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## *The Hungarian Economic History School: its Birth and Development*

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Economic history is basically a new branch of the historical sciences. Through its many thousands of years of development, the centre of the stage of historical studies had generally been occupied by the personal lives and deeds of rulers, and the political and military activities of various other national heroes. Thus, following the mostly localized and partially mythologized works of classical historians, medieval chroniclers dealt almost exclusively with the personal histories and military deeds of the feudal monarchs and attributed much of what happened to the direct intervention of God. The more complex humanist historians of the Renaissance and the Reformation period had moved away from such simple chronicling of the deeds of rulers, and switched their attention to the affairs of the state. Moreover, they saw historical developments as being motivated not so much by God's direct intervention, but primarily by the conscious policies of the powerful. By emphasizing the special position of the divine right kings, Baroque historians had increased even further the history-shaping role of the powerful historical personalities. Simultaneously, however, they also began to deal with aspects of economic activities as reflected in the mercantilistic policies of these divine right rulers. Yet not until the political emergence of the commercial middle classes, and the parallel rise of economic liberalism

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or capitalism did historians begin to interest themselves in the economic aspects of human existence.<sup>1</sup>

This shift of interest is already reflected in the works of the historians of the Enlightenment who broke consciously with the exclusive emphasis on political and dynastic developments and began to deal with the many diverse economic manifestations of society. Simultaneously they also recognized the significance of economic factors as history-shaping forces.

This economic orientation had lost some ground during the age of Romanticism, when the European mind turned again towards the irrational. The simultaneous emergence of political liberalism, however, was bound to lead to the recognition that the nameless masses were also active participants of human history. And this was only a step away from the dictum, which subsequently became widely accepted, that "the basic laws of human development appear in their fullness only in the depths of the material existence of the [human] collective".<sup>2</sup> This recognition, even if not fully accepted by everyone, naturally brought about the growing need to study the past of man's material existence, and thus the discipline of economic history was born.

#### THE ROOTS OF THE HUNGARIAN ECONOMIC HISTORY SCHOOL

Just as elsewhere in Europe, the roots of the Hungarian Economic History School — which emerged only during the 1890's — reach back to the eighteenth century, and more specifically to the *Staatenkunde* [State Science] School of M. Bél (1684-1749) and a number of his disciples, who paid considerable attention to the collection and description of economic

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<sup>1</sup> For general surveys on the history of historical studies in English, see HARRY ELMER BARNES, *A History of Historical Writing* (New York, 1937; 2nd ed., 1963); J. W. THOMPSON, *A History of Historical Writing*, 2 vols. (New York, 1942); and G. P. GOOCH, *History and Historians in the Nineteenth Century* (London, 1913; 3rd ed., Boston, 1959).

<sup>2</sup> See the good summary on the development of economic and agricultural history in IMRE WELLMANN, *Agrártörténelmünk módszerének kérdéséről* [On the Question of the Methodology of our Agricultural History], « Agrártörténelmi Szemle » [Agrohistorical Review], IV (1962), pp. 293-339; quotation from p. 293. For other related works on Hungarian agricultural and economic history, see the following works: IMRE WELLMANN, *Agrártörténelmünk feladatai* [The Goals of Our Agricultural History], « Agrártudományi Szemle » [Review of Agricultural Studies], 1947, pp. 425-438; MÁRTA BELÉNYESY, *Középkori mezőgazdaságtörténetünk kutatási módszereiről* [On the Research Methodology of Our Medieval Agricultural History] (Gödöllő-Budapest, 1957); LÁSZLÓ MAKKAJ, *Az anyagi kultúra történetének kutatásáról* [On the Research Methodology of Material Culture], « Történelmi Szemle » [Historical Review], I (1958), pp. 305-314; PÉTER GUNST, *Die Agrargeschichtsschreibung in Ungarn, 1945-1965*, « Agrártörténelmi Szemle », VII (1965), Supplementum, pp. 1-44; and PÉTER HANÁK, *Probleme der Betriebsgeschichtsforschung*, « Acta Historica », XIV (1968), pp. 339-366.

sources and phenomena.<sup>3</sup> Such other Hungarian scholars as S. Tessedik (1742-1820)<sup>4</sup> and G. Berzeviczy (1763-1822)<sup>5</sup> turned their attention primarily to the study of agricultural developments, and by 1820 K. Pfahler (18th c.-19th c.) had produced the first summary of the history of Hungarian serfdom.<sup>6</sup>

While significant within the context of contemporary scholarly developments, these early efforts were too scattered and haphazard. Not until the emergence of political liberalism in Hungary during the Hungarian Reform Period (c. 1825-1848) do we see a conscious effort to study and to summarize aspects of Hungarian economic developments on a larger scale. These came in the form of the pioneering studies of M. Horváth (1809-1878) on Hungarian industry, commerce, mining and the peasant question, which remained unchallenged right into the twentieth century.<sup>7</sup>

By 1878 the collective term *gazdaságtörténet* [economic history] had finally made its first appearance in Hungarian scholarship in a little work by Béla Weisz [Földes] (1848-1945) which purported to be an introduction to economic history;<sup>8</sup> and this came only one year after the birth of its

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<sup>3</sup> On Mátyás Bél and the Hungarian *Staatenkunde* School, see BÁLINT HÓMAN, *Tudományos történetírásunk megalapítása a XVIII. században* [The Foundation of Our Scientific Historiography in the 18th Century] (Budapest, 1920); IDEM, *A forráskutatás és forráskritika története Magyarországon* [The History of Source Research and Source Criticism in Hungary] (Budapest, 1925); and STEVEN BELA VARDY, *Modern Hungarian Historiography* (Pittsburgh, 1974), chapter IV. The latter work has only appeared in a temporary limited edition at the Department of History of Duquesne University. It is to appear in a revised version as a joint publication of the "East European Quarterly" of the University of Colorado and Columbia University Press in 1975.

