

# KOSSUTH AND THE IMAGES OF HUNGARIAN NATIONAL IDENTITY AFTER 1989

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The folkloristic image of Kossuth reveals to us the Kossuth of legend, the Kossuth of folktunes and popular anecdotes, while the other view has been shaped by the shifting political traditions and professional historiographic assessments. The changing interpretations of Kossuth are a historical phenomenon of intellectual history and reflect the various political situations as well as the intellectual climate of the past 150 years of Hungarian history.

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According to Gyula Szekfű, arguably the most influential twentieth-century Hungarian historian, Hungarian collective memory has two different images of Kossuth. The folkloristic image reveals to us the Kossuth of legend, the Kossuth of folktunes and popular anecdotes, while the other view has been shaped by the shifting political traditions and professional historiographic assessments.<sup>1</sup> As far as the folkloristic image is concerned we can say that Kossuth and the fifteenth-century ruler Mathias Corvin are by far the most popular national heroes with whom Hungarians have a special relationship of intimacy and familiarity.<sup>2</sup> There is for instance much less folkloristic material about the other iconic figure of the Hungarian Reform Era (1825–1848) István Széchenyi, but the scholarly literature on Széchenyi is far more extensive.<sup>3</sup>

How can we define the difference, if there is one, between the Kossuth folklore, the images of Kossuth produced and disseminated in the political culture, and the views promoted by academic historians? Here there will be no opportunity to discuss the extensive literature of the Kossuth folklore, which still awaits its historian. On the other hand one fact appears clearly: the question is not to assess whether or not the folkloristic image despite its structural ahistoricity is more authentic than the politicised image preponderant in high culture but rather to explore the dichotomy of the folklore and the political traditions.<sup>4</sup>

Even if we exclude folklore from our scope of attention as intellectual historians, this operation should by no means imply the denial of the evident plurality of our so-called historical memory, or the approval of an implicit and usually quasi-spontaneous privilegization of academic historiography by the representatives of the historical profession. One cannot arbitrarily elevate academic historiography above the clouds of historical memory, which consist of a loosely definable collection of different media. And when we take account of the complex nature of the historical past of the Kossuth images, it is no wonder that these media quite often overlap one another.

The changing interpretations of Kossuth's life and work along with those of the Revolution of 1848 and War of Independence are a historical phenomenon of intellectual history and reflect the various political situations as well as the intellectual climate of the past 150 years of Hungarian history. Certainly up until now the different judgements on Kossuth and on 1848 followed in most of the cases a pattern of sharp dichotomies. Regardless of their constant metamorphoses, the incredible capacity for renewal of such dichotomies makes the political mobilisation of the historical memory not only possible but almost inevitable. The alternative historicist conception of the historical memory on the contrary emphasizes the retrospective complementarity of the opposing discourses of a given historical period and tends to cultivate conservative and conciliatory approaches. Behind the discursive exploration of the dichotomies there is usually an *Erwartungshorizont* (horizon of expectation), which has been described by Reinhart Koselleck as the hope for and the desirability of a future that will be essentially different from the past.<sup>5</sup> In contrast of this dichotomical design of social transformation the historicist view of the history displays the wholeness of the time, the preservation of a supposedly consensual status quo, the desire of a cautious improvement within the familiar set of what has already been assimilated from the past. The traditional historical writing offers perspectives for both conceptions: the traditional "critics-from-the-middle" history suggests the relativity of the historical antagonisms,<sup>6</sup> while the "history-of-identity" approach commemorates the historical events and contributes to the mobilisation of the present by emphatically arguing for the permanent validity of the former antagonisms.<sup>7</sup>

