Three Hungarian Travelers
Visit Economy

During the course of its century-long existence, the Harmony Society, the most successful Christian communist community of the United States, entertained important visitors from many parts of the world and from all parts of this country. Its three settlements on the Conoquenessing in Butler County, Pennsylvania, on the Wabash in Indiana, and on the Ohio in Pennsylvania were internationally famous points of interest in the New World. The principal attraction of the Harmonists was the fact that they had made a great success of practical communism, long before Marx and the English and French Socialists. They had done this without writing any theoretical works about the matter and without attempting to convert others to their way of life.

While Robert Owen, who was inspired by their success, thought he could bring the material blessings of their system to all the people of the United States, and lectured widely in the hope of achieving this goal, the followers of George Rapp went quietly about their work, possessing the worldly goods they had as though they possessed them not. Instead of trying to convert others, as Robert Owen so eagerly did by proclaiming his anti-Christian theories, the Harmonists warned those who wanted to join them, or who wanted to start communist communities of their own, that they would do much better to remain in the individualistic system of living. The communist way of life, as the Harmonists lived it, was hard, and could be lived successfully only through deep religious conviction. It is perhaps a strange but very true paradox that the great material success of the Harmonists was the result of their disinterest in material things. The secret of their success lay in their obedience to Matt. 6:33—“But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.”

Many of the visitors to the Harmony Society have left reports of their visits, and many of these reports have become readily accessible
to interested readers. Among those which are comparatively un-
known are the visits of three Hungarians who came to Economy, the
third settlement of the Society, and were deeply moved by what
they saw and experienced there. These visits were fortunately spaced
and an examination of the records gives us a firsthand account of
three crucial periods in the Society's history. The first account is of
the period of the Society's greatest physical strength, on the eve of
the Count Leon rebellion, which resulted in the withdrawal of a
third of the members. The second visit comes shortly after the Count
Leon catastrophe, and the third after the death of the two great
leaders, Frederick and George Rapp, showing us how the Society
fared under the leaders of the second generation.

The first account is by Sándor Farkas de Bölö (1795-1842), and
is taken from his book Útazás Észak-Amerikában (A Journey in
North America), published in 1834. In the January, 1949, issue of
THE PENNSYLVANIA MAGAZINE OF HISTORY AND BIOGRAPHY Professor
John A. Lukács reported on this interesting volume in his article "A
Hungarian Traveler in Pennsylvania." One other English account of
this book was given by Zsombor Szász in the Autumn, 1938, issue of
the Hungarian Quarterly (London) under the title "A Hungarian
Traveller in North America." These articles tell us that Farkas was
a young Hungarian official from Transylvania who came to America
in 1831 as companion and secretary to the wealthy Transylvanian
magnate, Count Francis Béldi.

While the two English articles just cited provide a good general
view of Farkas' American journey, they do not give in detail Farkas'
interesting description of his visit to Economy. Professor Lukács has
very generously translated this description of the Harmony Society,
which, because of its importance, is here given in its entirety.¹

We planned to travel from Beaver to Economy, to visit the famous
Harmonists, that is, Rapp's Society. During our journey we heard various
views of Rapp and of his Society; even more varied were the views pub-
lished about them in Europe. One depicts Rapp's Society as a society of
united industry, of perfect equality, and dedicated to purest moralities.
Others depict it as a society of simple Germans, blinded by Rapp's foolish
lures, of people who are selfishly and intellectually exploited by Rapp, and
who will have to dissolve upon Rapp's eventual death. Others, again,

¹ Sándor Farkas, Útazás Észak-Amerikában (Kolozsvartt, 1834), 231-247.
ridicule them; they consider the whole Society as opposed to the principles of democracy, as living in a monarchical society, as being dangerous examples within republics, and as proving restrictive to individual freedom.

The main principles of the Rappists, or Harmonists, are: perfect equality, common property of all earnings—no one has private wealth, all belongs to the community. Everyone has equal rights to the otherwise indivisible common wealth—that may be used by anyone—but everyone has to work in some way and add to this common property. Idle members have no place in the Society; everyone has to take up some endeavor according to his strength and intellectual capacity.

As we proceeded toward Economy, we kept asking about the Society from our fellow travelers. After so many various opinions, there were questions that illuminated the ridiculous aspects of the Society. During the conversation one traveler, who spoke merrily at first, but then turned silent and sullen, finally said that he should be qualified best, as he was a member of the Society. Now we turned silent. Slowly our man became pacified and answered our questions with increasing willingness, expressing some regret that we were coming to visit them with such prejudices.

The country is mountainous and rocky from Beaver on, along the Ohio; there are flat lands occasionally by the river, but otherwise the Ohio progresses between forests, hills, and rocks. Approaching Economy there was now more open country, but forests still covered most. At a turn of the road we got out of the thick woods and found a countryside rather unusual in America. The ploughed, regular fields, fenced pastures, and sporadic orchards reminded us of German countries. "This is the Economy border," said our Rappist traveler with evident satisfaction. Fences covered the horizon and we entered under a wooden gate, which is unusual in America where there are few fences and progress is permissible throughout fields. As we proceeded, our admiration increased apace. In the tremendous fields we saw 50-60 ploughshares; in the fenced pastures we saw especially beautiful herds; elsewhere, very attractive Merino sheep; again colts, cows, in different enclosures, and in such large herds as we are accustomed to see on the great Hungarian estates. On the road we met many groups of laborers, in Rhenish and Swabian German dress. Haystacks, wheat crosses, brick ovens, and other farm sheds stood around. Had we not known where we were, we might have thought that we were entering the estate of a wealthy aristocrat.