<sup>4</sup> On Samuél Tessedik and his work, see IMRE WELLMANN, *Parasztnépünk múltjának feltárása* [The Study of the Past of Our Peasants] (Budapest, 1944).

<sup>5</sup> Gergely Berzeviczy was the most influential economic writer of the first quarter of the 19th century in Hungary. For a most recent study on his life and works, see ÉVA H. BALÁZS, *Berzeviczy Gergely a reformpolitikus, 1763-1795* [G. Berzeviczy the Reform Politician, 1763-1795] (Budapest, 1967). His economic theories are discussed by RÓBERT HORVÁTH, *Berzeviczy Gergely közgazdasági és népelemzési tanai* [The Economic and Population Theories of G. Berzeviczy] (Szeged, 1964).

<sup>6</sup> KÁROLY PFAHLER, *Jus georgicum regni Hungariae et partium eidem adnexarum commentatus est . . .*, 2 vols. (Keszthely, 1820).

<sup>7</sup> Some of Mihály Horváth's relevant works include: *Az ipar és kereskedés története Magyarországon a XIV. század elejétől* [The History of Industry and Commerce in Hungary until the Beginnings of the 16th Century] (Buda, 1842); *Az ipar és kereskedés története Magyarországon a három utolsó század alatt* [The History of Industry and Commerce in Hungary during the Last Three Centuries] (Buda, 1840); *Mikor és miért fosztattot meg a pöröstály szabad költözési jogától és mikor nyerte vissza azt?* [When and Why were the Peasants Deprived of the Right of Free Movement, and When Did They Get it Back?] (Pest, 1839); and *Az 1514-éki pörlázadás, annak okai és következményei* [The Peasant Rebellion of 1514, Its Causes and Consequences] (Pest, 1841).

<sup>8</sup> BÉLA WEISZ [Földes], *Bevezetés a gazdaság történetébe* [Introduction to Economic History] (Budapest, 1878).

German counterpart, *Wirtschaftsgeschichte*.<sup>9</sup> Simultaneously, the Hungarian Historical Association, founded in 1867,<sup>10</sup> also expressed a growing interest in the new discipline of economic history.<sup>11</sup> But it failed to go beyond this in the course of the next few decades, for Hungarian historians generally believed that economic history was really within the competence of economists. The only exceptions were the legal and constitutional historians who, possessing primarily a legal education, considered themselves really closer to the jurists than to the historians. The latter attacked this question primarily by collecting and analyzing Hungarian laws and dietary debates on economic problems.<sup>12</sup> Others began to deal with the history of large estates.<sup>13</sup> This orientation stemmed naturally from the country's basic social and economic system, and consequently it came to characterize even the Economic History School at the turn of the century.

The single most significant summarizing work of this period of early dualism in Hungary (c. 1867-1896) was *The History of Hungarian Agriculture* (1877) by the great legal historian G. Wenzel (1812-1891).<sup>14</sup> Due to the total lack of related source publications and preliminary studies, however, this work turned out to be more of an analysis of the relevant laws than a synthesis of the historical realities of Hungarian agricultural developments. In fact, not until the decade of Hungary's millennium (1896) was there a major and concerted effort undertaken by Hungarian historians to lift the study of economic history out of this shallowness, and to prepare the ground for a scholarly elaboration of the economic aspects of Hungarian civilization. It was this effort — urged on by the economic tendencies of that period — that led to the birth of the Hungarian Economic History School.

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<sup>9</sup> KARL THEODOR VON INAMA-STERNEGG, *Über die Quellen der deutschen Wirtschaftsgeschichte* (Wien, 1877).

<sup>10</sup> On the foundation and achievements of the Hungarian Historical Association, see IMRE LUKINICH, *A Magyar Történelmi Társulat története* [The History of the Hungarian Historical Association] (Budapest, 1918); and the studies by Agnes Várkonyi, Ferenc Glatz, Győző Ember, Éva H. Balázs, Miklós Incze, Domokos Kosáry and István Sinkovics, written for the occasion of the first centennial of the Association, published in its official journal the « Századok » [Centuries], CI (1967), pp. 233-267 and 1140-1190.

<sup>11</sup> Kálmán Thaly, the Executive Secretary of the Historical Association in « Századok », VI (1872), pp. 351-352.

<sup>12</sup> Some of the relevant authors include: Pál Horváth, György Kerekes, Sándor Matekovits, Gyula Kautz and others. Cf. WELLMANN, *Agrártörténelmünk*, op. cit., pp. 298-301.

<sup>13</sup> Historians dealing with the history of large estates included Vilmos Fraknói, Henrik Marczali, Gusztáv Wenzel, Samu Borovszky, Frigyes Pesty, Pál Jedlicska and others. Particularly significant were Fraknói's and Marczali's studies in the « Századok », 1888 and 1897.

<sup>14</sup> GUSTÁV WENZEL, *Magyarország mezőgazdaságának története* (Budapest, 1887).

## THE BIRTH OF THE HUNGARIAN ECONOMIC SCHOOL

This effort on the part of certain Hungarian historians which led to the foundation of the Hungarian Economic History School was, therefore, the result of the growth of the capitalistic economic system and the simultaneous specialization of historical scholarship. Particularly important was the emergence of capitalistic economic production in Hungarian agriculture and related industries, which created a need for the study of the hitherto forgotten field of economic history. While this need was not limited to Hungary alone, the Hungarian agricultural crisis of the 1890's increased this need in its Hungarian context.<sup>15</sup>

Fortunately, by 1892 this need was also realized by the powerful Hungarian National Economic Association [*Országos Magyar Gazdasági Egyesület* = OMGE],<sup>16</sup> controlled mostly by the country's influential agricultural interests, whose financial backing was essential for the effective initiation of Hungarian economic history studies. This financial support soon led to the foundation of the *Hungarian Economic History Review* [*Magyar Gazdaságtörténelmi Szemle*],<sup>17</sup> around which the Hungarian Economic History School arose. But this support also came to define to a considerable degree the tone and the content of the new journal.

