

## Travel Writing as a Substitute for American Studies in Hungary

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Travel writing (or, literature) is a rather broad term covering a variety of subgenres including, among others, travel diaries; travelogues and imaginary travel accounts; religious, political, and military mission reports; private or public letters from emigrants printed in newspapers; books by people who had stayed in a country then returned home (the I-know-all-about-it attitude); and official study trip reports.

In Hungary, travel literature has been a premier source of information on the United States during the past two hundred years of contact between the two cultures. From the first known Hungarian traveler to the New World (István Parmenius of Buda, 1580s<sup>1</sup>) to the most recent semi-literary works on how to work illegally in the United States, Hungarians have felt the urge to share their experiences in, and perceptions of, the North American continent with their fellow countrymen. Hungary's rather hectic history since the 1830s has defined even travel literature, repeatedly setting limits for it in the form of censorship or elevating it to a pseudo-academic level to substitute for scholarly research. To understand the nature of the role travel literature has played in shaping the Hungarian image of America, we must first look at that image.

The Hungarian image of the United States follows the general European trend of seeing the New World giant as the "Promised Land." In most cases, this means political democracy and unlimited economic opportunity, but in the case of the Hungarians there appears to be a special twist. One of the most intriguing questions of Hungarian culture and history is why Hungarians have so willingly accepted the economic dimension of the Promised Land image but have repeatedly refused to adopt the American form of democratic government. After all, in the past two centuries, Hungarians have rewritten their constitution several times and in very different ways, most recently in 1989, but they never chose to duplicate the political system that has worked in the United States since its inception in 1789. This was not because Hungarians did not know the American Constitution. To the contrary, the very first travelers who shared their experiences translated and published the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence in full or in part, and described the American political system in great detail.<sup>2</sup> What follows next is (1) a brief overview of

the major trends in Hungarian travel literature on the United States, (2) its role in shaping Hungarian images of America, and (3) an attempt to explain why Hungarians have, so far, refused to adopt the American version of democracy.

### **The Age of Reform**

The age of Hungarian national awakening, the so-called Age of Reform of the 1830s and 1840s, saw newly found interest in the United States. The first travelers were rich noblemen or aristocrats who felt they had to share their perception of America with their fellow countrymen in their native tongue (Hungarian) rather than in German, which most of them were equally or more versed in. Sándor Bölöni Farkas, in *Útazás Észak Amerikában [Journey in North America]*, displayed unconditional admiration for the American system (he even found excuses for slavery) and set the tone for all subsequent treatises on the US. Arguably the best-known section of the book is about the very first day he spent in the States:

From the first, fairy-talelike [sic] days in America, when in the evenings I recounted and reflected upon my day's activities, two things struck me forcefully. First, upon entering America nobody demanded our or for that matter any other passenger's passport. In fact, no one even asked our names, and our arrival went unnoticed. Second, at customs the traveler's word is sufficient guarantee to clear his luggage. It is not opened, rummaged through to check upon the passenger's honesty.<sup>3</sup>

Bölöni then describes the political system, provides a translation of the Declaration of Independence and parts of the Constitution, and offers statistics on a wide variety of issues ranging from religions to Native American tribes. For Hungarians, the book represented the spirit and freedom of the United States, and served as a possible model to follow in Hungary's struggle for national identity and independence from Vienna. Consequently, the book was banned by the Austrian censors who wanted no taste of American freedoms in the Hungarian half of the Habsburg Empire.

The only other Hungarian to share his experiences in a book before 1848 was Ágoston Haraszthy, who is considered the founder of wine culture in California. In his two-volume work published ten years after that of Bölöni's, Haraszthy devotes the better half of the second volume (some 200 pages) to the American political system.<sup>4</sup> The two books, together with

De Tocqueville's *Democracy in America* (first published in Hungarian in 1841-43), combined to create the image of the political and economic Promised Land in Hungary, as was manifested in the Revolution and War of Independence of 1848-49.

The April Laws of 1848 functioned as a constitution, and the events were described as a "Lawful Revolution" by Columbia historian István Deák.<sup>5</sup> The Habsburg attack on Hungary brought about a desperate war for independence. During the conflict, in April 1849, Lajos Kossuth proclaimed what he called the "Hungarian Declaration of Independence," which was modeled on the American one. The Hungarians were eventually defeated with Russian help, and aspirations for national independence were put on the back burner until the end of World War I. Thus, the first attempt to reshape the Hungarian constitutional system along American lines was defeated in the field of battle. In exile, György Klapka and Kossuth himself drew up various plans for a Danubian Federation (1862), but there never was a chance for its realization.

