

SHORT HISTORY OF HUNGARY

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THE ORIGIN

There are several theories about the origin of the Hungarians (Magyars). A living tradition fed by centuries of legend and poetry holds that the ancestors of the Hungarians were related to the Scythians who formed a highly developed empire in the fifth century before Christ.

Another theory of origin is the so-called "Sumerian connection" a relatively new and hotly contested speculation based on comparative language studies which tries to find common roots connecting Sumerian and Hungarian culture. Indeed, some similarity between the two languages can be demonstrated.[1]

A more widely accepted theory of Hungarian origin is that the Hungarians are of Finno-Ugrian extraction. They came from the Caucasus and the land around Don and Kuban rivers. Around the year 890 they entered their present homeland. In a few short years they managed to conquer the whole Carpathian basin, beyond the Danube.[2]

THE TRIBAL ALLIANCE

The Hungarians were a well organized tribal alliance. Their society was clearly divided into social strata, administered by councils on the clan and tribal levels. However, their leaders were empowered to take arbitrary measures in cases of emergency. They formed a democratic society which was constantly on military alert.

There were 108 clans represented by the seven tribes of Nyék, Megyer (Magyar), Kürtgyarmat, Tarján, Jenő, Kara and Kaza. They decided to unite under a single Supreme Chief.[3]

Having elected as their chief Árpád (896-907), the leader of their most powerful tribe, by a ceremony called the Covenant of Blood, probably in 896, the Hungarians easily subjugated the peoples of the sparsely inhabited Carpathian basin.

They destroyed the Moravian Empire in 906 and in the next year occupied Pannonia, having defeated a German force sent against them. They were then firmly established in the whole cen-

tre of the basin, over which their tribes and their associates distributed themselves, Árpád taking the central area west of the Danube of his own tribe (Magyar).[4]

On August 10, 955, the Hungarian army suffered a terrible defeat near the banks of the Lech river. But as a result of this defeat, the Hungarian people received the Christian faith. The first Hungarian to be baptized was Prince Géza (970-997). Of course, he became a Christian rather for political reasons, but he did summon priests to Hungary.

THE APOSTOLIC KING

Prince Géza remained a pagan at heart. But his son, King Stephen (997-1038) was already the father, apostle, and saint of his people. Under his leadership, the Hungarian nation became a part of the culture of Western Europe.

The Christian faith thrived in Hungary. In the year 1000, King Stephen received the Holy Crown from Pope Silvester II which later became so famous in the land. Stephen also received the right to found bishoprics and cloisters. Churches and basilicas were built all over the country, and priests and religious orders began to establish schools.[5]

The whole of his land was divided into counties (megyék) each under a royal official, an "ispán" (later „fő ispán" — head ispán) who represented the king's authority in it, administered its unfree population, and collected the taxes that formed the national revenue, central and local.

Each "ispán" maintained at his headquarters or "vár" (fortress), an armed force composed of freemen who took service under him, or of persons freed by the king. In Stephen's day there were about 45 counties.[6]

After King Stephen's death, Peter Orseoli (1038-1046) was helped to the throne by the German Emperor, Henry III who was eager to make Hungary his vassal state. Peter himself disliked the Hungarians and his feelings were reciprocated. After the coronation, Peter was able to rule only with German support, but not for long.[7]

Samuel Aba (1041-1044), Andrew (Endre) I (1046-1060), Béla I (1060-1063), Solomon (1063-1074) and Géza I (1074-1077) were followed by László, who occupied the Hungarian throne for 18 years.[8]

THE REGAL KNIGHT

King László I (1077-1095) re-established the law and order. He enacted a new code of laws strictly punishing crimes against property and life. He codified the protection of the female sex and defined the responsibilities of high dignitaries.

László I inherited Croatia. From then on, Croatia existed in a special, almost symbolic relationship with Hungary until 800 years later, when in 1920, the Trianon treaty severed Croatia from Hungary. His daughter, Piroska, became Greek Empress.

Under László's reign, Hungary's stature grew among the Christian nations of Europe. When a leader was sought for the Crusade to liberate the Holy Land, King László's valor, strategic skill and dedication to Christianity made him a pre-eminent candidate.[9]

THE BOOK LOVER

László's successor was King Kálmán (1095-1116). He concentrated his efforts on developing and organizing his country. He promoted the building of houses to gradually replace the time-honored rent. As a ruler, Kálmán was the most knowledgeable Hungarian of his time. He was the only European king of the age who could read and write. He did not need a scrivener or a lector to consult the holy books and codes. His fondness for reading earned him the nickname "Könyves Kálmán" (Kálmán the book lover).

During his reign, King Kálmán attained most of his goals, leaving a brilliant record, except for his failure to achieve genuine reconciliation with his brother Álmos. As a means of ensuring that his son, Stephen, would succeed him, King Kálmán, from his sick bed, ordered Álmos and his ten year-old son, Béla, to be blinded, to make them both unfit to rule.

But the fate decreed otherwise. When Kálmán's son, Stephen II (1116-1131) was approaching death without an heir, he made Álmos' son, Béla II ("Vak Béla" — Béla the Blind — 1131-1141) his successor.[10]

THE "BYZANTINE KING"

One after another weak kings: Géza II(1141-1162), Stephen III (1162-1172), László II (11162-1163) and Stephen IV (1163), Béla III (1172-1196), the "Byzantine King" became one of the

greatest kings in Hungary's history. After re-establishing order and authority, Béla III organized the Royal Chancellory which was to preserve a record of every matter that came before the king, so that royal decrees would not pass into oblivion. This office was also instrumental in spreading literacy.

On the king's initiative, hundreds of Hungarian scholars and students were sent to foreign centers of learning and, upon their return, were placed in key positions. He spared no effort to turn rough, wooden or marshy regions into model farms, for instance, attracted people from even the remotest districts to learn the agricultural techniques.

The developments in farming contributed to Hungary's remarkable industrial and commercial growth. In the time of Béla III, Hungary was to become the most important agricultural country of central Europe.

He was succeeded by his elder son, Imre (Emeric — 1196-1204) and by Imre's infant son, László III (1204-1205) who died the next year, then by Imre's brother, Andrew II (Endre II — 1205-1235).

THE AGE OF THE GOLDEN BULL

In his reign in 1222, the famous Bull was issued. In that year general dissatisfaction with the government almost led to an open uprising. Andrew II succeeded in pacifying the country by issuing a letter of rights known as the "Golden Bull" (Bulla Aurea). Later jurists considered it one of the fundamental pillars of Hungary's constitution, often comparing it with the Magna Charta of England. Issued only seven years after its famous predecessor, the Golden Bull set limitations on royal rights and prerogatives, eliminated many governmental faults and guaranteed the rights of the small landholders.[11]

Saint Elizabeth of Hungary was the daughter of Andrew II.

THE STRONG KING

Andrew's successor, Béla IV (1235-1270), began his reign with a series of measures designed to re-establish the royal authority, but his work was soon interrupted by the frightful disaster of the Mongol invasion.

In the spring of 1241 the Mongols quickly overran the country and before they left it, a year later, had inflicted ghastly devastation. Only a few — but not all — fortified places and the

impenetrable swamps and forests escaped their ravages. The country lost about half its population.

Béla IV took refuge in Dalmatia. After his return he reorganized the army, built a chain of fortresses, and called in new settlers to repopulate the country. He is not unjustly dubbed as the second founder of Hungary, the second builder of the Hungarian kingdom.[12]

His daughter was Margaret (Margit). In 1254 at the early age of twelve, she joined the Dominican Order, and after an arduous life of service and mortification, she died at the age of twenty-nine, in the Island of the Hares which shortly after her death, was renamed "Margit sziget" (St. Margaret's Island).[13]

Béla's last years were much embittered by the recurring struggle for power with his oldest son, Stephen, who had a Cuman (kun) wife. Although this marriage, far below the dignity of the proud Árpád kings, was destined to facilitate the smoother settlement of the Cumans in Hungary, its later consequences proved utterly disastrous for the country.

THE LAST KINGS OF THE HOUSE OF THE ÁRPÁDS

Béla's successor was Stephen V (1270-1272) who died in August at the age of thirty-two. His reign was characterised by great political upheavals and internal faction fights which divided the kingdom.

His son, László IV (1272-1290) also called "Kun László" (László the Cuman), was only ten years of age and the effective government of the kingdom was exercised by the royal council, presided over by his mother, Elizabeth.[14]

László grew up into a wild, undisciplined youth who came so near to paganism that Pope Nicholas IV preached a crusade against him. He was assassinated by a Cuman and left no legitimate heir.

One male of the Árpád line was, however, discovered in Italy. His legitimacy was impugned, but his supporters got him into the country, and the young man, Andrew III (Endre III — 1290-1301) proved a wise and capable king.

