

CRUCIAL POINTS OF THE EUROPEAN HISTORY

936

Otto the Great begins consolidation of the Holy Roman Empire.

1075 – 1122

The Investiture Controversy

1095-1291: The Crusading Era

1215

Magna Charta is presented to King John

1222 – 1242

The Mongol Invasion of Europe

1337 – 1453

Hundred Years War

1385 – 1535

THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE

/Brunelleschi, Donatello, Leonardo Da Vinci, Michelangelo, Raphael/

HUMANISM (1250 – 1500)

/Dante, Petrarca, Leonardo Bruni, Machiavelli, Thomas More/

1415

Jan Hus is burned as heretic

1453

Fall of Constantinople

THE REFORMATION

1517 – 1555

The Lutheran Reform Movement

1517: Luther posts the "**95 Theses**" on the door of the **Wittenberg** Castle Church.

The Reformation had profound effects on the unity of Europe. Not only were nations divided one from another by their religious orientation, but some states were torn apart internally by religious strife, avidly fostered by their external enemies. France suffered this fate in the sixteenth century in the series of conflicts

CRUCIAL POINTS OF THE HUNGARIAN HISTORY

1000

Saint Stephen I. is crowned king, and during his reign Christianity is adopted and the structure of the Hungarian state is set up.

1222

The **Golden Bull** issued during the reign of King Andrew II confirms feudal privileges and grants the right of resistance to the nobility.

1241-1242

The **Mongols** invade the country. The reconstruction is Béla IV's achievement.

1307

A ruler from the House of **Anjou**: Charles Robert I ascends the throne.

1342-1382

Under the reign of Charles' son, **Louis I**, the Great, the medieval state of **Hungary attains its largest territory**. Louis secures the throne of Naples, and becomes **king of Poland** in 1370.

1396

In the battle of Nikápoly the **Turks** secure their first important victory by defeating the crusader army of Sigismund of Luxembourg.

1456

János **Hunyadi** successfully defends Nándorfehérvár, today's Belgrade, and **stops Turkish attacks for half a century**.

1458-1490

During the reign of king Mátyás (Matthias) Hunyadi's: Hungary is an important European power: the Black Army conquers part of Bohemia and takes Vienna.

1514

The greatest Hungarian **peasant uprising** led by György Dózsa.

known as the French Wars of Religion, which ended in the triumph of the Bourbon Dynasty. England avoided this fate for a while and settled down under Elizabeth to a moderate Anglicanism. Germany, divided into numerous small states under the theoretical framework of the Holy Roman Empire, was also divided along internally drawn sectarian lines, until the Thirty Years' War seemed to see religion replaced by nationalism as the motor of European conflict.

1598 – 1689 Absolute Monarchies

ABSOLUTISM

political system where one person holds absolute power

After the Treaty of Westphalia (1648) which ended the **Thirty Years' War**, Absolutism became the norm of the continent, while parts of Europe experimented with constitutions foreshadowed by the **English Civil War** and particularly the Glorious Revolution. (1688-89) European military conflict did not cease, but had less disruptive effects on the lives of Europeans. In the advanced north-west, the Enlightenment gave a philosophical underpinning to the new outlook, and the continued spread of literacy, made possible by the printing press (J. **GUTENBERG**), created new secular forces in thought.

THE ENLIGHTENMENT

In the period known as The Age of Enlightenment, 18th century Europe showed remarkable cultural changes characterized by a loss of faith in traditional religious sources of authority and a turn toward human rights, science, rational thoughts and the replacement of theocracies and autocracies with democratic republics.

The upheavals of the Enlightenment led directly to the American Revolutionary War as well as the **French Revolution** and significantly influenced the **Industrial Revolution**.

THE FRENCH REVOLUTION AND NAPOLEON

At the end of the 18th century the refusal of the French king Louis XVI (endorsed by the nobility and the clergy) to share his political powers with the so-called Third Estate led to the 1789 French Revolution, a significant attempt to create a new form of government based on the principles of *Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité* (freedom, equality and brotherhood). The king was executed, France

29 August 1526

The independent Hungarian state falls in the battle of Mohács against the attacking Turkish empire. One camp of the feudal estates elects János Szapolyai while another camp elects Ferdinand I (of Habsburg) king.

1541

Buda is seized by the **Turks**. The country is divided into three parts, the largest part is held by the Turks while Northern and Western Hungary recognises the Habsburgs as ruler and Transylvania becomes an independent principality pursuant to the Speyer treaty of 1570.

