Introduction

I. Contours, perimeters

Hungary of the 1980s is a small compact country in the eastern portion of Central Europe inhabited by just over ten and a half million people. With its nearly 36,000 square miles of territory it occupies the geographical centre of the Danube valley, an agriculturally fertile lowland intersected by the two great rivers, the Danube and the Tisza, and bordered by a third one on the south, the Drava. The journey of the Danube can actually and symbolically express the common lot of the people who are Hungary's neighbours, one-time allies or protagonists, with whom she shares movable borders and eleven hundred years of history. From the west the Danube enters Hungary from Austria, moves along the border of Czechoslovakia, the northerly neighbour, and then after a journey of some two hundred miles the river leaves the oval-shaped land of the Magyars and enters Yugoslavia, with whom the southern border is shared. Further to the south-east, the Danube becomes Romanian, just as the land Transylvania, between the Hungarian border of today and the southeastern section of the Danube, is now part of Romania. At her last northern town, before turning to her delta, the Danube now borders the Soviet Union, whose extended arm has been touching the northeastern tip of Hungary since 1945.

Internally, the country is divisible into four large regions: Transdanubia (lowland and hills between Austria and the west bank of the Danube); the land between the Danube and the Tisza (part of the great Hungarian plain); Trans-Tisza (the rest of the great plain) and Upper Hungary (the land above the two rivers). Transdanubia has most of the interesting physical features: a large lake, Fertő (now a natural reserve), shared with Austria; the 46-mile long 'internal sea' Lake Balaton, with a range of volcanic hills, the largest holiday resort in the country; and finally, a cluster of mountains: Mecsek, and Bakony, at whose feet heavy industry has sprung up. Between the Danube and the Tisza, the northern hills of

Hungary range over highlands, and are the outliers of the Carpathians. The Börzsöny hills, in the neighbourhood of the capital, continue eastwards, and the wooded Mátra, the next mountain range, has Hungary's highest peak, Kékes, at 3,300 feet. Further east the limestone Bükk is only slightly smaller, with beautifully cultivated vineyards on its southern slopes, especially in the Eger valley. The great plain is only monotonous to travellers in fast cars or trains. At a closer look, the traveller discovers the variety of sand dunes, reclaimed marshlands, reservoirs, small copses, canals, rich crops, orchards, and some dry steppe deserts, with large herds of cows or horses.

Since Hungary is flat, surrounded by the sizeable Carpathian mountains, the climate is continental, with extremes of temperature. In the winter it is often between 20° and 30°F, in the summer, it not infrequently soars up into the nineties. Rainfall is generally highest in late spring and in mid-autumn. The climate is kind to cereal crops and good for viticulture; the oak and beech forests of the mountains and highlands prosper and even the coniferous forests of the north survive adequately. The Danube forests of willows and poplars take advantage of the half-yearly large rise and fall of the river due to the swell of tributaries in the north. But grass, and wild and tame flowers, usually wither in the summer heat. In addition to an abundance of domestic animals (the dog and the horse are specially favoured), and animals in farmyards of all sizes in farm settlements, villages, small towns, and even on the outskirts of larger ones, the traveller in the country is likely to encounter small as well as large game. Hares, foxes, pheasants and wild ducks are plentiful, deers, stags, badgers not infrequent, and at the edges of the interminable Danube forests one can sometimes hear the grunts of the wild boar.

Administratively, the country is divided into nineteen counties. Five sizeable towns are autonomous units, making up county boroughs. The counties are the following: Baranya, Bács-Kiskun, Békés, Borsod-Abauy-Zemplén, Csongrád, Fejér, Győr-Sopron, Hajdu-Bihar, Heves, Komárom, Nográd, Pest, Somogy, Szabolcs-Szatmár, Szolnok, Tolna, Vas, Veszprém and Zala. The largest counties are Pest (excluding Budapest), with a population nearing the million mark, and Bács-Kiskun with over 600,000; these are counties traditionally agricultural and more recently industrial as well. The county boroughs are Budapest, Debrecen, Miskolc, Pécs and Szeged. While Budapest, the capital, has well over two million

inhabitants, the second largest, Miskolc, has a population less than one-tenth of that of Budapest.

II. First impressions

An impression of the physical realities of Hungary in 1980 would perhaps satisfy the curiosity of the casual traveller but will not appease the well-sharpened intellectual appetite of the student of Hungary. Let us assume that he or she wants to know a good deal more than the first book, the first friend, the first piece of music, the first film or the first dish he tastes can reveal of Hungary or the Hungarians. He or she is in for surprises. The first book encountered may be in a public library and about lacemaking, as Hungarians are skilled lacemakers. Without so much as reading the book the student of Hungary is dropped into the sea of Hungarian folklore, for the various regions of past and present Hungary used various patterns, and similar techniques; each style 'meant' something, and every group of patterns somehow characterized a region. The first friend encountered is more likely to be a Hungarian living outside than inside Hungary. In addition to the ten and a half million Hungarians living at the centre of the Carpathian basin, there are a further three million living just outside the centre, in neighbouring Czechoslovakia, Russia, Romania, and Yugoslavia, in territories ceded to these countries in 1918 and 1945 respectively, while a further million or so live in Western countries. They could have been swept out by the recent tides of history, fleeing from Nazism, the Second World War or the Soviet re-entry in 1956, or they may have been 'economic emigrants' in search of a better living and moving from East to West.

Experience shows that one of the first questions asked of a Hungarian, whoever he may be, relates to sport. Magyars are reputed to be sportloving and competitive. In the 1950s sport assumed the role of giving a share of economic bonuses for competitors and the only opportunity of international travel for young people. The Hungarian semi-amateurs rose to the challenge and reaped Olympic glory in the way East Germans do now. But in the present consumer socialism of Kádár the old pressures have given way to petty comforts; Hungary is no longer a 'sports power', just a small nation with an unusual variety of games, still good at fencing, canoeing and the modern pentathlon, and reasonably skilful

in most ball games. Not infrequently Hungarians, such as Tamás Wichman the canoe star, win the Unesco fair play prize.

What would be the first piece of music with Hungarian connections that the student would come into contact with? It might be Liszt, since it is often not realized that he was Hungarian, or it could be Bartók or Kodály, 'twin lodestars on the Hungarian sky' as the poet Illyés put it, but it could be a piece of gipsy music (once so much chastised by the 'lodestars') coming from the radio; or indeed, it might be just music, popular or classical, with Hungarian connections: 'Autumn leaves' broadcast from Paris, or a Haydn étude composed in the Esterházy palace in Transdanubia, a Mozart opera conducted by Sir Georg Solti, or the Beethoven violin concerto with György Pauk playing first violin.

If the first impact on our student was made by a film, then if he or she belonged to the prewar generation it is likely to have been one of Sir Alexander Korda's British or Hollywood classics, in which every other stage-hand and extra was Hungarian, even though the themes were not. The situation is quite different with the films of our generation. *The Round-Up* is a Hungarian masterpiece about the hunting down of outlaws after 1849; it went around the world and from campus to campus in the United States. *My Homeland* is a memento of the Hungarian revolution of 1956 repeatedly shown on British television. The former was made by Miklós Jancsó, a Hungarian director living alternately in Hungary and Italy, using concealed parallels and closed symbolism; the latter was made by Robert Vas for the BBC using open allegory and all available documentation.

The student's introduction to a Hungarian dish need not have been in Budapest or by the Lake Balaton, where tourist-conscious restaurants will serve pork steak on a sword in flames. It could have taken place in Cluj (Kolozsvár), the centre and former capital of the Transylvanian province of Hungary, or it could have occurred in Munich, over Hungarian pancakes filled with apricot jam, ground walnuts and rum. The first authentic *gulyás* (a soup), as opposed to the westernized 'goulash stew', might have been eaten in New York, Boston or Chicago—a famous outpost of Hungarian gastronomy. As gastronomic tastes tend to be the most conservative of the human range of conscious and semi-instinctive choices, Hungarians abroad lose their language before they lose their eating habits. In mixed marriages with Westerners, whichever the Hungarian partner may be, the characteristic Hungarian dishes seem to survive and

make converts of the other party as well as of the issuing offspring. From the East, the Hungarians seem to have borrowed the generous use of spices, from the south the use of a good range of milk products and fruits, and from the northerly and western neighbours the refined baking techniques. The land has known viticulture since the Romans, and possibly before, and the habit of wine drinking has an unbroken continuity testified by archaeological remains and by the earliest songs and poems.

III. The present

The chance encounter with a piece of the Magyar mosaic may be translated into a sequence of new impressions, the initial acquaintance turned into a study, though not necessarily an academic one. The student of Hungary may be someone who decides to take more than one holiday in the country, or indeed just outside the country, in other Hungarian-speaking or multilingual areas like Transylvania in Romania, Slovakia north of the Danube, or Novi Sad in Yugoslavia. A Hungarian pen friend will inevitably mean a stream of letters peppered with Hungarian place-names which stimulate a certain interest in a strange esoteric language. The words appear to be stressed with military regularity, the preponderance of 'e' sounds (as in leg and beg but also in lag and bag) alternating with long and short vowels, some sounding akin to German, others near to French. Yet, in reality, Magyar is a unique language, Finno-Ugrian in origin, distantly related to Finnish in grammar, and heavily indebted to Turkish for words. All the same, every generation of Englishmen and Americans, ever since John Bowring produced his *Poetry of the Magyars* in 1830, has produced a handful of scholars and amateurs who mastered the language for its 'quaintness' or fell in love with the literature for its beauty.

When pleasure or leisure is coupled with or supplemented by a deeper interest, the student of Hungary may find himself augmenting or making his living from matters Hungarian. Tourist guides are a modern breed; translators, diplomats and merchants are not. For every American once employed in Hungary as a mechanic, or now engaged there as a builder of factories or a constructor of hotels, for every Briton once imported to Hungary as a horse trainer, a ship- or a bridge-builder, there are in the West at least two Hungarian scientists in Harvard, Princeton or in the Bell laboratories; at least two football or fencing trainers, artists of the small or of the big screen or of the painted canvas. Characteristically, twentieth-century Hungary imports little and exports much talent. Or, to put it in another way, there is and has been a surplus production of intellectuals among the ten and a half million people.

All this is attractive for those without, but it can be uncomfortable for those within. The people, ethnically known as Magyars, speak Magyar as their first (98%) and often their only (over 70%) language. The non-Magyar groups were largely 'lost' to the neighbouring countries. If we compared the size and population of Hungary at the beginning of this century with today, we would see at a glance that Hungary is now a third of its former size, and her population less than half, although almost totally Magyar. The Slovak element joined the Czechs, the Ruthens joined the Romanians, and together some of them were made Soviets in 1945; the Saxons and Romanians of Transylvania are now governed from Bucharest, while the Croats of the Drava and Sava, and the Serbs of Bácska and Bánát are united within Tito's Yugoslavia. Incorporated with these groups are the Magyar-speaking populations of these former Hungarian territories. The result is that Hungary – apart from the small gypsy issue – has no minority problem, but the Hungarian nationality question is a ball in the court of each neighbour.

Large-scale emigration at the turn of the century, and smaller waves later, established substantial Hungarian ethnic minorities in the United States, Canada and Australia. 1956 deposited small but intellectually influential and vocal groups in large European towns: London, Paris, Munich, Brussels.

Always extremely slow in growth (decimated by enemies, illness, etc.), the population of Hungary is once again on the increase. The suicidal rate of abortions that characterized the 1960s has declined. Maternity leave, benefits, and the lure of available accommodation has helped in the 1970s to push the birth rate to 1.6%, as against a death rate of 1%.

