

# HUNGARICA

A CHRONICLE OF EVENTS AND PERSONALITIES  
FROM THE HUNGARIAN PAST

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The homeland of the Hungarians in the heart of Europe

## Foreword

*God has created me a Hungarian, my parents have brought me into the Catholic Church and my own choice has made me an Australian. I have never felt a conflict of loyalties. I owe the sweet gifts of childhood and youth to Hungary, the harmony of my philosophy to my religion and the fruits of my working life to Australia. Our children and grandchildren born outside Hungary should not be made to face the dilemma of whether to be a Hungarian or an Australian (American, etc.). They should be good Australians — and cherish their Hungarian heritage. Their loyalty to their present country should gain an added dimension by the historic depth of their ancestral culture, their Magyar heritage. This is the proper concept of "Multiculturalism".*

*This little book offers a collection of "chronicles" — descriptions of events and stories of personalities chosen, at random, by their anniversaries. They form a mosaic which depicts the civilization of the people who were multicultural before they settled in Central Europe eleven centuries ago. Though never an "empire" and rarely a "great power", Hungary has taught the world one useful lesson: how to create one nation out of many. At the risk of sounding pompous, one may speak of "Pax Hungarica": the Hungarian method of pacifying their hostile environment. Instead of repelling, destroying or conquering their aggressive neighbours, the Hungarians invited them into their country, or, if they came uninvited, integrated them into their composite nation. "If you can't fight them, make them join you", is the Magyar variant of the well-known proverb. The reader will find among these chronicles the stories of some foreigners who came to Hungary (invited or uninvited) and who eventually chose to live and die for Hungary. This undescrivable magic attraction of Hungary and all things Hungarian is, perhaps, explained by some of these tales.*

*I hope that our children and their children, our friends and their friends will read these chronicles and feel some of the pride, love, sorrow and joy I felt when I remembered them.*

*A time may come when to remember  
Shall ask more courage than to plan,  
To claim the past more than the future  
In seeking a new fatherland.*

*If this pure land's overrun by invaders,  
A new Tartar horde or a horde of traders,*

*Then speak to yourself, with eyes closed,  
Just speak those words which at one time caused  
Sands drifting, peoples, houses  
To compose the pattern Hungary rouses.*

*Gather, friend, all you learnt to see  
When you walked in meadows which then were free . . .*

The author and the publishers gratefully acknowledge the permission of the *Special Broadcasting Service and Radio 2EA Sydney*, to use the text of the series "Magyar Krónikák" and "Our Heritage", compiled by the author and broadcast by the Hungarian Section of 2EA during the years 1981-1983.

In narrating some events and describing certain personalities the author has used the evaluations expressed in his work "The Timeless Nation" (Hungaria Publishing Co., Sydney, 1978), a compendium of Hungarian cultural history,

The Bibliography at the end of this book lists the other sources the author has consulted.

The quotation on this page is from "Fatherland in the Heights" by Gyula Illyés, translated by Vernon Watkins ("A Tribute to Gyula Illyés", Occidental Press, Washington, 1968).

# January

## HUNGARIANS IN AUSTRALIA

On the occasion of *Australia's Foundation Day in January* it is fitting to study the history of the Hungarian migrants in Australia.

The first Hungarians arrived in Australia about 150 years ago. A few more came after the defeat of the *1848-49 Freedom War* seeking a country free of oppression. Some of the immigrants were former officers of the Hungarian National Army.

Very few immigrants of Hungarian descent came around the turn of the century or in the twenties. Those who came were mostly unmarried young men, and they soon married Australian girls, integrating quickly into the Australian society.

The *thirties and forties* of this century saw the arrival of migrants who left Hungary because of the oppressive atmosphere in Hitler's Central Europe. They were mostly *Jewish intellectuals and businessmen*. Hard-working and ambitious, they soon became respected members of Australian society, some achieving fame as eminent businessmen, professionals and artists. They cherished their Hungarian culture and helped to dispel some misapprehensions about Hungary during World War II. The Australians learned through them that Hungary was, during the Nazi oppression of Europe, the refuge of Jews.

About 15,000 Hungarians arrived in Australia as "*displaced persons*" after World War II. The bulk of them were professional and middle-class people, most of them with families. Having met the earlier group of Hungarian refugees, the two groups found the common reason why they came to this country: to flee tyranny of one kind or another. The Hungarian migrant families kept their Magyar ethnic consciousness and their children learned to appreciate their ethnic heritage through Hungarian weekend schools, Scout activities, dance groups and other associations of cultural nature, without interfering with their harmonious integration into

Australian culture. The Hungarians never formed cultural ghettos and always adopted Australian citizenship.

After the *uprising of 1956 yet another 15,000* Hungarians came. After the sixties many immigrants of Hungarian descent came from Yugoslavia and Rumania. They came in family groups and kept their Hungarian identity.

It is estimated that in 1982 about 60,000 Australians have Hungarian ethnic origin.

Although only half of one percent of Australians are of Hungarian descent, the involvement of Hungarian-Australians in certain *professions and occupations* is well above that rate. They favour occupations in which independence, initiative and imagination prevail and hard work assures success.

There are, for instance, about 50 professors at various Australian Universities at the time of writing of this account. In *art and music* Australia lacked the attraction of some other countries, thus only a few well-known artists settled here, but many young artists of Hungarian origin have achieved success. The number of successful Hungarian *businessmen* has reached proverbial proportions. In *sport*: table tennis was made popular by Hungarians and soccer owes its rise in popularity, to a great extent, to Hungarians. The less spectacular sports of chess and bridge have been, at various periods, the preserve of Hungarian champions. Fencing, a popular Hungarian sport has reached a great degree of popularity, especially in Victoria, thanks to the Hungarian sportsmen there.

We may say that the Magyar immigrants have invaded the farthest corners of Australia: English with a characteristic Magyar accent is spoken in such distant places as the Birdsville Track in Queensland and the Australian Antarctic Territory. As false modesty is not one of the Hungarian national vices, they do not conceal their presence nor the fact that they are Magyars. In fact their vitality, industry and extrovert friendliness make them more conspicuous than population statistics would suggest.

*Without them the hot Australian sun would still rise, life, inflation and strikes would still go on, but the lights would be a little paler, music a little duller and Australia a little poorer.*

\*

Hungary's best known poet, **Sándor Petőfi** was born on the **1st of January, 1823**. His short, but meteoric career ended on the **31st of July, 1849**, when he was killed in one of the last battles of the Hungarian Freedom War.

The two main themes of his poetry were *love and freedom*. The "love" of his poetry was the romantic, pure love of courtship and marriage. The "freedom" of his battle-hymns was inspired by his boundless love of the Magyar nation and Magyar soil.

In a short poem he defines these two themes, his ideology, in fact his whole life:

*Liberty and love  
These two must I have,  
For my love I'll sacrifice  
My life.  
For liberty I'll sacrifice  
My love."*

He did sacrifice both his love and his life when he died on the field of battle, fighting for his nation's freedom.

His poems have been translated into 60 languages. These translations render, in an imperfect way, the inimitable beauty of Petőfi's Magyar words, treasured by Hungarians all over the world.

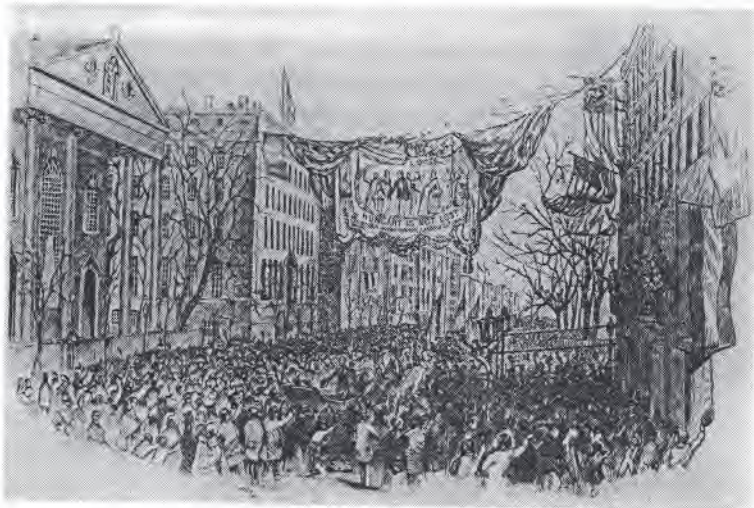
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The **2nd of January** is the anniversary of an interesting Hungarian victory.

During the eleventh century the German emperors made several unsuccessful attempts to make independent Hungary a vassal of the Empire. In January, 1052 the army of the emperor was besieging the Hungarian frontier city Pozsony. It was mid-winter and the German army lived on supplies stored aboard their ships moored in the Danube River. On a cold, misty winter day a Hungarian diver, named Zotmund, swam to the German ships under the ice floes and sank them by piercing the hull of each ship. Having lost their supplies, the Germans retreated in order to avoid starvation.

This is a rare instance of *the besieged starving the besieging army*.

\*



Kossuth in New York

On the 5th of January, 1852, Lajos Kossuth, leader of the Hungarian struggle for freedom, addressed the U.S. Senate and two days later he spoke to the Congress at the invitation of the American Government.

This honour has since been granted to only one other foreign statesman: Winston Churchill.

\*

On the 6th of January, 1764, several hundred Székely women and children were massacred at the village of Mádéfalva in Transylvania.

This massacre was the indirect result of the defence policy of the Austrian Empire under the rule of empress-queen Maria Theresa. During the first years of her reign, she managed to assert her right to succession through various wars with the help of the Hungarian soldiers in her army. Having discovered the value of the Magyar soldier, she ordered the drafting of a large number of peasant boys for the imperial army. As the draft meant 8-12 years of military service, the Hungarian youngsters were obviously reluctant to join the imperial army. The peasants of Transylvania were particularly reluctant to leave their small farms in order to serve the Austrian ruler. So the young Székely-Hungarian men of

military age began to flee to neighbouring Moldavia, a Rumanian province under Turkish rule.

The commanders of the imperial army districts took stern measures to secure the required number of recruits. They practically kept the families hostage for the return of the fugitives. In one Székely village, Mádéfalva, there was a large number of dependants — mostly women and children — waiting for the departure of the recruiting units.

Then, suddenly, on the 6th of January, the military attacked with cannons and muskets and massacred about 500 women and children.

After this outrage, entire Székely villages left the country and settled in Moldavia and Bukovina. They formed several Hungarian villages there and called themselves “csángós” (Székely-Magyar word for “refugees”). Here they have kept their Magyar language and customs for two centuries.

## SAINT STEPHEN'S CROWN

The government of the United States returned Saint Stephen's Crown and the other coronation regalia to the Hungarian people on the 6th of January, 1978.

The Hungarian royal crown, which the historians call “The Holy Crown of Saint Stephen” is made of two royal crowns. The first segment, which constitutes the upper part was given to King Saint Stephen in 1000 A.D. by the Pope, Sylvester II. In that year, the ruling Christian Prince of Hungary, Stephen, turned to the Pope asking for his recognition as an independent Christian king, implying that he did not wish to become a vassal of the Holy Roman (German) Emperor. The Pope sent him a crown and bestowed upon him the title of “King by the Grace of God”, thus acknowledging his independence from the emperor. This crown was placed upon Stephen's head on Christmas Day 1000 A.D.

The lower half of the crown was given to the Hungarian king Géza I in 1074 by the Greek emperor in gratitude for the humane treatment of the Greek prisoners of war. The two parts were made into one crown at the end of the 11th century.

This crown became not only the sign of royal authority but, more importantly, the symbolic embodiment of the supreme and

*sovereign authority of the Hungarian nation.* Through the solemn act of the coronation — a rite somewhat resembling the ordination of a Catholic priest — this supreme power is handed over to the king. The free Hungarian nation is, however, the ultimate source of all law and power: the nation freely elects the king and invests him with these sovereign powers when the act of coronation is legally performed with Saint Stephen's Crown. This is placed on the head of the king by the two "first lords" of the nation, the Head of the Church and the Head of the Government.



The Holy Crown

In the symbolic language of the Hungarian Constitution the members of the free nation are called the "members of the Holy Crown", the land of Hungary is "the land of the Holy Crown". Until 1848 only the nobles were considered to be members of the free nation — but since March 1848 all Hungarian citizens are equal members of the nation and of the Crown without any discrimination towards race, creed or nationality.

The *fortunes of Saint Stephen's Crown* seem to mirror the turbulent history of the Hungarian nation. Like many Hungarians, the crown often had to be hidden or to find refuge abroad. It was lost and found several times. Once, when it was carried in a wooden cask, it was lost and then found, miraculously, at the bottom of a marsh. Once an ambitious baron stole it and held it to ransom: he

wanted the king to marry his daughter in return for the crown. (It does not say much for the young lady that the king remained an uncrowned bachelor . . .). Once it was smuggled out of Hungary by a vengeful dowager queen in the pram of the infant crown prince. Subsequently, the widowed queen pawned it for a mere 2500 florins. On another occasion the fleeing ministers of the defeated Revolution contemplated destroying it — eventually they hid it underground, damaging the cross on the top in the process.

During a tragic period *after the defeat at Mohács*, the crown was captured by the Turks and the Turkish pashas tried it on, one after the other, only to find that it was too large for them. Or, possibly a little uncomfortable, considering that the previous wearer of the crown had been the unfortunate King Louis, killed at the Mohács battlefield.

At times of reconciliation it was returned to the nation's capital from its various hiding places. In 1790, for instance, the Habsburg king sent it back to Buda from Vienna. The crown and the other regalia were transported in an ornate coach, escorted by a thousand mounted guards of honour and received by long rows of singing people, kneeling at the roadside as the procession went by. In Buda, the nation's capital, the crown was greeted by the salute of 500 cannons and then exhibited at the royal castle, guarded, in turn, by the noble guards of Hungary's 72 counties.

During the period *between the World Wars*, Hungary had no king and was ruled by a Regent. The Holy Crown, the symbol of the nation's sovereignty was constantly guarded by a Crown Guard created for this task. At the end of 1944, the Crown Guard took it to Austria, then handed it over to the American Army, asking the U.S. Government to keep it until the liberation of Hungary.

The U.S. Government kept it **until 1978**. Then it was decided that the relics should be returned to Hungary and handed back to the Hungarian people, not to the Budapest Government.

The crown and the regalia are kept in the Hungarian National Museum in Budapest, as the possession of the Hungarian people.

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## THE FORSAKEN ARMY

The **Hungarian 2nd Army** was destroyed in the **Battle of the Don** which began on the **12th of January, 1943**. During the three weeks of bitter fighting, the army suffered about 150,000 casualties, among them 100,000 dead — about half of its total effective strength. *This was the worst military disaster of Hungarian history.*

In January 1943, the southern sector of the German front in Russia was in full retreat under the repeated, ferocious attacks of the Soviet armies. In the centre, the Don-front was held by the poorly equipped smaller allies of the Axis: Italian, Hungarian and Rumanian armies. The Hungarian 2nd Army was holding the easternmost, exposed Don-bend, south of Voronezh, along a 190 kilometre-long line. The army consisted of nine so-called "light" divisions — practically brigades with two regiments each. The army's armoured brigade had been placed under German command and was subsequently used elsewhere, covering the German retreat. The air-brigade had no fuel for its planes. The infantry divisions had no armour, very few heavy weapons, no efficient anti-tank weapons, no air-cover, no fuel for the vehicles. It was mid-winter in Central Russia: the temperature dropped to minus 40 degrees C at night. The Hungarian soldiers had no winter quarters, and only insufficient winter clothing, in spite of the Germans' firm undertaking to supply everything.

13 On the **12th of January** the main Russian attack struck the northern sector of the Hungarian line. The Soviet attacking force consisting of eight infantry and five armoured divisions concentrated on the sector held by two Hungarian brigades. After two days of bitter fighting, the Russians broke through, cutting off the northern part of the army, the 3rd Hungarian Corps. Two days later, **on the 14th**, the second wave of the Russian attack hit the southern sector of the Hungarian Army with four infantry and five armoured divisions. The Hungarian line was held for eight days, but in the meantime the Hungarians' southern neighbours, the 8th Italian Army, retreated without warning, leaving the right flank of the Hungarians unprotected. The Russians threatened to encircle several Hungarian and German divisions here, but the menaced units managed to break through the Russian line. The breakthrough was spearheaded by a Hungarian regiment which lost 80% of its effective strength.

In the north, the 3rd Hungarian Corps continued to cover the retreat of the German 2nd Army. The three divisions of this corps fought until February 1st, surrounded by Russian armoured divisions. On this day the Germans ordered the corps to attack the Russians in order to enable the encircled German units to retreat. The Hungarian Corps Commander, General Count Marcel Stomm, refused to obey and explained his action in his Order of the Day in the following words: ". . . The Royal Hungarian 3rd Corps . . . has been covering the withdrawal of the German 2nd Army for the last 12 days. During this time the Hungarian soldiers had to suffer the horrors of the Russian winter outdoors, without food, ammunition . . . Today I received the order to lead you in an attack to break through the Russian lines . . . which even the well-equipped and armed German troops were unable to stop . . . I cannot pass this order to you, as it would be senseless to expect the half-starved, half-frozen Hungarians to go to their deaths . . . After this I must allow everybody to look after himself . . . God be with you, Hungarian soldiers!"

On issuing this order, General Stomm said goodbye to his staff and began to walk in the direction of the Russian lines. He could hardly walk as both his feet were frozen. He was captured — with his service revolver in his hand — the only armed general captured by the Russians . . .

In attempting to stand fast in the face of an enemy 10-20 times superior in numbers and equipment, the Hungarian Army lost, in this single battle, three times the number of Australians killed during the entire war. These enormous losses tell the true story of courage and sacrifice of these forgotten men. In present-day Hungary, it is still forbidden to honour the memory of these brave soldiers. Their remains lie in unmarked mass-graves in Russia and the Communist Government of Hungary forbids the honouring of their memory.

It is left to the Hungarians living in the free world to remember them and their supreme sacrifice.

\*

The last king of the Árpád dynasty, **Endre III** (Andrew) died on the **14th of January, 1301**.

His only child, a daughter called *Elizabeth*, renounced her right to the throne and withdrew to a Dominican convent. She died

in 1336 and was subsequently canonized by the Church as the Blessed Elizabeth.

The dynasty of Árpád ruled Hungary for 400 years. The five ruling princes and 24 kings of the dynasty gave the nation a new land, a new religion and a new civilization. Some 20 members of the family have since been canonized by the Church.

During their reign Hungary became a national state with its own independent policy and a civilization which was truly Christian but still characteristically Hungarian.

\*

**Kálmán Mikszáth** was born on the 16th of January, 1847 in northern Hungary.

He spent most of his life as a writer, journalist and part-time politician in Budapest where he died in 1910.

In some respects he was the opposite of his rival and contemporary, Mór Jókai. Mikszáth was a realist and his "heroes" were simple peasants or middle-class people all possessing venal vices and modest virtues. Mikszáth described everyday life in 19th century Hungary with understanding and sympathy but he did not hesitate to view the shortcomings of his society with a touch of humour and sharp-witted satire. He also discovered the children whom most 19th century novelists ignored. His juvenile novel "The Two mendicant Students" is still a popular classic. So is "Saint Peter's Umbrella", a fairy tale for all ages. In his short stories he describes the simple peasants of the north, Magyars and Slovaks in peaceful coexistence.

A fine example of his social satire is the novelette "The Gentry" in which he describes the hypocritical vanity of the impoverished country nobility of northern Hungary. After a luxurious wedding, the narrator, a Budapest journalist, questions his friend about the pomp displayed by the guests at the wedding:

"And those four-in-hands," I exclaimed, "the pomp, the splendour and brilliance, the Havana cigars and everything, everything?"

"So much eyewash. The four-in-hands were borrowed from one place; the trappings here, the first pair of horses there, the second pair from another place . . ."

"But this is sheer deceit!"

"Popycock," Bogyo interrupted passionately. "Who would be deceived? Everyone knows that the other hasn't got four horses. These good boys, myself included, simply keep up form . . . beautiful, ancient form. Why, all this is so charming . . . This is the custom with us and customs must be respected at all costs . . . but as regards the merits of the case, even if the brilliance and pomp, the splendour . . . don't belong to one or the other . . . by all means, they belong to somebody — to all of us. These things happen to be scattered among us and whose business is it if, on certain occasions, we artificially pool them on one spot . . ." (Tr. by L. Halápy, Oxford Uni.Press, 1967).

Certainly a novel way of "keeping up with the Joneses"!

\*

**January the 18th** is the day of **Saint Margaret of Hungary**, another saint of the House of Árpád.

Margaret, or "Margit" in Hungarian, was the tenth child of King Béla IV. Béla, himself brother of the great Saint Elizabeth of Hungary, had three of his children canonized by the Church: Blessed Kinga, Blessed Yolanda and Saint Margaret.

Margaret was born during the *Tartar-Mongol invasion of Hungary in 1242* in the then Hungarian province, Dalmatia where the royal family had taken refuge. The parents offered their child to the service of God if Hungary was liberated. Margaret was placed, at the age of four, in a Dominican convent, was educated there and then took her vows in the new convent built on the island which today bears her name, Saint Margaret Island in the Danube, between Buda and Pest.

Margaret accepted her parents' wish eagerly and spent her life as a voluntary sacrifice for Hungary. She accepted no privileges and performed the lowliest duties in the convent. Her prayers and sacrifice helped the king in the almost impossible task of rebuilding the country ravaged by the Mongol devastation. She refused several offers of marriage and continued her harsh devotion until her death at the convent, at the age of 28.

Her name became a symbol of Christian sacrifice and devotion in the service of the nation. The memory of her self-sacrifice has served for centuries as consolation and comfort at times of tribulations. It was during such hard times, in 1943 that Pope Pius XII canonized her.



**The Blessed Eusebius** (or "Özséb" in Hungarian), founder of the monastic Order of Saint Paul, died on the **20th of January, 1270.**

Born into a rich, aristocratic family, Eusebius became a canon in Esztergom. Shocked by the horrors of the Tartar invasion of Hungary in 1241-42, he withdrew to the wilderness of the mountains and lived there as a hermit praying for his ravaged country. One night he saw a vision of many flickering lights uniting into one great flame. He interpreted this vision as God's indication of his new vocation. He assembled the hermits living in the forest and formed a monastic community of contemplating monks. He named the new order after Saint Paul the Hermit, so its members became known as the Pauline or White Monks.

Subsequently many Pauline monasteries were founded in Hungary and other countries of Central Europe. The order gave the Church many eminent prelates and saints.

The order has been disbanded in Hungary by the Communist regime, but Pauline monasteries still stand in Poland.

\*

**Imre Madách**, author of the greatest Hungarian drama, "*The Tragedy of Man*", was born on the **21st of January, 1823.**

He found ample emotional inspiration for his drama in his own life. He suffered persecution and imprisonment for his participation in the Hungarian Freedom War. During his imprisonment his wife was unfaithful to him. Madách divorced her, but never ceased to love her.

His drama, a philosophical tableau of the fate of mankind, depicts Adam and Eve being guided by Lucifer through various phases of human history. They experience in dreamlike prophetic scenes the struggles and frustrations of their descendants. The final scene however ends with a message of hope: God's last words to Adam are: "Man — strive and have faith — unfaltering faith . . ." Adam represents mankind in search of progress and happiness, whilst Eve is the symbol of the ideal Woman — Man's inspiration and comfort and his loyal companion. Obviously, the kind of woman Madách's wife never was . . .

This is how Eve describes Woman's eternal vocation:

*"I'll shine beyond the tomb!  
While Love and Poetry and Youth endure  
Upon my homeward way I still will go.  
My smile alone the ills of Earth can cure,  
And flush men's faces with its sunny glow . . ."*

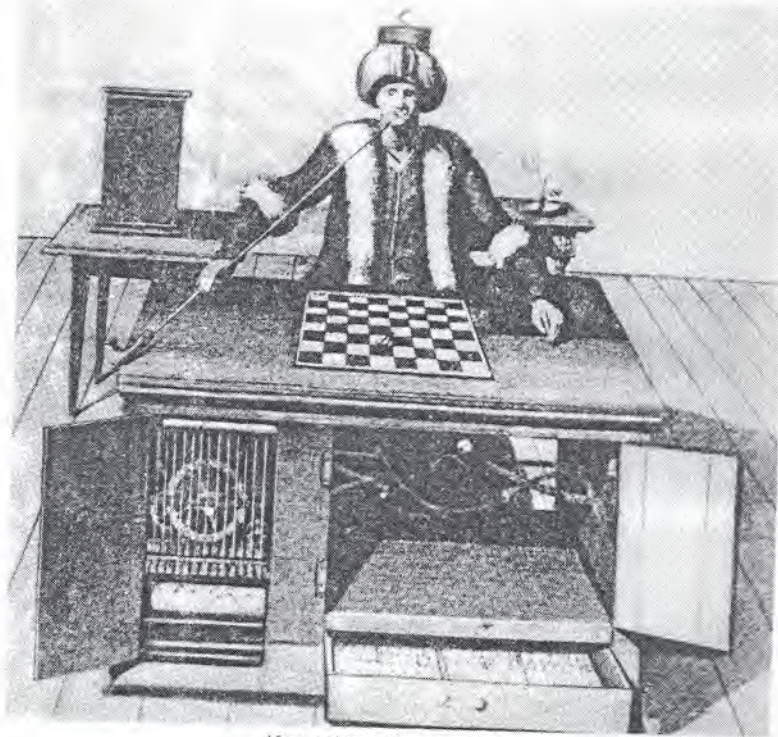
Madách died soon after the publication of his great work, in **1860.**

\*

**General Sándor Asbóth** died on the **21st of January, 1868** in **Buenos Aires**, where he was at the time United States Ambassador to Argentina. He was a military aide to Lajos Kossuth during the Hungarian Freedom War of 1848. He fled to America after the defeat of the Hungarian Army. During the Civil War he led a Union division and fought with distinction as one of the several Hungarian generals in Lincoln's army. After the war the president appointed him ambassador to Argentina where he eventually died as a result of an old war injury.

\*

**Farkas Kempelen**, the adventurous scientist was born on **January 23, 1734.** His best-known invention was the **chess-playing robot** which he constructed to entertain Queen Maria Theresa. This enigmatic machine was probably only an intricate magic trick: a box with a chess-playing dwarf cleverly concealed inside. It entertained — and frustrated — such eminent chess players as Maria Theresa, Frederick the Great and Napoleon. Kempelen never revealed its secret. After his death the machine was taken to America where it was destroyed in a fire. (Did it have a "self-destructing" device?) Kempelen did however have some *genuine inventions*: he constructed a "speaking machine" which can still be seen (and heard) in the museum of King's College, London. He also invented a system of writing for the blind — ten years before Braille. He was also a skilled civil engineer and architect: his achievements included the building of the giant fountain at Schönbrunn, a theatre in Buda, and a cotton mill in southern Hungary.



Kempelen's Chess robot

★

On January 24, 1849 the adventurous Hungarian soldier, István Türr set up a Hungarian Legion to help the Italians of Sardinia to fight for their freedom. After the defeat of the uprising, he fled to Germany and fought the Austrians there. Defeated again, he fled to South America in search of new battles to fight. On returning to Europe, he met Lajos Kossuth, the exiled leader of the Hungarian freedom struggle. Kossuth charged Türr with the organization of a "Hungarian Legion" in Italy. It was Kossuth's hope to liberate Austrian-oppressed Hungary with the help of the French who were at war with Austria at the time. The French however concluded peace with Vienna and Kossuth disbanded the legion.

Türr and his legionnaires joined the Italian freedom fighters under Garibaldi. Türr became *Garibaldi's chief-of-staff*. Between campaigns he found time to marry the niece of Napoleon III. At

the conclusion of Garibaldi's successful campaign, Türr returned to Hungary and his original profession — civil engineering.

He played an important role in the construction of the canals of the Hungarian Plain. Later he also worked on the construction of the Suez and first Panama canals.

To everybody's surprise (including, probably, his own), he died peacefully at home, at the age of 84.

### "NEW MELODIES OF NEWER YEARS . . ."

The poet **Endre Ady** died on January 27, 1919 in Budapest.

His first collection of poems, published in 1906 had a shattering effect on the stagnating Hungarian literary life of that complacent era. He published several collections in the following years, each raising a storm of both praise and attack for its prophetic, scolding patriotism, sensuous longing for love and for the poet's imaginative symbolism.

Ady created a symbolic language of his own to convey his dramatic message, as, for instance, in his appeal to the nation presented as a paraphrase of an old Magyar folksong:

*"New winds are shaking  
the old Magyar maples,  
Waiting we wait for  
the new Magyar miracles . . ."*

He felt deeply for his Magyar nation, and saw the faults of his contemporaries. He despaired of the nation's future, and raised his scolding voice against it like an angry parent, calling it *"his detestable, lovable nation . . ."* His was the tragic role of the unwanted Messiah, his impossible task the awakening of the nation with the *"new melodies of newer years . . ."*

His weary heart repeatedly found peace in his never-failing refuge, God's love. He remained, indeed, throughout his erring, prophetic career a God-seeking, repenting Christian psalmist, echoing David's eternal human cry from the depths of his misery and passion. The destiny of this lonely prophet was *"sadly, between Heaven and Earth to wander . . ."* Like the ancient prophets, he found his consolation in God.

In 1919, at the end of the World War, thousand-year old Hungary was being destroyed by enemies within and without. On a cold January day Ady's tormented soul finally found peace in his Christian faith:

*"I have already found Him in my heart*

*"I've found Him and have clasped Him in my arms,  
In death we'll be united, never to part . . ."*



## February

King **Kálmán** (Colman), called "The Wise" was crowned on the **3rd of February, 1095**. He was an enlightened man who modernized Hungary's laws. He forbade, among other things, the persecution of the *witches who, he stated, "did not exist"*. He signed this Law 700 years before Salem, at the height of the witch-hunting hysteria of the Middle Ages.

