

# Short History of the so-called Kossuth Coat of Arms after 1956

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## ABSTRACT

The so-called Kossuth coat of arms (together with the national flag with a hole in the middle) became the symbol of the Hungarian Revolution and War of Independence of 1956. Although the Soviet Union repressed the Hungarian Revolution on 4 November 1956, the Kossuth coat of arms remained the symbol of the state from late 1956 to early 1957. Moreover, a peculiar version of it (the second field of the coat of arms changed from red to blue) appeared.

At the time of the fall of communism in Hungary, an important question was which version of the historical forms of the Hungarian coat of arms would become the state symbol. For the Hungarians, the Kossuth coat of arms is the symbol of the revolution, while the coat of arms with the Holy Crown of Hungary symbolizes the thousand-year-old statehood. The proclamation of the Republic of Hungary was on 23 October 1989 (on the 33rd anniversary of the Revolution of 1956) and the Kossuth coat of arms was also very popular. Finally, the 'full form' of the Hungarian coat of arms (with the crown) became official, expressing that the Holy Crown is a symbol of the Hungarian statehood, regardless of the form of government.

**KEYWORDS:** communism, revolution, regime change, Holy Crown of Hungary, Hungarian statehood

## The Return of the Kossuth Coat of Arms in 1956–57

As some politicians from the period between 1946 and 1949 returned to public life, the state symbol used during that period also appeared and then became a symbol of the Hungarian Revolution and War of Independence of 1956.<sup>1</sup> Already in the summer of 1956, some people in the Hungarian People's Army called for the re-introduction of the Hungarian uniform and the Kossuth coat of arms.<sup>2</sup> The 'scenario' of the 1956 revolution was similar throughout the country and the number one demand everywhere was the removal of the symbols of dictatorship (Stalin images, red stars, Soviet monuments, etc.) and the reintroduction of national symbols.<sup>3</sup> On 22 October 1956, university student meetings were held in the major cities of Hungary. Their participants joined to the MEFESZ,<sup>4</sup> which was established on 16 October at the University of Szeged. The restoration of the Kossuth coat of arms was on the lists of student demands from the beginning.<sup>5</sup> On 23 October 1956, students of the University of Technology marched along the banks of the Danube in Buda, and when they reached Bem Square,<sup>6</sup> the Soviet-style coat of arms was cut out of the Hungarian flag. This is how the unique symbol of the revolution of 1956 was created: the national flag with the hole in the middle.<sup>7</sup> On 24 October, the Kossuth coat of arms was already painted on the combat vehicles joining the revolution. Insurgent József Varga painted the symbol of the revolution on the panzer and armour-piercing cannons in Corvin Alley, Budapest.<sup>8</sup> On 25 October, the so-called Rákosi coat of arms<sup>9</sup> was removed from the Kilián Barracks and the Kossuth coat of arms was erected.<sup>10</sup> That day, there were some flags with the Kossuth coat of arms in the crowd gathered in front of the Parliament. The iconic flag, which had the Kossuth coat of

1 On the history of the so-called Kossuth coat of arms after the Second World War, see: Albert 2022.

2 E.g.: the Officers of the Corps No. PF 1227 from Budapest. Gosztonyi 2006a, 70. footnote 73.

3 Galambos 2016, 8.

4 Magyar Egyetemisták és Főiskolások Szövetsége. (Association of Hungarian Students of the Universities and Colleges).

5 On the 16-point list, the 14th: Restoration of the Kossuth coat of arms, the introduction of Hungarian uniforms in the Army, and the declaration of the 15th of March as a national holiday and the 6th of October as a memorial day. See: [http://mek.oszk.hu/04000/04056/html/roplap/roplap1956\\_0556.html](http://mek.oszk.hu/04000/04056/html/roplap/roplap1956_0556.html), 01/27/2021.

