



Kossuth's Hat: War in Eastern Europe Comes to Concord

by Brent Ranalli

Thoreau lived in a globalized and fast globalizing world. He was among the first English-language readers to have wide access to the wisdom literature of Persia, India, and China. Thanks to the ice trade, as Thoreau knew, water from Walden Pond mingled with the Ganges. In this essay, we will see how Thoreau's Concord felt the ripples of geopolitical events from as far away as Eastern Europe.

1848 was a year of revolutions in Europe, from France and Germany to Poland, Sweden, Ireland, and Italy. Most of the revolts were crushed quickly by the authorities and established powers. The one that lasted the longest, and arguably stood the best chance of success before it was ultimately suppressed, was the Hungarian revolution. Part of what made the Hungarian revolution so (relatively) successful was that it combined all the important reform elements of the day: it was a liberal, democratic reform movement that carried moral authority, and it was also a national war of independence that united all classes of Hungarian society.¹

The reform program of the Hungarians included freedom of the press, greater autonomy for the kingdom of Hungary within the Habsburg empire in the form of parliamentary self-government, equality before the law, an end to

feudal privileges, and an end to serfdom. When the reformers' demands were presented in Vienna, Emperor Ferdinand, who needed the loyalty of his Hungarian armies to put down insurrections elsewhere in the empire, granted all of them. The reforms were ratified in April of 1848. Hungary then held elections and the new parliamentary government began reforming the law code. However, relations between Vienna and the parliament in Pest deteriorated, and the Austrians, having successfully put down insurrections elsewhere in the empire, felt themselves strong enough to renege on the reforms. The new emperor Franz Joseph



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Cavalry skirmish at Alsónyárasd during the battle of Pered, June 20, 1849. Painting by Joseph Anton Strassgswandtner, December 1849.

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sent armies to crush the new Hungarian government. Attacked by their own sovereign, the Hungarian parliament declared the throne vacant, leaving a path open for declaring a republic.

It was not only Hungarians who fought to defend the new democratic regime. Ethnic minorities in the region split, with some fighting alongside the Hungarians and others for the Austrians. (Belatedly the Hungarian parliament passed laws guaranteeing ethnic and minority rights—the first of their kind in European jurisprudence—but this came too late in the conflict to affect the military outcome.) Other defenders of the democratic regime were regular military units from all parts of the Austrian Empire that were stationed in Hungary and considered themselves to be following lawful orders. In addition, freedom fighters arrived from abroad, most notably from Russian-occupied Poland, which contributed an entire expatriate legion and many experienced officers. In all, around 40% of the troops who fought in support of the new Hungarian state were non-Hungarians.²

The defenders of independent Hungary held their own against the Habsburg armies, but when the Tsar of Russia mobilized an invasion force of 200,000 (combined with the Austrians' 175,000, against the Hungarians' roughly 170,000), they succumbed.³ By the end of 1849 Hungary was overrun and placed under martial law. Many Hungarian and allied civil and military leaders were executed; others fled or were exiled.

One of the key players in these events was Kossuth Lajos—or to use the anglicized version of his name, Louis Kossuth. Kossuth, born in 1802, was a member of the Hungarian minor nobility. He was trained as a lawyer, and he was a talented writer and speaker who quickly took a leading role among political and social reformers. When the Austrians cracked down on what they considered dangerous radicalism, Kossuth was imprisoned. When he was released three years later, he was a national icon. He continued to press for reform, including as editor of the influential political

journal *Pesti Hírlap*. It was Kossuth who led the delegation to Vienna in March of 1848 to petition for constitutional government for Hungary, and when the new government was formed, Kossuth was tapped for the role of Finance Minister. In the military crisis that ensued, Kossuth toured the countryside to recruit the citizen soldiers who would become the backbone of the army of national defense. When the Prime Minister resigned, Kossuth became the head of state and he remained in that role until the regime collapsed in August of 1849.

At that point Kossuth and his family and some of his retainers fled south to take refuge with the Ottoman Turks. In 1851, at the prompting of Secretary of State Daniel Webster, the U.S. Congress issued a joint resolution requesting President Millard Fillmore to invite Kossuth and his followers to settle in the U.S.⁴ Kossuth accepted the invitation to come to the U.S., but with an intention not to settle there but to secure political and military support and financial backing to renew the war and free his homeland.

