

28 "NEW MELODIES OF NEWER YEARS..."

(Hungarian literature during the first decades of the XXth century)

Endre (Andrew) Ady

Born of a Protestant family of ancient nobility in northern Transylvania (1877), he received a good education and chose the career of a journalist in the eastern Hungarian town of Nagyvarad. Here he met and fell in love with a married woman who became his great love, inspiring muse and tragic destiny, the "Leda" of his sensuous love poems. On Leda's invitation Ady went to Paris, where the modern trends of French art and poetry changed his outlook on life. On his return he settled in Budapest and published "New Verses" (1906). The collection had a shattering effect on the stagnating Hungarian literary life of this complacent era.

The violent attacks of the critics of the "establishment" only enhanced Ady's popularity with the young. He published several collections in the following years, each causing a storm of praise and attack for its prophetic, scolding patriotism, sensuous, sinful longing for love and for the poet's imaginative but obscure symbolism. The excesses of his stormy youth gradually destroyed Ady's health. He broke with Leda and found pure, youthful, true love in a girl much younger than himself whom he married. He was deeply shocked by the Great War, its senseless horrors and its destruction of human values. He died during the tragic month of January, 1919.

Ady created a *symbolic language* of his own to interpret his dynamic message. His exceptionally rich language uses picturesque, half-forgotten archaic words, racy folk-dialect, city slang and colourful composite words of his own creation. Frequently a sequence of allegoric images becomes the vehicle for his thoughts. This symbolism may take the form of gothic image of his own captive soul in "an old, fearful castle" where "the lone, forsaken rooms ring hollow" — the prison of his frustrations — from where "rarely at the hour of midnight. . . my large eyes begin to flare" ("The White Lady"). He often creates symmetrical structures of opposites or choices as in the prophetic appeal to his nation presented in the form of a paraphrase of an old Magyar folk song: "Peacock" where he challenges his somnolent nation to accept the "new Magyar miracles...new flames, new faith..." The nation must accept the demands of the new times because "either the Magyar words — shall have new senses, or Magyar life will stay sad. . ." The very titles of his collections carry symbolic messages: "Blood and Gold", "In Elijah's Chariot", "Craving for Affection", "This fleeing Life", "In Death's Foreranks".

The choice of *themes* often displays challenging contrasts. Life and death, the struggle between vitality and melancholy, often find a fatalistic harmony in the same poem with the thought of death almost welcome — in the midst of life's joys. The hauntingly beautiful "Autumn in Paris" presents his death-wish in the association of autumn and death". . . songs within my spirit burned — I knew for death they yearned . . . then Autumn whispered something from behind. . ." It would be interesting to compare Ady's

mystic death-wish with Petofi's classic vision in his "End of September" (cf. Chapter 7). Another moving picture of fatalistic resignation uses the tone of the folk-tale in its sombre imagery: "The Horses of Death".

Love is a lethal passion: Ady's thirst for love is akin to his resigned acceptance of death, which invades his most sensuous desires; "this kiss consumed we should peacefully — die without sorrow. . . ." he says in "Half-kissed Kiss" The poet is "Death's Kinsman", his kiss is the kiss of parting: "Her lips — to kiss I love who goes — not returning. . ." The break with his "femme fatale", Leda, is motivated by his deep longing for pure, chaste, spiritual love: he "wants to be loved by somebody. . . and to be somebody's" ("Craving for affection"). In the calm, sad moments of regret the memories of his childhood return: "A Familiar Lad" — his childhood innocence — mourns his approaching death.

Ady was deeply concerned with the tragic fate of his *Magyar nation*. He saw the faults of the present and he despaired of the nation's future. He raised his scolding, prophetic words against his people, like an angry parent, called them his "detestable, lovable nation" His is the tragic mission of the tormented Messiah, the task of awakening his nation with "new melodies of newer years. The mystic attraction of the Hungarian soil is expressed in the moving picture of the "Outcast Stone" (cf. Chapter 7). As the apocalyptic destruction of the War progresses, he despairs for his nation in the face of that monster devouring the youth of the Magyar people. His visionary poem, "Remembrance," written on the day the War broke out, conjures his fearful vision of War with the imagery of a folk-ballad.

Ady's tormented heart repeatedly found peace in his never-failing refuge, *God's love*. He remained indeed throughout his sinful, cursing, prophetic career a God-seeking, repenting Christian psalmist echoing David's eternal human cry from the depths of his misery and passion. He is his nation's prophet, and the prophet's destiny is loneliness 'as his mission is "sad, between Heaven and earth to wander..." He knows that when he is deserted by humans he can find refuge and peace in the Lord, because He "took me in His embrace." Like the ancient poet of his Bible, he found God the greatest consolation and satisfaction. He faces death calmly because: "I've found Him and have clasped Him in my arms, in death we'll be united, never to part..."

Ady's poetry can only be understood if approached with respect and compassion.

The poets of the "Nyugat" circle

Ady's appearance on the literary scene heralded the beginning of a new era, in Hungarian literature. His courage inspired a number of poets, essayists and critics rallied around the literary review "Nyugat" ("The West"). Though the writers of this group showed some degree of social concern,, their basic philosophy was that of universal humanism. This explains also their interest in foreign literature, especially French contemporary poetry and philosophy.

Milaly Babits (1883-1941), classic poet, aesthete, novelist and critic was a virtuoso of the language and a brilliant interpreter of foreign literature: Latin and western. He was a defender of pure poetry: his goal was aesthetic self-expression without any utilitarian or ideological aspects. The best known of his *novels and novelettes* are: "Stork Calif", a masterly portrait of a split personality, "Pilot Elsa",

an Orwellian satire of a future society engaged in eternal wars, and the "Son of Virgil Timar", an emotional parallel between spiritual love and cynicism.

Babits' many collections of *poetry* reflect his warm humanity and classic taste. Even self-pity takes the form of compassion in "Gypsy Song", where he bemoans his own "exile" from the capital in the symbolic image of the homeless gypsy. His pacifism lacks Ady's bitterness and mirrors the classicist's sorrow for the loss of human values ("They sang. . .") His lofty philosophy resulted in a certain degree of spiritual isolation.

Gyula Juhasz, the poet of deep, tender melancholy, searched in vain for sympathy; even his memories failed to console him.

Arpad Toth, a sensitive impressionist, was a subtle artist of the language and a true interpreter of French poetry. He described the melancholy feelings of the city-poet in exquisite sonnets.

