

THE HUNGARIAN PARTICIPANTS IN THE AMERICAN WAR OF INDEPENDENCE

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Rezumat: La Războiul de Independență a coloniilor engleze din America de Nord au participat câteva mii de soldați veniți din diverse părți ale Europei. În timp ce coroana britanică a beneficiat de sprijinul mercenarilor germani, americanii secesioniști i-au avut de partea lor pe francezii grupați într-un corp special de armată. Acestora li s-au alăturat voluntari de pe teritoriul Sfântului Imperiu Roman, din Suedia sau din Regatul Poloniei. Mai puțin cunoscute sunt aspectele legate de participarea unor soldați din Regatul Ungariei care au luptat pentru libertatea americanilor. Următorul articol aduce informații referitoare la patru luptători de origine maghiară ajunși pe câmpul de luptă american: Maurice August Benyovszky, Baronul Francisc Seraph Benyovszky, Mihály Kováts de Fabricy și Jean Ladislau Poleretzky. Având drept principală caracteristică spiritul de aventură, cele patru personaje sunt protagoniștii unor istorisiri incitante, cu sușuri și coborâșuri, cu răsturnări de situație și deznodăminte neprevăzute.

Abstract: Thousands of soldiers coming from different parts of Europe have participated in the American War of Independence. While the British crown received support from the German mercenaries, the secessionists Americans were helped by a special unit of the French army and by other volunteers from the territory of the Holy Roman Empire, the Kingdom of Sweden, and Poland. Less known are the issues of participation of troops from the Kingdom of Hungary who fought for American freedom. The following article brings information on the four foreign fighters who arrived on the American battlefield: Maurice August Benyovszky, Baron Francisc Seraph Benyovszky, Mihály Kováts of Fabricy and Jean Ladislau Poleretzky. Having the spirit of adventure as a main characteristic, the four characters are the protagonists of some exciting stories, with ups and downs, with twists and unexpected denouement.

Résumé: A la Guerre d'Indépendance des colonies anglaises de l'Amérique de Nord ont participé quelques milliers de soldats venus de diverses parties de l'Europe. Pendant que la couronne britannique a bénéficié de l'appui des mercenaires allemands, les Américains sécessionnistes ont eu de leur partie les français groupés dans un corps spécial d'armée. A ceux-ci, se sont ajoutés des volontaires du territoire du Saint Empire Romain, de Suède ou du Royaume de la Pologne. Moins connus sont les aspects liés de la participation des soldats du Royaume de l'Hongrie qui ont lutté pour la liberté des Américains. L'article ci-joint apporte des informations concernant quatre lutteurs d'origine hongroise arrivés sur le champ de bataille américain: Maurice August Benyovszky, le baron Francisc Seraph Benyovszky, Mihály Kováts de Fabricy et Jean Ladislau Poleretzky. Ayant comme caractéristique principale l'esprit d'aventure, les quatre personnages sont les protagonistes des histoires incitantes, avec des ascensions et des descentes, avec des torsions et des dénouements inattendus.

Keywords: *American War of Independence, soldier, traveler, military operations, stories, adventure.*

It is generally known that in the American War of Independence, or in the so-called American Revolution, fought also a few thousands of warriors, who came on the North American battlefields directly from the different parts of Europe. The majority of them were the Hessian mercenaries bought by the British Crown in the German principalities.¹ Almost 7000 soldiers belonged to the special French army corps were sent to help the American ally by the French royal court in 1780. The command of this corps was given to Lieutenant General count de Rochambeau. However, in the eight years lasting bloody war (1775-1783) fought the tens of the Frenchmen long ago before France entered the war against the British Crown officially. Among the most famous warriors belonged the general Lafayette. Besides the Frenchmen who fought with the Continental Army, were more or less renowned volunteers from the different countries of Europe, (i.e. from the territory of the Holy Roman Empire, Sweden or from the Kingdom of Poland). Short time before the start of the American Revolution, Poland lost a great part of its area in the First Partition and its population suffered the first from the several emigration waves. It is not necessary to name and describe in detail the deeds of the participants as were the Germans Johann Kalb and Friedrich Wilhelm von Steuben, or the Swede Hans Axel von Fersen. Among the warriors of a Slavic origin we can mention the Poles Kazimierz Pułaski – a veteran of the uprising of the Confederation of Bar against the Russians and pro-Russian king Stanislas August Poniatowski – or Tadeusz Kościuszko, who after the return to the homeland, took the important role in the national uprising of 1794, against an imperialistic politics of the Russian tsarina Catherina II.

The less known chapter of the history of the American Revolution is the participation of a few warriors from the area of the Kingdom of Hungary, who fought for the American freedom with more or less efficiency. In the present article, we would like to offer an overview on the essential facts, partly based on our own research, on the participation of the four warriors with the Hungarian origin in the War of American Independence. Surely, the most renowned, but also the most questionable participant in the American Revolution, coming from the area of the Kingdom of Hungary, was the famous adventurer and traveler: Maurice August Benyovszky.² He became a famous person in Europe, mainly after his tragic death,

¹ There were more than 30.000 „Hessian“ mercenaries fighting against the American revolutionaries, but a part of them was comprised of non-German origin soldiers. See E.J. Lowell, *The Hessians and the other German auxiliaries of Great Britain in the revolutionary war*, New York, 1884. Accessible at: <http://www.americanrevolution.org/hessians/hessindex.html>.

² Maurice August Benyovszky (1746-1786, Slovak form of his name: Móric August Beňovský). In the American primary sources, it is often Beniowski or Bieniewski, which are the Polish versions of this surname.

when his work – *Memoirs and travels* – was published in French and English.³ The *Memoirs* describes, largely fabricated or exaggerated, his military activities in the uprising of the Confederation of Bar, that was the union of the pro-national thinking Polish nobility which stood in opposition to the Russian interference into the inner Polish politics and the progressive reforms realized by the advisers to the king Stanislas August Poniatowski. Benyovszky took part in this war, in 1768 and again in 1769-1770, until the capture by the Russian army. After the trial in Saint Petersburg, he was sent, as a deported, to the fort of Bolsheretzka, in the Kamchatka peninsula. Along with his supporters, he escaped on a stolen ship. During his voyage, he touched the seacoast of the present-day Alaska, the islands of Japan and Taiwan (known, in his times, as “Ilha Formosa” or “Beautiful Island”), and finally he dropped anchor in the port of Canton, China. From there, he and the rest of his crew (many of them died from malaria during the voyage and in Canton) sailed to France, where Benyovszky entered the French colonial service as the commander of a small volunteer regiment. Because of the government’s intent to colonize the island of Madagascar, he was sent to build up a trade post there. Yet, his activities in the years 1774-1776 were not successful, partly due to the animosity of the local French colonial administration. His adventurous life continued in the participation in the war of the Bavarian succession (1778-1779), in the American Revolution in 1782, and finally in his second self-organized voyage to Madagascar and subsequent stay on the island, between July 1785 and May 1786. His activities were perceived as a threat to the French interests. For this reason, Benyovszky was traced and finally shot dead in a French punitive expedition.

