

# University of Alberta

## Making Magyars, Creating Hungary:

András Fáy, István Bezerédj and Ödön Beöthy's Reform-Era Contributions to the  
Development of Hungarian Civil Society

by

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## Abstract

The relationship between magyarization and Hungarian civil society during the reform era of Hungarian history (1790-1848) is the subject of this dissertation. This thesis examines the cultural and political activities of three liberal oppositional nobles: András Fáy (1786-1864), István Bezerédj (1796-1856) and Ödön Beöthy (1796-1854). These three men were chosen as the basis of this study because of their commitment to a two-pronged approach to politics: they advocated greater cultural magyarization in the multiethnic Hungarian Kingdom and campaigned to extend the protection of the Hungarian constitution to segments of the non-aristocratic portion of the Hungarian population. I argue that magyarization and civil society were closely connected: magyarization unfolded within the confines of civil society, and civil society was meant to guarantee that magyarization would leave room for cultural homogeneity.

I locate the success and ambivalence of Fáy, Bezerédj and Beöthy's efforts to shape Hungarian civil society not in the peculiar mixture of liberal and national elements that characterized their political campaigns, including their magyarization impulses, but in their social position as Magyar nobles transforming a multiethnic and socially-stratified Hungarian population. On a more subtle level, the fact that these three men based their reform efforts on grass-roots transformation and on the interconnectedness between the capital centres and the counties is also a central concern of this thesis.

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## Introduction

...the dead Latin language could not have remained the language of administration any longer now in the XIXth century. Instead, a living language had to take the unjustly usurped place of the dead one. The only question therefore must be: which living language should be the administrative language of the independent Magyar realm? This question can most concisely be answered with another question. Ask which country is the subject of discussion, and to whom the homeland belongs? Answer: Hungary is the country, and the homeland under discussion is that of the Magyars.

-Lajos Kossuth, Pest News, July 14, 1842-<sup>1</sup>

Therefore, in its own way, the opposition's task is to aid the step-by-step development of civil society. While achieving the goals of political life, each individual member must retain intrinsic rights of humanity in as great a degree as possible for maintaining personal freedom. The sacrificed rights, in turn, must have the saving grace that they will directly serve the aims of civil society.

-Political Pocketbook of the Pest Oppositional Circle, 1847-<sup>2</sup>

I have chosen to begin my discussion with these two quotations because they concisely address the central focus of this dissertation. In the pages that follow magyarization and civil society are the two political philosophies and concepts that are under scrutiny. At issue was how to transform the Hungarian Kingdom into a Magyar national state, while creating a civil society guaranteeing rights for all ethno-national groups in the new Hungary. Throughout, I examine political organization both from the perspective of "high politics", namely political activity with the aim of state administration, and its manifestations in other forums such as literature, associations and personal petitions. Therefore, I am working with the *Oxford English Dictionary* definition of politics as simply organization on a governmental or social plane. The time period for the study brings into relief the reform era of Hungarian history. The reform era was a time of cultural experimentation when advocates for change tried to deconstruct

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<sup>1</sup> "Szabadka körlevele," ["Szabadka's circular letter,"] *Pesti Hírlap* [Pest news] 14 July 1842, No. 160, *Kossuth hírlapírói munkássága* [Kossuth's journalistic activity], CD-ROM (Budapest: Arcanum, April 2003).

<sup>2</sup> József Bajza, ed., *Politikai zsebkönyv a pesti ellenzéki kör megbízásából* [Political pocketbook on behalf of the Pest oppositional circle] (Budapest: Lauffer, 1847), 5.



regressive aspects of feudalism through peaceful social evolutionary means. As the thesis has a broad conceptualization of politics, so too does it view the reform era in a similarly expansive sense. Here, this term encompasses the years 1790-1848, even though I know this periodization is a matter of debate.<sup>3</sup>

I chose three liberal, oppositional, noble, political figures from the gentry in order to explore the debates and conflicts of the Hungarian reform era. I picked András Fáy (1786-1864) who was chiefly a writer of Magyar literature, but who was also deeply involved in the political life of Pest County; István Bezerédj (1796-1856) who was a central figure in Tolna government circles locally and in the capital; and Ödön Beöthy (1796-1854) whose concern over unresolved social problems in Bihar led to heated religious debates in parliament. My purpose in choosing these three oppositional politicians as the basis of my study was not to continue the long-standing historiographical tradition of characterizing the reform-era liberal Hungarian nobles as “heroic figures” who in their selfless dedication to the nation became its sacrificial martyrs.<sup>4</sup> I was drawn to these particular figures because they envisioned the creation of a Hungarian state with a dominant Magyar cultural emphasis. At the same time, they wanted the formation of a society where instead of the libertarian constraints of a feudal hierarchy, civic rights guaranteed greater equality for all.

### **Making Magyars**

With this thought in mind I would like to spell out what this writing aims to accomplish. I wish to situate magyarization at the heart of the politics of the reform era *and* make a case for it as being intrinsically bound together with civil society in such a

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<sup>3</sup> The conventional approach is to date the reform era from 1825 or 1830 to 1848. Please consult: László Csorba, *A tizenkilencedik század története* [The story of the nineteenth century] (Budapest: Pannonica, 2000), 80 and László Kontler, *A History of Hungary, Millennium in Central Europe* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 230.

<sup>4</sup> Karin Liebhart and Béla Rásky, “Helden und Heldinnen in nationalen Mythen und historischen Erzählungen Österreichs und Ungarns,” *L’Homme* Vol.12 No.2 (2001): 247.

manner that it led to both emancipatory and corrosive ramifications. Advocates for magyarization hoped that when people accepted the new Magyar culture stronger ties of social interconnectedness would form. At the same time as social cohesion formed on the level of magyarization, its restriction to Magyar cultural-linguistic expression inherently limited the transformative potential present in the realm of civil society.

Magyarization was a multi-faceted programme. First, it involved the replacement of the official language of the realm, Latin, with Magyar. Second, it had a sociological aim that sought to create a new shared Magyar culture. Finally, it contained a propagandistic dimension that encouraged Germans, Croats, Slovaks, Serbs, Ruthenians and Romanians to become more Magyar.<sup>5</sup> Scholars have devoted most attention to the propagandistic dimension of magyarization. Despite this attention, this aspect of magyarization stands in need of more precise definition. The extent to which the non-Magyar nationalities of the Hungarian Kingdom would be magyarized was never fully articulated. In János Gyurgyák's recent book on Magyar national discourses he summarized what supporters hoped propagandistic magyarization would accomplish during the reform age. Pro-magyarizers set as their target goal "...that at least the nationalities inhabiting the Kingdom would utilize the Magyar language of state that they

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<sup>5</sup> János Varga, *A Hungarian Quo Vadis: Political Trends and Theories of the Early 1840s* (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1993), 57. In most writing on magyarization, definitional parameters become clear through context. Hungarian scholarly writing tends to distinguish between *magyarosodás* (voluntary magyarization) and *magyarosítás* (forced hungarianization). There is also what I would like to term a "minimalist" and a "maximalist" programme in relation to magyarization discourse. Magyarization as a minimalist programme prevailed during the reform era. It allowed for cultural diversity and for Hungarians to incorporate some aspects of the new Magyar culture into their lives. The maximalist programme maintained that the ultimate goal of magyarization was the denationalization of non-Magyar groups and complete assimilation to Magyar language and culture. For an explanation of voluntary/forced magyarization: Robin Okey, *The Habsburg Monarchy from Enlightenment to Eclipse* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2001), 313. For insight into magyarization as cultural denationalization please see: Zoltán Szász, "Government Policy and the Nationalities," in *Hungarians and their Neighbors in Modern Times, 1867-1950*, ed. Ferenc Glatz (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), 23.

learned in school in the broadly interpreted public realm (actus publicus)...”<sup>6</sup>

Discouraging multiculturalism or interfering with languages spoken in the privacy of people’s homes was not the desired end result of magyarization at this time. The cultural complexity of the Hungarian landscape was so diverse that linguistic codeswitching was a daily fact of life at all levels of society.<sup>7</sup>

At this point, I would like briefly to describe what this study is and what it is not. In this study I only shine the spotlight on three reform-era politicians, so I do not consider this writing a history of magyarization. I examine magyarization from what I would like to term a point-of-origin perspective, both in terms of the people who played an important role in setting its dynamic into motion and in terms of time. The reason for linking magyarization to specific people during a moment in time is to shift the concern from magyarization as an ideology to it being a political philosophy interpreted in different ways at different times. Hence, this thesis is about magyarization as a process with methodological variation as well as commonality, as the reform-era contributions of Fáy, Bezerédj and Beöthy demonstrate.

Historical discussion of magyarization either as ideology or process has to a large extent been marginalized in favour of the larger organizational concepts that dominate writing on the Hungarian reform period: liberalism and nationalism. I define liberalism as what Iván Zoltán Dénes’ termed “....an ideology and a political party to defend or establish constitutionalism against absolutism during most of the nineteenth century.” Liberalism, Dénes continued, “...was a program to create a modern, progressive, civilized European middle-class society opposing social backwardness and the privilege-

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<sup>6</sup> János Gyurgyák, *Ezzé lett magyar hazátok, a magyar nemzeteszmé és nacionalizmus története* [This is how the homeland became Magyar, a history of Magyar nationality ideology and nationalism] (Budapest: Osiris, 2007), 22.

<sup>7</sup> Susan Gal, “Codeswitching and Consciousness in the European Periphery,” *American Ethnologist* Vol.14 No. 4 (November 1987): 638.

system.”<sup>8</sup> During the nineteenth century, many Hungarian historians wrote about liberalism and magyarization as simultaneous developments, worthy of attention in their own right. This situation began to change in the second half of the nineteenth century when historians such as Gusztáv Beksics criticized liberalism for having prevented the complete magyarization of the non-Hungarian speaking peoples of the Kingdom.<sup>9</sup> From this perspective the reform era leadership had been too liberal; they had failed to bring into being the hoped-for Magyar national state and they had bestowed rights on the country’s minorities that hindered their successful incorporation into Magyar civic life.<sup>10</sup>

Historical writing on Hungarian liberalism in the twentieth century mostly retained the precedent from the previous century that it was a fatally flawed political ideology. Gyula Szekfű’s influential *Három nemzedék* [Three generations] depicted liberalism as excessive and antagonistic to true Magyar values. By contrast, other writing maintained Hungarian liberalism was not excessive, but ineffectual, because liberals had not done enough to appease the country’s minorities who wished to remain loyal subjects of the Hungarian Kingdom.<sup>11</sup> This largely negative interpretation of nineteenth-century Hungarian liberalism continues in the present in modified form, particularly in German-language writing. Eduard Winter’s *Frühliberalismus in der Donaumonarchie* (1968), for example, constantly describes Hungarian early liberalism as “Magyar romantic nationalism”; Moritz Csáky’s *Von der Aufklärung zum Liberalismus* (1981) makes the case that the promises of the enlightenment and early liberalism were not realized in

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<sup>8</sup> Iván Zoltán Dénes, “Liberalism and Nationalism: An Ambiguous Relationship,” in *Liberty and the Search for Identity: Liberal Nationalisms and the Legacy of Empires*, ed. Iván Zoltán Dénes (Budapest: CEU Press, 2006), 1.

<sup>9</sup> The book was Beksics, *A Szabadelvű Párt története* [A history of the liberal party] and it appeared in 1907. Reference: Miklós Szabó, “The Liberalism of the Hungarian Nobility,” in *Liberty and the Search for Identity: Liberal Nationalisms and the Legacy of Empires*, ed. Iván Zoltán Dénes (Budapest: CEU Press, 2006), 218.

<sup>10</sup> István Fenyő, *Haza és tudomány, a hazai reformkori liberalizmus történetéhez* [Homeland and scholarship, towards a history of domestic liberalism in the age of reform] (Budapest: Szépirodalmi Könyvkiadó, 1969), 7, 8 and 16.

<sup>11</sup> Alice Freifeld, *Nationalism and the Crowd in Liberal Hungary, 1848-1914* (Washington: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2000), 20-21.

Hungary until the twentieth century; and Dieter Langewiesche argued in his *Liberalism in Germany* (2000) that in all of the Habsburg territories, including Hungary, liberalism suffered from “retarded development”.<sup>12</sup> With such a disparaging general view of Hungarian nineteenth-century liberalism in twentieth-century historical scholarship, magyarization appears as exponentially worse, since it is not a particularly exemplary component part of liberalism in the first place.

The second key organizational concept that has influenced the historiography of the reform era is nationalism. I define nationalism in Ernest Gellner’s terms as “primarily a principle which holds that the political and national unit should be congruent.”<sup>13</sup> I picked this definition because it emphasizes the political nature of the process by which people become national. This aspect of nationalism is important for the Hungarian context under discussion. Also, since the definition purposely does not specify how in a given case the political and national unit should coincide, it is possible to insert magyarization, understood as a variant of nationalism, as the component process bridging the gap between the political and the national.

Critiques of magyarization from the direction of nationalism studies appeared at approximately the same time as those from a liberal point-of-view, namely the end of the nineteenth century. The most well-known in English-language writings derive from Scottish publicist R.W. Seton Watson (1879-1951), and the Vienna *Times* correspondent Henry Wickham Steed (1871-1956). Seton-Watson’s groundbreaking *Racial Problems in Hungary* (1908) had a pronouncedly anti-Magyar ideological emphasis. In relation to the reform era, Seton-Watson maintained it was “illogical” to expect “..that every inhabitant

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<sup>12</sup> Eduard Winter, *Frühliberalismus in der Donaumonarchie: Religiöse, nationale und wissenschaftliche Strömungen von 1790-1868* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1968), 119, 138, Moritz Csáky, *Von der Aufklärung zum Liberalismus: Studien zum Frühliberalismus in Ungarn* (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1981), 245-246 and Dieter Langewiesche, *Liberalism in Germany* (New York: Macmillan, 2000), 9.

<sup>13</sup> Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983), 1.

of 'Magyarország' must speak Magyar, just as every inhabitant of England or Italy speaks English or Italian."<sup>14</sup> Wickham Steed produced the book *The Habsburg Monarchy* (1919), which followed Seton-Watson's writing in spirit but not in degree of detail. Wickham Steed alluded to what he termed "Magyar chauvinism", which he viewed as dangerous. He opposed Magyar chauvinism not because it infringed on the cultural and legal rights of the non-Magyar inhabitants of the Hungarian Kingdom, but because magyarization was a destabilizing force for the cohesion of the Austro-Hungarian Empire.<sup>15</sup> Shortly after these books appeared, Hungarian social scientist Oszkár Jászi published *The Dissolution of the Habsburg Monarchy* (1929), which condensed oppositional views on magyarization into one volume.<sup>16</sup> Hungarian historians who examine how the late-nineteenth and early twentieth century critiques of magyarization affected Hungarian history and perceptions of Hungary often delve into the authors' personal motivations for writing as they did, and continue to accept the negative view of magyarization that they presented at face value.<sup>17</sup>

After the second half of the twentieth century, historians often favoured writing about the Hungarian reform era from the perspective of Magyar nationalism.<sup>18</sup> This

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<sup>14</sup> R.W. Seton-Watson, *Racial Problems in Hungary* (New York: Howard Fertig, 1972), 85.

<sup>15</sup> Henry Wickham Steed, *The Habsburg Monarchy* (London: Constable and Company, 1919), 31.

<sup>16</sup> Oscar Jászi, *The Dissolution of the Habsburg Monarchy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), 309 and 168-169.

<sup>17</sup> Géza Jeszenszky, "Scotus Viator and Hungary," in *Hungarians and their Neighbors in Modern Times, 1867-1950*, ed. Ferenc Glatz (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), 71 and László Péter, "R.W. Seton-Watson's Changing Views on the National Question of the Habsburg Monarchy and the European Balance of Power," *The Slavonic and East European Review* Vol. 82 No. 3 (July 2004): 655-679.

<sup>18</sup> For example in the works of E.J. Hobsbawm and Benedict Anderson. Hobsbawm differentiated between Hungarian nationalism in the first half of the nineteenth century (proto-nationalist), and the second half of the same century (nationalist). Anderson included an entire section on "popular Hungarian nationalism" under Kossuth and "the reactionary Magyar gentry's 'official nationalism' after 1875." E.J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 74 and 126-130 and Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983), 96 and 99.

approach granted scholars a new theoretical framework for analyzing the nineteenth century and for viewing magyarization as a component part of a larger process. The primary disadvantage of the nationalism approach was that it produced no consensus either on Hungarian nationalism or on magyarization. Thomas Spira gave voice to this confusion after summarizing that recent writing on the period 1790-1848 “fails to give a unified picture of developing Magyar nationalism in the early Reform era.”<sup>19</sup>

The heterogeneity of writing on Hungarian nationalism and magyarization ultimately did not generate the same degree of interest among scholars as did the question of what drew people to become Hungarian nationalists and magyarizers in the first place. The idea that the driving force behind these ideologies was a sense of psychologically-induced fear held collectively by Magyar-speaking people appears in a number of studies. Peter F. Sugar attributed reform-era magyarization to the fear of the awakening nationalism among the non-Magyar inhabitants of the Hungarian Kingdom.<sup>20</sup> R.J.W. Evans treats Hungarian nationalism and magyarization as types of xenophobia arising from a sense of Magyar “mistrust (of) all the nationalities who shared their homeland”.<sup>21</sup> However, the reasoning cited most repeatedly to account for Hungarian nationalism and magyarization is still the claim that Johann von Herder’s prediction that Magyars would be assimilated into Slavic cultures and that the Hungarian language would die out supposedly influenced generations to support a Magyar nationalist political stance.<sup>22</sup> George Barany maintained Hungarian nationalists’ acceptance of Herder’s theory was a

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<sup>19</sup> Thomas Spira, “Historians and the Nation: The Problem of Magyar National Awareness 1790-1848,” *Südost Forschungen Jahrbuch* Vol. 32 (1973): 105

<sup>20</sup> Peter F. Sugar, “The More it Changes, the More Hungarian Nationalism Remains the Same,” *Austrian History Yearbook* Vol. 31 (2000): 135.

<sup>21</sup> R.J.W. Evans, “Hungarian Nationalism in International Context,” *Historian* Vol.77 (Spring 2003): 7.

<sup>22</sup> Hans Kohn was influential in establishing the connection between Hungarian nationalists and Herder’s theories on Magyar culture and language. Hans Kohn, *The Habsburg Empire, 1804-1918* (Princeton: Van Nostrand, 1961), 26 and Thomas Spira, “Historians and the Nation,” *Südost Forschungen Jahrbuch* Vol. 32 (1973): 104.

partial explanation for why magyarization happened.<sup>23</sup> Similarly, the aforementioned Dénes' studies on the reform era also return to the premise of feared "national death" as the originating point for nationalist and magyarization practices.<sup>24</sup>

Not all twentieth-century writing looked at Magyar nationalism from the standpoint of how it originated. Many scholars favoured analyzing Magyar nationalism through separation into its component parts. Endre Arató maintained that Magyar nationalism encapsulated a sense of duality "with a heroic democratic struggle against foreign oppression (from Vienna) alongside an anti-democratic conquering tendency directed against other peoples."<sup>25</sup> By contrast, László Deme pointed to even more complexity within Hungarian nationalism during the 1820s and 1830s. There were three distinct facets to the nationalist agenda: the effort to replace the official Latin language of the country with Magyar; the drive to magyarize civil society in general and to re-magyarize the Hungarian aristocracy; and a separate campaign to "denationalize Hungary's non-Magyar inhabitants through the use of the Magyar language".<sup>26</sup> Deme had no sympathy for the third aspect to Hungarian nationalism, which he termed "aggressive".<sup>27</sup> For the first two, he was not so condemnatory, maintaining both that

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<sup>23</sup> George Barany, "The Awakening of Magyar Nationalism before 1848," *The Austrian History Yearbook* Vol. 2 (1966): 31.

<sup>24</sup> Iván Zoltán Dénes, "The Value Systems of Liberals and Conservatives in Hungary, 1830-1848," *The Historical Journal* Vol. 36 No.4 (1993): 825-826.

<sup>25</sup> Endre Arató, "A magyar nacionalizmus kettős arculata a feudalizmusból a kapitalizmusba való átmenet és a polgári forradalom időszakában (1790-1849)," ["Janus-faced Magyar nationalism in the transitional period from feudalism to capitalism and during the time of the bourgeois revolution,"] in *A magyar nacionalizmus kialakulása és története*, [The development and history of Magyar nationalism,] ed. Erzsébet Andics (Budapest: Kossuth Könyvkiadó, 1964), 80.

<sup>26</sup> László Deme, "Writers and Essayists and the Rise of Magyar Nationalism in the 1820s and 1830s," *Slavic Review* Vol.43 No. 4 (Winter 1984): 632.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.



Magyar nationalism was “predominantly progressive and liberal” in the reform era and that it had important beneficial consequences for the Magyars themselves.<sup>28</sup>

László Deme’s inclusive approach in relation to nationalism bears close resemblance to a third and prevailing style of classification of the Hungarian reform era. This classification stresses the combination of liberalism and nationalism that defined the period from 1790-1848. The advantage to the liberalism-nationalism categorization was that Hungarian nationalism was liberalized by emphasizing the civil rights of Hungarians, while Hungarian liberalism became more nationalized by linking potential citizenship rights to the nation-state. This classification also has the benefit of serving as shorthand for scholars familiar with the historiography of the reform era.<sup>29</sup> The one great disadvantage to the liberal-nationalist theoretical approach is that since liberal attributes are built into the national framework and vice versa, there is sometimes a tendency towards interpretation of magyarization in more apologetic fashion than in the works that treat Hungarian liberalism and nationalism as separate entities. For instance in the textbook on the first half of the nineteenth century in Hungary *Magyarország története 1790-1848* [The history of Hungary 1790-1848], the authors juxtapose the programme to magyarize Germanic, Slavic and Romanian peoples of the Hungarian Kingdom alongside sections on national cooperation between Magyars and other ethnic groups on social, cultural and political levels. With statements such as “(t)he propagation of the Magyar language in Hungary did not forestall some understanding of the national problems of the non-Magyar peoples” it becomes difficult to determine how forcefully pressure was

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 624 and Deme, “Pre-1848 Magyar Nationalism Revisited: Ethnic and Authoritarian or Political and Progressive?,” *East European Quarterly* Vol.27 No.2 (June 1993): 147.

<sup>29</sup> This classification is still standard in its use in current scholarship. For example: Endre Arató, “New Motives in the Hungarian Liberal and Conservative National Ideology of the Forties,” *Annales Universitatis Scientiarum Budapestinensis de Rolando Eotvos Nominatae: Sectio Historica* Vol. 17 (1976): 133, Friedrich Gottas, “Liberalismus und Nationalismus im ungarischen Reformzeitalter (1825-1848),” *Österreichische Osthefte* Vol.18 No.1 (1976): 26-43, and András Gergely, ed., *Magyarország története a 19. században* [The history of Hungary in the 19<sup>th</sup> century] (Budapest: Osiris, 2005), 206-207.

applied to groups during this time to learn and function in a Magyar cultural environment.<sup>30</sup>

I will avoid these frameworks of interpretation in order to examine magyarization as a programme deserving of attention in its own right, rather than as an offshoot of another dominant philosophy. Secondly, I am investigating magyarization because it was a main concern of Hungarian political actors themselves, and in that sense it has received too little attention to date. Finally, the longstanding hesitation to examine magyarization in greater detail has led to misconceptions about its principal terms and nature. The prevailing misconception in relation to magyarization is the impression that it was a one dimensional nationalization strategy instead of a complex series of cultural transformational policies.

I mentioned at the beginning that I wish to examine magyarization from what I termed a point-of-origin perspective, and that I would like to focus on magyarization not just as an ideology, but as a process. I think that this approach is essential in order to demonstrate the agency of Hungarian nobles and others in bringing about magyarization. In terms of the agency behind magyarization, Ludwig von Gogolák described hungarianization as “...an assimilation process that was sometimes consciously driven, (and) sometimes naturally ran its course.”<sup>31</sup> I wished to go further, highlighting that specific people were behind the aspiration to make the parameters of Magyar correspond to the boundaries of the state, and conversely, that recipients of the message to magyarize also possessed agency in how they responded to the Magyar cultural programme. Hence I purposely picked three political men for this thesis who received multicultural upbringings, but who chose to emphasize their Magyar identities. They were also keen to

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<sup>30</sup> Gyula Mérei and Károly Vörös, *Magyarország története 1790-1848*, második kötet [The history of Hungary 1790-1848, volume two] (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1980), 796.

<sup>31</sup> Ludwig v. Gogolák, “Zum Problem der Assimilation in Ungarn in der Zeit von 1790-1918,” *Südostdeutsches Archiv* Vol IX (January 1966): 8.

magyarize others, and their programmes all operated on different social levels, using various methods to achieve their common goal. Fáy's programme involved authorship to aid the magyarization of the middle classes *and* gradually turn Magyar peasants into literate citizens. Bezerédj turned his passion for education into a campaign to create kindergartens, where it was hoped impressionable children could be magyarized early in life. Beöthy publically supported a policy of Jewish emancipation because so many Jews were becoming good Magyars. By focusing on the agency of historical actors in this way, I will question Alexander Mark Maxwell's assertion that "(m)agyarization...thus appears to have been a policy doomed to failure."<sup>32</sup> Fáy, Bezerédj and Beöthy's magyarization programmes may not have reached every inhabitant of the Hungarian Kingdom, or turned them into Magyars, but they were by no means unsuccessful. Fáy became a best-selling author, kindergartens met the needs of parents on multiple levels and a portion of Hungarian Jews gained political allies who supported their desire for greater Hungarian social integration.

Since one focus of this thesis is on the agency behind magyarization, I wish to add that I am not working under the assumption that magyarization was essentially predicated on ethnic conflict,<sup>33</sup> or that magyarization was primarily and consistently an ethnic policy by Magyars in opposition to Hungarians of non-Magyar ethnic origin.<sup>34</sup> This was one aspect of the magyarization programme, but not its entirety, and it is not the

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<sup>32</sup> Alexander Mark Maxwell, "Choosing Slovakia (1795-1914): Slavic Hungary, the Czech Language and Slovak Nationalism" (Ph. D diss., University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2003), 363.

<sup>33</sup> Jozef Chlebowczyk, "Némesítő és magyarosító politika a XVIII.-XIX. században és a századfordulón. Kísérlet a szembesítésre," ["Germanization and magyarization policies in the XVIIIth and XIXth centuries and at the turn of the twentieth century. An attempt at comparative analysis,"] *Világtörténet* [World history] Vol. 23 (1973): 83.

<sup>34</sup> R.J.W. Evans, "Hungarian Nationalism," *Historian* Vol.77 (Spring 2003): 8, Thomas Spira, "Problems of Magyar National Development under Francis I (1792-1835)," *Südost Forschungen* Vol.30 (1971): 51. For an understanding of the difficulty of using ethnic categorizations to understand magyarization please see: Jeremy King, "The Nationalization of East Central Europe: Ethnicism, Ethnicity and Beyond," in *Staging the Past: The Politics of Commemoration in Habsburg Central Europe, 1848 to the Present*, eds. Maria Bucur and Nancy M. Wingfield (West Lafayette: Purdue University Press, 2001), 125.

chief one presented in the pages that follow. Magyarization encouraged ethnic Magyars and non-Magyars to adopt attributes of the new culture and rewarded them in some measure with access to education, employment, new entertainment options and some local governmental support. Magyarization encouraged assimilation, not ethnic exclusivity.<sup>35</sup> Magyarization appears in this thesis as a cultural, assimilative process for the Hungarian nobility, for ethnic Magyars from rural cultural backgrounds and for non-Magyars of all social persuasion.

Stepping back from the notion that ethnic considerations gave impetus to magyarization brings us away from the erroneous idea that magyarization consistently involved ethnic oppression followed by resistance.<sup>36</sup> Looking at magyarization from the standpoint of ethnic oppression would have overlooked how this process established its workings within Hungarian civil society. By factoring civil society into the magyarization equation I have tried to show how the homogeneity of Hungarian civil society guarded against Magyar cultural uniformity. Fáy, Bezerédj and Beöthy's magyarization programmes encountered limitations within civil society. The Magyar reading public was only a percentage of the inhabitants of the Kingdom, financial constraints and disagreements over leadership plagued the kindergarten initiative, and reservations about Jewish emancipation came from multiple directions. Placing magyarization within civil society shows that its potential to reach every person in Hungary was a challenge from its inception onwards.

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<sup>35</sup> Ludwig v. Gogolák, "Zum Problem der Assimilation in Ungarn," *Südostdeutsches Archiv* Vol IX (January 1966): 12 and 32.

<sup>36</sup> Ion Lupaş, *The Hungarian Policy of Magyarization* (Cluj-Napoca: Romanian Cultural Foundation, 1992), 5 and Ingomar Senz, "Deutschungarisches Bürgertum und Magyarisierung im 19. Jahrhundert: Die verschiedenen Phasen der Entnationalisierung des deutschen Bürgertums in Ungarn," in *Entwicklung und Erbe des donauschwäbischen Volkstammes: Festschrift für Josef Volkmann Senz zum 70. Geburtstag*, ed. Georg Wildmann (München: Arbeitskreis für donauschwäbische Heimat- und Volksforschung, 1982), 90, 97, 98 and 103.

Finally, there is one more aspect to magyarization that cannot be overlooked. I was intrigued by social stratification as a factor in the acceptance or rejection of magyarization discourse. Throughout, the importance of Fáy, Bezerédj and Beöthy's aristocratic background has not been neglected. Their membership in the middle nobility kept them from having direct sustained access to the highest governmental forums: the court, the Chancellery, the Treasury and the Vice-Regal Council, but permitted election to parliament and constant engagement in politics at the local level in the counties. This sphere of activity is meaningful, because it demonstrated that for magyarization to work it had to function at a local level and as a regional phenomenon. It was on these planes that Fáy, Bezerédj and Beöthy's magyarization campaigns were able to flourish because there they tapped into an embryonic civil society that was eager for a new vision of Hungary to give shape to its existence.

### **Creating Hungary**

The second phenomenon under exploration here is the development of civil society in Hungary during the reform era. In terms of pinpointing what constitutes civil society, there is a general lack of scholarly consensus as to what the phrase signifies, and what key social components must be included or excluded.<sup>37</sup> For the purposes of definition I wish to make use of Frank Trentmann's phrasing because of his prioritization of new forms of social interconnectivity. According to Trentmann,

Civil society came to denote not just an ideal but also an expanding social reality, rooted outside the state and freed from the traditional ties of church, estate, or corporation, and, instead, based on principles of self-government, equality among members, and openness to all, allowing members to fashion their selves, to create group identities, and to "improve" society.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Nicholas Deakin, *In Search of Civil Society* (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 4 and 6 and Frank Trentmann, *Paradoxes of Civil Society: New Perspectives on Modern German and British History* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2000), 6-7.

<sup>38</sup> Trentmann, *Paradoxes of Civil Society*, 3. For other definitions of civil society please consult: John Keane, ed., *Civil Society and the State: New European Perspectives* (New York:

In any event, the concentration on civil society in scholarship gradually evolved from Jürgen Habermas' classical text *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*. Habermas elaborated that the public sphere was: "...the sphere of private people come together as a public; they soon claimed the public sphere regulated from above against the public authorities themselves, to engage them in a debate over the general rules governing relations in the basically privatized but publically relevant sphere of commodity exchange and social labor."<sup>39</sup>

At this point it is interesting to question if Hungary fulfilled Habermas' criteria of having its own public sphere? As the title suggests, the public sphere of his conception is *bourgeois* in nature, but this is coloured by his use of examples primarily derived from British, French and German modes of development. Perhaps the greatest stumbling block hindering the application of his theories to the Hungarian reform era is his description of the public sphere as an encapsulation of equality in social relations where power and prestige of public office did not apply and more gravely "...economic dependencies also in principle had no influence. Laws of the market were suspended as were laws of the state."<sup>40</sup> Hungarian society was based on a society of estates, encompassing prelates, aristocrats, lesser nobles and city burghers.<sup>41</sup> Feudal society was breaking down during this time, and economic restructuring was a central concern surrounding social reconstitution.

Habermas' book presents an interpretation of a public sphere where Britain, France and German social structures are normative for Europe, so Central Europe and

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Verso, 1988), Jean Cohen and Andrew Arato, *Civil Society and Political Theory* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1992) and Margaret Somers, *Genealogies of Citizenship: Markets, Statelessness and the Right to Have Rights* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

<sup>39</sup> Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, trans. Thomas Burger and Frederick Lawrence (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1989), 27.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 56 and 36.

<sup>41</sup> Béla K. Király, *Hungary in the Late Eighteenth Century, The Decline of Enlightened Despotism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1969), 15.

Hungary in particular are automatically not part of this model version of European development. Many Hungarian scholars have agreed with this Western European view of the public sphere, and have seen Hungarian civil society as similarly problematic. At issue is the notion that Hungary's version of civil society differed from its ideal Western European counterpart.

Critics of Hungarian civil society repeatedly utilize the premise that Hungarian social development went “awry” at some point in time. Their arguments customarily select a combination of factors representing the essence of Hungarian civil society, and then reveal these components to be missing or distorted in terms of the Hungarian experience. Examples of this reasoning include Jenő Szűcs' pronouncement that “(t)he West subordinated society to the state; the East ‘nationalized’ it”, or Mihály Vajda's concentration on Hungary's improperly realized urbanization and the personal attributes that supposedly correspond with the creation of cities such as “attitudes of individualism”.<sup>42</sup> Even national characteristic explanations of faulty Hungarian social development still carry weight, such as István Bibó's connection of Hungarian divergence from (Western) European norms as due in part to “a distorted Hungarian temperament”.<sup>43</sup>

Whether or not Hungary created a civil society resembling those of Western Europe is a subject of debate, as is the question of when civil society was supposed to have come into existence. Studies that involve political science methodology and stress twentieth century transformations often claim a late date for the emergence of Hungarian

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<sup>42</sup> Jenő Szűcs, “Three Historical Regions of Europe: An Outline,” in *Civil Society and the State: New European Perspectives*, ed. John Keane (London: Verso, 1988), 318, 325 and 330 and Mihály Vajda, “East-Central European Perspectives,” in *Civil Society and the State: New European Perspectives*, ed. John Keane (London: Verso, 1988), 343.

<sup>43</sup> Mária Heller, Ákos Huszár, Borbála Kriza and Ágnes Rényi, “Civil Society as Will and Imagination: Theoretical Outlines and Empirical Observations (in Light of Hungarian Experiences),” in *Reconstituting Democracy from Below: New Approaches to Civil Society in the New Europe*, eds. Ulrike Liebert and Hans-Jörg Trenz (Oslo: Centre for European Studies, 2008), 174.

civil society, such as the 1970s.<sup>44</sup> Some scholars such as Miklós Szabó take the dilemma of periodization of Hungarian civil society to the point of denying its existence altogether.<sup>45</sup> Skepticism surrounding the concept of civil society in Hungary can also extend to the present day: Adam B. Seligman found that in modern Hungary ethnic-based loyalty patterns undermine the universality of the nation state, leading to “...serious questions as to the viability of any idea of civil society...” Similarly, Heller, Huszár, Kriza and Rényi came to the conclusion that “(a) number of studies prove that Hungary does not have a true civil society”.<sup>46</sup>

By contrast, there are other studies that take the existence of Hungarian civil society as a given fact.<sup>47</sup> For the reform era, recent interest has concentrated on the association as a quintessential marker for the formation of civil social standards. Studies devoted to associational organization in the reform era have appeared lately, particularly in relation to the Royal Free Cities of Buda and Pest.<sup>48</sup> It is beneficial to look at Hungarian associations during this time not only because the three decades before 1848 were a “golden age” for their formation, but because Hungary showed signs of being a

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<sup>44</sup> Ákos Huszár, “The Institutionalization of Civil Society in Hungary,” in *Reconstituting Democracy from Below: New Approaches to Civil Society in the New Europe*, eds. Ulrike Liebert and Hans-Jörg Trenz (Oslo: Centre for European Studies, 2008), 148.

<sup>45</sup> Miklós Szabó, “The Liberalism of the Hungarian Nobility (1825-1910),” in *Liberty and the Search for Identity: Liberal Nationalisms and the Legacy of Empires*, ed. Iván Zoltán Dénes (Budapest: CEU Press, 2006), 212-213.

<sup>46</sup> Adam B. Seligman, *The Idea of Civil Society* (New York: The Free Press, 1992), 164-165 and 177 and Heller, Huszár, Kriza and Rényi, “Civil Society as Will and Imagination,” in *Reconstituting Democracy from Below*, eds. Liebert and Trenz (Oslo: Centre for European Studies, 2008), 177.

<sup>47</sup> Andrew Arato, *Civil Society, Constitution and Legitimacy* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2000), 45.

<sup>48</sup> Robert Nemes, “Between Reform and Revolution: Associations, Culture and Politics in Budapest, 1800-1849” (Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 1999), Nemes, “Associations and Civil Society in Reform Era Hungary,” *Austrian History Yearbook* Vol. XXXII (2001): 25-45 and Árpád Tóth, *Önszervező polgárok: a pesti egyesületek társadalomtörténete a reformkorban* [Citizens who organized themselves: the social history of the societies of Pest in the age of reform] (Budapest: L'Harmattan, 2005). Gábor Pajkossy has termed societies in the reform-age as “ideal forms of civil society” and “microcosms of republicanism”. According to his estimate about 500 societies were active in Hungary before 1848, with 80 of these in Pest-Buda. “Egyesületek a reformkori Magyarországon,” [“Societies in reform era Hungary,”] *História* [History] No.2 (1993): 6 and 8.



special case by European standards. Stephan-Ludwig Hoffmann discovered “...provincial associations were less exclusive than their metropolitan counterparts: not only did nobles and magnates participate in them, but craftsmen, petty retailers, and even in some cases (for the first time) Jews and women.”<sup>49</sup> In many Western European variants of civil society, such a degree of social inclusiveness was not tolerated.<sup>50</sup> This discovery suggests that normative European models of early nineteenth-century civil society were somewhat different from what scholars once assumed.

This new scholarship has not put to bed an old historiographical debate about Hungarian early nineteenth-century civil society concerning how the middle classes were positioned in that emerging social order. In the last several decades of scholarship some Hungarian historians tended to downplay the fact that there were members of the German middle classes in the cities, and reasoned that Hungary actually *lacked* a bourgeoisie because it was not entirely Magyar in character. This logic led to an influential theory that the liberal members of the Hungarian nobility functioned as the ersatz bourgeoisie.<sup>51</sup> Endre Arató articulated this idea most clearly when claiming that “bourgeois nationalism” was the ideology that drove pre-1848 liberal nobles to be politically engaged.<sup>52</sup>

I am hesitant to agree that the liberal reform-era nobility was an ersatz middle class. Therefore, I place special emphasis on the aristocratic character of the three liberal

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<sup>49</sup> Stefan-Ludwig Hoffman, *Civil Society 1750-1914* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2006), 37.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 32-33.

<sup>51</sup> László Deme, “Pre-1848 Magyar Nationalism Revisited: Ethnic and Authoritarian or Political and Progressive?,” *East European Quarterly* Vol. 27 No.2 (June 1993): 162 and László Deme, “From Nation to Class: The Changing Social Role of the Hungarian Nobility,” *International Journal of Politics, Culture and Society* Vol.1 No.4 (June 1988): 58. There is also a reverse form of the argument, that the Hungarian bourgeoisie was in turn “feudalized”. William O. McCagg Jr., “Hungary’s ‘Feudalized’ Bourgeoisie,” *The Journal of Modern History* Vol. 44 No.1 (March 1972): 66.

<sup>52</sup> Gyula Mérei and Károly Vörös, *Magyarország története 1790-1848*, első kötet [The history of Hungary 1790-1848, volume one] (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1980), 117-157 and Mérei and Vörös, *Magyarország története 1790-1848*, második kötet [The history of Hungary 1790-1848, volume two], 793.

nobles under investigation, and on how this social origin was an essential factor in shaping the outcome of the new Hungarian civil society. In terms of their magyarization programmes, the degree to which given social groups in Hungary responded positively or negatively to Magyar national conceptions was influenced in part by their disposition towards the Hungarian nobility, who started the ball rolling.<sup>53</sup> If social groups were somewhat displeased with the liberal nobility, and unresponsive or antagonistic towards their magyarization policies, then the more civic campaigns that they championed were intended partly to compensate for the bitter pill of unwanted magyarization that they had to swallow.

The three members of the Hungarian middle nobility who are the basis of this study were highly active in Hungarian civil society. At the local level they were involved in circles of sociability on their rural estates, in founding associations, through their personal example as progressive landlords, and in attending political meetings at the county level. The distinctiveness of Hungarian civil society's fluid transitions between activism at the local level and parliament and from central representation back to the county plane has not been recognized in sufficient detail, and is consequently a special focus of this study.

The juxtaposition of Fáy, Bezerédj and Beöthy's magyarization and civic campaigns, along with the use of the same methodology to analyze them, is meant to underscore that in terms of the creation of civil society, they were two sides of the same coin. In the case of Fáy I have looked at his savings bank, which took up the lofty goal of rectifying the injustice of local poverty and transmogrified accidentally into a pillar of national capitalism. For Bezerédj I scrutinized the attempt to bridge the constitutional divide between nobles and peasants through landownership, tax declaration and the stimulation of regional industry to settle the subsequent social stalemate. Finally, in

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<sup>53</sup> R.J.W.Evans, "Hungarian Nationalism," *Historian* Vol.77 (Spring 2003): 10.

Beöthy's instance I looked at the campaign to ensure that Protestants received greater protection under the law at a time when religious equality was both a lofty goal of civil society and intrinsic to the restitution of social peace.

In reform era Hungary "civil society was to be national".<sup>54</sup> However, the Magyar national state was not intended to be exclusionary in terms of ethnic, social and gender categories. Civil society within the Magyar national state was meant to unify the diverse peoples of the Kingdom of St. Stephen in common citizenship.<sup>55</sup> The problem with this lofty ambition was what Adam B. Seligman identified as the difficulty involved in "maintaining solidarity among social actors conceived of as autonomous legal and (more importantly) moral agents."<sup>56</sup> In coming together in coffee houses, tea parlours, on city streets, in associations, and through publications or speaking engagements the boundaries of who would be included and excluded in the developing nation state were gradually determined and settled. Fáy, Bezerédj and Beöthy set out to help shape a new Magyar civil society, but their respective campaigns assumed an existence beyond their control and included results that they had not foreseen, much less imagined.

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<sup>54</sup> László Péter, "Lajos Kossuth and the Conversion of the Hungarian Constitution," *Hungarian Studies*, Vol. 16 No. 2 (2002): 149

<sup>55</sup> Dezső Korbuly, "Nationalitätenfrage und Madjarisierung in Ungarn (1790-1918)," *Österreichische Osthefte* Vol. 13 No. 2 (1971): 153.

<sup>56</sup> Seligman, *The Idea of Civil Society*, 145.

## Chapter One

### Government, the Nobility and the Governed in Early Nineteenth Century Hungary

In 1814, the English travel book writer and medical doctor Richard Bright (1789-1858)<sup>1</sup> developed a case of *Wanderlust* after completing his studies in medicine at Edinburgh University and decided to take an extensive trip to continental Europe. After visiting the Netherlands, Belgium and Germany, news that the Congress of Vienna was convening induced him to extend his travels to Central Europe. In Vienna he made the acquaintance of members of the Hungarian nobility, who gave him letters of recommendation to enter Hungary. This invitation to visit Hungary, along with the introduction to Hungarian society that they afforded, allowed him to spend several months en route transecting the Kingdom.<sup>2</sup>

Bright was not often impressed with such aspects of everyday life as the quality of roads, inns and city infrastructure. Even the official capital of the country, Pozsony, left in his estimation something to be desired. Upon his arrival there, he found:

....a city with 22,000 inhabitants, declared by Ferdinand, in 1536, the capital of Hungary,- the place where kings were crowned, and the diets were held,- there was now little to detain us. The castle, which was some years ago used as a barrack, was accidentally burned down. The walls still form a square pile with a tower at each angle; but it is more remarkable for its situation than its structure. It is placed on a hill of moderate elevation, which may be considered as the commencement of the Carpathian chain, overlooking a vast plain, through which the Danube rolls; and on the north-west of the horizon is broken for about one third of its extent by distant mountains. The town itself is insignificant; many of its streets are steep and narrow, the good houses but few,- and the shops, which are for the most part supplied with goods from Vienna, bear a poor and retail character.<sup>3</sup>

Bright's generally negative impression of the country's capital, and consequently first city of the realm, was in keeping with a pattern historian Irina V. Popova-Nowak detected

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<sup>1</sup> On Richard Bright see Diana Berry and Campbell Mackenzie, *Richard Bright, 1789-1858: Physician in an Age of Revolution and Reform* (London: Royal Society of Medicine, 1992) and Pamela Bright, *Dr. Richard Bright, (1789-1858)* (London: Bodley Head, 1983).

<sup>2</sup> Richard Bright, *Travels from Vienna through Lower Hungary; with Some Remarks on the State of Vienna during the Congress, in the Year 1814* (Edinburgh: A. Constable, 1818), 94.

<sup>3</sup> Bright, *Travels from Vienna through Lower Hungary*, 96-97.

as part and parcel of the accounts of British travelers in Hungary. Travel writers such as Bright were characteristically proud of their nationality while abroad, and were buoyed by a sense of superiority towards the foreigners they encountered.<sup>4</sup> Writings such as Bright's account, even if taken with a grain of salt, communicate to us that at the beginning of the nineteenth century there was a discrepancy between the advanced European nation that Hungary was aiming to become and the reality of the challenges that stood in the way of that ambition.

This background chapter will seek to analyze the historic political institutions and ethnic diversity of Hungary before the watershed year of 1848. It is intended as a starting point of how politics and society were structured so that the subsequent sections do not seem either discombobulated or devoid of context. Hungary had a relatively small federal governmental structure at this time. My description of what these institutions were and did is intended to serve as a reminder of what men such as Fáy, Bezerédj and Beöthy were attempting to dismantle: a small federal government created in the early modern era that was undemocratic and utilized Latin and German instead of Magyar as their chief languages of administration. The section on the nobles, the governors of society at both the federal and local levels, attempts to lend credence to the idea that the Hungarian nobility was more multicultural than Magyar. Hopefully, this background will give a fresh perspective to the chapters on Fáy, Bezerédj and Beöthy's magyarization programmes that follow as both an exercise in self-realization and a vision for a re-imagined Magyar Hungary. The last part of this chapter on the ethnographical composition of Hungary is a reminder that the population was in many cases multicultural on an individual and sociological level. Here, a traveller's account is

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<sup>4</sup> Popova-Nowak attributes these thought processes to British imperial attitudes towards Asian conquests conditioned in terms of Orientalism. Irina Popova, "Nationalizing Spatial Practices: Hungary and the Habsburg Monarchy, 1700-1848" (Ph.D. diss., Central European University, 1999), 194-195.

particularly useful in its concerns over the number of nationalities in the Kingdom, insight into how magyarization was changing the linguistic landscape and the realization that these diverse peoples did not always get along. All in all, this chapter seeks to shed light on the advantages and challenges civil society and magyarization faced when it came to welding the distinctive social elements into the cohesive fabric of a new nation.

### **Federal Institutions and Administration in Hungary The Hungarian Royal Court Chancellery**

At the national level, the Habsburgs had set up a series of institutions when they first became kings of Hungary in the sixteenth century, and these institutions still were thriving up to the middle of the nineteenth century. These institutions included the *Magyar Királyi Udvari Kancellária* [The Hungarian Royal Court Chancellery], located in Vienna, along with the *Magyar Kamara* [The Hungarian Treasury] and the *Helytartótanács* [The Vice-Regal Council], both of which were located in the fortress district of Buda. The Vice-Regal Council repeatedly figures in original source material under its Latin name, as the *Consilium regium locumtenentiale hungaricum*.

The Hungarian Royal Chancellery was governed since 1731 by a chancellor appointed from the upper echelons of the Hungarian nobility, with impeccable credentials and a record of unimpeachable loyalty. A vice-chancellor, counselors and secretaries also staffed the institution. It handled royal decrees [*Hofdekret*] and orders [*königliche Rescript*] by passing on the decisions of the king to the county governments. Its areas of jurisdiction included: the allocation of assignments to archbishoprics, bishoprics, and dioceses, administration of religious matters in the Kingdom generally, overseeing of royal donations and adjudication of nobility, care of orphans, supervision over the Royal Free Cities and coordination of censorship and the network of the secret police. The Chancellery also possessed a court of final appeal for noble and peasant legal cases. Despite the bewilderingly broad range of tasks the Chancellery had to handle, it

functioned with a relatively small group of people. In 1840 its staff totaled 154 office holders and 12 servants.<sup>5</sup> Hungarian kings swore upon coronation to uphold and to seek to restore the unity of the Kingdom of Hungary, but the Habsburg kings of Hungary consistently followed a policy of keeping Transylvania and Hungary proper as separate entities. This long-standing policy found expression in the maintenance of a separate Chancellery responsible for Transylvanian governmental matters.<sup>6</sup> In this time period eight men headed the Hungarian Chancellery, Counts Károly Pálffy (1787-1807), József Erdődy (1807-1819), Ferenc Koháry (1820-1826), Mihály Nádasdy (1826-1827), Ádám Reviczky (1828-1836), Fidél Pálffy (1836-1838), Antal Mailáth (1838-1847) and György Apponyi (1847-1848). Four men fulfilled the same responsibility for the Transylvanian Chancellery, namely Count Sámuel Teleki (1791-1822), and Barons Miklós Jósika (1822-1834), Elek Nopcsa (1837-1844) and Samu Jósika (1844-1848).<sup>7</sup> The principal language of communication and administration within the walls of this institution was German.

### **The Treasury**

The Hungarian Treasury had a similarly long history as the Hungarian Chancellery.<sup>8</sup> Established by Ferdinand I (1527-1564) in 1528 in Buda, it moved to Pozsony in 1531 because of the Ottoman occupation, and was not returned to its original home until 1784.<sup>9</sup> Under the rule of Joseph II the Hungarian Treasury was folded into the Hungarian and Transylvanian Chancellery (these had been united in 1782). Subsequent

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<sup>5</sup> Alexius von Fényes, *Statistik des Königreichs Ungarn*, II Theil (Pest: Trattner-Károly, 1844), 132-134.

<sup>6</sup> P.G.M Dickson, "Monarchy and Bureaucracy in Late-Eighteenth Century Austria," *The English Historical Review* Vol.110 No.436 (April 1995): 326.

<sup>7</sup> András Gergely, ed., *Magyarország története a 19.században* [The history of Hungary in the 19<sup>th</sup> century] (Budapest: Osiris, 2005), 548-549.

<sup>8</sup> István Nagy, *A magyar kamara, 1686-1848* [The Hungarian treasury, 1686-1848] (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1971).

<sup>9</sup> Martin von Schwartzner, *Statistik des Königreichs Ungarn* (Ofen, 1809-1811), 340.

consolidations united the Treasury and the Vice-Regal Council in 1785, no doubt conditioned by the thinking that too much bureaucracy was impeding government, and a new “superministry” uniting all federal institutions would cut through the red tape.<sup>10</sup> These institutional innovations, which had actually increased Hungarian economic independence by removing financial matters from direct royal control, were torn asunder and returned to their former zones of jurisdiction in 1790.

For the Hungarian Treasury separation from the Vice-Regal Council and Chancellery entailed renewed economic subordination to the Austrian Treasury. The basis for this pattern of organization was law 1569 §38 that the Diet had accepted in that year. Unfortunately, there were a series of contradictory laws, namely 1608 §5, 1609 §21, 1618 §15, 1622 §18, 1647 §146 and 1655 §11, all of which were equally valid as the law of 1569, were equally approved by both king and Diet, and which prioritized another form of organization: that the institution should be parallel to the Austrian Treasury, and not subordinate to it.<sup>11</sup> For reasons which did not need to be expressed openly, the Habsburg rulers of Hungary preferred to maintain the Hungarian Treasury as a subordinate sub-department of the Austrian Treasury, thereby taking law 1569 §38 as the precedent instead of subsequent legislation.

Around the year 1810 the statistician Martin von Schwartzner recorded the Treasury as having one president, one vice-president, two counselors from the magnate nobility, eleven from the lesser nobility and 200 other employees.<sup>12</sup> Given that its purview was to administer finances flowing from Hungary to Vienna, it is perhaps somewhat surprising that it only dealt with some of the country’s taxation, and that the

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<sup>10</sup> Dickson, “Monarchy and Bureaucracy”: 328 and 330.

<sup>11</sup> Dezső Márkus, ed., *1526-1608. évi törvények*, Magyar Törvénytár [The laws of 1526-1608, Corpus juris hungarici] (Budapest: Franklin Társulat, 1899), 605 and 607. Dezső Márkus, ed., *1608-1657. évi törvények*, Magyar Törvénytár [The laws of 1608-1657, Corpus juris hungarici] (Budapest: Franklin Társulat, 1900), 13, 57, 133, 195, 511, 513 and 591.

<sup>12</sup> Schwartzner, *Statistik*, 340.



Chancellery and Vice-Regal Council also shared in this duty. The Treasury only administered the king's revenues centered on salt taxes, mining rights, direct taxes, coin minting and his personal control over the Royal Free Cities. For example, one of the main taxes inhabitants of the country paid was the war tax, a levy on land used primarily for the purpose of supporting the military. It was not collected on behalf of the Treasury, but processed for the Chancellery, on account of the fact that it required the acquiescence of the Diet, which Treasury revenues did not.<sup>13</sup> Hungarian economic realities in this period are characterized by their complexity.

Two further factors contribute to why it is not a simple matter to deal with the Hungarian Treasury. The first is that the Kingdom had several systems of currency. There was a form of money based on silver exchange, having the florin as its base unit. Two florins amounted to one thaler, one florin was divided into 60 kreutzers, and one kreutzer was worth four groschen. This system of exchange was known as Rhenish currency. (The Hungarian equivalents were *krájczár*=kreutzer, and *garas*=groschen.) After 1761 the florin was also coined in copper. This florin was divided into 100 fillérs, and formed the basis of Hungarian currency. Paper money issued by the Bank of Vienna also carried the status of legal tender in the Hungarian lands, and could be found in denominations ranging from five to one thousand florins in value.<sup>14</sup> If the various currency standards of Hungary were not enough of a complication for Treasury officials, then languages used within the confines of their building certainly were a challenge for anyone. An official working at the Treasury needed expertise in Hungarian law, fluency in written and spoken Latin, excellent German, with strong competence in Hungarian and often in Slovak due to the location of the mining centres in the *felvidék*, or uplands of

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<sup>13</sup> Dickson, "Monarchy and Bureaucracy": 327.

<sup>14</sup> C.A. Macartney, *The Habsburg Empire, 1790-1918* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1968), 835.

Northern Hungary. Since the Treasury was a subordinate institution to its Austrian counterpart, its appointed officials tended to be loyal conservatives.<sup>15</sup>

### **The Vice-Regal Council**

The Vice-Regal Council was as important as the other two institutions to the government of Hungary, and perhaps even more so. It was created to carry out the king's acts and decrees. The responsibilities it administered were varied and vast as a result of this broad mandate. It was responsible for religious matters in Hungary, including that the Lutheran and Calvinist Hungarian Churches sent in their protocols for inspection. It oversaw Roman Catholic and Greek Catholic schools in the Kingdom directly, and all other educational matters less directly, making certain that censorship, curriculum and facilities were up to par. As has already been mentioned, the Vice-Regal Council administered the war tax on behalf of the Chancellery, and also helped the Roman Catholic Church administer its collection of one/tenth of produce which peasants had to pay, a tax known as the tithe. Legal jurisdiction of civil and criminal cases, as well as the construction, maintenance and regulation of prisons rested with the Council. Censorship, police, matters relating to peasant-landlord disputes (urbarial complaints and legal cases), conscription, ensuring that the military stationed in Hungary was fed and quartered, upkeep of roads, standardization of weights and measures, allocation of licenses to sell goods at markets, granting of travel documentation and administration of the toleration tax on Jews living within the confines of the Kingdom were just some of its extraordinary number of administrative responsibilities.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Such as Count Felix Zichy Ferraris (1810-1883). Source: Constant von Wurzbach, *Biographisches Lexikon des Kaisertums Österreich*, Sechzigster Theil Zichy-Zyka (Vienna: K.K. Hof- und Staatsdruckerei, 1891), 6.

<sup>16</sup> Alexius von Fényes, *Statistik des Königreichs Ungarn*, II Theil (Pest: Trattner-Károly, 1844), 138-139.

Schwartner recorded the number of employees permanently engaged at the Vice-Regal Council as totaling ninety-four people in 1784. Decisions about resolutions took place in a committee, composed of twenty-two men from prominent positions in the Roman Catholic Church, from the magnate nobility or from the non-titled lesser nobility. One of the twenty-two had to be from Croatia, as the Vice-Regal Council assumed jurisdiction over the *Partes Annexae*.<sup>17</sup> Of the twenty-two men who formed the council twelve had to be present in order for decisions to be legally binding. This status was achieved when documents were given the royal seal. All of these men received their positions through royal appointment.<sup>18</sup> The Vice-Regal Council prioritized Latin, but expertise in other languages was necessary in order to communicate with diverse county governments, and to handle petitions originating from them.

### **The Palatine, Royal Regent of Hungary**

The most important person who sat at the table where the counselors of the Vice-Regal Council deliberated policy and made their decisions was the palatine. This post was the highest-ranking office in early nineteenth century Hungary, because as the official representative of the king, the palatine possessed real power. During this time three palatines served as regents: the Habsburg Archdukes Alexander Leopold (1790-1795), Joseph (1795-1847) and his son Stephen (1847-1848).<sup>19</sup> Of the three, the one who

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<sup>17</sup> Term taken from Schwartner. The association of Hungary and Croatia began with Croatia's rule by a Hungarian King in 1102. When the Habsburgs assumed control over the Hungarian Kingdom, they likewise gained control over the Kingdom of Croatia. Within the Vice-Regal Council it was administered as a component part of the Hungarian Kingdom (*Partes Annexae*), but based on the fact that Croatia and Slavonia were separate crowns, they were a *Regnum* in their own right.

<sup>18</sup> Schwartner, *Statistik*, 231 and 229.

<sup>19</sup> Alexander Leopold died as a result of burns caused by a fireworks' accident at Laxenburg palace on July 10, 1795. Source: Henrik Marczali, *Magyarország története III Károlytól a bécsi congressusig (1711-1815)*, [The history of Hungary III from Charles III to the congress of Vienna (1711-1815),] ed. Sándor Szilágyi, vol. 8, *A magyar nemzet története* [The history of the Hungarian nation] (Budapest: Athenaeum, 1898), 564. Archduke and Palatine Stephen is a controversial figure in Hungarian history, due to his lack of support for the Hungarian insurgents during 1848. Aladár Urbán, "István nádor 1848 márciusában," ["Palatine Stephen and

left the strongest legacy was the one who occupied this position for more than half a century, Palatine Joseph.

The reason that Habsburgs were chosen as palatines for Hungary was to ensure their unquestionable loyalty to the king's points of view. Palatine Joseph was more independent in his conception of this role. Consistently, he supported Hungarian constitutionalism, respected national customs, and he even actively campaigned for cultural causes dear to the heart of progressives: such as the advancement of the Hungarian language, the creation of the National Museum and the foundation of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. For a Habsburg, Palatine Joseph was non-orthodox not only in his support of Hungarian causes, but even in terms of his private life. The Habsburgs were a strongly Catholic dynasty, who had been instrumental in fighting the Counter-Reformation in Europe. Joseph broke with the tradition of marrying Catholics and wed aristocratic women such as the Grand Duchess Alexandra Pavlovna of Russia (1783-1801) who was Russian Orthodox,<sup>20</sup> and the Duchess Maria Dorothea of Württemberg, a Lutheran.<sup>21</sup>

Joseph's warm affection for Hungarian peculiarities made him suspect in the eyes of his family. In reality, he was neither completely on the side of the liberal forces, nor indifferent to the defense of traditional Habsburg interests in Hungary that his birth and position required of him. According to András Gerő's summary of his accomplishment, the palatine "...was willing to play, on many an occasion, a balancing role, important

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March 1848,") in *Az értelem bátorsága: tanulmányok Perjés Géza emlékére*, [The courage of intellect: studies in memory of Géza Perjés,] ed. Gábor Hausner (Budapest: Argumentum, 2005), 791-802.

<sup>20</sup> On the fear that Alexandra Pavlovna was influencing her husband toward a more Slavophile political direction see: Elaine Rusinko, "Between Russia and Hungary: Foundations of Literature and National Identity in Subcarpathian Rus'," *The Slavonic and East European Review* Vol.74 No.3 (July 1996): 433.

<sup>21</sup> Maria Dorothea was devout in her Lutheranism, and sought to extend its influence in Hungary. Ábrám Kovács, "Mária Dorottya nádorné, és a modern protestáns angolszász és német eszmék terjesztése Magyarországon," ["The Palatine's wife Maria Dorothea and the spread of modern English and German Protestant ideas in Hungary,"] *Századok* [Centuries] Vol.140 No.6 (2006): 1531-1550.

from the point of view of Hungarian identity”.<sup>22</sup> It is central though to distinguish between Palatine Joseph as a diplomat with great finesse and his historical reputation as the “most Hungarian Habsburg”. Palatine Joseph was Hungarian in the sense that he was able to speak excellent Latin and German (as well as other languages), and not in any modern meaning of the term. In fact, during his long life and residence in the Kingdom, he never learned to speak correct and fluent Magyar. His most famous patriotic speech telling the estates at the Diet that he had the blood of the ancient Hungarian kings coursing through his veins was delivered in Latin, not Hungarian.<sup>23</sup>

Palatine Joseph continues to maintain such a positive reputation in historical writing because he was the last person to hold the office of palatine for any considerable span of time, and during a lengthy period of peace. His good name is also strengthened by comparison to his son’s brief and controversial stint as palatine just prior to the revolution and in its early phases.<sup>24</sup> Palatine Stephen was socialized to be his father’s successor, even receiving a greater educational background in Magyar. His decision to abandon Hungary in 1848 and not return thwarted the hopes of those who wanted the role of the palatine to be more national and Hungarian, and for the occupant of the position to be the first Magyar head of state.

### **Representative Institutions at National, County and City Levels The Hungarian Diet**

The most powerful representative institution in Hungary was the national Diet, which held its meetings in Pozsony. Between the years 1790 and 1848 it convened a

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<sup>22</sup> András Gerő, *Imagined History: Chapters from Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Hungarian Symbolic Politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), 62.

<sup>23</sup> Gerő, *Imagined History*, 286. Joseph was referring to the Árpád rulers, who were Hungary’s only native dynasty. After the death of the last Árpád in 1301, rulers from other houses reigned in Hungary.

<sup>24</sup> András Gerő, *Áruló vagy áldozat?: István, az utolsó magyar nádor rejtélye* [Traitor or victim?: The mystery of the last Palatine, István] (Budapest: Helikon, 1989).

number of times, from 1790-1791, in 1802, 1805, 1807, 1808 and 1811,<sup>25</sup> and later from 1825-1827, briefly in 1830, from 1832-1836, from 1839-1840, from 1843-1844, and finally from 1847-1848.<sup>26</sup> Modern history textbooks on this period tend to downplay focus on parliaments held between 1790-1791 and 1825-1827 because the early nineteenth-century Diets concentrated mainly on foreign policy, primarily dealing with voting recruits and money allocations to fight the Napoleonic wars. The other national assemblies prioritized domestic matters, concentrating on how Hungary should be reformed in order to keep pace with European progress.<sup>27</sup>

Even these categorizations of the Diets of the first half of the nineteenth century do not cover all the bases. For example, King Francis (1792-1835) called the Hungarian estates to assemble in 1808 expressly for the purpose of crowning his third wife, Maria Ludovica (1787-1816) Queen of Hungary.<sup>28</sup> Years before the use of the Hungarian parliament for such non-political purposes, the Hungarian estates began to worry that the king's emphasis on short Diets that yielded fast results for the crown, and their need for long Diets making them participants in policy-making, meant that king and estates were at odds. To rectify the imbalance the Hungarian estates tried the tactic of creating law 1802 §1, that stipulated the King had to summon a Diet on a tri-annual basis to renegotiate troop allocations and taxation.<sup>29</sup> Their efforts were lost on Francis, who duly signed the statute into law, but was not keen to have the responsibility of dealing with the demands of the Hungarian estates on such a regular basis. It was for this reason that he

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<sup>25</sup> Marczali, *Magyarország története* [The History of Hungary], 570, 573, 576, 580 and 594.

<sup>26</sup> Gyula Mérei and Károly Vörös, *Magyarország története, 1790-1848*, első kötet [The history of Hungary 1790-1848, volume one] (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1980), 9, 11 and 12.

<sup>27</sup> Mérei and Vörös, *Magyarország története* [The history of Hungary] follows this pattern, as does the more recent Gergely, ed., *Magyarország története a 19. században* [The history of Hungary in the 19<sup>th</sup> century].

<sup>28</sup> Marczali, *Magyarország története*, [The history of Hungary], 579.

<sup>29</sup> Dezső Márkus, ed., *1740-1835. évi törvénycikkek*, Magyar Törvénytár [The laws of 1740-1835, Corpus juris hungarici] (Budapest: Franklin-Társulat, 1901), 281.

chose not to call the estates to assemble for long periods, particularly between 1811 and 1825.

As the above sentence makes clear, the Hungarian parliament had no right to assemble on its own. Convocation and prorogation of the Diet were the exclusive privileges of the monarch. When the king decided that he wished to hold a parliamentary session, the Hungarian Court Chancellery issued letters of invitation (*litterae regales*) to all relevant people, which included the central reason why a Diet was necessary, and any draft legislation which the king wished to have considered in advance.<sup>30</sup> The right to initiate all legislation was the sole prerogative of the king, but the Hungarian estates had the right to present requests (*postulata*) for certain types of legislation, and could point out how they believed the king's royal representatives had not, in their estimation, fulfilled the letter of the law in their governance of Hungary.<sup>31</sup> It was very important that the grievances of the estates (*gravamina*) were never directly voiced against the person of the king himself, because there was a fine line between just cause for complaint and what could be considered treason. In any event, during the parliaments of these years the Hungarian estates made an art form out of having an unusually large number of grievances which needed to be redressed in Diets. Since these had to be addressed, the use of this technique gave the estates the opportunity for longer Diets, particularly between 1825-1827 and 1832-1836, which they used in order to further their own domestic agendas. Using this tactic allowed them to turn the disadvantage of not being able to initiate legislation on their own around to work in their favour.

The king and the estates assembled together comprised the Diet. The precise formulation for the latter body was Estates and Orders (*status et ordines*), and it comprised the four social groups already mentioned in the previous chapter. The pattern

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<sup>30</sup> Béla K. Király, *Hungary in the Late Eighteenth Century, The Decline of Enlightened Absolutism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1969), 82-83.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid*, 83.

for their assembly in the early nineteenth century had been defined in 1608.<sup>32</sup> The origin of the terminology was a matter of dispute,<sup>33</sup> but the people who had a right to appear as representatives had been fixed by custom. Having the right to appear in 1808 were: two Catholic archbishops, sixteen diocesan bishops and ten regular bishops, two leaders of monastic orders, 241 magnates, 189 magnates in absence *and* their widows, the lord-lieutenants of the counties, one representative from Dalmatia-Slavonia-Croatia, fifteen people serving on the highest courts of the land, two Croatian deputies, twenty-nine legates of chapters, seven abbots and provosts, ninety-eight representatives from the Hungarian counties, two representatives from the Jazyges and Cumanian special districts,<sup>34</sup> delegates from two of the six Heyduk cities<sup>35</sup> and eighty members from Free Royal Cities. According to Schwartner's calculations, 698 people in total had the right to attend this parliamentary session.<sup>36</sup>

Not all people however, even in a privileged body such as the Hungarian parliament, were created as equals. The delegates sat in two houses: the Upper and Lower Chambers. In the Upper Chambers were the spiritual leaders and magnate nobility, and presiding over their assembly was the palatine himself. The Lower House contained the representatives from the counties and cities. The *personalis*, a chief justice of the King's Bench, ensured that the sessions functioned in orderly fashion. Each county sent two untitled nobles to serve as their representatives in the legislature, but together they had but one vote. The county delegate pairs had to be in agreement on all issues and vote

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<sup>32</sup> Márkus, ed., *1608-1657. évi törvények*, [The laws of 1608-1657], 25. The Act is 1608 § 1.

<sup>33</sup> Dobokay, "Károk és Rendek," ["Estates and orders,"] *Athenaeum*, no.43, 28 May 1837: 337-342.

<sup>34</sup> Nora Berend asserts that Jazyges is a misnomer for people who should rightly be known as the As. The As and the Cumanians entered what is now Hungary before the nomadic Magyars settled in the Carpathian basin, and were assimilated over the course of centuries. The As spoke an Iranian tongue, while the Cumanians communicated using a Turkish language. Nora Berend, *At the Gate of Christendom, Jews, Muslims, and "Pagans" in Medieval Hungary, c.1000-c.1300* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 57.

<sup>35</sup> On the Heyduk cities: Alexius von Fényes, *Statistik*, II Theil, 156-157.

<sup>36</sup> Schwartner, *Statistik*, 127.



accordingly. If they were not, their votes cancelled each other out. The citizens from the Royal Free Cities who were chosen to voice their concerns in the legislature were even more disadvantaged. All told, they had but *one* single vote. For a resolution to become law, it had to pass both houses of parliament and receive royal assent. Even if a bill did pass both houses, the monarch was in no way obliged to give it his signature. In fact, just as the delegates could use the power inherent in discussing *gravamina* to their advantage, the king could use his power to decide in favour or against legislation to serve his purposes. Once a bill passed both houses, he could wait as little or as long as he chose before pronouncing the creation of a statute or vetoing the proposed legislation. As a consequence, both king and estates could stall the workings of parliament to a considerable degree, if it suited their interests. In the first half of the nineteenth century, the language of debate in the Diet shifted from Latin to Hungarian, mainly due to the influence of the Lower House. Prioritization of Latin lasted longer in the Upper House, and among deputies from Croatia.<sup>37</sup>

### **The County Governmental System**

The division of Hungary into administrative governmental sub-units dates back to St. Stephen, the first King (1000-1038). It was he who set up the county system. The terminology for this county division in Hungarian is *megye* (county), or *vármegye* (castle county), on account of the fact that they often had at least one castle fortification. The exact number of Hungarian counties has consistently changed through time. Even during the reign of St. Stephen, it is a matter of dispute as to exactly how many counties existed.

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<sup>37</sup> Gábor Pajkossy, "Problems of the Language of State in a Multinational Country: Debates at the Hungarian Diets of the 1840s," in *Études Historiques Hongroises, Volume Two: Ethnicity and Society*, ed. Ferenc Glatz (Budapest: Institute of History, Hungarian Academy of Sciences, 1990), 99 and 104.

It was somewhere in the region of between forty and forty-five.<sup>38</sup> In the early nineteenth century there were about fifty counties in Hungary proper, and nine further ones if Croatian and Slavonian districts were also listed, which was regularly the case. It was customary on maps to divide counties into sub-divisions, depending on the relation of a particular unit to the two largest rivers in the Kingdom: the Danube and the Tisza. Numbering began with the County of Pozsony, as it housed the capital. Croatia and Slavonian counties always followed Hungarian ones, and Transylvania counties were generally excluded, as they were not part of the country.<sup>39</sup>

At the head of each Hungarian county was an appointed royal official, the *ispán*, or lord lieutenant. It was illegal for this office to become hereditarily associated with certain families or particular people,<sup>40</sup> and yet by the early nineteenth century some of the lord lieutenant posts had reached this point. The lord lieutenant of Pest County was the palatine, Catholic bishops of Hungary simultaneously administered their church district and headed a county, and seventeen aristocratic families could count on permanent appointments in charge of counties. These appointees held their positions even though they were not present most of the time to fulfill their duties, which were carried out by *Administoren* in their stead.<sup>41</sup>

When the lord lieutenant was present in the county, he had the following responsibilities: serve as the highest judge for the district, ensure that the taxes for the military were collected as well as taxes for local purposes, oversee censorship, ensure the

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<sup>38</sup> Pál Engel, Tamas Palosfalvi and Andrew Ayton, *The Realm of St. Stephen: A History of Medieval Hungary, 895-1526* (New York: Tauris, 2001), 40 and 41.

<sup>39</sup> *Mappa novissima regnorum Hungariae, Croatiae, Sclavoniae nec non Magni Principatus Transylvanie* [New map of the Kingdom of Hungary, Croatia and Slavonia, but not of the Great Principality of Transylvania] Map. (Vienna: Artaria et Comp., 1801) OSzK TK TM 23 076.

<sup>40</sup> Dezső Márkus, ed., *1000-1526. évi törvéncikkek*, Magyar Törvénytár [The laws of 1000-1526, Corpus juris hungarici] (Budapest, Franklin-Társulat, 1899), 675. According to Law 1504 § 3.

<sup>41</sup> András Gergely, "Das Ungarische Komitat im 19. Jahrhundert," in *Études Historiques Hongroises, Volume One: Settlement and Society in Hungary*, ed. Ferenc Glatz (Budapest: Institute of History, Hungarian Academy of Sciences, 1990), 210.

execution of the laws and the decrees of the Vice-Regal Council, preside over a general assembly of the nobility four times a year (*Congregatio Generalis*), and other noble political meetings should they become necessary (*Congregatio Particularis*), and hold an election known as a *Restauration* once every three years to assign nobles to assistant county positions and to decide on who would represent the county at the dietal level.<sup>42</sup> The most important elected positions at county level were the vice-lord lieutenants (*alispán*), the second vice lord-lieutenants (*másod alispán*), the local judges, the dietal representatives, the accountants, and for documentation purposes, the notaries (responsible for the paperwork pertaining to the noble assemblies, as well as between the county and the governmental authorities and inter-county correspondence), and the county archivist. Depending on the size of the county, there were about forty to sixty office holders in total, supported by seventy to one hundred assistants.<sup>43</sup> Only the nobles could hold the major offices, and remuneration was minimal. These two factors resulted in relatively small and inexpensive local government.

Hungarian counties were responsible for ensuring that all district roads and bridges were in good order, that health conditions were up to par, that military stationed in the area was fed and quartered, that taxes were collected in a fair manner, and that the prison system was well administered.<sup>44</sup> Until the end of the eighteenth century county administration was reserved to the segment of the nobility that was able to speak and write Latin, because it was the official language of the country. Beginning in 1805, a law allowed counties to choose the language that they would use in order to conduct

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<sup>42</sup> Fényes, *Statistik*, II Theil, 142.

<sup>43</sup> Gergely, "Das Ungarische Komitat," in *Études Historiques Hongroises, Settlement and Society in Hungary*, 210.

<sup>44</sup> Fényes, *Statistik*, II Theil, 143 and 145.

administration.<sup>45</sup> One by one, counties switched from Latin to Hungarian for general assemblies and record keeping, so that by 1840 the majority of the counties administered local government using the Magyar language. This measure, designed “to advance the learning of the domestic tongue”<sup>46</sup> continued a process of giving preference to Magyar at the county level that was controversial given the varied ethnic composition of all Hungarian settlements.

There was little disagreement between the royal bureaucracy and the Hungarian estates at the county level in relation to the advancement of the Hungarian language, but other aspects of government were more contentious. When the opinions of these two governmental bodies diverged both could turn to extraordinary but entirely legal means to advance their particular cause. If an assembly of nobles at county level found a recently promulgated law or decree of the king to be contrary to the existing laws of the Kingdom, it had the right to refuse to enforce the legislation.<sup>47</sup> Noble assemblies also began a process of inter-county correspondence. Adding the extra step of communication among themselves before they addressed the federal governmental institutions allowed for the counties to synchronize policy and to use the weight of their numbers against the central authorities. It is no wonder that the royal governmental bodies tried repeatedly to ban counties from communicating with one another, because enforcing the flow of information between the central authorities and over fifty units created de-centralization.

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<sup>45</sup> Law 1805 § 4 allowed the counties to use the “domestic language” (ie. Magyar) in their correspondence with the Hungarian Chancellery and Vice-Regal Council. Márkus, ed., *1740-1835. évi törvénycikkek*, [The laws of 1740-1835], 325-327.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid*, 325.

<sup>47</sup> John Paget, *Hungary and Transylvania, with Remarks on their Condition, Social, Political and Economical*, Volume I (London: John Murray, 1839; reprint, New York: Arno, 1971), 543.

The central authorities lost the battle of control over the flow of information, and largely had to accept inter-county correspondence as a fact from 1828 onwards.<sup>48</sup>

Hungarian royal authorities tried two measures to control the increasing strength of the counties that the last two measures placed into the hands of the nobles who controlled local administration. The first measure was an attempt to change voting patterns at county level by law in 1819. Traditionally, voting at county assemblies involved *pondering* votes (known in documentation as *vota ponderantur, non numerator*, ie. weighing their importance based on who was voting) rather than *tallying* them based on one vote per person.<sup>49</sup> It was assumed that democratizing Hungarian noble county government would work to the advantage of the royal institutions, because class conflict within the nobility would cause poorer Hungarian nobles to side with the forces of the king. However, royal authorities came to realize that democratization even in this restricted political sphere was an unreliable tool at their disposal when the votes that they had anticipated would come their way turned out not always to materialize. Use of force was the second measure that royal authorities could utilize when county assemblies became unmanageable in their eyes. When counties refused to carry out the law or coordinated resistance against the governmental authorities, the king had the right to appoint a royal representative to launch an investigation.<sup>50</sup> One instance of this happening was the 1835 appointment of Ádám Szirmay to put pressure on Békés County to stop sending messages to other counties about necessary changes to legislation. When the appointment of a royal commissioner was insufficient to ensure county compliance, such

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<sup>48</sup> Gergely, "Das Ungarische Komitat," in *Études Historiques Hongroises, Settlement and Society in Hungary*, 212.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid, 212.

<sup>50</sup> Orsolya Völgyesi, "Királyi biztosi vizsgálat Békés megyében (1835)," ["Royal commissioner's investigation in Békés county (1835),"] *Aetas* No.1-2 (1999): 33.

as in 1821 and 1823 when numerous noble assemblies rejected royal requests for taxes and troops, the king had the right to send in the military until order was restored.<sup>51</sup>

These measures were somewhat sparingly utilized on the part of both counties and the federal government. If they had not been it would have been problematic for contemporaries to praise county politics, and the county system, as the bulwark of Hungarian constitutionalism. The *Pesti Hírlap* [Pest News] took this editorial line. One article with this style of argumentation appeared on February 16, 1843. In it Count János Pejácsevich wrote that Hungarian county political meetings not only replaced English political rallies, but were superior to them, as long as they managed to keep the peace, because in the interchange of opposing ideas a balanced opinion came to the fore, whereas in English meetings order relied on the sober good sense of the people.<sup>52</sup> One article aside, a more consistent manner in which the Pest News gave voice to its deep respect for the Hungarian counties was through division of space. Each issue tended to contain news of events domestically and in Europe, with domestic news organized along county-division lines, and with frequent attention to summaries of noble political meetings, resolutions, and accomplishments.

While written evidence is historically compelling, the best proof for the esteem that Hungarian nobles had for the county system and for the local system of government that they dominated is architectural. During the first half of the nineteenth century Hungarian nobles made a priority of building modern meeting houses by the leading architects of the day that would serve as a forum for their political gatherings and debates. Buildings previously utilized for this purpose became insufficient either in terms of size,

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<sup>51</sup> Gergely, "Das Ungarische Komitat," in *Études Historiques Hongroises, Settlement and Society in Hungary*, 219.

<sup>52</sup> *Pesti Hírlap* [Pest news] 16 February 1843, No. 222, *Kossuth hírlapírói munkássága* [Kossuth's journalistic activity], CD-ROM.

or no longer met aesthetic and stylistic requirements that paralleled the dignity and ambition associated with their activities that they wished to convey.<sup>53</sup>

In comparison to the baroque that had dominated elegant architecture in Hungary until the late eighteenth century, neo-classicism offered a more streamlined, pared down façade that represented a break from the past. By utilizing this style of architecture to build the county meeting houses being erected throughout the Hungarian Kingdom, the Hungarian nobility conveyed the idea that their democratic tendencies were also new and significant. Neoclassicism had other ramifications for Hungarian design and culture. It embodied “Hungary’s ambitions to rise to cultural parity with other European nations” and “became identical with the Hungarian idea of the rise of the nation”. It is for this reason that in addition to the county houses other cultural institutions such as museums and theatres were the ones deemed to be of such national significance as to merit new constructions in neoclassical style.<sup>54</sup>

One showpiece of Hungarian county house architecture was the Pest meeting house, that may still be seen on *Városház* street (Town Hall street) in Central Budapest. Entrusted to the architect who also designed the Hungarian National Theatre, Mátyás Zitterbarth jr. (1803-1867), the design was innovative even for neo-classicism because the six-columned Corinthian portico did not extend forward, but was sunk into the front wall of the structure. This element, the large entrance hall and the arcaded courtyard were all intended to testify to the particular importance of Pest’s county house as representing the leading county in the Kingdom, and the hope that one day Pest would overtake Pozsony as the capital of the emerging nation.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> Gergely, “Das Ungarische Komitat,” in *Études Historiques Hongroises, Settlement and Society in Hungary*, 212.

<sup>54</sup> Dora Wiebenson, József Sisa and Pál Lövei, *The Architecture of Historic Hungary* (Cambridge: MIT, 1998), 160 and 159.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid*, 163.

There were some dissenting voices willing to question the pride and self-assuredness of the nobility that radiated from the newly built county meeting houses. In the famous book *Hitel* [Credit], Count István Széchenyi (1791-1860) reminded his readership that aside from token admittance, the class of people who paid the tax and built these structures would never be given regular access to any part of the building other than its prison, usually housed in the basement.<sup>56</sup> It must also be remembered that not only were these county halls mostly off limits to the non-noble portions of Hungarian society, but if they were housed in cities they were largely outside of the jurisdiction of city authorities too. András Gergely goes so far as to state that these buildings and the proceedings that they contained had the privilege of “extraterritoriality” that is akin to the status granted to embassies in host countries. They were zones of sovereignty answerable only to the jurisdiction of the county that they represented.<sup>57</sup> With these latter reservations in mind, it is clear that the democratic practices enshrined in the Hungarian county system may have been a source of pride, but they pertained only to the Hungarian nobility.

### **The Royal Free Cities**

The last significant level of government that affected the lives of Hungarians living at this time pertained to those located in the cities, the most populous and prestigious of which were known as the Royal Free Cities. These were a group of urban settlements specializing either in trade or in mining and deriving privileges from the fact that they were directly subject to the king. Thus, even though they were situated within particular Hungarian counties, they too had a measure of extraterritoriality, earning them

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<sup>56</sup> Károly Kecskeméti, “Szabadságjogok a magyar liberálisok reformterveiben (1790-1848),” [“Basic freedoms in the reform plans of Hungarian liberals (1790-1848),”] *Aetas* No.1-2 (2000): 265.

<sup>57</sup> Gergely, “Das Ungarische Komitat,” in *Études Historiques Hongroises, Settlement and Society in Hungary*, 212.



the appellation of being “free”. Subjection to the king did, however, come with strings attached, including paying taxes directly to the Hungarian Treasury, and accepting the administrative decrees of the Vice-Regal Council, acting on behalf of the monarch.<sup>58</sup> During the reign of Maria Theresia (1740-1780) there were forty-four urban settlements in the Hungarian Kingdom that had been raised to this status, but by 1848 their number had increased to fifty-three.<sup>59</sup> According to one estimate, there were 710 334 people who lived in the Hungarian Royal Free Cities. This number added to the total of inhabitants of twelve military cities, eight cities governed by bishops, thirty-eight larger legally distinctive urban conglomerations and sixteen cities in Szepes County (also referred to as the Zips region after its German equivalent, and belonging today to Slovakian and Polish territory) produced a total of 1 259 484 city dwellers in the Kingdom, or one for every eight and a half people.<sup>60</sup> These statistics were based on calculations in 1846, and listed Pest as the most populous Royal Free City, with 109 861 inhabitants (Buda, its sister city across the river Danube, came in sixth with 34 893). The smallest Royal Free City was Ruszt in Sopron County with a population of just 1 179.<sup>61</sup>

In the Royal Free Cities the main language of discourse in the first half of the nineteenth century was German. Germans immigrated to the Hungarian cities from all areas of the former Holy Roman Empire, but there was a higher percentage of German settlement from the Rhineland, the Pfalz, Bavaria, Baden, Württemberg, Swabia, the Austrian principalities as well as from Bohemia and Moravia. In Pest-Buda their various German dialects coalesced into what became known as *Pest Deutsch* (Pest German) and

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<sup>58</sup> Fényes, *Statistik*, II Theil, 150.

<sup>59</sup> Elemér Mályusz, “A magyarországi polgárság a francia forradalom korában,” [“The Hungarian bourgeoisie in the age of the French revolution,”] in *Magyarország társadalomtörténete a 18.-19.században*, [Hungarian social history in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries,] ed. Tamás Faragó (Budapest: Új Mandatum, 2004), 250.

<sup>60</sup> Elek Fényes, *Magyarország leírása*, I.rész [Description of Hungary, part I] (Pest: Beimel, 1847), 38-40.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid*, 39.