Kossuth landed in New York City on December 5, 1851, and was given a welcome by the city such as only George Washington and the Marquis de Lafayette had received before him. Over 200,000 people turned out for the parade in his honor. From New York he went to Philadelphia, where he received a similarly enthusiastic welcome, and then on to Washington, D.C. In D.C. he met the President, the cabinet, and Congress, and he became only the second foreign dignitary, after Lafayette, ever to be invited to address the House of Representatives.

Despite what appeared to be a triumphant welcome in Washington D.C., most of Kossuth's aims were defeated there. Congress and the administration made it perfectly clear that while they sympathized with the Hungarian cause they had no intention of deviating from the policy laid down by President Washington of non-interference in European affairs. The United States would not intervene with Austria or Russia on behalf of the Hungarians.



Left: Library of Congress. Right: Wikimedia Commons

Left: Drawing of Lajos Kossuth by P. Kalmus, published by L. Rosenthal, undated. Right: Kossuth's speech in Cegléd recruiting soldiers for the national guard on September 24, 1848, drawing by Franz Kollarž.

What was left to Kossuth was to appeal to the American people and raise private funds for the Hungarian cause. So he began a tour of the country, starting with the Midwest, then a loop through the South, and then to the Northeast. He made an estimated 500–600 speeches and other public appearances.⁵ He encouraged Americans to form state, county, and district-level “Friends of Hungary” associations to raise funds. And everywhere he went he sold “Kossuth dollars”: bonds issued by the Hungarian government in exile that would start bearing interest after constitutional government was restored in Hungary.

By every account, Kossuth was a spellbinding speaker. “There seems absolutely no limit to the resources of his eloquence, his mastery over language, or his power of meeting the occasion,” wrote Thomas Wentworth Higginson. “Every day brings a new speech of Kossuth, —stirring and eloquent. All New York is in a blaze with his words,” reported Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. “Among orators, patriots, statesmen, exiles, he has, living or dead, no superior,” was Horace Greeley’s assessment.⁶ What makes Kossuth’s eloquence all the more impressive is that before 1851, the year of his visit to the U.S., Kossuth had never set foot in an English-speaking country. He had learned English during his three years as a political prisoner, over ten years prior, from the King James Bible, Samuel Johnson’s *Dictionary*, and the works of Shakespeare. (His locution had a decidedly old-fashioned flavor.) Kossuth was not only a powerful orator in Hungarian and English; he was also fluent in Slovak, Latin, Italian, French, and German. When he visited cities like Cincinnati with German enclaves, he addressed those audiences in German.⁷ In whatever language he used, he could speak for hours at a time, often extemporaneously, and he would tailor his address to his audience. One of the first things he did when he landed on Staten Island was to get his hands on books about American history and biography that he could mine for material.⁸

On May 11, 1852, Kossuth’s tour of the United States finally brought him to Concord, Massachusetts. It was a day of immense pageantry in the town, and it was arguably one of the most notable days in the public life of Concord in the whole of the nineteenth century, alongside Lafayette’s visit in 1824 and the dedication of the obelisk monument at the Old North Bridge with Emerson’s Concord Hymn in 1837. Kossuth was given a tour of the old battleground and then taken to the private residence of John Shepard Keyes, where he rested and dined. (Keyes’s autobiography refers to a “substantial lunch” at which the guest dined on “battered radishes.”⁹) From there Kossuth was taken to the Town Hall in a procession that included all the town’s schoolchildren, and then in front of a subscribers-only audience he was officially welcomed by Emerson and he gave his own speech.¹⁰

The speeches by Emerson and Kossuth are preserved, and we can see just how masterful Kossuth’s address was. First of all, he responded eloquently to points raised by Emerson only moments before. Then, as he went on with his prepared remarks to plead for Concord’s support for the Hungarian cause, he showed that he was



Courtesy Concord Free Public Library

Kossuth Dollar.

acquainted with both Emerson’s writing and Concord’s weighty local history. And then he offered some sustained wordplay on the name of the town.