Coming back to Benyovszky’s participation in the American Revolution, the recent historical research has rebutted the statement for a long time repeated in the historiographical literature. According to that, the Hungarian adventurer visited America three times during his life: at the turn of 1779–1780, in 1782, and finally in 1784, when he sailed from Baltimore (Maryland) to Madagascar. The Polish publicist and historian Janusz Roszko was the first researcher who clearly proved, that in 1779 and 1780, the person who tried to join the Continental Army was not Maurice Benyovszky, but his younger brother: Baron Francis Seraph Benyovszky.⁴ Roszko came to this conclusion based on the older paper of the Hungarian historian Lajos Thallóczy, where the original archival sources are quoted *in extenso*, proving the stay of Maurice Benyovszky in Paris and in Vienna, in 1779 and 1780.⁵ Roszko subsequently confirmed by his own archival research that in this case occurred the confusion of the two brothers, and that the older Maurice came to the USA, for the

³ Under the title: *Memoirs and Travels of Mauritius Augustus Count de Benyowsky*. London 1789 (first limited test edition), 1790 (second edition).

⁴ Baron Francis Seraph Benyovszky - Slovak form of his name is František Serafin Beňovský, 1753–after 1789.

⁵ Lajos Thallóczy, *Gróf Benyovszky Móricz haditengerészeti és kereskedelem-politikai terveit*, „Magyar Gazdaságtörténelmi Szemle“, vol. VIII, 1901, no. 8, pp. 329–376 and no. 9, pp. 385–409.

first time, in 1782.⁶ Later, the historian's theory was confirmed by the further archival documents found and described in an article written by the author of this paper.⁷ However, we can raise a question: what were the reasons of leaving the Benyovszky brothers the homeland and of taking the participation in the American Revolution?

Francis Seraph Benyovszky was a professional soldier and a kind of troublemaker with a carefree character. During his stay in Paris in 1777, Maurice decided to transfer his younger brother from the Polish garrison town of Tarnów⁸ and to place him in a special French unit, which was created to fight with the British in America (later known as the Lauzun's Legion).⁹ It is very probable that Maurice made this decision under the advice of his new Paris acquaintance Benjamin Franklin, an American emissary, with whom he had very friendly relationship (for example, they played the chess very often).¹⁰ There is no mention in the sources which way to America Francis Seraph took, but his departure and first short stay there is confirmed in a Maurice's letter to his brother Emanuel from August 22, 1778.¹¹ In the letter from December 10, 1778 Maurice wrote that after his return to France, Francis led a lavish lifestyle, played cards, and this gambling put him in debt. Finally, he spent three weeks in the Bastille, but he was released from the prison by the queen Marie Antoinette who was so kind and bought for him a rank of lieutenant in the regiment of hussars in the Lauzun's Legion.¹² We know that Francis attempted to get to the USA, but was repeatedly captured by the English.¹³ The fourth attempt to get to America was successful and he reached Boston in the summer of 1779. We know that from the letter of General Horatio Gates to John Jay, in August 21, in which he wrote information about Baron Benyovszky who requested a horse and a sum of money for

⁶ Janusz Roszko, *Awanturnik nieśmiertelny*, Katowice, 1989, pp. 215-217.

⁷ Patrik Kunec, *Sporný pobyt Mórica Beňovského v Spojených štátoch amerických v rokoch 1779-1780*, „Vojenská história“, vol. 9, 2005, no. 2, pp. 92-101; Idem, *Beňovského pobyt a aktivity v Amerike*, in Ľubomír Bosák, Patrik Kýška (eds.), *Móric Beňovský : legenda a skutočnosť. Zborník referátov z odbornej konferencie o Mórica Beňovskom, ktorá sa uskutočnila vo Vrbovom 10. októbra 2006*, Vrbové, 2007, pp. 43-56.

⁸ At that time, Tarnów belonged to the Habsburg monarchy.

⁹ Letter to brother Emanuel Benyovszky from July 6, 1777 and from December 10, 1778. Published in Mór Jókai, *Gróf Benyovszky Móric: Saját emlékiratai és útleírásai*, Budapest, 1888, vol. II, pp. 386-387, 406-407.

¹⁰ Janusz Roszko, *op.cit.*, pp. 195-196.

¹¹ In that letter, Maurice wrote that the brother Francis Seraph, sent by him to America, was captured by the English and returned back to Paris. Letter to brother Emanuel Benyovszky from August 22, 1778, written in Strasbourg, and published in M Jókai, *op.cit.*, vol. II., pp. 391-392.

¹² „Le frère François est enfin employé dans la legion de Lauzun-houssards en qualité de lieutenant après avoirs été à la Bastille 3 semaines... heureusement il passera de nouveau en Amerique et nous serons délivré de ce mauvais sujet.“ Letter to Emanuel Benyovszky from December 10, 1778, written in Neuschloss bey Arnau (today's Hostinné, the Czech Republic) in M Jókai, *op.cit.*, vol. II., p 407.