6 'More than a hundred thousand joyful people shouted in Bem Square: "We hereby swear, that we the yoke of slavery no more shall wear!" People crowded to help remove the foreign coat of arms from the Hungarian flag.' Berki 2002, 8. The quote is from Sándor Petőfi: *National Song*, 1848 (translated by George Szirtes).

7 Varga 1990, 46–47.

8 A national flag and the Kossuth coat of arms were also placed on the T-34 tank of Pál Maléter, who arrived at the main entrance of the Kilián Barracks and blocked it. Horváth 1993, 28.; Pongrácz 1982, 85. Pál Maléter (1917–1958) was the Minister of Defence in Hungary from 3 to 4 November 1956.

9 The coat of arms of the Hungarian People's Republic between 1949 and 1956.

10 Gosztonyi 2006b, 142.

arms in the middle, was also placed on the facade of the Kossuth Rádió (the Hungarian Radio) at that time.<sup>11</sup>

From 23 October 1956, therefore, two sides faced each other in the streets. People in power, who used the communist symbols and the revolutionaries and freedom fighters, who used the Hungarian national symbols. Some people made a tactical alliance with the revolution only to turn against it. For example, on 26 October, at the Border Guard in Győr, Comrade Fekszí proposed that a 5-member delegation go to the Revolutionary Workers' Council and announce their intention to join the body. The crowd in front of the City Council welcomed the delegation and the Border Guard's accession to the Revolutionary Workers' Council with great applause. Then they were presented with national-coloured armbands and ID cards.<sup>12</sup> The new National Government,<sup>13</sup> supplemented by Zoltán Tildy<sup>14</sup> and Béla Kovács<sup>15</sup> on 27 October, had already decided, among other things, to introduce the Kossuth coat of arms and declare 15th March a national holiday.<sup>16</sup> At 5:25 pm on 28 October, Imre Nagy announced these measures on the radio, among other things and called the demonstrations of the previous days a national democratic movement.<sup>17</sup> According to the joint order of the Minister of Defence Károly Janza and the Minister of the Interior Ferenc Münnich on 28 October, the coat of arms of the People's Republic was replaced by a national ribbon in the army and the police until the introduction of the new coat of arms.<sup>18</sup>

On 29 October, the newspapers announced that the Kossuth coat of arms would be used again. The *Szabad Nép* (Free People) also put drawing on its front page<sup>19</sup> (Figure 1.). The same drawing for the Kossuth coat of arms appeared in the 31 October 1956 issue of the *Szabad Szó* (Free Word),<sup>20</sup> and it was on the title page of the *Honvédségi Közlöny* (Army Gazette) for six months.<sup>21</sup> The significance of the Kossuth coat of arms was discussed in the 29 October broadcast of Kossuth Rádió: 'The new coat of arms on our national flags is the badge

11 Horváth 1993, 28.

12 Kahler–M. Kiss 1997, 79–80.

13 It was led by Imre Nagy (1896–1958), who was a communist politician. His second government was in office from 24 October to 4 November 1956.

14 Zoltán Tildy (1889–1961) – from the Independent Smallholders' Party – was the Prime Minister of Hungary from 15 November 1945 to 1 February 1946 and the President of the Republic of Hungary from 1 February 1946 to 3 August 1948. He was Minister of State between 27 October and 4 November 1956.

15 Béla Kovács (1908–1959) was the Minister of Agriculture of Hungary from 1945 to 1946. Between August 1945 and February 1947, he was General Secretary of the Independent Smallholders' Party. On 25 February 1947, Soviet authorities arrested and deported him to the Soviet Union. He was Minister of Agriculture and Minister of State during the 1956 Revolution.

16 M. Kiss 1997, 5.

17 Varga 1990, 56.

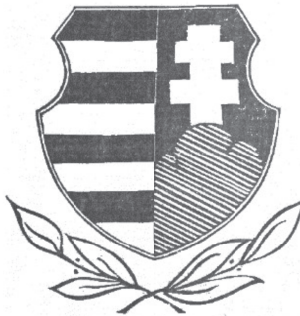
18 Horváth 1993, 29.