The immediate aim of the founders of the *Hungarian Economic History Review* was to make it into the forum for the study of Hungarian agricultural developments, with the ultimate goal of producing a major synthesis of Hungarian economic history for the occasion of Hungary's millennium. Thus, in its early stages, the periodical was intended primarily to serve as a repository of the preliminary studies for this major synthesis. By the time of its appearance, however, all serious scholars realized that, in light of the total lack of previous research, such a synthesis could not be finished in such a short time.

Starting publication in February of 1894, the *Hungarian Economic History Review* was in many ways a pioneer in its field. Not counting general economic journals, it was preceded in the West only by the ephemeral

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<sup>15</sup> PÁL SÁNDOR, *Die Agrarkrise am Ende des XIX. Jahrhunderts und der Grossgrundbesitz in Ungarn*, « Studien zur Geschichte der Österreichisch-Ungarischen Monarchie » (Budapest, 1961), pp. 167-193.

<sup>16</sup> Founded in 1830 by the great Hungarian reformer Count István Széchenyi, the Hungarian National Economic Association (OMGE) soon became Hungary's most powerful economic organization. In 1892, its president Count Aurél Dessewffy proposed that the association should sponsor a comprehensive history of Hungarian agricultural developments for the occasion of the upcoming millennium of Hungary. Cf. « Közgazdasági és Közigazgatási Szemle » [Economic and Administrative Review], I (1893), p. 14.

<sup>17</sup> EDIT IZSÉPY, *A Magyar Gazdaságtörténelmi Szemle történetéhez* [On the History of the Hungarian Economic History Review]. « Századok », CIII (1969), pp. 1077-1103.

German *Zeitschrift für Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte* (1893-1894),<sup>18</sup> and that only by a few months. During its thirteen years of existence, the review published many pioneering studies in agricultural, financial, industrial and social history. Many of these remained unsurpassed in their respective areas until after the Second World War, when the triumph of Marxist historiography in Hungary made the study of economic history the number one obligation of historians.

#### KÁROLY TAGÁNYI: THE "FATHER" OF THE HUNGARIAN ECONOMIC HISTORY SCHOOL

The four historians who played the most prominent role in the development of the *Hungarian Economic History Review* and in the rise of the Hungarian Economic History School were K. Tagányi, I. Acsády, S. Takáts and the young F. Kováts — the first of these being generally credited with the role of being the "father" and the "moving spirit" of both the periodical, as well as of the school that grew up around it.

An historian by training and an archivist by profession, K. Tagányi (1858-1924)<sup>19</sup> was among the very first Hungarian historians to make the study of economic and social developments — with an emphasis on agriculture — the number one area of his interest. Having achieved scholarly prominence with some of his early works (including his pioneering *History*

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<sup>18</sup> The ephemeral « *Zeitschrift für Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte* » ceased publication after only three numbers. Not until 1903 did its continuation appear under the title « *Vierteljahrsschrift für Wirtschafts- und Sozialgeschichte* », which soon became an international journal. Some of the noted European economic journals which preceded these reviews of economic history included: « *Journal des Économistes* » 1842, « *The Economist* » 1843, « *De Economist* » 1852, « *Jahrbuch für Nationalökonomie und Statistik* » 1863, « *Vierteljahrsschrift für Volkswirtschaft, Politik und Kulturgeschichte* » 1863, « *Économiste Français* » 1873, « *Giornale degli Economisti* » 1886, and « *Landwirtschaftsliches Jahrbuch der Schweiz* » 1887. Some of the oldest relevant Hungarian publications included: « *Gazdaságot Tzélzó Ujság* » [Review for the Study of Economics], 1796, and its continuation, « *Vis' gálódó Magyar Gazda* » [The Examining Hungarian Farmer], 1797, as well as the « *Mezei Gazdaság* » [Rural Economy], 1801-1802. By 1894 when the *Hungarian Economic History Review* was founded, over 20 economic and agricultural newspapers and other periodical publications have appeared in Hungary. Cf. *Mezőgazdasági szakfolyóirataink bibliográfiája, 1796-1899* [Bibliography of Our Agricultural Professional Periodicals, 1796-1899] (Budapest, 1958), and IZSÉPY, *op. cit.*, p. 1077.

<sup>19</sup> On Károly Tagányi see JÓZSEF HOLUB, *Tagányi Károly, 1858-1924*, « *Századok* », LVII-LVIII (1923-1924), pp. 833-837; BÁLINT HÓMAN, *Tagányi Károly*, « *Népelet* » [Volk Life] (1924), pp. 189-190, reprinted in HÓMAN's, *Történetírás és Forráskritika* [Historiography and Source Criticism] (Budapest, 1938), pp. 528-530; ERIK MOLNÁR's introduction to the second edition of Károly Tagányi's, *A földközösség története Magyarországon* [The History of Communal Landownership in Hungary], ed. Erik Molnár (Budapest, 1950), pp. 3-12; and ISTVÁN DÉRÁNY, *Gazdaság- és társadalomtörténet* [Economic and Social History] in *A magyar történetírás új útjai* [The New Paths of Hungarian Historiography], ed. Bálint Hóman (Budapest, 1931), pp. 183-236.

of *Communal Landownership in Hungary*, 1894),<sup>20</sup> Tagányi became the *de facto* editor of the *Hungarian Economic History Review* already in 1894. For three years, however, the journal was under the nominal editorship of the OMGE's secretary, A. Paikert (1866-1948), subsequently known largely for his leadership role in the Hungarian Turanist movement.<sup>21</sup> In 1897 Tagányi was officially appointed to the editorship, and he retained this position until 1901, when ill health forced him to resign. But he remained in close contact with the journal right up to its demise in 1906.