Dezso Kosztolanyi, poet, translator, novelist, critic and essayist, was a charming, witty, optimistic person, an independent and true aesthete. His prose shows an interest in modern psychology. His short stories (many translated into English) describe middle-class city society in colourful, humorous and vigorous style. His poems show his volatile temperament, all shades of light and gloom, vitality and refined decadence. His early farewell to the scene of his youth, "The Trees of Ulloi Ut", is a moving tribute to Budapest. He understands the timeless beauty of married love threatened by the dull routine of the home. The witty "To My Wife" is that rare phenomenon a love poem to the poet's own wife.

His translations opened new horizons: he interpreted subtle Chinese and Japanese poetry, but also modern American poetry.

Attila Jozsef (1905-1937), the son of a deserted mother in a Budapest slum, was the representative of the urban proletariat in modern Hungarian poetry. After his expulsion from the University he joined the illegal Communist Party but was soon expelled from it for his individualistic views. The hardships of his life during the depression affected his mental health and he eventually committed suicide.

His poetry shows flashes of vitality, even humour, but it remains basically pessimistic. His witty, cynic, sad humour is best illustrated in his poem "On My Birthday" mentioned in Chapter 7. Some of his most moving poetry is dedicated to his mother's memory ("Mama") His basic philosophy is characterised by his sincerity and classic realism. His imagery, naturalistic as it may be, impresses with its truth and lucidity, such as the lines where he describes how he feels mental illness approaching: "I feel my eyes jump in and out... when I squint with my whole reality..."

The "Ars Poetica", the basic creed of his art, stresses the role of the intellect in poetry. It is surprising to see this highly emotional, often unruly spirit stress the need of conscientious effort involved in writing poetry. We cannot help remembering Petofi, a kindred spirit who used a similarly classic, realistic, pure language to convey his revolutionary message.

Jozsef's own suffering arouses his passionate approach to his surroundings. The memories of his difficult slum childhood evoke nostalgic tableaux of happier children ("Lullaby"). His deep,

humanistic Christianity is expressed in "The Three Kings", a Magyar Christmas scene, reminiscent of the "Bethlehem plays" of the people.

Though bitter and "an exile" in his own country, Jozsef still felt one with his Magyar nation: "My dear country — take me to your heart — I want to be your faithful soul. . ." be said in his credo which could be his epitaph.

Some novelists of the period

Geza Gardonyi (1863-1922) was born of Catholic peasant parents in Transdanubia. He spent his life teaching as a village teacher. His marriage was tragic and he died a melancholic, lonely man in the northern Hungarian town of Eger.

Gardonyi was successful in many literary genres, but most of all as a novelist. He was a realist, like Mikszath, but his gentle, shy person lacked malice and cynicism. He was also a good psychologist and could search the soul of the child and the peasant with perfection. However, his portraits of women were tinged with bitterness and mysogony — obviously the result of his unfortunate marriage.

His best novel is the "*Invisible Man*" (also translated: "The Slave of the Huns") which displays imagination, genuine historical sense and the ability to characterise young people in love. Set in the age of Attila and told by Zeta, a Greek slave, the novel is a good synthesis of history and romance. The background of historical events up to Attila's death highlights the love story of Zeta and the Hun girl, Eموke. The characters are real and credible, and the aim of the narrative is to search for the real ego of the principal characters — hence the title.

Gardonyi's other historical novels, "The Stars of Eger" (the epic saga of Eger's defence in 1552) and "God's Captives" (the story of Saint Margaret of the Arpads), describe historical events and characters behind romantic plots of gentle youthful love - in the first novel ending in happy marriage, in the second remaining pure and platonic.

Gardonyi's social novels are spoilt by his distrust of women and his aversion to the institution of marriage. His *short stories*, especially those resulting from his long observation of village life, are idyllic, charming and colourful tableaux of peasant life.

He also wrote many plays, revolving around the problems of village life. The best known is "Wine", the story of the peasant who promises to give up drinking but breaks his promise. The near-tragedy is prevented by a timely application of peasant common sense and all ends well.

The work of his sensitive, lonely man has provided immense" enjoyment to countless readers. His choice of historical and rural topics limits his appeal to foreigners, though some of his works are available in excellent translations.

Zsigmond Moricz (1879-1942) was born in eastern Hungary of a poor, Protestant family. His novels, short stories and plays present a compassionate and realistic picture of the misfits of Hungarian society during the first decades of the century: the selfish peasant, the irresponsible gentry, the foolish, frustrated: middle-class woman, the violent outlaw ("betyar") and the greedy village-merchant. He paints a gloomy picture of a decaying society with coarse naturalism, in racy idiomatic Hungarian His view is

limited: he only sees the misery, servility, conceit, greed and lewdness of his world without bothering to reveal the good and promising side of Hungarian society.

"Be Faithful unto Death" shows a different Moricz: this gentle, warm story of a sensitive boy's schooldays has been his most popular work (filmed and adapted to the stage as well as in its original novel form). The historical trilogy, "Transylvania" is a fine analytical study of the XVIIth century with a lively plot and true, realistic portrayal of the leading personalities of the Principality.

Gyula Krudy (1878-1933) was a unique novelist who described hazy, undefined personalities in an impressive, dreamy atmosphere where realities and character delineations disappear, plots become blurred and the present and past are intertwined. His portraits of Budapest middle-class people or country gentry are reminiscent of a surrealist painting. ("The Sindbad cycle", "The Red Mailcoach")

Christian renaissance

Bishop *Ottokar Prohaszka* (1858-1927) who watched the spread of materialism with anxiety, became the inspired voice of the Christian conscience of millenary Hungary. He expounded the principles of modern Catholic social justice in his writings, sermons and lectures; sought out the roots of the spiritual, social and economic problems of his period and pointed to the resources of true Christianity. The mystic depth of his religious writings and the progressive humanism of his social ideas met with mixed response from his contemporaries.

Only after his death did his teachings find their echo among the writers of the short-lived Christian renaissance of the twenties and thirties.

The most popular of the post-war Catholic poets was the gentle humanist, *Laszlo Mecs* (1895-), a priest-poet of Northern Hungary. Unfortunately, the imaginative symbolism and colourful language of his poetry defy translation.

The other Catholic poets and writers (Sandor Sik, Lajos Aprily, Lajos Harsanyi, Bishop Tihamer Toth) and the great protestant Bishop, Laszlo Ravasz were the leaders of a promising Christian literary revival which ended abruptly with the collapse of the old social structure of Hungary in 1945.