Unhappily, he died without male issue, and with him the national Árpád dynasty became extinct.[15]

THE HOUSE OF ÁRPÁDS

The House of Árpáds gave Hungary twenty-six kings, of these twenty-one in the Christian era. It also enriched the universal Church with some twenty saints, several of them reigning kings, princes and queens. During the four hundred year rule of this native dynasty, the Hungarians established themselves firmly in their new homeland and grew into a mighty Christian kingdom. The unique Hungarian culture which developed during this era combined Christian spiritual values with the ancient traditions of Hungarians in a thriving, organic whole.[16]

HUNGARIAN POWER UNDER THE ANJOU KINGS

After the death of Andrew III, there were three candidates for the throne: Charles Robert of Anjou, Wenceslaus of Bohemia and Otto of Bavaria. Their claims were based on descent from an Árpád in the female line.

The powerful oligarchs promoted their own candidates for the throne. From 1301 to 1308, were years of struggles for the throne. In 1307, the Hungarian parliament assembled on the field of Rákos, near Pest, proclaimed Charles Robert (1308-1342) king. He was crowned twice with a specially made crown, but on the feast-day of Saint Stephen in 1310, he was crowned a third time with the Holy Crown.

Then he began to organize an army from the lesser noblemen who rallied around him. With his armies, he proceeded to liquidate the power of the remaining oligarchs quickly. Then he decided to turn his attention to Croatia and Dalmatia when conditions were quite chaotic due to Venetian expansion.

With order re-established throughout the kingdom, Charles Robert was able to concentrate on internal reforms. He regulated the economy and the financial system. He granted many favors to foreign merchants and reinstated the international trade routes connecting Hungary with various parts of Europe.

He also reorganized the defences of Hungary. Utilizing the private armies of the great oligarchs, he introduced the so-called banderial system. A "bandérium" being a military unit fighting under its own flag.

In his foreign policies, Charles Robert cultivated the Hungarian-Polish-Czech alliance. He also cemented dynastic ties with his Anjou relatives in the Kingdom of Naples. Throughout

his long reign, Charles Robert continued to progress in public esteem and authority in Hungary. When he died, he left behind a well-orderd inheritance for his elder son, Louis, who succeeded him on the throne.[17]

LOUIS THE GREAT

Charles Robert's son, Louis I (1342-1382), the only Hungarian king on whom his country has bestowed the name "Great" — a name given in love as well as fear — built on his father's foundation.

Keeping peace with the West, he repaired Charles Robert's losses in the South, and surrounded his kingdom with a ring of dependencies over which Hungary presided as archregnum in the Balkans, on the lower Danube, and in Galicia. The climax of his dynastic glory came when, in 1370, he also ascended the throne of Poland, in virtue of an earlier family compact.[18]

Although Louis excelled in warfare and kept up his military activities throughout his long reign, he was also great in the arts of peace. He paid careful attention to the spread of the Catholic faith. He founded Catholic bishoprics and sent missionaries to Bosnia, Serbia and Bulgaria. He was also a generous patron of the arts. Louis erected many churches, inviting architects and artists from France and Italy. He founded the first Hungarian university at Pécs in 1367.

LOUIS' DAUGHTER AND HER HUSBAND

In 1382 when Louis was nearing his end, he named his elder daughter Maria (1382-1395) and her fiance, Sigismund of Luxemburg (1387-1437) as his joint successors both in Hungary and Poland.[19]

But Poland refused to continue the union. They accepted Louis' younger daughter, Hedwig (Jadwiga) as queen but married her to Jagiello of Lithuania. The Hungarians crowned Maria, whose husband, Sigismund of Luxemburg, had himself crowned as her consort in 1387 and after her death, eight years later, ruled alone. He did much for arts, commerce, and, above all, for the towns.[20]

In September 1410, Sigismund was elected German king. In 1413 he went to Germany and was away from Hungary altogether for six years. In 1419, Sigismund also obtained the

crown of Bohemia, and he unavoidably neglected his duties as king of Hungary. Whilst he attended to German and Bohemian affairs, the Turks resumed their expansion in the Balkans and occupied Bosnia.

THE FIRST HABSBURG IN THE THRONE

When Sigismund died in 1437, leaving as issue a daughter, Elizabeth, married to Albert of Habsburg (1437-1439) who was accepted as Sigismund's successor, the Ottaman Turk sultan, Murad II was preparing a grand assault on Hungary. Albert set about organizing the country's defenses, but died in 1439, leaving his widow big with a child. To avoid an interregnum and a minority perhaps with a girl queen, the country elected Wladislaw I Jagiello (1440-1444) as king. Within two years of his death in battle against the Turks, the Hungarians accepted Albert's posthumus son, László V (1452-1457), appointing as his guardian and governor of Hungary the great general, János Hunyadi, who had been successfully repelling the renewed Turkish attacks.[21]

JÁNOS HUNYADI THE GOVERNOR (1446-1452)

Young Hunyadi began his career as a member of King Sigismund's bodyguards and devoted his entire life to the struggle against the Turks. King Albert appointed him "bán" of Szörény and Hunyadi defended the province with great success. In 1441, he was promoted to "vajda" (viceroy) of Transylvania, and Wladislaw I made him captain of Nádorfehérvár (Belgrade).

In the middle of 1455, Pope Calixtus III proclaimed a crusade and sent a Franciscan preacher, John Capistrano, to Hungary to call on the entire people to take up the cross. On July 22, Hunyadi launched a supreme attack against the Turkish camp in Belgrade and captured all their artillery and equipment. Belgrade was saved and the Turkish danger to Hungary averted.

Hunyadi's great victory at Belgrade was greeted by the entire Christian world with jubilation. To celebrate this event, the Pope ordered all church-bells to be rung daily at midday, a custom still observed today.

But Hunyadi was not able to enjoy his moment of glory for long. He caught an epidemic ravaging the Christian camp and died in the arms of John Capistrano on August 11, 1456. In October 23 of the same year, John Capistrano followed him.[22]

MATTHIAS, THE RENAISSANCE KING

In January, 1458, on a cold winter's day, the army recruited from the lesser nobility, marched to Buda on the ice of the Danube, hailing Matthias Hunyadi (1458-1490) as the new king of Hungary. He was the younger son of János Hunyadi. His mother was Erzsébet Szilágyi.

Matthias was a true Renaissance king, a fine natural soldier, a first-class administrator, an outstanding linguist, a learned astrologer, an enlightened patron of the arts and learning. Artists and scholars of European repute were welcomed at his court.

Politically too, he represented the ideas of the Renaissance. He simplified and improved the administration, and, above all, the laws, enforcing justice with an even hand. He had a mercenary standing army and it was known after its commander, "Black John Hauwitz", as the "Black army" which he kept as part of the royal "bandérium" for use against enemies at home and abroad.[23]

It was at Matthias' encouragement that the first Hungarian printing shop was set up in Buda in 1473 and started its activities with publication of the history of the Hungarians (Chronica Hungarorum). Matthias also assembled a magnificent royal library consisting of some five hundred beautifully bound and illuminated volumes, called "Corvinas".[24]

THE FALL OF THE KINGDOM

With Matthias' death, the high nobles began digging the grave of their own country and elected Wladislaw II (1490-1516) as king. He was a good and well-meaning man with a soft heart. His favorite expression was the Polish word "dobje" meaning "all right". During his reign everything in Hungary was given away. The main beneficiaries of this policy were the big landowners; the losers were the peasants. Therefore, the "Peasant Rebellion" (Parasztlázadás) broke out in May of 1514, and many thousands fell victim to the mad carnage carried out by both sides.[25]

THE TRAGEDY OF MOHÁCS

Wladislaw's successor was his young son, Louis II (1516-1526), under whose reign Hungary slid towards complete

anarchy. The new Sultan, Soliman II openly declared his intention of conquering Hungary. Hungary sent emissaries to Germany, seeking urgent help but it gave no help, only empty promises.

It was only the Popes, Hadrian VI and Clement VII who took the desperate appeals of the Hungarians seriously. In the summer of 1526, Soliman launched his long awaited attack. On the field of Mohács, on August 29, 1526 there were only 25,000 Hungarians against 150,000 Turks, so the Hungarians suffered a crushing defeat. There were 20,000 Hungarian bodies littering the battleground. Louis II himself was killed when his horse fell into the swollen Csele rivulet and he drowned in the raging waters.

TWO KINGS ON ONE THRONE

The immense tragedy of Mohács left Hungary without even a semblance of central government. The majority of Hungarians elected John Zápolyai king and the coronation ceremony was performed by the Bishop of Nyitra, but certain members of the aristocracy elected Ferdinand I, king of Hungary (1526-1564). Now there were two kings on the throne and both ending up as vassals of the enemy, the Turks.

