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THE FORMATION OF THE INDUSTRIAL WORKING CLASS IN HUNGARY: A LESSON IN SOCIAL DYNAMICS

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It is an interesting and challenging task to observe and describe the societal process through which an emerging social class recruits its members from the already established groups of a society. Such process took place in Hungary around the middle of the 19th century. During that period of time, as a result of demand for labor by an emerging manufacturing industry, the class of industrial workers had been gradually formed.

This development which radically changed the structure of Hungarian society was made possible by a major political event in 1867 that settled the long festering relationship between the Austrian Empire and Hungary. The Compromise of 1867 had created far-reaching changes not only in the political climate but also in the economic development of Hungary. Before the Compromise, the Hungarian economy was subordinated to the interest of the Austrian economic policy. The role of the Hungarian economy was mainly relegated to produce raw materials at depressed prices for the Austrian and Czech industries.

However, the still limited political independence following the Compromise empowered Hungary to strive also for economic independence. The development of a hitherto barely existing manufacturing industry was a precondition of achieving the goal of economic emancipation. Contemporary data show that, with the gradual alleviation of the political tensions between Austria and Hungary, that began even before the Compromise, in the early 1860s 114 new factories had been built. In the second half of the same decade, the number of new factory operations more than doubled to 280. Three quarters of them started in the three years following the Compromise (1).

The demand of the rapidly growing manufacturing industry for labor increased at a similar rate. However, the need of this expanding economic sector for employees could not be satisfied from the limited supply of industrial workers who were already employed in the few factories that existed prior to the 1860s. Therefore, the growing demand for industrial labor had to be met from the labor markets of other economic sectors, such as agriculture, the mining industry and independent crafts. Also, the unemployed or partially employed laborers, in addition to seeking job opportunities, were attracted by wages paid in factories which were considerably higher than the ones earned by unskilled labor in general, assuring a higher standard of living. The improved working conditions appealed not only to those who were unemployed but

also to those individuals who were gainfully employed but earned less than workers in factories.

Since the factories were built and located in the industrial suburbs of the cities or places close to sources of raw materials, in the absence of adequate transportation, new workers settled in housing developments surrounding their work place. As a result of working and living side by side, a certain cohesion and common interest developed among industrial workers, creating a new class in the Hungarian society. In this process, in a relatively short period of time, many thousands of individuals abandoned their former economic sphere and entered not only into a different occupation but also into a new social class, developing a new life style and a corresponding class-consciousness. A transitional movement of such a dimension affected the Hungarian society as a whole creating far reaching structural changes therein.

The industrial revolution in Hungary was limited to a few decades in contrast with the same phenomenon that took more than a hundred years in Western Europe. Therefore it offers a unique opportunity to observe the process in which a large number of individuals migrated from already existing economic sectors to the labor force of the evolving manufacturing industry. Specifically it will be examined from which traditional social groups did the developing industrial class recruit its members, and how this process affected the traditional social groups and the new industrial class. In the decades preceding the Compromise of 1867, the structure of the Hungarian society reflected the pattern that characterized the Western European countries before their industrial revolution, occurring primarily in the 18th century. The pre-industrial societies were mainly composed by a predominantly agricultural sector, by craftsmen and their unskilled helpers who performed some limited industrial activity on a small scale. In Western Europe the transition for an agricultural economy to an industrial one took about hundred years and occurred gradually. In Hungary an explosion of the manufacturing industry happened in three decades. If the Western societies had over hundred years to restructure their societies and still suffered from a revolutionary impact, one can imagine the magnitude of social change caused by the sudden appearance of the manufacturing industry in Hungary. Contemporary Hungarian statistics show the presence of only 28,000 factory workers in 1848 (2). This number increased tenfold during the next 40 years, although the size of the total population had grown only by 150 percent. Therefore, an increase of such magnitude in the industrial labor force could occur only at the expense of the other components of the Hungarian society.