### **The Dual Monarchy**

The abortive Hungarian Revolution and War of Independence of 1848-49 resulted in Austrian occupation, the suspension of Hungary's constitutional rights, and the termination of any extensive discussion of the United States. In 1861 elections were held and the Hungarian parliament was called into session. But, in the absence of the expected results, the Emperor tightened the screws again, and reconciliation came only in 1867. The Compromise of 1867 created a complicated system of governance known as Dualism and a new state, the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. Hungarians won themselves a special place in this system. The 12<sup>th</sup> law of 1867 functioned as their new constitution. It was based upon the idea of personal union under a single monarch (Francis Joseph) rather than the American model of republicanism, representative democracy, and separation of powers.

Quite interestingly, travel writing on America continued to flourish in Habsburg-occupied Hungary during the late 1850s and the 1860s. Authors like János Xántus (1857) and Károly Nendtvich (1858), and Pál Rosti (1861) were all allowed to publish, but the books were obviously heavily censored. Yet, in the absence of reliable studies of Hungarian publishing history and the relevant personal records of the authors, we cannot determine to what degree this censorship was enforced or self-imposed.

The gradual loosening of Vienna's stranglehold on the political and intellectual life of Hungary manifested itself in the publication of Count Béla Széchenyi's Civil War travelogue of America in Hungarian in 1863.<sup>6</sup> Béla was the elder son of István, one of the pivotal figures of Hungarian politics in the previous four decades, and a key member of the revolutionary government of April 1848. Vienna denied Count István Széchenyi a leave of absence from the army or a passport to visit the States before the Revolution, and he was locked up in a mental asylum between 1849 and 1860, when he eventually committed suicide. Yet in the quarter century between 1850 and 1876, his son was one of two travelers from Hungary who was allowed to travel to the New World and publish about his trip. The book is heavily censored but carries a full translation of both the US Constitution (with amendments) and the Confederate Constitution. He addresses the republican government only in passing and rejects the "Northern Yankee" in favor of the more aristocratic "Southern gentleman," whom he incidentally never met. Young Széchenyi was a well educated and well traveled aristocrat of the highest rank in Hungary, but he saw several technical wonders in the New World that he simply could not describe. About American hotels, he writes: "In the bigger hotels, a small room, driven by a water-pressure lever, leaves every five minutes to take guests to the second, third, fourth and fifth floors." This was the first encounter of a Hungarian with an elevator.<sup>7</sup>

Pál Rosti received a somewhat different treatment at the hands of the authorities. He was a rather wealthy representative of the middle nobility, whose sister married into the Eötvös family of barons. Rosti's 1861 travelogue was titled *Uti emlékezetek Amerikából* [*Memories of a Trip to America*] but all references to the United States were dropped from it. His comments on the United States of America were published only after the Compromise of 1867 in a popular weekly magazine, *Hazánk s a Külföld* [*Our Homeland and the Outside World*].

Between the 1880s and the First World War, American contacts with Austria-Hungary were expanded. Cheap American grain threatened the continental European market for Austrian foodstuffs, large-scale migration to the New World presented new problems for both sides, trans-Atlantic travel became cheaper and more accessible, and world fairs held in the United States attracted even more Hungarian attention. Accordingly, Vienna and Washington raised diplomatic representation to the ambassadorial level, and consulates were opened in Budapest and Fiume (now Rijeka), the latter of which was the chief port of departure for emigrant ships. The

broadening of exposure between the two cultures brought about new trends in travel literature, while preserving some of the old ones. The most notable general development was a shift from enforced to self-imposed censorship, which continued to prevent the development of a realistic perception and understanding of America in Hungary.

A new trend was the strikingly condescending tone employed by journalists who traveled to America to report on world fairs: Aurél Kecskeméthy in 1876 (Philadelphia), and Zsigmond Falk in 1893 (Chicago). A quotation from Falk demonstrates this new tone:

When we arrived in New York we were overwhelmed by such an unpleasant feeling of disgust that we felt like turning around and going home straight away. At the port, when we disembarked, we were met by a mob and human scum numbering hundreds of thousands, which offered to take our luggage, lest we should see it ever again. The thinly veiled cunning, vice and evil on the faces of these people aroused such disgust in us that we would willingly have given up the glory of seeing the new world.<sup>8</sup>

Kecskeméthy and Falk, albeit almost two decades apart, visited a United States in rapid transition and described and scorned it without any attempt to understand it. This anti-American sentiment was the result of three main factors: a major shift in the way Hungarians came to view the future of their own country, an imperial approach to the New World, and large-scale trans-Atlantic migration.