After lengthy negotiations, John Zápolyai (1526-1540) and Ferdinand concluded the Treaty of Nagyvárad (1538) in which they agreed on a division of the country between them. Ferdinand received the western and northern parts, John ruled in the center and the east.

After John Zápolyai's death, the majority of Hungarians accepted Ferdinand as their king but Soliman quickly declared himself guardian of John's infant son, John Sigismund (1541-1571), and marched into Hungary with a huge army and on September 2, 1541 Soliman occupied Buda. He placed southern and central Hungary under Turkish administration, leaving Isabella (John's widow) and her infant son only the eastern parts and Transylvania as a vassal principality. Hungary was now divided into three parts.[26]

THE AGE OF TRISECTION

The "age of trisection" was the blackest in all Hungarian history. The Turks left Transylvania relatively unmolested. Prime mover of this part was George Martinuzzi, commonly

known as "Brother George", Bishop of Nagyvárad. He was a shrewd diplomat, and an able administrator, one of the greatest statesman this country ever produced.

He devised a constitution based on earlier institutions, and consisting, under the Prince, of representatives of the "three nations" (the Hungarians, the Saxons, and the Székelys). Brother George became Cardinal and was assassinated at Alvinc in 1551.

Transylvania was also spared internecine religious strife, when the representatives of the Roman Catholic, Calvinist, Lutheran, and Unitarian churches agreed on a regime under which these four confessions ranked as "established" on a basis of equal freedom and mutual toleration (1557-Torda).[27]

In 1564, Ferdinand I died and was succeeded on the throne by his son, Maximilian I (1564-1576). John Sigismund immediately renewed his claim to the Hungarian throne, and only in the Concordat of Speyer (1571) submitted himself to the sovereignty of the Habsburg kings, renouncing his claim to the Hungarian crown. But John Sigismund died unexpectedly on March 14, 1571.

TRANSYLVANIA

Transylvanians elected Stephen Báthory (1571-1576) who was a man of great talent and circumspection. Under his wise and energetic rule, Transylvania became a model state which was soon to play an important role on the European scene. In 1576, Stephen Báthory was duly crowned king of Poland, leaving the government of Transylvania in the hands of his brother Christopher (1576-1581).

Still in 1576, Maximilian I died, and was succeeded by his son, Rudolph (1576-1608) who was an unbalanced man, whose advisers hated Hungary and its traditions. In Transylvania, when Christopher Báthory died, Sigismund Báthory (1581-1599) was his successor.[28]

Sigismund Báthory, under the influence of his maternal uncle, Stephen Bocskay, became engaged in a fifteen year war with the Turks in which he received the support of Rudolph. Both Sigismund and Rudolph, coincidently, had mental defects which worsened with the passing of years.

Sigismund started his long-planned campaign against the Turks with good success. Some of his victories were sensational. In 1595, he annihilated the immense army of Turks at

Gyurgyevo. But in 1596, he lost a most important battle at Mezőkeresztes where his troops, allied with Rudolph's army, were decisively defeated by the Turks.

This prompted Sigismund to abdicate the throne. Twice more he resigned only to return to rule again. In this time he relinquished power to Rudolph. Rudolph, in turn, delegated to his all-powerful Italian general, George Basta, the task of "restoring order" in Transylvania.[29]

Basta established a military government in Transylvania. His aim was to Germanise the principality and to remove all Hungarians from the cities and major towns. He exploited the people so cruelly that many peasants were facing death by famine. In some places, human flesh was openly sold on the market. From 1600 to 1604 was the Basta's reign of terror.[30]

Basta behaved in Transylvania with such insane cruelty toward the Hungarian Protestants that Stephen Bocskay, formerly a Habsburg supporter, revolted. He improvised an army out of the wild herdsmen (hajduks) and evicted Belgioioso-Barbiano from eastern Hungary, as well as cleared the whole Transylvania from the Basta forces.

In November 1604 entered Kassa triumphantly. In February 1605, he was duly elected prince of Transylvania. Two months later, Bocskay (1604-1606) was proclaimed "fejedelem" (ruling prince) of Hungary.[31]

Following Bocskay's death, Transylvania elected Sigismund Rákoczi (1606-1608). After his resignation, Gabriel Báthory (1608-1613) was duly elected prince of Transylvania.

In 1608, Rudolph was forced to resign, leaving him only Bohemia proper. The Hungarian parliament assembled at Pozsony then elected Matthias II (1608-1619) king of Hungary and he was crowned with the Holy Crown in November 1608.

Gabriel Báthory and Matthias II concluded a treaty in April 1613 which contained a secret clause for an alliance against Turks. The Turks soon learned of this, and immediately appointed Gabriel Bethlen prince of Transylvania (1613-1629), and the Diet elected him.

THE GOLDEN AGE OF TRANSYLVANIA

Gabriel Bethlen's reign ushered in the Golden Age of Transylvania. He was a brilliant statesman, a clever diplomat and an able general. Since the beginning of his reign in Transylvania, a

strong Catholic revival was in progress in the western kingdom, led by the great Archbishop of Esztergom, Peter Pázmány, who converted large numbers of Hungarian magnates to Catholicism and with them all the inhabitants of their estates.

Matthias II died in March 1619 and was succeeded on the Hungarian throne by his nephew, Ferdinand II (1619-1637). After the death of Gabriel Bethlen, Transylvania elected George Rákóczi (1629-1648) who lacked his predecessor's talent but he was much more cautious in his external policies than Bethlen, and the first 13 years of his reign were spent in comparative peace, allowing Transylvania a further period of spiritual and material development.

In 1637, Ferdinand II died and his elder son, Ferdinand III (1637-1657) became Hungarian king and Holy Roman emperor. He inherited his father's intolerance towards Protestants.

When George Rákóczi I died in 1648, he left behind a stable and prosperous principality and vast personal possessions. His successor was his son, George Rákóczi II (1648-1660) who aspired to a royal crown. Therefore, when a war broke out between the Poles and Swedes in 1655, he first offered his assistance to the Poles, then he turned to the Swedes, in return for their thrones.

During Rakóczi's ill-fated Polish campaign, Ferdinand III was succeeded by Leopold I (1657-1705). That time, in Transylvania, Ákos Barcsay (1660-1661) and John Kemény (1661-1662) were princes.

The great Grandvizier, Köprili wanted to annihilate Transylvania. John Kemény turned to Leopold I for help and he sent a sizeable army, leading by an Austrian general, Raymond Montecuccoli. He penetrated as far as Kolozsvár but did not engage the Turks and after a show of force, left Transylvania to its fate. Kemény continued the unequal struggle until he died fighting in the battle of Segesvár (1662).

NICHOLAS ZRINYI

The Turks exacted a terrible revenge. Tens of thousands of Transylvanians were taken into slavery. The fall of Transylvania was viewed in Royal Hungary with great alarm. The leading statesman, Nicholas Zrinyi, "bán" (governor) of Croatia and great-grandson of the hero of Szigetvár, was bitter in his criticism of Montecuccoli for failing to save Transylvania. His most remembered phrase was, "Hands off the Magyars!" (Ne bántsd a magyart!)

Köprili died in 1661 and was succeeded by his son, Ahmed. He proved even more aggressive than his father, and in 1663, renounced the peace previously concluded with Leopold I. A fierce Turkish attack was mounted against Royal Hungary, resulting in the fall of Érsekujvár and other territories.

A powerful imperial army was assembled with the support of the Pope and even Louis XIV of France sent 5,000 volunteers. Whilst the preparations were going on, Zrinyi launched a lightning strike against the Turks, temporarily occupied Pécs and burned down the large bridge at Eszék. Soon after that, the imperial general De Souches scored a series of victories against the Turks in northern Hungary. The main Christian force, led by Montecuccoli, now also moved.

After lengthy evasive manoeuvres, Montecuccoli finally gave battle to the Turks at Szentgotthárd on August 1, 1664 and won a resounding victory. A mere ten days later, Montecuccoli concluded a hasty peace with the Turks at Vasvár (1664). The terms of the treaty made it seem as if the Turks had defeated the Christians, allowing the Turks to retain all their recent conquests, surrendering Leopold's claim to Transylvania and undertaking to pay 200,000 Ducats to the Sultan as a "present".