¹³ The mentions of the repeated attempts to get to America are found in the letter of F. S. Benyovszky read in the Congress on June 26, 1780.

the journey to Kazimierz Pułaski.¹⁴ Gates gave him a horse and a little amount of money and sent him to Philadelphia. It is possible he had the recommendation letter for him from older brother Maurice, who acquainted Pułaski from the period of his participation in the Confederation of Bar uprising. Later in Philadelphia, the Congress gave a horse and necessary amount of money to Francis,¹⁵ but he probably did not manage to meet Pułaski in person. Unfortunately for Francis Seraph, Pułaski died in October 11, 1779 in the skirmish before the town of Savannah (Georgia). According the content of the same letter, from June 26, which Francis Seraph addressed to the Continental Congress, he allegedly joined the cavalry Legion of Count Kazimierz (Engl. Casimir) Pułaski, but it is not probable he could ride the distance of approximately of 1000 km from Philadelphia to Savannah in a few days. Without the influential protector, Francis Seraph lost all his hopes for obtaining the post in an American army. He did not give up easy and at the end of 1779 and during the first half of the year 1780, he mailed to the Congress several letters filled with the pleas for the position in the army or for the money for the return journey to Europe.¹⁶ The Congress did not allow financing his return journey and from July 1780. There are no traces of Francis Seraph Benyovszky in the papers of the American archives. Actually, one mention on him found its place in a letter of William Clajon, a secretary to General Horatio Gates, which reads: „*Count Pulaski's pretended Brother is gone to the Enemy. I suppose he was afraid of being known to have been expelled out of Lauzun's Legion in the French Service, that Corps being at Newport.*“¹⁷ Although the name of a deserter is not mentioned in the letter, based on Francis Seraph Benyovszky's several times expressed (but groundlessly) family relationship with Pułaski, we can be sure that this deserter was F. S. Benyovszky.

J. Roszko found the very interesting punch line of this story in the state papers deposited in the Austrian State Archive in Vienna. Among the diplomatic dispatches from Constantinople, Benyovszky's request for repatriation was written by the hand of an Austrian envoy Herbert Rathkeal, on September 10, 1783 and sent to the State Chancellery together with the two-pages *curriculum vitae*, written by the hand of

¹⁴ Letter of Gates to Jay, August 21, 1779. *Papers of the Continental Congress, National Archives, Washington, D.C.* (further only NA), item 171, ff. 252-253.

¹⁵ Report of the Board of War from September 3, 1779. *Papers of the Continental Congress*, NA, item 147, vol. II, f. 441.

¹⁶ Undated supplication in Latin read in the Congress on December 13, 1779, *Papers of the Continental Congress*, NA, item 78, vol. III, ff. 415-416. Letters from May 9, June 15 and June 26, 1780 written all in Philadelphia, *Papers of the Continental Congress*, NA, item 78, vol. III, ff. 461, item 78, vol. III, ff. 481, item 78, item 41, vol. I, ff. 291-293. All letters were republished *in extenso* in L. Orłowski, *Maurycy August Beniowski*, Warszawa, 1961 pp. 246-250.

¹⁷ Letter of W. Clajon to General H. Gates from August 20, 1780, written in Philadelphia. E. Clark (ed.), *The State Records of North Carolina*, vol. XIV (1779-1780). Winston, NC, 1896, pp. 566-567.

Francis Seraph.¹⁸ Before the eyes of the Austrian envoy, Benyovszky wrote down in points his military career – let us mention only few statements: at 1779, he wrote on his attendance in the battle of Charleston and before Savannah where he was the witness of the death of Pułaski; these statements are false, as we have said. To the year 1780, he allegedly fell again into English captivity after the fall of Charlestown on May 12. He was imprisoned in New York, from there he was transferred to England, and later he moved to the Dutch Republic where he allegedly entered the Dutch naval service. Subsequently, he tried to enter the Spanish Army, but the war with Great Britain slowly moved to the end and this fact stopped his hopes for the career in the Spanish Army. Finally, he decided to return to America, to the General Bernardo de Gálvez, but his ship wrecked on May 1783, near the Cap Verde. From there, he went to Gibraltar, and then through Genoa, Livorno, and some Greek islands where he found a way to Constantinople. There, he went ashore without the money and in the poor appearance. We still know nothing about his journey back to home, but sure thing is he reached his place of birth - the townie of Vrbové, where he died in 1789. The fact that Francis Seraph Benyovszky really spent some time in America trying to enter the American army or the French auxiliary corps can be confirmed by the several letters of the French officers, written by and mailed to him during his stay in the USA and after the return home. They were preserved in the family archive until today, one of them being written by the Admiral of the French allied fleet General d'Estaing.¹⁹ It can be said that Francis Seraph Benyovszky belongs to the ambiguous participants of the American Revolution, because we have no direct evidence of his participation in the real combat in the war of the American Independence. In this way, his story resembles the Maurice Benyovszky's efforts in the USA during the year of 1782. As we have mentioned above, Maurice August Benyovszky set foot on the East-American coast for the first time in March 1782. Which were the reasons of his departure for America and his effort to take participation in the American Revolution? After the service in the Austrian army, in the war of the Bavarian Succession (1778-1779), Benyovszky tried, in the period of 1780–1781, to establish the first Austrian trade and war fleet in the port of Fiume (today's Rijeka, Croatia). After the refusal of his projects by the Austrian court, he created a transport company, to transport the products of the Hungarian and Croatian agriculture to the port of Fiume. Unfortunately, the transport business went bad and finally, in the summer of 1781, Maurice Benyovszky left the company to his partner and shareowner, Count Marotti.²⁰

¹⁸ Österreichisches Staatsarchiv [Austrian State Archives], Vienna, Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv, Staatskanzlei, Turkei II Berichte, VII-X 1783, Kart. 81, fasc. 2, ff. 68.

¹⁹ Letter of d'Estaing to Francis Seraph Benyovszky, Savannah October 3, 1779. Magyar Országos Levéltár [Hungarian State Archive], Budapest, Collection P 444 Kvassay család, vol. 10, fasc. Xx, fol. xx.

²⁰ On the projects of Benyovszky from the years 1780 and 1781. See Lajos Thallóczy, *Gróf Benyovszky Móricz haditengerészeti és kereskedelem-politikai tervei*, „Magyar Gazdaságtörténelmi Szemle“, vol. VIII, 1901, no. 8, pp. 329–376 and no. 9, pp. 385–409.

After the failure of his business activity, Benyovszky realized he had to maintain his family (he had two daughters) in other way. Once again, he decided to search for the solid post in France. It is obvious that leaving Hungary he did not plan to depart for the USA. To Paris he came with his family in the autumn of 1781, and he immediately restored his friendship with Franklin.²¹ With the strong probability only here, he started to think about his participation in the American Revolution. Maybe he was positively influenced by the case of Lafayette, Kościuszko and others European participants in the war of the American Independence, which in that time slowly ended. Although some of them lost their lives in the war (such as his old friend Pułaski), he decided to take a part in this conflict. It is probable that this decision was determined by his existential problems and pragmatic expectations. Benyovszky thought that in America he could obtain a proper army position or another chance for the stabilization of his existence.