At the end of this 24-year reign he became prey to the intrigues of his family. His adulterous wife's evil behaviour may have given **Kálmán** second thoughts about the "witches that did not exist . . ."

\*

**Miklós** (Nicholas) **Horthy**, former Regent of Hungary, died on the **9th of February, 1957** in Portugal.

Horthy was a career officer in the Austrian-Hungarian Navy and its last commander-in-chief. After the collapse of the dual Monarchy, he took part in the activities of the anti-communist national government in exile as commander of the so-called National Army.

After the collapse of the Bolshevik regime of **Béla Kun** (the so-called "Council Republic") in July 1919, Hungary was left without a government capable of enforcing law and order. During the following three months, individuals and vigilante groups committed certain violent acts of revenge against the people associated with the atrocities of the Bolshevik regime. The emigrés of the **Károlyi-Kun** regimes denounced these lawless acts as „*The White Terror*” and accused Horthy and his regime of having permitted, or even committed them.

Horthy and his National Army were, during these months of chaotic interregnum under the strict supervision of the Allied (French) command in Southern Hungary. Therefore they had no



Miklós Horthy

opportunity to commit or to stop "atrocities". On the 16th of November, 1919, the Allies gave Horthy permission to enter Budapest and restore law and order in the country. Horthy then *put an end to these regrettable lawless acts* of revenge. The members of the Allied Control Commission in Budapest confirmed this unanimously.

The new Hungarian Parliament elected Horthy the country's Head of State with the title of "Regent" ("Kormányzó") in 1920.

After his election he withdrew from active politics, becoming, in all but name a dignified constitutional monarch. He was scrupulously honest and he observed the Constitution meticulously, but his isolation and conservatism prevented him from recognizing the social problems of his nation.

During World War II his honest but rather old-fashioned and naive statesmanship was unable to prevent Hungary's involvement at the side of Germany. A warm-hearted humanist, he made his country a refuge for persecuted Jews and Poles during the war.

He was forced by Germany to resign in October, 1944. Subsequently, he was interned in Germany and freed at the end of the war by the Americans. He then settled in Portugal and lived there until his death.

In spite of his conservatism, Horthy initiated an interesting *social evolution*: he had himself surrounded by middle-class personalities, creating a "new nobility" with honours and titles somewhat similar to the British system. He thus intended to create a new ruling class to replace the old aristocracy. Of his 14 Prime Ministers only one was a landed aristocrat. The world of his old-fashioned values collapsed in 1945 with Hungary's defeat and Soviet occupation.

### THE PAINTER OF COMPASSIONATE REALISM

Mihály Munkácsy, the greatest Hungarian painter, was born on the 10th of February, 1844.

Orphaned, he was placed in a joinery as an apprentice. His painting talent was discovered and his relatives sent him to Vienna to study art. He managed to finance his studies by the sale of his paintings in Austria and Germany. His Magyar landscapes, inspired by his childhood memories, attracted considerable attention.

In 1870 he painted the "Condemned Cell", a homage to a childhood idol, a Robin Hood of the Magyar puszta, the "betyár". The painting gained the coveted Gold Medal of the Paris Salon. His success lured the young painter to Paris where he was welcomed by

the critics and patrons of the arts. The fine genre compositions of this period present examples of his dramatic and compassionate approach to the poor and old, such as *"Woman carrying faggots"* and *"Vagabonds of the night"*.

He married a wealthy French baroness, but his marriage was childless and unhappy. Though successful, Munkácsy still felt an exile, a lonely man who received no real love from his snobbish wife or selfish friends, a stranger in an alien paradise. His tragic mood is best represented in the masterpiece *"Milton"*, where he painted the tragic, blind English genius, exiled and hated by his own family.



Munkácsy: The condemned cell.

At the height of his career he turned to religious themes. In *"Christ before Pilate"* he expressed the contrast of Christ's dignified silence amid a shouting, hostile crowd. After having tried many models for Christ, Munkácsy finally painted his own tormented, sad face. Three years later he completed *"Golgotha"*, capturing the awesome moment following Christ's death on the cross. The amazing range of colours includes several shades of white. He was a true magician with colours: once, in a gesture of bravado, he painted a woman's portrait using 572 shades of blue.

Tortured by an old illness and certain of his approaching death, he worked feverishly. He painted portraits of famous men,

completed a large mural in Vienna and then the mural *"Conquest of Hungary"* for the new parliament of his country. His last work was *"Ecce Homo"*: Pilate showing the scourged Christ to the Jews. He painted it while mortally ill — concluding his Christ trilogy and his own life's work. **He died in 1900.**

Munkácsy, the most popular painter of his time in Paris is hardly known abroad today. His unpronounceable name and the fact that he insisted on remaining an alien in France have made the emotional French forget him quickly. He did not belong to any school or group either. Most of his masterpieces were bought up by rich Americans and thus disappeared from public view. His own countrymen also failed to appreciate his delicate colours, fine distinctions of shades and compassionate themes.

His original style — we may call it **"compassionate realism"** — shows a deep insight into the sufferings of the human soul, especially of the poor and old, his favourite models. This was not a popular choice in the complacent era of Victorian snobbery. His portraits and compositions are exquisite studies in human psychology: he always grasps the moment of eloquent silence: the principal character has just said something or is about to say something, whilst the secondary characters provide a disturbing background of sounds.

Since his death his fame and glory have faded and so have the delicate colours of his few masterpieces still visible in the galleries of his two countries, France and Hungary.

★

**On the 11th of February, 1676,** 26 Hungarian galley slaves were released by the Spanish Navy.

*Leopold I* (1640-1705), a bigoted tyrant, was endeavouring to turn the Hungarians of his Empire into Catholic-Germans. The Hungarians, many of whom had turned to Protestantism in protest against the Catholic Habsburgs, refused to denounce their religion or their nationality. Leopold had their preachers brought before an Inquisition-like court, which sentenced about 90 of them to death. "Kind-hearted" Leopold reprieved them and changed their sentence to perpetual galley-slavery. Then he *sold the preachers to the Spanish* . . .

The Protestant nations of the West were appalled by Leopold's cruelty and protested vehemently (especially Holland).

The emperor then allowed the Dutch admiral Ruyter to release the prisoners from the Spanish. By that time only 26 preachers were alive . . .

\*

**Ilona Zrínyi**, the mother of Prince Ferenc Rákóczi, died in exile on the 18th of February, 1703.

She was the daughter of Péter Zrínyi, the patriot executed by the Vienna regime for plotting against the Habsburg King of Hungary. Her uncle, Miklós Zrínyi, was the greatest Hungarian statesman and soldier of the century. Ilona inherited her father's fiery patriotism and her uncle's statesmanship and military qualities.

Her first husband was the Transylvanian prince, *Ferenc Rákóczi I.* They had two children: Ferenc who later became the leader of Hungary's greatest freedom struggle, and a girl, Julia. After the death of her first husband, Ilona married *Prince Imre Thököly*, the leader of the Hungarian freedom struggles at the end of the 17th century. Thököly who fought the Germans as an ally of the Turks had to flee to Turkey when the German imperial troops chased the Turks out of Hungary.

*Ilona Zrínyi* remained, with her two children in the family fortress-castle *Munkács*, in Hungary. She defended the fort successfully for three years against superior imperial forces. At the end of the longest siege in Hungarian history, she surrendered the fort, accepting the German commander's guarantee of safe conduct.

In breach of the guarantee, Ilona Zrínyi and her two children were taken to Vienna and prison. Thököly eventually managed to redeem his wife, but the two children were kept in Vienna as wards — practically prisoners — of the Emperor. *Ilona rejoined her husband in exile in Turkey.* She died there in 1703 — the very year, her son, Ferenc began his epic war of freedom in Hungary.

Ilona Zrínyi was the finest example of patriotic Magyar womanhood. Together with the virtues of the loyal wife and loving mother, she also possessed the talents for military leadership and wise statesmanship — attributes which made many Hungarian ladies of those turbulent times worthy and equal companions of their warrior husbands.

Her remains, together with those of her son and husband, were brought back to Hungary in 1906 and laid to rest in the old Hungarian town of *Kassa*. Ironically, her last resting place has once again become a place of exile as the historic Magyar town has been awarded to Czechoslovakia by the Trianon treaty . . .

\*

**József Szigeti**, the great violin virtuoso died on the 19th of February, 1973.

He was born in Hungary and educated in Budapest. Among his professors were such masters as Joachim and Hubay. Szigeti's style was distinctive for the purity of the tone and his unpretentious, classic honesty. He was also a great teacher and a master of the art of transcription. Among his transcriptions were the piano pieces of his friend, Bartók.

Szigeti was only one of a galaxy of great Hungarian performing artists, such as the violinists *Ede Reményi*, *Emil Telmányi*, *Joseph Joachim*, *Jenő Hubay*, *Johanna Darányi*, *Ferenc Vecsey*, the cellist *János Starker* and pianists, like *Géza Anda*, the performer of the famous Mozart theme for the film "Elvira Madigan."

## THE GREATEST TELLER OF TALES

The romantic novelist **Mór (Maurice) Jókai** was born on the 19th of February, 1825.

He is still one of the most widely read authors in Hungary. His work is also well-known abroad in many translations. In 56 years of literary activity, Jókai has had over one hundred volumes of short stories and novels published.

His first historical novels were written during the Austrian oppression of Hungary, following the defeat of the 1848 Freedom War. Some of these novels describe imaginary events in Hungary during the Turkish wars (16th — 17th centuries). He ignores the historic truth and changes the Turks and Hungarians into heroes and villains. He paints a fantasy world of historic "westerns", in which the main concern of "Goodies" and "Baddies" is personal pride and honour rather than the nation's plight. Later he turned to more recent history and wrote closer to historic truth. The novel

"*The Baron's Sons*" is a fine epic of the Freedom War, with a pleasant blend of history and romance.

One of his many social novels, "*Dark Diamonds*", suggests an easy solution to the social problems of the workers of a mine. They are redeemed by the joint efforts of the patriotic scientist-hero (the owner of the mine) and the beautiful and brilliant daughter of the miners' leader. The two transform the mining village into a Utopian community where everybody lives happily ever after — including the hero and the heroine. A commendable solution to labour-management disputes.

The hundreds of short stories and novelettes, the favourite intellectual diet of the Sunday papers, offer relaxing, uncomplicated entertainment without cumbersome philosophies.

Jókai's topics include the complete range of human experience (and a few inhuman ones), all possible periods of history (and a few impossible ones), all known regions of the world (and a few known to Jókai only), but only two basic emotions: love and hate. He describes history not as it was but as it should have been, human relationships as they might have been and science as it could have been. He has tales to tell — and he tells them with humour and a twinkle in his eye. Some call him the "greatest Hungarian teller of tales". In a nation in which every second man is a politician, this is praise indeed.

To illustrate Jókai's romantic style, here are the concluding lines of the novel "*Dark Diamonds*" mentioned above. The coal-mine is saved (hence the title "dark diamonds") and the owner-hero had just asked the miner's daughter to marry him: "*— Oh, sir, she whispered, if I do not die, I shall always love you, but I feel that I shall die.*"

*As she spoke she fell back in a faint. Her brilliant colour faded to a wax pallor, her flashing eyes closed; and her body, which a moment before was like a blooming rose, crumpled lifeless, like an autumn leaf.*

*Ivan held her lifeless body in his arms.*

*The woman whom he had loved for so long, for whom he had suffered so much, was his, just as her pulse ceased to beat, just as she said: 'I shall always love you, but I feel that I shall die.'*

*But she did not die.*

*A diamond is a diamond for ever."*

★

The **24th of February** is the anniversary of one of the darkest episodes of Hungarian history, the death of **Charles Durazzo, king of Hungary in 1386.**

After the death of Louis the Great in 1382, king of Hungary and Poland, the two countries accepted his two daughters as their queens respectively. However, the nobles of Croatia — which was forming a union with Hungary — refused to accept Louis' daughter, Mary as their queen. They persuaded instead *Charles Durrazzo*, a distant relative of the late king, to claim the Hungarian throne.

Charles invaded Hungary at the head of a Croatian-Italian army and intimidated Queen Mary to accept him as "King-Consort". He was crowned by an equally intimidated archbishop. The Hungarian nobility refused to accept him, and decided to remove "the usurper" from the throne. A few weeks after the coronation, a deputation led by the Palatin (First Minister), appeared before Charles. One of the members of the deputation, *Count Forgách* drew his sword and attacked Charles. Charles and his Italian courtiers defended themselves, but Forgách inflicted mortal wounds on Charles. He died a few days later, after a reign of only 60 days.

Though assassination of kings was common practice in Europe in those centuries, Hungary had been unaffected by this popular fashion until that time. The death of the only king ever killed by his subjects in Hungary can be explained, but not excused.

★

At the end of the month of February the Church celebrates the memory of two of Hungary's 40 saints.

The **Blessed László Bátori** is remembered on the **27th of February**. He was a distant relative of King Matthias, a Pauline monk, remembered as the first translator of the Bible. He died around 1484.

★

Better known is the **Blessed Hedwig of Hungary**, also known as *Queen Jadwiga of Poland* whom the Catholic Church remembers on the **28th of February**.

She was the younger daughter of King Louis of Hungary and Poland. After her father's death in 1382 *she inherited the throne of*

*Poland.* Hedwig — or Jadwiga, as the Poles called her — was crowned at the age of 12. She was already engaged to a German prince with whom she was in love. However, she renounced her love for the sake of her Polish nation: she married the pagan prince of the neighbouring Lithuanians, Jagiello, in order to pacify the warlike neighbours of Poland. She united the two nations and Jagiello and his people were soon converted to Christianity under the influence of the saintly queen.

Jadwiga ruled her Polish-Lithuanian people with dedication and wisdom. She visited all regions of the united countries, dispensed justice in person, preached the gospel and established schools, hospitals and monasteries. The Poles called her “Little Mother” and revered her as a saint even during her lifetime.

She died at the age of 26 — after giving birth to her only child.

\*

The painter **Count Mihály Zichy** died in Russia on the **28th of February, 1906.**

He left Hungary after the defeat of the Freedom War in 1849 and lived in France and Russia working as a successful graphic artist and painter. His best known works are the romantic graphic illustrations for Hungarian, French and Russian poetry.

He kept his proud Hungarian identity during 50 years of exile. In his memoirs he explained: “Whoever was lucky to be born a Hungarian will always remain a Hungarian.”



# March

## THE MAGNIFICENT TWILIGHT OF MEDIEVAL HUNGARY

**King Lajos I (Louis)** called the “Great” was born in Hungary on the **5th of March, 1326.**

He was the son of Hungary’s *King Charles Robert*, himself a descendant of the Árpáds on his mother’s side and a scion of the Neopolitan Anjou House. Prince Lajos was educated at the courts of Buda and Visegrád. He received the best of Hungarian and Western ideas of Christian chivalry and late-Gothic culture. *In 1342 Lajos inherited the throne* of a strong and prosperous Hungary. He was called the last of the knight-kings, a truly Christian monarch, like his ideal, Saint László, the 11th century Hungarian king.

Lajos was a great patron of *art and science*. He founded the first Hungarian university at Pécs in 1367. The pre-Renaissance statues, made during his reign and recently found in Buda show a remarkable degree of artistic taste and workmanship in an era when sculpture was still little more than an ornamental extension of architecture.

He saw the danger of the Turkish advance on the Balkan Peninsula and created a protective belt of vassal states under Hungarian rule across the peninsula. In Dalmatia — similarly a Hungarian province — he established a naval base against Venice, an ally of the Turks. Such was his fame in Europe, that the **Poles invited him to their throne in 1370** which he accepted. During the period of personal union, Poland and Hungary formed a giant zone of peace and prosperity in the centre of war-torn Europe.

Ironically, he had little success in dealing with the country of his ancestors, *Naples*. His brother, Endre had inherited the Neopolitan throne but he fell victim to the intrigues of his wife and courtiers and was assassinated. Lajos reluctantly led two



campaigns into Italy to punish the criminals, but achieved only partial success. *He died in 1382*, after a long illness, probably leprosy, contracted during his campaigns.

In the century which saw the stormy twilight of the Middle Ages, the beginning of the Hundred Years War, the internal wars of western Europe, the ravages of revolutions, uprisings and the "Black Death", the Hungary of Lajos the Great was the island of peace and prosperity in the heart of Europe.

\*

The painter **László Paál** died in France on the **4th of March, 1879**, at the age of 33. He was a friend of the Hungarian painter Munkácsy. Like many of his talented compatriots, Paál left the oppressive atmosphere of Austrian-dominated Hungary after the freedom struggle of 1848. He lived and worked abroad: in Holland, then in France where he became a member of the so-called school of Barbizon. His soft, melancholic landscapes reflected the profound pessimism of the talented but unhappy and lonely artist.

\*

On the **5th of March, 1888** the Hungarian explorer, count **Samuel Teleki** discovered two huge lakes in Central Africa. He named them, after the Hungarian Crown Prince and his wife, Lake Rudolf and Lake Stefania respectively. The modest scientist did not name any geographical features after himself. The well-known Mount (or Volcano) Teleki was named after him by an English explorer.

We find Hungarian names on the map of other continents too. There is a Zsigmondy Peak in the Alps and a Zichy Island in the Arctic. Central Asia honours the memory of three Magyar explorers with names such as the Cholnoky Peak, Lóczy (Lhotse) Peak and Nopcsa Peak. This last one is dedicated to the memory of Ferenc Nopcsa, an adventurous explorer of the turn of the century to whom the Albanians once offered the throne of their newly created country. Nopcsa declined — and continued his search for dinosaurs.

The town of Esterházy in Canada and the towns of New Buda and Kossuth in the United States received their nostalgic names from their Magyar founders at the end of the 19th century.

The **12th of March, 1241** marked the beginning of the worst tragedy of medieval Hungary: the so-called **Tartar or Mongol invasion**. On that day the immense army of Batu Khan broke through the Verecke pass of the Carpathians.

*Batu, the grandson of Jengis (Ghengis) Khan* set out in 1239 from Asia to conquer Europe, especially Hungary. His well-trained swift and brilliantly led horsemen overran in quick succession Armenia, the Russian and other eastern-European principalities. He then defeated the Poles thus securing his right flank, then turned against his principal enemy, Hungary, the only remaining bulwark of western Europe. Having broken through the Carpathians, the Mongol horsemen soon reached the heart of Hungary, destroying the towns and killing every living soul wherever they met with resistance. The Hungarian king, *Béla IV*, attacked the Mongols who enticed his army into the treacherous swampy terrain of the Sajó River at *Mohi*. The battle of Mohi is remembered on its anniversary, the 12th of April.

\*

On the **12th of March, 1879**, the flood of the Tisza River destroyed Hungary's second largest city, **Szeged**. The disaster elicited an international response: many of the world's great cities contributed to the reconstruction of the stricken city. This relief action was mainly initiated by the Hungarian refugees abroad who, after the defeat of the freedom war of 1848, created an atmosphere of understanding and sympathy for Hungary all over the world. In grateful memory, the finest streets of modern Szeged bear the names of the assisting cities.

\*

The first **Russian Revolution** broke out on the **14th of March, 1917**. Alexander Kerenski, the leader of a small left-wing party, soon became the central figure in the events which resulted in the overthrow of the Russian dynasty. This was followed by general chaos and confusion. Lenin's well-prepared Bolsheviks, who had been waiting in Switzerland, then took over in November 1917. They swept Kerenski and his confused Liberals out of office, and began the bolshevization of Russia.



Count Mihály Károlyi

The effect of these events reached Hungary a year after Kerenski's fall. In *October 1918 Michael Károlyi* copied carefully all of Kerenski's mistakes, overthrew the old regime, created a Republic and plunged the country into complete chaos and misery. Then, realizing his failure, he handed the government of the country to **Béla Kun** and his team of Russian-trained Bolshevik agents. This was on **March 20, 1919**, the tragic March day which marks the beginning of the so-called "Dictatorship of the Proletariat" or "Council Republic", which completed the destruction of historic Hungary.

### THE HUNGARIAN SPRING OF 1848

March, the first month of the northern spring, has always been a period of violent change in Europe. On the **15th of March** the Hungarians, too, celebrate the anniversary of such a **spring revolution**, but a peaceful, bloodless one.

In 1848 Hungary was little more than a province of the Austrian Empire, ruled by the Habsburg emperor, who was also king of Hungary. In order to regain the freedom of the Hungarian nation, the Magyar political leaders began negotiations in Vienna with the imperial government. They demanded the establishment of a constitutional government in Hungary and the status of an equal partner in the dual Monarchy.



Sándor Petőfi

Dissatisfied with the slow progress of these negotiations, the youth of Pest, the Hungarian capital, decided to demand action. On the **15th of March, 1848**, the poet Petöfi recited his stirring poem "Arise Magyars", to the assembled demonstrators. The crowd then moved in a disciplined procession to the office of the imperial Governor and presented their demands — *the famous 12 points*.

These were printed for the first time without censorship. The points were almost word by word identical with the demands being negotiated in Vienna. They demanded, among other things, the abolition of serfdom, equality for all before the law, freedom of religion and of the press, and free elections by popular vote,

The military watched the demonstrations with sympathy — *not a shot was fired*. In the meantime, word reached the capital that the Vienna negotiations had ended successfully and that a democratic government had been granted by the emperor. Thus the youth of the capital expressed, without bloodshed, the nation's unanimous decisions to introduce sweeping reforms — an achievement which had cost the French nation hundreds of thousands of lives just half a century before.

March the 15th with its symbolic gesture has since remained the *Hungarians' great national day*, the one day of the year when Hungarians all over the world forget their differences and discover what unites them: **their love of freedom**.

\*

**March the 17th** is the anniversary of the death of **Tivadar Puskás**, scientist and friend of Edison. He invented the tele-phonograph, a predecessor of radio broadcasting, and developed the principle of telephone exchange. A year after the invention of the telephone he set up the world's first telephone exchange in Paris. He died in 1893.

\*

Cardinal archbishop **Péter Pázmány** died on the **19th of March, 1637**.

Born of a Protestant family, then converted to Catholicism, he joined the Jesuit order and eventually became Primate of Hungary.

By the end of the 16th century most Hungarian nobles had adopted the Protestant faith in protest against the Catholic Austrian Habsburg regime, which had treated Hungary little better than the pagan Turks. Pázmány convinced his fellow-Hungarians that Catholicism was not identical with Austrian Habsburg oppression, and that religious discussions did not have to degenerate into bloody battles as in Germany, France or England. His only weapons were the written and spoken word. He was a true Magyar patriot, and he approved of the independent policies of the Protestant princes of Transylvania. He realised that the small, mountainous principality was the Magyar nation's last bastion against the Turks and the Germans. He carried on a friendly correspondence with the Protestant rulers of Transylvania.

The result of their common effort was that Hungary was spared the horrors of the religious wars of that century.

Pázmány was an accomplished master of the colourful Hungarian word, which he used with quick wit and deep logic. The following extract from one of his writings may serve as a useful memento in the atomic hysteria of our days:

*"Men build slowly, but they are quick to destroy their beautiful buildings. Not so almighty God. For He builds quickly. In six days He created Heaven and Earth in all their fairness and splendour, but he took seven days to destroy a single city, Jericho . . . Nor will He hasten to bring this world to dust and ashes. He waits with great patience, as He does now . . ."*

\*

On the **19th of March, 1944** Hitler's Germany *suppressed Hungary's independence*.

The German's intervention was a reaction to the Hungarian endeavours to extricate themselves from the War. By 1943 Hungary found herself committed in the war against Soviet Russia. The Regent, Miklós Horthy, instructed the Prime Minister, Miklós Kállay, to seek an armistice from the Allies. As Hungary was surrounded by German occupied countries or Germany's satellites, the negotiations were conducted in secret. Besides, Hungary was harbouring a million Jews and other refugees from German persecution. A sudden German intervention would have endangered their lives.

Hungarians are not very good at keeping secrets, and so Hitler soon learned of the negotiations and invited Horthy to Germany in

March 1944. Here he faced the Regent with an ultimatum. This was that, unless he appointed a government committed to Germany, Hitler would order satellite troops in to occupy Hungary. During the "talks", on the 19th of March, German troops and the Gestapo occupied the key positions in Hungary. Horthy had no choice: he did not want to resign. That is to say, he did not want to leave his sinking ship.

He knew that Hungary had no troops at home to resist the Germans. So he appointed a government designated by Hitler. From this day until the end of the war, the German army and the SS kept Hungary under occupation. The country's administration was placed under German police and military supervision.

Thus the leadership of Hungary was deprived of its freedom of action during the critical last months of the war.

\*

The 20th of March is the feast of a little-known Hungarian saint, the Blessed Máté Csák, who died a Dominican monk in 1336.

He was the nephew of the better-known Hungarian lord of the same name who ruled practically all of Upper Hungary in the 14th century as a semi-independent feudal prince. *Lord Csák*, Palatin (First Minister) of Hungary in his time and a direct descendant of the 10th century Magyar chieftain Előd, would be amused to learn that certain imaginative Czech historians have used his name to prove their claims to Northern Hungary. In a submission to the Peace Treaty Commission, these "historians" pointed out that the word "Czech" in its modern English pronunciation is somewhat similar to the Hungarian pronunciation of "Csák". This proves that Lord Csák was Czech, and consequently the area ruled by him must be Czech national territory.

This poor linguistic joke about 14th century Czechs speaking 20th century English was accepted by the Commission as one of the "proofs" deciding the fate of Hungary at Trianon in 1920 . . .

### THE IDOL OF A NATION

**Lajos Kossuth** died on the 20th of March, 1894 at the age of 92 exiled in Italy.

Descendant of an old Hungarian family, he was a lawyer by profession and possessed exceptional talents as an orator, writer

and statesman. Elected to the Hungarian Diet (Parliament) he joined the reform movement led by Count Széchenyi. During the subsequent sessions of the Diet a difference in priorities began to separate Kossuth's "Liberals" from Széchenyi's "Moderates": Kossuth's primary goal was to obtain the nation's political freedom, whilst Széchenyi suggested internal social and economic reforms first.



*Lajos Kossuth*

Lajos Kossuth

When a responsible government was granted to Hungary in March 1848, Kossuth was a member of the first Ministry. During the summer of 1848, the Austrian government began destroying Hungary's new freedom by rousing the nationalities against the Hungarian government and later by active use of imperial troops against the Hungarian National Army. Kossuth became the nation's leader during the freedom struggle. In April 1849 he was unanimously *elected Head of State with the title of Regent*, to replace the dethroned Habsburg emperor. But the intervention of the Russian Army in May 1849 decided the fate of Hungary: the fight for freedom was lost.

After the capitulation in August 1849 Kossuth *sought refuge abroad*. After a short stay in Turkey, he was invited to the *United States*.

The American government also invited him to address sessions of the Congress and the Senate: an honour only granted to one other foreign politician, Winston Churchill. During his stay in the U.S. and then in England he made the plight of his nation known to the western world in several hundred addresses delivered in fluent, colourful English.

After his return from the U.S., Kossuth lived in England, *and later in Italy*, watching the European political scene and hoping that an opportunity would arise to initiate another campaign for the liberation of his nation. During these years he managed to gain world-wide attention and sympathy for his nation's cause through his speeches, writings, correspondence and negotiations. Thus the constant pressure of public opinion maintained by Kossuth's activities remained a real threat to Francis Joseph's shaky empire, and became a deciding factor in hastening the Austrian acceptance of the so-called "*Compromise*". This agreement, concluded between the two nations in 1867, made Hungary a (nominally) equal partner in the so-called "*Austrian-Hungarian Monarchy*".

Kossuth refused to approve of the "*Compromise*". He believed that Hungary, tied to doomed Austria, would eventually fall with the Habsburg Empire. His prophecy became tragically true at the end of World War I.

He remained in exile in Italy. In his writings he advocated the creation of a *confederation of Central European Nations* in order to secure their independence between the two aggressive powers, Russia and Germany. The suggestions of this great old statesman

are remembered today as the only solution that could have prevented the horrors of two world wars.

He died in Torino, Italy. Only then was he allowed to return to Hungary. His remains were brought to Budapest. Hundreds of thousands of Magyars wept as his body was laid to rest in the soil of his native country.

His name — probably the best known Hungarian name in the world — has since remained synonymous with the Magyars' love of freedom.

\*

**March the 28th** is the day of **Saint John Capistrano**. This Italian monk joined the Hungarian crusaders of John Hunyadi and inspired them with his fiery speeches. With his help, the great Hungarian general defeated the Turkish armies in various battles during the 15th century.

Saint John died of the plague together with his friend, John Hunyadi a few days after their greatest victory at Nándorfehérvár in 1456. He was one of the many foreigners who, attracted by the strange magic of Hungary, came to join the Hungarians and die for them.

\*

**Dezső Kosztolányi** was born on the **29th of March, 1885**.

On completing his studies at the Faculty of Philosophy in Budapest, he joined the circle of writers inspired by western literary trends. He became an outstanding poet, essayist and prose writer, the greatest impressionist in Hungarian literature. In all his writings his principal consideration was the purity of the Magyar language. His prose shows a sympathetic observer of human frailty while his poetry often hides deep philosophy under the deceptively simple exterior, as in the following lines from a poem written to his wife:

*You came in my room telling something odd;  
so after years of years I realized  
that there you are and scarcely listening  
surprised I looked at you. I closed my eyes.  
And this to myself I repeated mumbling:  
"I am used to her as I am used to air.  
She is giving me the breath".*

(Tr. by E. E. Kunz)

# April

Hungary's last king, **Charles IV** died on the **1st of April, 1922.**

He inherited the Habsburg throne of the Austrian-Hungarian Monarchy in 1916, upon the death of Francis Joseph, during World War I. He immediately initiated peace moves but his efforts were frustrated, partly because the opposing Entente powers insisted on the total destruction of the Monarchy and partly because his own Austrian-Czech ministers and generals wanted to fight on Germany's side until victory. Only the Hungarian Prime Minister, Tisza, supported Charles' peace initiatives, but to no avail.