1593-1606

The 15-year war against the Turks ends with the Peace of Zsitvatorok.

1604-1606

The fight of István Bocskai (ruler of Transylvania from 1605) for **independence** ends with the Peace of Vienna.

1613-1629

Transylvania's golden age under the rule of Gábor Bethlen.

1683-1699

The Turks are expelled from Hungary with the help of the Habsburg emperor. The castle of Buda is recaptured in 1686.

1703-1711

War of **Independence** of Ferenc Rákóczi II (prince of Transylvania from 1704, ruling prince from 1705) against the Habsburgs. In 1707 the national assembly at Ónod declares the dethronement of the Habsburgs, but the war of **independence** fails.

1740-1780

Reign of **Maria Theresa** (apostolic monarch from 1758).

1780-1790

Reign of Joseph II. The enlightened absolutist monarch, the "king with a hat" introduces a number of **reforms** but, with the exception of three, revokes them on his deathbed.

was proclaimed a Republic and a sort of democratic government was established. In the subsequent turmoil (associated with the coalition of most European monarchies waging war against republican France) General Napoleon Bonaparte took power. In the many wars of the Napoleonic Era, he repeatedly defeated Austria (whose emperor was forced to resign the title of Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire), Russia, Prussia and other powers allied for the most part with Britain. After being proclaimed French emperor in 1804, he was finally defeated in 1815 at Waterloo.

THE 19th CENTURY

After the defeat of revolutionary France, the other great powers tried to restore the situation which existed before **1789**. However, their efforts were unable to stop the spread of revolutionary movements: the middle classes had been deeply influenced by the ideals of democracy of the French revolution; on the other hand, the **Industrial Revolution** brought important economical and social changes, and the lower classes started to be influenced by Socialist, Communist and Anarchistic ideas, especially those summarized by **Karl Marx** in the Manifesto of the Communist Party. Further **instability** came from the formation of several **nationalist movements** (in Germany, Italy, Poland etc.), seeking national unification and/or liberation from foreign rule. As a result, the period between 1815 and 1871 saw a large number of revolutionary attempts and independence wars: even if the revolutionaries were often defeated, in 1871 most European states had become constitutional (rather than absolute) monarchies, and Germany and Italy had developed into nation states.

BELLE EPOQUE

The Belle époque, meaning "the pretty era" in the French language, was an era in the late 19th century, sometimes extended until the start of World War I. Art nouveau flourished in this era.

1825

Count **István Széchenyi** offers one year's revenue of his estates for the establishment of the **Hungarian Academy of Sciences** in the national assembly of Bratislava /Pozsony/ - the beginning of the Reform Period. Starting from 1832, the national assembly conducts its **sessions in Hungarian instead of Latin**.

15 March 1848

Revolution in Pest. On 7 April King Ferdinand V appoints the first independent and responsible Hungarian government led by Count **Lajos Batthyány**, and on 11 April assents to the laws adopted by the last feudal Diet.

September 1848

A **war of independence** begins against the Habsburgs. After the initial defeats, the Hungarian troops win a series of victories.

14 April 1849

The national assembly proclaims the **dethronement of the Habsburgs** and elects Lajos Kossuth as governor-president in Debrecen.

13 August 1849

Fall of the War of Independence. The Hungarian army capitulates to the Austrian emperor's and the Russian czar's superior forces at Világos.

6 October 1849

The martyrs of the War of Independence are executed in Arad (Oradea), Lajos Batthyány in Pest. By way of retaliation, all laws adopted in 1848-1849 are invalidated, only the liberation of serfs remains in force. The constitutional independence of Hungary is abolished and the Austrian customs and legal system is introduced.

29 May 1867

Compromise with the House of Habsburg

Francis Joseph I is crowned King of Hungary and the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy is established. Dynamic economic development starts in Hungary while political and national tensions are aggravated.

1896

The **MILLENNIUM**, the thousandth anniversary of the **Magyar conquest**, is celebrated with great pomp.

After the relatively peaceful *belle époque*, the rivalry between European powers exploded in 1914, when World War I started. On one side were Germany, Austria-Hungary and Turkey (the Central Powers), while on the other side stood Serbia and the **Triple Entente** - the loose coalition of France, Britain and Russia, which were joined by Italy in 1915 and by the United States in 1917. Despite the defeat of Russia in 1917 (the war was one of the major causes of the Russian Revolution, leading to the formation of the communist Soviet Union), the *Entente* finally prevailed in the autumn of 1918.