The lack of detailed statistics on religious matters – the state is decidedly shy on this point, and the census no longer asks for 'your religion' – leaves us the choice of relying on 'guesstimates', personal impressions, or generalizations drawn from small samples of research carried out by priests and sociologists. Drawing from a mixture of all three, one may conclude that nominally at least 80% of the people belong to some denomination. The majority belong to the Roman Catholic Church, the rest to one of the Reformed

churches, the Calvinists or the Lutherans. Naturally there is a smattering of other religions as well: Jews, Unitarians, Nazarenes, Baptists. Since religious practice is frowned upon – although tolerated, unlike in the cold war period – those who partake of religious education or regularly attend church services are in a minority. Normally, it is no recommendation for advancement in state jobs to have the reputation of being religious.

What is more, most jobs are state jobs. Yet the situation in the employment market is more complex than it seems. Officially, well over half of the country's wage earners work in industry. In a decidedly agricultural country, less than half, grouped mainly in peasants' cooperatives or in state cooperatives, are supposed to cope with agriculture. The fact is that they do not. A very large section of the labour force is 'moonlighting'; that is to say the family unit has at least one worker in industry, one in agriculture and one or more in both. In allotments 'rented' from the state such 'moonlighters' and other purely agricultural workers produce more than 30% of the country's total agricultural output. In a mixed economy, with regulated but not totally controlled markets, the New Economic Mechanism of 1968 (and later modifications) created, or rather allowed, an alignment of labour forces, and a movement of the products, that pushed up the living standard of the people by 100%. Comparisons are dangerous, because the cultural and economic preferences of consumers in different countries differ widely. Therefore, with great caution one may say that English wages and salaries are double in real terms, but since there is hardly any 'moonlighting' in England, and a great deal of unemployment, people do not live in twice the material comfort found in Hungary.

Hungary is a people's democracy of the Russian type, and the basic tenet in its constitution is the right to work. This tenet is ensured to such an extent that, let alone given social security benefits, non-working or out-of-work people are rounded up unless they can prove disability. So there is no unemployment, and no deprivation by hunger, but there is still a great deal of poverty. In a sociological survey commissioned by the Hungarian Academy of Sciences in 1973, 9% of the workforce was reported to earn less than 1,200 forint per month, which is less than £30. Little wonder, that the results were not published in Hungary. At the opposite end of the scale, members of vineyard cooperatives, peasants who have accumulated private plus rented lots in family units, and 'moonlighters' working as miners on the one hand and orchard owners on the other, may

earn ten to fifteen times more than the poor. And there is a higher stratum still, whose members may or may not have any connections with labour or direct production: top administrators, technocrats, film/radio/pop/sport stars and famous doctors are in a premier league of their own.

Taking Hungary's gross national per capita income, the country officially ranks twenty-third in the world, a relatively high position. This ranking, however, does not and cannot take into consideration the unrevealed military portion of Hungary's budget, the country's contribution to the Warsaw Pact. Over three-quarters of the gross national product are said to derive from industry. Again, such rough statistics conceal rather than reveal the true picture. Hungary's fertile soil is capable of feeding its population and producing an export surplus of wines, maize, wheat, sugar beet, potatoes, fruits and vegetables. The cultivated land covers 52% of the country's territory. Hungarian industry relies on a mixture of home produce (the construction industry, bauxite, gas, and part of the coal, food processing and manual industries) and imports coal, iron ore, oil, electricity, cars, and high technology. While industrial products are accounted for in trade figures without fail, a good deal of the food production is concealed and consumed. If Hungary had to feed itself on the profits made by industry, as Britain does, there would be a very different division shown in the gross national product. Be that as it may, the fact is that at the present time Hungary's trading partners are first of all the COMECON countries (70% with neighbouring socialist countries), and to a lesser extent the rest of the world. Yet, since the advent of the policy of détente and the Helsinki agreement, this has begun to change. For example, in 1978 Hungary received the 'favoured nation' trading concession from the United States. West German printing machinery conquered some of the Hungarian newspaper market, and Austrian agricultural accessories started to appear in Transdanubia.

But still, the largest growth industry, as in the Mediterranean, is tourism. Although Hungary is not short of natural beauty, and the summer season turns its capital and some of its country towns, like Eger, Esztergom, Pécs, Keszthely, Baja, Tapolca, Héviz, and Szoboszló into holiday resorts, the real attractions are the genuine hospitality of the people, the good, inexpensive and plentiful food which Hungarian hotels, restaurants and even private houses offer, and the abundance of hot thermal springs all over the country. Little wonder that, in addition to a cautious stream of Westerners,

the northern socialist neighbours, the Czechoslovaks and the Poles, practically overrun the Lake Balaton and the available tourist accommodation in Budapest every summer. There are hardly any free beds for unbooked tourists but there is no balance of trade deficit either.

Basically, the national economy is one of public ownership, with the fundamental means of production owned by the state, and the rest shared by the three sectors: the state, the cooperatives and private individuals. The aforementioned New Economic Mechanism meant, among other things, a policy of decentralization, and a switch from making national plans that relied mainly on heavy industry to using economic regulators: prices, taxes, credits, import and export licences. Foreign trading companies are put under the umbrella of the Hungarian Chamber of Commerce, farming cooperatives are coordinated by the National Council of Farmers Cooperatives. Workers and employees belong to the National Council of Trade Unions. Since the mid-1960s we have seen the very cautious beginnings of workers' participation in management, but more in a consultative than in a decision-making capacity.

A glance at the map of Hungary will show that all road and rail traffic focuses on Budapest, which has the country's only international airport and the most important river port as well. Indeed, to travel from the south of Hungary to the northeast or the northwest, it is infinitely easier to make for the capital first, and then take a further train or bus. The five large towns mentioned above have airfields but no regular, reliable interconnecting air services. Since Budapest was once the capital of a much larger country, the fan-like main roads and railway tracks also connect with the nearest large town in the neighbouring countries on their way to the capitals. There are now two motorways inside Hungary: from Budapest to Hegyeshalom on the Austrian border and from the capital to the Lake Balaton. International air services to Hungary from most capitals of Europe, and from many places overseas, are fairly frequent and reliable, with the Hungarian Air Company MALÉV running half of the total flights. The most attractive means of approaching Hungary from the West, as well as of travelling the waterways of the Danube, Tisza and Balaton, is by boat. In addition to carrying tourist and passenger traffic, the Danube is the international water highway between Germany and Romania. Hungary, being in the centre, sees the exchange of iron ore, coal, etc., for machinery of various sorts. Her own 'smelteropolis', Dunaujváros,

is almost exactly halfway between Regensburg, the starting point of the shipping trade, and the sea.

The Western student of Hungary who has mastered enough of the language to browse through Hungarian newspapers may be surprised to see the prominence given to Party congresses as compared to the meetings of the Council of Ministers or the legislative sessions of Parliament. As in all Soviet-type socialist states the Party (meaning the Communist Party, although in Hungary it is called the Socialist Workers' Party) reigns supreme, with the first secretary fulfilling the functions of both a United States of America president, and a Persian ayatollah. But what the Koran is to the ayatollah, the Soviet politburo is to the first secretary. It must be referred to and deferred to, it must be seen to be consulted. In reality its strictures can often be dodged, its vigilance outwitted. The constitution as written is very different from the administrative realities of many a country, Hungary not the least. By the Constitution, both the original 1949 version and the 1972 amendment, the working class is named as the ruling class – other classes and strata are just associates to power. Hungary's own semi-clandestine opposition groups would deny this as well as many other statements in the Constitution. Yet, they would not deny the Constitution itself, or the relevance of socialism in mid-Europe in the twentieth century. The question is, what kind of socialism, and how the letter of the law should be obeyed, enforced, interpreted. The Hungarian Council of Ministers with the prime minister as top manager promulgates decrees, which the legislative body, the parliament, does not question. The decrees are passed down directly to the administrative units of county or borough councils. Should the superorgan, the Party, issue its own directives, these will immediately be incorporated into the prime ministerial and ministerial decrees. In fact the Party has its own duplicate top apparatus: divisions for foreign affairs, home affairs, defence, etc., just like small but more powerful ministries. The party has about 600,000 members, each with some kudos, status or privileges, and the Communist Youth Union of Hungary (whose membership is virtually compulsory to students) has 800,000 members. They provide the majority of all officials from ordinary member of village council to member of parliament. Parliamentary elections take place about every five years; there is universal suffrage and the electorate can choose to vote or not to vote. There is only one party and one candidate per seat. Nonetheless, a certain elasticity and a measure of public

participation are displayed in electing the candidates.

The enforcement of the law – and the current interpretation of every new law and decree – is vigorous. The highest organ is the Supreme Court; cases of appeal and of state importance are tried there. The secondary organs are the county or the municipal courts. The lowest courts allow a judge and two lay assessors. The independence of the judges is granted by the Constitution but not by the Party. The armed forces have five divisions: soldiers, frontier guards, the police, the workers' militia and the customs police. Apart from safeguarding social property, public order, the security of citizens and the traffic, each of these organizations has at least one special function. The army forms part of the Warsaw Pact forces, the border guards exist to seal Hungary's frontiers, especially with the West, the police hunt down criminals and traffic offenders, the militia safeguard against rebellion in factories and the customs police examine and confiscate undeclared goods and money. The infamous AVO, the state security police instituted in 1945, was abolished in 1956 when its members were either retired, transferred to civilian professions, or distributed among the existing armed forces.

The Hungarian educational system is good. It consists of eight years of compulsory general schooling of uniform curriculum followed by a choice of four years at general grammar schools or at schools of specialized technical education. Again, schools of the same type have the same curriculum, so the transfer of a pupil from one end of the country to another does not bring educational disadvantages. Higher education embraces eighteen universities and over forty colleges of various standings, covering all aspects of professional life. Usually courses are of eight semesters, but the specialized technical and vocational courses last six to seven years. High schooling is sealed by a 'matriculation' or a set final examination, and university admission is preceded by an entrance examination. After the university finals, the graduate may proceed to write a dissertation for a doctorate. The highest degree of a 'candidateship' – somewhat more than a British or American Ph.D. – is granted only after accrued 'academic merit' and a defended written thesis.

The Hungarian health and welfare services are all-embracing, and since there is no real shortage of doctors and nurses the health service is adequate. Health insurance is automatic, medicine is free. Hospitals, however, are overcrowded, many of them in need of modernization, and specialized foreign drugs are difficult to obtain. A good percentage of doctors, at all levels, take private patients as

well, and 'thank you' payments to health service doctors are very common. Pensions are dependent on the rate of salary and the length of service and are managed by the Social Insurance of the National Council of Trade Unions. Trade unions are also responsible for providing cheap mass holidays to employees of firms, factories, and cooperatives. Sickness benefits and disability payments are fair – within the range of the given salary – and are rigorously controlled. Nurseries are good and plentiful because most mothers are expected to go out to work to make ends meet for the family. This is particularly true for young couples in search of or queuing for the first flat they hope to rent. The Ministry of Construction and City Development can just about meet half the demand for new rented accommodation, and to 'acquire' (buy, part-own, part-rent) a flat already occupied means a heavy down payment totalling several years of joint earnings. Lately, a trend towards small private bungalow building and weekend-house building has eased the national accommodation problem.

