

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.

Ottokar **Prohaszka**, bishop of Szekesfehervar, 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 Pal 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 RAKOCZI

Ferenc Rakoczi 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 Zrinyi*, wife of the Transylvanian Prince *Ferenc Rakoczi I*, was the daughter of a martyr for Hungary's freedom. His father was *Ferenc Rakoczi I*, the descendant of Transylvania's princes and fighters for the nation's freedom. Rakoczi's stepfather; *Irrtre Thokoly*, was the last great freedom fighter of the 17th century. After the defeat of Thokoly, Ilona Zrinyi held the family fortress, Munkacs 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”).



Prince Ferenc Rákóczi II.

The war lasted eight years. Rakoczi 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.

Rakoczi 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. Rakoczi and his close friends refused the amnesty offered by the treaty and fled to Poland, then to France and finally to Turkey. Here Rakoczi 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.

Rakoczi'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" had proven that the Hungarian nation would not tolerate tyranny. Rakoczi's name has lived since as his nation's inspiration in victory, consolation in defeat and hope under oppression.

Jozsef (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.

Sandor Korosi 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.

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 Bela 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 Bela'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 Bela and concentrated their best cavalry against him and his escort. While the Palatin and the bodyguard died to a man, King Bela 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.

Bela 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 BELA'S PEACEFUL EMPIRE

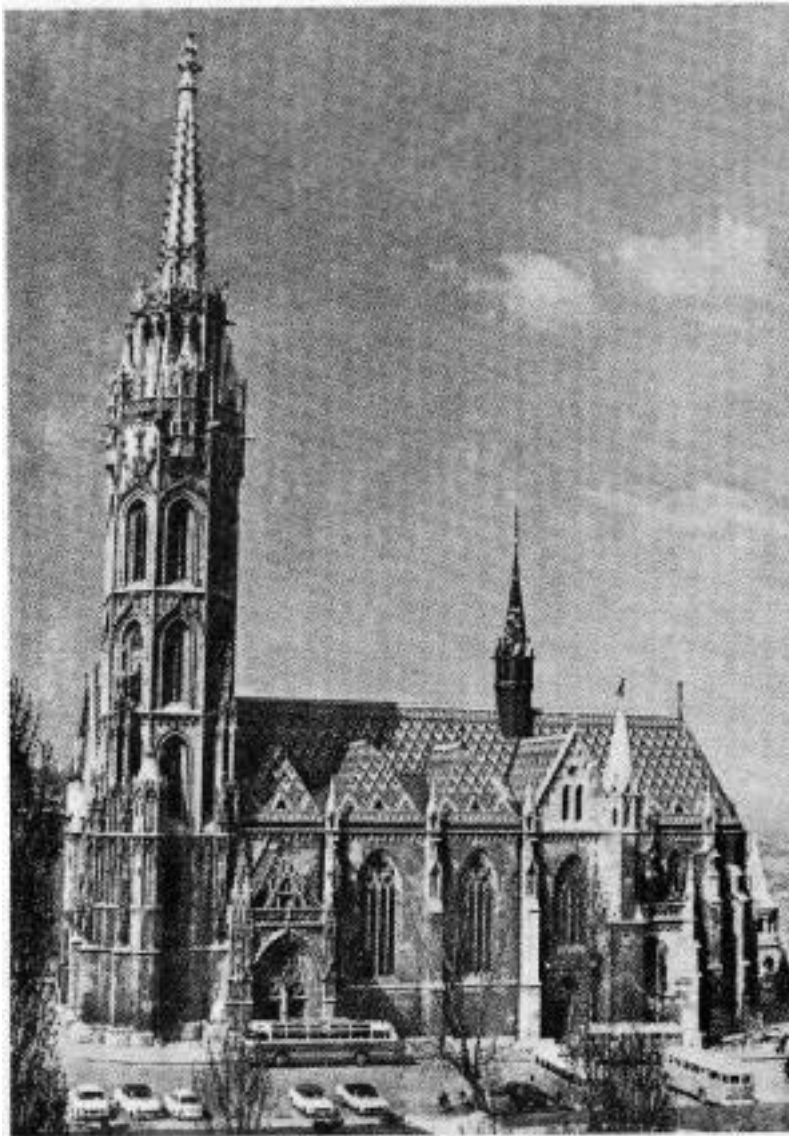
King Bela III died on the 23rd of April, 1196.

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.

Bela 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 Laszlo (Ladislas). Manuel intended to make his nephew his heir, but the wise Bela renounced the shaky throne of the declining empire and accepted the crown of his native country, Hungary, in 1172.

Bela's wife was a princess of the Capet Dynasty of France and Bela 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

Being on good terms with everybody, Bela 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.



Our Lady Cathedral, Buda

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.

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

THE WIZARD FOR ALL SEASONS

The Hungarian scientist and universal genius, Todor Karman was born on the 26th of April, 1881 in Budapest.

His father was professor of Education at the Budapest University. Todor 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 instrumental 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 Gottingen. 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 aerodynamics 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 aerodynamics 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 Coulee. 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 Nadasdy, Peter Zrinyi and Ferenc Frangepan were executed in Austria. They were the leaders of the so-called "*Wesselenyi 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) Wesselenyi 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. Wesselenyi 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 Rakoczi, the future leader of Hungary's greatest freedom struggle.