*Ofner Deutch* (Buda German). Spoken Pest German had a dominant Central-Bavarian inflection mixed with Austrian elements and influenced by the native German-Hungarian dialects spoken in the countryside. The language of commerce was characterized by the Central-Bavarian form of speech. Buda German also had a strong representation of the latter dialect, but added the unique element of Lower Austrian, particularly Viennese, to its linguistic German pot-pourri. It was mostly the better-off middle classes who conversed in these dialects, with the richer citizens opting for literary German.<sup>62</sup> Non-Germans conversed in their preferred language amongst themselves, but often used German as a *lingua franca* either when conversing with ethnic Germans, or when speaking with a person from a linguistic background that required a mediating language.<sup>63</sup>

Royal Free Cities were special because they were self-governing entities controlled by small oligarchies. Each of these cities had an inner and an outer council. The inner council consisted of about twelve *Senatoren*, with the most prestigious positions being the mayor, the chief justice and the city captain. The outer council was composed of fifty, eighty or one hundred citizens, and its chief duty was to vote for the people who would occupy the three leading positions on the board of the inner council. Sometimes the outer council's combined expertise could be utilized for matters relating to town security or economic development.<sup>64</sup> These councils worked together to appoint the city's representatives to the Hungarian Diet, and to replace officials whose offices had

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<sup>62</sup> István Soós, "A budapesti németiség nyelve és nyelvjárásai," ["The language and dialects of the Germans of Budapest,"] in *Németek Budapesten*, [Germans in Budapest,] ed. Vendel Hambuch (Budapest: Fővárosi Német Kisebbségi Önkormányzat, 1998), 219-220.

<sup>63</sup> For an testimony of this process, see István Kováts, *Egy szegény pórfiú önéletrajza* [The self-penned biography of a poor peasant boy] (Budapest: Magvető, 1981), 112. Kováts traveled to Pest to seek work in construction following the great flood of 1838. He learned to converse fluently in both German and a Slavic Language within the span of one year.

<sup>64</sup> Schwartner, *Statistik*, 241.

fallen vacant in the local administration. Town council representatives had the ultimate job security, for they held their posts until death.

In the first half of the nineteenth century city life in Hungary was experiencing change. Seen from the outside this change was not readily apparent. The Royal Free Cities remained the walled off entities that had protected them from Ottoman attack well into the nineteenth century. Pest's inner city retained its defensive fortifications, and although there was plenty of room for expansion, since it was situated on the edge of the Hungarian plain, only its suburban environs, namely Teréz, Erzsébet, József and Ferenc districts could truly accommodate the influx of immigration that characterized its expansion. Buda's administrative centre was housed in the castle district, built upon a medieval castle fortress, and set high above the rest of the city. While it made sense physically to protect the most important governmental buildings and the houses of the élite, even lower lying areas were similarly guarded. The water town section of Buda situated below the castle district also remained enclosed and fortified.<sup>65</sup>

The environmental confines of the Royal Free Cities appeared much as they had hundreds of years earlier. Real change was happening on the level of the people. Cities were increasing in size, with no other urban community being able to match the spectacular population expansion of Pest. Its estimated size in 1846 has already been mentioned. It is all the more impressive when one considers that because of its virtual decimation in the course of the Turkish wars it housed only about 3500 people in 1700, and a mere 20 000 a hundred years later.<sup>66</sup> The increase in size of Buda was not as spectacular, due to geographical constraints and because it did not have the potential for trade fairs and commerce which gave Pest its advantages.

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<sup>65</sup> Vera Bácskai, Gábor Gyáni and András Kubinyi, *Budapest története a kezdetektől 1945-ig* [The history of Budapest from Its beginnings until 1945] (Budapest: Budapest Főváros Levéltára, 2000), 81.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid*, 80.

More pronounced than the simple fact that the cities were increasing in size was the transformation in the nature of citizenship. In the past those who had burgher or *cives* status had to reside in the city, needed to own property, had to be nominated for citizenship by those who already were in possession of the distinction, and received the honour from the town council through election. A person went through all of the difficulty connected with the process because it afforded benefits, such as the right to practice a trade or engage in commerce.<sup>67</sup> Because of the advantages which *civis* status afforded a successful candidate, people such as guildsmen or large-volume traders by profession were willing to put in the time, effort and money to attain this status even though it often took decades to accomplish.<sup>68</sup> Even for those who met occupational requirements, there were other obstacles to overcome. Passing the property ownership and taxpaying thresholds were barriers that only a small portion of city dwellers could achieve. Those who were not disqualified on these economic grounds often stumbled over religious hurdles. Until the end of the eighteenth century, only Catholics could become citizens of towns and fill governmental jobs.<sup>69</sup> When this restriction was lifted it benefited mainly Protestants and those of Greek and Serbian Orthodox faith who had acquired enough capital to settle permanently in the Royal Free Cities. It did less to help Jewish residents, who were outright prohibited from settling in many of these cities, or

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<sup>67</sup> Ibid, 102.

<sup>68</sup> A good example of someone who had a successful, though lengthy path toward *civis* status in Pest was Benedek Unger (c1703-1781). Settling as a journeyman in Pest, he wed the elder widow Mrs. Cordula Lambeck in 1740, granting him the necessary respectability and material advantage to gain the nomination of eight master craftsmen for his citizenship petition. He was awarded *civis* status six months after his wedding. Unger became such a wealthy man that the street where his house was located was named in his honour. See: Zoltán Magyar, "A budapesti Magyar utca és a névadó család," ["Magyar street in Budapest and the family that gave it its name,"] *Turul* Vol. LXVI No.1-2 (1994): 43.

<sup>69</sup> Nemes, "Between Reform and Revolution" (Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 1999), 44.

who faced restrictions on acquiring property which led to a similar outcome of exclusion.<sup>70</sup>

By the early 1800s most of the political rights that had previously been associated with citizenship were really rendered null and void, as *cives* status in the Royal Free Cities became primarily a legal category. It was no longer necessary to have this special status in order to engage in business practices.<sup>71</sup> Many who did earn *cives* status no longer played a significant role in town administration, and in terms of one meaningful indicator of status, namely the possession of wealth, many full-class citizens lagged behind the resources of a successful merchant newly settled in town or even grain farmers benefiting from larger economies of scale. *Civis* status changed from functioning as a monopoly on economic business activity to aiding the process of urbanization. Increasingly, it allowed people of modest wealth to move from the countryside, gain a foothold in the city, and support themselves.<sup>72</sup> Hungarian cities went from housing 4.89% of the total population in 1784/5 to almost 13% on the eve of the 1848 revolution,<sup>73</sup> no doubt in part because citizenship became meaningful for a new segment of the population, and lost its stigmatic character for the rest.

Even more significant for the Royal Free Cities than the alteration of the nature of citizenship or of the coefficient increase in population of town settlements was the movement of Hungarian nobles from their country dwellings to houses and palaces in urban settings. Beginning in the seventeenth century, poorer nobles left the Hungarian plain to escape from Turkish armies and settle in cities in Upper Hungary. During the

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<sup>70</sup> Vera Bácskai, *Towns and Urban Society in Early Nineteenth-Century Hungary* (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1989), 139.

<sup>71</sup> Bácskai, Gyáni and Kubinyi, *Budapest története 1945-ig*, [The history of Budapest until 1945], 102.

<sup>72</sup> Bácskai, *Towns and Urban Society*, 133-134.

<sup>73</sup> Sándor Gyimesi, "Die Ostmitteleuropäischen Städte und die Modernisierung im 19. Jahrhundert," *Études Historiques Hongroises*, Issue 1 (1985): 344. The results for the cities in the Hungarian Kingdom did not apply to corresponding settlements. Transylvanian cities went from having 3.8% of the population to 4.1% in the same time frame, while Croatian urban living spaces went from containing 2% of the people in the Kingdom to 3.17%.

eighteenth century the noble exodus continued, not any longer due to concerns over physical security, but because competition from an increased number of nobles made it more difficult for individual families to live at a level of well-being that befitted their social position.<sup>74</sup> Magnate nobles followed the lesser Hungarian nobility to the cities. It was during this time that magnate families built grand residences in the Royal Free Cities, granting them the opportunity to socialize with other families who had done the same, to engage in politics, to meet in social clubs, and to enjoy all the new amusements that city life in Hungary began to offer, such as theatre, coffeehouses, dessert parlors, ice cream shops, parks and seasonal balls.<sup>75</sup> Nobles with money to invest even began to build houses or apartments in order to profit from urban real estate. According to Vera Bácskai, the historian who has looked at urban settlement patterns in this period most closely, the role of the nobility in promoting city development in Hungary has been overlooked, because “(b)y supplying rented dwellings to those with not enough money to buy a house and to the Jews, who in many towns were not permitted to acquire property, they promoted the increase of the urban population and contributed to the spread of rental housing, a typical feature of urban life”.<sup>76</sup>

The movement of the Hungarian nobility to the towns also increased the spread of Magyar language and culture in these areas. Péter Hanák called the towns “melting pots for magyarization,” and pointed out that the numbers of people who were Magyar in the urban areas far exceeded national averages.<sup>77</sup> When a wide spectrum of nobles conversed with one another in Magyar, or opted for Magyar instead of another language,

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<sup>74</sup> Mályusz, “A magyarországi polgárság,” [“The Hungarian bourgeoisie,”], 251.

<sup>75</sup> Other amusements Pest-Buda offered included circuses, pan-opticums, fireworks and the famous Easter Monday Fair on Swabian Hill. Source: József Zoltán and György Gaal, *Népi szórakozások a reformkori Pest-Budán* [Folk amusements in Pest-Buda during the age of reform] (Budapest: Fővárosi Szabó Ervin Könyvtár, 1975), 32-43, 50-51, 54-56 and 71-79.

<sup>76</sup> Bácskai, *Towns and Urban Society*, 126.

<sup>77</sup> Péter Hanák, “Polgárosodás és asszimiláció Magyarországon a XIX. században,” [“Embourgeoisement and assimilation in Hungary in the XIXth century,”] *Történelmi Szemle* [Historical journal] Vol. 17 No. 4 (1974): 516.

they brought the prestige of their status as the most important social estate in the realm to bear on the language. In doing so they raised it from its former position as a primarily peasant tongue, or the language of the lower nobility, to being a language associated with their position in society.

For those who were not noble and not from a Hungarian background, learning to speak Magyar opened the door for some measure of upward mobility, particularly for people who were already influential in the cities. Citizens who formed part of the inner and outer town councils had been primarily German until the late eighteenth century. As the nobles immigrated to Hungarian cities and sought *cives* status befitting their rank, and influence on the councils, their cultural interaction with the councillors made many of them chose a degree of magyarization, because the last step up the social ladder, ennoblement, was suddenly within reach. In Mályusz's phraseology, they became "enslaved" by noble mentality and thinking.<sup>78</sup> Instead of seeing it in such negative terms, one could just as easily argue that two social groups provided mutual benefits to one another. Hungarian nobles who emphasized their Magyar culture gained the title of citizen, a titular honorific that reinforced their personal sense of social status, whereas town citizens acquired the ability to speak another language in exchange for possible social advantage. Small wonder that when Mátyás Bél (1684-1749),<sup>79</sup> the famous enlightenment writer, dedicated a youthful work to his noble patrons who were citizens of Besztercebánya, he used names that were both German and Hungarian: György Veisz,

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<sup>78</sup> Mályusz, "A magyarországi polgárság," [The Hungarian bourgeoisie,], 252.

<sup>79</sup> Mátyás Bél's literary masterpiece was *Notitia Hungariae novae historico geographica, divisa in partes quator, quarum prima, Hungariam Cis-Danibianam; altera Trans-Danibianam; tertia Cis-Tibiscanam; quarta Trans-Tibiscanam* (Vienna: Paulli Straubii, 1735-1742). New writing on his contribution to Central European geography and culture includes: Zsolt Török, *Bél Mátyás, Mikoviny Sámuel és a honismereti iskola* [Mátyás Bél, Sámuel Mikoviny and the school of national knowledge] (Budapest: OPKM, 2003). Bél's correspondence has also recently been published: László N. Szelestei, ed., *Bél Mátyás levelezése* [The correspondence of Mátyás Bél] (Budapest: Balassi, 1993).

Mihály Fischer, István Mervalt, Sámuel Klement, János Henzeli and Bálint Kramer.<sup>80</sup>

For these people, the benefits of some magyarization outweighed its drawbacks.

### **The Nobility of Hungary: Social and Ethnic Stratifications**

It is difficult to estimate the population of the Hungarian Kingdom in the first half of the nineteenth century, because of the absence of modern computing methods and statistical analysis, the infrequency of government surveys, and the relative secrecy that characterized such information when it did exist. As a consequence, contemporary surveys, and historical repetition of this information, produce numbers which vary considerably, and must all be taken to be estimations to a greater or lesser degree. The three most famous statisticians who took on the monumental task of population estimation during this time were Ludovicus Nagy (1829),<sup>81</sup> Pál Magda (1834) and the aforementioned Fényes. For example, in 1846, Elek Fényes calculated the number of souls living under the Crown of St. Stephen to total 11 895 796.<sup>82</sup> The official Habsburg censuses pegged the Hungarian population at 8.5 million in 1787 and 13.2 million by 1850, an increase of over 64% in just over a half century.<sup>83</sup>

Estimations of the various segments of the population varied, in a manner similar to those totaling the number of people living in the Kingdom as a whole. A statistic that differs greatly depending on the source consulted is the number of nobles Hungary actually had in the first half of the nineteenth century. Taking the numbers from the 1787 census, 4.8% of the population was counted as noble, meaning 408 000 citizens of the

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<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

<sup>81</sup> Ludovicus Nagy, *Notitiae Politico-Geographico Statisticae Partium Regno Hungariae, Adnexarum seu Slavoniae et Croatiae, Litoralis Item Hungarico-Maritimi Commercialis et Confiniorum Militarum Hungaricorum* (Buda: Landerer, 1829), Pál Magda, *Neueste statistisch-geographische Beschreibung des Königreichs Ungarn, Croatien-Slavonien* (Leipzig, 1834).

<sup>82</sup> His methodology was based on counting living persons in existing Hungarian parishes. Elek Fényes, *Magyarország leírása*, [Description of Hungary], 19.

<sup>83</sup> Lajos Für, *Magyar sors a Kárpát-Medencében: népesedésünk évszázadai, 896-2000* [Hungarian fate in the Carpathian Basin: our demographic presence over the centuries, 896-2000] (Budapest: Kairosz, 2001), 211.



realm.<sup>84</sup> The authoritative Gyula Mérei and Károly Vörös volume *Magyarország története, 1790-1848* [The History of Hungary, 1790-1848] reminds readers that the Hungarian nobility officially opposed the collection of census data in the reform era, and comes up with the educated guess that based on a 40% general population increase, the Hungarian nobility should have numbered around 462 000 people by 1848 (including 27 000 in Croatia-Slavonia, but excluding Transylvania).<sup>85</sup> Regardless of the actual final number, all sources tend to agree that the relatively large number of Hungarian nobles in relation to population was a distinctive feature of the social landscape.<sup>86</sup>

### Una et eadem libertas?

The Hungarian nobility derived its privileges under the constitution, such as its exemption from taxation, from the legal construct that it was an indivisible, united body under the law. While this concept had strong weight in legal terms, in reality it ignored considerable socio-economic distinctions among the nobles. Usually, Hungarian nobles were ranked in three categories, based on wealth in socio-economic terms: the magnate nobles (*magnás nemesek*), the gentry or middle nobility (*köznemesség*) and the sandaled nobility (*bocskoros nemesek*). While it is a historiographical commonplace to divide the nobility into these three groupings, as a caveat it must be added that gradations among the nobility were more complex, and allowed for greater social differentiation among the nobles themselves than these categories imply.<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> Ibid., 208.

<sup>85</sup> Gyula Mérei and Károly Vörös eds., *Magyarország Története, 1790-1848*, 1.kötet [The history of Hungary, 1790-1848, volume 1] (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1980), 486.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid. Only the Polish territories had a higher *per capita* ratio of nobles to population in Europe at the time, with an estimated ratio of 8-10 out of every 100 inhabitants. Piotr S. Wandycz, *The Lands of Partitioned Poland, 1795-1918* (Seattle: University of Washington, 1974), 5.

<sup>87</sup> For example, a serf who married a low-ranking noblewoman gained her noble privileges through marriage, but was not accorded the status of being named noble, instead counting as a half-noble, or *ágilis*, *ágyilis*, *árgyilis*, depending on the dialect of the trans-Danubian, little lowland regions they inhabited. Other gradations included the *seminobilis* and *félnobilis* (*half noble*) classifications Gömör county utilized in record-keeping. Attila Paládi-Kovács, "Kisnemesi társadalom és kultúra," ["Society and culture of the lesser nobility,"] in

The magnate nobles included four princes, seventy-nine counts and eighty-four barons and their respective families. In all about 200-500 families were part of this class.<sup>88</sup> They were not people whose families had held their titles for hundreds of years, as the majority of them had only been raised to these ranks in the eighteenth century.<sup>89</sup> The premiere family in the realm in terms of wealth and size of estates was that of Prince Eszterházy, who controlled 6500 km<sup>2</sup> of lands on twenty-five properties, in 420 districts and agricultural towns.<sup>90</sup> So wealthy were the Eszterházy princes, and eager to engage in displays which visibly demonstrated their social importance, that at the ceremonies leading up to crowning Archduke Joseph as Holy Roman Emperor, Prince Nicolas Eszterházy's (1714-1790) celebrations as Bohemian Elector in 1764 won the admiration of Wolfgang von Goethe. No doubt the admiration derived partially because the Prince estimated his personal expenses had totaled 295 017 florins for the diplomatic assignment.<sup>91</sup> At the coronation of William IV of Great Britain in 1830 it was a similar story, with then Prince Nicolas II Eszterházy's (1765-1833) carriage surpassing that of the crowned monarch in extravagance and splendour.<sup>92</sup> The magnate nobles of Hungary had a separate class mentality of belonging to an exclusive group of people. The male members of this group tended to monopolize the government posts at federal and county levels as I have already emphasized in this chapter. When they married, they picked their mates generally from the Hungarian or imperial aristocracy, and did not wed with lesser

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*Magyarország társadalomtörténete a 18.-19.században*, [Hungarian social history in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries,] ed. Tamás Faragó (Budapest: Új Mandatum, 2004), 180 and 168.

<sup>88</sup> Gergely, ed., *Magyarország története a 19. században*, [The history of Hungary in the 19<sup>th</sup> century], 87.

<sup>89</sup> C.A. Macartney, *The Habsburg Empire, 1790-1918*, 52-53.

<sup>90</sup> Gergely, ed., *Magyarország története a 19. században*, [The history of Hungary in the 19<sup>th</sup> century], 87.

<sup>91</sup> Rebecca Gates-Coon, *The Landed Estates of the Eszterházy Princes: Hungary During the Reforms of Maria Theresia and Joseph II* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1994), 45-46.

<sup>92</sup> David Cannadine, "The Context, Performance and Meaning of Ritual, The British Monarchy and the 'Invention of Tradition', c.1820-1977," in *The Invention of Tradition*, eds. Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1983), 112.

Hungarian noblewomen. In their daily lives discourse was carried on in German or French, and particularly the woman of this social class considered it a badge of honour not to know Hungarian. Béla Grünwald pithily summarized the linguistic preferences of the magnate nobility when he wrote that the most characteristic feature of the Magyar magnates was that they did not know Magyar. Beginning in the 1830s members of the Széchenyi, Károlyi, Batthyány, Andrassy and Zichy magnate families took the decisive step of publicly supporting Hungarian, which lent the cultural prestige deriving from their social status to a language associated with poorer elements of the Hungarian Kingdom.<sup>93</sup>

The Hungarian *köznemes* was any noble individual below the rank of baron who possessed estates. Also referred to as members of the gentry, or *bene possessionati*, they were a segment of the noble population whose size was difficult to estimate because there was no clear distinction at what exact point a nobleman descended into the ranks of the sandaled nobility, or conversely, had risen sufficiently in social stature and lost the stigma associated with *arriviste* status to count as a member of the magnate nobility. Fáy, Bezerédj and Beöthy, the three liberal nobles who form the backbone of this study, all stem from this social grouping. László Deme, who looked at the reform era from the standpoint of class, argued that on the basis of the 1809 census 30 288 heads of families had incomes over 500 forints. Discounting the titled nobility, and estimating four *bene possessionati* per household, there were 121 152 people of this social class in Hungary at that time.<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> Gergely, ed., *Magyarország története a 19. században* [The history of Hungary in the 19<sup>th</sup> century], 88-89. Béla Grünwald, *A régi Magyarország, 1711-1825* [Old Hungary, 1711-1825] (Budapest: Franklin-Társulat, 1888), 93. On the efforts of two Zichy sisters (née Antonia Batthyány and Karolina Károlyi) publicly to support Hungarian patriotic culture see Robert Nemes, "The Politics of the Dance Floor: Culture and Civil Society in Nineteenth Century Hungary," *Slavic Review* Vol.60 No.4 (Winter 2001): 812-813.

<sup>94</sup> László Deme, "From Nation to Class: The Changing Social Role of the Hungarian Nobility," *International Journal of Politics, Culture and Society* Vol.1 No.4 (June 1988): 575.

Like the magnate nobility, the Hungarian gentry derived their social prestige from their land holdings and wealth, and not based on the antiquity of their family's noble status. In terms of material culture, they tended to live in the country in one-story houses, with stalls for animals, their coaches, and vegetable and fruit gardens. The fact that production from their estates tended to meet their physical needs, and their financial situation was one of well-being but not abundance, meant conspicuous consumption really did not characterize their life circumstances. Accoutrements of bourgeois culture such as expensive furniture, curtains, and several changes of clothing were beyond the reach of many at this social level. Many servants drawn cheaply from the ranks of the unemancipated peasantry eliminated the drudgery of household chores from their lives.<sup>95</sup>

In terms of sociability, the mid-ranking Hungarian nobility placed a high priority on family ties, even if the extended family members were scattered in several Hungarian counties, as they usually were. They mingled within their class, inviting guests to their homes for extended stays often involving the enjoyment of food and drink that their estates plentifully provided. If need arose for guests to stay overnight, and no beds were available, visitors slept on straw or mats on the floor, segregated into separate areas on the basis of gender. Balls, spas and gentleman's clubs (casinos) were the public counterpart to the private forums where the members of the gentry met and interacted.<sup>96</sup>

Linguistically, the middle Hungarian nobility were more diverse than their categorical description would imply. It was possible to belong to the Hungarian gentry, and not speak Hungarian, particularly if the nobles in question were from counties with a high ratio of non-Magyar speaking peasantry, such as Trencsén, Túróc, Liptó, Árva, Zólyom, Szepes and Sáros. In these places gentry nobles learned the local languages, and

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<sup>95</sup> Gergely, ed., *Magyarország története a 19. században*, [The history of Hungary in the 19<sup>th</sup> century], 90-91.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid.

they were utilized in the home environment as well.<sup>97</sup> Geographically, where the peasants spoke primarily Magyar, the middle nobility also learned to speak the language. For the purpose of politics at federal and county levels the official language of conversation and discourse was a form of Latin that deviated from classical Latin in the sense that it was “hungarianized” through rich additions of Slovak, Serb, Romanian and German linguistic elements.<sup>98</sup> Increased Magyar-language usage gradually began to replace Latin in this capacity in the first decades of the nineteenth century. Knowledge of German was also important for the gentry. With such linguistic variation and flexibility at their disposal, it is impossible to equate ethnic origin and any particular sense of “national” allegiance to members of the gentry as a group. It is only possible to do so on a case by case basis. Hence, as with the magnate nobility, in examining the gentry as a whole, we are again dealing with a Hungarian ruling elite that is not strictly Magyar in any modern understanding of the concept.<sup>99</sup>

There were many colourful Hungarian expressions to designate the lowest category of nobles, the lesser nobility, depending on regional variations and local dialectical word preferences. The one most often carried over into modern historiography is that of the *bocskoros* noble, which is an adjective denoting the wearing of shoes similar to those worn by peasants instead of the boot that only nobles were allowed to wear, according to county laws set in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.<sup>100</sup> Other

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<sup>97</sup> Béla Grünwald, *A régi Magyarország*, [Old Hungary], 116-117.

<sup>98</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983), 79.

<sup>99</sup> László Sziklay, “Pest-Buda nemzetiségi képe a Vormärz idején,” [“The ethnic map of Pest-Buda in the Vormärz,”] *Helikon Világirodalmi Figyelő* [Helikon world literature observer] Vol. 1 (1982): 63.

<sup>100</sup> Paládi-Kovács, “Kisnemesi társadalom és kultúra,” [“Society and culture of the lesser nobility,”] in *Magyarország társadalomtörténete*, [Hungarian social history], 177. Male peasants were forbidden from wearing baize and boots, female peasants from having lace, velvet and fur. Both sexes could wear only linen, a courser version of frieze called *daróc*, and the aforementioned sandal. Not only boots, but spurs as well, were attributes of male members of the Hungarian nobility. These sumptuary laws helped the identification of the nobility, and the emphasis of their separate class distinctiveness, by using personal possessions as status symbols.

adjectives used to describe this segment of the population were *kurta* (short) noble, *hétszilvafás* noble (a seven-plum-tree noble), a *félsarkantyús* noble (half-spurred noble), the derogatory *botos* noble (stick-wielding noble), or the *gatyás* noble (wide-legged pant noble). Another contemporary designation for them was as *taksás* noble, etymologically derived from the Latin *taxalistae*, utilized in the records to denote one who paid taxes to the county government in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries despite possession of noble status.<sup>101</sup>

Of all the social gradations of the Hungarian nobility, numerically it is most difficult to assess how many lesser nobles existed in the reform age of Hungarian history, because the lesser nobles were in many cases indistinguishable socio-economically from the peasantry.<sup>102</sup> As a consequence, the lesser nobility relied especially strongly on flaunting status distinctions in order to elevate itself above the level of the peasantry. Their methodology included enforcement of sumptuary laws and local privileges, residence in towns and on land recognized as noble, maintaining distinctive forms of greeting, address and naming practices, segregated seating in church services and separate areas of burial in local cemeteries in family crypts and plots constructed of stone, and specialization in separate types of work and amusement. While on the one hand these were simply customs and displays on the part of the lesser nobility to demonstrate their elevated place in society, which in real terms differed little from peasant life, on the other hand these attempts at differentiation reflected some special privileges, even if these were on the wane.<sup>103</sup> The paradox between the aspiration for status of the *bockoros* noble and his deficiency of valid cultural, social, or financial markers to demonstrate that standing have

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<sup>101</sup> Ibid., 167 and László Péter, "The Aristocracy, the Gentry, and their Parliamentary Tradition in Hungary," *The Slavonic and East European Review* Vol.70 No. 1 (January 1992): 80.

<sup>102</sup> One estimate is that they numbered approximately 400 000 by the end of this period. Source: Gergely, ed., *Magyarország története a 19. században*, [The history of Hungary in the 19<sup>th</sup> century], 92.

<sup>103</sup> Paládi-Kovács, "Kisnemesi társadalom és kultúra," ["Society and culture of the lesser nobility,"] in *Magyarország társadalomtörténete*, [Hungarian social history], 173-4, 183-184, 182-183 and 185-186.

often been the fodder for comedy. For example, Ferenc Czinke (1761-1835), Professor of Hungarian in Pest wrote an 1810 work in which a *bocskoros* noble arrested a Roma man, who compared his chains to the spurs typically worn by this social class. Offended, the noble hit and scolded him “Not to switch titles!” and continued the conversation using Roma and Hungarian, which did nothing to clarify the blurred class distinctions and social superiority that the officer wished to reestablish.<sup>104</sup>

The *bocskoros* nobility were not distributed evenly across the country, but were congregated in fourteen counties that reflected settlement patterns that arose as they were forced to leave their lands and escape Turkish subjugation in the sixteenth century. In Northern Hungary Borsod, Heves, Pozsony, Gömör, Abaúj, Szabolcs, Máramaros and Bihar counties had disproportionately high percentages of lesser nobles, while the Trans-Danubian counties of Győr, Zala, and Veszprém had the same distinction.<sup>105</sup>

Theoretically, lesser noble and land-holding peasant plots did not differ in size. To give one instance, in Zala County, according to statutes from 1556, one full land plot comprised thirty-two Hungarian *Hold*, whether owned by a noble or non-noble.<sup>106</sup> Since the indicator of nobility was not the *size* of the land, only its *nature* remained as a category for differentiation. This nature was determined by what classification land had been given. Land was divided into two main categories, taxed peasant lands known as urbarial holdings and non-taxed noble land which was allodial. To enjoy the full benefits of nobility a lesser noble had to have the necessary documentary evidence of noble status, and had to live on allodial property. In the early nineteenth century the lesser nobility’s

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<sup>104</sup> Ambrus Miskolczy, “Miért éppen a cigányok? (Önkép és cigánykép instrumentalizálása a ‘Cigányiász’ ban és magyar párhuzamai,)” [“Why the Gypsies? (Instrumentalization of self-image and Gypsy image in ‘Tiganiada’ and its Hungarian parallels,)”] *Holmi* [Things] Vol.2 (2006): 187.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid., 166. As examples: in 1784 Borsod county had a noble population of 15%, Szatmár 14% and Pozsony 11%. These statistics were based on male members of the population only.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid., 170. The Hungarian *Hold* was standardized only in name, but varied in size depending on the county. A middle estimate is that one *Hold* is equal to 0.43 hectares in metric analysis, or 1.07 English acres. Macartney, *The Habsburg Empire, 1790-1918*, 835.

desire to maintain both levels of privilege led to the phenomenon of compressed and densely inhabited noble town settlements where it was not uncommon for six to ten or even thirteen to fourteen houses to occupy one plot of allodial land.<sup>107</sup> The inconveniences posed by this phenomenon, such as chaotic town planning and increased fire hazards, were apparently more than compensated by such tangible gains as freedom from many forms of compulsory taxation, including property taxes.

The lesser nobility have generally been viewed negatively in historiographical writing. Complaints voiced against them paradoxically assert that they were ungovernable by the national institutions that have been mentioned, and that for the right sum of money they were infinitely pliable.<sup>108</sup> Traditional prejudices against the poor have been levied against them for their impoverishment, as well as for their illiteracy, lack of *Bildung*, and “uncivilized” comportment. Many of these criticisms amount to a condemnation of the lesser nobility’s ethos of masculinity. Their notions of masculinity placed great emphasis on picking fights, settling arguments with fisticuffs, brawling, swearing, and prison stays incurred as a result of engaging in such activities. The lesser nobility’s preference for minimalist government “interference” in their lives, to the point of condoning and supporting such illegal activities as horse theft and tobacco and liqueur (*palinka*) trafficking, have also been generally offensive to the sensibilities of historians who have passed judgment on this segment of the population.<sup>109</sup>

The lesser nobility did not participate regularly in federal political forums. They were not chosen as a rule to represent noble counties at the dietal level, and the offices

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<sup>107</sup> Paládi-Kovács, “Kisnemesi társadalom és kultúra,” [“Society and culture of the lesser nobility,”] in *Magyarország társadalomtörténete*, [Hungarian social history], 173-174.

<sup>108</sup> R.W. Seton Watson, “The Era of Reform in Hungary,” *Slavic Review* Vol.2 No.2 (November 1943): 154.

<sup>109</sup> For a strong condemnatory opinion of the lesser nobility: Béla Grünwald, *A régi Magyarország*, [Old Hungary], 110. A description of the mentality of male members of this class is included in: Paládi-Kovács, “Kisnemesi társadalom és kultúra,” [“Society and culture of the lesser nobility,”] in *Magyarország társadalomtörténete*, [Hungarian social history], 186-188.



they held tended to be local in nature. After the change in county voting patterns from weighing votes to counting them in 1819, this segment of the nobility had more influence in county politics due to its strength in numbers.<sup>110</sup> Noble democratization created a phenomenon where *Restaurations* reflected lesser noble masculine culture, and were characterized by rowdiness and episodes of violence.<sup>111</sup> Deaths resulting from these heated political disagreements were not unknown occurrences.

It is difficult to draw conclusions on the ethnic and national sentiments of this segment of the Hungarian nobility, as it also was with higher echelons of the same social category. The lesser nobility tended to speak the language(s) of the peasantry surrounding the districts that they inhabited, with perhaps some knowledge of German or Latin, but not to the extent of their social superiors. Their association with the proverb *Extra Hungariam non est vita. Si est vita, non est ita* (There is no life outside of Hungary. If there is life, it is not good.) denoted their connection to quintessential Hungarian rural and parochial life.<sup>112</sup> While this saying implied a sense of territorial loyalty which would later find resonance with nationalistic sentiments,<sup>113</sup> in this context it expressed the lesser nobility's sense of patriotism toward Hungary (not ethno-cultural allegiance). In fact, the historian Béla Grünwald even argued that the conservative allegiance to caste sensibility stymied the lesser nobility's ethno-national loyalties. The greater sense of belonging along feudal lines to other members of the nobility generated deeper connectedness to Serbian, Romanian, Croatian and Slovak nobles than to Magyar peasants, which

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<sup>110</sup> See page thirty-eight.

<sup>111</sup> Péter, "The Aristocracy, the Gentry, and their Parliamentary Tradition," *The Slavonic and East European Review*: 81.

<sup>112</sup> Paul Lendvai, *The Hungarians: A Thousand Years of Victory in Defeat* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), 166.

<sup>113</sup> Lóránt Czigány, "A nyugati magyar irodalom mibenléte- Avagy mire jó a magyar nyugati irodalom? Eszik-e vagy isszák?," ["On Hungarian literature on the west – Or what good is Hungarian western literature? Do they eat it or drink it?,"] *Kortárs* [The contemporary] No.4 (2006): 74.

translated into a preference for these former ethnic groups as neighbours.<sup>114</sup> Thus, as with all segments of the Hungarian nobility, the cultural adherence of the lesser nobility to an ethnically Magyar origin, and a concomitant support for a political agenda deriving from such a sensibility, cannot be supported given the socially and linguistically heterogeneous complexity of the Hungarian nobility as a group. Cases for cultural adherence to ethnic Magyar origin and avocation of this philosophy as a political stance must be made on an individual basis for all segments and members of the Hungarian nobility who lived in the first half of the nineteenth century.

### **The Governed: An Ethnographical Overview**

Any attempt to sketch an overview of the complexity of Hungary's ethnographical landscape at this time in history is a perilous undertaking, because official statistics did not measure ethnic origin as a category for analysis. Péter Hanák points out in a fairly recent article that "precise data on the natural and real growth of Hungary's population according to nationalities" may be found beginning only in 1880, long after the time frame of this thesis.<sup>115</sup> Estimates that are still accepted of the seven primary nationalities living in Hungary number ethnic Magyars as constituting 4.8 to 5.2 million people (about 38 to 40 % of the Kingdom's total inhabitants), Romanians as numbering 2 to 2.2 million (16 to 18 % of the population), Slovaks as having 1.7 million people (close to 13% of the Kingdom's peoples), Germans comprising 1.3 million (10% of the population), Serbians totaling 1.25 million (9.7 % of inhabitants), Croats numbering around 900 000 people (7% of the Kingdom's total), while Ruthenians were numerically the least represented with 440 000 people (3.5% of the population).<sup>116</sup> These modern

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<sup>114</sup> Grünwald, *A régi Magyarország*, [Old Hungary], 125.

<sup>115</sup> Péter Hanák, "A National Compensation for Backwardness," *Studies in East European Thought* Vol. 46 No.1-2 (June 1994): 38.

<sup>116</sup> Für, *Magyar sors a Kárpát-Medencében*, [Hungarian fate in the Carpathian Basin], 220, 221, 228, 229, 230. Another estimate of the Kingdom's population based on ethnic

categorizations leave out peoples who were recognized as constituting separate ethnic groups in the first half of the nineteenth century.<sup>117</sup>

Two groups that had social importance exceeding their numerical strength and who are not part of modern lists restricted to the seven major nationalities are the Jews and Roma. Jews experienced a tripling of their numbers in the country from 75 089 in 1785 to 241 632 in 1840,<sup>118</sup> (approximately 2% of the population of Hungary). The Roma peoples first appeared in the Kingdom in the second half of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, and began settling in the country in large numbers either as a result of escaping the Turkish armies, or in accompaniment of them. Archival records concerning the Roma in Hungary become more consistent from the eighteenth century onwards, when Habsburg rulers began asking the Hungarian counties to develop social regulation programmes to integrate the Roma.<sup>119</sup> However, historical research on the presence of the Roma in Hungary is fairly scarce and specialized.<sup>120</sup> According to the official conscription numbers from 1780-1783, there were between 30 241 and 43 609 Roma in Hungary.<sup>121</sup> These numbers remained almost completely static until the census of 1851.<sup>122</sup>

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classification can be found in Peter F. Sugár, Péter Hanák and Tibor Frank, *A History of Hungary* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), 204. Here the numbers in declining order are 4.8 million ethnic Magyars, 2.2 million Romanians, 1.6 million Slovaks, 1.3 million Croats, 1.2 million Germans, 800 000 Serbs and 400 000 Ruthenians.

<sup>117</sup> One estimate is that eighteen separate ethnic groups inhabited the Kingdom. In addition to the seven nationalities already mentioned they were: the Šokci (Hungarian: *Sokácok*, a Catholic Slavic people), Slovenes, Bulgarians, Montenegrins, French, Greeks, Macedonians, Armenians, Clementinus, Roma and Jews. Alexius von Fényes, *Statistik des Königreichs Ungarn*, I Theil (Pest: Trattner-Károly, 1843), 69.

<sup>118</sup> Fényes, *Statistik des Königreichs*, I Theil, 93.

<sup>119</sup> Péter Tóth, “Kóborlás és letelepedés (A magyarországi cigányok feudális kori történetéhez),” [“Wandering and settlement {towards a history of the Hungarian Gypsies under feudalism},”] in *Magyarország társadalomtörténete a 18.-19.században*, [Hungarian social history in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries,] ed. Tamás Faragó (Budapest: Új Mandatum, 2004), 371 and 375.

<sup>120</sup> An introductory source for information in English is: József Vekerdi, “The Gypsies and the Gypsy Problem in Hungary,” *Hungarian Studies Review* Vol. XV No.2 (Fall 1988): 13-26.

<sup>121</sup> Johann Heinrich Schwicker, *Die Zigeuner in Ungarn und Siebenbürgen* (Vienna: Karl Prochaska, 1883), 63. The discrepancy in the numbers is because married woman and those deemed “new farmers” did not have to declare themselves as being Roma.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*, 75. At this time the Roma numbered 30 304 people in Hungary, 52 665 in Transylvania and 800 in the Imperial and Royal Military.

In terms of geographical distribution, Hungarians constituted a majority in twenty-two counties. With the exception of six counties in the north and the counties that made up Croatia, they had at least some settlements in each county of the Kingdom. Romanians composed the majority of people in Temes, Krassó, the Partium,<sup>123</sup> and Arad Counties, and were one-third of the population in Bihar, Szatmár and Máramaros. The Partium and Hunyad Counties contained sizeable numbers of Romanian lesser nobles, who were part of the Hungarian nobility. Árva, Liptó, Trencsén and Zólyom Counties were overwhelmingly Slovak, in Nyitra, Bars, Túróc, Szepes and Sáros they had a two-third majority, and were half of the population of Pozsony, Hont and Gömör. Aside from these condensed settlements, considerable islands of Slovak settlement existed in Békés County in central Hungary, Pest-Buda, and in the town of Nyiregyháza. Germans did not have compact settlements in the counties, having established roots primarily in the Royal Free Cities and in the Zips region of Hungary. Serbians populated the military border, and the Croatian-Slavonian counties of the south, in addition to composing 20-30% of the population of Torontál and Bács Counties, and having sizeable settlements on Csepel Island, Buda and Szentendre. Croatians tended to live in the six Croatian and Slavonian southern counties, the military border, and had settlements in Zemplén, Sáros, and Ugocsa Counties in Hungary proper. These last three counties also housed the Hungarian Ruthenian population in smaller numbers, while in Bereg, Ung and Máramaros Counties this national group constituted the majority.<sup>124</sup> Jews were found in almost every Hungarian county, but were most densely settled in the northwest and northeast. Their populations exceeded 10 000 in Sáros, Pozsony, Szabolcs, Trencsén and Zemplén Counties, with Nyitra being the most thickly settled with over 21 000 inhabitants. The

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<sup>123</sup> Historically, the Partium was the portion of Transylvania between the Kingdom of Hungary and the Ottoman Empire.

<sup>124</sup> Gergely, ed., *Magyarország története a 19. században*, [The history of Hungary in the 19<sup>th</sup> century], 81-83.

one exception to this pattern of settlement was Pest County, with an estimated 20 202 Jewish settlers.<sup>125</sup> Roma were present virtually throughout the Kingdom, in the range of 500-1000 people per county. Their exact numbers are difficult to calculate in this period, because their nomadic lifestyle allowed them easily to move to a neighbouring jurisdiction when they experienced too much intrusion into their affairs from the local authorities.<sup>126</sup>

This chapter began with a traveller's account of how Pozsony as the capital of the Kingdom of Hungary, left something to be desired. I would now like to come full circle, and end on the same note with another foreigner's impression of the various ethnic groups in the realm. More importantly, these are remarks on the nature of the process of magyarization at work, and a reservation that national integration could be achieved at this level. John Paget (1808-1892)<sup>127</sup> followed in Bright's footsteps and studied medicine at Edinburgh University before embarking on a tour of the continent that led him to Hungary in 1835 and 1836.<sup>128</sup> Paget's valuable reflections on Hungary were published in 1839 as *Hungary and Transylvania, with Remarks on their Condition, Social, Political and Economical*.<sup>129</sup> This piece of writing is an invaluable source of information for historians researching Hungarian customs and social realities in this period.

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<sup>125</sup> Elek Fényes, *Magyarország leírása*, [Description of Hungary], 34-37.

<sup>126</sup> Schwicker, *Die Zigeuner in Ungarn*, 63-65.

<sup>127</sup> Paget came to Hungary as a result of a February 1835 Roman meeting with the estranged wife of Baron László Bánffy, Baroness Polyxena Wesselényi (1801-1878). He went on to marry her in 1837, and settle in Transylvania as a land owner. Considering himself a "Hungarian patriot of English parentage" he supported the Hungarian forces during the revolution in 1848-1849. Returning from exile in 1855, he lived in Transylvania until his death in Gyéres. David L. Wilkes, "John Paget, M.D., of Transylvania (1808-1892)," *Unitarian Historical Society, Transactions* Vol.17 No.2 (July 1980): 54-58, 60.

<sup>128</sup> Henry Miller Madden, "The Diary of John Paget, 1849," *The Slavonic and East European Review* Vol.19 No.53-54 (1939-1940): 237

<sup>129</sup> John Paget, *Hungary and Transylvania, with Remarks on their Condition, Social, Political and Economical*, Volumes I and II (London: John Murray, 1839; reprint, New York: Arno, 1971).

In the sections on magyarization, Paget went so far as to express sympathy for the political push to increase the use of Magyar among the non-Magyar peoples of the Kingdom. In his words:

If to this it be desired to unite the great political and national project of Magyarising the whole country, it is only necessary to annex to the enjoyment of political and municipal rights the condition of a knowledge of the Magyar language. This would be no hardship, for, as the law stands, all legal and political acts must be published in that tongue; and it is evident that no one can be fit to take a part in them who does not understand it.<sup>130</sup>

While on tour in Freystadl in Nyitra County, Paget reported that although the inhabitants were all Slovaks, yet "...the names of the one or two streets it boasts of are conspicuously painted up in Hungarian, by order of the Diet, as we were told in hopes of thus Magyarising the Sclavacks".<sup>131</sup> These manifestations of the drive to expand the parameters of the Hungarian language were beginning to produce negative relations among the nationalities of the Kingdom. Paget noted that national chauvinism (in his words "the pride of the Magyar") was causing Hungarian peasants contemptuously to refer to all foreigners as being *Schwab* (German) or *Talyán* (Italian).<sup>132</sup> He believed the poorest Hungarian peasant of Debreczen would not associate himself with the richest Romanian, purely as a result of prejudicial dislike, and recalled a conversation with a Baronness W--- who became involved in a disagreement between her Romanian footman, and her Hungarian coachman, who refused to drive her servant into that city. Lest he give the impression that these feelings of national tensions were limited to Hungarians and Romanians, he also added a recollection of anti-German sentiment. In his estimation:

The Germans are scarcely better treated; it was only the other day, when Count M-----, an Austrian officer of high rank, was calling on Madame R-----, that her little son happening to let fall some plaything he had in his hand, the Count applied his glass to his eye, and politely offered to find it for him. The child, however, though

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<sup>130</sup> John Paget, *Hungary and Transylvania*, Volume I, 315.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid., 58.

<sup>132</sup> Ibid., 503.

it could hardly speak, had already learned to hate; and in its sparing vocabulary it found the words '*blinder Schwab!*' which it launched forth with all the bitterness it could muster, in answer to the polite offer of the astonished Count.<sup>133</sup>

All of these examples of magyarization in practice that Paget noted, and the Hungarian “pride” which manifested itself in instances of national arrogance towards other ethnic groups in the Kingdom would of course multiply in nature, and lead to increasing tensions among the different peoples of the Hungarian monarchy in the years to come. We thus see magyarization in a dual capacity as a tool for Hungarian unification and as a reminder that there were limitations for integration into Magyar culture. It is with this thought in mind that I would like to turn to the first case-study on one path towards accomplishing the project of magyarization: Fáy and his relationship toward the Hungarian language.

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<sup>133</sup> Ibid., 503-504.

## Chapter Two

### Fáy and the Development of the Hungarian Language

On May 20, 1859 András Fáy wrote translator, religious scholar and Lutheran bishop József Székács (1809-1876). This letter is the closest document to an autobiography from Fáy in existence, and from its tone, it is clear that Fáy intended it to be a record of his legacy for the benefit of posterity. Instead of emphasizing politics, Fáy tried to make a detailed case for his literary legacy, listing some of his works in ABC fashion, often followed by a mild form of self-praise, such as “a comical short story that garnered some attention” or “for a refined readership it offered much new intellectual sustenance, pertaining to life philosophy”.<sup>1</sup> In so doing, Fáy made a case for the inherent value of his writing, and adjudicated which of his written contributions should be part of the Hungarian literary historical canon. Following another line of reasoning, this time delineated with roman numerals instead of ABC’s, he also posited that his significance lay in the fact that there was really very little precedent for pursuing literature quasi-professionally for a Hungarian reading public. In his words:

- I. That I (1807, when the work I had written as a 13-year-old was published) began to write and to pursue my activity as a writer, at a time when the Magyar language and aesthetic taste were so to speak in their cradle in our homeland...In my youth a veil of darkness shrouded Hungarian literature; and in the black of night a flickering candle is worth more than a blazing torch in the light of day.
- II. Since after 1818 it was my constantly set direction, both in the field of literature and outside of it, to make amends for obvious shortcomings, to correct mistakes and errors that I perceived, I can almost call myself a pioneer, or at least as someone who enriched his homeland with new ideas and directions.
- III. Several people, including Kölcsey, Sándor Kisfaludy, Bajza,<sup>2</sup> etc. customarily were wont to protest to my credit, that when examining the language, topic, adaptation, characterization, essence and proximity

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<sup>1</sup> András Fáy “Levél Székács Józsefhez Fáy Andrástól felolvastatott 1873. Feb. 26-án,”[“Letter from András Fáy to József Székács read out loud Feb. 26, 1873,”] in *A Kisfaludy Társaság évlapjai (Új folyam)* [The yearbook of the Kisfaludy society (new series)] Vol.IX (Budapest: Athenaeum, 1874), 72, 68 and 70.

<sup>2</sup> Ferenc Kölcsey (1790-1838) Sándor Kisfaludy (1772-1844) and József Bajza (1804-1858) were all noble writers, poets and dramatists, and Kölcsey and Bajza were also literary critics renowned for their harsh judgments. Their comment about the Magyar nature of Fáy’s works contained ironic undertones, and was not an unabashed compliment.



to life my works are exceptionally national, and Magyar. For this reason Count Majláth<sup>3</sup> expressed himself in the following manner: Fáy's works seem untranslatable to me.<sup>4</sup>

This chapter will take Fáy's reflections concerning his dedication to advancing the cause of Hungarian literature as its point of departure. In keeping with this premise, this chapter will underscore Fáy's recollection that the Magyar language and the culture that supported it were indeed in the process of being created, to a much greater extent than scholarship tends to highlight. Thus Fáy's complimentary self-image of himself as a pioneer will to some extent receive validation, as someone who was pushing the boundary of Magyar further in a multicultural Hungary where this action was controversial. If he had not been pushing against the linguistic, national and cultural limitations of the time when he began his serious literary writing (circa 1818), he would not have been disparagingly charged with being "too Magyar" a writer by his fellow nobles and friends, as Fáy revealed he had been in section III of the excerpt above. Needless to say, Fáy's pride in the knowledge that his writings were "exceptionally national and Magyar" will not be taken at face value. Instead, I would like to stress that in light of his complex linguistic background he chose to support Magyar culture out of personal self-interest because above all Fáy wanted to be a popular writer and to have a legacy that outlasted his lifetime.

The second emphasis in this section will be to disagree with Fáy's claim in his auto-biographical letter that his literary career and his political activities were separate spheres. Historical precedent, his educational background, legal training, as well as his privileged social position, gravitated him towards the written and spoken use of Hungary's official and quasi-official languages: Latin and German. Instead, he chose the

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<sup>3</sup> Count János Majláth (1786-1855) had close personal connections to Austrian ruling circles, and supported a conservative direction in Hungarian politics in the reform period. He was an author mostly of Hungarian-themed poetry and historical studies written in German and not Magyar. His life ended tragically in a murder-suicide with his daughter.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 67 and 75.

uphill struggle of writing literature and prose in a language that was in the process of being standardized, and where there was no fully guaranteed reading public ready to absorb his messages. As a member of the middle nobility, Fáy's dedication to the craft of literature represented a sea change in noble vocation and self-conception. Instead of writing exclusively for self-fulfillment and the entertainment of a select group of people from a similar social background, Fáy's ambition was to transcend estate barriers and appeal to the largest readership possible, even if that readership, according to feudal standards, was below his rank. I wish to highlight that Fáy's decision to be a writer by profession for a new reading public, use and advocacy of the Hungarian language, and inclusion of social critiques embedded in his writings were just as political in their content as his work on Pest County's Magyarization Committee and his support for freedom of speech in the Diet and at the meetings of the estates of Pest County. Had they not been he would not have suffered critical backlash (for his writings) or approval (for his advocacy of the need to write Magyar literature) to the extent that he did. For Fáy, the changing nature of the Hungarian language, and the concomitant emergence of a new Magyar-reading public were his opportunity. Unlike many professional authors today, Fáy had the advantage of independent income from his properties, which meant he was not bound entirely by market constraints. However, since the family already had the benefit of a name for itself, he faced the disadvantage and challenge that his reputation, pride, and lifelong commitment to his causes were on the line.

To support the general line of argumentation above, I think it is worthwhile to look at Fáy's literary politics by stressing his position within the Magyar writing scene of his time. After a brief biographical sketch and of his place in Hungarian historiography I turn to the subject of the literary renewal. Here the focus is on the "language wars" that aided the emergence of a new Hungarian language, and how Fáy was forced to keep apace with the process or risk marginalization into irrelevancy. Fáy's lukewarm

relationship with a key figure in the Hungarian language renewal, the “literary dictator” Ferenc Kazinczy (1759-1831),<sup>5</sup> would have ended his career in former times. Serendipitously for him, the multiplication of literary salons opened up alternate possibilities for ambitious writers, a development that saved his professional career. What truly changed was that the concept of literary merit altered from being tied to the approbation of élites such as Kazinczy to being defined through popularity with middle class reading publics. This line of reasoning is the subject of the remaining passages on the Hungarian literary environment of the early nineteenth century. It was this particular constellation of circumstances that led to Fáy’s successful career as a Magyar writer. In the remaining two sections I look at how Fáy shifted his support of the Magyar language from the page to the meeting rooms of the County House and ultimately to parliament. Keeping with the framework I set out in the preceding paragraphs, I stress that this transition is the same politics he was pursuing before, taken to another forum. I scrutinize Fáy’s involvement with the Magyarization Committee of Pest and his advocacy of freedom of speech in the Diet, and how dissimilarly to his writing, both of these campaigns achieve only mixed levels of positive results.

### Biographical Sketch

All the branches of the Fáy family could trace their rise to the nobility from land grants made to them by King Béla IV (1214-1270) in 1243. In his lifetime Fáy’s father László Fáy accumulated 5000 Hungarian hold of land, which put him squarely among the ranks of the middle nobility. András Fáy was born on May 30, 1786 in Kohány, Zemplén,

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<sup>5</sup> I am indebted to Hász-Fehér’s scholarship for this line of reasoning. Katalin Hász-Fehér, *Elkülönülő és közösségi irodalmi programmok a 19.század első felében: Fáy András irodalomtörténeti helye* [Solitary and unifying literary endeavours in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century: the place of András Fáy in literary history] (Debrecen: Kossuth Egyetem Könyvkiadó, 2000), 25-33. For Kazinczy as a “literary dictator”: G.J Cushing, “The Birth of National Literature in Hungary,” *The Slavonic and East European Review* Vol.38 No.91 (June 1960): 468.

which is now known as Kochanovce, Slovakia. He was the first child of his father's second marriage to Krisztina Szemere (May 29, 1785). He was baptized immediately following his birth at the Calvinist house of worship in Gálszécs (Sečovce, Slovakia).<sup>6</sup>

In 1791, Fáy's parents moved to Gomba, Pest County, leaving him to the care of his maternal grandfather in Kohány, László Szemere.<sup>7</sup> His linguistic education began with his wet-nurse, the family's gamekeeper's wife, who taught him to speak Hungarian. The Ruthenian son of the gardener followed, who taught him Ukrainian. This early linguistic background remained with Fáy throughout his life, meaning that his Hungarian as an adult was always accentuated with upper Hungarian Slavic pronunciation patterns.<sup>8</sup> Fáy's formal education began at age seven when he started a seven-year course in elementary and gymnasium education at the Calvinist College in Sárospatak. At the time he was present the school followed a liberal direction, emphasizing not only classical Latin, but humanism as well, and the introduction of lessons in Magyar.<sup>9</sup> Following the completion of his studies there, Fáy began a course of study from 1799 until 1803 at the Lutheran Lyceum in the country's capital.<sup>10</sup> Fáy's boarding with a German family

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<sup>6</sup> Ferencz Badics, *Fáy András Életrajza* [Biography of András Fáy] (Budapest, Magyar Tudományos Akadémia, 1890), 3, 4, 2 and 6.

<sup>7</sup> It was not unusual for aristocratic families to maintain a more distant relationship to their children than was common among non-aristocratic families. For example, nurses often breastfed and cared for the children. Katalin Péter, *Beloved Children: History of Aristocratic Childhood in Hungary in the Early Modern Age* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2001), 74-76 and József Szinnye, "Fáy András," *Magyar írók életei és munkái* [The lives and works of Hungarian writers] CD-ROM (Budapest: Arcanum, 2000).

<sup>8</sup> Badics, *Fáy András Életrajza* [Biography of András Fáy], 10.

<sup>9</sup> István Szilágyi, *A gimnáziumi oktatásügy története a magyarországi hely. hitvallásuaknál különös tekintettel a hely. hitv. tanároknak Pesten 1860-ban tartott egyetemes értekezletére* [The history of gymnasium education among practitioners of the Calvinist faith with special emphasis on the national conference of Calvinist teachers in Pest in 1860] (Sárospatak: Károly Jäger, 1861), 34-35. The reforms to the Sárospatak Calvinist College stemmed from 1796. The other prestigious Calvinist College in Hungary in Debrecen followed suit two years later, and also emphasized Magyar in its new lesson plan, due in part to Ézsaiás Budai's (1766-1841) influence. Katalin Fehér, "Magyar nyelvű pedagógiai előadások kollégiumainkban a 19. század első évtizedeiben," ["Hungarian-language pedagogical discourses in our colleges in the first decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> century,"] *Magyar Könyvszemle* [Hungarian book review] No. 4 (1993): 373 and 375.

<sup>10</sup> The Evangelical Lyceum of Pozsony was founded in 1606 and during this time was one of the most respected Protestant schools in the country. Árpád Tóth, "A középiskoláztatás

allowed him to become well acquainted with the German language, which was a relative rarity for practitioners of the Calvinist faith in Hungary at that time.<sup>11</sup> After completion of studies at the Lutheran Lyceum of Pozsony, Fáy returned to Sárospatak to study law. Elevation to the bar in 1808 brought the end of Fáy's formal educational training.<sup>12</sup>

At first Fáy tried to utilize his extensive schooling, and served as a district judge in two positions in Pest County, beginning with his appointment on November 13, 1810, and lasting until 1818.<sup>13</sup> However, somewhere along the line, he decided that the pursuit of justice was not his lot in life, and he instead began to nurse the ambition of becoming a writer. It was not unusual for members of the nobility in his position, and above it, to write treatises, scholarly studies, and poetry or to translate famous works, but before the nineteenth century nobles tended to be scholarly dilettantes rather than writers by profession. Fáy's first publication was *Bokréta* [Posy, 1807],<sup>14</sup> a collection of poems and short stories in Hungarian based on his school years. *Az elszegényedések* [Impoverishment, 1862], about how to view and resolve some of the problems of poverty in the country, was his last major work to appear during his lifetime.<sup>15</sup> In between he produced more collections of poetry, novels, short stories, original plays, as well as social writings on the topics of pedagogy, women, useful information, statistics and political

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stratégiai. A pozsonyi középiskolák társadalomtörténete a 19. század első felében,” [“Secondary schooling strategies. The social history of the secondary schools of Pozsony in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century,”] *Korall* No.3-4 (2001): 77.

<sup>11</sup> Badics, *Fáy András Életrajza* [Biography of András Fáy], 33, 36 and 32.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 49, 52 and 60.

<sup>13</sup> Alice Dombi, “Fáy András élete és munkássága,” [“The life and work of András Fáy,”] in *Párhuzamok a XIX. és XX. század pedagógiai törekvéseiben, Fáy András, Mester János, Becker Vendel munkássága*, [Parallels in pedagogical efforts in the XIXth and XXth centuries, the work of András Fáy, János Mester and Vendel Becker,] eds. Alice Dombi, János Oláh and István Varga (Gyula: APC Stúdió, 2002), 7. For a somewhat sentimental assessment of Fáy's work as a district judge “upholding Hungary”, and of him as a “good-natured, humorous, Magyar to the core, genius of a youth” please consult “Régi jó tablabirák,” [“Good old county judges,”] *Vasárnapi újság* [Sunday news] XXIII. No.2 (1886): 21-22.

<sup>14</sup> András Fáy, *Bokréta, melyel hazájának kedveskedik Fáy András* [Posy, with which András Fáy affectionately appeals to his homeland] (Pest: Mátyás Trattner, 1807).

<sup>15</sup> András Fáy, *Az elszegényedések. Emberbaráti, hazafiúi és politikai vázlatok* [Impoverishment. Humanitarian, patriotic and political sketches] (Pest: Engel and Mandello, 1862).

questions of the day. In terms of the latter, these included books on Szechenyi's involvement in the meetings of the nobles of Pest County, the need to found savings' banks on Hungarian soil, and his support and involvement in the unsuccessful 1840s campaign to unite the two major Protestant denominations in Hungary, the Calvinist and Lutheran faiths.<sup>16</sup> Although Fáy's writings are generally not part of the canon of Hungarian nineteenth-century literature, except for specialists in the realm of literature or history, in his time he was the most read writer in Hungarian from the 1820s until the revolution of 1848.<sup>17</sup>

In the 1830s and 1840s András Fáy transitioned from using literature as a vehicle for political views, to direct involvement in political and social causes. This emphasis found expression in his increased participation in the political meetings of the estates of Pest County, a commitment that culminated in 1835. It was then that Fáy replaced Ferencz Péchy for disobeying Pest County's voting instructions as second dietal representative for the 1832-1836 parliament.<sup>18</sup> Publicist writings followed, mainly in the pages of journals and newspapers such as *Athenaeum*, *Jelenkor* [Our Times], and *Pesti Hirlap* [Pest News].

Being sixty-two years of age when the revolution and war of independence began in 1848, Fáy choose not to participate directly in events, and withdrew to his estates in Gomba, Pest County instead. He made this decision because he was not willing to

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<sup>16</sup> Unfortunately this topic has not been the subject of sufficient scholarly attention. In a succinct article on the subject Botond Kertész detailed six reasons for the failure of the attempted union: opposition from Slovak Lutherans, decentralization in the hierarchy of both faiths, lack of sufficient support from church leaders, financial discrepancies between the "wealthy" Calvinist church and "impoverished" Lutheran organization, more support for union from Lutherans as opposed to Calvinists, and opposition from Orthodox theologians. "Protestáns uniókísérlet Magyarországon az 1840-es években," ["Protestant Attempts at Union in Hungary in the 1840s,"] in *Egyház és politika a XIX századi Magyarországon*, [Church and politics in XIXth century Hungary,] eds. András Hegedűs and István Bárdos (Esztergom: Esztergom-Budapesti Érsekség, 1999), 40-43.

<sup>17</sup> Badics, *Fáy András Életrajza* [Biography of András Fáy], 193.

<sup>18</sup> Pál Erdélyi, *Fáy András élete és művei* [András Fáy's life and works] (Budapest: Illés Neuwald, 1890), 130.

support the Magyar cause using violent means when avocation of peaceful political and social progress had been his life's methodology.<sup>19</sup> Following the defeat of the war of independence Fáy lived into the period of neo-absolutism (1849-1867), and continued his work as a writer mainly of literature and pedagogical writings. He did not live to see the Austro-Hungarian compromise of 1867, in which the Kingdom of Hungary was granted a large measure of independence in domestic affairs within the Austrian Empire. He passed away peacefully on July 26, 1864.<sup>20</sup> In terms of his private life, Fáy András married his adopted daughter, Zsuzsanna Sziráky (1809-1877) on October 18, 1832.<sup>21</sup> She gave birth to his son Gustáv Nagy (later Fáy) in 1826 (d.1866).<sup>22</sup> Just before the wedding, Zsuzsanna Sziráky gave birth to a second child, who died in infancy.<sup>23</sup> Fáy's incestuous relationship with his underage adopted daughter and his co-habitation with her without the consecration of marriage has been a controversial aspect of his life ever since they occurred. Both contemporaries and historians have been rankled by his treatment of Sziráky and his somewhat stereotypical and misogynistic depictions of women in his literary and political works, especially in light of the fact that he claimed expertise on the subject of the education of women.<sup>24</sup> I believe that these controversial aspects of Fáy's life bear remembering.

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<sup>19</sup> Erdélyi, *Fáy András élete* [András Fáy's life], 297-298.

<sup>20</sup> Dombi, "Fáy András élete," ["The life of András Fáy,"] in *Párhuzamok a XIX. és XX. század pedagógiai törekvéseiben*, [Parallels in pedagogical efforts in the XIXth and XXth centuries], 12.

<sup>21</sup> Badics, *Fáy András Életrajza* [Biography of András Fáy], 232.

<sup>22</sup> Virgil Koltai, *Fáy András élete és működése* [The life and significant work of András Fáy] (Győr: János Surányi, 1888), 68.

<sup>23</sup> Teréz Karacs, "Fáy András házassága. Jegyzetek Badics Ferencz életrajzához," ["András Fáy's marriage. Notes concerning Ferencz Badics' biography,"] in *Teleki Blanka és köre: Karacs Teréz, Teleki Blanka, Lövei Klára*, [Blanka Teleki's circle: Teréz Karacs, Blanka Teleki and Klára Lövei,] ed. Györyi Sáfán (Budapest: Szépirodalmi Könyvkiadó, 1963), 183.

<sup>24</sup> Badics tended to gloss over and whitewash Fáy's problematic treatment of women. Please see *Fáy András Életrajza* [Biography of András Fáy], 227-231 for his explanation of Fáy's marriage circumstances as "...the only blot on Fáy's pristine character." For a critical contemporary opinion, the best source is Karacs, "Fáy András házassága," ["András Fáy's marriage,"] in *Teleki Blanka és köre* [Blanka Teleki's circle], 182-184. A modern appraisal of his controversial marriage may be found in: Orsolya Völgyesi, "Fáy András, különös házassága," ["András Fáy's

### Historiographical Portraits of Fáy

András Fáy has been the subject of several biographies, beginning in the late nineteenth century. The most authoritative was that of literary historian Ferencz Badics (1854-1939) who published a 671 page Fáy biography.<sup>25</sup> This book represents a feat in scholarship that probably can never be duplicated, not only because of the wealth of source material that he used, some of which may no longer be in existence, but because he was also able to conduct interviews with Fáy's relatives and acquaintances. For the purposes of this writing, Badics' biography will generally be considered the authoritative factual account. Badics had two theses about Fáy's importance in the reform era. The first was to argue that "...we must consider Fáy as the *first person to put forth ideas about reform*" in the early nineteenth century. There is a simple reason why Badics made such a grand claim for Fáy's significant but not unprecedented notions for domestic improvement. The man historiography often still credits as instigating the reform era, István Széchenyi,<sup>26</sup> stated at a meeting of the estates of Pest County that Fáy's *Eredeti meséi és aphorismái* [Original Fables and Aphorisms, 1820] inspired in him the ideas, the will and the determination to undertake the necessary actions to bring about domestic reform.<sup>27</sup> Badics' second thesis about Fáy was that despite having the distinction of being the person who "inspired" Széchenyi, on a theoretical spectrum of liberalism he was not the most progressive or the most radical. Instead, he was in Badics' phrasing "a

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'peculiar marriage',"] in *Nők és férfiak...avagy a nemek története: A Hajnak István KörTársadalom Történeti Egyesület*, [Women and men...or a gender history: the István Hajnak circle social history society,] ed. Magdolna Lácay (Nyiregyháza: Nyiregyháza Főiskola-Gazdaságtudományi Kar, 2003), 147-156.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 234.

<sup>26</sup> Gábor Vermes, "Széchenyi and Posterity: Changing Perceptions about Széchenyi in the 19th and 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries," *East European Quarterly* Vol.XXIX No.2 (June 1995): 157.

<sup>27</sup> Badics, *Fáy András Életrajza* [Biography of András Fáy], 246 and 343.



conservative reformer”<sup>28</sup> (i.e. a person with some progressive tendencies, but who basically supported Austrian rule over Hungary to continue as it was with little systemic modification).

Another writer inspired by Fáy’s life was Pál Erdélyi (1864-1936), who published *Fáy András élete és művei* [András Fáy’s Life and Works] in 1890. Reflecting the stronger nationalism of the time, this biography argued that “András Fáy is the offspring of an ancient noble family, the product of the Calvinist College, the leading county’s (i.e Pest’s) district judge. The writer and politician was in his every aspect Magyar.”<sup>29</sup> Erdélyi saw literature as Fáy’s main contribution to Hungarian culture. He was the first Magyar social writer whose short stories were innovative in describing Hungarian society as characteristically alive and in flux.<sup>30</sup> This second thesis holds water in the history of literature to this day, particularly in relation to Fáy’s social novel, *Bélteky-ház* [The House of Bélteky, 1832].<sup>31</sup>

Imre Findura’s (1844-1930) biography of Fáy is ostensibly a literary history, but it is on all levels less substantive than Badics’ rendering of the same subject matter. It is mostly a cursory study of Fáy’s life and writings, filled with ethereal comments such as that the author was “worthy of being in the company of great minds” and “(w)hat Fáy did, he did without any trace of vanity or ambition; what he wrote, was written instinctively at the time”.<sup>32</sup> Only in a few sections are there comments that approach a thesis, such as when he comes to the conclusion that national politics never really

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 257.

<sup>29</sup> Erdélyi, *Fáy András élete* [András Fáy’s life], 277, 279.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 278.

<sup>31</sup> Antal Wéber, “A magyar társadalomkritikai regény őse: ‘A Bélteky-ház’,” [The ancestor of the Hungarian novel of social criticism: ‘the house of Bélteky’,”] *Filológiai közlöny (különlenyomat)* [Philological bulletin (special edition)] No.1-2 (1959): 43-49 and Katalin Hász-Fehér, “A nyilvános és a magános irodalomról (Utak Fáy Andráshoz és a *Bélteky házhoz*),” [“About public and private literature (roads to András Fáy and the *house of Bélteky*),”] *Irodalom történeti közlemények* [Contributions to literary history] Vol.102 No.1-2 (1998): 217.

<sup>32</sup> Imre Findura, *Fáy András élete és művei* [András Fáy’s life and works] (Budapest: Eggenberger, 1888), 123, 91-92.

appealed to Fáy as a profession. He regarded his time as a dietal representative as a testing of the water, and asserted Fáy's respect for this line of work only came at a later point in his life. Findura felt that his subject's true *métier* was politics on the county level.<sup>33</sup>

Virgil Koltai (1857-1907) was a teacher and literary historian, and at the time of writing also a member of the Benedictine order. As a consequence, the writing placed much weight on Fáy's religion, going so far as to claim that even the author's fictional literary writings were characterized by Protestant colourings.<sup>34</sup> Other than this exceptional idea, this biography bears a striking resemblance to Findura's in the rest of its analysis of the author's place in Hungarian history. Again, we have the ideas that Fáy was a great man "not for his shining accomplishments, but because his achievements increased the well-being of posterity", that formal politics was not his cup of tea since it involved engagement in a "scrimmage of vanity" and "stumbling about in the dark", and he was a "strong Magyar, but not from the rank and file of the old, conservative county judges."<sup>35</sup>

Even by the end of the nineteenth century, when these four biographies were written, it was becoming apparent that the entire life and works of the man poet Pál Szemere (1785-1861) termed the "Homeland's Everything"<sup>36</sup> were often too much for one person to tackle, causing specialist studies on Fáy to become the norm. This practice has not altered to this day. Calvinist pastor Kálmán Rácz (1867-1941) produced a study of Fáy's contribution to protestant religious life in 1893.<sup>37</sup> In the 1930s Fáy experienced a new vogue for some of his artistic pursuits. These topics were probably non-controversial

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 29.

<sup>34</sup> Koltai, *Fáy András élete* [The life of András Fáy], 133.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 133, 140 and 139.

<sup>36</sup> Findura, *Fáy András élete* [András Fáy's life], 24.

<sup>37</sup> Kálmán Rácz, *Fáy András mint protestáns* [András Fáy as a Protestant] (Budapest: Viktor Hornyánszky, 1893).

fields of study in politically-contentious times. Slim volumes appeared in print concerning his fables, his contribution to Hungarian musicology and analyzing the merits of his House of Békely.<sup>38</sup> Beginning at the turn of the century and resuming in the 1940s, scholarly interest became directed towards Fáy's books concerning pedagogy.<sup>39</sup> This interest has been rekindled in the present day, particularly in the scholarship of Alice Dombi and Katalin Fehér.<sup>40</sup> Also, Katalin Hász-Fehér has recently published about Fáy's role in literary history, a contribution which has been long overdue to scholarship.<sup>41</sup>

### ***The Nyelvújítás (Linguistic Renewal) and the Hungarian "Language Wars"***

There is no better way to begin the analysis of the contribution of András Fáy to the development of the Magyar language on a political level than to remember that at this time it took a back seat to the country's official language: Latin. In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, Latin usage in Hungary among the educated classes was dominant because it possessed the grammar and word-base for written and spoken everyday usage and was sanctioned by schools, government, the judicial system, the

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<sup>38</sup> Ernő Merényi O., *Fáy András meséi* [The fables of András Fáy] (Pécs: Steiner Kaposvár, 1931), Ervin Major, *Fáy András és a magyar zenetörténet* [András Fáy and Hungarian musicology] (Budapest: 1934) and György Bánrévy, *Fáy András Békely-háza és August Lafontaine regényei* [András Fáy's house of Békely and the novels of August Lafontaine] (Győr: Győregyházmegeyei Alap, 1934).

<sup>39</sup> Fáy's pedagogical contributions include: *Próbatétel a mai nevelés két nevezetes hibáiról* [Essay on the two major errors in modern child raising] (Pest: 1816), *Nőnevelés és nőnevelő intézetek hazánkban. Különös tekintettel nemesek, főbb polgárok és tisztességes karuak lányáira* [Raising women and women's education institutions in our homeland. With particular emphasis on women from noble, eminent citizen, and respectable backgrounds] (Pest: Trattner-Károlyi, 1841) and *A legegyszerűbb, természet- és tapasztalathűbb és gyakorlatibb nevelési rendszer* [The simplest, most natural method to raise children based on experience and practice] (Pest: 1855). The first studies on Fáy as pedagogue were: Lajos Komáromy, *Fáy András mint pedagógus* [András Fáy and pedagogy] (Budapest: Wodianer and Sons, 1899) and György Almásy, *Fáy András, A magyar józanság nevelője* [András Fáy, Hungarian educator in common sense] (Budapest: Horthy Miklós Tudományegyetem Pedagógiai Intézet, 1943).

<sup>40</sup> For example, Alice Dombi has several articles on this subject in the already mentioned *Párhuzamok a XIX. és XX. század pedagógiai törekvéseiben* [Parallels in pedagogical efforts in the XIXth and XXth centuries]. One article by Katalin Fehér on Fáy's teaching methods was published as "Fáy András pedagógiai műve 1816-ból," ["András Fáy's pedagogical work from 1816,"] *Magyar Könyvszemle* [Hungarian book review] Vol. 111 No.1 (1995): 94-97.

<sup>41</sup> Please see notes 5 and 31.

hierarchy of the Catholic Church, and historical precedent. It is no wonder that the attempt to begin the initial phase of magyarization, the encouragement of élites to switch from the official language of Latin to Hungarian, was met with some resistance. Political tracts often appeared defending the merits of the classical language, befittingly in a multicultural country in both Latin and German. Reasons for retaining official Latin ranged from its importance to Catholic culture, to stressing that ancient authors would no longer be read widely because they would be excluded from modern canons.<sup>42</sup> Dissenting tracts appeared in Magyar pointing out the benefits of the language, such as the one penned in 1807 by the engineer and technical writer István Vedres (1765-1830). Successful enough to generate multiple editions Vedres provided proof that statements such as the following did find some popular resonance: “(o)ur sweet mother tongue is not so impoverished or imperfect that the laws of our homeland could not be properly conveyed: because our learned Magyar scholars have already made it conspicuously apparent that it is suitable for the higher sciences....”<sup>43</sup>

One need only take into account this heated polemical climate, to understand that Magyar as a popular language still faced an uphill battle for recognition. According to the nineteenth-century Hungarian specialist R.J.W. Evans, the factor that gave Magyar the advantage over Latin and German was the Hungarian language’s relative absence of linguistic prestige in comparison to these two systems of communication. In his estimation, magyarization made its first advances in Hungary because of “Magyar’s lack of any decisive cultural advantage”. In other words, the fact that it was not regarded as an

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<sup>42</sup> András Rác, *Reflexiones privatae de linguae latinae in sacris ecclesiae catholicae usu, ejusque apud Hungaros in occasum vergentis inclinatione* (Lipsiae: Georg Wigand, 1845) and *Über den Verfall der lateinischen Sprache und dessen nachtheilige Folgen in Ungern. Eine freundlich-warnende Rede* (Leipzig: George Wigand, 1836), 47. Főváros Szabó Ervin Könyvtár Budapest Gyűjtemény (Hereafter FSzEK Budapest Collection) Ballagi 340/4 (political tracts).

<sup>43</sup> István Vedres, *A’ magyar nyelvnek a’ magyar hazában való szükséges voltát tárgyazó hazafiúi elmélkedés* [Pondering about the necessary predominance of Hungarian in the Magyar homeland by a patriot] (Kassa: János Ellinger, 1807), 7. FSzEK Budapest Collection Ballagi 261/4 (political tracts).

established nineteenth-century European language of importance initially fostered the impression that German and Latin were on safe ground and did not need re-enforcement to maintain their dominance. The mistaken assumption that Hungarian seemed to be politically innocuous was a factor that aided linguistic magyarization because outright resistance to its expansion did not initially seem to be warranted.<sup>44</sup>

The person who is most credited with advancing the Hungarian language in Hungary, particularly in the early nineteenth century, is Ferenc Kazinczy. Born in Érsemlyén, Bihar (today Simian, Romania) in 1759 to a Calvinist-landowning noble family,<sup>45</sup> and famous for his 2387 days of imprisonment for alleged involvement in the Hungarian Jacobin conspiracy,<sup>46</sup> Kazinczy turned toward promoting Magyar after his release, although he himself was fluent in Latin, German and Slovak in addition to Hungarian.<sup>47</sup> His method to promulgate Magyar involved creating literary journals such as *Magyar Múzeum* [Magyar Museum] and *Orpheus*, translating Latin, English, French and German classics into Hungarian, writing original poetry, articles and essays, and engaging in extensive literary criticism. He also was the focal point of a type of literary salon, centred around his property in Széphalom, and held together by his inexhaustible capacity for correspondence.<sup>48</sup>

Often termed a literary dictator, Kazinczy's overarching influence on Hungarian language and culture, particularly in terms of establishing literary norms and enforcing standardization is somewhat exaggerated in English-language Hungarian historiography.

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<sup>44</sup> R.J.W. Evans, "The Politics of Language and the Languages of Politics: Latin and the Vernaculars in Eighteenth Century Hungary," in *Cultures of Power in Europe during the Long Eighteenth Century*, eds. Hamish Scott and Brendan Simms (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 217.

<sup>45</sup> Joseph Reményi, "Ferenc Kazinczy, Hungarian Critic and Neologist (1759-1831)," *The Slavonic and East European Review* Vol.29 No.72 (December 1950): 237.

<sup>46</sup> A good classic on this topic is Kálmán Benda, *A magyar jakobinus mozgalom története* [A history of the Hungarian Jacobin conspiracy] (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1957).

<sup>47</sup> Evans, "The Politics of Language," in *Cultures of Power in Europe*, 217.

<sup>48</sup> The MTA definite edition of his writings is twenty-two volumes in length. Reményi, "Ferenc Kazinczy," *The Slavonic and East European Review*: 238-240.

Yes, Kazinczy may have been the “father of Hungarian literary criticism”, and he may have expressed his aesthetic, linguistic, and judgmental opinions about individual Hungarian writers with decided certainty, but his ability to inspire others to follow his lead waned particularly after the 1820s.<sup>49</sup> The literary scene of the reform era in Hungary was too pluralistic to kowtow to the dictates of one person indefinitely, and debates about language and letters tended to be settled in the rough and tumble of publication and counter-publication, and over the course of longer periods of time than has been sufficiently stressed.

One need only examine the heated intellectual conflicts relating to the orthography, morphology and semantics of the Magyar language at this time to understand that the debates about writing and speech did not remotely begin and end with Kazinczy.<sup>50</sup> One orthographical disagreement concerned itself with which type of spelling would rise to the level of standardization: Catholic or Protestant writing systems. Catholic schools taught students to write the ‘ch’ sound as ‘cs’ and ‘c’ as ‘cz’. Also when ‘t’, ‘d’, ‘n’ and ‘l’ met ‘j’ in a word it became ‘y’ (ex. *láttya* trans. He/She sees it.). Hungarian Protestant schools had the alternative system of orthography that the ‘ch’ sound be written as ‘ts’ and the ‘c’ sound as ‘tz’. Likewise when ‘t’, ‘d’, ‘n’ or ‘l’ ran up against a ‘j’, it remained ‘j’. (ex. *látja*).<sup>51</sup> A sub-section of the orthographical disagreement was the war over the use of ‘y’ or ‘j’, which was also known as the

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<sup>49</sup> Lóránt Czigány, *The Oxford History of Hungarian Literature: From the Earliest Times to the Present* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), 106.

<sup>50</sup> Grammar had the advantage of several texts which were highly authoritative. Pál Beregszász (1750-1828), Miklós Révai (1750-1807) and Ferenc Verseghy (1757-1822) had all produced such treatises in German, Latin and Hungarian. Pál Beregszász, *Versuch einer magyarischen Sprachlehre mit einiger Hinsicht auf die türkische und andere morgenländische Sprachen* (Erlangen: 1797), Johannes Nicolaus Révai, *Elaboratio grammatica Hungarica: ad genuinam patrii sermonis indolem fideliter exacta, affiniumque linguarum adminiculis locupletius illustrata* (Pestini: Trattner, 1806-1810) and Ferenc Verseghy, *A tiszta magyarság, avvagy a csinos magyar beszédre és helyes írásra vezérlő értekezések Követi ezeket a cadentiák lajstroma* [Elegant Hungarian, or admonitions for pretty Magyar speech and correct writing. Followed by a catalogue of cadences] (Pest: 1805).

<sup>51</sup> Géza Bárczi, Loránd Benkő and Jolán Bervar *A magyar nyelv története*, 12ik. kiadás [A history of the Magyar language, 12<sup>th</sup> ed. ] (Budapest: Nemzeti Tankönyvkiadó, 2002), 565.

epsilon/jott or phonetic/etymological difference of opinion.<sup>52</sup> According to historical linguistic studies, despite the background of people's religious education, or "expert opinions", free choice increasingly conditioned orthographic preferences in reform-era Hungary.<sup>53</sup>

The morphology conflict involved proposals to eliminate Magyar digraphs in favour of some form of diacritical mark over the letter in order to simplify reading comprehension. The digraphs in question were the above mentioned 'cs' as well as the 'zs', 'dz', 'sz', 'gy', 'ly', 'ny', and 'ty' sounds, including the then existing 'ds' (today the trigraph 'dzs').<sup>54</sup> This proposal was controversial because Slavic languages tended to contain such diacritical marks, and they were not original to Hungarian. Many scholars made suggestions for changes, such as scholar Miklós Révai (1750-1807), András Vályi (1764-1801), professor of Hungarian at the university, and the Calvinist pastor János Szilágyi (d.1854).<sup>55</sup> There was even an anonymous proposal from a certain J.L in the pages of the journal *Tudományos Gyűjtemény* [Scientific Collection] to adopt "good Slovak orthography" to replace Hungarian digraphs (the unwillingness of the author to sign his name indicated the somewhat tenuous nature of the idea).<sup>56</sup> In the end the orthographical and morphological disputes abated but did not disappear altogether with the publication of the Hungarian Scholarly Society's 1832 booklet on these subjects, under the direction of the great romantic poet, Mihály Vörösmarty (1800-1855).<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> Czigány, *Oxford History of Hungarian*, 104.

<sup>53</sup> Loránd Benkő and Imre Samu eds., *The Hungarian Language* (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1972), 286.

<sup>54</sup> P. Fábán, "Experiments Aiming at the Sweeping Reform of the Hungarian Orthography between 1772-1832," *Studia Slavica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* Vol. 12 No.1-4 (1966): 116.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 117-119.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 119.

<sup>57</sup> *Magyar helyesírás' és szóragasztás' főbb szabályai. A Magyar Tudós Társaság különös használatára* [The main principles of Hungarian orthography and morphology. For the especial use of the Hungarian scholarly society] (Pest: 1832).

The controversy over Hungarian semantics in this period is the one most well known to historiography. Again, one reason this topic is well documented in historical writing is because Kazinczy took a clear stance on the issue. The point of contention here involved mainly word coinage, and whether or not new terms should be created (the neologue standpoint) or whether medieval Hungarian roots should be resuscitated and reinvented in order to express modern concepts in geography, law, medicine, science, technology and the arts for which there were no true equivalents (the orthologue interpretation).<sup>58</sup> At stake was how distinctive Hungarian should sound in comparison to other European languages. This debate was accompanied by the fear that if too much was taken over from non-Finno-Uralic sources the musicality of Magyar would break down into dissonance. Kazinczy famously came down in favour of neology in word coinages,<sup>59</sup> a fact that arch orthologues such as János Földi (1755-1801) would have failed to appreciate.<sup>60</sup> The semantic problem was somewhat complicated by the fact that the Magyar language as it then existed in the early nineteenth century contained a hodge-podge of word coinages from non-Finno-Uralic roots. A large number of Latinized words existed in Magyar (ex. *akceptálni* signified “to accept”; present usage is *elfogadni*. Or *illegális* represented the adjective “illegal”, whereas more common present usage is *törvényellenes*). Rich borrowings from German had also served to paper over missing terminology from Magyar (ex. cooking terminology such as *száft* [gravy], *szósz* [sauce], or financial vocabulary including *kontó* [bank account] and *rizikó* [risk]).<sup>61</sup> In the end, for all of the passion for both the neological and orthological positions in Hungarian semantics, the central point of view that new word formations had to come from both

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<sup>58</sup> Bárczi, Benkő and Bervar, *A magyar nyelv története* [A history of the Magyar language], 544.

<sup>59</sup> Reményi, “Ferenc Kazinczy,” *The Slavonic and East European Review*: 241.

<sup>60</sup> Gyula Haraszti, *Költészetünk új-népies iránya* [The new folk direction in our poetry] (Budapest: Lajos Aigner, 1878), 64.

<sup>61</sup> Bárczi, Benkő and Bervar, *A magyar nyelv története* [A history of the Magyar language], 551-559.



directions won the day.<sup>62</sup> Working through the Hungarian Scholarly Society, Vörösmarty again was instrumental in publishing a Hungarian-German dictionary (1838) and a book called *A' Magyar nyelv rendszere* [Systematics of the Hungarian Language, 1844], which did not once and for all settle the semantic dispute, but provided an authoritative basis that served to reconcile writers to use specific word choices.<sup>63</sup>

The last linguistic basis for disagreement related to the history of the Magyar language. Scholars were at odds over which period should serve as the ideal referential point in the case of any heated divergence of opinion in relation to all the linguistic elements: grammar, orthography, morphology, and semantics. Instead of returning to a “golden age” for Magyar, increasingly the living language as spoken by the people became the tie-breaker in the case of dispute. This development was revolutionary for the Hungarian language, for up until then folk Hungarian as spoken by the peasantry had not been considered worthy of serious scholarly attention. For the first time, dedicated and successful writers and poets such as Sándor Petőfi (1823-1841), Mihály Tompa (1817-1868), János Arany (1817-1882) and Mór Jókai (1825-1904) began to write literature in the new idiom,<sup>64</sup> closing the gap between the aristocratic and meritocratic literary classes and the people. When the language renewal ended and the erudite opinions that caused the linguistic wars had been voiced, at the end of the day there was a workable Magyar language in place, even if it was not yet a true standard.

Since Hungarian was in the process of being reinvented, its lack of systemization implied that each person in effect spoke a slightly different version of the language, depending on his/her background, county of birth, level of education and number of other languages spoken. A closer look at Fáy's writing and style illustrate these ideas. Fáy's

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<sup>62</sup> Benkő and Samu eds., *The Hungarian Language*, 280.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 287.