Changes resulting from industrialization worked in two opposite directions. On one hand, they contributed to the growth of industrial labor, on the other hand, they adversely affected those sectors of society that suffered losses due to the migration of their members to the developing industrial class. The expansion of the industrial labor force did not affect only the structure of Hungarian society, but also, to a lesser extent, the labor force of the economically developed neighboring countries. At the beginning of industrialization in Hungary, the available skilled work force was limited to a small group of former craftsmen and journeymen who, by far, did not satisfy the demand for skilled labor. Therefore, the factories had to look elsewhere for

skilled labor, primarily in such countries as Austria, Germany and Italy. In the second half of the 19th century, foreign-born skilled workers constituted the majority of skilled work force in Hungarian factories. In order to ascertain the inter-class mobility caused by the expanding manufacturing industry, statistical data measuring the composition of the Hungarian society before the formation of the industrial labor class must be taken into account. These data also reveal the social foundation on which the expanding labor class had been built. In 1805, the number of craftsmen involved in small-scale industries amounted to 88,000, i.e., less than two percent of the total population of Hungary. This number had increased to 125,000 by 1840, one craftsman per 80 citizens (3). In comparison, in Austria, which was behind England and France in term of industrial development, one craftsman existed per 14 citizens.

The manufacturing industry initially had to rely on the pool of craftsmen and journeymen to satisfy its requirement for skilled labor. The competition among the factories for skilled workers was so fierce that a political leader in the Hungarian parliament proposed a bill that would have prohibited the raid of the skilled work force of another factory that invested great amount of capital in the recruiting and training of its employees. Industrial statistics from 1847 show that 528 factories existed in Hungary, employing 23,499 full-time workers. Their size is indicated by the fact that, on the average, 44 workers were employed by each factory. Skilled workers migrating from the neighboring countries, the artisans from the small-scale workshops and masses of unskilled laborers from the agricultural sector joined to this kernel.

In establishing the societal base of the industrial working class in Hungary, its relationship to the miners should be considered. Miners are involved in the production of raw materials used by factories in their final products. They are similar to industrial workers in several aspects: they work and live in large numbers side by side, and their living standard resemble that of the industrial workers. The number of miners amounted to 34,700 in 1855 (4).

Nonetheless, particularly at the beginnings of the manufacturing industry, there was hardly any interaction between miners and factory workers. Several circumstances were responsible for this situation. The mining facilities were located far away from the industrial centers, and the distance between their respective locations impeded close contact and cooperation between the two occupational groups of Hungarian society. Only later, toward the end of the 19th century, did some interaction develop along political and trade lines between the organizations of industrial workers and miners.

In the previous survey, the segments of pre-industrial Hungarian society that contributed to the development of the industrial working class were identified. In the following, the process through which parts of these groups became separated from their previous social identity and were absorbed into the class of industrial labor will be analyzed. In the first phase, those individuals entered into factory employment who, although not directly employed in factories, were engaged in the so-called cottage industries supplying parts to be assembled or refined in factories located in the neighborhood. The history of the cottage industries shows that primarily textile factories were surrounded by villages, the population of which, particularly the

women, were engaged in the production of semi-finished products that were assembled into final products in the nearby factories. With the expansion of the manufacturing industry, it was logical to employ those persons who, through their cottage industry-type work were already affiliated indirectly with an industry or one of its units. As a result, such workers abandoned their home work and moved to factory jobs and, in this way, became amalgamated with the industrial working class.

When the labor supply from the cottage industries proved to be insufficient to satisfy the ever-growing demand of the manufacturing industry for labor, the search was directed towards other economic sectors of society. In this phase, those were sought who either worked or became unemployed in sectors related to industrial work, such as small-scale industries and craft workshops. These economic units, although engaged in the production of industrial goods, differed from the manufacturing industry not only in size but also in the utilization of capital and machinery, providing energy. Many of the employees in craft shops, even the owners, sometimes preferred the well-paying factory jobs to their decreasing opportunities. Since their skill was readily applicable to the production process in the manufacturing industries, the transition from the craft shop to factory jobs was least problematic. Craftsmen were not only attracted by the wages paid in the factories, but they were also forced to leave their shops by the competition of the manufacturing industry. They were not able to compete with its lower prices made possible by the mass production of goods and the scale of economy.

The journeymen who were employed in small-scale industries constituted one of the first groups that left their previous job and accepted employment in a factory. They were motivated by their declining opportunity to become independent and owners of a shop. In fact, a growing number of journeymen spent their whole working life in the employ of a shop owner. The lost opportunity to become a shop owner radically changed their outlook in life. Hoping that one day they would work for themselves, they were willing to labor long hours at meager wages. When they no longer expected a change for the better, dissatisfaction with their future made them amenable to the recruiting efforts of the factories (5). Although they would still remain in employment status, at the same time, they would earn higher wages than in the shop and work shorter hours.