The one hundred fifty year-old history of the metamorphoses of the images of Kossuth provides examples for both of the above-mentioned epistemological models. It is somewhat ironic that the earliest efforts at a holistic view date back to attempts at the end of the nineteenth century, which tried to harmonize the cult of Kossuth with that of his greatest adversary Francis Joseph the Habsburg ruler of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy during a time when the catchword of "1848" expressed the most spectacular, although deeply misleading, dichotomy of Hungarian political life over the opposing interpretations of the constitution of 1848. We are told that the liberal conservative regime of the interwar period preferred

Széchenyi to Kossuth. Nevertheless, this widely shared belief needs to be adjusted because the leading cultural politician of the period Kuno Klebelsberg in summarising his program urged his compatriots to follow the example of Kossuth, who had been able to synthesize the idea of nation with that of the social reform.<sup>8</sup>

The totalitarian Rákosi regime of the 1950s, a highly bigoted Hungarian version of “Big Brother” Stalinism, cultivated an extremely dichotomical cult of history. The Communist Party declared itself to be the only true follower of the Hungarian revolutionary movements of 1848–1849, the only depository of the progressive traditions, and the long-awaited fulfillment of the dreams of the revolutionaries. It may seem paradoxical but the regime instead of choosing such radicals as the poet Petőfi or the journalist Tancsics declared Kossuth to be the central hero of its radically exclusive image of 1848–1849. One can attribute this to two factors. On the one hand Hungarian society identified 1848 and Kossuth, and on the other hand because Petőfi and Tancsics had never seized real power as Kossuth and the Communists had, allegedly in the same revolutionary way. In addition, Kossuth provided the same model of the father of his people that Rákosi, the “wise leader,” himself was also fond of adopting. One of the darkest aspects of this cult of Kossuth were the historical books justifying the “Justizmords,” the show trials, and the deportations of thousands of “class enemies” as following in the footsteps of the revolutionary legality of Kossuth.<sup>9</sup>

From the 1960s on this sharp dichotomy started to be mitigated by gradually providing an opportunity for the partial revision of the unconditional condemnation of the dualist period, which ensued after the Compromise of 1867. Historians, especially those who came from the school of György Szabad, embraced a larger conceptual framework and took interest in the whole period of the bourgeois transformation, a process by which the feudal order was replaced by a system of democratic and individual rights, parliamentarism and entrepreneurial freedom.<sup>10</sup> This conception, which stressed the “lawfulness” of the Revolution of 1848,<sup>11</sup> still retained for Kossuth a central place, although lost his exclusive importance and iconic reverence.

In the period of the change of regime, and especially during the fervent months of 1989, the Revolution of 1848 became again the central symbol of independence and democratic transformation. The demonstration of March 15 mobilizing more than one hundred thousand people on behalf of the opposition was one of the few highlights of the “negotiated revolution”<sup>12</sup> and can be seen as the true starting point of the *annus mirabilis* of 1989. While the officially sponsored celebrations attracted barely twenty thousand people, the far larger crowd attending the demonstrations organised by the opposition can be said to endorse with its enthusiastic presence the opposition’s program, which called for free elections, democracy and national independence.<sup>13</sup> At the same time, in focusing more and more on the processes and the forms of the representation of core elements of the

collective memory rather than on the events themselves, the demonstration of March 15 also anticipated the semantical shift of the collective memory, which occurred around the middle of the 1990s.

The collective memory caters to our conceptions about national identity, and academic historiography, as I noted above, is only one medium among others through which the collective memory takes shape. Architecture, uses of public spaces, films, journalism, textbooks and high-school curricula, political statements, legal acts and commemorative speeches – to mention just a few – have quite often a more lasting and deeper impact, although they are rarely studied and unveiled.<sup>14</sup> True, there are numerous passages and channels connecting these media, and the different genres of messages transmitted by this entangled web of communication reach us as an amalgam of emotions and ideologies through the complex process of reception, which takes place both synchronically and diachronically. Overshadowed by the suffocating presence of the collective memory, professional or academic history can remain neither neutral nor intact, although as part of its liturgy it loudly proclaims its distance from day to day practical politics and actuality. It is all the more important to take into account these inherent features of our province of knowledge when analyzing the metamorphoses of the image of Kossuth in the past crucial decade of democratic transition towards a pluralistic society.