<sup>64</sup> Bárczi, Benkő and Bervar, *A magyar nyelv története* [A history of the Magyar language], 546-547.

sentence structure was characteristic of the time, but is somewhat laboured by today's standards. Here is a translation of a short descriptive passage from the House of Béteky based on the 1844 edition about the minor noble Mátyás Béteky and his neighbours to illustrate this point.

In his garden, it must be said, there stood a noble strain of cherry tree, of which a few of the heavily-laden branches, leaned down into Valkay's garden. The bird was happy to peck at them, and Matyi occasionally walked down the garden with a loaded gun, and shot at the goody bird flock. He did the same one sunset, detecting a rustling among the tree branches, but heard a scream as a result of the fired shot; it must be said, Kriska, Valkay neighbour's old maid of a daughter, was helping herself to the appealing fruit from the branches that reached into their garden, and Matyi grazed her outreached hand instead of shooting a bird.<sup>65</sup>

Fáy's belaboured style of composition was accompanied by word choices that he constantly was forced to revise or risk falling out of step with the times. He painstakingly reworked new anthologies of his books later in his life, changing his wording in order to conform to the altered Magyar word stock just before the revolution, and again in the late 1850s and early 1860s before his death.<sup>66</sup> For example, his 1818 short story "A különös testamentum" [The Singular Will]<sup>67</sup> was renamed "A különös végrendelet" in the 1844 authorized Complete Literary Works edition. Hungarian borrowings from German, French and Latin such as *fröstök* [Frühstück], *mód* [mode] and *symptoma* [symptoma] were excised in favour of new Magyar equivalents *reggeli*, *divat*, and *kórjelenség*-breakfast, fashion, and symptom respectively.<sup>68</sup> Fáy took the trouble repeatedly to revise

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<sup>65</sup> András Fáy, *A Béteky-ház* [The house of Béteky] (Piliscsaba: Pázmány Péter Katolikus Egyetem Bölcsészettudományi Kar, 2005), 33.

<sup>66</sup> András Fáy, *Szépírdalmi összes munkái kötet I-VIII* [The complete literary works volumes I-VIII] (Pest: K Geibel, 1834-1844). Fáy reworked the language of his plays in the 1850s, including *A régi pénzek, vagy az erdélyiek Magyarországon* [The old coins, or the Transylvanians in Hungary] (Pest: 1858) (revised a second time since 1844) and "A mátrai vadászat," ["The Mátra hunt,"] in *Hulló Virágok* [Falling flowers] (Pest: Beimel, 1861).

<sup>67</sup> This story originally appeared at the end of Fresh posy. See note 86.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, 411.

his writings no doubt in order to find relevance and resonance with a Magyar reading public undergoing transformation in the same manner as the language that they used.

The Magyar language renewal was a conscious reshaping and reinvention of the Hungarian language in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, and the transformations that accompanied it were signs of a healthy civil society. Social divides were narrowed by the fact that nobles and élites began to turn toward the Hungarian idiom, which had earlier had little prestige and was spoken by ordinary people. In this new environment the merits of individual literary products, whether pertaining to the language revival or another subject, had to hold their own ground based on the strength of appeal that they generated.

Four aspects hindered the new Magyar culture of letters and literature from being a truly popular movement. The first was that people had to be convinced to learn or to access Magyar-language literature, because the majority of the reading public in Hungary tended to read newspapers and journals in German.<sup>69</sup> The second problem was that Hungarian-language writing was relatively expensive, and out of reach of average Magyar speakers, particularly from peasant backgrounds.<sup>70</sup> Also, even if average people could have purchased the fruits of the language revival's labour, they would probably not have been able to read it, as literacy rates among the peasantry were very low in the first half of the nineteenth century.<sup>71</sup> Finally, with Magyar people constituting a majority in

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<sup>69</sup> József Ferenczy, *A magyar hirlapirodalom története 1780-tól 1867-ig* [The history of Hungarian journalism from 1780-1867] (Budapest: Vilmos Lauffer, 1888), 107.

<sup>70</sup> Géza Fülöp, *A magyar olvasóközönség a felvilágosodás idején és a reformkorban*, [The Hungarian reading public at the time of the enlightenment and the age of reform,] 12 May 2009 <<http://mek.niif.hu/01600/01608/01608.htm>>. For instance, the book *Magyar Századok* [Hungarian centuries] by Benedek Virág (1754-1830) cost 3 forints to buy in a bookshop when the average servant made between 70 and 130 forints per annum.

<sup>71</sup> There are no exact figures as to what percentage of the public could read before mid-century, because the first census that quantified literacy rates was conducted in 1870. István György Tóth estimated that in Vas county in the first half of the nineteenth century only between 4 to 6% of peasants in German, Hungarian, Croatian and Slovene villages could affix a signature to a document. *Literacy and Written Culture in Early Modern Central Europe* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2000), 48 and 53.

the country, but not an absolute one, it goes without saying that those who did not have Magyar knowledge in their linguistic backgrounds could not access the new literary cultural products.

I would like to continue by focusing on the positive aspects of the Hungarian literary movement, because I believe these outweigh the negative ones. To read something involves agency, and the people who accessed the new Magyar literary products made a conscious decision to engage with the new culture. The gestational character of the early nineteenth-century Magyar literary scene contributed to its openness, which served to attract educated and aristocratic people, such as Fáy, to its cause. Although there were always counter-voices objecting to the advancement of the Magyar language in Hungary,<sup>72</sup> often from other language groups and peoples, this was also a sign of democracy within their own cultures, and a healthy counter-development to hinder excessive magyarization.

### **Fáy and the Magyar Literary Scene: Salons and Cliques**

There is a reasonable amount of evidence that Fáy held Kazinczy in very high regard, but this admiration was only reciprocated in a half-hearted manner by the well-respected man of letters. In one of his autobiographical recollections, Fáy hints that Kazinczy played a part in inspiring his decision to be a writer, mentioning that: “(w)e can hardly find, especially among the old literary or even scientific writers in our homeland, one whom Ferencz Kazinczy’s encouraging and ground-breaking works did not animate and set on the path of a literary career”.<sup>73</sup> He was of course referring primarily to himself. He recalled as a youth that he had already read some of the revered man’s publications in

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<sup>72</sup> A good example of literature exemplifying this tendency is Sámuel Hoitsy, *Sollen Wir Magyaren Werden? Fünf Briefe Geschrieben aus Pesth an einen Freund an der Theis* (Karlstadt: Johann N. Prettnner, 1833).

<sup>73</sup> *Fáy András emlékjegyzetei kortársakról. Badics Ferenc Gyűjteménye* [András Fáy’s recollections of his contemporaries. Collection of Ferenc Badics] Magyar Tudományos Akadémia Kézirattár [Hungarian Scientific Academy Manuscripts.] Hereafter MTA MS 10.057/j Section V.

translation, and was somewhat at a loss to see him in person at his grandmother's in Gálszécs, where Kazinczy's French manners and speech left him in awe.<sup>74</sup>

When Fáy developed the ambition to embark on a new career as a professional Magyar writer, he probably hoped that his distant kinship with Kazinczy<sup>75</sup> and the genuine respect that he held for him would give him an advantage over others which might be used in his favour. For this reason, Fáy decided to dedicate his first original work *Posy* (1807) to Kazinczy. Instead of having the desired positive result, Kazinczy was not flattered, but offended to the core of his being.<sup>76</sup> Kazinczy wondered what Fáy's father, reputed constantly to read the bible and prophesize, would say if he knew "his son wrote this ridiculous thing," and in a vein of mean-spiritedness added that he would encourage him to write more.<sup>77</sup>

On February 26, 1810 Kazinczy went further, sending Fáy a critique he had written of *Posy* in German for the *Annalen der Literatur und Kunst in den Österreich. Kaiserthume*. Extending the flower metaphor in the title throughout the assessment as an aesthetic device, he argued that the collection of poems lacked blending of colour, were exposed to the cold and experienced the draft of friendly northern air before they reached full blossom. To balance out the negative judgment Kazinczy commented "The Law Student's Song" did strike him as being particularly well composed with "liveliness and roguishness", and other aspects of the book allow readers to hope for more (and better) from the author in future.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

<sup>75</sup> János Váczy ed., *Kazinczy Ferencz levelezése 1824 Január 1- 1826 Március 31, 19ik kötet* [The correspondence of Ferencz Kazinczy January 1, 1824- March 31, 1826, Volume 19] (Budapest: Magyar Tudományos Akadémia, 1909), Kazinczy to Izidor Guzmics, December 13, 1824, 247.

<sup>76</sup> János Váczy, ed., *Kazinczy Ferencz levelezése 1807 Május 1-1808 Június 30, 5ik kötet* [The correspondence of Ferencz Kazinczy, May 1, 1807- June 30, 1808, Volume 5] (Budapest: Magyar Tudományos Akadémia, 1894), Kazinczy to János Kis, Jan.29, 1808, 298-299.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., 299.

<sup>78</sup> Ferenc Kazinczy, review of *Blumenstrauß, dargereicht dem Vaterland*, by András Fáy, *Annalen der Literatur und Kunst in dem Oesterreichischen Kaiserthume* Band II (1811): 168-169.

It must have been a bitter pill for Fáy to have his dedication for Posy, which he wished to use to advance his career, work against him instead. More bitter still, must have been Kazinczy's and his circle's constant reprimands that his use of the Magyar language was decidedly inferior. In one letter to Kazinczy, Count József Dessewffy (1771-1843) mocked Fáy's use of Germanisms in Magyar for the clause "a house standing with a little view."<sup>79</sup> Kazinczy was much more cutting in his first letter to Fáy, excerpts of which have already been mentioned. His grammar, use of 'tz' instead of 'cz' (although Kazinczy himself was a Calvinist as well) and even punctuation, were in his estimation horribly, terribly incorrect. Only the French passages were transcribed as they should have been. Kazinczy also included the insults that if Fáy continued to write as badly as he did "(h)ow would he consider himself better than the lowest of the peasants, than the young German girl from Pest who scribbled her little notes to the law students?" and "(t)he person who writes Magyar badly makes himself more of a laughing stock than one who writes *aequus* in place of the word horse, and everyone finds such a person a subject for derision".<sup>80</sup> From a later letter, when Kazinczy made the comment that "(o)ur Kotzebue"<sup>81</sup> (Fáy) believes I cannot conjugate properly," it becomes clear that Kazinczy considered Fáy's derivations from his standards in the use of Magyar to be willful undermining of his authority in the matter.<sup>82</sup>

Fáy was probably cut to the quick to read these assessments of his first attempts at professional writing by one he considered a role model and potential mentor. Exactly how hurt he was is difficult to ascertain, because his half of the Kazinczy correspondence

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<sup>79</sup> János Váczy, ed., *Kazinczy Ferenc levelezése, 1820 Január 1-1821 Dec.21, 17ik.kötet* [The correspondence of Ferenc Kazinczy, Jan. 1, 1820-Dec.21, 1821, Volume 17] (Budapest: Magyar Tudományos Akadémia, 1907), Count József Dessewffy to Kazinczy, Feb.26, 1820, 85.

<sup>80</sup> Jenő Berlász, Margit Busa, Klára Gárdonyi and Géza Fülöp eds., *Kazinczy Ferenc levelezése, 23ik kötet* [The correspondence of Ferenc Kazinczy, Volume 23] (Budapest: Magyar Tudományos Akadémia, 1960), Kazinczy to András Fáy, Jan.21,1808, 146.

<sup>81</sup> August von Kotzebue (1761-1819) was a famous German Vormärz writer and dramatist.

<sup>82</sup> Váczy ed., *Kazinczy Ferenc levelezése, 19ik kötet* [The correspondence of Ferenc Kazinczy, Volume 19], Kazinczy to György Zádor, Nov.25, 1825, 464.

has not been found. In relation to Kazinczy's letter to him about the poor quality of his Magyar, Fáy made a handwritten note to himself that in this first letter "(h)e brings me down by saying my style is ungrammatical and my orthography bad, but it is mixed with food for thought".<sup>83</sup> There are further hints in the Kazinczy correspondence.<sup>84</sup> In another letter Kazinczy himself remarks that he heard Fáy had given up writing poetry indefinitely.<sup>85</sup> In any case, Fáy's next major book would be on pedagogy, and it did not appear until 1816. *Fresh Posy*, the true follow up to his first work of literature hit bookstands only in 1818.<sup>86</sup>

What saved Fáy's writing career was that there were many groupings in which the Magyar language was being reinvented outside of the Kazinczy literary circle, so he did not have to have the mentor's approval. László Bártfay (1791-1858), the secretary to Count György Károlyi (1802-1877), had a full-fledged salon at which many of the new generation of writers regularly met, dined, conversed, listened to music and read their new writings aloud.<sup>87</sup> Some of the men who appeared at these gatherings were part of the *Aurora* circle, named after the journal that began publication in 1821 under the editorship of the critic József Bajza. This grouping also included the romantic writers Károly Kisfaludy (1788-1830), Vörösmarty and the university professor of dietetics and critic, literary editor and expert in Hungarian literature, Ferenc Toldy (a.k.a. Franz Schedel

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<sup>83</sup> Berlász, Busa, Gárdonyi and Fülöp eds., *Kazinczy Ferenc levelezése* [The correspondence of Ferenc Kazinczy], 457.

<sup>84</sup> Pál Szemere (1785-1861) wrote Kazinczy on May 6, 1810 that Fáy told him he had given up writing three years ago. Source: János Váczky, ed., *Kazinczy Ferenc levelezése, 5ik kötet* [The correspondence of Ferenc Kazinczy, Volume 5], 436.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid., Kazinczy to Pál Szemere and Ferenc Kölcsey, May 12, 1810, 448. Literary scholar Hász-Fehér disputes that Fáy abandoned writing at this point. *Elkülönülő és közösségi irodalmi programok* [Solitary and unifying literary endeavours], 33.

<sup>86</sup> See note 39 for bibliographic information on Fáy's pedagogical writings. András Fáy, *Friss bokréta, melyel hazájának kedveskedik Fáy András* [Fresh posy, with which András Fáy affectionately appeals to his homeland] (Pest: János Tamás Trattner, 1818).

<sup>87</sup> Károly Végh, "A reformkor szalonja," ["The salon in the reform era,"] *Polisz* No.45 (January 1999): 10.

1805-1875).<sup>88</sup> The *Aurora* circle and the salon that held it together broke away from Kazinczy's influence by writing original works, thereby "...signaling a theoretical disagreement with the aging dictator who preached diligent imitation" of the classics and of western literatures.<sup>89</sup> Thus a new direction in *belles lettres* was the order of the day.

Another reform-era salon that attracted the new grouping of writers, including Fáy, was the one that revolved around the figure of Mihály Vitkovics (1778-1829). This grouping formed around 1810 at Vitkovics' house, and all the usual suspects from the *Aurora* circle as well as others including notable antiquities collector Miklós Jankovics (1773-1846), academician Gábor Döbrentei (1785-1851), classicist poet Dániel Berszenyi (1776-1836), Benedek Virág and university professor István Horvát (1784-1846) were regular guests. The exceptionality of this grouping was that Vitkovics, who was himself a writer of poems, short stories and plays (which have been lost), was a Hungarian-Serb who was deeply drawn to Magyar culture. He often went so far as to wear Magyar-styled clothing in public. Consequently, as Fáy recalled, the people assembled at these events tended to be from several nationalities, and a highlight of the evening was hearing Serbian and Hungarian folk songs, the playing of the zither, and the beautiful singing of Vitkovics, which "was a chain that united the two nationalities".<sup>90</sup>

Fáy also engaged in hosting elaborate evenings for the leading lights of the new Magyar cultural scene at his houses on Spring street and later Hat street in Pest. Many of the same attributes of the early nineteenth-century salon were present, including the necessary personalities, poetic and literary readings, songs, musical performances (Fáy's son Gustáv regularly played the piano), and theatricals by the dramatists themselves. One

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<sup>88</sup> Ferenczy, *A magyar hirlapirodalom története* [The history of Hungarian journalism], 207-208.

<sup>89</sup> Czigány, *Oxford History of Hungarian*, 120.

<sup>90</sup> Károly Végh, "Kultsár István és Vitkovics Mihály szalonjai a XIX század elején," ["The salons of István Kultsár and Mihály Vitkovics at the beginning of the XIXth century,"] *Polisz* No. 46 (February 1999): 7-8 and *Fáy András emlékjegyzetei kortársairól* [András Fáy's recollections of his contemporaries] MTA MS 10.057/j Section III.



of Vörösmarty's poems, set to music as the "Song of Fót" was even inspired by Fáy's parties, in this case to celebrate the vintage at his county estate in October 1842.<sup>91</sup> Károly Végh, whose scholarship on salons and cultural groupings in this period has been cited in this section, categorized Fáy's social evenings as "a house of hospitality", and put forth the idea that "András Fáy's house (and soirées presumably) aided cultural life to become more national. This salon was a standard bearer of what it meant to be Hungarian".<sup>92</sup>

We know about some of the people who benefited from Fáy's hospitality from the memory books that he asked guests to sign upon visiting him. These are interesting not only for the perusal of names, but in order to see what a particular person chose to compose when presented with the opportunity. Politician Ferenc Deák (1803-1876) who is often associated with being the classical Hungarian liberal *par excellence*, decided to leave Fáy the provocative thought: "(t)he nation that abandons itself, deserves its own fate." Alongside the well-known names are ones from the intelligentsia,<sup>93</sup> such as the medical doctor Ferenc Gebhardt (1791-1869), who conducted medical consultations in Magyar, or craftsmen, such as silversmith József Szent-Pétery, who praised the virtue of work. Investigation of this source also reveals that women were also present at these salons and cultural soirées. Nóra Jókai wrote a pithy and pretty compliment about her friendship with Fáy, and writer Éva Takács (1780-1845) conveyed a more patriotic

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<sup>91</sup> Czigány, *Oxford History of Hungarian*, 134. The Song of Fót appears in Károly Horváth and Deszö Tóth eds., *Vörösmarty Mihály kisebb költemények III (1840-1855)* [The short poems of Mihály Vörösmarty III (1840-1855)] (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1962), 42-45.

<sup>92</sup> Károly Végh, "A hazának használni oly édes adó...' Fáy András vendégszerető háza," ["To be useful to the homeland is a pleasant tax' András Fáy and his house of hospitality,"] *Polisz* No.47 (March 1999): 9.

<sup>93</sup> For specifics on the intelligentsia during this time: János Mazsu, "The Intelligentsia in Hungary prior to World War I," *Hungarian Studies Review* Vol. XXIV Nos.1-2 (1997): 85-86. At the beginning of the nineteenth century there were about 20 000 *honoratiors* in Hungary, with over three-quarters of these belonging to the clergy, and only 5000 working in cities as lawyers, civil servants, teachers, artists, writers and poets. By the 1840s Mazsu estimated 20 686 clergymen, 16 000 civil servants, 10 000 teachers 10 000 estate managers, 4800 lawyers, 3000 physicians/pharmacists, 1000 art, music and literature teachers, and 1000 technocrats, for a total of 66 486 *honoratiors* on the eve of the revolution. Source: Mazsu, *The Social History of the Hungarian Intelligentsia, 1825-1914* (New York: Colombia University Press, 1997), 65.

stance: “(t)he person in fortunate circumstances who does not wish to advance the commonweal, and excuses himself from doing so under real or fabricated pretext, and does not do everything for the happiness of the homeland, according to the best of his abilities, is not a man, but the homeland’s shame.”<sup>94</sup>

Lest it be thought that these cultural evenings, whether at Bártfay’s, Vitkovics’s or Fáy’s quarters, were entirely governed by a convivial atmosphere, one need only look at some of Fáy’s reminiscences from this time. These anecdotes often have a biting quality, pointing to the truth that these writers were not only friends, but rivals as well. Calvinist minister János Pósfai (b.1778) was “cynical and mischievous in his character, and dirty and disheveled in dress”, while Baron Sándor Prónay (1760-1839) had “a speech impediment, but was a cultured and learned man knowledgeable about Hungarian and German literature” who “...on account of upbringing was convinced that it was only possible to pray wholeheartedly in Slovak.”<sup>95</sup> More personally, Fáy left behind the anecdote about scholar István Horvát that his learnedness had tipped over into a type of Magyar-mania, for he regularly asserted that the apostle Paul was Hungarian and the Samaritan woman from the bible (John 4:3-42) was a Hungarian-Palóc.<sup>96</sup> Gábor Döbrentei with closer acquaintance over a longer period revealed that he was a proud man who exerted himself to please. Pál Szemere as a legal student became an alcoholic, and was a hypochondriac in his old age, and Miklós Jankovics, although learned in both Latin and German, regularly made several mistakes in one single sentence of Magyar.<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> *Fáy András emlékkönyvei* [The memory books of András Fáy] Országos Széchenyi Könyvtár Kézirattár [Hereafter OSzK MS] Quat. Hung. 1938: 48, 11, 18, 32 and 22.

<sup>95</sup> *Fáy András emlékjegyzetei kortársairól* [András Fáy’s recollections of his contemporaries] MTA MS 10.057/j

<sup>96</sup> A people from the north-eastern area of Hungary, who speak a dialectical variant of Magyar.

<sup>97</sup> András Fáy, “Irodalmi tarlóvirágok,” [“Literary flowers blooming in wastelands,”] *Vasárnapi Ujság* [Sunday news] Vol. XXXIII No. 38 (1886): 607, and András Fáy, “Irodalmi tarlóvirágok,” [“Literary flowers blooming in wastelands,”] *Vasárnapi Ujság* [Sunday news] Vol. XXXIII No. 39 (1886): 626-627.

The atmosphere in these literary salons probably spurred the writers who frequented them to out-do one another in the volume and quality of writing that they produced. These new literary clubs were not wedded to Kazinczy's dictum to imitate classical and western examples in the Hungarian language. These restrictive specifications could sometimes hinder creativity, as Fáy's disappointment with Kazinczy's lack of sufficient enthusiasm for his writing demonstrated. The new literary salons held to other standards for Magyar language and literature, focusing more on mass approval. It is for this reason that conviviality as well as inter-personal competition and rivalries among the salon attendees were characteristic of their cultural environment. The multiplication of the number of literary salons<sup>98</sup> after Kazinczy's influence waned allowed them to transcend the specifications that he set for Magyar language and literature. This change benefited a fledgling writer such as Fáy who did not have to have the whole-hearted approval of the "literary dictator" to be successful.

### **The Early Nineteenth Century Hungarian Literary Environment**

The Magyar literary scene of the early nineteenth century described above would not have amounted to much if it had not had a strong basis of support in publishers who put out the works of the new writers, including Fáy's, and a reading public that was eager to purchase these new literary products. Pest and Buda became the new centres for publication and bookselling, instead of the formal capital of the country. Pest benefited from the presses and bookstores of Mátyás Trattner (1745-1828) and son, who led the Trattner-Károlyi firm, and Lajos Landerer (1800-1854), who later partnered with Gustáv Heckenast (1811-1878). Specialists who only dealt in selling the finished literary works were József Leyrer, Konrád Adolf Hartleben (1788-1863), József Eggenberger and son,

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<sup>98</sup> It is difficult to estimate the number of salons in Hungary at this time because we are dealing with a gathering located in the home and not registered with the authorities. What is more, the salon cannot be seen as limited to the aristocratic segment of society. Joseph Ben-David, "The Beginnings of Modern Jewish Society in Hungary in the First Half of the Nineteenth Century," *Jewish History* Vol.11 No.1 (Spring 1997): 59.

József Wagner, Gustáv Emich (1814-1869), Georg Kilian (junior and senior) and S. Ivánics.<sup>99</sup> A remarkable fact is that so many of the publishers and booksellers who assisted the sale of Magyar literary products were not far removed from their German roots.<sup>100</sup>

The bookshops of Pest sold not only the new literature, but also an increasing number of journals and newspapers. New Magyar-language literary inserts and periodicals began appearing in the 1780s at a time when the majority of the reading public of Hungary chiefly read newspapers and journals in German.<sup>101</sup> These included the *Pozsonyi Magyar Múza* [Hungarian Muse of Pozsony], the competing *Magyar Múza* [Hungarian Muse], the previously mentioned *Magyar Museum*, *Orpheus*, *Mindenek Gyűjtemény* [Cabinet of Curiosities] and the *Sokféle* [Many Things].<sup>102</sup> In the early nineteenth century the number of these publications kept multiplying, and it became necessary to have separate papers devoted to more technical-scientific subjects such as the *Erdélyi Múzeum* [Transylvanian Museum], *Tudományos Gyűjtemény* [Scientific Collection], *Felsőmagyarországi Minerva* [Northern Hungarian Minerva] and *Klió* [Clio], and artistic-literary ones such as *Hasznos Mulatságok* [Useful Amusements], *Szépliteraturai Ajándék* [Gift of Belles Lettres], and *Koszorú* [Wreath].<sup>103</sup> By the 1830s the prestigious journals had appeared including *Jelenkor* [Our Age], *Kritikai Lapok* [Critical Pages] and *Athenaeum*, with political, critical and literary fields of interest.<sup>104</sup> The most important paper of all was Kossuth's controversial *Pesti Hírlap* [Pest News], which rolled

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<sup>99</sup> Ilona Mona, "Hungarian Music Publication 1774-1867," *Studia Musicologia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* T.16 Fasc.1/4 (1974): 263-267 and *Gemälde von Pesth und Offen mit ihren Umgebungen. Ein Wegweiser für Einheimische und Fremde*. (Pesth: George Klein jr., 1837), 97-98.

<sup>100</sup> "Gustav Heckenast, der 'Cotta' Ungarns (1811-1878)," in *Ungarn und Deutsche Aufsätze zur donauschwäbischen Geschichte und Kulturgeschichte*, ed. Paul Ginder (Budapest: Instituts für donauschwäbische Geschichte und Landeskunde, 1999), 82.

<sup>101</sup> Ferenczy, *A magyar hírlapirodalom története* [The history of Hungarian journalism], 107.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, 66-91.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, 126-153 and 165-176.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, 192-215.

off the presses beginning in 1841. Most of these publications appeared for a select number of years only, and then ceased printing. For example, Scientific collection could only be purchased between 1817 and 1841, Athenaeum between 1837 and 1843 and Our Age from 1832-1848.

In the multicultural environment of early nineteenth-century Hungary, it was not an easy venture for a Magyar writer to be published. Publishers feared committing to Hungarian projects on financial grounds, and poor writers had difficulties unless they were able to self-publish. As few people possessed disposable income that could fund individual publishing attempts, this situation tended to favour those who did. As a result aristocrats and those from burgher backgrounds were more represented as writers than people from intelligentsia or peasant families.<sup>105</sup> Press runs for newspapers initially benefited German ones over Magyar publications, but by the 1830s the Hungarian newspapers sold more copies than their German equivalents.<sup>106</sup> It is more difficult to gauge quotas for publications of Magyar books than newspapers. These tended to be advertised first, and if a sufficient number of people subscribed the venture went ahead. For example, in Székesfehérvár the student priest Imre Farkas fundraised 100 forints so that the local press would publish an edition of Dániel Bersenyei's Magyar poems.<sup>107</sup> In any case, Magyar book press runs tended to be in the region of a few hundred copies, except for the most successful works.

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<sup>105</sup> László Csókas, "A magyar írói foglalkozás kezdeteiről," ["The beginnings of the professional Hungarian writer,"] *Magyar Könyvszemle* [Hungarian book review] Vol.III No.3 (1995): 244-245 and 239-230. Of 34 reform era writers examined, 3 were from magnate families, 13 from the middle nobility, 11 from burgher backgrounds, 4 from families where the father was a pastor and 3 came from serf origins.

<sup>106</sup> Nemes, "Between Reform and Revolution", 145. Nemes gives the statistic that in 1819, 1650 Magyar newspapers sold in comparison to 3 300 German ones. In the 1830s 10 000 Magyar newspapers were purchased and half as many German ones.

<sup>107</sup> Lajos Murányi, "A reformkor Fejér vármegye olvasáskultúrája: A székesfejérvári kaszinók és a Fejér Megyei Olvasótársaság (1838-1849)," ["The reading public in Fejér county in the reform era: the casinos of Székesfehérvár and the reading society of Fejér county,"] in *Fejér Megyei Levéltár Közleményei* 16, [The bulletin of the Fejér county archives 16], ed. Ferenc Erdős (Székesfehérvár: Fejér Megyei Levéltár, 1993), 11-12.

The reading public in Hungary benefited from altered forums that allowed them access to the new media products. These included the spread of lending libraries and reading cabinets, modelled on French and German precedents, and beginning with the first in Pest in 1787. The lending libraries were open to all who would afford the meagre fee of one krajcár per diem for borrowing a book.<sup>108</sup> Reading societies also enjoyed an upswing in popularity across the country, based on the premise that literary discussions improved personal and moral refinement.<sup>109</sup> People with disposable income began to invest in the creation of libraries, beginning in the second half of the eighteenth century. This phenomenon was an unusual circumstance in a country where only magnate nobles and leaders of the Catholic hierarchy had previously been able to collect books on any sizeable scale.<sup>110</sup> Citizens of cities who functioned primarily in a German environment initially accessed the new cultural products in translation. Although as the reform era progressed burghers increasingly took the next step towards partial magyarization by purchasing the work in its original language.<sup>111</sup> Peasants bought mainly calendars containing seasonal information and quasi-astrological and superstitious predictions. However even in this type of publication there were exceptions, such as the 1819 Debrecen calendar that contained the prose and verse of Magyar poet Mihály Fazekas (1766-1828), or the 1830 Komárom one, that published Gergely Czuczor's (1800-1866) poems.<sup>112</sup> This general upsurge in interest in reading and purchasing the fruits of the Magyar literary revival helped to generate a demand that compensated for the hesitancy of publishers to invest in Magyar-language manuscripts and publishing projects.

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<sup>108</sup> Géza Fülöp, *A magyar olvasóközönség*, [The Hungarian reading public,] 22 May 2009 <<http://mek.oszk.hu/01600/01608/01608.htm#7>>.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid., < <http://mek.oszk.hu/01600/01608/01608.htm#11>>.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid., < <http://mek.oszk.hu/01600/01608/01608.htm#19>>.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid., < <http://mek.oszk.hu/01600/01608/01608.htm#22>> and László Sziklay, "A magyarországi nem magyar nyelvű sajtó kezdetei," ["The origins of Hungary's non-Magyar language press,"] *Magyar Könyvszemle* [Hungarian book review] Vol.97 No.1-2 (1981): 33.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid., < <http://mek.oszk.hu/01600/01608/01608.htm#23>>.

Censorship in Hungary during the time of Metternich attempted to keep out of print potentially incendiary ideas about political life, government and parties, such as favourable allusions to oppositional movements.<sup>113</sup> As mentioned in the previous chapter, the Hungarian Chancellery was the highest government institution for Hungary that dealt with the matter of censorship and the secret police. Censors who worked for the Central Office for Book-Revision were often college professors or members of the gentry, and were able to do their work largely with the willing co-operation of writers.<sup>114</sup> Although in theory it was subordinate to the Imperial and Royal Ministry of Police and Censorship in Austria [k.k. Oberste Polizei und Zensur Hofstelle] jurisdictional boundaries were not always clearly defined. Jealous of its policing powers, the Hungarian Chancellery claimed greater authority in censorship matters, and that it should have the final say in a disputed case.<sup>115</sup> A strong probable cause for the Hungarian Chancellery's heavy-handedness in relation to censorship jurisdictions in Hungary was the fact that the Hungarian constitution did not empower the Austrian authorities to practice censorship or allow the secret police to operate in the country. The insistence that Austrian oversight in these matters should continue was technically tolerated, but illegal by the letter of the law.<sup>116</sup>

No published work could appear in any of the Austrian lands without submission to the appraisal of a government censor.<sup>117</sup> Censors were vigilant that published material had to uphold religious decorum (especially the Roman Catholic faith), the state, the

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<sup>113</sup> Tibor Frank, "Censorship in Metternich's Hungary: The Case of János Reseta, 1832-1848," in *Ethnicity, Propaganda, Myth-Making. Studies on Hungarian Connections to Britain and America, 1848-1945*, ed. Császár-Mályusz (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1999), 198.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, 193, 194 and 202.

<sup>115</sup> Donald E. Emerson, *Metternich and the Political Police: Security and Subversion in the Hapsburg Monarchy (1815-1830)* (Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1968), 155.

<sup>116</sup> Gábor Pajkossy, "A titkosrendőrség Magyarországon 1848-előtt," ["The secret police in Hungary before 1848,"] in *Emlékkönyv Csetri Elek születésének nyolcvanadik évfordulójára*, [Commemorative book for Elek Csetri's eightieth birthday], eds. Judit Pál and Gábor Sipos (Kolozsvár: Erdély Múzeum-Egyesület, 2004), 338-344.

<sup>117</sup> Emerson, *Metternich and the Political Police*, 154.

dignity of the king and the members of the royal family, and public morals, although the execution of these directives was left to individual appraisal.<sup>118</sup> The severity of censorship was not constant over time. During the first years of Joseph II's rule censorship became less onerous and Hungarian writers often chose to send their manuscripts to Vienna, instead of the Vice-Regal Council, because of its reputation for greater leniency. When reaction against Joseph II solidified in the Habsburg lands, the situation was reversed. Hungarian writers could expect more liberal manuscripts to pass conservative censors, who used the opportunity to give expression to their own political opposition.<sup>119</sup>

Under the rule of Francis I censorship assumed a more earnest character in Hungary than it had had under the Theresian, Josephinian, and Leopoldian monarchies.<sup>120</sup> After 1815 Count Joseph Sedlnitzky (1778-1855) ran the Ministry of Police in Vienna, with the trust and collaboration of Prince Metternich.<sup>121</sup> The highest police official responsible to Sedlnitzky for Hungarian affairs was Leopold Valentin Ferstl. Manifestations of liberalism in Hungary became particularly worrisome for Austrian Police officials, and scrutiny of books detailing Hungarian conditions, confiscation of cheap reproductions of the portraits of politicians and folk heroes,<sup>122</sup> the reading of private correspondence and surveillance of reform-minded politicians became the main governmental methodologies to keep it in check.<sup>123</sup> As the perceived threat in Hungary

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<sup>118</sup> Rebecca A. Gates, "Aristocratic Libraries, Censorship, and Bookprinting in Late-Eighteenth Century Hungary," *Journal of Library History* Vol.22 No.1 (1987): 28.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*, 29.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*, 31.

<sup>121</sup> Emerson, *Metternich and the Political Police*, 33.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*, 153-154.

<sup>123</sup> Sándor Takáts, *Kémvilág Magyarországon* [The world of spies in Hungary] (Budapest: Szépirodalmi Könyvkiadó, 1980), 64-78 and 150-228.



increased in this period, so too did the number of secret agents, from 28 in 1827 to an average of 80 between 1844 and 1846.<sup>124</sup>

Certainly there were some strategies that Hungarians could utilize to work around customs officials, postmasters, censors and secret agents in the service of the police, although these were naturally not foolproof. To prevent the “disappearance” of letters in the royal mail, Hungarians trusted friends or relatives to deliver their correspondence in the course of visiting others.<sup>125</sup> Sometimes good fortune allowed a book to pass the censor and be published before its dangerous potential was realized. A good example of this process is Sándor Bölöni Farkas’ (1795-1842) *Travels in North America*. It enjoyed two quite successful press runs of 1000 copies each beginning April 24, 1834 and January 10, 1835, before Bölöni Farkas was tickled pink that it was placed on the list of banned books.<sup>126</sup> Its ponderings on the nature of republican government in America gave too much subversive comparative potential to inhabitants of monarchical Hungary. The university press in Buda had a particular reputation for printing books that later sparked debate, because it was committed to representing the nationalities in the Kingdom, and had the typesets to print in non-Latin lettered languages, such as Serbian. Between 1777 and 1848 it published 1490 books, with 558 being in languages other than Hungarian.<sup>127</sup> If all else failed, and it was not possible to obtain a publisher in Hungary or Austria, a Hungarian writer could try to secure one in the German territories. Publishers in Leipzig

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<sup>124</sup> Pajkossy, “A titkosrendőrség,” [“The secret police,”] in *Emlékkönyv Csetri Elek születésének*, [Commemorative book for Elek Csetri’s birthday], 338-344.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid., 65.

<sup>126</sup> Samu Benkő ed., *Utazás Észak-Amerikában* [Travels in North America] (Bucharest: Irodalmi Könyvkiadó, 1966), 37 and 40.

<sup>127</sup> Gyula Mérei and Károly Vörös, *Magyarország története, 1790-1848, második kötet* [The history of Hungary 1790-1848, volume two] (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1980), 825-827. These included Slovak writings by Anton Bernolák, Ján Hollý and Ján Kollár, Serbian ones by Zaharije Orfelin and Dositej Obradović and in Ukrainian by Markijan Saskevics. Between 1780-1830 200 books in Romanian also rolled off of its presses. Ambrus Miskolczy, “A román nemzet útja a barokk nemzetiségtől a modern liberalizmusig Erdélyben és Magyarországon,” [“The road of the Romanian nation from a baroque system of estates to modern liberalism in Transylvania and Hungary,”] *Aetas* No.2 (2003): 93.

tended to be particularly welcoming to Hungarian writers, and could accommodate their needs in various languages, including Magyar.<sup>128</sup> The German publishing houses of Otto Wigand, Reclam, Jr. and Vereins Verlagsbuchhandlung all had a niche market in the publication of controversial Hungarian writers.<sup>129</sup> These books could then be smuggled into the Hungarian monarchy, where they would find an interested readership awaiting them.

### **Fáy's Messages in Bottles: Literature as Social Conscience and the Hungarian *Tendenzroman***

In an age when the reality of political censorship did hover over Hungarian writers, literature became a forum that allowed liberal ideas to be voiced. In the guise of being entertained reform-minded Hungarian writers wanted to win readers and convert them to their causes. Even if large segments of the reading public were not able to vote, this indirect appeal for their support indicated that their opinions had begun to carry weight. These new didactic literary writings in Magyar conditioned readers to accept this language as artistically fitting for literature and as suitable for a national political stage.

The most famous writer of the Hungarian *Tendenzroman* in the reform period was Baron József Eötvös (1813-1871). Renowned for his later life career as a theoretical writer and politician,<sup>130</sup> in his younger days he was a writer of novels, among other pursuits. Eötvös' most famous novel of social protest and political advocacy was *The*

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<sup>128</sup> Materials that were potentially offensive to various nationalities in the Hungarian monarchy were often denied a domestic publisher. For example: Miklós Wesselényi, *Szózat a magyar és szláv nemzetiség ügyében* [Discourse on the matter of the Hungarian and Slavic nationalities] (Leipzig: Otto Wigand, 1843) and C. Beda, *Vertheidigung der Deutschen und Slaven in Ungarn* (Leipzig: Robert Binder, 1843).

<sup>129</sup> Frank, "Censorship in Metternich's Hungary," in *Ethnicity, Propaganda, Myth-Making*, 196.

<sup>130</sup> Eötvös was instrumental in the promulgation of the Elementary Education Act of 1868, which guaranteed non-Magyar speakers in Hungary access to education in their native tongue. A recently released edition of the tract that earned him a European-wide reputation is: *The Dominant Ideas of the Nineteenth Century and their Impact on the State* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996-1998).

*Village Notary*. (1845).<sup>131</sup> The complicated plot of the novel revolves around the corrupt machinations of Mrs. Réty to prevent the electoral defeat of her husband as Vice-Lord Lieutenant of the fictional Hungarian County of Taksony, and the chain of tragic consequences that this action sets in motion. Along the way it is an indictment of Hungarian prison conditions, the county system and its tendencies toward petty despotism and racketeering, and the inhumanity of the legal system. Read on another level it is a plea for Eötvös' centralist political direction.<sup>132</sup> Ideally, Eötvös wanted neither the county system (a direction personified by Kossuth and other liberals) nor the governing institutions of Austrian rule (Aurél Dessewffy's neo-conservative stance)<sup>133</sup> to have more power at the expense of parliament.<sup>134</sup> Eötvös may have been the most famous writer of the novel with a social conscience, but Fáy's use of literature for the same purpose preceeded Eötvös' success. I would now like to turn to select examples of Fáy's books and short stories in order to determine what messages he wished his readers to ponder, and explain briefly why these causes were significant.

Fáy really earned his reputation as a Magyar writer from the publication of *Original fables and aphorisms* (1820).<sup>135</sup> These were commercially extremely successful, with three editions of 1000 copies each between 1820 and 1825, and a sequel in 1825 that also produced a second edition.<sup>136</sup> Translations also were a hallmark of its popularity as it was thought these stories and sayings would appeal to wider audiences of German, Italian

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<sup>131</sup> This book was so popular that it appeared in English translation. *The Village Notary. A Romance of Hungarian Life* (London: Longman, 1850).

<sup>132</sup> Paul Bödy, "Baron Joseph Eötvös and his Critique of Nationalism in the Habsburg Monarchy, 1848-1854," *The Historian* Vol.28 Issue 1 (December 1965): 25-26.

<sup>133</sup> Iván Zoltán Dénes, "The Political Role of Hungary's Nineteenth-Century Conservatives and How They Saw Themselves," *The Historical Journal* Vol.26 No.4 (1983): 850.

<sup>134</sup> Czigány, *Oxford History of Hungarian*, 170-174.

<sup>135</sup> András Fáy, *Eredeti meséi és aphorizmái* [Original fables and aphorisms] (Pest: Lajos Fűskúti Landerer, 1825) and András Fáy, *Fáy András Újabb eredeti meséi és aphorizmái* [New original fables and aphorisms from András Fáy] (Pest: 1825).

<sup>136</sup> Szinnyei, "Fáy András," *Magyar írók* [Hungarian writers], CD-ROM.

and English readers.<sup>137</sup> Another indication of their merit was that imitators tried to replicate Fáy's achievement, and capitalize on his success.<sup>138</sup> Finally, adding critical acclaim to readership interest, European recognition, financial windfall and imitation, the second book of these Fables even netted Fáy the prestigious Marczibányi prize of the Hungarian Scholarly Society in 1824, a prestigious accomplishment.<sup>139</sup>

O. Merényi, who wrote a condensed essay on Fáy's fable books, suggested that there was more to these fables than initially met the reader's eye. He too thought that they served a didactic function by "calling out to the conscience of the nation; it wanted to awaken it, to calm it, or to unsettle it..." Merényi thought that these innovative writings contained political allusions, in what he termed an "apolitical time,"<sup>140</sup> and that Fáy's intention was to reflect the nature of his society as through a mirror. Despite his strange contention about the absence of politics during this era, he went on to offer the contradictory statement that the Fables did have political content in two primary categories: they captured the "spiritual characteristics of being Hungarian" and the "current state of the Hungarian language and literature".<sup>141</sup> What exactly these elliptical categories meant is not clear. Ambiguity aside, Merényi's insistence that the national element was the most noticeable theme of Fáy's Fables serves as a reminder that these pithy writings were not intended for an underage readership. What Fáy was trying to accomplish with these tales was to introduce satirical and earnest social criticism into

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<sup>137</sup> Andreas Fáy, *Originelle Fabeln und Aphorismen* (Vienna: 1825), Zsigmond Deáky, *Grammatica ungherese ad uso degl'italiani* (Rome: Presso F.e.N. de Romanis, 1827) and E.D. Butler, *Az Olcsó Ebéd. The Cheap Dinner. Translated from the German into Hungarian and English. With an Allegory and a Few Fables by Fáy* (London: Haughton and Co., 1877) and E.D. Butler, *Hungarian Poems and Fables for English Readers* (London: Trübner and Co., 1877). The English translation prioritizes the moral of the fables at the expense of some context of the politics of the Hungarian reform period.

<sup>138</sup> Review of *Papiros tükor* [Papered mirror], by György Lengyel, *Kritikai Lapok* [Critical pages] 1 (1833): 74.

<sup>139</sup> Badics, *Fáy András Életrajza* [Biography of András Fáy], 169.

<sup>140</sup> Merényi's book appeared in the 1930s, which helps to contextualize his idealized interpretation of the Hungarian reform era.

<sup>141</sup> Merényi O., *Fáy András meséi* [The fables of András Fáy], 32 and 16.

seemingly harmless historical anecdotes or stories of animals conversing with one another.<sup>142</sup>

Fáy began his first book of fables with an introduction setting up a false premise that his book was harmless. After covertly trying to stay one step ahead of his detractors for the faultiness of his Hungarian due to his birth in Slovak surroundings, he compared himself metaphorically to the goose that hisses at everything under the sun. He tells tales, moralizes, and pinches here and there, but no one is afraid of him, and he will not make anything better.<sup>143</sup> By creating a setup of what his Fables were not Fáy in effect fabricated a duality that let him do exactly the opposite of his proclaimed intentions. He lulled readers into a sense of complacency with general morals about the unchanging (mainly negative) aspects of human nature, and then broke this pattern with an unmistakable political missive. The pithiness of the text added to the severity of the critical stance. To give an impression of their nature, here is the story ‘The Rooster’ in its entirety. This text casts doubt upon his age as a dawn of a “great era” in Hungarian history.

Wake up rooster friend! It’s dawning: so said the sparrow  
to the rooster slumbering beneath the shed. I would know  
he replied; it is just the moonlight peeking through the clouds,  
my friend. You can continue to sleep.  
My fellow Hungarians! How many have sung the song “The  
Hungarian Dawn is Upon Us.” Lord, still how dark is the light  
of day.<sup>144</sup>

Readers and listeners of the fables could enjoy the dialectical process of surmising who the person might have been who had inspired a particular critical remark, or appeared in the guise of a certain animal. There could even be so many layers to a particular story that

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<sup>142</sup> Badics, *Fáy András Életrajza* [Biography of András Fáy], 167.

<sup>143</sup> Fáy, *Eredeti meséi* [Original fables], VII and XVI.

<sup>144</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.

it was allegedly “impossible” for the writer to reveal all of them, thereby cleverly engaging the public’s imagination to see whatever it wanted.<sup>145</sup>

When Fáy did get down to the nitty-gritty of satire, he was fairly consistent in some of the topics he chose as targets for his quasi-concealed ire. One of these was his dissatisfaction with aspects of noble democracy in Hungary. In ‘The Crows’ Assembly’ a magpie asks what the crows managed to resolve at their meeting, and is told that it is only the next assembly that will decide the necessary course of action. The fable ‘The Sparrow-Convocation’ follows a similar pattern. The swallow remarks to a sparrow that he heard a great deal of talk and wondered what had been decided. To this the sparrow responded that discussions involving much talk normally imply little decisiveness. Fáy’s criticism is that political meetings tend not to be productive, a negative consequence of *una et eadem libertas*.<sup>146</sup> Office holders never come across in a favourable light. The aptly titled ‘Leech and the Ill Person’ ends with the ironic remark that many people who have served for thirty or forty years in a post believe that they have performed a valuable service. The ‘Fallen Bear’ about the titular animal falling from the tree, and making a virtue out of his helplessness, was also “learned behaviour from someone in office”.<sup>147</sup> Intergenerational conflict, namely the older noble generation retaining its grasp on power at the expense of the young, are the subject of ‘The Mistress and the Rooster’ and ‘The Advantages of Age’. In ‘The Mistress and the Rooster’ a woman catches the animal in order to finish it off while he assumes that she has made an error. In response to this naiveté the mistress tells the rooster that they will only benefit from putting a younger creature in place of the old. The ‘Advantages of Age’ tells the tale of a group of birds who gather to listen to a spring song in the forest. A young nightingale sings beautifully

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<sup>145</sup> As Fáy’s fables are rarities in print, some references will be from a twentieth century edition. András Fáy, *Lúd és Orr* [Goose and nose] (Budapest: Szépirodalmi Könyvkiadó, 1978), 107.

<sup>146</sup> Fáy, *Eredeti meséi* [Original fables], 21 and 41.

<sup>147</sup> Fáy, *Lúd és Orr* [Goose and nose], 123 and 95.

but the objections of the others force it to cease its song. The narrator/Fáy then enters the picture adding “I thought of this fable during the noise of a meeting, when an old county judge had just forced a young administrator to take a seat.”<sup>148</sup> Some of the most ambiguous and unsettling of this category are the aphorisms about the discrepancy between people’s appearance and their true nature. Aphorism 25 makes the statement “(t)he sickness of our age is wanting to appear to be great”. Number 33 expresses Fáy’s contempt for people who pretend to come to heel, while number 39 is about how “(i)n society, a man is always wearing a mask.”<sup>149</sup> All of these themes reflect Fáy’s personal experiences with the political life of which he was a part; although his generation did want to create a Magyar culture that would gradually correspond to the boundaries of the nation, these insights serve as potent reminders of its internal weaknesses, even at this formative stage.

Another pronounced theme in these Fables is Fáy’s deep dissatisfaction with the magnate nobility and the great lords of the realm. They waste the country’s money (‘The Tiger and the Lion’), speak to lesser people only out of self-interest (‘The Cat and the Fox’) and their clothes are the best part of their person (‘The Marten and the Fox’). The fable ‘The Crow and the Goldfinch’ tells the story of a crow who does not tolerate a goldfinch beside him to dry his feathers because then he would not have the sun upon him. Fáy then adds this tale is about why many benefactors (i.e. great lords) deny requests for support: they fear being overshadowed, some are arrogant, but most are jealous. ‘The Avaricious Driver’ takes down a magnate noble who insists on pushing his own cart out of the ruts in the road. The horse responds that fodder would be better than his assistance. Fáy’s moral is that “...the lords should be patrons, rather than

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<sup>148</sup> Ibid., 103-104 and 97.

<sup>149</sup> Fáy, *Eredeti meséi* [Original fables], 114-116.

insignificant little writers”.<sup>150</sup> Most likely there were two strands to Fáy’s constant reiteration of the shortcomings of those deemed to be pillars of the state. The fact that they were not as active in supporting the Magyar national movement as the middle nobility may have incurred his partial resentment. More likely, his vexation was probably due to class resentments of those hierarchically above his station. In this writing, he was able to equalize these differences through his scorn.

Finally, the Fables did have a lot of revelatory commentary about the Hungarian literary scene. Fáy tried to make a case for art for art’s sake, that writers should toil away whether anyone ever reads their writing or not. It may seem an honourable sentiment, but when combined with other fables mocking writers who write for a living, it becomes clear that Fáy wished to be somewhat socially exclusive and to restrict Magyar literature to (his) aristocratic and intellectual circles.<sup>151</sup> In the fable ‘The Obelisk’ he laments that too many people were toiling away at the Hungarian language, a somewhat hypocritical statement from someone who was doing the same thing. The ‘Bovine and the Fowl’ contained a similar dose of hypocrisy, as writers of the homeland were asked to write less, and scholars to read less and digest it better.<sup>152</sup> In the first book Fáy used the opportunity to wade into the dispute on word coinages, comparing orthologues to people who did not wish to retille their roofs, because the replaced tiles would be out of keeping with the rest (‘The Old and New Roof Tiling’).<sup>153</sup> Lastly, Fáy repeatedly addressed the topic of the reading public in surprising terms. ‘The Professor and His Deaf Neighbour’ was about a professor whose reading was disturbed by a singing deaf person. He shouts asking why he is making a loud noise he cannot truly appreciate. The deaf person replies that others can hear and that is reason enough for him. Like the deaf person’s song,

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<sup>150</sup> Fáy, *Lúd és Orr* [Goose and nose], 52 and 106 and Fáy, *Eredeti meséi* [Original fables], 60-61, 80, 107.

<sup>151</sup> Fáy, *Eredeti meséi* [Original fables], 90 and Fáy, *Lúd és Orr* [Goose and nose], 83.

<sup>152</sup> Fáy, *Eredeti meséi* [Original fables], 23, 48.

<sup>153</sup> *Ibid.*, 76.



contemporary writers were most capable of appreciating their own art. Fáy urged writers to think along the lines that: “as much as our audience might admire us, let us admire ourselves more”. The reason for such narcissistic vanity was that writers had limitations too. This moral is the ending for the fable ‘The Tailor and the Gentleman’. After several attempts a tailor cannot fit a suit onto a gentleman to his satisfaction. Chased out of the gentleman’s presence, the tailor defends his work with the reasoning that he “...can only sew a suit to fit a frame, not the frame to correspond to the suit.”<sup>154</sup> In other words, a writer’s work may be witty and well-executed, but brains and good taste were not attributes of what he termed, with an added bit of condescension, the *profanum vulgus*.

All of these criticisms taken together demonstrate that Fáy, and likely others as well, had some difficulty adjusting to the literary scene of the early nineteenth century, of which he was a part. Fáy wanted to restrict the boundaries of this scene to select people, resented others for engaging in exactly the same activity, and was sometimes offended at having to win over a public of inferior birth. Yet, the democratic nature of the reform era literary scene, and its new public were what made him a writer. All of these qualms give voice to how the Magyar literary scene was expanding beyond the confines of the feudal society of estates and orders, a dynamic beyond the control and complete liking even of those who made the transformation happen.

Fáy’s penchant for embedding political ideas in literature was not limited to his *Fables*. Other stories also employ this strategy. Since these involve fictional characters in imaginary situations, they could not utilize the duality of innocent absurdity combined with social commentary that the stylistic device of anthropomorphization made so appealing and novel. Instead, many of the short stories rely on satire or comedy to perform a similar slight of hand that deflected attention from the deeper layer of didacticism that underlay the comedic tone of the surface.

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<sup>154</sup> Fáy, *Lúd és Orr* [Goose and nose], 117 and 100-101.

Fáy's 'The Odd Will' (1818) and 'Repeated Lateness' (1822) both deal with the topic of young men courting several women, who have "intrinsic faults" and are hence unsuitable. In 'The Odd Will' a dying father called Csörgey makes his son his heir on the condition that within the span of three years Károly marry a woman who is either beautiful without vanity, rich without condescension or educated without a propensity towards "shameless display of knowledge."<sup>155</sup> Károly fails in the task, but there is still a happy ending. He obtains the inheritance because his father had the foreknowledge he would fail, and his true purpose was to teach his son "soberly to respect women despite all the inherent faults of their sex."<sup>156</sup> 'Repeated Lateness' returns to the theme of courting but without the promise of a marriage that is the culmination to the comedic arc of 'The Odd Will'. Here József is "too late" to marry Tercsike (who has a suitor), Juczika (who was healthy but is now deformed as a result of a corset and a misstep at a ball), and Luiza (who has fallen in love with a soldier). At the end of the story the title character marries no one, and decides to live a bachelor's life in Pest.<sup>157</sup>

These stereotypical portrayals of woman tinged with misogyny are echoes of Fáy's failed political advocacy to create women's schools or training colleges for teachers of women. Fáy was not the only one to sound the clarion call for women's education and teaching facilities in the reform era.<sup>158</sup> Many stories, press articles and books appeared on the subject from male commentators such as Ádám Pálóczi Horváth, István Kultsár, János Hetényi, Gustáv Steinacker and Imre Vahot in addition to Fáy. Interested women

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<sup>155</sup> András Fáy, *A különös végrendelet*, [The odd will,] 11<sup>th</sup> ed. (Békéscsaba: Tevan, 1922), 17.

<sup>156</sup> *Ibid.*, 77.

<sup>157</sup> András Fáy, "Az elkésések," ["Repeated lateness,"] in *Fáy András összes beszéleyei, első kötet* [The complete short stories of András Fáy, volume one] (Budapest: Franklin Társulat, 1883), 81, 88, 94 and 103.

<sup>158</sup> Fáy published some of his views on women's education in his book: *Nőnevelés és nőnevelő intézetek hazánkban* [Raising women and women's training institutes in our homeland] (Pest: Károly Trattner, 1841). He supported the nationalization of women because "women held the keys of our nation in their hands" and as long as Hungarian was only spoken in conference rooms, out of necessity, to the servants, and by peasants "then in effect we were not truly Magyar". *Ibid.*, 94.

also voiced their opinions on the topic, including Éva Karacs, her daughter Teréz, Countess Blanka Teleki and Rózsa Erdélyi.<sup>159</sup> Their efforts culminated in the discussion of the question of teaching centres and schools concentrating on women at the Diet of 1843-1844 in a special committee, chaired by Ferenc Deák.<sup>160</sup> Despite the committee's progressive recommendations to establish a national fund to create teaching colleges for women, and to allow women to train as teachers alongside of men, their suggestions came to nothing due to insufficient political will.<sup>161</sup>

Some of Fáy's other short stories covered the topics of professions transcending the specifications of feudal estates and orders ['What Would I Wish My Son to Do?' 1835], or ridiculed the Hungarian propensity to love foreign goods and ideas at the expense of homegrown products ['Even a Good Heart Endures Obstacles' 1835].<sup>162</sup> In *Adventures of the Heart and Mind*, (1838) the story titled 'Famous' details Fáy's recollection of a coffeehouse conversation, in which a hairdresser named János Nagy and his companions critique the initiatives of Széchenyi in Hungary. In effect it is a vindication of Széchenyi's politics, and further proof of the growth of non-élite public opinion in Hungary, and Fáy's aristocratic unease with this development.<sup>163</sup> Finally, 'Appeal' (1839)<sup>164</sup> touched on the topic of one of Fáy's pet social projects, the establishment of savings' banks in Hungary, which will be dealt with in more detail in the subsequent chapter.

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<sup>159</sup> Hedwig Holdampf, "Nők a közéletben a reformkori Magyarországon," ["Women in public life in the Hungarian age of reform,"] *Sic itur ad astra* Vol.XI No.1 (1999): 58-67.

<sup>160</sup> Deák was a leading nineteenth-century Hungarian politician and a key player in the Austro-Hungarian Compromise of 1867. In English please see: Béla K. Király, *Ferenc Deák* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1975).

<sup>161</sup> Katalin Szegvári Nagy, *A nők művelődési jogaiért folytatott harc hazánkban (1777-1918)* [The struggle for women's educational rights in our homeland (1777-1918)] (Budapest: Közgazdasági és Jogi Könyvkiadó, 1969), 41.

<sup>162</sup> Both are reprinted in *Fáy András összes beszélei, első kötet* [The complete short stories of András Fáy, volume one].

<sup>163</sup> András Fáy, "Hírnév," ["Famous,"] in *Fáy András összes beszélei, második kötet* [The complete short stories of András Fáy, volume two] (Budapest: Franklin Társulat, 1883), 103-121.

<sup>164</sup> This story is reprinted in the volume just cited.

All of these themes woven into Fáy's fictional literature clearly aimed to democratize current political debates for a public who might not have been as interested in reading the same information in a journal or political tract. Lulled into the complacency of expecting an escapist tale, the hope was that the reader or listener would have increased subliminal receptivity toward the polemical message beneath the surface. The use of Magyar as the communicative language for these ideas was also of significance. It nationalized these liberal political ideas as theoretically of importance for all those able to think, speak, read and write using Hungarian. Literature such as Fáy's, thus helped to create a public receptive to Magyar political culture.

### **Committees for the Propagation of the Hungarian Language**

When Fáy became the second member of parliament for Pest County on September 24, 1835, one of his great causes was that of the Hungarian language, which is not surprising. He replaced Ferenc Péchy for his colleague's repeated transgression of the county's instructions to its representatives,<sup>165</sup> and sat alongside vice Lord Lieutenant Simon Dubraviczky, first representative for Pest. Fáy's position on the nature and use of the Magyar language in Hungary may be gleaned from one of his diatal speeches on the topic.

....if we do not even have a language, and we do not, until it is not used country-wide, as long as our laws are in foreign words, then we are not a nation, but simply various classes of different peoples living in one principality and under one set of laws, not a decorative and permanent structure, but simply a collection of rocks, without any binding cement, that a single small movement threatens with collapse.

....Of the second group who has prejudices (against Magyar) I ask, which language should be the state language of diplomacy in our homeland? Perhaps Slovak? So that we would unite with the oriental giant that threatens to devour all of Europe? Should we choose the more cultured German tongue? So that we should aid what our petitions and grievances

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<sup>165</sup> Géza Ballagi, *A nemzet államalkotás kora, 1815-1847*, [The age of national state formation, 1815-1847,] ed. Sándor Szilágyi, vol.9, *A magyar nemzet története* [The history of the Hungarian nation] (Budapest: Athenaeum, 1897), 286-287. Fáy's appointment caused so much disagreement between Chancellor Ádám Reviczky and Palatine József that Metternich, and subsequently the King had to intervene. In the end, Fáy's credentials were not called into question.

presented to the king have always tried to forestall, that we should become an Austrian province? Or should we raise a Romanian suitable for ancient mystifications to the rank of a diplomatic language? Why? Do more people understand it than Hungarian? Or is our wish that our laws, which are binding to every citizen, should only be understood by those who have gone to school? Or is there more propriety and justice in teaching dead foreign languages than a language of a living nation?<sup>166</sup>

Before Fáy began his series of fiery speeches in the Diet about the need to devote attention to the use of Magyar in Hungary, he was involved for several years in the activities of the Committee for the Hungarian Language, made up of members of the nobility of Pest County. The Committee was composed of about thirty people, including two Barons, seven Counts, the prebendaries of Kalocsa and Vác, an archdeacon of the Greek Orthodox of Buda, one pastor from the Calvinist church, two from the Lutheran, a priest representing a Greek Orthodox community, and one advocate for the Jews of Pest County. Various judges who served at county level, notaries, and other noblemen made up the remainder of the composition of the Committee. Fáy was the only writer who had a seat at this table.<sup>167</sup>

By this time, the Magyar language had already made advances in Hungary. In 1805, laws were allowed to be published in Hungarian and Latin. Legally, the Vice-Regal Council and the *Curia regis*<sup>168</sup> had to respond to correspondence in Hungarian, if the text of the letter was in the same language by 1830. In addition no one was to be hired to an official post or allowed to take the bar exam without knowledge of Hungarian.<sup>169</sup> The committees for the advancement of the Magyar language were an expression of

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<sup>166</sup> "A Pest Varmegye követjének Fáy Andrásnak a' Magyar Nyelvben mondott beszéde,"["Pest county's representative András Fáy's speech concerning the Hungarian language,"] Dunamelléki Református Egyházkerület Ráday Levéltár. [Ráday Archive of the Calvinist District Along the Danube] Hereafter RL. Ráday Gyűjtemény C/24 Fáy András.

<sup>167</sup> "Pest county nobility meeting November 26, 1842," Pest Megyei Levéltár. [Archives of Pest county] Hereafter PML. *Acta Politica Miscellanea, 1831-1839. A magyar nyelv ügye* [The Hungarian language cause] no.441.

<sup>168</sup> The *Curia regis* was the supreme court of Hungary. It was made up of the *Judicum septemvirale* and the King's Bench (*Tabula regia*).

<sup>169</sup> Dezső Márkus, ed., "Law 1830 Article 8 §1, 2, 4 and 5," *1740-1835. évi törvénycikkek in Magyar törvénytár* [The laws of 1740-1835 in Corpus juris hungarici], 501.

dissatisfaction with the progress the language was making in Hungary, and a wish to accelerate the pace and concentration of magyarization. Pest County had a reputation and ambition for leading the country, and it did not wish to be left behind on this crucial national matter.

A meeting of the estates of Pest County on January 20, 1831 set the tone for some of the objectives of the Committee. From now on only petitions submitted to the county written in Magyar were to be given attention, court cases by county judges were to be conducted in this language only, letters from official bodies utilizing another language were to receive a reply stating that they switch to Hungarian in the future, and special attention was to be given to school teachers and priests as only they “could carry out the task of bringing the Hungarian language into full bloom.”<sup>170</sup>

As these members of the nobility were fluent in several languages, writing official governmental correspondence in Magyar or incorporating it more thoroughly into their activities in law were not the most demanding aspects of the mandate of the Committee. The records reveal that most of their attention and effort was directed toward ensuring compliance was happening elsewhere. County officials went on inspection visits to district schools and noted how many boys and girls attended, information concerning their teachers (the language of instruction, their pay scales, if they had to perform other jobs on the side in order to make a living), and special problems schools faced in a particular area (flood damage ruining a building, no books, parents who could not afford to send children to school etc..).

What these inspectors found was a great lack of uniformity. In Nagy Kovátsi 90 boys and 87 girls attended school, and they learned reading, writing and religion in German and Hungarian. In the district of Pilis Szántó 62 boys and 54 girls learned

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<sup>170</sup> “Pest county nobility meeting January 20, 1831,” PML *Acta Politica Miscellanea*, 1831-1839. A magyar nyelv ügye [The Hungarian language cause] no.441.

elementary skills in Hungarian and Slovak, but many could not attend classes regularly because they did not have sufficient clothing. In Üröm teaching in German and Hungarian was interrupted in the summer months, when the children's parents pulled them out of classes to work in the fields and vineyards. Pomáz had a teacher named Lőrincz Wohl and an assistant called György Mayer, but they were owed more than 700 ft in salary from parents. Lastly, in one school in Kaláz a teacher named Simon Sztepanacz had to work in three languages, Serbian, Hungarian and German, and simultaneously cope with all of the social problems of his students.<sup>171</sup>

Sometimes conditions in Pest County schools were not just problematic but intolerable. The notes for the inspection of the Óbuda Calvinist School recorded that despite being located in a city, parents were not helpless, but too stubborn to send their children to classes. These charges were repeated time and again, for example for the Calvinist school in Pomáz, and for the elementary school in Vörösvár. In Bogdány an inspector found that 249 students could not physically fit into the school building, and additional rooms were necessary. There were even sadly comical situations. The Csobánka inspection brought to light that in the Roman Catholic School the teacher was completely incompetent. He did not know any language other than German, and despite the constant reprimands of the community, regularly went hunting instead of showing up to teach.<sup>172</sup> If the Magyarization Committee had not started to be concerned about the

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<sup>171</sup> "Tabular representation of the subjects studied and number of children attending school in the district of Nagy Kovátsi in the first and second halves of the year 1843," "The school district of Pilis Szántó in the first half of the school year 1843-1844," "The school district of Üröm in the second half of the school year 1844," "The school district of Pomáz in the first half of the school year 1843," and "The G.H.E national school in Kaláz in the first half of the school year 1843," in PML *Acta Politica Miscellanea, 1831-1839. A magyar nyelv ügye* [The Hungarian language cause] no. 441.

<sup>172</sup> "Óbuda Calvinist school report, March 28, 1839," "Pomáz Calvinist school report, March 5, 1839," "Vörösvár elementary school report, February 26, 1839," and "School report for Csobánka," in PML *Acta Politica Miscellanea, 1831-1839. A magyar nyelv ügye* [The Hungarian language cause] no. 441.

language of teaching, these problems with the funding of education and conditions in the schools of Pest County and elsewhere would not have been exposed for years to come.

Given the many problems of Hungarian schools at this time, comments about the progress of magyarization were few and far between. When the Magyarization Committee of Pest met to discuss the results of the school inspections, they decided that a new, more inclusive approach was needed in order for progress to occur on the language question. Linguistic diversity was named as the number one problem hindering education. It was everyone's "responsibility to the homeland to speak its language" and the best way to achieve this goal was "to unite education with nationality". Therefore the Committee's first recommendation was "that the language of teaching in respected schools as well as in provincial schools should occur in the Hungarian language". The subsequent recommendations reveal that the Committee realized the achievement of the first goal actually was highly conditional. In descending order, lack of suitable teachers, textbooks of insufficient quality and quantity, the poverty of the parents (inability to pay schoolteachers, buy textbooks), failure to bring children to school so that they would work at home instead and the bad example of the parents all needed to be overcome *before* magyarization could even seriously be put on the school agenda for Pest County.<sup>173</sup>

Since school funding came from religious institutions, communities, parents, and bequests of the lords of the land, Pest County did not have the financial resources needed to overhaul the education system of the county. All it could do at this time was consider setting up a Sub-Committee to report to the main Magyarization Committee bi-annually, which would be more precise in linking progress in "the Hungarian language,

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<sup>173</sup> "Pest county nobility meeting November 26, 1842," PML *Acta Politica Miscellanea*, 1831-1839. A magyar nyelv ügye [The Hungarian language cause] no. 441.



coalescence of nationality and folk education” into the purview of one organization.<sup>174</sup> County judges had difficulty performing the tasks of their office, and then they were saddled with the added job of visiting a large number of schools once a year. It is no wonder that Pest County resorted to simple and cost effective tactics to reward special efforts in aiding magyarization, such as giving especially dedicated teachers memorial coins bearing the crest of Pest County on one side, and the words “For a humble Propagator of the Hungarian Language” on the other.<sup>175</sup> As the examples above clearly demonstrate, Pest County’s Hungarian Language Committee was only able to apply minimal pressure on its schools. Advances in magyarization relied on local example and initiative, leading to mixed results. Where there was little initiative, as in Kis Újfalú, the school inspector could do little more than note that the Slovak Lutheran population was making minimal advances in national coalescence, and few people even understood any Magyar. In contrast Püspök-Hatvan was a success story, because the Slovak and German Roman Catholics could almost all speak three languages.<sup>176</sup>

Not wishing to shy away from mixing issues of nationality and religion, the Hungarian Language Committee of Pest also looked at what languages were used in religious services, and saw opportunities for potential improvement. Most problematic from their point of view were Lutherans. It was not their nationality or their relationship to the Hungarian language that posed difficulties, but their location in Slovak-concentrated districts in Pest, and their lack of sufficient resources for learning to speak and read Magyar. Since the county could not overcome such obstacles, local priests were encouraged to deliver Hungarian Sunday sermons on a bi-monthly basis in areas of the county where Slovak and German linguistic patterns predominated, or every Sunday

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<sup>174</sup> Ibid.

<sup>175</sup> Ferenc Kerényi, *Pest vármegye irodalmi élete (1790-1867)* [The literary life of Pest county (1790-1867)] (Budapest: Pest Megye Monográfia Közalapítvány, 2002), 38.

<sup>176</sup> “School reports for Kis Újfalú and Püspök-Hatvan,” *PML Acta Politica Miscellanea, 1831-1839. A magyar nyelv ügye* [The Hungarian language cause] no. 441.

where the bi-monthly Hungarian sermons had already become established practice. Officials of the Roman Catholic and Greek Orthodox hierarchies, as well as worldly officials (the county judges again), were co-opted to serve as inspectors in hundreds of churches. The only means at their disposal to enforce these new added responsibilities was to appeal to the consciences of their local priests that teaching Magyar in church was part of their patriotic duties as a citizen, and in doing so they would “considerably advance the cause of happiness in the homeland”.<sup>177</sup>

The measures that Pest’s Hungarian Language Committee adopted were replicated in districts across the county. Many counties took the trouble of submitting to Pest documents explaining what they were doing at the local level in relation to the Hungarian language. Nógrád County sanctioned the creation of an institute for the propagation of Magyar. Gömör County nobles sent their recommendations for magyarization to landlords and asked that they would be read out publicly in churches on three consecutive Sundays, so that their measures could become public knowledge. Arad County set up a teacher training facility to assist teachers with Magyar lessons. In Moson County there was even a resolution to forbid marriage if one of the contracting parties had unspecified “insufficient knowledge of Hungarian”. Thankfully, this suggestion was abandoned on the conditions that it was opposed to morality, and could not be applied to every inhabitant.<sup>178</sup> The most consistent demand was the necessity for local government officials, record keepers, judges as well as teachers and priests to have knowledge of the Hungarian language. Although there were demands that people who did not know Hungarian should not be hired, or should be dismissed if they failed to learn some

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<sup>177</sup> “Pest county nobility meeting January 14, 1832,” PML *Acta Politica Miscellanea, 1831-1839. A magyar nyelv ügye* [The Hungarian language cause] no. 441.

<sup>178</sup> “Nógrád county nobility meeting August 23, 1833,” “Gömör and Little Hont county nobility meeting February 3, 1834,” “Arad county nobility meeting April 11, 1831,” and “Moson county nobility meeting February 2, 1832,” PML *Acta Politica Miscellanea, 1831-1839. A magyar nyelv ügye* [The Hungarian language cause] no. 441.

Magyar in a set number of years, there is no indication that these demands were followed. Given the relatively small bureaucracy at county level, such measures were neither feasible nor possible.

The Pest County Magyarization Committee was not the most liberal or radical such organization, despite the ambition of its nobility to make it the leading county in the country in all matters, including the political advance of the Magyar language. It was one of twenty-two counties that sent instructions to dietal representatives for the 1832-1836 Diet for more laws to be passed regulating the use of the Magyar language.<sup>179</sup> Fáy's speeches on the topic testify to this concern on the part of Pest County. So too does an actual glance at the dietal instructions that bound Pest representatives, which stated that the letter of the law of 1830 Article 8 was not being followed, and this situation was to be rectified.<sup>180</sup> To make amends, this Diet passed the law that made Hungarian the official language for justice records and registers. Probably due to some non-compliance at local level, the Diet of 1839-1840 made it clear that the 1836 law applied to registers in non-Hungarian areas as well as those inhabited by concentrations of Magyar speakers. Priests were required to know some Hungarian, even if they preached in another language.<sup>181</sup> This measure was partially a practical one, as religious authorities in Hungary, particularly at lower levels, were oftentimes civil servants who were required to write baptismal, marital and death records for state purposes in addition to fulfilling their religious obligations. Finally, in 1844 Magyar was made the state language of the Kingdom of Hungary.<sup>182</sup> The focus that the Diet was the place to enact laws expanding the use of Hungarian instead of at county level through Magyar-language committees

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<sup>179</sup> Kerényi, *Pest vármegye irodalmi élete* [The literary life of Pest county], 40.

<sup>180</sup> Károly Gálóczy, *Pest Pilis Solt Kiskun megye monográfiája, első kötet* [The history of Pest Pilis Solt and Kiskun county, volume one] (Budapest: Pest Megye, 1877), 146.

<sup>181</sup> Dezső Márkus ed., "Law 1840 Article VI § 7 and 8," *1836-1868. évi törvények* in Magyar törvénytár [The laws of 1836-1868 in Corpus juris hungarici] (Budapest: Franklin Társulat, 1896), 92.

<sup>182</sup> Ibid., "Law 1844 Article II §1-9," 198.

attests to the limitations that these organizations faced. They simply did not have the financial, manpower, or legal resources to put their recommendations into force. Moving the forum from the local level up to the national one at the Diet allowed them to circumvent these shortcomings, and to pass the measures institutionalizing Magyar as the state language of the country. Despite the best efforts of Fáy and others who sat on the magyarization committees across the country, their political cause in favour of the Magyar language was hindered not chiefly by resistance from non-Magyar national groups, but by pressing deficiencies in social welfare.

### **Freedom of Speech at the 1832-1836 Diet and the Politics of Terrorism<sup>183</sup>**

Magyar writers enjoyed relative success in having their works published, thereby assisting the development of a Hungarian literary culture. The spread of the use of the Magyar language was also hastened by magyarization committees and statutory recognition. These cultural and linguistic advances encouraged politicians such as Fáy to take their campaign in relation to Magyar to the next level: to urge the Diet of 1832-1836 to grant the right to greater freedom of speech, in effect institutionalizing the gains they had made thus far, and ensuring that the trajectory was in place for them to continue in the future.

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<sup>183</sup> I am using the word terrorism because it is original to the primary sources consulted. In the 1830s usage of the word terrorism was still in keeping with the concept of arbitrary state force against the people as characterized by the Jacobin phase of the French Revolution. The modern conception of terrorism as an action from below directed against the power of the state only appeared on the European scene in the late decades of the nineteenth century. On the subject of repression of the Hungarian liberal opposition as state terror please consult: Gábor Pajkossy, "A kormányzati 'terrorizmus' politikája Magyarországon 1835 és 1839 között," ["The policy of governmental 'terrorism' in Hungary between 1835 and 1839,"] *Századok* [Centuries] Vol. 141 No.3 (2007): 683-721 and Pajkossy "A kormányzati 'terrorizmus' politikája és az 1839-1840. évi országgyűlés," ["The politics of governmental 'terrorism' and the diet of 1839-1840,"] *Történelmi Szemle* [Historical journal] Vol. 48 No. 1-2 (2006): 25-52. On the shift of the terminology of terrorism: Richard Bach Jensen, "Daggers, Rifles and Dynamite: Anarchist Terrorism in Nineteenth Century Europe," *Terrorism and Political Violence* Vol. 16 No. 1 (Spring 2004): 116-153.

When Fáy arrived in Pozsony in September 1835 the issue of freedom of speech was already a heated topic of debate. A series of events had brought the matter into sharp focus. Baron Miklós Wesselényi (1796-1850) had been charged with *lese majesté* by the King's Bench for a cannibalistic reference to the government "sucking the fat of nine million people" made on November 10 and December 9, 1834 at a meeting of the nobility of Szatmár County.<sup>184</sup> Wesselényi had wanted to argue that while the peasants bore the burdens of taxation to support the upkeep of the state, the government did too little to serve their needs. The indictment was meant to serve as an example that the government took these matters so seriously that even this remark questioning their commitment would have harsh consequences. The problem with the charge was two-fold: conviction on the penalty of *lese majesté* was punishable with death, and it was doubtful whether such a vague statement unsupported by any treasonable *action* truly constituted any personal danger against the monarch.<sup>185</sup>

In a related matter, government authorities had ordered an investigation in Békés County. The nobility of Békés County had insisted that serfs and the matter of ending their feudal obligations needed to be put back on the agenda for dietal debate. Also objectionable was the nobility of Békés' opposition to the suggestion that the speaker of the Lower House (the *personalis*) be given the right to determine if a parliamentary representative had violated the instructions of his county, and needed to be recalled to his constituency.<sup>186</sup> At issue was not only that the nobles of Békés were objecting to how the King and his ministers were trying to conduct the course of the Diet, but also that the Hungarian counties were corresponding with one another to generate a liberal majority against the government. Between July 21 and August 1, 1835 Ádám Szirmay was sent to

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<sup>184</sup> Mérei and Vörös, *Magyarország története, második kötet* [The history of Hungary, volume two], 756-757.

<sup>185</sup> Ibid.

<sup>186</sup> Völgyesi, "Királyi biztosi vizsgálat," ["Royal commissioner's investigation,"]: 29, 30.

find out who was responsible for the inter-county correspondence, a task he failed to accomplish. The government investigation in Békés became associated with freedom of speech because the King had previously given his approval for the nobility of the counties to exchange information in a resolution on November 26, 1825.<sup>187</sup> Since the King and his ministers were deeming actions to be illegal that had previously been sanctioned by law, the governmental attack on freedom of speech broadened into one against liberalism, Hungarian constitutionalism and its burgeoning democracy, putting it on shaky ground.

Recognizing all that was at stake in the two incidents, but also that the parameters of discourse made it impossible technically to claim their own government was acting illegally, the estates and orders streamlined their dietal grievances over this issue to the concept of violation of freedom of speech. Defending the abstract concept allowed them to include mention of these and other specific injustices without directly challenging royal authority over Hungary. Pest County representatives actively spoke out on these issues. The archives of the county contain many documents stating the objection of the Lower House to transgressions of the right to free speech, and the replies of the Upper House blocking the petition from reaching the King.<sup>188</sup> The Lower House of the Diet always restated the same position. These indictments violated the “transparency needed to conduct public affairs” and that laws guaranteed the right of the counties to exchange correspondence.<sup>189</sup>

Although Dubraviczky was the first representative for Pest, and had precedence in speaking, Fáy took over the responsibility of handling the replies on freedom of

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<sup>187</sup> Ibid., 33, 36, 34.

<sup>188</sup> “Seventh denial of the upper house relating to freedom of speech,” “Eighth message of the estates and orders concerning freedom of speech,” etc. *PML Acta Politica Miscellanea*, 1835. Országgyűlési iratok [Dietal records] no. 485.

<sup>189</sup> “Message of the estates and orders in the matter of resolving the grievance of the princely order allowing a royal official investigation in Békés county,” *PML Acta Politica Miscellanea*, 1835. Országgyűlési iratok [Dietal records] no. 485.

speech, presumably because as a writer and supporter of the Hungarian language these issues were close to his heart, and would make him more effective as a spokesperson. On October 12, 1835, in a circular session of the Lower Diet, he argued that personal, financial and intellectual freedom were the spirit of the constitutional order. The Békés grievance was an indication that a “moral body, a municipality, (was) being disrobed of its constitutional rights”, and freedom of speech was the most important right of all, as it guaranteed the preservation of all other freedoms. These governmental actions lowered Hungary to the level of American slaves, who were similarly punished by not being allowed to speak.<sup>190</sup> When the Upper House sent its ninth refusal to allow the Lower House’s freedom of speech petition to be put before the King,<sup>191</sup> county representatives tried to change their strategy of argumentation. Several representatives began to express concern about national governmental authorities overreaching the scope of their authority. Zsigmond Bernáth (1790-1882) of Ungvár County worried that the restriction of municipal rights increased the power of the government and the Upper House. Representative Rubinyi wondered if the government’s orders were based on thoughtlessness, or a personal vendetta against certain individuals? He concluded by saying that he believed these actions endangered the moral authority of the governing bodies. Fáty went further to claim that the Upper House not only wanted to participate in the creation of legislation, but wanted to engage in the foreign practice of veto power. At the end of the day a resolution passed to send the tenth petition concerning freedom of speech to the Upper House, which similar to the ones before, was deemed not worthy of presentation before the King.<sup>192</sup>

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<sup>190</sup> “Dietal reports, no.289 October 14, 1835,” Magyar Országos Levéltár [Hungarian National Archives] Hereafter MOL Országgyűlési tudósítások [Dietal reports] #7154 No.18.

<sup>191</sup> “Dietal reports, no.291 circular session of the upper house, October 19, 1835,” MOL Országgyűlési tudósítások [Dietal reports] #7154 No.18.

<sup>192</sup> “Dietal reports, no.296, October 31, 1835,” MOL Országgyűlési tudósítások [Dietal reports] #7154 No.18.

As the Diet approached its conclusion without resolution of this pivotal issue governmental arrests continued. At the circular session of January 2, 1836 the Lower House debated the case of János Bod, a lawyer from the nobility resident in Pest County, who was arrested on January 8, 1835 for illegal possession of a handwritten article from the German paper Tribune, and had spent four months in jail and six subsequent months in hospital under watch without being charged with a crime. At this point dietal representatives such as Fáy upped the ante, branding governmental actions state-sponsored terrorism. In Fáy's reasoning, it was "the worst kind of despotism that cloaks itself in mysticism, and attacks a free country's free citizens' most precious possessions: their independence, their lives, their dignity."<sup>193</sup> The case of János Bod resulted in a similar impasse between the two houses of parliament, with the Upper House declining to accept a petition regarding the issue on the grounds that more insight and clarity would not be gained with a subsequent official investigation of the case.<sup>194</sup>

Soon the case of János Bod gave way to the more notorious ones of the arrest of the dietal youth, and eventually Kossuth himself. The dietal youth were a group of young men who attended the Diet as secretaries on behalf of absentee magnates and widows. Led by László Lovassy, and including Ferencz Lovassy, János Tormássy and János Lapsánszky they were charged for involvement in a conversational society, for arranging shelter for three Polish political refugees and holding inflammatory speeches that were influential in the creation of public opinion. László Lovassy was further indicted for compromising letters and torchlight procession speeches.<sup>195</sup> Arrested at the end of the

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<sup>193</sup> "Dietal reports, no.312 circular session of the lower house, January 2, 1836," MOL Országgyűlési tudósítások [Dietal reports] #7154 No.18.

<sup>194</sup> "Reply of the Hungarian upper house in the matter of Pest county's grievance in relation to the imprisonment of nobleman János Bod," PML *Acta Politica Miscellanea, 1835-1836*. Országgyűlési iratok [Dietal records] no. 436.

<sup>195</sup> George Barany estimated that 1500 dietal youth were present at the 1832-1836 Diet, including Kossuth. "The Hungarian Diet of 1839-40 and the Fate of Szechenyi's Middle Course," *Slavic Review* Vol. 22 No.2 (June 1963): 290-292. On the role of the dietal youth's torchlight



Diet in May 1836, their cause was taken up at the county level. Worrisome were not only the charges against the men, but the fact they had been arrested by soldiers (royal authority) and not county officials, that they were not entitled to a proper defense and that the proceedings against them were closed to the public.<sup>196</sup>

At the Pest meeting of the estates held on August 30, 1836 Fáy again levied the accusation of engaging in terrorist practices against the royal authorities for their use of secrecy in the proceedings. He demanded that the youth be released from military prison and given over to the civil authorities, that assurances be given that such action would not be repeated in future, that people responsible for these actions be called to account for them, and that due process of law be respected.<sup>197</sup> The debate on that day involved sending a letter to the Palatine on behalf of the county regarding the incarcerated young men. After going back and forth on the issue, it was deemed better to deliver the letter to the Palatine in person as part of a committee that included István Károlyi, Count Sámuel Teleky, Count Gedeon Ráday, Baron Pál Bánffy, Miklós Jankovics, Fáy and József Patay. The nobility of Pest received a reply from the Palatine four days later, which addressed the issue, but did not diffuse the volatility of the situation.<sup>198</sup>

Around the time that the dietal youth were sentenced and counties such as Pest protested governmental use of force against the opposition, the politics of terrorism reached their zenith with the arrest of Kossuth on May 5, 1837 for treason against the King. All in all twenty-two political trials were being heard before the King's Bench at

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processions and harassing crowds as political instruments see Edsel Walter Stroup, "Hungary under Noble Leadership and Habsburg Rule: 1830-1844, with Emphasis on the Issues of Peasant Liberation and Tax Reform" (Ph.D diss., University of Akron, 1986), 157-158.

<sup>196</sup> Ballagi, *A nemzet államalkotás kora, 1815-1847*, [The age of national state formation, 1815-1847], 428.

<sup>197</sup> "Pest county nobility meeting August 30, 1836," MOL *Törvényhatósági tudósítások* [Municipal reports] R100 #7156 No.20.

<sup>198</sup> Ibid.

this time.<sup>199</sup> The King, Metternich and other governmental ministers were unable to view freedom of speech and political opposition in Hungary as part of a positive dynamic involving civil society formation and gestating democratic process.<sup>200</sup> Instead, he thought these complex processes could be ended with simple solutions such as arresting the select number of “demagogues” who were the wellspring of the problem, replacing the Hungarian patriot Reviczky with the conservative, non-Hungarian speaking Count Fidél Pálffy, nephew of Count Kolowrat, as Hungarian Chancellor,<sup>201</sup> and using fear of arbitrary governmental reprisals as a scare-tactic weapon to ensure a forced compliance, subservience and loyalty within the Hungarian population.