We entered Economy, and our surprises grew. Beautiful, wide streets in the village, with a double row of trees, uniformly built new, two-story houses, in the style of old German cities. Every house had a uniform truck garden; in the back, at the river, different large buildings, a luxurious inn, and a simple temple in the center of the village—and the whole is organized and reflects the picture of a European city.

At the inn our Rappist fellow traveler greeted us, stating that he was one of the innkeepers. It seemed so; he seemed to have forgotten the questions and discussion we had en route and instead he presented the schedule of the
inn and offered his services. In a few minutes he came to report that young
Mr. Rapp wished to talk to us. He, the innkeeper, had thought from our
German conversation that we were of Count Leon's party; Count Leon has
been expected for some time, and his secretary had already arrived.² Young
Mr. Rapp received us in the parlor, a tall and corpulent man, about forty
years old. His clothes, his countenance, and his manners were simple and
one could detect simple honesty in his face. He greeted us in German, and
it took some time to convince him that we did not belong to Count Leon's
group. We expressed our admiration about what we had already seen, and
told him the purpose of our visit, and that we wished to meet the elder Mr.
Rapp and his group. He offered his services gladly and led us to his father.

As we had known the story of Rapp for some time, as we knew of his
singular principles, of his prophetic qualities wherewith he had brought
1,200 men to this jungle from Württemberg, wherewith he kept them to-
gether with his intellectual leadership, and wherewith he elevated them to
such prosperity from their erstwhile poverty, we now expected him to be a
man of unusual looks and of aristocratic stature. And now entered a white-
haired man, about seventy, in a long, old-fashioned, large buttoned coat,
with a big, knobby cane; his steps were lively, his blue eyes shone vividly
from under his bushy eyebrows, he had an extraordinary face, smiling
cheeks, and simple gestures. The old man greeted us in German and, after a
hearty handshake, bade us sit down. We saw no lordliness or poise in him,
but instead we found something in this simple old man that evoked our
sincere admiration and attracted our attention. The old man spoke German
with a Swabian dialect, his voice boomed with an excellent pitch, and his
accent was unusual. After the usual greeting sentences, we reported that we
wished to enjoy our stay at his place and we also wished to know the story
of his society. The old man did not have to be coaxed for long; he sat up in
his armchair as if he were to prepare for a festive lecture, and with a happy
countenance told his story as follows:

"In my childhood I experienced a special attraction to religion, and I was
interested in everything concerning religious sentiments. I read the Scrip-
tures industriously, and also the histories of religions. I found out that the
Christian religion has, in many ways, parted from its original moral sim-
plicity; I saw its deficiencies, and I felt that a religion that would lead men
to a moral life ought to be a simpler and also a more perceptible religion. In
my former country, in Württemberg, I communicated these thoughts to my
fellow citizens. I found many who agreed. Lutheran and Catholic country-
men of mine joined me. I began to spread my ideas and presented them in

² Count Leon's secretary, Dr. Johann Georg Goentgen, with whom Farkas dined at Rapp's
house, was the former chief librarian of the city of Frankfurt am Main. After studying various
systems of theology, Goentgen had become convinced that Count Leon's system contained the
full truth. Because of this conviction he had given up his position in the city of Goethe's birth,
where he had delivered the principal address when Goethe's eightieth birthday was celebrated
by the city, and had become Count Leon's disciple.
public places. Soon all kinds of believers came to my addresses in large numbers and this attracted the attention of the priests. These used every means to detract and persecute me. First they cursed me from their pulpits, then they turned with their complaints to the government, and harassed by their cries, the government finally felt forced to prohibit my speaking in public.

"Bored as I was with the priests' curses, I retired to the country, but however I wished to withdraw from public life, many more people and my fellow persecuted visited me, and matters progressed to the point where I was threatened with imprisonment. Under such pressures of opinion, my conscience came to the thought that I should emigrate from my country to a province where I could revere my God according to my beliefs. As Napoleon was First Consul at that time, I wrote him in 1802 that he permit us to settle in Louisiana, which then belonged to France. Through his Embassy, I soon received Napoleon's answer that permission for us to settle in Louisiana had been granted and that we could travel there shortly on two French government ships. Fifteen hundred of us planned to leave, but during our preparations our government put so many obstacles in our way that in the meantime Napoleon sold Louisiana to the United States and informed us that we should be allowed to settle in France, in the Pyrenees region.

"For a variety of reasons we could not accept this offer, and we decided to emigrate to the United States. But, as no one of us had acquaintances there, I was elected with two others by our Society to come here first and find a place. For a year we traveled up and down in America with little money. It would have been almost impossible to execute our intentions had Baltimore and Philadelphia not helped us with 2,000 dollars, and had I not received 800 dollars for my sermons from the German compatriots in Philadelphia. With this sum we bought a piece of land in the state of Pennsylvania, not very far from Pittsburgh, and we wrote our companions, who came, after surmounting many obstacles, gradually, 1,200 of them.