As it was said, Benyovszky finally decided in Paris for the departure for the USA. During the sessions with Benjamin Franklin, he stated his intention to settle down in America with all his family and property.²² Firstly, Franklin tried to prevent Benyovszky from this idea, but Maurice stood firmly on his decision. Most likely Franklin knew something about Benyovszky's adventurous past from the unknown sources, and surely, these pieces of information were not flattering for Benyovszky. From the Franklin's letters and diary it is not quite clear whether Benyovszky did mention his will or plan to participate in the war, but he asked Franklin for the letters of recommendation to the influential members of the American government. At the end of 1781, Maurice obtained Franklin's approval with the journey to the America, and two letters of recommendation: one to Robert Morris, the member of the Congress, and one to Richard Bache, the minister in the government. In these letters, there are no mentions about Benyovszky's intention to take part in the fight for the American independence. The shores of Europe Benyovszky left at the end of January, maybe at the beginning of February 1782.²³

After the arrival in America, Benyovszky maintained the contact with General Friedrich Wilhelm von Steuben, the prominent commander and one of the creators of the American army. He sent him a letter with Benyovszky's plea for Steuben's intervention and support in the case of Benyovszky's request for the post in the Continental Army. Steuben gave him an advice to address his request directly to General Washington and he helped to Benyovszky with composing the letter, because the Hungarian enthusiast for a case of the American freedom did not write and speak English. In the letter of March 18, 1782 Benyovszky asked Washington for the letter of recommendation addressed to the Congress and he stated he is ready to „*offer to Your country (of which I am ambitious of becoming a Citizen) my blood, my*

²¹ Janusz Roszko, *op.cit.*, p. 239.

²² Janusz Roszko, *op.cit.*, p. 240; E. Dvoichenko-Markov, *Benjamin Franklin and Count M. A. Benyowski*, in *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, Vol. 99, No. 6 (Dec. 1955), p. 410 (entry of the Franklin diary from Janury 2, 1782).

²³ Janusz Roszko, *op.cit.*, p. 241.

*knowledge and my courage.*²⁴ As we can see, he also had a desire to become the US citizen. From the content of this letter, it is clear that Maurice decided not only to settle down as soon as possible, but also to take an active participation in the fighting against the English in the war, which – unfortunately for him – ended in the last October with the surrender of the English land forces in the fort of Yorktown, Virginia.²⁵ The plan to settle down in the United States was from the beginning pretended because Benyovszky was lacking in money for its realization. His own property in the Kingdom of Hungary was forfeited. Washington wrote his reply on the same day.²⁶ He informed Benyovszky with the expression of regret that his request came too late, because the war on land is over and „*that the considerable reduction has lately taken place among our old officers by which some very valuable Generals and Officers who have served their country during the whole of this Contest and who wished to remain in Service – will be obliged to retire.*“

Benyovszky did not discourage himself by the negative reply and he immediately prepared the first version of the project, which was the only result of his activities during his stay in the United States. The project concerned the establishment of the legion of foreign volunteers in the service of the USA. The text of the project was written in French and sent on March 24 (i. e. only six days after the Washington's negative reply!), so it is obvious that Benyovszky had to think about it much earlier.²⁷ Benyovszky's project of the foreign legion is very detailed and it confirms the warfare experiences and knowledge of its author. Actually, he proposed to the US government to recruit in Europe, mainly among the Germans, the future soldiers of his foreign volunteers' legion, which could consist of three divisions, each of 1161 men, in the total number of 3483 mercenaries. Organization of the legion, number of its regiments, the recruited men, their equipment, and armory are described in a remarkable way. Finally, Benyovszky evaluated the costs of creating and equipment such a legion – the preliminary costs he calculated in the overall amount of 518.000 french livres, a sum he demanded from the Congress. The supreme command of the legion should be in the hands of the general, which post Benyovszky secured for himself. In this way, he probably planned to resolve his financial problems and to start a new military career in a new country. It is very disputable to describe Benyovszky as the altruistic enthusiast of the cause of the American freedom, as was f. e. the Polish warrior Tadeusz Kościuszko.

²⁴ Quoted after L Orłowski, *Maurycy August Beniowski*, p. 256. The photocopies of many Benyovszky's letters and the Washington's replies can be found at: <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/gwhtml/gwhome.html> (The web-page of the George Washington Papers preserved in the Library of Congress).

²⁵ The war continued in the Atlantic in 1782.

²⁶ J.C. Fitzpatrik (ed.), *The Writings of George Washington from the Original Manuscript Sources, 1745-1799*. 39 vols. Washington, D.C., 1931-1944, vol. XXIV, pp. 77-78. Published also in L Orłowski, *op. cit.*, p. 258.

²⁷ Although the original text was sent to General von Steuben, the English copy of it preserved among the *Papers of the Continental Congress*, NA, item 19, vol. I, ff. 275-282, 291-292, 297-298. Parts of it are republished in L Orłowski, *op. cit.*, pp. 258-264.

The Washington's consideration of the proposed project was written and sent to General von Steuben on April 12.²⁸ Washington's opinion on the establishment the foreign legion was generally positive, but he also noticed: „*the Utility of his plan for introducing a Legionary Corps of Germans into the Service of the United States of America depends, in my opinion, upon the political State of Affairs in Europe – the Probability of the War continuing, and the mode of conducting it – as also on the Time which will be required to bring this Corps into Action.*“ His comments concerned only the question of the required amount of monthly paid soldiers' pay. From the Washington's point of view, it should be less month-by-month from the reason of the expected casualties.²⁹

Not only Washington had so positive attitude to Benyovszky. A few other high representatives of the American army and diplomacy intervened in his cause. Among the mentioned Franklin, there were Baron von Steuben and the French ambassador in the USA Chevalier de La Luzerne. He described Benyovszky in his letter addressed do Washington as „*Je n'ai pas besoin de rappeler à Votre Excellence les services et les actions qui rendent M. de Beniowski recommandable.*“³⁰

On May 6, Benyovszky presented his slightly revised project to the Continental Congress.³¹ The Congress passed his project to the Board of War, which passed Benyovszky's project on May 14 to the special Committee for the final decision. Committee was composed of the three members: A. Clarke, E. Rutledge, and Theodorick Bland and it gave on May 24 a positive evaluation to the project, declaring that the Minister of War should prepare the text of an agreement between the Congress and Benyovszky in the two originals. Although it seemed that nothing could stop the ratification of Benyovszky's project, the things unexpectedly changed. The Congress from still unknown reasons created on May 27 a second committee, which members were T. Madison, Scott, and Ramsay and this time their evaluation of the effect of the proposed foreign legion was negative.³² From the text of the report it could not be said why the committee rejected the proposal of the project. It could be only assumed that the members of the second committee had more positively expectations concerning the development of the peace negotiations that resulted in the preliminary peace articles signed by the belligerents at the end of November 1782 in Paris. Probably the members of the second committee did not want to invest the large sum of money for the risky business in the times when the desired peace negotiations were expected. Benyovszky was a little stubborn man and he did not give up easy. He

²⁸ J.C. Fitzpatrik (ed.), pp. 163-164.