In the minds of most historians the memories of the politically motivated abuses of the memory of Kossuth and the Revolution of 1848 are still very much present. This may partly explain why we appear unable to single out strikingly marked new conceptions on Kossuth and 1848. In the historical profession the revision started well before the dawning of the new political freedom. Consequently most historians try to explore the already established conceptual patterns, which in some cases anticipated the catchwords of our own day.

Nevertheless, the critical reassessment of the historical tradition of 1848 and in particular the examination of the various ways and proceedings by which the tradition was appropriated in different political situations became an important new ambition of Hungarian historians after 1990. In that respect one of the most important contributions was in 1994 by Domokos Kosáry, the *doyen* of the Hungarian historians.<sup>15</sup> In his magistral essay Kosáry undertook to reevaluate the exhaustive historiography of the military leader of the 1848–1849 War of Independence Artur Görgey, who immediately after the defeat was unjustly stigmatised by Kossuth as a traitor of the Revolution. Kosáry's monograph focused on questions that today seem to be obsolete. His aim was to eliminate at last the primitive mythology that degrades the revolution and its main figures to the antagonism between good and evil. In the mirror of this oversimplified superstitious dichotomy the more Görgey is blackened the more Kossuth's fame shines. Although this seems hardly be the case any more today, Kosáry's book – *habent sua fata libelli!* – warns us to be prudent. When as a young historian Kosáry published the first edition of his

book in 1936, he was right in his belief that the stigma of the treason had definitively passed away in the face of the archival documents, and he had successfully proved not only that Görgey was a most loyal servant of the cause of independence but also that he was an excellent military leader, whose involvement was instrumental in all the major successes of the War. But the most horrific chapters of the treason theory came only later, during the 1950s, which did not leave Kosáry's personal fate unaffected either. In the dark years of totalitarianism, show trials, and summary executions Görgey became the very embodiment of both the internal traitor and the class enemy.<sup>16</sup>

Another new characteristic of the post-1989 historiography of 1848 is the growing interest in the religious aspects of 1848. In that matter especially the controversial activity of the Catholic Church came under intensive investigation. More than one Hungarian Catholic is embarrassed that the Catholic Church's involvement in one of the most remembered events of Hungary's collective memory is somewhat ambiguous. Consequently the identification of Catholicism and nationality is highly problematic. At the same time the nineteenth-century liberal protestant criticism that accused Catholicism of being excessively loyal to the Habsburgs against interests of the nation was also highly misleading and has by now been discarded.<sup>17</sup> After a forty-year hiatus under Communism ecclesiastical history has returned. Péter Zakar and Máté Csaba Sarnyai have analyzed in a series of articles the tergiversations of a divided, interest-driven, and inherently conservative Catholic Church hierarchy in the face of the possibility of autonomy, as well as the emergence of an increasingly popular liberal Catholicism among the lower ranks of the ecclesiastical hierarchy.<sup>18</sup> The sympathies of these young historians, who dismisses equally the underlying biases of a denominational historiography and the slanders of an excessively anticlerical communist historical writing,<sup>19</sup> are clearly in favor of liberal Catholicism and the democratic conception of autonomy, which stipulated the separation of the church and state. In short, they sympathize with a version of Catholicism that failed in 1848 due to the stubborn resistance of the church hierarchy led by an unbending Holy See, which itself became converted to a clearly antiliberal stance. Yet some aspects of contemporary European religious and social history need further consideration and deeper understanding in view of the firmly established and widely accepted correlation between a conservative ecclesiastical attitude and successful resistance to secularising tendencies in the western part of the continent. These new studies tend to speak of a conflictual autonomy instead of the ideologically undermined categories of the traditional progressive-versus-conservative antagonism of modern religious history.<sup>20</sup>