As has been pointed out before, Hungarians earned themselves a favored position in the Dual Monarchy, but their side of the compromise was giving up pretensions to national independence. This, in turn, meant that the United States, a democratic republic, simply could not serve as a model to follow for a Hungarian elite composed of aristocrats loyal to a monarch. Thus, the US remained a strange, alien, yet romantic land of adventure and opportunity, as was manifested in real and imagined adventure stories bearing titles like *Túl az óceánon: elbeszélések az amerikai életből* [*Beyond the Ocean: Stories of Life in America*] and *A floridai kalandhősök* [*Florida Adventure Heroes*].<sup>9</sup> This romanticized vision of America drew heavily upon the Cooper, Twain, and Beecher-Stowe (literary) tradition and on the first manifestations of juvenile and pulp fiction, published mostly in magazines and weeklies.

Detachment from reality went hand in hand with an unjustified imperial approach to the New World giant: Kecskeméthy and Falk write as if they were British or German travelers, representing countries that were actual rivals of the United States. Their attitude may be attributed to the belief that Hungary (European, and with rich cultural, historical, and constitutional traditions) was superior to the United States.

### **Migration to the United States**

Large-scale migration to America began in earnest in the 1880s and presented the various Hungarian governments of the age with an interesting dilemma. Although the Kingdom of Hungary was supposedly a nation state, ethnic Hungarians made up only half of the total population. The target areas for emigration were the ethnically mixed fringes of the country, and ethnic Hungarians made up about a quarter of the total number of emigrants. Discouraging ethnic Hungarian emigration and non-ethnic Hungarian remigration represented a subtle means of what we might call ethnic cleansing. To this end, an anti-American propaganda campaign was launched in Hungarian. Government publications highlighted the hardships of life in America, the abuse of the immigrants, and reported on mining and industrial accidents. At the same time, however, immigrants in the States wrote personal letters home, and in these they only reported on economic success and social equality. And people tended to disbelieve their government, although it was telling the truth, and accepted at face value what their relatives and fellow villagers told them about the New World, although these accounts were blatantly one-sided.<sup>10</sup> People, as usual, believed what they wanted to believe. Self-imposed censorship manifested itself in both extremely positive and negative treatments of life in the States.

As a result, around the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, travel literature continued to focus on the miracles of American life, especially industrial and urban development and the world fairs (including St. Louis in 1903-04).<sup>11</sup> At the same time, with the United States emerging as a major economic power, the Hungarian governments in the final three decades of the Dualist era (1885-1918) sent a choice selection of experts on officially commissioned trips to study various aspects of American life: railroads, agriculture, trade, health care, women in society, and so on.<sup>12</sup> This was the first ever Hungarian attempt to systematically study the United States, and we may view this government-sponsored set of projects as a substitute for American Studies—long before the term itself was coined in the United States.

The First World War cut off the Kingdom of Hungary from the United States and Hungarians living in the New World. The Treaty of Trianon dismembered the old Kingdom of Hungary, and the state of war, which began in December 1917, was terminated by a separate American-Hungarian peace treaty in August 1921. Ministers were exchanged, and full diplomatic, economic, and cultural contacts were developed for the first time in the common history of the two peoples. The free movement of peoples and ideas, however, was discolored by Hungarian claims that the United States had a moral obligation to help Hungarians revise the unjust Trianon Treaty. Meanwhile, the Americans introduced the national quota system (1924) and effectively cut off the flow of immigrants. Hungarian travel literature on America reflected these changes.

Between the wars, for the first time in the history of American-Hungarian contacts, travel literature ceased to be the chief source of information on the United States. American popular culture hit the European (and with that, the Hungarian) scene with a vengeance in the form of pulp fiction and film.<sup>13</sup> Travel literature developed two new subgenres in this period: accounts of religious, political, social, and scientific missions, and books by people who had spent an extensive amount of time in the States.