THE BIG CONSPIRACY

The "nádor" Francis Wesselényi, Nicholas Zrinyi and the Primate of Hungary, Cardinal Lippay, were extremely upset about Leopold's abject sellout in the treaty of Vasvár, they responded favourably to the suggestion of Gremonville (Louis XIV's envoy in Vienna) that Hungarians should elect Louis their king, with Nicholas Zrinyi as his viceroy in Hungary. The so-called "Wesselényi-conspiracy" was thus born. (1666-1671)

The conspiracy thus lacked any realistic basis and probably this was the reason why Leopold who soon found out about the movement, refused to take it seriously. Finally, in the spring of 1670, Peter Zrinyi and Francis Frangepan began to assemble their troops in Croatia and George Rákoczi II's son, Francis did the same in Northern Hungary, Leopold now decided it was time to act. His revenge was quick and merciless.[32] Nobles were executed or lost their estates, and nearly 800 Protestant pastors were sentenced to be galley slaves (1673-1674).[33]

During all these years, Transylvania led a rather stagnating existence under the inefficient rule of Michael Abaffy

(1662-1690). Having been cruelly punished by the Turks, Transylvania had neither mood nor the ability to engage in any largescale venture. They did, however, give a certain amount of support to the fugitives from Royal Hungary who congregated mainly in the western counties of Transylvania.

These dispossessed, impoverished Hungarians, popularly known as "kuruc" (is a derivative of the word "cross"), soon organized themselves into roaming bands and from 1672 onwards, began guerilla warfare against the imperial troops, the "labancok" (who were Hungarian soldiers on the Habsburg side — The origin of this word may have been the German phrase "Lauf Hans!" — Run, Hans!) in Northern Hungary.

THE THÖKÖLY INSURRECTION

The "kurucok" found an able leader in Imre Thököly who was a highly talented young man, then aged 27. Under his leadership, the fugitives were soon organized into a cohesive striking force, ready for a major attack against the German oppressors of their homeland. In 1678, Thököly raised the flag of revolt and invaded Northern Hungary.[34]

Thököly and his "kurucok" defeated two imperial generals, Leslie and Laborde, took over the gold mines of Upper Hungary and recaptured his ancestral estates of Liptó and Árva. Later, Thököly also ingenuously occupied Kassa, a fortified city dominated by a citadel. In a surprise attack, the "labancok" had no choice but to give it up.

In 1682, Thököly followed this victory with the occupation of Fülek. After this triumph, Pasha Ibrahim of Buda presented Thököly with a series of gifts from the Sultan: a sword, a baton, a robe, a flag and, finally, a crown along with an athname (paper of appointment) in which Thököly was named King of Hungary. But he was prudent enough not to accept the title. He was quite satisfied with the title "Prince of Hungary".

In 1683, Kara Musztafa, the new and ambitious Turkish Grandvizier, marched his troops against Vienna. Thököly was obliged to join the Turkish army in the siege, which he did reluctantly, avoiding as much combat as he could.

On this occasion, Thököly took with him his six year-old stepson, Ferenc Rákóczi to accustom the boy to military life and its hardship in his early years.[35]

THE RETREATING OF THE TURKS

In September of 1683, a Polish and German relief force, led by John Sobieski and Charles of Lotharingia, arrived under Vienna and won a resounding victory over the Turks.

Encouraged by the Pope who sent colossal financial aid for this campaign, Sobieski and Charles of Lotharingia pressed their advantage and pursuing the retreating Turks, won another victory over them at Párkány. In the same year, also Esztergom was liberated.

In March 1684, Leopold I, Sobieski and the Venetian Republic concluded a "holy league" against the Turks under the patronage of the Pope. In the same year, a fresh Christian army was assembled in Hungary under Charles of Lotharingia, and liberated Vác, Visegrád and Pest.

Leopold I now proclaimed an amnesty in Hungary and most Hungarians, excited with the prospect of liberating their country from Turkish rule, declared their loyalty to him. The Thököly insurrection (1678-1686) collapsed. Most of his former soldiers and supporters deserted him and joined the Christian armies.

THE LIBERATION OF BUDA

In June 1686, a huge Christian army arrived under Buda (Germans, French, English, Italian, Spanish and Swedish volunteers, augmented by some 15,000 Hungarians) and led the attack.

After much bloodshed and bitter fighting, the fortress of Buda fell on September 2, 1686. The victorious Christian armies liberated most of Transdanubia and large areas of the Great Hungarian Plan. Transylvania was liberated in the years following. The treaty with the Sultan was at Karlóca in January 26, 1699.

The Emperor, Leopold I, not Hungary, was the victor for retreating Turks. He quickly called a meeting of Hungarian parliament at Pozsony in October 1687 where he extracted a law declaring the hereditary right of the House of Habsburg to the Hungarian crown and also a renunciation of the right of resistance enshrined in the Golden Bull of 1222. Leopold's nine year old son, Joseph I, was then crowned with the Holy Crown amidst much jubilation.[36]

THE RÁKÓCZI INSURRECTION

In 1703, this provoked another rebellion, led by the young Ferenc Rákóczi. Leopold I died in 1705 and was succeeded by his son, Joseph I (1705-1711). Under pressure from the British and the Dutch, Joseph I commenced peace negotiations with Ferenc Rákoczi in Nagyszombat in 1706, but was only prepared to make minor concessions to the Hungarians. Joseph I refused to accept the independence of Transylvania. Therefore, the Rákóczi insurrection developed into a bitter and protracted struggle.

After eight years of indecisive and fruitless fighting, peace was established by the Treaty of Szatmár (April 30, 1711).[37]

After this, Rákóczi went into exile. For a while, he remained in Poland, then with a few of his followers retired to Rodosto on the shore of the Marmoa Sea. There Rákóczi spent the rest of his days on a small pension from the Sultan until he died on Good Friday of 1735.[38]

THE PRAGMATICA SANCTIO

The new king, Charles III (1711-1740) genuinely wanted peace with Hungary, and the worst abuses were now ended.

His chief concern was simply to secure the acceptance in Hungary of the Pragmatic Sanction, the imperial decree by which his daughter, Maria Theresa should inherit his dominions. After the Parliament accepted the Pragmatic Sanction in 1723, Charles III convoked it only once again.[39]

MARIA THERESA

After Charles III's death his elder daughter, Maria Theresa (1740-1780) was only 23 years old at the time of her ascension to the throne. In the first years of her rule, she did not "benefit" much from her royal position. As all Europe watched with interest, the rivals of the Habsburgs did not lose much time in seeking advantage over this "weak woman".

Maria Theresa became embroiled in a life and death struggle for the empire inherited from her father. Bavaria, Saxony, France, Poland and Prussia all wanted a share in the vast possessions of the Habsburgs.[40]

It was under these circumstances that Maria Theresa made a personal appeal to the Hungarian parliament which had been in

session since May 1741. On September 11, she appeared there and pleaded in tears for their help, appealing to the ancient courage and loyalty of Hungarians. The Parliament was deeply moved and in a famous scene characteristic of Hungarian chivalry, pledged their life and blood ("Vitam et sanquinem") to their sovereign.

Hungarians made a significant military contribution to Maria Theresa and saved her throne and possessions. She was genuinely grateful to Hungarians for coming to her aid and manifested her affection towards them in many ways during her reign.

She took a Hungarian tutor for her sons and made them learn Hungarian. In 1760, she founded the Hungarian Nobel Guard, a personal bodyguard consisting of young nobles. In 1776, she reannexed the Port of Fiume on the Adriatic coast to the Hungarian crown. But she did not reunite Transylvania with Hungary.

Maria Theresa showed great concern for the welfare of her subjects, especially the common man. She reformed health administration and the poor laws in Hungary and also introduced significant educational reforms (Ratio educationis 1777). She made repeated efforts to improve the lot of the Hungarian "jobbágys".

By nature, Maria Theresa was a kind and generous person but first of all, she was a Habsburg and a product of her age. She was an absolute monarch and head of the Habsburg Empire.

THE "HATTED KING"

After Maria Theresa's husband, Francis of Lotharingia, the German emperor died, Joseph, her eldest son, became emperor of Germany, and when she died, Joseph II (1780-1790) accepted the Hungarian throne. He was obsessed with the ideals of enlightened absolutism.[41]

He evaded the obligation of a king on coronation to swear to the constitution, by not submitting himself to coronation at all (he had the Holy Crown conveyed to Vienna), he pressed Hungary into his great machine. This action earned him the nickname "the hatted king" among his Hungarian subjects who hated him from the outset.[42]

In accordance with his enlightened ideals, Joseph II issued a decree in 1781 introducing complete religious tolerance in his

realms. He granted freedom of religion to all his subjects and gave Protestants an equal right to all public offices. But he placed the Catholic Church under state control.