Up to the mid-1860s, primarily the dissatisfied journeymen were attracted by the better paying industrial jobs. However, a decade later, they were followed by their former bosses who became bankrupted by the competition of the manufacturing industries. They could not match their prices, nor their investments in machinery and energy sources. Mostly, those shop owners were adversely affected who were previously engaged in those crafts where the manufacturing industries they faced proved to be most productive and efficient such as the textile industry and other industries involved in the mass production of consumer goods (tobacco, breweries, etc).

A decline in the number of journeymen and craftsmen is indicated by data originating toward the end of the 19th century. In 1890, the number of craftsmen who owned their shop amounted to 327,000. Data from 1900 show that their number declined to 313,000 (6). Although the difference is not substantial, it may be assumed that the process of gradual decline did not begin in 1890 but, due to the competition

of the manufacturing industry and its demand for labor, started earlier. In the absence of available statistical data, the trend cannot be quantified. In fact, the decline in the number of independent craftsmen may be placed at the mid-1860s. At that time, the liquidation of the small-scale textile and weaving shops was fully completed.

Workers employed in the factories were soon joined by foreign-born skilled workers who migrated to Hungary in search of job opportunities. These workers, due to their skill and erudition, soon became the leaders of the working class competing with native-born representatives. The influx of foreign workers into Hungary reached such a magnitude that during the 1870s one of the leaders of the budding Hungarian labor movement compared this phenomenon to the invasion of locusts. He called the native-born workers to join forces against the foreign invaders (7).

The manufacturing industry absorbed the available labor supply from the related economic sectors, such as the previously mentioned craftsmen, the journeymen, the workers in the former cottage industries and those employed in small-scale industries with relative ease as they were familiar with some of the aspects of industrial production. Once the supply of the above listed groups longer satisfied the ever growing demand of the factories for labor, they started to look elsewhere, primarily in the agricultural sector that was remote to the organization and production system of the manufacturing industry. However, the recruiting efforts of the factories were facilitated by the economic conditions prevailing in the labor market of agriculture during the second half of the 19th century.

The former serfs, who constituted the great majority of the agricultural labor force, obtained their economic freedom and possession of some cultivable land in 1848. However, farming allowed them only a substandard living because of the small size of their farms and the primitive methods of cultivation. Contemporary data show that, of the families engaged in agricultural activity, approximately 600,000 owned some land. Among them only 17,000 had a cultivable area larger than 100 acres. Another 93,000 possessed half as much, and the farm of the remaining 475,000 families amounted to less than 15 acres (8). This group was unable to make their living solely from the cultivation of their land. Therefore, they had to look for other sources of earning, usually outside agriculture, to survive.

The previously described conditions defined the economic situation of the first generation of former serfs who received land in the framework of the land reform at mid-19th century. For the next generations, this situation became even worse. Due to the fertility of the farmer families, the land was divided among the male children and therefore, the average size of the farms was further reduced making the opportunity to earn a decent living even more difficult and unrealistic.

Initially, the farming families facing the fragmentation of their land, pursued two approaches. Some families limited the number of male children to one; others left their land to the oldest male offspring, thereby forcing the other children to look for job opportunities elsewhere, mainly outside the agricultural sector. Such opportunities were primarily available in cities and towns where factories were located. The men were employed in unskilled jobs; the women served as domestic help. The same road was taken by small landowners whose plot was not large enough to assure even a substandard level of living.

Such was the pattern among those members of the agricultural society who at least owned some land and livestock. However, the larger half of the agricultural population did not own any land at all. They either performed seasonal work at large estates, or rented land from owners of large estates in a sharecropper arrangement. Since they did not have any bargaining power, the landowner usually demanded and got a large share of their crop. Also they were the most fertile group in Hungarian society. The majority of their children was unable to obtain any job opportunity in agriculture and was forced to migrate to industrial centers to find work.