The use of political terrorism by the Austrian authorities in Hungary ultimately proved to be a failure because their attempt to stifle democratization and a growing civil society truly only strengthened what they wished to suppress. The counties did not follow a policy of tit-for-tat with the government. For example, although nineteen counties considered Kossuth’s arrest and the matter of freedom of speech to be a political grievance that they would raise at a subsequent Diet, only nine were willing to accept confrontation with the authorities at all costs.<sup>202</sup> Instead, the counties persisted in voicing their objection to the trials and sentences. This persistence combined with the Palatine’s willingness to intercede on behalf of the Lower House at the Diet of 1839-1840 brought the fruit of a general amnesty for political prisoners such as Wesselényi, the dietal youth

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<sup>199</sup> Gábor Pajkossy, “Kossuth és a kormányzati ,terrorizmus’ politikája 1835-1839,” [“Kossuth and the governmental politics of ‘terrorism’ 1835-1839,”] *Századok* [Centuries] Vol.128 No.5 (1994): 810.

<sup>200</sup> Metternich was famous for seeing the interests of the state and peoples in oppositional terms: Amir Ahmadi, “Terrorism: Political not Legal,” *Current Issues in Criminal Justice* Vol.15 No.2 (November 2003): 178.

<sup>201</sup> Mérei and Vörös, *Magyarország története, második kötet* [The history of Hungary, volume two], 755 and Barany, “The Hungarian Diet of 1839-40,”: 292.

<sup>202</sup> Pajkossy, “Kossuth és ,terrorizmus’,” [“Kossuth and ‘terrorism’,”]: 814.

and Kossuth, and a cessation of pending political trials.<sup>203</sup> Proving what a fundamental issue the matter of freedom of speech actually was, the government was more willing to backtrack, grant the amnesty and deal with the release of the political captives into the general population, than allow a law enshrining freedom of speech to be written into the Hungarian constitution.

The failure to write provisions for freedom of speech into the Hungarian *Corpus juris* in 1839-1840 simply channeled more energy into laws which would guarantee the use of Magyar in Hungary. The guarantee of being able to use Magyar was the next best option to being able to write and speak without curtailed freedom. Members of the Hungarian middle nobility such as Fáy had played a leading role in creating a modern Hungarian idiom. It was a *coup de grâce* that this language now received the highest state sanction. The laws regulating the use of Magyar were deemed more acceptable by the King than curtailment of censorship and police oversight of the country. Unfortunately for the non-Magyar nationalities of the Hungarian Kingdom, and those who did not want greater assimilation to Hungarian culture, the breakthrough law of 1844 guaranteeing the official status of the language in Hungary was a far larger setback than more provisions for freedom of speech would ever have represented. Freedom of speech provisions could have guaranteed minority language rights; raising Hungarian to the level of official language status without granting legal guarantees for the preservation of minority languages established the dangerous legal precedent that magyarization did not have to take these rights sufficiently into account.

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<sup>203</sup> Mihály Horváth, *Huszonöt év Magyarország történelméből 1823-1848*, második kötet [Twenty-five years in the history of Hungary, 1823-1848, volume two] (Budapest: Mór Ráth, 1887), 145-163.

Fáy often expressed reservation about the nature of Hungarian politics and his role in the process.<sup>204</sup> Yet he spent all of his life in one form or another as a pioneer committed to the political cause of the Hungarian language. As a Magyar writer, he persevered against negative impressions of his ability and style by Kazinczy and others to become one of the most read authors of his time. Knowing the parameters of censorship allowed him to use his fiction as a platform for didactic and socially critical messages that simultaneously engaged his reading public and did not incur the displeasure of governmental officials. His involvement in aiding the creation of a Magyar literary culture drew him to county politics and political associations such as the Magyarization Committee of the nobility of Pest. When the government began to hamper the freedom of speech he held dear, he even took on the responsibility of acting as a replacement dietal representative for Pest County. Fáy is an intriguing personality for using the emerging Magyar literary climate to further his personal ambitions for fame and renown and for being somewhat unsettled by the consequences of magyarization that he helped set into motion.

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<sup>204</sup> András Fáy to Márton Puky, Pozsony March 29, 1836. RL Ráday Gyűjtemény C/24 Fáy András and “Követi pálya,” [“The parliamentary profession,”] *Pesti Hirlap* [Pest news] (Pest), 5 March 1843 and “Hónért, honfiakhoz!” [“For the homeland and patriots!”] *Pesti Hirlap* [Pest news] (Pest), 29 May 1841.

### Chapter Three

#### The Bee and the Beehive, the First Domestic Savings Bank in Hungary and a Plan for Life Insurance

Stimulating industry, enlivening commerce, easing access to credit and increasing the money supply were central concerns of reform-era Hungary. At the root of this line of reasoning was the hope that certain forms of modern capitalistic economic development would bring a corresponding increase in national wealth. It would be misguided though to assume that national wealth was then solely defined in terms of an early variant of gross national product or annual profit performance reports. Writing about the philosophical underpinning of the financial system of eighteenth century Britain, Mary Poovey put forth that “value” was not synonymous with numerical forms of representation because it “...had less to do with quantification than with determining the ‘fit’ between the action and God’s laws.”<sup>1</sup> In such an environment, the theoretical underpinnings of social planning took precedence over mathematical and statistical argumentation. Today, our reality is conditioned by what Poovey terms the “modern fact” which is negative in the sense that it is largely forgotten that “...even the numbers are interpretive, for they embody theoretical assumptions about what should be counted, how one should understand material reality, and how quantification contributes to systematic knowledge about the world.”<sup>2</sup>

In this chapter I look at an episode in early nineteenth-century Hungarian economic history, just before the “modern fact” established its position of dominance as the authoritative component of financial discourse. Specifically, I examine the writer András Fáy’s ambitions to found a bank and an insurance company, one of which was a venture crowned with success, while the other failed to materialize. Fáy’s plans for the

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<sup>1</sup> Mary Poovey, *A History of the Modern Fact: Problems of Knowledge in the Sciences of Wealth and Society* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 282.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, xii.

savings bank and its subsidiary insurance company grew out of notions of “charity”, following the model that had been established in Western Europe. The first section details this European precedent, which inspired Fáy to follow suit in Hungary. I then turn to Fáy’s theoretical justification of his ideas in literature and pamphlet form, and his campaign to open his financial institution. Operating from a paternalist point of view, Fáy thought it was an act of benevolence to found a savings bank for people whose limited financial means had not enabled them access to existing banking institutions. Even though he labeled his plan to open a savings bank a “charity”, his literary writings and his blueprint for the First Domestic Savings Bank of Pest reveal that his ultimate goal in relation to this establishment was even more substantial, and amounted to the hope of creating a social revolution by curtailing or eliminating poverty. Far from seeing Hungarian society as divided according to class constructs, he possessed a more fluid vision of these social divisions based on economic criteria as “a mental and cultural construct”.<sup>3</sup> Fáy was trying to help mold the “middle class” identities of others, which was a social preoccupation of his time in Hungary as well as elsewhere in Europe.<sup>4</sup> Social transformation from below would gradually narrow the gap between rich and poor economically and morally leading to a more harmonious future Hungarian society.

The most intriguing aspect of Fáy’s social vision and the savings bank and insurance company that were supposed to be its means to an end was not its utopianism but the speed at which its premise unraveled. When his savings bank became an almost immediate financial success, its charitable basis fell out of step with the desire to make money, and it was never able to recover its original lofty purpose. In the section on the operations of the bank up to 1848 I look at how the savings bank was steered away from

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<sup>3</sup> Patrick Joyce, “Work,” in *The Cambridge Social History of Britain, 1750-1950*, vol. 2, *People and their Environment*, ed. F.M.L. Thompson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 159.

<sup>4</sup> Patrick Joyce, “Narratives of Class,” in *Class*, ed. Patrick Joyce (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 326 and 330-331.

its foundational purpose, and Fáy's change of heart that a "middle way" was possible between the impetus to make money and to help the poor. This change of course may not have been as a result of any personal or collective corruption due to accumulation of wealth. Instead, Fáy's plans may have been derailed by what Georg Simmel identified as depersonalization tendencies inherent in joint-stock companies which exist solely to produce dividends and result in a "...personal lack of connection with other human subjects with whom (one) shares only monetary interests."<sup>5</sup> Finally, I end with an investigation of Fáy's second pet project to found an insurance company, which piggybacked on the success of its parent company and consequently did not require the moral justification of its predecessor. It was the ultimate indication that times had changed. The last section follows the history of both establishments through the tumultuous years of the revolution. By that time the basic survival of a company became imperative, as the folding of the otherwise sound insurance venture demonstrated, and notions of "charity" in the financial sector were permanently relegated to the back burner.

### **The Phenomenon of the Saving Bank in Europe**

Western Europe had a considerable number of banks by the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. Great Britain had had the bank of England since 1694, and possessed 52 banks in the capital by 1785 and several hundred country banking establishments in the first half of the nineteenth century.<sup>6</sup> The Bank of France emerged during the course of the Napoleonic wars in 1800, and a series of institutions with the names *caisse*, *credit société* and *comptoir* in their names performed banking responsibilities across the country. Banking centres in the German states included

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<sup>5</sup> Georg Simmel, *The Philosophy of Money*, ed. David Frisby (London: Routledge, 2004), 243-244.

<sup>6</sup> Charles P. Kindleberger, *A Financial History of Western Europe* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1984), 52, 77 and 79.

Hamburg, Cologne, Frankfurt and Berlin.<sup>7</sup> In Austria, a national bank came into being rather late in the game, in 1816, with the general purpose of regulating exchange, lending, stimulating commerce and increasing state wealth.<sup>8</sup>

The commonality among these banking institutions was their existence for the benefit of regulating finances and generally to circulate the wealth of aristocratic, commercial or business patrons, and not in order to transact savings and lending for customers from the lower-middle and labouring classes. Realization that a deficit existed in this area brought about concern for the foundation of savings' institutes that would benefit ordinary people. Some of the first experiments with savings banks happened in Hamburg in 1778 and in Oldenburg in 1786, but these ventures folded due to the wars with France.<sup>9</sup> However, it was the Ruthwell Savings Bank, the brainchild of the Reverend Henry Duncan, that gained recognition as the first official (permanent) working facility of this kind when it accepted deposits beginning in May 1810.<sup>10</sup> The Ruthwell Savings Bank was the earliest working model of a house that handled savings on behalf of disadvantaged people, but it was relatively local in scope. A rival and parallel savings bank in Scotland also claimed to be the first organization of this kind. It was the establishment of a saving fund by the Society for the Suppression of Beggars in Edinburgh in the decade of 1810 and the Edinburgh Savings Bank's adoption, modification and franchising of the Society's model<sup>11</sup> that led the savings bank idea to become a European phenomenon. The reason that Scotland's soil was particularly

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 98, 121.

<sup>8</sup> Emerich Thomas Hohler, *Historisch-politische Erläuterung über Bankanstalten überhaupt und über die österreichische Nationalbank insbesondere* (Vienna: Camesinaschen Buchhandlung, 1816), 32.

<sup>9</sup> Badics, *Fáy András Életrajza* [Biography of András Fáy], 490.

<sup>10</sup> H.Oliver Horne, *A History of Savings Banks* (London: Oxford University Press, 1947), 43.

<sup>11</sup> John Hay Forbes, *A Short Account of the Edinburgh Savings Bank, Containing Directions for Establishing similar Banks, with the mode of keeping the Accounts, and conducting the details of Business*, 2d. ed. (Edinburgh: John Anderson and Co., 1815).



conducive to the idea of banks for small savings had to do with the fact that it did not have the same social benefits for the needy offered by England.

The British parliament passed a series of eight laws between 1817 and 1844 regulating the institution of savings banks predominantly in England and Ireland,<sup>12</sup> and this legislation allowed their numbers to multiply to 385 in England, 23 in Wales and 76 in Ireland by the year 1834. France received its first such local bank from the See-Assecuranz Companie, opening its doors on Valentine's Day 1818. By 1837 it possessed 250 of these establishments across the country. Belgium possessed only 5 by 1830, but this small number was due to mergers with the Bank of Belgium rather than disinclination towards the idea of the savings bank. The Kingdom of the Netherlands contained fifty such banks by 1830. There were no official tallies for the number of savings banks in all the German states, and particularly for the non-German speaking regions of the Prussian monarchy, but in areas where German-speaking inhabitants predominated there were at least 201 banks. Outside of these areas and the Swiss Confederation the number of savings banks declined. There was one in Rome by 1837. In Vienna the *Erste österreichische Spar-Casse* opened its doors to welcome clients on October 4, 1819. Prague had one by 1825, and in 1829 the Duchy of Tuscany saw its first one open in Florence. In the Habsburg possession of the Kingdom of Lombardy, an entire grouping of savings banks began operation in 1823 in Mantua, Cremona and Pavia respectively.<sup>13</sup> Despite their financial success, these banking houses did not immediately replicate their business formula across the border in the Hungarian half of the Austrian possessions.

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<sup>12</sup> Horne, *A History of Savings Banks*, 42 and 92.

<sup>13</sup> Carl August Malchus, *Die Sparcassen in Europa. Darstellung der statutenmässigen Einrichtungen der grossen Mehrzahl von solchen in Europa, mit einer Nachweise des Betragen der in denselben aufgesammelten Ersparnisse* (Heidelberg: Neue Akademische Buchhandlung, 1838), 334, 340, 315, 303, 304, 248, 347, 352 and 63 and Tóth, *Önszervező polgárok* [Citizens who organized themselves], 107.

The inspiration for savings banks in Western Europe remained tied to their genesis with the Society for the Suppression of Beggars. The key was a moral censure of the poor. The poor were somewhat responsible for their plight because “(t)he earnings of health, and the wages of labour, are made to meet only the daily expenditure, and the poor man is not careful to lay up any small sum which might be easily saved after the supply of his daily wants.” Simultaneously with censure came exculpation. Poor people experienced greater temptation in having money at home than others did, and the simple act of placing their funds out of reach would supposedly break their patterns of character dissipation. Without a savings bank “(t)he want of a *place of deposit* for the small sums which a poor man has it in his power to lay up, prevents him from thinking of doing so, and from acquiring a habit which is the foundation of so many virtues.”<sup>14</sup> Under feudalism the explanation for poverty had been that labour markets were too constrained because the guild system and serfdom did not allow much labour flexibility. When freer capitalist labour markets did not alleviate poverty, a new reasoning was needed.<sup>15</sup> The lack of banking facilities catering to the needs of less advantaged people seemed to provide an explanation (and potential solution) for poverty that was both logical and remedial.

Before turning to the Hungarian context, we must look at the bank that served as a showcase of inspiration for the first savings banks in Central Europe. The *Erste österreichische Spar-Casse* with its location on Am Graben and Peter street, house # 572 on the first floor in Vienna<sup>16</sup> was the model for filial branches in the rest of the Austrian possessions. It was founded by self-professed humanitarians who gave sums ranging from token amounts to 300 Gulden in order to amass the capital holdings of the

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<sup>14</sup> Hay Forbes, *A Short Account of the Edinburgh Savings Bank*, 3 and 4.

<sup>15</sup> Laurence Américi, “Preparing the People for Capitalism: Relations with Depositors in a French Savings Bank During the 1820s,” *Financial History Review* Vol.9 (2002): 7.

<sup>16</sup> *Statuten und Reglement der ersten Oesterreichischen Spar-Casse* (Vienna: Österreichische Sparcasse, 1822), 16.

establishment. The governing body of the savings bank consisted of a committee, administrators and directors, and these people performed their tasks with the bank without financial remuneration.<sup>17</sup> In 1822 its Curator was Count Peter Goesz and its Vice-Curator Sir Bernhard von Eskeles.<sup>18</sup> Unique to this specific savings bank was the attachment of a General-Care-Facility from 1825. Operating on the model of a type of friendly society, it promised a yearly payment to all members until the death of the last participant. Membership was restricted to accepted individuals who paid 200 Gulden, were Austrian citizens, and resided in Vienna.<sup>19</sup>

According to its by-laws, the purpose of the savings bank was to ensure that:

...factory workers, craftsmen, day labourers, servants, peasants or some other hardworking thrifty minor or adult from time-to-time can set aside a little capital from his difficult work or his savings, so that this fund in later days can be used to establish better care, as an endowment, as money for sickness, in age, or for the accomplishment of some praiseworthy goal.<sup>20</sup>

There were also restrictions on both deposits and withdrawals. The minimum deposit was 25 kreutzer (in Conventionsmünze) or 1fl. 15 kreuzer in the Viennese currency then in circulation. Withdrawals of considerable sums required previous notification, with a one-month waiting period for 100-500 Gulden, two months for 500-1000, and three months advance warning for a withdrawal of up to 2000 Gulden. The society behind the institution claimed that it was a non-profit venture, but it did allow itself with its fifteenth article to keep a “security reserve fund” of unspecified monetary proportions. Most importantly for the Hungarian context, its sphere of operation was so narrowly defined that not only were Hungarian citizens excluded from depositing their funds, but capital from Hungarian societies and possessions could not be invested in the Viennese savings

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<sup>17</sup> Malchus, *Die Sparcassen in Europa*, 1 and 5.

<sup>18</sup> *Statuten und Reglement*, 17.

<sup>19</sup> Malchus, *Die Sparcassen in Europa*, 6 and 7.

<sup>20</sup> *Statuten und Reglement*, 1.

bank.<sup>21</sup> These restrictions naturally were at odds with the inclusive humanitarian claims of the bank.

### **Banking Institutions in Hungary before 1840 and Fáy's Advocacy for the Establishment of a Savings Bank in Pest**

Before Fáy organized the Society for the First Domestic Savings Bank of Pest there were a shockingly small number of banking facilities for a country of Hungary's size in Europe. The Austrian bank *Erste* did establish branches in eight Hungarian cities, namely in Pozsony, Nagyszombat (Trnava, Slovakia), Érsekújvár (Nové Zámky, Slovakia), Győr, Zólyom (Zvolen, Slovakia), Szeged, Eszék (Osijek, Croatia) and Varasd (Varaždin, Croatia), but these banks were limited in the services that they offered. Clients had to travel to Vienna to conduct many of their transactions, meaning that the social background of investors was limited to those who regularly could make such trips, namely well-to-do merchants.<sup>22</sup> Clearly the *Erste*'s strategy for diffusion in Hungary was to engage in as little business risk as possible by specializing in catering to a small, influential class of people. The first effort to create a savings bank as a result of local initiative was one in Brassó in Brassó County, Transylvania. The brainchild of Peter Lange, and patterned on the Nürnberg model, it was in the planning stages from 1827 onwards before it was able to start operation in 1835.<sup>23</sup> In terms of its organizational principle, it was unique in the sense that it was backed by the city.<sup>24</sup> If Transylvania had been a part of the Hungarian Kingdom, this bank would have been the first savings institution based on local initiative in the country. It was economically disadvantageous that Pest County, the Royal Free Cities of Pest and Buda, and the rest of the Kingdom of

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 2 and 6 and Malchus, *Die Sparcassen in Europa*, 3.

<sup>22</sup> Tóth, *Önszervező polgárok* [Citizens who organized themselves], 107.

<sup>23</sup> Gábor Egry, "A brassói és a nagyszombati általános takarékpénztár korai történetének néhány jellegzetessége 1835-1848," ["Certain distinctive characteristics of the early history of the Brassó and Nagyszombat general savings banks 1835-1848,"] *Századok* [Centuries] Vol. 136 No. 6 (2002): 1263-1265.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

Hungary had few established and official banking facilities during this time, other than those that have already been mentioned. Money in circulation had to be retained at home, and basic banking services such as borrowing money were generally the purview of private lenders. This lack of regulation naturally carried attendant risks for both parties engaged in financial transactions, and left the door ajar for abuse of the system. It also served the indirect function of retarding the development of capitalism in Hungary, which had profoundly negative consequences for the process of Hungarian integration into the Austrian and European economy.

Fáy first raised the idea of a savings bank for the district when the County of Pest asked local judges to submit suggestions for instructions for Pest's representatives at the 1825 diet. Under the sub-heading 'Some Projects', point number three expressed the idea that:

Immorality, especially among the poorer classes, is aggravated by the fact that they do not know what to do with their earnings. If these funds are lent to someone else, it will lead to a trial, and he will also lose his money. In order to avoid this consequence, a small bank (*Sparkasse*) should be established, with up to 300 forint deposits. A trustworthy business person or the county should be responsible for its administration.<sup>25</sup>

This document also contained more insights into Fáy's reasoning on economics. The prevalence of high prices, and the burden that this placed on taxpayers, led him to urge either the elimination of guilds or the establishment of price controls. He thought that commerce needed to be encouraged, and more regulation of loans was needed, because price and money fluctuations in the last decades had led to unstable rates of interest. Paper currency, first printed in Austria in 1762 to finance the Third Silesian War, needed to be abandoned in favour of metallic currency. Also, Hungary needed a law on drafts, to legalize the principle of credit.<sup>26</sup> In all of these suggestions it is possible to see the curious

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<sup>25</sup> Badics, *Fáy András Életrajza* [Biography of András Fáy], 252.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 249 and 250.

mixture of feudal and capitalistic thinking that characterized Fáy's economic understanding and sensibilities.

Despite all of these ideas pertaining to the improvement of the nineteenth century Hungarian economy, it was the concept of the savings bank that began to crystallize in Fáy's mind as the years progressed. Some of his literary writings contain seeds of his political thought on poverty and its potential alleviation through the creation of banking facilities. In the *House of Bélteky*, Fáy's novel about and in promotion of Hungarian embourgeoisement, there is a passage reiterating and publicizing his plea for the establishment of savings banks in Hungary. Bélteky's neighbour Valkay and Baron Regéczy discuss the practicality of the concept, with Valkay serving as the voice and advocate of progress.

I just have to come back to my point, said Valkay, that our homeland in this respect is in as dire straits as Europe. How can the servant's work be of value to her, when her few Forints, her little collected capital, in want of credit, cannot be placed out of her reach without being lost forever? And that which is kept at home for helpless old age and for the sake of the children is feared of being lost? She is forced to spend her little savings, as towns and especially cities have shop signs every third house, and these exercise considerably strong and constant inducements to her. There is a need for a number of savings banks in our homeland too, that the more cultured lands outside of Hungary have long possessed.

A single one would be many for the furtherance of these dreams of ours, *amice* Valkay! Replied the Baron, laughing; But where would we obtain the start up capital for them?

I will whisper it to you *domine illustrissime*! answered Valkay. Since we are discussing servants, let us take the gold and silver ribbons on their livery and hats down a notch, from the present amount to one finger's width, and the annual savings collected for five years---- and I swear by humanity, the needed start up capital will be there.

I myself would pay a tax of this nature, laughed the Baron as he strode toward his carriage, and certainly I would happily pay the tax, but *amice* Valkay, your pious idea will likely just remain a wish for some time longer!<sup>27</sup>

Six years later, in 1838 Fáy returned to this theme in *Adventures of the Heart and Mind*. The story 'Appeal' ostensibly about a party of whist at the house of the widow

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<sup>27</sup> Fáy, *A Bélteky-ház* [The house of Bélteky], 62.

Mrs. Várnay, actually revolves around the encounters of two male friends, Kegyesy and a narrator who has some characteristic similarity to Fáy, including his short-sightedness. In a short time span the two friends meet several people from poorer walk of life, who are all experiencing difficulties. A carpenter lost money to a gentleman in the form of a loan that he failed to repay, and the remainder of his savings and the tools of his trade went by the wayside as a result of his gambling habit. The narrator's servant Orbán is perpetually intoxicated, and the maidservant Nánika has had her wages withheld for two years, and is happy simply to spend money on pretty clothes because these at least are hers to keep. At the end of the story, the narrator comes to the conclusion that these disadvantaged people are all struggling because they do not have a proper outlet for their money. He and his friend Kegyesy "shake hands and resolve to fight tirelessly with all the strength in their hearts for the savings banks, and to use every opportunity to persuade everyone whose hearts are moved by the wellbeing of the country and humanity in the two homelands" (Hungary and Transylvania).<sup>28</sup>

Finally, the short story 'Old Bakonyszegi and his friends' (1839) was Fáy's last foray into propagating the concept of the savings bank in Hungary in literary form, albeit indirectly. The story was set topically in the aftermath of the great natural catastrophe, the Danubian flood of March 13 to March 15, 1838 that led to 2882 collapsed houses and 1363 damaged ones out of a total of 7500 in Pest and Buda.<sup>29</sup> In the tale a man named Bakonyszegi tells his life story to the narrator, and it is one of disillusionment after a lifetime of misfortune. Cheated of half of his pay by the indebted Count Vashegyi, bankrupted for lending 5000 forints to conmen Velesz and Lahner, robbed of his savings and abandoned by his wife, Bakonyszegi even loses his house in the great flood and

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<sup>28</sup> András Fáy, "Felszólítás," ["Appeal,"] in *Fáy András összes beszélyei, második kötet* [The complete short stories of András Fáy, volume two] (Budapest: Franklin Társulat, 1883), 138-139, 145, 149 and 152.

<sup>29</sup> Károly Némethy, *A Pest-Budai árvíz 1838-ban* [The 1838 Pest-Buda flood] (Budapest: Budapest Székesfőváros Közönsége, 1938), 63.

witnesses his daughter Lotti commit suicide due to her failed romance with the younger Count Vashegyi.<sup>30</sup> Although there is no direct reference to the idea of the need for savings banks in order to alleviate poverty, the central moral is that if Bakonyszegi could have placed at least some of his money in the safekeeping of a banking institution he would have been saved from his propensity to place monetary trust in people who rob him and would not have been so destitute at the end of his life. The story bears resemblance to Fáy's 'Appeal'. In both pieces of writing the hardworking poor are trapped in circumstances beyond their control, and no amount of industriousness can alleviate their situation. The use of literature to embed the idea of the need for savings banks in Hungary continues Fáy's propensity to use fiction as a forum for social commentary, a direction that I tried to highlight in the previous chapter. The troublesome aspect of these literary allusions is that while appearing to present the poor in a favourable light, there is a considerable amount of veiled moral censorship regarding their conduct of their own lives.

Fáy's hints and suggestions in literary form to agitate for the founding of a savings bank did not hit their intended target, and produced no individual or group of people willing to put time and funds into such a venture. Becoming increasingly convinced of the great need for this facility in Pest County, he took it upon himself to campaign for its creation. His 1839 booklet *Plan for the Establishment of a Savings Bank for Common People in Pest County* was his most comprehensive expression of his philosophy about these banks. It included a detailed outline for how this particular one would function and refuted the repeated allegations of critics as to why they were not practical in light of Hungarian conditions. The expense for this booklet was shouldered by the county, and up to 6000 copies were printed, distributed and displayed. Notaries,

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<sup>30</sup> András Fáy, "Öreg Bakonyszegi és barátjai," ["Old Bakonyszegi and his friends"] in *Fáy András összes beszédei, második kötet* [The complete short stories of András Fáy, volume two] (Budapest: Franklin Társulat, 1883), 275-324.



priests, and pastors were deemed especially important recipients of a booklet, and were asked to spread word about the savings bank concept in the course of their work duties.<sup>31</sup>

In the introduction Fáy stated his disappointment in diplomatic terms that “while this concept is fashionable in Europe, and in other parts of the world, in our homeland it was only ranked among the devout wishes, and no one dared test his strength with a developmental plan for a saving bank”. He hoped that this scheme for Pest County would serve as a model for other Hungarian counties, districts and cities, and clarified that his motivation for its creation was not personal profit, but dedication and good intentions towards humanity and Hungary.<sup>32</sup> Getting down to specifics, Fáy really attempted to make a very broad case for who would be able to make use of this bank. Potential clients would include: all noble and non-noble taxpayers, urbarial property owners, peasants without urbarial property, master craftsmen, apprentices, soldiers, day-labourers, schoolmasters, notaries, intellectuals, the servants and employees of the national theatre, servants of nobles, and those acting on behalf of orphans, mentally-incapacitated disabled people, widows and prisoners.<sup>33</sup>

Despite the broad social base of the Pest bank’s foreseeable clientele, Fáy insisted that it would ultimately benefit the common people by bringing about a type of social revolution. Putting away a little money for a time of need and helplessness “would most certainly give way to well being, as well as to other happy national virtues, including: contentment, patriotism, respect for the central government, obedience of the laws of the land, pure morals, peaceful intentions etc.” Common people would become

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<sup>31</sup> Sándor Jirkovsky, *A Pest hazai első takarékpénztár egyesület száz éves története*, első kötet, 1839-1889 [The one hundred year history of the society for the first domestic savings bank of Pest, volume one, 1839-1889] (Budapest: A Pesti Hazai Első Takarékpénztár Egyesület, 1940), 10.

<sup>32</sup> András Fáy, *Terve a' Pest-Megyei köznep számára felállítandó takarékpénztárnak* [Plan for the establishment of a savings bank for common people in Pest county] (Budapest: Budapest Könyvtérképesítő Vállalat, 1986), v, vi, viii.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.

better fathers, mothers, sons, daughters, husbands and wives, trade and commerce would improve, poverty would decrease, fewer prisons would house less convicts (e.g. people would commit fewer crimes such as stealing to obtain money), more people could marry, peasants would improve their land, look on the government with favour, happily pay their taxes and turn their sons over to impressment gangs (fewer hands would be needed to work and families could do with one less son), and general happiness would result in less complaining!! Naturally the fact that the poorer orders had their problems decline in one fell swoop would help everyone else because peasants would not turn to their masters so often for help, servants would change into more trustworthy, sober and respectful individuals, and the government would no longer have to spend money should starvation, harvest shortfall or other natural disasters arise.<sup>34</sup> This concept of a social revolution at no financial cost to the middle and aristocratic classes, and based on correction of the perceived deficiencies of this group of people, betrays Fáy's lack of true understanding of the plight of the disadvantaged and poor in early nineteenth-century Hungary. Although the savings bank was still in the planning stages, it already had the quality of being too good to be true.

All the details on how the bank would form and operate were already present at this point. Fáy calculated that a start-up capital of 40 000 forints would establish the facility, and used Malchus to make a case for the fact that even in Western Europe, banks did not always begin with large sums of money at their disposal. The initial financing would be raised through the sale of shares, but the institution would not be a publically-traded company. A share would sell for 200 forints, and 200 would be sold. These would be purchased by those who wanted to belong to the Society for the First Domestic Savings Bank of Pest, and the purchase of a single share would require them to pay not the entire amount of the share, but only 6% of its interest value for a period of 10 years

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 2, 5-8.

(therefore 60 forints). The day-to-day workings of the savings bank would be handled by a cashier, an accountant, lawyer/meeting minute-taker, a bookkeeper and a servant. Two rented rooms would be necessary, and all expenses for one year were estimated to be 2159 forints, that would be paid initially from the start-up capital. A president and a board of 18 members were expected to administrate the workings of the bank. While the employees physically present in the bank would receive a salary for their services, the president and board held charitable posts, and worked without compensation. The bank was expected to be open three days a week, on Tuesday, Friday and Saturday to coincide with market days in Pest, from 9-12 p.m. and 3-6 p.m. On special market days in January and July, it was to adjust to changed circumstances and remain open from Friday to Tuesday. Fáy's plan was so exacting (or frugal), that he even wrote down a long description of every piece of furniture and supplies he envisioned the bank needed in order to function, including wax from Spain and a calendar. These items were to be obtained mostly through donations, and did not constitute the majority of the bank's operating expenses.<sup>35</sup>

Passages in the book clearly were meant to refute repeated criticisms about why a savings bank, although common currency in much of Europe, would not be adaptable to Hungarian circumstances. It required a mental revolution for people to end their practice of maintaining their savings at home, or lending them out to a trusted person, and give them instead to the safe keeping of a financial house. Despite Fáy's professed confidence that there was an enormous potential clientele for his bank, he felt the need to justify this claim. He cited figures from 1837 that Pest County had 349 403 non-nobles (about 400 000 with the inclusion of nobles) and these people could make use of the bank. At another place in the text he even expressed some sympathy for the position that the venture would not work at all, because it was not "a magical fairy wand" and depositors

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 23, 20-21, 27 and 37.

would be the exception and not the rule for years to come. Other claims that had to be addressed included the idea that there would not be a sufficient number of people who wanted to take out loans from the bank, and that the director and his board would be overburdened with work. Fáy answered the first claim with the logic that there was daily evidence of people in the country and the county who lacked funds for investment purposes. The response to the worry that the bank officials would be taking on full-time work was the somewhat naive assessment that they would have to meet for only a few hours on a bi-weekly basis, and that accounting and inventory would rarely have to take place even once a year. The fact that these were the repeated objections and responses to the establishment of the bank testified to the reality that institutionalized depositing, lending, and the administrative and work schedule necessary to ensure their proper functioning were aspects of capitalism that were not entirely understood and supported among wide segments of the Hungarian population.<sup>36</sup>

The tug-of-war between securing depositors and making the institution break even, and the philanthropic desire to guarantee that the bank benefited the disadvantaged in Hungarian society can be seen in the financial details of how the facility was expected to function. Loan repayment would take place over 6 years (year one-nothing; year two 1/10th; year three 2/10ths, year four 2/10ths, year five 2/10ths, and year six 3/10ths and interest), and those who defaulted would be sued. Problematically, someone classified as a peasant with holdings was only allowed a maximum loan of 60 forints, and under no circumstances was a peasant without holdings given access to this service of the bank. They were “rather to be the recipients of another form of charity (sic).” The smallest accepted deposited sum was the low figure of 20 krájcár, and the maximum investment was not to exceed 100 forints, which clearly demonstrated the bank’s purpose to appeal to small investors. The interest rate was set high at 5% for deposits, and 6% for loans in

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 12, 74-76.

order to overcome investment reserve. Also in contrast to savings banks in many European cities, there were no limitations as to withdrawals and interest payments. Clients always had access to their money in theory, and were entitled to interest for every day that their money was utilized by the bank. Thus, offsetting the harsh restrictions that worked to the disadvantage of the needy were liberal financial parameters that worked to their advantage, at least at this early planning stage.<sup>37</sup>

### **The Campaign to Open the First Domestic Savings Bank of Pest**

Fáy made his sales pitch to the County of Pest to allow his savings bank to form on March 19, 1839. Immediately a committee was formed to investigate the details of his concept, and by June 4 of that same year they gave their approval. The only significant modifications to the plan were that instead of 200 forint shares, one share in the company would only be valued at 100 forints. The committee also wanted the Royal Free Cities of Pest and Buda to be involved in the creation of the facility, and for it to be operational by January 1, 1840. It was important to Fáy that he received this county support. The bank's name carried the title of the county, it was to be located in one room of the county hall, and although the nobility of Pest did not purchase a share in the bank collectively, they were ready to provide an emergency loan of 2000 forints in the event that the bank's finances were in danger.<sup>38</sup> These psychological, spatial and economic connections to Pest County were important in reassuring all potential investors of the security of their money and justification of their trust.

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 59-61. It must be stated that although discriminatory, the idea that a peasant actually had a legal right to his holdings and could purchase more (up to the maximum of four full plots) had only been enshrined in Hungarian law three years previously. The sixty forint ceiling on peasant loans likely reflected another 1836 law that set this amount as the maximum liability in the case of oral contractual disputes. Dezső Márkus ed., "Law 1836 Article IV §6 and 10," and "Law XX," 1836-1868. *évi törvénycikkek* in Magyar törvénytár [The laws of 1836-1868 in Corpus juris hungarici], 16-17 and 61-62.

<sup>38</sup> Jirkovsky, *A Pest hazai első takarékpénztár*, [The first domestic savings bank of Pest], 5, 6, 9 and 10.

County judge István Mondorovits sponsored 100 forints so that the subscription sheets for the savings bank could be printed. They were then distributed to the overworked county judges and the city counsellors of Pest and Buda who were expected to pound the pavement in their spare time and sell shares in order to accumulate the necessary start up capital.<sup>39</sup> Many of these subscription sheets are preserved in the national archives. At the top of each page there is a contractual statement clarifying the exact financial terms for a shareholder, that the first payment would be due in November 1839, and that even in the event of death, other relatives of the shareholder were still liable for the remaining installments.<sup>40</sup> It was also an option simply to donate some money for the cause, without making the full financial commitment to buy a share. For example on one such sheet Károly Burg donated 6 forints, Ferencz Horváth and Ignác Erményi 2 forints each, and János Iby and János Losonszy 1 forint per person between October 14 and November 25, 1839.<sup>41</sup> It is very characteristic that these subscription forms are primarily in Hungarian, instead of in a blend of Hungarian, German and Latin. One exception was a form in German. It listed wealthy and prominent businessmen Joseph Boscovitz (five shares), David Oestricher (one share), Samuel Ullmann (one share), Adopf Pinkas (one share), Samuel Wodianer (five shares), Salamon Enoch Kern (one share) and M.L. Kanitz (one share).<sup>42</sup>

More information on the social composition of shareholder investors is available, because the First Domestic Savings Bank of Pest Society had much civic pride in their achievement, and had the names of their shareholders regularly published until it was

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 11.

<sup>40</sup> "Official subscription sheet for the founders of the Pest county savings bank," in MOL Takarékpénztár Egyesület. Közgyűlési jegyzőkönyvek [Savings bank society. General assembly records] Gazdasági Levéltár [Economic archive] Z 21 p12.

<sup>41</sup> "The official subscription form of the trustees of the Pest county savings bank," in MOL Takarékpénztár Egyesület. Közgyűlési jegyzőkönyvek [Savings bank society. General assembly records] Gazdasági Levéltár [Economic archive] Z 21 p13.

<sup>42</sup> MOL Takarékpénztár Egyesület. Közgyűlési jegyzőkönyvek [Savings bank society. General assembly records] Gazdasági Levéltár [Economic archive] Z 21 p150.

decided to cap the number of shares at 629 in 1847.<sup>43</sup> In his study of Pest reform period societies Árpád Tóth estimated that two-fifths of share purchasers were bourgeois, two-fifths came from the middle and upper nobility and one-fifth were from the intelligentsia. The officials of the County of Pest were also represented in their entirety.<sup>44</sup> Further conclusions are possible. In the 1843 booklet listing their founding members, 554 individuals and organizations were identified as holding shares, and of these at least 35, or approximately 6% were women. Many were from aristocratic backgrounds, and while most purchased a single share, others such as Mária Máriássy-Szepessy and Mrs. József Teleky (b.Countess Zsófia Teleki) went the extra mile and owned four and five shares respectively in their own right.<sup>45</sup> Reflecting the feudal organization of the country, districts, smaller cities, and organizations pooled their resources to try their luck with the new financial gamble. The cities of Buda and Kecskemét, the community of Szentendre and the municipalities of Nagykőrös and Tinnye purchased ten shares all together. The Nagykőrös Municipality Society, the Buchers' Guild of Pest and Buda and the Jewish community of Óbuda bought four in total. The honour of purchasing the most shares went to a group of wealthy businessmen, M.L. Biedermann and Partners were the only ones to commit to paying for 10 shares.<sup>46</sup> Buying a lot of shares was not the norm, as only about 8% purchased more than one. The most likely reason for the hesitancy to invest in multiple shares was not lack of money in Pest County, but uncertainty about the ultimate soundness of the undertaking. Fáy recalled one incident of a shareholder changing his mind about buying a share when Miklós Jankovics asked his secretary to tell him that he

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<sup>43</sup> Jirkovsky, *A Pest hazai első takarékpénztár* [The first domestic savings bank of Pest], 16.

<sup>44</sup> Tóth, *Önszervező polgárok* [Citizens who organized themselves], 109.

<sup>45</sup> *A' Pestmegye pártfogása alatt álló hazai első takarékpénztár alapító részvényeseinek névsora betűrendben* [The list of names in alphabetical order of the founding shareholders of the Pest county sponsored first domestic savings bank] (Pest: Károly Trattner, 1843), 17 and 26.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 5, 6, 14, 18, 19, 25 and 26.

was no longer interested.<sup>47</sup> The best salespeople for the shares were János Zlinszky, Fáy himself, József Nagy and Gedeon Ráday, who sold 97, 40, 32 and 23 of the bank's shares or 29% of all shares sold.<sup>48</sup> Fáy himself backed his idea with his money to the tune of four shares.<sup>49</sup>

The shareholders convened for the first time in December, and they made a series of decisions about who would preside over the bank and be responsible for its administration. András Fáy was named Vice-Director, a token acknowledgement of his patrimony over the bank, and a simultaneous recognition that its serious financial decisions should be left in the hands of a more capable and experienced individual. The lawyer József Mátray became cashier, Péter Sántha, an ex-Sergeant of the Ferdinánd Esztei Infantry Regiment conveyed the needed authority to be its security guard, József Szalay, a Vice-Notary for Pest County, was named Secretary and Legal Counsel, Ferencz Suhajda its Accountant and Legal Counsel, while György Berényi ran the necessary errands for these men.<sup>50</sup> János Simontsits (d.1856), Vice Lord-Lieutenant of Pest County, demonstrated a knack for admirable time management and a considerable work ethic as he juggled responsibilities as a member of the governing board of the Hungarian National Theatre and as Director of the First Domestic Savings Bank of Pest. There was also a governing board to assist the Director and Vice-Director in their decision-making. With these appointments in place, the shareholders' meeting on December 30, 1839 decided that it was necessary to formulate an oath for the bank officers handling money. This decision and the need to publish the founding statutes of the bank society in both

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<sup>47</sup> András Fáy to Márton Puky, Pest, 27 September 1839, RL. Ráday Gyűjtemény [Ráday collection] C/24 Fáy András.

<sup>48</sup> Jirkovsky, *A Pest hazai első takarékpénztár* [The first domestic savings bank of Pest], 11.

<sup>49</sup> *Hazai első takarékpénztár alapító részvényeseinek névsora* [The list of names of the founding shareholders of the first domestic savings bank], 8.

<sup>50</sup> "General shareholders' meeting 1839," in MOL Pesti hazai első takarékpénztár egyesület. Közgyűlési iratok (1839-1864 and 1866) [First domestic savings bank society of Pest. General assembly records (1839-1864 and 1866)] Gazdasági Levéltár [Economic archive] Z 21.



Hungarian and German occasioned delays<sup>51</sup> that set the date of opening back from the January 1, 1840 timeline that the county had envisioned.

In its published statutes the Savings Bank of Pest set forth that it was an institution for the benefit of small capital holders, designed “to awaken, encourage and nurse the principles of industry and thrift among the working and servant class of the general population”. Stimulation of domestic commerce and the national economy were also hoped to be the happy by-product of the successful implementation of its primary aim.<sup>52</sup> Of the three days that the bank operated during the week Tuesday and Saturday were reserved for deposits, and Friday was the only day when clients could withdraw funds or liquidate their balances. Instead of Fáy’s figure of deposits ranging from 20 krájcár to 100 forints, by 1843 300 forints could be deposited, and this sum could accumulate to form a balance of 600 forints in total. If a client did wish to withdraw an existing deposit on Friday, then the maximum amount that could be taken out was 50 forints. For withdrawals between 50 and 100 forints eight days prior notice were necessary, and for ones between 100 and 300 forints a full month of advance warning was due to the bank. Interest was payable on deposits not on a daily basis, but only twice a year in January and July. There was even a service charge of which there had been no mention before. The deposit books that the bank issued were free for those with investments of 20 forints or less, but cost six krájcár for deposits between 20-50 forints, eight krájcár for between 50-100 forints and 20 krájcár for deposits up to 150 forints.<sup>53</sup> With the exception of raising the bar on the maximum depository amount this tightening

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<sup>51</sup> Ibid and “General shareholders’ meeting 1840,” in MOL Pesti hazai első takarékpénztár egyesület. Közgyűlési iratok (1839-1864 and 1866) [First domestic savings bank society of Pest. General assembly records (1839-1864 and 1866)] Gazdasági Levéltár [Economic archive] Z 21.

<sup>52</sup> *A’ Pestmegye pártfogása alatt álló hazai első takarékpénztár’ szabályai* [The founding statutes of the first domestic savings bank under the patronage of Pest county] (Pest: Károly Trattner, 1843), 3-4.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 10, 11, 12 and 13.

of the restrictions on withdrawals and interest payments and the addition of a service charge (albeit on a sliding scale according to wealth) did not work to the benefit of the small capital holders whom the bank ostensibly was designed to aid. Instead, it further ensured that the savings bank was not only financially sound, but increasingly profit-oriented as well.

The details of the statutes contained some instructions to the bank's employee and officers as to how to comport themselves properly while on the job. For the servant Statute 25 laid out that all hint of corruption had to be avoided as no personal gifts could be accepted from the bank's clients. He was also not to take any furniture or supplies home from the workplace, and not to make deposits on behalf of other people. While at work unexplained absences were not allowed. This person was to arrive fifteen minutes in advance of opening, and was responsible for guaranteeing that the rooms were swept, clean and well-aired. Most strikingly in a blend of paternalism and an early ethic of customer service, the statutes reminded the bank officers

To be patient towards peasant ineptness and incomprehension with a demeanour of affable philanthropy, and display good-intentioned willingness to show novices the way. One should not be ill-mannered or bad-tempered toward those who visit the office, as these people then may not wish to return. It is forbidden to make people wait unnecessarily, to mock their small deposits, to tear the money from their hands, or to reject portions of their money, etc. It is important to maintain the order of arrival in a strict manner. In the event mainly of large traffic to speak to a representative, the servant is to give each person entering the official room a copper number, and all matters will be dealt with in numeric fashion.<sup>54</sup>

A further customer service initiative years ahead of its time was the 1841 regulation to forbid pipe smoking in the bank's room, presumably out of consideration for non-smoking clients and female clientele.<sup>55</sup> These rules of conduct pertaining to the bank's

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<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 34, 39-40.

<sup>55</sup> "P entries," in MOL Pesti hazai első takarékpénztár egyesület. Valasztmány iratai. [First domestic savings bank society of Pest. Governing board records.] Gazdasági levéltár [Economic archive] Z 22 and Alexander Maxwell, "'Such a smoking nation as this I never saw....': Smoking,

employees were decidedly not feudal in nature because they created rigorous time constraints, set in writing that the bank's property did not belong to the people who used it, and reminded the bank's officers to treat all clients with respectful address, even if it entailed role-reversal on the part of a person of greater social stature waiting on someone from the lower orders. The evolution of the First Domestic Savings Bank of Pest in a capitalistic direction had occurred with surprising rapidity.

**The Bee and the Beehive: But Whose Work is to be Valued? The Activities of the First Domestic Savings Bank of Pest up to 1848**

The statutes of the bank were approved by the Vice-Regal Council and the institution was allowed to accept customers on January 11, 1840.<sup>56</sup> Regardless of Fáy's wish that the King should show his patronage to the establishment in some gesture of support, and in direct contrast to Franz Joseph's willingness to be the first depositor in the Budapest Post Office Bank on February 1, 1886, the royal house was conspicuous for its absence on opening day. Instead, the honour of being the first depositor went to a lawyer named Pál Bod, who invested the maximum then allowed under existing regulations in silver coin. The methods of advertisement had their effect, as seventeen further people followed his lead for a total of 384 forints on day one.<sup>57</sup>

The Society for the First Domestic Savings Bank of Pest was proud of its achievements, because following the shareholders' meetings of January 3 and 10, 1841 it was decided that the official yearly account balance that had to be sent to the

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Nationalism and Manliness in Nineteenth-Century Hungary," *Social History of Alcohol and Drugs* Vol.21 No.1 (Fall 2006): 14.

<sup>56</sup> Eszter Aczél, *Pénz, pénztár, takarékpénztár: fejezetek a Magyarország takarékpénztár történetéből 1839-1939-1989* [Money, cash box, savings bank: chapters from the history of the savings bank in Hungary 1839-1939-1989] (Budapest: Magyar Nemzeti Múzeum, 1989), 7.

<sup>57</sup> Fáy, *Terve a' felállítandó takarékpénztárnak* [Plan for the establishment of a savings bank], 80 and Jirkovsky, *A Pest hazai első takarékpénztár* [The first domestic savings bank of Pest], 41.

governmental authorities would be published in the press as well. Undersigned by Fáy and József Szalay, this article duly appeared on January 27, 1841 with the title ‘Official Savings Bank Report’. It informed readers that by then 1288 people had deposited money in the bank, for a total of 53 241 forints in deposits. These were further broken down into the feudal categories of servants (21 841 forints), guildsmen (18 384 forints), burghers, nobles and intelligentsia (16 370 forints), Jews (5460 forints) and taxpaying serfs (905 forints). Loans totaled 63 760 forints, and the bank officials were happy to state that as of this examination of the record books, the bank was in the black to the sum of 298 frts and 57 kr.<sup>58</sup> Hungarian societies that became profitable ventures were not run-of-the-mill so they were justifiably pleased to have passed the difficult months of the first year of operation.<sup>59</sup>

The iconography of the First Domestic Savings Bank was the industrious bumble bee, storing away honey for later use. The symbol of the bee and beehive appeared on booklets and stationary, and later became a fixture in the architectural design of the banks. Its purpose was to convey the central philosophy of the institution, that hard work and thrift could be the path to prosperity, especially for people who were not blessed with wealth and property. Yet from the beginning, the Savings Bank of Pest had an uneasy relationship with the most numerous and poorest class of people in Hungary. As the ‘Official Savings Bank Report’ made clear, although peasants and those involved in agriculture comprised 85-90% of the entire Hungarian population,<sup>60</sup> they only made up 1.7% of investors in the savings bank of Pest.

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<sup>58</sup> *Pesti Hirlap* [Pest news] 27 January 1841, No. 8, *Kossuth hirlapírói munkássága* [Kossuth’s journalistic activity], CD-ROM.

<sup>59</sup> Publicizing financial accounts was common practice in other areas of Europe and served the function of establishing confidence in the financial system with an eye toward attracting investment. Please see Mary Poovey, “Writing about Finance in Victorian England: Disclosure and Secrecy in the Culture of Investment,” *Victorian Studies* Vol. 45 No.1 (Autumn 2002): 30.

<sup>60</sup> Gergely, ed., *Magyarország története a 19. században*, [The history of Hungary in the 19<sup>th</sup> century], 95.

The concept of the bank had been made clear to them even if they could not read as churches were sent information pamphlets about its purpose, and these were read out at the conclusion of services on six consecutive Sundays.<sup>61</sup> Peasants therefore knew about the bank and were legally entitled to loans up to 60 forints. The hesitancy towards the bank came not so much from them, but from the shareholders. A sub-committee within the bank deemed it necessary to investigate in 1840 whether loans should be granted to peasants at all.<sup>62</sup> The findings of this committee were included in the report published in the press. It stated that after considering the matter of granting loans to peasants they had decided against doing so, but that the first such transactions could be expected sometime in 1842. Their reasoning was as follows:

...the main aim of our institution involves real and strict conditions: to guarantee that depositors' funds can be promptly returned, to ensure that the money entrusted to it is in a safe place, and to give it back without any clemency to the recipient (i.e. the bank). These salutary loans, which form one part of the charitable nature of this institute, cannot be made available at this time, without endangering the main aim of the saving bank...<sup>63</sup>

This situation clearly left the peasants in a bind. Neither did they have much disposable income that they could turn into savings, nor were they able to go to the bank for what they needed most, namely loans that could allow them to purchase enough land to raise their standard of living. The fact that the report defined the main aim of the bank as protecting their existing investors instead of serving the charitable purpose that underlay its foundation, showed the pressure that the shareholders had exercised on the bank in the short period of its existence.

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<sup>61</sup> Jirkovsky, *A Pest hazai első takarékpénztár* [The first domestic savings bank of Pest], 11.

<sup>62</sup> "B section," in MOL Pesti hazai első takarékpénztár egyesület. Valasztmány iratai. [First domestic savings bank society of Pest. Governing board records.] Gazdasági levéltár [Economic archive] Z 22.

<sup>63</sup> *Pesti Hírlap* [Pest news] 27 January 1841, No. 8, *Kossuth hírlapírói munkássága* [Kossuth's journalistic activity], CD-ROM.

Loans from the First Domestic Savings Bank were complicated to obtain, and there were different standards potential recipients had to fulfill based on position in the feudal order. For all those who were not classified as serfs, the pre-requisites for loans were collateral on state or bank bonds, or on certain classes of land and real estate. The bonds that were accepted included state bonds of people who resided in Pest-Buda, Eszterházy bonds, and privately-advanced funds backed by three people. Collateral derived from property and real estate was acceptable if it stemmed from noble-landholdings in Pest County, houses in the twin royal cities insured against fire damage, from land located in the special districts of the county, and from plots in smaller cities in the county where the person requesting a loan owned his home outright. When peasants were allowed to apply for loans, they could only use their land and vineyards as acceptable collateral. While those asking for loans on the basis of bonds only had to provide a record of their cases under litigation, peasants had to prove that they were nearly free of debt, had next to no legal entanglements, did not owe anything considerable, and that they had paid their taxes. Also, only they and the people requesting loans from small cities were asked to provide character references testifying to their “good comportment and frugal nature.”<sup>64</sup> These extra provisions for peasants, the cost in terms of time and money to obtain the necessary legal documents, and the severity of the terms all worked to the disadvantage of the peasantry, and discouraged their use of the institute for the purpose of borrowing.

Given that the structure of the First Domestic Savings Bank was disadvantageous to the peasantry and other low-income groups, the institute developed in an analogous manner to similar savings banks located in Western Europe. Depositors tended to be from higher social backgrounds and already in possession of savings, for which the bank

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<sup>64</sup>*A' hazai első takarékpénztár' szabályai* [The founding statutes of the first domestic savings bank], 14-25.

became an outlet. It is for this reason that the savings bank ran into the problem of people opening multiple accounts, so as to skirt the regulations establishing a low-ceiling maximum deposit. With interest rates of 5%, the possession of multiple accounts for those who had the accumulated savings represented a good investment, and many tried to take advantage of these favourable terms. One such person was Antonia Hamra who petitioned the institute in 1841 to supply her with two new bank books for her accounts numbered 444 and 938.<sup>65</sup> Two separate sources establish that it was the bank that froze her accounts in the first place.<sup>66</sup>

The Savings Bank governing board may just have been trying to make an example of Hamra, because the instances of fraud associated with holding multiple accounts became impossible to control. Two factors worked to the advantage of people who skirted the rules of the bank by opening multiple accounts. In the beginning, the First Domestic Savings Bank issued accounts on a number basis only, and not by name.<sup>67</sup> This feature made investigation of holders of multiple accounts a more time-consuming process, as names had to be associated with numbers before fraud could be established. Secondly, the bank benefited from an increased base of investors, and punishing clients for utilizing the framework that guaranteed its existence was in effect antithetical to its interests. The response of the bank was eventually to accept the facts before them by altering rates of interest and maximum deposits. Interest on deposits up to 300 forint was kept at 5%, but anything deposited above that sum entailed a reduction in interest of 1%.

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<sup>65</sup> “1841 H,” in MOL Pesti hazai első takarékpénztár egyesület. Közgyűlési iratok (1839-1864 and 1866) [First domestic savings bank society of Pest. General assembly records (1839-1864 and 1866)] Gazdasági Levéltár [Economic archive] Z 21.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., and “H Entries,” in MOL Pesti hazai első takarékpénztár egyesület. Valasztmány iratai [First domestic savings bank society of Pest. Governing board records] Gazdasági levéltár [Economic archive] Z 22.

<sup>67</sup> András Fáy, “Kimutatások a’ hazai létező és létesítendő takarékpénztárak ügyében,” [“Statements pertaining to existing and planned domestic savings banks,”] *Jelenkor* [Our age] 59 (24 July 1845): 351.

Maximum deposit levels were raised drastically from 300 frt to 5000 frt.<sup>68</sup> There was even a further provision that the bank would accept deposits above the maximum amount, personally negotiating the rate of return on interest, depending on circumstances.

The Savings Bank of Pest's attractiveness to social groups in possession of capital made it a profitable venture, even in its first year of existence. Subsequent years only furthered its gains. As a result one controversial issue that emerged was the famous request to alter the statutes of its foundation. Savings banks began appearing on the Hungarian landscape almost simultaneously to Fáy's bank in Pest. The official capital, Pozsony, had one by January 1, 1842, and there was also one in Arad that served as a prototype for the Pest venture. By 1843 Sopron acquired one, and in 1844 Miskolc followed suit. These banks differed from the one organized by the Society for the First Domestic Savings Bank of Pest in that their shares were publicly traded, and paid dividends to shareholders. The Pest savings bank's shares were owned by the individuals that bought them, and were not tradable. Sensing that there was a possibility present in this situation that was not being utilized to its full potential, Lajos Kossuth motioned that the Savings Bank of Pest should be transformed into a publicly-traded company on January 19, 1845.<sup>69</sup> He was entitled to make the motion because he had purchased a single share in 1839,<sup>70</sup> and the statutes of the bank allowed all shareholders an equal voice at general meetings, regardless of the number of shares he or she had purchased.

Kossuth's suggestion about transforming the First Domestic Savings Bank of Pest into a publicly-traded company again re-ignited the debate about what the ultimate

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<sup>68</sup> *A' Pestmegye pártfogása alatt álló hazai első takarékpénztár' szabályai* [The founding statutes of the first domestic savings bank under the patronage of Pest county] (Pest: Károly Trattner, 1846), 11 and Jirkovsky, *A Pest hazai első takarékpénztár* [The first domestic savings bank of Pest], 42.

<sup>69</sup> Jirkovsky, *A Pest hazai első takarékpénztár* [The first domestic savings bank of Pest], 14.

<sup>70</sup> *Hazai első takarékpénztár alapító részvényeseinek névsora* [The list of names of the founding shareholders of the first domestic savings bank], 14.



purpose of the bank should be: an institution geared towards the profit motive, and working to the benefit of its shareholders and those in possession of sufficient capital, or true to its professed charitable statutes as an organization helping the most vulnerable in society to establish themselves in the market economy on a small scale. The director Simontsits came down on the side of charity, and proclaimed his opposition to the suggestion to take the company public.<sup>71</sup> Fáy chose a middle position between the director and the shareholders that he expressed in two articles published in the pages of *Jelenkor* [Our Age]. He wrote that according to his knowledge twelve savings banks were by then in existence on Hungarian soil. He stressed that there was a fundamental difference between banks and savings banks, with the former laying stress on increasing their own wealth and the latter geared toward avoidance of social ills such as poverty and helplessness. Expressing sympathy for the working poor, he wondered:

And what should we say if next to those in possession of capital and those wishing to accumulate it, a third class of people were to insinuate itself, that also demanded its due from the institution of the saving bank, namely the publicly-traded company that relies on dividends, and insists on minor or excessive gains from those monies that are not its own, that it has made no sacrifices to obtain, and which the working and labouring classes of people painstakingly managed to salvage and earn from blood-stained sweaty work ?

Simultaneously to Fáy's plea that his bank should still continue to remain "a charity" was a statement of willingness on his part to bend to the wishes of influential shareholders.

As long as the philanthropic spirit was not lost from view, "...it was therefore thus advisable from looking at the interests of such a great institution legally to allow that the shareholders, as a result of their constant and not insignificant labours towards the institution, draw some winning gains, as speculative rewards, from their shares."<sup>72</sup> Fáy

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<sup>71</sup> Jirkovsky, *A Pest hazai első takarékpénztár* [The first domestic savings bank of Pest], 16.

<sup>72</sup> András Fáy, "Kimutatások a' hazai létező és létesítendő takarékpénztárak ügyében," ["Statements pertaining to existing and planned domestic savings banks,"] *Jelenkor* [Our age] 58 (20 July 1845): 346-347.

argued that alterations to the statutes of the bank were not signs that it was unsustainable as a charitable venture, but that the environment and circumstances had changed sufficiently to warrant a reconsideration of its rules and procedures.<sup>73</sup>

Fáy also alluded to a second controversy that became a subject for debate at around the same time as the one over converting the savings bank of Pest into a public company. This disagreement revolved around interest rates. More specifically, from his words it is clear that some shareholders were in favour of lowering the rate of return on savings accounts, presumably in order to widen profit margins. Fáy maintained that he had sympathy for the suggestion of low interest rates, but that for his institution he thought they were inadvisable “unless we wished for (savings banks) to lose their orientation completely.”<sup>74</sup> From his second article it is apparent that many of these proposed modifications of his bank in Pest originated from the rapid rise and success of the savings bank in Pozsony in particular, under the Chairmanship of the younger Count Ferencz Zichy. Fáy argued that “...one glance at the statutes of the savings bank of Pozsony will convince everyone, that despite all of its charms, its direction is chiefly lost...” Further, he was opposed to “the spirit of excessive speculation and focus on dividends”, and defended his own bank by saying that neither the Pozsony saving bank or his own should be the only model for other banks, but that local circumstances and needs should determine the character of subsequent banking establishments.<sup>75</sup> Fáy’s position of compromise between segments of the shareholders and the director won the day in the end, because it was resolved that once the bank accumulated 100 000 ft in security, it

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<sup>73</sup> Fáy, “Kimutatások a’ takarékpénztárak ügyében,” [“Statements pertaining to savings banks,”] *Jelenkor* [Our age] 59 (24 July 1845): 351.

<sup>74</sup> Fáy, “Kimutatások a’ takarékpénztárak ügyében,” [“Statements pertaining to savings banks,”] *Jelenkor* [Our age] 58 (20 July 1845): 347.

<sup>75</sup> Fáy, “Kimutatások a’ takarékpénztárak ügyében,” [“Statements pertaining to savings banks,”] *Jelenkor* [Our age] 59 (24 July 1845): 352-353.

would begin to pay shareholder dividends.<sup>76</sup> At the same time, its charitable origin was maintained by leaving the interest rates at their established levels, particularly for the smallest of deposits, as has already been mentioned. Since there were already reservations about “banking” on the poorer elements in society in 1841, when the report of the First Domestic Savings Bank of Pest appeared in the press, Fáy’s commitment to retaining some small essence of the original vision of the bank as a “charitable enterprise” was probably significant. The combination that he had conceived the institute for the benefit of the disadvantaged, coupled with his position as (by this time honorary) Vice-President of his bank,<sup>77</sup> allowed him to withstand extensive pressure to turn the Savings Bank of Pest into a purely for profit enterprise.

### **The Next Frontier in Charity?: The Domestic Hungarian Life Insurance Society**

With the savings bank in a flourishing state, a number of factors led Fáy to capitalize on his successful financial venture, continue his commitment to charity and pursue the development of new projects. One such new project was an offshoot of the First Domestic Savings Bank of Pest, and involved a plan to establish an ambitious insurance company. The need for a company along these lines first arose in 1840 when the Fisherman’s Guild of Pest deposited 1000 forints in the bank as insurance in the event of illness on the part of its membership. The Fisherman’s Guild negotiated a 4% interest charge for these funds, but when other Friendly Societies wanted to use the institution for the same purpose the bank temporarily declined their requests, on the grounds that it was

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<sup>76</sup> Jirkovsky, *A Pest hazai első takarékpénztár* [The first domestic savings bank of Pest], 16.

<sup>77</sup> Badics, *Fáy András Életrajza* [Biography of András Fáy], 504.

too early for such large investments.<sup>78</sup> A similar situation arose concerning establishing savings funds for children (orphan funds), which was not allowed until 1843.<sup>79</sup>

Friendly societies and orphan accounts were a form of insurance for people who already had the necessary collected capital for the purpose of security in the event of misfortune. What they did not possess was a safe place to store their funds. With the savings bank working towards meeting these needs for the people of Pest County, Fáy began to concern himself with those who did not have reserves of money stored away at home, and for whom life's precariousness could spell financial disaster. Around 1843 Fáy joined yet another society, The Hungarian Society for Mutual Aid Insurance against Hail Damage. The article announcing the society's formation explained that while some insurance companies were operational in Hungary, such as Austrian-Italian Assicurazioni Generali, their terms were highly conditional and not entirely suited to local conditions.<sup>80</sup> A subsequent issue laid out the rules of the society, and how it was designed to insure four classes of crops including fodder grasses, carrots, potatoes, kitchen and vegetable gardens, hemp, flax, hop, vineyards and tobacco. The society was composed of one President, Count Lajos Batthyány, and eighteen governing board members, who were also mostly aristocratic landowners.

Its structure represented a departure from many previous societies. Eschewing the precedent of the joint-stock company, article six clarified that mutual aid insurance meant "(i)n this society everyone is insured and the insurer at the same time." Article eleven made clear that profiteering was not a motive of the organization. If after the payment of damage claims, funds remained at the end of a fiscal year, then these would be invested

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<sup>78</sup> These deposits were later deemed acceptable if the invested sum exceeded 5000ft.

<sup>79</sup> Jirkovsky, *A Pest hazai első takarékpénztár* [The first domestic savings bank of Pest], 43.

<sup>80</sup> "Jégverés ellen kölcsönösen biztosító magyar egyesület alaprajza és szabályai," ["General guidelines and rules of the Hungarian society for mutual aid insurance against hail damage,"] *Pesti Hírlap* [Pest news] 12 February 1843, No. 221, *Kossuth hírlapírói munkássága* [Kossuth's journalistic activity], CD-ROM.

and its interest used to cover operational costs. Should years of plenty amass enough to pay for administration and operation and still have remaining deposits left over, then reduction of insuree payment schedules would be the next feasible step.<sup>81</sup> One year later, the paper boasted that Baranya, Krassó, Nógrád, Fehér, Zemplén and other counties had suffered hail damage, but thanks to the The Hungarian Society for Mutual Aid Insurance against Hail Damage those who had purchased this insurance were compensated for their entire losses. What is more, there was still 1223 ft 29kr. in silver coin remaining in their accounts.<sup>82</sup> This announcement was commendatory not only as a form of advertisement to generate new clients, but also to validate the mutual-aid society model. The change in terminology to mutual aid society and the parallel structural modification redirecting profits back into the company represented recognition that the shareholder model had limitations, and that these had to be overcome. The mutual aid society represented a new approach to create the essential services the country needed, without sacrificing the imperative to help the vulnerable.

By 1845 Fáy and the governing board of the savings bank began seriously to consider that their institution should have a related establishment under its aegis that pertained to matters of insurance.<sup>83</sup> As a direct precedent, there was the General-Care-Facility of the *Erste österreichische Spar-Casse* in Vienna. Designed to provide yearly pensions for soldiers, priests, civil servants, intellectuals, artists and citizens,<sup>84</sup> the

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<sup>81</sup> “Jégverés ellen kölcsönösen biztosító magyar egyesület alapszabályai,” [“Founding statutes of the Hungarian society for mutual aid insurance against hail damage,”] *Pesti Hirlap* [Pest news] 16 February 1843, No. 222, *Kossuth hírlapírói munkássága* [Kossuth’s journalistic activity], CD-ROM.

<sup>82</sup> “Jégverés ellen kölcsönösen biztosító magyar egyesület,” [“The Hungarian society for mutual aid insurance against hail damage,”] *Pesti Hirlap* [Pest news] 10 March 1844, No. 333, *Kossuth hírlapírói munkássága* [Kossuth’s journalistic activity], CD-ROM.

<sup>83</sup> “General shareholders’ meeting 1845,” in MOL Pesti hazai első takarékpénztár egyesület. Közgyűlési iratok (1839-1864 and 1866) [First domestic savings bank society of Pest. General assembly records (1839-1864 and 1866)] Gazdasági Levéltár [Economic archive] Z 21.

<sup>84</sup> *Die mit der ersten österreichischen Spar-Casse vereinigte allgemeine Versorgungs-Anstalt für Unterthanen des österreichischen Kaiserstaates : Im Geiste ihrer Statuten geschildert,*

General-Care-Facility had already been in existence for twenty years. Attempting to use the experience of the General-Care-Facility and the elapsed time to their advantage, the savings bank governing board discussed the creation of a society that would deal with several classes of insurance, thereby alleviating several needs, and making up for lost time in the process. Unfortunately, Hungarian conditions interfered with the progress of the institute, thereby relegating its development to a committee discussion phase that lasted for several years.<sup>85</sup>

The sticking point that delayed the creation of an insurance company attached to the savings bank of Pest was the lack of reliable natal and mortality statistics for Hungary on which insurance premiums could be set. An official census existed for 1784-1787, but the next reliable one would only take place in 1869, and while Hungarian doctors did have to report the number of deaths to authorities since 1819, these statistics were not part of the public record.<sup>86</sup> To work around these limitations, Fáy took it upon himself to study European authors specializing in population, statistical and probability analysis. His main sources were Johann Peter Süßmilch, Christian Jacob Baumann, Ernst Wilhelm Brune, Antoine Deparcieux, Jakob Bernoulli, T.R. Malthus and Charles Babbage.<sup>87</sup>

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*und mit tabellarischen Uebersichten über die zweckmässigste Art der Benützung dieser Anstalt, dann über den Erfolg der Einlagen versehen* (Vienna: Franz Tendler, 1829), IV and 7.

<sup>85</sup> "K Entries," in MOL Pesti hazai első takarékpénztár egyesület. Valasztmány iratai [First domestic savings bank society of Pest. Governing board records] Gazdasági levéltár [Economic archive] Z 22.

<sup>86</sup> Ágnes B. Lukács, "A halandóság viszonyok néhány vonása Magyarországon a 19. század első felében," ["Some aspects of mortality rates in Hungary in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century,"] *Demográfia* [Demography] Vol.12 No. 1-2 (1969): 72.

<sup>87</sup> András Fáy, *Adatok Magyarország bővebb ismertetésére* [Statistics for the better understanding of Hungary] (Pest: J. Beimel and Vazul Kozma, 1853), 7. For the record, the books Fáy consulted probably were: Johann Peter Süßmilch, *Die göttliche Ordnung in den Veränderungen des menschlichen Geschlechts, aus der Geburt, dem Tode, und der Fortpflanzung desselben* (Berlin: J.C. Spener, 1741), Ernst Wilhelm Brune, *Berechnung der Lebensrenten und Anwartschaften*, (Meyer, 1820), Antoine Deparcieux, *Essai sur les probabilités de la durée de la vie humaine d'où l'on déduit la manière de déterminer les rentes viagères, tant simples qu'en tontines: precede d'une courte explication sur les rentes à terme, où annuités: et accompagné d'un grand nombre de tables* (Paris: Frères Guerin, 1746), Jakob Bernoulli, *Ars conjectandi opus posthumum: accedit tractatus de seriebus infinitis, et epistola gallice scripta de ludo pilae reticularis* (Basil: Impensis Thurnisiorum Fraetrum, 1713), T.R. Malthus, *An Essay on the*

Süssmilch scholars in particular have highlighted Fáy's indebtedness to the writing of the Prussian clergyman.<sup>88</sup> As Süssmilch allowed estimation of population and mortality in the absence of extensive official statistical evidence, his method lent itself to analysis of Hungarian circumstances with relative ease. To provide the raw data for the mathematical calculations Fáy sent out 700 letters to priests and rabbis across the country, asking for statistics on numbers of deaths in their religious communities and the ages of the deceased for a ten-year period between 1837 and 1846.<sup>89</sup> All the surveys except two were completed, but not all could be imputed into the statistical tables.<sup>90</sup>

The delays occasioned by the Saving Bank Committee's investigation of the insurance idea and the necessary research needed to develop viable Hungarian statistics on mortality rates led other home-grown insurance companies to be quicker out of the gate than the institute Fáy had planned. Miskolc had a Tisza Region Mutual Aid Fire Damage Claim Society by 1847 and in Székesfehérvár there was the First Hungarian Mutual Aid Life Insurance Institute from that same year onwards.<sup>91</sup> This latter institution came into being because Emér Hamvassy, the chief accountant of the Székesfehérvár Savings Bank, received sponsorship to go on a nine-week research trip to investigate insurance companies in Leipzig, Gotha, Wrocław, Hamburg and Hannover due to the professional assistance of E.A. Masius, the director of the Leipzig insurance institute.<sup>92</sup>

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*Principle of Population; or a View of its Past and Present Effects on Human Happiness; with an Inquiry into our Prospects respecting the Future Removal or Mitigation of the Evils which it Occasions* (London: J. Johnson, 1803) and Charles Babbage, *A Comparative View of the Various Institutes for the Assurance of Lives* (London: J. Mawman, 1826).

<sup>88</sup> Jacqueline Hecht, "Johann Peter Süssmilch: A German Prophet in Foreign Countries," *Population Studies* Vol. 41 No. 1 (March 1987): 51 and Robert A. Horváth, "Süssmilch's Methodological Impact on European Statistics," *International Statistical Review* Vol.59 No. 1 (April 1991): 63.

<sup>89</sup> Fáy, *Adatok Magyarország ismertetésére* [Statistics for understanding Hungary], 6.

<sup>90</sup> József Finta, *Fáy András a biztosító eszme szolgálatában* [András Fáy and the investigation of the idea of insurance] (Budapest: Magyar Biztosítástudományi Szemle, 1936), 7.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, 4 and 6.

<sup>92</sup> Mihály Boross, "Az első hazai életbiztosító intézet alapismerete," ["General information about the first Hungarian life insurance institute,"] *Hetilap* [Weekly pages] 17 December 1847, No. 205. *Kossuth hírlapírói munkássága* [Kossuth's journalistic activity], CD-

One of the people involved with the Székesfehérvár insurance enterprise, Mihály Boross (1815-1899), went on to write a series of articles in *Hetilap* [Weekly Pages] publicizing the need for further life insurance companies in Hungary. In one of these articles he compared companies that operated on the stock principle, as mutual aid societies, or as a mixture of the two. His opinion was firmly set against the first type of organization, for experience had shown that:

If the institute was structured according to the stock principle, it is very probable that these stock papers will be gobbled up by the wealthiest inhabitants of that city, where the central office is located; I consider it neither patriotic, nor humane, nor honourable, nor indicative of common sense, nor just that the inhabitants of some city, because some institute exists in their midst, should grow fat based on the sweat of the entire nation and of all the inhabitants of the homeland, and that they should make gains based on their pennies, so that they would live for their own pockets instead of for the commonweal. For these reasons I am a swornopponent of stockholding institutions.<sup>93</sup>

Although Boross recognized the need to open insurance companies in Hungary, the rushed nature of many planned companies was a source of irritation to him. In his estimation the country was filled with people who were jacks of all trades, master of none. The problem was that "...in our homeland one meets so many individuals, who are perhaps renowned in some field, and are under the illusion that they would be able to establish a life-insurance institute."<sup>94</sup> Despite some difference of opinion with Fáy about the nature of his savings-bank model, and his lack of experience in life-insurance Boross

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ROM and E.A. Masius, *Lehre der Versicherung und statistische Nachweisung aller Versicherungs-Anstalten in Deutschland, nebst einer Hinweisung auf den hohen Einfluss dieser Institute auf den Nationalwohlstand, und die Gesetze darüber in den verschiedenen Staaten*, (Leipzig: Fest, 1846).

<sup>93</sup> Mihály Boross, "Az életbiztosító intézetekről általánosan," ["On life insurance institutes generally,"] *Hetilap* [Weekly pages] 17 September 1847, No. 179, *Kossuth hirlapírói munkássága* [Kossuth's journalistic activity], CD-ROM.

<sup>94</sup> Mihály Boross, "Az első hazai életbiztosító intézet alapismerete," ["General information about the first Hungarian life insurance institute,"] *Hetilap* [Weekly pages] 24 December 1847, No. 206. *Kossuth hirlapírói munkássága* [Kossuth's journalistic activity], CD-ROM.



had nothing but praise for him in print as “our hardworking Fáy, who transplanted the idea of the savings bank into our homeland in earlier times”.<sup>95</sup>

Fáy’s theoretical research on concepts relating to insurance schemes and his statistical data on Hungarian rates of births and deaths came together in 1848. It was in that year that his plan for the insurance company was ready for presentation to the board of the bank. The statutes of the new company itself relied on the groundwork of the General Multipurpose Capital and Pension Insurance Institute in Vienna, under the directorship of mathematics professor Johann Michael Joseph Salomon (1793-1856) that had opened in 1839.<sup>96</sup> Fáy envisioned a first-class organization that would deal in five separate classes of insurance: I. insurance in the event of survival, II. insurance in case of death, III. fixed-stipend insurance (*Leibrente*), IV. pensions, and V. mutual-aid insurance.<sup>97</sup> Special provisions curtailed coverage of sailors, soldiers, and others serving in a military capacity, and denied payments to those who committed suicide or, in true nineteenth-century fashion, perished in a duel or of wounds occasioned by dueling.<sup>98</sup> The start-up capital was to be 100 000 forints, composed of 200 forint shares, of which only 25% would actually need to be paid upfront. Regardless of the negative criticism of the shareholding organizational principle, Fáy decided that it had proven its merit in the past. His one concession was to attempt to limit shareholder dividends to interest and capping their profits at 5%.<sup>99</sup> In contrast to the savings bank established less than one decade

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<sup>95</sup> Mihály Boross, “Az első hazai életbiztosító intézet alapismerete,” [“General information about the first Hungarian life insurance institute,”] *Hetilap* [Weekly pages] 16 December 1847, No. 204. *Kossuth hírlapírói munkássága* [Kossuth’s journalistic activity], CD-ROM.

<sup>96</sup> Constant von Wurzbach, *Biographisches Lexikon des Kaisertums Österreich Achtundzwanzigster Theil Saal-Sawiczewski und Nachträge* (Vienna: K.K. Hof- und Staatsdruckerei, 1874), 151-153.

<sup>97</sup> *Fáy András életkor biztosító intézet* [András Fáy life insurance institute] OSzK MS. Quat. Hung. 1242, 4-7.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, 99 and 115.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, 128.

earlier, the statutes of the Hungarian Domestic Mutual-Aid Life Insurance Institute bore no further mention of their charitable intent.

### **The 1848-1849 Revolution and its Effects on the *First Domestic Savings Bank of Pest* and on the Insurance Institute**

With the statutes for the insurance company in place, its operations were set to begin in 1848. The board of the savings bank was even willing to donate 2000 forints as a gift to facilitate the opening.<sup>100</sup> However the outbreak of the revolution swept away all of these plans. All that proved salvageable from the promising establishment was Fáy's research on Hungarian demographics. This work became the basis for his book *Statistics for the Better Understanding of Hungary*, published in 1853. It was considered a valuable resource on Hungarian population assessment and rates of infectious mortal diseases for its time.<sup>101</sup>

The First Domestic Savings Bank of Pest fared better than the Hungarian Domestic Mutual-Aid Life Insurance Institute because it managed to survive the revolution and subsequent war. Just before 1848 the bank had been planning to expand from the county hall onto a property at the intersection of University and Green Garden streets belonging to Pál Almássy.<sup>102</sup> With the property already purchased, all that remained was for the bank's architectural committee to come up with a design that met with the necessary approval.<sup>103</sup> These plans came to an abrupt end when from the first to

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<sup>100</sup> "General shareholders' meeting 1848," in MOL Pesti hazai első takarékpénztár egyesület. Közgyűlési iratok (1839-1864 and 1866) [First domestic savings bank society of Pest. General assembly records (1839-1864 and 1866)] Gazdasági Levéltár [Economic archive] Z 21.

<sup>101</sup> See note 87.

<sup>102</sup> Jirkovsky, *A Pest hazai első takarékpénztár* [The first domestic savings bank of Pest], 20.

<sup>103</sup> "I Section," in MOL Pesti hazai első takarékpénztár egyesület. Valasztmány iratai [First domestic savings bank society of Pest. Governing board records] Gazdasági levéltár [Economic archive] Z 22.

the third of March 1848 a run on the bank threatened it with complete collapse.<sup>104</sup> A series of emergency loans followed including one from the Hungarian Commercial Bank of Pest<sup>105</sup> for 20 000 ft and a second one from the Vice-Regal Council for 100 000 ft., both in 1848. All loans were suspended during this unstable time as well.<sup>106</sup>

It is difficult to assess what part the bank played in financing the revolutionary effort, because many of the archival records were simply left blank for obvious reasons. There is one mention that the First Domestic Savings Bank of Pest gave a 20 000 ft loan to the County of Pest in 1849 based on “orders from above”, but what this money paid for is naturally not specified.<sup>107</sup> The banknotes of the revolution in various denominations were not printed by the First Domestic Savings Bank of Pest, but the Hungarian Commercial Bank of Pest.<sup>108</sup> The savings bank did accept the bank notes signed by Kossuth as legal Hungarian currency until the Austrian military authorities led by General Windisch-Graetz (1787-1862) announced in March 1849 that all Hungarian currency would be withdrawn from circulation by March 24.<sup>109</sup> In a process that would take until 1851 to complete, the bank was ordered to turn over all of the revolutionary currency to the Austrian military authorities at their headquarters on Soldier Square.<sup>110</sup> Financial institutions in Hungary, including the First Domestic Savings Bank of Pest, suffered great losses as a result of the revolution, because when the dust settled over 60 million forints

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<sup>104</sup> Jirkovsky, *A Pest hazai első takarékpénztár* [The first domestic savings bank of Pest], 21.

<sup>105</sup> This bank had been established in 1841. Thomas Barcsay, “Banking in Hungarian Economic Development, 1867-1919,” *Business and Economic History, Second Series* Vol. 20 (1991): 217.

<sup>106</sup> “K Section,” in MOL Pesti hazai első takarékpénztár egyesület. Valasztmány iratai [First domestic savings bank society of Pest. Governing Board Records] Gazdasági levéltár [Economic archive] Z 22.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid.

<sup>108</sup> Aczél, *Pénz, pénztár, takarékpénztár* [Money, cash box, savings bank], 11.

<sup>109</sup> Jirkovsky, *A Pest hazai első takarékpénztár* [The first domestic savings bank of Pest], 26.

<sup>110</sup> “M section,” in MOL Pesti hazai első takarékpénztár egyesület. Valasztmány iratai [First domestic savings bank society of Pest. Governing board records] Gazdasági levéltár [Economic archive] Z 22.

was burnt without compensation as punishment for their participation and support of the Hungarian insurgents in 1848-1849.

By 1848-1849 Hungary had 32 savings banks in existence, and this amount surpassed the number of these same institutions in the Austrian half of the Habsburg possessions.<sup>111</sup> The fact that they were more present in Hungary than in Austria vindicated Fáy's belief that they were essentially needed for Hungarian economic development. His personal initiative to found the First Domestic Savings Bank of Pest really did pave the way for the rapid multiplication of these organizations across the country. The success of his bank also proved that there was a great deal of capital in Hungary which had not been utilized previously, as Tóth contended.<sup>112</sup> This accumulation of capital would help lay the foundation for the impressive overall economic growth rate Hungary experienced in the late-nineteenth century.

The fact that capital accumulation and the profit motive so rapidly outpaced Fáy's original vision of a bank as a so-called charitable institution designed to help lower socio-economic groups attain the promises of embourgeoisement caught even him off guard. With the savings bank enjoying great financial success it would undoubtedly have been hard to make the case that it had in actuality lost its way. Still, it is saddening that he so quickly set aside his scruples about the alleviation of poverty, with the blush of first success. Although cosmetically empathetic to the plight of the poor in his literary writings, and in his book on the savings bank, these writings simultaneously reveal his limited understanding of impoverishment and the coping strategies people employ to endure their situations in life. To what extent he actually believed that poverty could be eradicated or lessened by the device of creating a savings bank, will probably never be

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<sup>111</sup> Aczél, *Pénz, pénztár, takarékpénztár* [Money, cash box, savings bank], 11 and Jirkovsky, *A Pest hazai első takarékpénztár* [The first domestic savings bank of Pest], 17. Fényes listed 30 in existence in 1847. Elek Fényes, *Magyarország leírása I.Rész* [Description of Hungary part 1] (Pest: Beimel, 1847), 193-200.

<sup>112</sup> Tóth, *Önszervező polgárok* [Citizens who organized themselves], 110.

known. His decision to go with the flow instead of remaining true to the philanthropic spirit of his bank would be a fateful decision, repeated over and over in the years to come. The consequences of prioritizing the upper and middle classes at the expense of the poor would haunt Hungarian governments and private enterprise until the end of the nineteenth century and beyond.

## Chapter Four

### Gardens of Magyar-Speaking Children: Bezerédj and the Early Childhood Education Movement in Hungary

The topic of early childhood education and kindergartens is an evergreen one that attracts scholarly interest on a continual basis. Great Britain, the United States and the German lands and their infant schools have received the most attention, especially in the writing of Ann Taylor Allen.<sup>1</sup> This attention is not surprising, because the development and importance of these centres to teach the young are both well known and laden with meaning. Human beings enter them at a highly impressionable point in their development, and their youth and receptivity provide opportunities to impart lessons, teachings and values that teachers hope will remain with their former pupils throughout their lifetimes. The recognition of this potential parallels the existence of the campaign to change early childhood education from the late eighteenth century onwards. By the nineteenth century the guiding principles of the early infant schools changed from imparting knowledge more effectively, to schooling children to be national citizens. This direction is well stated in Roberta Wollons' recent book on kindergartens, that they function as a "vehicle for socializing others" and that they were "...a politicized institution, directly linked to the goals of the state in the formation of national identity, citizenship and moral values".<sup>2</sup> The following will attempt to show that the use of early childhood education for these purposes both blossomed in a Central European

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<sup>1</sup> Ann Taylor Allen, "Gardens of Children, Gardens of God: Kindergartens and Day Care Centres in Nineteenth-Century Germany," *Journal of Social History* Vol.19 No.3 (Spring 1986): 433-450, Allen, "'Let us Live with Our Children': Kindergarten Movements in Germany and the United States, 1840-1914," *History of Education Quarterly* Vol.28 No.1 (Spring 1988): 23-48, Allen, "The Kindergarten in Germany and the United States, 1840-1914: A Comparative Perspective," *History of Education* Vol.35 No.2 (March 2006): 173-188, A.F.B. Roberts, "A New View of the Infant School Movement," *British Journal of Educational Studies* Vol.20 No.2 (June 1972): 154-164 and Caroline Winterer, "Avoiding a 'Hothouse System of Education': Nineteenth-Century Childhood Education from the Infant Schools to the Kindergartens," *History of Education Quarterly* Vol.32 No.3 (Autumn 1992): 289-314.

