Béla Török

In the Mainstream of XX Century – A Living History

Part 3 - HOW I SAW IT

(The published book in Hungarian has been translated by Leslie (László) Török into three parts. Part 1 contains extensive reflections on the author's father, childhood, tertiary education, university degrees, and early employment. Part 2 recounts his family's life as refugees in Germany and their experiences as migrants in their new home in distant Australia. Part 3 offers an assessment of the politics of that period and how he sees the future possibilities.)

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Hungary's Miklós Horthy

I was born in Szeged, and my earliest memories come from the era of revolutions (e.g., the communist revolution in Hungary 1918-1919). It is natural that in my eighties when I try to revive the past and compile my impressions of the quarter of a century (1920-1945) representing Miklós Horthy's Hungary, I can only report through *Szeged glasses*. Szeged is where I lived, went to school and college. This is where I became acquainted with the country's political life, and it is natural that I cannot paint a full picture of this era. You must also keep in mind that, through my family, I belonged to the noble middle class.

I've never completed any sociological studies, so this chapter can only be a summary of my memories and insights, without scientific inquiry. But perhaps for a later historian, this may something to the perception of this era.

It is understandable that after the lost Second World War, the winners -and all those who assisted the invading power (the Russian Communist Government)- tried to attribute all blame to the Horthy era. This might have seemed acceptable to many in the misery of the first post-war years, but as time went by and the real face of the new system in Hungary revealed itself to everyone, people slowly began to recall their memories of the calm and peaceful life of the twenties and thirties. And when they talked about the past, the Horthy era was referred to as the "*little peace*". I believed this reflected the true popular view of the Russian occupation.

When Miklós Horthy became head of state (Regent) in 1920, I was a small child, and I received impressions of the events from my parents' narratives. My father was then a young man of about forty years. He had been a soldier in World War I and, after the decommissioning, built a lawyer's practice. He participated in the counterrevolutionary organization in Szeged as a patrol officer, but during friendly discussions he met future Prime Ministers Gyula Gömbös (1932-1936) and Pál (Paul) Teleki (1920-1921 and 1939-1941)

An anti-communist alliance called ABC was formed in Szeged. One of the most enthusiastic members of this organisation was Pál Bokor, a lawyer. I knew

him well. He was a nationally sensitive, socially aware, good Hungarian man who worked for decades to improve the conditions of Hungarian peasants and workers. He eventually died in emigration. From Szeged, the reorganised armed forces also set out toward other parts of the country when the international situation allowed the national government to extend its influence. My uncle, Lieutenant Ittebei Miklós Kiss, was one of the most decorated soldiers of the First World War.

There were no major atrocities in Szeged during this era of revolutions. During the Autumn Rose Revolution, moderate people became leaders, and in Szeged the revolution never developed into real communism, especially after the French occupation. This ensured that the wounds suffered by Szeged society were not severe.

All those who had been exposed on the left side were able to find their place again in the political and social life of Szeged.

The Jewish people in Szeged did not break away from the nationally minded population. Szeged was not a destination for the Orthodox Jewish masses from Galicia, so the Jewish settlers in Szeged did not have to choose between the highly subversive communist–Jewish revolutionary strata and the Hungarian population. As a consequence, the Jewish community—active mainly in trade and industry—quickly found its place in the economic and social life of the city.

Looking back from a historical perspective, it can now be concluded that the leadership after the end of World War I was still in a nineteenth-century frame of mind. In their younger years, they had been sons of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, living within the political and social framework of the Habsburg Empire. They formed their worldview through conservative lenses, fighting for the restoration of the old state and social order.

Among their younger helpers, many held revolutionary ideas. Essential issues—such as land reform and improving the conditions of industrial workers—were in fact closer to the aims of the adherents of the failed revolution than the older generation was willing to admit.

These young people were the national radicals of the time. Naturally, some violence occurred, but every revolution has its victims. Yet pure faith and the will to bring change are essential elements of national radicalism.

The Horthy era was never able to cope with the tragedy that followed the lost war and the subsequent Trianon peace treaty. Hundreds of thousands of refugees entered the territory of Hungary, and placing these masses into employment required a superhuman effort. The influx of refugees made the national tragedy known to everyone, and society was completely overwhelmed by the determination not to consider the Trianon decision final. The slogan "No, Never, Never!" truly reflected the will of the whole nation. Through the refugees from Košice (Kassa), Bratislava (Pozsony), Cluj (Kolozsvár), Oradea (Nagyvárad), Arad, Subotica (Szabadka), and Novi Sad (Újvidék), the lost territories became vividly alive for the Hungarians of the Great Plain and the Danube region. The thought of liberation became almost a religion for the country, and the political forces—even if they had wanted to—could not have prevented it.

Later, governments were criticised for taking advantage of these emotional feelings of national despair, and some circles felt that this national preoccupation distracted attention from internal social problems.

From a long-term historical point of view, of course, the question arises whether it was wise to convince the population that it was possible to achieve a revision of the peace treaty by peaceful means. The Hungarian political leadership clearly overestimated the sympathetic words coming from Italian and English circles.

Perhaps it would have been better to focus our efforts on addressing Hungary's social and economic problems. But it is unimaginable to think that the priority of this important national question would have allowed us to refrain from joining the revisionist forces seeking to overturn the Versailles Treaty when the Second World War broke out. The nations of Eastern and South-Eastern Europe would not have been able to protect their neutrality.

In addition to revisionist politics, the era was dominated by fear—both among the people and the leaders—as they watched developments in Russia. When Béla Kun's bloody rule introduced the country to the aims and methods of a

Marxist revolution, it is understandable that most people became fundamentally anti-communist.
This attitude, however, had a negative consequence that influenced the fate of the nation for decades. All radical social reforms were portrayed by the capitalist and conservative forces as carrying the horrors of Bolshevism, thereby hindering the implementation of necessary reforms. It is characteristic that they even attempted to label the German ascension as "brown Bolshevism" in order to divert attention from social issues.
The atheism of the Russian Revolution also caused profound distress, and the ecclesiastical circles joined the anti-communist forces, though they sharply criticised the religious policies of the German system as well.
All this contributed to strengthening the position of the conservative powers. Economic life was heavily dependent on foreign capital, and István Bethlen tried to convince his City bankers that the era of revolutions was over and that Hungary was willing to take part in the French- and English-sponsored new European order.
As a result, the necessary land reform was not carried out, and only a limited land distribution helped to reduce some of the tension. It was obvious that a radical reform would only be possible if the current landowners were willing to accept partial compensation. Those who promoted the principle of private ownership protested against this. Even though the lands held by the churches were not private property, the church leadership—despite the higher principles of Ottokár Prohászka—was unwilling to take the lead and obstructed all serious steps in this direction.
Alongside the church estates, the aristocracy skilfully used ancient estate laws to defend its interests. Those who demanded land reform were opposed on the grounds that all previous governments had approved these land awards, and that in a truncated country one should not now turn against the historical ruling class of Hungary.
It is true that the great estates of the Hungarian aristocracy came into being through Habsburg donations and from confiscated Kuruc estates, but aside from this question, it can now be concluded that the most radical land reform plans did not aim at the destruction of all aristocratic large estates. Only a few

families would have suffered losses, limiting their holdings to 500 hectares, while greatly assisting Hungarian agriculture.
Mátyás (Mathew) Matolcsy was the leading expert in this field, and time has since validated his plans.
If Hungary had been able to implement these reforms, there would have been less possibility for the Communist rulers to seek the cooperation of the peasants (farm workers). In the 1980s, under the communist system, agriculture in Hungary could only be revitalised if medium-sized farming estates were reinstated to supply the European marketplace.
From a historical perspective, it is easy to see that the leadership of the Miklós Horthy government was only transitional in nature. They clearly understood that their actions had to be measured and thoughtful in re-establishing order and creating a climate capable of attracting foreign capital to enable progress. Their goals were, on the whole, achieved. The tragedy for both the nation and its leadership was that, after only a few short years, the world was struck by the Great Depression, which halted further progress.
The economic depression was universally addressed with deflationary policies, and the Hungarian leadership followed this path as well. At first, this eased the recession, but it soon deepened the crisis, and the burden of millions of struggling people cast a long shadow over Hungarian political life. In this crisis, political forces with support from both the left and the right began to organise in an effort to rebuild Hungarian society.
In truth, Hungarian society of the 1920s still belonged to the nineteenth century. Many thinkers recognised this. János Makay wrote a satire of his countrymen and of Hungarian society, and Gyula Szekfű's Three Generations examined the Hungarian neo-baroque mentality. The Hungarian middle class was almost completely isolated from the peasant, craftsman, and merchant classes. It identified itself with the nation, yet regarded those outside its own ranks as not its equals. Makay's observation was accurate: those who were called "úr" ("lord," "gentleman") in Hungary were often not considered true gentlemen at all.
What was the reason for this unstable situation? In fact, the Hungarians knew only the rotation of the sword and the plough, and the country lagged behind

the Western European nations in economic development. Hungarian industry and commerce, once prosperous in the Middle Ages, could not develop; the country became easy prey for the inflow of foreign capitalist forces. The nobility was impoverished, and its livelihood was increasingly found in public administration. The emerging professions—law, medicine, and engineering—also belonged to this middle class. Since this layer originated from the nobility, a new class slowly strengthened, not formally but in practice, and remained cohesive. The unifying force of this group lay in secondary education and professional training, but this also separated them from the peasant, industrial, and civic classes that represented the majority of the nation.

One of the main reasons for the separation of the "gentlemen" was the underdevelopment of the education system. Many did not even take advantage of the opportunities offered by the six-grade elementary system, while public schooling was still in its infancy.

On the other hand, within the middle class, the re-evaluation of the national past, the desire for national independence, and the bitterness of the present encouraged former noble families to investigate their origins. Once again, the use of noble prefixes, family research, and the display of family coats of arms became fashionable.

In the second half of the eighteenth century in Hungary, it had been desirable for nobles not to use their distinctive titles and badges of the past. However, in the Horthy era, these old forms reappeared and can be interpreted as a reaction to the times.

Making family names more compatible with the Hungarian language was also characteristic of contemporary society. One reason for this was that, during the peaceful period of the Compromise, the number of assimilating migrants grew rapidly; despite their origins, they regarded themselves as Hungarians. However, at the time of the Trianon Treaty, Hungarians with foreign-sounding names were questioned by the authorities of the successor states, so the process of changing names to Hungarian began in the now truncated country. This was not happily supported by the authorities and was also opposed in many families, where the traditional paternal name was regarded as important.

The re-emergence of titles and labels also contributed to the fragmentation of Hungarian society. Unfortunately, the oriental spirit of the Hungarian language strengthened this trend, with expressions such as “honourable” and “honourable gentleman/lady.” Government honours acknowledged these titles. Industrial and commercial leaders were often awarded distinctions on the basis of their donations. The phenomenon is well known in the West, but in the Trianon era it was taken to extreme lengths.

In a kingdom without a king, it was not possible to gain nobility in the traditional way. The Vitéz Order was established to fill this gap. It was a respectable idea that the nation should recognise those who had stood firm under the toughest conditions and risked their lives for Hungarian soil. The use of the word vitéz was less fortunate, especially as the title could be inherited. Not all courageous fathers had sons who were soldiers, and it often caused a smile when their offspring were physically unable to bear such a title. Fortunately, the Order restricted inheritance to the first-born male. (This limiting factor exists in English nobility as well.) The fact that nobility in our system was inherited by all descendants was apparently intended to replace the great blood loss suffered in the Turkish and German wars.

In the early thirties, a generation of twentieth-century reform-minded Hungarians appeared in political and social life. They clearly saw that Hungarian society needed renewal. The misery of the global economic crisis highlighted that essentially agricultural Hungary required radical land reform to create healthy conditions for peasant farming if the nation wished to take its place in the changing world economy.

Appalling stories were published describing the “Three Million Hungarian Beggars,” and pessimistic voices denied the possibility that a peasant-based renewal could rebuild the homeland. Yet behind every negative view stood the determination of the young Hungarian generation striving to lift the country out of a very serious economic situation.

These young people did not belong to a single political group. Later, however, due to international pressures, they drifted apart. There were some “left-wing” groups, but the young leaders of the right also quoted thinkers from the left, as they essentially shared common goals. Since Hungary had

always turned toward the West in its history, right-wing politicians could now formulate their plans for transforming the social order.
Radical land reform, the involvement of Hungarian workers in national affairs, the development of social security, the protection of workers' rights, safe workplaces, and annual leave were the main demands of this reform generation. On a national level, they supported Hungary's rearmament and were determined to break out of the restrictions imposed by the Little Entente.
Among others, György Oláh, István Eszterhás, and József Végváry were the outstanding representatives of this movement. The tragedy was that only a few years were available to them, for from 1938 onward Europe was in the grip of an impending war, leaving no time even to think about these issues. It became necessary to focus entirely on the looming threats.
The era was otherwise strongly influenced by national considerations.
The truncated country had become a national state, and statistical data even underestimated the number of remaining minorities. Many Jews declared themselves to be Hungarians; even in the separated territories, the German population of the villages of Baranya and Transdanubia had become strongly Hungarianised. Change only came after the early victory of German National Socialism, when German cultural organisations began to operate in these areas on a nationalist basis, disrupting the previously friendly relationship between Hungarians and Germans.
The role of the relatively fast-assimilating Jews also changed as events unfolded. On the one hand, they could not turn their backs on the still influential and difficult-to-assimilate Galician migrants. On the other hand, the bitter memory of Jewish leaders during the Communist rule of 1918 made their situation more difficult. The fact that a Jewish population of barely 7–8 percent assumed a leading role in trade, heavy industry, and the professions aroused resentment among the middle class. German events naturally increased the friction, and Hungarian Jews became increasingly isolated. However, these social difficulties were strictly controlled within the legal framework. Miklós Horthy's Hungary was a state governed by law, and freedom of expression and other rights were available to all citizens.

The opponents of the Horthy system were truly malicious when they portrayed the country—both within Hungary and abroad—as if it were a "fascist dictatorship." But the real question is: what can or should be regarded as fascism, and where are the boundaries between dictatorship and democracy?

Mussolini symbolised his system with the Roman fasces (in ancient Rome, a bundle of rods containing an axe with a projecting blade), and the irony of history is that international political literature even speaks of "red fascism." Yet in Mussolini's Italy, although there was a one-party system, the king still exercised significant influence through his constitutional powers; for example, during the war he replaced the "dictator" (Mussolini).

In Hungary, during the time of Miklós Horthy, there was no single-party system. The head of state did not function independently, and the constitution strictly defined his powers. This was confirmed by the events of October 15, 1944, when the majority of Hungarian parliamentarians ensured that they did not recognise his negotiations for an armistice with the USSR without ministerial approval.

Criticism of the Hungarian system at that time was valid only in that there was only a partially secret ballot, and that constituencies were divided in such a way that the ruling party could secure a parliamentary majority. But is it possible to achieve absolute democracy for all? This remains questionable. The Weimar Constitution, for example, exaggerated the system of proportional representation, which created a fragmented parliament incapable of functioning efficiently. The same problem afflicted the French regime between the two wars, rendering French leadership almost paralysed. On the other hand, England still insists on the system in which the candidate with the most votes in a district wins the seat. Thus, many times, a candidate with only 30 to 35 percent of the votes cast in a district is elected to parliament. This is not very democratic, yet it is the foundation of the two-party system. In the United States, voters can choose from only two major groups.

In Hungary, the reorganisation of the Upper House—ensuring that its members had the right to comment and decide—and the granting of similar

rights to the country's republican organisations, created a politically democratic structure that stood midway between the Weimar system and the dubious one-party systems.
The system was regarded as moderate in economic matters. Naturally, it rejected and excluded from the political life of the nation those forces that had aimed at the violent subversion of the state and social order in 1918. These forces were the representatives of the failed Communist regime, who nevertheless continued their underground activities during the two peaceful decades of the Horthy era.
It should be noted, however, that even though both the ruling party and the opposition parties believed in a free market and a social order built on private ownership, there was still room for social democratic representatives of Marxist philosophy—provided they aimed at a peaceful transformation of public and social life. At that time, those who advocated the nationalisation of factories came primarily from the industrial working class. In Hungary, however, industrial workers were a significant factor only in Budapest, and their numbers were small. This is why secret voting was introduced in industrialised centres, thereby securing the position of social democracy. Szeged was a typical example of this sharing of power. The city sent three mandates to parliament. Almost regularly, one member was elected from the list of the ruling party, one from the Social Democrats, and one representing the traders (mainly Jewish merchants), in the person of Charles Rassay.
There was complete freedom of the press in Hungary. According to the rules of democracy, of course, only factual news could be published. Hundreds of defamation lawsuits were brought before the courts when journalists went too far in their comments.
The Horthy regime was not anti-Jewish. During the era of revolutions (1918), the system did not overturn the excesses committed by the superficially assimilated first and second generations of Galician Jewry. What the regime did do was introduce a series of Jewish laws aimed at reducing Jewish dominance in certain professions (a form of affirmative action).
Later, when German pressure threatened Hungarian Jews, the conservative Horthy and his supporters did everything possible to soften the proposed

legislation and to exempt at least those Jews who had demonstrated their allegiance to Hungary by converting to Christianity or by participating in the counterrevolution of 1918.

This system did not implement economic reforms, nor did anti-capitalist actions take place in the form of "state planning" or "corporation law." Indeed, between 1935 and 1944, the Horthy Government and its members were accused by radicals of maintaining a form of "feudal capitalism."

They were on the right track in the sense that the aim of these criticisms was to improve the fate of industrial workers and to ensure the implementation of radical land reform. But the claim that Hungary was feudal was, in any case, exaggerated. Perhaps what was meant was simply that the influence of the large estates remained strong. This cannot be denied. Yet it must be taken into account that, although a radical reform of Hungarian society would have been desirable, raising the industrial workers and implementing a sweeping land reform was impossible within the short time available.

In terms of public criticism of his administration, Miklós Horthy was the most attacked figure after the loss of the war. This is understandable, as the forces now openly seeking to overthrow the state and social order aimed to create a new system of life. Thus, it became common to attack public servants, the county gentlemen (landowners), and especially the gendarmerie (the branch of the armed services responsible for internal security, as in France).