Tagányi's task as the *de facto* and later *de jure* editor of the *Hungarian Economic History Review* was considerable. He had to break a path not only for the journal, but also for a new discipline, which was generally not very highly regarded by the politically-oriented contemporary historians and the reading public. Tagányi took on this task with an unusual devotion and dedication. One of his recent assessors had rightfully called him the "living motor" of the journal, who carried on the multitude of administrative and editorial duties and financial burdens almost single-handed, while also writing his own worthy studies for the review.<sup>22</sup> Moreover, in addition to recruiting some of the best historians to the list of his underpaid contributors (e.g. in addition to Acsády, Takáts and Kováts, such first rate scholars as S. Barabás, S. Borovszky, H. Marczali, S. Márki, G. Pauler, L. Szádeczky-Kardoss, A. Pór, P. Sörös and L. Thallóczy), Tagányi devoted considerable attention to improving some of the hurriedly written studies by these contributors. In fact, in some instances he had made so many improvements that he "virtually became the [unnamed] co-author of several articles".<sup>23</sup> He also urged his contributors to write on specific topics, calling to their attention the availability and location of related archival materials, while also directing their attention to current developments in Western (particularly German) economic history studies.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> KÁROLY TAGÁNYI, *A földközösség története Magyarországon* (Budapest, 1894). For the second edition of this work see note 19, above.

<sup>21</sup> Alajos Paikert was one of the founders of the Hungarian Turanian Society [*Magyar Turáni Társaság*] (1910), whose purpose was to study and to foster the relationship among the so-called «Turanian» nations, generally known as the Ural-Altaiic people. Paikert also edited the Society's irregular periodical, the *Turán* (1913-1944), and published a number of works in which he propagated his romantic Turanian ideas. These included his *Ázsia jövője* [The Future of Asia] (1913), *A turáni gondolat politikai vonatkozásai* [The Political Implications of the Turanian Idea] (1925), *Ázsia ébredése* [The Awakening of Asia] (1934), and *A turáni népek világhivatása* [The World Mission of the Turanian Peoples] (1937), all of which appeared in Budapest.

<sup>22</sup> IZSÉPY, *op. cit.*, p. 1080.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1081.

<sup>24</sup> See particularly Tagányi's correspondence with Sándor Takáts in the National Széchényi Library of Budapest (*Országos Széchényi Könyvtár, Kézirattár, Levelestár*), particularly for the year 1877-1900. Cf. IZSÉPY, *op. cit.*, pp. 1080 ff.

While editing the journal and carrying on his own research, Tagányi also waged an incessant struggle against the financial problems of his journal. Due to the limited contemporary interest in economic and agricultural history in Hungary, the review never became fully solvent, which produced many bitter hours for the editor. Thus, despite his desire to do so, Tagányi was never able to terminate his journal's financial dependence on the OMGE, nor the consequent undesirable influence of the big estate owners on its content. The OMGE's contributions were augmented only occasionally by subsidies from the Hungarian Ministry of Agriculture.

As a result of the OMGE's decisive influence, the *Hungarian Economic History Review* was obliged to deal with the history of the large estates and of the landowning classes with more caution and circumspection than desirable in such a journal.<sup>25</sup> Even so, Tagányi advanced the cause of economic, agricultural and social history in Hungary to such a degree that after the review's deplorable demise in its thirteenth year of publication, Hungarian historians for the first time could write relatively effectively about these developments, without fear of being too shallow or misleading in their coverage.<sup>26</sup>

As an historian Tagányi was a typical member of the generally highly regarded Hungarian Positivist School — with all its merits and shortcomings. As practised in Hungary, positivism was primarily an historical methodology and not a philosophy of history. Moreover, because of its emphasis on minute source criticism, it was less apt in producing complex historical syntheses than research monographs or critically edited source publications.<sup>27</sup> And this also holds true for Tagányi, whose major works generally fall into the latter two categories. Thus, even his summarizing works, such as his highly valued *History of Communal Landownership in Hungary* (1894), or his lesser known *Origins of Our County Autonomy* (1899), were really monographic elaborations

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<sup>25</sup> As an example of this negative influence, see Tagányi's letter to Takáts, May 13, 1899, in which the former declines to publish information about financial abuses by members of the Dessewffy family, the ancestors of Count Aurél Dessewffy, the president of the OMGE.

<sup>26</sup> While the thirteen volumes of the «Hungarian Economic History Review» contained many necessary published sources for an overall synthesis of Hungarian economic developments, much of it was fragmented and disjointed, and thus difficult to use. See also WELLMANN, *Agrártörténelmünk*, *op. cit.*, pp. 303-304.

<sup>27</sup> On positivism in general see W. W. SIMON, *European Positivism in the Nineteenth Century* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1963). On Hungarian positivism see TIVADAR THIENEMANN, *A pozitivizmus és a magyar történetírás* [Positivism and Hungarian Historiography], «Minerva», I (1922), pp. 1-28; TIBOR BARÁTH, *Comte pozitivizmusa és a magyar pozitivizmus* [Comte's Positivism and Hungarian Positivism], in *Emlékkönyv Szentpétery Imre születése hatvanadik évfordulójának ünnepére* [Memorial Album on the Occasion of the Feast of the Sixtieth Anniversary of Imre Szentpétery's Birth] (Budapest, 1938), pp. 5-30; and ÁGNES R. VÁRKONYI's recent major study, *A pozitívista történetelmélet a magyar történetírásban* [The Positivist Philosophy of History in Hungarian Historiography], 2 vols. (Budapest, 1973).

of specific institutional developments in medieval Hungary.<sup>28</sup> In light of the above, next to having made economic history into a legitimate field of study in Hungary, Tagányi's most significant contribution to Hungarian social and economic historical studies consisted of his clarification of the communal landownership question in medieval Hungary, and of his participation in one of the most important debates about the structure of medieval Hungarian society. The latter took the form of a violent scholarly controversy between Tagányi and the socio-cultural historian L. Erdélyi (1866-1947), which — while unresolved at the time of the debate — advanced considerably the cause of Hungarian social history.<sup>29</sup>