Two things I have met here, in these free and mighty United States, which I am at a loss how to make concord. . . . First, that all your historians, all your statesmen, all your distinguished orators, who wrote or spoke, characterize [the American experiment] as an era in mankind’s destiny destined to change the condition of the world, upon which it will rain an ever-flowing influence. And, secondly, in contradiction to this universally adopted consideration, I have met in many quarters a propensity to believe that it is conservative wisdom not to take any active part in the regulation of the condition of the outward world.

These two things do not concord. If that be the destiny of America which you all believe to be, then, indeed, that destiny can never be fulfilled by acting the part of passive spectators, and by this very passivity granting a charter to ambitious Czars to dispose of the condition of the world. . . .

To this I will trust; and, reminding you of the fact that in the soil of Concord the ashes of your martyrs are mingled in concord with the ashes of your enemies, and out of both liberty has grown, I say let this be an augury. Let the future be regulated, not by long past disinclinations, but by present necessities; not by anticipations of olden times, but by sympathies congenial to the present times; and let the word ‘Concord’ be an augury to that fraternity amongst nations which will make the world free, and your nation the first and the greatest among the free.¹¹

Keyes records that Kossuth was composing or arranging his notes even at lunchtime before the event. This was only one of dozens of speeches Kossuth gave in Boston and Cambridge and Charlestown and Lowell and Lynn and Salem and Danvers and Lexington and Plymouth and Fall River and other towns within a day’s ride of Boston, all over the space of about three weeks in May (April 27 - May 18), before heading west to Albany. But as

busy as he was, Kossuth made this speech in Concord on May 11 truly special and worthwhile to hear.

We might then wonder: where was Henry David Thoreau on the 11th of May? If we consult his *Journal*, we learn that in the morning he was inspecting the dew on the grass and admiring willows and birches, and later in the day reflecting on the sound of hand organs and the call of female yellowbirds and the leafing out of larches. Kossuth's visit is dismissed with two words: "Kossuth here." It's not clear from this whether Thoreau attended.¹²

If we want to understand why Thoreau gave short shrift to one of the most notable events in the life of the town, or possibly even skipped it entirely, we get a clue from the *Journal* a week earlier. On Tuesday, May 4, Thoreau wrote:

This excitement about Kossuth is not interesting to me, it is so superficial. It is only another kind of dancing or of politics. Men are making speeches to him all over the country, but each expresses only the thought, or the want of thought, of the multitude. No man stands on truth. They are merely banded together as usual, one leaning on another and all together on nothing . . . But an individual standing on truth you cannot pass your hand under, for his foundations reach to the centre of the universe. So superficial these men and their doings, it is life on a leaf or a chip which has nothing but air or water beneath. I love to see a man with a tap-root, though it make him difficult to transplant . . .¹³

Part of the reason for Thoreau's disdain, then, was his reflexive contrariness: If the whole public is for a thing, Thoreau must be against it.¹⁴ There was probably also a related element of sour grapes. The committee to welcome Kossuth to Concord was chaired by John Shepard Keyes, Thoreau's "frenemy" since childhood.¹⁵ The formal welcome was being delivered by Emerson, Thoreau's pseudo-Oedipal rival. The idea of being charged a dollar by Keyes for the privilege of this humiliation might have been just too much to take. It is notable that the *Journal* entry from May 4 seems at first to be about Thoreau's disdain for

Kossuth, but on closer inspection we see that it is really about Thoreau's disdain for *the men who make speeches to Kossuth*. Emerson is the target here.

We can reasonably speculate that Thoreau expressed his misgivings about *men who make speeches to Kossuth* directly to Emerson on May 4, the day of the *Journal* entry excerpted above. In the first place, the *Journal* entry on this day begins with a reference to a conversation with Emerson: "R. W. E. tells me he does not like Haynes as well as I do. I tell him that he makes better manure than most men."¹⁶ It would seem that Emerson poured cold water on Thoreau's admiration of their townsman Haynes (a man who makes appearances in Thoreau's *Journal* as a local subsistence hunter), and then Thoreau in turn poured cold water on Emerson's admiration for Kossuth.¹⁷ In the second place, from the memoirs of Ferenc and Theresa Pulszky, companions of Kossuth, we learn

that on that very same day, the first Tuesday in May, Emerson had met Kossuth in Boston at the home of the Rev. Charles Lowell.¹⁸ Kossuth, and the upcoming address to be delivered by Emerson to Kossuth, would naturally have been a topic of conversation when Emerson spoke with Thoreau earlier or later that same day.