The pattern of life for those city dwellers who can afford it is, as often as they can, to leave the city and spend half of Saturday and Sunday in the country. For country people it is the reverse. Cultural events of importance, festivals, fairs, and football matches take place at the weekends, and an additional Monday is added on the occasion of the two movable feasts. State public holidays, Liberation Day (commemorating the freeing of Hungary from the Germans in 1945), May Day, and the Feast of the Constitution (formerly St. Stephen's Day) are fixed by date and are celebrated with a mixture of official parades, fine theatrical performances, opera, operetta, and great, general, spontaneous jollity. Hungarians use any occasion to have a party – drinking or dancing or just talking – and their capacity for conviviality and good companionship make chance meetings between friends, or prearranged staid family gatherings, into memorable occasions. Country traditions for celebrating birthdays, name days, weddings, christenings, confirmations, and even burials with a feast, are common in spirit but vary in customs from region to region. But 'the wake', although a feast, is an emotional one; the custom of wailing women may now be relatively rare but overreaction on the part of the grief-stricken relatives is very frequent. Feeling, expressing or just showing the extremes of emotion is a characteristic Magyar trait. Periods of passivity, years of lethargy, can be suddenly shaken off, and heroes are created, bonds broken, friendships forged, pent-up emotions released in 'one great hour'. And hence

the texture of Hungarian culture reflects these traits in the Hungarian character: the love of the dramatic and melodramatic Hungarian opera composers, Erkel and Szokolay; the efficacy of extrovert political poetry – written exclusively in the past – and the reaction to it; the egotistical lyricism of self-pitying bards. The symbols differ wildly: the ostentatious peacock, and the meek and mild Mother of Jesus, Patron of Hungary, whose new chapel is now being built in the grotto of St. Peter's in Rome. If lace, silverware, realist oil painting, pottery, sculpture, pipe-carving, and tile painting express the patience in the artistic talent of an industrial-agricultural people, then the impromptu performances, puppetry, mini-drama, singing (taught and untaught), the mastery of the short story, and the flowering of the Hungarian cinema in films of every sort characterize the dynamism of Hungarian culture. And, to the question 'Is Hungarian culture media-orientated?', the answer seems to be that it pervades the media and keeps its own message.

Naturally, the international pop cult with its ephemeral noises but inspiring rhythms has made inroads into the consciousness of the under-thirty age group, and, in some form or other, is here to stay. This industry has its own Hungarian stars, groups, stages, and even outdoor arenas, such as the Amusement Parks in Pest, and the one at the Gellért mountain in Buda. Yet this cult does not seem to vie with Hungarian poetry, the love of folk song or the appreciation of the embroidery of regional dresses: hair, beat and high decibels replace the operettas, the chansons, the busking, even the circus of a former era.

The venues for and depositories of culture and knowledge are well organized in Hungary, by any standard. At the grass-roots level, most villages have 'cultural houses' used for shows, meetings and amateur theatricals, while sizeable towns have theatres, and the largest of them opera houses. The bigger the place, the more prestigious the company, and the greater subsidy it gets from the state. Cinemas, again found in most villages, do not have to fight a great battle for survival against the television because state subsidies will keep them alive even without an audience. Since professional theatres are relatively few – about three dozen – amateur, student and impromptu groups abound. Except in the case of large cities, art galleries and museums are either in the neighbourhood of historic places, e.g. Esztergom, Mohács, or in places with folk art traditions (Szeged) or art traditions (Szentendre). These focal points of culture, along with restored historic buildings, castles, palaces,

churches and monuments have witnessed another renaissance in rejuvenation, care, public interest and general popularity in the 1970s. Preservation has remained one of the by-words of the decade.

Understandably, libraries and archives have taken their share in this upsurge. Although the restored royal castle in Buda Castle still only houses exquisitely arranged museums and picture galleries, the move by the National Library to this commanding position cannot wait too long. Just like the British Library, the Hungarian National Library (stock over 3 million volumes) has decided on separation, due to accommodation problems. The space problems of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences Library are not so acute because it is the head of thirty-eight scientific and learned institutional libraries. The Academy itself is the superorgan of scientific and scholarly research; the affiliated institutions are the specialized spearheads. The public library network in Hungary is exemplary in its extent, in the training of personnel and the provision of copies of basic texts, national classics and teaching books on technology, skills and crafts. Foreign language books, on the other hand, are harder to come by and authors deemed undesirable in communist countries are neither stocked in libraries nor sold in bookshops. All secondary schools and educational institutions of higher learning have their appropriate library, the best, oldest and most prestigious being the library of the Eötvös University of Budapest, with a stock of nearly two million volumes. There are important Hungarian book collections outside Hungary too: in the Babes-Bolyai University, Cluj (Kolozsvár), in the British Library, London, and in the Library of Congress, Washington, D.C., to mention just the most outstanding. Many of their readers are inclined to believe that these outside centres of learning serve as windows of Hungarian achievements to the world.

IV. History

Hungarians reaching spiritual consciousness and attaining the first degree of maturity begin to view themselves in the double mirror of history and literature. The two wings of this mirror reflect each other as well as the viewer. The optical effect of a double-winged looking glass is that the vision is serialized in smaller and smaller receding pictures *ad infinitum*. Until recently, their past had appeared to the Hungarians as if moulded by fate into certain shapes, forms and

types. In the mind, literature is inextricably bound up with Hungarian history: the chief protagonists of either are often the same people; the poet appears as soldier, seer and substitute politician; the sources are common to both and the chief and everlasting inspiration of all Hungarian writing is the political and social fortune of the inhabitants of Hungary.

In order to elucidate such condensed, almost allegorical statements, we will proceed in the simplest possible chronological manner. But before doing so we must remark that the history of earlier epochs may be classed with prehistory, archaeology, and comparative philosophy alongside history deduced from German, Old Slavic and Byzantine sources. The Hungarians of Árpád, chieftain of the Magyar tribe, occupied the Carpathian basin in 896 A.D. The conquerors were nomadic tribesmen squeezed by other nomad tribes out of the Volga and Kama rivers area, their former home. They were of an Asiatic stock, spoke the tongue of the Finno-Ugrian language group and were the pagan allies of the Carolingian emperor Arnulf – a Christian mediaeval king – who helped them to defeat the Slavic tribes of the land. The Slavs' social organization and primitive agriculture had been just a shade more advanced than those of the Magyars. Conqueror and conquered exchanged skills, blood, culture, but the business of ruling remained in the hands of the Hungarian tribal nobility, who – surviving telling defeats from the West – reorganized their military tactics, settled down to the land and provided the first set of Christian kings. The coronation of the first king, István, by Pope Sylvester II coincided with the annus mirabilis, 1000 A.D. The following selective list of rulers from then to the present day should be used to chart the country's subsequent history:

István I (Saint)	997–1038
Péter (Orseolo)	1038–1041
Aba Sámuel	1041–1044
Péter (Orseolo)	1044–1046
András I	1047–1060
Béla I	1060–1063
Salamon	1063–1074
Géza	1074–1077
László I (Saint)	1077–1095
Kálmán	1095–1116
István II	1116–1131
Béla II (the Blind)	1131–1141
Géza II	1141–1162
István III	1162–1172
Béla III	1172–1196
Imre	1196–1204
László III	1204–1205
András II	1205–1235
Béla IV	1235–1270
István V	1270–1272
László IV	1272–1290
András III	1290–1301

Vencel (Bohemia)	1301–1305
Otto (Bavaria)	1305–1308
Károly Robert (Anjou)	1308–1342
Lajos I (the Great)	1342–1382
Mária (Queen)	1382–1387
Zsigmond (Luxembourg)	1387–1437
Albert (Habsburg)	1437–1439
Ulászló I (Yagello)	1440–1444
László Hunyadi (Governor)	1446–1452
László V (Bohemia)	1452–1457
Mátyás I (Hunyadi)	1458–1490
Ulászló II (Yagello)	1490–1516
Lajos II (Yagello)	1516–1526
Ferdinand I (Habsburg)	1526–1564
[János (Zápolya)	1526–1540]
[János Zsigmond	1541–1570]
Miksa (Habsburg)	1564–1576
[István (Báthory)	1571–1586]
Rudolf (Habsburg)	1576–1608
[Zsigmond Báthory	1586–1604]
[István Bocskay	1604–1606]
Mátyás II (Habsburg)	1608–1619
[Gábor Báthory	1608–1613]
[Gábor Bethlen	1613–1629]
Ferdinand II (Habsburg)	1619–1637
[György Rákóczi I	1630–1648]
Ferdinand III (Habsburg)	1637–1657
[György Rákóczi II	1648–1660]
Lipót I (Habsburg)	1657–1705
[Mihály Apafi	1661–1690]
[Ferenc Rákóczi II	1704–1711]
József I (Habsburg)	1705–1711
Károly III (Habsburg)	1711–1740
Mária Terézia (Habsburg)	1740–1780
József II (Habsburg)	1780–1790
Lipót II (Habsburg)	1790–1792
Ferenc I (Habsburg)	1792–1835
Ferdinand V (Habsburg)	1835–1848
[Lajos Kossuth (Governor)	1849]
Ferenc József (Habsburg)	1848–1916
Károly IV (Habsburg)	1916–1918
Mihály Károlyi (President)	1918–1919
Béla Kun (Commissar)	1919
Miklós Horthy (Regent)	1919–1944
Ferenc Szálasi (Leader)	1944
Béla Dálnoki Miklós (Premier)	1944–1945
Zoltán Tildy (Premier)	1945–1946
Ferenc Nagy (Premier)	1946–1947
Lajos Dinnyés (Premier)	1947–1948
Mátyás Rákosi (Party Secretary)	1948–1956
Imre Nagy (Premier)	1953–1955
Ernő Gerő (Party Secretary)	1956
Imre Nagy (Premier)	1956
János Kádár (Party Secretary)	1956

(*Note: Alternative names and/or family names of rulers are indicated by parentheses; the names of the Princes of Transylvania are in square brackets.*)

Though there may be disagreement on the assessment of the last thirty-five years, it is customary for Hungarian as well as Western historians to divide the preceding centuries into two almost equal halves: the period from Stephen I to the death of Lajos II (Hungary independent), and the period from the battle of Mohács (where Lajos II perished) to the present day (Hungary dependent on some foreign power). This viewing of matters, correct but a shade simplistic, allows us to adhere to further natural divisions.

István I converted his largely pagan people to Roman Catholicism, instead of Byzantine Christianity, a conscious political choice that brought Western alliances to him and his successors, Western priests and monks, and Western injection of culture, from the use of the Latin alphabet to the forms of ecclesiastical language, with its deeds, bonds and feudal social classification. Although the pull of the East, in the form of pagan rebellions supporting the ancient religion and customs, which had been driven underground, exerted an influence until the 12th century, and although subsequent Hungarian kings like László I, Béla IV, and László IV tried to break, pacify and incorporate other small nomad people on the fringes of Hungary, the policy commitment to the political, religious and economic side of Christianity remained firm. The claim of the East, therefore, was totally unattractive to Béla IV, who ruled out any kind of treaty or submission to the invading Mongols. He chose opposition and exile in adversity and the patient rebuilding of the ravished country in times of fortune. Having won all the battles and devastated half of the land, the invaders returned whence they came. Before the Mongolian invasion of 1242, and again a generation after that date, Hungary appeared to the contemporary eye to be a wealthy kingdom, not far from the France and England of its day in population, number of fortifications, economic resources, military expertise and stature. There was a willingness to participate in the international actions of the day: allowing forces to pass through – which meant feeding them – and even partaking in the Crusades. The dynasty of Árpád, comprising native kings rooted in the land and owning much of it, commanding respect and a native army, ruled until the death of András in 1301.