#### TAGÁNYI'S SUCCESSOR: FERENC KOVÁTS

The incessant struggle with deficits, the lack of sufficient sympathy and support from the reading public, and the enormous amount of editorial work he invested into the periodical, eventually undermined Tagányi's health. By 1901 he was obliged to resign the editorship of the *Hungarian Economic History Review*. His place was taken by the able and enthusiastic, but young and inexperienced F. Kováts (1873-1956), who was able to carry on the journal only up to 1906, when with no. 3 of vol. 13 it ceased publication altogether.<sup>30</sup> With the review's demise, the outbreak of the First World War,

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<sup>28</sup> For the two editions of TAGÁNYI'S *History of Communal Landownership in Hungary*, see notes 19 and 20 above. Its German version is the *Geschichte der Feldgemeinschaft in Ungarn* (Budapest, 1895). For his work on county autonomy see *Megyei önkormányzatunk keletkezése* (Budapest, 1899). Tagányi's other significant works include: *Magyar erdészeti oklevéltár, 1015-1867* [Archives of Hungarian Forestry, 1015-1867], 3 vols. (Budapest, 1896); *A M. Kir. Országos Levéltár ismertetése* [A Guide to the Hung. Roy. National Archives], 3 vols. (Budapest, 1897-1898); *Szolnok-Doboka vármegye monográphiája* [A Monograph of Szolnok-Doboka County], 7 parts (Dés, 1901-1905); and *Hazai élő jogszokások* [Living Hungarian Legal Customs] (Budapest, 1919).

<sup>29</sup> In this debate Erdélyi believed in the existence of several social classes already in the early Arpadian age (i.e. 10th and 11th centuries), and he also detected the presence of considerable Slavic influences on the newly settled Magyars. Tagányi, on the other hand, championed the view that early Arpadian society was composed only of freemen and slaves — the former made up exclusively of Magyars and of related Turkic tribes, and the latter almost wholly of the conquered Slavs. Tagányi also rejected the extensive presence of Slavic influences, and viewed the pre-Magyar fortification system of the Carpathian Basin as a creation of earlier Turkic settlers, related to the Magyars. For the Tagányi-Erdélyi debate see the «Történeti Szemle» [Historical Review], III-V (1914-1916), and LÁSZLÓ ERDÉLYI'S *A tizenkét legkritikusabb kérdés* [The Twelve Most Critical Questions] (Kolozsvár, 1917). See also STEVEN BELA VARDY, *The Birth of the Hungarian Kulturgeschichte School*, in *Sinor-Festschrift* (in press).

<sup>30</sup> On Ferenc Kováts see PÁL SZABÓ, *A M. Kir. Erzsébet Tudományegyetem és irodalmi munkássága* [The Hung. Roy. Erzsébet University and its Scholarly Activities], 2 parts in one volume (Pécs, 1940), part II, pp. 557-562; and VARDY, *Modern Hungarian Historiography*, pp. 216-219. Kováts's most significant works include: *Városi adózás a*

and the subsequent collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the Economic History School also faded out and gave its place over to other orientations.

In the period that followed there arose a number of noteworthy orientations in Hungarian historical studies which dealt with aspects of economic, social and agricultural history. The two most significant of these were S. Domanovszky *Kulturgeschichte* School, whose roots reach back to the period of the Economic History School, and E. Mályusz's Ethnohistory School, which developed during the interwar period.<sup>31</sup> While both of them drew some inspiration from Tagányi's Economic History School, they went beyond the scope of this school. Yet neither of them was able to establish a periodical comparable to the *Hungarian Economic History Review*, which could have served as rallying points for historians interested in economic and social developments. Moreover, — and this is indicative of the general tenor of Hungarian historiography of the late dualist and interwar periods — not until 1959 was there a new journal established (*Agrártörténeti Szemle* = *Agrohistorical Review*)<sup>32</sup> that could claim to be a successor of Tagányi's *Hungarian Economic History Review*.

#### SÁNDOR TAKÁTS: THE SOCIO-CULTURAL HISTORIAN OF THE SCHOOL

If Tagányi was the father and moving spirit of the *Hungarian Economic History Review* and of the whole Economic History School, than the review's number one contributor was the fascinating priest historian S. Takáts (1860-1932).<sup>33</sup> Like Tagányi, Takáts was also an historian by training and an

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*középkorban* [Urban Taxation in the Middle Ages] (Pozsony, 1900); *Adalékok a dunai hajózás és dunai vámok történetéhez az Anjou korban* [On the History of Shipping and Tariffs on the Danube in the Age of the Anjous] (Budapest, 1901); *A középkori magyar pénztörténet vázlata* [An Outline of Medieval Hungarian Monetary History] (Budapest, 1901); *Nyugatmagyarország áruforgalma a XV. században, a pozsonyi harmincad-könyv alapján* [West Hungary's Commerce in the 15th Century, on the Basis of the Customs Book of Pozsony] (Budapest, 1902); and *A pozsonyi városgazdaság a középkor végén* [The Urban Economy of Pozsony at the End of the Middle Ages] (Pozsony, 1918).

<sup>31</sup> On the Hungarian *Kulturgeschichte* and Ethnohistory Schools of the interwar period, see VARDY, *Modern Hungarian Historiography*, pp. 198-279; IDEM, *The Birth of the Hungarian Kulturgeschichte School*; and IDEM, *Hungarian Historiography and the Geistesgeschichte School* (Cleveland, Ohio, 1974), pp. 38-44, 71-75.

<sup>32</sup> «Agrártörténeti Szemle» [Agrohistorical Review], published since 1959, is the journal of the Agrohistorical Committee of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences.

