

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen

This is the story of two many important persons. Both had - more or less - the same start position, and at least they both failed in a crucial way.

Two important persons for the future of Hungary. Ignaz Joseph Martinovics and Istvan Szecsenyi.

Ignaz Martinovics born 1755 in Pest, Hungary, was a Franciscan monk and revolutionary. At the age of 16 he entered the Franciscan order which he left again in 1782 and became member of the Freemasons. His adventures life took him all over Europe. He was a professor of chemistry and physics in 1782 at the newly founded University of Lemberg, and moved later to Budapest. Through the Pest police director Franz Gotthardi, he was able to get into the secret service of Emperor Leopold II and was used 1791 to 1792 as an informant to monitor the Freemasons and Jesuits. For a long time, Martinovics was considered a fighter for Hungarian freedom. Disappointed, he joined the radical Democrats and organized the Hungarian Jacobin movement. More and more he became a national hero and a political martyr. At that time, Hungary was in the shadow of the Habsburg monarchy. The problem for him was that he and Gotthardi did not find the interest of Emperor Franz that he had previously had from Emperor Leopold. Gotthardi tried to change Emperor Franz's mind. *"It is true that Martinovics is one of the heads of the Illuminati, but it is also true that he named the other leaders. If one sent him to hell, he would still achieve success there."* Martinovics reforms, which he continually renewed, were undesirable. They were supposed to have a positive effect on the lower nobility and lead to a republic under the rule of the lower nobility. It meant an abolition of the monarchy. His universal education and his extensive work as a scientific writer characterized him as a kindred spirit of the French encyclopedia, with which he also maintained personal relationships. His patriotism became dangerous for the upper class, who did not want to lose their privileges. For example, tax freedom for their properties and no military service. His idea was to organize a holy uprising along the lines of Poland. Emperor Franz should be stripped of Hungary's royal dignity and a republic should be proclaimed. He said for his followers: "Hungary could also stand on its own." He also saw an armed uprising as possible. Martinovics promised his followers financial help from Paris, but this was not the case.

After two month the movement founded by Martinovics politics had between 200 to 300 members who were divided into two secret societies: the Society of Reformers tried to unite the aristocratic opposition and advocated in its program a republic independent of the Habsburgs, a bicameral legislature, and political representation of non-nobles, as well as for the federal transformation of the country; The second group, the Society for Freedom and Equality, tried to win over supporters of radical

transformation and pushed for the abolition of aristocratic privileges and for rapid civil change. In 1780 he was promoted to major in the 39th Infantry Regiment and in 1781 he took on the position of field chaplain. From now on he traveled almost all over Europe. In 1783 he became a professor of natural sciences at the University of Lemberg. His wildly fluctuating ambition became increasingly apparent, which separated him more from his surroundings. Despite many failures, his pride and belief in himself remained unbroken. His personality has been described as follows: *He denounces representatives of the most political orientations and world views without remorse, judges everyone with superior certainty and constantly gives unsolicited advice, but always puts himself first.* His reform proposals were aimed at the Hungarian language. The demand for an introduction became more and more intense. With very few exceptions, the aristocrats were at home in Vienna, where they had their city palaces. They promoted German theater and Italian opera. Many of those even understood a word in Hungarian. Hungary had even not a real capital. The Hungarian capital, Pressburg, was so German that a Hungarian craftsman who did not speak German could not communicate.

The only exception we can perhaps mention is Gergely Berzeviczy, who was himself a participant in the Martinovics movement, but was fortunate to be able to avoid accountability. Berzeviczy attracted attention as early as 1797 when he wrote a work on Hungarian industry and trade in Latin and then published a pamphlet in 1800 without giving a name. In this he defended the Hungarian Jacobins and presented them as the protectors of the Hungarian constitution. They consisted of around 800 to 900 members in 30 lodges, representing Martinovics' new ideas. However, he caused a real surprise with his study on the serious situation written in 1806. The nobility owns four-fifths of the land for which they pay no taxes; the remaining 6.6 million residents have no political rights. Martinovics' real enemies were the high nobilities, representing around 500 families, like Esterházy, Batthyány, Pálffy and Grassalkovich, which ruled the country. A total of 550,000 persons called themselves aristocrats. Apart from Poland, nowhere else were there as many aristocrats as in Hungary. In his work for Napoleon, Berzeviczy proposed to the Emperor the liberation of the slave farmers and - following the example of the Napoleonic Code - the introduction of bourgeois social and political reforms. However, Napoleon did not accept Berzeviczy's advice and, instead of liberating the slave farmers, published his proclamation from Schönbrunn reaffirming the aristocratic-class constitution. The opposition also included the writers Ferenc Kazinczy and Ferenc Versey. Kazinczy was sentenced to 340 weeks in prison, because he was considered an innovator of the Hungarian language, which he found more important than the Latin and German of upper society and Versey received ten years in prison because he dared to translate the *Marseillaise* into Hungarian.