When Germany and the dual Monarchy did collapse in 1918, the Habsburg empire broke up into small national states. Hungary remained a kingdom under the Regent, Admiral Horthy. Charles claimed the Hungarian throne on two occasions in 1921, but the Hungarian government had to refuse, as the Trianon Treaty expressly forbade the restoration of the Habsburg dynasty. Charles and his family were taken into exile by a British ship. Soon afterwards Charles died on the island of Madeira.

It is one of the ironies of Hungarian history, that this honest warm-hearted man, loved and respected by the Hungarian nation, was not allowed to remain on the Hungarian throne. He was the first Habsburg who would have been welcome to it.

\*

**Ottokár Prohászka**, bishop of Székesfehérvár, died on the **2nd of April, 1927.**

Through his writings, sermons and activities, this great Catholic prelate became the inspiring voice of Hungary's Christian revival at the turn of the century. He voiced his concern about the excesses of materialistic capitalism and, at the same time, pointed to the dangers of atheistic Marxism. He felt a deep, emotional love for his Magyar nation, and watched its social problems with increasing

concern. As a remedy, he advocated the principles of Christian socialism, as suggested by the papal encyclicals of that period.

His religious writings reached the mystic heights of sainthood, but his practical humanism made even his loftiest ideas accessible to his readers. His progressive social thinking and practical Christianity found a gratifying echo among the Catholic and Protestant youth of his nation, thus initiating a true Christian Renaissance in Hungary.

This promising spiritual revival ended abruptly with the collapse of the country's social structure after World War II.

\*

**Count Pál Teleki**, Prime Minister of Hungary, died by his own hand on the **3rd of April, 1941.**

Teleki was a world-renowned professor of Geography and Hungary's Chief Scout for many years. Twice he served his nation — rather reluctantly — as Prime Minister: in 1920 and then again from 1939 until his death.

His (and Regent Horthy's) policy was to keep Hungary out of war. At the same time the two leaders endeavoured to obtain at least a partial revision of the injustices of the Trianon Treaty. In 1940 Teleki's government suggested to Rumania that the territorial provisions of the Trianon Treaty should be renegotiated between the two countries. Rumania asked Hitler to mediate in the dispute. Germany and Italy then handed down the so-called Second Vienna Award on the 30th of August, 1940. The arbitration returned to Hungary about 40% of the territory given to Rumania in 1920.

In order to strengthen Hungary against German pressure, Teleki concluded a Friendship Pact with Yugoslavia. The two countries then joined the German-Italian-Japanese Tri-Partite Pact to allay Germany's suspicions. In March 1941, however, there was a military coup in Belgrade. The new regime renounced the Pact and asked for British guarantees. Hitler decided to punish Yugoslavia and suggested that Hungary should attack at the same time. Horthy and Teleki refused the German offer. Then the Germans asked for permission to transport their troops through Hungarian territory to Yugoslavia. The Hungarian leaders knew that their army could not possibly resist the Germans. Teleki informed the British government of Hungary's position. The British

threatened reprisals if the German troops were allowed to cross the Hungarian territory.

On receiving the British message and the news that the German troops did cross the Hungarian frontier, Teleki shot himself.

This deeply religious Catholic took his own life as a desperate gesture, a cry for help for his nation which was being forced into the war, against a friendly neighbour. This is how Winston Churchill understood Teleki's action:

*"His suicide was a sacrifice to absolve himself and his people from the guilt in the German attack on Yugoslavia . . ."*(p 148, vol. III. *The Second World War*).

### PRINCE FERENC RÁKÓCZI

**Ferenc Rákóczi II, ruling Prince of Hungary, died on Good Friday, April 8, 1735 in exile.**

He was the descendant of the greatest leaders of Hungary. His mother, *Ilona Zrínyi*, wife of the Transylvanian Prince *Ferenc Rákóczi I*, was the daughter of a martyr for Hungary's freedom. His father was *Ferenc Rákóczi I*, the descendant of Transylvania's princes and fighters for the nation's freedom. Rákóczi's stepfather, *Imre Thököly*, was the last great freedom fighter of the 17th century. After the defeat of Thököly, Ilona Zrínyi held the family fortress, Munkács for three years against the imperial troops. After her surrender, she was taken prisoner with her two children. Young Ferenc was then educated in Austrian schools. He was allowed to return to Hungary when he came of age. On his return he immediately discovered how cruelly his nation was oppressed by the Austrian military.

So, in 1703 he decided to lead his nation's struggle for freedom, against the Habsburg-Austrian oppression. His call was heeded by aristocrats and peasants alike. Hungarians of all nationalities and creeds joined his troops, the "Kuruc" (Hungarian version of the Latin word "Cruz" — "crusader").

The war lasted eight years. Rákóczi financed the entire war from the revenues of his estates and of the state mines, without imposing taxes on the impoverished population. In 1707 he was elected *ruling Prince* of the nation to replace the dethroned Habsburg ruler. Lack of finances and the unfavourable

developments in international politics frustrated the nation's efforts. In 1710 the final blow struck the Magyar cause: the plague killed a fifth of the country's population.



Prince Ferenc Rákóczi II.

Rákóczi was still seeking foreign help when his commander, realizing the hopelessness of the struggle, accepted the imperial commander's offer of an honourable surrender in 1711. Rákóczi and his close friends refused the amnesty offered by the treaty and fled to Poland, then to France and finally to Turkey. Here Rákóczi lived with a small group of his followers in exile until his death.

His remains and those of his companions were brought back to Hungary and laid to rest in the town of *Kassa*. This city belongs to Czechoslovakia now as a result of the Trianon Treaty. Thus the great Hungarian leaders are exiled again in the land of their ancestors.

Rákóczi's outstanding intellectual and moral qualities would have made him a great king, had he lived in peaceful times. Still, his struggle had not been in vain: his "Kuruc"s had proven that the Hungarian nation would not tolerate tyranny. Rákóczi's name has lived since as his nation's inspiration in victory, consolation in defeat and hope under oppression.

\*

**József (Joseph) Pulitzer** was born in Hungary on the **10th of April, 1847**. As a young man he migrated to the United States where he began a career in journalism. By the age of 24 he owned a newspaper and was a member of the Missouri Legislature. He increased his fortune and political influence by buying newspapers and gradually building up a media empire. He strongly influenced his papers' editorial policies, campaigned for various social causes and relentlessly fought corruption.

He was also a member of the U.S. Congress for a short period.

From his large fortune he endowed a School of Journalism and established the Pulitzer Prizes.

\*

**Sándor Kőrösi Csoma** died in Darjeeling, India on the **11th of April, 1842**.

Wishing to study the origins of the Hungarian people, he travelled to India, mainly on foot. He then spent several years in various Tibetan monasteries studying the language and religion of this almost unknown country. He hoped to find information concerning the Central-Asian languages supposedly related to the Hungarian language. His Tibetan dictionary, and grammar and his translations of Tibetan Buddhist literature are still the most important source of Central Asian studies.

He completed his linguistic research under extremely harsh conditions in the Tibetan monasteries, working in unheated cells and sharing the monks' austere life. Then he set out to cross Tibet

and continue his research in Western China. This region was inhabited by the Ugyur people, whom he suspected of being related to the Hungarians. On his way, the 58-year-old explorer contracted malaria and died, on the border of Tibet and India.



Sándor Kőrösi Csoma

His tomb in Darjeeling is an honoured place of pilgrimage for both Hungarians and Buddhists who had proclaimed him a saint of their religion.



The Tartar-Mongol armies of Khan Batu destroyed the Hungarian army of King Béla IV at the village of Mohi on the 11th-12th of April, 1241.

When the Mongols invaded Hungary in March 1241, the king collected his troops and moved against the main group of Mongols, led by Batu, grandson of Ghenghis Khan. The wily Mongols enticed the Hungarian army to the swampy plain between two flooded rivers in northern Hungary.

The Hungarians set up a camp for the night. During that night, the Mongols managed to surround the Hungarian camp unnoticed. At dawn, on the 12th of April, Batu attacked, and Béla's heavily armoured knights were completely overwhelmed by the strange tactics of the Mongols. Their fast-riding units moved in complete silence directed by the flag signals of their commanders. The destructive fire of their unusually heavy and well-aimed arrows was supported by rockets and other frightening devices, such as horsemen made up as terrifying giants. They all fought like machines with death-defying bravery.

More than 50,000 Hungarians died on the field of Mohi. On that day, the quarrelling lords, prelates and knights found unity, loyalty and Christian humility during the magnificent hours of Mohi. They died bravely for a nation they had served poorly during their lives. Archbishops and bishops, high dignitaries, the nation's richest lords and nobles all died with Jesus' name on their lips — for God, King and Country. The Palatin (First Minister) — the "first gentleman of the realm" put on the king's armour and regalia and rode against the elite guard of Batu to certain death. He knew that the enemy wanted the king at any price. They mistook him for King Béla and concentrated their best cavalry against him and his escort. While the Palatin and the bodyguard died to a man, King Béla managed to slip through the Mongol lines dressed in a simple soldier's armour, accompanied by a few young nobles of his guard.

The Mongols, realizing their mistake, then chased the king. But he managed to find refuge behind the Danube River, which the Mongols could not cross. There he held out until February, 1242, when the river froze, and Batu could invade the rest of the country. The king escaped to a Dalmatian island. The Mongols stayed in the devastated country until the end of 1242. Then, suddenly, they left the country and returned to Asia. The great Khan had died in Mongolia, and Batu was eager to claim his throne.

Béla returned and with incredible energy rebuilt the devastated country. He is rightfully called the second founder of Hungary.

★

On the 14th of April, 1849 the Hungarian Diet, assembled in Debrecen, declared Hungary's independence from Austria, dethroned the House of Habsburg and elected Lajos Kossuth the country's Regent.

This development, a turning point in the Freedom War, was brought about by the unconstitutional action of the Viennese Government. Anxious to deprive Hungary of the constitutional freedom granted to it by Emperor-King Ferdinand, the Austrian Cabinet deposed the old king and put young Francis Joseph on the throne in December, 1848. The Hungarian Government refused to accept Francis Joseph as King of Hungary. The Diet had therefore decided to end this constitutional vacuum by severing the country's ties with Austria.

Though justified, this action was ill-advised as it prompted the Austrians to ask for Russian help to defeat the Hungarian "rebellion". The Tsar obliged and his intervention eventually crushed the Hungarian resistance.

## KING BÉLA'S PEACEFUL EMPIRE

**King Béla III died on the 23rd of April, 1196.**

During the 24 years of his reign, Hungary became the leading power in Central Europe, extending its frontiers beyond the Carpathians, into the Balkan Peninsula and along the Adriatic coast.

Béla spent his youth at the court of his uncle, Emperor Manuel, the last great ruler of the Byzantine Empire, who was himself the grandson of the Hungarian King, Saint László (Ladislas). Manuel intended to make his nephew his heir, but the wise Béla renounced the shaky throne of the declining empire and accepted **the crown of his native country, Hungary, in 1172.**

Béla's wife was a princess of the Capet Dynasty of France and Béla promoted close cultural and political ties with Western Europe, especially with France. With wise diplomacy and family

ties he soon established himself as a great ruler, equal in authority to the two emperors.



Our Lady Cathedral, Buda

Being on good terms with everybody, Béla III often mediated between Europe's rulers, including the Pope and the Emperor. He helped Emperor Barbarossa to organize the 3rd Crusade. Here he provided a strong Hungarian contingent.

At the end of the 12th century, Hungary had a population of about three million: equal to that of the largest Western kingdoms. The Hungarian nation had by that time integrated the characteristics of Western culture and its ancestral Eastern vitality. The nation, though made up mainly of Magyars, was a **composite** one: the Hungarian kings of the Middle-Ages encouraged immigration whether from the west or the east. The non-Magyar immigrants could gain nobility and obtain the highest offices in the service of the Church or the country — and many of them did. Many non-Magyars lived in large settlements where they kept their national identity in matters of culture and language, but did not form separate political units. This composite Hungarian nation of the Middle-Ages was blissfully ignorant of the complexities of nationality or minority problems and formed a harmonious multi-lingual, multi-cultural nation. The members of this nation all considered themselves Hungarian, whether they spoke Hungarian, Slovak, German or (as most educated people did), Latin. They all owed loyalty to one king, one country and had equal opportunities and duties.

Béla's tomb was the only one left undisturbed by the Turks during their occupation of the Hungarian capital. The remains of Béla and his Queen rest in the Cathedral of Our Lady in Budapest.

### THE WIZARD FOR ALL SEASONS

The Hungarian scientist and universal genius, **Tódor Kármán** was born on the **26th of April, 1881** in Budapest.

His father was professor of Education at the Budapest University. Tódor received his education in humanities and science in Budapest. His thirst for knowledge seemed insatiable in all fields of human knowledge. While serving in the Hungarian army during World War I, he constructed a computerised artillery range-finder and later he constructed the first helicopter ever to be used for military purposes. The experimental machine was eventually captured by the Italians who are still proudly displaying it in a Rome museum.

In the twenties he taught at various Hungarian colleges. He then entered the service of the Budapest Ministry of Education. As the official responsible for University Education, he was instru-

mental in promoting the study of psychoanalysis, biology and atomic physics at universities in Hungary. In the late twenties he went to Germany and was soon invited to teach at Göttingen. His advice in the field of applied mathematics and his research into mathematical physics were appreciated by such famous scientists as Einstein, Born and Fermi. His research into aero-dynamics has left its mark on the automobile industry — the “Karman-Ghia” sports-body manufactured by Volkswagen.

In 1932 he was invited to the U.S.A. where he subsequently taught at various universities (among other things). His interest in aero-dynamics and rocket research made him a pioneer in the aviation industry. As chief advisor for General Electrics, he was the main authority in the field of turbine-technology. At the same time he directed the stress calculations of the world’s largest dam, the Grand Culee. At Marconi’s invitation he went to Italy to study the problems of supersonic flight. (He actually invented the term “supersonic”.) Back in the U.S.A. he directed the Rocket and Radar Programme of the U.S. Air Force. He refused, however, to take part in the work of the Atomic Energy Commission which created the first atomic bomb.

Unlike some of his colleagues, he was not interested in politics. Though his universal genius left its mark on many aspects of science and technology, somehow the Nobel Prize had always eluded him. His dynamic curiosity was unwilling to concentrate on one special field of research, which is apparently the condition of the Nobel. Prize. It could be said that *he knew everything — but nothing else.*

He had a cheerful, pleasant, optimistic personality and he possessed skills unusual in a scientist: he was a good all-round sportsman, an excellent businessman and an efficient organizer. In spite of his active social life he never married. Marriage obviously would have hampered his dynamic curiosity in this field of research . . .

\*

On the 30th of April, 1670 three Hungarian lords, **Ferenc Nádasdy**, **Péter Zrínyi** and **Ferenc Frangepán** were executed in Austria. They were the leaders of the so-called “*Wesselényi Plot*”.

During the 17th century central Hungary was under Turkish occupation, whilst the western and northern regions were ruled by

the Habsburg Emperor, King of Hungary. Only the eastern part of the country, Transylvania, remained relatively independent under the elected Hungarian Prince.

In the region ruled by the Habsburgs the German military treated the Magyar population almost as harshly as did the Turks under their occupation. Such was the degree of dissatisfaction in Hungary with the rule of the Habsburgs that the highest dignitaries of the nation, led by the Palatin (First Minister) Wesselényi and the Archbishop-Primate of Esztergom made plans to depose the Habsburg king and replace him with a ruler who would be loyal to the nation. They invoked the Hungarian Constitution as codified in the “*Golden Bull*” of 1222: the nation had the right to resist the rule of a hostile king.

Their plans were, however, discovered. Wesselényi and some other leaders died before they could be arrested (some by convenient “accidents”) but the three leaders mentioned were tried by an Austrian Court and beheaded. Others involved were either imprisoned or had to flee to Transylvania.

Among those who managed to escape were the parents of Prince Ferenc Rákóczi, the future leader of Hungary’s greatest freedom struggle.



# May

**Stephen (István) Bátori** was crowned **King of Poland** on the **1st of May, 1576** in Cracow.

This eminent Hungarian soldier was elected Prince of Transylvania when the Polish Diet offered him the crown of the country. Bátori accepted and became Poland's greatest soldier-king. He defended Poland successfully against her traditional enemies, the Germans and the Russians. He defeated Tsar Ivan the Terrible, and took Moscow (the only conqueror ever to "get away with it"). He then concluded favourable treaties with both great powers.

He died after a relatively short reign of 10 years, on the **13th of December, 1586**.

★

The Hungarian-Australian sculptor **Andor Mészáros** died on the **1st of May, 1972**.

He was born in Budapest in 1900. After World War II he went to England and created the monumental altar-piece for Canterbury Cathedral. In 1951 he won the greatest award for sculptors in Madrid.

When he settled in Australia, his fame as a sculptor had preceded him. He soon became the President of the Association of Australian Sculptors. His style was modern and imaginative, but still simple and easy to understand. During the latter part of his career he frequently chose religious and allegorical themes.

His most characteristic creation is the sculpture "*The Migrant*". This is an emotional representation of the migrant leaving the country of his birth, walking forward but looking back with sad nostalgia at his old country. In a symbolic way, this statue can be called Mészáros' self-portrait. He, too, had preserved his Hungarian heritage and the nostalgic attachment to the country of his birth, but he also sought to express themes of universal human interest and to create works of Australian significance.



King István Bátori

★

## FOR GOD, THE CHURCH AND FOR HUNGARY

**Cardinal Joseph Mindszenty, Prince-Primate of Hungary, Archbishop of Esztergom**, died in exile on the **6th of May, 1975**.

Cardinal Mindszenty is known all over the world for his courageous stand against Communist oppression in Hungary. Throughout his long ecclesiastical career, as a parish priest, bishop, Archbishop of Esztergom and head of the Hungarian Catholic Church,

he was guided by the highest moral principles of the devout priest and by the deepest concern for the social, moral and spiritual well-being of his fellow-Hungarians. He always regarded freedom as everybody's birthright and stood up bravely against any regime which attempted to deprive his Hungarians of this divine right. Dictatorships on both sides persecuted and imprisoned him. Finally, on Christmas Day, 1948 he was arrested by the Soviet-dominated regime in Hungary, tortured and sentenced to life imprisonment on false charges. He remained in prison until October 1956 when the freedom fighters liberated him.

After the defeat of the 1956 uprising he took refuge in the American Embassy in Budapest. He remained there until 1971 when the Pope persuaded him to leave Hungary. During the last years of his life he worked ceaselessly as the itinerant pastor of his flock — the Hungarian refugees all over the world. He died at the age of 83. He was laid to rest in the Hungarian Chapel at Maria-Zell in Austria.

By 1948, the Communist oppression of Hungary and persecution of the Church had reached the most brutal stage. Mindszenty knew that he would not be allowed to fight for his faith any longer and expected to be arrested at any moment. Knowing what to expect at the hands of the Communist police, he summed up his attitude in his last *pastoral letter on the 18th of November 1948* — a month before his arrest — in these words:

“Of all my predecessors (Primates of Hungary) not one stood so bare of all means as I do. Such a systematic and purposeful net of propaganda lies — a hundred times disproved and yet a hundred times spread anew — has never been organized against the 78 predecessors in my Office. *I stand for God, Church and for Hungary. This responsibility has been imposed upon me by the fate of my nation which stands alone, an orphan in the whole world. Compared with the sufferings of my people, my own fate is of no importance . . .*”

\*

**May the 7th** is the day of the Blessed Gisela, first Queen of Hungary, wife of Saint Stephen. Gisela, the sister of Emperor Saint Henry, married Stephen in 996 A.D. With this marriage, the young Hungarian nation was accepted by the German Empire as an esteemed neighbour. When Stephen inherited his father's throne, he asked the Pope to recognize him as a sovereign Christian King.

The Pope sent him a crown, and Stephen and Gisela were crowned on Christmas Day 1000 A.D.

After the death of King Stephen, in 1038, Gisela returned to her native Bavaria and died there in 1059.

\*

**Ede Reményi**, the world-famous violin virtuoso, died during a concert in New York on the **15th of May, 1898**.

He took part in the Freedom War of 1848-49 and had to take refuge abroad after the surrender. On his way to America he visited the great German composer, Johann Brahms in Hamburg and entertained him with Magyar popular music. This inspired the composer to create his well-known “Hungarian Dances”.

\*



General György Klapka

**General György (George) Klapka** died on the **17th of May, 1892** in Budapest. He was a professional officer in the Imperial Army. When the Freedom War broke out, he volunteered for the Hungarian National Army. In 1849 he became a general in command of a division — at the age of 29. After a short period as Minister of War, he commanded the army corps based on the fortress of Komárom. From this base he conducted several successful cam-

paigns against the Austrians. After the capitulation of the rest of the Hungarian National Army (August, 1849), Klapka defended Komárom brilliantly for almost two months. He finally surrendered on the 4th of October on honourable terms.

Klapka left for England where he continued to work for the liberation of Hungary as a member of Kossuth's National Committee. On Kossuth's instructions Klapka organized Hungarian legions in several countries, becoming a general of the Prussian Army in the process. After the Compromise, in 1867, Klapka returned to Hungary and gained a seat in the Parliament in Budapest. But he soon gave up politics and went to Turkey, to organize the Turkish Army. He married in France and lived there during the last years of his life. It was on one of his visits to Budapest that he died.

### "LONG LIVE GÖRGEY!"

**Arthur Görgey**, the military leader of the 1848-49 Freedom War was born on the 21st of May, 1819.

Arthur Görgey served for a few years with the Austrian-Hungarian imperial guards and then with the engineers as a career officer. He then resigned his commission and obtained a University diploma in Chemistry. In March 1848 he joined the newly formed Hungarian National Guard.

In the summer of 1848, the nationalities of Hungary, roused by the Viennese regime, unleashed violent terrorist attacks against the Magyar population. The Hungarian government set up a national army to protect the Magyar population. The establishment of this army increased the hostility of Vienna and soon a full-scale war broke out all over Hungary. The young "Honvéd" army — as the national guard was called, faced the Austrian regular troops as well as the fierce guerillas of the nationalities.

Görgey was given the rank of major, in consideration of his military experience. He soon distinguished himself as the commander of a small unit of untrained "Honvéds" which defeated a strong Austrian-Croatian division near Lake Balaton in October 1848. A few weeks later the Hungarian government appointed Görgey commander of the western Hungarian army, with the rank of a general.



General Arthur Görgey

This was a fortunate choice. The Honvéd army consisted of enthusiastic, but untrained volunteers who needed the discipline and experience, the strict and efficient Görgey gave them. In order to train his troops, Görgey withdrew them to Northern Hungary, fighting an orderly rear-guard action with increasing efficiency during the winter of 1848-49. At the coming of spring 1849, Görgey had a well-trained, hardened, disciplined fighting force. With this force he counter-attacked in April 1849. This glorious **spring-campaign** swept the Austrian regular army across northern Hungary. The young commander and his young army out-manoeuvred and defeated the veteran Austrians, who were far superior in numbers

and equipment. By the end of May 1849 almost all of Hungary was freed from the Austrians.

Unfortunately, the political developments changed the fate of the Hungarian freedom struggle. The Austrian government replaced the aging, benevolent emperor by young Francis Joseph who, at 18, was but a puppet in the hands of the Viennese Cabinet. The emperor then abolished Hungary's self-government and asked the Russian Tsar for help against the Hungarian "rebels". The Russians obliged and sent an elite army of 200,000 against the Hungarians. Heavily outnumbered and exhausted, the Honvéds were unable to continue their resistance against the great powers. The 30 year old commander in chief, Görgey was given full powers by the government. He decided to end the hopeless struggle and surrender to the Russians.

The Russian commander promised safe conduct to all officers and men, but he handed them over to the Austrian commander nevertheless. The sadistic Austrian general Haynau then sentenced hundreds of officers to death and had thousands put in prison. Only Görgey was pardoned at the insistence of the Russian commander. He was interned in Austria, then eventually released. This circumstance gave rise to the unjust accusations of treason, and betrayal of his comrades, which Görgey was to bear until his death.

History has long since rehabilitated this fine soldier and true patriot. During his short, brilliant career as the youngest general of the Freedom War he appeared to be an enigmatic person with traits of character unusual in a soldier. With his steel-rimmed spectacles he looked more like a professor than a soldier. However, his cold, blue eyes looked at the world without illusions and demanded absolute obedience. He never showed any emotion and directed the operations with a cool, scientific approach. He was a strict disciplinarian. He treated his senior officers and the civilian authorities with dictatorial severity. Once he had a rich Hungarian count executed on the charge of corresponding with the enemy. At the same time, he treated his inexperienced younger officers and soldiers with paternal leniency and he shared the hardships of the camp life with the common soldier.

As a strategist, he possessed the ability to out-manoeuvre and to defeat superior enemy forces, the special talent of Rommel or Mannerheim. His leadership and his method of training his volunteers can be likened to the remarkable achievement of George Washington. His logical, scholarly mind rejected the emotional op-

timism of Kossuth and the other political leaders of the Freedom War. This sober realism and the fact that Görgey never hesitated to express his opinion, led to many clashes between Kossuth and Görgey (the two leaders of the nation). On several occasions Kossuth relieved Görgey of his command — only to reappoint him again at the request of the army which admired the young general.



Honvéd army camp

Görgey was not entirely devoid of emotions or fiery Magyar spirit. He was an enthusiastic horseman — this was his only passion. He possessed great personal courage during battles. Once he was severely wounded while leading a cavalry charge in person, like the Magyar commanders of ancient times. On the day of the surrender, August 13, 1849, he inspected for the last time his Honvéds on the field of Világos. His soldiers farewelled him with a loud "Long live Görgey!" Then for the first time in his life, this man of steel broke down and wept. Little did his soldiers know that their cheer would turn into a curse of a kind. *Görgey did live long: for 68 more years* after that fateful day, bearing the ignominy of false accusations. He even outlived his tyrannical opponent, Francis Joseph and died in Budapest in 1917, at the age of 98.

Shortly before his death, in 1916, the German fieldmarshall Mackensen happened to pass through Budapest. He paid a visit to the respected old Hungarian general, Görgey, and offered to show him the latest German weapons. Görgey watched the German

rapid-firing guns and machine guns in silence, then turned to the Hungarian Minister of Defence at his side and whispered with tears in his eyes: "If only I'd had some of these in 1849 . . ."

A few weeks later Hungary's finest general found eternal peace at last — after one year of glory and 68 years of undeserved humiliation.

## A HUNGARIAN KING IN AFRICA

May the 23rd is the anniversary of an interesting event: on this day, in 1849, the Hungarian explorer-adventurer, **László Magyar** married the daughter of the king of Bihé in Angola, West Africa.

The adventurous Hungarian was *born in 1820*. As a marine officer, he travelled extensively in South America. He left the service and began to organize an expedition into the depths of the Amazonian forests in *Brazil* in search of the fabled lost cities there. No one seemed interested, so he gave up and went to Africa. He began to explore and map the interior of the west-African region known as *Angola*. At that time only the coastal region had some Portuguese trading posts, the interior being entirely unknown.

Eventually he reached the capital of **Bihé** country, a large inland kingdom. The king liked the adventurous young man and (as the folktales say) he offered him the hand of his daughter and half of his kingdom. Magyar accepted the "fabulous" offer and married the dusky princess Ozora. In due course his father-in-law died and he inherited the kingdom — about the size of his native Hungary.

He continued his explorations with the help of the Bihé people. He explored the interior of Bihé and Congo, never seen by a white man (decades before Livingstone and Stanley). He is credited with the discovery of the sources of the Congo River.

He sent regular reports to the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. The Portuguese authorities learned of his explorations and became interested. The British learned of the Portuguese interest and became suspicious of both the Portuguese and Magyar. The French who have always been suspicious of the British anyhow, became similarly interested. The Portuguese published some of Magyar's reports — which were quickly translated into both English and French.

Then Magyar suddenly *died in 1864, at the age of 44*. His notes and collected material disappeared when his former country was taken over by the Portuguese (just ahead of the British and the French).

With the colonial question settled everybody conveniently forgot about Magyar — including his Hungarian compatriots.

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**Leo Szilárd**, the world famous atomic scientist **died on the 30th of May, 1964**.

Born in Budapest, he was educated in Hungary and Germany. He went to the United States in 1935 and subsequently taught at various universities there. It was Szilárd who suggested to Einstein and President Roosevelt the setting up of an atomic research programme.

A committee was formed, with the participation of four Hungarian scientists (L. Szilárd, J. Neumann, J. Wigner and E. Teller), the Italian Fermi and R. Oppenheimer to secure the possession of the atomic bomb for the United States.

## THE MAGYAR MONARCH OF MADAGASCAR

On the **last day of May, 1771** a strange ship was making its way out of a small harbour on the Kamchatka Peninsula on the west coast of Siberia. The ship was an old Russian sloop, built for the coastal fur-trade, but it flew the flag of the Polish Confederation. On board were 96 men and women of many nationalities. Apart from the Russian crew they were all escapees from the Siberian prison-settlement of Borsereck.

At the stern-rail stood a tall, handsome young man. He was looking broodingly at the smouldering ruins of the fort of Borsereck which he and his men had taken by storm before commandeering the ship. At his side stood a beautiful young girl watching the same sight with tears in her eyes.

The girl, *Afanasia*, was the daughter of the fort's Russian commander who had been killed during the short battle preceding the escape. The man was count **Aladar Maurice Benyovszky** a



Hungarian hussar-officer, the leader of the small group of refugees, who had killed Afanasia's father, during the battle.

Maurice (or Mór in Hungarian) Benyovszky was the son of a Hungarian landowner. He was *born in 1741*. At the age of ten he was already a hussar at the side of his father, who was a general in Maria Theresa's Hungarian cavalry. After his father's death, young Maurice quarrelled with his stepbrothers. As he used his hussar's sword too freely, he had to flee to his relatives in Poland.