But above all the heritage of 1848 and its iconic figures gained powerful new momentum because the transformation into a free and civil society became the much discussed central element of the political discourses of the 1990s in Hungary. In that respect the importance of the coming of the era of an unlimited ideo-

logical pluralism and competition with the newly opened European perspective in general and with the victoriously returning liberalism in particular can hardly be overestimated. The contest between the conflicting interpretations logically led to an intensified interrogation of the historical roots of these ideas. In the early 1990s there were two liberal parties in the parliament, and the ruling coalition also had a faction that defined its political identity as “national liberal.” Collection of the works of Hungarian and liberal thinkers and dozens of scholarly essays were published during the period.

It is not surprising to see that the competing discourses of a multi-party democratic system have not refrained from using the symbols and ideas of 1848 for their own political purposes. Nevertheless, there are significant differences between the parties that have constructed their political legitimacy mainly on historical arguments and those parties that prefer a pragmatist political marketing of “presentism” and/or try to instill oblivion into the electorate about their past record. Yet, the tendency is clearly indicated by a growing historical awareness on behalf of the public opinion. Of course the various *lieux de mémoire* (Pierre Nora) of the national identity are mobilised in different degrees. Besides 1848 and the Reform Era, the foundation of the state, Trianon, and the 1956 Revolution are the most important “realms” for the explorations of collective memory.

The first clash between the opposing interpretations in which the representation of these ideas have been at stake took place during the 1990 parliamentary debate on the new national coat of arms. The Christian Democratic coalition majority eventually opted for the arms with the royal crown symbolising the unbroken continuity of a thousand year-old Hungarian history rather than the Kossuth shield, with its overtones of 1848, the War of Independence, and the 1956 Revolution. Those who were for the arms without crown (that is to say for the Kossuth shield) argued that the royal crown with its monarchical connotations is incompatible with the republican state, that it can hurt the sensibilities of the neighboring countries, which may see revisionist claims attached to it, and most importantly that the Kossuth coat of arms symbolizes in the best way the close connections between national independence and democratic traditions. Not only liberals but also some of the members of the governing parties shared these opinions. The reasoning of the opposite side can be summarised in their passionate advocacy of a Hungarian history imbued with a thousand-year-old European Christian culture and traditions and a continuous statehood integrating all important chapters of Hungarian history.<sup>21</sup> It was along the same line of argument that the parliament granted a higher status to August 20, (the feast of Saint Stephen, the first Hungarian King) in the ranks of the Hungarian national holidays than to March 15 (the anniversary of the 1848 Revolution) and to October 23 (the beginning of the 1956 Revolution).<sup>22</sup>



During the following years the symbol of March 15 was quite often cited in many ways and on many different occasions. Nevertheless, the events of greatest significance for the emerging political crystallisation, such as the Democratic Charta rally in the Autumn of 1991, which put an end to the political isolation of the postcommunist party and endorsed its alliance with the liberals of the left, or the funeral procession of the Christian Democrat József Antall, the first prime minister after 1990, were not closely connected to images of 1848.