LEOPOLD II AND FRANCIS I

Joseph II's successor was his younger brother, Leopold II (1790-1792) who inherited an empire in a state of collapse.[43]

He obliged to restore the ancient constitution and to swear to treat Hungary as a wholly independent kingdom, to be ruled only in accordance with its own laws and customs. When Leopold II died, with tragic suddenness, his young son, Francis I (1792-1835) at first made the motions of conforming with his coronation oath, but he soon slipped back into the old ways.[44]

THE MARTINOVICS CONSPIRACY

Therefore, a conspiracy was born led by a former Franciscan turned freemason, Ignace Martinovics. His aim was to depose the dynasty and establish a republic in Hungary, based on liberal principles. By the time he was discovered in 1794. His movement had about 80 members, mainly intellectuals and young noblemen. In due course, 27 of these were duly tried by Hungarian judicial process and sentenced to death.

After the Martinovics conspiracy, Francis I turned increasingly to police state methods. He introduced strict censorship, banned freemasonry and all other secret societies.

THE RENEWAL OF LANGUAGE

In the meantime, the Hungarian literature underwent an energetic rebirth and this brought with it increasing public awareness of the importance of the Hungarian language. Led by Francis Kazinczy who was released from prison after seven years, a strong linguistic movement called "nyelvújítás" (renewal of language) developed among poets and writers who deliberately cleansed the Hungarian language from all foreign influences.

This revival gave an impetus to cultural development in general, and under the patronage of a small number of enlightened Hungarian aristocrats, important institutions of learning were founded. Foremost among these was the establishment of a National Museum by Count Francis Széchenyi in 1807 and the

founding of the Ludovika Academy for the training of Hungarian officers in 1808, both of which received the approval of Parliament.

From 1812, Francis I did not call the Parliament together for 13 years, and governed Hungary entirely by royal decrees, relying even more on police state methods to keep the country under control. He also commissioned his Minister of State, Prince Metternich to prepare a new constitution for Hungary, and although this was never done, the Hungarian constitution was in fact suspended until 1825.

In 1825, the situation was very explosive, then Metternich advised Francis I to call the Hungarian parliament together again in Pozsony. As soon as Parliament opened, the infuriated nobles went on the attack. They demanded an end to censorship, complete freedom of press and the introduction of Hungarian as the official language of Hungary. This session of Parliament lasted until 1827 and dealt with many proposals for constitutional, social and economic reform.

COUNT STEPHEN SZÉCHENYI

It was at the 1825 Parliament that Count Stephen Széchenyi, son of the founder of the National Museum, first entered public affairs. He delivered his maiden speech to the Upper House in Hungarian and proposed the foundation of a Hungarian Academy, and offered one year's full income of his estates, amounting to 60,000 florins, in support of this project. His example inspired other aristocrats and the Hungarian Academy of Science (Magyar Tudományos Akadémia) was established within one hour.

For the next two decades, Széchenyi became the driving force of economic and social development in Hungary (National Casino, Steam Shipping, the Iron Gate, Permanent bridge between Buda and Pest, Regulation of the Tisza, etc.). His reform programs were published in his books "Hitel" (Credit - 1830), "Világ" (World - 1831) and "Stádium" (1833). He concluded his first great work with these words, "I believe firmly that Hungary was not but will be."

In 1832, Parliament was again convoked and sat for 4 years. Led by the poet Francis Kölcsey and a young lawyer from Zala, Francis Deák, the reform party demanded significant improvements in the status of "jobbágys". It was at the 1832/36

Parliament that a talented young advocate, Louis Kossuth, made his first public appearance.

THE FEEBLE-MINDED KING

In 1835, Francis I died and was succeeded by his feeble-minded eldest son, Ferdinand V (1835-1848). Since the new king was mentally defective, the Habsburg Empire was governed by a council of state in his name (Archduke Louis, Metternich, Count Kollowrat).

After the dissolution of Parliament in 1836, this council of state decided to introduce strong-arm methods in Hungary in order to terrorize the adherents of the reform movement into submission. They first picked on Louis Kossuth who, in spite of express prohibition, continued his journalistic activities, had him sentenced to four years gaol.

They next introduced proceedings against Baron Nicholas Wesselényi, for publishing the reports of the Transylvanian parliament in 1834, he was sentenced to three years imprisonment.

At the 1839/40 Parliament, the reform party openly declared its adherence to liberal principles. It demanded complete freedom of speech, abolition of censorship and release of all political prisoners.

After many tumultuous scenes, an amnesty was granted and Parliament got down to legislative reforms. Further steps were also taken for the introduction of Hungarian as the official language.

THE MILITANT JOURNALIST

Louis Kossuth was released from prison and in 1841 he became the editor-in-chief at a newly founded daily newspaper, the "Pesti Hirlap" (Pest Journal). His stirring articles soon established him as the leader of liberalism in Hungary. His ultimate aim was to restore the independence of Hungary.

Széchenyi was deeply concerned that Kossuth's aggressive liberalism would provoke a showdown with the Habsburg Empire and lead to the loss of everything Hungary had achieved.

This progressive introduction of Hungarian as the official language of Hungary led to a great deal of friction with the national minorities (Slovaks, Croats, Germans, Rumanians) in the

country which until now had lived in exemplary peace and understanding with one another.

In November 1847, the Hungarian parliament assembled again in Pozsony. All members agreed that substantial reforms were necessary. On February 22, 1848, the French king, Louis Philip lost his throne. On March 13, there was a revolution in Vienna itself and Metternich was forced to abdicate. On March 14, the young intellectuals and students of Pest rose in open revolt against Austrian oppression.

"ARISE HUNGARIANS"

On March 15, 1848, they held a mass meeting in front of the National Museum where they proclaimed their demands in twelve points, and the great Hungarian poet, Sándor Petőfi recited his fiery poem "Talpra magyar" (Arise Hungarians) which was immediately thereafter printed and distributed in thousands as a mark of defiance of censorship.[45]

March 15, 1848 witnessed not only the bloodless revolution of the Hungarians in Buda-Pest but also the triumphal entry into Vienna of a 250 man Hungarian delegation led by Archduke Stephen and Louis Kossuth.

Ferdinand V received the Hungarian delegation which submitted the demands for sanctioning. On April 11 assented to all demands and a responsible independent Hungarian government was appointed with Count Louis Batthyany as premier.

"DIVIDE AND CONQUER"

Then a clique in the Court, which historians called the "camarilla", began its intrigues to undermine the reform work of the Hungarian Ministry. As a principle they used "divide and conquer"; as a weapon they used the idea of this age: nationalism; and as a tool, the nationalities.

In the fever of reforms and equality, the various ethnic groups were eager to carve out for themselves a piece of Hungary itself. On March 27, 1848, Jellasich as "bán" (governor) of Croatia allied himself with the separatist movement and induced the Croats to seek complete independence from Hungary.

On April 8, 1848, a Serbian delegation asked to secede from Hungary. At the same time, the Rumanians demanded a separate territory. In June, the Czechs and Slovaks wanted the same.

On July 11, 1848, Kossuth delivered a dramatic speech asking 42 million forints in taxes to provide for 200,000 men army. The deputies sprang to their feet to roar their approval, "Megadjuk! Megadjuk!" (We approve! We approve!).

On September 11, the imperial government gave Jellasich his marching orders and the "bán" invaded Hungary. The Hungarian Batthyany government resigned and the Parliament appointed a Home Defence Committee under the chairmanship of Louis Kossuth.

On October 3, the imperial government declared martial law in Hungary. Three days later, another liberal revolt broke out in Vienna. A Hungarian army went to link up with the Austrian revolutionaries but suffered a defeat by Windischgraetz who invaded Hungary.

THE COUNTRY IN FLAMES

The country was truly in flames. In the meantime, Ferdinand V was forced to abdicate on December 2, in favor of his 18 year old nephew, Francis Joseph I (1848-1916).[46]

On January 1, 1849, Kossuth moved to Debrecen, taking the Holy Crown and the bank note press, and Windischgraetz entered Pest without resistance.

The Hungarian commander, Arthur Görgey had used the winter to train and equip his forces and in March 1849, went on the attack. With the help of a Polish general, Joseph Bem, he scored a number of great victories.

On April 14, 1849, the Hungarian parliament in Debrecen declared the independence of Hungary, deposed the House of Habsburg and elected Louis Kossuth as Regent.

The Emperor Francis Joseph I, seeing that his armies were unable to deal with the Hungarians, now sought the assistance of the Czar of Russia, Nicholas I.

In June 1849, a joint Austrian-Russian offensive threw 370,000 men and 1,200 guns against Hungary's 152,000 men armed with only 450 guns. Fighting heroically against both emperors, the Hungarian forces retreated to the plains to make a last stand.

After a number of fatal reverses, Louis Kossuth resigned on August 12, and went into exile. The following day, Arthur Görgey and his remaining army laid down their arms at Világos, before the Russian general, Rüdiger. The cause of Hungarian freedom was lost.