²⁹ „Articles 8th and 9th are, in my opinion, inadmissible – because it would be giving a certain quantum of pay and subsistence p. month, to a Corps, which may by Deaths, Desertions, and other Casualties, be rendered very incompleat...“

³⁰ Letter of La Luzerne to Washington, April 18, 1782, from Philadelphia. Francis Wharton (ed.), *The Revolutionary Diplomatic Correspondence of the United States*, 6 vols., Washington D.C., 1889, vol. V, p. 314. Letter republished in W.M. Kozłowski, *Beniowski w Ameryce*, p. 163, L Orłowski, *op. cit.*, p. 268.

³¹ *Papers of the Continental Congress*, NA, item78, vol. IV, ff. 299-301.

³² Janusz Roszko, *op.cit.*, p 245.

decided to realize his project with the help of the Congressman for Virginia Theodorick Bland, who was the member of the first committee and had probably a great deal of sympathy for the personality of Benyovszky. Bland proposed to him that the project of the foreign legion could be approved and financed by the state of Virginia itself. Benyovszky slightly changed some of the points in project: instead of the German mercenaries should be recruited the Polish soldiers and officers, who left the homeland after the final defeat of the Confederation of Bar uprising and the first Partition of Poland. This plan failed too. Bland, with the strong probability, got the newscast doubts upon the credibility of Benyovszky's character and of the support from the French royal court.³³ Finally, Benyovszky gave up to the hostile fate and in the summer of 1782, he decided for the return to Europe. Therefore, this was the story of the Count Benyovszky's efforts to help the Americans in their fight against the British Army. Although he was not an active soldier in the fighting for the American Independence, he was prepared to sacrifice his life for the liberty of the United States of America.

The third Hungarian participant in the American Revolution is Mihály Kováts de Fabricy. His life story and the different military activities described in the detail a Hungarian historian József Zachar.³⁴ There are just a few mentions about the origin, family, and birth of Mihály Kováts. The precise date of his birth is not known, but most probably it was in August 1724 in the townie of Karcag (today in the county of Jász-Nagykun-Szolnok, Hungary). He was a Calvinist and his family belonged to the gentry. In 1740, Mihály Kováts started his military career, firstly as a common hussar in the Hávor's regiment (from 1744 it was called the Dessewffy's regiment). During the second war of the Austrian Succession (1744-1745), he fell into French captivity and unwillingly entered the French army. Later, captive in hands of the enemy, he was compelled to enter the Prussian army. On September 23, 1752, he obtained the degree of cornet in the Prussian First Hussar Regiment. In this regiment, many other Hungarian officers and common soldiers served. The commander of this unit from 1750 to 1758 was Mihály Székely. In 1761, Kováts left the service in the Prussian army and unsuccessfully tried to enter the Polish service. After the crossing the Polish-Hungarian border, he was arrested and imprisoned in Vienna as the deserter from the Austrian army, but in May 1762, the queen Maria Theresa gave him freedom after one year spent in prison. At the end of January 1763, the queen returned to him the rank of major and gave him a year pension of 500 gulden, as the means for the appropriate existence. Though he married in May 1763 and moved with his wife to the town of Prešov (Hungarian Eperjes), shortly after his marriage he left his home very often for unknown reasons and soon started to live his life in an adventurous

³³ These speculation expressed Janus Roszko, *op. cit.*, p. 246-247.

³⁴ Aladár Póka-Pivny, József Zachar, *Az amerikai függetlenségi háború magyar hőse: Kováts Mihály ezredes élete 1724–1779*, Budapest, 1982; József Zachar, *Kováts Mihály levele Benjamin Franklinnak 1777. január 13.*, „Hadtörténelmi Közlemények“, vol. 26, 1979, no. 2, pp. 308–318, Idem, *Kováts Mihály és Kazimierz Pulawski Magyar-lengyel fegyverbarátság az Ó- és Újvilágban*, „Acta Academiae Paedagogicae Agriensis“, Nova Series 2007, vol. XXXIV, Sectio Historiae, accessible at: <http://tortenelem.ektf.hu/efolyoirat/04/zachar.htm>.

way.³⁵ There is a very interesting mention in the letter of his father-in-law Sigismund Szinyei-Merse, from June 1765, concerning the long periods of Kováts's absence. The father-in-law complained in that letter that his son-in-law is very often in the company of the Polish magnate Karol Radziwiłł, the Duke of Vilnius, who stayed at that time in Prešov. Radziwiłł was a leading person in the group of the Polish nobility, which stood in opposition to the reforms prepared by the advisers of King Stanislas August Poniatowski and the increasing Russian involvement into the inner politics of the Kingdom of Poland.³⁶ Along with the Duke Radziwiłł, other Polish noblemen have settled down in Prešov or its close neighborhood. Prešov became their base in the first phase of the Confederation of Bar uprising.³⁷

Between the years 1767–1772, the traces of Mihály Kováts are missing in the archival sources.³⁸ With the strong probability, Mihály Kováts fought in the uprising against the Russians too, although we still do not have a direct evidence for this assumption in the archival documents. He probably fought in this revolt under the pseudonym, or *nom de guerre*. However, from his later American close relationship to Kazimierz Pułaski we can assume that he really took a participation in the Confederation of Bar uprising.³⁹ Kováts arose from the darkness again in the summer of 1772, when he appeared in the hussar uniform in Buda. After the return to the homeland, Kováts lived mainly in Buda but in the summer of 1776 he decided to leave the country and he went to Italy.⁴⁰

From Italy, he moved to Paris and from there to the southwestern coast of France. We know this fact from one letter, which was preserved in the correspondence collection mailed to Benjamin Franklin. Kováts wrote his letter in Latin and mailed it from the port town of Bordeaux, on January 13, 1777.⁴¹ The content of this letter concerns the plea for the recommendation letter for the Continental Congress because Kováts decided to enter the service in the American army. A very interesting fact is that many sentences from Kováts's supplication, starting from the Latin motto *Aurea Libertas fulvo non venditur auro* (Golden liberty could not be buy with gold), can be found also in the supplication of Francis Seraph Benyovszky, presented to the Congress in December 13, 1779. Is the Benyovszky's supplication a copy of that of Kováts's? It is difficult to answer, but the sure thing is

³⁵ Aladár Póka-Pivny, József Zachar, *op. cit.*, p. 86.