Bishop O. Prohászka, (1858-1927)
the voice of Hungary's new Christian conscience.

29. NO WAY OUT

(Hungary's history from the Depression to the end of World War II)

This chapter records some of the events that have shaped the present world. As the documentation of the events and developments described is still incomplete, and the historical perspective is insufficient, we shall only present a chronological record of the main events and introduce the makers of Hungary's recent history, leaving it to the reader to analyse their motives and assess the results of their actions.

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The crisis years

In consequence of the world financial crisis of the 30s, no foreign loans could be raised for the Hungarian economy and some of the existing loans were foreclosed. Banks, businesses and industries collapsed and many farms were ruined because of the 75% fall in the export price of wheat. Unemployment rose causing unrest and demonstrations in the cities.

This was the situation which Bethlen's successor, *count Gyula Karolyi*, faced as Prime Minister (1931-1932). He instituted harsh austerity measures, including a 50% cut in public expenditure (he traveled by bus to his office every day. . .), increased taxation and ordered reductions in salaries and wages. When these restrictions failed to remedy the situation, he resigned.

Horthy appointed the leader of the young radicals in the government party, general *Gyula (Julius) Gombos*, as Prime Minister (1932-1936). Gombos was an ardent nationalist with progressive social ideas. The conservatives in the government advised against radical social reforms and so Gombos and his brilliant Finance Minister, Bela Imredy, concentrated on the economic problems. Some foreign loans, expertly negotiated by Imredy, further cuts in government expenditure and an improve taxation policy set the nation on the road to recovery.

The basis of Gombos' *foreign policy* was revisionism (cf. Chapter 26), which he sought by peaceful means. He turned first to Italy, the country which seemed to show some understanding of Hungary's problems. When he saw that Hitler was endeavouring to effect a revision of the Versailles Treaty, he suggested closer Italian-German co-operation by forming a "Berlin-Rome Axis" (a term invented by Gombos). Later, or seeing the increasing German aggressiveness toward Austria he initiated the Italian-Austrian-Hungarian alliance (R.ome Protocols, 1934) in order to resist German pressure. After the assassination of the Austrian Chancellor, Dolfuss, Gombos realised that nothing could stop the German annexation of Austria and adopted a more Germanophile attitude.

The 1935 election brought victory to his young follower and Gombos was ready to proceed to his ambitious social programmes. He was then struck by a disease and died at the age of 50.



Horthy, who had not been very happy with Gombos' pro-German policies, appointed *Kalman Daranyi* in his place (1936-1938). Daranyi began by steering a middle-of-the-road policy in both internal and external politics and kept a firm control on all extremists of the left and right. It was at this time that the first National Socialists appeared on the Hungarian political scene. They formed various small parties but could not form a united front. The philosopher of "Hungarism", (the Hungarian National Socialist ideology), Ferenc Szalasi, made his debut in politics and was imprisoned several times — a fact, which increased his political charisma and the number of his followers.

Daranyi introduced a much-needed electoral reform bill (with secret and compulsory vote for men and women). After Austria's annexation by Germany, Daranyi launched a massive rearmament programme. In his foreign policy he favoured, by necessity, Germany, Hungary's new, powerful neighbour. Trying to cede to German pressure, Daranyi introduced the First Jewish Law.

Alarmed at his policies, Horthy asked Daranyi to resign.

In the shadow of Germany

Bela Imredy, a devout Catholic, and known to be an Anglophile at that time, seemed the right choice for the post of Prime Minister (1938-1939) in the year of the Eucharistic Congress held in Hungary in connection with the 900th anniversary of Saint Stephen's death.

In August of that year, Hitler invited Horthy and Imredy to Germany. The German leader suggested that Hungary should attack Czechoslovakia, seeing this as an excuse for Germany to step in and crush the country. Horthy and Imredy rejected his proposals. Then Horthy and his Foreign Minister, Kanya, gave Hitler and Ribbentrop some unsolicited advice on their war-mongering policies and the talks broke up in a hostile atmosphere.

At the famous Munich meeting of the four Prime Ministers (29 September, 1938) only Germany's claims against Czechoslovakia were settled. The Hungarian government began negotiations with the Czech government without success. Hungary then appealed to France and Britain, but the two powers suggested that Germany and Italy should mediate. Thus Hungary asked for and accepted the decision of Germany and Italy, given in the so-called *First Vienna Award* (30 October, 1938), which returned to Hungary the Magyar-inhabited southern strip of Slovakia and Ruthenia. The British and French governments acknowledged the territorial changes.

The western powers' reluctance to participate in Central European politics convinced Imredy that the region had been left to the mercy of Hitler's Third Reich. Thus he changed his anti-German attitude. Hungary joined the Anti-Comintern Pact of Germany, Italy and Japan, left the League of Nations and introduced the Second Jewish Law.

Then someone found proof that one of Imredy's ancestors was (probably) Jewish. Faced with this evidence, Imredy resigned.

Horthy turned to his old friend, the former Prime Minister, count *Pal Teleki*, who reluctantly agreed to head the government (1939-1941). In March, 1939, Hungary, simultaneously with the German action against Czechoslovakia, occupied Ruthenia (the eastern-most province of the dismembered Czechoslovakia, formerly a Hungarian district). The Hungarophile Ruthenes were pleased, and so were the Poles, who now had a common border with their friends, the Hungarians.

Before their attack on Poland, the Germans asked for permission to move troops across Hungary. Horthy categorically refused.

The coming of World War II

When the war broke out, Hungary remained non-belligerent but helped the Poles unofficially with volunteers and by admitting about 200,000 refugees (including many Jews).

In the summer of 1940, Hungary suggested negotiations with Rumania with a view to a revision of the frontiers in Transylvania. When Rumania refused to negotiate, Hungary mobilised. Rumania then asked Germany to mediate. Thus Germany and Italy handed down the *Second Vienna Award* (30 August, 1940), which returned to Hungary about 40% of the territory given to Rumania at the Trianon Peace Treaty

In September 1940 Hungary joined the Tri-Partite Pact (Germany-Italy-Japan). Teleki then negotiated a Friendship Treaty with Yugoslavia with a hardly disguised anti-German edge. Yugoslavia was then persuaded to join the Tri-Partite Pact. On the day of the signature there was a coup d'état in Belgrade and the new Yugoslav government repudiated the pact with Germany and accepted a British guarantee instead. Hitler decided at once to punish Yugoslavia and again he suggested that Hungary should attack first. Horthy and Teleki refused the suggestion.