We can imagine Thoreau announcing to Emerson, in his undiplomatic way, that he had no intention of going to this public event to sit and hear flattering speeches. God knows that Kossuth has probably heard enough flattering speeches to last a lifetime, we can imagine him saying.

If we imagine that, we can also imagine that good-natured Emerson took his disciple's chastisement to heart, and incorporated Thoreau's sentiments into the remarks he made to Kossuth. I mentioned earlier that Kossuth started his own speech by responding to certain points made by Emerson. These were barbs, even rebukes: "We are afraid you are growing popular, sir; you may be called to the dangers of prosperity." And:

"Remember, sir, that everything great and excellent in the world is in minorities."¹⁹

These remarks jar with the general tone of the speech, and they do give an appearance of Emerson channeling the sharp elbows of Thoreau. Thoreau might have found some satisfaction in hearing

KOSSUTH
AT
CONCORD!
Friday, May 7th, at 2 o'clock, P. M.

The Committee of Arrangements give notice that
Gov. KOSSUTH will visit the **BATTLE GROUND,**
at Concord, on Friday next, **May 7th at 2 o'clock, P. M.**
He will arrive at noon, and after partaking of a Colation, and visiting the old North Bridge, will proceed to the

TOWN HALL,
where the Reception will take place, at 3 o'clock, P. M., and he will be addressed by

R. W. EMERSON,
on behalf of the citizens.

Holders of Hungarian Bonds will be admitted to the Town Hall by Tickets furnished with the Bonds, at the rate of one ticket for each dollar invested. The Hall will be open at 1 o'clock, and will afford the only opportunity to hear Kossuth during the day. Bonds with Tickets can be obtained of A. STACY, at the Post Office, at HOLBROOK'S HOTEL, and at the HALL. The children of the town, forming by Schools with their teachers, will meet in front of the Unitarian Church, at half-past one o'clock, to form a Procession, under charge of a Marshal. Citizens of neighboring towns, and their Schools are invited to be present and join in welcoming the illustrious exile.

ON BEHALF OF THE COMMITTEE,
JOHN S. KEYES, Chairman.
JOHN M. CHERNEY, SECRETARY.
Freeman Press, Concord, Mass.

Courtesy Concord Free Public Library

Poster advertising Louis Kossuth's visit to Concord in 1852. Note that Kossuth's visit actually took place on May 11, not May 7 as stated here—evidently the event was rescheduled after the poster was printed.

this part of the speech or seeing it printed in the Friday paper, and he might have been impressed, if not fully satisfied, by Kossuth's deft response. (Kossuth trusts that adherence to duty will keep him safe if he ever achieves prosperity. And while everything good has yet been in the minority, the Almighty may grant mankind a destiny where the good prevails amongst all.)

There is another reason Thoreau might have disdained to attend Kossuth's speech. One group that was openly critical toward Kossuth was the abolitionists. William Lloyd Garrison wrote a tract against Kossuth, his *Letter to Louis Kossuth, Concerning Freedom and Slavery in the United States*. Frederick Douglass too had harsh words to say about Kossuth.²⁰ If these men were unhappy with Kossuth, Thoreau might have been cool to him as well for the same reason. The complaint of the abolitionists was the hypocrisy of Kossuth pleading for the United States to aid the Hungarians in restoring their liberty, while remaining silent on the question of the liberty of one seventh of the U.S. population. This was, in fact, Kossuth's stated policy: He declined to take a public stance on the issue of slavery in the United States. He said that as the representative of a foreign government he was entitled to try to influence U.S. foreign policy, but that he felt he had no right to express an opinion on U.S. domestic policy.