"The place we bought was uncultivated forest and we had to clear it with much effort. All of us were poor, and saw that if we separated we should not prosper, and that we could progress only with joint effort. We agreed to unite ourselves and our earnings. We named our settlement Harmony. First we lived in great poverty; our income came from crops and a small herd, but our united effort advanced to the point that instead of our narrow and not very fertile settlement, we could buy a larger and more fertile property in Indiana that we named New Harmony. There our endeavors prospered even better; we enlarged our herds and our farming, with good rewards. But the climate proved very warm, especially for our compatriots who were used to colder climates in Württemberg, and many died. Because of this circumstance we were forced to move again, and we sold New Harmony to Owen and his friends in 1824 for $120,000, and we came to this
place that we named Economy. Here, too, we faced uncultivated forests, but the gentlemen will see how far our joint work has advanced."

The old gentleman told us other stories about his Society, all of them simply and gently presented. The old man then invited us for supper, and until then we went out with Rapp, Junior, to inspect their properties.

In its previous settlements the Society concentrated exclusively on farming, but here it expanded further. They built a woolen mill, a power plant, a flax breaker, a brewery, a distillery, and large flour mills. All the work is performed by steam engines, part of them made in England, part of them here. While the factories were being built, special members of the Society visited the better-known factories of Europe and America in order to learn; when their own factories were ready, they invited, at high cost, known experts and mechanics from whom the Society members learned all that was necessary, and now practically all the work is performed by the members themselves.

We looked at the woolen mills first. Their wheels are propelled by steam; also those of the flour mills. These factories bring a net profit of 32,000 dollars yearly, and they also manufacture the clothing needs of the members.

We turned to the museum, whose warden, Dr. Müller, is a pleasant old man; he had come with the first settlers. The museum has a small library, almost exclusively containing works in German, and collections of minerals, birds, of Indian clothes, and other rare objects, all collected by Dr. Müller. The old man recounted all this with innocent joy. The music room is above the museum, where the members meet on Sundays, particularly their daughters, and learn religious hymns.

We appeared at supper together with Count Leon's secretary and Müller. Before the meal the old man offered us some wines made by the Society, which came from their earlier settlement by the waters of the Wabash. American wine is similar to the strong Hungarian ones, but it is heavier, more oily, and harder to digest. Americans have not yet advanced far in viticulture, for, though Economy and Italy share the same latitude, and the heat is sometimes as burning as in Italy, there are nevertheless severe cold spells because of the many forests and great waters; the nights are cold, frosts and pests appear, and the grapes do not always develop well. But even here America will win over Nature after the clearing of the forests. During our supper the old man recounted his stories with much kindness and grace. The courses were partly English, partly German, ones, and I found the table more luxurious than I would have thought amid all this patriarchal simplicity. After supper Miss Gertrude, Rapp's granddaughter, entertained us with her pianoforte and songs.

Next day we started to inspect the farm buildings. The full sheds, silos, harvesting machines, steam flax breaker, stables, and other buildings, are so perfect and grandiose in conception that they alone would prove a model achievement of the Society. The men are dispersed in different branches of the economy. There are workshops and storehouses providing for the needs
of the members. If a member needs a piece of clothing, he gets it from the community store. Though there is no legal proportioning of the goods, no one takes advantage of the community, but rather, as I heard, there is a rivalry among them as to who can get along with the least goods! Every morning the butcher delivers meat to the houses, in accordance with the size of families; so does the miller with flour. Vegetable gardens abound, and whatever is not available they get from their community store.

We looked at the silk factory. That started under Rapp's supervision three years ago, with some mulberry trees. The production is not yet large, and the cocoons are cared for by old Rapp, Gertrude, and the school children. But, after two years, some silk has been manufactured by the factory. Here the Pennsylvania Houses [of the legislature] and other government officials proved their sympathy with their industry. As the legislature learned of Rapp's woolen and silk industry, its members agreed to have a cravat and a piece of underwear made from Rapp's silks, and a frock coat and pantaloons made of his wool, so that in the next legislature every member should be able to attend wearing these homemade garments, thus exhorting their fellow citizens to the support of domestic industry. During our visit the cravats were being woven.

We entered a few houses to look at their arrangement. The rooms were everywhere the same, two larger and two smaller rooms, a cellar, and outer chambers. Only the old people and the children remain at home during the day. When the bells ring in the morning, everyone hurries to his own work and does that without supervision or prodding. Some members are entrusted with the sale of their products and produce. These are elected yearly and report on their activities. Their main supervisor is Rapp the Younger, who is very fortunate in his commercial activities. The Society has now more than two million dollars, including properties and cash, and this capital remains undivided and should increase.