The postcommunists of the Socialist Party (MSZP), who governed the country in an alliance with the liberal Free Democrats (SZDSZ) in the mid-1990s, put forward a pragmatist ideology advertising “expertise” and cultivating oblivion, while clearly relying on the Kádarian nostalgia of large segments of the population. Beginning in 1996 FIDESZ integrated the dispersed groups of the moderate right by launching an astonishingly successful offensive in the field of the political semantic under the banner of the concept of the *polgár* (citizen) and evocating the ideas of the lawful transformation of 1848. The government formed in 1998 by FIDESZ and its partners promoted itself as the “government of the citizens” and put the figure of Széchenyi in many ways in the heart of its discourse. FIDESZ emphasized Széchenyi’s commitment to a gradual and reform-oriented nation-building, as well as material and spiritual advancement. Considering Prime Minister Viktor Orbán’s first March 15 commemorative speech from this point it is all the more understandable that he celebrated on March 15 “the epoch of growth and peaceful development.” Széchenyi’s name was cited three times in the speech but that of Kossuth and the word revolution were conspicuously omitted.<sup>23</sup> At the last congress of his party in February 2002 Orbán recommended to his fellow party members that they follow the path of Széchenyi, “who has been neither conservative nor liberal and neither retrograde nor progressive”. His *Weltanschauung* had been quite simply a Hungarian synthesis of careful selection of the ideas of his times.<sup>24</sup> This markedly conservative view of history was quite naturally inclined to celebrate in the millenium of the foundation of the state the Hungarians’ capacity for survival and the wholeness of a thousand-year-long Hungarian history in Europe. It is noteworthy that in the face of the lingering process of European enlargement and the building up of an introverted “fortress Europe” the problematic normativity of the concept of Europeanness has become more and more questioned, and the nations of Central and Eastern Europe, while trying to secure recognition for their cultural equality, have bitterly experienced a continuing condescension from their Western European counterparts.<sup>25</sup>

The refurbishment of the Kossuth image in order to put it at the service of a political mobilization against the dynamic marketing of this historicist conservative discourse is a quite recent idea. It can be interpreted as a reaction of the liberal intellectuals and the ideologues of the Alliance of Free Democrats (SZDSZ) to the

successful appropriation of the collective memory by the conservatives. Its immediate cause was the transfer of the Holy Crown and the royal insignia from the National Museum to the Parliament initiated by the conservative government. The Alliance of Free Democrats protested vehemently against what it considered as an anachronistic symbol and accused the government of authoritarian sympathies. When the SZDSZ launched its campaign for the 2002 parliamentary elections last autumn it proclaimed an alternative interpretation of the Hungarian collective memory, and placed Kossuth in the center of this competing view of history. Displayed on a special web page of the SZDSZ and put together by such historians as András Gerő or Gábor Pajkossy, it constituted a striking example of the entanglement of the different mediums of the collective memory. Here the image of modernity and the liberal heritage of 1848 challenged “the eclecticism of a feudal and Christian rhetoric of conservative nationalism.”<sup>26</sup> This modernity is exemplified primarily by the figure of the liberal Kossuth. What is so conspicuously missing in this perception is the image of Kossuth as the hero of the nation. In this political vision nationalism has been discredited and replaced by an enthusiastic endorsement of the idea of the “constructed” nature of the nationalisms.

In a more sophisticated way the paper of László Kontler published in *Hungarian Quarterly* also expresses this dichotomical view of Hungarian history through a refined criticism of the prevalent pathos and the “need for pride” in the national identity.<sup>27</sup> Hungarian historical consciousness, being severely taken to task due its inherent lack of realism, produced its brightest chapters when a (self-)critical and responsible historical perspective helped the Hungarian collective identity to reassess the peculiar challenges of the given situations. According to Kontler this attitude reached its climax in the period immediately preceding 1848. For Kontler the most promising message of 1848 has been the idea of solidarity between the different strata of the society. The defeat of the revolution and the consequent Compromise of 1867 led to the marginalisation of this progressive heritage in exchange for an illusiory pursuit of the mirage of greatness. The current day celebration of Saint Stephen and the Holy Crown is reminiscent of a kind of the cult of power. Kontler implies that between the two foundation myths associated with March 15 and August 20 respectively solidarity and failure are set against statesmanship and power. For Kontler Hungarian history seems to have shown that you cannot have all the positive elements of these combinations together, so cultivating a holistic view of Hungarian history is a sign of a discrepancy between the general acceptance of modernity and the transition to the democracy on the one hand, and the selection of meaningful traditions on the other.<sup>28</sup> Kontler is well aware of the fact that March 15 is the *par excellence* national day for the public and he acknowledges – at least in the slightly different Hungarian version of his publication<sup>29</sup> – that setting this dichotomical framework he became also guilty of an anachro-



nism. Nevertheless, his output is a well articulated attempt to exorcize the allegedly dangerous spirit of nationalism from the collective memory.