In English history 'King and Country' is a concept the unity of which was unquestioned even in the famous student debates of the 1930s when the Oxford Union, for instance, defeated the motion to fight for it. In Hungary, the advent of foreign dynasties, some of which might become naturalized, some not, opened up new constitutional

interpretations for the ruling native nobility. By shifts of emphasis it became possible to be pro-country and anti-king, should the king lose sight of the nation's interest. Even the so-called Golden Bull of 1222 – loosely comparable to the Magna Carta, a royal effort to codify the privileges of freemen – was often interpreted in subsequent centuries as the sum total of the rights of the Magyar nation to do as they collectively pleased. The period from 1301–1526 was that of foreign kings, invited to reign in independent Hungary. From the point of view of territorial aggrandizement and accumulated wealth, the Hungarian kings were most successful under Lajos I. Hungary and Poland formed a personal union, including both sides of the Northern Carpathians, some of the Balkans, and temporarily some of Italy, which was annexed or just subjugated. What was acquired quickly, was lost quickly. Hungary is the nerve centre of the Carpathian basin but she never showed a strong will to hold on to outer appendages; Lajos had no male issue and King Zsigmond – the Holy Roman Emperor Sigismund of Luxembourg – was more interested in his empire, his dynasty and suppressing the Hussite heresy.

The tendency of the peers – however quarrelsome, disunited and jealous they were of each other – was to turn to dynasties which could provide subsidiary armies of defence on Hungary's southern flank. The Yagellos meant – or should have meant – property, power and prestige to the north-east; in reality, when the Osman Turkish attacks called for fortified castles on the southern Danube and repeated showdowns with sultans and grand viziers, the Polish connection proved remote and ineffective. János Hunyadi, a landowner soldier from Transylvania, who rose to the position of regent, showed the only way to stem the Osman tide. He was a man whose own lands were in immediate danger from the attacks, and he had a large personal retinue and a strong feudal army. In extra danger – the siege of Nándorfehérvár (Belgrade) in 1456 – he relied on his regulars helped by the crusading spirits of auxiliaries: crusader peasants. The reign of his son (Mátyás I was elected by the middle nobility) was the apogee of Hungarian power in the late Middle Ages, a period of prosperity, shortlived stability, and the flowering of Renaissance culture. Mátyás's stature and his achievement were permanent, at least in one sense: popular imagination depicted him, then as now, as the hero of the poor people, a winner of battles, a patron of the arts. Neither is this picture false, for Mátyás was a benevolent Machiavellian (before Machiavelli's time), and he em-

braced Italian culture, not only in the person of his wife, but by establishing a Renaissance court (the first printing press was introduced in 1473), and by building a fine library of manuscripts (Corvina) and many magnificent palazzi. His aim seems to have been to establish a Hungarian monarchy (he conquered Vienna), with such perimeters as it attained only later under the Habsburgs. Many historians believe that on the basis of a grandiose defence plan Mátyás wanted to combat the Turks.

Late mediaevel monarchy was personalized and dynastized to such an extent that the death of the king in 1490, without a son born in wedlock, meant the squandering of his accumulated wealth. Election strife, the reawakening of old jealousies, disbanding the 'black clad' mercenary army for fear of one magnate using it against another, squandering the throne's wealth, and weakening the body politic, were the rule of the day for some thirty years. Such convulsions were not unknown in the course of English dynastic changes, but a less fortunate geographical position, as a result of which Hungary was situated as a block in the path of militant Islam, magnified the problem enormously. Matters turned from bad to worse when a peasant revolt in 1514 was put down with great savagery on the part of the nobles. By the 1520s it was obvious that Lajos II, husband to the sister of both the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V, and Ferdinand of Austria, would be unable to persuade his brothers-in-law to lend him arms, armies and money to stop Suleiman the Magnificent, conqueror of Byzantium, Malta and Belgrade. It soon became painfully evident that the 'bastion of Christendom' (a papal phrase of Pius II), would be no more than a phrase to Clement VII, embattled as he was on account of the Reformation and Italian local politics. Token troops and token money were sent by the Poles, the Pope, Henry VIII, and Ferdinand, as the Hungarian king prepared for battle; far away from this puny army of 26,000, there was a Transylvanian noble, Zápolya, with a similar force, unwilling to move and waiting for the inevitable outcome. The battle of Mohács in 1526 sealed Hungary's fate: the king died, together with most of his armed nobles, and soon two pretenders cut the country into three divisions. János Zápolya, who in 1514 had crushed the peasant rebellion, ruled the eastern part as vassal to the Sultan, Suleiman retained the middle portion, and Ferdinand was elected by the Western Hungarian nobles to keep the north and west Turk free.

The next hundred and fifty years came close – using a deliberate

anachronism – to early modern guerilla warfare. The Turks tried to use their Hungarian possessions as an economic and military base to launch campaigns against Vienna. To thwart this, the over-taxed Hungarian population resisted passively or actively as opportunity allowed, by means of forages from bordering forts and castles. The Habsburg kings, now afraid for their own safety, kept strong garrisons in fortresses around Turkish-occupied Hungary and launched periodic counter-campaigns. The eastern part had developed into a viable economic and social unit, with her princes paying just a shade more than lip service and feigned military alliance to the Porte, but cultivating Hungarian interests. The ideological battle had also sharpened. The Habsburg parts were Catholic with a counter-reformation stamp. Transylvania turned Protestant and Turkish Hungary lived according to the precept *cuius regio, eius religio*, that is to say the people remained either Catholic or turned Protestant, according to whose estate they belonged to. The Turks did not break up the Hungarian estates, and thus Islam made no headway. The structure of society in the three Hungaries was similar, the constitutional tenets the same. Hungary was one and the same kingdom with an elected monarch, some lands temporarily conquered and occupied, and Transylvania ruled by a prince. Her subjects belonged to two vast classes: the nobility and the serfs. The nobles had three divisions: titled nobility, middle nobility (like the English squirearchy) and petty nobility, with the various types of freemen on the fringes. As laid down in the *Corpus Juris* (reinforced and recodified by Chancellor István Werbőczy) the serfs had no privileges, bore all the burden of taxation, and could not move from estate to estate. Although the turbulent history of the Turkish conquest made nonsense of these laws, for serfs fled, changed sides, estates and possessions, and fought just like the nobles, whose privilege the defence of the country should have been, there was no effective change in the law until 1848.

In 1686 a combined international force, under the aegis of Lipót I but commanded by Eugene of Savoy, defeated the Turks in Buda and liberated Hungary from the Turks. The rejoicing soon had to stop. The waning of the sultan's power spelled the end of the semi-independent Eastern unit. Transylvania too was taken over by the Habsburgs. Ferenc Rákóczi II, the pretender to the title of prince, raised the banner of a Northern Hungarian rebellion of serfs, job-less border guards and dispossessed nobles. The aim was to liberate the land from all kinds of foreign oppression. His troops, the Kuruc

soldiers (from the word *crux*) fought the king's men for eight years between 1703 and 1711, turning a guerilla war into a full-scale war of liberation. Rákóczi was helped by French money, and the anti-Austrian plans of Louis XIV, but the financial backing for his fight dried up after the Battle of Blenheim. As soon as József I, Emperor of Austria and King of Hungary, could withdraw his troops from the West, the change in military balance put paid to the independentist hopes of the Hungarians. The 'rebel' Rákóczi, betrayed gratuitously by some of his own opportunist nobles, went into exile in France, then in Turkey. The Habsburg empire successfully incorporated Hungary for another one hundred and forty years.

From a Hungarian point of view the long reigns of Károly II and then of Mária Terézia (Maria Theresa) were a drawn-out period of submissive semi-colonial existence under the Habsburgs. Austria was more industrialized, more skilled, more organized and better versed in the art of government. The infrastructure of Hungarian society, the relative independence of the counties, and the Magyar judicial system remained intact in the face of crippling taxes, apathy about communications, and lack of home-grown industry and self-initiated trade. By the end of the century, when the ideas of the French philosophers had penetrated the thinking of József II and roused Hungarian innovators to either back him up or carry the torch ahead of him, an interesting and complex situation confronted the advent of the French Revolution. First of all, it became clear that despite their backwardness, their agricultural base and their lack of a regular army, the stratified Hungarian nobility had great constitutional and nationalistic reserves which were able to block any reform that threatened the language and the solid infrastructure. Yet when, during the reigns of Lipót II and Ferenc I, the French Revolution and Napoleon delivered their blows against Austria, the Hungarians did not take their opportunity but were confused and divided. Certainly, there was a Jacobin Hungarian conspiracy that failed, and a *nobilis insurrectio* against Bonaparte which also failed. But those with some privileges to guard had constituted at least one-fifth of the total population of about twelve million, and it became clear that liberation ideals without a clear national call could not have had general appeal.

In post-Waterloo Europe each country's reform movement assumed a different character. In Italy, it was the call of the carbonari, the scheming of Cavour, and the volatility of the garibaldini

that give the populace enough self-respect to believe themselves equal to the Austrians. In imperial Austria itself, the movement of burghers and plebeians adopted an anti-feudal, anti-autocracy and pro-fraternity stance. In Hungary there were two forces which, in 1848, united first into accelerated reform and then burst into powerful revolution. Originally, improvers of living standards carried the torch. Animal husbandry, shipping, irrigation, bridge and road building, horse breeding, and modern forms of banking were developed according to English and French models. British engineers were imported by Hungarian magnates. István Széchenyi, the leading reformer, set his technical horizons as far away as America, although politically he remained a conservative, 'wanting to enrich the country so that she was able to stand on her own feet'. Secondly, there was the Hungarian political opposition, wide-ranging enough to include plebeian poets like Sándor Petőfi on its left wing and high nobles on its right, which took its lead from the American Declaration of Independence when its leader, Lajos Kossuth, voiced his programme as the nation's wish that 'Hungary is to be a free, independent, sovereign country'.

Revolution spreads like wildfire, but since it is not guns but constitutional changes that give it its true stamp, there might perhaps have been after 1848 a peaceful sequence of parliamentary reforms, an independent cabinet responsible to the ruler of two countries, abolition of serfdom, and an extension of suffrage; these changes would have completed the modernization of the body economic and the transformation of the body politic. But this pattern of events was halted by geopolitical calculations. Austria, as a signatory of the Holy Alliance, was committed to keep the peace against all sorts of rebellion, and the guns had fired in Italy and threatened in Paris and Vienna. In her peacekeeping role, Austria was a staunch ally of Russia. Moreover, in terms of Palmerstonian strategy she had an even more important role to play: in the interests of the balance of power in Europe, she was to be and to remain an empire, dividing Russia from the rest of Europe. Consequently, when war was declared between Austria and Hungary, non-revolutionary Europe watched how the quarrel between radical Magyar and conservative Austrian, one trying to hold on to hard-won independence and the other endeavouring to keep an empire, developed into a protracted fight involving other nationalities: Croats, Serbs, and Romanians. When the crisis came, the alliance between the Habsburgs and the Romanovs worked; the Czar's

troops and Ferenc József's (Francis Joseph's) soldiers forced the Hungarian generals to surrender in 1849.