About the education of children and about school policies there is much care expended; every child, without exception, has to attend the schools, where in addition to reading and writing they have to study natural history, technology, and introductory economic studies. There is not one illiterate member in the Society. In order to bring the children to the early habits of work and industry, they have to work every day under their teacher. They collect herbs in the spring, and fruits later. They use Lancaster's teaching methods, and Dr. Müller is their supervisor. The Society has a printing shop for their own schoolbooks.³

³ As far as I have been able to determine, the following is a complete list of the books printed by the Harmony Society press: Eine kleine Sammlung Harmonischer Lieder als die erste Probe der anfangenden Druckerey anzusehen. Gedruckt in Harmonie, Indiana. 1824 (A Small Collection of Harmonist Songs, to be looked upon as the First Attempt of the Beginning Printery. Printed in Harmony, Indiana. 1824); Gedanken über die Bestimmung des Menschen, besonders in Hinsicht der gegenwärtigen Zeit; von der Harmonie Gesellschaft in Indiana. 1824
Almost all the members are Germans. They speak with a Swabian dialect and they preserve their old Germanic customs of dress. English-speaking people generally do not join them. There is a Negro family, redeemed by the Society from slavery, and now they, too, are free men. The new members stand a year's apprenticeship, and if they are deemed unsatisfactory, or if they themselves are not pleased, they are allowed to leave with their original invested capital.

Finally, we mounted the new vineyard on a hill, where the vines are laid in the Württembergian custom, protected by stone walls. They had the stocks brought from France, and a great many from Hungary. Rapp the Younger esteems Hungarian fertility highly, and asked us frequent questions. It pleased me to speak of my country, but my grief also reappeared that he, just like many others, knows only of the fertility of my country! Whenever I found geography books printed in America, I looked up Hungary first, but I either found its mention only under AUSTRIA, or all that was said about Hungary was "a very fertile country."

As we returned from the vineyards, Rapp, Junior, explained to us their further plans; he believes that as long as the members lead a simple life, as long as they do not mix themselves in politics, and as long as the present Constitution of America continues to exist, their Society will last. He complained of the misconceptions that had spread about them, particularly in Germany, that Brockhaus' Lexicon calls them phantasts, and that the Duke of Weimar, whom they had received with greatest kindness in 1826, in the description of his journeys dealing with Owen's Society, spoke of many unjust things concerning the Rappists (Reise Seiner Hoheit des Herzogs Bernhard von Sachsen Weimar, durch Nord-Amerika. Weimar, 1827), and

Having mentioned Owen, who had bought New Harmony from Rapp, and who also had founded his Society on the community principle, we asked Rapp questions about him, but Herr Rapp did not have a good opinion of Owen, by virtue of their conflicts over the sale.

Owen's Society is again an extraordinary phenomenon in America, similar to Rapp's in many instances. Owen was born in England and acquired fame by his new educational system. In New Lanark, in Scotland, he constructed a famous cotton mill. There he formed an extraordinary colony with his workers. The poor children he taught according to principles derived from Rousseau's *Emile* and from *Robinson Crusoe*. The colony gradually grew to 2,300 members, and he published its educational principles in *A New View of Society* (London, 1813). He planned to form all humanity into a workers' family. His religious ideas attracted the attention of the priests, and he had to fight many a pamphleteering battle. Finally, he had to leave Scotland and England and, to fulfill his great ideas, he turned his attention to America. In 1824 he bought New Harmony from Rapp, and formed his Society there.

The community of property is also the main principle of Owen's Society, but as he is an enemy of every denomination that brought so much trouble to the world under the pretext of religion, with him everyone may believe whatever he wishes, and thus pure Deism is the religion of that Society. The shares are equal, but everyone also has to work the same amount, to provide equal wealth for everyone. Rapp shares these principles, but he does not only strive for personal wealth; he called religion to the support of his Society, and religion is not considered by Owen.

The Shakers and the societies of Rapp and Owen are three new chapters in the history of mankind, and, should they survive half a century, they should prove great lessons to philosophy and should disprove many a principle of politics. The consequent glory belongs to the American Constitution, which permits, in time and place, every kind of thought, however seemingly peculiar, without fearing dangers to the Constitution and government.

Returning to Economy, we looked at the garden of Rapp the Elder. In this little garden rare plants of America flourish and should prove wonderful to a botanist for many days. In a corner of the garden, in a *gloriette*, stands the monument to Harmony, made in Philadelphia. Though he is occupied in many fields, Rapp still finds time to tend his garden.

We had been here three days, and we had been looking and learning and hearing constantly. Economy is a great school of practical philosophy and

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5 Before it was sent to Economy in 1825, Philadelphia newspapers urged admirers of the arts to view "this noble figure" created by William Rush. The Harmony Society Archives also referred to the figure as the work of William Rush.
of practical life! What is done here, is clear: these simple morals, this placid domesticity, this disregard of worldly glitter which nevertheless brings a plenitude of wealth—all of this would seem a pious dream, had we not seen it and been convinced of its true existence. Does not this Society hamper the higher strivings of the intellect? Or curb the proud self-consciousness of man's will to be superior? Or do these simple patriarchal pleasures, this secure wealth, and this spurning of worldly vanities satisfy the soul amid all this constant work? Of all this, different minds will possibly decide differently. I left this place with admiration, richer with the discovery of a new philosophy, and I took more pleasure in having seen this than in learning the secrets of drawing rooms.

We came, finally, to say farewell to old Rapp, and to have a last look at this extraordinary man. In the style of ancient hospitality, the old man had his Wabash wines brought forth, he offered them to us, wished all good for our trip, and thus we parted from this famous place and man, full of thoughts and memories.