³⁶ S. Grodziski, *Polska w czasach przelomu (1764-1815)*, Kraków, 1999, pp. 19–20.

³⁷ On the Poles in Prešove wrote Melánia Benkovská, *Barskí konfederáti a Prešov*, „Nové obzory“, vol. 18. Prešov, 1976, pp. 99–143.

³⁸ Aladár Póka-Pivny, József Zachar, *op. cit.*, p. 91.

³⁹ J. Zachar, *op. cit.*, p. 312.

⁴⁰ Aladár Póka-Pivny, József Zachar, *op. cit.*, pp. 91–93.

⁴¹ Kováts wrote in Latin because he did not speak or write in English or French. See *The Benjamin Franklin Papers*, American Philosophical Society, Philadelphia, Pa., vol. LXX, no. 88, p. 1–4. The excerpt of the letter is published also in the edition of Franklin's papers L.W. Labaree et alii (ed.), *The Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, New Haven, London 1983, vol. 23, p. 173; facsimile of his letter is published in the article of J. Zachar, *op. cit.* pp. 313–316.

that Kováts died half a year before the letter of Francis Seraph Benyovszky was read in the Congress. Another strange fact is that Mihály Kováts's request for the recommendation has been addressed to Benjamin Franklin only three weeks after Franklin's arrival to Paris!⁴² Who informed Kováts in the far Bordeaux that Franklin as a special American emissary came to Paris? Was Kováts himself in contact with the American diplomatic mission in Paris and in this way he was informed about the latest news? Unfortunately, due to the lack of information in the original sources, we still do not know the answers to these questions. Surprising is also the fact, that Kováts was not the only one who was willing to enter the service in the American army. He wrote in his letter to Franklin that he was waiting for other friends who wanted to come to America as well.

Hungarian military historian József Zachar found the precise date of the departure of the ship *Catherina Froom Darmouth* – on its board Mihály Kováts left Bordeaux on February 26 and although we do not know the date of his arrival, he surely was on April 30 in Providence (Rhode Island), where Kováts delivered some letters with military information to General Spencer. Later Kováts bore some letters to General Washington. He received Kováts in the camp in Morristown and his letter to the Congress from May 17, 1777 confirms this fact.⁴³ Kováts appealed to the Congress, asking accepts to enter the rows of the Continental Army, but the Continental Congress gave him a negative response on May 23. With no chance for the position in the regular army, Kováts decided to enter the Pennsylvania militia in Philadelphia and he was accepted. He became an officer in a special German battalion with the task of recruiting men into it.⁴⁴

The change in Kováts's life came only with the arrival of K. Pułaski to America in July 1777. Kováts surely met him in the uprising of the Confederation of Bar, where they started a good relationship. He joined with Pułaski shortly after the battle of Germantown (October 4) and from this time on the two were an inseparable couple. Pułaski organized and trained the first American cavalry regiment at that time, because the cavalry was the poorest part of the young American Army. The military experiences of the hard-bitten Kováts were of great worth and Pułaski praised Kováts in letters sent to Washington.⁴⁵ Probably, due to Washington's recommendation, colonel Kováts became a „master of training“ in the future cavalry regiment under the command of Pułaski. The nomination for that position came from the Board of War on January 14, 1778.⁴⁶ As the officer responsible for training Kováts took a direct part in establishing the first regular regiment of the American cavalry, which later bore Pułaski's name. Pułaski proposed the establishment of such a regiment, or Legion, to General Horatio Gates on March 19, 1778 with the project

⁴² Franklin landed in France on December 3 and arrived to Paris at the end of 1776. J.R. Dull, *Diplomatic history of the American Revolution*, New Haven, London, 1985, p. 65.

⁴³ Aladár Póka-Pivny, József Zachar, *op. cit.*, pp. 101-102.

⁴⁴ M. Haiman, *Poland and the American Revolution War*, Chicago, 1932, p. 84.

⁴⁵ F. e., in his letter to Washington from January 9, 1778, Pułaski praised Kováts as the excellent horse-riding master. L Orłowski, *op. cit.*, p. 172.

⁴⁶ Aladár Póka-Pivny, József Zachar, *op. cit.*, p. 108.

of creating the cavalry unit under his own command. In this proposal, he mentioned Kováts, whom he championed for the post of his deputy commander. Gates, at that time the president of the Board of War, supported his proposal and Congress approved the establishment of the Legion on April 18, 1778. The Legion was to be composed of 68 lancers and two hundred fusiliers. The soldiers would make reconnaissance, spy tasks, and harm the enemy by the small attacks. At the beginning of 1779, the Legion had approximately 330 men and besides the Americans, there were the Germans, French, Irishmen, and Poles. The Continental Congress approved the rank of *Colonel-commandant* to Mihály Kováts. From that moment, the military activity of Kováts was connected with the campaigns the Legion participated in.

On September 15, Pułaski wrote to Washington, that the Legion is prepared for fight. After months of training, the Legion went to its first action, on October 8 the cavalymen of Pułaski's Legion arrived in Egg Harbor (New Jersey), where they fought against the soldiers of the British Fleet ships, which were at anchor in this port. A week later, October 15, 1778, the Legion suffered great casualties by a surprise night attack: two officers and thirty common soldiers were killed. On October 24, the Legion came to Trenton. From there, it moved to Sussex Court House, on October 26, and finally, it was sent to Minisink, on the river of Delaware, on November 10. Here, the Legion's task was to protect the civil population against the attacks of the Indians and the loyalists (Americans loyal to the British Crown). Pułaski proposed to the Congress the change the locality for the Southern Front at the beginning of 1779 in Philadelphia. Congress agreed and sent the Legion to the South, under the command of General Benjamin Lincoln. On February 2, the Congress also decided that the Legion should help the French allied fleet in South Carolina and Georgia, where the cities of Charleston and Savannah were in danger. Firstly, the Legion was sent to Charleston, South Carolina, which the British tried to win. At the end of March, the fusiliers and later the equestrians moved from Yorktown, Virginia, where the Legion was located in the winter camp, to Charleston. The legion had 336 men at this time. The Legion came to Charleston on May 8, but the number of men was diminished by a smallpox epidemic.⁴⁷ The Southern British army under the command of Colonel Prevost endangered Charleston. Pułaski with his Legion tried to defend the besieged town and, on May 11, he decided to attack the more numerous British army. In this attack, Mihály Kováts was mortally wounded. According to the relation of Doctor Joseph Johnson, the physician in Charleston, Kováts was buried at the place where he fell down, i. e. at the corner of the Huger Street.⁴⁸ Several statues and the specific Kováts's day commemorate Kováts's heroic participation in the American war of Independence in the USA.

