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American Influences on Hungarian Political Thinking from the American Revolution to the Centennial

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From about the end of the eighteenth century until the War of Independence of 1848-1849, the United States provided a model for Hungarians seeking national independence. Progressive intellectuals and politicians attacking feudal conditions in Hungary also looked with interest and enthusiasm to the American example.

In the eighteenth century, Hungary resembled the Young Republic in at least three different respects. After the Turkish occupation, when all the waste land and depopulated areas had to be reconquered and resettled, Hungary was something of a frontier on a minor scale. Encouraged by the Habsburgs, German settlers came to the abandoned land, and various other ethnic groups settled on territories formerly inhabited by Magyars. Historians later described the recapture of the land as a development on the American scale. In 1844, Wilhelm Richter, a German traveller, compared pioneering in America and in Hungary: "No able bodied man with capital who likes work and is mentally alert need to go to North America; he can make his fortune much nearer home, in the forests and steppes of Hungary."[1] The country's numerous peoples and the many religious denominations resembled America's ethnic groups and her variety of religious sects. Above all, the colonial status of Hungary under the Habsburgs invited comparison with the Young Republic that had gained its independence from the British crown. As a matter of fact, an anonymous poem in 1790 cited with sarcasm the British king grieving over the loss of America.[2] The success of the American Revolution inspired the patriotic Hungarian nobles, whose main concern was to gain their country's independence, while the young nation's democratic institutions appealed to the progressives dedicated to the modernizing of Hungary along the lines of Enlightenment ideals. In a broader sense, these aspirations included economic progress and many related issues; however, this study will investigate only questions of political democracy.

The distant, unknown, new country became a source of inspiration in Hungary soon after its birth. In 1789 Sándor Szacsvay, editor of *Magyar Kurir,* praised the Young Republic: "Since America became a free society after shaking the English yoke off her neck, all nations are yearning for the same liberties." Szacsvay also explained the decisive influence of "Washington's philosophy" on events in France,[3] thus combining the concern of both nationally-minded patriots and democratically-minded progressives.

This same interest and enthusiasm explains János Zinner's earlier enterprise, a book for which he asked Benjamin Franklin to provide accurate data.[4] Zinner, who signed himself as Prefect of the Royal Academy of Buda, promised Franklin "to give public manifestation of his true feelings." But the book was cautiously worded and did not predict the outcome of the revolutionary struggle. The letter, however, leaves no doubt about Zinner's personal sympathies: "I look upon you and all the chiefs of your new republic as angels, sent by Heaven to guide and comfort the human race."[5] Zinner's intentions were clear. If American "guidance" was to become effective in Europe, American ideas had to be propagated.

His example caught on. During the short-lived optimistic boom of political activity in the early 1790's, leading Hungarian politicians and intellectuals seized every opportunity to acquire and circulate information about the Young Republic, and to oppose Hungarian conditions by citing the American example. Such was the case when the historian Alajos Belnay reminded Hungary's aristocracy, which refused to surrender its privileges, of the American revolutionary example.[6]

The Hungarian Jacobin conspiracy of 1794–1795 was Central Europe's first political movement inspired by the French Revolution. France's geographical proximity alone explains its overwhelming impact. However, Ignác Martinovics, József Hajnóczy, and the other leading figures in the conspiracy, were thoroughly acquainted with American ideas as well, and attempted to apply them to Hungarian conditions. But the issues were rather confused, as were most political practices in eighteenth-century Hungary. Martinovics tried to accommodate his personal ambitions for a brilliant career with political activity, in conformity with the democratic ideals of the Enlightenment.[7] Other participants, such as Hajnóczy, the prominent progressive intellectual, the best-trained and most informed individual among the leaders, were torn by the confusing nature of the Hungarian political scene and their own duties as enlightened humanitarians and patriots. Hajnóczy was also an excellent legal scholar whose constitutional

proposals derived from sound research. A letter written by Konrad Bartsch, a junior civil servant at the Viennese Treasury, suggests that Hajnóczy had inquired for sources on the American Constitution. Bartsch disclaimed knowledge of any available edition of that document but promised to keep searching.[8] Hajnóczy's awareness of American conditions was certainly extensive, notwithstanding the difficulty of obtaining outside information in Habsburg-dominated Hungary. When Hajnóczy urged religious tolerance and legal rights for Hungary's underprivileged Protestants, he cited the American "Status of religious freedom" of 1786.[9]