But if we analyse the Hungarian public administration system, most of these accusations collapse. Successive governments, operating within the parliamentary system and in accordance with the ancient traditions of Hungarian constitutional development, sought to implement regulations not directly but in cooperation with local government.

The country's ancient county divisions remained; only the seat of the nobility was replaced by local government institutions. Of course, local government was not as wide-ranging as reformers wished, but the counties and the cities with municipal rights formed a genuinely well-established system of local administration. The assemblies of county councils and municipal bodies provided opportunities for critical discussion of regulations and for proposing amendments.

The lord mayors were the chief executive officers and, with the help of qualified civil servants, provided the actual administration of the villages and districts. The government exercised control over the powers of local government, and the mayor's role was essentially to apply the brakes against any tendency to pursue goals contrary to government policy. Thus, local governments cannot be regarded as fully democratic by today's standards—not only because the electoral system allowed only limited choice in the selection of voters and the issues to be decided. These circumstances, together with the government's built-up control mechanisms, can only lead to the conclusion that the Horthy regime's administration may be considered a directed democracy. At the same time, freedom of speech and organised debate were gradually leading toward a more complete democracy, and therefore we cannot claim that the population lived under the suppression of the judiciary or the police force (gendarmerie).

Public servants developed professionally with legal training, and many were educated within the Ministry of the Interior. The younger generation largely favoured the reform of society and, in particular, had the interests of the Hungarian peasantry foremost in mind.

We can regard the activities of the Hungarian gendarmerie with the greatest respect. The organisation, established by the Austrians at the turn of the century, became a national institution during the time of Miklós Horthy.

The most able young soldiers of the army were selected to serve the country within the gendarmerie framework, and their officers were recruited from young legal professionals with formal qualifications. This organisation maintained order strictly within legal boundaries. Certainly, there were abusers among them—no law enforcement system in the world can claim that none of its members ever require discipline—but it can be stated that the gendarmerie did not maintain a rule of violence. Rather, it earned the appreciation and cooperation of the population. Governments placed great emphasis on ensuring that their military organisations were exemplary, and from a historical perspective the image of the "rooster feather" on their helmets is highly regarded. In the last bloody battles of World War II, they

represented their institution honourably and fought for their country almost to the last man.

But the image of Hungarian public administration is incomplete if we do not remember the village clerk, always the brave and fearless representative of the interests of the Hungarian village and peasantry. The fact that the new rulers attacked them after World War II is evidence of the good work they performed for Hungary.

In the cities, the police ensured compliance with the legal system. Naturally, in the urban environment their activities differed from those of the gendarmes assigned to the countryside, but nevertheless law enforcement remained their guiding principle. Police captains who led their subordinates were legally qualified and therefore guided by non-military considerations. Their police courts judged offences in legal terms and relieved much pressure from the judicial courts.

The theory of the separation of state powers, as realised in the United States of America, was not known in Horthy's Hungary. Our system was built on the principles of the 1848 parliamentary constitution, so the courts also had executive roles as royal organs. Judicial appointments belonged to the head of state, based on the recommendation of the Minister of Justice. However, a nominated judge could only be relocated or assigned to another position if mutually agreed. Their promotion was assured, at least regarding progress through the pay classes. Their independence was guaranteed by the professional nature of the judiciary. The administration of the judicial courts was carried out by lawyers who began their careers within the judiciary. After five years of court practice, if they had passed their examinations before the Judicial and Attorneys' Commission, they could expect to receive a judicial appointment. In other words, the Hungarian state leadership avoided linking the judiciary to political parties—unlike the practice still accepted in the United States, where judicial appointments expressly aim to influence jurisprudence through top-level decisions in the spirit of the political party. Even in England and its overseas dominions, the practice was to appoint judges from among the most prominent lawyers, which often meant selecting those sympathetic to the ruling party.

Horthy's judiciary came from the Hungarian middle class, so full judicial independence did not exist, as judges represented the dominant political views. Nevertheless, they were able to consider the claims before them freely and impartially.

Hungary's Horthy abolished the jury system—an anti-democratic step in the eyes of many. The author himself worked as a forensic judge and later, in emigration, had the opportunity to become acquainted with the Anglo-Saxon legal system. He subsequently agreed with the abolition of the jury system. Citizens of the twentieth century were increasingly unable to determine the probable truth of "evidence," as ever more complex economic, technical, and scientific questions were being raised.

By contrast, the Hungarian appeals system included three members for the tribunals, five panel members for judgments, and seven members for the Royal Supreme Court—all educated, loyal lawyers who could consider the matters before them with due care.

In Hungary at this time, there were no political trials such as those in the Soviet Union or those that occurred daily after the end of World War II. There were, of course, cases in which political differences forced judges to render decisions with which they did not necessarily agree. It was only in the difficult years preceding World War II that the state took into account the possibility of adverse judicial judgments, in order to maintain discipline in the country's extremely sensitive foreign-policy situation and to prevent society from experimenting with fundamental economic doctrines.

It is characteristic of the difficult situation faced by judges that my superior, Jenő Szemák, President of the Budapest Criminal Court, participated in a number of convictions against national radicals; yet when the nation was in danger and had to decide whether to continue the struggle, he was appointed President of the Hungarian Royal Supreme Court (Curia Regia).

Cooperation between the royal courts, the government, and the head of state was ensured by the Ministry of Justice. In addition to the ministerial officials, there were many judges in the field, all of whom made decisions in the spirit of judicial independence and with respect for individual liberties.

However, it cannot be argued that only the aspects of the existing state and social order were taken into account. They had spiritual leaders such as Andor Sárffy and Gábor Vladár, men of great wisdom who, within their own spheres of authority, did everything in their power to uphold the principles of the legal system.

Ministers, almost without exception, recognised the independence and expertise of this leadership layer. Many of them relied on the support of the government.

Despite the dominance of conservative forces, the intellectual atmosphere was liberal, and young people could boldly broaden their views.

The weakness of the system was evident in the fact that completing an eight-class elementary education was not compulsory, so large numbers of people from rural areas could not read or write well. Education, especially in the villages, remained below the desired standard. One reason for this was that children in the fifth and sixth grades were needed as part of the workforce. On the other hand, some very poorly paid teachers overlooked the absence of older students, accepting the needs of working parents.

Criticism can also be directed at secondary education. In the vast majority of schools, the curriculum consisted mainly of humanities subjects. In the real-gymnasiums, real schools, and commercial institutes, students could choose between languages and bookkeeping or mathematics and physics, but these institutions did not, in essence, train students to earn a living.

University education—especially for the so-called “rural lawyers”—left much to be desired, and as a result the doctoral title was diminished. It is true that the doctoral degree meant only that the recipient could apply for a position as a municipal notary or an administrative post, which required no more education than secondary schooling in Western Europe or America. If a person truly wished to pursue a legal career, he needed five years of practice in the court system or in a law office, and could begin his legal practice or judicial appointment only after completing the judge-attorney examinations.

By contrast, the University of Technology and the Faculty of Engineering were already of European standard, and the medical faculties also carried out top-class work. Only financial limitations restricted their research. The youth

of Trianon Hungary were willing to make sacrifices and worked almost without remuneration under the supervision of leading professors. In addition, a number of young scholars worked with the Nobel Prize winner in Szeged, assisting his research without receiving any direct recognition.
There was also serious work carried out to raise the level of the country's education system. The work of the Civil School Teacher Training College, specific university departments, and the young people of the Eötvös College all aimed at training sufficient numbers of teachers who would work to improve educational standards.
The Horthy system also made it possible for talented young people from the poorest classes to complete tertiary education. The Horthy Colleges and university campuses were designed to open the gates to poorer but gifted students, enabling them to attain a higher standard of living.
The system also sought to open the country's borders to its most talented youth. In the Collegium Hungaricum in Vienna, Berlin, and Rome, the most promising sons and daughters of the nation were given the opportunity to broaden their horizons and deepen their expertise. The honest administration of scholarships ensured that disadvantaged young people also had access to these opportunities. There were additional individual scholarships offered by the French, English, and Americans. Trianon-era Hungary truly did everything possible to develop a farsighted leadership class.
In my memories of Szeged, I often think of the great Minister of Culture, Count Kunó Klebelsberg, who not only supported the development of Szeged as a university town but also set the direction for the development of agricultural schools that genuinely served the future of all Hungarians.
Universities naturally operated in a national and Christian spirit. Many later criticised this university life, suggesting that it encouraged "Jewish baiting." But this is a falsification of the image of the young Hungarian middle class. Admittedly, there were occasional protests, but serious academic work at the universities was always discussed by the youth in a free and liberal spirit. Despite the numerus clausus laws (a 10 percent limit on Jewish students), the number of Jewish students exceeded this percentage in virtually every faculty. It is also a fact that more prosperous Jewish families still had the opportunity

to send their sons and daughters to English, French, or German universities, whose degrees were almost without exception recognised by the Hungarian authorities.

The associations of university youth should also be mentioned. After the war, these organisations were blacklisted by the new Communist government, even though they—and the Hungarian youth who participated in them—were filled with Hungarian faith and enthusiasm, especially in their efforts to transform Hungarian social life and, in many respects, to oppose the conservative forces of their elders.

Emericana served mainly to revive Catholic life, while the so-called "territorial" associations focused primarily on protecting the interests of Hungarian populations in Southern Hungary (now parts of Serbia and Croatia), Transylvania (now part of Romania), and Upper Hungary (now part of Slovakia). The Turul Federation was the largest comradeship association of the time, setting Hungarian national aspirations as its goal, and its leaders soon became spokesmen for the reform generation.

The Turul Alliance strongly demanded radical land reform and the elevation of industrial workers. They worked in an ecumenical spirit on religious matters and were unconditional supporters of the revision programme. Even at the fun-filled "wet camps," at midnight, when the Memento (the radio reminder of Hungary's annexed countrymen) was broadcast, all vowed that when the time came, they would be willing to fight for reunification.

After World War II, the majority of Turul's members were attacked, whether at home or in exile. Some attempted to enlighten the foreign forces that had come to power, but their efforts could not succeed, as the new regime relentlessly persecuted those who advocated a Hungarian style of socialist transformation.

Based on military traditions, the Ministry of Defence directed the revival of the armed forces, which had been almost completely disbanded after World War I. No longer vetoed by a foreign ruler, they could now express their loyalty to Hungarian sovereignty. The officer corps included those who had served in the old common (Austro-Hungarian) army, and even in this respect they could not have gone further. Many Austrian officers continued their

service in the Hungarian army because they did not wish to participate in the Austrian Social Democratic system. Within the permitted 35,000-strong army, room also had to be found for officers from the occupied territories who had sought refuge with their families in the Trianon homeland. As a result, the number of officers was disproportionately high compared to the number of troops.

This situation only worsened during the two decades of the Horthy system. Maintaining the officer numbers was justified by the belief that once the size of the army could be increased, leadership would not face difficulties. However, it was excessive to treat officers on the same footing as civilian public servants; retired officers were pensioned off with the rank of colonel. Many of these older officers moved into administrative roles, making them less suitable for active field service

However, the training of officers was truly of a high standard. The Ludovika Academy and the later expanded "brother-in-arms" academies provided excellent instruction. It is true that, due to the relatively high pay of young officers and the ambitions of certain families, many applicants were not always the most suitable candidates. Meanwhile, as a result of the global economic crisis, unemployed graduates were living from month to month in part-time jobs. Their high-quality academic training could undoubtedly have been put to better use.

Conversely, the training of the General Staff was genuinely outstanding. In addition to direct military sciences, candidates also studied the social and economic problems of the country and the wider world, so Hungary trained many individuals with broad and responsive skills.

It is unfortunate that after World War II the new government used these people as scapegoats. Their actions are especially to be condemned, as they attempted to portray the majority of the Hungarian General Staff as wishing to serve the leaders of the German Empire rather than Hungary. When examining particular wartime incidents, officers were labelled as "German-friendly," and family investigations were conducted to substantiate these accusations by locating German names in their ancestry. While they used racial discrimination against the officers, they assumed no one would

notice. In the eyes of liberal Hungarian thinkers following the spirit of St. Stephen, this was regarded as a witch hunt, similar to those that had accompanied the destruction of earlier periods of Hungarian national renewal. These two decades were heroic times. After the humiliating Trianon Treaty and the restrictive anti-sovereignty measures it imposed, day-to-day efforts were required to rebuild the Hungarian defence forces almost from scratch. From my childhood, I still remember the people's enthusiastic contribution to the covert rearmament, carried out while diverting the attention of the Entente forces. We were also proud to note that the Hungarian air force was born in the civilian sector. I myself packed the rectangular blue uniform of the Junior Police Officer and chose my armoured division.

The foreign policy of the Horthy system was loyal to Hungarian interests. Its primary task was to break the Entente ring surrounding the country and to establish contact with other powers that wished to revise the Versailles-imposed state order.

Italy was the first to approach us. Mussolini's foreign policy was marked by the ambition to revive the Roman Empire, building both land and sea power. He directed his revisionist spirit toward South-East Europe. Opposed to Yugoslavia stood the Italian cultural presence in Fiume, Trieste, and the Dalmatian coast, and he sought connections with the Catholic Croatian people, which naturally aroused Hungary's interest. From independent Austria, however, he sought protection against German revisionism in connection with South Tyrol. Thus, Italian-Hungarian cooperation not only aligned with revisionist ideals but also served, in a sense, as a stabilising factor.

Then Germany began its revival, and it was natural that the Hungarian leadership gladly welcomed this new revisionist power. When Prime Minister Gyula Gömbös decided that Hungary's foreign-policy interests lay with the Berlin–Rome Axis, there was no intention of forming a military union. He wished to emphasise that culturally Western Hungary's interests were best served by Central Europe rather than by the eastern Slavic nations. This was also the essence of St Stephen's political decision when he accepted the Holy Crown from Pope Sylvester. Hungarian independence flourished within the Christian Europe of the German–Roman Empire; our tragedy began when this

central European power collapsed and the Turkish Sultan advanced through Hungary to Vienna.

In Horthy's Hungarian democracy, various political thinkers were free to discuss the country's foreign-policy problems. It is enough to look back on the political struggles of that era.

With the dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, our country not only became independent but was also significantly torn apart. Many people looked nostalgically upon the recent past and hoped for the restoration of the Habsburg kingdom. The Catholic hierarchy strongly advocated Habsburg legitimism, and the aristocracy also saw this as a safeguard against radical land reform.

Charles IV's attempts to regain the throne proved that, at a time when Eastern Europe was groaning under French imperialism and Polish dominance, it was impossible to crown a Habsburg ruler in Budapest.

The ruling party was controlled by Count István Bethlen, and this Protestant leader succeeded in establishing the Unified Party. This party governed the country until October 15, 1944, though under various names. It was a middle-way conservative party. After assessing the social situation, its leaders understood the need for social development, but only at a very moderate pace, in order to defend the old classes.

Urban society was largely under Jewish influence, promoting liberal principles. The Smallholders' Party emerged as the first representative of frustrated peasants who felt that radical land reform had been derailed by the ruling party. Later, in the shadow of World War II, they focused primarily on limiting German influence.

The rise of German National Socialism influenced national-renewal movements throughout Europe, resulting in the formation of several national socialist parties in Hungary. Their leaders, however, merely copied foreign models in a rather laughable manner. Despite all accusations, it was clear that the German government did not provide any assistance to these parties; it sought only to establish relations with the ruling Horthy Government.

The Hungarian radicals only became relevant when the various parties joined forces under Ferenc Szálasi. His programme was summarised in the former

General Staff's book The Way and the Goal. This was an interesting reworking of the ideas of the national radicals, especially regarding land reform and industrial relations.

While the parties that imitated the Germans made the Jewish question the centre of their programme, in Szálasi's case this was only a minor element, included largely because of public pressure.

The novelty of the programme was Hungarianism. Its aim was to bind the peoples of the Carpathian Basin into a cooperative federation under Hungarian leadership. After the war, Marshal Tito applied similar principles in Yugoslavia. However, it could not succeed there because it lacked the cultural and historical foundations that had existed in Hungary and might have united the peoples of the Carpathian Basin.

At the time, however, the Hungarian leadership saw neither the possibility nor the advantages of such a federation, and therefore attempted—sometimes with police measures—to suppress this movement in its early stages.

Nevertheless, Hungarian society was clearly not a police state; this was demonstrated by the many social organisations, often called "secret," that sought to influence the population with their political views.

Both right- and left-wing political groups created their own societies and clubs through which they attempted to shape political life. One such organisation was the Hungarian National Protection Association (MOVE), known as "Love of Country." The national radicals, with their German-friendly line, were opposed by the Turánia Society, which sought to surpass the radicals in their revisionist politics. The slogan Mindent vissza! ("Everything Back!") was even accepted in London as a basis for attacking the Germans.

Conservative circles, however, maintained a very good relationship with the head of state, and their influence was significant.

When looking back at the system of government in Trianon Hungary, we must admit that the country's democracy was limited compared with the English or French parliamentary systems. But the Horthy regime was not a single-party rule, nor—as some still fancifully call it today—a "fascist dictatorship." Within the framework of a multi-party system, people were free to express their views, and freedom of association was restricted only when directed against

the state or the social order. My contemporaries will still remember the often fierce yet good-tempered debates between people of differing perspectives. During the crisis years of the war, I often argued with István Bibó's colleague, Pista, in his room, where he freely expressed his anti-German, pro-Russian ideas without fear of being reported. Another colleague, Tamás Simándy, who later became president of NOT, was well known for believing that Marxist socialism and Communism offered a way to improve the lot of the Hungarian people. István Bibó himself was detained on October 15, 1944, by the Communist authorities for only 24 hours, because the new National Socialist head of the law-preparatory department arranged for his release.
The "black lists," however, were already being prepared by the left, and under Russian occupation Hungarian democracy and freedom came to an end.

Hungary during the Second World War.

The nation did not want to forget the loss of so many of its people under the Treaty of Trianon following the lost war, and therefore placed its hopes in the fight for a revision of that treaty. The Statute of the League of Nations did, at least in theory, allow for a review of post-war decisions, and in Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points (self-determination) there were grounds for hope. Hungary's western military efforts were finally rewarded by the success of the referendum in Sopron.