⁴⁷ Aladár Póka-Pivny, József Zachar, *op. cit.*, pp. 126–127.

⁴⁸ J. Johnson, *Traditions and reminiscences chiefly of the American Revolution in the South*. Charleston, S.C., 1851, p. 244.

The last participant in the American war of Independence was a major of the French army: Jean Ladislav Poleretzky.⁴⁹ He was born in the Alsatian townie of Molsheim, in 1749.⁵⁰ His father was André Poleretzky de Polereka, in that time the colonel of the light cavalry regiment. André Poleretzky was born in the town of Banská Bystrica, in the Upper Hungary, but his family roots were in a small village of Polerieka, in the Turiec region, today in Slovakia. After the defeat of the last uprising of the Hungarian nobility against the Habsburg dynasty – which was led by the prince of Transylvania Francis Rákóczy II – he left his homeland and went with his family firstly to Poland, and finally, at the beginning of the third decennium of the 18th century, to Paris, in the entourage of the Rákóczy's widow. In France, he entered the French army. He became a hussar in the regiment led by other Hungarian emigrant Ladislav Bercsényi. André Poleretzky moved up the military ranks gradually and he finally obtained the rank of Brigadier and became an owner of his own hussar regiment. In the command of his regiment, he fought bravely in the wars of the Austrian Succession (1740-1748). His two sons followed in the father's footprints and went to army. Older Francois Phillipe became general and governor of one Alsatian townlet of Rosheim. The younger Jean Ladislav obtained the rank of major in the hussar regiment and from 1779, he tried to make even better army career in the special corps, which was to be sent to the USA.

Jean Ladislav Poleretzky changed in 1779 his “mother-regiment” for the newly established special unit, known as the Lauzun's Legion, of which the supreme commander was Armand-Louis de Gontaut, Duke de Lauzun (1747-1793), a bon vivant and renowned women seducer of the French court, but also a brave soldier, who distinguished himself in the war on Corsica in 1769.⁵¹ Most of the Legion was composed of units from the *Volontaires étrangers de la Marine*, created in September

⁴⁹ The personality of major Jean Ladislav Poleretzky (Slovak form of his name is Ján Ladislav Polerecký) was researched by the Slovak historians Jozef G. Cincík and Vladimír Segeš, and by the Hungarian military historian Józef Zachar. Jozef G. Cincík, *O pôvode a rode majora Jána L. Polereckého (1748–1830)*, „Literárny almanach Slovák v Amerike“, Chicago, 1958, pp. 31–56; Jozef Cincík, *Major Ján L. Polerecký a významní americkí činitelia*, „Jednota, Katolícky kalendár na obyčajný rok 1958“, Middletown, Pa., 1958, pp. 50–72; No author (Jozef Cincík?), *The Slovaks Were There: Major John L. Polerecký Fought for America's Independence*. In: *Slovakia*, VII, 1957, No. 3–4 (Sept.–Dec.), pp. 83–87; Vladimír Segeš, *Tri generácie Polereckovcov v službách boha Marsa*, in M. Kovačka, E. Augustínová, M. Mačuha (eds.), *Zemianstvo na Slovensku v novoveku*, Martin, 2010, pp. 81-90; József Zachar, *Pollereczky János őrnagy az Amerikai forradalmi függetlenségi háborúban*, „Hadtörténelmi Közlemények“, 27, 1980, č. 2, pp. 293–310.

⁵⁰ The short biographies of the male members of Poleretzky family can be found in the article of Louis Schlaefli, *Notes complémentaires sur les familles des Hongrois établis à Molsheim*, „Annuaire de la Société d'histoire et d'archéologie de Molsheim et environs 1995“, Molsheim, 1995, pp. 92-99.

⁵¹ R. de Gontaut Biron, *Un célèbre méconnu : Le Duc de Lauzun (1747-1793)*. Paris, 1937. Duke de Lauzun wrote his own memoirs which were published for the first time in Paris in 1821, but there is no mention on J. L. Poleretzky in the text of memoirs concerning the American campaigns.

1778 by the naval minister Gabriel de Sartine, and “propriétaire” status had been granted to the Duke de Lauzun.⁵² His Legion was to be part of the greater special corps, which the royal court planned to send to America in the context of the alliance agreement signed in February 1778. Although a small part of the corps of the *Volontaires étrangers de la Marine* was sent to America already in 1778,⁵³ the majority of the Legion sailed for the USA only in May 1780. The Lauzun's Legion was composed of the infantry regiments, small artillery unit and two light cavalry regiments of three hundred men. In one of them major Poleretzky served.

Almost one year after the arrival to America, the soldiers of the Lauzun's Legion did not take part in the battles or other military operations. Only in the summer of 1781, the French corps moved with the American allies to New York, which was still in the British hands.⁵⁴ They planned to capture this important city, and for that reason they attacked the fort of Knyphausen (another name is Fort Washington) lying few miles from the city. The hussars fought with a British cavalry in the skirmishes near the fort. In this fight, Jean Ladislas lost his horse, which was killed by an enemy shot.⁵⁵ The assault on New York finally proved as unsuccessful.