Gergely Berzeviczy, the first person to attempt a vindication of the defendants' goals after the trial, received a hand-written Latin translation of the Declaration of Independence from Pál Czindery, the alleged translator of Rousseau's *Social Contract*.[10] Hajnóczy had experienced difficulty procuring a text of the American Constitution, even with Viennese friends to help him. Czindery's copy was evidently transmitted to Berzeviczy through secret channels. All this activity testifies to Hungarian eagerness and ingenuity to acquire these documents, even under the most unfavorable conditions. Freemasonry was one of the few open channels through which American ideas flowed. In January 1792, Martinovics informed the Viennese police that neophyte Masonic members had sworn an oath to "defend the present conditions in France and America in writing, orally, or even with a sword in their hands against all tyrants."[11]

Martinovics had translated Thomas Paine's works from the French, and he and others frequently cited the American Founding Fathers and their ideas in various contexts. The Austrian authorities recognized the danger arising from these American philosophical sources. Their fear was borne out during the final conspiracy trials, when the mere possession of Paine's books or identification with Franklin's ideas was considered evidence of guilt, as with Michael Verhovácz, bishop of Zagreb, Jacob Szecsenacz, a chamber councillor, and Paul Lukács, a lawyer.[12]

It may be true that the conspiracy involved relatively few people. But within three days of its publication in 1790 Martinovics's most important anonymous pamphlet[13] had sold more than five thousand copies,[14] an amazingly copious distribution at that time. In it, Martinovics tried to promote the enlightened social and educational reforms of Joseph II (1780–1790), and cited the "immortalis Americae Republica" [immortal American Republic] as an example for the Hungarian nobility to emulate. Very much like Belnay did at about the same time, Martinovics also encouraged aristocrats to introduce changes "ad

normam pensylvanorum" [in the Pennsylvanian way], as he described the American democratic system.[15] He praised both the Americans and the French: "Adora Philadelphiae coetum; extolle ad sidera sapientes Gallorum cervices." [I adore the Philadelphia convention and praise to the skies the Gauls' wise brains].[16] In two different works, Martinovics ranked America among the few free countries in the world.[17] Since Martinovics considered America a symbol of hope and daring, he glorified "immortalis Columbus, Americae inventor" [immortal Columbus, America's discoverer].[18] Though he also feared the distant country, at his trial he proposed to seek asylum there, if pardoned.[19] The request was denied.

The most striking evidence of the early American impact on Hungary emerged in two contemporary constitutional proposals, neither of which referred to America specifically, though both aired Hungarian variations of the federal principle. Martinovics elaborated his constitutional plan in an anonymous pamphlet in 1793.[20] He would restrict the central government's powers to defense and foreign relations, and would establish autonomous "provinces" for minorities. He devoted one chapter to the "federalization of the nation," in which the right of each province to promulgate its own constitution was firmly established.[21] The other document addressed the estates of county Zemplén.[22] This rather sketchy plan proposed that Hungary's counties, each under a governor, would be independent and would unite only for defensive reasons. The major differences separating the two contemporary proposals indicate the divided nature of contemporary Hungarian political aspirations. Martinovics envisaged a republic ruled by the Habsburgs, a sort of odd contradiction in itself; but then, he was interested in a more enlightened government, not in national independence. The Zemplén appeal reflected the aspirations of the patriotically-minded feudal gentry, whose only concern at that time was to attain national independence and to preserve their privileges. Their constitutional proposal incorporated elements reminiscent of the American Declaration of Independence: "Each county should be in full agreement with all the others about abolishing the tyrannical Dynasty."[23] The two documents demonstrate that both the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution were known in Hungary — which is the more remarkable since copies were not easily obtainable.