He became interested in the sea and wanted to become a sailor, but when he unexpectedly inherited the estate of his Polish uncle, he chose to become a member of the landed nobility in Poland. Eventually he joined the so-called "Confederation of Bar" an uprising of the Polish nobility against the Russians and the Russian-appointed king of Poland. The nobles declared Poland a Republic and began to fight the Russians and the royalists. They fought bravely but without any central planning or coordination. Benyovszky became their most successful cavalry commander, but he soon became disappointed by the constant quarrelling among the leaders of the Confederation and *returned to Hungary*.

He married and settled down to a peaceful, civilian life. The Polish leaders however missed their brave colonel and called him back to Poland. Benyovszky felt honour-bound to help his second country and returned to Poland, leaving his wife and infant son in Hungary.

By that time however the cause of the Confederation was lost: some of the leaders had surrendered to the Russians, others had fled to Turkey. Benyovszky's division was left to face the Russians alone. They were defeated and Benyovszky, severely wounded, *was captured by the Russians*.

They took him to a prison-settlement in the heart of Russia. As soon as his wounds had healed, Benyovszky began to organize an uprising to free the prisoners, but he was betrayed and had to flee again. He managed to travel across Russia undetected to St. Petersburg (today Leningrad). He was again betrayed and arrested. This time the Russians took no chances: they sent him to the farthest *Siberian prison-camp in Kamchatka, on the Pacific coast*.

Thanks to his exceptional talents, Benyovszky soon became the leader of the exiled community of Borsereck, on the coast of the Kamchatka Peninsula. At the age of 29 he had had ample experience as a military leader, sailor, linguist, diplomat and philosopher, whilst his skill at hunting and chess provided him with

an exceptional income in this wintry climate where the range of hobbies was rather limited.

The commander of the Russian garrison asked him to teach French to his daughter, *Afanasia*. The dashing young hussar and the beautiful girl fell in love with each other but Benyovszky honestly confessed that he was married already. This did not stop Siberia's most beautiful girl from remaining faithful to him until her death.

Benyovszky organized a mass escape of the prisoners by ship — the only way to reach civilization from this forgotten corner of the earth. He bribed the captain of a Russian sloop in the harbour. On the day of the planned escape — *May the 30th, 1771* — the conspiracy was betrayed and Benyovszky's men had to fight a bloody battle against the Russian garrison, during which Benyovszky killed the commander, Afanasia's father. The escaped exiles boarded the ship and left the harbour of Borsereck on the same day. On board, without Benyovszky's prior knowledge was Afanasia, who decided to follow her idol.

Benyovszky set a north-easterly course, towards the Arctic Sea, hoping to find the fabled northern passage between the Pacific and the Atlantic Oceans. They saw and charted many islands in the Arctic which had never been seen by a European and eventually reached Alaska. Not being able to proceed to the north, they turned south into the warm Pacific Ocean — which they soon found too warm and too pacific. Threatened by thirst and starvation some of the refugees started plotting mutiny, which Benyovszky discovered. He treated the culprits leniently, a mistake he was to regret later.

Eventually they reached a small island belonging to *Japan*. Benyovszky managed to establish friendly relations with the Japanese, due mainly to the fact that he was a native of Hungary, a country which had never tried to conquer or convert the Japanese . . .

A few weeks later they reached the island of **Formosa (today Taiwan)**. The island was independent in those days, inhabited by warlike tribes of headhunters. Benyovszky managed to keep his head and to establish contact with the least savage of the tribes. He gained the friendship and gratitude of the tribe by helping them against their violent neighbours. Hoping to be able to return one day and to establish a Hungarian colony in Formosa, Benyovszky continued his Odyssey. Had his dreams come true, we would be buying today textiles "made in Hungarian Taiwan . . ."

Their next landfall was **Macao**, the Portuguese colony on the China coast. Here the company of exiles broke up. Afanasia died of the yellow fever and so did several other friends of Benyovszky. Some refugees joined the ranks of the adventurers of the famous port, while a group of malcontents seized the ship and sailed away in search of further adventures. Left alone, Benyovszky turned to the French consul and offered his services to France. The French invited him to Paris. King Louis XV listened to the account of his travels with interest, made him a count and a colonel and instructed him to colonize the island of **Madagascar** for France.

In the 18th century, this large African island was still unconquered all previous attempts at colonization having failed against the fiercely independent natives of Malay, African and Arabic descent.

Benyovszky had his wife and son brought to France and embarked for Madagascar. He reached the island *in February, 1774*. The French governor of the nearby islands was jealous of this foreigner and gave him little assistance. Benyovszky landed his small force in an area which he knew was inhabited by the least savage of the Malagasy tribes, Then he used the same type of diplomacy as in Formosa: he offered help to the king of that region against his savage neighbours. As his ally, he defeated the warlike neighbours and eventually befriended them too. He then continued to extend his authority by similar means. He also refrained his soldiers from looting and stopped the slave trade.

Unfortunately, yellow fever and mutiny reduced his garrison. Even his son, Charles died of the fever. The jealous governor seized his opportunity to invade Madagascar. Against overwhelming odds, Benyovszky managed to repel the invasion. On seeing this, the chiefs and kings of the huge island *elected Benyovszky in 1776 their supreme ruler, emperor of Madagascar*.

Benyovszky accepted the honour and swore to defend his island against all would-be conquerors. He set up and trained a native army, formed a federal government of the chiefs and kings, abolished slavery and cruel punishments and set up a judicial system which included a unique feature: a separate Court established to deal with matters concerning women. At the suggestion of the natives, Benyovszky's wife was made chief justice of the Court. He also introduced the *Latin script with Hungarian spelling*. It seemed that he had established his Utopia where justice and equal-

ity were maintained by a strong but benevolent ruler: Plato's Republic and King Matthias' Hungary combined.

He then made his first but fatal mistake. Convinced that his kingdom needed powerful allies, he returned to Europe in search of a great power to protect Madagascar. He went first to *Hungary* where Maria Theresa made him a count and a general — but she was not interested in an African ally or colony. After all, she had Hungary. . . *France* was not interested any more: the French were busy preparing the Revolution to end all Revolutions. *England* was having trouble with the American colonies. So he sailed to the young American Republic. There, at last, he was not given the title of a count but was able to collect a shipload of useful goods and sail for Madagascar.

As his ship was approaching the island, the crew mutinied. They put Benyovszky adrift in a boat and sailed away with the precious cargo.

He found that his empire had broken up, the government had ceased to function and the childish natives were again fighting one another. What is more, the covetous French governor was again preparing to invade the island.

Benyovszky could collect only about 30 of his native soldiers to oppose the French landing. They fought bravely, but the fire of the French ships' cannons crushed his valiant troop. Benyovszky himself was mortally wounded by a cannon-shot.

**He died at the age of 45 in 1786.** He lies today in an unmarked grave on his beloved island, still dreaming of a Utopia of peace and justice.



# June

## TRIUMPH AND TRAGEDY

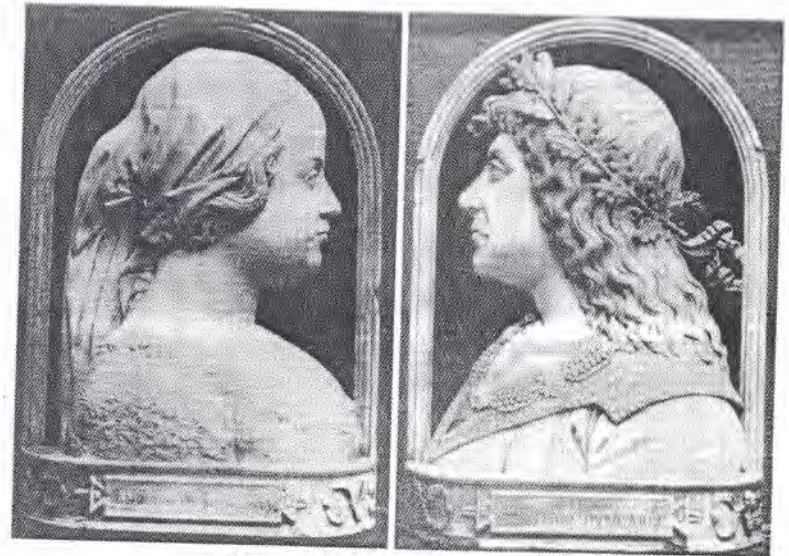
On June 1st, 1485, King Mátyás (Matthias) took the Austrian capital, Vienna and established a Hungarian province in northern Austria.

Mátyás, son of the great general, John Hunyadi, was elected King of Hungary on the 24th of January, 1458, at the age of 18. His 32-year reign marks the golden age of Hungarian history. The brilliant and strong-willed man refused to be influenced by the rich lords of the country and became a fair and just king of the people. He only followed his own counsel and that of his mother, *Elizabeth Szilágyi*, widow of John Hunyadi. She was one of the great ladies of Hungarian history who have, for a thousand years, influenced the nation's fate in an unobtrusive, feminine way.

Mátyás stabilized the nation's *finances* by introducing an equitable, universal system of taxation — a rarity in that century (in any century, for that matter). The burden of the budget was borne by the revenues of the royal mines and state-owned establishments. He raised the nation's social, economic and cultural standards, without placing heavy burdens on the poor peasants. His legal reforms assured equal rights for all his subjects. Promotion to the highest positions was open to any peasant who had the will and talent to improve his status.

Mátyás was a true son of the *Renaissance*, a generous patron of the arts and literature. His wife, *Beatrice d'Este* brought from Italy scientists and artists who helped to make the capital, Buda one of the great centres of humanism, together with the three universities of the country. The first printed book was published in Buda in 1473, three years before bookprinting began in England.

Like his father, Mátyás wanted to repel the pagan **Turks** from Europe, but did not wish to bleed his beloved Magyar people to death in the process. He therefore endeavoured to gain the Crown



Queen Beatrice and King Mátyás

of the Holy Roman Empire and use the military power of the Empire against the Turks.

As Hungary was not a member of the Empire, he tried to obtain the crown of one of the vassal states with the right to vote in the election of the Emperor. He did manage to gain the Crown of Bohemia and the possession of a part of Austria — both member states of the Empire. His plans seemed to be approaching their realization.

Then one day, while visiting the capital of the Hungarian province of Austria, Vienna, he fell ill and *died under somewhat suspicious circumstances at the age of 50, in 1490.*

He had no legitimate heir and his weak, quarrelling successors let his empire collapse. One generation after the triumphal conquest of Austria, the Turks destroyed Hungary's national independence at *Mohács, in 1526.*

\*

**Fülöp László** the popular portrait painter of the British and other royal families was born on the **1st of June, 1869.** He settled in Britain in 1914 and spent all of his active life there.

“IT COULD NOT HAPPEN HERE. . .”

(Fantasy and reality)

*“No man is an island, . . .  
every man is a piece of the Continent. . .  
any man’s death diminishes me,  
because I am involved in Mankind;  
And therefore never send to know  
for whom the bell tolls;  
it tolls for thee. . .”*

(John Donne)

On a hot summer day in 1914 the heir to the throne of Great Britain was assassinated by a group of terrorists. It soon became evident that the terrorists had been trained in the small country of Salvia and enjoyed the protection of the Salvian government.

The British Government made it clear that it intended to take military action against Salvia for fomenting the assassination. At the decisive Crown Council, attended by the Prime Ministers of the Dominions, the British Prime Minister stated that no great power could tolerate such a blatant insult and demanded that Salvia be destroyed and its territory annexed by the Empire. The Australian Prime Minister, Mr. Townley, pointed out that Australia had no territorial claims on Salvia and warned against any action which might lead to a general war. He reminded the British Government that Salvia was an ally and protégé of the great Afro-Asian Empire and therefore military action might lead to an intercontinental — possibly world — war. His was the only dissenting voice. The leaders of all the Dominions, including the African and Asian ones, voted for war and so the grief-stricken old king declared war on Salvia. As prophesized by Mr. Townley, the Afro-Asian Empire and its allies immediately declared war on the British Empire.

The Australian Parliament shared Mr. Townley’s objection to the war, but they accepted the majority decision of the Crown Council in the spirit of true democracy and joined in the British declaration of war. The parties declared political truce to enable Mr. Townley’s government to fully support the war effort. The Australian code of honour: “fairness and mateship” demanded loyalty to the commitments of the mother country however unpalatable the idea of war was to the peace-loving Australians. According to their temperament, they decided to “make a smashing good job of it” or, at least, “the best of a bad job”.

For four years the Australian soldiers — conscripts and volunteers alike — fought dutifully on foreign soil, mostly under British generals whose muddled thinking and archaic strategy were responsible for countless Australian casualties. The tragic role of the Australian soldier was best illustrated in the so-called “Gallipoli expedition” when the faulty planning of the British politicians and generals landed the Australian soldiers on a well-defended enemy peninsula where they were massacred by the thousands.

Slowly, the Empire weakened. Then, besieged on all sides, her sea-lanes severed, her population starving, her armies cut off from their bases, Great Britain collapsed. Her few allies, even some of her dominions, had changed sides, only Australia remained loyal to the bitter end. When Great Britain finally decided to ask for an armistice, the Australian troops returned home, their discipline and morale unimpaired.

In the meantime things had changed in Australia. One of the leaders of the Opposition, Sir Michael Kane, stated that “he had always been a friend of the Allies” (because he had spent most of the war in a neutral country.) He formed an “Australian National Committee” and demanded that the king appoint him Prime Minister. The king gave his assent by cable and then he himself abdicated because Great Britain was soon to become a republic. The first day of Sir Michael’s government was marred by an ugly incident: Mr. Townley, the former Australian Prime Minister was murdered by a group of “vigilantes” who claimed that they had “executed” Townley because he was the principal war criminal, having led the nation’s war efforts for four years. Sir Michael “regretted” the incident but added that “rough justice had been meted out” and that now “with the principal war-monger punished, Australia was absolved of all responsibility in the war.” He had, of course, conveniently forgotten Mr. Townley’s efforts to prevent the war.

The new government promptly abolished conscription and ordered the returning troops to lay down their arms and disperse. “Never again do I want to see another soldier . . .” said the newly appointed Minister of Defence. Sir Michael elaborated that “a pacifist and unarmed Australia would certainly be regarded as the friend of the victorious allies.”

On learning that Australia had disbanded her defence forces, the newly formed neighbouring states — some of them former members of the British Empire who had changed sides at the last moment — saw their opportunity to acquire much needed territory

on the Australian continent. Their hastily collected troops began to occupy large areas of undefended Australia. They justified their invasion by statistics (prepared by the Australians themselves) showing that almost half of the Australian population was of non-British descent. Their demographic maps also showed that the interior was inhabited by oppressed Aborigines. So the invading neighbours came ostensibly to "liberate" these "oppressed nationalities". Soon the mineral rich areas of Western Australia and Queensland were occupied and so were the large cities of the eastern seaboard, the home of many "oppressed nationalities".

Unable to stop the invasion, Sir Michael resigned and handed over the government to a recently formed extremist group which claimed to represent the "oppressed workers of the world". "I leave Australia under the protection of the workers of the world" he said and retired to his country estate.

The newly declared "Universal Workers' Councils' Republic of Australia" disbanded the former public service, police and judiciary and replaced them by volunteer commandos called "Workers' and Sailors' Councils". All farming properties were nationalized under the management of these "Workers' and Sailors' Councils" — thus practically stopping all food production.

Fearful of the dangers of the Australian Revolution spreading to other nations, the victorious Allies allowed the foreign troops to occupy the rest of the Australian territory. Without resisting, the Universal Workers' Councils fled the country which was then subjected to the invasion of the undisciplined troops of the neighbouring nations. They found Australian civilization fascinating and looted billions of dollars' worth of goods, including plumbing fixtures unknown in their own underdeveloped countries. After having stripped the country of everything moveable, they reluctantly obeyed the Allies' order to vacate the small central area that was to be left to the Australians. A new Australian coalition government was formed with the Allies' permission and this government was instructed to sign the Peace Treaty.

The Peace Conference of Delhi had already spent a year discussing the treaty with Great Britain and the Allied politicians were too tired to discuss in detail the case of Australia, a distant and largely unknown country. So they ignored the submissions of the Australian peace delegation and gave their verdict solely on the basis of the claims of the delegations of the so-called "succession"

states, neighbours of Australia who claimed to have liberated the oppressed minorities in the Australian territories occupied by them. The leading Allied politicians quoted the well-known legal adage that "possession is nine points of the law" and drew the new frontiers according to the positions of the occupying armies.

Thus the Peace Treaty of Delhi transferred three quarters of the Australian territory and two thirds of her population to her victorious neighbours. Queensland, Western Australia and the eastern seaboard were lost and only the agricultural regions of N.S.W., Victoria and S.A. remained in landlocked Australia.

The long-suffering population of this mutilated country was to bear the sad legacy of the war. More than half a million Australians had died for King and country. The population was starving after the revolutions and invasions of the preceding years. They also had to provide for hundreds of thousands of refugees and for the huge number of unemployed industrial workers — the country had no mineral resources and no sea transport left. In addition, the country had to pay huge reparations to the victors.

Australia was more severely punished than Great Britain. The charges made against Australia by her land-hungry neighbours were: (a) that Australia had caused the war (proof: the Australians themselves had executed their Prime Minister as a war criminal), (b) Australia had oppressed her minorities (proof: the notorious "White Australia" policy), and (c) Australia was a potential troublemaker, a source of extremist subversion, as shown by the Australian revolution at the end of the war.

June the 4th, the day of the signature of the Delhi Peace Treaty became a day of national mourning in Australia, together with the commemoration of the Gallipoli disaster.

**This has been a true story.** Only the names have been changed, in order to bring it closer to the reader. *Substitute "Austrian-Hungarian Monarchy" for the "British Empire" and "Hungary" for "Australia"*. Mr. Townley's real name was István Tisza, Prime Minister of Hungary in 1914. Sir Michael Kane was called Count Michael Károlyi in Hungary. The peace treaty mentioned was signed in *Paris, at the Palace of Trianon on the 4th of June, 1920*. The rest of the story is true. That was Hungary in 1920 — and that, but by the grace of God, could have been Australia.

There is, of course, more to this tragic story. For a thousand years the Hungarians admitted — sometimes even invited — into



Map showing the former territory of Hungary and the area of that country as reduced by the Treaty of Trianon, with particulars of the partitions and allocation of the alienated territory to Czechoslovakia, Jugo-Slavia, Rumania and Austria.

-----pre-war boundary of Hungary.  
 \_\_\_\_\_present boundary of Hungary.

Hungary's partition by the Trianon Treaty

their country refugees from neighbouring war-torn countries, much the same way Australia has been welcoming victims of tyrannies or economic disasters.

In the 15th century Hungary had a population of four and a half million — equal to the population of England at that time. Of this at least 80% were Hungarians. Three centuries and many Turkish and German invasions later Hungary had a population of only two and a half million — and only half of these were Hungarians. Still the policy of “open doors” continued and Hungary welcomed all those who sought refuge, regardless of their race or religion.

The **Rumanians** who first entered Hungarian Transylvania in the thirteenth century and the **Ukrainians** (or Ruthenes) who have been immigrating since the same century, have preserved their orthodox religion and language in Catholic Hungary. In fact it was in Hungary that books for orthodox Rumanians were first printed because in their homeland the practice of their religion was severely restricted and bookprinting was unknown. The **Slovaks**, the only nation settled in the Carpathian Basin more or less at the same time as the Hungarians, have preserved their language, religion and national identity even in small, scattered settlements. The **Serbs**, once the Hungarians’ brothers-in-arms in the struggle against the Turks, were first invited to settle in Hungary in the 15th century.

As they were neither forced nor expected to assimilate, these nationalities in Hungary have kept their national identity, language and customs intact for centuries.

So it came about that at the last census, in 1910, the breakdown of nationalities in Hungary showed that only a little more than half of the population was of Hungarian (Magyar) nationality.

During World War I Hungary’s role was similar to that attributed to Australia in my imaginary narrative. During the war the Czech, Rumanian and Serb propagandists succeeded in convincing the Allies that Hungary had to be dismembered and her territories with mixed nationalities transferred to Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia and Rumania. Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia did not yet exist when the war began and Rumania, a former ally of the Austrian-Hungarian Monarchy was promised a large portion of Hungary for changing sides during the war — which she did.

Their wishes were granted in full, and Hungary’s arguments were completely ignored at the Peace Treaty of Trianon which transferred three quarters of Hungary’s territory and two thirds of her population to the three states mentioned.

*June the 4th, 1920 was the day of the signature of this Peace Treaty.*  
*On that day the bells tolled for Hungary.*  
*May they never toll for your country.*

### WHEN EAST MET WEST

According to tradition, **Prince Árpád** died on the **5th of June, 907 A.D.** He was buried near Óbuda, the ancient Roman city of Aquincum. The chapel built over his tomb was destroyed during the Turkish occupation and even its exact location has since been forgotten.

Árpád was the paramount leader of the large group of Magyars who entered the Carpathian Basin in 895-896 A.D. and settled there forming the state of Hungary. His direct descendants ruled Hungary until 1301 as paramount rulers or kings. This was not the first settlement of Hungarians in that region. Large Magyar contingents lived there during Attila’s Hun rule (5th century A.D.) and further waves of Magyar settlers arrived at the Carpathian Basin between 500-900 A.D. Thus Árpád’s “conquering” Magyars had little to “conquer” as they found mostly fellow Magyars or brother nations in the Carpathian area which they then pacified, settled and organized with relative ease.

The **Magyars or Hungarians** are a composite nation, formed of several more or less related ethnic components. These racial groups amalgamated during the millenia of migrations in the western Asian and eastern European regions. The various components of the Hungarian nation came into contact, during these migrations with Mesopotamian (Sumerian), Transcaucasian, Caucasian, Iranian cultures and races, with Turkic — Turanian and Finno — Ugrian ethnic groups. Having integrated into a multi-cultural, multi-racial, multi-lingual nation, they settled in the Carpathian Basin. There they became a mono-lingual, integrated, composite nation. The culture of this deep-rooted people is a synthesis of the values of the East and the West.

The **Magyar or Hungarian language** mirrors the composite character of the nation. Made up of elements of Ural Altai (Finno-Ugrian), Turkic, Caucasian, Mesopotamian, Sumerian and other related language components, it presents today a surprisingly well-balanced, logical, rich agglutinating structure. It has a magnificent literature. Because of its unique character, Magyar writing loses much of its flavour, when translated. This is why Hungarian literature is hardly known abroad. It is a pity though, for Magyar poetry and prose are the most cherished heirloom of Hungarians everywhere. They represent for them that mystic, unidentifiable notion which is Hungary.

\*

On the **5th of June, 1473**, **András Hess** completed the **printing of the first Hungarian book** in Buda. The printing began on the instructions of King Mátyás who wanted to try the new method invented by the German, Gutenberg. After Germany, Italy and France, Hungary was the next country to introduce book-printing — *three years before Caxton printed the first book in England in 1476.*

It is interesting to note that the *Budapest University Printery* is the second-oldest such establishment in Europe founded in **1577**.

Speaking of universities: the **first Hungarian university** was founded at **Pécs** by King Louis the Great in **1367**, 20 years before the foundation of the first university in Germany, Heidelberg.

Few Hungarians realize that Hungary did occasionally beat the Western countries on fields other than Wembley Soccer Stadium . . .



General Stahel-Szamvald

On the **5th of June, 1864**, Hungarian-born general **Julius Stahel-Szamvald** led the Union troops to victory in the battle of Piedmont. He was awarded the highest American decoration, the Congressional Medal of Honour for his feat.

Several thousand Hungarian-born officers and soldiers fought in the Union armies during the Civil War. These were mostly refugees, members of the former Hungarian National Army, defeated in 1849. It is interesting to note that no Hungarian-born officer is

known to have served in the Confederate forces. It appears that Hungarians had acquired a marked distaste for slavery . . .

After the war, Stahel-Szamvald served his new country as American consul in China and Japan.

\*

**Emperor Francis Joseph and Empress Elizabeth were crowned King and Queen of Hungary on the 8th of June, 1867.**

After the defeat of the Hungarian Freedom War of 1848-49, Austria first attempted to incorporate Hungary as a province of the Habsburg Empire and to assimilate the Hungarians. Soon, however, the passive resistance of the nation, the anti-Austrian feeling aroused by Kossuth and his fellow-emigrés abroad and the disastrous military situation in the other parts of the Austrian empire, forced Vienna to make concessions.

Thus the so-called "*Compromise*" was made with Hungary in 1867. The Austrians restored the constitution granted to Hungary as equal partner in the dual Monarchy, under the rule of the same Habsburg emperor-king, Francis Joseph.

The Compromise granted Hungary only nominal equality with Austria. The "common" portfolios of Foreign Affairs, Finance and Defence were managed almost entirely by Austrians, the Hungarians having very little to say in the most important matters concerning the empire. This is how Hungary was, eventually, forced into *World War I* for the sake of Austria's pride, when the heir to the throne was assassinated in 1914.

## THE ÁRPÁD QUEEN OF SCOTLAND

June 10th is the Feast of Saint Margaret of Scotland in the Catholic Calendar.

Margaret was the grand-daughter of *King Saint Stephen of Hungary*.

When Edmund the Ironside, King of the English, died in 1016, his two sons sought refuge in Hungary, in Saint Stephen's Court. One of the boys died in Hungary, but the other, Edward, married Stephen's daughter, *Agatha*. They had three children: a boy, Edgar; and two daughters, Christine and Margaret, who was born around 1047.

The English King, Edward the Confessor, who had no children, recalled Edward in 1054 wishing to make him his heir. The Prince went to England but died soon after his arrival there. Agatha and the three children then lived for a while in Edward the Confessor's Court. Another prince enjoyed Edward's hospitality at that time. This was Malcolm of Scotland, son of King Duncan, killed by Macbeth (of Shakespearean fame). He fell in love with Margaret who was then in her early teens, but history intervened and separated them: King Edward died, the Norman Duke William invaded and conquered England, and Malcolm returned to Scotland. Princess Agatha decided to return with her children to her father's country, Hungary. However a fierce gale — and divine providence — drove their ship northwards and they landed on the shores of Scotland. Malcolm, who had become King of Scotland, welcomed his friends enthusiastically — and eventually married his childhood sweetheart, Margaret, in 1070.

Margaret was a disciple of the Benedictine teachers of the Cluny reform movement. These were the advisors of her grandfather, Saint Stephen. Her life was the epitome of Saint Benedict's motto: "*Ora et Labora*" ("Prayer and Work"). Due to her attractive personality and superior education she soon became the leading voice in the changes which affected the social and spiritual life of Scotland. She founded churches, schools, hospitals and monasteries. King Malcolm adored his wife. Being illiterate — as many of his fellow monarchs were at the time — he left the affairs concerning education, religion and social reforms to his wife. She possessed a thorough scholastic education acquired in her grandfather's court in Hungary.

In *Dunfermline*, the capital, Margaret had a beautiful Benedictine monastery built. In the courtyard of the cathedral stood a marble stone, called Margaret's Stone. On this stone, the Queen received anyone seeking justice or help. Today, this stone covers her modest tomb. She used her gentle persuasion with the leaders of the Scottish Church, gradually putting into effect the Benedictine reforms of Cluny, the great Catholic revival of the 11th century.

Malcolm and Margaret had eight children: six sons and two daughters. Three of their sons became kings of Scotland successively. One of their daughters married King Henry I of England, thus uniting the Saxon and Norman dynasties.

During the last years the royal couple lived in the Castle of *Edinburgh* where Margaret had a small chapel built as her oratory.





Saint Margaret's Chapel, Edinburgh

This is the *Saint Margaret Chapel* we know today, the official church of the Edinburgh garrison where the families of the Edinburgh Regiment have the right to marry and have their children baptised — regardless of their denomination.

Malcolm and his eldest son were killed in a battle in 1093. When Margaret learned of their deaths, she knelt down, said a prayer, then lay down and died. "So calm was her departure" — says her historian — "that her friends only noticed after a while that her soul had passed to the land of eternal peace . . ."

She was canonized by the Pope and declared Patron Saint of Scotland. She has a unique place in the memory of the Protestant

Scots too, who remember the anniversary of her death, November the 16th, as Saint Margaret's Day.

It is interesting to note that *Queen Elizabeth II* is also a descendant of the Hungarian-born Margaret. This is because her mother is of Scottish birth. The Queen also has Hungarian ancestry on her father's side: Queen Mary, George V's Queen, the present Queen's grandmother, was the grand-daughter of Princess Teck, the Hungarian Countess Rhédey. Countess Rhédey was famous for her beauty and horse-riding skill, qualities obviously inherited by the members of the Royal Family.

Margaret's descendants did not stay on one side of the Atlantic. Margaret Washington, nee Butler, George Washington's grandmother was also a distant, but direct descendant of the Scottish dynasty founded by Margaret and Malcolm.

All this amends the well-known "Mikes' Law" ("Everybody is Hungarian"). We should say: "Everybody and his ancestor are Hungarian . . ."

\*

**June 11th** is the day of the **Blessed Gergely** (Gregory), a Pauline monk, friend of King Matthias. He died in 1479.

\*

On **June 15th** another Hungarian saint is remembered: the **Blessed Jolánta (Yolanda)** who was the daughter of king Béla IV, sister of Saint Margaret and the Blessed Kinga. She married a Polish prince. After the death of her husband she retired to the Convent of Gnesen where she died in 1298.

## THE LOST BROTHERS

On the 21st of June, 1236, the Hungarian monk, **Julian** left what he called "Greater Hungary" to return to the other Hungary — 2000 miles away. Brother Julian had discovered the Hungarians' "long lost brothers", another Magyar speaking nation and their large, prosperous country situated between the Volga and the Ural in eastern Europe.

According to the "Gestae" — the chronicles of medieval Hungary, only a part of the Magyar nation settled in the Carpath-

ian Basin in the 9th century. The rest of the Magyars — possibly the larger part of the nation, remained in the Volga-Ural region. At the beginning of the 13th century, the learned *King Béla IV* decided to verify these reports and sent four Hungarian monks to look for the legendary “lost brothers” of the Hungarians.