The next two decades opened up the possibilities of a 'Monarchy saving' compromise. In the beginning the Hungarian nation answered the repressive measures of a vengeful Austrian administration with peaceful internal resistance. The Hungarian exiles of the war in England and America, with Kossuth as the spokesman of Hungarian independence, worked on international public opinion in order to soften up the Austrians. The decisive point was reached at Kőnnigrätz in 1866: Austria was beaten by Prussia and, losing the last semblance of German hegemony, accepted the offer of Ferenc Deák, the leading Hungarian statesman of the day, for a compromise. The resulting pact of 1867 created Austria-Hungary, leaving all the other nationalities in the background in constitutional matters. The Hungarian ruling classes, working out a thesis of Magyar supremacy, were as ready then to Magyarize Romanians, as Romanians are ready now to Romanize Magyars in Transylvania. A plan by exiled democrats, including Kossuth, was drawn up farsightedly, perhaps utopistically, to establish a Danubian confederation that could – and in their opinion should – replace the decrepit empire.

The next half century, up to the First World War, constituted the heyday of Hungarian capitalism. Belated industrialization leapt forward, with heavy industry forging ahead in the capital and other large northern towns such as Győr and Miskolc. Steam mills appeared all over the south. Budapest itself more than doubled its population; it rose up like a phoenix on both sides of the Danube with avenues and well-planned boulevards in the centre, and with new or reconstructed mansions in the style of Paris or Vienna. The trade union movement gained muscle to improve the wage claims of a new urban proletariat. The agrarian labourers caused small riots, political liberals talked of universal suffrage and the military forces created a pocket constitutional crisis by wishing to command Hungarian troops of the joint army in the Hungarian language.

When Austria-Hungary entered the war in 1914 on the side of Germany, there had been only one unwavering but rather ineffectual and several times reshuffled opposition group: the liberals of Count Mihály Károlyi. For Hungary, the war meant great deprivation, heavy loss of life, economic bankrupty, and an explosion of internal hostilities as far as all the large nationalities were concerned. The treaty of Trianon in 1919 was the practical

but blundering working out of the Monroe doctrine of national self-determination. Territories ceded to Romania, Serbia and the new Czechoslovakia reduced Hungary to one-third of its former size and formalized the disintegration of an empire that had really come to an end with defeat in the war.

There were two important intermezzos for Hungary, each lasting half a year, and each in its own way an attempt to prevent the loss of territories to neighbours. From October 1918 to March 1919 Mihály Károlyi as president of the new liberal republic – the dethroning of Károly IV came suddenly, and could be called an abdication – did his best to convince the Entente of his egalitarian stand on the nationality question. When his failure became apparent, the alliance of the social democrats and the communists came to the forefront, and Béla Kun, communist leader, commissar for foreign affairs and Leninist agent, took over. His campaign of armed resistance at the front, aided by Soviet Russia, and a commune based on workers' power and peasants' cooperation, had collapsed by August 1919. The Soviet Union itself was fighting for survival and was in no position to aid Kun other than politically; internally the peasants resisted being herded into state cooperatives and the rest of the country resisted the terror measures.

Out of the chaos, precipitated by the fall of Kun and the march of the Romanians into Budapest, emerged Miklós Horthy, a former admiral of the Austro-Hungarian navy supported by army officers. From late 1919 onwards Horthy ruled, first as dictator, then as 'regent' to a kingdom that had no king, repelling the attempts of the Habsburg ex-king who wanted to return. The initial white terror, which was intended to avenge the former red terror, slowly changed into a right-wing régime with an elected parliament, in which even social democrats and the peasants were represented, although communists and fascists were banned. Hungary's foreign policy was built on intensive revisionism, the return of the lost territories, and the reversal of the Trianon treaty. Yet those who criticized her leaders for steering the country into a German alliance in the 1930s should remember the fate of Poland, Czechoslovakia, Romania and Yugoslavia. With a well-organized, efficient and strong war machine to back up her diplomacy, Germany subdued or conquered every country around her. At the turn of the fourth decade of the century, Hungary received several instalments of a 'payment' for being an ally: part of Yugoslavia (the former

Bácska), part of Transylvania, and parts of former northern and north-eastern territories were returned by the Romanians and Czechs. This caused divisions among the populace and some bloodshed, suicide by the Hungarian premier Pál Teleki, and a split – albeit a concealed one – in the ruling party. The war effort by Hungary is an expression of this split: when the issue could no longer be avoided, about 200,000 Hungarian soldiers were sent to the Russian front. Eventually more than half of these were killed or captured by the advancing Russians. Regent Horthy had made a secret deal with the Allies, an important clause of which obliged him to protect Hungarian Jewry in exchange for the Allies refraining from bombardment of Budapest. At Easter 1944 the German army occupied Allied Hungary; at Whitsun the deportation of the Jews was organized. On 15 October 1944 Horthy attempted to sign a pact with the advancing Russians. The Germans intervened, the Regent was arrested and a Hungarian fascist puppet, installed as 'leader', rampaged about the capital for some fifty days, having Jews and 'anti-German elements' shot, until the Russians chased him out, along with his 'arrow-cross' men and their German masters.

The years from 1945 to 1948 have been labelled by historians as 'the period of rebuilding'. After the plundering by the occupying Germans, the bombing raids of the Allies in the fatal year of 1944, and the free-for-all policy adopted by many a Russian commander, Hungary, once more cut down to Trianon size, started miraculously to breathe in the atmosphere of a new parliamentary democracy. The middle-of-the-road Smallholders Party won the 1945 election, trade with East and West restarted, the construction industry enjoyed a phenomenal period, large estates were nationalized, and land was distributed by the communist agricultural minister of a coalition government: Imre Nagy. But 1948 was also the 'year of change', from a multiparty coalition to a communist-dominated government, from a parliamentary democracy to a police state, from an agricultural-industrial to an industrial-agricultural country with the emphasis on heavy industry, from private to corporate and state ownership of the means of production. The speed of change can only be explained by the use of threats and coercion, and by the omnipresence of the occupying Soviet army. The Five-Year Plan that started in 1949 completed the transformation so speedily that, before it was halfway through, all potential opposition, whether religious, internal communist, or merely peasants protecting their land, or dissenting workers, was crushed by trials, tribunals, con-

centration camps and prisons. It was calculated that in 1951 and 1952 about 200,000 people were arrested. Mátyás Rákosi, the first secretary of the Party, was 'Stalin's best pupil' in everything: the peasants were forced into cooperatives, the workers' standard of living was crippled by the piecework rate, writers and other intellectuals were cowed into submission, and the clergy were split into martyrs, would-be martyrs and collaborators.

Stalin's death opened the sluices one by one. In 1953 Imre Nagy was appointed prime minister by the politburo to succeed Rákosi, who kept his job as first secretary of the Party. This signalled a political and economic as well as a personal change, for the office of an East Central European prime minister was, under Stalin and his immediate successors, directly linked with the Soviet leadership and normally the premier came second to the Party secretary in rank. Between 1953 and 1955 the two protagonists Nagy and Rákosi fought a pitched battle for dominance. Hungarian public opinion woke up to the possibilities. The economic changes introduced by Nagy, the revival of light industry, the easing of the peasants' taxation, decentralization and wage structure reform, were met with approval by everyone who would voice an opinion. By the late summer of 1956 the world had witnessed three events in Eastern Europe that were to have their explosive sequel in Hungary. In 1953 East German workers rebelled in Berlin; in early 1956 Khruschev, the Soviet leader, denounced Stalin and Stalinism at the 20th Party Congress; and in the same summer and early autumn the Poles – against Soviet advice – elected new leaders. The Hungarian revolution of 1956 started as an accelerated reform movement, for an untainted socialism with a human face. The obtuseness of Rákosi, his entourage, and his successor, the provocation of the secret police and the interference of the Soviet armed forces stationed in Hungary, turned what started off as a student demonstration into a battle for dominance in Budapest at the end of October. In ten days the first phase was over. The secret police was defeated and disbanded, Imre Nagy once again emerged as premier and the Soviet tanks, depleted, left the capital. The rest of the country peacefully handed over power to revolutionary committees and councils. A succession of coalition governments were formed and, in conformity with the wishes of a vocal majority, the country seemed to be ready for multiparty leadership. The second phase started with the second, militarily overpowering intervention of the Soviet army on 4 November. Budapest was heavily damaged, thousands were killed,

and the Hungarian government and the leaders of her armed forces were eventually arrested, tried and executed or sentenced to long imprisonment, as were countless insurgents. The revolutionary councils survived for another two months, and then János Kádár, the new Russian-appointed leader, achieved political dominance.

The years that follow are dangerously close to us to be viewed as history. After a shaky start, sprinkled with vengeance, the Kádár régime, as it came to be called, slowly but steadily achieved respectability. In return for burying the dream of independence (Nagy had announced on 1 November 1956 that Hungary was leaving the Warsaw Pact; in eighteen months he was dead) the Soviet Union has helped to rebuild Hungary's ruined capital, to put the economy on its feet again, and – in time – to establish or allow the creation of a mixed economy, with built-in incentives for the small man. While the 1956 Revolution is never talked about positively in official Hungarian circles, it is ironical as well as gratifying that the present leadership has so far conceded more than half of the Revolution's internal demands.

Summary

The beginnings. Conquest in 896 A.D.
Mediaeval monarchy. House of Árpád 996–1301.
Independence under foreign kings 1301–1526.
Turkish conquest 1526–1686
  Heyday of Transylvania 1600–1660
Austrian rule 1686–1918
  Rákóczi war 1704–1711
  Reform era 1820–1847
  Revolution and war 1848–1849
  Austro-Hungary 1867–1918
Revolutions, Counter-Revolution 1918–1919
German dominance 1920–1944
Russian dominance 1945–
Revolution 1956

V. Literature

Literary periods are less self-contained than historical ones and literary historians have an uphill task in establishing the breakdown into periods of Hungarian literature. There are three ways of

establishing periods: the first – column one below – takes the class of the writer as the cue; the second – middle column – closely parallels the events of political history; the last – column three – uses a blend of style, movement and history.

Religious literature	1200–1500	Catholic literature. Latin humanist literature. Latin – clerical and secular.
High nobility	1500–1800	Renaissance: Hungarian and Latin, secular, catholic and protestant. Enlightenment: Hungarian – secular.
Nobility, plebeians	1800–1866	Age of reform: romantic and messianic. War of Liberation: realist and messianic.
Plebeians, bourgeoisie	1867–1944	Dual monarchy: realist, escapist, revolutionary. Interwar years: realist, *l'art pour l'art*, revolutionary.
Socialist literature	1945–	Contemporary literature: censorship, self-censorship, socialist realism, multifaceted literature.

The first Hungarian text of literary merit is a funeral oration and prayer from the end of the 12th century. It is a philological treasure and a memento of the Hungarian mediaeval church, a foretaste of the composite nature of Hungarian literature, which is to this day 'all things to all Hungarians'. We find evidence in notes, chronicles and edicts to warn us that pre-Christian Hungarian literature was partly wiped out, partly driven underground by the missionary zeal of the Latin Church. Comparative ethnography and musicology would rescue legends and tunes of old, comparative philology and literature would collect the chants and poems of kinfolk to reconstruct a pre-Christian world. There are manuscript books of songs surreptitiously copied by merry poets or scribes which reveal merrymaking, the joys of sensuous pleasures, like a fresh brook under the visible mountain. These finds are few and far between compared to the codices filled with prayers, laments, legends of saints, supplications, historical romances in a Christian vein, homilies and hymns

written to heroic and saintly kings. The first extant poem written in Hungarian is a *Lament of Mary*, a free translation of a Latin original dated c. 1300. Both the language and the versification are well developed, and hence we can assume far earlier beginnings, but on the stormy seas of Hungarian history the manuscripts that survived were the lucky ones or were the few that got away in time to foreign parts. The central figures in the mediaeval Latin literature of Hungary as well as in the Hungarian translations, paraphrases and original texts were the saintly kings: István and László. They are remembered, in times of hardship, with a mixture of awe, reverence and hope. With the added feeling of nostalgia, these figures live on right through to our age, as symbols of historic and communal responsibility, promoted by Magyar writers who are concerned with the nation's survival.

