

The Széchenyi Memorial Days in 1980
Széchenyi-emléknapok

Edited by **Ádám Schmidt** and **Tamás Halm**

Budapest, Magyarok Világszövetsége (World Federation of Hungarians), 1983. 343 pp.

On the occasion of the 150th anniversary of the publication of *Hitel* (Credit), the first significant Hungarian work on economics, the Division of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, covering Economics and Jurisprudence, the World Federation of Hungarians, and the Hungarian Economic Association jointly organized a scientific session in Budapest between 26–30 August, 1980. Participants at the conference, devoted to the memory of István Széchenyi, included Hungarian economists and business executives as well as several economists of Hungarian descent who now live beyond the country's frontiers. The chairmen of the sessions were: Professors József Bognár, Béla Csikós-Nagy, head of the National Office for Prices and Materials; Ottó Gadó, chief adviser at the Hungarian Treasury; Professor Iván T. Berend, economic historian and Kálmán Kulcsár, director of the Institute of Sociology, member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences.

This volume records the events and lectures held during the memorial days. It was intended by the publisher and the editors to serve as a souvenir for those who participated in the memorial days and to provide a survey of events to all interested. It is a collection of papers catering for scholarly interested rather than the proceedings of the meeting. Therefore, the structure does not follow the chronology of the conference.

The volume opens with the inaugural address by J. Bognár, Member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences and President of the World Federation of Hungarians. It is followed by a short summary of the lectures and contributions first in Hungarian and then in English. Then, under the title "Lectures, papers, contributions" the complete texts of the lectures are included in their original language—grouped under three major headings: "István Széchenyi and his economic ideas"; "The Hungarian economy and the world economy"; "Some present problems of the international economy". The editors had a difficult task in making the chapters of the volume more or less homogeneous. Besides a diversity in contents there is also a kind of diversity in form. From texts ready for the printer to such as were transcribed from tapes almost every variant occurred. As regards structure, it has to be noted that spontaneous reactions and contributions to the discussion were generally placed after the lecture or contribution that had been last referred to. In the introductory paper there is a closer link: here the contributions follow right after every lecture. All in all, in compiling the memorial volume the editors did not carry out a selection in the narrow sense of the term; they rather made efforts towards some purposeful systematic arrangement of diverse lectures. It was their conviction that only in this manner could the volume give a really true picture, acceptable also by scholarly standards of this conference which could be judged a success—even from the distance of three years.

Based mostly on the paper of Professor Antal Mátyás ("The path and problems of economic development in Hungary in the fundamental works of Széchenyi") and on the contributions of László Tóth and Professor Nicholas Kaldor, a rather broad consensus emerged at the conference as to the place of Széchenyi's economic ideas within a broader European context. Firstly, as is true of most economic thinkers, Széchenyi was concerned with finding viable answers and solution to problems of everyday life. Secondly, as Kaldor put it, while so doing, he joined western economic thinkers such as Adam Smith who, in modern terms, may be considered a development and growth oriented "Keynesian" in contrast to the allocation and equilibrium minded neo-classical economists. Thirdly, one of Széchenyi's main concerns was the inadequate feudal framework of economic development stifling the growth of the Hungarian economy; with special regard to the lack of a viable credit system and to the social background of this. This concern of his for an

adequate social framework of economic development put him, as both Kaldor and Mátyás emphasized, in a different position from that of the contemporary mainstream Western (British) economic thinking, inasmuch as for this latter, especially for Smith, the institutional framework did *not* pose a special problem, for it was already adapted to a modern capitalist economy.

So, while Széchenyi's ideas about a modern economy were clearly and heavily derived from the then prevalent British economic thinking (and the newly born capitalist prosperity of real Britain), their originality consisted in having depicted those special stumbling blocks for economic development that in Britain by this time did not exist and can be summed up as the feudal socio-economic system. For this reason, it is surely not far fetched to consider him as an early forerunner of XXth century, third-world development economists as well.

Magyar Tudományos Akadémia,
Közgazdasági Információs Csoport,
Budapest

György Becsky

**Demographie, Bevölkerungs- und Agrarstatistik
(Demography, Population and Agrarian Statistics)**

**A Compendium of Papers of the First Scientific Session of the
Austro-Hungarian Committee of Historians, Budapest, 1978**

Edited by Gábor Erdődy

Budapest, Akadémiai Kiadó, 1982. 129 pp.

For more than four centuries the fate and history of Austria and Hungary was, for better or worse, closely intertwined. The minor partner of this liaison brought about by particular historical and geopolitical circumstances, was clearly Hungary, where, during these centuries, virtually nothing happened which was not strongly influenced or outrightly directed by Austria. This is not to say that the latter remained immune to Hungarian social and, more significantly, economic influences. How did this interplay of economic, social and cultural forces take place, and, what major differences remained of this interplay between the overall historical pattern of the two societies and cultures?—these were the questions addressed by the first scientific session of Austrian and Hungarian historians held in Budapest in September 1978.

The papers presented at this session, under the presidency of Zs. P. Pach, director of the Institute of History and member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, were prepared partly by Austrian and partly by Hungarian historians, and dealt mostly with various aspects of economic history and demographic development in both countries. On the Austrian side all the papers—that of Professor R. G. Paschka (Research Institute for Eastern and South-Eastern Europe at the University of Vienna), entitled “The Sea in the South — A Common Emphasis in Hungarian and Austrian History”, that of Dr. B. Bolognese-Leuchtenmüller (Institute of Economic and Social History of the University of Vienna) entitled “Considerations on a Systematic Amalgamation of Demographic Problems with Economic and Social History” and finally, that of Dr. R. Sandgruber from the same institution, entitled “Hungary and Austrian Agriculture”,—dealt with various aspects of economic history and demography. Although not by any means neglecting these problems, the Hungarian participants encompassed a somewhat broader spectrum of problems. L. Katus and J. Puskás, both from the Institute of History analyzed problems linked with demography or agriculture (“The Problems of Demographic Transition in Hungary before WW I” and