19 *Szabad Nép*, 14. (29 October 1956) 297., front page.

20 *Szabad Szó*, 24. (31 October 1956) 1., Budapest, front page.

21 From 6 December 1956 to 27 April 1957. *Honvédségi Közlöny*, (6 December 1956) 8., front page; *Honvédségi Közlöny*, (27 April 1957) 5., front page.

of independent Hungary. [...] We could not and did not want to adopt the coat of arms that Rákosi tried to force on our people in the era of slavish imitation.<sup>22</sup> The main task of the Revolutionary Police Force Committee was to establish a new armed organization after the dissolution of the ÁVH.<sup>23</sup> On 30 October 1956, when the organizational regulations of the National Guard<sup>24</sup> were drawn up, it was stated that all National Guardsmen were required to wear a Kossuth coat of arms badge.<sup>25</sup> The Kossuth coat of arms, which became a symbol of the victory of the revolution of 1956, also appeared in the world of sports. László Jeney, a water polo player was interviewed in 1992. As goalkeeper, he was a member of Hungary's Olympic team in Melbourne, Australia, in 1956. Jeney said: 'We left Budapest on 30 October, knowing that the revolution had won. [...] we sewed the Kossuth coat of arms on our tracksuits instead of the coat of arms with the red star, and the flag of the training camp was already decorated with the Kossuth coat of arms. [...] After 4 November, we sewed a black ribbon on the Kossuth coat of arms on our tracksuits and on the camp flag. Outside in the Olympic Village, such a flag was flying on the mast.'<sup>26</sup>



**Figure 1.** *Kossuth Coat of Arms in 1956.*<sup>27</sup>

The survival of the Kossuth coat of arms as a state symbol in late 1956 and early 1957 is very interesting. On 9 November 1956, the Presidential Council of the Hungarian People's Republic amended the Constitution to make the Revolutionary Workers' Peasants' Govern-

22 Juhász 2006, 229.

23 Államvédelmi Hatóság (State Protection Authority).

24 The National Guard was created during the 1956 Hungarian Revolution and War of Independence, following the example of 1848. Over time, it became a civilian armed force under central control. The National Guard had only a law enforcement function.

25 *Párttörténeti Közlemények*, 3. (September 1957) 1., 144.

26 Csikós 1992, 5.

27 Source of the image: *Szabad Nép*, 14. (29 October 1956) 297., front page.

ment of Hungary (the Government of János Kádár<sup>28</sup>) the supreme body of state administration and to legalize the use of the Kossuth coat of arms.<sup>29</sup> On 11 November, János Kádár acknowledged at a central committee meeting of his party, that the previous symbol policy had been flawed.<sup>30</sup> It was announced in the 12 November 1956 issue of the *Magyar Közlöny* (Hungarian Gazette) that the coat of arms of the Hungarian People's Republic would be the Kossuth coat of arms until the National Assembly amended the Constitution.<sup>31</sup> However, the decision of the Presidential Council was unconstitutional because it changed the Constitution by ordinary resolution.<sup>32</sup> On 27 November 1956, the Government accepted Ferenc Münnich's<sup>33</sup> proposal to introduce a new rank mark in the armed forces. Thus, the use of the Kossuth coat of arms on the cap was authorised.<sup>34</sup> Meanwhile, some county newspapers reported that badges with the Kossuth coat of arms were sold in large numbers,<sup>35</sup> and in some cases questions about the emblem appeared in crossword puzzle sections.<sup>36</sup> On 21 December 1956, one of the authors of the *Zalai Hírlap* (newspaper of Zala County), while welcoming the introduction of the Kossuth coat of arms, condemned the sale of badges. According to the paper, this is how national sentiment is turned into a commodity.<sup>37</sup>