Catholic and Protestant religious missions surveyed the various Hungarian communities in the New World, and their respective churches offered relief to their most immediate concerns. The Catholic Bishop Béla Bangha reported on his mission in 1923, and Elek Máthé was sent on a similar survey trip by the supervising body of the Reformed Churches of Hungary in the early 1940s.<sup>14</sup> Political missions revolved around the possible revision of the Trianon Treaty, with the 1928 “Kossuth pilgrimage” standing out as the ultimate representation of such projects. Dozens of books and newspaper articles tell the story of the official Hungarian delegation that traveled to New York City for the unveiling of a public statue of Lajos Kossuth, the ultimate hero of 1848-49.<sup>15</sup> Scout jamborees provided the social dimension of specialized travel literature, and academic exchanges (mostly in the natural sciences) yielded the occasional scholarly account.<sup>16</sup>

Between October 1918 and January 1920, the Hungarian political system went through many changes. The Hungarian half of the Dual Monarchy became a democratic republic (November 1918 to March 1919), which was replaced by a soviet republic (March-August 1919), leading to the Rumanian invasion of the capital. In early 1920, the Hungarian parliament

decided to restore the kingdom, this time without a king but with a regent (Count Miklós Horthy) serving as head of state. Thus, within the span of fifteen months, Hungarians had three shots at reconsidering their constitutional system, and they reverted to a modified version of the old order. The closest Hungarians ever came to seriously considering the possibility of adopting the American constitutional system was during the democratic republic period, but the regime of Count Mihály Károlyi did not have enough time to stabilize its power, develop its ideas about the best possible form of government for the country, and hold universal elections to legitimize itself. Oscar Jászi's vision of a Danubian Confederation modeled on the American federal system<sup>17</sup> remained a daydream and became a key myth of subsequent progressive left-wing movements.

This, however, did not mean that Hungarians ignored the US constitution. A Debrecen university professor, László Szabó, spent a few years in the States in the early 1920s, and published three important books on the subject. *Az igazi Amerika* [*The Real America*] saw two editions within two years at one of the major publishers in Hungary. It is the first systematic survey of life in America by a Hungarian academic, and covers a wide range of topics including race, society, the press, business life, shopping, women, Jews, prohibition, and the Ku Klux Klan. This pioneering work was followed by shorter accounts of American democracy and freedom of the press.<sup>18</sup> József Szabó tried to replicate László Szabó's success in 1935, but his work is of limited academic value.<sup>19</sup> Zoltán Magyary, another Hungarian academic, spent some time in the States during the early stages of the first New Deal and contributed a solid treatise on the American theory and practice of the state in 1934.<sup>20</sup> It is common knowledge that the first American Studies programs were launched in the States in the 1930s and that Nazi Germany also prioritized the discipline in the framework of enemy studies. Despite Szabó and Magyary's impressive efforts, this did not happen in Hungary: popular culture and travel literature continued to be the chief sources of an image of America, which, by default, simply could not be realistic.

### **The communist dictatorship and American Studies**

In the Second World War the US and Hungary again fought on different sides and Hungary ended up in the Soviet sphere of influence. The cultural and political battle lines of the cold war settled in following a short transition period (1945-47). The new political and intellectual elite of Communist Hungary, following the Soviet lead, adopted the policy of “if

you don't talk about it, it doesn't exist" towards American Studies. Official Hungarian government propaganda depicted the US as "fascist" and "imperialist," the stumbling block to human progress. The 1949 communist constitution was democratic on paper, but oppressive in practice. Western languages were banned from the university curricula and 1956 heightened tensions and rhetoric even further. The early 1960s brought about the reopening of the English departments, the easing of the official rhetoric, and the first call for American Studies in Hungary. Professor László Országh's pleas for independent American Studies departments and more funding for research<sup>21</sup> fell on deaf ears, but the improvement of the cultural relations between the two countries (1966-78) opened up backdoor possibilities in the form of Fulbright, Ford, and IREX research grants. Meanwhile, the Hungarian government published a two-volume history of the US from a team of Soviet "historians," and literary magazine editors had to submit each piece of translation of American literature to the censors before publication even as late as the 1980s. The Kádár regime tried to maintain total control over information on the United States.