OPPRESSION AND COMPROMISE

"Hungary lies at the feet of Your Majesty", reported Prince Paskievich to the Czar after Világos but it was the ministers of Francis Joseph I who exacted the revenge (Schwarzenberg, Haynau, Bach).

At the instigation of the Austrian premier, Schwarzenberg, Francis Joseph I appointed General Haynau, his plenipotentiary in Hungary, with power to impose the death sentence without prior approval.

Haynau had the Premier Batthyany, 13 Hungarian generals and hundreds of others executed, and sent thousands more into dungeons in Austria.

Schwarzenberg and Bach took over now and placed Hungary under the administration of the Austrian police. The language of public administration and secondary and higher education became German. And Hungary was in every way treated as an occupied province of the Habsburg Empire. Economic and financial expoloitation went hand in hand with political oppression.

In these bleak and depressing years, Hungarians looked for leadership increasingly to Francis Deák. He advised to follow a policy of passive resistance towards the Austrian authorities.[47]

Francis Deák refused to participate in a conspiracy against the dynasty. He brought peace to Hungary, reuniting it with the Habsburg emperor.[48]

With his work and striving, and aided by the beneficial influence of the empress, Elizabeth, a compromise known as the "kiegyezés" was reached between Hungary and Francis Joseph I in February 1867. And on June 8, 1867, Francis Joseph I had himself crowned at Buda as king of Hungary.[49]

The "Compromise" of 1867 restored its territorial integrity to Hungary, and gave it more internal independence than it had enjoyed since 1526. The monarch's powers in internal affairs were strictly limited.

The political consolidation included a general reorganization of the administration. The judicial system was modernized. In 1868, Joseph Eötyös carried through an admirable elementary education act and much headway was afterward made in raising the educational and cultural level of Hungary. There was considerable economic progress in many fields. The attempts of Hungarians to regulate their affairs with the national minorities did not result in an enduring solution.[50]

THE FIRST WORLD WAR

On June 28, 1914, Serbian agents murdered Francis Joseph I's heir, the Archduke Francis Ferdinand and his wife during a visit to Sarajevo, signaling the beginning of the First World War which soon engulfed the whole Europe and extinguished historic Hungary in its flames.

The Hungarian premier, Stephen Tisza, opposed strongly any armed reprisals against Serbia, but an ultimatum was delivered which could only lead to war. On July 28, 1914, the Austro-Hungarian armies attacked Serbia. Russia now mobilized against the Monarchy to which Germany responded with an ultimatum and within few days, the lines were drawn.

On one side were the central powers (Germany and Austria-Hungary), supported by Turkey and Bulgaria, on the other, Russia, Britain and France as well as most of the rest of Europe. Italy and Rumania were biding their time, preferring to sit on the fence.

On November 21, 1916, Francis Joseph I died. His nephew, Charles IV (1916-1918) succeeded him on the throne. On April 25, 1917, the Social Democrats, certain left-wing members of Parliament led by Count Michael Károlyi and Oscar Jászi's Radicals, formed the Democratic Block. In the same year, the United States of America entered into the war.

On November 7, 1917, a Communist revolution broke out in Russia and the Russian war effort collapsed. In September 1918, also the Bulgarian front collapsed.[51]

On October 19, 1918, Massaryk sent a message to President Wilson who announced his support for Massaryk. On October 26, Massaryk concluded an agreement with a representative of American-Ruthenians, patterned after the Pittsburgh Pact which he had concluded with the American-Slovaks in May 1918, thus laying the foundation for a Czecho-Slovak state. This republic was declared in Prague on October 28. On October 29, 1918, the Zagreb parliament proclaimed Croatia's independence with the idea of eventually forming a Yugoslav kingdom with Serbs and Slovenes.

THE ASTER REVOLT

On October 30, a social revolution, dubbed "Őszirózsás forradalom" (Aster revolt), broke out in Budapest as a result of

years of agitation by leftist elements. Count Michael Károlyi was appointed premier by the King. On November 3, 1918, the war was formally ended for Hungary, and the enemies now closed in for the kill.

As a result of the Russian October Revolution, the Hungarian Republic was proclaimed on November 16, 1918 with Michael Károlyi as president. He appointed Béla Linder as Minister of Defense who dissolved the still intact Hungary army, after the armistice. Béla Linder announced, "I do not want to see soldiers around here any more!"

At the same time, Serbia, Rumania and Czecho-Slovakia launched an undeclared war against Hungary. These petty imperialists attacked Hungary in her defenceless state and occupied constantly increasing areas of Hungarian territory.

President Wilson's protest against such encroachments by the Allies went unheeded. On March 20, 1919, Michael Károlyi resigned and relinquished his power to Béla Kún, a Hungarian Jew from Russia, a disciple of Lenin, whom he had expressly commissioned to bolshevise Hungary and all of Central Europe.[52]

DICTATORSHIP OF THE PROLETARIAT

Béla Kún proclaimed the "Proletárdiktatúra" (Dictatorship of the Proletariat) and a reign of terror now followed in Hungary. The leaders of the clique which came to power were largely supplied by Jews (32 of Béla Kún's 45 Commissars were Jews). An armoured train manned by "Lenin Boys" led by the sadistic Tibor Szamuely and Otto Klein, the bloodthirsty thugs, roamed the countryside, executing thousands of defenceless civilians for alleged "crimes against the people".

Many historians accused the Hungarian people of having anti-semitism. Their antisemitism is not praised but understandable when we consider those atrocious facts which have been done by the many unfaithful and atheistic Jews.

On June 24, 1919, a counter-revolution hastily organized by students of the Military Academy broke out in Budapest but was defeated. Béla Kún now raised a Red Army and went on the attack against the Czechs in northern Hungary where he scored some significant successes. The Rumanian army now entered Budapest and carried out systematic looting of both state and private property, but Béla Kún was no match for the Rumanian army, and on August 1, 1919, fled to Vienna.

ADMIRAL NICHOLAS HORTHY

A counter-revolutionary government had been formed at Arad which subsequently moved to French-occupied territory at Szeged where Admiral Nicholas Horthy, former commander-in-chief of the Austro-Hungarian Navy, had organized a small national army. With the encouragement of the Allies who feared a return of the Communists, Horthy led his force to Transdanubia and on November 16, 1919, entered Budapest, after the 133 days of the terrible, red dictatorship.

On March 1, 1920, Admiral Nicholas Horthy (1920-1944) was elected Regent for ten years (which was later extended for life) with powers similar to those formerly possessed by the king.

THE TREATY OF TRIANON

On June 4, 1920, Hungary was forced to sign at Versailles the Treaty of Trianon. Here Hungary lost nealry 3/4 of its territory and almost 2/3 of its population. On July 19, 1920, Count Paul Teleki was appointed as premier.

The historic Hungarian state which comprised the entire Carpathian Basin and formed a perfect geographic and economic unit, was dismembered into six artificial parts. Nearly three and a half million Hungarians were torn away from Hungary. Almost two million of them went to Rumania, over a million to Czecho-Slovakia and nearly 600,000 to Yugoslavia. Even Austria collected 26,000 of them.[53]

The Treaty of Trianon did nothing to ensure that the rights of minorities under foreign rules would be observed in their new lands. The Treaty also called for the payment of huge reparation which the poverty-striken nation could not possibly pay.[54]

Regent Admiral Nicholas Horthy had a dignified personality and a deep love for his people. He encouraged progressive social reforms. While the social problems of Hungary were also aggravated by the influx of nearly 400,000 Hungarian refugees, public servants, teachers, businessmen and their families, expelled by the Successor States from the occupied territories.

Until these expatriates could be resettled and rehoused which took months and even years, they led a miserable existence, living in old railway carriages and maintaining themselves from the handouts of welfare organizations and communal soup kitchens.

In those times, many thousands emigrated to foreign countries, mainly to the United States of America.

On March 7 and October 29, 1921, Charles IV tried to regain his throne. In the battle of Budaőrs, Hungarians were against the Hungarian army. The Allied powers now stepped the unfortunate rule in and deported him to Madeira, where he died in the following year.

After Paul Teleki's resignation, the Regent appointed Count Stephen Bethlen premier. He directed Hungary ten years long (1921-1931) and applied for membership of the League of Nations. It was granted in September 1922. The League approved the reconstruction loan in March 1924. Hungarian economy continued to make good progress until 1929.

In August 1931, Bethlen resigned and Count Julius Károlyi took over as premier. In September 1932 also Károlyi resigned and the Regent commissioned Julius Gömbös. He was a man of great vision with a deep sense of social justice (96 points). He persuaded Mussolini to support Hungarian revisionism. Gömbös created a Rome-Vienna-Budapest triangle for mutual support (at the time when Hitler was not yet in power).