But the leadership knew well that this partial result was born only of political power considerations, and understood that the fate of the country had to be resolved primarily by diplomatic means. Accepting the Versailles order, we sought economic cooperation to safeguard the fate of those living in the nations beyond our borders. These attempts—including the idea of a Czechoslovak-Austrian customs union, a Romanian-Hungarian personal union, and friendly overtures to Yugoslavia—did not lead to a solution. French domination, however, triggered a reaction from England, which sought to maintain the balance of power. To counter French influence, Britain recognised the injustices suffered by Hungary and began to support Hungarian revisionist aspirations. The publicity campaign was entitled "Justice for Hungary!" This was, however, greatly overestimated by the Hungarian public, especially when the son of an English press baron was given a royal welcome at several gatherings.

Politicians were aware that, despite this support, the goals of the revision programme were still far from being achieved. Yet it was of great significance that the nation was so deeply committed to these revisionist aims, and when the European crisis escalated into war, it became difficult to steer the country toward different objectives—quite apart from the geopolitical realities of Europe and the Danube Basin.

Mussolini's friendship toward Hungary was partly a consequence of Italy's pressure on Yugoslavia and its support for Croatian self-determination, in which Hungary also took part. The French accused Hungary of supporting the

Croatian cause. Subsequently, French foreign policy hardened in order to maintain the Little Entente.

It became increasingly clear that any modification of our borders could only occur if the state order created by the Paris peace treaties was broken, and if the balance of power in Europe—directed against us by France and its Little Entente allies—was fundamentally altered.

It was clear that only the strengthening of German nationalism could bring about the changes we were expecting. The signs of this were already evident in the Weimar Republic, and its collaboration with Russia indicated the possible preconditions for change.

However, this development was interrupted by the economic crisis of the 1929 world depression. Germany suffered poverty and unemployment, and public opinion sought a more nationalistic response. In 1933 this allowed Hitler's rise to power, with his central programme being the eradication of the Versailles state order.

The Hungarian public, with mixed emotions, watched the newsreels of the marching brown-shirted battalions. On the one hand, they were pleased to see their old allies regain their pride. It seemed natural that a common failure would now be followed by a common rise. Yet the German radical movement was not only nationalistic but also socialist, and this was particularly concerning to the leading layers of the Hungarian state, because socialism demanded sacrifices from both landowners and the barons of capitalism.

The culture of northern Germany was also very different from the traditions of Hungarian Christianity, and National Socialism—proclaiming a strict separation of state and Church—was judged negatively by Hungarian ecclesiastical circles.

The Jews were rightly concerned that the strongly anti-Semitic new German politics would affect Hungary as well, and the Hungarian press, largely operated by Jewish newspaper editors, also judged developments in Germany negatively.

In these decisive years Gyula Gömbös was Prime Minister of Hungary, and he especially appreciated German National Socialism because he saw in it the

advance of the Revisionist Forces. He hoped that our own programme would be easier to implement if the new system in Germany grew stronger.
From an economic point of view, we had a direct interest in dealing with the German leadership, which was successfully reviving its economic life, if we were to escape from our own economic crisis.
When Gömbös spoke of the axis of Hungarian foreign policy lying along the lines of Berlin and Rome, he did not advocate a German-Italian treaty, but merely emphasised the need to maintain friendly relations with both Rome and Berlin.
Hungarian governments, both before and after Gömbös, sought to ensure flexibility in Hungarian diplomacy in a hostile and fenced-in situation. We also attempted to establish relations with England and to demonstrate that we had closed the era of revolutions that followed the lost war. Gömbös even stated that he himself had changed his position on the Jewish question.
Indeed, Hungarian Jews did not suffer disadvantages during these years. Many migrants arrived from the occupied territories, and Hungary increasingly became a refuge for underprivileged European Jewry.
After Hitler's rise to power, he began the German rearmament. The occupation of the Rhineland and the annexation of Austria initiated a process in which Hungarian diplomacy had to confront the dangers of a new world war. In this overwhelming crisis, the German Empire once again found itself in conflict with its old opponents: the British, French, Russian, and American powers. The memory of World War I was still vivid, so it was understandable that we watched events unfold with fear. Revisionism increasingly receded into the background; the main goal now was the preservation of Hungary's neutrality.
In 1938, Hitler received the Governor's few visits with solemn ceremony. It appeared that the German proposal presented during the negotiations in Kiel not only surprised the Hungarian government but also divided the Hungarian leadership. Its essence was that, in exchange for Hungary's cooperation in Germany's plans to dissolve Czechoslovakia, the whole of Felvidék would be returned to Hungary. The offer was tempting, but the Hungarian government gave an ambiguous response. The leaders believed that England and France

would not tolerate an attack on Czechoslovakia and that such an action could trigger a new world war. Hungary did not wish to participate in such a conflict as a German ally.
Thus, the Munich Accord surprised the Hungarian government, particularly because Hungarian demands were not even discussed.
Hungarian society, driven by revisionist hopes, did not want to accept that this historical opportunity should pass unused, and large segments of the population urged direct Hungarian involvement.
In this situation, Miklós Horthy flew to meet Marshal Göring. Germany responded positively by offering further opportunities to Hungary. The negotiations culminated in the First Vienna Award, which returned the highland areas—including the city of Kassa—to the mother country.
The decision produced a balanced outcome for the Hungarian government. The territorial gains granted by Germany and Italy did not require a military alliance. It is true that Hungary's political standing suffered in the West, yet Poland also participated in the anti-Czechoslovak action, and the Western powers accepted the Vienna decision.
Perhaps Hungarian society remained most divided over this result.
Anti-German forces stressed that Ribbentrop often proposed border adjustments with anti-Hungarian intentions, which increased the appeal of the "Everything Back!" slogan in London.
War fears swept across Europe in the autumn of 1938. People and governments were relieved when, after four months, the British Prime Minister declared at the Munich Conference that the agreements reached had secured "peace for our time."
Soon it became clear that the peace talks would not continue, and England's response to the Munich Agreement was an acceleration of its rearmament programme, even exceeding the pace prescribed in 1934. Later published information revealed that Great Britain was preparing for a conflict with the German Empire, though under no circumstances before 1939.
During these years, the German Empire made great efforts to win Britain's cooperation for its more distant aims. Hitler's plans were never kept secret, and General Marshal Göring conveyed the German position to the English

through a Swedish businessman acting as intermediary. According to this view, the German Empire sought to revise the borders established by the Versailles Treaty. The first step in this revision was the reunification with Austria, and they did not hide their desire to bring the Czech Republic—formerly part of the German-Roman Empire—into a cooperative relationship with Germany. There was also no doubt that they would not relinquish their claims to either Danzig or the Polish Corridor.

The Germans would have preferred that Poland join the German federal system at the expense of nationality conventions and serve as a springboard for the 1943 plans aimed at breaking up the Soviet Union. German diplomacy sought to persuade the Poles that cooperation was in their national interest. In this sense, Miklós Horthy also attempted to influence the Poles. Poland, however, gave an evasive response to the German rapprochement; they chose instead to preserve their independence against both German and Russian pressures.

British diplomacy, meanwhile, intensified its efforts and declared that it was unwilling to accept the German proposals. Britain was not prepared to abandon its centuries-old political doctrine: to prevent the unification of Europe under any single dominant power.

Thus, after Emperor Napoleon and Wilhelm II, Adolf Hitler also found himself confronted by England. The German leaders tried in vain to persuade the British that they respected the British Empire, its cultural heritage, and its global political weight. They even proposed a treaty promising active German support for the British Empire should it face difficulties in British India or in other colonies.

The German leadership hoped that, at the decisive moment, England would refrain from declaring war and thereby avoid risking the loss of its empire in a second world conflict.

Hitler refused to alter his European programme and began taking steps to dismantle the Czechoslovak state in early 1939.

In his speech in Stettin in November 1938, he declared that he could not tolerate English attempts to encircle the German Empire. He stressed: “This war will not be when your lordships want it!”

Hungarian diplomacy was aware of the German plans and prepared itself to safeguard Hungarian interests in the coming crisis. Transcarpathia was influenced by a growing Ukrainian autonomy movement. In Berlin, this region was clearly viewed as a springboard for future operations when Germany would begin breaking up the Soviet Union.

Slovakia was also encouraged by Berlin to proclaim its independence at the decisive moment. Hungary regarded Slovak aspirations with understanding but did not abandon the idea of regaining parts of Transcarpathia. Militarily, this did not exceed the country's capabilities and was politically well-founded. The Soviet Union would have preferred Hungarian rule in the Carpathians rather than face a strengthened Ukrainian secessionist movement.

It was also in Poland's interest that this region be returned to Hungary, as the Ukrainian minority would have regarded Carpathian Ukraine as a springboard for further ambitions.

Czechoslovakia received the German ultimatum on the eve of March 15, 1939, and under duress accepted the German absorption of the Czech Republic. The plans of the German leadership did not affect the Carpathian Basin at all. Hitler later confirmed this, stating that the borders of the German Empire reached the Carpathian line in this region and that beyond this line Germany had no direct imperial interest.

Thus, the Hungarian military reached our ancient frontier, and its troops met Polish units—an outcome that contradicted neither Berlin's nor London's expectations.

It should therefore be emphasised that this part of the territory returned to the motherland through Hungarian efforts, supported by both the Western powers and by Berlin and Moscow.

However, the international situation continued to deteriorate. England pursued a restrictive and encircling policy against the German Empire, and despite German protests, Britain gave Poland a guarantee applicable in any possible conflict. Hitler responded by terminating the German–English Naval Agreement. Nevertheless, behind-the-scenes negotiations continued. It soon became clear, however, that in a German-Polish conflict the threat of war was real.

The German leadership was convinced that, at the decisive hour, England would be willing to settle the conflict peacefully. But there was another trump card for the German leadership. Negotiations with the Soviet Union had been underway for months, and Germany appeared to be the diplomatic winner, because Stalin eventually decided to accept Hitler's offer. Anglo-French politicians could promise nothing tangible to the Soviet Union, yet from the first days of the war they would have had to face the German attack. Germany, on the other hand, advocated restoring the 1914 borders and re-occupying the territories lost through the Paris peace treaties and the Polish-Russian war. In addition, Stalin was given a free hand to shape his relations with the Baltic States and Romania. Their behaviour was also influenced by the fact that Poland refused to consider the presence of Russian troops on its territory, even in the face of a global conflict.

Thanks to the German-Russian agreement, the German Empire could therefore boldly invade the West without the risk of a two-front war, and the Soviet Union was content to watch the confrontation unfold. The exhaustion of both sides in a long war would only serve Russian interests.

The increasingly threatening danger was that, for geopolitical reasons, we were being drawn ever deeper into an imminent world war. The leadership that had lived through the First World War—only twenty years earlier—wanted to avoid losing again on the German side. Miklós Horthy, István Bethlen (a close adviser to the head of state), and Prime Minister Pál Teleki all believed that if the United States intervened, Germany would once again be defeated. Therefore, Hungarian diplomacy did everything possible to emphasise to Britain and France that Hungary wished to maintain its independence and neutrality. Teleki was greatly relieved that during the German talks in May 1939, the German leadership made no further attempts to create a Hungarian-German military alliance; they expected only friendly neutrality from Hungary in the event of a European conflict. Germany sought similar assurances from other South-East European nations, requesting only economic cooperation while it fought in the West.

Regarding Hungary's revisionist demands, Germany also asked that the country refrain from any actions that might disturb the peace of

South-Eastern Europe or disrupt economic cooperation with the German Empire. They assured Teleki that after the conflict they would support Hungary's revisionist aspirations in a friendly manner. Interestingly, leading English statesmen said much the same. For a time, it seemed that Hungary's neutral status could be consolidated.

When Hitler decided in August 1939 that, despite British opposition, he would pursue his demands toward Poland, it was still unclear whether the crisis could be resolved by compromise. According to unconfirmed reports, he outlined Germany's minimal goals: regaining Danzig and connecting the city to the Empire by an elevated road and railway. In mid-August, Soviet negotiations with the Entente were broken off. Stalin invited the German Foreign Minister to Moscow to settle the German-Russian relationship.

On the eve of the German invasion, Hitler announced his minimum demands, asking for an immediate response from the Poles. The ultimatum only strengthened the spirit of Polish resistance. Lipski, the Polish ambassador, did not even read the German proposal; he replied immediately. He told England that within a few weeks a revolution would break out in Germany and that Poland would be able to defend itself during this time.

The optimistic statement of the Polish ambassador now seems almost ridiculous, but at the time people were filled with hope of avoiding a new European tragedy. England replied that the German offer would only be considered if the German troops that had crossed the Polish border on 1 September were withdrawn. The Germans refused, but it was still a surprise to the German leadership when the English delivered the declaration of war. The loyal leaders of the British Empire, the representatives of the dominions and the peoples of the Commonwealth, dutifully declared war on the German Empire, and France likewise did not hesitate. The neutrality of Italy and other European countries, however, delayed the emergence of a full world war. The non-belligerent nations also felt that the Polish campaign, conducted over several weeks, had created a new situation. The Western powers did not declare war on the Soviet Union for participating in the German campaign against Eastern Poland. Contributing to this was the fact that on the western front the French troops did not attack the German defensive line. The

revolutionary German strategy—waging war with mobile air and armoured forces against the static trenches of the First World War—proved effective. It seemed that France saw the solution in an economic blockade and the expectation of a German uprising. The neutrality of South-Eastern Europe and Italy, as well as Soviet economic cooperation, ensured that the German Empire's progress would run smoothly.

Hungary tried to maintain friendly diplomatic relations with both the Polish and German governments. It cooperated economically with Germany, but also accepted Polish refugees, and although the Germans expressed displeasure, they tolerated the Poles' departure for the West.

The Soviet Union's resolute revisionist policy also strengthened the Hungarian government's decision to prepare its own revisionist demands, regardless of the interests of the German and Western belligerents.

In April 1940, the situation of the German Empire was further strengthened by the successful completion of the Norwegian campaign, and with the rapid success of the May offensive, most neutral countries hoped for a peace treaty between Britain, France, and Germany.

Italy also entered the war on the German side, apparently to strengthen its position in the expected peace negotiations and to press its claims against France.

The most important factor, however, was that the rapid German victories fundamentally changed the situation for the Soviet Union. Stalin had clearly hoped that in a long and bloody war both the Western and German forces would mutually weaken, allowing the Soviet Union—still completing its armament and reorganisation—to emerge as the triumphant third power. But the swift victory in France and the possibility of an early peace meant that a victorious Germany might turn east without the counterweight of the British Empire. Therefore, the Soviets sought to implement their territorial claims even before any peace negotiations. They subjugated the Baltic States, secured Finland, and sent an ultimatum to Romania demanding Bessarabia.

Molotov, the Soviet Foreign Minister, summoned Kristóffy, the Hungarian ambassador in Moscow, and declared that he supported Hungary's demands for Transylvania and expected Hungary to take the necessary steps in that

direction. The Hungarian armies on the Romanian border were ready to attack.
The Soviet Union thus set out to defend its interests against those of Germany. The German leadership regarded all this as a hostile act.
Perhaps Soviet behaviour also contributed to Britain's decision to continue the war even in this difficult situation and to reject the moderate German peace proposal. From that moment on, Great Britain hoped that a Russo-German war would encourage the rebirth of the First World War coalition.
Literature still debates the evaluation of the German reaction. The English invasion plan could only have succeeded if the Germans had secured control of the airspace. However, this was unlikely, since Great Britain had focused its rearmament since 1934 on air power. Hitler therefore decided to move most of his forces eastward and clarify Soviet intentions.
Hungary's Transylvanian action was viewed coldly in Berlin. They claimed that we had promised neutrality regarding our revisionist aims during the conflict and were therefore endangering economic cooperation with South-East Europe.
Romania also drew its own conclusions. Britain's guarantee proved worthless against Soviet claims, and therefore the Romanians sought the protection of the German Empire. Germany accepted Romania's request, but informed them that the Hungarian question must be settled directly with Hungary. The German Empire no longer wished to intervene, since Romania had now become its ally. However, when the parties failed to reach agreement at the Turnu-Severin negotiations (Second Vienna Award), and Hungarian military action came to an end, Germany accepted the role of arbitrator to prevent a Hungarian-Romanian confrontation that would have disrupted German supply lines.
Hungary welcomed the Solomon-like decision of the Italian-German governments, regaining only part of the sought-after Transylvanian territory. Teleki, however, clearly saw that German expectations regarding the transfer could adversely affect Hungarian-Soviet relations, which had begun to normalise after the German-Russian agreements.

One such expectation was that Hungary allow the passage of German troops through Hungarian territory to Romania. The so-called “tan-troops” transport trains rolled through Hungarian railway stations from December 1940.
These troop movements had a dual purpose. On the one hand, Italy’s defeats required confronting British forces on the Bulgarian-Greek border and across the Balkan Peninsula; on the other hand, if war broke out between Germany and the Soviet Union, Germany needed to secure its southern flank.
Because of Soviet actions and German manoeuvring, the possibility of a Russo-German war came to the fore. The German state administration also had to consider that the European war might become a world war. German diplomacy therefore activated Japanese cooperation, and the Tripartite Pact was solemnly signed.
Hungary was obliged to accede to this pact once German troops were allowed to cross the country, and it also had to take into account Italian interests.
The danger of a possible expansion of the war—and especially the possibility of a Balkan theatre—directly affected both Hungary and Yugoslavia. In this situation, both states sought to preserve the relative peace of their region, and this shared interest led to negotiations between the two governments. A similar convention was concluded between Yugoslavia and Bulgaria, stipulating that Bulgaria would not raise its revisionist demands.
The German Empire welcomed the Hungarian–Yugoslav negotiations and supported the effort to reach an agreement between the two countries. On 12 December 1940, the signing of the Hungarian–Yugoslav Treaty appeared to secure our situation along the southern borders. Yugoslavia accepted the Hungarian position that our revisionist claims would be addressed only after the end of the European war. On 27 February 1941, the Yugoslav and Hungarian foreign ministers solemnly exchanged the documents of friendship ratified by their parliaments.
Thus, all obstacles seemed removed from the perspective of German diplomacy, and negotiations between Germany and Yugoslavia could begin, ensuring relative peace in the Balkan Peninsula. Yugoslavia would not become a combatant but would join the Tripartite Pact.