The paranoid fear of losing total control of information (a key feature of any dictatorship) manifested itself in (what now appears to be) a comical way. In 1972, when most families did not even own a television set and when there was one TV channel with no broadcasts on Monday, the Central Committee of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party discussed the possible ill effects of "enemy propaganda via satellite TV broadcasts."<sup>22</sup>

Popular culture and travel literature continued to serve as the chief sources of America's image in Hungary, but both had its own, distorted "socialist" version. Inter-war pulp fiction was banned and some of it physically destroyed by the authorities. Quotas were introduced to limit the influence of American movies. As a substitute, a series of East European westerns were produced by the Germans, Yugoslavs, and Cubans, featuring a Serbian physical education teacher (Gojko Mitić) impersonating all the major Native American leaders from Osceola to Sitting Bull. The first American TV serials to hit the Hungarian screen were *Roots* and *Dallas* in the mid-1980s. The two most popular western novels of the 1970s and 1980s were published as juvenile literature and were penned by a Czech and a Pole respectively.<sup>23</sup>

Although travel literature was strictly controlled and censored, it made up the vast majority of books dealing with America. The tone of these accounts matched the overall tone of the official party rhetoric. One of the earliest pieces is *Ezt láttam Amerikában* [*This Is What I Saw in America*]

by János Gyetvai, who visited the States between the wars, but published his work only in 1952. The famous writer and Communist Party bigwig Iván Boldizsár provided the 23-page foreword, which begins with the following statement: “János Gyetvai tells us what he saw in America at a time when American imperialism descends into open aggression and carries out shameful criminal acts.”<sup>24</sup>

Later, during the normalization of bilateral relations in the early 1970s, but after the 1956 Revolution and War of Independence, a somewhat different tone was adopted. One representative author from this period, the top Hungarian sports commentator Tamás Vitray, was invited on a scholarship to study American television and production. He sat in on the David Frost and Dick Cavett shows and got to interview Cavett himself. His accounts center on the “Applause” sign flashing at times during the show and the power of advertising. He cites Cavett saying that 93% of all TV programs are garbage.<sup>25</sup> Regardless of the tone and quality of Vitray’s comments, for a quarter century these were the only detailed accounts Hungarians at home could read of genuine American talk shows. Vitray was associated with Syracuse University and at one point he explains in detail what a campus is, and how universities function in the States. In connection with a visit to Washington he lectures the reader on the American constitution and the right to judicial review of the Supreme Court in a surprisingly misinformed manner:

The third article of the Constitution of the United States vested legislative powers into this body, which in 1803, soon after the adoption of the Constitution, made a decision according to which, as the sole “interpreter” of the Constitution, it reviews each law passed to check if it meets constitutional requirements or not.<sup>26</sup>

He does not allow himself to be enthusiastic even about Niagara Falls and finds it surprisingly small.<sup>27</sup> He tells about the love Hungarians showered on him, but describes Hungarians living in America as people out of place who would like to preserve their culture but fail to do so. This, in turn, fits the Kádár propaganda targeting especially 1956 refugees: they left only for a better life and to have a car, they have no place in the States, and they all would like to come home.

The 30 plus Hungarian travelogues of America published during the Kádár years (1956-88) follow the same clichés and patterns. There is a special reason for going to the United States, which turns out to be a

disappointment, with frustrated Hungarians all hoping to come home but afraid to ask. The mission varies from musical invitation through medical exchange programs to journalism. Journalistic accounts were especially popular, with János Avar regularly contributing on presidential elections and Pál Ipper and István Kulcsár offering insights into everyday life in America.<sup>28</sup> Thus, centrally controlled travel literature served as a substitute for American Studies. Some of these authors still show up in 2009 as talking heads on TV channels or programs associated with the former communist party.

What worked against the communist brainwashing attempts was common sense, memories of the interwar image of America, and American cultural diplomacy (and propaganda) in the form of radio broadcasts, film, and music. As a result, Hungarians continued to have a distorted image of the United States and what it stood for: Communist propaganda denigrated the United States, while word of mouth folklore glorified it.

### **American Studies in post-1989 Hungary**

1989 brought sweeping changes in the region, and Hungarians got still another chance to reconsider their constitution (this time the 1949 communist one) along the lines of the US constitution, but decided to adopt a modified West German model.<sup>29</sup> American Studies became a legitimate academic discipline, and the restrictions on student enrollment were removed. Books about America are now published regularly, but the old communist attitude of “if you don’t talk about it, it does not exist” prevails as the national curriculum has not been revised to meet the requirements of a free, but American-dominated, world. USIS libraries were closed down by the State Department, and the recent opening of American Corners in some cities in Hungary represents the first truly effective means of outreach to the general public in nearly a decade.