<sup>33</sup> On Sándor Takáts see MIKLÓS NAGY, *Takáts Sándor élete és munkássága* [The Life and Works of Sándor Takáts] (Budapest, 1937); KÁLMÁN BENDA's introduction to TAKÁTS's *Művelődéstörténeti tanulmányok a XVI-XVII. századból* [Socio-Cultural Studies from the 16th and 17th Centuries], ed. Kálmán Benda (Budapest, 1961), pp. v-xiv; STEVEN BELA VARDY, *The Ottoman Empire in European Historiography: A Re-Evaluation by Sándor Takáts*, «Turkish Review», II (1972), no. 9, pp. 1-6; and IDEM, *The Birth of the Hungarian Kulturgeschichte School*, *op. cit.*

archivist by profession. But beyond this, he was one of the greatest masters of the historical essay in Hungary. His interest lay almost exclusively in social, economic and cultural history, and he dealt especially willingly and effectively with the way of life of the people — whether peasants or aristocrats — during the Turkish period of Hungarian history.

Takáts was an avid researcher, and he also had the touch of a literary artist. His essays are so alive, so human, so delightful, and so informative that one cannot help liking them and learning from them. Without these delightful human aspects of Takáts's writings, which filled much of Tagányi's journal,<sup>34</sup> the *Hungarian Economic History Review* would have ceased publication much earlier than it did. Besides his unconcealed pro-Turkish sympathy (which stemmed from a feeling of loneliness of the Magyars among the nations of Europe),<sup>35</sup> Takáts's most important weakness was his over-reliance on archival material, while paying little attention to the published works and conclusions of fellow historians.

Takáts's popularity as an historian and his importance to the review was demonstrated, among others, 1899, when due to overwhelming problems Tagányi contemplated retirement from the editorship. He was persuaded to remain at the helm of the journal only because Takáts promised his continued support; for as he wrote to his chief contributor, "without you it is impossible".<sup>36</sup>

Tagányi's retirement from the editorship of the *Hungarian Economic History Review* in 1901 was a major blow to its existence. But Takáts's appointment as an archivist of the Hungarian Parliamentary Archives in 1903, and his subsequent inability to contribute effectively to the journal was at least as great a catastrophe. Thereafter the review subsisted only as a shadow of its former self, kept going by the heroic but inadequate efforts of its young editor F. Kováts.

#### IGNÁC ACSÁDY: THE SYNTHESIZER OF THE ECONOMIC HISTORY SCHOOL

Among the other notable contributors of the *Hungarian Economic History Review*, the most important next to Takáts was I. Acsády (1845-1906), the

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<sup>34</sup> Takáts later collected many of his studies and essays written for the «Hungarian Economic History Review» and for other journals in over two dozen independent volumes. The most significant of these works is his *Rajzok a török világból* [Sketches from the Turkish World], 3 vols. (Budapest, 1915-1917), to which he added a fourth volume under the title *A török bódoltság korából* [From the Period of the Turkish Conquest] (Budapest, 1928). An abbreviated version of this multivolumed work also appeared in Turkish translation entitled *Macaristan türk aleminde çizgiler*.

<sup>35</sup> It was this loneliness of the Magyars in Europe that prompted and nurtured the romantic Turanian ideas and movement mentioned in note 21 above.

<sup>36</sup> Tagányi's letter to Takáts, December 18, 1899. Cf. Izsévy, *op. cit.*, p. 1082.

only member of the Economic History School with synthesizing abilities.<sup>37</sup> Acsády had played a notable role already in the foundation of the review by calling attention to the importance of economic forces and material interests in the shaping of history, and thereby creating a growing interest in economic and social history studies in Hungary.<sup>38</sup> Thus he was instrumental in pointing to the significance of population statistics, tax rolls, and various other documents on the financial and material obligations of the rural and urban masses as sources for the study of the historical evolution of Hungarian society. Moreover, after the journal was launched, Acsády was also the first to summarize the goals and obligations of Hungarian economic history studies in a lengthy article on its pages.<sup>39</sup> In this study he pointed out the need to create a consciousness of the importance of economic forces in history, as well as to produce specialists in the area of economic and social history studies.

In addition to his numerous studies in the *Hungarian Economic History Review* and various other historical journals, Acsády also contributed to the growth of the Economic History School through his participation in the preparation of the first Hungarian encyclopedia on economic affairs (*Közgazdasági Lexikon*, 1898-1901),<sup>40</sup> as well as through his pioneering synthesis, *The History of Hungarian Serfdom* (1906).<sup>41</sup>

The latter work, which was the first critical study of its kind in Hungarian historical studies,<sup>42</sup> was probably a byproduct of Acsády's earlier major synthesis of Hungarian history, *The History of the Hungarian Empire* (1093-1904),<sup>43</sup> wherein he attempted to deal with the history of all classes of Hungarian society. Subsequently he decided to summarize his research findings specifically on the peasant masses. With only the beginnings of basic research underway, this was a rather daring undertaking, and one can only marvel

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<sup>37</sup> On Ignác Acsády see PÉTER GUNST, *Acsády Ignác történetírása* [Ignác Acsády's Historiography] (Budapest, 1961).

<sup>38</sup> See particularly ACSÁDY's *Közgazdasági állapotaink a XVI. és XVII. században* [Our Economic Conditions in the 16th and 17th Centuries] (Budapest, 1889) and IDEM, *Statisztika és történetírás* [Statistics and Historiography], «Nemzetgazdasági Szemle» [Review of National Economy] (1889), pp. 447-448. See also GUNST, *Acsády*, *op. cit.*, pp. 79-140.

<sup>39</sup> ACSÁDY, *A magyar gazdaságtörténet feladatai* [The Goals of Hungarian Economic History], «Magyar Gazdaságtörténelmi Szemle», II (1895), pp. 137-158.