It is worth following the versions of the Kossuth coat of arms that appeared on the front page of the *Magyar Közlöny* from 12 November 1956 to 11 May 1957 (Table). From the very beginning it is clear that the coat of arms is not uniform. On 12 November, there are no foliage around it, and the background of the double cross is an empty field.<sup>38</sup> On 20 November, the coat of arms was covered with foliage, but the crown of the trimount was missing.<sup>39</sup> From 24 November, the 1946 version was used (with foliage and with the crown of the trimount).<sup>40</sup> From 11 December 1956 to 1 February 1957, the appearance of the coat of arms changed continuously.

28 János Kádár (1912–1989) was the leader of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party from 1956 to 1988, when he led Hungary. He became president of the party in 1988–89, but this position did not carry any real power.

29 Varga 1990, 71–72.

30 MNL OL M-KS 288. f. 4/1. ő. e. MSZMP KB notes, (11 November 1956), 11.

31 Decree 26/1956 of the Presidential Council of the Hungarian People's Republic. *Magyar Közlöny*, (12 November 1956) 93., 568.

32 Baráth 2009, 11., footnote 14.

33 Ferenc Münnich (1886–1967) was a communist politician. After 1956, he was one of the most important persons in the system.

34 Baráth 2009, 73., footnote 44.

35 E.g., *Vas Népe*, 1. (29 November 1956) 9., 4.









36 '14. Who again prescribed the use of the Kossuth coat of arms on 26 November 1918? [...] 27. Is there a crown on the trimount of the original Kossuth coat of arms?' *Csongrádmegyei Hírlap*, 1. (24 December 1956) 31., 6.

37 *Zalai Hírlap*, 1. (21 December 1956) 9., 3.

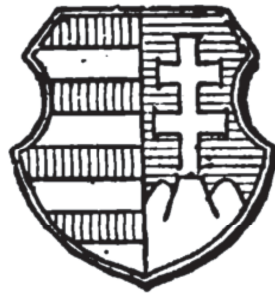
38 *Magyar Közlöny*, (12 November 1956) 93., front page.

39 *Magyar Közlöny*, (20 November 1956) 94., front page.

40 *Magyar Közlöny*, (24 November 1956) 95., front page.

<b>Versions of the Kossuth Coat of Arms appearing on the front page of the <i>Magyar Közlöny</i> between 1956 and 1957</b>	
Picture	Date of publication
	<b><i>12 November 1956</i></b>
	<b><i>20 November 1956</i></b>
	<b><i>between 24 November 1956 and 8 December 1956</i></b>
	<b><i>between 11 December 1956 and 12 December 1956</i></b>
	<b><i>between 13 December 1956 and 24 December 1956</i></b>
	<b><i>between 29 December 1956 and 1 February 1957</i></b>
	<b><i>between 2 February 1957 and 8 February 1957</i></b>
	<b><i>between 10 February 1957 and 11 May 1957</i></b>

After that, however, it is worth taking a closer look at the headlines of the *Magyar Közlöny*. Hatching is a conventional system for monochrome denotation of heraldic coats of arms, in which the colours are represented by dots and lines. According to the most common colour marking method: red is the vertical lines, blue is the horizontal lines, green is heraldic diagonal lines from right to left. Gold is marked by points and silver is left blank.<sup>41</sup> If we look at the coats of arms in this way, we can see that from 2 February 1957<sup>42</sup> to 11 May 1957,<sup>43</sup> the second field of the coat of arms changed from red to blue, and the trimount remained colourless (Figure 2.).