The Hungarian government decided not to interfere in the German-Yugoslav conflict unless Yugoslavia disintegrated or the Magyar minorities were in danger. Teleki sent this information to London, asking for Britain's understanding of Hungary's position. Britain answered by threatening a break of diplomatic relations if Hungary allowed the Germans to cross her territory and said she would declare war if Hungary attacked. In the meantime, German troops began to move against Yugoslavia across Hungary. Teleki, on receiving the British note and the news of the German troop movements, shot himself in protest against Hungary's involvement (3 April, 1941). The circumstances of the German troop movements and of Teleki's death are still unclear.

Involvement

After Teleki's death the Foreign Minister, *Laszlo Bardossy*, was appointed Prime Minister (1941-1942). Germany attacked and overran the Yugoslav defences, and on the 10th of April Croatia declared her independence. Yugoslavia now ceased exist and the Hungarian government sent some troops to the Magyar-populated Bacska district.

When Germany attacked the Soviet Union (22 June, 1941), Hungary declared her intention to remain non-belligerent. A few days later the Hungarian town Kassa was bombed, allegedly by Soviet planes. After some talks with Horthy and the government, Bardossy declared to the Parliament that a *state of war* existed between Hungary and the *Soviet Union*. The circumstances of this declaration are similarly unclear.

A small force — the Mobile Corps — was sent to the Russian front. Britain declared war on Hungary in December 1941. Hungary declared war on the U.S. simultaneously with the other Tri-Partite states. In the spring of 1942 the Germans demanded more substantial help in Russia, hinting that as the Rumanians had sent two armies, Germany might return Northern Transylvania to them. So the Hungarian 2nd Army was sent with 10 divisions for front line service, and a few added divisions for occupation duty.

There had been some partisan activity in the Hungarian occupied Bacska (the Magyar inhabited district of former Yugoslavia). The impetuous Hungarian commander — a pro-German general — took unwarranted, brutal steps to suppress the partisan activity and had many partisans and suspects executed, with the knowledge of the Budapest government. An investigation followed but the general eventually fled to Germany with some of the other officers involved in this so-called “*Ujvidek massacre*”

As the Regent was in his 75th year, the question of succession had to be considered. The Parliament elected the Regent’s son, *Istvan Horthy, as Deputy-Regent*. Upon his election, the Deputy Regent, a reserve officer in the Hungarian air force, joined his unit fighting in Russia. In August 1942, during one of his mission his plane crashed and Istvan Horthy died.

Hungary’s unwilling participation in the war created among many of the nation’s leaders, churchmen, moderate politicians and intellectuals strong anti-German and anti-war feelings, which developed into a powerful *silent resistance*. They sought peaceful and legal ways to extricate Hungary from her ever-increasing commitments on the side of Germany. Tibor Eckhardt, the leader of the largest opposition party (the Smallholders), went to the U.S. in 1941 to prepare a possible government-in-exile should the German pressure become unbearable. Horthy knew about the aims of the group and discreetly supported them.

In the spring of 1942 Horthy appointed *Miklos Kallay* (1942-1944) Prime Minister and entrusted him with the task of extricating Hungary from the war and restoring the country’s independence. Kallay began an astute course of diplomatic balancing acts, pretending to be a pro-German and in the meantime preparing the way to regain Hungary’s freedom of action. Hungarian humour has dubbed this policy the “Kallay Double Dance” from the famous folk dance of the Premier’s native district. To begin with, he brought in the Fourth Jewish Law (after having discussed it with the Jewish leaders). At that time more than 100,000 Jewish refugees from other countries lived in Hungary in addition to the 700,000 Hungarian Jews. Thanks to Horthy and Kallay, they remained in security (though under some restrictions) until the German occupation in March 1944.

Kallay also instituted *secret peace initiatives* abroad but the western responses were evasive. The Casablanca Conference had already stated (1943) the demand for “unconditional surrender”, while the Teheran Conference assigned Hungary to the Soviet sphere. These two decisions strengthened the arguments of the pro—German elements and frustrated the efforts of the peace-seekers. The vague verbal promises and agreements reached with Britain and the U.S. were later conveniently forgotten.

In January 1943 the *Hungarian 2nd Army* was holding 200 kilometres of the Don line in Russia with 9 “light divisions” (brigades). The army’s armoured division and air-brigade had been placed under German command and used elsewhere. The army had few heavy weapons, hardly any winter equipment (it was -45 degrees) and insufficient ammunition, though the Germans had promised to supply everything.

On January 13, a Russian army group and a tank army attacked the Hungarians. The Hungarian army of about 200,000 suffered 150,000 casualties, among them 100,000 dead. The bitter fighting lasted for three weeks. One Hungarian corps was surrounded and its commander captured fighting; the other

divisions were annihilated or thrown back. The men fled in 40-50 degree cold, without transport, as the Germans monopolised the few roads and shelters.

The German occupation of Hungary

Hitler at last learned about Kallay's tentative attempts to "jump out" (in the Budapest cafes everybody knew the exact details). He invited Horthy to Germany in March, 1944, faced the Regent with an ultimatum: unless Horthy replaced Kallay with a pro-German premier and placed Hungary's potential at Germany's disposal, Hitler would order Rumanian, Slovak and Croat troops to occupy Hungary. During the "talks" German troops occupied the key positions in Hungary

Horthy had no choice — Hungary had no fighting troops left to resist. So he appointed *Dome Sztojaj* as Prime Minister and accepted pro-German ministers in the Government. German police and SS arrested many moderate and left-wing politicians and anti-German intellectuals. Leading personalities in the administration and army were replaced with pro-German appointees. The SS ordered the concentration of Hungarian Jews in ghettos, then, without Horthy's or the government's knowledge, and with the connivance of some pro-German officials of the Interior, began to move the Jews to German concentration camps ostensibly for "work".

On learning of the deportations, Horthy defied the Germans and dismissed Sztojaj and the officials who had collaborated with the SS in the deportations. He then appointed general Geza *Lakatos* to head the government of generals and non-political experts and ordered him to end Hungary's participation in the war.

After Rumania's volte-face in August 1944, the Soviet troops began to move into Transylvania. There were no Hungarian troops strong enough to stop them and the Germans refused to use against the Russians the panzer divisions occupying Hungary. By October the Russians stood near Debrecen.