<sup>2</sup> Roberta Wollons, "On the International Diffusion, Politics and Transformation of the Kindergarten," in *Kindergartens and Cultures: The Global Diffusion of an Idea*, ed. Roberta Wollons (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 2.

environment and predated the kindergarten movement. The discussion is concentrated on certain Hungarian reformers, such as István Bezerédj and his wife Amália, who recognized the possibilities inherent in cultural and social immersion of the young and acted upon it.

This chapter is about how the concepts of nationalization of education and magyarization entered the political discourse of reform-era Hungary, and how infant care facilities were the places where these goals were implemented. After providing a brief biographical sketch and historiographical background on István Bezerédj, I give details on the Hungarian infant centres by contextualizing their origins within Europe and the Habsburg territories. I then turn my attention to Hungary and the decrees governing education (*Ratio educationis*) and first efforts to found early children's schools on the part of Countess Teréz Brunszvik (1775-1861). Inspired by Brunszvik's example, I follow how the Bezerédj's worked to build upon her educational concepts in their home County of Tolna. Ethnically, the population figures for this county in 1836 were 117 754 Magyars, 54 233 Germans, 2 142 Serbians, 500 people of Slavic descent and 3833 Jews. Yet in 1831 the county passed guidelines in relation to education that settlements with one predominant religion should have a single school and that Magyar should be its language of instruction, that only teachers with competence in Magyar be allowed to teach, and that children who wore clothing to school that "displayed some form of national differentiation" be made to leave these garments at home.<sup>3</sup> The infant schools were the only learning facilities where these directives could be implemented because they were new and hence not subject to the jurisdiction of the royal and religious authorities in the same way as existing educational establishments. Leaving the thriving

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<sup>3</sup> Mrs. Sándor Braun, "Tolna vármegye és a rendi országgyűlések (1807-1847)," ["Tolna county and the feudal diets (1807-1847),"] *Tanulmányok Tolna megye történetéből, VIII* [Studies from the history of Tolna county, VIII] ed. János K. Balog (Szekszárd: Tolna Megyei Tanács Levéltára, 1978), 139.

infant centres of Tolna behind, I return to the national association encompassing the Hungarian infant schools: The Society for the Perpetuation of the Infant Schools in Hungary. Finally, I deal with how this organization, to which Bezerédj also belonged, attempted to act as an umbrella organization for the infant centres springing up across the country, and how it became mired in an inconclusive disagreement among its members over the extent and intensity of magyarization that it sought to promote. As the section on historiography will elucidate, the key interpretations of Bezerédj's character and significance have hinged on the question of his "humanitarianism". I would like to add the caveat that this viewpoint places too little stress on how much his early child care initiatives were not simply acts of goodwill but a cornerstone of his politics. They signified his commitment to Magyar culture at a regional level, and were geared toward ensuring that Tolna County would have a more magyarized landscape in the immediate future.

### **Biographical Sketch**

István Bezerédj was born on October 28, 1796 in Szerdahely to his parents István Bezerédj the elder (1771-1843) and his wife Erzsébet Nagy Felsőbüki (d.1837). The couple had a second son named Pál two years later. By the time István Bezerédj was sent to the Catholic Gymnasium in Sopron in 1804, he was knowledgeable in Hungarian, German and French.<sup>4</sup> These skills were important for family correspondence, since the preferred use of French and German in letter writing was considered to be indispensable.<sup>5</sup> After six years in the Gymnasium with its Latinate focus, Bezerédj went on to the legal

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<sup>4</sup> Géza Rozsonits, "Bezerédj István, a reformpolitikus, (Szerdahely, 1796. október 28.-Hidja, 1856. március 6.)," ["István Bezerédj, a politician for reform, (October 28, 1796 Szerdahely-March 6, 1856),"] *VÁRhely* Vol.2 No.3 (1996): 124.

<sup>5</sup> István Bodnár and Albert Gárdonyi, *Bezerédj István (1796-1856)*, I. kötet [István Bezerédj (1796-1856), volume I] (Budapest: Athenaeum R. Társulat, 1918), 29.



academy in Pozsony. He studied there until August 17, 1815, learning piano, drawing, dance and French privately in addition to his formal education.<sup>6</sup>

At age twenty-four Bezerédj chose to marry a relative from the Vámos branch of the family named Amália Bezerédj (1804-1837) who was then seventeen years old. Amália was given an exceptional education for a woman of her time, learning Hungarian, German, English and French very well, and Latin to a fair degree. She studied the arts expected of woman of her rank, and was educated in drawing, singing, music, playing the piano and the harp.<sup>7</sup> After their marriage, the pair settled on estates in Hidja, in Tolna County. Amália and István Bezerédj had one daughter after thirteen years of marriage, Floriana, who was born during the famous Diet of 1832-1836, on May 7, 1834, and became known as the “little dietal girl”. Amália’s own education, her interest in creating a suitable environment and learning materials for her daughter, and her advancing tuberculosis, caused her to turn her attention to artistic pursuits. She composed music, and became a writer. Her first works were in German, and later in Magyar. Her three most well-known literary works were *Novellen and Erzählungen*, *Flóri könyve* (Flóri’s Book) and *Földesi estvék* (Evenings in Földes). These were all released by her husband after her death on September 18, 1837.<sup>8</sup> Flóri’s Book was particularly successful, enjoying at least sixteen printings, and becoming a part of the lives of several generations of children.<sup>9</sup> These writings made Amália a pioneer in the field of Magyar children’s literature.

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 48, 52, 55 and 62.

<sup>7</sup> Géza Rozsonits, “Egy elfelejtett reformpolitikus,” [“A forgotten politician of reform,”] in *Emlékkönyv Bezerédj István születésének 200 évfordulóján*, [Memorial book in commemoration of the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of István Bezerédj’s birth,] ed. Géza Rozsonits (Sopron: Edutech, 1996), 35.

<sup>8</sup> Rozsonits, Géza. “Kétszáz esztendeje született Bezerédj István,” [“The two hundredth anniversary of István Bezerédj’s birth,”] *Honismeret* [Homeland knowledge] No.6 (1996): 21-22.

<sup>9</sup> István Juhász, *Szemelvények a Bezerédj-család történetéből (genealogiai táblákkal)* [Extracts from the history of the Bezerédj family (with genealogical tables)] (Budapest, 1940), 26.

István and Amália Bezerédj's common interest in children's issues led them to support causes relating to children, education and the training of teachers both at the national level and in their home County of Tolna. At the 1843-44 Diet Bezerédj was elected to be chairperson of a committee that produced recommendations for the reform of elementary education, most of which were unfortunately not adopted.<sup>10</sup> With the Diet not turning its attention to this issue sufficiently, the Bezéredjs returned to their sphere of influence in Tolna, helping to create a Children's Institute in Hidja, and an infant school in Szekszárd by 1836. There were also plans for a national teaching institute specializing in training preschool teachers, and a Tolna teaching academy of the same mold under their aegis was realized one year later. The Children's Institute and the Szekszárd infant centre went on to earn a national reputation for excellence and their concepts were replicated in infant schools across the country.<sup>11</sup> Bezerédj went on to join The Society for the Perpetuation of Infant Schools in Hungary in 1836.<sup>12</sup> Tolna became a separate branch of this Pest-based society, and István Bezerédj was asked to become the chairperson of the regional branch. Although István Wargha went on to lead the Tolna National Preschool Teachers' Training Centre, István Bezerédj still retained a decisive voice on the governing board, especially in matters relating to pedagogy.<sup>13</sup>

The childcare initiatives were not the only societal initiatives that attracted Bezerédj during the reform era. He was a member of the Tolna Casino, a local branch of

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<sup>10</sup> Gábor Pajkossy, "Bezerédj István politikusi pályája," ["The political career of István Bezerédj,"] in *Emlékkönyv Bezerédj István születésének 200 évfordulóján*, [Memorial book in commemoration of the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of István Bezerédj's birth,] ed. Géza Rozsonits (Sopron: Edutech, 1996), 51-52.

<sup>11</sup> Fényes documented 61 infant schools in operation in 1847. Elek Fényes, *Magyarország leírása*, 1.rész [Description of Hungary, part 1] (Pest: Beigel, 1847), 171-172.

<sup>12</sup> "Az országos kisdédóvó egyesület alapító tagainak névsora," ["List of names of the founding members of the national infant school society,"] *Kisdédóvókat Magyarországon terjesztő egyesület* [Hungarian infant school promulgation society] MOL P 1652.

<sup>13</sup> Rózsa Kurucz, "Bezerédj István és Bezerédj Amália szerepe a reformkori nevelésügyben," ["The role of István Bezerédj and Amália Bezerédj in the matter of education in the reform period,"] in *Emlékkönyv Bezerédj István születésének 200 évfordulóján*, [Memorial book in commemoration of the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of István Bezerédj's birth,] ed. Géza Rozsonits (Sopron: Edutech, 1996), 82-83.

the organization that prioritized remaining true to Széchenyi's conception that it be a gentlemen's club devoted to the debate of current affairs.<sup>14</sup> Bezerédj was active in the establishment of a Tolna Protection Association, and in the Tolna Mulberry Silk Society. In fact he even went on to become president of this association on November 6, 1840.<sup>15</sup> After 1845 when liberal-minded national politicians met regularly in Pest on a quarterly basis, he was a loyal attendee. Among the membership of the national Protection Association, Bezerédj was so celebrated at this same time that he was one of only four people to have his portrait on souvenir handkerchiefs, an indication that he formed a part of the association's "inner circle".<sup>16</sup>

In addition to involvement in reform initiatives, Bezerédj engaged in politics through the traditional feudal forums that were expected of male members of the middle nobility in his position. From 1825 he was a judge in Tolna County, and engaged in the deliberative assemblies of the local nobles, winning election and serving as the chief notary from 1827-1836.<sup>17</sup> There he found common ground with Dániel Csapó (1778-1844), the Vice Lord Lieutenant of Tolna from 1827-1836, and Antal Augusz, who advocated a liberal direction in county affairs. They stood in opposition to the Perczel and Döry families and Count Rudolf Festetics, who were more inclined to support feudal noble rights.<sup>18</sup> These deeply ingrained divisions solidified into a two-party system, with the conservative group being labeled the Pecsovits party (after Ferencz Pecsovits, an official for Count Rudolf Festetics) and the liberals earning the name of the Kubinszky

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<sup>14</sup> István Bodnár, "Száz év tettekben, alkotásokban...A Szekszárdi Kaszinó vázlatos története," ["One hundred years of deeds, work...an outline of the history of the Szekszárd casino," in *Bezerédj István és a százéves Szekszárdi Kaszinó*, [István Bezerédj and one hundred years of the casino of Szekszárd,] ed. István Bodnár (Szekszárd, 1942), 103.

<sup>15</sup> István Bodnár and Albert Gárdonyi, *Bezerédj István (1796-1856)*, II kötet [István Bezerédj (1796-1856), volume II] (Budapest: Magyar Történelmi Társulat, 1920), 176, 288-9, 301.

<sup>16</sup> Pajkossy, "Bezerédj István," ["István Bezerédj,"] in *Emlékkönyv Bezerédj István születésének*, [Memorial book of István Bezerédj's birth,] 52-53.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 46.

<sup>18</sup> Bodnár and Gárdonyi, *Bezerédj István*, I. kötet [István Bezerédj, volume I], 134.

party, a mocking term taken from the name of a local tanner.<sup>19</sup> The battle for local supremacy resulted in neither party being able decisively to gain the upper hand, and led to Tolna changing sides repeatedly at the dietal level, issuing instructions to representatives that alternated between liberal and conservative political agendas.

István Bezerédj was firmly settled among the liberals, in fact according to the reports of the secret service between 1830-1840 he was considered to be “left-leaning” or even “part of the radical left.”<sup>20</sup> He was elected as a dietal representative for Tolna for four separate feudal Diets: in 1830, from 1832-1836, for six months of the 1839-1840 session, and in 1843-1844. For the national representative assembly in 1848-1849 he represented Szekszárd until the end of the revolution.<sup>21</sup> Along the way his partner representatives were Dániel Csapó, János Jeszenszky, Miklós Perczel and Móric Perczel.<sup>22</sup> Despite being bound by the instructions of his county, Bezerédj spoke out on a wide range of issues on topics that were close to his heart. In addition to those already mentioned, some of these were: the wider use of the Hungarian language, the establishment of greater religious freedom, the virtues of Jewish emancipation, asking the king to follow a national political direction (retention of his Hungarian title, increased residency in Hungary), reformation of the *urbarium*, freedom of speech, greater legal equality for cities on the national level, and calls for the extensive alteration of the Hungarian criminal code, legal system and the state and nature of correctional facilities. Bezerédj even went so far as to support a motion that women in some cases should be granted the right to vote, and that laws should guard against animal cruelty on the

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<sup>19</sup> Pajkossy, “Bezerédj István,” [“István Bezerédj,”] in *Emlékkönyv Bezerédj István születésének*, [Memorial book of István Bezerédj’s birth], 49 and Bodnár and Gardonyi, *Bezerédj István*, II kötet [István Bezerédj, volume II], 20, 22.

<sup>20</sup> Pajkossy, “Bezerédj István,” [“István Bezerédj,”] in *Emlékkönyv Bezerédj István születésének*, [Memorial book of István Bezerédj’s birth], 45.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 46.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 47, 48, 50 and 51.

grounds that it led to a decline in morals and schooled people in inhumanity.<sup>23</sup> Both these latter measures were far ahead of their time, and attracted very limited support, even among fellow liberals.

István Bezerédj's most celebrated political achievements were those relating to taxation and his measures on behalf of his serfs in Tolna. On July 8, 1838 he signed a contract with his serfs in Medina liberating them from performing robot, and substantially reduced their payment of the yearly ninth of their produce to him. In 1840 a second and more generous contract followed with his Kakasd serfs that allowed for the gradual ownership of the land they occupied, the cessation of all ox and manual robot commitments, liberation from the ninth on his behalf, and the guarantee that he would no longer undertake to collect the tenth from his new tenants for the Catholic Church. A modification of the Medina contract in keeping with the one pertaining to Kakasd followed, but the Vice-Regal Council blocked its operation until 1848.<sup>24</sup> Bezerédj was not the first to eliminate feudal obligations of serfs to landlords, or to change their property relation status,<sup>25</sup> but he was the first to gain a national reputation for doing so. On December 6, 1844 Bezerédj capitalized on these successes by being one of the first noblemen in Hungary to subject his estates to voluntary taxation.<sup>26</sup> The decision to take this step drew criticism from the nobility, but also inspired some isolated instances of people willing to follow his example, such as Lajos Kossuth, József Eötvös and Ferenc Deák.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Bodnár and Gárdonyi, *Bezerédj István*, I. kötet [István Bezerédj, volume I], 168, 208, 212-3, 216, 242-245, 260 and Bodnár and Gárdonyi, *Bezerédj István*, II kötet [István Bezerédj, volume II], 192, 199, 210, 223.

<sup>24</sup> Bodnár and Gárdonyi, *Bezerédj István*, II kötet [István Bezerédj, volume II], 254, 263-265 and 256.

<sup>25</sup> Pajkossy, "Bezerédj István," ["István Bezerédj,"] in *Emlékkönyv Bezerédj István születésének*, [Memorial book of István Bezerédj's birth], 50.

<sup>26</sup> Rozsonits, "Bezerédj István, a reformpolitikus," ["István Bezerédj, a politician for reform,"]: 128.

<sup>27</sup> Pajkossy, "Bezerédj István," ["István Bezerédj,"] in *Emlékkönyv Bezerédj István születésének*, [Memorial book of István Bezerédj's birth], 51.

After these moral triumphs in the late 1830s and 1840s the remainder of Bezerédj's life was marred by tragedy. Despite the efforts of Amália's sister Etelka Bezerédj (1807-1888) to raise her niece Flóri, Bezerédj's daughter died on December 5, 1844 from the effects of a growth on her neck. United by closeness stemming from their common losses, Bezerédj married Etelka by the time the revolution was well under way on June 10, 1848.<sup>28</sup> He maintained the legality of the revolution and supported Kossuth on principle until the end. His unwillingness to abandon the Hungarian cause was used as grounds for the severity of the sentence meted out to him after his arrest by the forces of General Jacob von Haynau (1786-1853). On June 28, 1850, the man who spoke so often against the death penalty was himself in turn sentenced to die, and to the confiscation of all of his estates.<sup>29</sup> Pleas for clemency from influential people and his wife Etelka fell on death ears, and the authorities refused to accept a similar petition from his former serfs. Not taking no for an answer, the people of Szerdahely began what appeared to be a religious procession to Mariacell. When it became apparent that the procession was a cover, and their actual destination was to see the King in Vienna, Francis Joseph personally intervened and pardoned Bezerédj from his death sentence.<sup>30</sup> Bezerédj then returned to his house in Hidja to the company of his friends. After injuries sustained from a severe horseback riding accident and fall he passed away on March 6, 1856.<sup>31</sup>

### Historiographical Portraits of Bezerédj

István Bezerédj and his political career have been subject to an equal measure of praise and criticism since he became a focal point on the national stage in the 1830s and

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<sup>28</sup> Rozsonits, "Kétszáz esztendeje született Bezerédj István," ["The two hundredth anniversary of István Bezerédj's birth,"]: 22 and 23.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 25.

<sup>30</sup> Géza Rozsonits, "Néhány adalék a Bezerédj család helyi történetéhez," ["Some details about the local history of the Bezerédj family,"] in *Emlékkönyv Bezerédj István születésének*, [Memorial book of István Bezerédj's birth], 115.

<sup>31</sup> Bodnár and Gárdonyi, *Bezerédj István*, II kötet [István Bezerédj, volume II], 432.

1840s. Opinions from contemporaries and friends of Bezerédj after the failed war of independence in 1849 placed greater emphasis on his shortcomings as a politician than had been the case before the revolution. György Bartal (1820-1875) was Bezerédj's friend and a member of the national representative assembly. Similarly to Bezerédj, he had been arrested and jailed for remaining loyal to the Hungarian side in 1848-1849. Unlike Bezerédj, Bartal was able to make a political recovery, and even rose to the post of governmental minister in the mid 1870s. Bartal wrote an essay analyzing Bezerédj that was highly critical of his former close friend and must have been discouraging for him to read, considering that it was published in 1851, when Bezerédj was still alive. Bartal rebuked Bezerédj for lacking the character traits of an "ideal" statesman, including: determination, consistency, and calm assessment of a given situation. In his opinion, Bezerédj also went far beyond what his own party considered to be within the realm of possibility in progressive questions.<sup>32</sup> By distancing himself from his former friend through this public attack, Bartal gained greater political credibility during the neo-absolutist period (1849-1866).

Other assessments of Bezerédj published after 1849 tended to agree with Bartal: many alleged that Bezerédj was a statesman whose character defects made him somewhat unsuitable for his position. A leading article in *Vasárnapi Újság* [Sunday News] from 1861 argued that "(i)n polemics, his humanitarian attributes described above made him weak."<sup>33</sup> Mihály Horváth (1809-1878), Catholic priest, political émigré and historian of the reform era repeated Bartal's accusations at face value and with little modification. After listing Bezerédj's accomplishments, and connecting these to his character, Horváth summarized that "...it was precisely these noble qualities that were the source of those

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<sup>32</sup> Rózsa Kurucz, *Bezerédj István, 1796-1856* [István Bezerédj, 1796-1856] (Szekszárd: Babits, 2003), 113, 115 and 116. This portrait originally appeared in Antal Csengery, *Magyar szónokok és státusférfiak; politikai jellemrajzok* [Hungarian orators and men of state; political character sketches] (Pest: Gusztáv Heckenast, 1851).

<sup>33</sup> Kurucz, *Bezerédj István*, [István Bezerédj], 118.

weaknesses and failings. Despite the depth of (Bezerédj's) education, the extent of his learning, and the wealth of his knowledge these qualities made (Bezerédj) completely incapable of assuming a role of leadership.<sup>34</sup> What all of these interpretations fail to mention is that Bezerédj never set himself the goal of being an "ideal statesman", and he did not aspire to gain victories by forcing others to concede. He wished people to see the justness of his causes of their own volition. Where these criticisms are not personal disparagements, as in the case of Bartal, they provide insight into idealized conceptions of masculinity in Hungary after the failed revolutionary war.

In the early twentieth century István Bodnár (1863-1945), a writer and director of the Tolna County Savings and Credit Bank, and Albert Gárdonyi (1874-1946), librarian, archivist and author wrote a two-volume biography on István Bezerédj that is an invaluable source of information on the nobleman's life, and has already been cited repeatedly in this short biography and historiography. Bodnár and Gárdonyi changed the neo-absolutist and post-1867 impression of Bezerédj's life and work by placing more weight on Bezerédj's attempt to bring about change to feudal landlord-serf relations as the fetters of a system that had outlived its usefulness. Their biography also lends a touch of pathos to their central figure as a man who suffered terrible personal tragedies in his life with the loss of his first wife and only child, and who bore his losses with quiet resignation.<sup>35</sup> This interpretation of Bezerédj's character turns what was previously taken to be weakness on his part into the source of his strength. Although the authors make these arguments only implicitly in their biography, Bodnár did comment more overtly on his subject in another book.

While working on his biography, his noble character shined

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<sup>34</sup> Mihály Horváth, *Huszonöt év Magyarország történelméből 1823-1848*, első kötet [Twenty-five years in the history of Hungary 1823-1848, volume one] (Budapest: Mór Ráth, 1887), 299.

<sup>35</sup> Bodnár and Gárdonyi, *Bezerédj István*, I. kötet [István Bezerédj, volume I], 382 and Bodnár and Gárdonyi, *Bezerédj István*, II kötet [István Bezerédj, volume II], 135.



through in nearly one thousand original letters. He is alive, and he walks before me. His every letter, line, illuminates his deeds and the nuances of his actions with sparkles of light. This man is pure unconditional love. He is all heart, one can say he is absolute goodness, and completely non-egotistical.

In the same piece, Bodnár continued his attempt to rehabilitate Bezerédj's negative late-nineteenth century reputation by citing that "...the very reason he was great was because he never destroyed anything. He always sought to create."<sup>36</sup> Such reasoning is very compelling, but with over fifty years of distance from their subject it downplays how controversial and divisive Bezerédj's stances on magyarization, land reform and noble taxation actually were. Still, the Bodnár-Gárdonyi biography is invaluable source material because the authors then had access to the family archives and library which were subsequently twice heavily damaged in 1919 and 1945.<sup>37</sup>

Modern scholarship on Bezerédj has tended towards greater specialization. Géza Rozsonits and Rózsa Kurucz have both made recent contributions to the research on Bezerédj. Articles, essay collections and a collection of documents have appeared in the last few years.<sup>38</sup> Rozsonits has opted for an overview approach in keeping with Bodnár-Gárdonyi's example, while Kurucz has focused more closely on the Bezerédjs' involvement in the kindergarten movement in early nineteenth-century Hungary, and on Amália Bezerédj's considerable efforts in advancing early childhood education in Magyar in Hungary. Finally, reform era historian Gábor Pajkossy has offered his own assessment on Bezerédj's life and career in Rozsonits' collection of essays. Rejecting the oft-repeated historiographical conclusion that Bezerédj's philanthropy and humanity were his weakness, he termed him "a realist". Yes, he did set goals for himself that were unattainable, and his methodology to achieve results was faulty, but "...taking these

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<sup>36</sup> Bodnár, "Bezerédj István humanizmusa," in *Szekszárdi Kaszinó* [The casino of Szekszárd], 45.

<sup>37</sup> Rozsonits, "Kétszáz esztendeje született Bezerédj István," ["The two hundredth anniversary of István Bezerédj's birth,"]: 20.

<sup>38</sup> Please see notes 4, 7, 8, 13 and 32.

factors into account, he sought answers to the questions of his age, using the means and standards of his time.”<sup>39</sup> In the remainder of this chapter I strive to come to terms with Bezerédj’s realist approach to politics, his vision of using the infant centres as beds for magyarization, and the limitations that were inherent to the concept.

### **Influential European Theorists on Early Infant Education**

Before turning to the topic of the infant centres in Hungary, it is necessary to remember how the campaign to reform early childhood education began. Scholarship credits Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi (1746-1827), the well-known Swiss writer and theorist, as one of the key innovators in this field. Pestalozzi carried out a series of educational experiments in the Swiss counties beginning with a school attached to his Neuhof farm that taught children cottage industry skills to subsidize the estate’s income from 1774-1779.<sup>40</sup> Further educational experiments at Stans for five months in 1799 and at Burgdorf and Yverdon from 1805-1825 followed his initial efforts.<sup>41</sup> Pestalozzi’s fame as an educational reformer was enhanced through his literary writings as well as his experimental schools. These included the didactic *Lienhard and Gertrud* (1781), which is about how a landlord named Arner’s benevolent paternalism leads to civil regeneration and harmony in a community previously burdened by corruption, unemployment, lack of industry and poor education.<sup>42</sup> Pestalozzi’s *How Gertrude Teaches Her Children* (1801) was his breakthrough work in pedagogical writing, for his ideas about natural education (*Menschenbildung*) and the importance of familial and motherly love as being essential

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<sup>39</sup> Pajkossy, “Bezerédj István,” [“István Bezerédj,”] in *Emlékkönyv Bezerédj István születésének*, [Memorial book of István Bezerédj’s birth], 54.

<sup>40</sup> Joy A. Palmer ed., *Fifty Major Thinkers on Education: From Confucius to Dewey* (New York: Routledge, 2001), 65.

<sup>41</sup> Gerald L. Gutek, *Pestalozzi and Education* (Prospect Heights: Waveland, 1999), 39-41 and 45-49.

<sup>42</sup> Barbara Becker-Cantarino, *German Literature of the Eighteenth Century: The Enlightenment and Sensibility* (New York: Camden House, 2005), 149.

conditions to generate receptivity for the acquisition of knowledge. This book and its ideas inspired institutes in various European countries such as Britain, France and the German territories based on Pestalozzi's method, and over 200 titles propagating and discussing his theories.<sup>43</sup>

A large number of volumes elucidating Pestalozzi's contributions to education were needed because of his difficulty with the transition of his theoretical concepts into actual teaching methodology. *Menschenbildung* in pestalozzian terminology entailed pedagogical practice in keeping with the laws of nature. If properly understood, these would trigger a process in the child he termed *Anschaung*, another untranslatable term that can be variously understood as sense impression, observation, contemplation, perception, apperception and intuition.<sup>44</sup> The actual technique to impart ideas to the child in question was to reduce information to three elementary constituents: language, form and number. Language learning began with syllabic repetition, followed by memorization of long lists on topics involving nature, history, geography and social science topics before reading sentences. Form prioritized the teaching of measurement and drawing before letter tracing, alphabet recognition and writing exercises. The number component referred to using objects (such as pebbles or peas) to impart to children concepts such as counting, addition and subtraction, and the manipulation of a square to demonstrate fractions, multiplication and division. A cornerstone of the pestalozzian method was the rejection of excessive verbalism prevalent in traditional educational techniques because it was too abstract, not based on a child's immediate environment, and hence obstructed rather than aided cognitive learning processes.<sup>45</sup> Pestalozzi died two years after the closure of his Yverdon institute in 1827. Internal quarrels among his staff and financial

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<sup>43</sup> Joy A. Palmer ed., *Fifty Major Thinkers on Education*, 67.

<sup>44</sup> Gutek, *Pestalozzi and Education*, 83 and 88.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 93, 96, 111-112, 117 and 121.

mismanagement ended his institute's twenty-year history of educational innovation.<sup>46</sup>

However, the fame he earned in his lifetime led many who had the means and the interest in early childhood education to visit him, and to modify his ideas as component parts of their own experiments in teaching pre-school age children.

A second educator whose theories on children's education would have great influence on the European continent and beyond was Samuel Wilderspin (1792-1866), who founded the infant school movement. The infant schools began with his appointment as master of a teaching establishment in 1820 in Spitalfields, London.<sup>47</sup> Their fame also spread because of Wilderspin's book on the subject, which enjoyed several printings.<sup>48</sup> Wilderspin's methodological innovations included the use of visual references to reinforce verbal communication of ideas. Hence concepts such as the alphabet, classifications of animals, vegetation, minerals, and other substances, morality in bible parallels, and simple and complex elements of grammar and mathematics were taught through explanation and the use of picture cards or other devices such as blocks, figure frames and multi-jointed rods that a teacher could manipulate to demonstrate the idea in question.<sup>49</sup> Music and singing were used in the same manner, to associate information with aural memory. Teachers were expected to sing educational songs that taught children about aspects of the world using simple poetic devices such as rhyming couplets. Children were even trained to perform miming gestures while hearing and singing the songs, further reiterating the idea being taught through physical movement and play. Play appeared in other aspects of the Wilderspin curriculum. It was encouraged to take

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 49-50.

<sup>47</sup> W.B. McCann, "Samuel Wilderspin and the Early Infant Schools," *British Journal of Educational Studies* Vol.14 No.2 (May 1966): 192.

<sup>48</sup> Samuel Wilderspin, *On the Importance of Educating the Infant Children of the Poor: Showing how Three Hundred Children, from Eighteen Months to Seventeen Years of Age, may be Managed by One Master and Mistress, containing also an Account of the Spitalfields Infant School* (London: T. Goyder, 1823).

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 197-200.

place outside using swings, ropes and instruments such as building blocks. Through the alteration of education and play children's levels of alertness increased, making them more receptive to learning for longer periods of time.<sup>50</sup> At the height of his fame over 2000 schools were part of the Wilderspin infant school system.<sup>51</sup> Wilderspin's professional reputation was damaged in 1839 when he was dismissed from the Dublin Model Infant and Training School due to conflict with school authorities over the religious content of his lessons. He was given a civil list pension of £100 and retired to Wakefield, Yorkshire, where he spent the remaining years of his life disappointed with the direction his system had taken.<sup>52</sup>

The most famous pedagogue on early childhood learning in the first half of the nineteenth century was Friedrich Froebel (1782-1852), who developed the ideas that would eventually find fruition in the worldwide establishment of the kindergarten.<sup>53</sup> Froebel's ideas derived from a combination of institutional parameters and his own theoretical conclusions about childhood and how children learn at this stage of mental development. Working in the German states, the prohibition against academic learning in pre-school<sup>54</sup> led him to the then novel idea that a child's understanding of the world could be developed through structured play instead of rote memorization. To the situational context Froebel added his own ideas on pedagogy. These beliefs reversed the biblical conception in education that children were sinful and needed to be taught social restraint, and idealized instead their innate innocence and goodness. When Froebel began to use his schools and lectures to transmit ideas about democratization and religious egalitarianism,

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<sup>50</sup> *Extracts on the Advantage of Mr. Wilderspin's Training System* (London, 1840), 3-4.

<sup>51</sup> McCann, "Samuel Wilderspin and the Early Infant Schools," 188.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 202-203.

<sup>53</sup> There is much historiography on this topic including: Robert B. Downs, *Friedrich Froebel* (Boston: Twayne, 1978), and Evelyn Lawrence ed., *Friedrich Froebel and English Education* (London: Routledge, 1969).

<sup>54</sup> Ann Taylor Allen, "Children between Public and Private Worlds: The Kindergarten and Public Policy in Germany, 1840-Present," in *Kindergartens and Cultures: The Global Diffusion of an Idea*, ed. Roberta Wollons (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 20.

he garnered the ill will of the German authorities. The Prussian government took the lead in suppressing his movement in 1851, with the majority of the German states following suit.<sup>55</sup> Froebel died one year later, discouraged that his life's work had been discredited.

After this date, historical writing emphasizes that Froebel's loyal followers travelled abroad to North America, Britain and Western Europe, where his ideas found fertile soil and kindergartens and teacher training schools specializing in the transmission of his method proliferated.<sup>56</sup> In the 1860s a more liberal environment in the German territories allowed the gradual re-introduction of the kindergarten, as government bans were lifted.<sup>57</sup> European territories that had not previously been as conducive to kindergartens now became more receptive, as the movement gained strength in France, Belgium, Austria, Sweden and in other parts of Europe.<sup>58</sup>

### **Early Childhood Education in the Habsburg Territories**

As recently as 1982, political scientist Andrew C. Janos made a case that the main pattern of Hungarian development from 1825 onwards was "backwardness" in comparison to Western Europe.<sup>59</sup> Even within the microcosm of the Habsburg lands, innovations were often in the western half of the realm before they migrated east, but the general picture was not always the same. The first Hungarian infant schools are exemplary in this regard. The first public preschool in the empire and monarchy was opened in Buda on May 27, 1828 by Countess Teréz Brunszvik (1775-1861). A year later two further ones followed in Buda, one in Pest and three others in various parts of the

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<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 22 and 23.

<sup>56</sup> Wollons, "On the Diffusion of the Kindergarten," in *Kindergartens and Cultures*, 5.

<sup>57</sup> Taylor Allen, "Children between Public and Private Worlds," in *Kindergartens and Cultures*, 25.

<sup>58</sup> Wollons, "On the Diffusion of the Kindergarten," in *Kindergartens and Cultures*, 12.

<sup>59</sup> Andrew C. Janos, *The Politics of Backwardness in Hungary, 1825-1945* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982).

country.<sup>60</sup> The next infant school in the Habsburg realm was in the Kingdom of Lombardy-Venetia in Cremona in 1829, and Countess Brunszvik also helped the foundation of this institute in an advisory capacity.<sup>61</sup> In Austria, the Viennese capital gained its first preschool only on May 4, 1830 assisted by Josef von Wertheimer (1800-1887), translator of Samuel Wilderspin's influential book on infant schools into German.<sup>62</sup> After the first school in Vienna, others appeared following the same pattern, such as the one in the parish of Margarethen situated at Gartengasse No.60.<sup>63</sup> In the Vormärz period outside of the capital at least five of these institutes were established in the Steiermark in 1831. In 1832 Tirol gained child-care facilities, followed by Kärnten in 1833. Niederösterreich had preschools established in 1832 and 1841, while Salzburg benefited from such a place beginning in 1844.<sup>64</sup> In the Kingdom of Bohemia two of these children's schools opened in Prague on Hrádek and in Karlin in 1832. Jan Vlastimír Svoboda led the Hrádek one, which was an elite establishment patronized by the mayor P. Spořil, by church officials, high-level bureaucrats, rich citizens of the city and Czech patriots. This school also served as a model for other places based on the same pattern in the Bohemian monarchy, and as an infant school teacher training institute.<sup>65</sup> In divided Poland, the first attempts to establish infant care facilities were based on the initiative of

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<sup>60</sup> Ottó Vág, "Public Preschool Education in Hungary: A Historical Survey (1)," *Paedagogica historica* XX (1980): 252.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> Elisabeth Wappelshammer, "Geschichte des Kindergartens-die Anfänge der Institutionalisierung," *Beiträge zur Historischen Sozialkunde* Vol.24 No.1 (1994): 16. The translation was Samuel Wilderspin, *Ueber die frühzeitige Erziehung der Kinder und die englischen Klein-Kinder-Schulen, oder Bemerkungen über die Wichtigkeit, die kleinen Kinder der Armen im Alter von anderthalb bis sieben Jahren zu erziehen, nebst einer Darstellung der Spitalfelder Klein-Kinder-Schule und des daselbst eingeführten Erziehungssystems* (Vienna: Gerold, 1826).

<sup>63</sup> "Regeln der Kleinkinder-Wart-Anstalt des Pfarrbezirkes Margarethen, welche in Margarethen in der Gartengasse No. 60 am 4. November eröffnet werden wird," *Bécs nyomatványok* [Viennese newspaper extracts] OSzK MS Quat.Germania. 1390/7 no.3.

<sup>64</sup> Wappelshammer, "Geschichte des Kindergartens," 16.

<sup>65</sup> Věra Mišurcová, "Friedrich Fröbel und das Kindergartenwesen in den böhmischen Ländern," *Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift der Friedrich Schiller Universität Jena Gesellschafts und Sprachwissenschaftliche Reihe* Vol.32 No.4-5 (1983): 525.

Stanisław Jachowicz (1796-1857), Teofil Nowosielski (1812-1888) and the Warsaw Charity Society. It began its activities in 1830. Other attempts were made from 1840-1848 to create similar establishments in the Kingdom of Galicia, but these schools were often in the hands of religious orders emphasizing the inculcation of traditional religious values instead of pedagogical innovation.<sup>66</sup>

While the pattern of development of childcare facilities in the Habsburg territories is not difficult to reconstruct, there is some confusion in relation to historical terminology. At first the German term *Bewahranstalt* referred to children's schools based on eighteenth-century models that served the needs of predominantly lower-income parents, and schooled children to sit still for long periods of time, memorize large quantities of information, and learn obedience and piety. The term *Kleinkinderschulen* was a literal transcription of the English term "infant school" into German, and was utilized by the schools aiming to conform to the new developments in English education. The fact that the new English schools really were *Bewahranstalten* designed to care for poorer children so that they were less predisposed to commit crimes was lost in translation at this point. Towards the 1840s these concepts became clearer in the German-speaking territories as the Darmstadt teacher Julius Fölsing redefined *Kleinkinderschulen* as reserved for children from the "higher orders". *Bewahranstalt* retained its original meaning as a day-care and learning option for the children of less-advantaged segments of society. The differentiation between the two types of facilities was reinforced in the 1869 Imperial Elementary School Law for the Austrian half of the empire. In contrast to

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<sup>66</sup> Józef Miąso, "Friedrich Fröbel und das fortschrittliche pädagogische Gedankengut in Polen im 19. Jahrhundert," *Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift der Friedrich Schiller Universität Jena Gesellschafts und Sprachwissenschaftliche Reihe* Vol.32 No.4-5 (1983): 549 and Bogna Lorence-Kot and Adam Winiarz, "Preschool Education in Poland," in *Kindergartens and Cultures: The Global Diffusion of an Idea*, ed. Roberta Wollons (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 174.



these two terms, the word *kindergarten* in the German context referred to early childhood education without differentiation of children according to categories of class or religion.<sup>67</sup>

While the Kingdom of Hungary had a multicultural population, and many who were interested could read and learn about the new directions in pedagogy through German material and newspapers, it is not clear how the German terms for these schools were appropriated and utilized in the Hungarian context. Oftentimes the historiography claims that Countess Brunszvik's first infant school was called *angyalkert* or angel garden. Ottó Vág has written numerous articles on this subject and has traced this misinformation back to a memorial speech by Lajos Kacs Kovics for Teréz Brunszvik and to a seminal booklet by Károly Szathmáry on Hungarian pre-school history. His conclusion about the false association of the first Hungarian infant school with Froebel was that "(i)n the (18)60s and 70s, as the ideas of the fröbelian kindergarten gained more acceptance, some people wanted to prove that public early childhood education in Hungary not only had a longer tradition than in Germany, but that before Froebel there was already a 'garden' for children".<sup>68</sup> The term for a preschool in reform era Hungary was *kisdedővő*. Since no single word or phrase embodies an accurate translation of the concept this chapter will use various terms such as infant school or preschool to establish that the inspiration for these centres came from many areas, and that the Hungarian schools were unique in their own regard.

### **Hungarian Education and the *Ratio educationis***

The matter of education was a controversial source of contention between the Hungarian estates and the king. Under Maria Teresia the Habsburgs issued an important

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<sup>67</sup> Wappelshammer, "Geschichte des Kindergartens,": 17-18.

<sup>68</sup> Ottó Vág, "Die Rezeption der Fröbelschen Methoden in Ungarn," *Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift der Friedrich Schiller Universität Jena Gesellschafts und Sprachwissenschaftliche Reihe* Vol.32 No.4-5 (1983): 588. Károly Szathmáry, *A magyar kisdedővő és nevelés rövid története* [A short history of early Hungarian infant schools and child-raising] (Budapest: Pesti Könyvnyomda, 1887).

ordinance related to Hungarian education, called the *Ratio educationis*, in 1777. In a country where primarily religious orders controlled learning institutions, and access to education correlated to a large degree to the social estate of one's birth, the inclusive principles of the 1777 decree emphasizing that all inhabitants of the country were in need of some education and that teaching itself *should* be free in principle were important advancements. By the time of the second *Ratio* in 1806 the French revolution had made many of the populist concepts in its guidelines seem potentially dangerous, and a new spirit infused the second decree. It was still necessary to impart education to all in some measure, but the framework of the social-estate ordination of education was returned: each person was to be taught in a school designed for her station in life.

Both of the *Ratio educationis* decrees were initially promulgated by the monarch without the consultation and acceptance of the estates. The reason for this decision was that members of the Vice-Regal Council and the governmental ministers surrounding the King increasingly insisted that education was a royal prerogative. Unfortunately, the Hungarian constitution defined education as subordinate to the authority of parliament, which immediately meant that the transgression of this right was cause for this issue to be raised as *gravamina* in the dietal convocation of their choosing.<sup>69</sup> The Hungarian estates were bothered by very specific aspects of the educational decrees. At the Diet of 1790-1791 they were given the opportunity to voice these objections and to work with the ruler by forming an educational commission that would report its findings for consideration in future legislation. The committee met from August 1791 until February 1793, but most of its recommendations endured the same fate as those of the other commissions, that of being relegated to possible consideration at a later date. The key request of the

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<sup>69</sup> Moritz Csáky, "Von der Ratio Educationis zur Educatio Nationalis: Die ungarische Bildungspolitik zur Zeit der Spätaufklärung und des Frühliberalismus," *Wiener Beiträge zur Geschichte der Neuzeit V* (1978): 210, 231, 229, 222 and 207 and Elemér Kelemen, *Hagyomány és korszerűség: oktatáspolitikai a 19-20. századi Magyarországon* [Tradition and modernity: the politics of education in 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century Hungary] (Budapest: Új Mandátum, 2002), 21.

educational committee was that Hungarian be given more priority in education, and not the Latin or German of the *Ratio educationis* of 1777. Also, there was an insistence that Protestant educational facilities be allowed to maintain greater autonomy from the state. In a country where Catholicism had enjoyed special status for hundreds of years, and with a staunchly Catholic ruling house, it is no wonder that the objections to the first *Ratio educationis* had a religious dimension as well.<sup>70</sup> Both the national and the religious considerations were taken into account with the second decree. In relation to the Hungarian language, the *Ratio* of 1806 granted more scope for Magyar as an auxiliary language of education in Hungary, but it still balanced this Hungarian instruction with schooling in the national languages, particularly at the elementary level.<sup>71</sup> The Hungarian estates were not satisfied with these provisions, but there was little that could be done since the decree of 1806 was meant to be the monarch's answer to their complaints.

As the crown and the estates were deadlocked over the matter of education, and jurisdictional and national lines were drawn, existing educational facilities were left somewhat unassailable. They were claimed by royal authority, and the various religions that exercised control over the educational system jealously held onto their jurisdictions. New facilities, such as infant schools, had the advantage of being free from the history and imprint of these powerful entrenched interests. According to Rózsa Kurucz, who has written extensively on infant education particularly in Tolna County, "(i)n public education (early childhood education centres) were the only domain where there was no royal prerogative, and here with civil social mobilization reform ideology could be

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<sup>70</sup> Csáky, "Von der Ratio Educationis zur Educatio Nationalis," 218 and 220 and Kelemen, *Hagyomány és korszerűség* [Tradition and modernity], 22.

<sup>71</sup> Csáky, "Von der Ratio Educationis zur Educatio Nationalis," 230 and Béla Bellér, "Die ungarische Nationalitäten-Schulpolitik von der Ratio Educationis bis heute," *Études Historiques Hongroises: Volume Two Ethnicity and Society*, ed. Ferenc Glatz (Budapest: Institute of History, Hungarian Academy of Sciences, 1990): 435.

brought to fruition”.<sup>72</sup> In other words, since infant education existed in a quasi-legal sphere, educational reformers were able to exploit this weakness in the institutional framework. The infant centres could be more directly under their control than any other existing educational institution, and they had free reign to incorporate more Magyar-based curriculum than in other areas of the schooling system.

### **Countess Teréz Brunszvik and the Fate of her First Centres for Children**

The person responsible for opening the first pre-schools in Hungary that made use of the learning principles developed in Western Europe at the beginning of the century was the somewhat unlikely figure of Countess Teréz Brunszvik. She did not initially appear to be a person whose ideas were potentially threatening to royal prerogatives in relation to education in Hungary. Brunszvik had stellar aristocratic connections to the magnate aristocrats who governed the land, stemming from her grandfather Antal Brunszvik (1709-1780) who was made a count in recognition of his services quelling peasant revolt in Vas and Zala Counties back in 1766. Teréz Brunszvik’s father was a distinguished state servant who held posts at the Treasury and was a royal representative for Joseph II and continued on as Lord Lieutenant of Bars County and as a pedagogical consultant to the Vice-Regal Council under Leopold II.<sup>73</sup> One of four children of Antal Brunszvik the younger and Baroness Anna Seeberg (1752-1830), Teréz Brunszvik never married and inherited her father’s interest for pedagogical matters, particularly in relation to the education of children and women.

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<sup>72</sup> Rózsa Kurucz, *Bezerédj Amália és István Bezerédj a gyermekekért* [Amália Bezerédj and István Bezerédj for the children] (Szekszárd: Szekszárd Város Önkormányzata, 1994), 43.

<sup>73</sup> Mária Hornyák, *Beethoven, Brunszvikok, Martonvásár* [Beethoven, the Brunszviks, Martonvásár] (Martonvásár: Mezőgazdasági Kutató Intézet, 1993), 17-19.

A lot of printer's ink has been devoted to the life of Teréz Brunszvik, and there are several reasons for her popularity with researchers. The first is that she left behind copious amounts of documents, writings, a memoir and almost fifty years of diary records from 1808-1858 with only a few years for which no notations exist. These records reveal that it was her fervent desire that her pedagogical work would be a topic of interest for posterity.<sup>74</sup> The fact that she left her writings to her grandniece Emma de Gérando Teleki (1811-1893) and to Emma's son Attila (1844-1897), also spoke to her wish that her legacy would become public knowledge. The opportunity for the realization of Teréz Brunszvik's hopes came when her diary was donated to the archive of the Szabó Ervin Metropolitan library, and her writings to the manuscript division of the national library, among other institutions. Researchers such as the literary historian Marianne Czeke (in the 1930s), early childhood education researcher Ottó Vág, pedagogical historian Endre Zibolen, Hungarian education historian István Mészáros and Brunszvik specialist Mária Hornyák have all contributed in the twentieth century to detailing Brunszvik's contribution to Hungarian and European education.<sup>75</sup>

Teréz Brunszvik's path to becoming an educational pioneer began with helping care for her sister Josephine's four children, particularly after the death of Josephine's first husband, Count József Deym (1752-1804). Since Deym had taken the then unusual step of naming Josephine the caretaker of her own children, Josephine and Teréz set out in the summer of 1808 on a trip to Western Europe to inspect educational institutes that

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<sup>74</sup> Marianne Czeke, *Brunszvik Teréz Grófnő naplói és feljegyzései*, 1.kötet [Countess Teréz Brunszvik's diaries and notations, volume 1] (Budapest: Magyar Történelmi Társulat, 1938), XI, XII, XXI and XXV.

<sup>75</sup> Mária Hornyák, "A Brunszvik Teréz-kutatás eredményei," ["The results of research concerning Teréz Brunszvik,"] in *„Nőttön nő tiszta fénye” Tanulmányok Brunszvik Teréz emlékezetére*, ["Its pure light grows and grows" studies in memory of Teréz Brunszvik,] ed. Mária Hornyák (Martonvásár: Brunszvik Teréz Szellemi Hagyatéka Alapítvány, 1996), 100, 104-107.

would be suitable for Josephine's sons, Friedrich (1801-1853) and Carl (1802-1840).<sup>76</sup> It was on this purposeful journey that Teréz Brunszvik met the Swiss educator Pestalozzi, spending forty-eight days at his institute in Yverdon beginning in October 1808.<sup>77</sup> Pestalozzi was taken with the Hungarian aristocrats, because he visited them in Geneva twice, he and his wife wrote letters to them, and Pestalozzi even promised that he would come to visit them in Hungary.<sup>78</sup>

Hungarian historians have been very focused on the Brunszvik-Pestalozzi connection, and have pondered just how much Teréz Brunszvik's childcare centres simply transplanted Pestalozzi's concepts to Hungary. Endre Zibolen highlighted that Teréz's diaries did not cease to concern themselves with Pestalozzi, and that her "teaching congresses" and "teacher review" panels also came from him.<sup>79</sup> Rózsa Kurucz repeated these ideas and added that Teréz Brunszvik used Pestalozzi's thoughts on *Menschenbildung* as guiding principles to raise Josephine's children, and corresponded with other Hungarian aristocrats who were interested in the new pedagogy, particularly the family of Baron Miklós Vay.<sup>80</sup> Mária Hornyák placed weight on the notion that Teréz

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<sup>76</sup> Hornyák, *Beethoven, Brunszvikok, Martonvásár*, [Beethoven, the Brunszviks, Martonvásár], 48.

<sup>77</sup> Rózsa Kurucz, "Bruns zvik Teréz és Pestalozzi," ["Teréz Brunszvik and Pestalozzi,"] in *„Nőttön nő tiszta fénye” Tanulmányok Brunszvik Teréz emlékezetére*, ["Its pure light grows and grows" studies in memory of Teréz Brunszvik,] ed. Mária Hornyák (Martonvásár: Brunszvik Teréz Szellemi Hagyatéka Alapítvány, 1996), 25.

<sup>78</sup> Czeke, *Bruns zvik Teréz Grófnő naplói és feljegyzései*, 1.kötet, [Countess Teréz Brunszvik's diaries and notations, volume 1], CCXVI, Kurucz, "Bruns zvik Teréz és Pestalozzi," ["Teréz Brunszvik and Pestalozzi,"] in *Tanulmányok Brunszvik Teréz emlékezetére*, [Studies in memory of Teréz Brunszvik], 26.

<sup>79</sup> Endre Zibolen, "Bruns zvik Teréz és Pestalozzi," ["Teréz Brunszvik and Pestalozzi,"] in *Bruns zvik Teréz pedagógiai munkássága* [Teréz Brunszvik's pedagogical work,] eds., Ottó Vág, Lajos Orosz and Endre Zibolen (Budapest: Tankönyv Kiadó, 1962), 38 and 40.

<sup>80</sup> Kurucz, "Bruns zvik Teréz és Pestalozzi," ["Teréz Brunszvik and Pestalozzi,"] in *Tanulmányok Brunszvik Teréz emlékezetére*, [Studies in memory of Teréz Brunszvik], 29, 30 and 32.

Brunszvik was active as a book-lender within her circle, and used this opportunity to circulate Pestalozzi's writings among interested members of the Hungarian elite.<sup>81</sup>

Alongside these ideas Piroska Benes wrote a dissertation that argued Brunszvik was more indebted to Samuel Wilderspin in her methodology than to Pestalozzi.<sup>82</sup> In her introduction to Brunszvik's diary and notations, Marianne Czeke also found several instances of disagreement with Pestalozzi, for instance in terms of the number of guests allowed to watch the children at prayer. She concluded that "...Pestalozzi's motivated humanitarian spirit, and not his famous method, gave our Teréz the instrumental push to transform herself from a mundane Countess to a pedagogue concentrated on the happiness of the people".<sup>83</sup> Finally, Mária Hornyák put forth an alternative theory that Brunszvik's decision to switch careers from aristocrat to educator did not have to do with any person, but was based on a religious epiphany that she experienced on March 29, 1809 in Italy that was akin to a "rebirth." However Brunszvik did not go into detail about her transformation even in her most personal writings.<sup>84</sup> The problem with the somewhat fruitless search for the smoking gun as to why Brunszvik became a school founder is that it detracts from the actual extent of her personal achievement and the degree to which her methodology adapted foreign concepts to Hungarian circumstances.

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<sup>81</sup> Mária Hornyák, "Brunszvik Teréz és Heinrich Pestalozzi," ["Teréz Brunszvik and Heinrich Pestalozzi,"] in *A XIX századi magyar pedagógusok a polgárosodásért, A XIX század jelesei*, [Hungarian nineteenth century pedagogues for embourgeoisement, notables from the nineteenth century,] eds., Alice Dombi and János Oláh (Gyula: APC Stúdió, 2003), 132.

<sup>82</sup> Endre Zibolen, "Brunszvik Teréz és Pestalozzi," ["Teréz Brunszvik and Pestalozzi,"] in *Brunszvik Teréz pedagógiai munkássága* [Teréz Brunszvik's pedagogical work], 39.

<sup>83</sup> Czeke, *Brunszvik Teréz Grófnő naplói és feljegyzései*, 1.kötet [Countess Teréz Brunszvik's diaries and notations, volume 1], CXCVIII and CXCVIII.

<sup>84</sup> Hornyák, "A Brunszvik Teréz-kutatás eredményei," ["The results of research concerning Teréz Brunszvik,"] in *Tanulmányok Brunszvik Teréz emlékezetére*, [Studies in memory of Teréz Brunszvik], 108.

Teréz Brunszvik opened her first childcare centre in Buda on May 27, 1828 in the Krisztina district,<sup>85</sup> nearly twenty years after her extended stay in Yverdon at the Pestalozzi institute, and when she herself was 52 years old. Two more followed in March 1829 in the Buda Castle and in the Leopold district in Pest, and a final one opened in June in the Water City area of Buda.<sup>86</sup> In all, she estimated that the twin cities needed at least fourteen such establishments to meet existing requirements, but she was unable to realize this ambition.<sup>87</sup> The funding for the infant centres initially came from Countess Brunszvik herself and her exhaustive efforts to convince her aristocratic acquaintances to donate to her organization. When Brunszvik became the president of the National Society for Early Infant Education, Guardian and Formation Institute, which she had helped to establish, the statutes of the Society pegged a school's start up cost at roughly 600 forints per annum. This amount included the pay of one male teacher (and his replacement costs!), female assistants, a cleaning person, administrative costs and rent. Even though heating and school supplies were not included in this figure, the statutes of the National Society for Early Infant Education were not far from the mark in economic terms.<sup>88</sup> When the preschools were taken out of Teréz Brunszvik's hands by state order, then the cost of running the three Buda schools averaged out to between 422 and 511 forints per annum, while the Leopold district school in Pest needed over 609 forints over a twelve-month period.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> Mária Hornyák, *Első ovodánk története, Buda-Krisztinaváros 1828-1867* [The history of our first preschool, Buda-Krisztina city 1828-1867] (Martonvásár, Brunszvik Teréz Szellemi Hagyatéka Alapítvány, 2003), 26 (FSzEK B-1806).

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, 29.

<sup>87</sup> M. Therézia Brunsvik, *Számadás a kisdedovó intézetről 1830-dik esztendei 1ső júliusától fogva 1833-dik végéig* [Accounting of the infant school from July 1, 1830 until the end of 1833] (Buda: Magyar Királyi Egyetem, 1836), 5.

<sup>88</sup> *Rendszabás a' nemzeti egyesületnek, a' kisdedek koránti nevelésére nézve, gyám és képző intézetek által* [Statutes concerning the national society for early infant education, guardian and formation institute] (Pest: J.M. Trattner és István Károlyi, 1830) OSzK MS Quatro Germania 1390/6 Pest Buda Nyomtatványok [Pest Buda press articles], 16.

<sup>89</sup> *Ausweis über den Bestand der unter dem Schutze des Ofner wohlthätigen Frauen-Vereins stehenden Klein-Kinder-Bewahr-Anstalten in der königl. Freistadt ofen seit*



Interestingly, although Teréz Brunszvik's child care facilities initially attracted much support from magnate-level aristocrats and high-ranking members of the Catholic church such as the Prince Primate and Cardinal Sándor Rudnay (1760-1831), Archbishop of Esztergom, their support quickly dwindled away in favour of citizens of Pest and Buda, and later, key members of the middle nobility who took up the cause.<sup>90</sup> The historiography has not yet produced a clear reason as to why they stopped their previous level of support. In any case Teréz Brunszvik came up with innovative and progressive fundraising methods that allowed her to keep afloat after her previous backers distanced themselves. Brunszvik either wrote or supplied the leading German-language newspaper of Pest-Buda, the *Vereinigte Ofner Pester Zeitung*, with information about her experimental preschools that stressed the royal support of her enterprise. She connected the opening of the schools to the King's sixtieth birthday, detailed the three-hour visit of the Palatine's wife, the Archduchess Maria Dorothea, to the Krisztina district location, and did the same for the visit of the Prince Primate, including mentioning that he gave a donation of 100 forints and enough firewood for one winter's heating requirements.<sup>91</sup>

In her book promoting her childcare establishments Teréz Brunszvik touted the trade school for girls appendaged to her Krisztina district model school. She mentioned that the Archduchess actually wore the first straw hat that the girls had produced, that she allegedly remarked "no Hungarian Lady will now want to wear a hat made on foreign soil", and that she quickly took two more examples for her sons, the Archdukes

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*ersten July 1832, bis letzten December 1833* OSzK MS Quatro Germania 1390/6 Pest Buda Nyomtatványok [Pest Buda press articles], 52 and *Ausweis über den Bestand unter dem Schutze des löbl. Pesther Magistrats stehenden Leopoldstädter Klein~Kinder~Bewahr~Anstalt seit ersten July 1832, bis letzten December 1833*, OSzK MS Quatro Germania 1390/6 Pest Buda Nyomtatványok [Pest Buda press articles], 55.

<sup>90</sup> Ottó Vág, "A magyar óvodai nevelés kialakulása és Brunszvik Teréz," ["The development of Hungarian preschool education and Teréz Brunszvik,"] in *Brunszvik Teréz pedagógiai munkássága* [Teréz Brunszvik's pedagogical work], 14-15.

<sup>91</sup> Ottó Vág, "Brunsztik Teréz szerepe az első magyarországi óvodák létrehozásában (Documentumok)," ["The role of Teréz Brunszvik in the creation of the first Hungarian preschools (documents),"] *Magyar Pedagógia* [Hungarian Pedagogy] Vol.61 No.1 (1961): 421-422.

Alexander (1825-1837) and Joseph Karl (1833-1905), as well as some straw slippers for herself.<sup>92</sup> When the important dates on the horseracing calendar arrived, the National Society for Early Infant Education slyly took advantage of the opportunity to ask for donations of hand-made items or works of art that would be exhibited publicly before being auctioned off, with the proceeds going to the upkeep of the preschools. So successful was the response in 1830, that by the time of the theatre evening that capped the charity drive, over 220 items had been donated and over 4023 forints were raised. Knowing that they had a winning formula on their hands, the organizers tried to make the event an annual affair and advertised the venture for 1831 as well.<sup>93</sup> These innovative fundraising tactics appealed to Hungarian civil society because they combined the panache of imitation of magnates and royalty in support of a Christian cause with the opportunity of enjoying cultural events such as horse-racing, art exhibitions and theatre evenings without the guilt that they were solely there for purposes of pleasure. The art exhibition further granted mainly middle-class women the unprecedented opportunity to elevate their previously monetarily and artistically marginalized handicrafts to the level of “works of art” that deserved to be displayed and regarded as such. It is no wonder that the response for donations was so overwhelming. It is to Teréz Brunszvik’s credit that although she came from the high aristocracy, she was able to understand many of needs of new classes of moneyed supporters of her schools and made use of them to her advantage. She recognized that the public that opted to attend these cultural events on the social calendar would similarly be drawn to her educational campaign and that providing

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<sup>92</sup> Brunszvik, *Számadás a kisdedovó intézetről*, [Accounting of the infant school], 30.

<sup>93</sup> *Zur Kunstausstellung bey Gelegenheit des Wettrennens*. 1830 MS Quatro Germania 1390/6 Pest Buda Nyomtatványok [Pest Buda press articles], 19-20, *Danksagung des National-Vereins für früheste Erziehung kleiner Kinder in Bewahr- und Bildungsanstalten an die edelmüthigen Spenderinnen zu Pesth und Ofen in Jahre 1830*. MS Quatro Germania 1390/6 Pest Buda Nyomtatványok [Pest Buda press articles], 17-18 and *Zur Kunstausstellung bey Gelegenheit des Wettrennens*. 1831 MS Quatro Germania 1390/6 Pest Buda Nyomtatványok [Pest Buda press articles], 23.

greater cultural variety on offer increased attendance figures. High participation in turn imbued these activities with increased social and national significance.

Teréz Brunszvik envisaged that her preschools would be for children between the ages of one-and-a-half years old and six years of age, but the majority of actual attendees were between two and five years old. Children of both sexes attended, and even more unusually for Hungarian circumstances, the curriculum was based on humanistic and life sciences subjects and greatly downplayed religious instruction.<sup>94</sup> Enrolment numbers fluctuated, but for the three Buda schools, while they were under the Countess' jurisdiction, the highest number of students was 185 in the Krisztina district school, and the lowest 80 in both the Castle district and Water City locations.<sup>95</sup> In contrast to the English schools that served as a model for the Pest-Buda centres, prevention of juvenile delinquency was not their primary *raison d'être*. Sometimes the print material for the schools did have aspects that hinted at social control policies. The statutes of the National Society for Early Infant Education made clear that the need for the learning facilities was so that "...action could be taken against the so generally prevalent moral deterioration in the lower people's orders", while an undated Hungarian-language advertisement touted one of the benefits of the preschools for the "middle and more refined orders" to be the elimination of the "... infinite bad consequences-- especially character degeneration-- to which in greatest measure the wealthy children are exposed, because of the incompetence of servants of this type..."<sup>96</sup> Lest these sentiments be taken as definitive, it must be added that other printed materials stressed that the school would also serve the interests of

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<sup>94</sup> Vág, "Brunszyk Teréz szerepe," ["The role of Teréz Brunszvik,"]: 419, 427-428 and Vág, "A magyar óvodai nevelés kialakulása," ["The development of Hungarian preschool education,"], 16 and 17.

<sup>95</sup> Hornyák, *Első óvodánk története*, [The history of our first preschool], 61 (FSzEK B-1806).

<sup>96</sup> *Rendszabás a' nemzeti egyesületnek*, [Statutes concerning the national society,] OSzK MS Quatro Germania 1390/6 Pest Buda Nyomtatványok [Pest Buda press articles], 12 and *Rövid Rajza azon végtelen hasznoknak, melyeket a' kis gyermekek iskolái nyújtanak* [Brief sketch of the infinite benefits, that the little children's schools provide,] OSzK MS Quatro Germania 1390/6 Pest Buda Nyomtatványok [Pest Buda press articles], 65.

wealthy children. Antal Réhlingen, the one-time secretary of the National Society for Early Infant Education claimed it was better for the comfortably well-off and the wealthy members of society to trust their children to one of these schools rather than follow custom and allow a “rough, uncultured and incautious peasant without land” to look after the children.<sup>97</sup> Studies have shown that at least for the Krisztina School the social composition of the children was indeed mixed, since Teréz Brunszvik wrote that the students were “largely the children of officials and trades people, also fiaker drivers, carters and the children of washerwomen”.<sup>98</sup> With Hungarian custom and the second *Ratio educationis* of 1806 maintaining the need for preservation of class distinctions in education, the brunszvikian schools were breaking new cultural ground.

The statement of accounts for the four Pest-Buda schools all list administration committees that were composed of men, with women being listed as “overseeing women”.<sup>99</sup> Within the schools themselves, there was a hierarchy in place of a single male teacher responsible for directing learning, an assistant female teacher and a servant.<sup>100</sup> All of these circumstances must have represented necessary compromises on her part, because Teréz Brunszvik was passionate about giving a greater role for women in society, and envisioned her child centres as a place where mothers could serve a vital social function. In her own words,

...the men who are responsible for the administration of the infant schools, who often have public service positions as well, despite having the best intentions, are not capable of devoting enough attention to the minutiae of this responsibility. Their minds are

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<sup>97</sup> Vág, “Brunszyk Teréz szerepe,” [“The role of Teréz Brunszvik,”]: 425.

<sup>98</sup> Hornyák, *Első ovodánk története*, [The history of our first preschool], 62 (FSzEK B-1806).

<sup>99</sup> *Ausweis über den Bestand der unter dem Schutze des Ofner wohlthätigen Frauenvereins stehenden Klein-Kinder-Bewahr-Anstalten* OSzK MS Quatro Germania 1390/6 Pest Buda Nyomtatványok [Pest Buda press articles], 52-53 and *Ausweis über den Bestand unter dem Schutze des löbl. Pesther Magistrats stehenden Leopoldstädter Klein-Kinder-Bewahr-Anstalt* OSzK MS Quatro Germania 1390/6 Pest Buda Nyomtatványok [Pest Buda press articles], 55.

<sup>100</sup> Hornyák, *Első ovodánk története*, [The history of our first preschool], 56 (FSzEK B-1806).

accustomed to serious and more important occupations, and only reluctantly reduce themselves to the necessary care helpless childhood requires. However, everywhere women administer the affairs of the protective institutes, we see these better run, more effort goes into the care, it is more natural, and the small, but important needs are attended to in a bustling manner.<sup>101</sup>

Teréz Brunszvik lived as she wrote, because in addition to helping raise her sister's children, and opening her preschools, she had an adopted daughter, Lujza Derecskey, introduced her niece Blanka Teleki (1806-1862) into Pest-Buda society, and helped raise a further four girls from her acquaintances.<sup>102</sup> From Teréz's writings it is apparent that she wanted many more educational opportunities for women, and it was her unrealized dream to open a national school to train female teachers.<sup>103</sup>

The most controversial aspect of Teréz Brunszvik's involvement in the infant schools' movement, from the standpoint of its later development, revolved around the question of nationality. Teréz Brunszvik came from a magnate Hungarian aristocratic family, but she herself was most comfortable communicating in German. She used this language for her personal reflections.<sup>104</sup> As a consequence, scholars have been careful to examine what language children were being trained to speak in her learning centres. István Mészáros cited cultural precedent for his assertion that in the Buda schools the children were taught in German, while in Pest Hungarian was the language of choice. He also cited a later letter from Countess Brunszvik that expressed an ambiguous relationship toward the Hungarian language.<sup>105</sup> Ottó Vág's article on documents pertaining to Countess Brunszvik's preschools had a summary of subjects taught at the

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<sup>101</sup> Brunszvik, *Számadás a kisdedovó intézetről*, [Accounting of the infant schools], 26.

<sup>102</sup> Hornyák, *Beethoven, Brunszvikok, Martonvásár*, [Beethoven, the Brunszviks, Martonvásár], 74 and 76.

<sup>103</sup> Lajos Orosz, "Brunsztik Teréz és a magyar nőnevelés," in *Brunsztik Teréz pedagógiai munkássága*, [Teréz Brunsztik's pedagogical work,] eds., Ottó Vág, Lajos Orosz and Endre Zibolen (Budapest: Tankönyv kiadó, 1962), 30-31.

<sup>104</sup> *Brunsztik Teréz naplói*, [The diaries of Teréz Brunsztik,] FSzEK, B 0910/55.

<sup>105</sup> István Mészáros, "Nemzetnevelés és az első óvodáink," ["Educating the people and our first preschools,"] in *„Nőttön nő tiszta fénye” Tanulmányok Brunsztik Teréz emlékezetére*, ["Its pure light grows and grows" studies in memory of Teréz Brunsztik,] ed. Mária Hornyák (Martonvásár: Brunsztik Teréz Szellemi Hagyatéka Alapítvány, 1996), 59-60.

Leopold facility in Pest, and it included learning to name vocabulary pertaining to the body, the school, the home and the twin cities, and to structure sentences from that vocabulary, in both German and Hungarian.<sup>106</sup> Mária Hornyák also thought that the linguistic offerings of the schools were more varied than Mészáros had concluded, and that the children in the Krisztina district establishment learned in both Hungarian and German.<sup>107</sup> The language Hungarian children learned in their first contact with formal education would become much more important in the second wave of concern with the infant school movement. Then, the advantages of imparting knowledge of Magyar to a greater portion of the population became more of a concern. For Teréz Brunszvik the issue, and her schools, became much less of a priority, not because of personal choice, but because the authorities took matters out of her control.

On July 1, 1832 Palatine Joseph ordered the three Buda schools to be removed from the jurisdiction of Countess Brunszvik and placed under the authority of the Buda Charitable Women's Society. The Pest institute went to the local magistrate, and the National Society for Early Infant Education was ordered to be dissolved.<sup>108</sup> Baron Alajos Mednyánszky (1784-1844), who served as director of the society, may have turned against her and convinced the authorities to take her preschools out of her hands.<sup>109</sup> This allegation stems from Brunszvik herself who maintained: "(t)hey convinced Palatine Joseph that I was raising little carbonaries in my infant schools. Mednyánszky aspired to become a counselor at the royal court!"<sup>110</sup> Researchers have never been able to identify what the reason was that Countess Brunszvik was deemed too dangerous to run her

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<sup>106</sup> Vág, "Brunszzvik Teréz szerepe," ["The role of Teréz Brunszvik,"]: 427.

<sup>107</sup> Hornyák, *Első ovodánk története*, [The history of our first preschool], 25 (FSzEK B-1806).

<sup>108</sup> Ibid., 35 and 6.

<sup>109</sup> Hornyák, *Első ovodánk története*, [The history of our first preschool], 34 (FSzEK B-1806).

<sup>110</sup> Teréz Brunszvik, "Felszázad életemből," ["A half century of my life,"] in *Gróf Brunszvik Teréz élet és jellemrajza*, [Countess Teréz Brunszvik's life and character,] eds., Marianne Czeke and Margit Révész (Budapest: Kisdednevelés, 1926), 93.

schools. Royal authorities did initially underestimate their potential for schooling children in a new ethos of citizenship. When Teréz Brunszvik first requested permission from the Vice-Regal council to operate the infant schools, then they were deemed “private-initiative educational facilities, not humanistic public institutes” and were relegated outside the realm of official educational policy, to the discretion of the local authorities.<sup>111</sup> For four years, Teréz Brunszvik used the Pest-Buda preschools’ existence outside of strict governmental jurisdiction to school girls and boys together, in a more democratic environment, to minimize religious instruction, to ensure that women also guided their teaching and to guarantee that they gave children basic language education in German, and innovatively in Magyar. When the infant schools were run by the Buda Charitable Women’s Society and the Pest Magistrate they became more conventional in nature. By that time though, the direction of the infant school movement lay elsewhere, and in other people’s hands.

### **Model Schools in the Country, in the Capital and in Literary Worlds**

According to Árpád Tóth, by 1848 there were five infant centres in Pest in the City Centre, one in the Leopold District, two in Teresia District, and one in Joseph District. They were also care facilities located in cities outside of Pest-Buda and in the countryside in equal measure. By 1843, Arad, Balassagyarmat, Besztercebánya (Banská Bystrica, Slovakia), Kassa (Košice, Slovakia), Miskolc, Nagyszombat (Trnava, Slovakia), Pécs, Pozsony, Sopron and Szombathely all had preschools of their own. Fiume (Rijeka, Croatia) and Zilau (Zalău, Romania) each had one, and Kolozsvár (Cluj-Napoca, Romania) possessed two. A further nine were located in non-urban areas by this same date.<sup>112</sup> In a recent study Elemér Kelemen came to the slightly different conclusion that

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<sup>111</sup> Vág, “Brunsztvik Teréz szerepe,” [The role of Teréz Brunsztvik,]: 418-419.

<sup>112</sup> Tóth, *Önszervező polgárok*, [Citizens who organized themselves], 95 and 96.

the country had 89 working preschool establishments by 1847.<sup>113</sup> The one in the Hungarian capital of Pozsony may have been of special significance. Teréz Brunszvik's memoirs explain that she went to the city to help set up a preschool. She also participated actively in a dietal campaign to establish a Teacher's College, which received substantial support from István Bezerédj in the lower house of parliament, and was organized on an associative basis. She credited her time there as the opportunity Mednyánszky needed to win over the Palatine against her involvement in the institutes that she created.<sup>114</sup>

However, the preschools in the country's premier city became somewhat of a showpiece for the new concept of the infant school, and could be visited by the influential men and women who assembled in the capital for the dietal sessions. One such person who made a visit was Lajos Kossuth, who recalled "I will never forget the wonder that I felt in the infant school in Pozsony, seeing the loving affection the children possessed toward their respectful old teacher". Naturally, he saw the schools' potential to raise a new class of Hungarian citizen almost immediately, because he wanted teachers to emphasize a type of pedagogy for the young that would "allow the development of mutual goodwill in small children instead of the impulse toward selfishness."<sup>115</sup>

István Bezerédj did visit a Pozsony infant school, and he too was impressed with what he saw there.<sup>116</sup> His visit was no doubt influenced by his tendency to participate in pedagogical campaigns at the parliamentary sessions he attended. At the 1832-1836 Diet he spoke repeatedly for the establishment of a nation-wide network of Teacher's Colleges and increased funding for technical training programmes at polytechnic institutions,

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<sup>113</sup> Kelemen, *Hagyomány és korszerűség*, [Tradition and modernity], 150. For contemporary statistician Elek Fényes' estimate of the number of infant centres before 1848 see note 11.

<sup>114</sup> Teréz Brunszvik, "Felszázad életemből," ["A half century of my life,"] in *Gróf Brunszvik Teréz élet és jellemrajza*, [Countess Teréz Brunszvik's life and character], 93.

<sup>115</sup> István Barta, ed., *Kossuth Lajos ifjúkori iratok. Törvényhatósági tudósítások, Kossuth Lajos összes munkái*, VI kötet [The youthful writings of Lajos Kossuth, municipal reports, the complete works of Lajos Kossuth, volume VI] (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1966), 559.

<sup>116</sup> Bodnár and Gárdonyi, *Bezerédj István*, I. kötet [István Bezerédj, volume I], 373.



which were entirely lacking in the Kingdom. When the proposed bill was rejected outright by the royal authority on the grounds of the *Ratio educationis* (that education was a royal prerogative, and proposed legislation would not be made a subject of debate), Bezerédj took over as spokesperson for this issue and expressed a sense of collective dismay and anti-governmental sentiment. In his words:

The government is acting against its own conscience by denying us the necessary means to raise our children and fellow citizens. But there are limits to everything, to patience as well. Let the government be careful of its actions!...What I am voicing to you, I voice to the entire nation, and may all hear my words: patriots, associations, let us unite, so that we may pay the sweetest debt to our homeland, that we may carry through the greatest, most sacred godly task: that we educate the people!<sup>117</sup>

At the 1839-1840 Diet Bezerédj was made the chairperson of a committee to examine education. After considerable deliberation, and a presentation of yet another proposed bill to the lower house in 1843, this second attempt at educational reform was rejected on the same grounds as his previous campaign, and was not made a subject of debate.<sup>118</sup> It is no wonder that since official forums were closed for educational reform, Bezerédj turned to other channels to achieve his aim, as he announced he would do in his quoted speech to the house. One such avenue became his advocacy for infant centres, which continued to exist slightly apart from the parameters of official control. István Bezerédj used several different means at his disposal to advance this cause, because like Kossuth, he realized how important it was to control the education of Hungarians for a new ethos of citizenship to take shape.

One route that István Bezerédj chose to advance the cause of infant centres was partnership with his first wife Amália, who was artistically gifted. Amália Bezerédj saw her work appear in print when her music was published as part of an 1825 edition of

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<sup>117</sup> Mihály Horváth, *Huszonöt év*, második kötet [Twenty-five years, volume two], 24-25.

<sup>118</sup> Kurucz, *Bezerédj Amália és István Bezerédj a gyermekekért*, [Amália Bezerédj and István Bezerédj for the children], 37.

musical scores titled Hungarian Melodies from Veszprém County.<sup>119</sup> During her lifetime a second publication followed, this time a piece of writing, with the appearance of a short story in 1835 that was subsequently reprinted as part of a two-volume literary commemorative collection benefiting the victims of the great danubian flood of 1838.<sup>120</sup> The first appearance of her short story earned her a 25 forint remuneration fee, which was excellent for the standards of the day.<sup>121</sup> So controversial was the phenomenon of the woman writer in reform-era Hungary that Amália Bezerédj was one of only a small number of mostly aristocratic women who were able to surmount the obstacles in their paths and see their works in print.<sup>122</sup> Noble status was not enough to overcome discrimination against women entering these artistic domains, leading Amália Bezerédj to publish under pseudonyms (her music appeared as courtesy of A de B., and the short story under Malby, a non-gender specific version of her nickname).<sup>123</sup> Amália Bezerédj's advancing tuberculosis and her probable awareness that she would not live to see her daughter grow up led her to shift her focus from literature with a pedagogical bent, to pedagogical works with a fictional veneer. Her husband's support for magyarization in Hungary<sup>124</sup> resulted in his encouragement that she shift from German-language writing to Hungarian, a task that she was able to do without difficulty.

The two books that conveyed Amália Bezerédj's ideas on education were the publishing phenomenon Flóri's Book and the didactical Evenings in Földes. Flóri's Book contains sections on the Hungarian alphabet, reading exercises, prayers, moral lessons,

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<sup>119</sup> Géza Papp, "Die Quellen der ,Verbunkos-Musik' Ein bibliographischer Versuch," *Studia Musicologica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* T.24 Fasc. ½ (1982): 46.

<sup>120</sup> Rózsa Kurucz, "A tehetséges, európai műveltségű Bezerédj Amália (1804-1837) öröksége," ["The legacy of the talented, European cultured Amália Bezerédj (1804-1837),"] *Neveléstörténet* [Educational history] Vol.1 No.3 (2004): 46.

<sup>121</sup> György Szondy, *Bezerédj Amália* [Amália Bezerédj] (Debrecen: Studium, 1937), 9.

<sup>122</sup> Anna Fábri, "Hungarian Women Writers, 1790-1900," in *A History of Central European Women's Writing*, ed. Celia Hawkesworth (London: Palgrave, 2001), 93-94.

<sup>123</sup> Papp, "Die Quellen der ,Verbunkos-Musik'," *Studia Musicologica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* : 46 and Kurucz, "A tehetséges Bezerédj Amália öröksége," ["The legacy of the talented Amália Bezerédj,"] *Neveléstörténet* [Educational history]: 46.

<sup>124</sup> Kurucz, *Bezerédj István*, [István Bezerédj], 55, 57-59, 60, 65-66, 74 and 76.

games, as well as explanations of the seasons, animals, months of the year, the rudiments of Hungarian and world geography, as well as summaries of the nature of planetary motion and the solar system. Her language often was a blend of poetic and economical rhyming couplet form that is still pleasing to the ear, and was calculated to retain the attention and comprehension ability of very young children. The original book also had twenty-five musical compositions that served the same purpose. Filling a void as *the* Hungarian manual for the infant centres that did not exist, it became by far the most successful of the 196 Magyar children's books that are believed to have been published between 1825 and 1848.<sup>125</sup> While much of the concept for the sections could be attributed to Wilderspin's influence, there were themes that were highly innovative for Hungarian social conditions and reflected Amália Bezerédj's political views, such as her stance against animal cruelty. One couplet lesson warned: "Tormenting an animal on your part/ Is an indication of a bad heart."<sup>126</sup> A later lesson on America conveyed some pro-republican sympathy. The idea that: "America is the forth/ Landmass, divided north/ and south./ Its name is great by word of mouth./ Because a people who are happy and free,/ Inhabit its territory,..."<sup>127</sup> These sophisticated ideas were not often enmeshed in contemporary press articles, much less children's literature. When these concepts are combined with its importance as a simple means to teach the Hungarian language to infants and young children, from both Magyar and non-Magyar backgrounds, it is difficult to understand why the purposeful Flóri's Book has been labeled as "naïve" by several generations of historians.<sup>128</sup>

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<sup>125</sup> Kurucz, "A tehetséges Bezerédj Amália öröksége," ["The legacy of the talented Amália Bezerédj,"] *Neveléstörténet* [Educational history]: 43.

<sup>126</sup> Amália Bezerédj, *Flóri könyve, sok szép képekkel, földrajzokkal és muzsika melléklettel* [Flóri's book, with many lovely pictures, maps and musical insert] (Pest: Gustáv Heckenast, 1840), 29.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*, 105.

<sup>128</sup> István Bodnár, "Bezerédj Amália, a 'Flóri könyve' írója," ["Amália Bezerédj, the writer of 'Flóri's book'," ] in *Bezerédj István és a százéves Szekszárdi Kaszinó*, [István Bezerédj



Illustration: A didactical drawing from Flóri's Book showing a well-to-do boy engaging in cruelty to animals

Evenings in Földes was more of a tract for the propagation of the infant schools intended primarily for a young noble and bourgeois audience (and their parents), but employing a conversational and storytelling format rather than expository form. The innocence of its form attempts to mask the seriousness of its message. Its central premise on the preschools is the decision of two aristocrats, Mr. and Mrs. Földesi (thinly standing in for the Bezerédj's themselves) to open a child centre in fictional Földes. They attempt to convince their guests, who metaphorically represent the book's readership, to accept what they are trying to do by refuting all of their arguments against the infant schools with logical counterarguments. These expressions of doubt about the preschools were likely also based on the Bezerédj's personal experiences. Gyula, a little boy at the

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and one hundred years of the casino of Szekszárd,] ed. István Bodnár (Szekszárd, 1942), 65 and Kurucz, "A tehetséges Bezerédj Amália öröksége," ["The legacy of the talented Amália Bezerédj,"] *Neveléstörténet* [Educational history]: 45.

gathering, voices the opinion that it is not worthwhile to teach peasants not to do something, when they are used to corporeal punishment. Mrs. Földesi responds with the sentiment that children of all social classes can be taught to obey a good example. Often employed rhetorical sentiments are also included: that children suffer injuries from being unattended (in this case in a dangerous agricultural setting), and that the good cultural environment of the care centre would have a trickle-down effect on the moral and religious improvement of the poor peasant family.

Most intriguing is the difference of views between landowners Várdi, Tornyos, Földesi and the teacher Valler revolving around the notion of distribution of wealth and social responsibility. Várdi serves as a devil's advocate voicing the opinion that it is not necessary for peasants to be able to read, and that preschools are a waste of money, because in the past there were none, and all was well. To this Valler responds with the ethic of noble obligation: "...truly we cannot deny to ourselves, who live only for pleasure, who have the means of subsistence without any trouble, that it is our responsibility, in some unconventional manner, to work for the benefit of humanity." Tornyos follows the reasoning from an economic angle, that their concentration of wealth in society is distributed through such measures as feasts, which does serve the interests of all who have some part in their creation. Földesi parried this thinking with a caveat about the social dangers posed by overconsumption: "(w)aste is detrimental to the economy and the country; in contrast, money spent on a good cause produces beneficial returns."<sup>129</sup> Given the disparity between the complexity of ideas being presented, and the targeted age of readership, it is no wonder that this book did not have the resonance of its predecessor. The Bezerédjs became partners in this literary endeavour, because aside from the two publications previously named, Amália Bezerédj's writings were edited and given to

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<sup>129</sup> Amália Bezerédj, *Földesi estvék, olvasó könyv a' magyar ifuság számára* [Evenings in Földes, a reader for Hungarian youth] (Pest: Gustáv Heckenast, 1841), 116, 119, 121, 123, 124, 125, 127 and 128.

publishers as a labour of love by István Bezerédj, after her passing.<sup>130</sup> Her husband realized the value of her literary efforts as promotional material for the infant school idea, and did not let them go to waste.

### **Tolna County's Commitment to Infant Schooling**

The Bezerédjs, and their like-minded political county allies, did not begin and end their support for the cause of control over Hungarian infant education with dietal committees, visits to preschools in the area or didactic literature. They were acutely aware of the fact that as local landlords they had a sphere of power in the countryside as well, and that this position could be used to further their aims. When István Bezerédj finished his participation in the 1832-1836 Diet he made sure to include his plea for county authorities to support the local infant schools in Tolna "...not only through moral support, but through active deed..."<sup>131</sup> Unlike most dietal representative reports, which were filed away in local archives, this one went to the printer to increase its potential for resonance.

Meanwhile, plans were underway for formation of preschools in Tolna. Antal Augusz and Bezerédj relative László Bezerédj followed Teréz Brunszvik's precedent and travelled across Western Europe with the express purpose of viewing infant schools.<sup>132</sup> After the creation of the first infant school in Belacz (today Kakasd) on the property of Count Leó Festetics in Tolna, the Bezerédjs campaigned for Antal Augusz to aid the creation of another school in Szekszárd.<sup>133</sup> To generate the needed income they formed a local society, called the Szekszárd Infant School Institute Aid Society, according to the

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<sup>130</sup> Bodnár and Gárdonyi, *Bezerédj István*, I.kötet, [István Bezerédj, volume I], 379.

<sup>131</sup> *Tolna vármegyének az 1836-dik eszt. Julius 5-én tartott közgyűlése jegyzőkönyvéből* [Extracts from Tolna Castle county's record book from the general meeting of July 5 in the year 1836] (Pest: Károly Trattner, 1836), 36-37. FSZEK Budapest Collection 343650.

<sup>132</sup> Kurucz, *Bezerédj István*, [István Bezerédj], 32.

<sup>133</sup> Kurucz, *Bezerédj Amália és István Bezerédj a gyermekekért*, [Amália Bezerédj and István Bezerédj for the children], 66.

draft copy of their statutes in the Tolna archives.<sup>134</sup> They were willing to accept as members anyone who purchased a share worth 20 forints, or made interest payments on the same sum, and even included the liberal idea that their governing board would be composed equally of five men and five women in their statute plans.<sup>135</sup> In the end the governing board took on a more conventional form, composed of six men, with Antal Augusz as their president, and a list of 115 ladies who were essential volunteer contributors to the undertaking.<sup>136</sup>

The presidency went to Augusz no doubt because of his ability and willingness to donate 1050 forints to the cause. The Bezerédjs in turn were able to contribute 5000 bricks for construction, and 84 forints in cash.<sup>137</sup> The initial funds raised were invested in the purchase of a local house, that of Josef Radocsai in Németh Street in Szekszárd, to house the preschool. The price agreed was 3500 forints, although Mr. Radocsai disputed the terms of the agreement, meaning this issue must have led to some further complications.<sup>138</sup> Male teachers' salaries also posed a considerable challenge, with one teacher named János Koholcz receiving 100 forints for two months' work.<sup>139</sup> Another teacher involved in the infant centres in Tolna, István Wargha, asked for his pay to be increased to 1000 forints and a candle provision, and apologized to István Bezerédj in their correspondence for owing him 300 forints that he could not repay.<sup>140</sup> It is no wonder

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<sup>134</sup> *Szekszárdi kisdédóvó intézet segélyző egyesület alapszabály tervezet* [Plan for the statutes of the Szekszárd infant school aid society] Tolna Megyei Önkormányzat Levéltára (Hereafter TMÖL) Antal Augusz II 4d. 61. pall.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*, 2, 3 and 4.