Of the post-1989 crop three volumes stand out. The first one is a delayed publication of an account of a 1980s trip to the States by the poet Károly Jobbágy; a book that stands out as a yardstick of what travel literature could have been without communist censorship.<sup>30</sup> The second one is Mária Muhi’s *Turistavízum* [*Tourist Visa*], supposedly a novel about a fictitious girl that explores the various means of working illegally in America by abusing visa regulations.<sup>31</sup> The third one is a narrative interview with Jenő Menyhárt, one of the legends of underground pop and rock music in Hungary in the 1980s, who lived for some time in New York. The idea of turning travel writing into a book-length interview is strikingly original, and Menyhárt’s observations are

quite impressive for someone who learned the American way of life the hard way.<sup>32</sup>

It follows from this discussion that travel literature was the chief source of information on the United States before the First World War and has shared that role with some form of popular culture ever since. And with the exception of some 40 years (between the wars and since 1989), all information on the United States has been heavily censored. Before 1989 Hungarians never had the comfort of studying the US in a free academic environment, and since 1989 no serious attempt has been made to educate the general public on things American. What remains is popular culture and travel literature.

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### Notes

<sup>1</sup> David B. Quinn and Neil Cheshire, trans., *The New Found Land of Stephen Parmenius: The Life and Writings of a Hungarian Poet, Drowned on a Voyage from Newfoundland, 1583* (Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1972); on his life see 3-67.

<sup>2</sup> Sándor Bölöni Farkas, *Journey in North America, 1831*, trans. Árpád Kadarkay (Santa Barbara: ABC-Clio, 1978), chapters 23-25, 185-201. The Hungarian original was published in Kolozsvár (Cluj) in 1834.

<sup>3</sup> Bölöni Farkas, *Journey in North America* 85.

<sup>4</sup> Ágoston (Mokcsai) Haraszthy, *Utazás Északamerikában. [Journey in North America]* 2 vols. (Pest: Heckenast Gusztáv, 1844). A cheaper, second edition was brought out in 1850. The relevant sections are from 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., vol. 2: chapters 2-10, 10-209. This book is not available in English.

<sup>5</sup> István Deák, *The Lawful Revolution: Louis Kossuth and the Hungarians, 1848-1849* (New York: Columbia UP, 1979).

<sup>6</sup> Count Béla Széchenyi, *Amerikai utam: Részletek 1862-ki naplójából [My American Trip: Excerpts from his Diary of 1862]* (Pest: Emich Gusztáv, 1863).

<sup>7</sup> For details, see Tibor Glant, "Fájdalmas küldetés: Gróf Széchenyi Béla amerikai útja 1862-ben" ["A Hurtful Mission: Count Béla Széchenyi's Trip to America in 1862"], Frank Tibor, ed., *Gyarmatokból impérium: Magyar kutatók tanulmányai az amerikai történelemből [Out of Colonies an Empire: Hungarian Scholars on American History]* (Budapest: Gondolat, 2007), 88-103. The quote is from page 92 in the original; translation mine.

<sup>8</sup> Zsigmond Falk, *Budapestől San Franciscoig [From Budapest to San Francisco]*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Budapest: Deutsch Zsigmond és Társa, 1895), 37-38. Translation mine; the original reads as follows: "Megérkezve New-Yorkba, annyira kellemetlen, visszataszító, olyan érzés fogott el, a mely azt mondotta, hogy sokkal üdvösebb, sokkal praktikusabb volna rögtön megfordulni és hazatérni. Már a hajó kikötőjében is, midőn járművünket elhagytuk, az a százazreket meghaladó csócselék, szemét-népség, a mely elénk jött, a mely kínálkozott málháinkat vinni, hogy azokat természetesen többé sohase láthassuk meg, az a visszataszító és megtestesült ravaszság, galádság és gonoszság, a mi ez emberek arczán ott honol: már ez is olyannyira disgustált, hogy szívesen lemondunk volna azon dicsőségről, hogy láthassuk az újvilágot." The book saw four editions

between 1895 and 1902, with the first two coming out in 1895. See also Aurél Kecskeméthy, *Éjszaka-Amerika 1876-ban* [*North America in 1876*] (Budapest: Ráth Mór, 1877).