The armistice. Hungary's second German occupation

Horthy sent a delegation to Moscow to ask for an armistice.

A preliminary agreement was signed there on the 11th October. After the final Crown Council on the 15th of October 1944, Horthy announced to the nation that he was asking for an armistice and ordered the troops to stop fighting.

What followed is not clear. There are so many different accounts of the events that one can only state the results: Horthy was arrested by the Germans and the capital was taken over by the SS and the Hungarian National Socialists. Horthy learned that his (only) son had been kidnapped by the SS. In addition, all the strategic points of Budapest were in German hands (there were hardly any Hungarian troops in the capital). The Regent was forced to rescind his proclamation and to appoint Ferenc Szalasi as Prime Minister, replacing Lakatos arrested by the Germans. Horthy then abdicated and was taken to Germany as a prisoner, where he and his family were kept in custody until the end of the war.

Ferenc Szalasi formed a right-wing coalition government and, in November 1944, was elected "Leader of the Nation" by what was left of the Parliament. The Hungarian army was reorganised and many civilian and military leaders were arrested, taken to German concentration camps or executed (such as the members of the anti-German "Committee of Liberation", led by Endre Bajcsy-Zsilinszky). In Budapest, certain criminal elements, claiming adherence to the "Arrow-Cross" (the Hungarian National Socialists), took the opportunity to commit atrocities against the Jews and opponents of the regime. The retreating Germans took to Germany all the livestock, equipment and machinery they could dismantle.

The entire Hungarian army continued fighting the Russians, their resistance strengthened by the horrifying news of the lootings, rapings and other atrocities in the Soviet-occupied Hungarian territories. For the same reason, hundreds of thousands of refugees moved west with the retreating troops.

In December, the Russians encircled Budapest, which was defended by Hungarian and German troops under the command of General Ivan Hindy. After the fall of Pest, the Germans blew up all the Danube bridges and the defenders continued the fight in Buda. During the seven weeks' siege most of Pest and Buda, including the royal castle, was destroyed. Buda fell on the 13th of February, 1945 (it had been held longer than Stalingrad).

In the west the exhausted Hungarian-German troops fought on bravely, (one town, Szekesfehervar, changed hands seven times), defending Hungarian territory against superior Russian forces until the 4th of April, 1945.

Under Russian occupation

On receiving Horthy's armistice orders, general Bela Miklos, commander of the First Hungarian Army, surrendered to the Russians. He and the members of Horthy's Moscow armistice delegation were taken to Debrecen, occupied by the Russians. Here a "National Assembly" was hastily collected and it appointed *Bela Miklos* Prime Minister. His first government consisted of the members of the armistice delegation, politicians of the moderate or left-wing parties and three Communists (who held the key positions). This '*Provisional Government*' signed an armistice with the Soviet Union and duly declared war Germany, though no Hungarian unit ever fought against the Germans. The government was later moved to Budapest and received its orders from Marshal Voroshilov, Soviet Commander-in-Chief.

It is impossible to give an accurate account of Hungary's *military and civilian losses*. Of the more than 1 million Hungarians in the services, conservative estimates put the number of dead and missing at 200,000. At least a similar number of civilians perished as a result of bombings, atrocities and deportations, in addition to the 120,000 to 200,000 Jews, who died in German concentration camps (it is impossible to determine the exact numbers, as many of them were refugees from other countries) Altogether some 550,000 to 650,000 Hungarians perished during the war (total losses of the U.S.: 290,000).

The material losses were incalculable: some cities, most industries, transport installations and rolling stock were totally destroyed; the loss of agricultural produce and private property was immense.

About one million soldiers and civilian refugees left the country at the end of the war, though many have returned since ("here you must live and die...")



30. "EVERYBODY IS HUNGARIAN..."

(Hungarian travellers and settlers in the world)

About one third of the 15 million Hungarians live outside the present frontiers of Hungary. Three million live "abroad" without ever having left their country in the Carpathian basin: their home territory was transferred from Hungary to various succession states by the Trianon Treaty in 1920. We have studied their way of life, art and customs in the various chapters describing the regions of the Carpathian basin.

In this chapter we are looking only at some Hungarians who left the Carpathian basin for various reasons and settled or lived in foreign countries for a considerable period.

The Middle Ages

Several princesses of the Arpad dynasty married into foreign ruling families. We have already mentioned Saint Stephen's daughter, Agatha, and her daughter, queen Saint Margaret of Scotland (Chapter 5). The daughter of king Saint Laszlo, *Piroska* ("Irene" in Greek), married to the Greek emperor, was the mother of Manuel the Great (1143-1180), the last great ruler of Byzantium. After her husband's death Irene retired to a convent in Constantinople where she died and is known today as Saint Irene.

Saint Elizabeth of Hungary, daughter of king Endre II, was married to the Prince of Thuringia. After the death of her husband, Elizabeth dedicated herself to the care of the poor and the sick. Her niece, also called Elizabeth, Princess of Aragon, is known today as Saint Elizabeth (Isobel) of Portugal. We know little of Clemence of Hungary, wife of France's Louis X in the XIVth century. She was an Arpad on her mother's side and sister of Hungary's king, Charles Robert. Her son, John was assassinated when he was five days old.

Queen Saint Hedwig (Jadwiga) of Poland was the daughter of Louis the Great. She inherited the Polish throne after her father's death (1382). Then she married the pagan Jagiello Prince of the Lithuanians, converted him and his people to Christianity and united the two countries.

We have already mentioned the four Dominican monks who travelled to the borders of Europe and Asia in the XIIIth century in search of the "Greater Hungarian Nation" (Chapter 5).

The XVIth - XVIIIth centuries.

One of the tragic results of the Turkish wars was the deportation of hundreds of thousands of Magyars of all by the Turks as slaves. Estimates indicate that about 2 million Hungarians were subjected to the horrors of slavery. The families were, of course, separated and the children lost their national identity. Many boys were trained in special institution become Janissaries, the Turks' elite soldiers. They lost all recollection of their birth, name, religion or family.

Brother Gyorgy (George) Hollosi who accompanied a troop of Spanish "Conquistadors" in 1541 in Mexico, lived for 40 years among the Zuni Indians of that country. He converted them and protected them

from the greedy Spanish conquerors He died among his Indians who wrote on his tombstone: "Here lies Brother Gregorio Hollosi, brother of all men, who brought light to those who were living in the dark."

Poland's great king, Stephen Bathori was mentioned Chapter 13.