However, the British secret service—working to draw the Balkan Peninsula to its side—organised a military coup in Belgrade, and the new Yugoslav government openly joined the coalition against the German Empire. It refused to ratify the Tripartite Pact and gave contradictory answers regarding the validity of the Hungarian and Bulgarian treaties. Since these agreements were linked to the federal system of the Tripartite Pact, it was clear that they too were nullified. The phrase "eternal friendship" in the text of the convention meant nothing. Hungarian diplomacy had not wanted to accept this wording, but because the Bulgarian–Yugoslav convention used the same term, the Yugoslavs refused to change it.

Germany immediately decided to launch a reprisal offensive against Yugoslavia. Hungary was directly affected by this decision, as its treaty with Germany guaranteed German troops access across Hungarian territory. However, the Hungarian government did not wish to participate directly in the action against Yugoslavia.

Hitler's offer again aimed at full Hungarian–German military cooperation. He stated that, in return for a joint operation against Serbia, Hungary could regain Bácska and Bánát, restore partnership with Croatia, and even be allowed to open a new port in Fiume. This tempting offer was the subject of intense discussion in the Council of Ministers and the Supreme Defence Council between 28 March and 1 April 1941.

Some of our leaders believed the offer could not be rejected and were prepared to accept full cooperation with the German Empire.

Prime Minister Pál Teleki strongly opposed this view. He believed it would be fatal for Hungary to assist Germany in a way that might lead to war with England. Teleki insisted that even if Hungary cooperated with Germany to a limited degree, we must not turn our back on the Western powers. He was convinced that Britain would carry great weight in the post-war peace negotiations. He acknowledged that the Yugoslav government had violated the Hungarian–Yugoslav convention, but in his view, this did not entitle Hungary to declare war on Yugoslavia.

The final meeting of the Supreme Defence Council lasted seven hours. In the end, Teleki's position prevailed. Hungary decided not to take part in the

German invasion and would occupy territory only if Yugoslavia collapsed or attacked Hungary.

Pál Teleki's will prevailed, but the following night he committed suicide. His death was later explained by senior officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, who claimed that the prime minister had been under great pressure from Germany and had sought to lessen Hungary's responsibility in the eyes of the British authorities. Years later, "farewell letters" were reconstructed from memory to support this theory. The writer believes that Teleki suffered a nervous breakdown not only because of the difficult political situation, but also because his wife was lying in hospital with a terminal illness.

It is also possible that he received reports indicating that the Soviet Union did not wish to conclude a non-aggression and friendship treaty with the new Yugoslav government, suggesting that German–Russian relations were approaching an explosive end. As a consequence, Hungary would be forced to mobilise and face overwhelming Slavic forces.

After Teleki's death, László Bárdossy became prime minister and faithfully carried out the decision of the Supreme Defence Council in Teleki's spirit. The German campaign was launched on 6 April 1941, and two days later Yugoslav pilots attacked the Hungarian cities of Pécs, Szeged, and Nagykanizsa. There were also reports of atrocities committed against the Hungarian minority. Hungary still waited. On 10 April, Croatia proclaimed its independence and the defeated Yugoslav army disintegrated. Only after the collapse of Yugoslavia did the Hungarian army move in to regain the area of Bácska (Bačka, a geographical and historical region of the Pannonian Plain). The moderate Hungarian behaviour was not appreciated by the West. British propaganda condemned the Hungarian government for allowing German troops to pass through Hungary during the attack on Yugoslavia. At the same time, they criticised Hungary for seeking to revise the Treaty of Versailles. London's Hungarian-language radio broadcasts attempted to poison Hungarian–German relations by announcing the German occupation of Bánát. In this delicate matter, the Germans themselves were not in a comfortable position, and it was not appropriate to address the issue openly because of the conflicting claims of Serbia, Romania, and Hungary.

The German leadership was otherwise disappointed in Hungary, as it again became clear that even full satisfaction of Hungary's revisionist demands would not end the Hungarian government's efforts to preserve an independent foreign policy during the war.
They did not include Hungary in the preparations for Operation Barbarossa, the planned military campaign against the Soviet Union. Of course, this did not mean that Hungarian diplomacy was unaware that the war would soon take this direction.
In any case, the Yugoslav campaign forced the German leadership to postpone the attack from 20 May to 22 June.
Romania and Finland joined the operations at the same time, while Italy, Slovakia, and Croatia declared that they considered themselves at war with the Soviet Union.
Hungary made a final attempt to stay out of the impending clash. The government announced that it would break off diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union.
Berlin's diplomacy criticised Hungary's inadequate behaviour. Italy advised Hungary to join the action.
The decision was made easier by the bombing raid on Kassa (Košice, Slovakia), which was reported to have been carried out by Russia. According to some reports, however, the attacking planes bore markings resembling those of Axis powers. (It is possible that the attack was carried out by German forces in order to facilitate Hungary's involvement in military operations.) After the war, Hungarian Air Force researchers living in free Europe conducted very thorough investigations into the matter. Secret German records were also examined, but no information was found to confirm these accusations. It was concluded that if no Russian planes were involved, then Slovak or possibly Romanian aircraft—deserting the Soviet Union after the outbreak of German hostilities—might have dropped their bombs on Kassa.
However, the government's decision to move toward war was also influenced by the fact that, under the Tripartite Pact, the partner states were entitled to use Hungary's transport network. Thus, it was virtually impossible to maintain neutrality in a German–Russian conflict.

The state leadership also considered that, in the event of a Western victory, Hungary had already demonstrated moderate behaviour, unlike Romania, which—now aligned with the German Empire—had turned against the Soviet Union. Therefore, the government believed that in any future peace negotiations, when comparing Romanian and Hungarian conduct, the issue of Transylvania would not be judged unfavourably for Hungary. On the other hand, in the event of a German victory, if Hungary did not continue its moderate but firm cooperation with the Reich, Germany might revise the gains achieved under the Second Vienna Award.

The air raid on Kassa allowed the government to avoid making a formal declaration of war, and Parliament merely accepted the government's announcement that the hostilities resulting from the Kassa attack had created a state of war between Hungary and the Soviet Union. The decision was made with a heavy heart, for despite the government's opposition to communism, Hungary had no territorial disputes with the Soviet Union.

After the war was lost, László Bárdossy (the prime minister at the time) was sentenced to death by an extra-judicial People's Court in Russian-controlled Hungary for war crimes, on the grounds of a constitutional violation.

This accusation was unfounded. The government and the Head of State had discussed the situation, and both bore political responsibility for the decision. The government immediately announced its position to Parliament in accordance with the spirit of the constitution, which approved the planned steps—namely, that Hungarian units would cross the Transcarpathian border and join the German military movements.

Later, the House of Representatives debated the issues surrounding Hungary's entry into the war. The opposition did not accuse the government of violating the constitution, but emphasised the fear that, in the eyes of the Western powers, Hungary had now drifted into a situation that could have fatal consequences.

Hungarian military involvement in the German offensive was very limited, essentially dealing only with residual resistance. The "rapid brigade" was recalled before winter. Hungarian participation was confined to cooperation with the invading forces.

The German campaign, delayed by the events in Yugoslavia, began five weeks later than planned, while the autumn rains arrived unusually early and were followed by a harsh winter. As a result, the German forces could not achieve their strategic objectives, and the Soviet Union had the opportunity to consolidate its strength.

Japan and the United States also entered the war. Conservative Hungarian leaders feared that Germany would once again face a victorious coalition, as in World War I. Japan's triumphs revived the hope that American intervention would not have an immediate impact in Europe and that by 1942 the German Empire might resume its offensive in the East.

Unfortunately, the evolution of world politics did not favour this idea. The United States decided to give priority to settling the European theatre.

The concept of a compromise peace became unthinkable for both the American and British empires, which proclaimed the policy of unconditional surrender. The United States launched large-scale military shipments to the Soviet Union. The situation of the German Empire became critical, and carpet bombings of German cities began.

At this time, Miklós Horthy believed that Hungary should intensify its diplomatic efforts toward the Western powers, at least to clarify Hungary's position.

Under Miklós Kállay's cabinet, the government sought to conserve its forces. He also treated the Jews liberally, and as a result, Central European Jewry looked to Hungary as a refuge where they could live undisturbed, while in Yugoslavia, Romania, and Slovakia they were subjected to retaliatory German measures.

Hungary emphasised to Germany that the country was ready to undertake the necessary sacrifices and comply with German wishes, and it organised the 2nd Hungarian Army. These forces took part in the German offensive in the spring of 1942.

German and allied troops pushed toward Stalingrad and the Caucasus, but despite their gains they could not defeat the Russian forces. After the failure of the Stalingrad campaign and the retreat during the second Russian winter, they faced a massive Soviet counter-attack. The newly formed 2nd Hungarian

Army was initially weak; it consisted mainly of infantry and light artillery, with no significant armoured forces.
Hitler recognised that the Achilles heel of the eastern front was the sector held by the Hungarian and Romanian troops, who defended a long line without depth. Historians say he issued an order to reinforce this part of the front, but it was somehow lost within the German General Staff, and the necessary reinforcements never arrived.
When Soviet armoured units broke through the weak Hungarian defensive line, there were not enough reserves to stop them. They swept through as though through an open gate, encircling and trapping the Hungarian fighting units. Large numbers were taken prisoner, and the front was stabilised only through the heroism of small groups of troops.
Hungary's military situation was also troubled along its southern borders. Yugoslavia's conscript army collapsed under the lightning campaign, but fanatical Serbian forces organised a partisan war. They inflicted heavy losses on the police and gendarmerie, and Hungarian military garrisons were frequently attacked.
Partisan warfare had become a major factor since the beginning of the German–Russian war. According to international law, combatants operating behind the lines in civilian clothing were considered unlawful, and the occupying power, under the Geneva Convention, was entitled to impose the severest reprisals.
Unfortunately, since the start of the Second World War, the conflict had taken on an ideological character, and Western propaganda portrayed political assassins and partisans as freedom fighters. The German leadership on the Eastern Front also made serious efforts to eliminate the political leaders of the Soviet army and supporters of the Communist Party.
Hungary did everything possible to avoid involvement in partisan warfare; our occupying troops in Russia treated the population humanely. It is telling that no serious partisan activity developed in the areas occupied by Hungarian forces. Captured partisans were brought before a tribunal, and their actions were investigated before judgment was passed.

The military and internal authorities in the south of the country had tolerated partisan hostilities for many months. Eventually, the situation became so serious that the government ordered a clearing operation in the town of Újvidék (Novi Sad). This was carried out by a brigade from Szeged. Although the retaliation was formally conducted on the basis of military investigations and carried out by military officers, it must be acknowledged that there were serious abuses and thousands of victims during the cleansing process. In other words, during the purge of Novi Sad, war crimes were committed. The government ordered an immediate investigation, and based on its findings, the military court initiated proceedings against several senior military and gendarmerie officers.

It is a separate question how responsible a lieutenant is for taking part in an executing squad. He received his orders within the framework of the law, and the action met the requirements of international law. One cannot expect a soldier to weigh the moral and political implications of his orders. If he did so, he would not only be subject to military court proceedings, but the army itself could disintegrate.

Following World War II, Jewish and Arab terrorist acts also reinforced the Geneva Convention's decision to reject the legitimacy of civilian combatants behind the front lines and to allow severe reprisals by occupying powers.

After the defeat at Stalingrad, the front moved dangerously close to Hungary's borders. The conservative government wished to prevent Russian troops from entering Hungarian territory, and therefore began diplomatic negotiations with several countries in an attempt to explore the possibility of a separate Hungarian peace. These efforts intensified when Italy left the war and its new government declared itself at war with the German Empire.

There were also romantic notions of English paratroopers landing in Hungary to ensure that the country would not fall under Russian occupation at the end of the war. But by then there was firm agreement between the United States and the Soviet Union, and it was unrealistic to assume that American and British forces could break through the German front from the south.

Joseph Goebbels, the German Minister of Propaganda, addressed the South-East European countries in the journal Reich. He declared that these

countries were hoping in vain for Western forces to advance into the Balkan Peninsula, because such a plan was vetoed by the Soviet Union, and any Western invasion would be forced to land in France. He emphasised that their only hope lay in a German victory, and that their national interests required full-scale cooperation with Germany.
In the event of a German defeat, Goebbels predicted that an "iron curtain" would fall along the western borders of these countries and Bolshevik repression would engulf Europe.
Hungary's position—and its evident steps toward leaving the war—preoccupied the German leadership. As early as 1943, a proposal was presented to the OKW (Oberkommando der Wehrmacht) to occupy Hungary militarily. Hitler rejected the plan at that time, warning his generals that such a move would only provoke a Hungarian uprising. As an Austrian, he remarked: "The gentlemen are not familiar with Hungarian history…"
Nevertheless, the German leadership continued to monitor developments. When, in the spring of 1944, Russian units reached the Carpathians, Hitler accepted the necessity of securing the Hungarian front.
He discussed the removal of the Jews in Hungary with the Governor on 18 March. However, he stressed that he was willing to withdraw his troops if the government agreed to further cooperation with the Germans. By the time the Governor returned home, the German troop movements had already been completed. Since the presence of German forces in such numbers had not been expected, there were clashes between Hungarian and German units at several border crossings, but no organised resistance was possible.
The resignation of Miklós Horthy would not have solved the country's problems; it would only have opened the way for the rise of a national-radical government. Such a step would not have helped the Jewish population either. He therefore decided to appoint a government that would cooperate with the Germans, hoping that he would still be able to preserve some freedom of action.
Forming a new government was not a simple task. The leader of the Arrow Cross Party, Ferenc Szálasi, was not acceptable to the Governor. Szálasi himself did not wish to assume the office of Prime Minister. In his view, it was

unacceptable that the Germans demanded direct control over the "Jewish question."
The conservative parties did not want to take responsibility for forming a government under occupation, so the Governor finally turned to an old military adviser, Döme Sztójay, who accepted the task. The Germans trusted him because he had represented Hungary in Berlin for many years and had built good relations with many German statesmen. At the time, he was seriously ill and clearly took up the position without political ambition.
The Sztójay government soon presented itself to Parliament, which voted confidence in it. In an extremely difficult situation, the government sought to persuade the German authorities that it was willing to cooperate in internal and defensive matters, while also taking steps to mitigate the measures imposed by German security forces that violated Hungarian sovereignty. They managed to maintain order and limit excesses from both the left and the right.
The German occupation forces organised the transport of the rural Jewish population to Polish labour camps. They proclaimed that the deportees would be treated humanely, and with the cooperation of the Jewish Council, Jews living in the countryside were deported.
The churches sharply protested against the deportation of the rural Jewish population, including the reading of pastoral letters in all churches, but the government's hands were tied. Unfortunately, some rural policemen and gendarmes had to be involved in the deportation process, and this deeply poisoned relations between Hungary and those affected.
It can be stated that the Hungarian military, police, and gendarmerie forces continued to act with discipline and loyalty to the Head of State. When Miklós Horthy judged that, because of the military situation and the impact of the attempted assassination of Hitler on the German leadership, he could intervene against the deportation of the Jews in Budapest, the Hungarian military and gendarmerie prevented the deportations. It was therefore illogical that after the war the entire gendarmerie was condemned as abusive. Today it is clear that this served only the interests of the Hungarian Bolsheviks acting on behalf of Russian aims.

From a Hungarian point of view, the war reached another fatal turning point when Finland began negotiations with the Soviet Union and Romania switched sides. A large number of German troops fell into Russian hands, and the way opened for Soviet forces to penetrate Transylvania and Bánát through the Southern Carpathians—bypassing the Hungarian defences in Transcarpathia.

Hungarian diplomacy, in its contacts with the Western Powers, did everything possible to help the country exit the war and even proposed accelerating the advance of the British 8th Army into the Carpathian Basin. But the West replied that Hungary must negotiate with the Soviet Union.

In this desperate situation, the Governor decided to attempt the impossible by personally seeking contact with the Soviet Union.

Miklós Horthy was aware that, as Head of State, he had no constitutional right to conclude an armistice without the consent of the government. The government was responsible to the House, and it was well known that the overwhelming majority of Parliament at this time—like the National League—was determined to continue the seemingly hopeless struggle.

The National League hoped that Germany would finally deploy its new weapons, which, even if they could not secure full victory, might create the conditions for a compromise peace. There were rumours of tension within the Russian–Anglo-Saxon alliance. Horthy understood that he could only act in a private capacity.

He dismissed the Sztójay government and appointed General Géza Lakatos as his administrative replacement. Its members were almost exclusively his personal supporters. The government was not informed of Horthy's deliberations with the Soviet Union, but it is likely that ministers in key positions were aware of his intentions. The negotiations did not remain secret from the German intelligence services, giving the resistance forces an opportunity to prepare for a takeover of power.

Kórody, chairman of the Arrow Cross Party, brought the rumour before Parliament, declaring that the Head of State had been negotiating with the Soviet Union. At this point, the President of the House of Representatives, András Tasnády Nagy, interrupted the speech, stating that it was

inconceivable that the Governor—who for twenty years had led the country in exemplary constitutional fashion—would commit such a violation of the constitution.

The negotiations between Horthy and the Russians continued, and they agreed on the main points. The remaining question was whether Hungarian troops, upon surrender, would then have to confront the Germans. In this matter, Horthy could not decide, for his chivalrous spirit struggled with the thought that, in this critical phase of the war, Hungary should turn against its former ally.

Today it is difficult to determine exactly what Miklós Horthy intended on this issue. Perhaps he expected the Soviet Union to relent. In any case, the Governor planned to announce the existence of the ongoing ceasefire agreement by noon on 15 October 1944.

On that same morning, Miklós Horthy received the Extraordinary Ambassador of the German Empire, whose task was, if possible, to persuade him to halt the talks with the USSR. The German commissioner explained that Hungary's hope for more favourable treatment was worthless if it accepted the unconditional surrender being offered.

The Governor gave an evasive answer. He told the ambassador he would not change his plans. We know that the Governor's radio speech resulted only in resistance from the opposition, who then seized power while advocating continued German–Hungarian cooperation.

Under compulsion, Miklós Horthy signed his statement of resignation, and the new government was introduced to the House. Ferenc Szálasi took the oath before the Holy Crown and Parliament, and the new head of state assumed power on a constitutional basis.