The concise essay of Ágnes Deák designates Kossuth's place in the history of political ideas also from the liberal perspective of a criticism of nationalism.<sup>30</sup> In her understanding Kossuth belonged to one of the few nineteenth-century politicians who were able to synthesize liberalism with democratic convictions. Liberalism and nationalism easily paired off during and after the *Vormärz*, and democratic republicanism and nationalism often worked together. But the harmonization of democratic radicalism with the liberal establishment was beyond reach for most European statesmen and political thinkers until the very end of the nineteenth century. Naturally Kossuth and a few others constitute the exceptions.

In that context Ignác Romsics's recent study on nation and state in modern Hungarian history is also revealing.<sup>31</sup> For Romsics Hungarian nationalism almost always gave inadequate responses to the different challenges of the country's historical development during the last two centuries. Despite the warnings of Széchenyi and a few perspicacious but rather isolated politicians the generation of the Hungarian Reform Era shared quite unanimously the illusory optimistic belief that social emancipation of the national minorities will calm their separatist claims. These illusions were shipwrecked during the bloody ethnic conflicts in 1848-1849. In the same way the dualist regime of the post-1867 period forced assimilation instead of exercising tolerance and granting autonomy, and this policy had in no small degree paved the way that led to the catastrophe of Trianon after the First World War. According to Romsics the only way to avoid the failures of the nationalist utopias would have been the federalization of the Hungarian state as early as 1794 along the lines that the Hungarian Jacobin (and *agent provocateur*) Ignác Martinovics envisioned in his writings.<sup>32</sup> Much in the same spirit Kossuth's plan for a Danubian Confederation in 1862 pushed forward the most realistic concept of a state based on decentralized and democratic self-government.<sup>33</sup> Both Romsics and Kontler seem to draw inspiration from the thoughts of such twentieth-century Hungarian political thinkers as Oszkár Jászi and István Bibó, whose general devaluations of the period before 1918 describe the developments in terms such as "self-deception" and "blind alley" and continue to exert great influence on Hungarian intellectual life.<sup>34</sup>

It's not by accident that historians of such different backgrounds and horizons as Kontler, Deák and Romsics display a more and more unequivocal refusal vis-à-vis the problematic nature of *national* collective memory. Nationalism is increasingly seen and described as "constructed," "contingent," "exclusivistic," and "irrational."<sup>35</sup> Notwithstanding the success of the dominant pattern of criticism of the genealogical concept of history, which takes its roots in the organicist view of Herder, the antigenealogical concept has also its blind spots. Critics point out the

methodological and theoretic shortcomings of a rigid application of the multiculturalist anthropology, and the ideological biases of the teleologically oriented antigeneological concepts.<sup>36</sup> In the face of the recent wars and the religious and ethnic tensions in the territory of the former Yugoslavia and the gratification of tribal and national virtues by cynical politicians one is easily tempted to see and condemn in the concept of the nation an inherent feature of exclusivism. Yet it may lead to a seriously distorted and dogmatically ignorant optic of historical understanding.

At the end of this intentionally eclectic review of the collective memory one must soberly diagnose that more than a decade after the “negotiated revolution” none of the *lieux de mémoire* of the collective memory enjoys consensus, and 1848 is no exception. Instead, there is a competing and even conflictual pluralism of the different historical discourses at work. Those who emphasise the national character and the continuity of a thousand-year-long Hungarian history put Széchenyi in the forefront and tend to ignore Kossuth; while the liberals try to revitalise Kossuth’s memory by iconizing him as a modern, progressive, liberal and democratic statesman and leaving his emphatically nationalist rhetoric in the shadows. Still far from being primarily the property of intellectual curiosity, the *primum movens* of historians, Kossuth’s memory continues to haunt our designs of the present and the future.