The conspirators were executed or imprisoned, but their ideas continued to inspire Hungarians. America remained alive, at least in the dreams of poets. Mihály Vitéz Csokonai, the most illustrious poet of the Hungarian Enlightenment, expressed both despair and hope in a 1795

letter to Sándor Bessenyei in American terms: "And I, an exile in my own country," he wrote after his expulsion from the College of Debrecen, "carry on my days in boredom. I am happy only when I can find a New World for myself, and build there a Republic, a Philadelphia — at least there like Franklin — eripio fulmen coelo sceptrumque tyrannis" [I snatch lightning from heaven and the sceptre from tyrants].[24] The easy, matter-of-fact way in which both Martinovics and Csokonai alluded to Philadelphia, or to Pennsylvania for that matter, without further elucidating their significance, is sufficient evidence that at the end of the eighteenth century those were household words with very specific connotations among Hungarian progressive intellectuals. Dániel Berzsenyi, another important poet of the age, also described his idea of democracy in American terms: "Our democracy should not be that of lawlessness or recklessness, but one of wisdom and human understanding like that of George Washington. This is the first victory of civilization, something for which writers should furnish the ground, provided they wish to be the schoolmasters of humanity."[25]

Sándor Farkas Bölöni, scion of a Transylvanian middle stratum noble family, "the Columbus of Democracy,"[26] realized Berzsenyi's dream and produced a textbook on democracy based on American principles. His republican political ideas and his membership in the Unitarian church made him *persona non grata* in a Roman Catholic monarchy. On a 1831–1832 voyage to the United States, Bölöni discovered America both for himself and for Reform Age Hungary. In 1834 he made his findings available to all "open-minded compatriots."[27] Unlike Martinovics, Bölöni was attracted to the distant land and felt at home in the Young Republic. Amidst the awakening of backward Hungary in the 1830's and 1840's, America functioned as a model of "material, spiritual and moral" modernization, to cite an 1834 article in *Tudománytár*. Bölöni's travelogue, together with Gábor Fábián's Magyar translation of Tocqueville's *Democracy in America* in 1841, rapidly became a textbook of political and economic progress, a treasury of democratic ideas frequently cited in political debates at all levels. The significance of those books on Hungarian political thinking cannot be overemphasized.[28] In Count István Széchenyi's view, no one had ever honored Hungary "with a more useful and more beautiful present" than Bölöni.[29]

In Bölöni's opinion, the two most impressive features of the young country's political life were "Liberty and Equality." He praised the personal freedom of Americans, their maturity in political matters, the fact that in America public elections were every citizen's concern,

responsibility and right.[30] When he claimed that "the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence are the political Bible of the Americans" and that "these are indispensable furniture in all households and the reference book of all citizens,"[31] he most certainly wished to set a standard for his own compatriots. Native of a country with very strict class distinctions, Bölöni was swept away by the equality enjoyed by the American citizen: "The clergy and the army, the police and the judges, the scholars and the bankers, these are also common, equal citizens."[32]

Bölöni's book, preceding by one year Tocqueville's *Democracy in America*, has a special significance as a pathbreaking description of American democratic institutions. No comparable Central European or even Russian travelogue preceded it. Previous Russian or Bohemian books failed to match the accuracy of Bölöni's informative statements nor did they contribute commensurately to the proliferation of American ideas. The Russian Pavel Svinin, though his status as a diplomat placed him in an excellent position to collect facts about the workings of American institutions, described the new country rather inaccurately.[33] Karl Postl of Prague knew the United States from first-hand experience, and as Charles Sealsfield he even became a citizen. However, he maintained that American principles could not be applied to European conditions.[34] Perhaps he was overly cautious, aware of Metternich's hostility to the United States. Unlike Postl, Bölöni was not cautious. Not only did he strongly believe in the adaptability of American ideas to European political problems, he also daringly advocated this faith. This made him an early nineteenth-century pioneer of American democracy in Central Europe.