The first extant longish historical verse in Hungarian comes from the time of King Mátyás I and deals with a battle against the Turk. The literature of Mátyás's court had remained Latin. Among panegyrics and eulogies, odes and elegies by the circle of humanists there towers up the poetry of Janus Pannonius, an individual of Italian education slightly ill at ease in less civilized Hungary.

From the second decade of the 16th century, unease and fear – soon rising to a crescendo of terror and anger – seeped out of Hungarian poetry. References to the slaughter of peasants, to the Turkish conquest and the general 'ruin of the country' became leading themes in the poetry of roving Protestant pastors who blamed the baseness of the nobility for all the manifest punishments of God. On the other hand, scholars quietly nestled in Transylvania or in unoccupied western Hungary, organizing printing works, writing tales and stories, translating the psalms, and rendering the whole Bible into Hungarian. With the work of Gáspár Heltai Hungarian belletristic prose had a late but definite start; Gáspár Károlyi's translation of the 'Protestant' Bible, in the second half of the century, was an achievement comparable with Luther's. The third great stylist of the age, Péter Bornemisza, wrote with such vigour and using so varied a vocabulary that one is not surprised to find him as an adapter of *Electra* (from Greek) and the author of a collection of inspired poems.

The military writers of the century were also poets. Sebestyén Tinódi lived in the first half and witnessed – or described as though he had witnessed – all the significant battles and sieges of the Turkish wars. His accounts are chronicles given by a 'war correspondent', who – crippled in battle – lived off his poetry recitals and lute playing in the castles of the high nobility. One of the castle owners, a soldier and lover of wine, song and women, won long-lasting fame with his lyrical evocations of nature's beauty, his delicate love poems, his songs for soldiers and his confessional religious poetry: in Bálint Balassa the two traditions that had started in time immemorial met and burst out in late Renaissance poetry. The fun-loving folk song and very responsible, often philosophical Christian poetry accompanied the life style of a soldier who lived like a pirate and died a hero.

With his successors the inspiration became less complex. János Göngyössy further elaborated on the stylistic devices evolved by Balassa. The picture of life as presented in his hexameters became broader though skin-deep. Miklós Zrinyi was a totally committed, moral man, the military commander poet of the 17th century. If Balassa had been a Hungarian Walter Raleigh, Zrinyi was a Tasso who had fought a few real battles with the 'infidel' himself. His epic poem *The Siege of Szigetvár* is a poetic reliving of his own great-grandfather's experience of siege by the Turk. While Zrinyi was writing historical essays and military pamphlets to combat the Turks, Péter Pázmány had already reconquered thousands of Magyar Protestant souls for Catholicism with his rich, witty, fulminating erudite sermons. But Catholicism, even when reintroduced by an archbishop of major literary talent, was too often for comfort equated with Habsburg rule. The voice of patriotism, the call for independence, when it emerged to accompany and to inspire fighting Kuruc soldiers, was devoid of religious content. The Kuruc poets, song and ballad writers, were anonymous; their heroes were Rákoczi, his generals and his captains. The style – while the Kuruc had the upper hand – recalled Balassa; it turned to late mediaeval laments once the imperial troops had overcome them. Rákoczi's page, Kelemen Mikes, had gone with him into exile in Rodosto. The letters he wrote from Turkey to an imaginary aunt in Transylvania in the first half of the 18th century are the tokens of a new development of Hungarian prose. Mikes wrote about everyday matters with a keen eye for detail, and he was able to be descriptive and elegant yet imaginative and humorous at the same time.

The Enlightenment reached Hungary by way of Vienna, mainly through the efforts of Hungarian officers serving in the imperial guard of Maria Theresa. The ideas of the French philosophers met up with reforming zeal in the works of a Hungarian nobleman

anxious to introduce the fruits of progress in his native country. The literary society of his making was directly or indirectly responsible for the translation of modern classics (mainly French and German), for the furthering of Hungarian linguistics, and for a series of quasi-philosophical works on the Voltairean pattern, such as the *Travels of Tarimenes*. The first novelist of the same stamp, József Kármán, looked as far as Pope and Sterne. This movement, which knocked on the doors of colleges, schools, military establishments and also large country houses, imperceptibly changed the spirit of education. Two students of the Protestant College of Debrecen, Mihály Fazekas and Mihály Csokonai, created a new style and a vocabulary supple and modern enough to translate ideas into the language of the reading public of the age. Clerks and foremen of large estates, freemen, artisans, merchants, well-to-do peasants and petty nobles were the lower ranges of the readership which embraced Fazekas's humorous epic *Matthew the gooseherd*. The hero is the Hungarian Till Eulenspiegel, the poet peasant boy who, employing low cunning, gets the better of the rich landowner. Csokonai created numerous characters from all walks of Hungarian life, appearing in plays, epic poems, spoofs or congratulatory lyrics. His themes of love, love requited, wine songs, and poems on subjects relating to moral and philosophical education, are as wide-ranging as his application of classical or Hungarian metres, strophes, and (almost) free verse. Like his contemporaries Ferenc Kazinczy and János Batsányi, his life was deeply influenced by the consequences of the Martinovics conspiracy. Kazinczy was directly implicated in the conspiracy, the discovery of which seemed to have netted many progressive young writers of republican, anti-feudal and anti-Habsburg sentiments. Batsányi was sentenced to one year's imprisonment, more for his poems welcoming the changes in France than for his complicity. Kazinczy got seven years, and Csokonai, perhaps because he was in touch with Kazinczy or perhaps because of his erotic poems, was dismissed from college, and never had a permanent job again. Kazinczy was the toughest of them all. He emerged from prison, reproduced his prison diary – published only in contemporary *samizdat* during his lifetime – and reorganized Hungarian literary life from scratch. Translations of Greek, Roman and contemporary classics, literary criticism in the form of letters, a new periodical, and books of poetry and essays were all part of the programme.

Above all, the language had to be fortified and renewed at the same time. Soon the writers found themselves in opposing philo-

logical camps: the orthologs resisted the introduction of artificial words, the neologs – Kazinczy's side – were busy creating new derivations of existing words that could express the new notions of science, literature and society. We find the two most prominent poets of the turn of the century on Kazinczy's side. Dániel Berzsenyi and Ferenc Kölcsey, both country gentlemen of classical education, fell out with each other because of Kölcsey's harsh criticism of Berzsenyi's book of poems. 'Bombastic' and 'self-indulgent' were the terms the critic used, though his own rhymes were often sentimental and aped some German writers in manner. Yet both had a genius for the language, a burning desire 'to elevate the country', though Berzsenyi's method was to write rousing odes in the manner of Horace while Kölcsey reworked Hungarian themes about King Mátyás and about Zrinyi trying to capture his audience with his argument.

The language was a political issue no writer could avoid. Károly Kisfaludy, the younger of two writer brothers, was the first Hungarian dramatist to achieve nationwide acclaim. The theatre had Hungarian roots in the sixteenth century, but the German influence so much overshadowed the Hungarian that although mimes, charades and little plays were often performed in large country houses, the permanent theatre in Pest played only German plays in German. If Kisfaludy's patriotic material such as *The Tartars in Hungary* and other popular works had more success than merit, the best drama of this age – or perhaps any age in Hungary – was not performed in Pest until the late 1840s. József Katona's *Bánk bán* is a tragedy of Shakespearean proportions about a regent in the 12th century who saved his country from disaster but lost his 'honour' and his wife.

The representative novelists of the age were András Fáy, writer of stories, tales, legends and one long, very old-fashioned and rather orthodox family novel, *The House of Bélteki*, and the dashing baron Miklós Jósika who, having enchanted the public with the first properly constructed historical novel, went on to write another dozen. The model was Sir Walter Scott, whose influence was but the beginning of a Celtic penetration into Hungary; Ossian-Macpherson was to become a cult hero of the new generation, who devoured Welsh and Scottish legends, Scottish ballads and tales.

When Csokonai tried to live off his writing in the dying days of the 18th century, he perished in starvation and consumption; by contrast the leading talent of the 1830s succeeded well. Mihály

Vörösmarty was the oldest member of a triumvirate that included Sándor Petőfi and János Arany. *Aurora* was his periodical which eponymously heralded and introduced a generation of poets, critics and novelists unequalled in talent and influence to the present day. Vörösmarty, a tutor of young aristocrats and a freelance writer, was given a post at the newly formed Hungarian Academy of Sciences. He was the the arbiter of literary taste, of countless competitions, and the writer of an epic, *The flight of Zalán*, that came to be thought of as the national epic. His drama *Csongor and Tünde* is like an oriental tale with mediaeval philosophy and modern romantic sentiment motivating the action. Before 1848 he was the uncrowned king of a theoretical literary establishment, the literary king of the reform movement. After 1849 he became an alcoholic, a manic depressive and the creator of the most sombre, the darkest and the most beautiful poems in the language.

Petőfi was Vörösmarty's protégé in Pest when he decided to give up soldiering and acting for repertory companies, and to try his luck with poetry. Petőfi's appearance on the literary scene was similar to that of Burns's. Neither was his stature nor his output any meaner. He may have been weak at the novel and mediocre with his own drama, but his translation of *Coriolan* shows him at his best. Nor are his *Travel notes* inferior to anyone's having tried that genre. Petőfi's poems may or may not be the best stylistically, but they remain the most popular to this day. His meteoric rise, which started with folk songs that people could not distinguish from the real ones, culminated in his early political poetry. With the help of his fellow writers, 'the Ten', and fellow intellectuals, he practically engineered the outbreak of the 1848 revolution in Pest and wrote all the best poetry for it. In peacetime the public was enthralled by his folk epic *John the Hero*, in wartime he became a propaganda officer in the army (before the term propaganda was invented) and wrote the daily poem to rouse the soldiers and to inform public opinion.

Petőfi died in battle, as he had prophesized, but his best friend János Arany survived to live through the next two phases of Hungarian history: Austrian vengeance and the compromise. The collapse in 1849 had a catastrophic effect on the country's literary life. Newspapers and periodicals died with the free press, while writers and journalists were hunted down and arrested and went into hiding or were hounded out. No writer of importance would bow to renewed absolutism and Arany, a timid and retiring notary public,

wrote a poem in 1855 which became the symbol of personal liberty under oppression when published a decade and a half later. The ballad of *The Bards of Wales* tells how Edward I is unable to force the bards of conquered Wales to sing in his praise. The allegory (apart from the sheer technical brilliance) of the poem was so convincing that it now heads the list of other famous allegorical poems such as *The Bird to his sons* (Mihály Tompa), *Vigil* (János Vajda), *Bells of Carthage* (András Kozma) and *One sentence in tyranny* (Gyula Illyés). Arany's mastery and his output of ballads both historical, folk and 'urbanistic' have outshone his early epics (*Toldi*), songs, lyrical poems, literary essays and criticism. Meter, rhyme, vocabulary and content matched each other in unequalled poetic harmony in his verse. He lived to serve the Academy, to revere the memory of a brave epoch and its martyrs, and to hand down a language capable of discerning the shades of mood, of detecting psychological conditions, and of expressing the growing complexity of life in the era of new capitalistic enterprise after 1867.

