

May

Stephen (Istvan) Batori was crowned King of Poland on the 1st of May, 1576 in Cracow.

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

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

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

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

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

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



FOR GOD, THE CHURCH AND FOR HUNGARY

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

Cardinal Mindszenty is known all over the world for his courageous stand against Communist oppression in Hungary. Throughout his long ecclesiastical career, as a parish priest, bishop, Archbishop of Esztergom and head of the Hungarian Catholic Church he was guided by the highest moral principles of the devout priest and by the deepest concern for the social, moral and spiritual wellbeing of his fellow-

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

General Gyorgy (George) Klapka died on the 17th of May, 1892 in Budapest. He was a professional officer in the Imperial Army. When the Freedom War broke out, he volunteered for the Hungarian National Army. In 1849 he became a general in command of a division - at the age of 29. After a short period as

Minister of War, he commanded the army corps based on the fortress of Komarom. From this base he conducted several successful campaigns against the Austrians. After the capitulation of the rest of the Hungarian National Army (August, 1849), Klapka defended Komarom brilliantly for almost two months. He finally surrendered on the 4th of October on honourable terms.

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



"LONG LIVE GORGEY!"

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

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



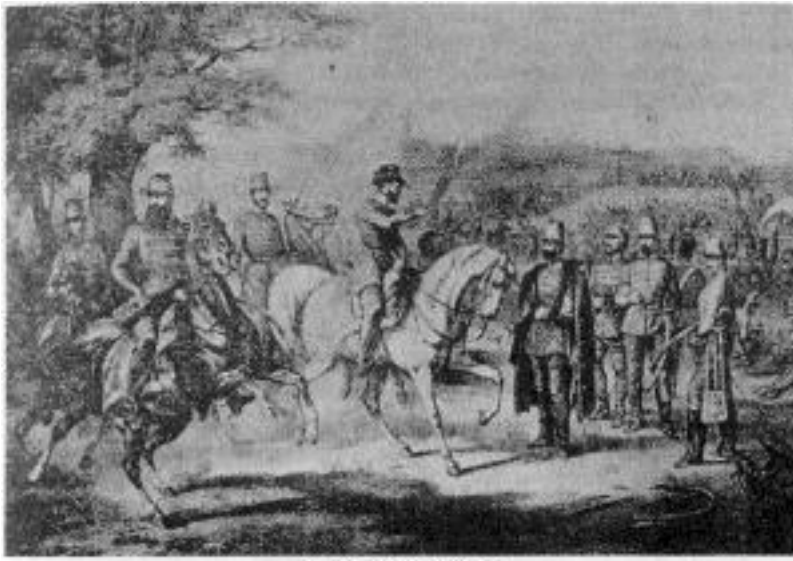
General Arthur Görgey

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

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

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

his young army out-maneuvred and defeated the veteran Austrians, who were far superior in numbers and equipment. By the end of May 1849 almost all of Hungary was freed from the Austrians.



Honvéd army camp

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

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

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

shared the hardships of the camp life with the common soldier.

As a strategist, he possessed the ability to out-manoeuvre and to defeat superior enemy forces, the special talent of Rommel or Mannerheim. His leadership and his method of training his volunteers can be likened to the remarkable achievement of George Washington. His logical, scholarly mind rejected the emotional optimism of Kossuth and the other political leaders of the Freedom War. This sober realism and the fact that Gorgey never hesitated to express his opinion, led to many clashes between Kossuth and Gorgey (the two leaders of the nation). On several occasions Kossuth relieved Gorgey of his command - only to reappoint him again at the request of the army which admired the young general.

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

Shortly before his death, in 1916, the German field-marshal Mackensen happened to pass through Budapest. He paid a visit to the respected old Hungarian general, Gorgey, and offered to show him the latest German weapons. Gorgey watched the German rapid-firing guns and machine guns in silence, then turned to the Hungarian Minister of Defence at his side and whispered with tears in his eyes: "If only I'd had some of these in 1849..."

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

A HUNGARIAN KING IN AFRICA

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

THE MAGYAR MONARCH OF MADAGASCAR

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

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

The girl, *Afanasia*, was the daughter of the fort's Russian commander, who had been killed during the short battle preceding the escape. The man was count Aladar Maurice Benyovszky a Hungarian hussar-officer, the leader of the small group of refugees, who had killed Afanasia's father, during the battle.

Maurice (or Mor in Hungarian) Benyovszky was the son of a Hungarian landowner. He was *born in 1741*. At the age of ten he was already a hussar at the side of his father, who was a general in Maria

Theresa's Hungariari cavalry. After his father's death, young Maurice quarrelled with his stepbrothers. As he used his hussar's sword too freely, he had to flee to his relatives in Poland.

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

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

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

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

Thanks to his exceptional talents, Benyovszky soon became the leader of the exiled community of Borsereck, on the coast of the Kamchatka Peninsula. At the age of 29 he had had ample experience as a military leader, sailor, linguist, diplomat and philosopher, whilst his skill at hunting and chess provided him with an exceptional income in this wintry climate where the range of hobbies was rather limited.

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

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

Benyovszky set a north-easterly course, towards the Arctic Sea, hoping to find the fabled northern passage between the Pacific and the Atlantic Oceans. They saw and charted many islands in the Arctic which had never been seen by a European and eventually reached Alaska. Not being able to proceed to

the north, they turned south into the warm Pacific Ocean, which they soon found too warm and too pacific. Threatened by thirst and starvation some of the refugees started plotting mutiny, which Benyovszky discovered. He treated the culprits leniently, a mistake he was to regret later.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Benyovszky accepted the honour and swore to defend his island against all would-be conquerors. He set up and trained a native army, formed a federal government of the chiefs and kings, abolished slavery and cruel punishments and set up a judicial system which included a unique feature: a separate

Court established to deal with matters concerning women. At the suggestion of the natives, Benyovszky's wife was made chief justice of the Court. He also introduced the *Latin script with Hungarian spelling*. It seemed that he had established his Utopia where justice and equality were maintained by a strong but benevolent ruler: Plato's Republic and King Matthias' Hungary combined.

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

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

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

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

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