Bölöni was convinced that a free press, good public libraries, a decent educational system, and the political maturity of a nation were interdependent variables. Everything, including the right to education, hinged on political freedom. The Americans "know that where the knowledge of sciences and law is limited to a certain class or to the few, the more learned can easily rule over the less learned."[35] No wonder that with this understanding of the importance of cultural factors for political progress, Bölöni later played a major role in the Hungarian Academy's effort to establish links with the American Philosophical Society.

Hungarian cultural centers collaborated on all levels with liberal politicians to propagate American ideas and information about the United States. The first Hungarian map of North America ("Oskolai uj magyar Atlas" [A New Hungarian School Map]) was prepared at the College of Debrecen in 1804. Significantly, it was drawn by three

students, Gábor Erőss, József Papp, and Dávid Pethes, all of them close friends of Csokonai, under the guidance of the famous Ézsaiás Buda, one of Csokonai's professors. The map featured both present-day Canada and the United States, which was termed the "Egyesült Szabad Társaságok" [United Free Societies]. Hungarians were undecided at that time about the new country's proper name. The two most common designations were "Észak Amerikai Szabad Státusok" [North American Free States] and "Észak Amerikai Egyesült Státusok" [North American United States]. The first name betrayed obvious political bias, because it emphasized the country's independence.

The College of Debrecen also published Hungary's first history textbook dealing with the American Revolution by József Péczeli, which showed evidence of censorship.[36] In 1843, the College of Sárospatak produced the first Magyar world history text,[37] which described the thirteen United States as "happy provinces," where pressure on the conscience and restriction on the liberty of the press did not exist.

Hungary's principal cultural organization, the Magyar Tudományos Akadémia [Hungarian Academy of Sciences], was also eager to establish links with America. Political considerations prompted the Academy's desire to communicate with a kindred body in such a distant part of the world, even before establishing contact with European institutions.[38] In 1831 Bölöni visited the Philadelphia Philosophical Society. On his return, he promoted collaboration between the two scholarly bodies through Gábor Döbrentei, one of Hungary's first anglophiles. Hungarians attached great importance to this cultural exchange. Károly Nagy, a member of the Academy, was dispatched to Philadelphia to establish contact, and as soon as the Academy's first yearbook appeared, it was speedily transmitted to Philadelphia.

The impact of American political ideas in Hungary culminated with István Széchenyi and Lajos Kossuth, the two leading figures in the Age of Reform. Széchenyi first learned about America in a Pest high school course on Universal Geography and World's History of the Continents Outside Europe, and he also became acquainted with Benjamin Franklin's ideas in his father's library through Zinner's book. Franklin, the cautious, middle-of-the-road, compromising, but successful politician, became Széchenyi's life-long model.[39] His greatly-desired visit to the United States never materialized because Metternich feared the proliferation of what he termed "evil doctrines and pernicious examples,"[40] but Széchenyi's fascination with the new country, the "werdende Land" [the country in the making],[41] as he called it, never diminished. He described America thus: "America is the country where

people's rights are the most equal, where the constitution is the best, and since I have dedicated my life to such a noble endeavor, I consider it my duty to pay a visit to that source from which the substance of justice flows."[42] His interest in the United States earned Széchenyi the nickname "der Americane" [sic].[43]

The climax of American influence in Hungary was reached on 19 April 1849 in Debrecen's Nagytemplom [Great Church], when the "Függetlenségi Nyilatkozat" [Declaration of Independence] dethroned the Habsburgs. In January 1853 Kossuth, then in exile after the War of Independence had been lost, visited Congress in Washington. In an address at a congressional banquet he summed up the essence of several decades of radical Hungarian hope that the American model could be adapted to the old continent. "Now matters stand thus: that either the continent of Europe has no future at all, or its future is American republicanism."[44] Kossuth's visit to the United States Congress marked the end of a period of almost a century of unique, intense impact of American political thought in Hungary. Never since has American political philosophy had such a strong, decisive, and shaping influence on Hungarian political life.