Laborers employed at infrastructure construction sites came originally from the agricultural sector. These laborers or "diggers" were mainly employed at railroad construction, and building navigable and irrigation channels, also at other public works requiring earth moving. The extent of such projects is indicated by the number of companies that were engaged in building the hitherto neglected infrastructure of the Hungarian economy. In the last third of the 19th century, 59 large companies were involved in building railroads, regulating the flow of rivers and draining the flood areas. As a result of these undertakings, over 3 million acres were returned to cultivation (9). However, most of these projects were completed by the end of the 1880s. The large number of diggers who lost their jobs, in most cases, forever, had two options to consider. They either might have returned to their former agricultural job, but as was shown earlier, the labor market in agriculture was already saturated. They had no other alternative but to seek employment in urban areas, primarily in industrial centers. The majority who were previously employed in construction activities, some of them being related to industrial work, were hired to perform semi-skilled or unskilled labor in factories.

It may be summarized that the expanding industrial working class absorbed the former employees of the small-scale industries, the journeymen of the craft shops, attracted foreign-born skilled workers and presented job opportunities to agricultural workers, owners of small farms and diggers who were no longer able to find job opportunities in their traditional labor market.

In the following discussion, the process through which occupational groups hitherto working outside the boundaries of the industrial working class, found livelihood and were incorporated in this class will be considered. It is also of interest to ascertain the changes these groups underwent in their transition from their former occupation to the requirements of their factory job. This was completed at the time when the second generation of the newcomers identified itself with the working class.

The journeymen and other persons previously employed in shops and small-scale industries were attracted to factories primarily by lack of opportunity to advance to ownership. Due to the expansion of the manufacturing industries, a growing demand was generated for skilled labor. Therefore, skilled individuals who switched to factory jobs were well paid and appointed to positions of foremen and headmen, enabling them to maintain or even surpass their previous standard of living. However, their situation somewhat deteriorated when a large number of hitherto independent craftsmen and shop owners were devastated by recurrent economic recessions and the competition of the manufacturing industries and forced workers to seek employment in factories, thereby increasing the supply of skilled labor.

The debacle of the stock exchange in Vienna, Austria during the 1880s was the first major economic upheaval impacting the manufacturing industries all over the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. It resulted in large-scale layoffs and subsequent unemployment. The wages of those workers who still remained employed were adversely affected. The standard of living of both the employed and unemployed skilled workers declined, and this was the factor that finally separated them from their previous occupational and social groups and caused them to assume solidarity with the class of the industrial workers. Simultaneously, their economic and political interest conflicted with that of the political parties representing the middle and upper classes of the Hungarian society and accepted the ideology and political program of the trade unions and the labor movement.

If individuals, previously affiliated with small-scale industries and craft shops that, in certain aspects, related to factory work, had to undergo considerable occupational and ideological changes, one can appreciate the magnitude of changes suffered by those who left their livelihood in the agricultural sector to join the industrial work force. The way of thinking and the method of the work process of those who were previously occupied in land cultivation and animal husbandry, were vastly different from those prevailing in the manufacturing industry. However, the new work environment and the necessity of collaborating with fellow workers made it inevitable to adjust to their new work environment. Even those who might have attempted to preserve the old customs and were intimidated by the unfamiliar way of their new life, could not fight the impact of their changed work environment. They did not have the mental strength nor the skill to resist to its effects.

On the other hand, the second generation of the former craftsmen and agriculture workers became quite homogeneous. This is quite understandable because the offspring of the first generation of industrial workers, coming from different social entities, had been exposed from their birth to the same effects generated by their urban living and working conditions in the factories. Already, at an early age, they were employed in the factories and through interaction with their fellow workers, their ideology and political concepts were similar whether they lived and worked in Budapest, or Vienna, or London. They were affected by the same factors: living at the peripheries of industrial cities in crowded apartment houses, and by the rhythm of the machines.

So far the new class of the industrial workers in Hungary was examined from the viewpoint of the other societal groups that contributed to the formation of this class. It was registered which social entities, to what extent and in what time frame, participated in the development of the industrial working class. In addition to these outside effects and influx, certain degree of stratification occurred within the industrial class depending primarily on the particular industrial branch in which they were employed.