The monks did reach the region and found a large, Magyar-speaking nation between the Volga River and the Ural Mountains. Because of its size and large population, they called the country “Magna Hungaria”: Greater Hungary.

Only one of the four monks survived the arduous return journey, and even this monk died soon after his arrival in Hungary without being able to make a detailed report of his findings.

So Béla sent another group of four monks.

Only one of these, Julian, managed to reach the homeland of the Volga-Hungarians and he lived with the Magyar brothers for some weeks. They spoke Hungarian, formed a large powerful nation engaged in pastoral and agricultural activities, but quite capable of raising a large army when attacked. They had, in fact, already clashed with the Mongols and had repelled several invasion attempts. They were not Christians but their monotheistic religion and high moral standards were close to Christianity. This nation of several million was well known and respected in the region for their lively trade and spirit of independence.

Julian left “Magna Hungaria” in June 1236 and hastened back to Hungary with his report. Little did he know that he would be the last Hungarian ever to see the “lost brothers” of the East.

The king decided to invite the eastern Hungarians to migrate to the Carpathian Basin, and join their brothers settled there in order to form a united, great nation, capable of resisting the threatening Mongol invasion. Julian and three others set out again toward “Greater Hungary” with the King’s message.

They never reached the country of the Volga-Hungarians. Hardly had they reached the south of Ukraine when they received the tragic news: the attack of the Mongol army had totally destroyed the once powerful “Greater Hungary”. The Mongols had annihilated the entire nation as was their custom with people who had resisted them.

Julian returned to Hungary, accompanied by some Cumanian refugees, neighbours of the Volga-Hungarians who gave a dramatic account of the last heroic struggle and destruction of what was once the second Hungarian nation.

So the Hungarians, once again alone, faced the Mongol onslaught as the principal target of Khan Batu, the would-be conqueror of Europe. As we have already seen in this chronicle, the Hungarian nation did fall under the Mongol-Tartar onslaught of 1241-42.

History would have taken a different turn if the strong eastern Magyar nation had been able to join their brothers in the Carpathian Basin forming, possibly, Europe’s strongest nation.

But then, as Omar Khayyam said:

*“Of all the words of Life and Dream,  
The saddest are: it might have been. . .”*

\*

The Catholic Church honours the day of **Saint László (Ladislás)** on the **27th of June**.

Saint László was *king of Hungary from 1077 to 1095*. A heroic and popular knight-king, he represented the finest virtues of medieval chivalry. He fought the eastern invaders (Cumanians, Pechenegs) — and then converted them to Christianity and resettled them in Hungary. He re-established law and order in the country after the turbulent decades under his predecessors. László paid particular attention to the eastern region of Hungary, Transylvania where he founded new towns and bishoprics. He granted special privileges to the Székely, a Magyar ethnic group settled in the easternmost area of Transylvania.

He enjoyed immense prestige at home and abroad. His daughter — the future Saint Irene — married the Greek emperor and by his clever family politics he incorporated Croatia as an autonomous province of Hungary.

His reputation as the model of the Christian knight justifies his choice as the patron saint of the Hungarian soldier. His day, *the 27th of June has therefore been celebrated as the day to remember the Magyar soldiers* who died in the defence of their country during its history.

## A FATEFUL DAY

On the **28th of June, 1914**, the Crown Prince of the Austrian-Hungarian Monarchy, *Francis Ferdinand and his wife were assassinated* in Sarajevo by a member of a Slav secret society. The Austrian government wished to take stern measures against Serbia

for fomenting the assassination. At the Crown Council, *István Tisza*, the Hungarian Prime Minister *objected to measures that might lead to war*, but the Austrian politicians and generals insisted on armed retaliation. So a month later, Francis Joseph declared war on Serbia, setting off a chain of events which soon involved the world in the Great War.

Hungary's unwilling participation in the War eventually led to the country's destruction by the Trianon Treaty. Over half a million Magyars died, three quarters of the country were lost — in order to avenge the death of the Austrian archduke who, incidentally hated the Hungarians.

Twenty-seven years later, on the same day, **28th of June 1941**, Hungary found herself **at war with Soviet Russia**.

When Germany attacked the Soviet Union on the 22nd of June, 1941, Hungary declared her intention to remain non-belligerent. Italy, Finland, Rumania, Slovakia and Croatia, however, followed Germany in declaring war on the Soviet Union at once. A few days after the launching of the German offensive, the Hungarian city, Kassa was bombed, allegedly by Soviet planes. On the 28th of June, the Hungarian Prime Minister, *László Bárdossy*, declared that, as a result of this hostile act, *"a state of war existed between Hungary and the Soviet Union."*

Bárdossy made this statement without consulting the Parliament or obtaining explicit instructions from the Regent. The Hungarian Constitution reserved the right of the declaration of war to the Regent, after the Parliament had given its consent. Before the People's Court, in 1945, Bárdossy insisted that Hungary did not declare war — it was Russia's hostile act which created a state of war between the two countries.

A British historian, Professor C.A. Macartney, suggests a typically "Magyar" reason for Bárdossy's behaviour: the Prime Minister knew that Hungary would not be allowed to remain neutral in the centre of the German supply lines. He therefore "arranged" Hungary's entry into war but made certain that, if things "went wrong" all responsibility should fall on him alone and not on the Regent or members of the Parliament. Things "did go wrong" — and after the War Bárdossy faced the People's Court in Budapest with great courage and accepted full responsibility for everything.

He accepted his death sentence as a sacrifice for his nation.



## July

On the **2nd of July, 1859** the Chief of the Persian General Staff was given a state funeral with great military pomp in the presence of the Shah. There is nothing strange about this event — except that the Persian general honoured was called **Fedor Karacsay** and he was of Hungarian-Székely birth.

Karacsay fought in the Hungarian National Army with distinction and fled the country in 1849, after the defeat of the Freedom War. Eventually he found his way to Teheran, capital of Persia (Iran) — in much the same way Hungarians happen to find their way to the remotest parts of the world today. He helped to reorganize the Persian Army. He was made a general and later Chief of the Imperial General Staff.

This proves that no country is safe from adventurous Magyars, especially from those of the Székely variety.

\*

**July the 4th is the day of Saint Isabella (Elizabeth) of Portugal.**

Elizabeth was an Árpád princess, niece of the better-known Saint Elizabeth of Hungary. She was born in 1271 and was married to the King of Portugal. She spent her life pacifying her temperamental relatives. On one occasion she stood between the armies of her son and her husband to stop their battle. She brought peace to the turbulent kingdoms of the Iberian Peninsula and earned the epithet: "Queen of Peace". She is known as the Patron Saint of Portugal.

\*

**July the 8th** is the anniversary of an event unique in military history. On this day, in 1664, the commander of the besieging army *married the commander of the garrison* defending the fort.

The young widow, **Mária Széchy**, called (for obvious reasons) the "Venus of Murány", was a follower of Prince György Rákóczi



Mária Széchy (The Venus of Murány)

who, at that time, was waging war against the Habsburg emperor-king of Hungary. Mária successfully defended the fortress-castle Murány against the Imperial forces for a considerable time. It seems that she was on good terms with the god Mars as well . . .

The commander of the besieging army happened to be the handsome Magyar general, *Ferenc Wesselényi*. One day, Wesselényi asked for an armistice, went up to the fort and managed to convince the bellicose lady that Hungarians should not hate each other, on the contrary . . . He therefore asked for her hand in marriage. Mária accepted his "terms" and the two commanders celebrated their wedding in the castle on the 8th of July.

## "JUSTICE FOR HUNGARY"

On the 15th of July, 1931 a small plane flew from New York to Budapest, breaking two world records.

Ocean flying was still a hazardous enterprise in 1931 — it was only four years after Lindbergh's epic flight. Of the five planes which set out from New York to cross the Atlantic in 1931, only two reached Europe. One of these was named "*Justice for Hungary*", piloted by two Hungarians, **György Endresz** and **Sándor Magyar**. Financial backing for the enterprise was secured by the generous contributions of the Hungarians in the U.S. and Canada.

The small, one-engined Lockheed-Sirius flew from New York to New Foundland, the closest point to Europe. From there the two pilots took off from an improvised airport on the afternoon of July 15th. They crossed the Atlantic during the night, reached Ireland in the morning and then flew over western Europe in daylight. They reached the outskirts of Budapest in the late afternoon. Then — within sight of their goal — their fuel ran out and they had to land in a cornfield, some 10 miles from Budapest.

The flight broke the existing long-distance non-stop record: the plane spent 26 hours and 20 minutes in the air without landing. The pilots also broke the speed record for long-distance flights.

More importantly, the name of the plane which flashed across the front pages of the newspapers, "*Justice for Hungary*", called the world's attention to the injustice done to Hungary in the Treaty of Trianon.

\*

The **Olympic Games of Helsinki** began on the 19th of July, 1952. Hungary finished second, with 16 gold medals. On the occasion of the *London Olympics*, 1948, Hungary was third with 10 gold medals, and a similar result was achieved at the *Berlin Olympics* in 1936. These remarkable achievements by a small nation prove to the world that the Magyar spirit remains unbroken in spite of disastrous wars and foreign oppression.

Hungarians excel in the field of intellectual competition too. The Hungarian *chess team* won the World Championship twice, the last time in 1978, defeating the Soviet team, the undisputed leaders in chess.

There is little State support for sport in Hungary. The Magyars are genuine "amateurs" of sport: they love competition and they feel emotionally involved with their sportsmen or teams representing their nation abroad.

\*

László Moholy-Nagy was born on the 20th of July, 1895 in Hungary. He studied painting and his avant-garde ideas inspired by the French Cubists found sympathetic appreciation with the poet Ady and his friends.

After World War I Moholy-Nagy went to Germany. He founded the so-called "*Bauhaus School*", based on the principle of purely visual, nonrepresentational art, composed of colour, texture, light and an equilibrium of forms. As an art educator, Moholy-Nagy stressed the importance of natural visual gifts: "Everybody is talented" was his motto.

Moholy-Nagy moved to the United States in 1937 and founded the Chicago "*Institute of Design*" ("*New Bauhaus*") which he headed as the foremost educator of modern art until his death in 1946.

## NATIONAL SELF-DESTRUCTION

In July 1514 the rebel "peasant" army of György Dózsa was defeated by the army of John Zápolya at Temesvár, in the south of Hungary.

The defeat of the Dózsa uprising marked the end of Hungary's only civil war, the saddest episode of the country's history.

These events occurred only 24 years after the death of Hungary's greatest king, Matthias. As the great king died without a legitimate heir, the barons of Hungary invited the weak-willed Vladislas (Ulászló) Jagiello to the throne of the country. Under his indifferent rule, the barons and nobles abandoned Matthias' fine social, cultural, military and political reforms and plunged the once powerful nation into complete chaos. They refused to pay taxes, thus ruining the country's economy and refused to bear arms against the Turks — because they needed their private armies against each other.

In the face of the increasing threat of a Turkish attack, the Pope authorized the Primate of Hungary, Cardinal Bakócz, to raise a crusader army. Bakócz appointed the efficient professional soldier, György Dózsa commander of the crusaders. Soon the poor nobles, the over-taxed citizens of the towns, the lower clergy and the oppressed serfs or peasants swelled the ranks of the crusaders, who called themselves "kuruc" (from the Latin "cru" = "cross"). The rich barons and the landed nobles objected to the recruiting of their manpower, the serfs. Clashes began between the nobles and the serfs who were bitter about their treatment by the tyrannical landlords.

By June 1514 a full-scale war raged between the barons' private armies and the "kuruc" of Dózsa. In July, Dózsa laid siege to Temesvár in the south of the country. The governor of the province of Transylvania, János Zápolya suddenly attacked Dózsa's army with a superior, well-equipped professional army and annihilated the "kuruc". The victor punished the captured leaders of the rebels with the savage cruelty usual in Europe in those times.

Subsequently, the vengeful Diet inflicted various restrictions on the serfs whom they held responsible for the uprising (though it was led by noblemen, lower clergy and urban citizens).

During these centuries, the entire European continent was aflame with civil wars, peasant uprisings and religious wars. Some of the western "peasant revolts" claimed 200,000 victims. The number of deaths caused by the Dózsa uprising was about 20,000. Still, the effects of this bloodletting were fatal: the Turkish Empire stood ready to launch the invasion of Hungary. What is more, the victor of Temesvár, John Zápolya eventually gained the crown of Hungary on the strength of his victory over the peasants. After the defeat at Mohács (which we remember on the 29th of August), the throne of Hungary became vacant. The power-hungry Zápolya, head of the strongest remaining Hungarian army, had himself elected king. He reigned for 15 years after Mohács (1526-1540) as one of the two rival kings (the other was Ferdinand of the Habsburg dynasty). During these 15 years this cowardly, dishonest, selfish man practically handed over Hungary to the Turks. He still disposed of strong forces but he lacked both the will and the talent to raise his sword in the defence of his country.

He was the last of the national kings of Hungary — and certainly the least.

July the 22nd is the anniversary of another victory and of a crusade of a different kind. On that day, in 1456 (half a century before the events described above), the army of Hungarian crusaders, commanded by János Hunyadi, defeated the Turkish army at *Nándorfehérvár*, frustrating the Osman attempts to invade Central Europe.

János (John) Hunyadi, probably the greatest soldier of Hungarian history, fought the Turks in the Balkans for decades. By 1456 the Sultan had assembled an immense army ready to invade Hungary, the gateway to the Christian West. The Pope tried to raise a crusade against the Turks, but only Hungary offered her soldiers. As Hunyadi wrote to the Pope: "We only, left alone . . . have endured the fury of the war . . ."

The Turkish army, reinforced with heavy artillery (a new feature in Europe at the time) attacked Hungary's largest frontier stronghold, *Nándorfehérvár* on the Danube. Hunyadi brought up his troops — consisting of Magyar peasants and volunteer noblemen — and attacked the Turks on both banks of the river. The Hungarians triumphed, the Sultan's army was destroyed and Europe could breathe a sigh of relief.

Grateful, the Pope ordered that the bells should toll every day at noon in memory of Hunyadi's victory. Today, few bells toll in Europe at noon, and even fewer people remember the Hungarian victory, least of all in the former Hungarian stronghold, *Nándorfehérvár*, which happens to be called *Belgrade* today . . .

\*

The Catholic Church honours the **Blessed Kinga** on the 24th of July. Kinga was the eldest of the three sainted daughters of King Béla IV. She married the Polish King, Boleslav. After his death she entered a convent of the Franciscan nuns where she died in 1292. In canonizing her, the Pope declared Kinga Patron Saint of Poland and Lithuania.

\*

**Baron Lóránd (Roland) Eötvös** was born on the 27th of July, 1848. He was the son of József Eötvös, author, statesman and educationalist.

Lóránd Eötvös was professor of Physics at Budapest, a member and later President of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences



Professor Lóránd Eötvös

and, for a short time, Minister of Public Education in Hungary. He died in Budapest in 1919. His old university bears his name today.

His studies and experiments led to several important discoveries. The result of the experiments connected with capillarity are laid down in the so-called "Eötvös Law" which defines the variations of surface tension with changes of temperature. Later he concentrated on the problems of terrestrial magnetism and gravitation. The "Eötvös torsion balance" is used to determine the infinitesimal variations of gravity caused by subterranean deposits of minerals or fuel deposits. This is an essential instrument in modern geological research.

\*

**Ernö Dohnányi** was born in Pozsony, Hungary, on the 27th of July, 1877. He was professor and later director of the Budapest

Conservatory, director of State Music Broadcasts and principal of the Budapest Music High School. He settled in the U.S.A. after Hungary's Soviet occupation, and died there in 1960.

Dohnányi was a virtuoso of the piano. He composed for the piano and for orchestra. His symphonies, the ballet "The Veil of Pierette", the suite "Ruralia Hungarica" and the piano composition "Variation on a Nursery Song" are still popular items on the radio stations and in the concert halls of the world.

\*

**György (George) Széll**, the famous conductor, died on the **30th of July, 1970** at the age of 73 in the United States.

Széll was born and educated in Hungary. He began his musical career at the age of ten as a guest pianist in Vienna. During the '30s and '40s he reached world fame as the conductor of the greatest orchestra's in Germany and later in the U.S.A. From 1946 until his death he conducted the Cleveland Symphony Orchestra.

Széll was one of the large number of Hungarian-born conductors who enriched the musical life of the West, especially after World War II. *Sir George Solti* divided his time between London, his home and the U.S.A. where he regularly conducted the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. He also seemed to find time for France where he was the musical director of the Paris Orchestra. *Jenö (Eugene) Ormándy* conducted the Philadelphia Orchestra for four decades, *Antal Doráti* is best known in the United States, *Ferenc Fricsay* in Germany and *Tibor Paul* in Australia.

### A MASTER OF ALL TRADES

**András Jelky** was born on **July 30, 1730** in the small Hungarian town of Baja. His father was a master tailor and András' only ambition was to follow in his father's footsteps. On completing his home apprenticeship, he went to Germany in order to spend a year there as a tailor's journeyman.

Instead of one year, he spent 24 years abroad, gaining (against his will) fascinating experience in a wide range of occupations. None was related to his chosen trade, however.

Soon after his arrival in Germany he was kidnapped by a press-gang and forced to serve as a sailor aboard a Dutch ship

bound for East India. The ship sank in the Atlantic and the unwilling sailor was picked up by another Dutch ship bound for Europe — but fate was against him. The ship was captured by Turkish pirates near Malta and young Jelky was sold at a slave market in Algeria. He again managed to get away, this time in a small boat of his own making. A Portuguese ship picked him up — and took him to Macao, the Portuguese colony on the south coast of China.

Two years later he turned up in *Batavia* (today Jakarta), the capital of Dutch East Indies. His own account of these years is rather hazy: apparently he was shipwrecked then captured by a fierce native tribe and given the choice of marrying the chief's daughter or else . . . He obviously preferred being the guest of honour to being the dinner itself, so he married the dusky beauty. Yet he arrived at Batavia apparently unmarried and obviously alive. It seems that our young tailor had learned to spin a good yarn during his apprenticeship . . .

His vast experience, knowledge of languages and good Hungarian common sense soon earned him a high and respected position in the Dutch colony. He became a wealthy businessman and diplomat, married and had two children. At various times he was sent by the colonial government to Ceylon and Japan on missions of diplomacy and trade. He was, in fact, one of the first Europeans to establish a diplomatic post in Japan.

Then his wife and children died and Jelky remembered his old country. He gave up everything and returned to Hungary after an absence of 24 years. There, in the city of Buda, the former Dutch Royal Counsellor, diplomat and businessman took up his original trade and died as a master tailor in 1783.

He left no riches, no family — only an incredible tale of adventure which is still waiting for the pen of a novelist or the skill of a film director.

### "BROTHER OF ALL MEN . . ."

On a rocky peak in the New Mexico desert rises a huge cross made of rough stones. At the base one finds the following inscription in Spanish:

*"Here lies Brother Gregory Hollósi, brother of all men, who brought light to those who were living in the dark."*

Gregory Hollósi was a Hungarian monk who accompanied the Spanish conquistador, Coronado into California and New Mexico in 1540. Gregory hoped to be able to spread the Christian Faith among the Indians but Coronado and his soldiers were hoping to find the legendary "Seven Silver Cities". Gregory's missionary efforts were frustrated by the greed and cruelty of the Spanish soldiers. The Hungarian priest had obviously not concealed his opposition to the methods used by the conquerors, because we find a note in Coronado's diary in 1541 reporting that "Brother Gregory has been sent away because of his continuous stubbornness and lack of respect . . ."

Gregory survived in the arid region and eventually found the mountain towns of the Zuni Indians — ironically the same "Seven Silver Cities" for which Coronado had been looking.

The Indians lived in seven towns, in houses cut into the mountain rock. They made their weapons and ornaments of silver which they found in abundance in the mountains. Brother Gregory lived with the Zunis for 40 years. He converted them to Christianity and defended them against those who brought shame upon the Faith of Christ. Several Spanish expeditions attempted to conquer the "Silver Cities" but the Zunis' bravery — and Gregory's prayers — saved them each time. Finally, in 1580 a large Spanish army was sent against the Zuni towns. Gregory met the commander, and pleaded with him. The commander took him hostage and continued his march against the cities. As the Spanish army was crossing the huge suspension bridge leading to the valley of the Zunis, Gregory knelt down in prayer for his people. In that moment, the bridge collapsed, killing the Spanish soldiers and Brother Gregory.

His tombstone still looks down upon the now empty valley after 400 years. We do not find his name among the famous conquerors or saints — but he was a good man, a brother of all men in an age of inhumanity.



# August

## A HUNGARIAN QUEEN OF FRANCE

The wedding of **Princess Clemence**, sister of Charles Robert, King of Hungary and *Louis X*, King of France on a summer day in 1315 was the first joyous event for years after a period of tragic and strange happenings in France.

Louis, was the eldest son of Philip called the Fair, King of France whose handsome looks concealed a particularly cruel and greedy character. In 1314 Philip destroyed the Order of the Templar Knights and had their leaders executed on false charges. This was in order to acquire their considerable fortune. The Grand Master of the Order courageously defended the innocence of the Templars even at the stake, before his execution. Before his death he pronounced a curse upon the king and his family "to the thirteenth generation . . ."

Soon after his execution strange and frightening things began to happen to the royal family. It became known that the wives of the king's three sons had had long-time scandalous love affairs with the nobles of the court. Philip had all three wives thrown into prison and some of their lovers executed. Then he himself died as a result of a mysterious hunting accident. His oldest son, Louis succeeded him. As his adulterous wife could not be crowned Queen of France, he had her assassinated in the prison. Then he sent his envoy to Hungary to ask for the hand of the sister of the powerful and respected king of that country, Charles Robert.

**Princess Clemence** who was 18 at that time was a descendant of the Hungarian Árpád Dynasty and of the Anjou royal family of Naples. She was born in Naples but her parents died soon after her birth. She was brought up by her grandmother, Mary, Queen of Hungary, daughter of the Hungarian King, Stephen V and niece of the three saint daughters of King Béla IV. Queen Mary gave her two grandchildren, Charles Robert and Clemence, a good Christian



and Hungarian education. Charles Robert then inherited the Hungarian throne in 1307 and Clemence went with him to Hungary.

Charles Robert's court at Visegrád became the centre of refined Western culture and Christian Hungarian humanism. Such was the fame of this great king that the King of France sought to strengthen his shaky empire through marriage and alliance with the powerful Anjou-Hungarian dynasty.

Princess Clemence proved much more than just a beautiful young bride. She knew nothing of the sinister tragedies of the Capet family but took pity on the sick-looking, disturbed and frightened Louis who seemed to be much older than his 37 years. The French historians give us an enthusiastic description of her beauty and tell us of the luxurious Hungarian ship which brought her to France and describe her fabulous dowry in detail, including the solid-gold dinner set decorated with the Hungarian coat-of-arms in jewels. The French historians call her "Clemence de Hongrie" — "Clemence of Hungary" and the Paris court kept referring to her as "The Hungarian Lady". It is obvious that her Hungarian ancestry was more important than the Anjou family connection.

We are also told how she introduced the refined manners of Naples and Visegrád into the world of violence and intrigue which was the Paris royal court at that time. She ordered her courtiers, for instance, to use forks at the dinner table, as was the custom in Hungary, instead of their fingers and hunting knives, as was the French custom then.

Having learned her husband's dark secret, she endeavoured to heal the soul of this unfortunate man with Christian charity. She also turned her attention to the plight of the poor and sick of her new country. Her charitable activities, resembling those of her ancestor, Saint Elizabeth of Hungary, soon made her a beloved and popular consort of the hated king. This was a rare thing in France, where foreign queens have rarely been popular. Her very name, "Clemence" which means "benevolence" in French seemed to suit her well and soon she became known as the "Benevolent Queen."

Under her influence, Louis began to regain his health and his peace of mind, especially when he learned that Clemence expected a child — hopefully the heir which Louis had so much desired.

It was then that the real curse of the Capets struck. Suddenly Louis died of mysterious stomach pains. It was rumoured that the

mother-in-law of his younger brother had poisoned him in order to secure the throne for her family. Soon after the king's death his son was born. He was to be baptised and crowned John I five days after his birth. At the moment of the baptism the baby suddenly shivered and died. The chronicler notes that the baby was held by his God-mother at that moment, who was none other than the mother-in-law mentioned before . . .

After the double tragedy Clemence moved into the monastery-castle Temple in the heart of Paris. There she mourned her husband and child in prayer and works of charity. She took no further part in the political life of France but she must have observed the tragic developments in France, the downfall of the Capet dynasty. Louis was succeeded by his two brothers who both died childless, and under "suspicious circumstances". They were the last members of the direct line of the Capet dynasty and they were followed by the Valois branch of the family. The first Valois king was — curiously enough — the son of the intriguing lady suspected of having arranged the premature demise of the last Capets.

**Clemence died in 1328** — the very year the last Capet died and the first Valois was crowned. By that time she was all but forgotten — except for the poor and the sick on whom she had spent all her fabulous fortune.

Thus the short reign of the Hungarian Queen of France brought a little Italian sunshine and a touch of Hungarian humanism into the dismal, violent world of 14th century France.

## A BITTER LESSON IN POLITICS

**On the 10th of August, 955**, a Hungarian army was defeated by the German forces at **Augsburg** in Bavaria.

In the 10th century, the Hungarians were still considered intruders by their powerful neighbours, the German and Byzantine Empires. The leaders of the young Hungarian state decided therefore to assert their rights in the Carpathian Basin. For more than 50 years they fought *deterrent, preventative campaigns* against the two empires. The campaigns were intended to weaken the central power of each empire by assisting rebel vassals against the emperor. The success of the campaigns also enabled Hungary to obtain a position of strength from which to negotiate with their neighbours on equal terms. We could call these campaigns "wars to

prevent wars" — and as such they compare rather favourably with the "wars to end all wars" of the 20th century.

The most successful general of these campaigns was **Bulcsu**. In addition to his military skill, he was also a skilled diplomat. He established an alliance with the Bavarian ruler, Duke Arnulf, who married Bulcsu's sister. Arnulf fought the German Emperor, Otto, in alliance with Bulcsu. When he died, his son, Conrad, continued his struggle against the emperor. He asked his uncle, Bulcsu, to help him. Bulcsu hastened to his assistance with 8,000 Magyar soldiers.

Conrad, however, made peace with the emperor and the two decided to destroy the Hungarians. They ambushed Bulcsu's army and defeated it at the River Lech, near Augsburg. The few survivors were put to death, including Conrad's uncle, Bulcsu and his fellow-commander, Lehel.

In spite of this bitter lesson in international politics, the policy of the "campaigns" (or "raids") paid off. The Magyars had proved that they could be useful allies and dangerous enemies. A few decades after the disaster, the grand-daughter of the victor of Augsburg married the heir to the throne of Hungary.

Hungary had joined the European community.

\*

**János (John) Hunyadi**, the greatest Hungarian soldier died on the **11th of August, 1456**.

This legendary hero who survived countless battles died of the plague which he contracted during his campaigns.

He was the son of a minor Hungarian official in Transylvania. Hunyadi served in the king's guard and rose eventually to the rank of commander of the Hungarian forces at the southern frontier. His victorious campaigns on the Balkans contained the Turkish advance for decades. By 1444 he had pushed the Turks back to the south of the peninsula but without the help of the western nations he could not entirely chase them from Europe.

During the infancy of King Ladislas V he acted as Hungary's Regent. After the capture of Constantinople (today Istanbul) in 1453, the Turks set out to conquer Hungary and beyond her, Christian Europe. Hunyadi again repulsed the Turkish advance in the famous Battle of Nándorfehérvár in 1456 — but died two weeks after his great victory.

Hunyadi was the paragon of the Christian Magyar knight whose religious devotion equalled his military prowess.

His opponent Sultan Mohammed said of him: "We were enemies, but nevertheless, his death grieves me, for the world has never known a greater man."

\*

**August the 13th** is the feast of **Saint Irene**, daughter of the Hungarian King, Saint László. Irene — in Hungarian Piroska, was married to the Byzantine Emperor. One of her sons, Manuel eventually occupied the throne of Byzantium as the last great ruler of that declining empire.

After her husband's death, Irene retired to a convent, and died there in 1133. She is buried in Istanbul (Byzantium) in the Greek church built in her honour.

\*

**Bálint Bakfark**, the composer and lute-player, died on the **15th of August, 1576**. He visited several Western countries where he became known as "Orpheus Pannoniae". His compositions were published in Hungary and abroad during his lifetime. It was through these collections that the West first became acquainted with Magyar melodies which inspired many contemporary compositions under such titles as "Ungarescha", "Ungarischer Tanz" and others.

\*

**Dr Ignác Semmelweis** died on the **17th of August, 1865**.

He was born in Buda, Hungary, in 1818. After graduating from Pest and Vienna, he worked as an assistant at the Vienna Maternity Hospital. At that time *puerperal fever* killed a large number of women in childbirth. Semmelweis began to study this killer of young women. He discovered that the fever was caused by a bacterial infection, carried by the nurses and doctors who assisted at childbirth. Thus, he discovered the nature of bacteria long before Pasteur. He immediately ordered that the nurses and doctors should wash their hands before examinations and operations. The mortality rate in his division dropped dramatically. When he disclosed his findings and asked his superiors to introduce



Dr. I. Semmelweis

similar measures throughout the hospital, the Austrian doctors ridiculed his assertions and rejected his suggestions. The hospital authorities had already been angered by his insistence that he was Hungarian, in spite of his German name, and that he insisted on dressing in the Magyar style. Now their professional jealousy worsened the situation. Semmelweis was denied promotion or facilities to continue his research, let alone permission to publish his findings.