In the 1850's, the so-called Bach-period, a time of political repression and censorship following Hungary's defeat, the propagation of American political ideas was out of the question. Still they continued to command respect and admiration, and visits to America by Hungarians were prompted by "common anxiety" for Hungary's political future, as Béla Széchenyi, son of the great national figure, expressed it.[45] Such was the case with the author of the first Hungarian scholarly travelogue on the United States. Károly Nendtvich, professor of technology at the University of Budapest and a member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, visited America in 1855.[46] He was immensely impressed with the political maturity of the American people and with the achievements of primary education in the New World. Very much like Bölöni, Nendtvich did not fail to point out the connection between politics and culture. Wisely and cautiously, to evade censorship, he shunned allusions to Hungarian conditions. Instead, he discussed Europe in general terms, a politically less controversial topic in the eyes of the censors. In Nendtvich's view, Europe feared an enlightened people and preferred to keep the masses in intellectual darkness. Americans had no such apprehensions, because all of them could entertain "political and social careers."[47] The professor discussed political issues cautiously. Far from describing the American Constitution admiringly as Bölöni had, he avoided discussing such a potentially "dangerous" document entirely,

and cleverly analyzed the constitution of Ohio instead. He noted "the almost unlimited rights" of Ohio citizens and their "unmatched self-restraint." Nendtvich predicted: "Such freedom joined to such political maturity could turn the desert and the wilderness into a civilized modern country in a short period of time."[48]

Europe's fascination with American political democracy began to wane in the second half of the century, as the United States entered a new phase of development. Pride in political democracy and in the unique American phenomenon of the shifting frontier gradually yielded to pride in the nation's unprecedented industrialization. With the Gilded Age, America became associated in the European mind with material wealth, but political corruption cast a shadow over the early ideals of democracy. Under the new circumstances, interest in America's rapid rate of industrial and economic development replaced interest in political democracy all over Europe. This preoccupation was not entirely new in Hungary. Owing to the country's backwardness, concern with economic questions had dominated radical Hungarian thought for several decades. Ágoston Mokcsai Haraszthy, a Bács County lawyer, visited America in 1840 to investigate the possibility of establishing trade links between the two countries. He later returned and settled in California. His book[49] attempted to convince Hungarians that political freedom and economic well-being complemented each other, and that favorable political conditions created an atmosphere conducive to prosperity. Thus, Haraszthy buttressed the importance of political democracy with economic arguments in order to promote the Hungarian radical cause. The American entrepreneur intrigued him: "The immense country is open before him . . . he has to ask for no permit if he wants to build railroads, canals, steamboats, power stations, factories or anything else."[50]

America's economy preoccupied all radicals before the War of Independence, but by the end of the century it became almost the only issue of interest. The reasons are obvious. Not only had the United States metamorphosed, conditions in Hungary had changed as well. In 1867, a political compromise was reached with the Habsburgs, and consequently, simultaneously with the Gilded Age in America, Hungarian radicals lost interest in the democratic model-state promoted earlier in *Tudománytár*. Hungarians also became more critical of the American political scene.

Hungarian reportage on the American Centennial illustrates these changing attitudes. Responding to the ever-present European curiosity in American conditions, Hungarian periodicals as well as popular

magazines did their best to provide adequate information on the Centennial in serials or occasional articles. The centenary coverage also produced the best Hungarian book on the United States in the second half of the nineteenth century. In its astonishing insights Aurél Kecskeméthy's travelogue[51] ranks only with Bölöni's enthusiastic textbook on American democracy. But Bölöni, unlike Kecskeméthy, was a radical republican who wished to discover American democracy. In the Young Republic he found the ideal country he had sought, to serve as a model for Hungarian radicals. Kecskeméthy was a brilliant but rather sceptical, aristocratically-minded journalist. He was biased against democracy, and in Centennial American political life he found his prejudices justified. He had never believed that the American system could be transplanted to Europe, but what he discovered in the United States convinced him that the system failed to serve even American interests. Moreover, his visit was not political but a government mission to report on the American economy. Despite the temporary economic stagnation, Kecskeméthy was amazed and favorably impressed by America's material progress; however, unlike Bölöni, he did not attribute economic success to the country's political institutions but to the fact that the new republic had been able to make a completely new start under conditions suggesting a *tabula rasa* situation on a virgin continent.[52]