Among the emigres accompanying Prince Rakoczi to France in 1711 was count Ladislav Bercsenyi, son of the Kuruc commander, Miklos Bercsenyi. Young Ladislav settled in France, founded a hussar regiment which still bears his name and eventually became Marshal of France.

The adventurous count *Moric Benyovszky* (1741-1784) began his career as an officer in the Seven Years' War. Seeking further adventures, he went to Poland and joined the Polish freedom fighters against Russia. He fought so well that the Poles appointed him general and made him a count. He was eventually taken prisoner and deported to East Siberia (Kamchatka). Here he rallied his fellow prisoners and managed to capture the fort of the governor and the heart of his daughter. He then commandeered a Russian battleship and set out to explore the Pacific. Having visited Japan, Hongkong and various islands, he spent some time on Formosa (today Taiwan) straightening out the local political situation. He then sailed on and inspected the huge island of Madagascar off the African coast, then still independent and ruled by countless native chieftains. He eventually arrived in France, where he suggested to the king (Louis XV) that he should establish a French colony on Formosa or Madagascar. The king appointed him a general, gave him the title of count and a few promises, and sent him off to Madagascar. Equipped with his titles (and not much else) he landed in Madagascar, befriended some tribes, defeated the others and in 1776 was proclaimed by the assembled chieftains, king of Madagascar. He ruled the island wisely for three years. Among other things he introduced Latin script — with Hungarian spelling — for the Madagascar language. The islanders still use his script and spelling. Then — probably at the urging of his family (he had several, in fact) — he returned to France seeking closer trade and political ties.

This time the French ignored him, so he returned to his native Hungary, where queen Maria Theresa made him a count and appointed him general. But she was not interested in African colonies (she had Hungary, after all . . .) So Benyovszky went to Britain and then to the new Republic of the United States. There he loaded his ship with goods for Madagascar (before they could make him a count and appoint him general) and sailed back to his kingdom. To his surprise, he found a French military establishment there (led probably by a general who was also a count). He fought to regain his kingdom but died during the fighting. Some native legends and street names (and a few generals and counts) keep his memory in Madagascar.

The first Hungarian known to have landed in *North Amerika* was Parmenius of Buda, a naval officer in the British service (1585). Several Hungarian missionaries worked among the natives of South and North America during the XVIIth and XVIIIth centuries. Colonel M. Kovats was a distinguished officer in Washington's army during the War of Independence.

Andras (Andrew) Jelki, the enterprising boy from Hungary set out to see the world in 1750 and became a sailor. After having been shipwrecked, captured by pirates and sold in slavery he reached the Dutch East Indies (alive) where he again landed among some primitive natives, who wanted him for

(their) dinner, but he "got out of the frying pan" by marrying the daughter of the local chief and eventually became the chief of the tribe himself. Then we find him in Batavia, the capital of the Dutch East Indies, as a prosperous businessman (without his native wife). At a later date we find Jelki in Japan as the Dutch Ambassador there. He died in 1783.

Laszlo Magyar reached Portuguese West Africa (Angola) in the middle of the XIXth century. He began mapping the interior of the colony in Portuguese service and discovered the source of the Congo river. Then the fate of seemingly all Hungarian adventurers caught up with him: he married the daughter of the Sultan of Bihe (Bie) and in due course became the king of the country himself. He died in Bihe under obscure circumstances (possibly during a state dinner...)

The XIXth century

Sandor Korosi-Csoma (1784-1842), the brilliant Szekely scholar, wished to study the origins of the Hungarians. He decided to explore Central Asia first. Being very poor, he travelled to India mostly on foot, equipped only with the knowledge of dozen languages. After an adventurous journey he reached India in 1822. Commissioned by the Indian (British) government to prepare a Tibetan-English dictionary, he spent 16 months in a Tibetan monastery, studying the Tibetan language and literature, completing his dictionary and translating some Tibetan literature into English. He then traveled to various Tibetan towns (the first European to move about in Tibet freely) and studied data concerning possible ties between Hungarians and the Central Asian races.

On returning to India he published his dictionary and Tibetan grammar, which are still the most important source of Tibetan linguistic studies. Having completed his research, he set out to re-enter Tibet and move from there to the area inhabited by the 'Ujgur" or "Djungari" people, north of Tibet, whom he suspected of being related to the Hungarians. On his way he contracted malaria and died in Darjeeling on the Tibetan border His memory still lives in Tibet. In 1935 he was proclaimed a "Saint" of Tibetan Buddhism. Various Indian scientific institutions preserve his memory.



Sir Aurel Stein, the Asian explorer, was born in Budapest carried out archeological explorations for the Indian (British) government in Central Asia and discovered the so—called “buried cities” in Mongolia.

During the *American Civil War* many Hungarians, mostly refugees from the Freedom War of 1848-49, settled in United States. Many fought in the Union armies (none the Confederates), such as generals Stahel and Asboth, Coblonels Mihalotzy and Zigonyi and several units of Hungarian soldiers. Agoston Haraszty was a pioneer of California, a wine-grower, a businessman and a diplomat.

General *Istvan Turr* (1824-1908) took part in the Italian freedom war in 1860 as Garibaldi's Chief of Staff. He then assisted Klapka in organising the "Hungarian Legion" (cf. Chapter 22). After the Compromise he returned to Hungary and original profession, engineering. He later worked at the construction of the Suez and Panama canals.

Hungarian-born *Joseph Pulitzer* of newspaper fame served first as a cavalry officer during the Civil War. After the war he became interested in newspaper editing and eventually owned a chain of newspapers. He left his huge estate (about \$20 million) to a foundation bearing his name and a school Journalism.

Janos Xantus; a self-educated scientist and explorer, discovered several hundred animal and plant species in North America and South-East Asia between 1855 and 1871

The XXth century: science, art and literature

Eight scientists of Hungarian birth received the Nobel P between 1914 and 1976. Only one worked in Hungary when received the Prize (Albert Szentgyorgyi). Of the others Fulop Lenard, Richard Zsigmondy and Gyorgy Hevesy lived in Germany, Robert Barany in Austria, Gyorgy Bekesy and Jenó Wigner the U.S. and Denes Gabor in Britain when they received the award. It was said that if two members of the U.S. Atomic Commission had been absent, the others could have held their meeting in Hungarian. The most eminent of these Hungarian— American scientists was Professor *Leo Szilard*, who demonstrated the possibility of atomic fission in 1939. With his friend, Einstein, he suggested to President Roosevelt that he should set up an atomic research programme in the United States. The team of Szilard, Teller, Wigner and Neumann — all Hungarians — with the half—Hungarian Oppenheimer and the Italian Fermi constituted the successful Atomic Commission which eventually assured the United States the possession of the atomic bomb.