This friendly account is the last complete one known to exist about the Harmony Society at the time of its greatest numerical strength and efficiency. Only a few days after Farkas left, the guest arrived who was to give George Rapp the most critical competition for leadership that he would experience. The guest's ambassadors had already arrived, and Farkas had conversed with them. When, previous to his arrival at Economy, Farkas had visited Niagara Falls and had recorded his name there in Hungarian, he looked through the visitors' register and before his own name found inscribed a few days earlier: "Count Leon Et Party. An Emigrant from Germany to the United States." Farkas had already seen numerous accounts about Count Leon's migration in the newspapers. They reported that he had large estates in Germany along the Rhine and near Frankfurt, but that having supported the revolutions of 1830 and 1831 in Germany, he was forced to sell his estates and leave Germany. He had come to America with fifty others because he believed that no one in America would be persecuted for his beliefs. At this time, he was looking for a place to settle. Farkas remarked: "Germany lost fifty citizens and, according to the newspapers, seven million florins, merely because he opined differently from others—and America won fifty citizens and seven million florins." But the matter was by no means that simple. Farkas later probably read newspaper accounts and books showing that even in the free United States men fought

6 Sándor Farkas, Útazás Észak-Amerikában, 189.
each other because of their religious and political beliefs, and that not only did Rapp and Leon persecute each other, but Americans themselves persecuted both men because of the peculiar views they held.

It would take an entire book to tell the adventurous story of Count Leon. Let it be sufficient for the context of this article to say that he traced his ancestry back to Christ. In Europe, at this time, the strange case of Kaspar Hauser, the man-child of alleged royal descent who had grown up in obscurity and who suddenly appeared in Nürnberg in 1828, was attracting popular attention. Kaspar Hauser died in 1833 under very strange circumstances, and, although he has been the subject of many dramas and novels, his life story remains an unsolved mystery. Count Leon’s story is similar, and it is possible that some of his own claims were inspired by those of Kaspar Hauser.

Count Leon was an unusual man in many ways. He was accustomed to luxury and believed in a coming golden age in which man would not share poverty, but wealth. Although the American best-seller on how to win friends and influence people had not yet been written, the Count knew the secret. People liked him, especially those who were interested in the mysteries of the Christian religion. He was greatly aided in his progress by the fact that he looked very much like the Christ of traditional pictures. In common with George Rapp, he believed that the millennium was about to begin; in fact, at the very time when Rapp and his congregation believed that day had come, Count Leon had written the Harmonists an impressive letter stating that God was about to take over the rule of the world. This letter had given Rapp much courage, and he had used it in his sermons to sustain his people’s faith. All the members of the Harmony Society looked forward to Count Leon’s coming with the greatest eagerness, as Farkas suggested at the beginning of his account.

Soon after Count Leon’s arrival at Economy, it developed that the Count considered himself to be God’s anointed, the Messiah who was to preside over the millennium. If Rapp’s Harmony Society was the Woman Clothed with the Sun and prophesied in the Revelation According to St. John, then Count Leon within that theological system was the anointed of God who was to rule the world. This theological conflict caused George Rapp much anguish, and he never before prayed with such intensity that he might know the truth.
The story cannot be related here in its entirety, but it should be said that a crisis developed which resulted in a vote as to which of the two men, Rapp or Count Leon, should lead the Harmonist community. The question was not whether individual members wanted to give up the communist system; they all liked it and wanted it continued, even with Leon as leader. One of the important factors in the crisis was the matter of marriage. Leon was much less of an ascetic than Rapp; he favored marriage and saw no conflict between holiness and sexual intercourse in marriage. Rapp believed with Luke 20:35—"But they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage." When the vote was taken, two thirds voted for Rapp; one third voted to leave with Count Leon and develop a new settlement. This settlement was established nearby and ultimately evolved into the present town of Monaca, Pennsylvania. Soon after the division had taken place, however, Count Leon and most of his original followers moved to Louisiana.7

Although the arrival of Count Leon and the presentation of his theological system had been very upsetting for George Rapp's faith at first, his faith was reconfirmed when the final vote was announced. Holding to his original belief and symbols, he saw the departure of the third of his members as a fulfillment of the prophecy made regarding his church: "And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads. And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born" (Rev. 12:3, 4).

These were the faith-shaking events which transpired at Economy between the time of Farkas' departure and the arrival of the second visitor from Hungary, Nicolaus Niembsch von Strehlenau, a man who gained a permanent place for himself in German literature under the name of Lenau. Although Lenau won his fame through his German poetry, he was careful to keep his standing as a Hungarian, an attitude which was of help to him in a number of brushes with the Austrian censors.

Lenau had been studying philosophy and was wrestling with profound problems at the University of Heidelberg when he decided to go to America "to complete his education." His troubled state of mind is clearly disclosed in a letter which he wrote to a friend shortly before his departure:

If I had as firm a belief in the continuity of our personality, you see, then I would say: "Brother, we will see each other again, certainly we will see each other again." But I do not have this happy faith as you have it, and just now I feel the sad results of my philosophy most bitterly, for I must tell myself: You are going to sea, you are trusting yourself to the deceitful waves, you are entrusting your heart with all its love for your friends to the uncertain winds.