Julius Gömbös died in October 6, 1936, and was succeeded by Kálmán Darányi, and in May 1938 Béla Imrédy was appointed as premier.

THE "FÜHRER" ADOLF HITLER

In March, 1938, Hitler annexed Austria and preparations for the break-up of Czecho-Slovakia were under way.

The First Vienna Award announced on November 2, 1938, granted Hungary an area of 12,012 sq. km. with a population of 1,048,537. The next spring, when Slovakia became a separate state, Hungary recovered Ruthenia as well. Then Regent Horthy, riding a white horse, to Komárom and then to Kassa, was greeted with indescribable jubilation (March 15-19, 1939). That time, Hungary had a common frontier with Poland.

From February, 1939, Count Paul Teleki was the premier again. In September, after the Poland defeat by Hitler, Hungary gave asylum to nearly 200,000 Polish soldiers and civilians and helped most of them to reach the West through Jugoslavia and Italy.

In June 1940, the Soviet Union annexed the eastern part of Rumania, known as Bessarabia, Teleki now raised Hungary's

claim to Transylvania. In the Second Vienna Award (Agreement) on August 30, 1940, Hungary received 2/5 of Transylvania, an area of 43,104 sq. km. with a population 2,577,260.

In December 1940, Hungary and Jugoslavia signed a pact of "eternal friendship". In April 1941, Hitler decided to attack Jugoslavia and demanded that Hungary scrap the friendship treaty and take part in the invasion. Unwilling to turn Hungary into another Poland, Paul Teleki agreed to the German demand but committed suicide as a mark of protest.

Teleki's successor, László Bárdossy, ordered the Hungarian army to occupy the Vojvodina and other Jugoslav-held areas of historic Hungary. Hungary thus acquired a further territory of 10,619 sq. km. with a population of 1,030,027, on April 11, 1941.

On June 22, 1941, Hitler attacked Russia. After an aerial bombing of Kassa, which was "attributed" to Soviet planes, Bárdossy declared that a state of war existed between the two countries and sent nearly 40,000 expeditionary forces (Second Army) into the Ukraine.

On December 6, 1941, Britain declared war against Hungary. Six days later, under strong German pressure, Hungary declared war on the United States.

The Hungarian force led by Gustáv Jány was at the Don on July 9, 1942 and took the combat service until January 12, 1943, where half of its force was annihilated.

In March 1942, the Regent Horthy replaced Bárdossy with Nicholas Kállay with the express task of extricating Hungary from the war. In November, 1943, the Hungarian parliament proposed the extrication from the war. Soon after this, Hungary was designated as a Soviet occupation zone at the Teheran conference held by Roosevelt, Stalin and Churchill.

When Hitler was informed about the Hungarian's extrication, on March 17, 1944, he summoned Horthy to his headquarters at Berchtesgnaden and presented him with an ultimatum: Hungary should either make an all-out contribution to the war under close German supervision or the country would be occupied by the Germany army. The Regent broke off the discussion indignantly and headed for home. He was, however, held up at the border and in the meantime, large units of the Wehrmacht moved into Hungary and took control of the country on March 19, 1944.

THE GERMAN OCCUPATION

On March 20, 1944, the Regent appointed Döme Sztójay, former Hungarian ambassador in Berlin, as premier. In the meantime, the war was going badly for Germany, and Soviet forces were approaching Hungary's eastern frontier.

In April 4, 1944, the Allied powers began to bombard the Hungarian cities. In August, when the Soviet army reached Rumania's frontiers, its government suddenly switched sides and joined the Russians against Germans and also declared war on Hungary.

In a final desperate attempt to save Hungary, Horthy had gone on the radio to announce an unilateral armistice. The result of this last effort was his immediate capture by the Germans who put a puppet government under Ferenc Szálasi in power.

For the next six months, Szálasi presided over a scene of horror. By Christmas 1944, Budapest was completely encircled by Soviet forces. A large Hungarian contingent commanded by General Hindy and assisted by smaller but substantial German units (nearly 70,000 men), put up a heroic defence for nearly two months. In the meantime, hundreds of thousands of civilians fled to Austria and Bavaria as the Hungarian and German armies withdrew.[55]

THE RUSSIAN OCCUPATION

On April 4, 1945, the last piece of Hungarian soil fell to the invaders. The Russian troops looted the cities and villages freely. They entered practically every habitation. They took away everything they wanted, especially food, clothing, valuables and wrist-watches. They used magnetic mine detectors in search of gold, silver and other metals. In many cases, after looting, the homes were also set on fire, causing a vast total loss.

Rape caused the greatest suffering. Violations were so general — from the age of 10 up to 70 years — that few women in Hungary escaped this fate. Acts of incredible brutality have been registered. Many women preferred to commit suicide in order to escape monstrosities. Misery was increased by the sad fact that many of the Russian soldiers were ill with syphilis and medicines in Hungary were completely lacking. Men have been beaten up by Russian women serving in the Red army or in the Russian police force, for not having submitted themselves to their wishes.

The fate of the peasant population differed little, especially, where Red soldiers found stores of wine. Once drunken, nothing was sacred to them. They raped halfgrown girls and screaming grandmothers. They robbed the peasants of their animals and stole everything they could carry.

But the most tragic losses were the hundreds of thousands of men and boys whom the Soviet army seized for deportation to Russia. "Malinka robot" (a little work) was the slogan with which the male population was taken to Siberia, which became for most a land of no return. Most of the families were in mourning. There were nearly 40,000 deceased and 250,000 civilians were deported.

UNDER THE RÁKOSI'S LEADERSHIP

After the Russian military conquest of Hungary, under the leadership of Mátyás Rákosi, a group of Moscovite Hungarians (Ernő Gerő, Zoltán Vas, Imre Nagy, László Rajk) proceeded to bolshevise Hungary under the immediate direction of the Kremlin.[56]

On December 23, 1944, the Russian High Command appointed a provisional government in Debrecen. It was headed by General Béla Miklós and was composed of representatives of four officially approved political parties: the Communists, the Social Democrats, the Smallholders and the National Peasant Party. Of these, greatest power was wielded by the Communists who enjoyed the backing of the Soviet authorities.

On January 20, 1945, the provisional government signed an armistice with the Allies under which Hungarian civil authorities were obliged to withdraw to the Trianon frontiers.

On November 4, 1945, general elections were held which only candidates of the government parties were allowed to contest. The Smallholders Party won nearly 60% of the votes.

The party thus would have been able to assume government in its own right but this was vetoed by the Soviet High Command. On the direction of Marchall Voroshilov, the former coalition was maintained, with Zoltán Tildy as President of the Republic and Ferenc Nagy as premier. Msgr. Béla Varga was the President of the Parliament. The most important ministries went to the Communists, including the Ministry of Interior which controlled the police.

On February 10, 1947, a formal peace treaty was in Paris which formalized re-establishment of the Trianon frontiers and

gave Czecho-Slovakia some further area. In May 1947, Ferenc Nagy went to Switzerland, tendered his resignation, and remained in exile.

A new government was now formed under the "progressive" Smallholder, Lajos Dinnyés, but effective power was in the hands of the Communists.

On August 31, 1947, new elections were held which were accompanied by many abuses on the part of the Communists, the Smallholders only gained 14.6% of the votes. The Communists were now openly dominating and they soon turned against the remaning members of the coalition.

In June 1948, Rákosi accused the Social Democrat leadership as "fascists" and had most of them arrested or driven into exile. Rákosi was now reigning supreme.[57]

CARDINAL MINDSZENTY — SYMBOL OF RESISTANCE

Only one bastion still stood, battered but unconquered: the Roman Catholic Church, under the leadership of Cardinal Joseph Mindszenty. As Mindszenty had resisted the Nazis during the war, and been imprisoned for it, so he now became the symbol of resistance against Soviet tyranny. He became the only effective opposition to the oppressors.[58]

Rákosi realized this and now moved to liquidate the Church. His first step was to nationalize and expropriate all religious schools. Having achieved this, he set the political police on the priests, arresting many of them, and whipped up a vicious propaganda campaign against Cardinal Mindszenty himself.

Finally, the Cardinal was arrested by the political police (AVO) on December 26, 1948 and after great physical cruelties and much humiliation, put before a people's court in February 1949 and sentenced to life imprisonment.

Rákosi held a farcial new "election" on May 15, 1949, at which people could only vote for a single list comprising the Communists Party and their nominees. Hungary was now openly a Communist dictatorship. A new constitution confirming this was adopted on August 20, 1949.