<sup>9</sup> László Madarassy, *Túl az óceánon: Elbeszélések az amerikai életből* [*Beyond the Ocean: Stories of Life in America*] (Budapest: Rózsa Kálmán és Neje, 1889); Gyula P. Zempléni, *A floridai kalandbőcsök* [*Florida Adventure Heroes*] (Budapest: Magyar Könyvkiadó Társaság, 1905). For a recent study of late-nineteenth-century Hungarian travel literature on the US see András Vári, “Fenyegetések földje: Amerika a 19. század második felében—magyar szemmel” [“Land of Threats: The USA in the Late Nineteenth Century—as Seen by Hungarians”], *Korall* 26 (Nov. 2006): 153-84. Hereafter Vári, “Fenyegetések földje.”

<sup>10</sup> Julianna Puskás, “Hungarian Images of America: The Siren’s Song of Tinkling Dollars,” Dick Hoerder and Horst Rössler, eds., *Distant Magnets: Expectations and Realities in the Immigrant Experience, 1840-1930* (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1993), 180-98.

<sup>11</sup> Vári, “Fenyegetések földje,” 156. On St. Louis, see Mór Gelléri, *Egy amerikai világtúrájáról* [*Around an American World Fair*] (Budapest: Singer és Wolfner, 1904).

<sup>12</sup> István Bernát, *Jelentése Nagy-Britannia, az Észak-Amerikai Egyesült Államokban tett tanulmányútjáról* [*István Bernát’s Report on His Study Trip to Great Britain and the United States*] (Budapest: Pesti Könyvnyomda, 1885); Pál Kovács, *Amerikai tanulmányutam* [*My American Study Trip*] (Budapest: Pester Lloyd, 1894); Zoltán Szilassy, *Amerikai mezőgazdaság: Az Észak-Amerikai Egyesült Államokban tett tanulmányi út alapján* [*American Agriculture: Based on His Study Trip to the United States*] (Budapest: Pátria, 1897); Emil Zerkowitz, *Amerikai kereskedők* [*American Merchants*] (Budapest: Singer és Wolfner, 1905); and the Gelléri book cited in note 11 above.

<sup>13</sup> For details see Tibor Glant, “Amerikás könyvek és Amerika-kép a két világháború közötti Magyarországon” [“Books on the United States and the Image of America in Interwar Hungary”], Tamás Magyarics and Miklós Lojtkó, eds., “Minden gondolatomra számtalan másik árnya hull . . .”: *Emlékkönyv Frank Tibor 60. születésnapjára* [“All My Thoughts Are Shadowed by Countless Others . . .”: *In Honor of Tibor Frank, for His 60<sup>th</sup> Birthday*] (Budapest: Prima Rate Kft., 2008), 79-85.

<sup>14</sup> Béla Bangha, *Amerikai missziós körutam* [*My American Mission Tour*] (Budapest: Magyar Kultúra, 1923) and Elek Máthé, *Amerikai magyarok nyomában* [*On the Trail of Hungarian Americans*] (Budapest: Dante, 1942).

<sup>15</sup> Zoltán Biró, *Amerika: Magyarok a modern csodák világában* [*America: Hungarians in the World of Modern Miracles*] (Budapest: Novák, 1929; 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Hungária, 1930) and László Faragó, *Kossuth-zarándokok útja Amerikába, 1928* [*The Trip of the Kossuth Pilgrims to America, 1928*] (Békés: Petőfi, 1928).

<sup>16</sup> Erzsébet Kol, *Tiszaparttól Alaszkaig* [*From the Banks of the Tisza to Alaska*] (Budapest: MTA, 1940). The book is an amusing account of a scientific exchange program. Sándor Pohl, *Felbőkarcolók közt—magyar portákon* [*Among Skyscrapers—in Hungarian Homes*] (Vác: n. p., 1936) is a scout jamboree account.

<sup>17</sup> Oszkár Jászi, *A Monarchia jövője: a dualizmus bukása és a Dunai Egyesült Államok* [*The Future of the Habsburg Monarchy: The Fall of Dualism and the Danubian United States*] (Budapest: Új Magyarország, 1918). Jászi often called it “Eastern Switzerland,” too.

<sup>18</sup> László Szabó, *Az igazi Amerika* [*The Real America*] (Budapest: Pallas, 1926; 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 1928), *Az amerikai demokrácia* [*American Democracy*] (Debrecen: Hegedüs és Sándor Irodalmi és Nyomdai R.T., 1926), and *Az amerikai sajtó szabadsága* [*The Freedom of the American Press*] (Budapest: n. p., 1929).