The vast majority of the army and civil service took the oath, and the fighting continued. The Armed Forces Commander and the General Staff stressed that the troops would continue to fulfil their duty.

The military evacuation of Budapest began on 30 October 1944. The leadership took steps to defend the capital should hostile forces reach it. During these days, revolutionary protests occurred, many directed against the Jewish population, but the government intervened vigorously whenever such

incidents came to its attention. The German security forces urged the deportation of the Jews from the capital, but Ferenc Szálasi refused and effectively guaranteed the safety of the Jews already concentrated in designated districts.

On Christmas Eve, the capital was encircled by the Soviet Army, but the Hungarian and German garrisons defended the city with great determination. The military significance of the storming of the city was later recognised in a lengthy article published by a journal of the French military academy. The expert author concluded that this battle was, from a military point of view, one of the most important engagements of the Second World War.

Indeed, during this siege the nation demonstrated that the resolve to defend the homeland to the last person applied not only to the political leadership but also to the overwhelming majority of the population, who were unwilling to accept Bolshevik servitude.

The troops of the armed forces, the hardened squadrons of the gendarmerie, and the university youth clubs heroically held their positions. Their struggle could not have lasted six weeks had the civilian population not supported the defenders with disciplined and devoted loyalty. The German conscripts also held their ground, and the leadership did everything possible to relieve the besieged units.

Time was gained by the defenders; new divisions were formed, mostly on a voluntary basis. The Hunyadi armoured grenadiers and the St. László Division demonstrated in the final battles in Transdanubia that this country never turns against its allies and is ready to defend its homeland to the last scrap of land.

Many, especially after the war, believed that it had been unreasonable for Budapest to suffer so terribly during the siege, and they wept sincerely at the sight of the beautiful bridges lying in the Danube and the burnt-out palaces. Cities, however, can be rebuilt. Budapest, too, was reborn. Today it is again one of the most beautiful cities in the world. It is ironic that during the rebuilding of the Castle District, memories of our medieval past were uncovered, so that the destruction of the baroque palace led us back to an even earlier age.

But the soul of the nation can only be preserved if the present generation can recover the past and allow the self-sacrificing deeds of their ancestors to warm their hearts. Today the pain has faded, and what remains is the memory of the heroes who defended the nation's capital with honour. After the struggles against the Turks and the fight against Habsburg repression, the Hungarians in the twentieth century again demonstrated that they must be taken seriously by the great powers under all circumstances.

Some have appreciated the hard-fought Hungarian resistance at the end of the war, noting that it protected Europe and Christian civilisation from the eastern communist tide. Our seven-month resistance gave the West time, so that the Iron Curtain fell only along the Stettin–Trieste line, allowing the Western powers the opportunity to prepare for the future liberation of Eastern Europe.

The fall of the Third Reich

The Great German Empire's historical comet darkened the European sky for only a moment, yet world literature is still examining every detail more than half a century later. The reason is obvious: the sufferings and consequences of the Second World War continue to shape human destiny. Again, and again, we must confront those fatal twelve years. It seems that this brief period forms a dividing line in world history. Perhaps it will influence events for centuries to come. The rise and fall of the Great German Empire was intertwined with the successes, weaknesses, and sins of the German National Socialist movement. When I look for the causes of the empire's collapse, it is therefore necessary to address German National Socialism (Nazism) as a political movement.

First of all, it is necessary to clarify concepts, because post-war literature naturally views the recent past through the eyes of the victors. It simplifies the problem by describing the German movement as a "defeated and outlawed" regime, labelled "Nazi" or "Fascist." Today, for example, the term "red fascism" is even used when referring to the oppression and illegitimate rule of the Bolshevik system.

Most misunderstandings and disagreements arise from the fact that the movement called itself socialist. There has been no serious attempt to analyse what this socialism actually meant. I believe that behind this term lay a number of different ideas.

In my view, socialism may mean that a party or movement calls for the creation of social justice—one of the major issues of the twentieth century as industrial capitalism developed. The United States and Great Britain are the most representative examples of this form of total capitalism. It is undeniable that industrial workers at the time could only feel exploited within such a system.

Beyond improving the condition of industrial workers, socialism also sought to integrate this social layer into the life of the nation

through constitutional means. In agrarian countries, socialist forces likewise aimed to improve the situation of the peasantry.
On the other hand, socialism may also be interpreted in the sense represented by the European social-democratic parties. According to them, large banks, industrial conglomerates, and public services such as railways and hospitals should be placed under state control. Essentially, they did not attack the fundamental principles of capitalist society but sought to achieve their aims constitutionally within a multi-party democratic system.
Lenin represented a different socialism, which—according to Marxist historical philosophy—proclaimed that a social order based entirely on communal forms could be realised, and that to achieve this, a temporary dictatorship of the proletariat was necessary. Ultimately, according to their theory, the socialist state would wither away and communist society would become a paradise on earth.
This idea was utopian, for the dictatorship of the proletariat was in reality a one-party command system. Moreover, the Soviet Union ignored its own historical theory by becoming imperialist, arguing that it needed to liberate the exploited proletarians of the world through an arms race and the oppression of peoples who disagreed.
German National Socialism showed similar features. First of all, it embraced a one-party system. In both Hitler's Germany and the Soviet Union, the ruling party rejected the multi-party system of parliamentary democracy. The new Germany was also imperialist in the sense that it sought to overturn the European order established at Versailles, but its aims were not global; it sought only to secure living space for the German people in Eastern Europe. Even the survival of the British Empire was to be guaranteed—unlike the Soviet Union, which, through the ideology of the communist regime, clearly aimed at world domination.
The bible of the German movement was Mein Kampf, in which Adolf Hitler set out his ideas. Critics are correct in saying that this cannot

be compared to the many volumes of philosophical and historical analysis in Karl Marx's Das Kapital. Hitler was a politician expressing his views on the political situation of his time. Among other things, he described the French hatred of the Germans, demonstrated by the desperate and retaliatory spirit displayed in the post-war years.

A researcher would search in vain for detailed proposals in which Hitler outlines a radical transformation of Germany's economic or social life. In other words, the book did not provide an economic programme, and the "socialist" element in the party's name referred only to the uplift of industrial workers and their place within the nation. In this sense, the author also addressed the German peasantry, but his remarks amounted only to a vague outline of a peasant programme.

In short, the German movement understood socialism as the creation of social justice, without any fundamental changes to private property or similar institutions.

The explicitly anti-Marxist Deutsche Arbeitsfront (German Labour Front) rejected the idea of class struggle and brought factory owners and employees together at the negotiating table. Party representatives ensured that these round-table discussions considered only the interests of the nation as a whole.

German National Socialism also opposed the Italian system, because in the "corporate state" German writers saw only a continuation of class struggle.

There was, of course, a genuinely socialist wing within the movement. However, while Lenin and later Stalin pursued an imperialism aimed at world domination and the creation of a communist society, the Strasser–Röhm group saw socialism as a means of establishing German imperialism through total state control.

Hitler clashed with this wing even before taking power. After the failure of the 1933 coup attempt, he insisted on a constitutional path

and had to clarify his position to the leaders of German industry. He repeatedly addressed assembled industrialists, assuring them that German National Socialism was not Marxist and that free enterprise would not be threatened by a change of power. Meanwhile, communist forces were also advancing, trying to convince the population that only radical socialism could rescue the working class from the economic crisis. Thus, representatives of large corporations began to support the National Socialists financially, hoping that German rearmament would benefit them.

The left wing of the party threatened a possible coup, but Hitler resolved the crisis by persuading them that the party must first concentrate on taking power.

After the seizure of power, the forces around Ernst Röhm felt that the party had betrayed "true socialism" and prepared for a coup. When Hitler learned of this, he abandoned persuasion and used force to silence them.

Following the takeover, an economic boom ensued. The rapid decline in unemployment and the strong integration of German workers into social life proved that the earlier successes of the Communist and Social Democratic parties were not rooted in ideology but in the despair of the workers. As their situation improved, opposition diminished, and in the second half of the 1930s the street battles between red and brown paramilitary groups were replaced by cooperation within the system.

Hitler kept his word to the barons of big industry. The Papen–Hugenberg group also hoped that their influence would shape National Socialist policy.

The agreement with the Vatican was likewise an improvement for German Catholics. Hitler respected the importance of the Rhine region and Bavarian Catholicism, and sought only the separation of church and state—a constitutional principle in the United States and France. This stood in sharp contrast to the Soviet Union, where

active atheism destroyed church institutions and cultural monuments.

Prior to 1933, the fundamental problem facing economists was the world depression, which they attempted to tackle through austerity measures—policies that resulted only in further abstinence and impoverishment. Among the leaders of German economic life was the politically conservative Hjalmar Schacht, who proposed a novel solution: reviving economic activity through loans and public works. This approach was not only acceptable but desirable to the National Socialist leadership.

Decades later, economists still debated whether this solution originated with Keynes, Schacht, or Roosevelt, for it is clear that the American recovery—the New Deal—was built on economically and politically similar principles.

In Germany, however, most public works projects served rearmament, and even road construction had strategic purposes. Hitler had already explained in Mein Kampf that his main goal was to break the Versailles state order. He did not deny that once the Empire was restored, he intended for Germany to turn eastward. This also meant that he firmly distanced himself from any policy aimed at seeking revenge against the West. Behind the scenes, he encouraged the United Kingdom to maintain its empire and tried to persuade France that he did not seek to regain Alsace–Lorraine. Even in the case of South Tyrol, Italy was assured that cooperation between the two states was essential.

However, he never abandoned the goal of expansion to the east. He also timed the pace of rearmament so that the Empire would be ready to turn eastward by 1943. Schacht (Minister of Economics, 1934–1937) opposed the acceleration of the arms race because it was clear that Germany could not sustain it under traditional economic management. Since Hitler would not relent, the relatively untouched free-enterprise system was replaced by planned

economic control. Göring became the driving force behind the Four-Year Plan (1936), which prepared the country for war.
The German leadership understood that the memory of the heavy blood sacrifices of World War I was still vivid in the people's minds, so Hitler always emphasised that the creation of the Great German Empire would be achieved by peaceful means. One of their famous election posters even proclaimed that Adolf Hitler, the front-line soldier, knew the horrors of war and therefore wanted peace. Rearmament began only after his request for general disarmament was rejected by the other states. (Germany had, in fact, been disarmed in 1918.)
After Germany's first determined steps, England launched its own rearmament programme in 1934. Post-war literature now recognises that they planned for this programme to be completed by 1939, effectively fixing the date of a possible European war.
The National Socialist leadership hoped that during these preparatory years—when Germany was economically strengthened and the Greater German Reich created—the nationalist spirit would unify the country, a prerequisite for any war effort.
Industrial workers were almost entirely supportive of the system, as industry leaders cooperated with management. This was not the case for the higher middle class and the Junkers (the landed nobility of Prussia). When issues such as the annexation of Austria or the creation of the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia arose, they could not oppose National Socialism because these were national objectives. In the months immediately preceding the war, however, they were at the forefront of various underground movements and sought to clarify their position—primarily toward the English.
Thus, despite the slogan "One Empire, One People, One Leader," German unity was still incomplete. Memories of Bavarian, Prussian, and other regional conflicts remained vivid in society.
The problem of the German Jews also intensified conflicting views. It is difficult to understand why the German Empire attempted to

solve the Jewish question with such radical measures. This group did not cause as much tension in Germany as in Central and Eastern Europe. Jews fleeing from Galicia sought to preserve their traditional, Eastern Jewish lifestyle, whereas Jewish immigrants in Germany were already European in character. German culture was largely accepted, German was spoken, and assimilation was ongoing. In Central and Eastern Europe, rapid assimilation was impossible due to the large Jewish population, and intermarriage was likely only within the middle class. In Germany, by contrast, Jews made up only 2 to 3 percent of the population, and there were no major obstacles to assimilation.

Undoubtedly, the overwhelming influence of Jewry prevailed during the Weimar period in the major cities—in film, radio, theatre, and finance. Obviously, it would have been sufficient for Germany simply to reduce this disproportionate influence.

Conservative elements within the party worked in this direction, but most of the leadership set the goal of encouraging Jewish emigration. Post-war English literature notes that this process proceeded relatively smoothly in the pre-war years, with the Jewish population in Germany reduced by one third.

The disappointed Jewish emigrants, however, began a powerful propaganda campaign against the German leadership, which only strengthened the radical elements within Germany. When, in 1938, an assassination attempt was made against a German diplomat in Paris, the radical wing of National Socialism carried out a veritable pogrom throughout the Reich.

The National Socialist state system had another weakness. Today it can be stated that the Soviet system was more stable in this respect. In Germany, all constitutional power was concentrated in the Leader. Yet in the complex industrial society of the twentieth century, it was impossible for one man to control everything. Hitler therefore entrusted different spheres of responsibility to various subordinates. In doing so, he created “little kings” among his

prominent leaders, making the machinery of government increasingly cumbersome. It later became clear that some high-ranking officials knew very little about other parts of the war apparatus.

By contrast, in the Soviet Union the council system (at least in principle) provided collective leadership. It is true that in the Politburo power was often held by one man at a time, yet decisions were formally made collectively.

In South-Eastern Europe, the German Empire had no territorial ambitions; it sought only friendly cooperation in the region.

In the Hungarian context, enemy (British) propaganda did everything possible to confuse the Hungarian public by spreading fantastic "German plans." The supposed schemes for a Baranya or Bánát "Gau" were inventions of biased minds. On the contrary, although the German minority wished to preserve its cultural identity, the German leadership planned to relocate South-East European Germans to the territories expected to be gained in the east. Otherwise, German National Socialism never supported the radical nationalist parties in Hungary, preferring instead to cooperate with the conservative government of Miklós Horthy.

After the annexation of Austria and the establishment of the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, the German Empire had only one remaining demand: Danzig and the Polish Corridor—an issue that post-World War I literature rightly predicted could lead to a future conflict.

Anglo-Saxon propaganda later attempted to portray the Danzig issue as if Hitler had violated the "promise" of the Munich Conference, where he claimed to have no further territorial demands in Europe.

In reality, for nearly four years Germany had done everything possible to win Polish cooperation within a German-led federal system. The German leadership expected the Polish question to be

handled in the spirit of the South Tyrol or Alsace-Lorraine settlements.
The German demands were very moderate. They insisted only that the city of Danzig—designated a "free city," belonging neither to Poland nor Germany—be returned to the Reich, and that an autobahn corridor be created to connect Danzig with the motherland, a proposal made several years before the war.
This offer, which appeared to settle the Polish–German relationship, nevertheless posed a serious problem for the Poles. A German alliance would have meant that Poland, in the event of a German–Russian conflict, would become a theatre of war, and in the case of a German victory would be compelled to expand eastward and accept the liquidation of the Polish Corridor.
On the other hand, Great Britain could not allow this development, for the occupation of Austria and the defence agreement concerning the Czech Republic demonstrated that such steps would sooner or later lead to German hegemony in Europe. This had to be prevented, if necessary, by armed force. That is why, after the talks in Munich, Great Britain immediately accelerated its armament programme and sought, through guarantees in Eastern Europe, to restrict future German moves in this direction.
Germany regarded these steps in British diplomacy as attempts at encirclement. In response, the Anglo-German Naval Agreement was terminated.
Great Britain needed continental alliances for a successful war in Europe and, in addition to strengthening the Franco-British alliance, it took steps to bring the Soviet Union into an anti-German structure.
Germany, however, did not want to become involved in another world war that would again have to be fought on two fronts. In the years between the wars, German literature dealt extensively with this problem, and one of the truisms of German military policy was that a European war could only be fought on a single front.

This was the background to German efforts to gain the understanding—or at least the neutrality—of the British Empire regarding its plans for dismantling the Soviet Union. Soon, however, it became clear to German diplomacy that Great Britain, despite the risk of unrest among its colonial peoples and the danger that another war might be fatal to its empire, could not allow any European state to become dominant on the continent. To prevent actual encirclement, German diplomacy therefore took steps to contact the Soviet Union.

The two sides were worlds apart ideologically, and the Russian leaders were well aware of Germany's eastern ambitions. During the negotiations, however, it became apparent that behind the ideological façade, national interests were decisive. Stalin saw that it was wiser to weaken Europe by giving the German Empire a free hand in a new Franco-British versus German war. He estimated that in a three- to four-year conflict, both sides would be so exhausted that a better-armed Soviet Union could assume the role of arbiter and achieve its own aims.

Both sides in the German–Russian relationship entertained the idea that cooperation between the two peoples and a clear separation of their spheres of interest would serve them both. The Western powers tried in vain to win the Soviet Union as an ally; the Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact appeared to remove the threat of a two-front war. British plans also faltered because Poland refused to allow Soviet troops to enter its territory.

German diplomacy after World War I feared possible American intervention, whose financial strength was highly respected. For a time, circumstances seemed to favour the German Empire. After the First World War, the United States was shocked by the bloodbath that had merely restored the major European colonial empires. President Wilson's ideals were dismissed. The American public did not want to hear of re-engaging in a European war, and Congress passed a neutrality declaration.

Thus, it seemed that Britain and France would have to face the crisis alone—namely, the approaching Danzig flash-point.
Hitler believed that England would yield at the last moment. He did not consider the occupation of Poland a problem, and because of German–Russian cooperation, he believed that the eastern front would soon collapse. He also hoped that the western front would be represented only by French forces, and it was well known that French strategy focused on defending the Maginot Line.
Hitler was confident in his luck and therefore did not want to change the launch date of the Polish campaign on 1 September, despite the fact that Anglo-German discussions were still ongoing. After the fighting began, Britain responded to Germany's final, publicised peace proposal by stating that any further negotiations must be preceded by the withdrawal of German troops from Poland. The German leadership, of course, was not willing to accept this.
At that time, the German leadership, Britain, and Poland all effectively accepted that war was the only way to resolve the crisis. It is typical of those fateful hours that when Lipski, the Polish ambassador, received Ribbentrop's German peace proposal, he did not read it. He slapped it on the table and, according to the English historian David Irving, declared: "In Germany, within a few weeks, a revolution will break out, and we Poles will hold the front."
The Polish campaign was indeed a lightning strike. Armoured vehicles and aircraft demonstrated the effectiveness of mobile warfare.
Following the campaign and the division of Poland, Hitler expected that Britain would now be willing to consider a compromise peace. He was disappointed, for behind the scenes—despite all neutrality laws—Roosevelt's America had already begun preparations to intervene on Britain's behalf.
Hitler planned an offensive against France in the autumn of 1939 (October), but had to postpone it until the spring of 1940.