Aside from his unconscious flight from the reality of Europe, Lenau was motivated by two thoughts in coming to America: he wanted "to send his imagination to school—to the primitive forests," and he wanted to acquire some land which he planned to have farmed by someone he would hire. By this investment he hoped to secure for himself a steady income which would allow him to devote himself fully to the writing of poetry. He had, like his countryman Farkas, heard of the great success of the Harmonists, so within about two weeks after his arrival in Baltimore early in October, 1832, he was in Economy. He had brought letters of introduction to C. L. Volz of Pittsburgh, and he knew another prominent Pittsburger of the time, Karl von Bonnhorst. Both these gentlemen were lawyers, and both were not only friends of the Harmony Society, but also acted as its counsel. Von Bonnhorst had proved a valuable friend during the Count Leon troubles and had also written a booklet about Count Leon. Through Volz and Von Bonnhorst Lenau became acquainted with the unfortunate lot of German redemptioners at that time and also with the entire tragic conflict that had taken place at Economy. He had just come out of a world of conflict between belief and unbelief; now he moved into a region suffering under that situation which Hegel called real tragedy—the conflict between "Recht und Recht," right and right. There was never a question between Rapp and his followers, and Leon and his followers, about the essential truth of Christianity; in this matter both factions were

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9 Karl von Bonnhorst, Der Abenteurer Proli (Frankfurt, 1834).
in agreement, and both were bitterly opposed to the school of philosophy at the University of Heidelberg which had been undermining Lenau's faith and peace of mind. Only with this background in mind can we understand most of what Lenau wrote in America, particularly his poems "Der Urwald" (The Forest Primeval), and "Primula Veris."

It would be only natural to expect that a man in Lenau's profession would publish an account of his American experiences upon his return to Europe, but no such record appeared. And the widely read book Der Amerikamüde (America-Weary) by Ferdinand Kürenberger, which was long reputed to be a true account of Lenau's experiences in America, has been proved otherwise both by special studies and by a statement made by Kürenberger himself.\(^{10}\) Lenau probably kept some notes on his experience at Economy in his diary, but this was carefully withheld from publication, together with other papers, by its later owner in Vienna, and was probably destroyed during the last war. There are other records of his stay at Economy, however, which help us understand what a strong positive influence the Harmony Society had upon his life and work. Such evidence can be found in the Harmony Society Archives, in his letters and poetry, and in the book Geläutert (Purified), written by Louise Weil, a German woman who lived in the same house in Economy as Lenau. These sources do not tell us much about how Lenau found life at Economy, but they do reveal that the Harmonists tenderly cared for him while he was sick, that they helped him struggle against his inclination to deep melancholy, and that Jacob Henrici, later one of the Trustees of the Society, was very much interested in his poetry and acted as one of his critics. Henrici's restraining and calming influence is clearly reflected in manuscript copies of Lenau's poems in the Harmony Society Archives, but this is a subject of literary criticism and does not concern us here.

Lenau's reaction to America and Jacksonian Democracy was extremely bitter; not so his reaction to Economy. After observing the money-making drive of Americans, he exclaimed in disgust: "It takes a voice with the power of Niagara to preach to these scoundrels that

\(^{10}\) Cf. George A. Mullfinger, Ferdinand Kürenbergers Roman Der Amerikamüde, dessen Quellen und Verhältniss zu Lenaus Amerikareise (Philadelphia, 1903); also see Neue Österreichische Biographie, VI (Vienna, 1929).
there are higher gods than those made in the mints.” How, by con-
trast, he loved Economy, where such a sermon need not be preached,
is seen from his poem “Ein Heimathbruder!” (A Brother from Home),
in which he expresses the joy of a traveler in a strange land when he
finds another who speaks his language with heart and mouth. Lenau,
although a Hungarian, had a particular love for Württemberg and
her poets, and almost all the Harmonists were Württembergers.
During his illness at Economy, Katharina Becker (the name had
been Langenbacher), the sister of one of the Trustees, cared for him
and came to know him especially well. Her close friend Louise Weil
relates that Lenau once fell into such melancholy that he would
surely have died had the Harmonists not restored his will to live.
Vanishing from the colony one day, Lenau was found only after
many hours of searching for him, wholly exhausted. He had wan-
dered about the hills near Economy, was overcome by the futility of
life, and wanted to die. He tells of this experience himself in his poem
“Der Urwald,” but all mention of or reference to the Harmonists is
carefully avoided. Nevertheless, that poem can be understood only
against the background just given. Similarly, his poem “Primula
Veris” can be understood only against the background of the Har-
mony Society experiences of that time. He dedicated this poem to
Katharina Becker, who had done so much to restore his physical and
spiritual health. The first part of this beautiful poem is clear enough
when simply understood as a poem celebrating the primula veris, but
the poem has two parts, each carefully marked. In the second part,
Lenau applies the experience of the primula veris which had been
killed by the frost to the experience of the Harmony Society. Just as
the flower in its eagerness to welcome Spring had come out at its
first sign only to be killed by frost because the real Spring had not yet
come, so Katharina Becker and her fellow Harmonists had been
waiting eagerly for the coming of the divine Spring, the millennium,
and had opened their hearts to the first messenger of this “Göttliche
Frühling” (divine Spring), only to be chilled by the frosts of the false
messenger. His conclusion, however, celebrates the triumph of the
flower’s believing soul which is never lost.