Kossuth's public neutrality fooled no one. When Kossuth and his entourage toured the South, everyone assumed he was in sympathy with the abolitionists, despite his public neutrality, and so he received relatively little support there. (Later, Hungarian émigrés, many of them ardent abolitionists, would swell the ranks of the Union army and officer corps in numbers all out of proportion to their tiny percentage of the U.S. population.²¹) Kossuth's public neutrality was a calculated stance: If he wanted diplomatic and military support from the United States, he had to try to appeal to the whole country, not just one faction or section. In retrospect we can say that if that effort contorted him into hypocrisy, that was unfortunate for him, but he was only mirroring back at the United States the nation's own hypocrisy. Even beyond realpolitik, though, there were other legitimate reasons to refrain from talking about slavery. In a speech he made at Faneuil Hall in Boston, Kossuth was frank:

Have I not difficulties enough to contend with, that I am desired to increase them yet with my own hands? Father

Mathew goes on preaching temperance, and he may be opposed or supported on his own ground; but who ever imagined opposition to him because, at the same time, he takes not into his hands to preach fortitude or charity?²²

In the United States, all anyone wanted to talk about, it seemed, was slavery. (This is especially striking in the Pulszkys' memoir. The Pulszkys record that even in the South, even among those who assumed the foreigners found slavery offensive, as they definitely did, slavery was a favorite conversation starter: justifying the institution, lamenting it, praising it, excusing it, trying to provoke an argument about it.) Kossuth evidently felt that if he wanted to engage Americans in a serious discussion about European affairs, he had to establish some ground rules, to keep the conversation focused on European affairs. In retrospect we could consider that fair or unfair, good or bad policy, but it was certainly understandable.

It is interesting to compare Thoreau's disdain for Kossuth with his enthusiasm for John Brown, considering the parallels: Brown too came to Concord to make speeches and ask for money with which to buy weapons to further a righteous cause. Thoreau's contrarianism wasn't a factor with Brown, because Brown wasn't a celebrity known and beloved by all. Sour grapes wasn't a factor either: Thoreau was not on the outside looking in, he was in the inner circle of Concord abolitionists who would meet with Brown privately. And perhaps most important, the cause of the Southern slave was frankly a cause that interested Thoreau more than the fate of a nation half a world away. Thoreau in his writings never professed *not to care* about Kossuth's cause. But like Father Mathew, he already had enough on his plate to occupy him.²³

But what about Kossuth's hat, ostensibly the subject of this essay?

When Thoreau wrote in his Journal about "excitement about Kossuth" in the U.S., that

was an understatement. Kossuth-mania was real. Kossuth drew immense crowds, partly because of his talents as an orator, partly because of his compelling story, and partly because he reflected back at Americans their pride in their own nation's founding principles. People cried when they met him and heard him speak; ladies donated the jewelry off their necks to the cause of Hungarian freedom.²⁴ Americans named streets and towns and counties after Kossuth, and erected statues of him. They adopted Kossuth's style



Library of Congress (obtained from HMDDB)

Kossuth wearing the Kossuth hat, drawing by P. Kramer, 1852.

of facial hair, and they adopted his style of dress. And when it came to style of dress, what made the deepest and most lasting impression was the Kossuth hat.

Here is what Thoreau had to say about the hat, when he polished the Journal entry we saw earlier for inclusion in the lecture and essay we know as “Life Without Principle”:

That excitement about Kossuth, consider how characteristic, but superficial, it was! —only another kind of politics or dancing. Men were making speeches to him all over the country, but each expressed only the thought, or the want of thought, of the multitude. No man stood on truth. They were merely banded together, as usual one leaning on another, and all together on nothing; as the Hindoos made the world rest on an elephant, the elephant on a tortoise, and the tortoise on a serpent, and had nothing to put under the serpent. *For all fruit of that stir we have the Kossuth hat.* Just so hollow and ineffectual, for the most part, is our ordinary conversation. Surface meets surface. When our life ceases to be inward and private, conversation degenerates into mere gossip. We rarely meet a man who can tell us any news which he has not read in a newspaper, or been told by his neighbor; and, for the most part, the only difference between us and our fellow is that he has seen the newspaper, or been out to tea, and we have not. In proportion as our inward life fails, we go more constantly and desperately to the post-office. You may depend on it, that the poor fellow who walks away



Courtesy Special Collections, Raymond H. Fogler Library, University of Maine

Joseph Attean in a featherless variant of the Kossuth hat.

with the greatest number of letters proud of his extensive correspondence has not heard from himself this long while.²⁵