Italy's behaviour also caused difficulties. In late August, the Italian government unexpectedly announced that it was obliged to remain neutral if a European war broke out as a consequence of the German–Polish conflict. Hitler accepted this because he still hoped that England would relent. Italy's non-interference was not absolute, however, and its later actions unnecessarily expanded the battlefield by opening the Greek front.

The German western offensive was preceded by the Danish and Norwegian operations, which facilitated North European economic transport. Swedish steel, in particular, was vital for German military industry. The German operation in Norway began only twenty-four hours before the arrival of the British fleet.

The major German offensive launched on 10 May 1940 broke the resistance of the French and their allies within weeks, and France was forced to request an armistice. Military operations then ceased. Adolf Hitler's peace offer was not accepted by the British Empire, and the state of war continued.

Great Britain's rigid behaviour seemed incomprehensible to many. Most European states believed the war was essentially over and expected peace negotiations.

The Soviet Union was particularly affected by the smooth German victory. Stalin had calculated that many years would pass before the Soviets would have to face a new European order. He had not expected a rapid German triumph, and now anticipated that England would accept the new European situation and give Germany a free hand in the East. This is why Stalin occupied the Baltic States and attacked Romania as a precaution, while massing considerable forces along the German–Soviet border.

Hungarian diplomacy took these events into account, including the question of Hungarian Transylvania. Hungarian and Soviet moves against Romania were aligned. From the perspective of the German Empire, however, Soviet military actions were a threat.

It was clear that Great Britain was working to provoke a German–Russian confrontation—a two-front war.

There were plans for a British landing, but they never took serious form because the British Air Force was so well prepared that the Luftwaffe could not secure air supremacy. Moreover, it was necessary to clarify Soviet intentions. For this reason, the German Air Force attacked British military targets, but only in a restrained manner. The German army shifted its focus to the eastern front. The dilemma for the German leadership at this time was whether to turn south or east.

Italy's ill-considered Greek campaign was disapproved of by Germany, but it raised the prospect of Britain attempting an attack from the south, through the Balkans. Churchill had long been fascinated—since the First World War—by the idea of landing in Europe from the sea and attacking from the rear.

The takeover of North Africa, together with control of the Suez Canal and Gibraltar, would have provided the German Empire with an immense strategic area from which it could never again be threatened by a European blockade.

The road to Gibraltar ran through Spain. Hitler held talks with Franco, requesting passage for German troops through Spanish territory. With his plans to attack Gibraltar, Hitler tried to win over the Falange leader, but Franco refused to cooperate.

Historians on the winning side often claim that Adolf Hitler always negotiated violently and uncompromisingly. Yet in the Spanish–German negotiations he proved overly accommodating. The same was true in his discussions with Mussolini, and Miklós Horthy was often able to secure his position despite German interests and wishes.

In my study of German literature, I found that Emperor Wilhelm was regarded as crude and impatient in diplomacy, whereas Hitler—especially with his "friends"—tried to be flexible. After the event, it is easy to speculate what might have happened had Germany

accepted the Soviet position and, instead of turning east, sought its territorial and economic security at sea.
Germany could have used its military industry to further develop submarine warfare and air power. Instead, the German leadership decided to clarify the Soviet Union's intentions.
Molotov, the Soviet Foreign Minister, during his last visit to Berlin, discussed the international situation and the policies of the two states in an open exchange of views. Russia emphasised that it was willing to continue economic cooperation in the spirit of the German–Russian agreement, but Molotov rejected Hitler's proposal that Russia limit its imperial ambitions in the Persian Gulf. He also declared that Romania, Bulgaria, and even Turkey belonged to the Soviet sphere of influence.
During the talks, a British air raid occurred. Molotov's remarks revealed that he expected the war to continue and that European peace was not as close as many statesmen believed.
Hitler left the meeting convinced that sooner or later he would have to confront the Russian question, for he would not accept Soviet dominance in the Balkans. Both the German General Staff and Hitler believed that in a new lightning strike the Soviet Union could be eliminated from the war before Britain and America could deploy significant military forces in Europe.
The U.S. Navy had already received orders to attack German warships, even though the German navy had been instructed, for political reasons, to avoid any conflict with American forces so as not to provoke a declaration of war.
Operation Barbarossa was scheduled by the German leadership for 20 May 1941. The Greek front did not appear to require a long campaign. Necessary troop movements had been underway since 1940 through Hungarian, Romanian, and Bulgarian territory. However, unexpected problems arose in Yugoslavia. It had seemed that, thanks to successful German diplomacy, the Yugoslav

government would join the Tripartite Pact, enabling German troops to complete the Greek operation safely.
British diplomacy and secret service, however, succeeded in inciting a military coup in Belgrade. The new government was anti-German and pro-Russian, forcing Germany to expand its limited Balkan operation to include Yugoslavia. Some units had to be withdrawn from the eastern front, and the offensive scheduled for 20 May could only begin on 22 June.
The Yugoslav resistance was broken by German forces within days. This was aided by the Slovenians and Croats, who saw the situation as an opportunity to gain independence and free themselves from Serbian domination.
Hungary also enforced part of its claims by occupying the Hungarian-inhabited region of Bácska. Serbian resistance did not cease, however, because although the Serbian state administration collapsed, army units continued fighting in the mountains. At this time, partisan warfare by the civilian population began, tying down a significant number of German troops.
The coup supported by the British secret service also contributed to the failure of Operation Barbarossa to break Soviet resistance. In addition, that year the autumn rains and the Russian winter were harsher than usual. In Western Europe, the road network allowed almost unrestricted movement of armoured forces, whereas in the East mobile warfare faced far greater natural obstacles. German troops were not properly prepared for winter conditions and managed to hold the front only with great difficulty.
The Germans reached the outskirts of Moscow, but by then the Soviet Union had had time to form new divisions.
On 8 December 1941, Japan, seeing no other way out of the United States' hostile economic policy, launched an air strike on Pearl Harbor, bringing the USA into the war. That year, the German Empire finally faced the three great powers that had once defeated it in the First World War and imposed the Versailles order upon it.

There is no doubt that the situation of the German Empire was more favourable than in the First World War. Japan's military successes partially diverted American power and weakened the British Empire. From Norway to Spain and further to North Africa, there was virtually no active front, and German leaders hoped that in 1942 a new offensive would disable the Soviet Union.

It can now be stated that German politics and diplomacy failed on the eastern front. On 22 June, German forces and a substantial Hungarian contingent entered Soviet territory. Surprisingly, the population welcomed them almost as liberators. Orthodox bishops appeared in full vestments in the villages, offering bread and salt to the troops according to ancient custom.

By contrast, German policy—driven by fervent anti-communism—gave special security forces free rein to eliminate political enemies. These forces also turned against the Jewish population and committed massive abuses, while Wehrmacht officers looked on with contempt.

However, the greatest political mistake was that the advancing German troops were not followed by any measures that would have convinced the population that they were truly being liberated from Stalinist terror.

For example, had Germany facilitated the convening of a Ukrainian constitutional assembly in Kiev, Ukraine might have proclaimed its independence. In that case, the troops would not have faced partisan warfare but rather cooperation from the population, making resupply easier. They might even have fought on the German side.

It is still difficult to determine who was responsible for this failure. Rosenberg, of Estonian-Lithuanian origin, supported such a strategy, but Himmler's exaggerated self-confidence prevailed. Earlier, Hitler had been the balancing force within the party, but by that time his control had gradually weakened. It is not impossible that the German leadership wanted to preserve the possibility of a future

German–Russian reconciliation and therefore avoided appearing as "liberators."
It was unrealistic to expect Italy to provide meaningful military assistance to the German Empire. The commitment of Italian soldiers was questionable, making it necessary to send German armoured divisions to North Africa. This weakened the eastern front. Perhaps it was also a mistake not to persuade Spain to intervene. Instead of securing supply lines for the German Afrika Korps by occupying Gibraltar, this task was entrusted to the less enthusiastic Italian naval forces. German air superiority was already gone, yet securing the reinforcement line remained essential. Thus, after Rommel's initial successes, the momentum of the offensive was lost and the fronts solidified.
The operation on the eastern front, launched in the summer of 1942, failed to achieve its intended objectives: the capture of Stalingrad and control of the Baku oil supply. Moreover, the collapse of the Soviet Union could no longer be expected, as American military shipments had begun to arrive and the vast territorial depth of the country proved decisive. The long siege of Stalingrad and the resistance of Leningrad ultimately became the turning points of the war. By this time, Germany could only hope for a compromise peace. Germany was able to increase its arms production even under these difficult circumstances. A serious problem now arose as Britain and the United States carried out systematic air raids against German cities. These carpet bombings targeted not only military installations but also aimed at the annihilation of the civilian population.
The German submarine war reached its climax. Although the maritime powers suffered extraordinary losses, it became clear that this would not be the decisive battlefield.
When U.S. troops in North Africa defeated the German–Italian expeditionary army, the political situation in Italy was shaken. It became evident that Italy's commitment to Germany had been

superficial since 1940, and most of the Fascist leadership agreed with the King that Italy should surrender and change sides.
The German response was swift and effective against the Italians, but the Allied landings in Italy could not be prevented, and the retreat from the Apennine Peninsula to the Po Valley began.
The Anglo-Saxons successfully landed in Italy. Great Britain proposed shifting the battlefield to the Balkans, but the Soviet Union now regarded the entire peninsula as its sphere of interest, making it impossible for Anglo-Saxon troops to enter the Balkans.
At this stage of the war, the Jewish question also took a grave turn. Originally, the German leadership planned to transport Europe's Jews to Madagascar. When this became impossible due to the collapse of German naval power, they pushed for their relocation to Eastern Europe, intending to use them in Polish and Ukrainian industrial complexes. Himmler was charged with this task.
Special security forces carried out these deportations with inhuman cruelty, transporting Jews to Eastern European labour camps. They were housed in barracks near synthetic rubber and synthetic fuel production sites. Inhumane labour conditions, poor nutrition, sadistic guards, contagious epidemics, and regular air raids caused immense suffering.
When advancing Soviet troops approached these settlements, the most serious crisis arose. German authorities ordered the dismantling of factory equipment and the evacuation of the Jewish population. This proved impossible because the German rail network was nearly paralysed by constant air raids.
During the winter, able-bodied men were forced to march. Many of the weak did not survive, and the roads were strewn with the dead. Women, children, and the elderly were transported in railway wagons, but they too suffered terribly. Trains often stood for days in the open on twisted tracks; food supplies collapsed, wagons filled with corpses, and survivors resembled skeletons. These transports

arrived at concentration camps in Germany, where the invading (liberating) forces were shocked by the horrific scenes.
Such evacuations under these conditions were criminal, and those responsible were rightly condemned. The German leadership also sinned against its own people, and the memory of these actions still obscures the sins committed by the other side.
The carpet bombings of German cities were themselves a sin. The cries of the hundreds of thousands who burned in Bremen, Hamburg, and Dresden still echo today.
By 1944, the German military situation was almost hopeless, yet the leadership still placed its hopes in the Russian offensive. The difficulties of reinforcement were reduced, and there was an opportunity to deploy reserve troops at vulnerable points. They also believed they could repel the planned Allied landings on the western coast.
The German armaments industry was relocated underground, and great efforts were made to develop new weapons. Today we know these were missiles and jet aircraft. The first jets achieved destructive results, and there was hope that they would end the air raids on the civilian population.
However, the landing of Anglo-American forces significantly restricted the German leadership's options, leaving only the hope of avoiding unconditional surrender. The German General Staff then organised the Ardennes offensive while the eastern front remained relatively stable. There was also hope that the new jet-propelled aircraft would soon dominate the skies.
Following the initial successes of the Allied offensive at the end of 1944, Eisenhower began relocating his headquarters to France. The German advance stalled, partly due to fuel shortages, which also hindered the deployment of jet aircraft. Hungarian refugees later recalled seeing hundreds of these machines ready for take-off at the forest edges—without fuel.
The Wehrmacht capitulated, and the war was over.

Evaluation of the Second World War

The German Empire lost the war. The depth of the collapse can only be understood by those who experienced this period on German soil.

We, who could no longer be called front-line soldiers, with the responsibility for our women and children heavy on our minds, travelled in groups—sometimes in uniform, sometimes in vehicles, sometimes in train wagons that moved in fits and starts—towards an unknown destination. We felt the hopelessness of the situation acutely. Hungarian peasants fleeing westward were machine-gunned by American sharpshooters. Trains often stood for days on open tracks, and passengers sometimes had to walk many miles if railway workers managed to find an alternate route. Finding shelter for the night was difficult; the local population often barred their doors in fear or cruelty. The authority of the leadership was collapsing, and their requests for cooperation were frequently ignored. Food supplies were reduced to the bare minimum; refugees stole from farms and newly established relief depots, while others collected mushrooms in the forests.

The occupation by the victorious powers did not bring peace. A spirit of retribution permeated their military administration—they burned surplus food and clothing rather than distribute it to the needy. Emergency food rations were set at 1,200 calories, with the explanation that this was the amount provided in the concentration camps. This ration was maintained for another year. Soldiers of the Western powers did not kill civilians indiscriminately, and the Soviet level of criminal behaviour was unknown, but crimes were committed here and there—often by the Central Intelligence units—who sought to strip the population of their remaining valuables. Yet some military commanders were shocked by the growing lawlessness and attempted to curb the abuses of the more ruthless elements.

The victors ordered the dismantling of all undamaged factory equipment. Soon trains were heading to Russia, and it seemed that the Morgenthau Plan—reducing Germany to an agricultural state—might indeed be implemented. The expulsion of ethnic Germans from Eastern Europe began: East Prussian and Silesian Germans, Hungarian Swabians, Transylvanian Saxons, Upper Hungarian Saxons (Spitz-Szepes), and Sudeten Germans (Czechoslovakia) were forcibly relocated. Austria's union with Germany (the Anschluss) was not recognised, even though Austrians, as Germans, had expressed their desire to live in one state with the rest of the German people.

"From London and Moscow, Czech and Slovak political agents in exile followed an advancing Soviet army pursuing German forces westward, to reach the territory of the first former Czechoslovak Republic. Beneš proclaimed the program of the newly appointed Czechoslovak government on April 5, 1945, in the north-eastern city of Košice, which included oppression and persecution of the non-Czech and non-Slovak populations of the partially restored Czechoslovak Republic. After the proclamation of the Košice program, the German and Hungarian population living in the reborn Czechoslovak state were subjected to various forms of court procedures, citizenship revocations, property confiscation, condemnation to forced labour camps, and appointment of government managers to German and Hungarian owned businesses and farms, referred to euphemistically as 'reslovakization.'" — Wikipedia

The Soviet occupation zone attempted to redirect the North German population by invoking the earlier German–Russian cooperation treaty, trying to convince the Germans that by turning east—and reaching the Atlantic with the help of the new "Genghis Khan" troops, whose empire stretched to the Pacific—they could find a new future.

The Germans had to face the fact that their nation was now divided into three parts. For me, this recalled the great tragedy of the Hungarians after Mohács, when the once-great Hungarian state also broke apart into three: Transylvania, the Turkish-occupied territories, and the surviving royal domain.
The depth of the German collapse is also shown by the fact that the Germans had to withdraw entirely from their eastern expansion. They lost East Prussia and the city of Kant; Königsberg came under Russian sovereignty. The new frontier, the Oder, lay only sixty kilometres from Berlin, the imperial capital. Germans were expelled from the territories annexed to Poland. At that time, it seemed there was no chance for their rebirth.
However, a historically observant eye could perceive that the acceptance of the forcibly resettled Germans proved to be a two-edged advantage. The immigration of South-East European Germans was particularly significant. Their settlement and gradual integration into the life of the country helped offset the severe blood losses of the Second World War. According to the laws of life, within ten to twenty years the largely older German parents would be rejuvenated by their young German children. Politically, the deportation of these Germans also appeared advantageous: as Germans from foreign lands, their presence would have complicated relations between Germany and their former homelands. In Hungarian terms, I recalled that the Germans of Baranya were only slowly absorbed and assimilated into Hungary. Now, however, they could become nation-building members of the future German state.
The dismantling of German industry did not lead to an agricultural transformation. At this time, the United States feared that full implementation of the Morgenthau Plan would lead to the loss of Europe and a victory for communism. For this reason, the United States provided Germany with the capital needed to create a modern industrial economy, and soon German industry was once again among the world's leading producers.

In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, both Emperor Wilhelm II and Hitler sought to make Germany the strongest nation in Europe by building military, political, and economic hegemony and expanding eastward. The two world wars of the twentieth century failed to achieve this—just as the efforts of the Sun King and Napoleon had failed, exhausting French power. It may be that Germany will achieve primacy only in the economic sphere. It could become the engine of prosperity in Eastern Europe.

It appears that France has accepted this view. After the First World War, France believed it could continue to pursue its Napoleonic dream by building an alliance system in Eastern Europe, created by the simultaneous defeat of Germany and Russia, to ensure French hegemony. The Second World War showed that France could no longer even contemplate hegemony over Germany. Thus began a long-term cooperation between two nations long hostile to each other. Indeed, Franco-German understanding seems to have laid a firm foundation for a united Europe, in a truly European spirit.

The writer also sees Franco-German cooperation as a positive outcome of the Second World War. Although, like all wars, it brought serious casualties and spilled blood, it also produced economic and social developments. Among these, it is particularly striking that the four-engine bombers which destroyed cities, together with jet aircraft, later enabled the development of worldwide tourism—supported by radio and television—bringing peoples closer together and accelerating the course of history.

These events helped reconcile the peoples of Europe. Today, Germans, French, Dutch, and Italians are in such frequent contact that old, intricate conflicts have begun to fade. There is now a solid foundation for the idea of unity among all European states.