The degree of skill and expertise possessed by a person determined his place in the industrial hierarchy. The acquisition or loss of skill contributed to his ascendancy or descendancy within the industrial society of a factory or industry. The rank of an individual in the work hierarchy also determined his wage income and the corresponding standard of living. On the basis of skill differences, the working class had been divided into three major categories: the skilled workers, the semi-skilled and

unskilled workers. Members in the first category, in course of acquiring their skill, they also obtained general education in the middle school and later in the trade school. Due to their education, they not only received higher wages but also gained respect of their fellow workers in the unskilled categories. As a consequence, their leadership role extended outside their work environment to the political and trade organizations of industrial workers. They controlled the trade unions that were limited only to skilled workers and, since the political movement, particularly in the first decades, was largely based on trade unions, they had leadership role in that organization as well. Unskilled workers constituted the bottom half of the industrial work force. Their majority was illiterate. They performed jobs involving heavy lifting, materials moving and similar low-level chores. Some of them worked as helpers to skilled workers, mainly cleaning machines and supplying parts for the final product. Corresponding to the low level of their work, they were paid at the bottom rate and, accordingly their way of life was quite impoverished, although still surpassing the level of earnings in their former occupation, particularly in agricultural sector. Since unskilled workers were excluded from trade unions, they actively participated in the political labor movement. At the meetings, they supplied the majority of the attendees without having much role in the decision making. The difference in the organizational setup between skilled and unskilled workers followed the pattern that emerged in the early phases of industrialization in England. While the trade unions representing the interest of the skilled workers were formed already in the 1830s, the first organization of the unskilled workers, i.e., that of the longshoremen of Glasgow, was set up 50 years later. Although no such time difference may be observed in the Hungarian labor movement, there was a delay in the effective organization of unskilled workers.

Such lapse of time may be easily explained in terms of differences between the two groups, particularly in the first generation. At that phase, skilled workers moving from small-scale industries and craft shops were able to soon realize their distinct interest that was missing from the thinking of unskilled workers who came from agricultural areas in rural settings. However, the second generation of the latter group became accustomed to the modes of urban living and acquired some literacy. As a result, the sharp differences between the skilled and unskilled groups of the industrial labor force diminished. The circumstances they all experienced in the factories and the recognition of their common interest reduced their previous differences and helped to create a unified labor movement.

In addition to the vertical stratification of the industrial working class in Hungary, a horizontal differentiation also existed. It was caused by the distribution of the Hungarian society among the various nationality groups. At the time of the 1867 Compromise, the Magyar, the dominating nationality, constituted about 60 percent of the population in Hungary. Since the demand of the manufacturing industries for labor also attracted members of the non-Magyar minorities, workers from the various nationalities had to work side by side and their emotional conflict to certain extent affected their cohesion.

From the viewpoint of nationality, the Hungarian labor force was composed of three major groups: workers of Hungarian (Magyar) nationality, members of other

nationalities living within the Hungarian borders and a relatively small group of skilled workers, migrating primarily from Austria, Germany and Italy. Despite their lesser weight in the total Hungarian population, the foreign-born workers, due to their skills and erudition, exercised a considerable influence on the labor movement.

Because of their leading role in trade and political labor organizations, the migration of foreign-born workers deserves further examination. Workers of foreign origin first moved to Hungary in large numbers to participate in the construction of the railways. Those were built by international consortia that transferred the work force, engaged in the construction of railroads in other countries, to Hungary (10). It was pointed out, somewhat critically, by the Népszava, a trade union newspaper, in 1868 that the Hungarian railroads had been built by workers of Czech and Italian nationalities (11). The question whether there weren't enough Hungarian workers to do the job, was raised. This question was answered in another publication. "It is widely known and factually proven that railroads and canals are constructed by skilled workers of foreign origin because of the inexperience and the lack of skill of the domestic work force" (12). It was reported that to build a railroad at the town of Arad, 500 construction workers were hired from Italy. Although it is not certain that all foreigners, employed at the construction of the Hungarian railroads, did stay in Hungary, it may be assumed that some of them settled here because the railroads they helped to build required their skill, even after the completion of construction work. In fact, because the last three decades of the century, foreign-born workers still composed the majority of the work force at the railroads, Count Imre Miklüs, the first minister of transportation after the Compromise routinely issued government rules and regulations both in Hungarian and German languages.

It was not only the work force of the railroads that hosted a considerable number of foreign-born skilled workers, but branches of manufacturing industries also continued to recruit and settle workers from other countries. A glass factory located in Northern Hungary hired 30 glass blowers from Prussia. In the Hungarian–Belgian Company, all managers and skilled workers migrated from various West European countries. Since they did not speak the Hungarian language, they had considerable difficulty to communicate with the semi-skilled and unskilled workers of Hungarian nationality. At early stage of industrialization, it frequently occurred that the foreign workers who usually filled the upper level positions in the production area were not able to communicate with the Hungarian laborers since neither understood each other's language.