### Notes

1. Gyula Szekfű, “Az öreg Kossuth”, in *Emlékkönyv Kossuth Lajos születésének 150. évfordulójára*, I–II, Ed. Zoltán I. Tóth (Budapest, 1952), II, 409–410.
2. See Róbert Hermann, “Kossuth Lajos életútja”, in “... Leborulok a nemzet nagysága előtt”, *A Kossuth-hagyaték* (Budapest, 1994), 155.
3. Béla G. Németh, “Nagysággal gyengeség gyengeséggel nagyság”, *Magyar Tudomány* 1994/9, 1045–1046.
4. On the epistemological distinction between the national identity see Pál Hatos, “Emlékezet, identitás, ünnep. A genfi történeti hagyomány eszköztára”, in *Rendi társadalom – polgári társadalom XIV* (to be published in 2002).
5. Reinhart Koselleck, *Vergangene Zukunft: Zur Semantik geschichtlicher Zeiten* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1979), 349–375; on Koselleck’s views, see Reinhard Mehrings, “Carl Schmidt and His Influence on Historians”, *Cardoso Law Review* vol. 21 (2000): 1659–1664.
6. See especially Hayden White, *The Politics of Historical Interpretation: Discipline and De-Sublimation in the Content of the Form Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987), 58–82.
7. François Furet, *Penser la Révolution française* (Paris: Gallimard, 1977), 23–24.
8. Kunó Klebelsberg, “Reálpolitika és neonacionalizmus” [1928] in *ibid.*, *Tudomány, kultúra, politika, Gróf Klebelsberg Kunó válogatott beszédei és írásai (1917–1932)* (Budapest: Európa, 1990), 445; on Klebelsberg see Mihály Szegedy-Maszák, *A Cultural History of Hungary* (Budapest: Corvina–Osiris), 2000, 214.