Martinovics found himself caught in 1794 and ending in arrest. After the death of Emperor Leopold, he joined the Hungarian freedom movement and under Emperor Franz organized an uprising for a separation of Hungary from Austria. This activity led to a secret trial against him and he and four co-conspirators were beheaded as high traitors in Ofen in 1795. The ceremony was extremely brutal. Jakab Zsigray was the first to be beheaded. Only after the third attempt did it succeed. Martinovics had

to watch this and fainted. Janos Laczkovics was the next. With his head bowed, he overturned the chair. Jozsef Hajnoczy and Ferenc Szentmarjay followed. Ignaz Martinovics was dragged onto the chair with difficulty and his wrists were bandaged. The scarf slipped from his bald skull. He was bandaged again and the head flew away in a wide arc. The bodies were taken to a place that no one knew. That was the messy end of the Hungarian Jacobin movement.

Years of depression followed.

It was not until **Istvan Szecsenyi** came on stage that much changed. Born in Vienna in 1791 came from a wealthy noble family. He came from one of the richest noble families, and his father, Ferenc Széchenyi, went down in Hungarian history as the founder of the National Museum. The young count studied with the Benedictines and Piarists and then philosophy at the Szombathely Academy. During the Napoleonic Wars he took part in the last noble uprising in 1809 and fought in the lost Battle of Raab. In 1813, before the “Battle of the Nations” in Leipzig, he carried out a crucial mission, his horse was shot from under him on the battlefield, he received several medals for his bravery. There he took part in the Congress of Vienna in 1815, then traveled through Europe and became friends with Baron Miklós Wesselényi. In 1824, Károlyn Zichy fell in love with Crescentia Seilern, whom he was only able to marry ten years later, after she became a widow. He was a career officer until 1826. Based on his experiences abroad, he wanted to change the backward conditions at home. In 1825 he spoke in Hungarian for the first time in the Reichstag. A sensation and a shock for the participants, because Latin was normally used. Shortly thereafter he donated his fortune to found the Academy of Sciences. In 1827 he founded the National Casino as a place for national public education and exchange of ideas for the public good. He took part in the creation of steam navigation on the Danube. Everything he did now was intended to be of benefit to Hungary and its residents. He was a great man who created Hungary in the first place. Szecsenyi saw Hungary's future as being integrated into a Central Europe with a constitutional monarchy. That's why he stood in contrast to Lajos Kossuth, who wanted a national economic policy. Also economic and political independence. His conflicts with Lajos Kossuth began in the early 1840s. They both agreed that the country could only develop if the Hungarian nobles became “noble Hungarians,” but they had completely different ideas about it. Széchenyi wanted to introduce the reforms gradually, not against the court, but by persuading the aristocracy, while Kossuth, who came from the nobility, saw the reorganization of relations with Vienna as a prerequisite for the reforms. He had good contacts with Metternich and was well informed about political events. Maybe it was also because Metternich's wife Melanie Zichy was in love with the good-looking Count. This unhappy love was a depression for him which always accompanied him with suicidal thoughts. Szechenyi was initiator for the nation movement and moral for the whole nation. Like Kazinczy he was a pioneer of the Hungarian language, although he spoke better German than Hungarian. There was still no binding spelling and the so-called language innovators first had to find Hungarian words. Szecsenyi's motto was Hungary was not! Hungary will be. The aim was to liberate serfdom and abolish tax exemption for the nobility and a