So, he moved to the *Pest Maternity Hospital in Hungary*. Here he was able to carry out his innovations and to considerably reduce the mortality rate of the young mothers. However the jealousy and

hostility of the Austrian doctors made it impossible for him to make his doctrine known to the medical world. In the dual Austrian-Hungarian Monarchy, Vienna exercised dictatorial control over the medical profession. His treatises and studies only reached the medical world after his death.

He died at the height of his career at *the age of 47, ironically from an infection*. He was a victim of the very disease which he had fought at the expense of this fortune, his health and his peace of mind. The Western world has since acknowledged Semmelweis' contribution to science. *Lord Lister*, the father of modern surgery paid this tribute to the Hungarian physician: "Without Semmelweis my achievements would be nothing. *To this great son of Hungary surgery owes most.*"

The medical best-seller of Morton Thompson: "The Cry and the Covenant" describes Semmelweis' struggle dramatically.

\*

The only **world jamboree** of the **Girl Guide** movement took place in Hungary in **August, 1939**. Ten thousand girls from all over the world met at this "*Pax Ting*" ("*Peace Rally*"). *Their gentle plea fell on deaf ears: Europe was already rushing toward World War II.*

\*

**On the 20th of August** Hungarians all over the world remember their first Christian King, **Saint Stephen (István)**, who reigned from 997 to 1038.

He was the son of the last paramount Prince of Hungary, Géza. István married Gisela, the daughter of the Duke of Bavaria and sister of the future emperor. On his father's death, István became the ruling Prince of Hungary. In 1000 he asked the Pope to recognize him as an independent Christian King. Pope Silvester II sent him a crown and bestowed upon him the title of "King by the Grace of God", thus acknowledging his independence from the Holy Roman (German) Empire.

István established a Christian hierarchy and set up a central state organization based on the division of counties, rather than on the Western-type feudal system. He invited educated and skilled people from abroad to settle in Hungary and he granted them privileges. In his "*Admonitiones*", written to his son and heir, he

advised the future king to welcome foreign "guests" in order to enrich Magyar culture by their contributions. At the same time, however, he proudly acknowledged the ancient historic heritage of the Magyar nation: "Preserve everything that is Hungarian. Without a past a nation has no future . . ." he wrote to his son.

He maintained friendly political and family ties with many European rulers, such as the Emperor, Saint Henry, his brother-in-law. One of his daughters, Agatha, married Edmund the Ironside's son, Edward and became the mother of Queen Saint Margaret of Scotland.

Unfortunately, his only son to reach adulthood, Imre, died in a hunting accident. King Stephen's death was followed by a period of internal strife.

He died on the **15th of August, 1038**. His *Holy Crown* has remained the symbol of supreme authority in Hungary.

## MOHÁCS

**On the 29th of August, 1526, Sultan Soliman (Suleiman) destroyed the Hungarian army at Mohács.**

During the first decades of the 16th century, the weak king Ulászló (Vladislas) II and his child successor, *Lajos (Louis) II (1516-1526)* left the government of the country to the barons who took no notice of the increasing danger of Turkish invasion. In an orgy of self-destruction, the nation's leaders fought each other for power and refused to pay taxes or to bear arms in defence of Hungary.

When Sultan Soliman "the Magnificent" set out in 1520 to conquer Europe, the once powerful Hungary could only oppose small mobile units in the south, recruited and commanded by the heroic archbishop, Tomori. The king was unable to mobilize the private banderia of the barons. Young Lajos II then wrote to the other Christian rulers of Western Europe, asking for help against the Turks. The two "very Christian Kings" of France and Spain (the Emperor) were fighting each other. The French King was the ally of the Sultan in any case. The King of England, Henry VIII regretted that he could not send help as he was "having domestic problems" (a typical British understatement). Hungary was left alone again.



King Lajos II.

When the Turks captured the few Hungarian forts defending the southern frontier, the king eventually managed to raise a small army of about 25,000. He bravely set out from Buda to face Soliman's well-equipped army of nearly 200,000. The Hungarians moved to the south of the Transdanubian region, near the confluence of the Danube and the Drava and waited there for the

Turks. They calmly watched the Turks as they struggled across the swampy flats with their heavy cannons — 300 of them. Someone suggested that the light cavalry should attack the Turks while they were still among the swamps, but the leaders rejected the idea. It would have been unfair and unchivalrous to attack the poor Turks while they were having such problems on the Hungarian terrain. So they let the “guests” establish their positions on the southern, elevated side of the plain, install their heavy artillery and arrange the disposition of the troops. They also waited for the Sultan to complete his noon prayers.

Then, when the Turks seemed to be ready, the small Magyar army attacked. Such was the fury of the first attack that the Turkish lines were broken. The young, impetuous king took command of his guard and led them against the faltering Turkish lines. In that moment, the Turkish lines fell back and the charging Magyars ran into the murderous fire of the Janissaries’ muskets and the 300 heavy cannon. 20,000 Hungarians died in less than two hours. The king, heavily wounded, was escorted by two bodyguards. As he was crossing a flooded river, the heavy armour dragged him down and he drowned. With him died on the field of Mohács the prelates and high dignitaries of the nation.

The Sultan could hardly believe that this small army was the national army of Hungary. He cautiously moved to the capital, Buda, found it undefended, sacked it and then returned to Turkey with 100,000 captives. For 15 years after this disaster, Hungary remained unoccupied by the Turks. But the disaster at Mohács broke the Magyar soul. Never again did historic Hungary regain her complete independence and power.

### STRANGE ANNIVERSARIES

The Turks never actually ordered the Hungarians to celebrate the anniversary of the Battle of Mohács as “Hungary’s National Day of Liberation”. Still, some interesting events happened on the anniversary of this great disaster.

**On the 29th of August, 1532** — three years after the Battle of Mohács to the day, a minor Hungarian-Turkish battle ended with a strange result.

On this day the Turkish siege of the Hungarian fort of **Köszeg** ended in what, for lack of a better term, we must call a “draw”.



Sultan Soliman (Suleiman)

\* Sultan Soliman (the “Magnificent”), having decided that the Hungarians constituted no danger anymore, ordered his army to attack the heart of the Habsburg Empire, *Vienna*. He moved with his troops through Croatia and western Hungary against the Austrian capital. Near the Austrian border stood the small fortified town, Köszeg. It was defended by 38 soldiers and a few hundred peasants who had fled to the fort from the Turks. The commander,

*Miklós Jurisics*, was loyal to the Habsburg King of Hungary, Ferdinand. He refused to surrender and managed to defend the fort successfully for almost four weeks against the vastly superior Turkish force.

By the end of August, the Turkish leaders began to worry about the approach of autumn. The Turkish army, accustomed to warmer climates and using camels to move its heavy equipment, could not move or wage war in the cold, rainy, muddy weather. So the Sultan ordered his commander to end the siege without delay. The commander, who happened to know Jurisics personally, arranged a secret meeting with the Hungarian captain. As a result of this meeting the following "arrangement" was made: a small Turkish detachment entered the fort (unopposed), planted the Turkish flag on the highest tower of the fort (alongside the Magyar flag) while the Sultan and the rest of the Turkish army held prayers of thanks for the "capture" of the fort.

Then the entire Turkish army packed up and moved toward Vienna in haste. The Hungarians then held their own thanksgiving in the fort and put the Turkish flag up in the church as a war trophy. Soliman had little benefit from the "compromise" capture of the fort. By the time his army reached Vienna, the empire had collected a large force to face the Turks. As the autumn cold was coming too (the Austrians' ablest general), Soliman returned to Turkey.

On the *15th anniversary of the Battle of Mohács, in 1541*, the Turkish capture of the undefended castle of Buda, the capital, signalled the *total Turkish occupation* of central Hungary.

On the *40th anniversary of Mohács, in 1566*, the great conqueror, *Soliman the Magnificent*, the victor of Mohács *died* during the siege of the fort Szigetvár — a few miles from the scene of his great triumph.

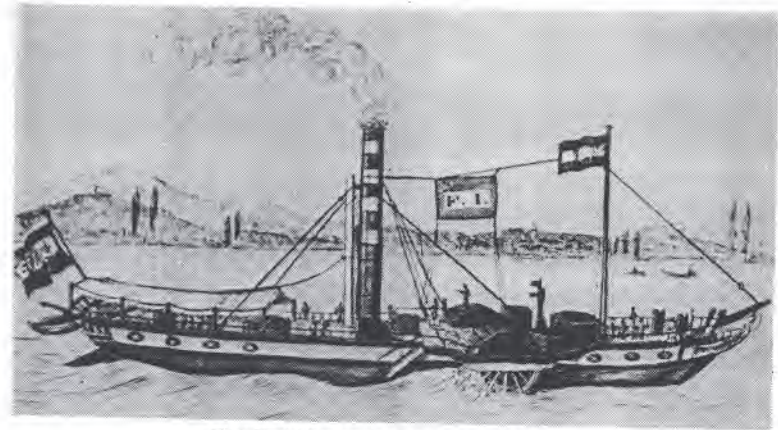


## September

### SOME HUNGARIAN "FIRSTS"

The first regular river-steamship service between Vienna and Pest was opened on the **4th of September, 1830**.

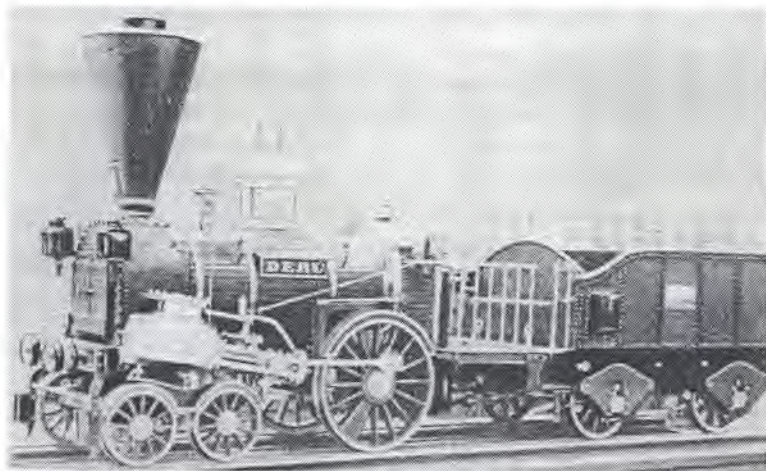
The steamship was invented by Robert Fulton in 1807. By 19th century standards, Hungary was very progressive in using the new invention so soon after its first application.



The first Hungarian steamship (1830)

1830 was also the year of the invention of the steam locomotive by George Stephenson. Fifteen years after the first experimental run between Liverpool and Manchester, Hungary opened *Central Europe's first steam-train line* between Pest and Vác. A few years later, in 1848, a longer railway line was opened between Pest and Szolnok.

There are some Hungarian "firsts" in the field of communication. The electric locomotive invented by the Hungarian engineer *Kálmán Kandó* made it possible to use electricity in rail transport. The first underground railway system on the European continent was inaugurated in Budapest in 1896.



The first Hungarian steam locomotive (1847)

The memorable year of 1896 — the thousandth anniversary of Hungary's statehood in Europe — or Hungary's "Millenium", marked the completion of the water, sewerage, gas, electricity and public transport systems in Budapest and the major Hungarian cities. The engineers Bánki and Csonka invented the petrol carburettor, thus making mass-production of cars possible. If they could see the congested roads of a modern city today, they might have second thoughts about their invention . . .

\*

On the 5th of September, 1909, the first night of the play "Liliom" by Ferenc Molnár was a complete failure in the Budapest Comedy Theatre. The critics agreed that young Molnár would never be able to write a good play.

Since that fateful evening, "Liliom" has been shown in Budapest more than a thousand times. It has enjoyed similar popularity on the stages of Berlin, Paris, London and New York. Eventually the play was made into a "musical" with the music of Rogers and Hammerstein and has since been a great success on stage and screen — under the title "Carousel".

Ferenc Molnár was born in Budapest in 1878. He studied Law (a "must" for the gentry in those days) then became a journalist (a "must not" for the gentry), a writer, war-correspondent and playwright. He wrote pleasant, but rather forgettable short stories, but

his only novel has become a world success. "The Boys of Pál Street" has been translated into most European languages and has been a juvenile classic for 70 years.

His real fame was created by his plays. As his themes were mostly humorous and universal, his plays are easily translated. They have reached the theatres of Western Europe and were especially well-received in the United States.

Molnár followed the path of the success of his plays and settled in New York. His comedies ("The Devil", "Olympia", "The Swan"), his witty criticisms and pleasant bohemian personality made him a popular figure in the American theatre world. He died in New York in 1952.

His novel and plays still remain popular but his Magyar name has somehow faded into obscurity — very few theatre-goers today remember the author of "Carousel". The reading public is apt to forget the "very Magyar" names of Arnóthy, Gábor, Földes, Harsányi, Márai, Wass or Zilahy although some of their works are bestsellers among German, French and English readers. On the other hand everybody knows the "western" names of such Hungarian-born authors as Arthur Koestler, Hans Habe (János Békéssy), René Fülöp-Miller and, of course, George Mikes.

\*

On the 8th of September, 1566, Miklós Zrínyi and the remaining defenders died in a heroic battle at the gate of the fort Szigetvár.

The Turkish Sultan, Suleiman led several campaigns into Hungary in an attempt to conquer Christian Europe. During the 50 years of his reign, he occupied the entire Balkan Peninsula and managed to conquer one-third of Hungary. However, his grandiose campaigns were halted each time by the stubborn resistance of the Hungarian garrisons of the country's frontier towns. Such a fortified town was Sziget in the south of Transdanubia, near Mohács, the scene of Suleiman's greatest victory. Sziget was defended by Count Miklós Zrínyi, a lifelong enemy of the Turks.

In 1566 Suleiman decided to direct one more attack against Vienna, and to commence this attack by destroying his arch-enemy Miklós Zrínyi. On the first day of August the 90,000-strong Turkish army began the siege of Sziget, defended by Zrínyi and his 2,500 men. The Hungarians defended the town, then the fort

successfully for five weeks. During the siege, the old Sultan had a heart attack and died — ironically on the anniversary of the Battle of Mohács. His commanders continued the siege and finally managed to set fire to the walls and buildings. On the *8th of September* Zrínyi realized that the fort could not be held any more. He collected the few men still capable of fighting, while the women and the wounded locked themselves in the fort's arsenal. Zrínyi had the gate opened and stormed out with his men. They all fought to the death — the Turks took no prisoners. When the Turks began to enter the deserted fort, the women blew up the arsenal killing all remaining Hungarians and a few additional Turks.

During the five weeks of the siege the Habsburg Emperor-King of Hungary, Maximilian, was camping not far from the battle with an army of 60,000. When Zrínyi's messengers asked him to come to the aid of the besieged fort, he sent back his messenger, instructing Zrínyi to hold out until the end of the hunting season, as the Imperial Court *could not interrupt their yearly duck-shooting* . . .

### THE QUEEN OF MAGYAR HEARTS

**Elizabeth**, Empress of Austria and Queen of Hungary, was assassinated on the **10th of September, 1898**.

She was the daughter of the Bavarian Duke Wittelsbach and a cousin of King Louis II of Bavaria. Elizabeth was only 16 and reputedly the most beautiful princess of Europe, when she married *Francis Joseph*, ruler of the Habsburg Empire in 1854. The gentle, romantic, poetry- and nature-loving girl suffered much in the atmosphere of pride, prejudice and etiquette of the Vienna court, ruled by her tyrannical mother-in-law, Sophia.

She turned to her more emotional and sensitive Hungarian subjects who responded warmly to her sympathetic understanding. She learned to speak and write Hungarian and was the first Queen of Hungary in 400 years to speak to her subjects in their mother tongue. She helped to alleviate the oppression of Hungary by Austria. The conclusion of the "Compromise" of 1867 between the two nations was to a great extent due to Queen Elizabeth's influence.

The Austrians resented her popularity with the Hungarians, but she maintained her predilection for the Magyars. The first



Queen Elizabeth (at her coronation, 1867)

Queen of Hungary, Gisela, was also a Bavarian princess. Since that time, Bavarians seemed closer to the Hungarian hearts than other Germans or Austrians.

The tragic deaths of her only son, Rudolf, of her sister and then of her cousin, King Louis II, deeply affected her. She spent the last years of her life in a constant state of depression, a shy, melancholic figure who preferred the lonely rides in the forests, the philosophical solitude of a villa in Greece or walks in Switzerland to the stifling atmosphere of the Vienna court.

One day Elizabeth was walking on the shore of Lake Geneva when the anarchist Luccheni stabbed her. She hardly felt the shock, and died, an hour later, as she had always wanted to die: alone and far from the cold, cruel court of Vienna.





Queen Maria Theresa's allegoric picture  
(on the occasion of the Pozsony Diet)

## A ROYAL COMMAND PERFORMANCE

On the 11th of September, 1741, the Hungarian Parliament, in an emotional scene, pledged the nation's wholehearted support for the Empress-Queen **Maria Theresa**.

She was the last in the direct line of the Habsburg dynasty. As her father and predecessor had no male heir, Maria Theresa's succession was contested by several provinces of the Habsburg Empire. This led to a war of succession between Austria and Bavaria-Prussia-France.

The young Queen — whom a cynical historian once called the “*only man of the Habsburg dynasty*” — showed some remarkable qualities — mostly feminine ones. She had the Hungarian Parliament recalled and appeared before the assembled nobles in mourning. (Her father had just died — besides, black matched her blond hair admirably . . .) With her infant child in her arms, the Crown of Hungary on her head, and tears in her beautiful blue eyes, she looked very much like the image of the Holy Virgin, Patron of Hungary. This must have been a familiar picture indeed, before the dazed eyes of the Magyar nobles. Only a generation before, their fathers had fought the grandfather of the young Queen, under Prince Rákóczi's flags, decorated with the picture of the Holy Virgin, patron of freedom-loving Hungarians.

Now the beautiful “Queen in distress” appealed to her “beloved, noble and chivalrous” Magyars for help against the enemies of the dynasty. Her “noble, chivalrous” (and forgetful) Hungarians stood up and cheered, promising her “their life and blood . . .”

So Hungary, not long before a defeated rebel, came to the rescue of her oppressor, Austria. Hungarian hussars fought gallantly for their “Queen in distress”. Thanks to their help Maria Theresa kept her provinces.

Whatever the historians may say about her, Maria Theresa was quite a woman . . .

\*

**General János Czecz** died on the 14th of September, 1904 in Buenos Aires.

He was born in Hungarian Transylvania in 1822. During the Freedom War he served in the Hungarian National Army with dis-

tion, rising to the rank of general at the age of 27. Severely wounded in the last battle, he hid in Transylvania until 1850, when he fled to Germany, then to France and Africa. Eventually he settled in Spain where he met and married the daughter of a former Argentine President.

They went to Argentina and Czech entered the service of the Argentinian Army. He founded the country's Military Academy and became its first commander. He modernized various services of the army and died as a respected general of Argentina.

His statue in front of the Military Academy of Buenos Aires preserves the memory of the great general of two countries.

### HE OUTLIVED HIS OWN EXECUTION

On the 21st of September, 1851, 36 leaders of the Hungarian Freedom War were sentenced to death by an Austrian Military Court. Among them were Lajos Kossuth, Regent of Hungary, Bertalan Szemere, the last Prime Minister, several ministers, generals and politicians. On the following day 36 gallows were erected in the courtyard and a tablet with the name of a condemned man was hung from each gibbet.

The 36 condemned men were not present. They had fled from Austrian vengeance and were sentenced and executed "in contumaciam", in effigy, in their absence.

One of these "hanged" men was **Count Gyula (Julius) Andrassy**. He was born in 1823 and died in 1890 — having outlived his own execution by some 40 years.

During the Freedom War he served Hungary's cause as a soldier and diplomat. After the capitulation, he fled to London and then to Paris. The handsome young Magyar diplomat-soldier soon became the favourite of French society, earning the epithet "Le Beau Pendu": a reference to his good looks and good luck of not being hanged.

He received amnesty in 1858 and returned to Hungary where he worked for reconciliation with Austria. On the conclusion of the "Compromise" in 1867, he was appointed *Prime Minister* of the Hungarian Government.

In 1871 Francis Joseph appointed him *Foreign Minister of the Dual Monarchy*. Andrassy became instrumental in establishing



Count Gyula Andrassy

peaceful relations amongst the European powers at the Congress of Berlin. Andrassy possessed a world-wide outlook. He saw the aggressive designs of Russia and countered them by cultivating friendly relations with Germany and Great Britain. He also supported the ailing Turkish Empire, to counter Russian ambitions, but at the same time managed to conclude an agreement between Russia and the Monarchy to maintain peace.

Gyula Andrassy was the first Magyar statesman for centuries who occupied a leading diplomatic position. He was the most amiable of men uniting in himself the best qualities of the Magyar magnate and the modern gentleman.

His son, **Gyula Andrassy (the Younger)**, played a similar but less spectacular role in world politics. He was the last Foreign

Minister of the Monarchy in October 1918. His last task was to sue for peace at the end of World War I.

The first and the last Foreign Ministers of the monarchy were Hungarians — father and son. During the four decades between them, the Austrian Foreign Ministers managed to destroy the Austrian-Hungarian Monarchy.

### “THE GREATEST OF ALL HUNGARIANS”

Count István (Stephen) Széchenyi was born on the 21st of September, 1791.

He was the son of a rich and progressive aristocrat. In his youth, he served in the army during Napoleonic times with distinction, then travelled in the western countries of Europe. He studied the economic and social structures of the western democracies, especially that of England. On his return to Hungary he advocated similar financial, economic and social reforms. Hungary was, at that time, little more than a province of the Austrian Empire whose leaders endeavoured to keep Hungary an underdeveloped agricultural provider for the Empire.

Széchenyi's ideas which he expounded in his publications and speeches in the Diet, inspired the young reformers of Hungary. The leader of these “young Magyars”, Lajos Kossuth, became Széchenyi's devoted follower and called him “The greatest of all Hungarians”. Gradually however, the younger reformers changed their priorities: for Kossuth and his circle, Hungary's political independence became the primary aim of the Reform movement, whilst Széchenyi and his “Moderates” emphasized the importance of social and economic reforms.

When the country was at last given a constitution and a responsible government, Széchenyi, together with Kossuth, took part in the first ministry. Soon, however, the Vienna Government began to limit Hungary's freedom and incited the nationalities against the central Hungarian Government. This manoeuvring eventually led to the Freedom War of 1848-49.

Széchenyi, horrified by the vision of a civil war, suffered a nervous breakdown. He resigned his portfolio and withdrew to a private hospital in Vienna. Here he remained until his death while the nation fought its losing war against Austria and Russia. During

the years following the defeat of the freedom struggle, Széchenyi again served his nation by his writings. Pretending mental illness, he remained in the hospital and from there he wrote tracts (under an alias), defending his nation's cause.

Some of his tracts were published in England, whilst some of his articles appeared in “The Times”, under the nom-de-plume “Ignotus”.

The Viennese police became suspicious and began to harass him. They threatened to shut him up in a public mental hospital. This threat and the continuous harrassment drove him to suicide: *he shot himself on the 8th of April, 1860.*

Széchenyi had had many talents. As a young hussar officer, he had served the Austrian Empire well during the Napoleonic Wars. Before the decisive Battle of Leipzig, he had ridden through the French lines to convey the Austrians' message to Blücher and Bernadotte concerning the impending battle. In Italy he had once led a dashing cavalry charge against Marshal Murat (himself a cavalryman of fame).

At the conclusion of the war, he had resigned his commission and begun to learn *his own native tongue*. Having spent his youth abroad he could hardly speak Hungarian. Soon, however, he was able to write and speak Magyar well. He is, in fact, one of the great Hungarian authors.

He had also been a practical man — and a rich landowner. He had used both his practical skill and fortune to promote the ideas he had acquired while studying the western countries. His donations had helped to establish the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, the Danube Navigation Company and other intitutions. He is also credited with having introduced horse-racing, in order to improve horse-breeding. He had played an important role in the construction of the first railway lines and the building of the first steamships on the rivers. He had initiated improvements of the navigability of Hungary's rivers and the construction of the first chain bridge between Buda and Pest. In one of his many writings (“Credit”) he had expressed his faith in his nation's future in these words:

*“Some people believe Hungary to be a noble relic, a fine thing that was. I like to believe the contrary, that our country was not but will be . . .”*

\*

Sándor (Alexander) Kisfaludy was born on the 22nd of September, 1772.

He fought against the French as a member of the Hungarian Noble Guard and was eventually taken prisoner. It seems that his captivity, spent in sunny Provence, was made bearable by the charitable attentions of the French ladies who inspired his first poems. On his return from his "French leave", he received a rather cool reception from his Hungarian fiancée. The repentant hussar wrote the song-cycle "*Plaintive Love*" to his (Hungarian) lady. The cycle, published in 1800 met with unprecedented success. The fresh, imaginative verses show the inspiration of the emerging French Romanticism — obviously the result of his extended "study-tour" in that country.

His fiancée forgave and forgot — at the turn of the 19th century no girl could remain unmoved by stanzas, such as these:

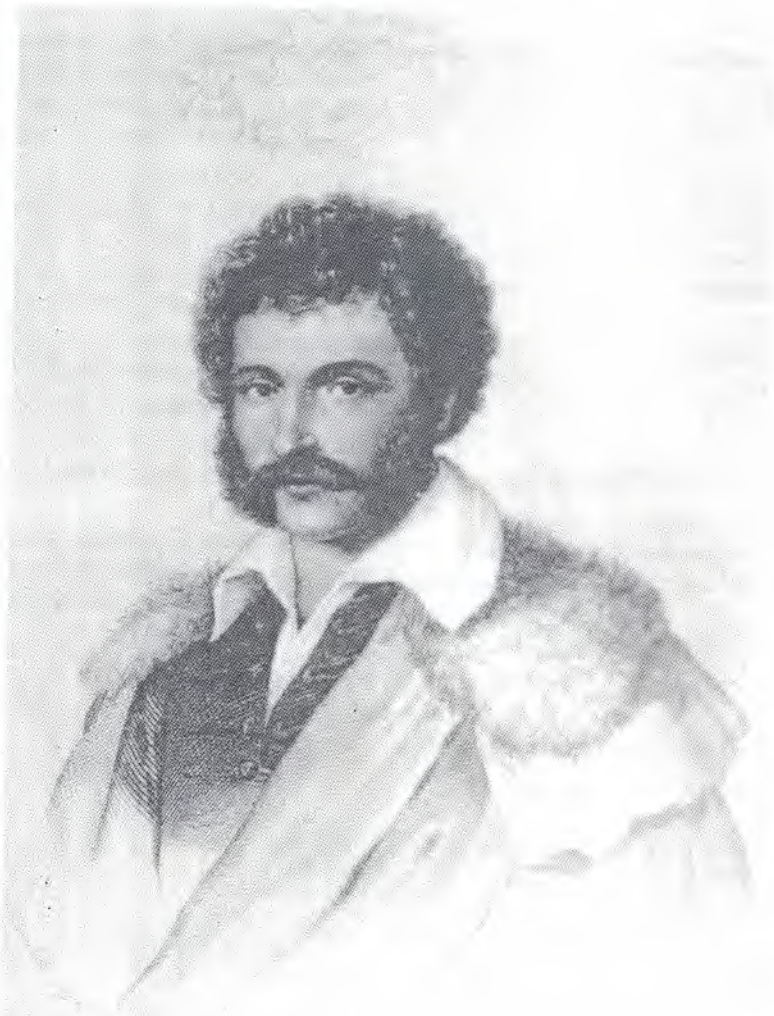
*Days come, days go,  
but sorrow does not range;  
the hours fly and pass,  
but my destiny does not change.  
Volcanoes tire;  
rivers, lakes run dry:  
but not my fire  
or tears from my eye;  
forests, meadows come alive;  
star-clusters turn and swill;  
fortune revolves and thrives;  
only my misery stands still.*

(Tr. by Paul Desney)

After their happy reconciliation, Kisfaludy wrote the second cycle, "Happy Love" — considerably shorter than the first part. They then married and lived happily ever after — without the help of poetry.

★

**Károly (Charles) Kisfaludy**, Sándor's younger brother, born in 1788, was the black sheep of the family. He broke with the conservative traditions of the nobility and embarked upon the career of an itinerant painter. He then tried his hand at drama with more success. His witty, easy flowing comedies mark the beginning of the modern Hungarian drama. As a lyric poet he turned to the people



*Kisfaludy Károly*

Károly Kisfaludy

for fresh vocabulary and even wrote some folkish songs. His patriotic poetry expressed hope in the future instead of the emotional lamenting over the past as was the fashion of his day.

By the end of his life he became the supreme authority in the field of Hungarian drama.

The sarcastic wit which ensured the success of his comedies, may be illustrated by the following extract from the humorous ballad, "*The Sorrowing Husband*". This is the story of "Mistress Therese", the fiery, beautiful, but domineering wife of a hen-pecked innkeeper during the time of the Tartar invasion. Here are the concluding lines:

*The Tartar comes. His eyes are fire,  
And burning with brute desire  
When Mistress Therese he espies  
He realizes what a prize  
She would be. So with no ado  
Up comes to her the Tartar foe  
And taking hold around her waist,  
With one strong pull he had her placed  
Beside himself, and then with haste  
He into the far distance raced.  
. . . The spouse, whose wife had just been stolen,  
Feels, that his eyes with tears are swollen;  
Looks up the road on which they fled  
"Poor Tartar!" is all that he said.*

(Tr. by W. N. Loew)

\*

**Béla Bartók died on the 26th of September, 1945 in the United States.**

He was born in eastern Hungary in 1881. While studying at the Budapest Academy of Music, he became interested in genuine Magyar folk music. He and his friends, Béla Vikár and Zoltán Kodály collected and published thousands of genuine, old folk melodies. Their folk-music research helped the public to distinguish between original Magyar folksongs and the popular, gypsy interpretation of the "Magyar songs" of the operettas and urban song-writers.