In the **Treaty of Versailles** (1919) the winners imposed hard conditions on Germany and recognised the new states (such as Poland, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia) created in eastern Europe out of the defunct German, Austro-Hungarian and Russian empires, supposedly on the basis of national self-determination. In the following decades, fear of Communism and the economic Depression of 1929-33 led to the rise of extreme governments - **Fascist or Nazi** - in Italy (1922), Germany (1933), Spain (after a civil war ending in 1939) and other countries (such as Hungary).

After allying with Italy in the "**Pact of Steel**" and signing a non-aggression pact with the Soviet Union, the German leader Adolf Hitler started World War II in September 1939 following a military build-up throughout the late 1930s. After initial successes (mainly the conquest of western Poland, France and the [Balkans] before 1941) Germany began to over-extend itself in 1941 by attacking Russia; despite initial successes, the German army was stopped close to Moscow in December 1941, and one year later it suffered a decisive defeat in the battle of Stalingrad. Meanwhile, Japan (allied to Germany and Italy since September 1940) attacked the United States on December 7, 1941; Germany then completed its over-extension by declaring war on the United States. War raged between the Axis Powers (Germany, Italy, and Japan) and the Allied Forces (Britain, France, Russia, and the United States). Allied Forces won in North Africa and invaded Italy in 1943 and invaded occupied France in 1944. In the spring of 1945 Germany itself was invaded from the east by Russia and from the west by the other Allies respectively; Hitler committed suicide and Germany surrendered in early May. The last Axis Power, Japan, surrendered in August 1945, after the United States used **atomic bombs** to destroy the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

28 July 1914

Following the **assassination of Francis Ferdinand**, heir to the Austrian throne, the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy declares war on Serbia; **World War I** breaks out.

1918

As a result of the defeat the Monarchy falls apart.

In the wake of defeat in the **First World War** (1914-1918), the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy came to an end. In Hungary a short-lived communist council republic followed a bourgeois democratic revolution. After its collapse, **the new government was forced to sign the Trianon Peace Treaty in 1920**. Since the pens of the negotiators were guided by military-strategic considerations when they drew the borders of the successor states, two thirds of the Hungarian nation found itself outside the borders of the country. With this loss of territory (Hungary had to renounce 70 per cent of its former land) it was also deprived of access to its raw materials. These historical facts had a commanding influence on the policies of **Regent Miklós Horthy**. His authoritative, conservative government misjudged the balance of power: though not Fascist, the Hungarian government sided with Hitler in the hope of regaining some of the territory lost after the First World War. Between 1938 and 1941 this policy was partly successful, but Hungary entered the **Second World War** on the side of the Axis powers. In 1944 German forces occupied the country and, after an unsuccessful attempt to pull out of the war, in October 1944 the extreme right wing **Arrow-Cross** Party came to power. Hungary had reached low ebb in its history. In 1944 a new Hungarian government was formed in Debrecen, a town in the Eastern part of the country which had by this time been liberated.

In February 1946 a republic was proclaimed and a year later in February 1947, representatives of the Hungarian government signed the **Paris Peace Treaty**, which effectively restored the 1938 borders.

HOLOCAUST in general

Holocaust is a Hebrew word with Greek roots, which means "sacrifice". We shall use it to mean all the genocide and crimes against humanity practiced by the Nazis and their allies, whose victims were not only **Jews, Roma/Gypsies, homosexuals, people with mental and physical disabilities** and political and religious opponents, but also the Polish **nobility** and **intelligentsia** and groups of Russian and Serbian **civilians** who were massacred, as were the inhabitants of various villages in different parts of Europe.

Reliable sources estimate the total number of victims of the Holocaust crimes to be at least 8 million, including two thirds of the Jewish population of Europe.

One feature of the Nazi Holocaust that distinguishes it from other mass murders was the systematic method with which the mass killings were conducted. Detailed lists of present, and future, potential victims were made and meticulous records of the killings have been found. In addition, considerable effort was expended over the course of the Holocaust to find increasingly efficient means of killing more people, for example, by switching from **carbon monoxide** poisoning in the Aktion Reinhard death camps of Belzec, Sobibor, Treblinka to the use of **Zyklon-B** at Majdanek and Auschwitz; gas vans using carbon monoxide for mass killings were used in the Chelmno death camp.

In addition to mass killings, Nazis conducted many experiments with prisoners, children inclusive. **Dr. Josef Mengele**, one of the most widely known Nazis, was known as the "Angel of Death" by the inmates of Auschwitz, for his experiments.