modernization of agriculture. Many innovations were only possible thanks to him. Every day now in Budapest we notice the famous Kettenbrücke which the Scottish engineer Adam Clark constructed. The first permanent and winter-proof connection between Pest and Buda, was the highlight of his work. Hungarian National Theater, conservatory, a trade school, a modern machine factory, a sports club and a rowing club are associated with the name Szecsenyi. You can tell that his many trips to England had a strong influence on him. Many poets appeared in public. Sandor Petöfi, Mihaly Vörösmarty, Jozsef Katona and others. Despite these many successes his depression was always present. He forwarded reform and feared revolution. He also did not get along with the upcoming politician Lajos Kossuth, whom he accused of seeking a revolution. Szecsenyi increasingly lost his attention. His view was: I am afraid they will think I am too Hungarian in Vienna and too Austrian in Budapest. In 1848 Szechenyi was Minister of Transport alongside Kossuth. When the bloody clashes began in September, Szechenyi collapsed. He accused himself of being partly to blame for the war with Habsburg. In 1848 he suffered a nervous breakdown. He went to a private mental institution in Vienna. After several years he seemed to have healed. Hostility, house searches and threats from the police chief brought back delusions. Széchenyi, who was increasingly actively monitored by the police, the authorities constantly harassed him and made it clear to him that they knew that he was using the mental institution as a political refuge. Széchenyi perceived this as a threat and was found in his room on April 8, 1860 with his head mutilated and a pistol in his hand.

Széchenyi, who was called “the greatest Hungarian” by his great opponent Kossuth, became an outstanding personality in Hungary through his patriotism, his belief in progress, his willpower, his fight for reforms, his creative passion, his willingness to sacrifice and his practical work introduced into Hungarian history.

After the disaster in 1809 Napoleon's proclamation to the Hungarians found fertile ground with some. It was Pál Nagy who represented the Hungarian feudal opposition and was celebrated for his speeches, but which earned him a reprimand from Emperor Franz, who was also the Hungarian king. “The Hungarians are not afraid of Napoleon, because they have a ruler who only makes demands at every parliamentary session, but never allows their just complaints to be taken up.” When the power of the Habsburgs appeared to be waning, it was the supporters of Hungarian class nationalism who hoped for change. At the crucial moment, however, there was a lack of offensive power to change something and take action. “It is consistent with this that in the autumn of 1809, when the desired peace was approaching and the external danger was receding, it was the wish of the nobility that Austria not become too strong. God grant that our king should lose Vienna and thereby be forced to move his residence to Buda, said a colonel of the insurrection to Camille de Tournon, who made the following remark: The nobility seems to be somehow weakening the Austrian house and the guarantee to see that their constitution remains their only and true idol.” One of the Habsburgs' greatest critics and Hungarian nationalist, the poet and judge Bacsányi, was captured early on and held in the Kufstein Fortress in Tyrol, but was freed by the French in May 1809. Together with Maret, Duke of Bassano, he stayed in Schönbrunn, where the proclamation was being written. Nevertheless, the

verbal arguments were of only minor importance. The feudal ruling class did not want and could not lose the privileges it had acquired. Napoleon's promises could not exceed what had been achieved so far. Nagy, urged by opposition leaders to take a more aggressive stance, also refused to make any changes. He rejected the enforcement of the proclamation, citing that "the people who in times of danger have the best bet on their homeland and throne." The French advance on Buda that the opposition had hoped for did not take place and that the capital of the future would once again be in the center of the state, near Rákosmező, the place of the announced people's assembly, was only a vision. On July 13th, Sándor Nagy, brother of Pál, who fought as an insurgent against the French, wrote to his family from the camp in Komorn: "The end of the Austrian monarchy and Hungarian freedom has already come, I have no more hopes." The French command continued to try to convince the Hungarian population of the advantages of Napoleon's idea. This is expressed very clearly in a letter: "The division general and governor of the part of Hungary which is subject to French arms; Hurry to make it known to the Hungarians that our invincible Emperor has won a complete victory over the Austrian army, whose remnants he is pursuing into Bohemia and Moravia. "Everyone's private interests, prejudices and passions must align with this news, which decides the fate of the world, that it contains either the greatest happiness or the sweetest consolation, namely freedom and peace." Vive Napoléon

Many thanks for Your attention.