<sup>136</sup> *A Szekszárdi kisdédóvó óvó intézetre ügyelő választmányának 1836.1837. és 1838. évekről készült jelentése* [The report for 1836, 1837 and 1838 of the governing board of the Szekszárd preschool institute] (Perger, 1838), 7-12. TMÖL Mrs. Dániel Csapó II 85d. 29. pall.

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>138</sup> *Gyermek óvó intézet számára megvásárolt Radocsai-féle ház szerződése* [The contract of the Radocsai house purchased for the child care institute] TMÖL Antal Augusz II 4d. 58. pall.

<sup>139</sup> *Szekszárdi kisdédóvó intézet számadásai, iratai, 1836-1859, 1868, 1871*, [The Szekszárd infant school accounts, documents, 1836-1859, 1868, 1871], 19. TMÖL Antal Augusz II 4d. 60 pall.

<sup>140</sup> István Wargha to István Bezerédj, 28 January 1840, TMÖL István Bezerédj 328d. 78. pall.

that the Szekszárd Infant School Institute Aid Society crossed out the idea in their statutes that they were committed to opening multiple infant centres.<sup>141</sup>

Aside from the dues for membership, the Szekszárd Infant School Institute Aid Society tried to generate money by mobilizing civil society in the county (and outside of it) to their banner. Even during the Hungarian war of independence, members asked primarily local people to donate money for the upkeep of the school, and followed through by collecting the promised amounts.<sup>142</sup> The Szekszárd Infant School Institute Aid Society organized regular balls coupled with a charity lottery, and all proceeds went to benefit the cause of infant education.<sup>143</sup> These dance evenings were held in the great room of the Tolna County House, the premier building of the county and seat of government, lending an air of official approval and status to the evening.<sup>144</sup> In their published statement of accounts, the dance evening of 1838 was recorded as generating 296 ft 43 kr for the infant centre.<sup>145</sup> Although this amount was only a fraction of the over 6545 ft the society had already spent on the preschool, István Bezerédj did consider the fundraising approach to be a winning concept, because he repeated it in 1843 with the assistance of his sister-in-law and future second wife Etelka Bezerédj. This time the setting of Pozsony was even more spectacular, the cause to benefit the existence of a national preschool teachers' training centre in Tolna more ambitious, and the proceeds

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<sup>141</sup> *Szekszárdi kisedővő egyesület alapszabály tervezet* [Plan for the statutes of the Szekszárd infant school society], 2. TMÖL Antal Augusz II 4d. 61. pall.

<sup>142</sup> *Szekszárdi kisedővő intézet számadásai, iratai, 1836-1859, 1868, 1871*, [The Szekszárd infant school accounts, documents, 1836-1859, 1868, 1871], 87. TMÖL Antal Augusz II 4d. 60 pall.

<sup>143</sup> *Kisedővő intézet ügyelő választmány sors játékhöz adományokat kér 1837* [Request of the governing board of the infant school institute for donations for its charity lottery 1837], 2-3. TMÖL Mrs. Dániel Csapó II 85d. 29. pall.

<sup>144</sup> *Meghívó táncvigalom a kisedővő intézetek javára* [Invitation for a dance amusement to benefit the preschool institutes], 2. TMÖL Antal Augusz II 4d. 59. pall and *Szekszárd kisedővő intézetre ügyelő választmány levele* [Letter of the governing board of the Szekszárd preschool institute] Lajstr. 945/1837. TMÖL közgyűlési iratok [General assembly records].

<sup>145</sup> *A Szekszárdi kisedő óvó intézetre ügyelő választmánynak jelentése* [The report of the governing board of the Szekszárd preschool institute], 15. TMÖL Mrs. Dániel Csapó II 85d. 29. pall.



arising from the “Children’s Ball”, at over 400 forints, were even more generous than before.<sup>146</sup>

Multiple sources agree that it was Amália Bezerédj who convinced her husband and Augusz Antal to devote their time and energy to the infant school and founding a preschool teachers’ training centre.<sup>147</sup> In 1836, her involvement in the matter deepened when she and her husband converted an existing school in Hidja on their property into one that had a functioning infant centre as well.<sup>148</sup> Amália Bezerédj also played an instrumental part in organizing the Szekszárd Infant School Institute Aid Society benefits, overseeing the smallest details for the event, including the lithography on the printed raffle tickets.<sup>149</sup> In fact, the mobilization of women for the preschools was central to their success. The advertisements for the Szekszárd infant centre were particularly keen to enlist the help of women, not only to donate their free labour to the institute, but asking them “to expunge the remainder of the debt” that the society still held.<sup>150</sup> The strategy to make them amenable was to appeal to their motherly and feminine instincts. One advertisement asked for their participation because they were “...tenderly-feeling mothers ...(and) accomplishing this goal can most naturally be expected from women who are ordained by nature to raise the impressionable human seedlings”. If motherly guilt did not suffice to compel them to donate time or money, there was always the possibility for amusement at the county house balls. Women would prove to be

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<sup>146</sup> Kurucz, *Bezerédj Amália és István Bezerédj a gyermekekért*, [Amália Bezerédj and István Bezerédj for the children], 20.

<sup>147</sup> Kurucz, “A tehetséges Bezerédj Amália öröksége,” [“The legacy of the talented Amália Bezerédj,”] *Neveléstörténet* [Educational history]: 51, István Mészáros, *A magyar nevelés története* [The history of Hungarian education] (Budapest: Tankönyvkiadó, 1968), 252 and Bodnár and Gárdonyi, *Bezerédj István*, I.kötet [István Bezerédj, volume I], 369.

<sup>148</sup> Kurucz, *Bezerédj Amália és István Bezerédj a gyermekekért*, [Amália Bezerédj and István Bezerédj for the children], 72-78.

<sup>149</sup> Bodnár and Gárdonyi, *Bezerédj István*, I.kötet [István Bezerédj, volume I], 369-370 and Vág, “Brunszzvik Teréz szerepe (Documentumok),” [“The role of Teréz Brunszzvik (documents),”]: 433.

<sup>150</sup> *Kisdedóvó intézet ügyelő választmány sorsjátékhoz adományokat kér 1837* [Request of the governing board of the infant school institute for donations for its charity lottery 1837], 2-3. TMÖL Mrs. Dániel Csapó II 85d. 29. pall.

important, if unacknowledged partners, in the next stage of the preschool campaign: when the infant schools were seen as ideal spaces and tools for the implementation of greater magyarization.

### **The Society for the Perpetuation of Infant Schools in Hungary and the Magyarization Conflict**

In 1834 Teréz Brunszvik organized a new society for her pet cause, the Society for the Perpetuation of Infant Schools in Hungary in Pest-Buda with the help of two county officials: Móricz Szentkirályi and Daniel Glosius.<sup>151</sup> This new initiative took off in 1836 when Tolna aristocrat Count Leó Festetics assumed leadership, and offered land on his property in Belacz for a preschool teaching institute and 240 ft annually to pay the director of this institute and model preschool.<sup>152</sup> Hundreds of notable men and women joined this new organization, including the leading luminaries of the Hungarian opposition.<sup>153</sup> The ambition of the Society for the Perpetuation of Infant Schools was centrally to control the Hungarian preschool movement ideologically, financially through the provision of interest-free loans, and through oversight of the preschool teaching institute and allocation of manpower.<sup>154</sup> Its ranks were divided when some members began to see the schools as ideal facilities not just for educating the young, but as instruments in the campaign for greater magyarization.

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<sup>151</sup> Rózsa Kurucz and Erzsébet Szányel, "A Contribution to the History of Kindergarten Teacher Training in Tolna," in *Conference Papers for the 4<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the International Standing Working Group for the History of Early Childhood Education (within the ISCHE) Congress held in Pécs 27-29 August 1987*, ed. Sámuel Komlósi (Pécs: Regional Committee at Pécs of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, 1987), 182.

<sup>152</sup> *Kisdédóvó egyesület megalakulásáról gr. Festetics Leo* [Count Leo Festetics on the foundation of the infant school society] Lajstr. 1027/1837 TMÖL közgyűlési iratok [General assembly records].

<sup>153</sup> "Az országos kisdédóvó egyesület alapító tagainak névsora," ["List of names of the founding members of the national infant school society,"] *Kisdédóvókat Magyarországon terjesztő egyesület* [Hungarian infant school promulgation society] MOL P1652.

<sup>154</sup> Tóth, *Önszervező polgárok*, [Citizens who organized themselves], 98.

One person who saw preschools as wonderful opportunities to increase knowledge of the Magyar language and create citizens who would be part of this new cultural landscape was of course Lajos Kossuth. His famous criticism of Teréz Brunszvik was that “she completely excluded consideration of nationality” from her vision of the teaching facilities.<sup>155</sup> István Bezerédj helped guide Kossuth towards greater awareness of the preschool issue, because he was the one who gave him the German copy of the Wilderspin book. Kossuth deemed the writing sufficiently important to translate into Hungarian while he was sitting in prison for his offences relating to press and speech laws, although he never actually finished the project.<sup>156</sup> In 1841 Kossuth published a lead article in Pest News voicing his frustration with the progress the Society for the Perpetuation of Infant Schools had made since its 1836 reconstitution. What bothered him was that in a country of millions, hundreds of thousands could do something for this cause, and yet they did nothing, that the central society had not acquired even a 500 person membership in six years, that inactivity and sloppiness characterized the regional management of the infant centres, and that local administrators were not worthy of the trust that they had been given. He went on to add that so much could be achieved if only every county set up one model institute, and “there is hardly any other institute that could be set up that had ‘nationality’ as its central premise”. He ended with the optimistic call to action: “(y)ou have to want it sir; we must not lull ourselves into complacent dreams of doing nothing, with the idea that we cannot do anything. In between attaining everything and nothing there exists a something.”<sup>157</sup>

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<sup>155</sup> Mészáros, *A magyar nevelés története*, [The history of Hungarian education], 253.

<sup>156</sup> Gábor Pajkossy, ed., *Kossuth Lajos iratai 1837 Május-1840 December*, kötet VII, [The writings of Lajos Kossuth May 1837-December 1840, volume VII,] *Kossuth Lajos összes munkái* [The complete works of Lajos Kossuth] (Budapest: Akadémiai kiadó, 1989), 228.

<sup>157</sup> *Pesti Hírlap* [Pest news] 24 February 1841, No. 16, *Kossuth hírlapírói munkássága* [Kossuth’s journalistic activity], CD-ROM.

Several people agreed with Kossuth's thinking about the infant centres and their potential to teach Magyar children a new standardized language, and non-Magyar children the rudiments of the language they hoped would hold the key to creating a more unified national culture. Móricz Szentkirályi, who helped found the Society for the Perpetuation of Infant Schools, wrote a tract about the infant schools for the governing board. In it, he pointed out "(i)n our homeland, another not insignificant aspect of speaking exercises is that in places where Magyar is not the mother-tongue, children should learn it at an age when they are most impressionable. Language makes a group of people into a nation..." He went on to add that the director Leó Festetics' model infant school in Belacz was in an entirely German-speaking town, and the German parents there were thrilled with the progress their children were making in the Magyar language.<sup>158</sup> Of all people to express a viewpoint on the topic of the infant centres, Baron Miklós Wesselényi was most explicit as to what was hoped from them in terms of magyarization:

The Slovak, Serbian, Romanian or German small child learns Magyar without labour or effort. A child can learn one language as easily as another...Twenty years after the establishment of a preschool institute, the population of an entire area will be magyarized, ie. they will be able to speak Hungarian. More should not be understood or expected of magyarization. It is not necessary and not a goal that foreign-language speakers forget their mother tongues. What we need, and for all that we wish to accomplish and constitutes our duty: it is enough that they know Magyar.<sup>159</sup>

A constantly recurring theme in the discourse on the infant schools and magyarization is the complaint that there were an insufficient number of teachers to populate the new places of learning. Theoretically, more centres could have been opened if only there had been a cadre of teachers for the urban and rural communities in the Kingdom. However, it must be understood that the complaint of teacher shortage is veiled

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<sup>158</sup> Móricz Szentkirályi, *A kisdéd-óvó intézetekről a' választottság megbízásából* [About the infant preschools with the entrustment of the committee] (Pest: Károly Trattner, 1838), 42.

<sup>159</sup> Miklós Wesselényi, *Szózat a magyar és szláv nemzetiség ügyében* [Discourse on the matter of the Hungarian and Slavic nationalities] (Leipzig: Otto Wigand, 1843), 309.

language for the lament that there were too few teachers with the necessary linguistic and pedagogical training to work in the reformed Magyar idiom, and not that there was a shortage among these members of the intelligentsia in general. From 1831 Pest County authorities asked that teachers speak Magyar in the infant schools under their jurisdiction.<sup>160</sup> In Szekszárd, the teacher János Koholczer had to leave his posting because he was “insufficiently knowledgeable in the domestic language, and as a preschool teacher was unable to deal with Hungarian-speaking children...” Koholczer had probably been warned several times to engage a Magyar-speaking assistant, and his non-compliance with this request was most likely the grounds for his dismissal. His replacement, János Gyöngyösy, was a trainee of the Tolna National Preschool Teachers’ Training Centre, and consequently was much more ideologically up to speed than his predecessor. Interestingly, in the German-language speaking islands of Tolna the population objected most strongly not to learning the language, but to having to wear Hungarian clothing. It was in relation to bodily expression of Magyar nationality that they tended to draw the line.<sup>161</sup>

Teachers who were already working in the infant schools often sang the praises of the campaign to teach children to speak Magyar. Péter Varga, who taught in the City Centre venue, thought it was an advantage that children “...practiced learning the homeland’s language, and became accustomed to the specific soundings of this language at an early age”.<sup>162</sup> István Wargha, the director of the Tolna Preschool Teachers’ Centre

<sup>160</sup> Mészáros, *A magyar nevelés története*, [The history of Hungarian education], 252.

<sup>161</sup> *A Szekszárdi kisdéd óvó intézetre ügyelő választmányának jelentése*, [The report of the governing board of the Szekszárd preschool institute], 12. TMÖL Mrs. Dániel Csapó II 85d. 29. pall and Mária Csapó, *Tolna Megye a reformkori politikai küzdelmekben* [Tolna county and the political struggles of the reform era] (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1989), 26.

<sup>162</sup> Péter Varga, *Nefelejts, vagy azon erkölcsi mondások, énekek és imádságok gyűjteménye, melyekben a’ Pesti belvárosban kisdédovó intézetben a kisdédok’ szíveik képeztetésére gyakoroltatnak, ugyan ezen intézet rövid történetével* [Forget-me-not, or a collection of those moral sayings, songs, and prayers practiced in the city centre to appeal to the hearts of the little children in the preschool institute, and a short history of this establishment] (Pest: Károly Trattner, 1839), 8. FSzEK Budapest Collection B 372/143.

from September 15, 1838,<sup>163</sup> was even more direct. In a speech to the local nobility he made a case that "...preschools in our homeland are a means for preparation and impressionability. It presents itself, in addition, as the instrument to forge together distinctive elements most easily, that carries in its womb the moral and civil well being of the coming generation, and takes into consideration the state of our homeland's future populatory condition".<sup>164</sup> This faith that the spirit of the teacher produced results in creating magyarized children was not a vain hope. In one Pest infant centre alone 31 out of 35 children did not speak Magyar in 1844, but one short year later it was possible to consider Magyar as the sole language of the preschool "in a matter of a few months' time".<sup>165</sup> However, these assessments must be taken with a grain of salt. They may have reflected the teachers' projections for the future onto circumstances that did not yet exist or were not even possible.

István Bezerédj believed in the importance of the infant centres, because their potential partially to magyarize the non-Hungarian elements of the Kingdom's population fit in with his ideas about the standardization and elevation of the Hungarian language to become the "domestic language" in fact rather than as an empty allusion in contemporary discourse. As a landlord from Tolna, a largely rural county inhabited by a fair percentage of people from backgrounds other than Magyar, he had a particular insight into this aspect of Hungarian reality. In 1842 he wrote, "...as in everything, in the repopulation of the puszta (the Hungarian plains) as well, we cannot exclude consideration of our nationality..." and he reasoned that a targeted resettlement "...that would not sideline a consideration of nationality, but would seek to make it a first-place priority, (from such a

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<sup>163</sup> Ibid., 9.

<sup>164</sup> Kisdedovó ügyek, 1840-1846, [Infant school matters, 1840-1846], 826. TMÖL István Bezerédj 332 d. 88 pall.

<sup>165</sup> Mészáros, *A magyar nevelés története*, [The history of Hungarian education], 258.

policy) it would be truly hopeful that (the settlers) would become more Magyar, in less time.”<sup>166</sup>

Bezerédj did more than write, speak and organize on behalf of the infant schools. He lived his principles in life. His wife’s artistic talent served the cause, his daughter’s upbringing was reformulated as a textbook for Hungarian preschools, and Flóri, despite being an aristocratic child, attended the preschools along with children from serf backgrounds, and was brought up first-and-foremost as a little Magyar girl.<sup>167</sup> Flóri’s death in 1844 was not only Bezerédj’s personal tragedy, it was the loss of the person who most deeply embodied one aspect of his political vision: a new type of Hungarian citizen with greater egalitarian principles coupled with a strong background in Magyar culture. During the Hungarian war of independence and the subsequent neo-absolutist period many of the Magyar infant centres would be forced to close their doors. After the Austro-Hungarian compromise of 1867, the issue of kindergartens as beds of magyarization would again resurface, along with the objections of the non-Magyar speakers of the Kingdom to these centres on the grounds of linguistic minority cultural discrimination.<sup>168</sup>

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<sup>166</sup> *Pesti Hirlap* [Pest news] 15 September 1842, No. 178, *Kossuth hirlapirói munkássága*, [Kossuth’s journalistic activity], CD-ROM.

<sup>167</sup> Bernadett Bencze, “Bezerédj Flórika Sopronban,” [“Flórika Bezerédj in Sopron,”] *TIT Évkönyv* [TIT yearbook] (1998): 76 and 81.

<sup>168</sup> Kelemen, *Hagyomány és korszerűség*, [Tradition and modernity], 156.

## Chapter Five

### Serfs, State Taxes and Silkworms: István Bezerédj's Efforts to Alter Social Distinctions and Stimulate Economic Development through "Model" Behaviour

István Bezerédj was both a part of Hungary's feudal fiscal system and one of the people who dedicated himself to its reformation. At the 1832-1836 diet his chief specialization was as an advocate for the alteration of Maria Theresia's 1767 serf legislation, the *urbarium*, which had not been touched in its main provisions for over sixty-five years and was showing definite signs of its age. Although the laws of 1836 did make substantial changes to the *urbarium* by pushing the peasants closer to being paid in money for labour services, the great breakthrough of turning the peasants into wage labourers who owned their land outright was not reached. From the landlords' perspective 1836 inched them closer to breaking the constitutional barrier that guarded against their taxation-free status when the sandaled nobility began to pay taxes on land and services, and nobles as a group voluntarily assumed responsibility for the costs of their own forum, the Diet, even if they limited their commitment to the current session only.<sup>1</sup> Although in this instance the best-case scenario of the Hungarian nobility becoming tax-paying members of society was far from attained, steps in that direction were made.

Disappointed with the compromised outcome of 1836, Bezerédj used his financial and social resources to prove the inherent value of the new *urbarial* and taxation legislation by taking advantage of the letter of the law, and even going beyond its limits. On July 8, 1838 he signed a contract with his Medina serfs stipulating their payments in kind in exchange for cessation of robot and feudal dues. In 1846, he signed a second contract granting the residents of Medina as close a deed to their land as the law would allow. The circumstance that its provisions did not go into effect because of opposition from the Vice-Regal Council, and during the revolution from the serfs themselves, did

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<sup>1</sup>Dezső Márkus, ed., "Law 1836 Article XI §1-5," and "Law 1836 Article XLIV §1," *1836-1868. évi törvények* in Magyar törvénytár [The laws of 1836-1838 in Corpus juris hungarici], 49 and 76.



not detract from its value. The inhabitants of Kakasd went through a similar process, but their path towards ownership was smoother. Their emancipation contract benefited from peasant initiative in petitioning Tolna County to sanction the agreement on November 18, 1843, and no doubt contributed greatly to the Vice-Regal Council's inability to say no and to grant the execution of its terms on January 2, 1844.<sup>2</sup> With his offer to subject himself voluntarily to the payment of income taxes, Bezerédj took the controversial step of transgressing the law, by formally taking on the quasi-mythical status of the Hungarian constitution. In relation to noble taxation exemption, he took a personal stance that the constitution, in this respect, was not a semi-sacred guarantor of Hungary's freedom, but simply a taboo increasingly out-of-step with the times.

Bezerédj and others who chose to follow the same path were attempting to achieve a subtle but profound change in social and political relationships, moving towards patterns of secure property relations and citizenship for both peasants and nobles. In campaigning for peasants to become landowners at the 1832-1836 diet, Bezerédj wanted to expand a marker of nobility to the dispossessed. Giving peasants greater land rights over their property was a legal protection that only nobles enjoyed. Nobles were not subject to dictates as to when to harvest, to work the land or to give up sections of their crop; they could administer their work schedule and land allotments at their leisure. Dissolving the exclusivity of this attribute of sovereignty over the land that nobles enjoyed meant that by extension a cachet of aristocratic estate status disappeared too. Symbolically, peasants would become somewhat noble. Conversely, by privately agreeing with the controversial measure of noble taxation he tried to take a responsibility that served as a marker of inferiority for the peasants and convert it into a meritorious

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<sup>2</sup> Bodnár and Gárdonyi, *Bezerédj István*, II kötet [István Bezerédj, volume II], 254, 256-258, 253 and 266-267 and Pajkossy, "Bezerédj István," ["István Bezerédj,"] in *Emlékkönyv Bezerédj István születésének*, [Memorial book of István Bezerédj's birth], 50.

distinction for aristocrats. As noble and peasant would both share the trait of paying taxes, nobles would begin to resemble their peasant counterparts. The compensation for this decline in aristocratic self-image ideally would have been a shared ethos of civic social responsibility in mutually supporting the upkeep of the state.

Studies both old and new have pointed out that Bezerédj's motives in these famous actions were not as altruistic as they appeared at first glance. Bodnár and Gárdonyi tellingly stated that "(i)t was not purely humanitarian motives, that directed him in his course, but higher financial and national perspectives...."<sup>3</sup> In a 1991 study on the financial circumstances of Tolna's middle nobility József Glósz pointed out Bezerédj's "Janus-like" character, constantly advocating for greater serf rights and simultaneously profiting handsomely from the terms of the deals. He is most cynical in relation to Bezerédj's actions in relation to the people of Szedres. Glósz alleges his motive in helping found the community was simply to guarantee a ready supply of cheap labour for his agricultural enterprises, and this reflected badly on the "champion of civil equality".<sup>4</sup>

These interpretations have trouble reconciling different notions of equality. Bezerédj was perfectly willing to grant the peasantry greater civic and social freedoms. However, just because Bezerédj wanted peasants and nobles to exchange certain proprietary and monetary symbolic markers of their status with one another, did not mean that he wanted this equalization to extend to greater income and financial equalization as well. In fact, Bezerédj very much wanted the nobility to retain its position at the apex of society by adjusting to changed economic circumstances and structuring land settlements with their former serfs in a manner that would serve their interests in the long run. He

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<sup>3</sup> Bodnár and Gárdonyi, *Bezerédj István*, I. kötet [István Bezerédj, volume I.], 280.

<sup>4</sup> József Glósz, *Tolna Megye középbirtokos nemességének anyagi viszonyai a 19. század első felében*, [The financial situation of nobles with mid-sized property holdings in Tolna county in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century], *Wosinsky Mór Múzeum Évkönyve XVI*, [Yearbook of the Mór Wosinsky museum XVI,] ed. Ferenc Vadas (Szekszárd, Wosinsky Mór Megyei Múzeum, 1991), 86, 87 and 99.

took a measured gamble that his somewhat altruistic actions in relation to the serfs would be greatly preferable to no settlement at all. This latter option would destroy the position of strength that the aristocracy currently enjoyed. He reckoned that the serfs would be happy to become farmers in possession of small units of land, with their independence compensating for their modest means. Aristocrats, in turn, would no longer have to endure criticism over forcing people to work against their will for free.<sup>5</sup> Instead, nobles would transform into larger-scale agricultural entrepreneurs benefiting from modestly-paid labour on the part of contracting parties inclined to work. Bezerédj could never have sold a purely humanitarian settlement of serfdom to a class of aristocratic entrepreneurs, because they did not want to pay labour costs for work services that they currently enjoyed *gratis*. The lure that coming to terms with the serfs was not only better than not doing nothing, but was a potentially lucrative measure for the nobility as a group, was the sugar coating designed to help them swallow the bitter pill of increased labour cost.

In this chapter I focus on Bezerédj's stances in relation to serf emancipation, taxation and his support for Tolna silk production. I begin with an introduction setting out the nature of Hungarian serfdom in the first half of the nineteenth century. Bezerédj's preoccupation with the issue of urbarial reform at the 1832-1836 Diet sets out how he as a landowner supported more radical legislation to aid the peasantry, but that his own calculations to reach a settlement favourable to the nobility were never far from his mind. The next segments deal with Bezerédj's "model" projects in the areas of manumission contracts, personal and voluntary taxation and the stimulation of silk production in Tolna County. These all served as a showcase for his politics to bring together nobles and peasants in aspects of shared citizenship, with the added advantage that they would

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<sup>5</sup> This issue remained a touchy issue until 1853, when the Austrian authorities paid Hungarian landlords a compensation package from a taxation fund in order to eliminate serf dues permanently as part of the terms of the Urbarial Patent. Source: Gergely, ed., *Magyarország története a 19. században*, [The history of Hungary in the 19<sup>th</sup> century], 294.

generate revenue at both national and local levels, and would accrue more benefit than they cost in terms of time and money. Unfortunately, making his taxation pledge and his agricultural projects into advertisements for his politics meant that he could not afford to fail. He ran the risk that personal setbacks in these areas could be used as a justification for the unsoundness of his entire programme. This weakness in his reasoning was something that would become obvious when an association that he patronized strongly, the Tolna Mulberry Silk Society, did not live up to its expectations, and did not stimulate promised development on a regional level.

### **Hungarian Serfdom in the First Half of the Nineteenth Century**

The overwhelming majority of Hungarian society in the reform era was composed of the disenfranchised, unemancipated serf population, roughly nine million people as of 1840, and statistically 85-90% of all the residents in the Kingdom.<sup>6</sup> Since the nobility enjoyed tax exemption status as a constitutional right, the entire fiscal upkeep of the country fell on the shoulders of its peasant residents. According to Elek Fényes' *Magyarország leírása* [Description of Hungary], state income came from fifteen primary sources, and totaled 34 262 333 forints in the 1840s.<sup>7</sup> Most of these taxes were federal in nature, were not subject to parliamentary or county approval, and there was no stipulation that the collected amounts had to be reinvested within the Kingdom, or conversely, could be used as the Habsburg rulers wished within the rest of their hereditary possessions. Only the house tax, calculated at 5 453 125 ft in the same time period, and paid proportionally by the counties, the royal free cities and special districts,<sup>8</sup> had to be channeled directly back into the areas that financed it.

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 102, 95.

<sup>7</sup> Elek Fényes, *Magyarország leírása* [Description of Hungary] (Pest: Beimel, 1847), 161-162.

<sup>8</sup> Stroup, "Hungary under Noble Leadership and Habsburg Rule: 1830-1844", 271.

At the local level there were three classifications of Hungarian peasant. The *cenzuális* or *taxás* serf was a free peasant living in a community of serfs, usually an agricultural town. These peasants paid all dues in the form of monetary payments. Next came *villein* (*szabadmenetelű jobbágyok*) who owed some services and taxes to landlords, but possessed certain freedoms as well, such as having the ability to move. Finally, there were the *bondsmen* (*örökös jobbágyok*), peasants whose life circumstances tied them to their holdings.<sup>9</sup> All serfs paid taxes in relation to property. These taxes were set in relation to the amount of land that they were entitled to work. The classifications were: *jobbágy*, *sessionati* (a peasant who tilled a full plot of land or a faction of a full plot), *zsellér*, *non sessionati*, *inquilini* (a cottager who had only a garden plot and house) or *alzsellér*, *subinquilini* (a subcottager without any land or perhaps even a house). A full plot of land tilled by serfs was divided into eight components (*sessiones*). The size of what amounted to a full plot varied county by county, depending on calculations regarding the fertility of the soil. The land surrounding the house and garden plot was not affected by these considerations; it amounted to 1100 *négyszögöl* irrespective of where it was located.<sup>10</sup> All peasants occupying land and cottagers paid one forint smoke tax, the ninth to his lord on the first harvest, the tithe to the Catholic Church for same produce covered by the ninth, and gifts (chickens, capons and eggs), again to his landlord, on an

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<sup>9</sup> László Novák, "A jobbágyfelszabadítás kérdései a XVIII-XIX. században," ["The questions surrounding the liberation of the serfs in the xviii<sup>th</sup> and xix<sup>th</sup> centuries,"] *Agrártörténelmi Szemle* [Agricultural history review] *Historica rerum rusticarum* Vol. 39 No.3-4 (1997): 455.

<sup>10</sup> Ferenc Ekhart, "Magyar alkotmány- és jogtörténet," ["Hungarian constitutional and legal history,"] in *Magyarország társadalomtörténete a 18.-19.században*, [Hungarian social history in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries,] ed. Tamás Faragó (Budapest: Új Mandatum, 2004), 113. The *négyszögöl* is an antiquated unit of measure. In Hungary the Viennese *négyszögöl* was in common use in the nineteenth century. It equaled 3.59665m<sup>2</sup>. Source: György Fodor, *Mértékegység lexicon* [Lexicon of measurement units] (Budapest: Műszaki Könyvkiadó, 1990), 156.

annual basis. For extraordinary events, such as if the lord were imprisoned, or in celebration of his wedding or first mass, further gifts were required.<sup>11</sup>

The unpaid labour services that the serfs owed their landlords were legally regulated by Maria Theresia's peasant legislation, which was known as the *urbarium* of 1767. Before the *urbarium* came into effect landlords had much more leeway in determining how much free labour they could require of their serfs. The *urbarium* represented the maximum amount a landlord could require of a peasant per annum. It set robot requirements at fifty-two yoked labour days or 104 regular days, three days of hunting assistance, and two days of long-distance haulage for serfs with a full plot of land, down on a descending scale to cottagers, who owed eighteen days of work and  $\frac{1}{3}$  of a day of hunting help, to twelve days of work for subcottagers.<sup>12</sup> Lest it be assumed that we are dealing with an exclusively male landscape here, it must be added that women were sent to do the robot work on a regular basis as well, particularly reaping, collecting hay and vineyard labour.<sup>13</sup> In fact, it was a situation of all hands on deck, because even though children were not sent to perform robot, they were quickly socialized into a rural culture that valued their ability to work hard in an agricultural capacity as a key character trait.<sup>14</sup> The essential aspect of the *urbarium* for the purposes of this chapter was that it inserted the state in the centre of the serf-lord relationship, as the state capped work requirements and allowed serfs to appeal their convictions in their lord's courts to the

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<sup>11</sup> Ekhart, "Magyar alkotmány- és jogtörténet," ["Hungarian constitutional and legal history,"] in *Magyarország társadalomtörténete a 18.-19.században*, [Hungarian social history in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries], 116. These taxes are also summarized in Béla K. Király, "Neo-Serfdom in Hungary," *Slavic Review* Vol. 34. No.2. (June 1975): 273.

<sup>12</sup> Zoltán Horváth, *A jobbágy alkonya Sopron Megyében* [The sunset of serfdom in Sopron county] (Akadémiai Kiadó: Budapest, 1976), 78.

<sup>13</sup> Judit Knézy, "Falusi nők a mezőgazdaságban, falusi nők munkája (18.-19. század)," ["Rural women in agriculture, rural women's work (18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> centuries),"] in *Magyarország társadalomtörténete a 18.-19.században*, [Hungarian social history in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries,] ed. Tamás Faragó (Budapest: Új Mandatum, 2004), 241-242.

<sup>14</sup> Judit Knézy, "Paraszt-, pásztor-, cselédgyermek munkára való nevelése," ["Peasant, shepherd, and servant children being raised to work,"] in *Magyarország társadalomtörténete a 18.-19.században*, [Hungarian social history in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries,] ed. Tamás Faragó (Budapest: Új Mandatum, 2004), 244-248.

Vice-Regal Council, and even beyond.<sup>15</sup> As to whether or not this new state presence in the serf's spacial environment actually aided him/her can be disputed. In some counties lords used the newly-instituted labour maximums to their benefit as productivity targets, in places that had seen serf feudal dues lapse into disuse.<sup>16</sup>

The legislation to reform the *urbarium* of 1767 was passed at the end of the 1832-1836 Diet. Although it had been debated extensively, its terms fell short of expectations, even though it was considered a ground-breaking set of laws at the time of its acceptance.<sup>17</sup> It set categories for land quality that correlated with allotment size and these were varied county-by-county, depending on the nature of the soil.<sup>18</sup> Provisions for robot were kept virtually unchanged from 1767.<sup>19</sup> The most novel portion of the new *urbarium* was opening the door to manumission contracts that would have allowed serfs to make a monetary payment to their landlords for permanent redemption of urbarial dues and services.<sup>20</sup> These contracts could only be initiated by landlords, which essentially disabled the peasantry from taking active steps to achieve its own emancipation.

Historians have been divided over the question of whether or not the lot of the serf actually improved or declined in the reform era. Ignác Acsády, who wrote authoritatively on the subject at the turn of the twentieth century, thought that the *urbarium* had raised the standard of living of the peasants, because with their work requirements for their landlords set, they had more time to devote to their own land plots,

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<sup>15</sup> Ekhart, "Magyar alkotmány- és jogtörténet," ["Hungarian constitutional and legal history,"] in *Magyarország társadalomtörténete a 18.-19.században*, [Hungarian social history in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries], 109.

<sup>16</sup> Gergely, ed., *Magyarország története a 19. században*, [The history of Hungary in the 19<sup>th</sup> century], 106.

<sup>17</sup> Even twenty years after the fact the laws were reprinted in booklet form. Source: *Urbarial-Gesetze des ungrischen Landtags 1832/6 mit den am Landtage des Jahres 1840 Erläuterungen und theilweisen Abwänderungen* (Presburg: Wigand, 1856).

<sup>18</sup> Márkus ed., "Law 1836 Article V §1," *1836-1868. évi törvénycikkek in Magyar törvénytár*, [The laws of 1836-1868 in Corpus juris hungarici], 19-27.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., "Law 1836 Article VII § 5", 38.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., "Law 1836 Article VII §5, and Law 1836 Article VIII §2-4", *1836-1868. évi törvénycikkek in Magyar törvénytár*, [The laws of 1836-1868 in Corpus juris hungarici], 38 and 41.

which increased their personal wealth. The only factor that hindered the *urbarium* from achieving its full potential was the landlords who did not carry out its terms to the extent that they could have done or to the advantage of the people it was supposed to serve. This development was to be expected since it was in the interest of landlords to have as many days of free labour as possible, and landlords were the ones responsible for enforcing the law.<sup>21</sup> István Szabó, a specialist writing about forty years after Acsády, had a more pessimistic view of the *urbarium*. He thought that serfs gradually lost ground and that landlords gained from this process. As evidence that the serfs were somewhat worse off than before he gives the example that even the élite of the peasant cultural realm, the judge who executed the lord's orders in villages, was regularly subject, arbitrarily even, to fines, imprisonment or corporeal punishment.<sup>22</sup> The key piece of evidence often utilized to substantiate the claim that Hungarian peasant conditions were worsening is that demographically peasant birth rates increased faster than the rest of the population, and land quantities, as the only real indicator of monetary assets in this period, were fixed. It is in this context that the statistic that cottagers and subcottagers increased from about 7.8% of peasants to 10% becomes loaded with meaning.<sup>23</sup> When to this is added the fact that landlords increasingly expropriated properties from peasants in the early nineteenth century, then it seems straightforward that more peasants occupying less land resulted in decreased standards of living and greater impoverishment.<sup>24</sup>

However, there is always a second side to a coin. Peasants were not above incorporating greater amounts of land into their holdings at the expense of their landlords,

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<sup>21</sup> Ignác Acsády, *A magyar jobbágyság története* [A history of Hungarian serfdom] (Budapest: Károly Grill, 1908), 385-387.

<sup>22</sup> István Szabó, *Tanulmányok a magyar parasztság történetéből* [Essays on the history of the Hungarian peasantry] (Budapest: Teleki Pál Tudományos Intézet, 1948), 306-307.

<sup>23</sup> Gergely, ed., *Magyarország története a 19. században*, [The history of Hungary in the 19<sup>th</sup> century], 99.

<sup>24</sup> Király, "Neo-Serfdom in Hungary," 275.



in some cases metre-by-metre, year after year,<sup>25</sup> especially since the belief that all of the land actually was their property often formed a component part of their mental makeup. It was also in the interests of peasants to be imaginatively creative in terms of the real size of their holdings, because smaller land plots decreased their taxation burden across the board.<sup>26</sup> There is also evidence that peasants living in Hungary increasingly had knowledge of methods of birth control, or practiced abortion, as a recent study of the village of Sárpilis, or the contemporary statement of the chief medical doctor of Baranya County, indicated.<sup>27</sup> Control over fertility patterns allowed for calculation regarding division of landholdings, and prevention of sharp decreases in living standards. Given these pieces of information, it is apparent that while peasants in Hungary may not have had great room for maneuver, they were not by any means wholly entangled in circumstances beyond their control.

**“The Serf Would Earn a Better Deal in Time”: István Bezerédj and the *Urbarium* at the 1832-1836 Diet**

Bezerédj was characteristically optimistic, hardworking and eager to follow every subtle shift of position and change of circumstances that characterized the political climate in Pozsony at the famous 1832-1836 gathering. Conclusions on his state of mind can be taken from contrasting his public speeches in parliament and comparing these to his instructions from Tolna on how to vote. Further, since he was a punctilious letter writer, to such people as his fellow representative for Tolna, Dániel Csapó,<sup>28</sup> there is a record of his public persona that can be placed alongside the more intimate sphere of his

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<sup>25</sup> Stroup, “Hungary under Noble Leadership and Habsburg Rule: 1830-1844”, 195.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 196.

<sup>27</sup> Rudolf Andorka, “The Social Demography of Hungarian Villages in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries (With Special Attention to Sárpilis, 1792-1804),” *Journal of Family History* Vol.11 No.2. (1986): 169-170, 189.

<sup>28</sup> Csapó stepped down as Tolna’s first representative on June 17, 1834 due to ill health. Bezerédj continued to inform him of the regular day-to-day workings of the diet even after his resignation. Bodnár and Gárdonyi, *Bezerédj István*, I. kötet, [István Bezerédj, volume I.], 158.

reflections to a man whom he trusted and who was a close personal friend and colleague. The contrast between these two overlapping yet separate communicatory fields can put his thought on the *urbarium* into a fresh perspective. For instance, from one such letter we learn that Bezerédj took his role as one of Tolna's national representatives quite seriously. He wrote to Csapó on May 25, 1833: "I wrote immediately above that I am well, and with this line I tried to set my esteemed friend's mind at ease. I can now participate fully in the process, and I feel truly well. Even though it is past one, and in the last few days the cold has been oppressive, I have not missed anything that pertained to the fate of our county...."<sup>29</sup> Bezerédj tried to walk a fine line by respecting his voting instructions, while simultaneously looking out for Tolna's welfare both as a public servant and a blueblood.

The difficulty involved in balancing what Bezerédj wanted to say in parliament with Tolna's official position, and how he resolved the impasse between the two, is particularly worthy of attention. Bezerédj regularly employed a rhetorical tactic of telling the assembly how he had to vote on behalf of Tolna and then proceeded in the remainder of his speech to wax lyrical about the need to grant serfs fundamental rights that far exceeded the more modest motion that he was in that moment denying. Such was the case with his July 18, 1833 presentation opposing serfs' rights to transfer usufruct without landowner's consent, the *usufructuatio*, as it was known in Hungarian Latin. Tolna's position was to uphold noble usufruct rights at the expense of serfs.<sup>30</sup> Among more conventional speeches pointing out that serf lands belonged to the Hungarian aristocracy, or the condescending claim that serfs would not have the intelligence to know what to do

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<sup>29</sup>István Bezerédj to Dániel Csapó, May 25, 1833, TMÖL Csapó Dániel II Bezerédj István levelei, 1818-1844 [Dániel Csapó II the letters of István Bezerédj, 1818-1844.] 47 d. 114. pall.

<sup>30</sup>Mária Csapó, *Tolna Megye a reformkori politikai küzdelmekben* [Tolna county and the political struggles of the reform era] (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1989), 58.

with the few hundred forints that sale of usufruct would generate, Bezerédj went with the tactic of “voting” for a non-existent motion: serf land ownership. In his translated words:

Since I am therefore voting against the free buying and selling of the *usufructuatio*, once and for all I am also voting for the true, fundamental betterment of the serfs, out of consideration. Serfs should not only be able to convert their dues permanently, but they should be granted ownership of their holdings, and they should have them without urbarial obligation as free citizens....<sup>31</sup>

Some of Bezerédj's speeches on the elimination of the ninth followed a similar pattern of text and subtext, attempting to influence his listeners with a bland, curt statement of where he stood, and creative, logical lines of reasoning attempting to sway the vote in another direction. His personal position on the ninth is clear from his Medina and Kakasd contracts: it should be substituted for payment in kind. He was also rather proud of Tolna's special-case scenario in relation to the ninth and tobacco production in particular, which he mentioned often enough in Pozsony as being a potential “model” for the nation that word reached the Palatine, who requested a special audience with him to discuss the subject.<sup>32</sup> As far as the estates of Tolna were concerned, they insisted on the retention of the ninth in its present form as a category of noble property.<sup>33</sup> Privately, it irritated him that the upper house set store on retaining the serfs as free labourers on their estates.<sup>34</sup> In the dietal forum he cited current English philosophy on the sanctity of property, a message preached to the converted, but he must have made his audience

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<sup>31</sup> “Az usufructuatio eladás ellen szólok beszédei,” [“Speakers opposing the sale of usufruct,”] *Országgyűlési tudósítások I, 1832 December 17-1833 Augusztus 4*, [Dietal reports I, December 17, 1832- August 4, 1833,] Vol. 62, *Kossuth Lajos összes munkái* [The complete works of Lajos Kossuth] CD-ROM (Budapest: Arcanum, 2002).

<sup>32</sup> István Bezerédj to Dániel Csapó, September 19, 1833, TMÖL Csapó Dániel II Bezerédj István levelei, 1818-1844 [Dániel Csapó II the letters of István Bezerédj, 1818-1844] 47d. 114. pall.

<sup>33</sup> Csapó, *Tolna Megye a reformkori politikai küzdelmekben*, [Tolna county and the political struggles of the reform era], 61.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, Bezerédj to Csapó, September 19, 1833, TMÖL [Dániel Csapó II the letters of István Bezerédj, 1818-1844] 47 d. 114. pall.

uneasy, because he subverted the same concept in the next breath. From his September 28, 1833 speech, he put forward that:

In any case, England in recent times considers property so powerfully sacred and irreproachable that it wanted to accommodate the liberation of black slaves only by the payment of large compensatory sums. And does not financial ownership entail a similar form of respect as the property of slaves, which can honestly not be called “property” at all? It does deserve the same respect, and this should only be taken away with compensation. The whole country, aristocratic and non-aristocratic, should sacrifice equally, because to transfer sacrifice to one segment would not serve the interests of fairness.<sup>35</sup>

Heard on one level he asked the nobles to remember that the ninth was indeed “property”, and that they should not relinquish it without receiving compensation. On another level he reminded them that there were parallels between slavery and serfdom, that when people are made into commodities it is a questionable moral act, and making a sacrifice on this point was the least that they could do given what they had done to those beneath them. Bezerédj’s speeches from the 1832-1836 Diet are at their best when he maintained the outward appearance of compliance with the terms of his employment as one of Tolna’s members of parliament, but simultaneously infused these speeches with heavy doses of subversive ideas and his individual wishes for the direction the country should take on the urbarial issue.

Bezerédj could have treated the duality in his speeches at the Diet as a game between one reality and a deeper, more intimate reality ultimately only known to himself, but there is every indication that his conscience felt the internal contradictions of his conflicted position. When the nobility of Tolna sent supplementary instructions strengthening its stance not to allow the taxation of impoverished nobles living on urbarial property, then he expressed misgivings about Tolna altering its vote in this

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<sup>35</sup> “Tárgy: az úrbéri törvénycikkek: a főrendek által javasolt módosítások vitájának befejezése,” [“Topic: the urbarial laws: the ending of the debate on the modifications proposed by the upper house,”] *Országgyűlési tudósítások II, 1833 Augusztus 5-1834 Március 24*, [Dietal reports II, August 5, 1833-March 24, 1834,] Vol. 82, *Kossuth Lajos összes munkái* [The complete works of Lajos Kossuth] CD-ROM (Budapest: Arcanum, 2002).

matter. In this instance these misgivings were written to another close friend of his, Imre Sztankovány. <sup>36</sup> Bezerédj was not always tormented by the internal self-contradictions of his role. Often, he simply agreed with the instructions Tolna compelled him to defend. Similarly to the opposite scenario, in these instances too he stated openly what his personal beliefs were, meaning for his fellow representatives it was easy to differentiate between when he was speaking as Tolna's public servant, and when he was speaking for himself.

The ideas that Bezerédj expressed on the tithe are highly illustrative of the conclusion arrived at above. Although the tithe was not strictly part of the *urbarium*, but was debated separately, it was a form of tax comparable to the ninth, payable to the church in theory, but often used to support public expenditure in actuality. Although a Catholic, Bezerédj voiced the opinion in parliament that "...the tithe in all its forms and manifestations must be ended." His reasoning was that it was an oppressive tax because of the people's *perception* that it benefited the Roman Catholic Church. This impression was particularly galling for Protestants living in the country who had to pay the tax. <sup>37</sup> Bezerédj argued that the disconnection between the appearance and content of the tax meant it had to be eliminated because "(t)he poor people are not capable of differentiation that they are paying public taxes; they only see that one tenth of their produce is taken by a priest". <sup>38</sup> Since the tithe was an old tax wrapped in a new package, Bezerédj's claim that this misrepresentation was harmful was novel because it implied that the state and

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<sup>36</sup> Csapó, *Tolna Megye a reformkori politikai küzdelmekben*, [Tolna county and the political struggles of the reform era], 71.

<sup>37</sup> István Bezerédj to Dániel Csapó, August 25, 1834, TMÖL Csapó Dániel II Bezerédj István levelei, 1818-1844 [Dániel Csapó II the letters of István Bezerédj, 1818-1844] 47 d. 114 pall.

<sup>38</sup> Both of the quotations above derive from the same speech. "Az augusztus 19-i kerületi ülésben, a tized kérdésben elhangzott beszédek folytatólagos ismertetése," ["The continued delineation of the speeches related to the question of the tithe at the August 19 circular session,"] *Országgyűlési tudósítások III, 1834 Március 25-November 29*, [Dietal reports III, March 25, 1834-August 4, 1834,] Vol. 172, *Kossuth Lajos összes munkái* [The complete works of Lajos Kossuth] CD-ROM (Budapest: Arcanum, 2002).

Catholic Church had to exercise transparency in how they taxed the people, a direction that had not been truly prioritized except in terms of limiting taxation excesses.

Just as Bezerédj was not morally conflicted on the issue of the tithe, so too was he in agreement with the instructions on the proposed Article VIII of the urbarial laws. Article VIII was one of the controversial clauses of the proposed legislation, guaranteeing serfs legal protection over their holdings and their physical person, rights that only the nobles truly enjoyed in reform-era Hungary. Before saying that he was voting for the proposed clause, Bezerédj felt at liberty to divulge his personal theory as to why granting these rights served the nobility's interests:

....because the main and lasting guarantee of our freedom rests in the maintenance of theirs, only bravely living free men support the freedom and bravery of others. It is so with property, with houses, with rights and freedoms, and it will always be so in this world....<sup>39</sup>

The debates on the tithe's accountability to the people only produced a weak law that it could be contractually regulated in similar fashion to the ninth in the future, but not eliminated or altered in any significant manner,<sup>40</sup> and the one on Article VIII granting serfs the legal protection that nobles enjoyed was so controversial that it was taken off the legislative calendar. Whether or not Tolna's instructions on the urbarial legislation supported his opinions, Bezerédj attempted to use the forum to push for the expansion of the public sphere and property rights to include the serfs. The fact that he managed to voice such controversial statements without being recalled for insubordination to Tolna is a testimony to how well he balanced the different priorities that commanded his loyalty, and the clarity with which his voluminous language both conveyed the imbedded

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<sup>39</sup> "1833 június 13, 14, 15. Tárgy II: Egy VIII törvénycikkely javaslata a jobbági személyi és vagyoni biztonságáról," ["June 13, 14 and 15, 1833. Topic II: a proposed law to defend the person and property of serfs,"] *Országgyűlési tudósítások I, 1832 December 17-1833 Augusztus 4*, [Dietal reports I, December 17, 1832- August 4, 1833,] Vol. 51, *Kossuth Lajos összes munkái* [The complete works of Lajos Kossuth] CD-ROM (Budapest: Arcanum, 2002).

<sup>40</sup> Márkus, ed., "Law 1836 Article XXXIV, "1836-1868. évi törvénycikkek in Magyar törvénytár, [The laws of 1836-1868 in Corpus juris hungarici], 70.

messages in the speeches and neutralized them sufficiently to be suggestive but not threatening.

Bezerédj's hands were not tied so much after the diet was concluded, and in his report to the estates of Tolna he was able to offer his personal input on what direction their politics should take at subsequent diets. Instead of praising the achievements made at the 1832-1836 Diet, he pointed out what had failed to be realized, thereby indirectly including those Tolna nobles in the blame whose auxiliary instructions had opposed the acceptance of these resolutions. He named the failed section of Article VIII of the urbarial laws as its "crowning jewel", and repeatedly urged that serfs be granted the right to own land because it was the "first foundation of bourgeois unity." The exclusion of paragraph two from Article V was also a deep disappointment, because it would have granted serfs the right to ask for contracts from their lords, setting them on a path to owning their holdings, due to their own initiative. As the law stood, it only let landlords take the first step in converting feudal dues and obligations, if they so wished. Finally, Bezerédj asked for a reconsideration of the legal system in relation to domestic taxation, with a curious egalitarian wording. There should be "...other monies helping to contribute to home taxation burdens besides urbarial funds, aristocrats on urbarial land, and noble or non-noble serfs..."<sup>41</sup> All of these ideas went far beyond what the aristocrats of Tolna wanted for their serfs, or conversely, what they were willing to pay to the state.

Perhaps Bezerédj would have had greater success with transmitting his message about the need for greater civic equality between serfs and nobles in the key area of legal protection and ownership of property if he had placed greater weight on his logic that there was considerable money to be made by the nobility in the business of serf emancipation. He did not give voice to the idea very often in his speeches. One exception

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<sup>41</sup> *Tolna vármegyének jegyzőkönyvéből* [Extracts from Tolna castle county's record book] (Pest: Károly Trattner, 1836), 21, 22, 23 and 29. FSzEK Budapest Collection 343650.

was when the idea surfaced that serf redemption contracts should be banned altogether instead of legalized, and Bezerédj responded that: “(i)f we think about what direction progress is taking, then it is not the *urbarium*. It is better that while the urbarial obligations exist, we exchange them for good monetary sums.”<sup>42</sup> Bezerédj’s best silent vocalization of this point of view was in a letter to Csapó just after the King stopped the exchange of notes between the two houses of parliament in August 1834, in effect ending the debate on the a revision of the *urbarium* law.<sup>43</sup> Bezerédj came to the conclusion that:

I think all we are doing is drawing a line of demarcation between aristocratic and serf holdings, and this is not only advantageous for the well being of both sides, but also because the longer the question remains unresolved, the division and parcelling will certainly entail greater sacrifice on the part of the landlord. ... Therefore any sacrifice that may seem too great in the moment, but which leads to this differentiation, so that in the future what is ours is owned outright without question, is a gain when the interests of the Hungarian landlord are considered. The serf would earn a better deal in time. It would perhaps be a false calculation to think that leaving the situation in uncertainty, we will deal better with the peasants later. It is better to do so right now, even if less is given.<sup>44</sup>

Serf and noble advances at the 1832-1836 Diet on the urbarial issue were comparatively modest. Hungarian peasants were one step closer to owning their holdings if their lords offered them contracts redeeming feudal dues and services, and they also had the satisfaction of witnessing the poorest members of the nobility who lived on urbarial property lowered to their level by becoming tax payers. The nobility had the security that the redemption contracts were voluntary, and they had dogged the bullet that they could be initiated by peasants, meaning their position of power over their subjects was not relinquished. They also retained their tax-free status, but only at the expense of

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<sup>42</sup>“Október 1-ső napján kerületi ülés,” [“Circular session from October 1,”] *Országgyűlési tudósítások II, 1833 Augusztus 5-1834 Március 24*, [Dietal reports II, August 5, 1833-March 24, 1834,] Vol. 82, *Kossuth Lajos összes munkái* [The complete works of Lajos Kossuth] CD-ROM (Budapest: Arcanum, 2002).

<sup>43</sup> Csapó, *Tolna Megye a reformkori politikai küzdelmekben*, [Tolna county and the political struggles of the reform era], 65.

<sup>44</sup>István Bezerédj to Dániel Csapó, September 1, 1834, TMÖL Csapó Dániel II Bezerédj István levelei, 1818-1844 [Dániel Csapó II the letters of István Bezerédj, 1818-1844] 47 d. 114.pall.



dividing ranks, excluding a portion of their social group from protection, and creating the dangerous precedent that it was indeed possible to tax the Hungarian nobility even if the constitution's wording said otherwise.

### **Bezerédj's Redemption Contracts as "Model" Behaviour**

Contracts between lords and serfs that significantly reduced or eliminated the feudal dues and services owed to landlords were not a novelty of the nineteenth century, and naturally pre-dated Bezerédj's settlements with his serfs. They first appeared when the Ottoman wars forced peasants into large communities for purposes of protection that eventually became cities. The ties between peasants living in these centres and landlords loosened, necessitating special contracts to regulate their obligations, usually in the form of rental payments.<sup>45</sup> Also as a result of the Turkish Wars, but happening centuries later, more lenient serf-lord contracts arose when Hungarian landlords repopulated their properties in the eighteenth century after the demographic devastation of the occupation. Landlords brought in foreign settlers of various ethnic origins (eg. Germans, Slovaks, Magyars) and promised them a set time period of alleviation from taxation in exchange for construction of a house and tilling the land. When the tax exemption period expired, these settlers regularly negotiated special contracts with their lords to redeem feudal dues for monetary payments. Once these contracts were in place, they tended to remain, even after 1767, meaning that individuals, communities, or even portions of counties could be relatively free from robot and payment of the ninth. The settlements of Nagykőrös and Nyíregyháza were examples of the first development, while the Counties of Zala, Szabolcs and Szatmár exemplified the latter occurrence.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>45</sup>Novák, "A jobbágyfelszabadítás kérdései," ["The questions surrounding the liberation of the serfs,"]: 455.

<sup>46</sup>Zita Horváth, "A Zala megyei parasztság helyzete a 18.ik században az úrbérrendezés forrásainak tükrében," ["The situation of the peasantry of Zala county in the 18<sup>th</sup> century in light of the sources of the socage settlement,"] *Korall* Vol. 19-20 (2005): 142, 153, 154 and János

Despite not being a groundbreaking action per se, Bezerédj's redemption contracts with his serfs did cause quite a stir in reform-era Hungary. Voluntary contractual relationships imply some degree of equality between the parties in that both sides gain benefits and obligations, and for many Hungarian landlords this concept was unpalatable. Bezerédj did his best to create contracts that would be advantageous to him, to his serfs and to other landlords as "models" that could be imitated. He also used the press as a forum to advertize and campaign for redemption contracts, especially when his disappointment grew that they failed to find greater favour. It is worthwhile to take a closer look at the Medina and Kakasd settlements to see what their conditions were, and to see how Bezerédj tried to sell his fellow nobles on the idea that greater social equality could be profitable through his own personal example.

By the time Bezerédj proposed his emancipation contracts, a second law had clarified law 1836, Article 8, which regulated these serf-landlord legal settlements. More could be redeemed than the ninth, as feudal dues, robot, payment of the tenth and division of common lands were all potentially subject to "freely negotiated agreements".<sup>47</sup> On the basis of this law the Kakasd agreement came first. Some of its specifications can be deduced from supplementary documents that Bezerédj had to submit to Tolna County authorities on account of his contract being initially denied by the Vice-Regal Council. Bezerédj wanted the Kakasd serfs to pay for their emancipation for five years. They were to lay down a monetary sum, but this amount was calculated so that their assets would far exceed their debts. This slight of hand was to be accomplished by not asking for significant compensation for the ninth, the tenth, and by granting them a portion of the commons, giving the serfs the disposable income that had previously gone to the landlord

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Festetics, "A parasztok viszonya földesurukhoz Magyarországon (1806)," ["The relations of peasants to their landlords in Hungary (1806),"] *Korall* Vol.19-20 (2005): 219.

<sup>47</sup> Márkus, ed., "Law 1840 Article VII § 9, " *1836-1868. évi törvénycikkek* in Magyar törvénytár, [The laws of 1836-1868 in Corpus juris hungarici], 94.

and the state. Ideally, if Bezerédj's calculations were correct, even after the payment of the annual installment, the Kakasd serfs would still have had enough left over of this increased income to set aside as supplementary savings.<sup>48</sup>

Bezerédj's reservations against the actions of the royal representative assigned to investigate the Kakasd case, the "respected" and "contradictory" Vincze Döry provide insight into how far the government was willing to act in an obstructionist manner in order to prevent the execution of a law that it had ultimately sanctioned. He reported that the royal representative had engaged in discussions about the validity of the contract with the former owner, Count Sándor Festetics, instead of his father, the current proprietor, that no contracts would be sanctified in relation to the serfs because Döry intended to sue, and that he had communicated to the serfs that the emancipation contract was dangerous to their interests, and that his purpose in passing on this information was out of consideration that they did not overextend themselves. Joking at his own expense, Bezerédj could not help adding the aside that if Vincze Döry were as concerned about serfs accumulating unmanageable debt as he claimed then "...serfs could be forbidden from performing robot and paying the ninth in order to remedy private income retention". This bit of ironic humour must have provided his audience with at least a little entertainment as they heard the lengthy particulars of his objections to Döry's administrative handling of the Kakasd contract read out at a Tolna County noble meeting on March 30, 1841.<sup>49</sup>

All in all, forty-three serf families and seventeen cottager and subcottager families lived on the Kakasd settlement. Redemption dues for one full serf property amounted to 900 forints. The Kakasd serfs were on track with their payment schedule

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<sup>48</sup>*Bezerédj István észrevételek a kakasdi jobbágyokkal kötöt örökváltságról* [István Bezerédj's observations concerning the emancipation contract with the serfs of Kakasd] Lajstr. 101/1841. TMÖL közgyűlési iratok [General assembly records].

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

when the Vice-Regal Council ended its opposition to the liberation, and accepted the contract in 1844. The serfs were able to complete their last payment in 1846.<sup>50</sup> The predominately ethnic German composition of the 986 residents probably was a cultural factor facilitating their accumulation of enough savings to pay for their emancipation.<sup>51</sup> The fact that Bezerédj's Kakasd transactions brought him 37 000 ft in cash, and generated a profit margin of 10 000 ft above the price that he had paid for the land in 1840<sup>52</sup> were a testimony to his calculations, to years of perseverance and to the realization that it was possible to generate profit from emancipation without betraying the spirit of its terms.

Bezerédj's second deal with the serfs of Medina to grant them emancipation in all but name was more innovative than his first with the residents of Kakasd. As he was dealing with people who were cash poor, he tried to be flexible so that even in the absence of home savings, they could turn their labour potential and agricultural surpluses into bankable assets. For serfs with a full plot of land he asked for six Pozsony mérő of fall rye, four Pozsony mérő of oats, and four Pozsony mérő of ground corn in exchange for the ninth, payable once a year, for three years.<sup>53</sup> Serfs with smaller holdings would have owed proportionally less in relation to their ability to pay. For the smoke tax, Bezerédj asked for eight forints, payable in one forint installments each year. To convert robot, he asked for 100 forints, and discounted it immediately to ninety forints that could be paid by performing robot, which he was willing to compensate to the amount of ten kr per day for non-yoked labour. The tithe was to be ended without any compensation, and Bezerédj wrote into the contract that from that point on the serfs would be responsible for

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<sup>50</sup> Csapó, *Tolna Megye a reformkori politikai küzdelmekben*, [Tolna county and the political struggles of the reform era], 124-125.

<sup>51</sup> Acsády, *A magyar jobbágyság története*, [A history of Hungarian serfdom], 487.

<sup>52</sup> Glósz, *Tolna Megye középbirtokos nemességének anyagi viszonyai*, [The financial situation of nobles with mid-sized property holdings in Tolna county], 86.

<sup>53</sup> The Pozsony mérő is one of three units of measurement that was used in Hungary in the nineteenth century mainly to measure grains. It was equivalent to roughly 62.5 dm<sup>3</sup>. The other two were the Viennese mérő (61.5 dm<sup>3</sup>) and the Pest mérő (93.7 dm<sup>3</sup>). Source: Fodor, *Mértékegység lexicon*, [Lexicon of measurement units], 145.

paying their dues to the Chaplain of Pécs and the parson as part of their own civic duty. Gifts included subcottagers not being required to pay for emancipation from the ninth, robot, or smoke tax; exclusion of compensation for the ninth on hemp and weaving; a liberation from a tax on sheep; a decrease in what the serfs owed if the authorities judged the contract unfair; a similar leniency if the serfs were found to own more holdings than they claimed; and a stipulation that common lands, if at all possible, be given to social and governmental functionaries with modest means: church ministers, school teachers and civil servants. The strictest parts of the contract related to dues that Bezerédj held collectively, such as the tithe on wine, which were further to be collected because he did not have sole ownership over them.<sup>54</sup> Regardless of Bezerédj's careful financial planning, this contract never won the approval of the aulic authorities, and so never went into effect. Whether the source of the opposition to its terms derived from the litigious claims on portions of the property,<sup>55</sup> or simply the customarily slow pace of Hungarian bureaucracy, it is difficult to say.

When the word of mouth spread among the nobility of what Bezerédj had undertaken in relation to his serfs, he tried to capitalize on the momentum of the positive press that he received and to answer the concerns of detractors in a series of articles that ran in the pages of Pest News. To a nobility that was obsessed with the markings of status, he appealed to their vanity, that "...for the patriots who play a part in it, the elimination of the *urbarium*, and the recognition by all in word and deed of this civic act, lends just as much distinction as a revered person enjoys and feels on account of his

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<sup>54</sup> *Bezerédj István és a medinai jobbágyos örökváltság* [István Bezerédj and the emancipation contract for the medina serfs] Lajstr. 1254/1846 TMÖL közgyűlési iratok. [General assembly records].

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*

august titles.”<sup>56</sup> He brought forth his usual rational arguments, that the time of the ninth was past, and that if it had been eliminated in Western Europe, how was Hungary going to retain what Europe had decided to cast off? If they feared for their safety from potential peasant uprisings then he told them that once they signed a contract with their serfs “lively, happy co-operation” would replace “the sad conflict of released oppositional powers.”<sup>57</sup>

These arguments were not without merit, but the claim that emancipation contracts could be a source of immediate cash income for the nobility was his most persuasive line of reasoning. Liberation would accrue benefits to the landlord by increasing the liquidity of his property and assets.<sup>58</sup> The peasants, due to their habits of thriftiness, actually were in possession of the money that they could use for their liberation.<sup>59</sup> If the opposite scenario were the case, namely that the serfs lacked the money to pay outright for emancipation, then payment in agricultural produce would be just as valuable to the landlord. He could use the guaranteed income from emancipation as security for a loan, or for payment of already existing debts.<sup>60</sup> Or, if he so chose, it could be used to pay day laborers or for upgrades to the manorial property.<sup>61</sup> Since urbarial property could be turned into an asset waiting for banks to appear before

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<sup>56</sup> “Még egy szó Bezerédj Istvántól a’ kokasdi örökváltság ügyében,” [“More from István Bezerédj in the matter of the emancipation of Kokasd,”] *Pesti Hirlap* [Pest news] March 6, 1841 No. 19, *Kossuth hirlapírói munkássága*, [Kossuth’s journalistic activity], CD-ROM.

<sup>57</sup> István Bezerédj, “Kilencedről,” [“Concerning the ninth,”] *Pesti Hirlap* [Pest news] April 3, 1841 No.26, *Kossuth hirlapírói munkássága*, [Kossuth’s journalistic activity], CD-ROM.

<sup>58</sup> István Bezerédj, “A szabad föld eszméje, urbéri viszonyokra nézve,” [“The philosophy of free land, from the standpoint of urbarial relations,”] *Pesti Hirlap* [Pest news] June 16, 1841 No.48, *Kossuth hirlapírói munkássága*, [Kossuth’s journalistic activity], CD-ROM.

<sup>59</sup> István Bezerédj, “Vezércikk (Örökváltság II),” [“Lead article (emancipation II),”] *Pesti Hirlap* [Pest news] March 7, 1842 No. 123 *Kossuth hirlapírói munkássága*, [Kossuth’s journalistic activity], CD-ROM.

<sup>60</sup> István Bezerédj, “Szabad Föld III,” [“Free land III,”] *Pesti Hirlap* [Pest news] June 19, 1841 No. 49 *Kossuth hirlapírói munkássága*, [Kossuth’s journalistic activity], CD-ROM.

<sup>61</sup> Bezerédj, “Vezércikk (Örökváltság II),” [“Lead article (emancipation II),”] *Pesti Hirlap* [Pest news] March 7, 1842 No. 123 *Kossuth hirlapírói munkássága*, [Kossuth’s journalistic activity], CD-ROM.

emancipation was just a case of placing the cart before the horse.<sup>62</sup> In fact, in terms of cost, emancipation carried out on the landlords' own initiative could be cheaper than any state-mandated liberation, due to the lack of bureaucratic infrastructure necessary for a nationally administered programme. Finally, there were the hard sells: that any cash in the hand was better than nothing at all, that forcing serfs to work against their will or expropriation in exchange for emancipation would backfire against them, and that actually giving away small portions of their land and property to serfs would lead to greater agricultural productivity overall than if agriculture remained largely in their hands.<sup>63</sup>

Even with all of Bezerédj's efforts to use the profit motive to generate aristocratic support for legal settlements with serfs, it is not surprising that few members of the nobility were willing to make a sacrifice that they did not have to make by following his lead in signing the emancipation contracts that the laws of 1836 and 1840 brought into being. Indeed, in mentioning that the Counts Kázmer and Gustáv Batthyányi did sign such redemption contracts in Vas County with their serfs, as did the Counts Károlyi in Csongrád, the contemporary historian Mihály Horváth noted that contracts regulating serf dues between landlords and peasants were "a political sin" just a few years earlier.<sup>64</sup> To these examples Acsády added emancipation contracts signed by the lords Count István Zichy in Komárom, Baron Zsigmond Rudnyánszky in Pest County and Ádám Tahy with the settlement of Tiszaföldvár. The people of the agricultural cities of Szentes, Hódmezővásárhely and Csongrád also successfully purchased their freedom from serfdom.<sup>65</sup> When the Urbarial Patent of 1853 arranged for state-administered serf

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<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> Mihály Horváth, *Huszonöt év Magyarország történelméből, 1823-1848*, harmadik kötet [Twenty-five years in the history of Hungary, 1823-1848, volume three] (Budapest: Mór Ráth, 1887), 112-113.

<sup>65</sup> Acsády, *A magyar jobbágyság története*, [A history of Hungarian serfdom], 488.

liberation, the maximum compensation landlords received for serf dues was between 600-700 forints for a complete plot of serf land. Seven years earlier Bezerédj received 900 ft from his families in Kakasd. He had been correct that the Hungarian serfs wanted to become peasant proprietors and were willing to pay before the revolution to enjoy the sense of pride in property ownership and personal security that the noble landowners valued as their exclusive privilege.

### **Bezerédj and the Question of Noble Taxation in the 1840s**

Members of the Hungarian peasantry may have been willing to pay to sever their ties with their noble landlords, in order to achieve upward social mobility. Did the members of the Hungarian nobility feel similarly inclined to pay when it came to subjecting themselves to taxation? Were they able to regard the accompanying decline in status that such a move entailed as well compensated by their gesture of civic responsibility? Before 1848 there were sporadic and isolated instances of noble taxation, but the great breakthrough of Hungarian aristocrats becoming tax-paying citizens remained allusive.

To be fair, the Hungarian nobility as a group had shouldered responsibility for certain taxation measures, aside from the already-mentioned offering up of the “peasant” nobility to the ranks of the tax-paying masses. The campaigns to build the great projects of the first half of the nineteenth century in Hungary: the National Museum, the Hungarian Theatre, and the Chain Bridge all had some voluntary noble “contributions” as a component of their financing. The building to house the contents of the National Museum came from a half million forint subscription voted by the 1832-1836 Diet. The Hungarian Theatre was also an act of the same forum, with 400 000 forints being set aside for the cause. Due to the exceptionally wide cross-spectrum of public support for the concept, the National Theatre was able to open its doors on August 22, 1837, in



record time.<sup>66</sup> Finally, the debate over the building of the Chain Bridge sparked controversy partially because members of parliament wished nobles to pay to utilize the structure, instead of maintaining the complex system of tolls employed on the boat bridge that temporarily spanned the Danube between Pest and Buda during the warmer months of the year. Although the nobility generally gave a tip when utilizing the bridge structure, the threat of possible compulsion added years to the realization of the project, and it was opened to the general public only in November 1849.<sup>67</sup> It is not by accident that the line between “voluntary noble taxation” and “charitable donation” on these projects was purposely blurred. As far as the nobles were concerned contribution to these public projects was theoretically fine, but they were very careful to stress that these incidents of personal taxpaying were extraordinary and subject to strict time restrictions. Using this conditional framework they were simultaneously able to pay lip service to their constitutional right not to be taxed, and to uphold it as a law that was beyond reproach.

The attainment of objectives can have the negative effect of generating rising expectations for the future. With “public” projects such as the National Museum, Hungarian Theatre and Chain Bridge underway, it became possible to imagine that other much more ambitious national projects could also see the light of day if only a larger amount of guaranteed funding were available *and* subject to parliamentary control. Since the majority of taxes were borne by the twelve million hold of peasant-occupied land, the non-taxed thirty-three million hold in the hands of aristocrats seemed the answer to an

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<sup>66</sup> George Bisztray, “Hungary, 1810-1838,” in *National Theatre in Northern and Eastern Europe, 1746-1900*, ed. Laurence Senelick (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 293 and Ildikó Nagy, “Színház és társadalom a reformkori Pest-Budán,” [“Theatre and society in reform-era Pest-Buda,”] in *Variációk: Ünnepi tanulmányok M. Kiss Sándor tiszteletére*, [Variations: celebratory writings dedicated to Sándor Kiss M.,] ed. István Ötvös (Piliscsaba, Pázmány Péter Katolikus Egyetem, 2004), 99-100.

<sup>67</sup> Judit Brody, “The Szechenyi Chain Bridge at Budapest,” *Technology and Culture* Vol.29 No.1 (January 1988): 110, 116 and “Tariffa 1790,” MOL N22 Archivum Palatinale Pal. Ad. Josephus Archivum Secretum Extraseriale Diaet. Poson. 1835.

impoverished state's prayers.<sup>68</sup> Thus during the 1839-1840 and 1843-1844 Diets, the issue of noble taxation became a hot topic. With István Széchenyi initiating the proposed legislation, noble taxation had the added prestige of the support of the person who had brought the Hungarian Scholarly Society and the Chain Bridge into existence. Széchenyi's well-known plan called for a temporary tax of two *garas*<sup>69</sup> per hold of land that all property owners would pay. The resulting 5 000 000 ft sum would be used as collateral to secure a 100 000 000 ft loan at 3½ % or 4% interest, that would be paid off in full in thirty-five years and could be used towards an ambitious project.<sup>70</sup>

Proposals for the project included building a modern European transportation network or regulating the course of waterways, such as the Danube, essential investments for stimulating commercial development within Hungary. Despite all efforts, the scheme failed after being watered down in committee to three million ft, and by a further two million ft by the upper house, so that it became essentially completely ineffectual.<sup>71</sup> Széchenyi attempted to appeal to the instincts of his noble audience by pleading his case on several emotional levels. He appealed to their sense of social responsibility and conscience because "(m)ay God forgive me...to contribute to nothing is not only not upstanding, but truly shameful...".<sup>72</sup> Patriotism was similarly a theme of his long exposition, combined with a little flattery that the magnate nobles were heading in the right direction.

With this I noticed such characteristics in my fellow nobles;  
Even if I do not consider them generally to be awakened  
patriots imbued with a sense of responsibility, and I cannot

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<sup>68</sup> *Pesti Hirlap* [Pest news] January 7, 1844 No. 315, *Kossuth hirlapírói munkássága*, [Kossuth's journalistic activity], CD-ROM.

<sup>69</sup> The *garas* is the Hungarian term for the German Groschen, 1/24 or 1/36 of a Taller depending on the territory of its origin.

<sup>70</sup> István Széchenyi, "Adó," ["Tax,"] August 17, 1843 No. 65 *Jelenkor* [Our age] *Gróf Széchenyi István minden írása*, [The complete writings of István Széchenyi,] CD-ROM.

<sup>71</sup> Gergely, ed., *Magyarország története a 19. században*, [The history of Hungary in the 19<sup>th</sup> century], 224.

<sup>72</sup> István Széchenyi, "Két garas," ["Two garas,"] August 20, 1843 No.66 *Jelenkor* [Our age] *Gróf Széchenyi István minden írása*, [The complete writings of István Széchenyi,] CD-ROM.

support how they choose to live their lives, why should I not believe they are honourable and spirited individuals one and all, in whom there is more man than animal, and who after a little reflection could enjoy their individual or family circle enjoyments solely on the basis of national pride, and (the knowledge that) the nation is blossoming.<sup>73</sup>

Széchenyi even added that his targeted (male) audience would be pursuing a healthy masculine direction in submitting themselves to his taxation plan as his goal was "...to yearn for Hungary's manly flourishing. Anything, however useful it may be on its own, which does not lead to this final goal, which does not approximate it, does not satisfy the thirst in my soul. I do not want 'half-measures', 'I want it somewhat, but not enough' and other such (excuses)."<sup>74</sup>

At the high point of his campaign, he even appeared in full Hungarian costume to make his presentation, thereby sending the message that supporting noble taxation was the true "Hungarian" measure, and not the opposite: constitutionally-sanctioned tax evasion.<sup>75</sup> Unfortunately, even he undermined his own message. In one article in which he stressed the virtues of the noble taxation scheme, he admitted he understood the reservations of those who opposed the concept on principle: "(tax)...according to my understanding of the term is that which is forcefully extracted from the person. Its usefulness is imperceptible or only minimally so, or he has to pay it without his knowledge. Lord only knows what it is directed towards, and how incompetently it is handled." At the end of the sentence, he did modify this statement that his scheme was less like a "tax" and more in keeping with a "contribution to a savings bank." This

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<sup>73</sup> István Széchenyi, "Két garas," ["Two garas,"] August 24, 1843 No.67 *Jelenkor* [Our age] *Gróf Széchenyi István minden írása*, [The complete writings of István Széchenyi,] CD-ROM.

<sup>74</sup> István Széchenyi, "Két garas," ["Two garas,"] September 10, 1843 No.72 *Jelenkor* [Our age] *Gróf Széchenyi István minden írása*, [The complete writings of István Széchenyi,] CD-ROM.

<sup>75</sup> Horváth, *Huszonöt év*, második kötet, [Twenty-five years, volume two], 444 and Stroup, "Hungary under Noble Leadership and Habsburg Rule: 1830-1844", 293.

modification was designed to detract from the negative connotation of the tax idea and convert it into something his readership would approve.<sup>76</sup>

Dissatisfied that considerable talk, time and energy spent on the noble taxation campaign had produced no quantifiable result, István Bezerédj decided to submit to Tolna County his decision “---- not only in words, but using the means within my power, to respond with actions, specifically with the elimination of my freedom from taxation---to provoke a reaction.” At another point in his declaration he repeated the hope that “in my voluntary taxation situation I will stand united with more and more of my patriotic companions.” Using Tolna County’s taxation tables, Bezerédj came to the figure that he could contribute 300 ft annually to the war tax and domestic fund, the two branches of direct taxation borne by the peasantry. Always careful with his funds, he built clauses into the contract that if universal taxation were instituted at a future point in Hungary, this existing contract would become null and void, and if a special tax were instituted (again at a later date) that affected only the aristocratic segments of the population, then the amount already paid should be discounted from the sum he would owe. Bezerédj cited two public reasons for his decision to relinquish his tax-free status. The first was “I cannot delay any longer, my conviction that the alteration of our taxation system is in the interests of our homeland and justice both demand it.” In a later section he claimed that: “(i)n the fulfillment of my tax responsibility my conscience is at peace”.<sup>77</sup> Bezerédj knew that by making this public declaration at county level, word of mouth would carry news of his action to other Hungarian nobles. The crux of his claim of the need for noble taxation was moral, making this both the strength and weakness of his action. As an imitative instrument it was geared to find favour only with those people who were

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<sup>76</sup> István Széchenyi, “Adó,” [“Tax,”] August 17, 1843 No. 65 *Jelenkor* [Our age] Gróf Széchenyi István minden írása, [The complete writings of István Széchenyi,] CD-ROM.

<sup>77</sup> *Bezerédj önkéntes adózása*, [Bezerédj’s declaration of voluntary taxation,] Lajstr. 1314/1844. TMÖL közgyűlési iratok. [General assembly records].

predisposed towards paying to relinquish a little of their nobility. It turned out that this group was smaller than even the supporters of this issue had thought to be the case.

In Pest County the aristocrats Albert Rosti, János Besze and Lajos Kossuth followed Bezerédj's example, and were mocked openly in the pages of the paper *Budapest Híradó* [Budapest news] for their "noble" act.<sup>78</sup> More vaguely, Horváth mentioned that in Zala County over 200 nobles were inspired to renounce their taxation immunity, along with approximately sixty nobles in Csongrád. Sáros, Hont and Szatmár Counties also had larger numbers of nobles who agreed with Bezerédj's moral stance that not paying tax was the greater act of shame, than to share civic equality with the ranks of the tax-paying masses.<sup>79</sup> The loudest voice raised in objection against Bezerédj's taxation pledge was, somewhat surprisingly, that of Széchenyi himself. In the article "The Shot from the Half-Cocked Pistol", the title being a suitable metaphor for his estimation of Bezerédj's grand gesture, he used some of his most malicious language against the Tolna nobleman, mollified only by the thin veil that he was not speaking his direct opinion but merely repeating what others had said on the subject. In his words:

He is a single man, who hasn't the slightest family care, who is cynical as a result, having no inclination for worldly pleasures, and for whom money means about as much as a bride for an old geezer; or who "like a flower in the waters of Gastein" basks in the company of others, but is the richest one there, so that he doesn't know what to do with his money, etc. etc. What is 300 forints a year to him?<sup>80</sup>

The most Bezerédj and others managed to accomplish with their taxation pledge was for a parliamentary committee to consider the matter of noble taxation at the 1847-1848 Diet, a compromise tantamount to buying time in order not to take any decisive measures. The voluntary component of the campaign to engage in noble taxation was its Achilles' heel.

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<sup>78</sup> Kurucz, *Bezerédj István*, [István Bezerédj], 94.

<sup>79</sup> Horváth, *Huszonöt év*, harmadik kötet, [Twenty-five years, volume three], 112.

<sup>80</sup> István Széchenyi, "A pisztoly időelőtti elsütése," ["The shot from the half-cocked pistol,"] January 24, 1845 No. 9 *Jelenkor* [Our age] *Gróf Széchenyi István minden írása*, [The complete writings of István Széchenyi,] CD-ROM.

Hungarian nobles could simply choose to opt out, and the majority of them did. Yet in this matter, as in the case of the redemption contracts, Bezerédj was right: nobles were in a position of strength and if they acted early they could set the terms of the deal in their favour. Their unwillingness to compromise was because peasant proprietorship, and even in some cases monetary gain, meant far less to them than to the peasants. What they “paid” to retain by doing nothing was the maintenance of their taxation-free status, which was an essential attribute associated with their conception of Hungarian nobility.

### Home Spun Solutions?

Revenues can be increased through taxation or stimulating industry and production. Realizing that both were needed nationally and at the local level in Tolna County, Bezerédj began to experiment with silkworm cultivation on his estates in Hidja and the Jegenyés plains during the 1830s.<sup>81</sup> It was a continuation of a practice that had had a historical precedent in both Tolna and Hungary in general, mostly through smaller-scale projects on noble and royal estates, and at guild level.<sup>82</sup> There were a number of difficulties that limited the expansion of the silk industry. In the eighteenth century government pilot programmes in the Bánát and the Bácska regions in the south under the jurisdiction of the Treasury intended to stimulate agricultural development and knowledge to coincide with repopulation campaigns. Hungarian producers had to deliver the cocoons to one of eight stations established by the Vice Regal Council by the late years of that century. From there, in cumbersome and costly fashion, the cocoons were spun into raw silk in Vienna and transported back to Hungary in order to be woven into

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<sup>81</sup> Rózsa Takáts, “Adatok a magyar selyemhernyó-tenyésztés történetéhez I.,” [“Material relating to the history of Hungarian silkworm cultivation I.”] *Magyar Mezőgazdasági Múzeum Közleményei*, [The news bulletin of the Hungarian agricultural museum,] 1 December 2009 <<http://teroses.uw.hu/selyem/selymecikk.html>>.

<sup>82</sup> Bodnár and Gárdonyi, *Bezerédj István*, II kötet, [István Bezerédj, volume II], 278-280.

cloth.<sup>83</sup> Given the logistical difficulties involved in the egg and cocoon distribution and collection and the inefficiency of increased expenditure due to transportation costs between Vienna and Hungary, it is no wonder local producers never managed to raise silk cultivation beyond the cottage industry level within Hungary by the early nineteenth century.

At this time, Hungarian producers wanted to turn disadvantage into advantage by taking an agricultural industry that had historical precedent in the country, cutting away middlemen involved in the manufacturing process, and in so doing turn a cottage industry into a domestic branch of national production. Great dreams and illusions tied themselves to the entire enterprise. Emanuel Hoffmann, whose family was involved in silk cultivation,<sup>84</sup> wrote a book on the subject about how peasants would be ideal silkworm cultivators. All that would be needed would be to make "...slight adjustments to Slovak, Hungarian, Croatian and Romanian peasants, to have it put before them, and for their natural reservations to be set aside." The potential for profit was enormous, as in Hungary and Transylvania there were 11 450 000 homes, and if *each one* cultivated silk cocoons 5 570 000 pounds of silk would be produced.<sup>85</sup> Hoffman thought that the greatest obstacle to overcome would be surmounting the peasants' stubbornness in sticking to the tried and true, but enlightenment and the lords' willingness to buy the cocoons from the peasants would provide the necessary reassurance for peasants to invest in the scheme. In the remainder of the book Hoffman provided a long list of what hard work would lay behind making the venture work. Six years of preparatory work was needed to grow the

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<sup>83</sup> Takáts, "Adatok a magyar selyemhernyó-tenyésztés történetéhez I.," ["Material relating to the history of Hungarian silkworm cultivation I.,"] *Magyar Mezőgazdasági Múzeum Közleményei*, [The news bulletin of the Hungarian agricultural museum,] <http://teroses.uw.hu/selyem/selymecikk.html>.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid.