**Figure 2.** The ‘blue-coloured’ Kossuth Coat of Arms without the Crown of the Trimount.<sup>44</sup>

The question arises as to how conscious this was, or whether it was simple negligence or some other reason behind it.<sup>45</sup> In any case, the use of this version of the coat of arms remained consistent until it was replaced by the new coat of arms of the People’s Republic. It even changed on one occasion, when it omitted the crown of the trimount on 10 February 1957, but the blue colour remained unchanged.<sup>46</sup> Another curiosity is that the symbol later popularly called Kádár coat of arms’ (the new coat of arms of the People’s Republic), officially came into force only on 23 May 1957,<sup>47</sup> but before that it had already appeared on the front page of the *Magyar Közlöny* on 15 May<sup>48</sup> and 18 May.<sup>49</sup> At the same time, on 29 May 1957, the Military Prosecutor’s Office was still using seals with Kossuth coat of arms in its indictments of the revolutionaries and freedom fighters.<sup>50</sup> Returning to the ‘blue’ Kossuth

41 Bertényi 2003, 26.

42 *Magyar Közlöny*, (2 February 1957) 14., front page.

43 *Magyar Közlöny*, (11 May 1957) 54., front page.

44 Source of the image: *Magyar Közlöny*, (10 February 1957) 19., front page.

45 The most likely explanation is that the graphic artist lacked heraldic knowledge.

46 *Magyar Közlöny*, (10 February 1957) 19., front page.

47 Act 2 of 1957 amending the Constitution of the Hungarian People’s Republic. *Magyar Közlöny*, (23 May 1957) 57., 328.

48 *Magyar Közlöny*, (15 May 1957) 55., front page.

49 *Magyar Közlöny*, (18 May 1957) 56., front page.

50 Horváth 1993, 31.

coat of arms, this version also appeared on the cover of the *Igazságügyi Közlöny* (Journal of Justice),<sup>51</sup> and its use remained the same until 21 April 1957.<sup>52</sup>

The use of the Kossuth coat of arms became increasingly uncomfortable for the communists who had recently regained power. On 7 February 1957, István Dobi,<sup>53</sup> Chairman of the Presidential Council of the People's Republic, was the speaker at a meeting of the Council of Ministers on the subject of the change of the coat of arms. The Council recognized the problem that the exact description of the Kossuth coat of arms, which had become provisionally official on 12 November 1956, had not been determined.<sup>54</sup> The proposals submitted at the meeting were not adopted, so the Government asked the Secretary of the Presidential Council of the People's Republic to prepare the draft coat of arms in 2-3 variants and submit it to the competent commission of the National Assembly for a decision. An internal decision was taken to adopt version 2 as the coat of arms used in the official seal of the state until the Parliament amends the Constitution on the issue of the coat of arms.<sup>55</sup> A red-white-green tricolour without the coat of arms was adopted as the flag of the Hungarian People's Republic. On the buttons and the cap rose of the uniforms of the armed corps, the Kossuth coat of arms on a red star background was designed.<sup>56</sup> These are specified in Decree 3064/1957 (II.9).<sup>57</sup> On 22 February, an amendment was adopted regarding the symbols used on the uniforms of armed bodies.<sup>58</sup> Resolving the issue of the coat of arms was not an easy task for the Kádár government. On 5 February 1957, Dobi announced that artists had made drawings for the new coat of arms.<sup>59</sup> At a meeting of the Council of Ministers on 7 February, the second of the submitted designs was adopted pending the decision of the National Assembly, but this was not attached. The question arises as to whether this was the 'blue-coloured' Kossuth coat of arms, which appeared on the front page of the *Magyar Közlöny* on 2 February, but the version without the crown of the trimount only appeared from 10 February. On 14 February,

51 *Igazságügyi Közlöny*, 66. (21 February 1957) 4., front page.

52 *Igazságügyi Közlöny*, 66. (21 April 1957) 8., front page.

53 István Dobi (1898–1968) was president of the Independent Smallholders' Party between 1947 and 1949. He was Prime Minister of Hungary from 1948 to 1952 and Chairman of the Presidential Council of the Hungarian People's Republic from 1952 to 1967.