Bartók's interest in his nation's folk music has left its mark on his compositions — Magyar inspiration remained at the root of his otherwise original and unique creations. The fusion of folk

inspiration and his original genius created music which strikes the audiences as harsh, ultra-modern and dissonant. He usually accompanied his simple, basic themes by disharmonic decoration. The result was a unique, difficult, philosophical music better suited to the 21st century than to ours.

His compositions include a number of piano pieces, concertos and sonatas. Of his string quartets Sir Malcolm Sargent said that they were "the most important contribution to chamber music since Beethoven". Bartók's orchestral compositions (e.g. "Music for Strings, Percussion and Celesta"), are among his most often performed works. His opera "Bluebeard's Castle" and his ballets "The Wooden Prince" and "The Miraculous Mandarin" are very difficult to perform.

Bartók was a true humanist: his love for his Magyar nation blended with his love for all mankind. He appreciated and studied the folk music of people everywhere and gained his inspiration from many folk-cultures other than Hungarian. His musical expression created a synthesis of Eastern inspiration and Western harmonies.





Marauding Turks in Hungary (16th Century German drawing)

# October

## THE DAY OF REMEMBRANCE

On the **6th of October, 1849**, 13 generals of the Hungarian Honvéd Army were executed at **Arad**, and the first Prime Minister of Hungary, **Count Lajos Batthányi** was shot in Pest. Some 200 leaders of the Freedom War were subsequently executed by the vengeful Austrians during that tragic year of 1849.

On the anniversary of the Arad executions, we remember all Hungarian victims of the wars, revolutions and invasions which fell on the nation during its 11 centuries of history in Central Europe. Other sad anniversaries honour the memory of those who died on Hungary's many battlefields, but the 6th of October is dedicated to those who died violently, without defence or choice, because of their nationality, religion or ideology.

We remember the two million victims of the *Tartar invasions* of the Middle Ages. We think of the more than four million Magyars killed or carried off to the slave markets of Asia during the *Turkish wars* of the 16th-17th centuries. We remember the Protestant preachers sent to the galleys by the Austrian Inquisition, and the families of the "Kuruc" freedom fighters massacred by the Imperial troops. We mourn the 500 women and children of the Székely village of Mádéfalva who were massacred in 1764 by the Imperial troops in retaliation for the men's refusal to serve in the Imperial Army.

During the **Freedom War of 1848-49** several thousand Magyar civilians — mostly women and children — fell victim to the violence of the guerilla bands of the various nationalities incited by the Austrian Government. At the end of the **First World War**, the Moscow-directed Communist regime had some 590 persons killed for alleged resistance against the regime, mostly peasants . . .

The horrifying losses of the **Second World War** are still in living memory. Until March 1944 Hungary gave protection to more

than one million Jews, many of them refugees from neighbouring countries. On the 19th of March, 1944 Germany assumed military and political control over Hungary. At first, hundreds of anti-German politicians and intellectuals were arrested and taken to German concentration camps, then, in May, the mass **deportation of the Jewish population** began: 400,000 were taken to the concentration camps in Poland. Of these between 120,000 and 200,000 perished during transport or in the death-camps. Hungary's Regent, Horthy, learned of the deportations and he stopped them, thus saving the lives of the rest of the Hungarian Jews.

The calvary of the rest of Hungary's civilian population began at the end of 1944. The fighting on Hungarian soil lasted seven months — the capital, Budapest, was besieged for two months. The bombings, the house-to-house fighting and the lack of food and services claimed thousands of civilian lives. The so-called **"liberation"** by the Soviet troops caused the hospitalization of some one million Hungarian women. In one typical episode of this "liberation" the Bishop of Győr, Vilmos Apor, was killed by the "liberating" troops for defending the women who had sought refuge at his residence.

According to the U.S. Congress investigations, 295,000 Hungarian **civilians** — among them boys and girls of 13-14 — were **deported to the Soviet Union**. Of these civilians, and of the 325,000 Hungarian prisoners of war, some 350,000 perished in the Soviet Union. Nor did the killings stop at the end of the war. In 1946 the Hungarian villages **Kis** and **Nagydobrony** were destroyed by aerial bombing for allegedly refusing to deliver the crops — 3,000 Magyar peasants died in the Hungarian "Lidice".

The foreign-controlled regime in Hungary conducted a relentless campaign of retaliation against the former ruling class of the nation. The number of victims is unknown, neither is it known how many perished during the 1956 Freedom War.

Hungarian history has many sad anniversaries, but October the 6th always remains the epitome of the martyrdom of all innocent Magyar victims of persecution and tyranny.

(The data relating to the Jewish deportations are based on G. Reitlinger's *"The Final Solution"*, London, 1971, pp. 570-577.

Other data: from Special Report No. 10 of the Select Committee of the House of Representatives, Washington, D.C. 1954, also various works of Prof. C. A. Macartney, Encyclopaedia Britannica, etc.).

## "YOU GOTTA HAVE TALENT TOO . . ."

**Ilona Massey (Hajmássy)**, star of romantic film-operettas, died on the **10th of October, 1974** in Washington D.C. at the age of 62.

She was born in Hungary. After World War I the theatre and film industry of impoverished Hungary could not offer career opportunities for the large number of talented artists of the nation. Thus Ilona, together with many of her contemporaries, left Hungary to seek fame abroad. This great exodus of Magyar talent led many of them to Hollywood. Because of the language difficulties, relatively few Hungarian actors reached stardom in this Mecca of the film.

Ilona Massey was one of the few. In addition to her theatrical and linguistic talent, she also possessed a pleasant singing voice and gentle romantic beauty. These qualities ensured for her leading roles in such film-operettas as "Balalaika" and "Rosalie" with Eddy Nelson as her partner.

After the war she married an American general and retired from the theatre. She was proud of her Hungarian ancestry without using her "Magyariness" as a publicity gimmick. The first refugees of the 1956 freedom fight were welcomed in Canada by Ilona Hajmássy reciting the Hungarian national anthem . . .

Among the other stars of the **"Hungarian period"** of Hollywood were *Paul Lukas (Lukács)*, *Cornel Wilde*, *Éva Bartók* and more recently *Peter Lorre*, *Tony Curtis (Kertész)* and the *Gábor* sisters.

Between 1930 and 1960 the Hollywood film industry was dominated by **Hungarian-born producers and directors**. As in their position organizing ability was more important than the knowledge of the English language, the Magyar directors went about their tasks with supreme confidence and contempt for the rules of the language. They brought three decades of prosperity to Hollywood — and enough anecdotes to fill the filmstars' memoirs for a century.

The patriarchal rule of the ageless **Adolf Zukor** has covered practically the whole history of the movies. He had a signpost erected at the centre of his empire, the Paramount Studios, showing the distance to *Récse*, the Magyar village of his birth.

*István Székely (Sekely)*, *George Pál* and many other Hollywood executives were of Hungarian birth, including Mr Fox

(Fuchs) of 20th Century Fox. In Britain, the *Korda brothers* (*Sir Alexander, Zoltán and Vince*) created the finest imperial British films of the period with such directors as *Mihály Kertész* (*Curtis*) and the Magyar film-music composer *Miklós Rózsa*.

In Hollywood, film-script writing was, for a time, the preserve of the "Lászlós" (L. Vadnai, L. Fodor, L. Görög, L. Bus-Fekete).

Of course, it was "not enough to be Hungarian, you gotta have talent too . . ." as the sign said on Zukor's door.

It seems that during the first half of the century, talent was Hungary's biggest export to America.

Some say that ham and corn came close second . . .

\*

**October the 15th, 1944** was one of the most fateful days in Hungarian history.

By September 1944 Hungary's leaders knew that Germany was losing the war. The Regent, Miklós Horthy, had already sent a secret delegation to Moscow in September 1944 to ask for an armistice. A preliminary agreement was signed by this Hungarian delegation in Moscow on the 11th of October.

On Sunday, the 15th of October, the Regent called a meeting of the Crown Council. With the unanimous agreement of the Council, Horthy told the German Ambassador that Hungary was asking Soviet Russia for an armistice. Then the Hungarian radio read Horthy's proclamation to the nation. He described Hungary's desperate position and told of Germany's perfidious behaviour towards Hungary. In conclusion, the proclamation stated that Hungary was about to conclude an armistice with Soviet Russia.

What happened after the proclamation is not clear. It seems that Horthy was arrested by the Germans and that the strategic points of the capital were occupied by the German SS and the Hungarian right-wing organizations. Horthy learned that his only son, Miklós, had been ambushed and kidnapped by Skorzeny's German commandos. Thus he was forced to revoke his proclamation. Soon the radio began to broadcast messages rescinding the Regent's proclamation. The Hungarian troops were told to continue fighting the Russians. Then it was announced that Horthy had appointed Ferenc Szálasi to head a new government and that he himself had resigned.

The Regent and his family were taken into "protective custody" in Germany where they remained until the end of the war. The Hungarian army went on fighting. — Budapest fell after a two months' siege, almost completely destroyed.

The last Hungarian fighting units left Hungarian soil on the 4th of April, 1945.

\*



Ferenc Deák

**Ferenc (Francis) Deák** was born on the 17th of October, 1803.

He was Count Széchenyi's friend. The two men led the moderate group of the reform politicians in the decades before the Freedom War. After the constitutional victory in 1848 he became a member of the first Hungarian ministry. When it became obvious,



however, that the Vienna Government intended to destroy Hungary's constitutional freedom, he resigned from the ministry. He continued however to work for reconciliation as a member of the Diet.

After the defeat of the Freedom War, in 1849, Deák became the leader of the nation's passive resistance, while working for the reconciliation between the emperor and Hungary. With the moral support of Queen Elizabeth and the cooperation of other moderate statesmen, Deák achieved his goal. *In 1867 Austria and Hungary concluded the "Compromise" ("Ausgleich")*. Hungary regained her constitutional rights, Francis Joseph and Elizabeth were crowned King and Queen of Hungary and a responsible ministry was appointed. Deák modestly declined participation in the ministry, but supported it with his advice.

He died in 1876. The entire nation mourned him. Queen Elizabeth, Hungary's friend and Deák's admirer, wept at his catafalque.

Deák's personality is unique in Hungarian history. He looked like a simple country squire. Though witty, he possessed no rhetorical talent (a very rare deficiency among Hungarians). His only speeches were friendly talks with a pipe in his mouth and an anecdote on his lips. He was no soldier or writer either. However, at the most difficult times, he became the leader of his nation by the sheer power of his brilliant intellect and moral superiority. *Though no politician, Deák was probably Hungary's greatest statesman.*

### THE GLORY OF EGER

On the 17th of October, 1552, the Turkish siege of the fort of Eger ended with the victory of the defenders.

After his victory at Mohács in 1526, Sultan Soliman gradually consolidated his conquest of central Hungary. By 1550 most of the Hungarian Plain and Transdanubia were under Turkish occupation. The remaining western and northern counties formed the so-called "Royal Hungary", ruled by the Habsburg King of Hungary (and Emperor of the German Empire). The Habsburg kings considered Hungary a mere province of the German Empire, a buffer region between the Osman and German territories. Their sole aim was to prevent the Turkish invasion of Austria, preferably at the cost of Hungarian lives.

The indefinite borderline between the Turkish-occupied region and "Royal Hungary" was the scene of constant border clashes between the aggressive Turks and the Magyar "frontier soldiers", who were mostly volunteers who received very little military or financial help from the king-emperor.

One of the largest strongpoints of these "frontier soldiers" was the fort of Eger at the foot of the northern mountains. In 1552 the sultan decided to break through the line of frontier posts and advance to the Carpathian mountains.

After having captured several strong forts, the victorious Turkish armies joined at Eger in September, 1552. The Turks had some 150,000 troops with heavy siege artillery. Facing them, the fort was held by 2,000 Magyar troops, equipped with a dozen small cannon and 200 muskets. Under the command of their captain, *István Dobó* and such resourceful officers as the engineering genius, Gergely Bornemissza, the Hungarians managed to hold the fort for over six weeks. More than half the Hungarian garrison were killed, so that, towards the end of the siege, the women often took the place of the fallen soldiers on the ramparts, helping to repulse the Turks.

Frustrated and shamed by the long, wasteful siege, the Turkish troops finally refused to continue the fight and retreated in disorder on the 17th of October, 1552.

*For the first time since Mohács, the Hungarians remained victorious on the field.*

### "I TOO PLOUGHED A FURROW . . ."

János Arany died one hundred years ago, on the 22nd of October, 1882.

He is probably the greatest poet of the Hungarian nation — and he is almost unknown abroad. His choice of typical Magyar themes, his profound understanding of his people and his mastery of the Hungarian language make him a popular poet among Hungarians — but the same qualities make adequate translation of his poetry almost impossible. One of his critics once said: "Whoever was born a Hungarian and thus was destined . . . to accept our fate, is compensated for all the hardships by being able to read János Arany in the original . . ."

Arany was born in 1817 in a small village, in the heart of the Great Hungarian Plain. As a child, he lived on the small family farm, and his father, a poor farmer, taught him reading, writing and the elements of the Latin language — an achievement which throws an interesting light upon the intellectual standards of the Hungarian peasants.

The talented boy completed his education at various colleges and became a teacher in his own village. During the 1848-49 Freedom War he fought as a simple soldier — a circumstance which earned him an “amnesty” after the defeat of the freedom struggle. He then gradually became the foremost man-of-letters in his country and died, at the age of 66, as the universally respected literary authority in Hungary.

Thanks to his peasant environment, he knew the soul, the language and the folklore of the Magyar people. His epic style suggests the calm wisdom and humanistic realism of the hardy people of the Great Plain.

Arany's first masterpiece, “*Toldi*”, an epic of classic popular realism, is a folk-tale in verse based on a local legend and tells of the adventures of a Magyar hero in the 14th century. Arany soon found the form of expression of which he eventually became the greatest representative in the Hungarian language: *the ballad*. Each ballad is a little drama written in concise style with a deep understanding of the workings of the human mind. One of his ballads deserves a special mention: “*The Bards of Wales*”, written in 1857. In that year, Francis Joseph, Emperor of Austria was visiting Hungary, defeated in the Freedom War and little more than a conquered province of Austria during those years of oppression following the war. The Hungarian poets were asked to write a poem in his praise. Arany responded with this symbolic ballad, based on the legend of the bards of Wales who refused to sing the praise of their conqueror, Edward I. No one could fail to recognize Francis Joseph and defeated Hungary in the opening verses of the ballad:

*“Edward, King of England, rode  
Upon his royal steed;  
Let me see what is the worth  
Of the Welsh domain, quoth he.  
Has it rivers, fallow land;  
Has this blood done it good?  
Do meadows with grass a-plenty spring  
Of this patriotic rebel blood?”*

His other ballads are based on themes from Hungarian history or rural life. Their concise, racy language makes them untranslatable.

Whilst essentially an epic poet, Arany did create *lyric poetry* of considerable charm. These poems are mostly melancholic reflections interspersed with wisdom and humour. He was reticent about his emotions and modest about his own role as a poet. The following lines constitute his humble “*exegi monumentum*”:

*“I travelled at the limits of the earth;  
I too ploughed a furrow  
And men cast upon it  
Their momentary gaze . . .  
. . . I lived here and among the many  
I too strummed the lyre.”*

He did much more than that. He was indeed the most Magyar of all Hungarian poets — except, possibly for his extreme modesty, a rare quality indeed among his fellow Hungarians . . .

## HUNGARIAN RHAPSODIES

Three well-known Hungarian composers are remembered in October.

Ferenc Liszt was born on the 22nd of October, 1811 in the Hungarian village of Doborján. His father, an employee of Prince Eszterházy, recognized his son's talent and sent him abroad to study. Liszt soon became known as the “Paganini of the piano”. Later he settled in Switzerland, where his three children were born. One of these, Cosima, married Richard Wagner.

During his frequent visits to Hungary, Liszt became acquainted with the popular interpretation of Magyar folk music. These melodies inspired his “Hungarian Rhapsodies”. After having studied Hungarian folk music in depth he created his “Hungaria”, a symphonic poem which presented genuine folk-music inspiration.

After the marriage of his daughter, Liszt lived in the art-loving German principality, Weimar and in Bayreuth where his son-in-law, Wagner had established the centre of German musical culture.

In 1861 Liszt broke with his somewhat bohemian life-style and became a member of the Franciscan Order. He gave up all worldly interests, except music. Dividing his time between Weimar and Budapest, he helped to promote musical education in Hungary by

founding the Academy of Music in Budapest, of which he became the first president.

Ferenc Liszt was proud of his Magyar nationality. He wrote in one of his books: "I adore my country, Hungary, and its music. My only desire is to serve them to the best of my abilities . . ."

He died in 1886 in Bayreuth.

Liszt's musical opus is too important and too well known to be treated in this sketchy chronicle. There is, however, one interesting aspect of his work which should be mentioned. As his musical talent matured, the cosmopolitan and bohemian prodigy of his youth developed into a truly Christian and Hungarian genius. The last, most valuable creations of his life, the "Years of Pilgrimage" and "Hungaria" symphonic poems, his "Coronation Mass", "Christus Oratorium" and "Legend of Saint Elizabeth of Hungary" show a true artist who found fulfilment in the lofty ideas of his Christian faith and Magyar nationality.

\*

**Ferenc Lehár, Hungarian composer died on the 24th of October, 1948.**

It is said that there is not a single moment in the world without a Lehár melody on a radio station or stage or in a concert hall.

Lehár was born in Hungary in 1870 at a time when Hungary and Austria formed one monarchy. As Vienna was certainly the musical capital of the dual empire, Lehár began his musical career there. In 50 years he wrote 30 operettas. Many of these are still performed and the melodies and songs of all of them can be heard anywhere and at any time. He chose exotic venues for the romantic plots of his operettas, selecting practically all major (and some minor) countries of the world, recreating the musical atmosphere of the chosen country.

The operetta dedicated to the country of his birth is entitled (unfortunately) "Gypsy Love". He later changed his undeserving title to "The Magician". His best known operettas are: "The Merry Widow" (Montenegro!), "The Count of Luxemburg", "The Land of Smile" (China), "Frederica" (Germany), "Paganini" (Italy) and "Frasquita" (Spain).

He kept his Hungarian citizenship all his life. However, at the end of World War II he did not hasten to return to Soviet-liberated Hungary and died in Austria.

**Imre Kálmán, the other world-renowned Hungarian operetta composer died on the 30th of October, 1953.**

He was born in Hungary in 1882. His light operettas achieved success in Hungary, Austria, Germany and the United States. He popularized the urban, gypsy-orchestrated type "Magyar song" of the turning of the century in several operettas with Magyar themes, such as "Csárdáskirálynő" (translated, rather unfortunately: "Gypsy Princess"), "Countess Marica", "Circus Princess" and others.

He died in the United States.

## THE 1956 FIGHT FOR FREEDOM

When the Soviet troops completed the occupation of Hungary in April 1945, they treated the country as their colony by right of conquest. After a period of uneasy but seemingly Democratic Government, Soviet Russia installed a puppet government led by Moscow-trained communists under strict Russian military control.



British cartoon on the Freedom Fight of 1956

By 1956 the Hungarians knew that the foreign ideology of Bolshevik Communism and the Russian occupation troops were there to stay permanently. This is why the people — including the Communist-educated youths and workers — rose against foreign ideology and oppression.

During 1956 the Soviet Empire was shaken by such events as Stalin's repudiation by the Moscow Communist Congress and the

upheavals in Poland in the summer months. In Hungary, during the month of October various student groups began to manifest their wishes to change the nation's colonial status. On the 22nd of October the Budapest student groups formulated their 16 point suggestions. These included the demand for free elections, a multi-party system and the withdrawal of Russian occupation troops.

On the 23rd of October peaceful demonstrations at various points of Budapest voiced the demands for reforms. Bloodshed began in the evening when the Communist Political Police fired upon a peaceful rally outside the Budapest radio station. The demonstrators then received help from some units of the Hungarian Army and began to fight back. The leaders of the Hungarian Communist Party asked for Russian military help. The Russians obliged, and for five days bitter fighting went on between Russian tanks and Communist Political Police on one side and Hungarian students, workers and regular soldiers on the other.

Eventually a new Hungarian Government was formed with the popular Imre Nagy as Premier. Nagy disbanded the hated Political Police and arranged for the withdrawal of the Russians from Budapest. On the 30th of October Cardinal Mindszenty was freed. On the 1st of November Premier Nagy announced Hungary's withdrawal from the Warsaw Pact and declared the country's complete neutrality. The Revolution was — apparently — victorious . . .

Unknown to the Hungarians, Moscow had already decided to crush the Hungarian freedom struggle by force. While the battered Russian units were retreating from Budapest, fresh Soviet units began to pour into the country from the East. The Russians had obtained the approval of their satellites (and also of "neutral" Yugoslavia) for action against Hungary. The Western powers were busy with the Suez Crisis which began on the 29th of October by the British-French-Israeli invasion of Egypt. The U.N.O. Security Council decided that the question of Russian troops in Hungary was a matter between the Hungarian and Russian Governments. The U.S.A. remained silent.

Thus assured, Soviet Russia decided to crush Hungary's struggle. While still pretending to "negotiate" with the new Hungarian Government, they directed 10 armoured divisions towards Budapest and on the 4th of November they attacked the unsuspecting city.

Though the military leaders of the country had been abducted by the the Russians on the previous day, the freedom fighters



Freedom fighters

fought back with incredible bravery, fighting tanks with small arms and Molotov-cocktails. The brute force of tanks and guns broke the resistance of Budapest, but in the country fighting went on until January 1957.

The Russians installed a puppet Communist Government under *János Kádár*, but the workers' passive resistance continued for months after the nation's military defeat.

Western newsmen who observed the fighting could not help being impressed, not only by the matchless courage of these young fighters against overwhelming odds, but also by the generous behaviour of the freedom fighters. There was no looting, no acts of individual revenge against Russians. Shop windows broken open by the fighting still had their contents intact and money was collected in unguarded, open boxes on the street corners.

For three months after the Russian invasion, clandestine radios of the last resistance groups kept sending their dramatic messages to the West, asking for moral and political help — they needed no arms or soldiers. The West reacted slowly, the futile U.N. resolution condemning the Russian intervention remained ineffective and the praise heaped upon the brave freedom fighters by the greatest minds of the West came too late.

One of these clandestine freedom radios sent this message: "Civilized people of the world, listen and come to our aid . . . We implore you in the name of justice, freedom . . . to help us. Our ship is sinking. Light is failing. *The shadows grow darker every hour over the soil of Hungary*".

This is how the American publication "Life" responded — belatedly — to their call: "The . . . Revolution is a story of glory — and a small, sorrowful memorial to the bravery of Hungary . . . It is a cry to renew the love for liberty and the spirit of sacrifice, so that fighters for freedom, wherever they may rise, *do not another time stand and die alone . . .*"

By the time this moving tribute appeared in print, the Hungarian fighters for freedom **had died alone** and the **dark shadow** of Communist domination had covered the **blood-soaked soil of Hungary . . .**

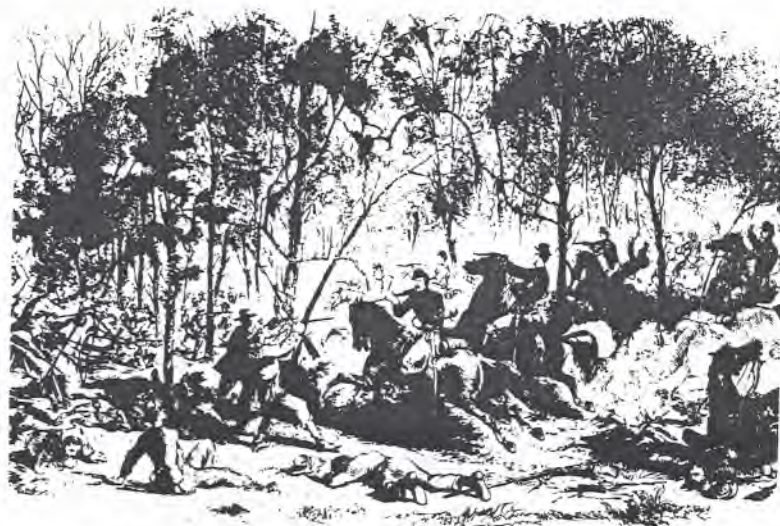
(Sources: United Nations Report of the Special Committee on the Problem of Hungary. General Assembly. Official Records: Eleventh Session, Supplement No. 18-A/3592. New York, 1957.

Life: "Hungary's fight for freedom" Special Report, New York, 1957. Various reports of radio monitors, foreign journalists and observers).



Colonel Mihály Kováts

The *American War of Independence* had its Hungarian volunteers too. One of them was Colonel **Mihály (Michael) Kováts** who served in Washington's army as a cavalry commander, true to his motto: "Fidelissiums ad Mortem" — "Faithful Until Death".



Zágonyi's charge at Springfield

American military history mentions the "*Springfield Charge*" of Colonel **Károly Zágonyi** on the **25th of October, 1861**. The Hungarian hussar colonel charged the superior forces of the Confederation at Springfield, destroyed them and secured the State of Missouri for the Union.

\*

The Hungarian-born scientist and explorer **Sir Aurel Stein** died on the **26th of October, 1943**, in Kabul, Afghanistan. He held high British honours, the British Government financed his expeditions and the publication of his books. When he died — far from both his countries, his assistants put the handful of Magyar soil which he had always carried with him, in his coffin . . .

\*

**Albert Szent-Györgyi** received the *Nobel prize* on the **28th of October, 1937** for his discoveries in Physiology (Vitamin C).

As professor of Szeged University he was the only Hungarian scientist to receive the Nobel Prize while working in Hungary. There are several prize-winners of Hungarian birth, but they all worked abroad at the time of the award. Such scientists were: Fülöp Lénárd (1905, Physics), Robert Bárány (1914, Medicine), Richárd Zsigmondy (1925, Chemistry), György Hevesy (1943, Chemistry), György Békéssy (1961, Physics), Jenő Wigner (1963, Physics), Dénes Gábor (1971, Physics).

## November

On the **2nd of November, 1938**, the so-called "*First Vienna Award*" returned to Hungary the southern strip of the Magyar-inhabited land given to Czechoslovakia in the Trianon Treaty (Cf. June 4).

Hungary never ceased to protest against the injustices of Trianon and the revision of the treaty was foremost in the mind of the nation between the two wars.

When Great Britain, France, Germany and Italy agreed at the *Munich Meeting* in September 1938 to return to Germany the German-inhabited region of Czechoslovakia, the four governments suggested that the Hungarian claims be settled by negotiation between Czechoslovakia and Hungary. Should the negotiations fail, the Agreement promised arbitration by the same powers.

The negotiations did fail and Hungary appealed to the four powers for arbitration. Great Britain and France authorized Germany and Italy to make a decision on their behalf, which the two powers did.

Their arbitration decreed that Hungary should receive the regions where the bulk of the Magyar population lived, which was about one-fourth of the land originally taken from Hungary. The British and French Governments acknowledged these territorial changes made under the original Munich Agreement.

Thus the "*First Vienna Award*" was not "*Germany's gift to Hungary*", but a partial rectification of the original treaty made by *the signatories of the same (Trianon) Treaty*: a legal peacetime agreement ratified by the governments of the signatories of the original Trianon Treaty.

### "A NEW WORLD OUT OF NOTHING . . ."

On the **3rd of November, 1823**, a young man of 22 wrote to his father: ". . . *I have created a new world out of nothing . . .*"

The young man, **János Bolyai**, did not exaggerate: on that day he had completed his 30-page treatise on geometry, written in Latin and entitled, rather modestly: "*Appendix*". In this short study the young Bolyai had created the nucleus of a new world of science, a new approach to geometry in which the traditional principles of the Euclidean geometry were partly refuted, partly revised. This new system, called the "**Absolute Geometry**" has since supplied the basic principles for Einstein's theory of Relativity and other advances in modern science.

János was the son of **Farkas Bolyai** who was himself a mathematical genius and creator of many new and revised principles concerning the philosophical foundations of mathematical thinking. He was born in 1775 to an old Hungarian-Székely family. In addition to his exceptional talent he was also a poet and dramatist, a painter of some note, a practicing doctor, a skilled technician and builder, a forester and a linguist.

While studying at the Göttingen University, in Germany, he became a close friend of *Gauss*, the great mathematician. On his return to Hungary, Farkas Bolyai became Professor of Mathematics in the college of his hometown, *Marosvásárhely*, in Transylvania. He wrote several studies on the fundamental questions of mathematical philosophy. He died in 1856, after a miraculously active and rewarding life, at the age of 81.

His son, **János Bolyai**, was born in 1802. He inherited his father's exceptional talent, but his interests were not as wide as his father's. Under his father's teaching he managed to master the entire structure of higher mathematics before the age of 13. He then completed the Academy of Military Engineering and served as an engineering officer in the Austro-Hungarian Army. Though he was an enthusiastic sportsman and accomplished musician, his principal interests were mathematics and geometry. On his father's suggestion he studied the fundamental principles of the traditional Euclidean geometry and succeeded in refuting the famous axiom of the parallels. On this revised basis he built his new system of geometry which he called "**Absolute Geometry**."

Though his discovery was completed in 1823 — the date of his letter to his father — the European scientists only learned of his theories much later, when the treatise was translated into French. Three years after Bolyai's initial discovery, in 1826, the Russian mathematician, *Lobachevsky*, reached the same conclusions, independently from Bolyai. Today scientists attribute the creation of

Absolute Geometry equally to Bolyai and Lobachevsky, joining their names with that of *Riemann*, a German scientist, who a few decades later developed and explained their ideas and completed the system.

Thus Bolyai's discovery helped to lay the foundation of modern mathematical science which led eventually to the modern theories of relativity, quantum-mechanics and other principles of atomic-age science.

The two Bolyais are probably the only example of a talented father-son combination in science. They are also unique inasmuch as the foreign students and teachers pay tribute to their genius more willingly than the average Hungarian who knows very little of Hungary's greatest scientists.