<sup>40</sup> *Közgazdasági Lexikon* [Encyclopedia of Economics], 3 vols., ed. by Sándor Halász and Gyula Mandelló (Budapest, 1898-1901).

<sup>41</sup> ACSÁDY, *A magyar jobbágyság története* [The History of Hungarian Serfdom] (Budapest, 1906). New editions in 1944, 1948 and 1950.

<sup>42</sup> While Károly Pfahler did produce an early history of Hungarian serfdom in his *Jus georgicum* ... (note 6 above), that work cannot be regarded a critical survey.

<sup>43</sup> ACSÁDY, *A magyar birodalom története* [The History of the Hungarian Empire], 2 vols. (Budapest, 1903-1904). For a critical evaluation of this work by a Catholic historian, see JÁNOS DUDEK, *Kritikai tanulmányok Acsády Ignácnak A magyar birodalom története című művéről* [Critical Studies on Ignác Acsády's Work Entitled The History of the Hungarian Empire] (Nyitra, 1904).

at his success of having produced as worthy a summary as his *History of Hungarian Serfdom*, which he completed only weeks before his death. In fact, most of the stylistic and factual corrections were already done by Acsády's nephew, P. Szende (1879-1934), a publicist and an historian in his own right, who was connected with the so-called Organic Sociological School of the late dualist period in Hungary.<sup>44</sup> Although many of the data and interpretations of Acsády's work have since been outdated by more recent historical research, his *History of Hungarian Serfdom* is still valuable today. Its value is further increased by the fact that — not counting valuable monographic studies and a number of smaller compendiums — a definitive substitute is still to be written.

Conservative and mostly idealist oriented interwar Hungarian historians have often accused Acsády of being a materialist and even a Marxist historian.<sup>45</sup> For this reason they gave him less credit for his work than he deserved. As a matter of fact, Acsády was more of an anti-clerical than a materialist; and his forceful Magyar nationalism would in all probability have prevented him from becoming an all-out Marxist even if Marxism had been a viable force in Hungary of that period. While undoubtedly oriented toward an economic view of history, and also influenced by the emerging Organic Sociological School (which contained elements of historical materialism), Acsády's *History of Hungarian Serfdom* was basically the product of Hungarian positivism.

Both Acsády's philosophy of history and his political beliefs were eclectic. His recognition of the importance of economic forces, his praise of capitalism, his anti-clericalism, and his craving for a more egalitarian society coexisted very well with his strong nationalism, his refusal to indict the "historic" landowning classes of Hungary for social and economic exploitation, as well as with his opposition to class conflict and violent revolutions.

Acsády's greatest weakness as an historian were his spotty source criticism and his too eclectic view of history, which contained numerous contradictory elements. Both of these stemmed from his lack of a rigorous methodological and philosophical training. But as many of his generation suffered from identical weaknesses, these shortcomings were almost unavoidable. Consequently, they also showed up on the pages of the *Hungarian Economic History Review*; augmented to some degree by the lack of training in economic history by the editors, as well as the contributors.

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<sup>44</sup> See GUNST, *Acsády, op. cit.*, p. 211. On Pál Szende and the Organic Sociological School, see ZOLTÁN HORVÁTH, *Magyar századforduló. A második reformnemzedék története, 1896-1914* [The Hungarian Fin de Siècle. The History of the Second Reform Generation, 1896-1914] (Budapest, 1961); LÁSZLÓ MÁRKUS, *A szociáldemokrata történetfelfogás jellemzéséhez. A kezdetektől 1918-ig* [On the Characterization of the Social Democratic View of History. From the Beginnings to 1918] (Budapest, 1963); and VARDY, *Modern Hungarian Historiography*, pp. 62-63.

<sup>45</sup> See for example HÓMAN's view in *A magyar történetírás új útjai, op. cit.*, p. 35.

In the case of the Review, these problems were further increased by its over-emphasis on data and source publications, and on essays dealing with very small, and at times insignificant details. And this was done at the expense of larger synthetic studies. The fragmented and unsystematized nature of the published material, in turn, made the use of the journal so difficult that much of its published data remained unexploited for considerable time. In fact, not even Acsády relied as heavily on the *Hungarian Economic History Review* in writing his *History of Hungarian Serfdom* as he could or should have.<sup>46</sup> But this may have been due to his illness and approaching death, and the resulting speed with which he had to work.

#### OTHER SCHOLARLY MANIFESTATIONS OF THE ECONOMIC HISTORY SCHOOL

Next to the *Hungarian Economic History Review*, the only other contemporary publication in this field in Hungary was the *Transylvanian Economic History Review* [*Erdélyi Gazdaságtörténeti Szemle*], which appeared in the course of 1897 and 1898 as a supplement to *The Transylvanian Farmer* [*Az Erdélyi Gazda*] in Kolozsvár.<sup>47</sup> This second Hungarian periodical in economic history — which was greeted enthusiastically by Acsády in the *Hungarian Economic History Review*.<sup>48</sup> — had published a number of important studies and sources on the economic and financial affairs of the ruling princes of autonomous Transylvania in the sixteenth and the seventeenth century, as well as on the agricultural, commercial and financial affairs of the landowning and burgher classes of the principality. Its life, however,