Todor Kalman, engineer and scientist made himself famous in the U.S. through his many inventions and innovations in the field of aerodynamics and rocket research.

In the field of *economics*, Hungarian emigres have enriched both "worlds": Jenó Varga was the leading economist of Soviet Russia and Gyorgy Lukacs the leading philosopher of Marxism, while Lord Thomas Balogh and Lord Miklos Kaldor were the British government's chief economic advisors until recently.

Before World War II the American *film industry* seemed to be Hungary's only colonial empire. The malicious saying "It is not enough to be Hungarian, you gotta have talent too. . ." was wrong, of course, as quite a few had little talent, only "Hungarian connections". But the names of Adolf Zukor, Michael Kertesz, Sir Alexander Korda, Zoltan Korda and many others assured Hungarian hegemony in the fledgling art of the film. Some film— stars are also of Hungarian birth, such as Peter Lorre, Tony Curtis; Cornel Wilde and Ilona Massey — they were obviously not born with these well—known names. Others seem to be quite proud of whatever they were born with: the Gabor sisters, Marika Rokk, Eva Bartok and many others.

As Hungarian *writing* is not easily translated, Hungarian writers best known abroad are those who learnt to write in English or German, such as Arthur Koestler (“Darkness at Noon”) and Hans Habe. *George Mikes* has achieved the difficult synthesis of Hungarian humour and British satire. His delightful racial tableaux (“How to be an Alien”, “Milk and Honey” etc.) delight everybody (including the people he is satirising).

Lajos Zilahy, a well-known novelist before his migration to the U.S., wrote his controversial historic novels, “The Dukays”, in America.

Jozsef Remenyi (1892—1956) was the first great Hungarian American author, essayist and literary historian.

Albert Wass (1908—) was also a noted Hungarian author in Transylvania before 1945. In 1952 he migrated to the U.S., and became a professor of Florida University. His Hungarian and English writings include novels, short stories, poetry, essays and research work of historical, sociological and folkloric nature.

Ferenc Molnar (1878—1952), the most successful playwright of recent Hungarian literature was also a remarkable novelist and author of short stories. His novel “The Boys of Paul Street” an exquisite tableau of adolescent life has become a world best seller in many translations. His mystery-drama “Liliom” achieved world fame through its American stage and film-version “Carousel”. Molnar settled in the United States before World War II and continued his career as a successful writer for stage and film.

The playwright *Menyhert Lengyel* noted for his interest in social problems in his dramas written in Hungary before 1914 (“Typhoon”), migrated to the United States after World War I and became a popular film—script writer.

The authoresses Yolanda Foldes and Christa Arnothy in France and Claire Kenneth-Bardossy in the U.S., are well known for their pleasant novels of lighter nature.

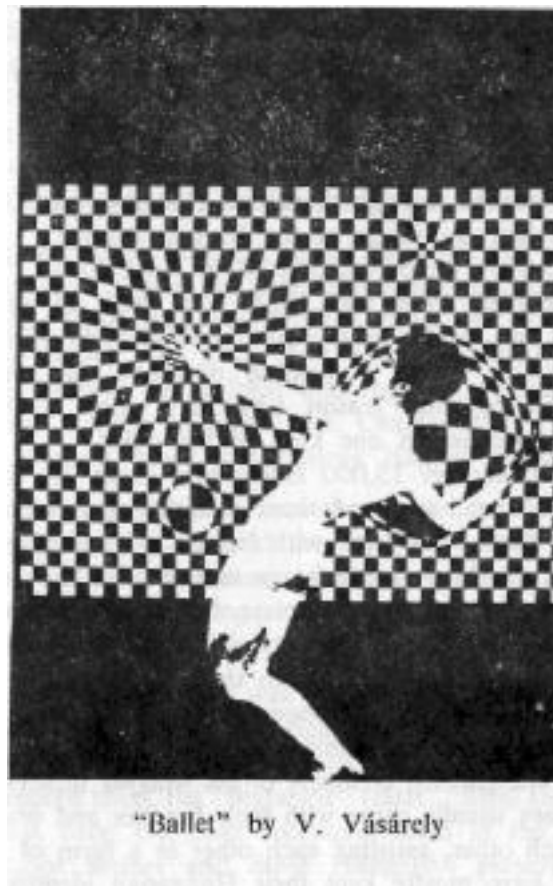
Aron Gabor, a journalist living in Germany, presents a staggering indictment of man’s inhumanity to man in his a biographical work “East of Man”.

The number of talented authors: poets, novelists, philosophers and historians living abroad and using the *Hungarian language* in their writings is immense. Their opus represents an important segment of contemporary Hungarian literature, the study which is, however, beyond the scope of this book.

Music is another field where Hungarian participation assumed proverbial proportions. The number of well-known Hungarian conductors living abroad is truly impressive (George Solti, Eugene Ormandy, George Szell and many others). Since Liszt and Remenyi, many Hungarian performing artists especially of the violin and piano have lived abroad, such as Emil Telmanyi, Joseph Joachim, Joseph Szigeti, Johanna Daranyi, violin virtuosos and Geza Anda, the pianist. Miklos Rozsa and Sigmund Romberg have become well-known for their film and operetta music.

In *Fine Arts* the adage that a Hungarian painter can only succeed abroad has proved true in many cases. Some talented Hungarian artists lived abroad all their creating life, such as Fulop Laszlo, portrait painter in Britain, Ferenc Martyn, avant—garde painter in France, Marcel Vertes, graphic artist,

Victor Vasarely, creator of three—dimensional op—art” in France, Gyorgy Buday, graphic artist in Britain, Sandor Finta, the shepherd—boy, who became a famous sculptor, author and teacher, Laszlo Moholy-Nagy founder of the ‘New Bauhaus’ movement, Gyorgy Kepes, professor of Art, M.I.T., and colour woodcut artist Jozsef Domjan in the U.S.A., Amerigo Toth in Italy, Zoltan Borberekı—Kovacs in South Africa and many others.