The Centenary inevitably prompted reporters to assess the achievements of a country that had raised unprecedented hopes in Europe's millions. Many Hungarian journalists still saw the United States as the nation inseparably linked with the idea and practice of liberty. Samu Fischer, one of these reporters, attributed the wealth he saw displayed at the Philadelphia exhibition to political freedom and the love of work.[53] The emphasis on the importance of work struck a responsive chord in Hungary. The twin-struggle against apathy and idleness was an essential aspect of the political message in the Reform Age as well as after. Bölöni had praised the responsibility of American citizens who "consider the common good their chief purpose."[54] Practical Haraszthy angrily assailed Hungarian complacency and idleness.[55] Nendtvich indirectly yet bitterly indicted Hungarian indifference to academic activity in his praise of American generosity in the publication of scholarly works. He was even more outspoken in his flattering comments about the New York Mercantile Library Association: "It would be difficult with us to raise sufficient money among certain classes for a society founded for the purposes of spiritual and academic interchange."[56] Béla Széchenyi was the most explicit critic on the political implications of this issue. He

visited America in 1863, and published his impressions on his return. He had two main objectives in drawing attention to the American attitude toward material improvement and progress. First, "We must renounce idleness, which has almost become a second faith with us." And then, we must abandon false pretenses. Instead of always appealing hypocritically to patriotism, we should adopt a more rational view, he emphasized.[57]

Though all these reporters concurred that America's material development was astonishing, they conceded the unfortunate fact that Centennial America possessed not only wealth and progress but that it also bred election scandals and political corruption. The periodical *Magyarország és a Nagyvilág* described political life in Centennial America as the "mockery of the most beautiful rights of the citizen."[58] Most Centennial reporters' evaluations merit attention because they sharply contradicted the discoveries of earlier visitors. Bölöni had rhapsodized about the Americans' respect for human personality and liberty, and he had appreciated the absence of customs inspection in New York harbor. But Pál Liptay, a reporter for the *Fővárosi Lapok,* and Kecskeméthy bristled on their arrival at the insolence of American officials.[59] Whereas Bölöni had admired the simplicity of the presidency, including the ease of access to the chief executive, Kecskeméthy was dismayed to find that this easygoing practice generated disrespectful behavior.[60] Bölöni had considered the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution as sacred documents, the ideal safeguards of political freedom and democracy; for Kecskeméthy the Constitution was far from perfect.

The eminent economist István Bernát, who visited the United States in 1884–1885 and published his findings, shared Kecskeméthy's misgivings.[61] Both criticized the inherent weaknesses of the Constitution — a far cry from Bölöni's devotion. Kecskeméthy blamed the American government's lack of control on several factors: the Constitution, which limited the government's effectiveness in many ways; the independence which state governments refused to sacrifice in favor of greater federal power; the lack of continuity in government; and the fact that the whole system was a profit-seeking power-game run by "professional politicians" instead of an institution serving the people's interest.[62] Both Kecskeméthy and Bernát considered the masses unfit for decision-making in political questions — and hence unsuited for democracy, because they were easily manipulated by dishonest politicians. Kecskeméthy believed that his conservative and aristocratic prejudices were vindicated by the overwhelming corruption he found in Centennial

America, and that his misgivings about the viability of democracy were justified. He fiercely opposed universal suffrage, which gave the vote to a mass of people who were "intellectually unprepared and morally unworthy."[63] His views are supported to some extent by William Pierce Randel's recent conclusion: "Corruption in public life was pretty much taken for granted as a price that had to be paid for the democratic system."[64] Apparently, Centennial American democracy was a far cry from the perfect system early nineteenth-century European liberals had hoped it would become. Kecskeméthy lamented: "Indeed, today's America is not the Ideal which a Franklin, a Washington, a Lafayette hoped to realize." This criticism did not necessarily imply that Kecskeméthy rejected the entire American democratic experience. Indeed, he emhasized that rejecting America could by no means be the last word.[65]