This passage suggests that the Kossuth hat represented for Thoreau *superficiality*, like the traveler’s cap mentioned in *Walden*. (“The head monkey at Paris puts on a traveller’s cap, and all the monkeys in America do the same.”²⁶) When Thoreau was guided in the Maine woods by Joseph Aitteon (Attean) in 1853, and was disappointed that his Penobscot guide wasn’t as “authentic” an Indian as the expectation he had built up in his head, he commented that Attean used slang expressions and whistled popular songs, and he also noted that Attean sported a Kossuth hat.²⁷ What could be a more damning illustration of conformity to superficial mass culture?

The Kossuth hat was a soft felt hat with a medium to low crown, often decorated with an ostrich feather. Given the many images of Kossuth wearing the hat with his military uniform, we might be excused for thinking

that the hat was a traditional Hungarian headpiece, but nothing could be further from the truth. As Thoreau might or might not have known, the Kossuth hat was the brainchild of a Manhattan impresario named John H. Genin, who had a stock of this new style in his hat emporium and proposed to name it after Kossuth if the Hungarian celebrity would be willing to wear it in public. Kossuth agreed to the proposition.²⁸

That arrangement sounds a little tawdry. On the other hand, Genin was a strong supporter of the Hungarian cause, who had already helped Hungarian refugees get settled and find jobs in



Library of Congress

More portraits of Kossuth wearing the Kossuth hat. Left: Lithograph of Kossuth by D’Avignon, after a daguerrotype by Root & Co., 1851. Center: Image of Kossuth by Paul Greenfield & Co., 1894, apparently after 1852 engraving by J.C. Buttrey. Right: Kossuth depicted holding Hungarian Constitution, unattributed, no date.



Left: New York Public Library Digital Collections. Right: Library of Congress

John Genin and his hat emporium (both drawings by J.W. Orr).

America, and Kossuth might have considered that one good turn deserved another. And this was by no means the last or the worst tawdry business that the former Governor-President of Hungary involved himself with during his tour of America. In city after city, the town fathers would throw a big parade and banquet, and then present Kossuth with a bill for the festivities, expecting that he would pay for it out of the donations he had raised for the Hungarian cause.²⁹ And there was the problem of his own body guard causing offense at hotels by sleeping with their boots on and breaking the furniture.³⁰ And of course all of this paled in comparison with the tawdry compromise he made of his own volition in swallowing his opinion about slavery. “Beware of all enterprises that require new clothes,” Thoreau wrote.³¹ It was certainly a morally perilous enterprise that Kossuth embarked on in the United States while wearing Genin’s new headgear.

But for all that, the decision Kossuth made to wear the hat in public wasn’t a difficult one, because it was genuinely a good hat. Our sources say that Kossuth considered it “pleasing in appearance and comfortable on the head.”³² And even Kossuth’s critics considered the new hat an improvement over the stiff silk top hat that had previously been in fashion. George Templeton Strong, a prominent New Yorker who was *not* caught up in the Kossuth mania, wrote in his diary on Christmas Eve, 1851: “Perhaps a reform in the hats of America will flow from the preaching of the illustrious Magyar. It’s to be hoped it may, for the Hungarian hat has the advantage[,] in grace and comfort both[,] of our American stove-pipe sections.”³³ Even Thoreau got on board. Above, we saw that Thoreau may have seen the hat as a symbol of conformity. But the hat won him over in the end. He describes not only Attean as wearing it in the woods, but also Joe Polis, in a passage where he praises Polis’s rugged simplicity.³⁴ It was evidently not for nothing that the Kossuth hat was part of “the ordinary dress of the lumberman, and to a considerable extent, of the Penobscot Indian.”³⁵ In an appendix Thoreau lists an “old Kossuth hat” among the items he recommends travelers to bring on their own excursions to the Maine woods, which suggests that he probably

owned one himself.³⁶ And on Christmas Day of 1859 (one wonders if he had received one as a Christmas present), Thoreau had more praise for the hat in his Journal: “The chief recommendation of the Kossuth hat is that it looks old to start with, and almost as good as new to end with.”³⁷

Kossuth raised over \$90,000 in donations and war bonds, almost all of which was spent on guns and other war supplies.³⁸ But the war in Hungary was not renewed. Kossuth lived out the rest of his life in exile in Italy. Americans went back to their own affairs. “For all fruit of that stir we have the Kossuth hat,” Thoreau had written.³⁹ Strong echoed in his own journal: “I doubt the likelihood of any other lasting result from [Kossuth’s] mission.”⁴⁰ At least it was a good hat.