Mihály Tompa, a Protestant pastor and creator of poetic romances, flower tales, character sketches and nature poems before 1848, used his knowledge of nature to evolve a new allegorical language, whereby storks meant imprisoned patriots, flying birds meant poets forced to emigrate, crows meant opportunists, and autumn signified the dying homeland. His younger contemporaries, Vajda and Reviczky, used parable, simile, and the whole armoury of the symbolic language in a different way. It is true that Vajda, a member of the '48 generation and a political radical, continued to represent the communal woe over the loss of independence in poems that strengthened the battle cry of radicalism, but at the same time, his intense interest in the pessimist philosophers, his unhappy love life, and his dual experience as a town-dweller pining after nature, gave him an insight into the condition of man. Gyula Reviczky, a lyric poet and a cosmopolitan in outlook, went even further on the road of individualism. Presaging the symbolists – who had a different hue when they belatedly came to Hungary – Reviczky's 'wish world' had the quality of a dream addressed to an audience fully aware that they were watching a dreamer dreaming.

Mór Jókai was also a friend of Petőfi, and a member of the group called 'the Ten'. The creator of a fictional world full of demigods, villains but also everyday people, this young lawyer of gentle birth had an unerring sense for doing the right thing. No wonder he was popular in England! In the age of reform he was a radical youth,

during the revolution, he was a popular journalist; in the time of repression his wife, who was older than him, helped him to hide, and when it was safe again he started to produce a flood of fiction that was to flow from his pen practically until the end. *Hungarian sketches in peace and war* was popular, and novels depicting the whole epoch like *The baron's sons* or *The new landlord* were also exportable in translations. Jókai's other tales, some historical, some with a fairy-tale element, some with an early science fiction background, such as *The lion of Yanina*, *The nameless castle*, or *Black diamonds*, had the quality of serials, with strong characters and eventful plots. His prodigality is proverbial: he wrote more books than Dickens and Thackeray put together, his influence on his Magyar contemporaries was more profound than that of Tolstoy on the Russian public, yet his quality was as uneven as life itself. No one was more eager to point out Jókai's deficiencies than Pál Gyulai, poet and critic, admirer of Arany, brother-in-law to Petőfi. Basically, Gyulai was right: Hungarian prose should have had the quality of language and the attention to detail that one can find in Arany's ballads. Yet even Zsigmond Kemény, the novelist who came closest to the psychological insights of the late Arany ballads, in his novels *Hard times* and *The lunatics*, was unable to update his own prose to the level of his clinical observations. The third significant Hungarian novelist of the age, József Eötvös (who was, incidentally, no mean political scientist and an educational reformer) also felt the pull of Latin expressions; juridical phrases weigh down his best novels, *The village notary* and *The Carthusian*. The problem was simply this: the novel looked back to a stage of Hungarian evolution when public life was carried out in Latin, German and Hungarian, and the remnants of this mixture lived on practically to the end of the 19th century. Poetry, however, going back to clear sources, and constantly rejuvenating itself, was capable of expressing everything within its range, in pure uncontaminated Hungarian. This may explain the subconscious decision by many major talents to opt for poetry.

The only worthwhile dramatist of post-revolutionary Hungary was Imre Madách, a landowner with philosophical and historical interests, and a writer of contemplative verses, heavy historical dramas and one single masterpiece. *The tragedy of man* expands the symbolism of lost national liberty into that of the loss of Eden, which is the symbol of man's struggle. Remoulding the Faust legend to fit into the Old Testament, and extending the parable to include a historical pageant leading up to his own day, Madách created

recognizable contemporary prototypes in his Adam, Eve and Lucifer. A counterpart to his sombre world is found in the drama of Ede Szigligeti and his colleagues, rivals and contemporaries. They worked, almost exclusively, with and through comedy and very light drama, producing entertainment with a real or a pseudo-nationalistic content. At his best, Szigligeti depicted the carefree life of touring companies (*Liliomfi*), gallantry, the duel of the sexes, the Hungarian customs of eating and drinking well.

Hungarian literary histories of the *fin de siècle* hardly ever discuss the oppressive amount of bad literature that was available to the people. Albums, almanacs, cheap books, weeklies, soft-cover romances, and penny ballads covered market stalls, railway stations and newspaper stands, and most families had at least treasure-trove calenders and illustrated annuals on a subscription basis. The critic of the era, Jenő Péterfy, was a gentleman of high taste and élitist persuasion who felt suffocated by his actual surroundings. The poet József Kiss belonged to a minority, the recently accepted but long assimilated Hungarian Jews, and he was glad to be able to add his poetical *Legends of grandfather* to the ever-growing corpus of national legends. The real sage of the age was the novelist and short-story writer Kálmán Mikszáth, the author of *The good people of Palócz*, of *St. Peter's umbrella* and of *The strange marriage* among many amusing, incisive, cynical but paradoxically charitable works of fiction. Mikszáth's characters at last talked like real people. Mixing with them at the level of a patriarchal landlord, and also at other levels as lawyer, part-time politician, writer and holiday-maker, he put them into his books with sympathy and practically no class prejudice. The centre of the stage in his novels is occupied by the gentry – as before — but they are completely stripped of heroism, though retaining their extravagant charm.

That charm was denied them by Endre Ady, the first Magyar lyric poet of European proportions, at the beginning of our century. Having left his Transtisza home and his petty noble background behind, he first made a name for himself as a radical journalist in Nagyvárad, and then as a revolutionary poet in Budapest. His volume entitled *New poems* appeared in 1906, loaded with 'new rhythms', a 'new kind of poems of new times', a new type of symbolism, new enemies to attack, and evidently new ways to look at everything. Ady had been to Paris, and returned as often as he could afford it. With him the Parisian orientation of writers was renewed – Petőfi had idolized the Paris of 1789 and Batsányi and his circle

had themselves heralded the French Revolution. Among Ady's comrades-in-arms we find a group of writers, editors and contributors involved with the periodical *West*. Babits, Juhász and Tóth among the poets, Ignotus and Schöpflin among the critics, Móricz, Kaffka, Kosztolányi and Füst among the writers came to represent such a change in attitude and in the style of writing that they virtually captured the intelligent reading public of their day and delivered a death-blow to the literary establishment well before it was toppled by social and political change.

In inverse ratio to their political fortunes, nations like Poland and Hungary produced messianic politicians, educators, writers and poets. Ady's messianism was partly a vocation (like that of the medicine man or the shaman of old) and partly a pose. His political poetry and journalism served the cause of the underprivileged, the peasants and the workers. But he also looked at man, and the condition of man, irrespective of class and nationality. He wrote Magyar existentialist poetry (fighting with religion, accepting fate, and denying then pleading with God) before the term was coined.

Jenő Heltai, Ferenc Molnár and Frigyes Karinthy were born in the same decade, the 1870s, and were born entertainers. Apart from sketches and one-act cabaret pieces, Heltai's most successful play was *The numb knight*, a serious comedy that could stand on any European stage, just as Molnár's plays could and still can. While Molnár's *The Guard* and *The Wolf*, on account of their stagecraft and masterful technique, are still alive on the stages of New York, London and Paris, the favourite of Hungarian critics has always been *Liliom*, a three-act play about a 'tough guy' in an amusement arcade. When Molnár moved abroad between the two world wars and reaped his Hollywood triumphs, he left the field in Hungary to Karinthy. Hungarian writers of this age in general, and Heltai, Molnár and Karinthy in particular, were ambidextrous. Karinthy's humorous sketches in *The distorting mirror*, and his parodies of his contemporaries in *That's how you write* are masterpieces of humour on a par with Leacock. His semi-serious sequels to *Gulliver's travels*, and the science fiction-type short stories produced by his fertile imagination reveal his Wellsian side. Karinthy's poetry is serious to a fault. In it he quests the *raison d'être* of human existence.

To our generation it appears futile and even childish, but the *West* group between the wars, and their heirs, were split into urbanists and populists. Some writers were classed retrospectively and much against their will, others wore the label as a banner.

Kosztolányi, a novelist, short-story writer and poet, the first president of the Hungarian P.E.N. club, should be an urbanist, because of his urban themes, his knowledge of languages, and his *l'art pour l'art* sympathies. Babits, the translator of the *Divine Comedy*, a poet of contemplative moods, a pacifist and arbiter of good taste and literary competitions, counts as an urbanist because he did not seem to throw in his lot with the common people. Dezső Szabó, on the other hand, a teacher of peasant children, the author of a deluge-like indictment of the régime in the form of a novel, *The swept away village*, is put on the right flank of the populists. On the left flank we find the most formidable genius of Hungarian prose: Zsigmond Móricz. It is almost inexplicable that books by the son of a peasant and a vicar's daughter should not appeal to the Anglo-American public. Yet, apart from his children's classic *Be faithful unto death*, not one of his forty-four books has appeared in English. His world is that of Hungary in the first four decades of the century: poor peasants, merry lords, corrupt officials, broken ambitions, drinking to stupor, eating to death and – perhaps the best of all – remembrance of times well passed. *The enchanted garden* is the title of his historical trilogy about the life and times of Gábor Bethlen, prince of Transylvania.

Móricz's style is passionate, pulsating, and direct. The style of Gyula Krúdy – once nearly forgotten, now a cult figure – is ironic, overpersonalized and magical. Krúdy has written about forty-five novels and short stories. But the best of these, the Sindbad stories, *The crimson coach*, and *What Béla the blind saw in love and woe*, are prose poems of epic proportions. Krúdy's style is somewhere between the prose of Proust and Virginia Woolf, though he read neither. His characters float in the river of Hungarian images and linguistic possibilities, taking early ego-trips, dreaming love dreams, fighting demons imaginary and real.

The 1930s, when Krúdy died impoverished of a heart attack, were perhaps as fertile in the field of literature as the 1840s had been. Erdélyi was writing his folk song-like poems, Tersánszky and Tamási published their respective fictionalized autobiographies called *Marci Kakuk* and *Ábel*, both testimonies in favour of the have-nots, Gyula Illyés brought out the *People of the Puszta* and re-created the life of Petőfi, and Attila József wrote some of the most profound poems of the decade: *Ode*, *My homeland*, *By the Danube*, *Consciousness* and *The pain is sharp*. Judging by the tone of the best Hungarian writing, society was ready for a revolutionary change, be it a violent

or a peaceful revolution. There is an urgency in the writing of Illyés, a peasant, a former émigré with a French education. While wishing 'to elevate his kinsmen' he invented a sub-genre, that of lyric sociology. There is an earnestness about Attila József, who set out to be the first good proletarian poet Hungary had ever had, and ended up in 1937 as the prototype of the rejected genius. The world of József is intense and gentle, class-conscious and playful, aggressive and love-hungry at the same time; in other words it curiously anticipates contemporary feeling, the sentiments of an atomized and atomic eye. Apart from the academics and the essayists, the writer worth his mettle hoped for a solution from the left: from the communists or the social democrats or the populists. Writers and poets of Jewish origin, whatever their political persuasion, were rounded up by 1944. Antal Szerb the literary historian, Gábor Halász the essayist, György Sárközi the poet-novelist, and Miklós Radnóti the translator-poet died in Nazi hands in that year or the next. Each in his own way had made a unique contribution to Hungarian culture: Szerb's writing and outlook linked contemporary Britain – that of Huxley and of Shaw – to Hungary; Halász updated national classics; Sárközi proved that faith defies the accident of birth; and from a concentration camp Radnóti wrote the most enduring modern love poetry.