In early September, the men of the Lauzun's Legion moved to the South, to the fort of Yorktown, Virginia, where the final phase of the war for American independence took place. In the different military operations, the Lauzun's hussars confirmed their reputation of the brave soldiers, mainly in the skirmishes with the dragoons led by Lieutenant-Colonel Banastre Tarleton, who obtained a very bad reputation during the campaigns in South Carolina, in 1780. The fights between the French hussars and the British dragoons are described in the Lauzun's *Memoirs*. Although there is no mention of major Poleretzky military activities, it is without doubt that he also fought in these minor skirmishes, but as the higher officer, he probably maintained the services of the mutual contact between the headquarters and the fighting men. There is no reason to disbelieve to the brave conduct of major Poleretzky in the battles, but the newly found documents made a stain on his character. Recently published *Memoirs* of the Lieutenant Colonel of the Lauzun's Legion Claude-Etienne Hugau⁵⁶ speak unfavorably about the behavior of major

⁵² Short history of the Legion can be found in the article of Robert A. Selig, *The Duc de Lauzun and his Legion. Rochambeau's most troublesome, colorful soldiers*, „Colonial Williamsburg. The Journal of the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation“, Vol. 21, No. 6 (December/ January 2000), pp. 56–63. Article is accessible at: <http://www.americanrevolution.org/lauzun.html>.

⁵³ Francis Seraph Benyovszky was enlisted in this unit in 1778.

⁵⁴ Short description of the French corps can be found in the article of Glenn Williams, *March to Victory*, „Revue historique des armées“, 2007, no. 246, pp. 10-21.

⁵⁵ This event is described in Jean Ladislas Poleretzky's petitions for the war pension. National Archives, Washington, D.C., Record Group No. 15A – Revolutionary War Pension file of John L. Polereczky.

⁵⁶ C.E. Hugau, *Détails intéressants sur les événements arrivés dans la guerre d'Amérique. Hyver 1781 à 1782*, in G.A. Massoni (ed.), *Hampton, Charlotte et suite*, Besançon 1996, maîtrise [MA thesis].

Poleretzky during the Yorktown campaign and after it. This text discovers the problems with the discipline within the Legion and describes the unknown details of everyday life of the ordinary soldiers and higher officers, who fought in the American Revolution. Hugau mentioned Major Poleretzky already on the first page of his Memoirs. On November 11, 1781, in Hampton (near Yorktown), where the Lauzun's Legion was in the winter encampment after the capitulation of the British, Poleretzky submitted the request for a vacation and for the return to France. Lieutenant Colonel Hugau not even refused the plea for the vacation, but moreover sent Poleretzky to the prison because he was accused of different crimes and misconduct! Most serious of the accusations was that of a stealing the horses of the comrades and their resell, which could bring to major Poleretzky the profit of almost 30.000 French livres! Hugau presumed that major would like to leave the army with this money and wrote in his memoirs directly that „qu'il falloit s'en retourner en France qu'il n'y avait plus rien à glaner dans ce país“[he wants to return to France because there is nothing else to filch in this country].⁵⁷ Besides the horses' stealing, major Poleretzky was accused of a looting of the private property. Point five of the accuse list speaks that major Poleretzky took from the certain house in Gloucester Point (on the other side of the York River, opposite to the fort) „one beautiful table“and „several books from the bookshelves“. Poleretzky extraordinary interest in – although not his own – books can make his unpleasant conduct a little sympathetic, if we could have an evidence he really read the stolen books and did not try to resell them. Major Poleretzky was accused of the embezzlement of the regiment property, of the sell of borrowed things and of the not quite clear financial transactions, in which he grabbed his comrades. Therefore, as Hugau wrote, they did not want to serve with him and even they did not want to eat with him at one table. Poleretzky's crimes – if he committed them all – cannot be apologized, but they could be explained by the fact, that the soldier's pay was low and some of them tried to obtain more during the war campaigns. The punishment for the crimes did not come probably due to the good relationship between Poleretzky and Lauzun, who could not support Poleretzky in person, because on October 24 he returned back to France to inform the court of the British capitulation in Yorktown.

After his imprisonment, Poleretzky presented to Hugau a letter from Lauzun, in which the Duke gave him his permission for leaving the Legion for the vacation. Hugau could not ignore this fact and on November 13, he released major Poleretzky from the prison. He departed the same day to Philadelphia; from there, he probably sailed by the merchant ship back to France. The sure thing is that Poleretzky did not travel to France in the entourage of the Duke de Lauzun and he did not described the capitulation by his words before the King and Queen, as it is often stated in the Slovak historiographic and encyclopedic literature.⁵⁸

⁵⁷ C.E. Hugau, *op. cit.*, p. 77.

⁵⁸ *Slovenský biografický slovník* [Slovak Biographical Dictionary], Martin, 1990, vol. IV, p. 505.

Jean Ladislas returned at the beginning of 1782 to Alsace to settle some family affairs and in the summer of 1782, he came back to the USA. He left the French military service and decided to settle down in America. With the small pension from the French court, he could stay more than two years in Boston, but finally in 1785 he bought the tiny farm in the village of Pownalborough, today's Dresden, on the territory of the state of Maine. In 1788, he obtained the letter of naturalization and married for the second time. In Dresden, he acted in various administrative posts, a few years he was a lighthouse keeper on the Seguin Island, but finally he returned to Dresden where he worked as the notary. Because of the very low salary, he tried to obtain a state pension as the warrior of the war for Independence from 1818, but the first sum came to his address only after his death in 1830. His grave is easy to find, because the metal star commemorating the graves of the heroes of the American Revolution marks it. As his story shows, the heroes of the past were not always without the blemish.

These four participants in the American War of Independence show the different forms of the participation of the Foreigners in the American Revolution. Francis Seraph Benyovszky was a prototype of an adventurer who at the first time had a solid post in the French corps, but later he tried to enter the service in the American Continental Army independently – and finally unsuccessfully. His elder brother, Maurice August Benyovszky also tried to enter the American Army, and after the refusal of his offer he tried to offer a project of establishment of the foreign Legion, which was to fight for the freedom of the USA. Benyovszky would like to become the supreme commander of it, of course. However, the Continental Congress rejected his proposal and Benyovszky had to find another way how to secure his existence. More active participation in the American war of Independence took another Hungarian adventurer – Mihály Kováts de Fabricy, who entered the Cavalry Legion of his old acquaintance Kazimierz Pułaski. His heroic military conduct ended in the battle of Charlestown, in May 11, 1779, five months before the death of his commander and friend Pułaski. The last type of the foreign warrior in the American Revolution was major of the French army Jean Ladislas Poleretzky, the Frenchmen by birth, but the Hungarian by his origin. He fought for the independence of the USA in the so-called Lauzun's Legion, the special corps sent to America by the French royal court as a part of the „Expédition Particulière“ in 1780. Although he participated in the several battles, his moral behavior was not without the blemish. These four different stories form only the marginal chapter in the history of the American war of Independence, but with no doubt, very colorful and interesting one.