THE POLICE TERROR

Not satisfied with this, Rákosi was determined to get rid of all rivals within his own party. Accusing the non-Moscovites of

"Titoism", he had their leaders rounded up and tried by the people's courts, including the former Minister of Interior, László Rajk, who was hanged on October 15, 1949. Several others were put to death and hundreds imprisoned for long terms.[59]

In 1951, in the City Park (Városliget) of Budapest, a Roman Catholic church, the beautiful Regnum Marianum, was demolished to make way for a colossal statue of Stalin.

The Hungarian army received Soviet style uniforms with the Red Star as common emblem. Rákosi's regime was characterized by police terror: the dreaded "midnight knocks" on the doors of terrified victims; the forced collectivization of agriculture; and the naturalization of practically the entire economy.

In the same, 1951 year, János Kádár was arrested with his "gang" and taken to 60 Andrássy Street, the dreaded headquarters of the secret police, where he was subjected to torture for "complicity with László Rajk". In August 1952, Rákosi assumed the office of premier.

IN THE CLAWS OF STALINISM

In parallel with the political reign of terror, the Hungarian economy was completely subordinated to Soviet interests.

The factories worked for Russian consumption and the famous uranium mines in Pécs became Soviet property and were put under guard by the Red Army. The special feature of the exploitation of the workers was so-called voluntary contribution (work without wages).[60]

A Three-year plan introduced in August 1947, was followed by the Five-year plans for the enforced industrialization of Hungary, with an emphasis on heavy industry. The collectivization of farmers was now finalized. The Christian churches were placed under the control of a State Office for Religion. Religious instruction of the young was rendered practically impossible and the work of parish priests and lower clergy hindered in every way.[61]

THE MILDER POLICY

The death of Stalin in 1953 and the fall of Beria in Moscow finally put an end to Rákosi's totalitarian rule. On orders from Moscow, he turned over the premiership to Imre Nagy, remaining first secretary of the Party.

Imre Nagy formulated a milder policy, advocating "Hungarian socialism". The terror decreased, political internees and many prisoners were released, more than 50% of the peasants were allowed to leave the "kolkhozes" (collective farms) and production of consumer goods increased.[62]

In April 1955, Imre Nagy was dismissed from office and expelled from the party. Rákosi reinstated, put Hungary back on its previous course but was dismissed again in July 1956, this time from all his offices and in disgrace.

The new man in charge was Ernő Gerő who promptly announced that there would be no concession on matters of principles to Imre Nagy and his group.

THE "VOLCANO" ERUPTS

The relaxation of pressure under Imre Nagy and the Polish challenge to the Soviet Union in the spring and summer of 1956, emboldened Hungarians. On October 23, 1956, students in Budapest staged a great procession. People flocked into the streets to join them. This developed into an all-out national uprising in which they systematically demolished the Communist regime and set up a free and democratic government with Imre Nagy as premier.

Ernő Gerő answered with an unwise and truculent speech, and police fired into the crowds. The shots turned a peaceful demonstration into a revolutionary one. The Hungarian and Soviet army's members joined the revolutionaries, and army depots and munitions factories handed out arms.

Outside of Budapest local councils sprang up in every center. The peasants reoccupied their confiscated fields. The Communist bureaucracy melted away. Prison doors were opened. The members of the AVO fled if they could. A cheering crowd escorted Cardinal Mindszenty and the Soviet troops had withdrawn.

On November 1, 1956, Imre Ngy announced Hungary's withdrawal from the Warsaw Pact (to which it had adhered since 1955) and asked the United Nations to recognize Hungary as a natural state, under the joint protection of the Great Powers.[63]

But the United Nations were preoccupied with an international crisis involving the Suez Canal and offered Hungary no more than a token gesture of support. At the same time, the United States and other western powers made it clear to the

Soviet Union that they still considered Hungary as part of the Soviet sphere and would not intervene.

Encouraged by this, the new Soviet dictator, Nikita Khruschhev, ordered the Red army to invade Hungary and on November 4, 1956, five thousand Russian tanks and huge infantry forces went on the attack. The unequal struggle lasted several weeks but eventually the Hungarian freedom fighters were subdued. Even after the fighting had ceased, a general strike by workers continued and it was only at the end of the year that a semblance of "order" was restored.

JÁNOS KÁDÁR THE RUSSIAN COLLABORATOR

The Soviet authorities, especially Andropov, the ambassador in Budapest, now appointed János Kádár, a former "national Communist" who had been imprisoned under Rákosi and had actually joined the revolutionaries on October 24, turned Russian collaborator, as premier of Hungary and first secretary of the Hungarian Communist Party.

Kádár was entrusted with the re-sovietization of Hungary with the active support of the Red army. He set up special courts to deal swiftly with the freedom fighters (who he termed "counter-revolutionaries") and at least 2,000 young Hungarians, many of them mere teenagers, were executed and over 20,000 persons were imprisoned, including prominent writers and intellectuals.

Imre Nagy who sought refuge at the Jugoslav Embassy, had been abducted to Rumania. After a secret trial, he, Maleter and a few close associates were executed in 1958. Many lesser figures were seized and transported to the Soviet Union, some never to return. More than 100,000 refugees escaped to the West.[64]

In the first uncertain weeks of his regime, János Kádár made many promises, which remained only promises. Kádár and his Moscow principals were anxious to avoid another uprising and they therefore decided on a new approach to the Hungarian problem.

Hungary was to be turned into a "shopwindow" for the Communist bloc, a "cheerful barrack" in the Soviet block, where the natural attributes and charm of the people were enlisted in presenting a favorable view of "Socialism" to the world.

From the end of 1961 onwards, therefore, Kádár began to develop a benevolent appearance of his regime, declaring that

"who is not against us, is with us", and introduced a number of measures designed to lessen political oppression and to give Hungarians some breathing space.

On March 22, 1963, Kádár declared an amnesty for most political prisoners and subsequently also granted immunity from prosecution to Hungarians who had left Hungary in the wake of the 1956 revolution.

In 1964, János Kádár reached an agreement with the Vatican which resulted in the appointment of new Catholic bishops to a number of vacant sees but also strengthened state control over the affairs of the Church.

WAITING FOR THE DAWN

As a corollary to this general policy of liberalization, a new system of planned economy, called "New Economic Mechanism", was introduced on January 1, 1968, which gave managers of state enterprises a great deal of freedom.

Whenever any international issue arose, Kádár always supported Moscow's policy with meticulous orthodoxy. Therefore, he sent forces into Czecho-Slovakia in 1968 (Spring of Prague).[65]

For the people of Hungary, the cost of the long years of Soviet domination has been extremely high. From the nation deeply committed to Christian ideals and morality, Hungarians have been turned into a race of agnostics and non-believers. The historical consciousness and national pride of Hungarian youth have been systematically eradicated. Driven by the hopelessness of their own situation, many young and old choose suicide.

Over five million or more unborn children have been aborted, lowering the birthrate to catastrophic levels and reducing Hungarians to an aging and morbund nation.

But the wheels of history are turning relentlessly. And whilst the peoples of the world look forward to the future with trepidation, Hungarians everywhere are waiting for the end of the night. They are waiting for the national dawn.[66]

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SHORT HISTORY OF HUNGARY

by

Fr. Paul Bolváry

Dear Reader,

You are holding in your hands a Short History of a country 1100 years old. You will read the destiny of a land which once was counted among the European Great Powers. Hungary once was greater than England or France.

Because of its location, the bastion of the West and its people failed in defending its own freedom and the freedom of the West.

In the history of mankind, there was no other nation who fought so many battles and so much blood shedding for their freedom as the Hungarians.

It is sad that their wars of independence were plotted on Szatmár (1711); Világos (1849) and Budapest (1945-1956) where the blood of soldiers, students, teenagers and workers steeped the streets.

You will know the history of this country which gave many famous scientists, musicians and artists to the cultural world, especially to the United States of America. The following is only a small listing of some of these great scientists and their works:

Matches (János Irinyi 1817-1895); the Telephone (Tivadar Puskás 1844-1893); the Non-Euclidean Geometry (János Bólyai 1802-1860); Television (Mihály Dénes 1894-1953); the Computer (János Neuman 1903-1957); the Atomic Bomb (Leó Szilárd, Edward Teller, Eugene Wigner); Vitamin C (Albert Szentgyörgyi 1937); the Helicopter (Oscar Asbóth 1881-1960); Electromotor (Ányos Jedlik 1800-1895); Radar-Astronomy (Zoltán Bay 1960).

All are hallmarks of our modern existence and seemingly unrelated, except that all were invented, or brought to light by Hungarians.

After many historical battles and suffering, Hungary is still existing. This fact can give us a deep hope for as István Széchenyi, the greatest Hungarian predicted,
„HUNGARY WAS NOT, BUT WILL BE!"