers.

Hosszú, Kristóf
„Adel verpflichtet"? The Efforts of the Deutsche Adelsgenossenschaft to Preserve Noble Positions as Reflected in the *Deutsches Adelsblatt*

This study analyzes the pursuit of a dominant group in German society, the German nobility to conserve their social, economic, and political positions and influence from an ideological perspective around the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The fight for persistence (the German concept of *Obenbleiben*), unification, and representation as a unified class of nobility has been an important research trend since Heinz Reif's fundamental work on Westphalian nobility, with significant contributions by Rudolf Braun and Daniel Menning. The latter authors concur that the German nobility, perceiving the increasingly rapid changes of their era (from the decline of religiosity to the rise of urbanization and even the organization of labor) viewed all aspects of their power – rooted in feudal foundations – as being threatened. As a result, they shifted towards an ever more radical conservatism. The most prominent manifestation of this ideology is represented in the journal of the largest association that brought together the German nobles, the so-called Deutsche Adelsgenossenschaft. The *Deutsches Adelsblatt* was published from 1883. This journal is one of the most popular sources for German nobility research, and it demonstrates how Prussian noblemen interpreted their own period as a crisis of the society, which led them to fight for the preservation of their traditional leading role. However, the struggle of the nobility changed over time, which brings up the question how elaborated the conceptions of the *Deutsches Adelsblatt* were about the persistence of the nobility, and whether the noblemen were able to adapt to the intensifying changes of their world. Through a comparison of articles appearing in the 1884, 1894, and 1903 volumes of the journal, this study aims to illustrate a trend in the changing nature of noble conservatism by examining the descriptions of the nobility's situation, role, and social mission. This allows us to demonstrate how the idea of noble conservatism became increasingly radical. Thus, it becomes evident how the Prussian nobility distanced itself both from the populace it aimed to lead and from the other strata of nobility that remained outside the scope of the Deutsche Adelsgenossenschaft due to the vague goals of the association, which were never realized.

Hrčka, Alexandra
National Identity and Civil Society in Late Nineteenth-Century Liptó County

This study seeks to trace the forms of national identity in the operation of two associations, the Slovak Beseda (Tót polgári kaszinó) and the Hungarian Circle in Liptószentmiklós and Rózsahegy – similar in function and type – in late nineteenth-century Liptó County. The paper identifies the means and methods used by the two associations to strengthen their preferred linguistic and national identity. The manifestations of the national narrative in the operation of the associations is examined in the period of the revival of Hungarian nationalism, which was particularly marked by the closure of three Slovakian public grammar schools, the dissolution of the Matica slovenská and the renunciation of the Slovakian National Party (Slovenská národná strana). The Beseda (founded in 1862), the Hungarian Circle in Liptószentmiklós (founded in 1870), as well as the Hungarian Circle in Rózsahegy (founded in 1886) equally declared education as their primary mission and restricted the promotion of delicate political and ecclesiastical issues among their members. The statutes of the three associations did not contain any formulation of an explicit national narrative. However, the reconstruction and analysis of the activities of the associations and the composition of their membership reveals that the national narrative was in fact prominent in their activities. Accordingly, the members of the Beseda's leadership took an active political role in the Slovakian national movement, while the Hungarian Circle provided regular support to the Hungarian Educational Society in Upper Hungary. In addition, music, dance, and literary events organized by the associations, as well as the selection of press subscriptions can all be identified as tools capable of influencing the identity of the members.

Huszti-Szlama, Gabriella Zsófia
"It is scandalous that there are some women who, after all this, have the audacity to wear the lace and silk made by our enemies…" Enemy Construction in the Activities of the Fényűzés Elleni Liga

The political discourses of the modern era are permeated by issues of propaganda and enemy-seeking, already observable in the early twentieth century. The quote in the title of the study comes from Cécile Tormay's essay entitled *Struggle Against Wasteful Fashion*. The well-known writer, together with Györgyné Pallavicini, founded the Fényűzés Elleni Liga (League Against Luxury) in the spring of 1916. Although the reason for its establishment can traced back to the escalating shortage of raw materials, the movement was permeated with hostility towards French and English fashion. This is not surprising given that the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and France, as well as England, were on opposing sides in the war. However, the incorporation of fashion into the discourse of enemy construction was still considered a novelty. The League declared everyone who did not agree with their objectives as an enemy. The paper demonstrates how this enemy-seeking behavior was realized through the activities of the association based on the constitution of the

League, Cécile Tormay's essay, and the manifestos published in local newspapers. The theoretical basis for the analysis is provided by the works of Márton Szabó (2003, 2007), Reinhart Koselleck (1998, 2003), and Murray Edelman (1988).