9. Róbert Hermann, "Az 1848–1849-es forradalom és szabadságharc a magyar történetírásban", in *Aetas* 1999/1–2.
10. *Ibid.*
11. István Deák, *The Lawful Revolution Louis Kossuth and the Hungarians, 1848–1849* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1979).
12. Rudolf L. Tőkés, *Hungary's Negotiated Revolution. Economic Reform, Social Change and Political Succession, 1957–1990* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996).
13. See Tamás Hofer, "The Demonstration of March 15, 1989", in *Budapest: A Struggle for Public Memory. Program on Central and Eastern Europe*, Working Paper Series 16 (Cambridge, Mass.), 316; and Alice Freifeld, *Nationalism and the Crowd in Liberal Hungary, 1848–1914* (Woodrow Wilson Center Press and the Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000).
14. Although stated from different perspectives, the necessity of the consideration of the synchronical plurality of the historical memory and other discourses of time is the underlying methodological assumption of the two most important contemporary account of the connection between national past and modernity: see Reinhart Koselleck, "Einleitung", in *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe. Historisches Lexicon zur politisch-socialen sprache in Deutschland*, I, (Stuttgart: E. Klett, 1972), I–XVII; and Pierre Nora, "Entre Mémoire et Histoire", in Pierre Nora, ed., *Lieux de mémoire*, I–III (Paris: Gallimard, 1984), vol. 1, I–XXI.
15. Domokos Kosáry, *A Görgey-kérdés története*, 2 vols. (Budapest: Osiris, 1994).
16. The process by which the communist party state transformed Kossuth and 1848 are the subject of various recent publications. On the history of the celebration of March 15 see György Gyarmati, *Március hatalma – a hatalom márciusa. Fejezetek Március 15 ünnepségének köréből* (Budapest, 1998); on the communist expropriation of the centennial commemoration of 1848 see András Gerő, *Az államosított ünnep. Az 1848. centenáriuma* (Budapest, 1998); on the organisation of the 1948 in the capital see Róbert Szabó, "Politikai propaganda és történelmi ünnep. Adalékok az 1948. márciusi centenáriumi ünnepségek történetéhez", *Történelmi Szemle* 1998/3–4, 215–228.
17. On documents relative to the Catholic Church's involvement in the 1848 Revolution and War of Independence see István Elmer, ed., *A haza, az egyház és a trón érdekében* (Budapest, 1998).
18. See Máté Cs. Sarnyai, ed., *Állam és egyház a polgári átalakulás korában Magyarországon* (Budapest: METEM, 2001); Zakar Péter, "Isten és a szabadság 1848–1849 Magyarországon. A forradalom és a szabadságharc egyházi megközelítései", *Századvég* 2001/Summer.
19. On the Catholic view see Antal Meszlényi, *A magyar katolikus egyház és az állam 1848–1849-ben* (Budapest: Szent István Társulat, 1928); on the communist historiography see Erzsébet Andics, *Az egyházi reakció 1848–1849-ben* (Budapest: Szikra, 1949).
20. Margaret Lavinia Anderson, "The Limits of Secularization On the problem of the Catholic Revival in Nineteenth-Century Germany", *Historical Journal* 1993, 647–670; Hugh McLeod, ed., *European Religion in the Age of Great Cities, 1830–1930* (London: Routledge, 1995) and H. McLeod, *Secularization in Western Europe, 1848–1914* (London: Routledge, 2000).
21. For the protocols of the parliamentary debate see the official web page of the Hungarian Parliament <http://www.mkogy.hu/34/014/0042.htm>
22. Ignác Romsics, *Hungary in the Twentieth Century* (Budapest: Corvina–Osiris, 1999), 441.
23. The speech is downloadable on <http://www.meh.hu/Kormany/Kormanyfo/1999/03/990315.htm>
24. Viktor Orbán, "A jövő erői felsorakoztak. Orbán Viktor miniszterelnök beszéde a FIDESZ–MPP kongresszusára", *Magyar Nemzet* February 18, 2002, 4.
25. See Tony Judt, *A Grand Illusion? An Essay on Europe* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1996), especially 70–76.
26. See <http://kossuth.szdsz.hu/index.html> and Gábor Pajkossy, Kossuth évszázadai <http://www.szabaddemokratahirlap.hu/publikacio/kossuthév.htm>

27. László Kontler, "The Need for Pride. Foundation Myths and the Reflection of History in Modern Hungary", *Hungarian Quarterly* 160 (Winter 2000), 54–74.
28. *Ibid.*, 72.
29. László Kontler, "Alapításmítoszok és történeti reflexió – Milleneumi számvetés", *Holmi* 2001, 274–284.
30. Ágnes Deák, "Kossuth Lajos és a 19. század koreszméi", *Vigilia* 1998/11, 830–834.
31. Ignác Romsics, "Nation and State in Modern Hungarian History", *Hungarian Quarterly* 164 (Winter 2001), 37–61.
32. *Ibid.*, 41.
33. *Ibid.*, 45.
34. See Oszkár Jászi, *The Dissolution of the Habsburg Monarchy* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1929); István Bibó, *Democracy, Revolution, Self-determination. Selected Writings*. Ed. Károly Nagy (Highland Lakes, NJ: ARP, 1991).
35. Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1983); Eric Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780* (Cambridge, Eng.: Cambridge University Press, 1990).
36. Anthony Smith, "Nationalism and the Historians", in Gopal Balakrishnan, ed., *Mapping the Nation* (London: Verso, 1996), 175–197; Elias José Palti, "The Nation as a Problem: Historians and the 'National Question'", *History and Theory* (October 2001), 324–346; Andrzej Walicki, "Ernest Gellner and the 'Constructivist' Theory of Nation", in *Cultures and Nations of Central and Eastern Europe. Essays in Honor of Roman Szporluk. Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 22 (1998): 611–617.