As a postscript: Following the suppression of Hungarian independence, the Austrians allowed some of the social and economic reforms (e.g., the abolition of serfdom) to stand. Other revolutionary aims, including national self-government, were achieved in 1867, with no bloodshed, when the Habsburg empire reorganized as the dual monarchy of Austro-Hungary.

Notes

1. On the 1848 revolutions in general, see Jonathan Sperber, *The European Revolutions, 1848-1851* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005). On the Hungarian revolution in particular and Kossuth’s role in it, see Istvan Deak, *The Lawful Revolution: Louis Kossuth and the Hungarians 1848-49* (New York: Columbia University Press 1979).

2. Gábor Bona, “A szabadságharc honvédsége,” *Új forrás*, June 1998 (<https://epa.oszk.hu/00000/00016/00036/980621.htm>). C.f. Deak, 188ff.

3. Deak, 304.

4. John Bartholomew St. Leger, “Louis Kossuth in America, 1851-1852” (University of Richmond Master’s Thesis, 1961), 2.

5. András Tarnóc, “‘A Hungarian for Hungarians, and Nothing for Mankind?’ William Lloyd Garrison’s Response to Kossuth’s Stance on Slavery,” *Hungarian Studies* 33, no. 1 (2019): 61-71; Deak, 344.

6. Mary Thacher Higginson, *Thomas Wentworth Higginson: The Story of His Life* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1914) 98; Samuel Longfellow, ed., *Life of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow: With Extracts from*

his *Journals and Correspondence, Volume 2* (Boston: Ticknor, 1886), 211; Horace Greeley, "Introduction," in *The Life of Louis Kossuth Governor of Hungary, including Notices of the Men and Scenes of the Hungarian Revolution; to which is Added an Appendix Containing His Principal Speeches, &c.*, by Phineas Camp Headley (Auburn: Derby and Miller, 1852), xi; c.f. Deak, 74.

7. St. Leger, 52.

8. St. Leger, 12.

9. John S. Keyes, "Autobiography of Hon. John S. Keyes" (manuscript in the Special Collections at the Concord Free Public Library; transcription available online), 119.

10. John P. Jewett, ed., *Kossuth in New England: A Full Account of the Hungarian Governor's Visit to Massachusetts; with His Speeches, and the Addresses that Were Made to Him, Carefully Revised and Corrected.* (Boston: John P. Jewett & Company, 1852); "Gov. Kossuth's Visit to Concord," *Middlesex Freeman* 18, no. 20 (Friday, May 14, 1852), found in the Special Collections of the Concord Free Public Library.

11. *Middlesex Freeman*.

12. Henry D. Thoreau, *Journal, Volume 5: 1852-1853*, ed. Patrick F. O'Connell (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 50. A few days later, reflecting back on the notable day, Thoreau still provides no indication that he spent any of it indoors at the Town Hall listening to speeches: "On the 11th when Kossuth was here I looked about for shade but did not find it—the trees not being leaved out. Nature was not prepared for great heats" (*Journal, Volume 5*, 58).

13. Thoreau, *Journal, Volume 5*, 24-25.

14. "If he [Kossuth] could come openly to Boston without the knowledge of Boston, it might be worth my while to go & see him" (Thoreau, *Journal, Volume 5*, 8; April 29, 1852).

15. As recounted in Walter Harding's *The Days of Henry Thoreau* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), Keyes competed with the Thoreau brothers for the attention of young women and helped himself to their boat (96, 107). In later life, Keyes was one of the very few acquaintances of Thoreau to speak ill of him posthumously (e.g., Walter Harding, *Thoreau as Seen by His Contemporaries* (Dover Publications, 1989), 205-08).