The impact of foreign-born workers, at least at the beginning of the Hungarian industrialization, is shown by sample statistics taken in Budapest in the 1870s. The sample included 10,000 factory workers, 75 percent of whose were born in various regions of Hungary, and the other 25 percent migrated from abroad, primarily from Austria (20.4 percent), some from Germany (2.5 percent) and the remaining 2.1 percent from other countries (13). But even among workers born in Hungary, the Magyar nationals had a lesser numerical weight in the industrial work force that could have been expected on the basis of their share in the total population. This demographic phenomenon may be explained in terms of factors that determined the location of the factories. Particularly, the heavy industries that depended on close

availability of raw materials (iron, coal, metals) were constructed near to the mines and quarries that supplied raw materials for their final products. Most of the mining facilities were located in the mountains along the border areas of the pre-1921 Hungary. However, such regions were mostly populated by minorities, such as Slovaks, Romanians and Serbs. Accordingly, the factories in the border areas hired their workers from the neighboring villages populated by minorities. On the other hand, the majority of the Hungarian nationals lived in the lowlands occupying the center of Hungary and was mostly engaged in agricultural cultivation on fertile lands. Another factor that may explain their low rate of participation in the industrial work force, was their dislike of factory work. They preferred occupations in agriculture and, if they were sufficiently educated, they applied for clerical jobs in state or municipal offices.

This attitude explains that even in those industrial centers that were located in regions populated by ethnic Hungarians, such as Budapest or Pécs, a large portion of the industrial work force still belonged to minorities. In the previously quoted sample of 10,000 workers taken in Budapest, 60 percent were born in Hungary. Of them, 61 percent considered themselves members of Hungarian nationality, Slovaks numbered 31 percent, and the other eight percent included Germans, Serbs and Romanians. Another survey, inquiring about the ethnic origin of the 1500 miners in the Pécs region, found that 46.6 percent belonged to Slavic nationalities (Slovaks, Serbs), another 40 percent were of German origin and only 13.3 percent of the miners considered themselves ethnic Hungarians. If the share of the non-Hungarian ethnic groups were as large as indicated by the previous data, their weight had to be overwhelming in areas that were mainly populated by Slovaks, Romanians and other ethic minorities.

The role that the various nationalities played within the industrial working class and its movements, was not only determined by their numerical weight but also their skill and educational level. At the beginnings of the trade and political organizations of the industrial working class, workers of German nationality dominated the labor movement in Hungary. They possessed the highest industrial skill and a similar level of general education. On the other hand, the Slovaks and Romanians because of their neglected educational system were illiterate in large numbers. The predominance of the German workers, particularly in skilled trades, often caused conflict between them and their Hungarian counterparts. The latter resented that, despite their majority status in the country, they played second fiddle in the labor movement almost to the end of the 19th century. This situation is exemplified by a demand of Hungarian journeymen in the printing trade organization that the official newsletter of the organization be published also in Hungarian. Initially, the German printers, who constituted two-thirds of the membership, rejected the demand of the Hungarian printers. Only after a protracted discussion did the Germans agreed that the trade journal contain two pages written in Hungarian. Nonetheless, the conflict along nationality lines reverberated to the extent that the Hungarian printers set up their own trade organization. Only years later did the two organizations became united again (14).

At other meetings of trade and political organizations serving the interest of the industrial workers, discussions and presentations were conducted in both Hungarian

and German. One language group communicated with the other through interpreters. This bilingual situation continued until the end of the 19th century. Conflicts among various nationalities working side by side in the factories subsided with the gradual assimilation of non-Hungarians who were employed in factories that were located in regions with ethnic Hungarian majority. At the same time, the latter acquired the necessary skill and erudition that enabled them to take leadership positions in the trade organizations and the political labor movement.

The conflict among the nationality groups making up the labor force was also ameliorated by the ideology of the growing labor movement that emphasized the internationality of industrial labor and called for the solidarity of all workingmen regardless of their skill and national origin.

The above described processes, particularly of the assimilation with the dominating Hungarian nationality contributed to a large extent to the homogeneity of the industrial working class in Hungary, thereby depressing not only the span of vertical stratification but also the horizontal division. In conclusion, the observation and the subsequent analysis of the process through which the industrial working class was formed in Hungary, in a compressed time frame of approximately 35 years, presents a lesson in social dynamics.

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