What Lenau thought of the Harmonists is reflected in this poem.
What he found at Economy after his depressing philosophical and
spiritual struggles was faith. We have no account about the Society
from his hand, but what the Harmonists gave him is reflected in his poetic work from this time on. This restored faith reaches its most powerful expression in his great dramatic poem "Savonarola." When the Harmonists later read it, they were deeply moved and felt convinced that it was written out of a true Christian spirit. In a sense, this work was a reply to the faith-shaking biography of Christ, _Das Leben Jesu_, by D. F. Strauss. Lenau's work does not relate the teachings of Savonarola himself, but instead puts into his mouth the essentially Protestant confession of faith which Lenau had made his own through his difficult struggles before and after Economy. When one reads Savonarola's strong pleas for Christianity and the emphasis placed on the practice of the Christian faith, it is like reading a sermon of George Rapp, only in more poetic German, more condensed, and without the flavor of Jacob Böhme's mysticism.

The Harmonists, who were experts in real estate, advised Lenau in his land transactions. On March 15, 1833, he signed an agreement at Economy which arranged for the farming of the land he had bought in Ohio. The next day, he sold his heavy four-volume German dictionary to Frederick Rapp, financial agent of the Harmonists, and soon after set out for Niagara Falls, which he wanted to see before returning to Europe.

The third Hungarian visitor was a friend of Lenau's, Theresa Pulszky. She was the wife of Francis Aurelius Pulszky,11 and both had come to America in 1852 as companions of Kossuth,12 who was a guest of the nation, and who was attempting to raise money to finance a revolution for liberty at home. The party came to Economy in the hope of enlisting some help, but the Harmonists turned them down because they did not believe in supporting violence. This

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11 Francis Pulszky was a man of considerable importance. He had been brought up in the Lutheran tradition, served as a delegate of the liberals of Saros in the Diet of 1840, on Kossuth's recommendation was appointed to the position of State Secretary of the Ministry, and in 1848 had been sent to London as the first Hungarian minister. He came to the United States with Kossuth from London and returned there after the Spring, 1852, tour of America with the large fund that had been collected for the new war of independence. In February, 1853, Kossuth sent him to Washington to ask President Pierce to intervene in the struggle for independence. Cf. Thomas Lengyel, "The First Hungarian Minister in London," _Hungarian Quarterly_, VI, 82 ff.; Heinrich Marczali, "Franz von Pulszky," _Ungarische Rundschau_, IV (1915), 630-673.

negative response to Kossuth's request for funds probably explains the skeptical tone of Mrs. Pulszky's account of their visit.

It was in 1853 that Francis and Theresa Pulszky published their book *White, Red, Black* in New York and London. The book, which combined Theresa's diary with the observations and comments of her husband, was a great success in both England and the United States. The section in which we are interested is entitled "VISIT TO ECONOMY," and includes the parenthetical note, "From Mrs. Pulszky's Diary." 13

ECONOMY, the successful experiment of a communistical society, had interested me long before our visit to the United States. As it is only a few miles' distance from Pittsburg, I wished to see it.

Rapp, the precursor of the French and English Socialists, and of Joe Smith, the Mormon Prophet, had in his character several features common with them all. 14 He pretended to be a seer, an instrument raised up by Providence, like Joe Smith; and he stuck to his own schemes of political economy,—to the theory of the community of property and repudiation of commerce,—as steadfastly as Baboeuf or Cabet.

In one respect he succeeded: his community grew wealthy, and independent of the world without. They raise, grow, and manufacture every thing which they require for their food, clothing and enjoyment. But, in another regard, the experiment has failed. Religious fanaticism was the only means of keeping them together, and of excluding foreign elements from the community which might have disturbed it. This was the case so much the more, as the natural increase of the value of their land, about 5000 acres, in the very neighbourhood of Pittsburg, has increased this capital to a stupendous amount. The property was to remain among the original settlers; marriage was therefore abolished. The establishment became a kind of monastery, and as the accession by adoption was restricted, ECONOMY assumes the character of a Tontine, to the benefit of the last survivors. During our stay in Pittsburg I inquired, from those who could give me information, of the origin and the fortunes of this singular community.

John George Rapp, born in 1757, was a weaver and farmer in Württemberg, and came to the persuasion that the Church, in her present form, is nothing more than a police establishment, "which does not lead mankind to Christianity, but out of Christianity." He therefore refused to pay tithes to the clergy, and preached that people should return to the tenets of primitive Christianity, and, in particular, to the community of property. He soon


was surrounded by disciples, principally farmers and mechanics. Worried by the persecution of the police and the law, he emigrated, with his community, in 1840 [sic], to the United States. They first bought 3000 acres in Butler County, but, as they soon found themselves implicated in serious difficulties, being unable to meet their engagements, the women had to give up even their rings and earrings, and everything costly they possessed, which had not yet entered the common stock. Nevertheless, they at length sold the first establishment with profit, and thereupon settled in the neighbourhood of Pittsburg.