54 Dobi stated in his proposal of 5 February 1957: 'As the description of the coat of arms will only be made later, in the Act amending the Constitution, there is currently uncertainty as to the exact description of the coat of arms, and the new coat of arms of our People's Republic will be produced and used in various unofficial forms.' MNL OL XIX-A-83-b 3064/1957. About the flag of the Hungarian People's Republic.

55 Magdolna Baráth stated that no coat of arms was attached to the protocol.

56 Baráth 2009, 224.

57 MNL OL XIX-A-83-b 3064/1957. Decision 3064/1957 of the Revolutionary Workers' Peasants' Government of Hungary on the flag of the Hungarian People's Republic.

58 Instead of the Kossuth coat of arms, the buttons on the People's Army uniform were replaced with intersecting rifles. MNL OL XIX-A-83-b 3102/1957. Decision 3102/1957 (22 February 1957) of the Revolutionary Workers' Peasants' Government of the introduction of cap roses and uniform buttons in the People's Army.

59 MNL OL XIX-A-83-b 3064/1957. About the flag of the Hungarian People's Republic.



János Kádár new coat of arms plans were not yet considered suitable, so the government ordered new designs to be made.<sup>60</sup> On 21 February, István Dobi stated: ‘The government will present to the Parliament that version, in which the Kossuth coat of arms is surrounded on two sides by a dense wheat wreath.’<sup>61</sup> This version was already beginning to resemble the final and official form of the new coat of arms.

The story of the symbol (Figure 3) created by the painter and graphic artist Sándor Légrády<sup>62</sup> could be the subject of a separate study, so here I would like to draw attention only to the points related to the Kossuth coat of arms. At a government meeting on 11 April 1957, István Kristóf<sup>63</sup> presented the resolution of the Legal Affairs Committee of the National Assembly, which proposed the insertion of a red star on the top of the coat of arms. According to the newer designs, the contour of the coat of arms corresponds to the contour of the Kossuth coat of arms, with an inner field divided into three equal parts of red, white and green, surrounded by a wreath of wheat, interspersed with red on one side and red-white-green on the other. At the meeting point of the wheat wreath there is a red star.<sup>64</sup> On 18 April, it was proposed that the new coat of arms of the People’s Republic should also include the two basic elements of the ‘Rákosi coat of arms’, the wheat ear and the hammer.<sup>65</sup> However, on 25 April, this idea was rejected, so the look of the new coat of arms was finalized.<sup>66</sup> On 2 May 1957, the Secretariat of the Government used the Kossuth coat of arms on its seal<sup>67</sup> for the last time and then it used it without the coat of arms.<sup>68</sup> János Kádár said at a meeting of the Central Committee of the Hungarian Socialist Workers’ Party on 7 May that the Kossuth coat of arms and the old coat of arms<sup>69</sup> should not be the official emblem of the country.<sup>70</sup> On 9 May, Kádár presented his opinion on the coat of arms in the Parliament,<sup>71</sup> and on 11

60 Baráth 2009, 236.

61 *Ibid.*, 255.

62 Most of Légrády’s designs included the Kossuth coat of arms. However, the accepted version retained only the characteristic contour of its shield. The coat of arms designs from 1957 were published by: <http://www.legradyzmus.hu/cimer, 08/21/2013>. (The link is no longer available. Z. M. A.).

63 István Kristóf (1912–1979) was a communist politician, who was the Secretary of the Presidential Council of the Hungarian People’s Republic between 1956 and 1961.

64 Baráth 2009, 351–352.

65 ‘Based on the discussion, the government adopted the draft of the coat of arms presented based on the idea that the white field of the coat of arms should contain a crossed wheat ear and a hammer. The wheat ear and hammer can extend into both the red and green fields. The gap between the wreath of wheat surrounding the coat of arms and the coat of arms shall be filled with drawn beams.’ Baráth 2009, 363.

66 *Ibid.*, 392.