16. Thoreau, *Journal, Volume 5*, 24.

17. For Emerson's admiration of Kossuth, see his undated journal entry from early 1852: "When a personality reaches such a strength as that of Peter the Great, or Bonaparte, or Kossuth, it is a fair offset to the Andes of conventionalism" (*The Journals and Miscellaneous Notebooks of Ralph Waldo Emerson, Volume XIII, 1852-1855*, ed. Ralph H. Orth and Alfred R. Ferguson (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1977), 16).

18. Ferencz Aurelius Pulszky and Theresa Pulszky, *White, Red, Black: Sketches of American Society in the United States During the Visit of Their Guests, Vol. 2* (New York: Redfield, 1853), 183-84.

19. *Middlesex Freeman*.

20. St. Leger, 75-76.

21. Papp, Susan M. "The Civil War Era (1851-1870)," from *Hungarian Americans and Their Communities of Cleveland* (Cleveland: MSL Academic Endeavors, 2010). Online at: <https://engagedscholarship.csuohio.edu/clevmembks/12/>.

22. Jewett, 93.

23. That the plight of the Hungarians occupied at least some small portion of Thoreau's thoughts is seen in a Journal entry from December 22, 1851. Seeing the determination on the face of a little Irish boy braving snowdrifts to reach the schoolhouse, Thoreau remarked: "I forget for the time Kossuth and his Hungarians. Here's a Kossuth for you!" (*Journal, Volume 4: 1851-1852*, ed. Leonard N. Neufeldt and Nancy Craig Simmons (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 216).

24. St. Leger, 39.

25. Henry D. Thoreau, *Reform Papers*, ed. Wendell Glick (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973), 273; emphasis added.

26. Henry D. Thoreau, *Walden*, ed. J. Lyndon Shanley (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971), 25.

27. Henry D. Thoreau, *The Maine Woods*, ed. Joseph J. Moldenhauer (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972), 90, 107.

28. Stephen Beszedits, "The Origin and History of the Kossuth Hat," *Vasváry Collection Newsletter* (2013), issue 39 (<http://vasvary.sk-szeged.hu/newsletter/13jun/beszedits.html>). Or was it quite that simple? Some drawings of Kossuth in Hungary during the 1848-49 struggle, produced (it appears) contemporaneously rather than after the fact, show him with what appears to be a Kossuth hat, complete with ostrich feather (see images

on page 2 and this page). The most likely explanation is that Kossuth did wear one or more distinctive hats during the struggle, and that Genin had deliberately fashioned and stockpiled a new hat designed to resemble one he had seen Kossuth wearing in illustrated news reports. And then media influence may have flowed the other way as well: Kossuth's high-profile tour in Genin's hat made the "Kossuth hat" (in whatever variation or adaptation) a leading symbol of Hungarian nationalism in the post-war period. Hungarian folksongs to this day celebrate Kossuth's "little hat" flying the national colors (*Kossuth Lajos kis kalapja / Nemzeti szín lobog rajta*). One Hungarian museum website (that of the Dobó István Castle Museum) credits an American origin to the Hungarian fashion, saying the Kossuth hat was styled after hats worn by American revolutionaries in the 1770s. This seems doubtful, but Genin's Kossuth hat did remain fashionable with Union troops during the American Civil War.

29. Steven B. Várdy, "Louis Kossuth: A Celebrated, Disillusioned Hungarian Revolutionary's Visit to Pittsburgh in 1852," *Western Pennsylvania History* (Spring 2008), 18-31, 28.

30. St. Leger, 41.

31. Thoreau, *Walden*, 23.

32. Beszedits.

33. Quoted in Beszedits. "Magyar" is the Hungarian word for "Hungarian."

34. Thoreau, *Maine Woods*, 226.

35. Thoreau, *Maine Woods*, 90.

36. Thoreau, *Maine Woods*, 318. I am indebted to Peter Meyer for pointing out the appearance of the Kossuth hat in Thoreau's appendix.

37. Henry D. Thoreau, *Journal XIII: December 1, 1859 – July 31, 1860*, ed. Bradford Torrey (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1906), 52; December 25, 1859.

38. St. Leger, 88.

39. Thoreau, *Reform Papers*, 273.

40. As quoted in Beszedits.



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Kossuth arrives in Pest, April 14, 1848.
Colored copper engraving by József Tyroler.