<sup>85</sup> Emanuel Hoffmann Hoffmannsthal, *A selyem tenyésztés módjának előadása a magyar földmivelők számára* [The delineation of a silk cultivation method for the benefit of agricultural workers] (Új Vidék: Pál Jánkovits, 1838), vi and viii. TMÖL Bezerédj család vegyes iratok [Miscellaneous documents of the Bezerédj family] 335 d. 172 pall.

mulberry trees before there would be a sufficient supply of leaves to support silkworms, and every four years the trees' leaves should be left untouched. Trees were susceptible to diseases, the insects needed a separate heated room and table, and killing them in the cocoon stage required a special technique. These considerable hardships were nothing, in Hoffman's estimation, when one considered that peasants needed something to occupy their time for six to eight weeks in May after the planting was done, and that the work was so easy that woman and children could do it instead of the men. Fifteen forints could be made with "little effort" and if the peasants were able to ensure "...good and clean air, enough high-quality food, moderate heat, a good and appropriate place and immaculate cleanliness in relation to the insects, then failure only results in rare cases." Given that this scheme so greatly downplayed the capital, time and educational investment peasants needed to undertake to buy into this concept, and that there was a constant emphasis on easy profit at the expense of peasant labour, it is clear that the targeted audience for this book was not the agricultural worker, but rather the lord looking for a new way to improve the output of his estates.<sup>86</sup>

The claim that the peasants' efforts to support raw silk cultivation could be greatly profitable was only one half of the message behind the campaign to expand the silk industry in Hungary in the early nineteenth century. The second aspect to its potential for profit was that all social estates and classes used silk in some measure, in the form of cloth, ribbon and thread, so there was a potentially vast domestic market in place for the finished product. The double lure that agricultural and luxury good profits attached themselves to the same item led to a spate of societies dedicated to silkworm breeding to spring up across the country in the 1830s and 1840s. In the 1830s there were silkworm societies in Kecskemét, Mohács and Pécs. In the 1840s the Sopron-Vas Mulberry Society and the Tolna Mulberry-Silk Society appeared almost simultaneously. These were

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<sup>86</sup> Ibid., vi, x, 18, 20, 21, 22, 30, 11 and 12.



followed by the Pozsony-Győr-Moson Mulberry Society, the rival Sopron Silk Cultivation Association, and the Fejér Mulberry Society. Even in Transylvania, where innovations often took longer to arrive, there was a Joint-Stock-Silk-Factory to spin silk thread by 1840, and the Cultivation Association for Silk and Mulberry of Kolozsvár came into being just before the revolution in 1847.<sup>87</sup>

In Tolna the local silk society was the brainchild of Bezerédj, Augusz and Csapó in the 1830s. By the time its statutes were nearing completion Csapó was forced to step down as its president and Bezerédj took his place.<sup>88</sup> Unlike many reform-era associations that catered to a burgher, merchant or aristocratic membership, this society aimed for support that was as socially diverse as possible. Its ground rules from May 13, 1841 stipulated that:

“...and true universal progress is only to be expected if membership is as numerous as possible, and there are adherents from the poorer labouring class of people- to this end, it seems best to arrange matters so that alongside small dues there will be many shares in the society, that can be purchased singly by poorer people without hurting them financially. Wealthier people will vouch for more shares, and will still be able to participate in larger measure.”<sup>89</sup>

The Tolna Mulberry Silk Society had purchased buildings and land from the Treasury for the venture, and it aimed to make money from sale of trees, silk worms, and raw and finished silk. Initially society organizers wanted to sell 15 000 mulberry trees to “taxpayers”, adding that previous experiments with free distribution of the trees had not worked. In order to get the venture off the ground, society leaders wanted to offer a series of incentives to encourage peasants to join. When it came to purchasing the mulberry

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<sup>87</sup> Takáts, “Adatok a magyar selyemhernyó-tenyésztés történetéhez I.,” [“Material relating to the history of Hungarian silkworm cultivation I.”] *Magyar Mezőgazdasági Múzeum Közleményei*, [The news bulletin of the Hungarian agricultural museum,] <<http://teroses.uw.hu/selyem/selymecikk.html>>.

<sup>88</sup> Bodnár and Gárdonyi, *Bezerédj István*, II kötet, [István Bezerédj, volume II], 288-289.

<sup>89</sup> “A’ Tolnai Szeder-Selyem Egylet alap szabályai,” [“The statutes of the Tolna mulberry-silk society,”] TMÖL Bezerédj család vegyes iratok [Miscellaneous documents of the Bezerédj family] 335 d. 173 pall, p.17.

trees, they stipulated that taxpayers would be the ones to benefit from its first-come, first-served system. The three non-aristocratic persons who purchased the most mulberry trees were to receive prizes of fifty, thirty and twenty ft at the end of the year, and a similar reward system was promised to the people who returned the most cocoons. With the purchase of a share there was also the invitation to attend the two general meetings each year and the supper afterwards. There, guests would be able to hobnob with the élite of the county as special provision would be made so that seating would not be conditioned by rank, and although the meal would be modest in price, wine or beer, pálinka, and even coffee would be served.<sup>90</sup>

The Tolna Mulberry Silk Society did its best to bring more people on board than was common for Hungarian societies of its time. School masters were given trees to plant on the properties that they administered, and the values relating to silkworm cultivation and its importance to the county were indoctrinated into young children by its calculated incorporation into the educational curriculum.<sup>91</sup> Bezerédj even took his campaign for the society and Tolna silk to Pest, by participating as an exhibitor in the industrial arts' exhibitions that intended to lend an air of respectability and professionalism to Hungarian industrial products, methods and machines. Detached from their natural contexts and presented formally in rooms of buildings that were themselves showcases for modern design, the Redout (Vigadó) from 1842 onwards, and the National Museum after 1846, the wares and designs on display functioned as advertisements that "made in Hungary" was not restricted to agricultural production alone. The silk produced on the Bezerédj estates had a good showing. Although he did not receive a gold, silver or bronze commemorative coin at the Pest County House, Bezerédj did beat out his own silk society and Pál Kiss' entry, winning a commendation on account of his silk being fourteen to

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<sup>90</sup> Ibid., 3, 6, 7, 10, 22-25.

<sup>91</sup> Kurucz, *Bezerédj Amália és István Bezerédj a gyermekekért*, [Amália Bezerédj and István Bezerédj for the children], 76.

fifteen dernier, between one and two dernier above the then standard for the industry.<sup>92</sup> The aftereffects of Bezerédj's 1843 yellow silk display were long-lasting. At the Pest County House on December 31, 1844 Lajos Batthyány asked for a celebratory day in his honour, that his "Honorable Mention" certificate, the silk itself, and the two judges' comments pertaining to the display be publically shown, and that all printed material was also to be read aloud to passersby.<sup>93</sup> All of these achievements reflected positively on Bezerédj himself, naturally, but they cast the Tolna silk production efforts in a favourable light as well.

At the same time that the industrial arts' exhibitions were wowing the museum-visiting crowds in Pest, the silk campaign and its supporting societies began to intersect with other aspects of the drive to support Hungarian industry. Drawing on the message of the Protectionist Society, at the closing ceremonies of the first industrial exhibition in 1842 Bezerédj called on the ladies of the homeland to support local industry and buy Hungarian. In the same year, reform-minded nobles in Tolna County pledged to clothe all the people on their estates using only locally-manufactured cloth.<sup>94</sup> István Bezerédj was enjoying such renown for his pledge voluntarily to be taxed at this time that he was a part of the "inner circle" of the Protectionist Society and was one of only four people whose faces appeared on souvenir Hungarian handkerchiefs.<sup>95</sup> In late 1844 a related effort surfaced not just to protect, but to create Hungarian industry, and this campaign carried

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<sup>92</sup> Ferencz Csanády, "Kivonat az 1843-ki iparműkiállításról szóló jelentésből a tablabiró Bezerédj István urat illetőleg," ["Extract from the release regarding the 1843 industrial exhibition concerning district judge István Bezerédj,"] Lajstr. 53/1845. TMÖL közgyűlési iratok. [General assembly records].

<sup>93</sup> Lajos Batthyány, "Bezerédj István díjazása az iparműkiállításon a bemutatott selyemért," ["István Bezerédj's award for the silk displayed at the industrial arts exhibition,"] Lajstr. 53/1845. TMÖL közgyűlési iratok. [General assembly records].

<sup>94</sup> Takáts, "Adatok a magyar selyemhernyó-tenyésztés történetéhez I.," ["Material relating to the history of Hungarian silkworm cultivation I.,"] *Magyar Mezőgazdasági Múzeum Közleményei*, [The news bulletin of the Hungarian agricultural museum,] <<http://teroses.uw.hu/selyem/selymecikk.html>>.

<sup>95</sup> Pajkossy, "Bezerédj István," ["István Bezerédj,"] in *Emlékkönyv Bezerédj István születésének*, [Memorial book of István Bezerédj's birth], 52-53.

over into silk production. One project involved an organization to create a temporary joint-stock company to invest in the expansion of Antal Valero's silk cloth factory in Pest. The Valero factory was one of a handful of larger factory-sized establishments in the country,<sup>96</sup> and the plan called for investors to buy 1500 shares at a pricey 200 ft per share.<sup>97</sup> The sale of shares was underway for about a year, when Antal Valero decided to pull out of the venture, refund the investors' money, and take out a 100 000 ft. loan instead from the newly formed Hungarian Commercial Bank of Pest.<sup>98</sup> István Bezerédj did not play a part in Valero's change of heart, but he did invest in his initial attempt to take his silk factory public, as his name on the governing board of the First Hungarian Silk Fabric and Ribbon Factory Society attests.<sup>99</sup>

While István Bezerédj was away from his home county in Pest and other places the Tolna Mulberry Silk Society did not exactly flourish. The original concept of the silk society called for 800 shareholders to pay six ft per share in the first year, and two ft per share every year thereafter for a total of fifteen years. At the end of that time, the society was scheduled to be dissolved.<sup>100</sup> When the general shareholders' meeting was held in mid-1842 only 172 shares had been sold, and the three men who had backed the investment with their own time and money were already vouching to step in financially to

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<sup>96</sup> According to the census of 1841 there were only nine steam engines in the entire country. Two other factories in existence during this time were the shipyards of Óbuda and the Pest Rolling Mill Company. Source: Ivan T. Berend, "Hungary: a Semi-Successful Peripheral Industrialization," in *The Industrial Revolution in National Context: Europe and the USA*, eds., Mikuláš Teich and Roy Porter (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 266 and 279.

<sup>97</sup> "Terv egy nagyszerű selyemkelme- és szalaggyarnak biztosított részvények útjának alakítására," ["Plan to form a great silk fabric and ribbon factory through guaranteed shares,"] *Pesti Hírlap* [Pest news] November 24, 1844, no.407 *Kossuth hírlapírói munkássága*, [Kossuth's journalistic activity], CD-ROM.

<sup>98</sup> Péter Hámori, "Egy dicső bukás története," ["The story of a failure of note,"] *Népszabadság* [People's freedom] (Budapest), 24 May 2001.

<sup>99</sup> "Terv egy nagyszerű selyemkelme- és szalaggyarnak alakítására," ["Plan to form a great silk fabric and ribbon factory,"] *Pesti Hírlap* [Pest news] November 28, 1844, no.408 *Kossuth hírlapírói munkássága*, [Kossuth's journalistic activity], CD-ROM.

<sup>100</sup> "A' Tolnai Selyem Egylet szabályai," ["The statutes of the Tolna silk society,"] *TMÖL Bezerédj család vegyes iratok* [Bezerédj family miscellaneous documents] 335 d. 173 pall, p16-17.

a greater extent if need be.<sup>101</sup> As the “taxpaying” public could not afford to purchase the eggs upfront, it was resolved that the price could be discounted from the payment they received for the cocoons.<sup>102</sup> By 1847 the society had sold only 7310 mulberry trees, which was a small amount in comparison to the 25 895 it had distributed to Tolna schools. The society was pleased to report that each share would have a return of over 7% that year, but also did not disguise the truth that the increased rate of return was due to many people choosing to end their partnership with the Tolna silk society. Somewhat ruefully, society secretary Ferencz Stann tried to put bad news in the best possible phrasing and reported: “...that obstacles at the beginning had to be overcome, and the gaining of experience resulted in losses in many areas, and the last years in respect to silk cultivation were unfavorable ones. Profits declined considerably in comparison to last year because of the sudden depreciation in the price of silk...”<sup>103</sup>

All in all, 658 people purchased shares in the society at one point or another,<sup>104</sup> which was not a bad showing considering the circumstances. The Tolna Mulberry-Silk Society truly suffered from its misplaced good intentions and hopes. Although it wished to make agriculture more profitable in Tolna, a place that was not truly suited to industry, it picked a product that required too much specialization and care to be produced on a mass scale. Somewhat unusually for societies of its time, the organizers sought to incorporate the “taxpayer” among its ranks of shareholders. However with the need to purchase the mulberry trees, the patience necessary for the trees to grow, and four years’

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<sup>101</sup> Gábor Tóttós, “Szeder-selyem egyleti tettek,” [“Actions of the mulberry-silk society,”] *Szekszárdi Vasárnap* [Szekszárd Sunday] Vol. XVII No.16 [May 6, 2007]: 11.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid.

<sup>103</sup> “A tolnai szeder-selyem egylet mérlege,” [“An assessment of the Tolna mulberry-silk society,”] *Hetilap* [Weekly paper] August 27, 1847 No. 173 *Kossuth hirlapirói munkássága*, [Kossuth’s journalistic activity], CD-ROM.

<sup>104</sup> Bodnár and Gárdonyi, *Bezerédj István*, II kötet, [István Bezerédj, volume II], 291.

waiting time as a shareholder before shares paid dividends,<sup>105</sup> the silk society truly only lent itself to those who had enough capital to wait years before seeing any return on their investments, and not the ordinary Hungarian peasant.

István Bezerédj staked a great deal on raising rural standards of living in Tolna through his emancipation contracts and through founding local societies such as the Tolna Mulberry-Silk Society. Governmental obstructionism and delay hindered the first measure from achieving its potential, even though new laws sanctioned such landlord-serf settlements. The second concept in turn suffered from its own shortcomings, being a business that simply did not lend itself to large volume production. His voluntary taxation campaign for the Hungarian nobility was even more hampered, because its only selling point was to convince its target audience that paying taxes was a moral obligation. Unfortunately for Bezerédj these “model” projects were intended to underscore the soundness of his positions on peasant proprietorship and nobles as agricultural entrepreneurs and taxpayers. His wishy-washy results in these areas were respectable, but did not reach the level of achievement that would have been needed to convince large portions of the nobility that his ideas represented the path to take.

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<sup>105</sup> “A’ Tolnai Selyem Egylet szabályai,” [“The statutes of the Tolna silk society,”] TMÖL Bezerédj család [Bezerédj family] 335 d. 173 pall, p18.

**Chapter Six**  
**The *Interessengemeinschaft* of Reform-Era Jews and the Hungarian Oppositional Nobility: Finding Common Ground on Emancipation, Assimilation and Magyarization**

At the end of his article on Jewish immigration to Hungary László Varga summarized a fundamental shift in Jewish cultural attitudes sometime in the first half of the nineteenth century. This shift was perceptible “(i)n that instant, however, when pro-Habsburg sympathies and more broadly “Germanness” came together with Hungary’s Jews who were socially-advanced --or more specifically, an influential segment of this group of people--and when the Hungarian nobility became the ones who represented progressive ideas, then the middle-class Jews within the country faced a new choice, and had an alternative direction to follow.”<sup>1</sup> This chapter takes this shift as its topic, examining how a portion of Hungary’s Jews were drawn to the new Magyar culture, and to the benefits that magyarization seemed to offer. There was a sense of reciprocity to Jewish openness to the new Magyar environment. As these Jewish members of society deduced potential gain from becoming Magyars, a section of the Hungarian liberal opposition noticed the willingness of Jewish peoples to integrate into Hungarian society. By the twenties and thirties these nobles began to raise the possibility of granting Jews equality under the law. While the issue of guaranteeing greater equality for Judaism and Jewish peoples never entirely went off the parliamentary radar, its nature changed by the 1840s. Then, members of the Hungarian nobility such as Ödön Beöthy and others were still eager to support the cause of Jewish emancipation, but in a more conditional fashion. Granting greater equality in the future became tied to a particular conception of Hungarian citizenship: one based on magyarization *along* with greater secularization.

Both Jews and the Hungarian nobility stood to gain as a result of this *Interessengemeinschaft*. The opposition members of the Hungarian nobility compensated

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<sup>1</sup> László Varga, “Zsidó bevándorlás Magyarországon,” [“Jewish immigration to Hungary,”] *Századok* [Centuries] Vol.126 No.1 (1992): 78.

for their minority status with political adherents, magyarization gained more statistical and numerical support (an important benefit in a living space where Magyars were the largest ethnic group, but not the majority of the population) and the reform-minded nobles proved that their principles were dyed-in-the-wool because they were willing to partner with peoples who were set apart by feudal classifications. Jewish inhabitants in turn gained outside supporters for liberal directions within Hungarian Judaism. Being in a minority position themselves, these were powerful allies to have. Willingness to invest the time to learn Magyar and function in its social environment opened the doors for new careers in fields such as medicine, journalism, politics, satire, finance and business. These new positions required the necessary educational background, which many Jews possessed, but they were not tied to religious affiliation, and were consequently open for the taking.

This state of affairs was markedly different from the past. Previously, in a feudal-Christian society, social integration may have entailed apostasy. In the reform era, Jews were increasingly granted the potential for the same end result, with magyarization standing in for apostasy, and the added benefit of the retention of their religious identity. Although it must be added, the Hungarian reform era still retained a place for Jewish apostasy as the ultimate form of social assimilation, as this chapter will show. Noble anti-Semitism had been a recurring character trait among certain members of their caste. Distancing themselves from this tendency, some Hungarian nobles with liberal sympathies tried to prove that their politics trumped their estate affiliation. In return, Jews' favourable disposition towards Magyar proved that magyarization could be an attractive voluntary ideology instead of a forced cultural conversion.

I begin this section with the customary biographical sketch of Ödön Beöthy and the opinions concerning his character and activities as they have emerged in the course of Hungarian historiography as a tie between this chapter and the next. Afterwards, there is a



section on Jewish immigration to Hungary, and Habsburg regulations and policies affecting the Jewish inhabitants of the realm. Essentially, this part of the writing is the background to the political state of Jewish affairs in the Kingdom by the beginning of the nineteenth century. I then shift to a social perspective, looking at the religious and linguistic affiliations of Hungarian Jews during this time. This approach is pivotal for comparative purposes, as secularization and magyarization was what the oppositional members of the Hungarian nobility strongly suggested would be necessary preconditions for Jewish social inclusion and religious equality. Finally, I turn to the important question of limitations. I conclude that barriers to finding common ground over magyarization were present on the sides of both the oppositional members of the Hungarian nobility who were favourably disposed towards Jewish equality, and among liberal members of the Jewish community open to Magyar cultural integration. Although not a seamless blending of diverse interests, the harmony between these two segments of the Hungarian population over the issue of magyarization would shape Magyar culture in long-term and lasting ways.

### **Biographical Sketch**

Ödön Beöthy was born on December 5, 1796 in Nagyvárad (Oradea, Romania) to parents László Beöthy and Janka Husztinger. His name was recorded as Eugenius in the birth registry, but he preferred the hungarianized Ödön, even though it did not correspond to his name.<sup>2</sup> The family estates totaled primary holdings of 8000 hold land in Bihar County on the plains of Nagymarja, along with a castle on the property.<sup>3</sup> The County of Bihar was territorially the largest in the Kingdom, with a social composition of 30 816 nobles and an ethnic configuration of 289 613 Hungarians, 1590 Germans, 200 500

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<sup>2</sup> Márton Hegyesi, *Biharvármegye 1848-49-ben* [Bihar castle county in 1848-49] (Nagyvárad: Sámuel Berger Jr., 1885), 24-25.

<sup>3</sup> József Ruzsoly, "Beöthy Ödön emlékezete," ["Ödön Beöthy in memorium,"] *Debreceni Szemle* [Debrecen review] March 1 (1997): 70.

Romanians and 7100 Jews.<sup>4</sup> At the age of sixteen Beöthy left the safety and security of his home county behind to join the Chiemayer Huszar regiment to fight the Russians in Poland. He later went on to become a part of the Eighth Kiemayer Light Calvary Huszar Regiment of Pozsony, participating in the major European battles against Napoleon's armies. In 1820 he demobilized having reached the rank of Captain, and returned to his estates to pursue the studies he had previously abandoned.<sup>5</sup>

Beöthy devoted himself to being a landlord, and studying history, politics, law and the languages of English, French and German. He made sufficient progress to become a county judge by 1826, thereby taking the first step towards a political career.<sup>6</sup> Involvement in county political assemblies led to his election as a dietal representative for Bihar at the 1830, 1832-1836, 1839-1840, 1843-1844 and 1847-1848 Hungarian reform Diets.<sup>7</sup> At county assemblies and at the Diet Beöthy represented a left-leaning stance. In fact, both the initial impetus for a liberal political direction in Bihar can be attributed to him in considerable measure, as well as the formation of a conservative stratum of nobles who opposed this point of view.<sup>8</sup> As was the case in Tolna in this period, the county house was repeatedly the place for ideological warfare, and these heated disagreements between nobles did degenerate into outright brawls when tempers became too flared. Bribery at the local level helped to add courage to what conviction could not achieve alone.<sup>9</sup> In one especially famous incident on December 18, 1845 conservatives and

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<sup>4</sup> Elek Fényes, *Magyarország leírása*, 2 rész [Description of Hungary, part 2] (Pest: Beimel, 1847), 365.

<sup>5</sup> Imre Nagy, "Beöthy Ödön," *Az 1848-1849 évi első népképviselési országgyűlés történeti almanachja*, [Historical almanac of the first democratically-elected parliament of 1848-1849,] ed. Béla Pálmány (Budapest: Magyar Országgyűlés, 2002), 97.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Viola Sárkány, "Beöthy Ödön (1796-1854)," ["Ödön Beöthy (1796-1854),"] *Honismeret* [Homeland knowledge] (2002): 53, 57-58.

<sup>8</sup> Ruzsoly, "Beöthy Ödön emlékezete," ["Ödön Beöthy in memorium,"] *Debreceni Szemle* [Debrecen review]: 70.

<sup>9</sup> Erzsébet Orvos Szendi, "Beöthy Ödön politikai pályafutása, 1830-1848," ["The political career path of Ödön Beöthy, 1830-1848,"] *Hajdú-Bihar Megyei Levéltár Évkönyve* [The yearbook of the Hajdú-Bihar county archives] XXV (1998): 108.

Hajduk soldiers attacked liberal nobles with bayonets and swords over a nomination dispute, and Beöthy managed to escape unharmed only because a soldier named Ernő Piskolicz saved his life.<sup>10</sup> In Bihar the Beöthy, Komáromy, Bernáth, Csanádi and Haller noble families were drawn to liberal ideals, while the Sughó, Sántha, Hodossy and Papszás families campaigned for the maintenance of tradition in Hungarian government. Lajos Tisza, Beöthy's partner dietal representative at the 1832-1836 assembly, went on to become one of his strongest opponents at the local level, when he switched sides and became Vice-Lord Lieutenant of Bihar County.<sup>11</sup>

Beginning with the 1832-1836 Diet, Beöthy spoke most often and emphatically on the topic of Protestant civic equality in Hungary. The fact that he was chosen to specialize on this issue was a calculated move on behalf of the opposition, because being a Roman Catholic himself he was criticizing his own church. His most famous stance was campaigning to end the disadvantages that Protestants faced within the country. Realizing that religious equality was not guaranteed if it did not apply to all state-sanctioned faiths, Beöthy went on to advocate for the elimination of obstacles that Eastern Catholics, Orthodox<sup>12</sup> and Jewish inhabitants of the Kingdom regularly encountered in their daily lives.<sup>13</sup> Beöthy took his campaign for religious equality from the theoretical-political sphere to the personal one when he wed a local landowner's daughter, Lujza Csanády in 1837. Csanády was Calvinist, making the resulting union a mixed marriage and a

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<sup>10</sup> Hegyesi, *Biharvármegye 1848-49-ben*, [Bihar castle county in 1848-49], 29.

<sup>11</sup> Orvos Szendi, "Beöthy Ödön politikai pályafutása," ["The political career path of Ödön Beöthy,"] *Hajdú-Bihar Megyei Levéltár Évkönyve* [The yearbook of the Hajdú-Bihar county archives]: 101, 103 and 107.

<sup>12</sup> Sárkány, "Beöthy Ödön," ["Ödön Beöthy,"] *Honismeret* [Homeland knowledge]: 54-55.

<sup>13</sup> Imre Pótor, "Beöthy Ödön, a protestáns vallásszabadságot védelmező római katolikus politikus," ["Ödön Beöthy, the Roman Catholic politician defending Protestant religious freedom,"] in *Tovább...Emlékkönyv Makkai László 75. születésnapjára*, [Onward...a memorial book for László Makkai's 75<sup>th</sup> birthday,] ed. József Barcza (Debrecen: Debreceni Református Kollégium, 1989), 213.

controversial matter.<sup>14</sup> The couple had two offspring, a son named Ákos who went on to become a parliamentary representative in the post-1867 era, and Sarlota, a daughter.<sup>15</sup>

Even though Beöthy was most vociferous in his demands to end civil discrimination based on religious affiliation, like all other noble politicians of his time he spoke out on a number of other pressing causes. He supported freedom of speech and the press just as Fáy did. Along with Bezerédj he wanted the serfs to be freed and the nobles to pay taxes. Like both men, he wished the use of the Hungarian language to increase in an official capacity.<sup>16</sup> He publically supported the 1830 Polish uprising against the czar, and the hungarianization of the Habsburg military units stationed in the country.<sup>17</sup> The Ludovika Military Academy, the National Theatre, and Hungarian education, which was greatly under the influence of religious control and hence was relevant to religious matters in general, also piqued his interest.<sup>18</sup>

The second act to Beöthy's career came during the revolution of 1848-1849. In that short span of time he took on one responsibility after another. Working alongside Miklós Wesselényi, from April 23 he was a royal representative responsible for the incorporation of the Partium into the Hungarian Kingdom. Able to speak Romanian fluently, he could tell the local population the intentions of the Batthyány government for their region.<sup>19</sup> In the same month, he was named as Lord Lieutenant for Bihar County, a position that earned him the right to sit in the Upper House of the Hungarian parliament. With the civil war brewing, his military background was deemed too important to waste.

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<sup>14</sup> Sárkány, "Beöthy Ödön," ["Ödön Beöthy,"] *Honismeret* [Homeland knowledge]: 57.

<sup>15</sup> Hegyesi, *Biharvármegye 1848-49-ben*, [Bihar castle county in 1848-49], 26.

<sup>16</sup> Miklós Bényei, "Beöthy Ödön művelődéspolitikai nézetei," ["Ödön Beöthy's views on cultural politics,"] *A Hajdú-Bihar Megyei Levéltár Évkönyve*, [Yearbook of the Hajdú-Bihar county archives,] ed. István Gazdag (Debrecen: Alföld, 1985): 24.

<sup>17</sup> Sárkány, "Beöthy Ödön," ["Ödön Beöthy,"] *Honismeret* [Homeland knowledge]: 55-56.

<sup>18</sup> Bényei, "Beöthy Ödön művelődéspolitikai nézetei," ["Ödön Beöthy's views on cultural politics,"] *A Hajdú-Bihar Megyei Levéltár Évkönyve* [Yearbook of the Hajdú-Bihar county archives]: 26, 28-29, and 30-31.

<sup>19</sup> Hegyesi, *Biharvármegye 1848-49-ben*, [Bihar castle county in 1848-49], 22.

At first he was sent to Eperjes (Prešov, Slovakia) as a royal representative, and then to perform a similar function in relation to the Serbian uprising in Bács, Torontál, Csongrád, and Csanád Counties and in the Royal Free Cities of Szeged, Szabadka, Újvidék and Zombor. By December 19, Bezerédj was assigned the task of the administrative reorganization of Transylvania along Hungarian political lines, but soon resigned this job due to civil-military disagreements with General Bem. After a short stint returning to his duties in the Upper House, Kossuth named Beöthy as the Hungarian diplomat to Bucharest on April 1, 1849. Success in this assignment proved elusive as well, since the Turkish authorities refused his entrance into the country, thereby sending the message that they were not willing to countenance the new Hungarian regime.<sup>20</sup> Returning from Brasov on May 27, Kossuth gave Beöthy the compensatory position of a seat on the highest court, the *Septemviralis*.<sup>21</sup> Loyal to the revolutionary cause to the very bitter end, Beöthy even accepted an offer on June 17, 1849 to represent the district of Berettyóújfalu.<sup>22</sup> This decision would prove to be fateful, as Habsburg authorities placed great weight on when revolutionaries turned their backs on the revolutionary government in their calculations for retributive punishment.

Beöthy stayed loyal to the Hungarian government until the end of the revolution, but he was not always in agreement with its actions. The declaration of independence from Habsburg rule was in his estimation a great mistake that destroyed the legality of the revolution. In protest, he resigned his position as Lord Lieutenant.<sup>23</sup> Kossuth also twice

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<sup>20</sup> Nagy, "Beöthy Ödön," *Az 1848-1849 évi történeti almanachja*, [Historical almanac of 1848-1849], 98-99.

<sup>21</sup> Hegyesi, *Biharvármegye 1848-49-ben*, [Bihar castle county in 1848-49], 24.

<sup>22</sup> Ruszoly, "Beöthy Ödön emlékezete," ["Ödön Beöthy in memorium,"] *Debreceni Szemle* [Debrecen review]: 73.

<sup>23</sup> Orvos Szendi, "Beöthy Ödön politikai pályafutása," ["The political career path of Ödön Beöthy,"] *Hajdú-Bihar Megyei Levéltár Évkönyve* [The yearbook of the Hajdú-Bihar county archives]: 113.

offered him a cabinet post as minister of transportation, but he declined to accept.<sup>24</sup> These reservations were not enough to sway the Austrian military authorities once victory was assured. When news reached him of the Hungarian defeat and the executions at Világos he at first went into internal hiding, and then escaped abroad.<sup>25</sup> In a reversal of fortune Beöthy dressed as a servant and used borrowed documentation to cross the Hungarian-Austrian border by steamship, receiving extensive help from his son's tutor István Szigethy.<sup>26</sup> A Viennese wholesale trader named Ferdinánd Pfeifer offered to give him shelter in Vienna since he was indebted to Beöthy for helping him gain greater business access to the Hungarian market.<sup>27</sup> On January 1, 1850 he was called to appear before a Hungarian military court. On September 21, 1851 he was sentenced to death in absentia, and the following day his name was suspended from a public hanging noose, along with many others who shared his fate.

Beöthy's years in exile were eventful, and have not been the subject of extensive research. He lived in Paris, London, and Jersey and regularly was a guest at the homes of Richard Cobden and Victor Hugo. Beöthy even tried to narrow the ideological divide among the members of the Hungarian émigré community, by reconciling László Teleki and Kossuth, but to no avail.<sup>28</sup> Heart problems led Beöthy to Hamburg for medical treatment, where he was reunited with his wife for the first time since the revolution in 1854.<sup>29</sup> He died there on December 7, in a local inn, and was interred fittingly in a cemetery in the same city. Two attempts to repatriate his remains to Hungary in 1868 and

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<sup>24</sup> Hegyesi, *Biharvármegye 1848-49-ben*, [Bihar castle county in 1848-49], 22.

<sup>25</sup> Nagy, "Beöthy Ödön," *Az 1848-1849 évi történeti almanachja*, [Historical almanac of 1848-1849], 99.

<sup>26</sup> Hegyesi, *Biharvármegye 1848-49-ben*, [Bihar castle county in 1848-49], 32.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 27-28.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 28.

<sup>29</sup> Nagy, "Beöthy Ödön," *Az 1848-1849 évi történeti almanachja*, [Historical almanac of 1848-1849], 99.

1906 both resulted in failure.<sup>30</sup> Given that the past has not been entirely kind to his memory, this chapter examines his cultural politics, particularly in relation to incorporating Jews into Hungarian society as fellow Magyars, as part of his greater, enduring physical legacy.

### **Historiographical Portraits of Beöthy**

Although Beöthy has attracted interest from historians, he has not been the subject of intense scrutiny. There is no lengthy monograph on his life, and large portions of his activities remain unexplored, such as his work for the opposition at Bihar County level. Even the existing recent synopses of his life used in the previous section to create a short biography tend to draw on the exact same sources, mainly from the second half of the nineteenth century. Where the sources are not repetitive, they are in disagreement.

One of the first people to describe Beöthy was Julia Pardoe, an English traveler and writer, who saw him speaking in person before the Diet in Pozsony. Naming him Eugene de Beöthy, and mistakenly claiming that he represented a County called Bitax, she described him as “....a short stout man, between forty and fifty years old, with a firm and powerful voice, and (one who) speaks with great fluency and fire. He is, although himself a Catholic, the scourge of the Romanist clergy, and the champion of Protestantism.”<sup>31</sup> This impression captures the rhetorical ability that others too tended to admire and praise, including both Mihály Horváth and Antal Csengery. In fact, Csengery claimed that not only was Beöthy admirable for the quality of his *ex tempore* speaking

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<sup>30</sup> Ruszoly, “Beöthy Ödön emlékezete,” [“Ödön Beöthy in memorium,”] *Debreceni Szemle* [Debrecen review]: 73.

<sup>31</sup> Julia Pardoe, *The City of the Magyar or Hungary and her Institutions in 1839-40*, volume I (London: George Virtue, 1840), 287.

abilities, but that he was so rapid in his delivery that real records of his speeches do not exist, because even he could not write rapidly enough to capture the thoughts expressed.<sup>32</sup>

Horváth's and Csengery's literary pictures of Beöthy agree in another key particular. They both disparage him for his lack of formal learning, and hint that other contemporaries held a similar negative assessment of him. Horváth wrote that "(a)s strong as he was in opposition, in attacking injustices, in fact in debating matters of reform in general: we saw him as weak in equal measure, not due to comprehension, but because of lack of knowledge, the insufficiency of his education..."<sup>33</sup> Csengery added that Beöthy tended to lose patience when it came to details, and he also saw this pattern of behaviour as due to shortcomings of his missed education as a young man, that even later patient dedication could not remedy.<sup>34</sup> Csengery also placed considerable psychological weight on Beöthy's military background. In Csengery's estimation, Beöthy was "(a) restless, disgruntled character, prone to agitation, but in a difficult situation he was able to control himself. In his temperament there was coexistence between a good deal of harshness, defiance, contempt, scorn and much sensitivity and noble feelings". The harsh aspects of his personality derived from his experience in combat, where he became accustomed to "order, precision, and military discipline, and opposition is not tolerated".<sup>35</sup>

Still in the nineteenth century, Márton Hegyesi wrote a study of Bihar County during the revolution and war of independence that has already been cited. Considered authoritative enough recently to be reissued, its second chapter is devoted exclusively to Beöthy. Hegyesi placed more weight on Beöthy's character as an adult rather than the importance of his childhood years in personality formation. Looking at his motivation for

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<sup>32</sup> Horváth, *Huszonöt év*, első kötet, [Twenty-five years, volume one], 297 and Antal Csengery, *Jellemrajzok* [Character portraits] (Budapest: Franklin Társulat, 1898), 45.

<sup>33</sup> Horváth, *Huszonöt év*, első kötet, [Twenty-five years, volume one], 297.

<sup>34</sup> Antal Csengery, *Jellemrajzok*, [Character portraits], 47.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 46, 47.



trying to change Hungarian religious law, he saw in him a strongly developed sense of empathy that caused him to feel the pain and yearnings of the disadvantaged. Somewhat strangely for a man who wrote a study on Beöthy's loyalty to the revolution, he labeled him "...exclusively a *gravamina* politician (a supporter of the ancien régime)", "...a singular blend of the revolutionary and the conservative...." and one who "... never belonged to those who advocated an extreme position".<sup>36</sup> All in all, it is somewhat hard to reconcile the immoderate personage of Horváth and Csengery's recollection, with Hegyesi's reluctant revolutionary.

In the twentieth century, there were two important scholarly evaluations of Beöthy's actions in 1848-1849. The first from Eszter Waldapfel looked at Beöthy's attempts to meet with Ottoman diplomats and urge them to follow a pro-Hungarian foreign policy. Waldapfel disparaged Beöthy's abilities as a diplomat and labeled him a "bourgeois-nationalist", but at the same time ascribed the ultimate cause of his failure to General Bem's resentment towards him and use of his connections in the Ottoman Empire against him.<sup>37</sup> Domokos Kosáry looked at the same topic over thirty years later, and came to the diametrically opposite conclusion. Bem did not try to sabotage Beöthy's mission. Beöthy managed to sabotage it himself by not being culturally sensitive to Ottoman diplomatic cultural practices, and by not bringing the "gifts" Ottoman officials expected to receive.<sup>38</sup> Whether having these two requirements would have tipped the balance in Hungary's favour against the other European powers exercising influence in the region is another question altogether. Thus, it must be admitted that there is not yet an authoritative historiographical account of Beöthy, either in relation to 1848-1849, or

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<sup>36</sup> Hegyesi, *Biharvármegye 1848-49-ben*, [Bihar castle county in 1848-49], 30.

<sup>37</sup> Eszter Waldapfel, *A független magyar külpolitika 1848-1849* [Independent Hungary's foreign policy 1848-1849] (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1962), 186-187 and 253.

<sup>38</sup> Domokos Kosáry, *Magyarország és a nemzetközi politika 1848-1849ben* [Hungary and international relations in 1848-1849] (Budapest: MTA Történet Tudományi Intézete, 1999), 94-96.

examining other key areas of his life.<sup>39</sup> These next chapters on Beöthy's religious politics attempt to address this shortcoming.

### **Hungary, Land of Freedom and Opportunity?**

The history of Jews in Hungary from the late seventeenth century onwards is one of resettlement, because the Turkish wars had reduced their population to small communities in the Burgenland and Transylvania. After 1670 and their expulsion from Vienna and Lower Austria by King Leopold I (1655-1705), they began to appear on the country's western frontier. Into the nineteenth century, they came from Austrian territories including Bohemia, Moravia, and Silesia. This immigration was abetted by King Charles III's (1711-1740) 1726 decree that in the Austrian lands only one male Jewish family member could marry and have children, a measure intended to whittle down the size of the Jewish population. Nyitra, Pozsony and Trencsén Counties began to house these displaced persons. Poverty, pogroms and instability in the Polish lands spurred immigration from the north and east, from Russia, Volhynia, Galicia and Lithuania. These Jews similarly lived in the border counties, at least initially. Although there was less persecution in Hungary than the lands they had left, settlement was by no means without any strings attached. King Leopold I made their residence within seven miles of a mining town a capital crime in 1693, and supported the political wishes of the burghers of the Royal Free Cities to bar Jews collectively from living within city limits. (The councils of the Royal Free Cities were, however, free to grant exceptional settlement to individual Jews). Jews could not reside in portions of Szepes, Gömör, Zólyom, Bars,

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<sup>39</sup> There is also a fictional account of Beöthy in the 1941 novel *A Frimont-palota* [The Frimont palace] by Géza Tabéry. Source: Ruszoly, "Beöthy Ödön emlékezete," ["Ödön Beöthy in memorium,"] *Debreceni Szemle* [Debrecen review]: 73.

Hont, the privileged districts, Szolnok, Heves, Csongrád, Csanád, and Bács Counties, the military frontier, and in twelve of Transylvania's fifteen historic counties.<sup>40</sup>

With so many restrictions, it may be difficult to imagine Hungary as a land of greater freedom and opportunity, yet for these displaced persons, Hungary had potential.<sup>41</sup> The agricultural cities were open to them, and important Hungarian magnate families such as the Eszterházys (Sopron, Moson), the Batthyánys (Rohonc, Szalonak, Nagykanizsa), the Pálffys (Vödrice, Pozsonyváralja) and the Zichys (Óbuda) were happy to let them settle on their properties as they paid a yearly tax to the landlord (*Schutzgeld*). In addition, they performed vital services such as estate management, local commercial activities, and overseeing trade from the Levant as middlemen trafficking in wool, spices, tea and sugar and ensuring that these commodities reached Western Europe.<sup>42</sup> For a select few great fortunes could be made, particularly during the Napoleonic wars. Two famous cases were Samuel Wodianer, and Moritz Ullmann, later merchant residents of Pest, who had grown wealthy from the demand for wool and tobacco.<sup>43</sup> With serfdom closed to them as an option, most Jews survived as service providers or running small businesses as tailors, butchers, brewers, tavern keepers, shopkeepers, teachers, moneylenders, and as travelling salesmen selling articles of clothing to peasants in exchange for various

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<sup>40</sup> György Haraszti, "A zsidóság visszatérése Magyarországra a 18. században," ["The return of the Jews to Hungary in the 18<sup>th</sup> century,"] in *Magyarország társadalomtörténete a 18.-19.században*, [Hungarian social history in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries,] ed. Tamás Faragó (Budapest: Új Mandatum, 2004), 361, 364, 365, 366 and László Gonda, *A zsidóság Magyarországon, 1526-1945* [Jewish peoples in Hungary, 1526-1945] (Budapest: Századvég, 1992), 313.

<sup>41</sup> Jewish immigration to Hungary fluctuated during the reform era, but was a consistent trend. After the Austro-Hungarian compromise, Jewish immigration would give way to emigration, in keeping with prevalent tendencies for other ethnic groups inhabiting the Kingdom. Source: Varga, "Zsidó bevándorlás Magyarországon," ["Jewish immigration to Hungary,"] *Századok* [Centuries]: 74.

<sup>42</sup> Haraszti, "A zsidóság visszatérése Magyarországra," ["The return of the Jews to Hungary,"] in *Magyarország társadalomtörténete*, [Hungarian social history,] 362, 363 and 366 and Gonda, *A zsidóság Magyarországon*, [Jewish peoples in Hungary], 55.

<sup>43</sup> R.J.W. Evans, "Progress and Emancipation in Hungary during the Age of Metternich," *Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* Vol. 46 (2001): 58.

leathers, rags or rusted iron. The poorest, most unfortunate, or those without the necessary skills worked as day labourers or mendicants in significant numbers.<sup>44</sup>

In terms of numerical strength, 88 000 Jews were estimated to reside in Hungary and Transylvania by 1790, by 1846 (excluding Transylvania) there were just over 250 000 Jews in the Kingdom, and by the last census before the end of the monarchy in 1910 Jews numbered 932 458. Taking out the 20 000 odd Jewish residents of Croatia-Slavonia, they amounted to 5% of the population of Hungary proper. One in almost every four inhabitants of Budapest was Jewish, totaling 23.1% of the people in the capital city. These increases far outpaced those of any other major ethnic or religious group in the multiethnic and multinational country.<sup>45</sup>

During the reform era Jews were still regarded in feudal terms as the property of the Royal Treasury, whose continued presence was subject to the good will of the king. Leopold I was the ruler who decided to exploit the terms of this conditional acceptance by declaring that Jews in Hungary had to pay a forerunner of the Toleration Tax if they wished to stay. Maria Theresia, who has a historiographical reputation for her strong measures against the Jewish peoples of her lands,<sup>46</sup> merely continued and expanded upon the already existent practices of previous monarchs. Financial difficulties during the Austrian Wars of Succession made her turn to taxing Jews to produce extraordinary income in 1743.<sup>47</sup> The end of the wars and the retention of the tax converted it into a true

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<sup>44</sup> Haraszi, "A zsidóság visszatérése Magyarországra," ["The return of the Jews to Hungary,"] in *Magyarország társadalomtörténete*, [Hungarian social history], 364 and 367.

<sup>45</sup> Margit Balogh and Jenő Gergely, *Egyházak az újkori Magyarországon, 1790-1992 Adattár* [Churches in modern Hungary, 1790-1992 statistical data] (Budapest: MTA Történettudomány Intézete, 1996), 149-153, 162, and 156.

<sup>46</sup> Bruce F. Pauley, *From Prejudice to Persecution: A History of Austrian Anti-Semitism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1992), 16-17. Of special importance to Hungarian history is her expulsion of the Jews from Buda in 1746. Source: Kinga Frojimovics, Géza Komoróczy, Viktória Pusztai and Andrea Stribik, *Jewish Budapest: Monuments, Rites, History* (Budapest: CEU Press, 1999), 41.

<sup>47</sup> Some scholars attribute the tax to Maria Theresia's anti-Semitism, ie. punishment of Jews for their pro-Bavarian allegiance during the war. Source: Howard N. Lupovitch, *Jews at the*

Toleration Tax. Its amount varied due to a number of circumstances. In 1743 it was assessed per family at six forints, by 1746 it was a head tax of two forints per person, and by the time of its formal remodification in 1749 it became a set figure that was levied on Hungary and subdivided according to income tables for the counties.<sup>48</sup> It was then farmed out to local Jewish collectors who decided how much to collect from each individual family. Due to the fact that the Toleration Tax had been imposed by decree without the consent of the Diet, it was illegal according to Hungarian constitutional law, and automatically became a grievance of the estates. Many Hungarian landlords were only too happy to campaign on behalf of Jews to end the Toleration Tax, because Jews who were paying tax to the royal authorities were less likely to support the rates of *Schutzgeld* landlords demanded. Thus, the Toleration Tax was unpopular for many reasons: because of its non-application in relation to the Christian population, because it was inequitably paid within the Jewish community itself, because it impinged on noble legal rights, and because it was counterproductive to noble financial interests. It is no wonder that although the amounts demanded kept rising, its collection and payment lapsed entirely after 1828. Jews also were subject to a border tax that applied to all external and internal jurisdictions. In 1785 this tax was simplified to a one forint payment when crossing the Austro-Hungarian border. Again, since only Jews were subject to its terms, it was in essence an overtly discriminatory measure designed to lessen the immigration of poorer Jews from the east.<sup>49</sup>

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*Crossroads: Tradition and Accommodation during the Golden Age of the Hungarian Nobility 1729-1878* (Budapest: CEU Press, 2007), 38.

<sup>48</sup>Anikó Prepuk, "Zsidóemancipáció a reformkorban," ["Jewish emancipation in the age of reform,"] in *Történelmi tanulmányok III: A KLTE Történelmi Intézet kiadványa*, [Historical studies III: a publication of the KLTE historical institute], eds. Zsuzsa L. Nagy and Géza Veress (Debrecen: KLTE Historical Institute, 1994), 18 and Gonda, *A zsidóság Magyarországon*, [Jewish peoples in Hungary], 313.

<sup>49</sup>Gonda, *A zsidóság Magyarországon*, [Jewish peoples in Hungary], 315 and 46. The Toleration Tax rates (a.k.a. *kamerális taksa*) were assessed as follows: 1749: 20 000 ft, 1755: 25000 ft, 1760: 30 000 ft, 1772: 50 000 ft, 1778: 80 000 ft and 1813: 160 000 ft. Source: Ibid., 313-314.

The situation of Hungarian Jews improved with a series of decrees from Joseph II. On March 31, 1783 he asked for their school system to be expanded; that Jews have the right to attend Christian schools; that with the exception of the theological faculty Jews be allowed to attend university; for Jews to be able to rent rural property; that they be allowed to join guilds and become journeymen and master craftsmen; that with the exception of the mining cities Jews must be allowed to reside freely in the Kingdom; and that Jews had to abandon distinctive religious expressions of their faith as part of their clothing or person to ease their assimilation into society. Henceforth, they were even free to adopt accoutrements that had been the privilege of Christians alone, such as wearing swords! <sup>50</sup>

The most important aspects of the legislation pertained to freedom of movement and language. With the stipulation that Jews could live virtually anywhere in the Kingdom, the restriction that prevented their residence in the Royal Free Cities was lifted, to the great consternation of groups of guild members and city burghers. The patent also prioritized linguistic Jewish integration through the suppression of Yiddish. Depending on where Jews came from before arriving in Hungary, they spoke a different dialectic variant of Yiddish: Westslovak, Burgenland, Hungarian, or East Yiddish (Galicia).<sup>51</sup> Joseph II's patent pronouncedly opposed the "cacophony" of this linguistic variation, and stipulated that Jews use "customary languages" in courts, contracts, registers, and record keeping. In another section the aim was made more overt. There, the wording was "in order to facilitate the extinction of the Jewish languages, for the purpose of promulgating the useful languages in the territories". The ostensive justification for this measure was that greater linguistic conformity on the part of Jews would facilitate the work of

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<sup>50</sup> For the Hungarian translation of the decree: Gonda, *A zsidóság Magyarországon*, [Jewish peoples in Hungary], 261-268 Wolfdieter Bihl, "Das Judentum Ungarns, 1780-1914," in *Studia Judaica Austriaca Bd.III: Studien zum ungarischen Judentum* (Eisenstadt: Roetzer, 1976), 19.

<sup>51</sup> Bihl, "Das Judentum Ungarns, 1780-1914," in *Studia Judaica Austriaca Bd.III*, 23.

government censors, meaning they would have as little trouble dealing with material designated for the Jewish community, as was the case for other peoples. Hebrew, as a language used for religious learning, was excluded outright from these linguistic restrictions. The use of the term “useful languages” is interesting. In this case Joseph II did not require an outright prioritization of German, in place of other languages. In fact, the opening wording of the patent pertaining to the transparency of record keeping listed Hungarian, Latin, and German as possible linguistic alternatives to Yiddish in that exact order, a concession to the traditions of Hungary, and a slight deviation from the centralization (and germanization) of Joseph II’s general approach to Hungary.<sup>52</sup> A subsequent patent from July 23, 1787 ordering Jews to adopt given names and surnames had a more pronounced Germanic focus.<sup>53</sup> The only aspect of Joseph II’s Jewish patents that proved completely unacceptable to the indigenous Jewish communities was the requirement that Jewish men shave their beards in conformity with masculine fashions of the day. The objections of the Orthodox religious leaders led in short order to the rescindment of this over-extenuation of the state’s right to dictate religious piety on the male body.<sup>54</sup>

The death of Joseph II and the nullification of the majority of his decrees led groups in Hungarian society to try to scale back on the advancements the Hungarian Jewish population had made. The hostility of the burghers led the Royal Free Cities of Pest and Nagyszombat to order the expulsion of the Jews, an action that the Vice-Regal Council nullified in 1790. At the Diet of that same year, the Royal Free Cities again tried to take a stand against the economic competition that the Jewish traders represented, but the Diet voted in favour of the Jews, allowing their continued residence in the premiere

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<sup>52</sup> Gonda, *A zsidóság Magyarországon*, [Jewish peoples in Hungary], 261-262.

<sup>53</sup> Bihl, “Das Judentum Ungarns, 1780-1914,” in *Studia Judaica Austriaca Bd.III*, 19.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

cities of the realm.<sup>55</sup> Notwithstanding the fact that the Jews had received support from both royal and parliamentary authority, the cities used the terms of the law granting Jews the right to live in the Free Royal Cities against them, by prohibiting the continued residence of new Jewish immigrants to the urban centres who had settled after the cut-off date codified by the law. Lest it be assumed that one ethnic group was particularly negatively disposed towards Jews, it must be stressed that there was no constant ethnic pattern to the petitions to city councils to exclude the Jewish traders. In Arad, Magyar, German and Illyrian guild members objected to a Jewish merchant selling slacks, in Szeged German and Serbian traders did not want Jews to open shops, in Kassa, the German and Magyar guilds rallied against the “untrained” Hebrew tailors, while in the capital of Pozsony there was a long history of German and Slovak guild members and business owners trying to restrict Jews to their settlements outside of the city walls. These instances proved that the source of the objection was primarily economical, that guild members and merchants were actually uniting against their business competition in order to maintain their advantageous commercial positions within the city.<sup>56</sup> With some exceptions, the council members of the Royal Free Cities were able to interpret the law to serve their interests until 1840. In so doing they kept out many Jewish business competitors and limited the buying options of the Hungarian public.<sup>57</sup>

The other striking aspect of the law of 1791 was the acknowledgement that the legal protection of Jewish inhabitants needed to be addressed, because it envisaged a

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<sup>55</sup> Gonda, *A zsidóság Magyarországon*, [Jewish peoples in Hungary], 48 and 50. Jews could remain in Royal Free Cities if they had settled there before January 1, 1790. Source: Dezső Márkus, ed., “Law 1790 Article 38,” *1740-1835. évi törvénycikkek*, Magyar törvénytár [The laws of 1740-1835, Corpus juris hungarici], 187.

<sup>56</sup> Géza Eperjessy, “Zsidó iparűzők a reformkori szabad királyi városokban,” [“Jewish traders in the royal free cities during the age of reform,”] *Századok* [Centuries] Vol. 117 No.4 (1983): 715, 724, 729 and 730.

<sup>57</sup> Prepuk, “Zsidóemancipáció a reformkorban,” [“Jewish emancipation in the age of reform,”] in *Történelmi tanulmányok III* [Historical studies III], 18.



“central commission” to investigate their affairs and offer recommendations.<sup>58</sup>

Simultaneous to the acknowledgement that something had to be done was the delay of this necessary discussion to a vaguely specified “subsequent Diet”. This deferral demonstrated a lack of urgency on the part of legislators toward Jewish grievances. The fact that neither the Diet nor the King were particularly keen to apply pressure to the cities or legislatively to ensure Jews at least enjoyed some key rights of the non-noble Christian population indicated their somewhat ambivalent attitude in relation to greater Jewish emancipation. Ambivalence on the part of the King and Diet toward Jews may have been a general pattern, but it was not the entire story. The need for Jewish manpower and specialized skills, particularly during the wars, led to new openings that aided their social integration. For example, Jews were allowed to receive diplomas in medicine at the University of Buda from 1782 onwards, and after 1807 were granted the right to serve in the Austro-Hungarian military.<sup>59</sup> However much Hungarian legislators may have wanted to retain the *status quo* in relation to the country’s Jews, society was undergoing transformation, and as a component part of this society, Hungarian Jews were a part of this process of change.

### **Jewish Religious and Linguistic Affiliations in the Reform Era**

The Jewish community in Hungary in the early nineteenth century was diverse. They differentiated themselves by geographic origin as from the *oberland* (Jews from western Hungarian counties) or the *unterland* (originating from the north-east counties). Geographic classifications tended to branch into other categories, as the Jews from the west of the country often were more likely to adopt prevailing lifestyles, dress, cultural customs and linguistic patterns of the segments of Hungarian society that surrounded

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<sup>58</sup> Márkus, ed., “Law 1790 Article 38,” *1740-1835. évi törvénycikkek*, Magyar törvénytár [The laws of 1740-1835, Corpus juris hungarici], 187.

<sup>59</sup> Bihl, “Das Judentum Ungarns, 1780-1914,” in *Studia Judaica Austriaca Bd.III*, 20.

them. Jews from the east were culturally more disposed toward utilizing these same attributes and customs to demonstrate their adherence to tradition. The heart of Orthodoxy was in the capital of Pozsony, where Rabbi Chátám Szofér (a.k.a. Moses Schreiber) (1762-1839) presided over his yeshiva with an iron fist, opposing the ideas of the Jewish Enlightenment, embourgeoisement and magyarization as contrary to the Talmud. Chátám Szofér left his birthplace near Frankfurt in order to find and to found Jewish communities more in keeping with his conservative values in more eastern regions of Europe.<sup>60</sup> In Pozsony, a reform movement within Judaism led by Wolf Breisach challenged Szofér's grasp on power, and recorded such gains as the organization of a primary school, a society for productivization and a yeshiva. These advances were destroyed in one fell swoop as the Orthodox Bettelheim, Pappenheim and Guttman families suddenly inherited a fortune, and Breisach died without warning.<sup>61</sup> Conditions were then in place for Orthodox Judaism and the Szofér family dynasty to rule on in Pozsony for the greater part of the nineteenth century.<sup>62</sup> Other famous advocates of Conservative Judaism in Hungary were Mózes Teitelbaum (1759-1841), who made Sátoraljaújhely a centre for Hasidic teaching and was legendary for his reputed powers to cure the sick. There was also Mózes Müncz (circa 1750-1831), Rabbi of Óbuda. Müncz tried to extend his jurisdiction without success to Pest, and was known for his brook-no-opposition attitude, that did not even shirk from issuing sentences involving being tied and displayed in public or open-air beatings.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> Ferenc Orbán, *A magyarországi ortodox zsidóság története* [The history of Hungarian Orthodox Judaism] (Budapest: Makkabi, 2006), 8-9, 17-19.

<sup>61</sup> Michael Silber, "The Historical Experience of German Jewry and Its Impact on Haskalah and Reform in Hungary," in *Toward Modernity: The European Jewish Model*, ed. Jacob Katz (New Brunswick: Transaction Books, 1987), 120 and 150.

<sup>62</sup> Orbán, *A magyarországi ortodox zsidóság története*, [The history of Hungarian Orthodox Judaism], 25-26.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 22-25.

The *Haskalah* that began among Jews in the German lands took on a form that came to be known as Neology in the Hungarian context. One main proponent of the idea of adapting the religion and customs of Judaism to the nineteenth-century spirit of the times was Aaron Chorin (1766-1844), Rabbi of Arad from 1789. Chorin advocated liturgical modification and the incorporation of non-traditional elements such as organ music into Sabbath observance.<sup>64</sup> Lipót Löw (1811-1875), Rabbi in the community of Nagykanizsa, was willing to go much further than Chorin. Löw openly admonished Chorin for his hesitant position, and urged that open co-operation with a progressive government would be in the interest of Hungarian Jews.<sup>65</sup> If there was an equivalent to the Orthodox bastion of Pozsony for the Neologue Jews of Hungary, it was Pest. Gabriel Ullmann brought the Viennese reform rite to the urban centre to a synagogue and school that he established. The use of prayers, choir singing, organ music, recitation of the Torah instead of ritual chanting, and a sermon in German were included in the ritual and curriculum. When Löw Schwab (1794-1857) took over the Pest rabbinate he modified Ullman's institutional innovations in favour of a compromise between reform and tradition, but still maintained the community's generally modern form.<sup>66</sup> Other Rabbis were similarly eager to blend Neology with Orthodoxy. Moses Ezekiel Fischmann, Rabbi of Miskolc between the 1830s and 1860s, acquiesced in having a choir and raised platform at the front of the synagogue, but drew the line at introducing an organ and removing the barrier between men and women during the Sabbath services.<sup>67</sup> The divisions between the Neologue and Orthodox camps came to a head in August 1844,

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<sup>64</sup> William O. McCagg Jr., *A History of Habsburg Jews, 1670-1918* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989), 128.

<sup>65</sup> Wolfgang Häusler, "Assimilation und Emanzipation des ungarischen Judentums um die Mitte des 19. Jahrhunderts," in *Studia Judaica Austriaca Bd.III: Studien zum ungarischen Judentum* (Eisenstadt: Roetzer, 1976), 40-41.

<sup>66</sup> Silber, "The Historical Experience of German Jewry and Its Impact on Haskalah," in *Toward Modernity*, 123-124.

<sup>67</sup> Howard Lupovitch, "Between Orthodox Judaism and Neology: The Origins of the Status Quo Movement," *Jewish Social Studies, New Series* Vol. 9 No.2 (Winter 2003): 129.

when the two sides agreed to meet at a conference of Rabbis in Bács in Southern Hungary. There, the modernizing stream in Judaism was voted down by the Orthodox majority.<sup>68</sup>

Both groups would live to fight another day, with the deep cleft between them remaining unresolved until the end of the Hungarian monarchy. Before that time, in 1870, the Hungarian government and Jewish leaders themselves asked all Jewish communities to affiliate with one of the two directions in Hungarian Judaism. To the consternation of all, it was discovered that a third classification of Jews did not wish to be affixed to either position, and in true Hungarian fashion they became known as *Status quo ante* Jews. Although they only comprised 5-6% of the Jewish population between 1880-1910, their precise numbers before then are unknown. They may have predated Neology and Orthodoxy in the reform era,<sup>69</sup> may have assimilated aspects of their programmes, or may have functioned as a reaction against them.

Hungarian Jewish linguistic association during the reform era, like the question of precise religious affiliation, becomes just as complex upon closer examination. The Orthodox groupings around men such as Szófer tended to hold on to the retention of Yiddish, and purposely turned against the adoption of Hungarian or High German in their religious life.<sup>70</sup> Rabbis who were committed to bringing *Haskalah* reforms to Hungary opted for German as the language of Sabbath services.<sup>71</sup> Jews who received higher educational training learned standard German, and this opened the door to the German

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<sup>68</sup> Häusler, "Assimilation und Emanzipation des ungarischen Judentums," in *Studia Judaica Austriaca Bd.III*, 55-56.

<sup>69</sup> Lupovitch, "Between Orthodox Judaism and Neology," *Jewish Social Studies, New Series*: 124 and 127.

<sup>70</sup> Orbán, *A magyarországi ortodox zsidóság története*, [The history of Hungarian Orthodox Judaism], 16.

<sup>71</sup> Häusler, "Assimilation und Emanzipation des ungarischen Judentums," in *Studia Judaica Austriaca Bd.III*, 40.

press and social-literary culture of Western Europe.<sup>72</sup> Burghers and guild members, whether Germans or members of another ethnic affiliation, often opted for German as the common language of communication in the Royal Free Cities, and their antipathy to the Jewish elements in the Kingdom has already been noted.<sup>73</sup> Despite being fluent in Yiddish, Hungarian Jews may not have felt kinship with their religious counterparts in the west, due to the trade restrictions successive kings imposed on Hungarian commerce. In fact, dissatisfaction with the government in Vienna over trade policy remains a long-standing historiographical thesis in explanation of voluntary magyarization, in relation to Jews and other ethnic groups.<sup>74</sup> Jews initially settled along the Hungarian frontier in border counties populated predominantly by non-Hungarian peoples. Their later migration to the centre counties, greater urbanization, exposure to Hungarian state education and enthusiastic integration of Magyar into their daily lives were all parallel developments.<sup>75</sup>

### **The Reform-Era Diets and Opinion on Jewish Integration**

In her 2004 dissertation Janet Elizabeth Kerekes looked at the attitudes of Hungarian politicians toward Jews and the question of extension of greater civil and religious equality toward them, including some sections dealing with the first half of the nineteenth century. She found that during this time politicians could be broadly separated into three categories on the issue: one segment advocating emancipation as a human right, a second grouping tying more social mobility to Jewish willingness to engage in greater magyarization, and a third die-hard element opposing the likelihood of Jewish and

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<sup>72</sup> Silber, "The Historical Experience of German Jewry and Its Impact on Haskalah," in *Toward Modernity*, 134-136.

<sup>73</sup> Please see page 272.

<sup>74</sup> Endre Arató, *A feudális nemzetiségtől a polgári nemzetig: a magyarországi nem magyar népek nemzeti ideológiájának előzményei* [From feudal nationality to civic nation: the origins of the national ideologies of the non-Magyar peoples of Hungary] (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1975), 65.

<sup>75</sup> Orbán, *A magyarországi ortodox zsidóság története*, [The history of Hungarian Orthodox Judaism], 14-15 and McCagg Jr., *A History of Habsburg Jews*, 135.

Hungarian integration outright, for various reasons.<sup>76</sup> While the overall pattern to this categorization is sound, it must be borne in mind that adherence to the first and third patterns of thinking did not preclude sympathizing and supporting the second. In essence, they were not mutually exclusive categories. Imagining the degree to which Magyar culture could include or exclude Jews reverberated back on these politicians. When looking at this question on its own, reform-era politicians with reputations for liberal politics can come across as illiberal, while those with reputations for intransigence in nationalist historiographies become more tolerant of difference.

Even as early as the 1832-1836 Diet, there are many examples of politicians who made humanitarian pleas for greater Jewish civic emancipation. These pleas were often embedded in debates on other topics, instead of being granted their own distinctive platform. József Siskovics of Baranya County made clear that his instructions regarding Jews were that they obtain “complete freedom”, while Sándor Császár of Temes listed the elimination of the Toleration Tax to aid the embourgeoisement of Jews as one of four desired points that needed codification in law.<sup>77</sup> Ödön Beöthy was included in this grouping. In a debate on the tithe, he remarked that it was ironic that the Catholic Church, having done so much to exclude Jewish people from civil society, eagerly collected this tax, which was derived from an ancient Jewish custom.<sup>78</sup> István Bezerédj, true to his

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<sup>76</sup> Janet Elizabeth Kerekes, “Masked Ball at the White Cross Café: The Failure of Jewish Assimilation in Post-Emancipation Hungary,” (Ph.D.diss., University of Toronto, 2004), 146-147.

<sup>77</sup> “1833 április 2, Tárgy: A főrendek vallásos viszontizetetének megvitatása,” [“April 2, 1833, topic: debate on the upper house’s reply to the proposed religious law,”] *Országgyűlési tudósítások I, 1832 december 17-1833 augusztus 4* [Dietal reports I, December 17, 1832-August 4, 1833] Vol.31 *Kossuth Lajos összes munkái* [The complete works of Lajos Kossuth] CD-ROM (Budapest: Arcanum, 2002) and “1833 április 11, Tárgy: A vallás ügyben a főrendekhez intézendő második ikenet vitája,” [“April 11, 1833, topic: debate surrounding the second response to the upper house concerning the religious matter,”] *Országgyűlési tudósítások I, 1832 december 17-1833 augusztus 4* [Dietal reports I, December 17, 1832-August 4, 1833] Vol.34 *Kossuth Lajos összes munkái* [The complete works of Lajos Kossuth] CD-ROM (Budapest: Arcanum, 2002).

<sup>78</sup> “A dézsma kérdésnek berekesztése,” [“The end of the question of the tenth,”] *Országgyűlési tudósítások V, 1834 augusztus 27-1836 május 2* [Dietal reports V, August 27, 1834-May 2, 1836] Vol.300 *Kossuth Lajos összes munkái* [The complete works of Lajos Kossuth] CD-ROM (Budapest: Arcanum, 2002)

character, made one of the most overtly humanitarian speeches on behalf of the Jews, and went further than almost anyone else, in gently reprimanding other members of parliament for anti-Semitic attitudes:

...in any respect it is problematic to attack a people who cannot defend themselves. It would be better for the law to concentrate on the betterment of the situation of the Jews, who have been quietly suffering amongst us for centuries. The cause lies in our civic institutions, that bear down on these people in a deplorably unjust system. These injustices become fodder for bitter accusatory arguments (that are counterproductive) because the accusatory arrow strongly rebounds on those who create the situation.<sup>79</sup>

To those who held such beliefs, his speech remained unconvincing. K. Horváth thought that Jews “were a class of people in opposition to the interests of society,” an allusion to the perceived negative role of Jews in Hungarian commerce. Antal Marczibányi of Trencsén thought that Jewish pub keepers were threatening impoverished nobles who tried to make a living in the same chosen profession because “in want of profits, they offer better wine at cheaper prices”.<sup>80</sup> Then there were those who had deeper-seated resentments. Pál Nagy blamed the Jews for cheating and stealing during the wars, and using their ill-gotten gains to buy cattle. In contrast, war veterans returned with nothing but wounds and were not even allowed to purchase tax-free property. On one day, the Bishop of Nyitra, József Vurum, even described a “nightmare scenario” concerning the question of transferring property rights to serfs. Lords would not be able

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<sup>79</sup> “Az úrbéri 2-ik válasz iránti második izenetet a KK és RR országos ülésben jóváhagyják,” [“The estates and orders general assembly accepts the second response to the second reply on the urbarium,”] *Országgyűlési tudósítások V, 1834 augusztus 27-1836 május 2* [Dietal reports V, August 27, 1834- May 2, 1836] Vol.252 *Kossuth Lajos összes munkái* [The complete works of Lajos Kossuth] CD-ROM (Budapest: Arcanum, 2002).

<sup>80</sup> “Tárgy: Az Urbaliale folytatása,” [“Topic: continuation of the urbaliale,”] *Országgyűlési tudósítások I, 1832 december 17-1833 augusztus 4* [Dietal reports I, December 17, 1832-August 4, 1833] Vol.37 *Kossuth Lajos összes munkái* [The complete works of Lajos Kossuth] CD-ROM (Budapest: Arcanum, 2002) and “Tárgy: Az urbalialis bormérés vitájának folytatása,” [“Topic: the continuation of debate of the urbalial right to measure wine,”] *Országgyűlési tudósítások II, 1833 augusztus 5-1834 március 24* [Dietal reports II, August 5, 1833- March 24, 1834] Vol.69 *Kossuth Lajos összes munkái* [The complete works of Lajos Kossuth] CD-ROM (Budapest: Arcanum, 2002).

to cultivate their lands without free labour. Jews and usurers would take over the vacated properties, the governing lord would be a shadow of his former self, depopulation would set in, impoverishment would become generalized and *worst of all*, a poor law would have to be instituted following the English example.<sup>81</sup> There was a measure of hypocrisy in these statements. All of these invectives opposing capitalism, sympathizing with suffering sandaled nobles and defending the “poor taxpaying people” were ironically out of place spoken by those who were atop the feudal hierarchy and who benefited economically from the unpaid labour of others.

The Diet was a public and theatrical forum, so for true insight into how select politicians from the opposition viewed Jewish civic emancipation and magyarization, it is best to combine this evidence with material from other forums. What people say has to be juxtaposed to what they think privately and do, in order to gain a fuller understanding of their greater belief system. For example, Steven Bela Vardy thought that in relation to Jews “...there was only one voice raised for their unconditional emancipation in the name of justice, freedom and equality: the voice of Baron Joseph Eötvös.”<sup>82</sup> Vardy had in mind Eötvös’ ground-breaking political tract *A zsidók emancipációja* [The Emancipation of the Jews],<sup>83</sup> that first appeared in the pages of the *Budapest Szemle* [Budapest Review] in 1840 and in German translation shortly thereafter. Eötvös’s book was instrumental in refuting anti-Semitic discourse with logical reasoning about the positive influence of

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<sup>81</sup>“A November 10-i országos vitáinak további ismertetése,” [“Further information on the plenary debate of November 10,”] *Országgyűlési tudósítások III, 1834 március 25- november 29* [Dietal reports III, March 25, 1834-November 29] Vol.196. *Kossuth Lajos összes munkái* [The complete works of Lajos Kossuth] CD-ROM (Budapest: Arcanum, 2002) and “1833 november 2. A főrendek ülése,” [“November 2, 1833. The sitting of the upper house,”] *Országgyűlési tudósítások II, 1833 augusztus 5-1834 március 24* [Dietal reports II, August 5, 1833- March 24, 1834] Vol.91. *Kossuth Lajos összes munkái* [The complete works of Lajos Kossuth] CD-ROM (Budapest: Arcanum, 2002).

<sup>82</sup> Steven Bela Vardy, “The Origins of Jewish Emancipation in Hungary: The Role of Baron Joseph Eötvös,” *Ungarn Jahrbuch* Band 7 (1976): 144.

<sup>83</sup> József Eötvös, *A zsidók emancipációja* [The emancipation of the Jews] (reprint, Budapest: M. Ráth, 1892) and József Eötvös, *Die Emancipation der Juden*, trans. Hermann Klein (Pesth: Heckenast, 1841).



Jews on Hungarian society. He would be able to turn these liberal views into religious equality legislation during his second political incarnation as Minister for Religion and Schools from 1867-1871 when Hungary won home rule following the Austro-Hungarian compromise. However, Eötvös' egalitarianism has to be set alongside his advocacy of Magyar culture. His literary efforts included accentuation of Magyar, and he wrote such statements as: "I do not know of a greater cause than the maintenance of our nationality," and "(o)ur language, that is the language of law, that will be the language of education in short time, that has a propensity to establish itself among the more educated classes day-by-day, will establish its victory under these circumstances..."<sup>84</sup> Eötvös combined support of the Magyar cause with his call for Jewish emancipation by giving influential social assistance to Jews who were inclined toward a more secular approach toward Judaism and who were willing to learn Magyar. Moritz Bloch (magyarized: Mór Ballagi) is the famous example here. Producing a Magyar Torah and urging Jewish magyarization was enough for Eötvös to engineer his election as the first Jew to the bastion of Hungarian academia, the Academy of Sciences. The cultural prestige of this achievement was a remarkable feat for a man denied the opportunity to matriculate because of his religion. Flushed with success, Ballagi became so committed to Hungarian culture that he converted to the "Magyar faith," and spent the rest of his life writing, lecturing and living as a Calvinist theologian and writer of books on Magyar linguistics.<sup>85</sup> He would represent a typology of the cultural convert who was more committed to Magyar life and ways than someone who had been born and raised as one. The ideological perpetuation of magyarization in the second half of the nineteenth century would be aided by people of Ballagi's stamp, especially when they occupied pivotal governmental positions.

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<sup>84</sup> József Eötvös, *Reform* (Budapest: Révai Testvérek, 1902), 150 and 151.

<sup>85</sup> Vardy, "The Origins of Jewish Emancipation in Hungary," *Ungarn Jahrbuch*: 154 and William O. McCagg, Jr., "Jewish Conversion in Hungary in Modern Times," in *Jewish Apostasy in the Modern World*, ed. Todd M. Endelman (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1987), 150-151.

Another liberal politician associated with the concept of Jewish equality was Ödön Beöthy. In 1833, when Széchenyi's gentleman casino inspired the establishment of a local chapter in Nagyvárád, Beöthy played a part in its development, and often sat on the governing board before being elected to its presidency in 1848. True to the intention that various classes would interact more freely within its confines than in general society, Beöthy was instrumental in opening the casino's doors to Jews in equal measure to their representation in the area. The Nagyvárád casino was even exceptional in comparison to casinos in other places in Hungary not only because it admitted Jews, which was not the case everywhere, but because it elected Jews to governing positions. Dr. Hermann Pollák (Vice-Director in 1839; later librarian and accountant) and Salamon Reich (Board Member in 1841) both benefited from these policies. Beöthy also supported motions at the 1839-1840 and 1843-1844 Diets for Jewish emancipation.<sup>86</sup> News of Beöthy's willingness to work to lessen social discrimination against Jews reached the ears of a portion of the community in Pest. In 1848, Dr. Fülöp Jacobovics, the president of the Pest Society for the Dissemination of the Magyar Language among Native Israelites sent Beöthy a commemorative letter for his efforts to foster "...material and intellectual progress, to be a champion of political and religious freedom, that every Hungarian of Mosaic faith is indebted to recognize, with gratitude pouring out from the heart."<sup>87</sup> Beöthy may have believed in Jewish emancipation as a right, but even he had doubts that their complete magyarization and integration in Hungarian society was possible. Ironically, for someone whose own education had been truncated, he once lamented that

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<sup>86</sup> In 1847, there were 13 Jews out of 245 members belonging to the Nagyvárád casino. Source: Michael K. Silber, "A zsidók társadalmi befogadása Magyarországon a reformkorban, a ' kaszinók'," ["The integration of Jews into Hungarian society in the reform era, 'the casinos',"] *Századok* [Centuries] Vol.1 No.126 (1992): 125.

<sup>87</sup> *A honi izraeliták között magyar nyelvet terjesztő pesti egylettől, Tekintetes nemes és vitézlő Beöthy Ödön urnak...* [From the Pest society for the dissemination of the Magyar language among native Israelites to the respectable, noble, valiant gentleman Ödön Beöthy...] MOL Beöthy iratok [Beöthy documents] P 1756.

Jews did not receive impetus to learn. To be fair, he connected this deficiency to lack of access to the professions, and latent social fears that Jews would economically outperform Christians, and not to any innate genetic shortcomings of Hungarian Jews themselves.<sup>88</sup>

There were other reform-era Hungarian politicians with more pronounced historical reputations for being magyarizers than Beöthy, and who were similarly advocates of Jewish emancipation. Count Károly Zay (1797-1871) was an excellent case in point. When Zay became General Inspector of Lutheran Churches and Schools in Hungary in 1840 he instituted a programme that included a magyarization component, much to the dismay of many upper Hungarian Slovak school boards. In 1841, he further alienated this community of people with his support for the union of the two primary Protestant denominations in Hungary, which threatened to tip the balance in favour of a Magyar-speaking majority within Hungarian Protestantism.<sup>89</sup> Regardless of the insensitivity and injustice of his proposed religious reforms in relation to ethnic Slovaks, Zay was not motivated by religious discrimination. Not only did Zay campaign for what he believed would be a Protestant revival, but he actively defended the rights of other religious groups for their own autonomy within the state, including the Jews. As illustration of this point, it must be recalled that at the Diet of 1839-1840 Count Zay spoke enthusiastically in support of Jewish emancipation in the Upper House. In ideological agreement with Bezerédj's humanitarian stance, he raised four commonly held prejudices often cited against granting Jews civic rights, and then proceeded to refute

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<sup>88</sup> Béneyi, "Beöthy Ödön művelődéspolitikai nézetei," ["Ödön Beöthy's views on cultural politics,"] *A Hajdú-Bihar Megyei LevéltárÉvkönyve* [Yearbook of the Hajdú-Bihar county archives]: 31.

<sup>89</sup> Valéria Fukári, *Felső-magyarországi főúri családok. A Zayak és rokonaik. 16-19. század* [Upper Hungarian magnate families. The Zay family and their relatives. 16<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> centuries] (Pozsony: Kalligram, 2008), 123 and 125. For the ramifications of Zay's magyarization ideology in relation to Slovaks instead of Jews please consult: Alexander Mark Maxwell, "Choosing Slovakia (1795-1914): Slavic Hungary, the Czech Language and Slovak Nationalism" (Ph. D. diss., University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2003), 48-49.

them. The most intriguing segments of his speech related to his conceptions of Jewish linguistic and national allegiance. One of the allegations that he attempted to refute was that Jews endangered the Hungarian homeland and its constitution because "...they would unite themselves with the residual burghers of German origin, being in closest contact with them, and would suppress our just awakened sense for nationality...." This charge was ridiculous for two reasons. First, he wondered "...is it not a narrow-minded, unsustainable claim that the immigration of a few thousand oppressed, homeless Jews could endanger our nationality?" Secondly, Zay believed that the Jews were not so wedded to German culture as to be closed to the prospect of magyarization. In time "(t)he old Jew will die, and the new Jewish citizen will rise up, who will either be entirely Magyar, or will extend a handshake of brotherly understanding over the altar of friendship." In Zay's reasoning, language would not be the determining factor hindering brotherly union between Jews and Magyars. The worrisome aspect of Jewish-Magyar difference was the extent of their secularization. The opening words of his speech likened Jewish Orthodoxy to fanaticism and "the chains of the Jews"; to remove these chains and to aim for their embourgeoisement was "a sacred duty for cavaliers of progress".<sup>90</sup>

Lajos Kossuth was the person who combined magyarization ambitions with the potential Hungary's Jews could offer the cause with most finesse. In his youth, he wrote more stereotypically on the Jewish presence, blaming Jewish innkeepers for the hunger, indebtedness and poverty of peasants.<sup>91</sup> By 1846, the Secret Service received reports about Kossuth and was greatly alarmed about Jewish enthusiasm for the organizations that he spearheaded, for others that favoured the Hungarian opposition, and for their receptivity toward Magyar culture over tried-and-true adherence to German.

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<sup>90</sup> "Graf Carl Zay's Rede rücksichtlich der Emancipation der Israeliten; gehalten auf dem Reichstag 1839/40," in *Protestantismus, Magyarismus, Slavismus. Als Antwort auf die gegen den Grafen Carl Zay Generalinspector der evangelischen Kirchen und Schulen A.G. in Ungarn erschienene Schrift* (Leipzig: Georg Wigand, 1841), 47-49.

<sup>91</sup> Vardy, "The Origins of Jewish Emancipation in Hungary," *Ungarn Jahrbuch*: 144.

Ödön Beöthy, Gábor Klauzál, István Bezerédj, Count Gedeon Ráday And Lajos Kossuth are said to have made an agreement with the heads of the very substantial Jewish community in Hungary, promising the possibility of emancipation, if they magyarize completely. As a consequence, in the Jewish households of Pest, only Hungarian is spoken, only the Hungarian Theatre is patronized, and everything German is shunned. The literary Gazette “der Ungar”, whose editor Klein is also an Israelite, and who is hostile to all things German, has no appeal.<sup>92</sup> All educated Israelites are members of the Protection and Circle associations, and think that the advantages gained in 1840<sup>93</sup> are the work of the opposition party, and they must repay them with their talent and money.

The recently founded Israelite association “For the Advancement of Industry and of Agriculture” credits the opposition party benefits. It would be prudent to think of strategies so that the Israelites do not go over completely to the side of the opposition, and become entrenched opponents of Germandom.<sup>94</sup>

No doubt the secret service agent who formulated this brief exaggerated the picture of concord between the very diverse Hungarian Jewish communities, Kossuth and other leading opposition politicians in order to magnify the value of his report, methods and role. There was a fine line between Jewish support through acceptable venues such as the press and associations and through monetary means. The accusation that oppositional politicians had accepted Jewish funding for political, personal or financial gain was something that could be used to sully their professional reputations.<sup>95</sup>

Kossuth put forth in a newspaper article on Jewish emancipation that he wished for a reformation within Hungarian Judaism towards greater secularization in conjunction

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<sup>92</sup> The reference is to Hermann Klein who shortly after magyarized his name to János Kilényi and converted to Lutheranism. Source: Béla Kempelen, *Magyar zsidó családok II* [Hungarian Jewish families II] (Budapest: Makkabi, 1999), 57.

<sup>93</sup> The nature of this law is explained on pages 288 and 289.

<sup>94</sup> “Függelék: A besúgó jelentések alapján Sedlniczky rendőrminiszter által készített ‘Informations-Protocolle’ Kossuthal és az ellenzék szervezkedésével foglalkozó részei az 1845 elejétől az országgyűlés kezdetéig,” [“Appendix: secret service reports for police minister Sedlniczky’s ‘informations-protocolle’ pertaining to Kossuth and the activities of the opposition from the beginning of 1845 until the start of the diet,”] Vol.60. *Kossuth Lajos összes munkái XI* [The complete works of Lajos Kossuth XI] *Kossuth Lajos összes munkái* [The complete works of Lajos Kossuth] CD-ROM (Budapest: Arcanum, 2002).

<sup>95</sup> At the 1843-1844 Diet Beöthy and Klauzál were publically accused of being “Jewish agents” who had been bribed with 50 000 pieces of gold. Source: Ballagi, *A nemzet államalkotás kora, 1815-1847*, [The age of national state formation, 1815-1847], 579. Zay refused to accept Jewish loans for his glass factory in Zsitna and his felt factory in Zayugróc for fear it would become a political liability. Source: Fukári, *Felső-magyarországi főúri családok*, [Upper Hungarian magnate families], 120.

with Jewish magyarization. In the May 5, 1844 article penned by Gábor Fábíán, he tied the success of Jewish emancipation to liberalization of Jewish-Christian marriage, at a time when hammering out details of Catholic-Protestant intermarriage took over a decade to bring to legislative fruition!<sup>96</sup> This radical idea might have looked toward a vision of Magyar culture that was down the road, but it alienated a large portion of Hungary's Jewish population, who adhered to Orthodox values. Kossuth made his position even clearer when he linked Hungarian integration to the pre-condition of Judaic reform. He added the rebuttal to Lipót Löw's reply to the Pest News article mentioned above that "...Jews will not be socially emancipated, even if they already enjoy political emancipation...these obstacles can only be removed by Jews themselves and not the legal system and not the government."<sup>97</sup> This stance put Kossuth squarely in the camp of those who supported magyarization of Jews, but who feared that there was fundamental incompatibility between Jewish Orthodoxy and Magyar culture.

On the other side of the issue were those politicians who opposed the possibility of Jewish integration in Hungarian society. Their adherence to this position did not preclude them from having magyarizing sentiments. They merely thought that despite all effort on the part of Jews and non-Jews alike, full Jewish assimilation would not be attainable. The best exemplar of this line of reasoning was Széchenyi. He motioned in favour of permitting Jews to join the casino gentlemen's clubs that he founded, a

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<sup>96</sup> Gábor Fábíán, "Zsidó emancipatio," ["Jewish emancipation,"] *Pesti Hirlap* [Pest news] 5 May 1844, No. 349, *Kossuth hirlapírói munkássága*, [Kossuth's journalistic activity,] CD-ROM. The controversy surrounding Catholic-Protestant mixed marriages and other issues related to Protestant civil rights in the reform era are the subject of the next chapter.

<sup>97</sup> Leopold Löw, "Nyílt levél a' zsidó emancipation ügyében," ["Open letter concerning the matter of Jewish emancipation,"] *Pesti Hirlap* [Pest news] 2 June 1844, No. 357, *Kossuth hirlapírói munkássága*, [Kossuth's journalistic activity,] CD-ROM. There is more detail on the Kossuth-Löw exchange in Lajos Venetianer, *A magyar zsidóság története a honfoglalástól a világháborúkitöréséig: különös tekintettel gazdasági és művelődési fejlődésre* [The history of Hungarian Jews from the conquest to the outbreak of the world war: with special emphasis on economic and cultural developments] (Budapest, 1922), 151-153.

suggestion that was voted down with little support.<sup>98</sup> Yet, at other times, he objected to Jews on the basis of their alleged adherence to Germandom and almost racial-tinged conception that their magyarization would initiate a “dilution of Magyardom”. These comments from such a revered personage provided reference material for generations of anti-Semitic Hungarians, as has been well documented.<sup>99</sup>

Less well known is someone such as Fáy, who looked up to Széchenyi so much that he wrote a series of articles on his involvement in the political meetings of Pest County, and whose recollection of a particular meeting on Jewish emancipation was as follows:

Pest County was always exceptional in its avowal of liberal values. Its speakers engaged in competition over the matter. Therefore, it is not worthy of wonder, that sometimes they went overboard. I remember at one meeting a couple of people motioned that Israelites gain full emancipation and equality in everything with the other (non-noble) inhabitants of the country. I made the suggestion, that for the time being we should do less. We should wish for the attainable, rather than so much that is not possible, and which we know in advance will not pass, and will squash even the smallest progress. At my suggestion it was whispered in my ear: we know just as well, that nothing will come of the resolution, but let Pest County have the glory, that it was the first to consider the idea.<sup>100</sup>

Four members out of twelve of the governing board of Fáy’s bank were Jewish.<sup>101</sup> Not only did he scorn the idea that Jewish emancipation in Pest County could be realized, but he claimed to have played an instrumental role in its limitation at the very moment of its inception.

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<sup>98</sup> Silber, “A zsidók társadalmi befogadása Magyarországon,” [“The integration of Jews into Hungarian society,”] *Századok* [Centuries]: 118-119.

<sup>99</sup> Evans, “Progress and Emancipation in Hungary,” *Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook*: 60 and George Barany, “‘Magyar Jew or Jewish Magyar?’ Reflections on the Question of Assimilation,” in *Jews and Non-Jews in Eastern Europe*, eds., Bela Vago and George L. Mosse (Jerusalem: Israel Universities Press, 1974): 57.

<sup>100</sup> András Fáy, *Gróf Széchenyi István Pestmegyei működése* [Count István Széchenyi’s involvement in the affairs of Pest county] (1862; reprint Budapest: Wodianer, 1925), 27.

<sup>101</sup> Prepuk, “Zsidóemancipáció a reformkorban,” [“Jewish emancipation in the age of reform,”] in *Történelmi tanulmányok III*, [Historical studies III], 25.