Hungarians in Australia

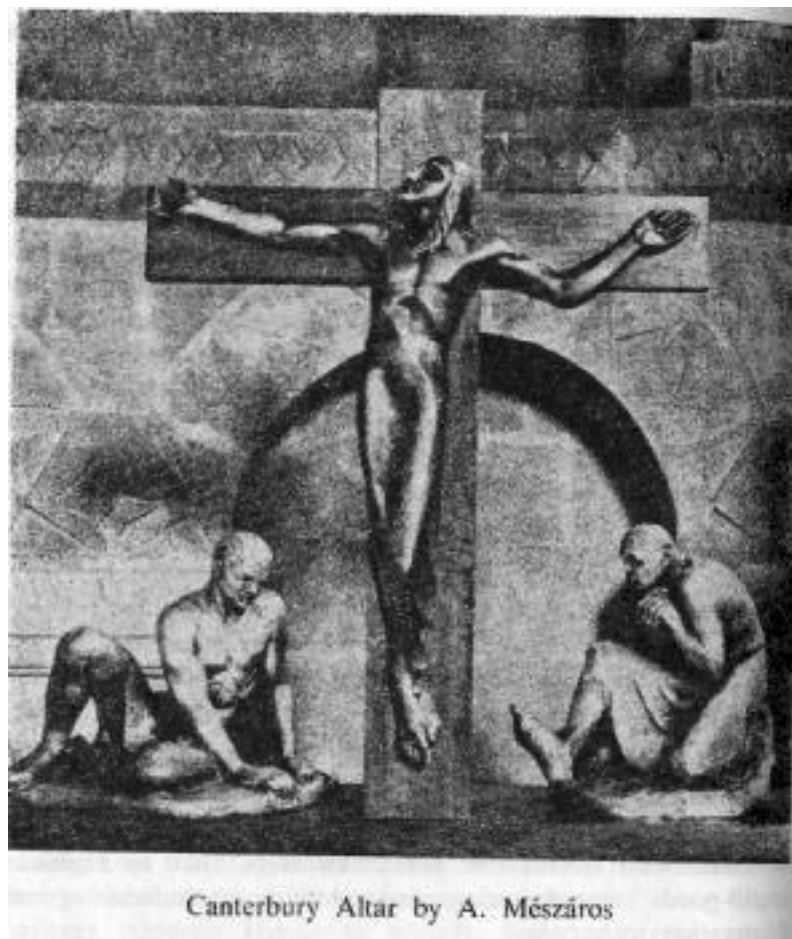
The first Hungarian migrants arrived in Australia in the middle of the XIXth century: many of them were ex-officers of the 1848—49 freedom war.

Most of the immigrants before 1930 were single men who married Australian girls and integrated into Australian society. The 1930s and 40s saw the arrival of the Hungarian émigré, who left Hungary because of the oppressive atmosphere in Hitler’s Central Europe. They were mostly Jewish intellectuals and businessmen. Hard—working and ambitious, they became respected members of Australian society, but they cherish their Hungarian culture and helped to dispel some misapprehensions about Hungary’s role during World War II. The Australians learned through them that Hungary was, during Nazi oppression, the refuge of the Jews in Europe.

About 15,000 Hungarians arrived in Australia as “displaced persons” between 1949 and 1953. The bulk of them were professional and middle—class people, most of them with families. Having met the earlier Hungarian migrants, the two groups could find a common reason why they came to Australia to flee the tyrannies of one kind or the other.

After 1956 another 15,000 Hungarians came. As these were mostly single men, many of them assimilated rapidly. On the other hand, those who came with families — at any period usually kept the Magyar ethnic consciousness in the family and their children learned to appreciate the values of their ethnic heritage (through Hungarian schools, Scout and other youth activities), without interfering with their harmonious integration into Australian society and culture.

In the 1960s many migrants came from Yugoslavia: most these were Hungarians, members of the Magyar minority in the country. They ‘usually came with their families and often settled close to each other, assisting each other in a form of co-operative. They have mostly kept their Hungarian identity.



It is estimated that in 1970 about 50,000 Australians had Hungarian ethnic origin. This number does not include the children born in Australia.

Only 0.4% of Australians are of Hungarian origin (or, as the Magyars put it, 99.6% of Australians are of non—Magyar origin) but their involvement in certain professions and occupations is well above that rate. They favour occupations in which independence, initiative and imagination prevail and industry assures success.

There were some 50 professors and lecturers at various Australian universities in 1970. Some academics are well-known such as professor George Molnar, who is also a political cartoonist. In their specific fields there are many outstanding scientists, such as the entomologist Jozsef Szent-Ivany, the international jurist Gyula (Julius) Varsanyi, the anthropologist Sandor Gallus, the demographer Egon Kunz, the historian Antal Endrey and Akos Gyory who, at the time of his appointment, was the youngest professor of Medicine in Australia. Dr. A. Mensaros, a member of the West Australian government, was the first non-British Cabinet Minister in the State.

In *art and music* Australia lacked the attraction of some other countries, thus only a few well-known artists settled here. The conductors Tibor Paul and Robert Pikler are the best known names in music. The Fine Arts are represented by the late Andor Meszaros, the sculptor and engraver, Desiderius Orban, one of the “Group of Eight” (cf. Chapter 25), Judith Cassab painter, Stephen Moor and Gyorgy Hamori decorative artists.

There are many eminent *businessmen* and architects of Hungarian origin in Australia and the number of small businessmen is immense. It seems that some businesses, such as espressos, small—goods manufacturing and clothing manufacturing are Hungarian monopolies.

In *sport*, table tennis was made popular by Hungarians. Australian soccer owes its origins and success to Hungarian coaches, organisers, players and patrons. A Hungarian-founded and sponsored team, the “Budapest” (later: “Saint George-Budapest”) has been the most successful team in the country. In chess, Lajos Steiner and other Hungarian players dominated the national championships for two decades. Fencing, a typical Magyar sport, owes its increasing popularity in Australia to Hungarian sportsmen and trainers (G. Benko, A. Szakall).

* * *

There are today almost 2 million Hungarian expatriates who have invaded the farthest corners of the world. Hungarians can be found anywhere — and they usually are. As false modesty is not one of their national vices, they do not conceal their presence nor the fact that they are Hungarians. In fact, their vitality, industry and extrovert friendliness make them more conspicuous than population statistics would suggest. One is tempted to accept the thesis of the Hungarian writer, Mikes: "Everybody is Hungarian...."

There are about 15 million Hungarians in the world today: not quite 0.5% of mankind.

Without them the sun would still rise and life would still go on — but the rainbow would be a little paler, music a little duller, women a little sadder and mankind a little poorer.