The Encyclopaedia Britannica, after stating that János Bolyai was one of the two founders of non-Euclidean geometry, concludes the article on the two Bolyais:

"The creation of non-Euclidean geometry has been compared with the Copernican revolution in astronomy for its profound influence on philosophy and science."

\*

**November the 5th** is the day of **Saint Imre (Emery)**, son of King Saint Stephen.

He was Saint Stephen's only son to reach adulthood. He received the best education for his future task from his father, and from Bishop Saint Gellért (Gerard). In his book "*Admonitiones*" the king himself gave his son an excellent summary of the duties and desirable qualities of a Christian king.

Imre grew into a fine young man, possessing exceptional intellectual and moral qualities. He was also an enthusiastic sportsman: a circumstance which led to his premature death. He died as a result of a hunting accident in 1031.

Instead of becoming his country's king, Imre became the Patron Saint of Hungary's youth.

\*

**Count Miklós Bercsényi**, the commander of Rákóczi's army, died on the **6th of November 1725**, in exile in Turkey, at the side of Prince Rákóczi. He was the first aristocrat to join Ferenc Rákóczi in his freedom fight in 1703. He stood by the prince faithfully and followed him into exile, spurning the offered amnesty at home.

His son, *László Bercsényi* settled in France where he founded the first hussar regiment of the French army He died a Marshal of France. The hussar regiment he founded still bears his name.

Another of Rákóczi's officers, brigadier *András Tóth* settled in France with his son. Tóth rose to the rank of general in the French Army and was made a Baron. He gave up his position and joined his prince in exile in Turkey. His son, **Ferenc Tóth** (Francois Tott), however, remained in France and made a career there, first as an artillery officer, and then as the French king's envoy in Turkey. During his diplomatic mission he gave the Turks expert engineering advice on fortifying the Dardanelles. He also submitted the first detailed plan of the future Suez Canal. At the height of his career he resigned his posts and returned to Hungary, the country of his ancestors he himself had never seen. He died in Hungary.

\*

On the 7th of November, 1895, the Hungarian scientist, **Lajos Biró** set out to explore New Guinea. He spent six years studying the anthropology and natural history of the great island which was at that time, still largely unexplored.

\*

**László Mécs**, the priest-poet, died on the 9th of November, 1978, in the Abbey of Pannonhalma. Mécs was probably the most popular literary personality of the thirties. He was a member of the Premonstratensis Order and lived and worked as a parish priest in a small village in northern Hungary. After the Treaty of Trianon his village was given to Czechoslovakia, but Mécs remained with his people as their spiritual leader.

His poetry became known all over the Magyar-speaking regions of Central Europe. His colourful, easy-flowing lines sang of peace, love and justice. His imaginative symbolism and rich language carried a joyful message of Christian humanism.

This is how he described his own role as a poet-priest:

*"My face to every smile a mirror gives;  
That is the end for which my being lives;  
Reflecting smiles of flower and butterfly,  
Woods, wolves, sheep, tempest, rainbow in the sky,  
Sun, moon and starlight, affluent man and poor,  
Suff'ring and joy, good days and days unsure.  
At rose-trees, at the Cross, with smiles I nod,  
Learning to smile back in the Face of God."*

("The Child longed to play", trnsl. by W. Kirkconnel).

## TWO CHRISTIAN SOLDIERS

At this time of the year we remember two soldier-statesmen of the 17th century. Though they belonged to different denominations and political alignments, their ultimate goal was the same: the restoration of independent, Christian Hungary.



Prince Gábor Bethlen

The Protestant rebel Bethlen and the Catholic royalist, Zrinyi lived and died for the same cause — Hungary's freedom.

Prince **Gábor Bethlen** died on the 15th of November, 1629. He was ruling Prince of Transylvania (1613-1629), a semi-independent Magyar state between the Turkish Empire and "Royal Hungary",



the realm of the Habsburg king of Hungary. During the 16th and 17th centuries, Transylvania managed to maintain a precarious independence by cleverly playing off one great power against the other. According to their temperament and talent, the elected rulers or princes of the little country kept their menacing neighbours away by either paying them tribute or by fighting them. Thus the little mountainous region became the last bastion of Hungarian religious, cultural and — to some extent — political freedom.

Bethlen, a soldier of humble origin, was a devout Protestant. When he was elected Prince in 1613, Transylvania was threatened by the Habsburg Emperor-King whose Viennese Government decided to end the little country's independence. By clever diplomacy, Bethlen managed to secure the benevolent neutrality of this other dangerous neighbour, Turkey, and allied himself with the western Protestant powers, England, Holland and Sweden, enemies of the Catholic Habsburg Empire. As their ally he joined the Thirty Years' War (1618-1648) and led several successful campaigns against the imperials in northern Hungary ("Royal Hungary"). Though unable to defeat the emperor decisively, he was able to negotiate on a stronger basis after each campaign. Thus he managed to strengthen Transylvania's independence, extend its territory into northern Hungary and to gain religious freedom for Hungarian Protestants under Habsburg rule.

At home, he maintained an absolutist, but benevolent and enlightened rule. He granted complete religious freedom to all nationalities, promoted the arts and education and strengthened the little nation's economy by progressive reforms inspired by the western countries.

He died after a reign of 16 years, his task still unfinished.

The other great soldier-statesman, **Count Miklós Zrinyi** died on the **18th of November, 1664**. He was a Catholic, and a loyal subject of the Habsburg king of Hungary. He fought for the liberation of Hungary with the same courage and wisdom as Bethlen. He chose a different path towards his ultimate goal. He felt that Hungary had to be freed from the pagan Turks first with the help of the Habsburg Empire.

Leading his well-trained troops, he defeated the Turks in several minor engagements, but the Emperor refused to commit imperial troops to a major campaign against the sultan. Zrinyi held the rank of a general in the Imperial Army but he was not given

command of German troops, he could only dispose of his own soldiers, recruited, trained and financed by himself.

Only once did he manage to draw the imperial commander (Montecucculi) into a major battle, at Szentgotthárd, which ended in a great victory over the Turks. Unfortunately, the imperial diplomacy failed to profit by this great victory and Vienna concluded a humiliating peace with the sultan, granting all Turkish demands in the hope the sultan would not attack Vienna again.



Count Miklós Zrinyi

Embittered by this cowardly policy, Zrinyi began to contemplate an anti-Habsburg policy in cooperation with his Protestant

friends in Transylvania. He then died as a result of a very suspicious "hunting accident".

This great soldier-statesman was also the *greatest Hungarian poet* of his time. His lyric poetry expresses his secret longing for peace and the quiet enjoyment of the beauty of life, denied to the Magyars of his century. His epic poem "Zrinyiász", proudly sings the praise of his great-grandfather, his namesake, the hero of the 16th century struggle against the Turks (cf. 8th September). His prose writings laid down the principles of the military and political struggle against the Turks.

The concluding lines of his "Zrinyiász" summarize his goal in life:

*"I seek my fame not only with my pen,  
But also with my sword so feared by men;  
And all my life I'll fight the Ottoman moon,  
And gladly for my country die, be it late or soon."*

He fought for his nation all his life with all his talent. He also died for Hungary — unfortunately too soon.

\*

**November the 19th** is the feast of **Saint Elizabeth of Hungary**.

Elizabeth, the daughter of King András II was born in Hungary around 1207. At the age of 14 she was given in marriage to Louis, Landgrave of Thuringia, in Germany. Their ideal, happy marriage, which was blessed by three children, lasted only six years because Louis died on his way to the crusade.

The young widow gave up all her wealth and retired to a hostel she had built for the poor and sick. There she shared the harsh life of the needy. She joined the Third Order of Saint Francis of Assisi whose charity, compassion, humility and poverty she imitated. The emperor asked her to marry him, but Elizabeth declined. The severity of her devotion and dedication probably shortened her life, as she *died at the age of 24, in 1231*.

Seven princes acted as her pallbearers. The emperor placed on her coffin the crown she had declined to wear.

Elizabeth was canonized four years after her death, in the lifetime of her father and family. She is one of the best-known saints of the Middle Ages.



Mihály Vörösmarty

**Mihály (Michael) Vörösmarty** died on the 19th of November, 1855.

He was the greatest Hungarian poet of the Romantic period. He established his fame with his epic poems, a genre very popular during the first half of the century. The colourful style and imaginative beauty of the language lends an almost lyric beauty to these epics. For the same reason they are practically untranslatable.

Vörösmarty really excelled in an original type of *contemplative lyric poem*, of which he was the greatest master in Hungarian literature. One of these fine philosophical poems is entitled "To the

Daydreamer". He wrote it to his young bride. The poem ends with these stoic words:

*"He who wants a flower does not bear a bush;  
He who would have vision gazes not into the sun;  
He who would seek after pleasure loses out.  
Only the humble are not brought pain through desire.  
Don't look, don't look into the distance of desire,  
The entire world is not our land to hold;  
Only that which the heart alone can encompass,  
That only we can hold as our own."*

(Transl. by Paul Desney)

He wrote this to the only girl he ever loved, whom he married and with whom he lived happily until his death.

His age was not called the Romantic period for nothing . . .

\*

**Francis Joseph**, Emperor of Austria and King of Hungary died on the **21st of November, 1916**, after a reign of 68 years.

He was made Emperor of Austria in 1848 after the removal of the weak Emperor Ferdinand V. The Hungarian nation was, at that time, already at war with Austria in defence of its constitutional rights. After the defeat of the freedom struggle, the Viennese Government, under Francis Joseph's authority, led a cruel campaign of revenge against the leaders of the war and the young Emperor signed hundreds of death sentences. In 1867, after the so-called "Compromise" Agreement, Francis Joseph was accepted as Hungary's King and crowned in Budapest. His family life was beset with tragedies: his son committed suicide, his wife was killed by an anarchist and his brothers died violently.

In 1914 he declared war on Serbia at the urging of his Austrian advisors, against the advice of the Hungarian Prime Minister. This was to avenge the assassination of his nephew, the heir to his throne. But it set off a tragic chain of events, the First World War, and indirectly also the Second World War, and its tragic aftermath in Central Europe, Francis Joseph's former Empire.

\*

On a **November day in 1457** a Hungarian deputation arrived in Paris asking for the hand of a French princess for the Hungarian King Ladislas V. The magnificent gifts were carried by a strange

new type of vehicle which had springs in its undercarriage and light, spoked wheels. This was the first time the light, sprung Hungarian-type carriage became known abroad. This horse-drawn carriage, first built in the Hungarian town of **Kocs** in the 15th century, was lighter, faster and more comfortable than the heavy carts of the Middle Ages. This invention soon became known as the "cart of Kocs", in Hungarian "kocsi szekér" — "kocsi" for short. The Hungarian word became soon adopted by all European languages to indicate the "coach" ("kutsche", "coche", etc.), a Hungarian invention.

\*

Another Hungarian achievement has a more recent date. On the **25th of November, 1953**, the Hungarian National Football (Soccer) Team — the so-called "Golden Team" — *defeated the English National Team* 6 to 3 in the famous Wembley Stadium. This is the first time in the history of Soccer that the inventors of the game were defeated at home.



# December

## A TRAGIC VICTORY

On the 11th of December, 1914, three Hungarian hussar regiments stormed and took the Russian trenches at **Limanowa** in Galicia.

The first year of World War I was marked by the spectacular victories of the Germans and by the equally spectacular defeats of the Austrian-Hungarian Monarchy. The supreme command of the Monarchy consisted of members of the Imperial Family and some old, incompetent Austrian and Slav generals. No Hungarian general had any say in the decisions of the high command. Still, the Hungarians, who had opposed the idea of a war of revenge against Serbia and who had nothing to gain from the victory of the Central Powers, fought with dutiful courage under foreign generals for an empire that was not theirs. Altogether some 600,000 Hungarians died in that senseless war — in the most part as a result of the archaic and wasteful strategy of their Austrian leaders.

In December, 1914 — four months after the Austrian declaration of war — the armies of the Monarchy were in full retreat in Galicia, the easternmost province of the dual Empire. The Austrian generals attempted to stop the Russian advance by uncoordinated, local counter-attacks. Only one of these counter-attacks succeeded, the so-called **Limanowa Charge**. In the hilly region, east of this small town, increasing Russian troop concentrations were noticed. The Austrian army commander ordered three Hungarian hussar regiments to attack and break through the Russian lines.

The Russians outnumbered the hussars five to one and they were entrenched at the crest of a line of hills, their positions defended by artillery and machine guns. The hussars dismounted and stormed the hills, led by the commander of the Nadasdy Regiment, Colonel Muhr. They had no weapons suitable for a charge of this nature. Besides, their colourful uniforms: red breeches, blue

capas and white caps were easy target in the snow for the Russian riflemen and machine guns. Halfway up the hill Colonel Muhr was mortally wounded. The hussars' ranks thinned as they fell, one after the other. Still, the survivors reached the Russian trenches and a furious hand-to-hand combat followed, which lasted all day.



Colonel Othmar Muhr

When the wintry sun set on the evening of the 11th of December, several thousand hussars and many more Russians lay dead on the hills of Limanowa — but the attack had been a success, the Russians' lines were broken and their offensive halted — at the cost of half the effective strength of the Hungarian troops.

For more than a century, the Balaclava "*Charge of the Light Brigade*", the futile and heroic death of 300 British hussars has been the favourite theme of poets, novelists, film-writers and symphony-composers. At Limanowa ten times that number died just as uselessly and heroically. The thousands of Magyar peasant boys are only remembered by a few aging relatives who sometimes

look at faded photographs of a cheerful young man in hussar uniform with the inscription: "Died for God, King and Country at Limanowa".

They died for an Empire which was not theirs, a King who could not speak their language and for God who seemed to have forsaken them.

\*

The physicist **Ányos Jedlik** died on the **12th of December, 1895**. He constructed the world's **first electro-magnetic motor**, in 1828. Being a Benedictine monk, he was too modest to sell his invention or even to have it patented. This is why the German engineer, Siemens, who constructed the same machine 13 years later, is today credited with the invention.

\*

A contemporary of Jedlik, **János Irinyi**, lost his invention for a different reason. As a young chemist, he succeeded, in 1836, in making the first phosphorus match. As he was very poor, he sold his invention to a Swedish manufacturer for a very small sum. This is how the "Swedish" match was invented in Hungary.

\*

On the **14th of December, 1921** a plebiscite under international supervision returned the town of **Sopron** to Hungary.

Sopron had been given to Austria in the Trianon Treaty but the population of the region protested against Austrian occupation. The League of Nations eventually agreed to hold a plebiscite, which decided in Hungary's favour.

This has been the only rectification of the Trianon Treaty allowed by the victorious powers. It was obviously only granted because both litigants were defeated countries. The Hungarian Government kept requesting plebiscites in the various Magyar-inhabited towns and border regions awarded to the neighbouring states — the "victorious" ones — but these requests were denied.

\*

**Cardinal George**, archbishop of Esztergom, known generally as "**Brother George**" ("Frater György"), was assassinated on the **16th of December, 1551**.

He was born to a Dalmatian aristocratic family but served, from his early youth, in the Hungarian cavalry, under Pál Tomori. He later joined the Pauline Order and became the Zápolya family's tutor. After the Battle of Mohács (1526) John Zápolya became King of Hungary and Brother George his closest advisor. After King John's death (1540) the Turks occupied Hungary's central regions. Brother George, guardian of the infant crown prince and advisor (and, to some extent, guardian) of the young, capricious widow, Isabella, moved the royal family to Transylvania, the eastern part of Hungary. Here he managed to set up a semi-independent principality, which he ruled as Regent. He kept the peace with both his powerful neighbours, the Turks and the Germans, playing off one great power against the other, bribing officials, paying tributes — or relying on the sword when other means failed. Once he led a cavalry charge himself against the Turks, destroyed them, recaptured a frontier town and then humbly explained to the sultan that it had been a "dreadful mistake". (He did not say whose.) The sultan had the defeated pasha hanged, took the bribe offered by George and thus the matter was settled to (almost) everybody's satisfaction.

Though he was a Catholic prelate, bishop and later Cardinal-Archbishop, head of the Hungarian Church, he was a wise and tolerant ruler. It was under his Regency that the *Diet of Torda* declared the principle of religious freedom, for the first time in Europe (which was, at that time, torn by the religious wars).

His ultimate aim was to free Hungary from the Turks, but he realized that this could not be achieved without the help of the Habsburg Empire. Thus he prepared the reunion of Transylvania with the other regions of Hungary ruled by the Habsburg Emperor-King. He had to conceal his plans before the Turks, however. He voiced his "friendship" and "loyalty" to the sultan. The king's commander failed to see the true reason for this "lip-service" and had him assassinated as a suspected ally of the Turks.

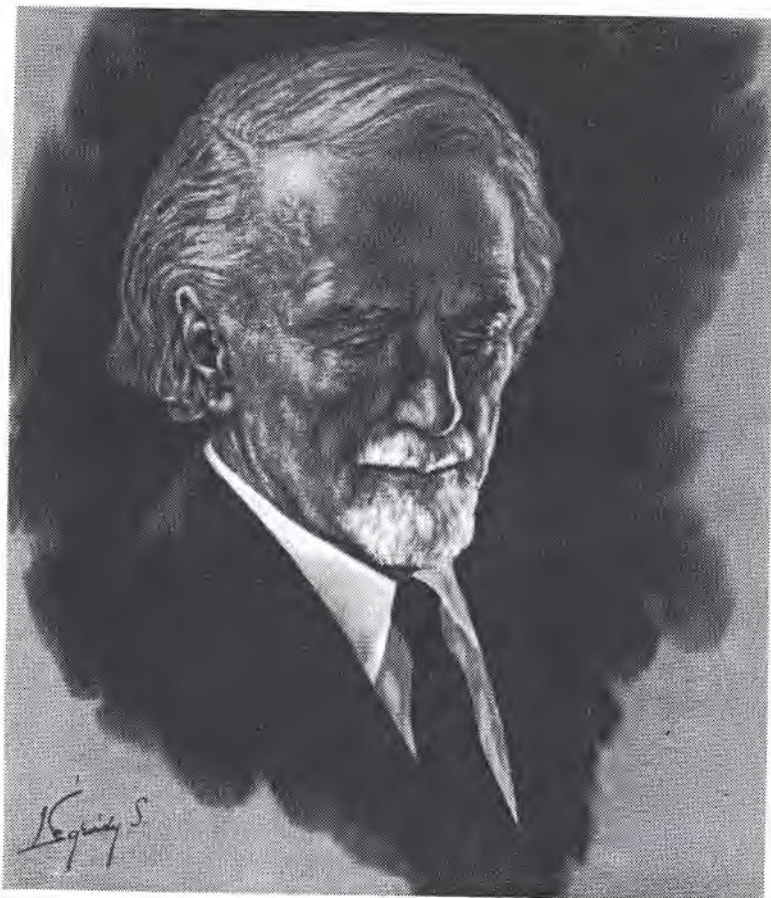
The greatest diplomat of 16th century Hungary, born a foreigner, gave his life for the survival of his adopted nation.

\*

**Zoltán Kodály** was born on the **16th of December, 1882** in Kecskemét, in the heart of the Hungarian Plain.

He began studying and collecting genuine Magyar folk melodies in his student years. With the collaboration of Béla Bartók and

others, Kodály initiated and directed the study, identification and evaluation of the rich treasure of Magyar folk music. On his initiative, the Hungarian Academy of Sciences has collected more than 100,000 genuine Magyar folk melodies. Professor of the Budapest Academy of Music, he soon became the nation's foremost musical educator.



Zoltán Kodály

After World War I he became interested in choral singing, found it a practical and inexpensive vehicle of musical culture. He later based his well-known "*Kodály Method*" on the evaluation of vocal music. This basic philosophy of musical education aims at the development of the very young (pre-primary) child's musical ability by using singing as the first vehicle of music teaching.

His opus contains a rich collection of choral works, tableaux of songs and dances of various Magyar regions. His orchestral compositions retain the traditional melodic elements, such as the popular "toborzó" (recruiting song) type motifs. This is why his compositions are enjoyed even by those who have no appreciation of Bartók's philosophical creations.

"*Háry János*", a comic opera became the favourite of national and international concerts with its pleasing, emotional rhythms and folk-inspired melodies.

Like his music, his original education principles are easily adapted to any national educational system, as is the case in many countries today.

\*

**István Bocskay**, ruling Prince of Transylvania and Hungary, died on the **29th of December, 1606**.

Bocskay was a Protestant nobleman of Transylvania and an able soldier. As the commander of the prince, he fought several successful engagements in Wallachia (Rumania) against the Turks in alliance with the voyvod (duke) of the province, Michael (called the "Brave"). The inept Prince of Transylvania alienated certain groups of his subjects who rose in rebellion against him. Michael (who was also a wily politician) went to the aid of the Magyar rebels in Transylvania, helped them to defeat the prince (who was killed in the battle) and then had himself declared Prince of Transylvania. At this point the Habsburg Emperor interfered, sent his troops to Transylvania and had the would-be Vlach Prince chased from the country. This episode is described by some Rumanian historians as the "unification of the three Rumanian provinces".

The German troops then imposed their own reign of terror in Transylvania. To end this interregnum, the Transylvanian Diet elected István Bocskay Prince in 1605. Bocskay began by chasing the marauding Germans, Vlachs, Tartars and Turks out of the country. Then he decided to proceed with the liberation of Hungary: from the Germans first, then from the Turks. He led successful campaigns against the imperial (Habsburg royal) armies in northern Hungary and gained valuable concessions from the emperor. These were Transylvania's independence and religious freedom for the Hungarian Protestants under Habsburg rule. The Hungarian nobles elected him *ruling Prince of Hungary*. The sultan

sent him a crown, but Bocskay refused to accept it and become a vassal of the Turk.

Before he could proceed with the second phase of his long-term plan, the expulsion of the Turks, he died, under somewhat suspicious circumstances after only two years of his reign.

\*

The last Abbot of Zirc, **Vendel Endrédi**, died on the **29th of December, 1981**.

He was the last head of the Hungarian Cistercian Congregation, which was abolished by the Communist Government of the country in 1948. After the suppression of the Order, Endrédi was imprisoned with many other Cistercians. After his release he spent his last years in the Benedictine monastery of Pannonhalma. His spirit unbroken, he kept teaching and writing and his humble cell became a place of pilgrimage for his friends, admirers and former pupils.

He was laid to rest at his former abbey, Zirc. On that occasion, the Budapest regime allowed the surviving Cistercians to enter their confiscated monastery once more, in order to bury their last abbot — and to celebrate the 800th anniversary of the foundation of the Abbey of Zirc . . .

The first monastery built in Hungary was the Benedictine Abbey of Pannonhalma, founded in 997.

The *Benedictine monks* have played an important role in the conversion and Christian education of the Magyar people. They gave the Hungarian Church many eminent prelates, scholars and educators.

The *Cistercians*, originally a contemplative branch of the Benedictines, came to Hungary in the 12th century. *The Abbey of Zirc was founded in 1182*. During the Middle Ages the Cistercians led a contemplative life, supporting themselves by agriculture. Their role changed during the 18th century: they became a teaching order, like the Benedictines, Jesuits, Premonstratenses and Piarists.

There are no Cistercian monasteries in Hungary any more. Some of the former monks of the Zirc Abbey have established the *Cistercian Abbey of "Our Lady of Dallas" in the United States*. They carry the heritage of the Hungarian Cistercians in exile.

\*

**János Apáczai Csere**, the great Hungarian scientist of the 17th century, died on the **31st of December, 1659**.

He was a Protestant scholar, born in Transylvania. On completing his philosophical and theological studies in Holland, he became professor at the College of Gyulafehérvár in Transylvania, which was a university in all but name. Here he compiled his monumental "Hungarian Encyclopedia", the first universal compendium of knowledge in Hungarian. His death at the age of 34 brought a brilliant career to a premature end.

## CHRISTMAS IN HUNGARY

The Magyar people celebrate the mysteries of Christianity by ornamenting the liturgy with the colourful melodies of their millenia-old musical tradition. Among the Christian festivities, the heart-warming story of the first Christmas is particularly close to the emotions of the simple peasant. The humble circumstances of Christ's birth and the role of the Bethlehem shepherds became the subject of many plays and carols sung to the words of unknown folk-poets to tunes older than Christianity in the land of the Magyars.

Many **Christmas carols** form part of a "*Bethlehem-play*", others are sung on their own or in connection with the Christian church service.

From time immemorial, the winter-solstice (of the Northern Hemisphere), the Christmas period has been a season of festivities. The pagans used to celebrate the re-birth of the Sun-god, the Christians the birth of Christ. The ancient rites and myths have been ennobled, but the memories of the old pagan celebrations still linger in some Magyar folksongs, such as the refrain of the popular carol:

"*Oh life, oh sunsine,  
Oh dear, little Jesus . . .*"

The folk-carol "*Nagykarácsony . . .*" ("On the night of Christmas"), is known throughout the country. One of the variants goes:

"*At Christmas night,  
On Jesus' birthday,  
We must rejoice . . .  
Let's be happy,  
For He is born to us . . .*"

Some carols take the form of a cheerful dance, expressing the joy of the awakening shepherds. Other carols incorporate Latin words of the Catholic liturgy. One of these begins with the words



Bethlehem Play

"Gloria in excelsis . . ." then continues in Hungarian. One of the popular carols begins with the Greek words "*Kirje . . .*" (variant of "Kyrie") from the liturgy. The naive charm of the text and the ancient melody leave no doubt that we hear one of the genuine creations of the people, probably the Catholic Székelys of Csik county in Transylvania. The majestic Christ of the liturgy becomes a sweet little baby, surrounded by His Holy Mother, shepherds and peasants worried about the cold. They wish to be able to give the Divine Child the comfort, which, according to the Gospel, had been denied to Him in Bethlehem:

*"There is no cover for Jesus' bed,  
The poor Dear is so cold!  
He has no winter coat . . ."*

The so-called "**Bethlehem plays**" used to be a charming addition to the Christmas celebrations in all countries of Europe since the Middle Ages. They have practically disappeared in the western countries. In Hungary however, the farmers and shepherds find the story of Christ so attractive that troupes of children and even of adults still perform these improvised dramas around Christmas.

The plays present various colourful versions of the Gospel story. The scene is usually the stable with Mary, Joseph and the shepherds at the side of Jesus in the manger. During the play the

herdsmen are joined by various symbolic personalities such as King Herod, soldiers, angels and even devils. The amateur actors go from house to house performing their little play for the family. In some regions they sometimes take the manger to the church and perform a short version of the play there.

Throughout the play humorous improvisations mingle with deeply philosophical thoughts and old folk-hymns. Many changes are made to the original Gospel story. Often the Magyars' nostalgic love is expressed in the form of the wish; "if Jesus had been born in Hungary, things would have been different . . ." As one carol put it:

*"Oh, if you had been born in Hungary,  
In the town of Bicske,  
You would have found a better country . . ."*

In some places *marionettes* are made to perform dances before the manger.

The little timber structure which represents the manger or the stage is decorated with particular care by the children themselves. The children carry this candle-lit, glittering little structure from house to house in the snowy, silent night of the Magyar village. The candle-light brings the magic of the Gothic cathedrals to the peasant's home with its universal message of peace on Earth . . .

## FROM BETHLEHEM TO CALVARY

The Christmas-New Year period is the time of memories and reflections for all mankind. The 15 million Hungarians who live all over the world have somehow more to remember and reflect than the rest of mankind.

By celebrating the birth of the Founder of Christianity, the Hungarians also remember the birth of the Christian Kingdom of Hungary. **On Christmas Day, 1000 A.D. King Stephen** — later to be known as Saint Stephen — was crowned with the crown of the Pope. Thus the Hungarian nation was welcomed into the community of Christian countries.

The formerly pagan Magyars accepted the Christian faith and with it, western civilization. This faith and this civilization became the Magyar nation's own heritage defended through centuries against various pagans. Christian devotion and Magyar patriotism became synonymous notions. The picture of the child Jesus, in His humble manger, watched with anxious care by His mother, Mary, has somehow been the symbol of the Magyar people: the loneliest



nation on earth, protected by the Holy Virgin, "Our Lady of Hungary".

Somehow, many momentous events which took place around Christmas and New Year during the course of Hungarian history seem to remind the Hungarians of their close affiliation with the cause of Christianity.

**On December the 30th, 1916**, Hungary's last king, **Charles IV and his Queen** were crowned in the historic Cathedral of Our Lady in Buda. After the solemn ceremony, the king mounted his horse and rode up a man-made hillock, built of soil collected from the 73 counties of Hungary. There, with Saint Stephen's Crown on his head, Charles made four symbolic strokes with a sword in the four directions, swearing to defend Hungary against all enemies.

Kind-hearted Charles could not defend Hungary, he could not even stop the senseless war which his predecessor had started. On that cold, cruel winter day, Hungary's fate had already been sealed.

**Christmas Day of 1918** marks, by the irony of history, the occupation of the **two historic capital cities of Hungary, Kolozsvár** in Transylvania and **Pozsony** in Upper Hungary by the troops of the newly created "succession" countries.

The tragic **Christmas Day of 1944** still lives in the memory of the older generation. On this day, Hungary's capital, Budapest, was *encircled by the advancing Soviet forces*. While the Hungarian-German troops held the city for two months — longer than Stalin-grad — the civilian population of one million suffered atrociously during the coldest winter in living memory. For the Hungarians of 1944, the road to Calvary began at Bethlehem.

On the **26th of December, 1948**, the courageous head of the Hungarian Catholic Church, **Cardinal Mindszenty** was arrested by the Communist Government. His martyrdom which began on that day, truly epitomizes the suffering and sacrifice of Saint Stephen's people for Christianity.

Chesterton once said: "*Christianity is mankind's most beautiful idea. It is a pity no one has ever tried it.*"

He was wrong. Saint Stephen's people have followed the road of Christianity for a thousand years, from the glory of Bethlehem to the sorrows of Calvary. They truly believe that this road will, one day, lead to Resurrection.