Only Britain's role remains uncertain. After the war, Churchill recognised that with the breakup of the British Empire, England would become a medium power. He therefore sought closer ties with America. The North Atlantic Alliance meant that England did

not wish to share the fate of Europe, which was increasingly turning eastward. Later, however, when American capital revitalised the economies of European states, England moderated its reluctance and joined the European alliance. Now (1985), as the outlines of a united Europe take shape and financial unity is already in place, England is again hesitant to cooperate too closely, for it could only play the role of a third partner alongside Germany and France. This remains a problem today. We believe that any Russian retreat must sooner or later be followed by an American retreat.

The evaluation of the Second World War must include the development of social and economic conditions since 1945. This picture is striking because, despite the German Empire's military defeat, the economic system of the following decades was not purely capitalist—at least not during the Cold War. In the West, the institutions of the welfare state were created; unlimited capitalism was abandoned, and a form of socialism emerged that focused on the political and economic needs of the working class. Agriculture remained free, and elements of free-market management began to appear even within the Soviet sphere of influence.

Later, this process was completed with the transformation of the Soviet Union. Thus occurred the great equalisation that ultimately broke down the anti-communist concept of the "free world." This happened because Marxism–Leninism had failed.

It is characteristic of these new insights that even the old concessions to socialism began to be dismantled by states. The former "mixed economy," which allowed railways, gas and electricity, telephones, and similar services to remain in public ownership for the public good, gradually changed. Even after the war, efforts to nationalise mines or banks were underway. Yet these trends were later replaced by the re-introduction of the principle of private property.

In other words, militarily the struggle against communism failed. Behind the anti-communist slogans, German, Italian, and Japanese

imperialism formed a seemingly unbeatable world alliance—but communism also failed. Russia's strength proved too small to fulfil its dream of world domination.
After the Second World War, Hungary unfortunately suffered even more than the battered Germany.
There is no reason to be ashamed of Hungary's politics during the Second World War. The conservative Hungarian leadership did not serve foreign interests; with all its strength, it sought to use the historical situation to achieve the nation's sacred goals.
Throughout the war, the leadership always took world-political considerations into account. They did not accept the Kiel German offer in 1938, nor the return of the Felvidék (Upper Hungary) under the Munich Agreement, even though all four major European powers had agreed to it.
The occupation of Transcarpathia was carried out independently and in the spirit of Hungarian–Polish cooperation.
In Transylvania, despite German objections, we acted in diplomatic agreement with the Soviet Union.
In the southern territories, we were careful to consider the English point of view, and insisted that only after the breakup of Yugoslavia would we attempt to regain our former lands, particularly Bácska.
Hungarian behaviour toward the Soviet Union was moderate. In fact, Russia became our enemy only within the Carpathians, when they were attacked by frenzied Romanian troops. The Hungarian nation and its leadership, however, instinctively recognised in those difficult months that the future of the nation could only be secured through suffering and sacrifice, while firmly defending its national rights.
Cities can be destroyed, but buildings can be rebuilt. The soul of the nation must be preserved in such fateful times. The heroic defence of Budapest and the Trans-Danubian struggles to the last man proved that this nation can always be relied upon.

The Soviet Union forced upon us a strange and unrealistic utopia; their invasion and long-lasting influence could have meant the death of our nation. The incorporation of Transcarpathia into the Soviet Union is one of the strongest proofs of the destruction of non-Slavic Hungary, the aim being at least to keep Hungary in servitude.

It soon became clear that the Soviet Union aspired to seize domination over Europe. This was carried out under the "socialist" utopia of Marxist–Leninist communism. The tragedy was deepened by the fact that the new European frontiers were drawn in the spirit of Slavic expansion. Russian troops advanced almost to the Atlantic. Thus, in the new peace talks in Paris, Hungarian considerations were even less effective than they had been at the Trianon Palace after the First World War. In Soviet philosophy, the question of nationality did not exist; they claimed that national separation was merely the ransom of capitalist class divisions and incompatible with the socialist world order. Therefore, our Hungarian brothers—already torn from their homeland by Trianon and subjected to the oppression of foreign peoples—were now forced to retrace their Calvary.

While at Trianon Count Albert Apponyi could still defend our interests, the new leaders of Hungary were mostly Soviet citizens who asked only for forgiveness for alleged past sins. They represented Moscow's interests alone. Conservative Hungary was sentenced to death, and the executioner was Mátyás Rákosi (leader of Hungary's Communist Party, 1945–1956). Above all, they sought to destroy the Hungarian middle class.

The pretext was found in the fight against "war criminals."

Under international law, still valid today, only aggressive war is punishable. How, then, could the majority of our Hungarian parliamentarians be "brought to court"?

How could Hungarian civil servants or officers be held responsible for carrying out orders issued by their superiors?

How could Cardinal Mindszenty, as head of the Catholic Church, be persecuted for his ethical and moral convictions?
The revenge-driven regime demanded bloody retribution. The series of actions aimed at destroying the Hungarian middle class—and the suffering of tens of thousands who were displaced—demonstrated clearly that the true goal was the annihilation of the nation's backbone. The attack on the churches and the creation of an unbelieving, atheist society were among their most significant tools in forging a Soviet-style people: a broken, subservient population no longer capable of independent thought.
A society deprived of basic knowledge of human rights was forced to accept kolkhoz agriculture, "rabbit-cage" urban housing, and the hopeless waiting of the impoverished worker for his turn.
The irony of history is that many of those deported had believed that Western influence would prevail after Germany's defeat and would prevent Communist terror.
The gross cruelty of the Rákosi system eventually alarmed even the Moscow leadership, and from 1954 reforms were forced upon his government. Yet the naïve Hungarian people—unversed in world politics—believed that the Soviet system was collapsing, and they rose in a revolution that was politically victorious. But it soon became clear that the opposing forces of the Cold War had agreed to maintain the status quo (the USA and the USSR). The American president who had proclaimed the rollback of communism had spoken only in electoral rhetoric; he merely stated that he would not tolerate further Soviet advances. Once again, our nation stood alone, and we had to acknowledge that the occupying power remained in control.
Decades passed under this redesigned communist system. The first years after the 1956 Revolution brought renewed terror and retaliation. Eventually, housing conditions improved, bread became more plentiful, and the persecution of the churches eased. Many felt that in such a long-lasting situation, one had no choice but to work

within the system. Yet the masses had lost all connection with the leadership and no longer regarded the state as their country. Thus, a society emerged that looked only to its own self-interest—a mentality that gradually led the system toward its disintegration. The worker was not interested in producing, and the manager's most important task became the increase of his own private assets. Corruption grew to an incredible extent and truly Balkanized the country.

Smuggling and manipulation of currency regulations were not regarded as crimes; any loss inflicted on the state was even considered a national virtue. Unfortunately, Hungarian history contributed to this attitude, romanticised through the tales of Sándor Rózsa and Jóska Sobri (our "Robin Hoods"), now revived in modern forms.

The Second World War did have some positive effects. Perhaps the question of national unity is the one whose solution advanced most during these decades.

Before the Second World War, Hungary's national leadership was full of goodwill and correctly recognised the direction of development—they sought to build Hungarian unity. It was typical that political parties often chose the word "unified" in their names. Yet society still bore the imprint of nineteenth-century life. Our leaders gradually integrated the representatives of the emerging educated class, but the great social differences between the former noble and common classes persisted, expressed in the way the peasantry and workers referred to the upper classes as urak ("my lords").

This distinction and aversion were largely swept away by the "red" (communist) storm. Many from the former middle class now worked as labourers to earn their daily bread, often gaining the respect of those who had once opposed them. The children of the middle class no longer followed the career paths of the old system.

New professions emerged, and the previously negative attitudes toward certain occupations faded.
Unemployment and exile were not the central problems; rather, it was that the existing living conditions no longer met people's needs. Even during the 1956 Revolution, society was almost unified, and I feel that even today's political parties do not represent social conflict so much as different paths toward freedom.
The communist utopia was placed on the new flag, and they imitated Russia's industrial policy as well. The Russians recognised that a non-industrialised society had drifted into socialist revolution, and therefore sought to build heavy industry by the harshest means, believing that the goals of communism would then be easier to achieve. Their functionaries in Hungary also wanted to transform an agricultural country into an industrial state. They pushed for industries without raw materials and ignored the fact that production would have no natural market. They created immense human suffering through misguided and degrading measures. In education, technical training was forced, while humanistic education was neglected or ignored.
Even hopeless enterprises continued to operate, draining society. During the long Turkish occupation and the later colonial status under the Habsburg Empire, our middle class had found its place mainly in medicine, engineering, law, the military, and public administration. Thanks to forced industrialisation, Hungarians learned the technical skills of many professions, and today Hungarian industry could be competitive on the world market if internationally managed financial capital were available to integrate the country into the modern market economy.
Thus, when Hungary re-enters the industrial and commercial life of Europe and the world, we will not need to lament any backwardness inherited from our historical past. Industry and commerce will simply need to learn the financial rules of the capitalist world. It is

clear to any contemporary witness that after nearly half a century of occupation, the country has become Balkanized.
Communist land policy proved clumsy and misguided. At first, the radical land reform—long a programme of many national parties—seemed to promote national unity. In many cases it created the illusion that the Hungarian peasantry would finally triumph.
But the regime, hostile to private property, did not consider that healthy peasant holdings would serve the nation's political and economic future. Instead, a system of cooperatives was introduced as a transitional step toward state-managed agriculture. These cooperatives, formed from small peasant farms, became state-owned economic units with poor production results.
The fate of the cooperative population improved only when the leadership introduced limited private farming. Then the Hungarian peasantry performed a miracle. In addition to achieving self-sufficiency, they produced goods for the market, easing the previous difficulties of feeding the urban population. This small concession was so successful that the rise of the smallholders even provoked envy among the urban population.
For production reasons, the state-owned large estates remained. They mechanised agriculture, creating automated farming similar to the large American, Canadian, and Australian farms—though on smaller holdings. However, while overseas large-scale farms used mechanisation to support family-run enterprises that adapted to the demands of a free market, the employees of the Hungarian state-owned estates had no incentive to increase their efforts. The same occurred in Russia. One of the most striking examples of this economic failure is that, during these years, one of the world's largest agricultural states was forced to buy wheat from abroad.
When, ten years ago, after the withdrawal of Soviet forces, the country partially compensated landowners who had lost their estates illegally and without compensation, it would have been possible to create healthy, medium-sized farms capable of supplying

Europe with the rich produce of Hungarian soil. In an increasingly industrialised country, a broader capitalist economy could have been introduced, laying solid foundations for private ownership and equity-based companies. Instead, elements within the ex-communist government, intent on preserving their power, secretly privatised state-owned infrastructure and strengthened their own positions. The Second World War finally resolved the very serious Jewish question.

The Hungarian people never thought in racial terms. Throughout our history—perhaps with the exception of the first half of the nineteenth century—the idea of a nation without internal distinctions prevailed. Hungary always embraced all peoples of the Carpathian Basin as brothers. Jews also found security and opportunity in Hungary. During the Turkish occupation, Jewish merchants traded with the Turks and were sometimes in conflict with Hungarians; in the Middle Ages, religious differences caused friction among the various denominations. By the time of the 1848 War of Independence, the Jews living among us were largely assimilated, and their sons and daughters suffered alongside the nation in its struggle for freedom.

Unfortunately, the masses of Jews living in the Russian–Polish territories, confined in difficult conditions, chose Hungary as the first stage of their westward journey, creating serious challenges for the country. By nature, assimilation could only have occurred through intermarriage within the middle class. Yet rapid, large-scale immigration raised the Jewish population from forty thousand to one million in just under fifty-six years.

The traditions, talents, and historical experience of the Jewish people created, in the host nation, an impression of conquest that conflicted with Hungarian interests. This explains the measures taken between the two world wars to curb Jewish influence.

It must be emphasised that these actions by the Hungarian people always remained within the bounds of humanism.

During the Second World War, however, the actions of the occupying German power severely affected Jewish communities in the countryside, who suffered grievous losses through deportation. Hungary, however, rescued the families living in the capital as soon as it regained the ability to act independently. It is tragic that the entire Hungarian middle class was later held responsible for what happened. This was a hasty and politically damaging accusation. A small group of Jews—the Muscovites—despite the intentions of responsible Jewish religious leaders, launched a veritable hunt for civil servants, gendarmes, and police officers. It was at this time that a genuine anti-Semitic atmosphere arose in the country.

In 1956, however, Hungarian Jewry in great numbers turned against communism, and many then began a mass migration to the West. The number of Jews in Hungary was thus significantly reduced, and the assimilation of those who remained continued. Today, it is foolish and unjustified for Hungarians to reopen old wounds. The same applies to Judaism: they must also learn that full integration into the Hungarian nation is only possible if the past can be forgotten in a spirit of forgiveness. After all, Hungarians too have something to forget—namely, the role of certain Jewish leaders in the communist rule imposed on Hungary after the world wars.

The suffering endured after the Second World War also made the country aware that not only the Carpathian Basin, but all of Europe—with its culture—is the only place where we can live a humane and authentically Hungarian life.

One of the dangers of communist repression was its attempt to persuade Hungarians that a thousand years ago St. Stephen had led us in the wrong direction, and that we should have gravitated toward the East. Their propaganda drew on the sentiment—especially strong during resistance to Habsburg rule—that the West had abandoned us, and that because of our Eastern origins, perhaps our place was not in Europe.

It was a subtle propaganda, and even the highly successful and much-loved rock opera about St. Stephen carried this idea in the background.

All efforts toward the East proved fruitless. Hungarian Christianity ultimately chose Europe. For a thousand years, and still today, Hungary waits to become a full member of the European community.

After the Second World War, the Christian churches faced significant challenges. For many, it seemed possible to ignore God and the Church. The mass-killing, Moscow-trained leader declared that the Pope had no army, and therefore nothing could prevent the destruction of the Church's resistance. Yet decades after his death, his theory proved to have been built on sand. The rock of Peter proved stronger, and the hell of the Bolshevik invasion could not extinguish faith in Jesus.

The Catholic Church in Hungary can look back on a thousand years of history; the fifty-year atheist nightmare now appears only as an episode. Persecution and repression renewed the Church that had been sentenced to death. The high clergy lost the wealth and land accumulated over centuries, but the pastors became closer to the people; the wedge of wealth and power no longer separated them. In times of great trial, it is natural that the suffering soul turns toward the eternal, seeking truth beyond reach, and thus spiritual life was strengthened among a minority.

It is understandable that some church leaders attempted to reach an agreement with the conqueror, but the people did not turn to the appeasers—they turned to the steadfast resisters. After nearly ten years of freedom, increasing signs suggest that the rebirth of Christianity has begun.

The moral renewal of the country is still hindered by the influence of Western materialism. Morality is essential for rebuilding a homeland. The old spirit of "No, No, Never!" must not be allowed to die. The Hungarians are the strongest nation among all the peoples

who settled in the Carpathian Basin, and they have an undeniable right to live here. We cannot claim domination over others, but we can expect other nationalities to respect Hungarian culture and recognise our language.

We must not repeat the mistake—perhaps unavoidable between the two world wars—of refusing compromise and shouting the old slogan: “Give Everything Back!”

In the present political situation, it is clear that the country’s efforts must focus on enabling Hungarians living beyond our borders to preserve their language, faith, and culture.

The “new world order” following the Soviet withdrawal evidently sought to restore the European situation as it stood at the end of 1945. Hungarian governments were compelled to accept the demand to conclude “basic treaties” with the successor states. In these agreements, Hungary acknowledged existing borders, but was assured that the situation of Hungarian minorities would be treated in a fair spirit. Unfortunately, in practice, this has not been satisfactory.

But there is no reason for despair. After every war, the victors demand the right to tighten borders and secure the status quo. Yet history does not end with such acts; changing times always create the possibility of revision. If the situation of Hungarian minorities does not substantially improve, these agreements may one day be considered null and void.

A good example is Poland, which was repeatedly partitioned by its neighbours, yet has now been reunited. Its western borders were artificially drawn, and yet its old territories had to be transferred to the victor—who drew the boundaries in an imperial spirit. The same imperial logic justified the occupation of Transcarpathia.

Taking all this into account, we must regard the present arrangement as a temporary state of affairs. Government policy cannot be built on revisionist dreams, for governments must consider international realities. But society must always be ready to

assert its legitimate rights at the appropriate historical moment. We must devote all our strength to the social and national reconstruction of the country. A confident and unified nation can, in any case, enforce its rights.

The result of the Second World War is that, although we were defeated on the battlefield and endured fifty years of Russian domination, we remain under the influence of a victorious power. Yet fate has united us, and we continue our struggle for Hungarian freedom and independence.

At the Dawn of the New Millennium

Since the outbreak of the Second World War, sixty years have passed, yet even in the final years of the century the future is not entirely clear, for the consequences of that fatal war still haunt us all.

The literature at the turn of the century has become more extensive and more objective. Among these works is a major scholarly study by Richard Overy, The Road to War, which appeared both as a book and as a television series.

The author demonstrated honestly that the great powers of the time—without exception—regarded war as one of the instruments of international policy. Drawing on information now available, he revealed that British rearmament began in 1934 and was planned to be ready by 1939 to confront German forces.

The book's concluding analysis evaluates the second half of the century. The objectivity of historical distance made it possible to quote the following sentences from the political testament of Adolf Hitler:

"Following the collapse of the German Empire, and until national aspirations are strengthened in Asia, Africa, and South America, there will be only two powers in the world: the United States of America and the Soviet Union.

Their geographic situation and the laws of history will fatally force these two colossi to measure each other's strength—whether on a military line or on an economic and ideological plane."

This is indeed what happened. The two non-European powers divided Europe between themselves. Much of Eastern and Central Europe became the experimental kitchen of the Marxist–Leninist utopia; in vain had Europe for a thousand years defended its western half against the assaults of eastern empires. Thus, the war was not only lost by Germany and its allies. It made little difference

whether Yugoslavia or Poland stood among the victors—similar fates awaited them.

But the real loser of the Second World War was Great Britain. Britain accepted the risk of war because it did not want Germany to dominate Europe. Although Hitler was willing to commit Germany to the defence of the British Empire, England placed its confidence in American cooperation and expected a repetition of the First World War. They believed that Germany and Russia would destroy each other, allowing Anglo-French diplomacy to restore the Versailles order.

They did not take American anti-colonialism seriously, nor did they admit that their ally also sought global influence.