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<sup>46</sup> IZSÉPY, *op. cit.*, pp. 1101-1102. Some of Acsády's other significant works in the area of economic history include: *Magyarország pénzügyei I. Ferdinánd uralkodása alatt, 1526-1564* [Hungary's Financial Affairs During the Rule of Ferdinand I, 1526-1564 (Budapest, 1888)]; *A magyar jobbágy-népesség száma a mohácsi vész után* [Hungarian Serf Population After the Battle of Mohács] (Budapest, 1889); *A magyar nemesség és birtokviszonyai a mohácsi vész után* [The Hungarian Nobility and its Conditions of Landownership After the Battle of Mohács] (Budapest, 1890); *Régi magyar birtokviszonyok, 1494-1598* [Old Hungarian Landownership Condition, 1494-1598] (Budapest, 1894); *Két pénzügytörténelmi tanulmány: I. A pozsonyi és szepesi kamarák 1565-1604. II. A jobbágy-adózás 1564-76-ban* [Two Studies in Financial History: I. The Treasuries of Pozsony and Szepes 1565-1604. II. The Taxation of Serfs in 1564-76] (Budapest, 1894); *Magyarország népessége a pragmatica sanctio korában* [Hungary's Population in the Age of the Pragmatic Sanction] (Budapest, 1896); and *A magyar adózás története, 1568-1604* [The History of Hungarian Taxation, 1598-1604] (Budapest, 1896). Acsády also authored two volumes of the ten-volume « Millennium History », *A magyar nemzet története* [The History of the Hungarian Nation], 10 vols., ed. by Sándor Szilágyi (Budapest, 1895-1898). These included: *Magyarország három részre oszlásának története, 1526-1608* [The History of Hungary's Trisection, 1526-1608] (Budapest, 1897), and *Magyarország története I. Lipót és I. József korában, 1657-1711* [Hungary's History in the Age of Leopold I and Joseph I, 1657-1711] (Budapest, 1898).

<sup>47</sup> On these other economic journals see IZSÉPY, *op. cit.*, p. 1086.

<sup>48</sup> See Acsády's remarks in « Magyar Gazdaságtörténelmi Szemle », IV (1897), p. 136.

was too short to have made a meaningful impact on the development of economic history studies in Hungary.

Much more significant was the almost simultaneous appearance of the above-mentioned multivolumed *Encyclopedia of Economics* [*Közgazdasági Lexikon*]. Sponsored by the Hungarian Economics Association [*Magyar Közgazdasági Társaság*], with the collaboration of the Hungarian Academy's Committee on National Economics and Statistics, this work carried numerous major studies on various aspects of Hungarian economic, social, financial and institutional history. Among historians, the encyclopedia's most important contributor was undoubtedly Acsády. He represented both the discipline of history, as well as the Hungarian Academy of Sciences in this project. But Acsády's role in this project was also important because of his scholarly contributions. The latter included almost all of the excellent and exhaustive articles (some of them virtually small monographs) on such diverse topics as the history of taxation, serfdom, agriculture, guild system, military frontier regions, cities, as well as the history of economics itself.<sup>49</sup>

Among the Hungarian economic historians, next to Acsády only Tagányi had a notable role in the preparation of the *Encyclopedia of Economics*. In addition to contributing a number of major articles himself, Tagányi also supplied the archival information to the majority of the historical essays in the work.<sup>50</sup> The role of F. Kováts, Tagányi's successor in the editorship of the *Hungarian Economic History Review*, was much more limited. And this also holds true for the other participating historian, A. Áldásy (1869-1932), who was first of all a specialist of diplomatics and genealogy, and only secondarily an economic historian.<sup>51</sup>

## THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE ECONOMIC HISTORY SCHOOL

In retrospect, the Hungarian Economic History School was undoubtedly less successful than it could have been. It was unable to fulfil the main goal of its founder, namely to come up with a major synthesis of Hungarian economic and agricultural history for the occasion of Hungary's millennium even a decade after that event. Nor was it able to establish a major source publication series in its field. Yet, by creating an awareness of the significance of economic history in the minds of contemporary historians, it did set the stage for its eventual acceptance as a legitimate discipline. Moreover, the

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<sup>49</sup> *Közgazdasági Lexikon*, *op. cit.*, vols. I-III.

<sup>50</sup> See the editors' introduction to *ibid.*, I, pp. i-iii.

<sup>51</sup> On Ferenc Kováts see the works listed under note 30 above. For Antal Áldásy consult JÓZSEF HOLUB, *Áldásy Antal, 1869-1932*, « Századok », LXVI (1932), pp. 366-367; BÁLINT HÓMAN, *Áldásy Antal*, in Hóman's *Történetírás és forráskritika*, *op. cit.*, pp. 521-522; and VARDY, *Modern Hungarian Historiography*, chapters XIX and XX.

Economic History School at the turn of the century was instrumental in the birth of a number of major synthetic studies on aspects of Hungarian economic life,<sup>52</sup> as well as in the development of at least two related schools in interwar Hungarian historiography, the already mentioned *Kulturgeschichte* and Ethno-history Schools of that period.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> In addition to Acsády's *History of Hungarian Serfdom*, one of the most significant summarizing works of that period was LAJOS SZÁDECZKY's *Iparfejlesztés és a cézsek története Magyarországon. Okirattal, 1307-1848* [Industrial Development and the History of the Guilds in Hungary. With Documents, 1307-1848], 2 vols. (Budapest, 1913). One should, however, be careful about SÁNDOR MILHOFFER's *Magyarország közgazdasága* [The Economy of Hungary], 3 vols. (Budapest, 1904), which while purporting to be the history of Hungarian economic developments, is but a somewhat uncritical compilation by an historian untrained in economic affairs. For an extensive critical evaluation of this work, see Ferenc Kováts's review in «Magyar Gazdaságtörténelmi Szemle», XII (1905), pp. 57-71.

<sup>53</sup> On interwar developments in Hungarian historiography, see FERENC GLATZ, *Historiography, Cultural Policy and the Organization of Scholarship in Hungary in the 1920's* «Acta Historica», XVI (1970), pp. 273-293; ERIK MOLNÁR, *Historical Sciences, in Science in Hungary*, ed. by Tibor Erdely-Grúz and Imre Trencsényi-Waldapfel (Budapest, 1965), pp. 161-178; VARDY, *Modern Hungarian Historiography*, chapters VI-XX; and IDEM, *Hungarian Historiography and the Geistesgeschichte School*, pp. 25-47, 62-77.