The full extent of what was happening in German-controlled areas was not known until after the war. However, numerous rumors and eye-witness accounts from escapees and others did give some indication that Jews were being killed in large numbers. Some protests were held. For example on October 29, 1942 in the United Kingdom, leading clergymen and political figures held a public meeting to register outrage over Germany's persecution of Jews.

In HUNGARY

The Hungarian Jewish community was the largest community to be deported so late in the war, and those outside Budapest were deported with frightening speed. Yet, until the German occupation in March 1944, Hungary was a place where Jews could still find refuge from the Holocaust.

"If there is such a thing as fate there is no freedom. If there is freedom, there is no fate; ... we ourselves are the fate."

Nobel laureate in literature **Imre Kertész**

Hungary

Victims: 260 000

Survivors: 300 000

Concentration and Extermination Camps:
Auschwitz-Birkenau, Dachau, Mauthausen, Belzec, Treblinka, Ravensbrück, etc.

World War I and especially World War II ended the pre-eminent position of western Europe. The map of Europe was redrawn and divided as it became the principal zone of contention in the Cold War between the two newly emergent world powers, the capitalistic United States and the communist Soviet Union. The U.S.A. placed western Europe (Britain, France, Italy, West Germany, Spain etc.) under their sphere of influence, establishing the NATO alliance as a protection against a possible Soviet invasion; the Soviet Union claimed eastern Europe (Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, East Germany) and formed the Warsaw Pact. Europe was divided by a "Iron Curtain". This situation lasted until 1989, when the weakening of the Soviet Union led to glasnost and the ending of the division of Europe - Soviet satellites were free to remove Communist regimes (and the two Germanies were able to re-unify). In 1991 the Soviet Union itself collapsed, splitting into several states (the main one remaining the Russian Federation) and removing communists from most governments.

After the end of World War II, western Europe slowly began a process of political and economic integration, desiring to unite Europe and prevent another war. This process resulted eventually in the development of organisations such as the **Council of Europe** and the **European Union**. After the end of the Cold War, these organizations began to include nations within eastern Europe as well.

The process of **integrating Europe** was slow due to the reluctance of most nation states to give up their sovereignty. However, the process began to accelerate in the early 21st century. (2004: **25 Member States**) Whereas the **European Union** started out as a loose economic alliance among European nations, Europe finally began taking steps to create a true Europe-wide **federal government** in the early 21st century.

At the turn of the century, nations within the European Union had created a **free trade zone** and eliminated most travel barriers across their borders. A new common currency for Europe, the **Euro**, was established electronically in 1999, officially tying all of the currencies of each nation to each other. The new currency was put into circulation in 2002 and the old currencies began to be retired.

The first free elections were held immediately after the war, in 1945. Six parties, which had the approval of the Allied Control Commission, took part. the Independent Smallholders' Party gained 245 seats, the Communists 70. By 1947 there were only two parties left to oppose the Communists who were enjoying support from **Moscow**, and these were gradually broken down under the increasing political pressure from the **USSR**. Under the leadership of **Mátyás Rákosi** (1949-1956) a Soviet-type Constitution was passed by Parliament and a one-party system came into being, which ignored national traditions and slavishly copied the Soviet model. On **October 23, 1956** a popular uprising, which gradually turned into a revolution, broke out against the hated leadership and regime. It was crushed by Soviet Red Army troops, and in 1958 the leader of the 1956 revolutionary government, Imre Nagy, and several of his associates were executed. The dictatorship was restored with Soviet support and hundreds fell victim to reprisals. In the years of János **Kádár**'s leadership (1956-1988), after a period of retaliation for the revolution, the regime was consolidated, but even under these conditions of relative liberality and the so-called soft dictatorship, it became clear that socialism was not reformable and the country and its people were in need of change.

The industry, the agriculture and the whole social life was organized by the communists and the living standard was in a very low level, meantime in Western Europe began the developing of the industrial and social life.

Demands for a **multi-party system** were gaining strength and the collapse of the one-party state became inevitable. On June 16, 1989 a huge crowd gathered to witness a fitting **reburial for the martyrs of the 1956 revolution**. On October 23, 1989 Hungary was renamed Republic of Hungary. In the spring of 1990 - after 45 years of a single party regime - free elections were held. Since then, four coalition governments have led the country through fundamental structural, economical and social changes which resulted in the establishment of the firm democratic Hungary of today. Further, Hungary regained its active leadership role in the Central Eastern European region. In 1999 Hungary became a member of **NATO**. Hungary successfully concluded its accession negotiations with the **European Union** at the end of 2002, and became a member of this organization on May 1, 2004.