When the change came, however, few were prepared for its suddeness and alien radicality. Socialist poets like Kassák welcomed, at the beginning, the abolition of privilege and what seemed to be the disappearance of class. Writers silenced before the war, such as Tibor Déry, directed themselves, at the start, to the creation of a new socialist literature. But poets of the sensitivity of Milán Füst – a pioneer of free verse in *West* – and Lőrinc Szabó were cautious, and loners such as János Kodolányi wrote for their own desk drawers. The three years of rebuilding – when Illyés could enthuse about land reform, when János Pilinszky and György Rónay could lay down the foundations in public of a new Hungarian Catholic poetry, when Sándor Weöres could write in any style he liked and György Faludy could write about anything he liked – came to an end in 1948.

To emulate the political dictator who in turn had copied Stalin, the Hungarian literary scene then had its own dictator: József Révai. The five years between 1948 and 1953 were equal in darkness to the five years following 1849. A new articifical style, socialist realism, was invented and enforced; poets either published dithyrambs about socialist life and leaders or went into the exile of silence. Those who spoke up harshly, like Faludy, or made criticisms, like Határ, were sent to prison or to labour camps; those who could stand it no longer, like Cs. Szabó, escaped; and those who deviated, like Déry or György Lukács the philosopher, were publicly exposed and humiliated.

Cracks appeared in the wall of censorship in 1953. Writers and poets who in the earlier days of the dictatorship had been duped into celebrating it, believing that they had been serving progress, now did everything to pull Stalin's shaking building down. Among the many who made criticisms (starting with self-criticism) the most eminent was Gyula Háy, a playwright of historical and social dramas such as *Caesar and the peasant* and *The bridge of life*, and an old communist, like most of the reformers. By 1955 these writers had clustered around the *Literary Gazette*; in the course of the next twelve months they revolutionized public opinion and through other intellectual organizations like the Petőfi Circle they spearheaded radical reform. The high watermark was the 2 November 1956 issue of the *Literary Gazette*, in which Déry lamented on the dead who had just died for freedom, Kassák published an anti-Stalin curse and Illyés released his *Sentence on tyranny*.

When cross-sections of vital moments in time, such as the Russian-engineered repression that followed 1956, are examined, it becomes clear that Hungarian history and literature share more than a bond, and are linked by more than just fate. They seem to be the two Janus faces of the same phenomenon: the manifestation of a will to survive. After 1956, many writers escaped, set up the Hungarian writers' organization in exile and began to publish in New York, Paris, London, Rome, and Brussels. Others, like Déry and Háy, survived prison sentences and started to work in any way they could when released. The aesthetes kept close to people like Albert Gyergyai and Endre Illés, whose literary standards were high, and whose honesty was never suspect. As life became easier and internal politics less restrictive, the leading talents Ferenc Juhász, László Nagy, his wife Margit Szécsi, and Sándor Weöres covered the field with long, strange, beautiful, soporific poems, both boring and exciting. Dezső Tandori, young and braver, turned his back to them and joined the international avant-garde. Among the other loners, Ágnes Nemes Nagy created most memorable, technically perfect, and intellectually honest poetry, with lines and stanzas of haunting

beauty.

Prose, at its best, seems now to be self-disciplined. Magda Szabó has used the interior monologue technique to build up a sequence of woman's novels that now vie with the pre-First World War oeuvre of Margit Kaffka. Miklós Mészöly surprised highbrow readers with hermetic works of fiction, powerful and puzzling; *Saulus* can serve as an example. György Moldova, a parodist, reporter and popular novelist has built his compulsively interesting but lightweight near misses in fiction around the focal points of social drama in the last twenty years. As regards the stage, László Németh, almost as old as the century, a veteran of the essay and the novel, continued to write and publish his interrupted series of historical dramas, while Miklós Hubay, a master of dialogue and of modern theatrical technique, offered on the stage a glimpse of current conflicts. The most typical and the most successful playwright of the post-1956 era is István Örkény, whose *Cat's play* and *Tóth family* can also be seen on the Western stage.

Away from the main river of Hungarian literature, the surrounding streams in the socialist countries and the more distant creeks in Western democracies continue to add quantity, quality and colour. In Yugoslavia, Ferenc Fehér has been writing about the landscape of Bácska, which Serb and Hungarian should appreciate equally if given access to it. In Transylvania Sándor Kányádi and András Sütő are the guardians of the Hungarian language and literary heritage with works that influence the local Magyar community in the same way that Pantycelyn's hymns used to keep the Welsh language alive. In London, László Cs. Szabó, a Christian writer and essayist, and Győző Határ, a pagan poet and playwright, have been broadcasting and writing in a way that mirrors Europe, so that the echoes can be heard in Cluj (Kolozsvár), Belgrade and Budapest. And finally, like a border soldier of old, László Kemenes Géfin has been committing to paper his fighting, contentious, uncensored poetry in Toronto, perhaps to prove the unity and endurance of Hungarian culture.

Outstanding individual writers

Two-thirds of the writers on the following list should be on any list compiled by someone who knows the field; the remainder are a matter of choice.

Poetry

Name	Dates
Janus Pannonius	1434–1472
Sebestyén Tinódi	1505–1556

Name	Dates
Bálint Balassa	1554–1594
Miklós Zrinyi	1620–1664
János Gyöngyőssy	1629–1704
Kata Szidónia Petrőczy	1662–1708
János Batsányi	1763–1845
Mihály Fazekas	1766–1828
Mihály Csokonai Vitéz	1773–1805
Dániel Berzsenyi	1776–1836
Ferenc Kölcsey	1790–1838
Mihály Vörösmarty	1800–1855
Mihály Tompa	1817–1868
János Arany	1817–1882
Sándor Petőfi	1823–1849
János Vajda	1827–1897
József Kiss	1843–1921
Gyula Reviczky	1855–1889
Endre Ady	1877–1919
Mihály Babits	1883–1941
Gyula Juhász	1883–1937
Árpád Tóth	1886–1928
Lajos Kassák	1887–1967
József Erdélyi	1896–1978
György Sárközi	1899–1945
Lőrinc Szabó	1900–1957
Gyula Illyés	1902–
Attila József	1905–1937
Jenő Dsida	1907–1938
Miklós Radnóti	1909–1944
György Faludy	1910–
István Vas	1910–
György Rónay	1913–1978
Sándor Weöres	1913–
Ferenc Fáy	1921–
János Pilinszky	1921–
Ágnes Nemes Nagy	1922–
László Nagy	1925–1978
Ferenc Juhász	1928–
Margit Szécsi	1928–
Ferenc Fehér	1928–
László Kemenes Géfin	1937–
Dezső Tandori	1938–

Prose

Name	Dates
Gáspár Heltai	1490–1574
Gáspár Károlyi	1529–1591
Péter Bornemisza	1535–1584
Péter Pázmány	1570–1637
Kelemen Mikes	1690–1761
György Bessenyei	1747–1811
Ferenc Kazinczy	1759–1831
József Kármán	1769–1795
András Fáy	1786–1864
Miklós Jósika	1794–1865
József Eötvös	1813–1871
Zsigmond Kemény	1814–1875
Mór Jókai	1825–1904
Pál Gyulai	1826–1909
Kálmán Mikszáth	1847–1910
Jenő Péterfy	1850–1899
Géza Gárdonyi	1863–1922
Ignotus	1869–1949
Aladár Schöpflin	1872–1950
Dezső Szabó	1879–1945
Ferenc Móra	1879–1934
Zsigmond Móricz	1879–1942
Margit Kaffka	1880–1918
Dezső Kosztolányi	1885–1936
Frigyes Karinthy	1887–1938
Józsi Jenő Tersánszky	1888–1969
Milán Füst	1888–1967
Albert Gyergyai	1893–
Tibor Déry	1894–1977
Áron Tamási	1897–1966
János Kodolányi	1899–1969
Antal Szerb	1901–1945
Gábor Halász	1901–1945
Endre Illés	1902–
László Cs. Szabó	1905–

Magda Szabó	1917–	Ede Szigligeti	1814–1878
Miklós Mészöly	1921–	Imre Madách	1823–1864
András Sütő	1927–	Jenő Heltai	1871–1957
György Moldova	1934–	Ferenc Molnár	1878–1952
		Gyula Háy	1900–1975
		László Németh	1901–1975
Drama		István Örkény	1912–1979
Károly Kisfaludy	1788–1830	Győző Határ	1914–
József Katona	1791–1830	Miklós Hubay	1918–

VI. The bibliography

The bibliographical control of Hungarian published material is good; the current foreign-language portion of this material, the so-called *hungarica*, is issued almost exclusively by two of the largest state publishing houses: Corvina Press and Akadémiai Kiadó. Although there is a general Hungarian national bibliography with many sectional offshoots, such as the repertories of periodical publications at home and abroad, and lists of periodicals current and retrospective, there is no agency yet that lists all the book titles in foreign languages. Publishers' lists and the holdings of individual libraries are, therefore, the best starting points.

The total annual output of Hungarian publishers in books and pamphlets is now consistently in the seven thousand range. This means that, taking the book per head average, Hungary ranks about fourth in Europe, making it a bookish country. Items published in foreign languages amount to several hundred each year, with English accounting for by far the lion's share. Countries surrounding Hungary have ethnic publication programmes that include Magyar as well, but just as much Hungarian and more *hungarica* material is issued from Western countries, particularly the United States. The finest *hungarica* catalogue published to date is the *Guide to Hungarian studies* by Elemér Bakó of the Library of Congress. The most extensive relevant information can be obtained from the British Museum subject catalogue cumulations.

The choice of items in this bibliography was guided by relevance, availability, the author's geographical position and, in certain subjects where value judgements predominate, by taste. Relevance should speak for itself; its first criterion is topicality. Availability is a key factor: where relatively little has been written in English, such as on transport, the choice is narrowed down by language. Periodical

articles of the last five years – other things being equal – were preferred to older ones. Items of historical interest, unobtainable or privately circulated, may well be of limited use. One could, for instance, quote many historical works still relevant except that they are unobtainable for most people. By the author's geographical position, I mean that, by being based in England, my knowledge of a certain type of British *hungarica* (e.g. translations from the Hungarian) is more intimate than my knowledge of the same type of material published in America. Neither should the influence of my 'microclimate' be denied: the choice of certain editions of otherwise standard works, the preference of certain scientific encyclopaedias as against others, is to some degree influenced by the stock of the John Rylands University Library. And when quoting periodical articles on theatre and film and on the visual arts we are (beyond some established successes and national classics) left to our own devices. Yet, it is justifiable to say, that by far the majority of all the items in this selection are standard works which would be included in any English-language bibliography of a similar size.

Finally, one may reflect on the inclusion of certain classification headings and the exclusion of others. 'Philosophy and psychology', particularly when coupled together, may show general traits – as branches of the sciences do – rather than particular national ones. But there were in these disciplines some exceptional Hungarian personalities whose work warrants sectional treatment. 'Politics' is an inclusive term: in its present form it depletes 'Administration' and decimates 'Modern history'. 'Food and wine' are Hungarian preoccupations and exports; 'Humour' is (or can be) a recognized Hungarian characteristic; 'Architecture' is deemed sufficiently important in Hungary to require its own section; and 'Music' includes only writing about music, not scores in any form. Works translated into English from the Hungarian are numerous and a fair number are listed; works translated into the Hungarian are countless and none are listed.

The multiplicity of subjects often covered in any one book is, by and large, covered by the system of cross-references and by the index. The arrangement of the items within each classification heading is alphabetical by author or corporate heading. The titles are 96% English, 3% other Western languages and 1% Hungarian. The first names of Hungarian authors are always quoted in Hungarian, according to the normal usage of the British Library. Those wishing to find English equivalents are referred to the composite glossary.