<sup>19</sup> József Szabó, *A mai Amerika* [*America Today*] (Budapest: Szent István Társulat, 1935).

<sup>20</sup> Zoltán Magyary, *Amerikai államélet* [*State Life in America*] (Budapest: Kir. Magy. Egyetemi Nyomda, 1934). In my article cited in note 13 above, I wrote extensively about New Deal literature in Hungary in this period.

<sup>21</sup> László Ország, “Az amerikanisztika feladatai Magyarországon” [“The Tasks Facing American Studies in Hungary”], Zsolt Virágos, ed., *Ország László válogatott írásai* [*Collected Writings of László Ország*] (Debrecen: Kossuth Egyetemi Kiadó, 2007), 22-28. Rpt. from *Hungarian Studies in English* 2 (1965). 121-26.

<sup>22</sup> “Az MSZMP KB Agitációs és Propaganda Osztályának jelentése a műhold közvetítésével sugárzott ellenséges televíziós propaganda várható alakulásáról,” 16 Sept. 1972: Bendegúz Gergő Cseh et al, eds., *Zárt, bizalmas, számozott II: Irodalom-, sajtó- és tájékoztatáspolitikai, 1962-1979 (Dokumentumok)* [*Sealed, Confidential, and Numbered 2: Literary, Press, and Communication Policy, 1962-79*] (Budapest: Osiris, 2004), 461-64.

<sup>23</sup> Jiri Brdecka, *Limonádé Joe* [*Lemonade Joe*] (Budapest: Móra, 1968) and Adam Bahdaj, *A fekete sombrero* [*The Black Sombrero*] (Budapest: Móra, 1975).

<sup>24</sup> János Gyetvai, *Ezt láttam Amerikában* (Budapest: Szépirodalmi, 1952). Boldizsár contributed an introductory study titled “Az amerikai imperializmus útja és eszközei” [“The Ways and Means of American Imperialism”], 5-28. The quote is from page 5; translation mine. The original reads as follows: “Gyetvai János abban az időben mondja meg, mit látott Amerikában, amikor az amerikai imperializmus egyre leplezetlenebb agresszióra vetemedik, egyre szégyentelenebb bűncselekményekre ragadtatja magát.”

<sup>25</sup> Tamás Vitray, *Amerikai mozaik* [*American Mosaic*] (Budapest: Táncsics, 1972), 122-34. Hereafter Vitray, *Amerikai mozaik*.

<sup>26</sup> Vitray, *Amerikai mozaik*. Translation mine; the original reads as follows: “Az Egyesült Államok alkotmányának harmadik cikkelye ruházta a törvénykezési hatalmat erre a testületre, amely azután 1803-ban, nem sokkal az alkotmány megszületése után, döntést hozott, mely szerint, mint az alkotmány egyedüli hivatalos ‘értelmezője’, minden elfogadott törvényt felülvizsgál, hogy az vajon az alkotmány szellemében fogad-e, vagy sem.”

<sup>27</sup> Vitray, *Amerikai mozaik*, 94-97.

<sup>28</sup> Avar contributed books on Nixon (1969), Carter (1976), Reagan (1981 and 1988), and Bush (1989). Pál Ipper, *A túlsó partról jelentem* [*Reporting from the Other Side of the Ocean*] (Budapest: Gondolat, 1970); István Kulcsár, *Tudósítás Átlagamerikából* [*Reporting from Average America*] (Budapest: Gondolat, 1987).

<sup>29</sup> Béla Pokol, “Separation of Powers and Parliamentarism in Hungary,” *East European Quarterly* 37.1 (March 2003), 67-84; see especially 72-74. See also Thomas A. Baylis, “Presidents versus Prime Ministers: Shaping Executive Authority in Eastern Europe,” *World Politics* 48 (April 1996), 297-323.

<sup>30</sup> Károly Jobbágy, *Amerika poétaszárnyon* [*America on the Wings of a Poet*] (Balassagyarmat: Ipoly, 1996).

<sup>31</sup> Mária Muhi, *Turistavízum* (Budapest: Médiamix, 2005).

<sup>32</sup> Imre Para-Kovács, *Amerika kiadó: Beszélgetések Menyhárt Jenővel* [*America for Hire: Conversations with Jenő Menyhárt*] (Budapest: Glória, 2006). Menyhárt fronted a band called Európa Kiadó, and the title of the book is a word play on that.