Svégel, Fanni
The Personal is Political? Zsuzsa Ortutay and the Hungarian Women's National Council

This study is the first complex biography of Zsuzsa Ortutay (1913–1982), secretary of the Hungarian Women's National Council (Magyar Nők Országos Tanácsa, MNOT) specialized in family policy and wife of Communist minister Gyula Ortutay. In discussing her life and professional activity, this article aims to reinterpret the connection between her private life and expert work in family policy. The first part of the study analyzes her early life and career as a dancer and art teacher and her marriage during the World War II period. From the 1950s on, the politicization of personal issues, such as reproductive rights, family life, and motherhood can be linked to her activity as an advocate for women's issues. Beyond Ortutay's political role, the activity of the Hungarian Women's National Council and the internationalization of feminist issues are also under scrutiny. To this end, the personal records of Zsuzsa Ortutay are explored, such as her diary fragments, letters, and her autobiography, complemented by MNOT documents related to family policy, and the diary of her husband. This kaleidoscopic biography underscores the complex nature of women's life courses amidst the political twists and turns of the twentieth century. By writing Zsuzsa Ortutay's life account based on autobiographic sources, the study attempts to understand the entanglement of personal ambitions, the complications of marriage, and the "state feminism" of socialist Hungary.

Taschek, Zoltán
The 1929 Bill on Trade Unions of the Ministry for Social Welfare and Labor

In the Horthy era, a law on trade unions was never enacted. But a bill was prepared in the Ministry of Social Welfare and Labor led by Catholic priest József Vass at the end of the 1920s. This paper examines the draft overlooked so far in literature. After outlining the situation of trade unions in the years of the Bethlen consolidation and presenting the background of the elaboration of the bill, especially the disputes in the Cabinet about the issue, the study analyzes the document from several aspects. It discusses its stance on the questions of the right to organize, the right to strike, and corporatist ideas. Then, the paper demonstrates the ways the bill intended to influence the operation of the social democratic and the Christian social trade unions. Since in the era, as during the Dual Monarchy, founding trade unions was forbidden among agrarian workers, the study focuses specifically on the way the bill treated this controversial problem. It also shows the ideological background of the contemplated reforms by examining the public and

confidential statements of Minister Vass and his main colleagues. To evaluate the planned measures of the bill, the paper compares it to an earlier draft proposed by the Ministry of Commerce in 1923, and touches on the European context of the issue: the regulations of other countries and the views of Catholic social thinkers. Finally, the study sketches the fate of the bill and the situation of the trade unions in Hungary in the later period of the Horthy era.

Zsuró, Zsuzsanna
Social Engagement and Civil Society in Contemporary Art

The restriction of artistic freedom has been a characteristic aspect of the contemporary Hungarian cultural field since the restructuring of cultural policy in 2010. A persistent opposition to the government's tight control attitude has been voiced among art workers over the past thirteen years. In parallel with "official" art, socially engaged and critical artistic practices have emerged to support marginalized communities and to reinvigorate critical thinking. Izabel Galliera's book entitled *Socially Engaged Art After Socialism: Art and Civil Society in Eastern Europe* examines socially engaged art practices in the context of civil society. The book argues that the role of civil society has significantly increased, among other things, in the light of the complex political, cultural, and economic relations between the EU and the Central and Eastern European region. Galliera argues that civil society facilitated and then subversively critiqued the social transformation towards democratization in the early 2000s. Taking this theory further, this paper seeks to explore the relationship between civil society and contemporary art in an interdisciplinary approach. Among other things, it seeks to interpret the function of civil society in the changed socio-political context of post-2010 Hungary and to examine self-organizing, socially engaged, and critical artistic practices as a subversive behavior in relation to the products of "official" culture. The study provides important insights into how artistic attitudes against neoliberalism and capitalism have been transformed into critical reflections of right-wing exclusionary cultural-political attitudes by the simultaneous reorganization of civil society.