Puzzled and disillusioned Hungarian reporters published articles resembling the one in *Divat-Nefelejts,* which commented on the enthusiastic reception given by Americans to the Emperor of Brasil; the reporter called the hosts "a degenerated democratic people for whom democracy seemed to have become irrelevant."[66] But Kecskeméthy was not content merely stating disappointing facts; he tried to find a cause for the great disillusionment. He concluded that "today's America is only the immense embryo of a new world," and that the contrast in size between the two continents made it very difficult to understand America because its natural immensity influenced all aspects of life. "The good and the bad, the right and the wrong take exceptional dimensions," as he cleverly expressed it.[67] Hence, any assessment had to be carefully rendered, because the size of the phenomenon observed might lead to distortions. Kecskeméthy's judgment was sober but hopeful. He accepted the uniqueness of the American experience in human history as a starting point for criticism. European hopes in the ideal American democracy had to be disappointed, because nothing human was ever perfect. But Kecskeméthy's insight into the American experience as something unfinished, something evolving continuously, opened up a new perspective. No wonder that in the early twentieth century the editor of his diary, Miklós Rózsa, reassessed Kecskeméthy's American impressions. He claimed that the journalist returned from his American journey a changed man. His conservative attitudes had metamorphosed, and only his sudden death prevented the elaboration of a new political philosophy.[68]

The change in Hungarian attitudes was not unique; on the contrary, it fitted perfectly into the general European pattern. In the heyday of the Young Republic, European politicians journeyed to America to ob-

serve, and to decide which of the American political experiences could be applied to their native lands. Paul Janet commented on Tocqueville in 1861: "It is certain, it is evident, that the problem that disturbed M. de Tocqueville and brought him to the United States, is the problem of European democracy."[69] Most of the useful American travelogues also cited conditions in the home-land. Many immigrant writers observed the missionary élan of the new nation, creator of a democratic, prosperous, and free society. All these influences promoted progressive development in the home-country. According to Sigmund Skard, "the reports of the immigrants with their democratic optimism worked as a liberal impulse in Europe."[70]

By the time of the Centennial, America had ceased to serve as Europe's political model, admired with almost religious devotion; moreover, the European situation had changed. Tocqueville and his contemporaries had gone on pilgrimages to study democracy; this was not the case with Centennial visitors. They wanted to find out what had happened to the promises of a perfect democracy. Instead of mouthing admiring statements, they emerged with questions. What the Englishman Thomas Henry Huxley said in one of his Centennial addresses is indicative of the radical change in the European view of America: "I cannot say that I am in the slightest degree impressed by your bigness or your material resources, as such. Size is not grandeur, and your territory does not make a nation. The great issue, about which hangs a true sublimity and the terror of overhanging fate, is what you are going to do with all these things?"[71] In other words, what is going to happen to a country still in its embryonic stage, as the perceptive Kecskeméthy had summed it up. Instead of considering America as a "fixed" model in a static condition of perfection, Europeans including Hungarians began to see America as a country embarked on the road towards something as close to perfection as humanly possible. Admiration was thus replaced by scrutiny. This late nineteenth-century image of America as something unfinished, as something in the making, corresponds accurately with the spirit of American dynamism, with the character of a country that in Hart Crane's words is still journeying to "endless terminals."