If these were some of the opinions of leading political figures on the left and centre of the political spectrum, then it is not hard to see why full political emancipation for Jews in Hungary was not enacted in legislation during any reform era Diet. To be fair, both houses did pass resolutions for a broader law, but in 1840 the King watered down what he was prepared to grant. By 1843-1844 the Upper House was again willing to acquiesce in a broader law, but demanded immigration restrictions on Jews including wealth requirements (2000 ft-10 000 ft in assets), registration with the authorities, longer-term settlement in the country *and* knowledge of Magyar. These discriminatory policies were designed to attract wealthy Hungarian citizens instead of the refugees from east and west who began to be seen as contributing too little to national economic development. Opponents of Jewish emancipation received a free gift when Orthodox Jews submitted a petition to the Diet objecting to legal integration on the basis that Palestine was their homeland and not Hungary. A compromise arose, but when the King closed the session with no reply to the proposal of both houses, then the law was put on ice.<sup>102</sup>

The 1840 law pertaining to Hungarian Jews represented nearly the extent of what constituted Jewish emancipation in Hungary during the reform era. It opened the Royal Free Cities to Jewish settlement, but kept the restriction against the mining centres in place, and had a huge loophole that residence was only possible "...if there was no proven, substantial objection to their moral comportment". The rest of the law granted more leniency to pursue commerce, establish factories and compete with the guilds "even using the assistance of journeymen of their religion" (imprecise phrasing that helped guarantee existing guilds maintain segregationist policies) and reiterated the need to be consistent in their use of names, registering births in official record books, and writing

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<sup>102</sup> János Gyurgyák, *A zsidókérdés Magyarországon* [The Hungarian Jewish question] (Budapest: Osiris, 2001), 45-47.



contracts and diplomas using “customary living languages”.<sup>103</sup> Since the latter provisions were repetitions of earlier laws, they indicate resistance and non-compliance on the part of groups within the Hungarian Jewish community. In 1847 King Ferdinand V (1835-1848) made a special deal with Hungarian Jews to abolish the Toleration Tax if they paid the two and a half million forints that was outstanding since payments had ceased in 1828. Palatine Joseph’s intervention reduced the sum to 1.2 million,<sup>104</sup> and even this amount might have been waived had not Jewish involvement in the Hungarian independence war made the royal authorities determined to exact punishment and their due. Although the collected money went to a Jewish education fund,<sup>105</sup> resolution of the Toleration Tax through extra-parliamentary means reinforced the concept that Hungarian Jews were unlike other citizens, and still were beholden to the personal good will of the king.

### **The Double Barrier: Jewish Responses to the New Magyar Culture**

Currently, there are too few studies of how Hungarian Jews incorporated Magyar cultural practices into their lives. The degree to which the Magyar cultural environment was receptive towards their social needs or alienating has similarly not been given adequate attention, particularly at the local level. For example, we can wonder if the Magyar language created in the reform era was potentially inclusive or if it already carried the baggage of an anti-Semitic linguistic history. If it did, then the wish of an increasing number of Hungarian Jews to make Magyar-language knowledge and national allegiance a component part of their personal identity was inherently limited. For instance, we can see this tendency at work if we examine Royal Lecturer András

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<sup>103</sup> Margit Balogh and Jenő Gergely, *Állam, egyházak, vallásgyakorlás Magyarországon, 1790-2005*, I.kötet [State, churches and religious practice in Hungary, 1790-2005, volume I.] (Budapest: MTA Történettudományi Intézete, 2005), 174-175.

<sup>104</sup> Gyurgyák, *A zsidókérdés Magyarországon*, [The Hungarian Jewish question], 47.

<sup>105</sup> McCagg Jr., *A History of Habsburg Jews*, 129.

Dugonics' *Magyar példa beszédek és jeles mondások* [Model Speeches and Notable Sayings in Magyar] from 1820. In the section on similes and comparisons we find suggestions to colour good Magyar speech with "(S)he cheats like the Jew/ (S)he has no desire (to do something), as the Gypsy (does) for hanging" or "(S)he is afraid, as is the Jew on Sabbath Friday".<sup>106</sup> The first example makes clear that the book was an equal-opportunity offender, not sparing other linguistic and ethnic groups from negative stereotypical comments. If these model speeches were exemplary of the Hungarian language in 1820, before the drive for greater Jewish-Magyar integration accelerated in the 1840s, one might wonder if there was a barrier preventing integration before it even began.

It may be easy to assume that there was a single barrier, that non-Jewish Hungarians were uneasy about accepting Jews into the new Magyar society. However, it is just as noticeable that Hungarian Jews were hesitant about abandoning essential aspects of their Jewishness in the quest for an idealized version of Magyar identity. This second barrier is the famous dual identity trope that will become the classical metaphor of Magyar Jewish literary writing in later years: that as Hungarians and Jews identity is divided and perpetually in conflict.<sup>107</sup> In the reform era this position was not yet as clearly articulated, but its presence can still be detected. A good way of honing in on the boundaries of this duality is to identify when a member of the Hungarian Jewish community went too far in pursuance of the goal of Magyar social integration. A clear social marker was the decision to abandon Judaism in favour of Christianization, which was an act of transgression that often led other Jews to react with surprise, disbelief and scorn toward the person who took the step.

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<sup>106</sup> András Dugonics, *Magyar példa beszédek és jeles mondások*, I. rész [Model speeches and notable sayings in Magyar, volume I] (Szeged: Orbán Grün, 1820), 201 and 208.

<sup>107</sup> Szilvia Peremiczky, "'Árpád and Abraham were Fellow Countrymen'," *Hungarian Studies* Vol.18 No.2 (2004): 168.

In a recent study, Árpád Welker looked at Protestant church registers to conclude that between 1800 and 1895, 1087 Jews converted to Protestantism in Pest. Although statistically these numbers are insignificant in relation to the Hungarian Jewish population, the patterns of accelerated conversions are relevant in terms of broader socio-cultural trends. For reform era Pest, there was a spike in conversions parallel to the political and journalistic drive encouraging Jews to secularize before they magyarized in the 1840s. There was a second spike specifically in 1843-1844, when a group of Scottish missionaries was active in the city.<sup>108</sup> The written evidence of their work made it clear that they used their purported ministration to the British migrant workers building the Chain Bridge and the patronage of the Archduchess Maria Dorothea as a cover for their operation to convert Jews to Calvinism.<sup>109</sup> The missionaries attracted “Hungarian” and “Jewish” attendance to their Sunday sermons “...for the sake of the (English) language, which began to be a favourite study about that time”. When they switched to German instruction, their core of devoted followers dropped to about thirty persons.<sup>110</sup>

One of the greatest success stories of the Scottish missionaries was the conversion of nearly the entire Saphir family, consisting of Israel Saphir (1806-1866), a prominent wool merchant and school founder, his wife, three daughters and two sons. In a biography of Adolph Saphir, one of Israel’s sons, there is an account of his brother Philipp’s confrontations with angry Jewish women, one of whom verbally abused him as a “hypocrite and apostate”.<sup>111</sup> Subsequent research has revealed more evidence of similar

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<sup>108</sup> Árpád Welker, “Zsidó betérések a protestáns felekezetekbe Pesten, 1895 előtt,” [“Jewish conversions to Protestant denominations in Pest before 1895,”] *Korall* Vol.27 (2007): 97, 98, 99 and 100.

<sup>109</sup> Robert Smith, “Personal Narrative of a Ten Years’ Mission in Hungary. II,” *Sunday at Home* No. 657 (December 1, 1866): 763-764 and Robert Smith, “Personal Narrative of a Ten Years’ Mission in Hungary. I,” *Sunday at Home* No. 656 (November 21, 1866): 739-740.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*, 764.

<sup>111</sup> Gavin Carlyle, “*Mighty in the Scriptures.*” *A Memoir of Adolph Saphir D.D.* (London: John F. Shaw and Co., 1893), 76-77. There are further accounts of Phillip’s difficulties trying to convert Jewish women to Christianity in Pozsony and of his missionary work in that city and in

reactions on the part of the Jewish community towards them. Israel Saphir and his friend Rabbi Löw Schwab had a falling out over his conversion. Once the Saphir family's openness to Christianity became known, they were specifically targeted. Israel Saphir's conversion was special because of his wealth and prestige in the Jewish community, meaning "a hundred other conversions would have not produced the same impression throughout the country as his" and this fact "was very obvious to the missionaries as well".<sup>112</sup>

Other converts in the 1840s not necessary associated with the Scottish missionaries included branches of the Kánitz, Finaly and Chorin families, and prominent individuals such as the critic Gustáv I. Zerffi, playwright Károly Hugó and journalist Miksa Falk.<sup>113</sup> The previously mentioned Wodianer and Ullmann families also shed their Jewish faith. Ullmann even abandoned his wife, a mother of ten, when she was not willing to become Catholic. These latter conversions were highly motivated by the potential for social advantage, as both families were ennobled shortly afterwards, and were somewhat sheltered from the backlash of their actions by their great wealth.<sup>114</sup> There are no specific statistics for the reform era, but between 1820 and 1899, these two men were one of 126 who were born Jewish and were raised to the ranks of the Hungarian nobility.<sup>115</sup> The trend towards Jewish ennoblement would accelerate in the dualist era, when the Hungarian state could trade an inexpensive distinction for the considerable social prestige of ennoblement in return for services relating to

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Pöstyén in Philipp Saphir, *Letters and Diaries of P. Saphir*, ed. Adolph Saphir (Edinburgh: Johnstone and Hunter, 1852), 87-96.

<sup>112</sup> Ábrahám Kovács, *The Origin of Scottish-Hungarian Church Relations: The Settlement and the First Years of the Scottish Mission in the 1840s* (Debrecen: Dr. András Harsányi D. Alapítvány Kuratóriuma, 2001), 38 and 50-51.

<sup>113</sup> Aladár Komlós, *Magyar zsidó szellemtörténet a reformkortól a holocaustig*, [Hungarian Jewish intellectual history from the age of reform to the holocaust,] köt.1, *A magyar zsidóság irodalmi tevékenysége a XIX. században* [vol. 1, Hungarian Jewish literary works from the sixteenth century] (Budapest: Múlt és Jövő, 1997), 50.

<sup>114</sup> William O. McCagg, Jr., *Jewish Nobles and Geniuses in Modern Hungary* (Boulder: Colombia University Press, 1972), 56 and 60.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*, 67.

magyarization. In the reform era, the most controversial conversions were not the members of the nouveau nobility, but the aforementioned Ballagi and Jónás Kunewalder, who had been president of the Jewish Community of Pest.<sup>116</sup>

Christianization set former Jewish Hungarians beyond the reaches of their previous religious communities in ways that linguistic magyarization did not. To those not willing to engage on this path, conformity to Hungarian linguistic acculturation granted Jews a place in the new Magyar society that was forming, without having to abandon their religious identity. This compromise in relation to Jewish magyarization made it an increasingly attractive social option. Rabbi Lipót Lőw stated it in a nutshell in his book *Zur Emanzipationsfrage*: “(w)e want our children to be Jewish by religion, Magyar by nationality, that is to say that they be Jewish Hungarians”.<sup>117</sup>

To support this new direction, Jewish Hungarian societies began to form in many areas around the country. Outside of the emerging capital centre, relatively little is known about their activities. In Pest there was the Pest Society for the Dissemination of the Magyar Language among Native Israelites that sent its commemorative letter to Beöthy and a copy of the Magyar-Jewish Calendar and Almanac (a collection of literary writing) that it commissioned.<sup>118</sup> Formed in 1844, it had about 300 members, including many Jewish medical practitioners. It put on literary evenings where original Hungarian works were read, had a Hungarian library, and worked with Jewish educational institutions to ensure the standard of Magyar-language school exams. From 1846, it employed the tried-and-true forum for early magyarization, a Hungarian day-care facility.<sup>119</sup> Its secretary at one point, Márton Diósy, had as his programme “let us hungarianize so we can

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<sup>116</sup> Komlós, *Magyar zsidó szellemtörténet*, [Hungarian Jewish intellectual history,] köt.1, *A magyar zsidóság irodalmi tevékenysége*, [vol. 1, Hungarian Jewish literary works], 50.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid., 58.

<sup>118</sup> *A honi izraeliták között magyar nyelvet terjesztő pesti egylet*, [The Pest society for the dissemination of the Magyar language among native israelites,] MOL Beöthy iratok [Beöthy documents] P 1756.

<sup>119</sup> Tóth, *Önszervező polgárok*, [Citizens who organized themselves], 210, 211 and 215.

magyarize, let us become citizens so we can make citizens”.<sup>120</sup> A capable man, Diósy went on to become Kossuth’s personal secretary during the war of independence.

In addition to the Pest Society for the Dissemination of the Magyar Language, the aspiring capital had the Magyar Israelite Craftsmen and Agricultural Society since 1842 and the Israelite Charitable Women’s Society that was organized in 1847.<sup>121</sup> The craftsmen’s association boasted about 600 members, and specialized in helping Jews obtain access to trade licenses and the agricultural sector, two areas of employment that had been largely exclusionary under feudalism to non-Christians. The more conventional framework of the craftsmen’s association and its commitment to working within feudal parameters let it remain in place after the revolution, whereas the Pest Society for the Dissemination of the Magyar Language was made to close down. The Israelite Charitable Women’s Society also was a fairly non-controversial organization, operating schools and feeding the destitute, including during the famine of 1847, which heavily affected portions of Slovakia.<sup>122</sup> The latter two societies may have been more conventional in their aims, but the very fact that Hungarian Jews felt the need to organize to fill lacunae in social services that religious groups failed to fill indicated a new civic engagement and stake in Hungarian society than was previously the case. The Jewish craftsmen’s association went on to inspire sister organizations in Arad, Debrecen and Nagykanizsa and the Pest Society for the Dissemination of the Magyar Language had a similar influence on Magyar societies in Arad, Nagyvárad, Nagybecskerek and Pécs.<sup>123</sup>

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<sup>120</sup> Pál Sándor, “A honi zsidó értelmiségről 1840-1849-ben,” [“The domestic Jewish intelligentsia between 1840-1849,”] *Századok* [Centuries] Vol. 128 No. 1 (1994): 103.

<sup>121</sup> Venetianer also lists an Israelite Society of Commercial Entrepreneurs and a Commercial Pension and Friendly Society established by Manó Kanitz that operated in the twin cities in the 1840s. Source: Venetianer, *A magyar zsidóság története*, [The history of Hungarian Jews], 143 and 145.

<sup>122</sup> Tóth, *Önszervező polgárok*, [Citizens who organized themselves], 212, 214 and 215.

<sup>123</sup> Sándor, “A honi zsidó értelmiségről 1840-1849-ben,” [“The domestic Jewish intelligentsia between 1840-1849,”] *Századok* [Centuries]: 103.

In the 1840s a segment of Hungarian Jews began to demonstrate a willingness to magyarize, for “(d)omestically, the Jews spoke German, but they were enraptured by Hungarianness.”<sup>124</sup> This cultural disposition did not lead to an exclusive linguistic prioritization of Magyar,<sup>125</sup> even though as years progressed Hungarian Jews would become increasingly likely to cite Magyar as their “mother tongue”.<sup>126</sup> A lot of the linguistic crossover had to do with investment in education. Following the 1844 Diet there were thirty-five Hungarian-language Jewish schools in operation.<sup>127</sup> The tendency toward education in Magyar accelerated after 1867, with even Orthodox communities regularly opting to send their children to Christian and Hungarian schools.<sup>128</sup>

The clearest proof of Hungarian Jewish commitment to the emerging national state began earlier with Jewish involvement in the war of independence. Over 20 000 served in the *Honvéd*<sup>129</sup> between 1848-1849 and as retribution the Austrian occupational military authorities extracted money, equipment and supplies from Jewish settlements as they marched throughout the country.<sup>130</sup> Before the war of independence ended, on the last day that parliament sat, it recognized the principle of Jewish equality in law, on July 28, 1849.<sup>131</sup> This law set the stage for a more permanent legal codification after 1867. These achievements can be seen as an acknowledgement on the part of the state of the value of Jewish-Magyar cultural symbiosis.

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<sup>124</sup> Komlós, *Magyar zsidó szellemtörténet*, [Hungarian Jewish intellectual history,] köt.1, *A magyar zsidóság irodalmi tevékenysége*, [vol. 1, Hungarian Jewish literary works], 71.

<sup>125</sup> Häusler, “Assimilation und Emanzipation des ungarischen Judentums,” in *Studia Judaica Austriaca Bd.III*, 49.

<sup>126</sup> In 1910 75.6% of Jews listed Magyar as their primary language of choice, as opposed to 21.8% German and only 3% for all the remaining languages of the monarchy. Source: McCagg Jr., *A History of Habsburg Jews*, 190.

<sup>127</sup> Tóth, *Önszervező polgárok*, [Citizens who organized themselves], 210.

<sup>128</sup> McCagg Jr., *A History of Habsburg Jews*, 135 and 138.

<sup>129</sup> Evans, “Progress and Emancipation in Hungary,” *Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook*: 56.

<sup>130</sup> Béla Bernstein, *A negyvennyolcas magyar szabadságharc és a zsidók* [The eighteen forty-eight Hungarian war of independence and the Jews] (Gyoma: Múlt és Jövő, 1998), 149-150.

<sup>131</sup> Jenő Zsoldos, ed., *1848-1849 a magyar zsidóság életében* [1848-1849 in the life of Hungarian Jews] (Gyoma: Múlt és Jövő, 1998), 28.

Why did Hungarian Jews find the emerging Magyar landscape to be an attractive cultural option? William McCagg Jr. cited the often mentioned “German” programs in Hungarian cities, notably in the capital of Pozsony, as being responsible for throwing Jews into the arms of the Magyars,<sup>132</sup> but he wondered if internal divisions within Hungarian Judaism might not have had a similar effect and “...acted as a Magyar-speaking production line of sorts for the remodeling of Jews.”<sup>133</sup> Hungarian Jews gained legal and social respectability, but what is often overlooked is that Magyar language and culture benefited reciprocally. George Barany summed it up well:

The interaction of Magyar liberal nationalism and the assimilationist trend among Hungarian Jews in the 1840s gave both movements a peculiar coloring, traces of which can still be observed on occasion far beyond the geographic confines of Old Hungary. All too frequently, politically-inspired but willingly accepted magyarization, which was only one important chapter of the story, tends to overshadow the fascinating multi-cultural background of this interaction....<sup>134</sup>

In opening itself to Jewish interaction, Hungarian culture gained a depth and richness that worked against the isolationist quality possessed by the Hungarian language in its geographic environment of linguistically unrelated parallel cultures. For all their limited ability to come to terms with this fact, members of the Hungarian reform era opposition recognized this potential and responded in kind.

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<sup>132</sup> Venetianer traced the anger that resulted in the pogroms to the parliamentary debates to allow Jewish residence and voting privileges in the Royal Free Cities before the revolution. Venetianer, *A magyar zsidóság története*, [The history of Hungarian Jews], 166-168.

<sup>133</sup> McCagg Jr., *A History of Habsburg Jews*, 134 and 139.

<sup>134</sup> Barany, ““Magyar Jew or Jewish Magyar?” ” in *Jews and Non-Jews in Eastern Europe*: 66-67.



## Chapter Seven

### Ödön Beöthy and the Campaign to Eliminate Protestant Disabilities

The commitment of members of the Hungarian liberal opposition to religious issues was deeper than to target only one specific faith and ethnic group. At the core of their efforts pertaining to religion was the realization that religious equality was essential, and this value was not merely an abstract principle. It was necessary to tackle the unequal legal standing and obligations different religions in Hungary possessed in relation to one another and to the state. If this task were not accomplished, then it would not be possible to create a new form of Hungarian citizenship where the inhabitants of the Kingdom of Hungary were on an equal footing.

This chapter will look at Beöthy's involvement in religious cultural politics during the reform era. It will deal mainly with his advocacy on behalf of freedom of religion and conscience. The central focus is on how Beöthy campaigned for Hungarian Protestants not to face the legal discrimination that had plagued their existence in the country for centuries. Conversely, I draw attention to how Beöthy took on the preponderance of the Roman Catholic Church in Hungary and its state-sanctioned policy of discrimination against non-Catholics who were nonetheless subject to its authority and policies, particularly when it came to the issues surrounding marriage. In the first section I give a brief overview of religious and ethnic affiliations in Hungary at this time, as well as an overview of the history of religious laws. Next, I detail some of the religious grievances of inhabitants of Bihar County, and how these records of injustices reappear in Beöthy's speeches at the 1832-1836 Diet when he helped to raise the matter of drafting new religious legislation. When the 1832-1836 Diet failed to produce a new religious law, I turn to how the Roman Catholic Church in Hungary attempted to sway public opinion to support its position. In a very short span of time there was a flurry of literary activity on the part mainly of Catholic priests and religious activists who were mostly

quick to defend the Church's position over the contentious matter of mixed marriages (unions between parties where one member was under the jurisdiction of the Catholic authorities) and over the right of the priest to demand the couple agree to a *reversalis*, the promise of a non-Catholic partner to raise future children to adhere to this faith.

In the course of defending Protestant rights and taking on the Hungarian Roman Catholic Church, Beöthy and other supporters of a new religious law lost sight of the principle they were advocating, and religious equality narrowed to become Protestant religious equality. This concept is central to the last section of this chapter on the new religious law of 1844. The liberal opposition decided to draw a line in the sand over Protestant rights as opposed to the rights of all the non-Catholic religions because the plight of Hungarian Protestants was the most politically viable option to anchor the principle of religious equality. Enshrining Hungarian Protestant rights in a new, effective law would have benefited ethnic Magyars in large measure. Once (Magyar and non-Hungarian) Protestants received what was legally due to them, then the door opened for the other ethnic and religious groups of the land to receive a similar recognition. Religious equality for some signified a potential for greater cultural equality for all. Unfortunately, the greatest mistake members of the liberal opposition made pertaining to the new religious law was the assumption that religious groups not benefiting from the terms of the 1844 religious law would soon have their grievances similarly addressed. Granting piecemeal religious equality only to Protestants simultaneously included and excluded Hungarian inhabitants from the nation state then in formation, and this decision would have irrevocable ramifications.

### **Religious Conflicts, Laws and Ethnic Affiliations**

According to Elek Fényes' statistics there were 5 922 812 Roman Catholics, 863 866 Eastern Catholics, 795 876 Lutherans, 1 617 876 Calvinists, 1 746 236 Orthodox and

241 632 Jews in Hungary by the middle of the nineteenth century.<sup>1</sup> The largest ethnic groups comprising Catholics were Magyars (2 495 192), Slovaks (1 215 944), Croats (886 079) and Germans (416 150). The Eastern Catholics were predominantly Ruthenians (302 615) and Romanians (105 180). Lutherans were in greatest measure Slovaks (180 617), Germans (134 966) and then Magyars (12 701). Calvinists reversed this descending order, being primarily Magyar (1 602 471), Germans (10 055) and Czech-Slovaks (3750). The Orthodox were almost evenly divided between Romanians (909 361) and Serbs (828 365). Finally, Jews were *sui generis* in classification terms, functioning as both a separate ethnic group and religious grouping.<sup>2</sup> When these numbers are viewed in percentage terms, except for some shifting between the Orthodox and Eastern Catholic religious populations, and a significant increase in Jews, they remained fairly constant into the beginning of the twentieth century.<sup>3</sup>

The Habsburg rulers of Hungary placed great weight on the importance of Roman Catholicism as a force that helped bind the Kingdom to the Austrian half of the empire, and the person of the monarch, but given their inability to exercise direct control over Hungary, particularly in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, they were willing to enter into religious compromises. The Union of Ungvár in 1646 allowed the maintenance of Orthodox religious ritual but brought churches under the control of the Roman Catholic Church hierarchy. The Serbians who migrated into the country beginning in the year 1690 were allowed to keep not only their Orthodox religion, but were accorded special privileges that no other religion possessed, including the right to name bishops and establish bishoprics, because as armed border guards they served as cost-effective

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<sup>1</sup> Fényes, *Statistik*, II Theil, 102.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 103.

<sup>3</sup> Leslie Laszlo, "Nationality and Religion in Hungary, 1867-1918," *East European Quarterly* Vol.17 No. 1 (Winter 1983): 42.

soldiers against the Turks and rebellious Hungarians.<sup>4</sup> Unable to carry out the Counter-Reformation to its full extent in Hungary because of the Turkish occupation of the majority of the country, the Habsburgs were willing to make necessary concessions to the Protestants of the land. The Peace of Vienna contained a clause ratified by the Diet in 1608 that granted religious liberty to Hungarian Protestants. The attempt to overturn that agreement led to a second treaty, the Peace of Linz, which produced even more concessions when it was formally accepted in 1647. These grants included letting Protestants have the right to build churches, allowing for an independent church hierarchy not subject to Roman Catholic interference, jurisdiction over marriages and even an allowance for fines for hindering Protestants in the practice of their faith.<sup>5</sup>

The religious concessions given to Hungarian Protestants, and not those granted to Eastern Catholics and the Orthodox, became a thorn in the side of the Habsburg rulers. There was a historical association in the back of the rulers' minds between Hungarian Protestantism and rebellion, such as during the Long War (1591-1606) or the Rákóczy uprising (1703-1711).<sup>6</sup> Although there were exceptions to the general rule, such as the fact that Rákóczy himself was Catholic or that he also had limited support from the Catholic Church hierarchy,<sup>7</sup> the general pattern still caused the Habsburg rulers of Hungary to exercise caution when it came to Protestant affairs.

In the eighteenth century after the reconquest of Hungary, every effort was made to substitute a war of attrition in place of a war on the battlefield against Protestant elements. One significant step in the process was the *Carolina resolutio* of King Charles

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<sup>4</sup> János Karácsonyi, *Magyarország egyháztörténete* [Hungarian church history] (Budapest: Könyvértékesítő Vállalat, 1985), 214 and 228-229.

<sup>5</sup> J. Craig, trans., *History of the Protestant Church in Hungary from the Beginning of the Reformation to 1850* (London: James Nisbet and Co., 1854), 118 and 159-160.

<sup>6</sup> David P. Daniel, "The Fifteen Years' War and the Protestant Response to Habsburg Absolutism in Hungary," *East Central Europe* Vol.8 No.1-2 (1981): 49 and László Katus, *Ecclesia semper. Reformanda et renovanda*, eds., Zoltán Gözsy, Szabolcs Varga and Lázár Vértési (Pécs: Pécsi Egyháztörténeti Intézet, 2007), 46-51.

<sup>7</sup> Katus, *Ecclesia semper*, eds., Gözsy, Varga and Vértési, 46-51.

III from 1731. In violation of the seventeenth-century laws cited above, Protestants were hindered in their ability to create new churches, were subject to the authority of the Vice-Regal Council and the supervision of the Roman Catholic Church, were not allowed to marry before a Protestant pastor in the case of Protestant-Catholic unions, were forbidden from becoming civil servants due to having to swear an oath with the wording “by the mother of God and all the Saints” and were required formally to honour Catholic holidays and take part in Catholic religious processions.<sup>8</sup> Subjection to the Roman Catholic ecclesiastical authorities pertained not only to marriage, but also to potential divorces. Although their faiths contained provisions for divorce, the fact that they were heard before Catholic courts meant that separation from “bed and table” was all that irreconcilable Protestant couples were regularly granted.<sup>9</sup>

Maria Theresia was not eager to remedy these Protestant grievances and directed her energies instead into exercising greater state control over the Hungarian Roman Catholic Church. Using Pope Sylvester II's Sylvester bull to St. Stephen, the basis of the claim that the Hungarian ruler is an *apostolic king*, Maria Theresia used the power invested in the document to name bishops and prebendaries, establish and rearrange existing bishoprics and chapters and to prevent the circulation of the results of church synods without the prior consent of the king. The fact that the Holy See always maintained the Sylvester bull was a forgery and illegal was not a deterrent for this political-religious policy direction.<sup>10</sup> Her son Joseph II continued her stance of subordinating the Hungarian Catholic Church to the state. His most lauded religious legislation was his Edict of Toleration issued on October 29, 1781 granting Protestants

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 287-288.

<sup>9</sup> Lajos Rácz, “A polgári házasság intézményének megvalósulása Magyarországon,” [“Development of the institution of civil marriage in Hungary,”] *Jogtörténeti Értekezések*, [Legal history treatises,] ed., Kálmán Kovács (Budapest: ELTE Jogtörténeti Tanszék, 1972), 13.

<sup>10</sup> Katus, *Ecclesia semper*, eds., Gózsy, Varga and Vértési, 61-63.

and Orthodox Christians freedom to practice their religion.<sup>11</sup> This act was a volte face from the earlier position that Hungarian Protestantism was inherently dangerous.

When Joseph II died and the majority of his legislation was revoked, save for such decrees as the Toleration Patent, the Hungarian Diet was faced with the difficulty of coming up with a compromise solution that would not deny Protestants the gains they had achieved and would appease the Hungarian Catholic church. The resulting law was 1791 § 26. It granted Protestants in the Kingdom the right to build churches and schools, liberated them from having to pay for masses or partake in Catholic processions, subjected them to their own ecclesiastical authorities, allowed them to establish higher education institutions and to let their own religious leaders visit prisoners and the sick, allowed them to be employed as civil servants, liberated them from swearing the Catholic oath of office, and prevented lords from forcing serfs to perform labour services on their religious holidays. The negative aspects of the law were the clauses that stipulated bishops did not have to recognize the legality of divorces, that attempting to convert Catholics to Protestantism was an offence reportable to the king, that all unions between Protestants and Catholics (mixed-marriages) were to be conducted before Catholic clergy, that all mixed marriage divorces were to be heard before Catholic courts and that children of mixed marriages would have their religion determined in the following manner: if the father were Catholic all surviving children would be required to assume his religion; if the father were Protestant male children would be Protestant and female children were to be raised as Catholics.<sup>12</sup> If a person wished to leave the Roman Catholic or Eastern

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 67-68.

<sup>12</sup> Margit Balogh and Jenő Gergely, *Állam, egyházak, vallásgyakorlás Magyarországon, 1790-2005*, I.kötet [State, churches and religious practices in Hungary, 1790-2005, volume I] (Budapest: MTA Történettudományi Intézete, 2005), 131-136.

Catholic faith and convert he or she had to undergo a six-week “conversion” class in instruction pertaining to the religion the person wanted to change.<sup>13</sup>

These laws naturally did not apply to Transylvania, but also excluded the Kingdom of Croatia-Slavonia-Dalmatia, because it was illegal for Protestants to own property there or hold public or private offices.<sup>14</sup> The Greek Orthodox religious adherents were granted freedom to own property, hold office, have their own education system, foundations, religious hierarchy, and the right to worship freely (1791 § 27). Jews fared more poorly, with January 1790 being set as the status quo for where they were allowed to settle, and gaining only the promise that at the next Diet a committee was needed to examine their situation (1791 § 28).<sup>15</sup> With the laws attempting to please all people at the same time, they naturally fell short of pleasing anyone. In the long run, particularly law 1791 § 26 produced a host of problems in the next half century as those religious groups that had attained more equality resented the clauses that continued to restrict their freedom in favour of the Catholic Church, while certain representatives of the Catholic hierarchy were upset that the concessions made to the Protestants (and the state) had undermined their position as *religio praedominans* in Hungary.

A lot of the problems faced by religious denominations in Hungary in the first half of the nineteenth century stemmed from the hierarchical classification of the various religious groups. The Roman Catholic and Eastern Catholic religions enjoyed the benefits of considerable official state support. Beginning with the Toleration Patent, Protestant religions and Orthodoxy became “tolerated”. With the passage of the 1791 legislation, the word “received” as a legal classification appears in the terminology of the text, and

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<sup>13</sup> Mihály Bucsay, *A protestantizmus története Magyarországon 1521-1945* [The history of Protestantism in Hungary 1521-1945] (Budapest: Gondolat, 1985), 178.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 136.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 137-140.

becomes widely used in subsequent discourse.<sup>16</sup> Yet as László Péter made clear in his excellent article on the subject, since the term derived from customary law, it was neither defined, nor was it made clear which religions belonged to this category, nor what inclusion in this classification implied in terms of rights and necessary obligations.<sup>17</sup> What is more, even though religions such as Orthodoxy were habitually recognized as belonging to this second “received” category, nowhere in the *Corpus juris hungarici* was it actually defined as such.<sup>18</sup> Below the rank of “received” were “tolerated” religions. The most outstanding example of the “tolerated” religion was Judaism.

Each category of religious classification had its own advantages and disadvantages. For example, although Judaism was only tolerated as a religious practice in early nineteenth century Hungary, Jews were allowed autonomous direction of religious matters,<sup>19</sup> a privilege that “received” Protestant religious groups did not enjoy. The problems that adherents of various religions in reform-era Hungary faced was not just their discriminatory situation *per se*, but also their particular combination of rights and obligations in comparison to all the other religions enjoying some form of customary and constitutional-legal classification. According to László Péter:

The system of graded privileges turned the Churches on each other rather than induced them to co-operate, and society’s sense of justice was not violated when the state withdrew some privileges. Under a liberal statutory system, a right taken away from one is an attack on all; under a hierarchy of privileges, it is not.<sup>20</sup>

The jostling among the religious groups in Hungary to position themselves favorably on the hierarchical ladder was complicated by the state’s eighteenth century settlement programmes and the national affiliations associated with attachment to a particular faith. The settlement policies officially favoured the increase of Roman

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 136.

<sup>17</sup> László Péter, “Church-State Relations and Civil Society in Hungary: A Historical Perspective,” *Hungarian Studies* Vol. 10 No.1 (1995): 11.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 12.

<sup>19</sup> Karácsonyi, *Magyarország egyháztörténete*, [Hungarian church history], 374.

<sup>20</sup> Péter, “Church-State Relations and Civil Society in Hungary,” *Hungarian Studies*: 16.



Catholics (primarily Germans) and Orthodox peoples (Serbs, Romanians). The number of Jewish inhabitants in the monarchy also increased,<sup>21</sup> but this was due to unofficial immigration and natural demographic increase and not entirely state policy. The state repopulation drive worked most greatly to the disadvantage of Protestants,<sup>22</sup> who were already smarting from the hundreds of years of persecution they had had to endure from a state apparatus that officially favoured the Roman Catholic Church and did not give teeth to the legislation of 1608 and 1647.

The demographic disadvantage that Protestantism faced could easily take on national-psychological dimensions. The exclusion of Protestants from owning property or holding office in Croatia-Slavonia-Dalmatia was also an anti-immigration measure that kept primarily Magyars and Germans from being allowed to settle. Calvinism had the reputation of being “the Hungarian religion”, and although the majority of ethnic Hungarians were not practitioners of the faith, elements of its religious world view became culturally significant to a wider circle of people than those brought up within the confines of the faith. The connection between Calvinism and the development of Hungarian national character have been argued in the past.<sup>23</sup> Protestantism in Hungary has also been historically linked to magyarization. One classical example of the phenomenon was the attempt to unify the two primary Protestant confessions in the 1830s and 1840s, which had strong magyarization overtones in relation to the Lutheran Church in particular.<sup>24</sup> Another example of magyarization intertwining with Hungarian Protestantism is the nineteenth-century notion that ethnic Magyars were predestined to assimilate other cultures and rule over the Carpathian basin. This ideology drew a portion

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<sup>21</sup> Katus, *Ecclesia semper*, eds., Gözsy, Varga and Vértési, 26.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Margit Molnár, “A kálvinizmus, mint ,magyar vallás’ és hit megtartó ereje,” [“Calvinism as the ‘Hungarian religion’ and the sustaining power of faith,”] in *Vallás és etnikum közép Európában*, [Religion and ethnicity in Central Europe], ed. László Kupa (Pécs: B&D Stúdió, 2007), 76.

<sup>24</sup> See page 283 of the previous chapter on the activities of Count Károly Zay.

of its rhetorical strength from historical theories in conjunction with the Hungarian Conquest<sup>25</sup> and a portion from the predestination theory of Calvinist theology.<sup>26</sup> Thus ironically as Protestantism declined in terms of demographic weight, its resonance in Magyar cultural politics became all the more significant. For this reason, the issue of Protestant disabilities became one critical point where the religious-cultural line was drawn in the conceptualization of a new Magyar national state, and it is to its appearance as a subject of contention in the 1830s that I would now like to turn.

### **Religious Grievances in Bihar County and Central Efforts to Alleviate Them at the 1832-1836 Diet**

An informative way to ascertain the problems of the local population in relation to religious issues is to look at the county registry books and the complaints submitted to government authorities. For Bihar County these complaints were filed according to the person's official legal classification of religious affiliation, and they mentioned the source of the religious problem the person was experiencing. The only negative aspect of the records is that they were purposely vague about the religion a person or people wanted to have in order to avoid duplication in record keeping. In any case, these records provide great insight into people who were caught at this time between the jurisdictions of two religions, the one they were legally bound to follow and the one to which they wished to adhere. County authorities were left with little recourse but to examine and administer the matter. If the injustice were particularly severe, or ongoing, then the recommendation could be made that it be made a part of the documentation for inclusion in the next Diet

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<sup>25</sup> Here the idea is that the early Magyar-speaking peoples "conquered" the Carpathian Basin and established linguistic dominance over the region. There is no historical consensus on how these events happened, or if they did at all. Source: Nándor Dreisziger, "Hungarian Proto-History: The Traditional View," and "Hungarian Proto-History: Alternative Theories," in *Hungarians from Ancient Times to 1956: Biographical and Historical Essays* (Toronto: Legas, 2007), 103-108 and 109-115.

<sup>26</sup> Ludwig Binder, "Deutschtum und Protestantismus in Ungarn im 19. Jahrhundert," *Südostdeutsches Archiv* Band XXX-XXXI (1987-1988): 16-17, and 14.

and brought up as a grievance, but more active steps could not be taken, especially as the religious authorities concerned in each specific case also needed to decide what actions (if any) needed to be taken. All in all, these complaints form a picture of a population left in a religious and bureaucratic grey zone that unsettled their piece of mind and disrupted their daily lives. One case could affect multiple generations of a family, and because cases tended to remain unresolved, people were often left in a legal limbo that had far wider social consequences at local level than attendance at particular religious services a few days in the week.

In Bihar County many people felt strongly enough about the intolerability of their legally amorphous religious situation to try to turn to civil authorities for remedy. András Nagy is an excellent case in point. Classified as a Roman Catholic, Nagy's complaint centred on the fact that his children were unable to lead their lives because of bureaucratic obstructionism on the part of church authorities. Nagy tried to obtain a letter attesting to his conversion before his marriage at the age of twenty-nine, but this documentation was not recognized as valid. As a consequence, the six children born of his marriage were still seen as Roman Catholic by the church and state authorities. At the time of his complaint only his son, Mihály, was still undergoing religious instruction, the others had reached the age of eighteen. These children, Suzanna, András, Erzsébet, Julianna, and Mária had all gone through the necessary six-week instruction course in Catholic faith to convert several times, but they had received no binding legal documentation attesting to the fact. Suzanna was experiencing extra difficulties since she had decided to cohabit with her partner, András Borbély, at age twenty-nine, because she could not obtain legal consent to marry from the local Roman Catholic authorities. Suzanna wound up having four children, who were therefore illegitimate. With one daughter co-habiting with her partner out of wedlock, the Roman Catholic officials would not sanction the marriages of the other daughters. Without hope for church sanction, and

because they did not wish to experience their sister's fate, Erzsébet (24), Julianna (21) and Mária (19) put off being married themselves.

A second submitted complaint pertaining to the Nagy family showed that the governing authorities had been powerless to make any headway against the religious hierarchy. The complaint was submitted by the widowed Mrs. András Nagy, Klára Kovács. The fact that Kovács submitted the claim meant that her husband had passed away without his religious affiliation being resolved. Suzanna still lived unwed with her partner, by this time for eight years. The non-married children did have documents that they had completed the six-week Catholic instruction classes, but especially the female children were still wary of entering into marriages. The family was being forced to attend masses, including Suzanna's husband, András Borbély. Klára Kovács asked that the family be allowed to resume practice of their former faith, and strengthened her plea by appealing to the sympathies of the authorities, citing her husband's persecution until his death and her young daughters' forced singledom as factors that warranted their attention towards her particular case.<sup>27</sup>

Marriage and divorce provided repeated opportunity for the religious authorities to exercise influence over people's lives, often against the wishes of the participants involved in the dispute. Calvinist Mihály Takács was ordered to cease co-habitation with his Roman Catholic wife Erzsébet Pápai, because although divorced from his first wife, Erzsébet Barakonyi, the fact that she was still alive made Nagyvárad Bishop Ferencz Laicsák object to the terms of the marriage, even though it was presumably the first for Pápai, and neither she nor her husband were in violation of the tenets of their respective

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<sup>27</sup> "Vallásbeli tárgyak," ["Religious matters,"] *Bihar vármegye nemesi közgyűlésének iratai. Közgyűlési jegyzőkönyvek/IV-1/A* [Records of Bihar county noble assemblies. General assembly registers/IV-1/A] MOL Vol. 1832 No. 517, microfilm 33346 and *Ibid.*, MOL Vol. 1833 No. 468, microfilm 33346.

faiths in relation to marriage.<sup>28</sup> Another Protestant in a similar situation was István Kovács who was legally separated from his first wife, Katalin Oláh, but was not allowed to marry his Roman Catholic fiancée Francisca Szabó.<sup>29</sup> Persecution was not always doled out to the people whose religious status was “questionable,” but to the religious leaders who presided over their unions. Calvinist Preacher Mihály Derecskei of Vértes was placed under investigation for performing a marriage service for Mária Török and Sándor Tékes while fully cognizant of the fact that her religious affiliation had not been clarified. Calvinist Pastor Dániel Vásárhelyi of Mihályfalva suffered a similar fate for his decision to join together Anna Lékány and Imre Pelhe. Lékány was in trouble because of her religious status as she did not wish to remain Eastern Catholic and a priest in Vasad had ordered her to take the mandatory six-week conversion class.<sup>30</sup>

Sometimes the religious grievances submitted to the county authorities ceased to centre on a specific point of contention, but involved so many layers of red tape that they took on a bureaucratic life of their own, and turned into irresolvable, ongoing disputes. János Técsi of Belényes offended the head of the committee, Judge Lajos Szilágyi, and Judge György Sántha when he was unable to provide suitable reasons for wanting to leave the Roman Catholic faith and return to practicing what he considered his true faith: Calvinism. Técsi had provided written statements twice as to why “he would rather suffer death than remain a Roman Catholic”, but his reasoning failed to sway the investigating committee. With Sántha’s resignation, a new committee was constituted to investigate the matter afresh.<sup>31</sup> It is difficult to imagine that with such entrenched positions on both sides, much headway was possible. Técsi’s earlier arguments that he had been forced to adopt Roman Catholicism as a servant because Master Teacher Ferencz Zimmerman’s

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid., MOL Vol. 1832 No. 519, microfilm 33346.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., MOL Vol. 1833 No. 490, microfilm 33346.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., MOL Vol. 1832 No. 531, microfilm 33346 and MOL Vol. 1832 No. 523, microfilm 33346.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., MOL Vol. 1833 No. 478, microfilm 33346.

“aggressive behaviour” forced him bore little weight with the local Roman Catholic authorities next to the fact that he had become a Catholic of his own free will. Subsequent statements that he experienced no “peace of mind” or “soothing religious guidance” from practicing Roman Catholicism only resulted in his forced participation in the required conversion class and the setting up of the county committee to hear his case.<sup>32</sup> These bureaucratic disputes could even stretch into the afterlife. One particularly bitterly contested case involved the Belényes Orthodox cemetery. Due to the lengthy disagreement between the local Orthodox and Eastern Catholic churches, authorities had to suspend burials pending legal resolution of whose bodies were entitled to lie in its sacred earth.<sup>33</sup> Small wonder that given the multitude of religious disputes in the county pending any lasting solution, the same documents describing the cases mentioned that Bihar County’s representatives at the next Diet must bring up the inadequate religious legislation as part of the county’s grievances. The county’s dietal instructions were to include directions to petition the crown to initiate more permanent legal solutions leading to local religious peace.<sup>34</sup>

Even though the 1832-1836 Diet was in the midst of the consuming urbarium debate, Ödön Beöthy broke with protocol and rose on January 9, 1833 and asked the representatives to consider forming a committee to look into religious grievances and the modification of Law 1791 § 26 as it pertained to Protestant injustices.<sup>35</sup> For all the seeming spontaneity of his timing, it was a calculated move on the part of the opposition and on his behalf, because although religious grievances were numerous and not limited to Protestant denominations anywhere, not least his home county, legally they had the

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid., MOL Vol. 1832 No. 519, microfilm 33346.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., MOL Vol. 1833 No. 485, microfilm 33346.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., MOL Vol. 1832 No. 532, microfilm 33346 and MOL Vol. 1833 No. 490, microfilm 33346.

<sup>35</sup> István Barta, ed., *Kossuth Lajos országgyűlési tudósítások, 1832 December 17-1833 Augusztus 4.* *Kossuth Lajos összes munkái*, I.kötet [Lajos Kossuth dietal reports, December 17, 1832-August 4, 1833, volume 1] (Budapest: Magyar Történelmi Társulat, 1948), 89-90.

strongest constitutional case. Fourteen points were raised in order to modify the law: 1) that children should in all cases have their father's religion until eighteen years of age; 2) that the six-week conversion course for those wishing to leave the Roman Catholic and Eastern Catholic faiths be eliminated; 3) that Protestant spiritual leaders be allowed to bring Catholics to services; 4) that Catholics may have Protestant teachers; 5) that Protestants (and Catholics) be allowed to attend foreign universities; 6) that remarriage in certain cases not be forbidden; 7) that Protestants have the right to establish secondary schools; 8) that consistories and synods be established and maintained; 9) that Protestants who have divorced be allowed to remarry; 10) that Protestants should not be made to pay to support the Catholic Church, or that Catholics should not pay to support Protestant churches; 11) that Royal Free City posts not be allotted on the basis of religious background; 12) that being Protestant should not be a factor for land ownership considerations, or should not hinder the ability to engage in a craft; 13) that in tax free zones Protestants and Catholics should not pay church taxes and 14) that where cemeteries did not belong to one religion, they remain communal.<sup>36</sup>

Unfortunately for Beöthy his motion "simply to establish the perfect equality of the three religions"<sup>37</sup> became sidetracked almost immediately with the outbreak of a personality conflict between him and János Tágen (1777-1838), the First Provost of Nagyvárád. Beöthy brought up the matter of incidents such as that of András Nagy and János Técsi detailed above, on February 21, 1833. He stated:

....but there are examples, of seventy-year-old men too, who have long reached the age of majority and are forced to suffer, in uncertainty, what religion they should follow. At seventy, perhaps until death these people fail to achieve the appeasement of their conscience. Even at burial they may run into obstacles, and their grown children may not marry, or may be forced to enter into illegal unions that cause great moral censorship, because the higher authorities' disapproval makes even a Protestant preacher unwilling to marry them. The respected Chapter representative (József Lovonics of Eger) may not be content with his speech, or in the

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 147-150.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 148.

fact that participants in the six-week conversion course do not experience compulsion; In his county there is sad knowledge borne of experience that the six-week course can stretch into 20-30 years, and some families are left eternally in religious limbo, and in every session like souls arising from the dead, their cases are newly examined.<sup>38</sup>

Tágen stepped on his toes by rising after his speech ended and denying the validity of his statements. The ensuing uproar led the Personalis, Sándor Mérey (1779-1848), to dissolve the chamber immediately.<sup>39</sup> Although in subsequent sessions representatives defended Beöthy, and Tágen left the debating floor of his own free will, the derailment of the issue to one revolving around honour did nothing to advance the debate, or the modification of the law, and foreshadowed further stalemates to come.<sup>40</sup>

On March 9, the Palatine ordered a committee be set up to investigate the religious question, and it reported its findings by March 24.<sup>41</sup> Contrary to expectations, this committee did find considerable common ground with the recommendations of the Lower House. Accepted were the proposals that Catholics could attend Protestant services without Pastors being charged with “temptation”. Protestants were given allowance to remarry, have secondary schools, consistories and synods. It was agreed that for posts in Royal Free Cities religious affiliation should not be a factor in choosing the successful candidate, and that with certain exceptions (such as the tithe) Protestants would not have to pay taxes to support Catholic services. Provisions for the elimination of the conversion course for those having reached eighteen, Protestant remarriage after divorce from a Catholic, allowance of Protestant settlement in the Kingdom of Croatia, and cemeteries becoming more non-denominational places of internment were not accepted. The last suggestion was denied on the grounds that it represented “a dark spot upon the nation”.<sup>42</sup> All in all, these were remarkable gains considering that there were a

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 199.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 199-200.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 175-180.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 227 and 244.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 254.



host of ecclesiastics in the Upper House who gave long speeches in Latin about the lack of persecution of Protestants in Hungary, and who repeatedly argued the Lower House violated its jurisdictional boundaries just by debating matters of dogma.<sup>43</sup>

In the end the real sticking point became the matter of the *reversalis*: the common practice of a Catholic priest denying a marriage blessing for a Protestant and Catholic couple, because the Protestant would not agree to swear that his or her children would be raised as future Catholics. Showing unusual leniency, the Upper House was willing to write into law that the *reversalis* should end in future, or be without force of law if demanded. It was only in relation to the past that the *reversalis* was to maintain its legality.<sup>44</sup> Seven exchanges between the chambers were insufficient for the Lower House to be content with its achievement.

With the two houses stalemated and no possibility of a religious law to modify 1791 §26, Beöthy gave his famous speech on July 10, vowing to continue speaking in favour of a new law at a future assembly. It was at this time that he made his well-known reference to the Gospel of Mark 5:39. The unresolved religious issue was like Jairus' sick daughter of whom Jesus said "(t)he child is not dead, but sleeping" before he ordered that she arise and walk.<sup>45</sup> Beöthy's obvious flair for theatricality aside, what is important to note is that it was at this time only, after the failure of the Lower House to secure concessions for Hungarian Protestants, that he returned to pointing out the religious grievances of other groups in the country, such as the Orthodox residents who made up a sizeable portion of the inhabitants of his home county. He promised on July 13 "....to put forward these, and similar complaints suffered by the non-Catholic old believers."<sup>46</sup> True

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 238-244.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 268-269.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 543.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 557.

to his word, Beöthy tried to return to the religious question at the same Diet, on August 7, 1835, bringing up the most severe cases of Orthodox persecution. These included:

....one incident that happened in the district of Peszáka, where an Orthodox person endured so much persecution that he went insane. In another case the Eastern Catholic and Orthodox priests argued for five days over who should bury a dead child. The body had begun to decompose, and fetid air filled the family's home. In the end the Eastern Catholic priest brought a weapon to force the burial, and had the coffin dragged away from the grave's plinth.<sup>47</sup>

Although these allusions produced "a clamour of deadened revulsion," the very next speaker, László Palóczy of Borsod County, made it clear that they had no intention of returning to a fruitless debate on the religious question.<sup>48</sup> Earlier, Beöthy had only supported Lajos Tisza's motion, his fellow representative from Bihar, to extend the parameters of the new religious legislation to include adherents of the Orthodox faith, but he had not spoken at length directly in relation to the topic.<sup>49</sup> His reticence was not due to his position on religious equality. It was a calculated effort initially on the part of the Catholic representatives of the Lower House to take on the advocates of Catholic religious supremacy in the Upper House. Unfortunately, in re-fighting the Catholic-Protestant conflict the opportunity to advocate for inclusive religious equality came and went.

### **The Hungarian Catholic Church on the Offensive as *Religio praedominans* in Hungary**

After the end of the 1832-1836 Diet and its failure to produce new religious legislation, the use of the *reversalis* in mixed marriages, and the religious affiliation of

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<sup>47</sup> The man went insane because he was Eastern Catholic, and his marriage to an Orthodox woman was so opposed by the local priest, that he put him in chains and forced him to go from village to village. Source: István Barta, ed., *Kossuth Lajos országgyűlési tudósítások, 1834 December 1-1835 Augusztus 26. Kossuth Lajos összes munkái*, IV.kötet [Lajos Kossuth dietal reports, December 1, 1834-August 26, 1835, volume IV] (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1956), 645.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 645-646.

<sup>49</sup> Barta, ed., *Kossuth Lajos országgyűlési tudósítások, 1832 December 17-1833 Augusztus 4. Kossuth Lajos összes munkái*, I.kötet, [Lajos Kossuth dietal reports, December 17, 1832-August 4, 1833, volume I], 151.

children became hotly-contested issues. As the law then stood, it was already weighted towards gently increasing the proportional representation of Catholics in Hungary. All children born of Catholic fathers were expected to follow the father's faith by law. In cases where the father was Protestant (or Orthodox), and the mother was Catholic, primary sources written by Catholic clergy members often made it clear that moral and spiritual pressure was applied to women to urge their husbands to condone the Catholicization of the children.<sup>50</sup> In one typical writing, György Gózony, a teacher of priests in Székesfehérvár, gave voice to this accepted practice, when he qualified the difference that women felt when they returned from mass or the confessional. He thought, "(f)rom here it is more characteristic that the Lady comes back with a different state of heart, and she persists relentlessly in making her husband amenable to raising their children according to her faith. What husband could resist bending his will to accommodate his beloved partner?"<sup>51</sup> Parish priest Dániel Prokopovszky (1816-1900) was even more blunt in his interference in the private lives of interfaith couples with his authoritative assertion that "(t)hose Catholics, who enter into mixed marriages and do not insist on raising their children in the Catholic faith, or in some way do not assure that such a course is set, deny their Catholic faith, and endanger the spiritual well-being of children worthy of love and affection".<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Károly Borbory, *Mit tart szabad szellem és természeti jog a' vegyes házasságok' ügyében* [What do public opinion and natural law have to say on the matter of mixed marriages] (Pest: 1841), 12.

<sup>51</sup> György Gózony, *Szózat milly kilátás, minő lépés katolikus és protestánsra nézve a' vegyes házasság?* [What are the outlooks and implications of mixed marriage between a Catholic and Protestant?] (Székes-Fehérvár: Pál Számmer, 1835), 117-118.

<sup>52</sup> Dániel Prokopovszky, *Törvényes és politikai vizsgálat a' vegyes házasságok ügyében honunkban fennlévő legujabb kérdésekre nézve melyet politikús és egyházi férfiak használatára följegyzett egy hazafi* [Legal and political examination of the matter of existing mixed marriages in our homeland looking at the newest questions for the use of political and ecclesiastical men as written by a patriot] (Buda: Magyar Királyi Egyetem, 1841), 74-75.

After 1836 the Catholic hierarchy in Hungary began insisting that the non-Catholic groom agree to a *reversalis*,<sup>53</sup> or face the consequences of a truncated wedding: outside the church, with the priest not wearing his official vestments, simply acknowledging the union legally, and substituting *passiva assistentia* in place of an official blessing on the couple.<sup>54</sup> Being the only religious body that was legally entitled to preside over mixed marriages, Catholic authorities had the power at their discretion to modify the wedding ceremony as they wished. The threat of a mixed marriage with *passiva assistentia* as substitution for an official ceremony was designed to offend the sensibilities of the couple, by not bestowing full ceremonial validation on their union and punitively denying their complete experience of this right-of-passage. The increased pressure on the groom to avoid this predicament by agreeing to raise his children as Catholics, and the fear that the Catholic Church's use of the *reversalis* would upset the religious balance of the land and create greater Catholic supremacy, produced a short-lived flurry of literary activity on the topic.

Most of the writing touched on the central issue concerning where state responsibility ended, and the jurisdiction of the church began. Repeatedly, the idea was raised that the state did not have the right to interfere in the Catholic Church's theological interpretation of marriage and stylization of the wedding event. In priest Sándor Csajághy's book this concept was articulated at the end, with the comment "...what the Catholic Church should believe and teach in relation to mixed marriages, because here is the root of the obstruction, as of yet no earthly power has been able to dictate...."<sup>55</sup>

Another priest named Mihály Déry (a.k.a. Mihály Mráz) brought up the same key

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<sup>53</sup> Gábor Salacz, "A reverzális-kérdés Magyarországon," ["The reversalis question in Hungary,"] *Katholikus Szemle* [Catholic review] Vol.1 (January-June 1937): 10.

<sup>54</sup> Csaba Fazekas, "Illyés Ferenc edelényi plébános áldás-megtagadási ügye 1841-ben," ["Parish priest of Edelény Ferenc Illyés' blessing-denial case from 1841,"] *A Borsodi Tájház Közleményei* [Bulletin of the Borsod museum house] Vol.9-10 (2001): 27.

<sup>55</sup> Sándor Csajághy, *Párbeszéd a vegyes házasságokról*, [Discussion on the topic of mixed marriages], 2d ed. (Pest: Beimel, 1842), 23.

thought. He asked: "...is it right to force those who are the voice of the Catholic Church—the Hungarian Catholic clergy—officially to commit a spiritual action, that is in violation of the spirit of this legally-protected religion?"<sup>56</sup>

The non-bestowal of the blessing on the marriage union resonated through many of the writings, indicating that it was a great sore spot. Yes, the standard response was there, that the priest resorted to *passiva assistentia* because he fundamentally did not wholeheartedly condone the concept of mixed religious marriages at all.<sup>57</sup> There were books that presented multiple viewpoints: the priest's marriage blessing was not his personal choice, but represented the stance of his church, or it was not the union that was being made sacred in that one moment, but the deserving religious people before him.<sup>58</sup> The harshest judgment came from one volume that denied that a Protestant experienced any difficulties from not being blessed since he followed another religion and received legal sanction of his marriage. Likewise, the Catholic woman who was indifferent to her children being raised in the faith that she thought best, or should think best, would similarly experience no qualms that a priest refused to grant his blessing.<sup>59</sup> The fact that these writings came out at the height of the mixed-marriage controversy, were mostly written by priests and were backed by such solid publishers as the University of Buda, indicated that there was probably an element of social control behind the press campaign combined with official state support.

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<sup>56</sup> Mihály Déry, *Lehet e 'a' vegyes házasságotul a' beszentelést törvényesen megtagadni vagy reversálist elfogadni?* [Is it legally possible to deny blessing mixed marriages or to accept the reversalis?] (Buda: Magyar Királyi Egyetem, 1840), 5.

<sup>57</sup> József Márton Mack, *A' vegyes házasságok megáldásáról. Theologiai szavazat* [On the blessing of mixed marriages. A theological discourse] (Buda: Magyar Királyi Egyetem, 1841), 13. FSzEK B655/474.

<sup>58</sup> Csajághy, *Párbeszéd a vegyes házasságokról*, [Discussion on the topic of mixed marriages], 12 and 16.

<sup>59</sup> *Tekintetes Esztergam vármegyének 1841-dik esztendei böl dog asszony hó 14-dik napján tartott köz gyűléséből a' vegyes házasságok' tárgyában az ország minden tekintetes megyéhez irtt levele* [Letter to all the honorable counties in the country from noble Esztergam castle county's meeting held on January 14, 1841 on the topic of mixed marriages] (Esztergam: Beimel József, 1841), 6-7.

A relatively smaller number of the publications on the mixed-marriage topic were not pro-Catholic, and these represented a wider spectrum of opinion. Bertalan Kun wrote about how it was unacceptable for the king not to take on the church when it corroded the power of the state and endangered civil peace.<sup>60</sup> An unnamed writer printed László Palóczy's liberal-minded religious speech from Borsod's February 17, 1841 county assembly, but only to deny its validity.<sup>61</sup> Perhaps most radically, János Horárik, a controversial Catholic priest, spoke out at a Pest County assembly in February 1841 about how a priest had the obligation to bless mixed marriages because he was the son and servant of the state.<sup>62</sup> Filled with ideas such as "...it is not the purity of belief, but piousness of heart that is the greatest, the most important (quality) in marriage", his book on mixed marriages appeared solely with the help of a German publisher.<sup>63</sup>

Adding fuel to the fire of religious discontent, Nagyvárad Bishop Ferencz Laicsák issued a letter to the priests under his jurisdiction on March 15, 1839 stating that they now had no choice but to ask mixed-marriage couples to agree to a *reversalis* or be denied blessing of the union. Non-compliance with the request was to result in ceremonies recognized only with the use of *passiva assistentia*. Bishop Laicsák's letter further disrupted the uneasy religious peace, but simultaneously presented a picture of a church struggling with its position in an increasingly secular society. He wondered "(p)oor children (in mixed marriages) who love their parents equality will at first think that all religions are equal. Later in life the children will see and feel the tremendous differences (among religions), and they will believe none are of any value...." Another

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<sup>60</sup> Bertalan Kun, *Viszhangok 1840-dik évből a' magyar clerusnak a vegyesházasságok' ügyben* [Repercussions from 1840 for the Hungarian clergy over mixed marriages] (Leipzig: Ottó Wigand, 1844), 7.

<sup>61</sup> P\*\*\* L\*\*\* B\*\* Megye Második Alispányának a' vegyes házasságok ügyben közgyűlésen tartott beszédére válasz [A response to L\*\*\* P\*\*\*\*\* second vice lord lieutenant of B\*\*\* county to his assembly speech on the topic of mixed marriages] (Pest: József Beimel, 1841).

<sup>62</sup> György Tordai, *Horárik János* [János Horárik] (Budapest: Művelt Nép, 1954), 35-36.

<sup>63</sup> (János) Horárik, *Die Ehe im Geiste Christi und die gemischten Ehen* (Tübingen: Osiander, 1843), 44.

matter that was bothersome to him was that Catholics were entering into mixed marriages so often, and he asked his priests to remind the faithful in their jurisdictions that entering into such unions was contrary to the teaching of the Hungarian Roman Catholic Church.<sup>64</sup> János Scitovszky, Bishop of Rozsnyó, issued a circular letter similar in content to that of Laicsák.<sup>65</sup> Both of these letters have been seen as following in the footsteps of Archbishop Clemens August v. Droste-Vischering's well-documented stance concerning mixed marriages that reached its climax in 1837. That year the German priest was sent to prison for compliance with Vatican policy upholding the use of the *reversalis*, which the Prussian government opposed. Truthfully, the incident probably only emboldened representatives of the Roman Catholic clergy in Hungary to take a harder line.<sup>66</sup> Laicsák's circular to his priests had more clout than that of Scitovszky, because Bishop Laicsák chose to combine his offensive with a rebuke against the person whom he viewed as part of the onslaught the Hungarian Catholic Church was experiencing: Ödön Beöthy himself.

Laicsák reminded Beöthy that as an avowed Catholic he owed the church his subservience, and that his example of "...hurtful, authoritarian, not worthy of the topic assertions were weakening respect of religion, were painfully wounding the religious feelings of better souls, and were sowing the seeds of atheism in the hearts of easily-swayed youth. His degrading mockery was setting a precedent of religious disrespect encouraging disruptive display in public spaces and unfairly....turning religious ceremony into a topic of discussion, that the majority of citizens of the homeland with

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<sup>64</sup> Ferencz Laicsák, "Laicsák Ferenc nagyvárad püspök körlevele a vegyes házasságok tárgyában," ["Nagyvárad Bishop Ferenc Laicsák's circular letter in the matter of mixed marriages,"] *Sárospataki Füzetek* [Notebooks from Sárospatak] Vol.VIII (1864): 740-741.

<sup>65</sup> Katus, *Ecclesia semper*, eds., Gözsy, Varga and Vértési, 91.

<sup>66</sup> Joseph Grisar, "Das Kölner Ereignis nach Berichten italienischer Diplomaten," *Historisches Jahrbuch* Vol. 74 (1955): 727 and György Bárány, "A liberalizmus perspektívái és korlátai az 1843/44-es országgyűlés vallásügyi vitáinak tükrében," ["The possibilities and limitations of liberalism at the 1843-1844 parliament in light of the religious debates,"] *Századok* [Centuries] No. 2 (1990): 187.

true conviction regard as part of the sacraments...” Laicsák made a personal rebuke even more biting, by requesting that Beöthy modify not only his errant behaviour, but his Catholicism by “...obtaining true religious faith for himself, striving to perform his religious duties accordingly, and in both private and public life comport himself in keeping with the rules of respectful intercourse”.<sup>67</sup>

These words were particularly offensive to Beöthy’s sensibilities. Nagyvárád was the capital of his home county, and under the religious authority of Bishop Laicsák. In addition, he himself was personally affected by the mixed-marriage controversy, being wed since 1837 to his Calvinist bride, Lujza Csanády. Beöthy responded with a harshly-worded reply against those “...who use religion as an instrument to further their power, and act the part. A person’s public or private life can be littered with moral shortcomings, errors and transgressions, but if he conforms to the ceremonial trappings of religion, if he carries the banner for the triumphant priesthood, all is forgotten and swept under the carpet, and he can expect political support and worldly rewards.” Beöthy also reminded Laicsák that the Bishop had “...personally made the effort publically to name him an atheist and worse than all Protestants” and despite his censure, Beöthy considered himself a Catholic and wished to spend his remaining hours practicing his faith unmolested and in peace”.<sup>68</sup> Beöthy was picked as the one to represent the Catholic liberal opposition in religious matters because of his “fanatical anticlericalism”.<sup>69</sup> No doubt, it took someone with his dogged determination and quarrelsome nature to take on the entrenched structure of the Roman Catholic Church in the country.

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<sup>67</sup> Ferenc Laicsák, “Laicsák Ferenc Beöthy Ödönhoz,” [“Ferenc Laicsák’s letter to Ödön Beöthy,”] *Sárospataki Füzetek* [Notebooks from Sárospatak] Vol.IV (1864): 349-350.

<sup>68</sup> Ödön Beöthy, “Beöthy Ödön válasza,” [“Ödön Beöthy’s response,”] *Sárospataki Füzetek* [Notebooks from Sárospatak] Vol.IV (1864): 352, 353, 354.

<sup>69</sup> Károly Kecskeméti, “Szabadságjogok a magyar liberálisok reformterveiben (1790-1848),” [“Basic freedoms in the reform plans of Hungarian liberals (1790-1848),”] *AETAS* No.1-2 (2000): 258.



Other people who voiced their liberal politics too loudly encountered religious difficulties in a similar manner. The best example of someone who experienced such religious persecution was Lajos Kossuth. For his recommendation before the nobility of Pest, that Hungarian counties use the power at their disposal legally to punish Catholic priests who asked couples to agree to the *reversalis*, he encountered substantial trouble in his efforts to wed Catholic Teréz Meszlényi. In private correspondence Kossuth complained that as matters then stood Domokos Feichtinger (1778-1852), an inner city priest, would not agree to perform his marriage service on December 31, 1840, he would not be wed in church, there would be no blessing, and Teréz had been forced to take care of the wedding bans herself. Kossuth and his bride were in a worse predicament than Beöthy and Lujza Csanády, because as the Protestant in the relationship, the weapon of the *reversalis* could be used to pressure him to raise his future children as Catholics.<sup>70</sup> Beöthy's Catholicism automatically mandated that his children would inherit his religious background. Thus even though Kossuth acted in full compliance with religious law, his public pronouncements against the policies of the Roman Catholic Church drew the resentment of its members against him, and led to considerable personal and social complications.

The Hungarian Roman Catholic Church knew that its use of the *reversalis* in an increasingly overt fashion put it on questionable legal ground, because the law of 1791 stated that it could not use the authority invested in it to interfere with the performance of mixed marriages.<sup>71</sup> The Prince Primate at the time tried to use the hierarchical authority of the Church to trump stately opposition. József Kopácsy (1775-1847) issued both a

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<sup>70</sup> Kossuth's children were baptized in keeping with his Lutheran faith. Source: Gábor Pajkossy, ed., *Kossuth Lajos iratai, 1837 Május-1840 December* [The writings of Lajos Kossuth, May 1837-December 1840] in *Kossuth Lajos összes munkái, kötet VII* [The complete works of Lajos Kossuth, volume VII] (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1989), 650-653 664-665 and 667.

<sup>71</sup> Balogh and Gergely, *Állam, egyházak, vallásgyakorlás Magyarországon*, [State, churches and religious practices in Hungary], 136.

pastoral letter on July 2, 1840, and an encyclical eight days latter, supporting his priests' use of the *reversalis* and *passiva assistentia* in marriage ceremonies with non-compliant couples.<sup>72</sup> To receive even more spiritual backing, Kopácsy sent the Bishop of Csanád, József Lonovics, to Rome to request Pope Gregory XVI's official stance on the matter. After half a year of waiting Pope Gregory XVI sent Lonovics back to Hungary with the assurance that a marriage service with *passiva assistentia* was fully acceptable practice, and although not advisable, Catholics could be wed before a non-Catholic priest.<sup>73</sup> Unfortunately, these two decisions were both contrary to the law and put the Church on a collision course with the Hungarian constitution.<sup>74</sup> In a policy of tit-for-tat the liberal counties eagerly took up Kossuth's suggestion from August 27, 1840 at the Pest noble assembly. From that point on, their assemblies began to issue steep fines to priests who interfered in carrying out mixed-marriage ceremonies and subjected priests to trials under specially-constituted county courts.<sup>75</sup> When the counties began to put practitioners of the state-sanctioned religion on trial for policies that the Pope had sanctioned, it was enough eventually for the King to reconsider his objection to a new law on religion.

### A New Religious Law, A New Milestone for Equality?

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<sup>72</sup> Pajkossy, ed., *Kossuth Lajos iratai* [The writings of Lajos Kossuth] in *Kossuth Lajos összes munkái*, kötet VII, [The complete works of Lajos Kossuth, volume VII], 651.

<sup>73</sup> Katus, *Ecclesia semper*, eds., Gözsy, Varga and Vértesi, 93-94.

<sup>74</sup> *Circularschreiben des Fürsten Reichsprimas von Ungarn und Graner Erzbischofs Joseph v. Kopácsy vom 18. November 1841. Dechanten, Pfarrer und Pfarradministratoren der Graner Erzdiöcese, in Gemäßheit des päpstlichen Breve an die ungarischen Erzbischöfe und Bischöfe in Betriff der Gemischten Ehen vom 30. April 1841 welches von Seiner k.k. Apostol. Majestät dem Könige von Ungarn Ferdinand V., am 12. October 1841 das Placet unregium erhielt* (Preßburg: Philipp Korn, 1842), 18-19 FSzEK Budapest Collection, Ballagi 340/7 (political tracts).

<sup>75</sup> One instance of a liberal county that followed Pest's lead was Borsod: Fazekas, "Illyés Ferenc plébános ügye 1841-ben," ["Parish priest Ferenc Illyés' case from 1841,"] *A Borsodi Tájház Közleményei* [Bulletin of the Borsod museum house]: 27 and Csaba Fazekas, "Borsod vármegye állásfoglalásai a vegyes házasságok ügyében 1840-1841," ["Borsod county's stances on the matter of mixed marriages 1840-1841,"] *Levéltári Évkönyv* [Archival yearbook] Vol.X (2000): 207-242.

With all the religious trouble the country was experiencing, it is no wonder that the Diet of 1839-1840 returned to the matter of trying to pass a new religious settlement. Beöthy spoke repeatedly on the topic reminding the House that children born of mixed marriages would form a new generation of people without clear citizenship, requesting that mixed marriages that were not blessed receive this consideration, and that Protestant pastors be allowed to perform Catholic-Protestant and Catholic-Orthodox marriages. Not wanting to let his difference of opinion with Laicsák rest, he asked that the Bishop be punished for his behaviour, a measure the Diet had no intention of following.<sup>76</sup> Rhetorically, he was on the strongest footing when he reminded the assembly that even in the royal House of Austria there were princes who were married to Protestant spouses.<sup>77</sup> In an age when allusions were sufficient to convey his reasoning, this reference was meant to be a plea for equal or similar rights for subjects as for Archdukes, a novel liberal idea.

Lower House delegates proposed a similar law to the one defeated at the 1832-1836 Diet: the *reversalis* issued in the past and the present was to have no validity, the counties should set up committees to oversee conversions to Protestantism or Orthodoxy instead of Catholic priests, Protestant pastors must not be charged with “temptation” for preaching before Catholics or Eastern Catholic adherents, Protestants who had divorced Catholics should be able to remarry, cemeteries should become communal in future, and Protestantism must not suffer legal disabilities in the Kingdom of Croatia. The remaining recommendations to the bill remained virtually unchanged from five years previously.<sup>78</sup> After six exchanges between the houses, this time the Upper House was even more

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<sup>76</sup> Ábrahám Bodon, “Vallásügyi tárgyalások. Az 1839-1840 országgyűlésen,” [“Religious debates at the diet of 1839-1840,”] *Sárospataki Füzetek* [Notebooks from Sárospatak] Vol.II-III (1862): 201-205.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., 240-241. Beöthy was alluding to Archduke Joseph, Palatine of Hungary, wed at this time to the Lutheran Maria Dorothea von Württemberg.

<sup>78</sup> Ábrahám Bodon, “Törvénycikkely a vallás dolgában,” [“Bill relating to religion,”] *Sárospataki Füzetek* [Notebooks from Sárospatak] Vol.VIII-IX (1860): 831-832.

flexible. It granted virtually all aspects of the legislation, except that Protestants who had left a living Catholic partner would not be allowed to enter into a second marriage and that freedom of Protestant religion was not extended to Croatia.<sup>79</sup> Still suspicious of the opposition, “the Protestant party”, the King closed down the Diet within days without giving his sanction to the new religious law.<sup>80</sup>

Embarrassed that Catholic priests were being placed before county courts, the Chancellery ordered the counties to suspend all pending cases and transfer the documentation to Vienna.<sup>81</sup> By this time, though, it was not possible to put the matter to rest without resolution. At the 1843-1844 Diet the religious issue was on the table again, with Beöthy, Szentkirályi and Gábor Klauzál of Csongrád leading the way. Both houses had essentially agreed at the last Diet on the legislation, so the opposition of the Lower House brought up unaddressed aspects of their full religious programme. They pointed out that the Orthodox and Jews did not have their status regulated, and that the Unitarians living within the Kingdom of Hungary (as opposed to Transylvania) had no religious protection whatsoever.<sup>82</sup> The great religious sensation at this Diet was Károly Wurda, a parish priest from Győr, who made two extensive speeches on the need for “complete religious freedom”, a stance that was far to the left of what the liberal opposition dared ask for ten years previously.<sup>83</sup> Before he was recalled and replaced, Beöthy defended him and his stance on more than one occasion.<sup>84</sup> This Diet ended with royal sanction of a piece of religious legislation eliminating the limbo of “questionable affiliation”, which

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<sup>79</sup> Ábrahám Bodon, “Vallásügyi tárgyalások. Az 1840-diki országgyűlésen, január 4-én főrendi országos ülés,” [“Religious debates. Upper house general assembly held on January 4 at the 1840 parliament,”] *Sárospataki Füzetek* [Notebooks from Sárospatak] Vol. I (1862): 68-73.

<sup>80</sup> Ábrahám Bodon, “A vallásügy kimenetele,” [“The outcome of the religious question,”] *Sárospataki Füzetek* [Notebooks from Sárospatak] Vol. II-III (1862): 266.

<sup>81</sup> Fazekas, “Illyés Ferenc plébános ügye 1841-ben,” [“Parish priest Ferenc Illyés’ case from 1841,”] *A Borsodi Tájház Közleményei* [Bulletin of the Borsod museum house]: 42.

<sup>82</sup> Ferencz Kovács, ed., *Az 1843/44-ik évi magyar országgyűlés alsó tábla kerületi üléseinek naplója*, I kötet [The record of the circular sessions of the lower house of the 1843/44 Hungarian parliament, volume I] (Budapest: Franklin Társulat, 1894), 271-272.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, 300-303 and 311-314.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, 306-307 and 310-311.

had produced the on-going religious disputes between county and ecclesiastical authorities, made it legal for mixed marriages to be performed before Protestant pastors, and streamlined the process of conversion from Catholicism to Protestantism.<sup>85</sup> Missing from the law was the King's stipulation as to the religious affiliation of children born of mixed marriages, settlement of the *reversalis* issue, and regulation of remarriage for Protestants who had divorced Catholic spouses. These matters were left to municipal jurisdiction, the Catholic Church hierarchy, and the individual consciences of marrying couples. In some cases, as in the matter of children born to mixed-marriage couples and Protestant remarriage, the unsettled problems dragged on for fifty more years, until they were regulated in 1868.<sup>86</sup> Even with these limitations, the law was then considered one of the most groundbreaking pieces of legislation to come from the Diet, aside from raising Magyar to the level of the official state language, a fact that is historiographically often overlooked.

The King essentially granted the resolution of (most) Protestant grievances in Hungary, but failed to let the Diet anchor the principle of religious equality. Unbeknownst to the members of both houses, part of the reasoning behind this decision was a fear of Orthodoxy, and of the anti-Eastern Catholic measures of Czar Nicolas I.<sup>87</sup> For instance, there was no stipulation in the law that mixed-marriage couples could wed before Orthodox (as well as Protestant) clergy. This oversight happened at a time when Eastern Catholic Hungarian inhabitants were defecting in large numbers back to Orthodoxy, which was a serious concern for counties such as Bihar, Beöthy's home

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<sup>85</sup> Balogh and Gergely, *Állam, egyházak, vallásgyakorlás Magyarországon*, [State, churches and religious practices in Hungary], 176-177.

<sup>86</sup> Rácz, "A polgári házasság intézményének megvalósulása," ["Development of the institution of civil marriage,"] *Jogtörténeti Értekezések*, [Legal history treatises], 22.

<sup>87</sup> Bárány, "A liberalizmus perspektívái," ["The possibilities of liberalism,"] *Századok* [Centuries]: 196.

riding.<sup>88</sup> The King tried to issue royal decrees making up for the shortcoming. In 1846 the Vice-Regal Council simply announced that all sections of the 1844 law about Roman Catholic conversion to one of the two established Protestant faiths pertained unequivocally to conversion to Orthodoxy. A contradictory decree asked southern Hungarian counties to investigate “mass conversions” to Orthodoxy, and compose reports on priests “tempting” the faithful.<sup>89</sup> Although Bihar County had a huge problem on its hands, it chose to cite the illegality of the decrees (ie. not sanctioned by parliament), rather than try to administer its contradictory tenets.<sup>90</sup> With both the King and the Diet choosing a course of separation of religious justice from religious equality, the hierarchy of religions under the law was maintained. In effect, it created what Beöthy cited as a danger: different levels of citizenship in Hungary based on religious affiliation and ethnic and/or linguistic background. The concept of who was Hungarian narrowed mostly in favour of Catholics and Protestants, and left large sections of the population in the lurch.

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<sup>88</sup> Karácsonyi, *Magyarország egyháztörténete*, [Hungarian church history], 373.

<sup>89</sup> Bárány, “A liberalizmus perspektívái,” [“The possibilities of liberalism,”] *Századok* [Centuries]: 209 and 211.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, 212.

## Conclusion

In 1842 István Gorove (1819-1881), who was also a member of the liberal opposition, published a book with the title *Nemzetiség* [Nationality]. The book was a reflection on the state of Hungarian politics and policies, and contained ideas and suggestions on what directions should be pursued in the future. When it came to the matter of assessing the programme of advocates of reform, there was one particular idea that stood out above all others. He stressed it was integral to remember “(w)e have to believe those who say: our future greatness and happiness rests in equal measure on constitutional reform and the propagation of our nationality. Our person and property is protected by our constitution,- our constitution is secured by our nationality; the first will make us strong and wealthy, both together will make us contented and powerful.”<sup>1</sup> Gorove’s quotation is a valuable reminder that in the Hungarian reform era hungarianization combined with constitutional and social reform were not seen as diametrically opposed, but as complementary forces.

This thesis has attempted to lend credence to this viewpoint by studying the campaigns of three oppositional politicians from the pre-1848 era who were all vocal supporters of an increased role for Magyar language and culture in the Kingdom of Hungary, and who patronized other non-national social causes from which a wider spectrum of the inhabitants of the country stood to benefit. In each case one chapter on magyarization (Fáy and freedom of speech, Bezerédj’s kindergarten movement and Beöthy’s vocal endorsement of Jewish emancipation) is set alongside one chapter on social reform (establishment of the savings bank for Fáy, the plea for serf emancipation for Bezerédj and the need to end Protestant legal discrimination for Beöthy). The underlying commonality concerning the measures to ensure more magyarization and greater social justice for the non-noble elements of the Hungarian population was the

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<sup>1</sup> István Gorove, *Nemzetiség* [Nationality] (Pest: Gusztáv Heckenast, 1842), 4.

belief that by modifying the ancient constitution, a significant portion of Hungarians, from all ethnic backgrounds, would share common cultural ground and newly-instituted legal protection. As Brian E. Vick summarized at the end of his study on the 1848 German parliament, when historians analyze the pre-revolutionary period "...it is still crucial to grasp that the mixed cultural-political constructions of national identity turned not on exclusion but on inclusion, and a nonforceful inclusion with guaranteed rights of citizenship and cultural autonomy at that."<sup>2</sup>

Inclusion of Magyars and non-Magyars in one nation with citizenship guarantees for those of noble and non-aristocratic background and birth were the ideals that Hungarian nobles such as Fáy, Bezerédj and Beöthy sought to achieve. However, there was a gap between their ideals and the reality of what was achieved. In a study of the reform party's politics during this era, András Gergely came to the conclusion that not that much had actuality been attained, for "...the liberal opposition had to be satisfied with partial reforms and compromise solutions. It was a gradualism for the most part forced on them by the resistance put up by the conservatives, or more exactly, by the Viennese government."<sup>3</sup>

This thesis has not attempted to qualify the achievements of the members of the Hungarian reform movement solely in these terms. Instead, I have tried throughout to show how great a gap there was between the intentions of these reformers and the results of their efforts. What began as a potential solution for the conundrum of poverty turned into a banking empire; the altruistic appeal for noble taxation and serf property rights produced much discussion but few concrete gains; and the drive for religious equality

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<sup>2</sup> Brian E. Vick, *Defining Germany, The 1848 Frankfurt Parliamentarians and National Identity* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002), 225. Vick expressly mentions that the Hungarian reform movement is part of his assessment, and cites László Deme's judgment that "...Magyar nationalism was hardly so romantic or illiberal as its reputation suggests." Ibid., 217.

<sup>3</sup> András Gergely, "The Liberalization of Hungarian Political Life, 1830-1848," *Études Historiques Hongroises* Issue 1 (1985): 253-254.



faded away in favour of concessions only to Hungarian Protestants. There was a great deal of difficulty involved in creating a well-run association or generating consensus in favour of a piece of groundbreaking legislation. As this was the case, I have purposely placed spectacular successes, such as the First Domestic Savings Bank of Pest, alongside intermediate outcomes, such as the Society for the Perpetuation of Infant Schools in Hungary, or well-intentioned failures, such as the Tolna Mulberry Silk Society. The logic of this placement was to locate the weakness of these liberal programmes in their internal shortcomings, and not primarily in the obstructionism of the Hungarian Conservatives or the Viennese government. At the same time, I do not differentiate between programmes and ideas on the basis of longevity because to Fáy, Bezerédj and Beöthy and others who followed in their footsteps, the process was important, and given the extent of their activism, some missteps along the way had to be taken in stride.

As I stated in my introductory chapter, I do not think that it is a fruitful line of reasoning to think of these liberal pre-1848 reformers as engaging wholeheartedly in the establishment of “bourgeois constitutionalism” or promoting unadulterated “capitalist economic development.”<sup>4</sup> The degree to which these aristocrats were “bourgeois” themselves I similarly find to be inherently contradictory. Instead, I agree with Péter Hanák’s assessment that there was a conflict between the aim of the liberal reformers, to spur on social, economic and cultural transformation on the one hand, and their position atop the feudal hierarchy, which induced them to favour social inertia on the other. The end result of this conflict was some measure of ambivalence.<sup>5</sup> Wherever possible, I have tried to write about both the impulse for change and how other aspects of their efforts undermined the very essence of what they intended to do. When the King granted the law recognizing the official status of Magyar in 1844, the fact that free speech was not

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 241.

<sup>5</sup> Péter Hanák, “The Bourgeoisification of the Hungarian Nobility-Reality and Utopia in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century,” *Études Historiques Hongroises* Issue 1 (1985): 407.

constitutionally anchored did not seem problematic, even though it placed the non-Magyar speaking inhabitants of the Hungarian Kingdom in a double bind. Bezerédy's logic of advocating serf emancipation and taxation of the nobility on the premise that serfs would receive a better deal later on, while nobles would later have to pay through the nose, was both self-serving and failed ultimately to convince other nobles to follow his lead. Beöthy's support for Jewish emancipation in turn took a back seat to his campaign to eliminate Protestant disabilities, which was a topic that touched him on a more personal level. Hanák stated it in a nutshell when he wrote: "...most of the progressive nobility understood 'bourgeois virtue' to mean 'civic virtue', and not the capitalist ethos. They accepted bourgeoisification mostly because it meant political and national reform; and many of them accepted it because it seemed a way to revive their status *qua* landowners, and a way to keep their positions of leadership."<sup>6</sup>

Finally, I have attempted to reconsider the process of magyarization in this dissertation. I have adopted what I term a point-of-origin approach, looking at three men who favoured greater magyarization on a personal and national level and who developed methods to realize their cultural vision. Here, it was important for me to show that in different hands, magyarization could be interpreted and implemented in divergent ways. Fáy wanted both to create and foster a Magyar reading public; Bezerédy envisioned a country where children of diverse ethnic backgrounds would all be able to converse using Hungarian as a *lingua franca* because of their attendance at a formative point in their lives in a Magyar kindergarten; and Beöthy saw Jews as good Hungarian citizens when they added Magyar to their linguistic repertoire and integrated more thoroughly within Hungarian society. This approach was not intended to ignore the exclusionary and

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 408.

discriminatory aspects of magyarization.<sup>7</sup> In fact, the argument about the ambivalence of the Hungarian liberal reform nobility toward constitutional change cited here can easily be extended to magyarization, and to a lack of sufficient concern and understanding for the minority rights of the non-Magyar inhabitants of the Hungarian Kingdom. I have simply tried to make a case that this ambivalence regarding magyarization was not rooted in ethnic conceptualizations of Magyar culture. Had it been so, the reformers would not have been willing potentially to grant all Hungarians new legal rights. These legal rights represented a substantial advance in a feudal country where state sanctioned social inequality was the norm, and amounted to a social revolution when they were enacted into legislation in 1848-1849. This thesis looks at how three reformers intended to shape Hungarian society at a very specific point in time. Men such as Fáy, Bezerédj and Beöthy hoped that a new Magyar culture would thrive in civil society. The legal-constitutional guarantees which civil society generated would, in turn, guard against excesses of magyarization. If all went well, at an undetermined time in the future Hungarian citizens would enjoy the benefits of greater social cohesiveness.

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<sup>7</sup> A good summary of this aspect of magyarization particularly in the second half of the nineteenth century can be found in: Oscar Jászi, *The Dissolution of the Habsburg Monarchy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), 327-337.

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