When their wealth increased, Rapp introduced a new feature into the community. "Asses!" said his prophetic voice to the faithful flock, "do you mean to be wiser than our Saviour? He was unmarried!" And such was Rapp's authority, gained principally by the auricular confession, which he strictly enforced, that they submitted to this decree. He then divided them into groups of five to seven persons, so that every one of those should form one artificial family, where the defects of one member were to be remedied by the qualities of the other. Their fare and clothing were the same for all, and of the coarsest description.

Rapp (as the reader will anticipate) had visions and dreams. He predicted the near approach of doomsday, and therefore compelled his disciples to give up selfishness, property, and family. In 1847 he died, being ninety years old; a strange compound of a religious enthusiast and a cunning impostor. At the time of his death, the community possessed 5000 acres, with cattle, machinery for agriculture, wool and silk manufactories, and was worth two millions of dollars. His successor as prophet, was Doctor Henrizi, a scholar, who preached in the style of Rapp, and seemed most anxious that the Spartan fare should not be improved. But Bäker, another member of the community, went with the other eleven elders into the kitchen,—where the new prophet was just then enquiring into the contents of the saucepans,—and caught the sacred sleeve, exclaiming, "But now it is enough! we want better fare and less work." The community approved of this "coup d'etat," and Bäker and Henrizi had to exchange positions.

Thus, the revolution of Economy was consummated, and the twelve elders, who in the lifetime of Rapp, never dared even to discuss his decrees, became thenceforth a "Consultative Body," though it is said, nothing but the form of the proceedings has changed, for Bäker is so clever, that he always carries his point. And as he retains the hoarding propensities of the German peasant, there is no danger that the community should turn epicurean. Our visit was previously announced to the prophet. When our carriage arrived at the foot of the hill, where Economy stands, we were met by Bäker and Henrizi. Bäker's features are those of a shrewd, thrifty peasant, half Jew, half German. Henrizi has the expression of a Puseyite.

15 The records of the Harmony Society show that Jacob Henrici actually handed in his written resignation as officer of the Society in 1848.
clergyman. Their hair is long and curly, such as Rabbis used to wear. They had broad-brimmed hats, silk waistcoats, and wide and long coats of fine cloth.

They accompanied us to the village, composed of about a hundred clean and neat houses. Several women of the community, in the Swabian peasant garb, greeted us here, and told us how happily and peacefully they lived. Remembering that my poor friend, the celebrated German poet, Lenau (some years ago he became insane and died) had paid a long visit to Economy, with the intention of himself making a practical experiment of communism, I asked Henrizi what he thought of him? “He was no material for us,” said he.

When I spoke about the communistic principle, they said: they believed that Christ is coming soon, and therefore it is better to prepare for the future world than to care for individual property, family, and the external world. I remarked to them that if they do not marry, and the day of judgment is yet delayed, their society might be centralised at last, and absorbed by one, perhaps very worldly individual, inheriting the fruit of all their toils. But Henrizi met my objection, saying, that as their motives were sacred, Providence would take care of the results. They offered us wine and cake; we visited their wool, cotton, and silk manufactory. The weavers were poorly clad, and looked dismal. I asked, therefore, how it came to pass that the elders, in spite of equality, were better dressed than the workmen? Bäker answered, that it was only to do us honour, that they had put on their holiday dress; but on Sunday they were all alike.

The dinner was a substantial German peasant's fare. I enquired whether they cultivate music and song in the German way? They said, music was their enjoyment, though I heard nothing but the nasal twang of the Swabian rural communities, not German melody.

We visited Rapp's house, it is like the others, one story high, clean, and nice. The adopted grand-daughter of Rapp, and her mother were clad like all the other women, and looked as some of the old pictures of Van Eyk or Hemling.

They told us, they had also a school and a library, but they did not show it. I asked why they kept a school, when they had abolished marriage? They said, that some children are adopted, and others chance to be found. The community consists of about six or seven hundred members; the majority of them is above fifty years old.

In general, Theresa Pulszky's account is accurate, but there are a number of factual errors: Henrici did not hold the title of Doctor,

16 Henrici and the original Harmonists of his time expected the property of the Society to become the property of the state of Pennsylvania, i.e. after all had died and if Christ should not have come before then. In no case was the Society to be dissolved and the property divided into private property. Cf. Karl J. Arndt, “The Harmony Society . . .,” American Philosophical Society Year Book (1953), 188-194.
Rapp's house was not like the others, but much larger, Rapp's granddaughter was not adopted, and the membership of the Society at the time of her visit was only half the figure of her lowest estimate. The Harmonists were always inclined to be reticent toward visitors until they had in some way given evidence of the fact that they deserved confidence. Farkas won that confidence, so did Lenau, but Theresa Pulszky, on a mission to collect money to overthrow a government "ordained of God," failed to win that confidence. Her report reflects this feeling. Romelius Baker and Jacob Henrici were kind to the Kossuth-Pulszky party, but their remarks about them, as recorded in the Harmony Society Archives, show what they thought of these visitors, who, as persons brought up in the Lutheran faith, had not obeyed God's commandment: "Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation" (Rom. 13:2).

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