67 See: MNL OL XIX-A-83-b 3201/1957. Decision 3201/1957 (2 May 1957).

68 From 14 May 1957 (on the appointment of Jenő Hazai, MNL OL XIX-A-83-b 3202/1957.) to 23 May 1957 (appointment of János Katona, MNL OL XIX-A-83-b 3213/1957.).

69 In this case the ‘Rákosi coat of arms’.

70 MNL OL M-KS 288. f. 4/8. ő. e. MSZMP KB notes, (7 May 1957) 5–6.

71 *Archives of the Hungarian Parliament* 1953 II. 1687.

May, the new symbol of the People's Republic was adopted.<sup>72</sup> The so-called Kádár coat of arms also appeared on the stamp of the government on 23 May 1957.<sup>73</sup> Although this symbol was more representative of Hungary than the so-called Rákosi coat of arms (from 1949 to 1956),<sup>74</sup> it also broke with the historical Hungarian coat of arms.



**Figure 3.** Coat of Arms of the Hungarian People's Republic between 1957 and 1990.<sup>75</sup>

## Regime Change and the Hungarian Coat of Arms

The so-called Kossuth coat of arms and the crowned small coat of arms of Hungary returned to the political public life during the 'regime change' (the fall of communism in Hungary). Initially, a part of the Hungarian society (those involved in politics) was divided on the question of which version of the coat of arms should once again be the symbol of the state. For the Hungarians, the Kossuth coat of arms is the symbol of the revolution, while the coat of arms with the Holy Crown represents the thousand-year-old statehood.

In the last years of the 1980s, more and more articles on the history of the Hungarian coat of arms appeared in the press. At that time, even questioning the so-called Kádár coat of arms was considered taboo. On 12 November 1988, a thought-provoking article by a university professor, István Kállay<sup>76</sup> was published in *Népszabadság*. Kállay briefly described

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., 1808.

<sup>73</sup> MNL OL XIX-A-83-b 3215/1957. On visits by Hungarian government delegations to people's democratic countries.

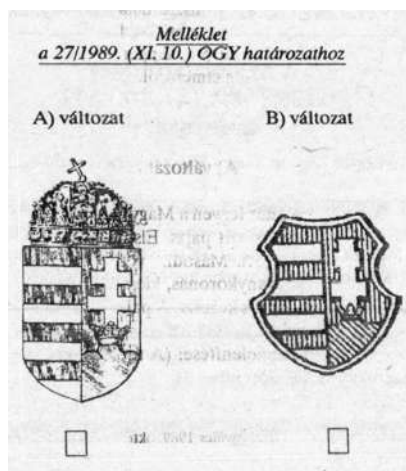
<sup>74</sup> See about this: Albert 2022, 20–21.

<sup>75</sup> Source of the image: *Magyar Közlöny*, (23 May 1957) 57., 329. [in black and white].

<sup>76</sup> István Kállay (1931–1998) was the leader of the reorganization of the Magyar Heraldikai és Genealógiai Társaság (Hungarian Heraldic and Genealogical Society) in the late 1970s and early 1980s. The Society was founded in 1883 but it ceased to exist in the Rákosi era. Magyar Heraldikai

the history of the Hungarian coat of arms, then concluded that the ‘traditional coat of arms’ (in this case the so-called Kossuth coat of arms) was very popular among the people.<sup>77</sup> At the end of 1988, the Coat of Arms Committee of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences was convened at the request of the Hungarian government. According to the Committee’s proposal, either the crowned small coat of arms or the Kossuth coat of arms were suitable as state symbols. Professor Iván Bertényi,<sup>78</sup> who was the Head of the Department of Auxiliary Studies of History of Eötvös Loránd University, was in favour of the crowned coat of arms.<sup>79</sup>

The proclamation of the Republic of Hungary took place on 23 October 1989.<sup>80</sup> However, the issue of the coat of arms took a long time to be settled. As early as 8 March 1989, Minister of Justice, Kálmán Kulcsár proposed a debate on the issue of the coat of arms. He also added that he was professionally in favour of the crowned coat of arms.<sup>81</sup> It is very interesting, that the look of the Kossuth coat of arms was not accurately described in either 1946 or 1956. This was done only in 1989, when a referendum was planned on the new coat of arms of the Hungarian State after the change of the regime (Figure 4).