NOTES

1. Sándor Domanovszky, ed., *Magyar művelődéstörténet* [Hungarian Cultural History] (Budapest: n.d.), 4: 189; Wilhelm Richter, *Wanderungen in Ungarn und unter seinen Bewohnern* [Wanderings in Hungary and among its Inhabitants] (Berlin: 1844), p. 115.
2. Kálmán Benda, ed., *A magyar jakobinusok iratai: Naplók, följegyzések, röpiratok* [The Hungarian Jacobins' Documents: Diaries, Notes, Leaflets] (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1952-1957), 1: LXX.
3. *Magyar Kurir*, 27 May 1789.
4. János Zinner, *Merkwürdige Briefe und Schriften der berühmtesten Generäle in America, nebst derselben beygefügten Lebensbeschreibungen* [Noteworthy Letters and Writings of the Most Famous Generals in America, with Added Biographies] (Augsburg: 1782); Zinner to Franklin, letter of 26 October 1778, in Jared Sparks, ed., *The Works of Benjamin Franklin* (Boston: Tappan and Whittemore, 1844), v. 8.
5. Franklin, *The Works*, 8: 303-304.
6. Alajos Belnay, *Reflexiones cunctorum Hungariae civium non nobilum* [Reflexions of Hungary's Non-Noble Citizens] (Pest: 1790); see George Barany, "Hoping against Hope: The Enlightened Age in Hungary," *American Historical Review*, 76 (April-June 1971), 354.
7. Benda, *Jacobins' Documents*, 1: LXX. The widely-travelled Martinovics, formerly a professor in Lemberg [Lvov], whose checkered political career as an Austrian informer and Hungarian revolutionary needs more clarification, was an adventurer, as Kálmán Benda correctly described him.
8. *Ibid.*, 1: 46-49.
9. Hajnóczy, *Ratio propendarum in comitiis legem* [Essence of the Proposed Legislation in the Oncoming Diet], in Benda, *Jacobins' Documents*, 1: 326.
10. Éva H. Balázs, *Berzeviczy Gergely, a reformpolitikus, 1763-1795* [Gergely Berzeviczy, the Politician of Reform, 1763-1795] (Budapest: 1967), p. 189, note 20.
11. Benda, *Jacobins' Documents*, 1: 581.
12. *Ibid.*, 2: 279, 359, and 705.
13. *Oratio ad proceres et nobiles regni Hungariae* [Address to Hungary's Aristocracy and Nobility].
14. Béla Dezsényi and György Nemes, *A magyar sajtó 250 éve* (Budapest: Művelt Nép Könyvkiadó, 1954), p. 30.
15. Benda, *Jacobins' Documents*, 1: 147.
16. *Ibid.*, 1: 125.
17. "Status regni Hungariae 1792" [The State of the Hungarian Kingdom, 1792], in Benda, *Jacobins' Documents*, 1: 780; "Mémoires philosophiques" [Philosophical Memoirs], in Benda, *Jacobins' Documents*, 1: 27.
18. *Ibid.*, 1: 126.
19. *Ibid.*, 2: 419.
20. *Entwurf einer neuen für Ungarn bestimmten Konstitution* [Plan of a New Constitution for Hungary].
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Social Change in Post-Revolutionary Hungary, 1956-1976*

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By November 7, 1956, the guns on the streets of Budapest were still. János Kádár, a few of his friends and colleagues were in power, backed by the USSR and its determination to maintain Hungary as a part of the Soviet bloc. Whatever Kádár's claim to legitimacy later had been, the simple fact was that in November, 1956, he was the unelected, unwanted and despised leader of a country whose people by and large regarded him as a traitor.

He inherited the leadership of a country that suffered from the worst effects of a Stalinist rule that lasted from 1949 to 1956. It was, in a sense, a classical Stalinist rule replicating the pattern of dictatorship that existed in the Soviet Union and all over Eastern Europe during the days of rapid and forcible collectivization and industrialization. But it was also a fact that Hungary was undergoing a process of modernization as well. In 1938, for example, 58 percent of the country's gross national income came from agriculture. By 1950, that figure had shrunk to 48 percent.[1] In 1938, the agrarian population of the country was a whopping 56 percent of the total population; by 1949, it had decreased to 30 percent.[2] Simultaneously, the percentage of population employed in industry had grown by approximately the same proportion.[3] Urbanization also advanced significantly: between 1938 and 1955 the population of urban centers grew by nearly two million people.[4]

But the changes which occurred in Hungary in the economic setting were small when compared to the social dislocation of the people during the same years. Between 1945 and 1952, the forced transformation of society resulted in the "disappearance of the former ruling classes" in their entirety; by conservative estimates, between 1945 and 1952, 350 to 400 thousand families lost their earlier position and were forced to

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