**Figure 4.** Two Versions of the Coat of Arms attached to the Referendum on the Coat of Arms scheduled for 7 January 1990.<sup>82</sup>

és Genealógiai Társaság. Website. <http://www.mhgt.org/bemutatkozas/>, 01/11/2022.

77 Kállay 1988, 11.

78 Iván Bertényi (1939) did a lot to ensure that Hungarian heraldry did not disappear during the communist era.

79 A Kossuth- vagy a királyi címert válasszuk? Az MTA bizottsága kettőt javasol. *Reform*, 2. (3 March 1989) 8., 4–5.

80 On the 33rd anniversary of the Hungarian Revolution of 1956.

81 *Archives of the Hungarian Parliament* 1985 III. 3313.

82 Source of the image: *Magyar Közlöny*, (10 November 1989) 82., Budapest, 1375.

According to the description made at that time, the Kossuth coat of arms is a split shield with slightly curved sides. The first field is cut seven times in red and silver, the second consists of a silver double cross on a red base, set in a golden crown, which is placed on the middle heap of the trimount.<sup>83</sup> However, the planned referendum about the coat of arms was not held, so the members of the freely elected Parliament decided on 3 July 1990.<sup>84</sup> The crowned coat of arms (Figure 5) was declared the state coat of arms of Hungary by 258 votes to 28, with 35 abstentions,<sup>85</sup> expressing the view that the Holy Crown is a symbol of the Hungarian statehood, regardless of the form of government of Hungary. After the decision, the question of the appearance of the state coat of arms no longer arose. ■



*Figure 5. Coat of Arms of Hungary from 1990.<sup>86</sup>*

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83 Ibid.

84 The Hungarian Parliament decided on the matter after a year and a half of debate. Although the views of the members of Parliament were also divided regardless of party affiliation, preferences can be observed. The Socialists and Liberals mainly supported the Kossuth coat of arms; the Conservatives and Christian Democrats mainly supported the coat of arms with the Holy Crown. See about this: Albert 2014, 175–194.

85 *Archives of the Hungarian Parliament* 1990. 337.

86 Source of the image: *Belügyi Közlöny*, 1. (28 August 1990) 17., 498.

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## KIVONAT

### Az úgynevezett Kossuth-címer rövid története 1956 után

Az úgynevezett Kossuth-címer (a lyukas nemzeti zászlóval együtt) az 1956-os magyar forradalom és szabadságharc jelképévé vált. Bár a Szovjetunió 1956. november 4-én leverte a magyar forradalmat, a Kossuth-címer maradt az állam szimbóluma 1956 vége és 1957 eleje között. Sőt, megjelent egy furcsa változata is (a címer második mezeje vörösről kékre változott).

A kommunizmus bukása idején, Magyarországon fontos kérdés volt, hogy a magyar címer történeti formáinak melyik változata lesz az állam szimbóluma. A magyarság számára a Kossuth-címer a forradalom jelképe, míg a Szent Koronával ellátott címer az ezeréves államiságot jelenti. A Magyar Köztársaság kikiáltása 1989. október 23-án (az 1956-os forradalom 33. évfordulóján) történt, illetve a Kossuth-címer is nagy népszerűségnek örvendett. Végül a magyar címer „teljes formája” (a koronás címer) vált hivatalossá, kifejezve, hogy a Szent Korona államformától függetlenül a magyar államiság jelképe.

**KULCSSZAVAK:** kommunizmus, forradalom, rendszerváltás, Szent Korona, magyar államiság