The German victories of 1940 convinced the United States that Britain and France lacked the strength to resist Germany—whose influence was expanding even in South America, a region the United States regarded as its own sphere. Thus, the USA and the Soviet Union formed a relationship that, by 1945, led to the division of the world.

The European colonial empires could no longer be maintained, and into the vacuum stepped American capital.

Had the Soviet Union, using Marxist–Leninist ideology, not attempted to break into the American sphere, the cooperation might have lasted longer. However, the United States sought to halt further Soviet expansion by adopting a policy of containment, which—though it did not aim to roll back communism—intended to keep the Soviet Union within the limits of the Yalta agreements.

The decades after the war created a vast opposition between the so-called "superpowers." The gigantic rearmament that followed—using both conventional and atomic weapons—directly affected a broken Europe.

It seemed that the final days of Christian Western civilisation had arrived. Lawlessness and immorality reminded many of the end of the Roman Empire. The proliferation of atomic and hydrogen bombs

made it possible to destroy the two thousand years of civilisation that had raised the European nations to the threshold of world domination.

The Greek and Roman civilisations created by the Mediterranean peoples were eventually destroyed by the attacks of the "barbarians"—the Germanic and Turkish peoples pressing from the north and east of Europe. Yet these victorious forces ultimately reconciled themselves to Roman civilisation, and after a dark era of five hundred years, strengthened by the compelling power of young, conquering Christianity, they began to build the culture we rightly call the achievement of European man.

In the Middle Ages, despite dynastic wars and conflicts, we can still speak of a European unity, for the emerging nations were united by the triumphant Christian worldview, and philosophers could rightly dream of the Civitas Dei (City of God).

This European unity was broken by the Reformation. It is true that the movement rightly attacked the power-hungry and often guilty rulers of the Church, but the disruption was not caused by internal Christian reform; it was caused by the rise of national states. This development was also supported by the fact that the interests of Catholic powers on land conflicted with the colonial interests of maritime powers, making them enemies even without theological differences. Such was, among others, the English break with Rome.

When the age of national states began to wane, the desire for European cooperation was reborn. The tragedy for Hungarians was that during these two centuries we were fighting for our very existence against the Muslim advance, and we were almost completely defeated—yet received no major European assistance.

At this time, European thinkers still formulated their plans in the spirit of the resurrected ancient Roman Empire. Under Charlemagne, under Frankish influence, and later with the strengthening of the Germanic peoples, Europe took shape under the hegemony of the German-Roman emperors. It must be

emphasised, however, that the conquering force in these centuries was always Christianity. The Gothic cathedrals still standing today testify to Europe's unity in this faith.

Under Louis XIV, the Sun King, the French quest for European hegemony placed the idea of unity under pressure, and France even sought alliance with the Turkish Sultan. This unrestrained French ambition did not succeed.

The French Revolution was a great social rebirth. The spirit of Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity made it possible for France to imagine itself as the unifying force of Europe and the bearer of European hegemony.

Yet the desire for social transformation did not prove strong enough to suppress national feeling, and it is understandable that Blücher's Prussian soldiers ultimately ended Napoleon's rule. The fact that England was the founder and soul of the conservative European alliance shows that it had always opposed aspirations toward European unity; only a politically and economically fragmented Europe could guarantee the safety of the British Isles.

After the Napoleonic Wars, the conservative Holy Alliance maintained peace in Europe. Yet this alliance could not prevent the gradual spread of the ideas of the French Revolution. In the changing modern Europe, the rule of reactionary dynasties was gradually replaced by the rise of imperialist great powers. German unity was also achieved. The Second Empire was finally proclaimed in Paris after the victorious Prussian–French War.

The Italian people also sought their identity—Garibaldi's red-shirted troops entered Rome, completing the unification of Italy. Both Protestant and Catholic churches had to compromise with the ruling national elites, but the outward signs of Christianity's influence were often only symbolic; the churches increasingly served national imperialist forces.

The First World War was triggered by France's desire for revenge and by England's traditional policy of maintaining a balance of

power in Europe—always opposing any attempt at continental hegemony. Hungary was threatened by the aggressive Balkan policy of Tsarist Russia, for in the world order promoted by the expanding pan-Slav movement, Hungary would have been reduced to servitude.

At that time, given the state of military technology, trench warfare merely balanced the resources of both sides, and German diplomacy failed to prevent the creation of a world alliance determined to fight for its own financial supremacy. Central Europe collapsed. Thus, in the First World War, the influence of Christian forces did not prevail. Christian ministers dutifully blessed the flags of opposing nations and offered spiritual comfort to those facing death, as well as to those who mourned their loved ones.

It is interesting to observe the development of Chinese territories during this period. The Yalta division of the world placed China within the Soviet sphere of influence. General MacArthur tried in vain to reverse this decision, hoping to use America's nuclear superiority to secure victory for the Nationalist forces in China. But geopolitical considerations outweighed ideological ones, and today China pursues an independent foreign policy.

India—once the glittering jewel of the British Empire—regained its independence and has managed to solve many of its problems over recent decades. It has built up substantial land, air, and naval forces and will soon become a major political power.

The evolving Arab world has been shaken in recent decades. Until the Second World War, these regions were under British and French control. Today they remain fragmented, yet they already pursue independent political agendas. Progress is still hampered by the failure to find a satisfactory solution to Israel's role. The reason is clear: The United States, under pressure from its influential Jewish citizens, supports Israel's efforts to secure a homeland where Jewish identity can exist without the threat of direct attack. On the other hand, the rivalry between the two superpowers naturally

encouraged the idea of Arab–Russian cooperation. It is not yet clear how Russia will adjust its policy in this regard. The uncertainty of the situation is reflected in the repeated American attempts to establish Arab–Jewish peace—efforts that have not yet borne fruit.
The reconstruction of Europe began in the western regions as well. The United States recognised that the misery of Central Europe—especially German poverty and national humiliation—could only push Germany toward an Eastern orientation. There is a historical basis for a grand political vision built on German–Russian cooperation, a possibility that cannot be ignored despite the ideological hostility between the two systems. This is why the Marshall Plan was created—an about-face from the Morgenthau Plan proposed during the war. Germany's reconstruction became the key to the rise of Western Europe. Western European nations also recognised this shift. It is remarkable that former enemies who had faced each other on the battlefields of Flanders, France, or northern Italy now worked together for a united Europe.
The nations of Europe thus began to move toward unity, and by the turn of the millennium they appeared to have established a common currency under the guidance of a central bank. This was a decisive step toward ensuring that the Member States would one day pursue a common foreign policy.
England's intentions remain uncertain. In a united Europe, the German–French economic axis will inevitably set the course, and England will have to adapt. Yet psychologically, Great Britain still finds this difficult to accept. It is not impossible that if England remains outside the European Union, it will turn toward the United States. An Anglo-Saxon naval power bloc—comprising the USA, Canada, Britain, Australia, and New Zealand—is conceivable.
The British Commonwealth, successor to the empire, now offers only economic advantages to its members; politically, they have long since moved toward full independence.

The unification of Europe at the turn of the century and millennium still does not represent a true unity. The eastern borders remain uncertain, and the situation with Russia is unresolved. Yet the unity of the European market gives participating nations a decisive advantage in the struggle for world markets.

In any case, the current form of unification points toward the idea of a universal state, which is often the final stage of a civilisation.

As for Russia, it is not surprising that it announced its desire to join the "European House." This raises the question: does Russia truly belong to Europe? Geographically, the lands west of the Urals are undoubtedly European. But Siberia also belongs to Russia, and its eastern shores are washed by the Pacific Ocean.

Nor can we ignore that the Russian people lived for five hundred years under the shadow of the Tatar Empire. Peter the Great attempted to Europeanise his country, but this affected only the upper classes, who adopted French and German cultural forms, while the Russian people continued to live in an essentially Asian manner.

Seventy years of communist rule pushed Russia even further into Asian backwardness. Generations grew up in an atheistic system without religious education. It will take decades to rebuild their cultural and political life on a European basis. For now, their desire to join the European Union seems premature. Their accession would also increase their influence over Europe—precisely what Russian leaders aim for. Moscow's rule in Europe would not be advanced by military campaigns, but through economic and cultural influence.

It appears that the Anglo-Saxons are aware of this possibility. When the Russian president proposed forming a Paris–Berlin–Moscow axis, the nervous reaction of the American press was very telling.

A Europe dominated by Slavic forces recalls the age of Genghis Khan and would inevitably clash with the policies of maritime powers. Perhaps this is one reason why the United States hesitates to withdraw militarily from Europe, preferring to maintain its bases in

England, Spain, Italy, Greece, and Turkey. Yet the growing unity of Europe and the independent aspirations of its peoples will eventually force the United States to become more flexible.

For now, however, European unity is not yet complete. The situation in Eastern Europe remains uncertain. Russia protested against the accession of Hungary, the Czech Republic, and Poland to NATO, even though it had renounced any claim to control over them. It strongly opposed further expansion of the North Atlantic Alliance. American policy on this issue remains uncertain, and the Balkan wars suggest that final political decisions have not yet been made. Friction between Europe and the United States is to be expected.

The end of the Cold War and the end of the arms race meant that Europe's access to overseas markets declined. Growing unemployment and the consequent slowing of national economies once again placed individual national policies in the foreground, creating new conflicting interests among the participating nations. Europe can only become a lasting unity if a peace conference objectively clarifies the latent border and autonomy issues, without clinging to boundaries drawn by the victors on an imperialist basis. Above all, however, it is necessary to restore the unifying force that once led to the emergence of national civilisations in Europe. In other words, European unity can only be the rebirth of Western civilisation if, in its universal form, Christianity is able to unite and hold its peoples together. Perhaps it is symbolic that this great rebirth comes at the turn of the century, which is also the dawn of the third millennium of Christianity.

When Christianity reached the first millennium, believers hoped that Christ would return to Earth and establish the Civitas Dei (City of God). By the time we reached the threshold of the year 2000, humanity had developed spiritually; we now understand that for the Lord, a moment is as a millennium. Today we do not wait for miracles. Rather, we may feel that we must embark on a path of universal cooperation, a true Christian spirit that, according to our

faith, reveals and accepts Jesus throughout the world. Christian Western civilisation—like the rule of European man over the world—may have fallen. Perhaps the missionary path was misguided when it sought to convert the peoples of the world to Jesus while cooperating with trade and imperialist forces. Often it seemed that Christianity was the religion of white people, which explains the limited success in converting the yellow, brown, and black peoples of the world.

Now, however, the world rule of the white man has been broken. New great powers are emerging before our eyes, and it seems that sooner or later we will witness the coming of the "era of hostile great powers," which Spengler predicted would follow the post-Caesarian age.

In this struggle, the European nations can play a major role if the Christian worldview manifests itself in an exemplary, objective, and balanced spirit.

This will also open the way for a Christian rebirth. Today, the churches are still separated and cut off from state power, able to speak only in a weak and often discredited voice. For this reason, the powerful ecumenical spirit must first succeed, so that, according to the teaching of Jesus, there may be "one shepherd." We need not seek participation in state power, but through the faithful we must ensure that the new universal Europe is imbued with a Christian spirit, and thus has the right to speak for true justice in the new world.

The Last Decade of the Century

Significant political and economic transformations took place in the last decade of our century. People breathed more easily because they believed that we had escaped the threatening horrors of a Third World War—an atomic war—and we were confident that a better, more peaceful, and more secure future lay ahead. There is no doubt that the Cold War collapsed between the Great Powers and that the Soviet Union eventually withdrew its occupying troops from Central and Eastern Europe. The Berlin Wall fell, and a united Germany took a major step toward restoring its sovereignty. The arms race ceased, and Europe was no longer threatened by the atomic bomb. Worldwide, we expected that the reconstruction of Eastern Europe and Russia would provide work and prosperity for millions.

By contrast, a new economic policy emerged and unemployment increased. The situation in world politics also remained unclear. Tensions in the Middle East were not resolved, and Russian–American relations remained uncertain, as it was evident that the organisation of Balkan affairs depended on cooperation between the two superpowers.

The end of Russian occupation did not bring national freedom to Eastern Europe, but only some relief from the existing communist system.

It is difficult today to outline the current global political situation. The age of great change that began in the last decade of our century is still unfolding, its evolution hidden beneath the veil of the future. The driving forces behind events remain state secrets; the historical perspective needed to evaluate the present is missing. For this reason, it is impossible to write about these events as if they were already history. Yet it is necessary to try to understand the springs of these developments in order to draw conclusions.

In this situation, our observations must inevitably be derived from the events of the Second World War.

First of all, we must consider the relationship between the United States of America and the Soviet Union. It must be emphasised that since its War of Independence, the United States had maintained an anti-colonial stance toward England. This explains why, after the First World War, President Wilson became disillusioned, withdrew from Paris, and declared that America did not wish to participate in another European war under similar circumstances.

Ultimately, the United States entered the Second World War because it was not in America's interest for Europe to unite under German hegemony. They concluded that the strength of England and France was no longer sufficient to prevent this, and America found a partner in the Soviet Union to shape the new world order.

Therefore, after the war, America offered no assistance to European powers in maintaining their colonial empires; indeed, during the 1956 Suez Crisis, Israel, Britain, and France were forced to retreat. Behind this ideological position lay economic interests, as American capital now replaced European influence in these regions.

During the war, England attempted to limit Soviet expansion and sought to open a second front in the Balkans. This could not be achieved because the Soviet Union's future spoils were threatened, and they even warned their allies of the possibility of a renewed German–Russian agreement. The Western Allies had to accept that Berlin and Prague would be occupied by the Russians. More than one American general recognised the weakness of American policy, remarking that America might have been on the wrong side in this struggle.

American politicians also realised that the Yalta agreement was interpreted differently by the Russians than by the American president and his advisers. They were particularly struck by the fact that the Iron Curtain descended across Eastern Europe along the Stettin–Trieste line. At the Potsdam Conference, the two major

powers still agreed on the immediate issues concerning Germany, and the Soviet Union was willing to attack Japan, but the shadow of the Cold War had already fallen.

When the Soviet Union strongly supported communist revolutions in Greece and Turkey, and these countries were threatened by Soviet intervention, one of the most important principles of post-war American policy was formulated by President Truman: the doctrine of "containment." This policy promised assistance to any state seeking to defend itself against foreign domination. It was at this time that the Marshall Plan was born, launching the economic reconstruction of Western Europe. Soviet aggression in Eastern Europe increased, and serious tensions arose in Berlin, which was isolated from the West. Eventually, the non-communist European states joined the United States in a military alliance—the North Atlantic Treaty (NATO)—and in response, the Warsaw Pact was formed.

It must be noted, however, that this was intended only to emphasise the seriousness of these intentions. Today it is clear that the United States did not wish to end the Russian–American understanding established at Yalta; it merely wanted the Soviet Union to accept the American interpretation of the agreement—namely, that Russia would not pursue an offensive policy. This is demonstrated by the fact that when the American president spoke of halting communist expansion, the official U.S. reaction to the 1956 Hungarian Revolution was simply to fold its arms and watch the Soviet intervention unfold.

Some military circles in the United States believed that the problem of the Soviet Union should, if necessary, be resolved by military means—especially because they knew that America's exclusive possession of the atomic bomb would soon end, and they wished to avoid a costly atomic arms race. There was an opportunity during the Korean War, but President Truman rejected General MacArthur's demands and dismissed the politically minded soldier.

In the end, the Soviet Union was forced to accept the American interpretation of the Yalta Convention. In 1975, when the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe concluded in Helsinki, the final declaration stressed that the signatories would respect human rights, freedom of thought, conscience, and religious liberty. At the same time, the declaration strengthened the borders that the Soviet Union had imposed upon Europe in an imperialist spirit at the end of the Second World War.

This agreement still shapes the political landscape today. On this basis, the Great Powers recommended that Hungarian governments accept similar basic treaties. In the political circumstances of the time, the country could not refuse, but in my opinion these treaties can only be sustained if the protection of minority rights is genuinely upheld.

For decades, Russian–American relations were characterised by mistrust and threat; the term "Cold War" was entirely appropriate. This cold war was accompanied by an arms race. The fact that the Soviet Union succeeded in obtaining the technical and theoretical knowledge necessary to build the atomic bomb—and later the hydrogen bomb—greatly increased the economic burden on both sides. It is understandable, therefore, that both parties sought ways to limit this confrontation. This became the central theme of their summit meetings.

Nevertheless, the Soviet Union continued its ideological and political struggle across the globe, and the threat of nuclear war became immediate during the Cuban crisis.

The gradual escalation of the Vietnam War also showed that the Soviet Union could effectively exploit the problems of the "Third World." Today it is clear that the United States made a grave mistake in becoming involved in a tropical jungle war. Military victory would have required a major landing against Hanoi—something well within America's capabilities given its naval and air supremacy. It is

not impossible, however, that the threat of Soviet intervention prevented the United States from attempting such a solution.
The economic strength of the United States enabled it to continue the arms race. It successfully persuaded its allies to share the burden of this enormous expenditure. Yet the United States became heavily indebted, and the consequences are still felt in today's economic life.
All in all, however, we can say that American policy succeeded: it avoided a third (atomic) world war, forced the transformation of the Soviet Union, and ultimately secured American global hegemony.
For the observer, however, it is almost impossible to form a definitive opinion on the transformation of the Soviet Union. It is necessary to review its history in order to understand the situation of today (1990).
There is no doubt that Tsarist Russia was the most backward nation in Europe. After the French Revolution, most European states adopted its ideas, but Russia clung to its feudal system. Its peasantry was oppressed by the landowning nobility, and its industrial development was still in its infancy. The French cultural influence on the Russian upper classes was superficial, and Peter the Great's dream of integrating Russia into Western life remained unfulfilled.
Unfortunately, those who advocated radical reform became supporters of Marxist theory. They knew that it would be difficult to realise a Marxist revolution in a fundamentally agricultural, underdeveloped state. However, the Russian defeats in the First World War created the opportunity for such an experiment, and under Lenin's leadership the Russian proletarian dictatorship was born.
In the first years, they could naturally achieve only the consolidation of their power—this was accomplished through a multi-year civil war. Lenin refused to allow Western intervention. Later, he relaxed his economic policy, and it seemed that renewed peasant agricultural production would repair the economic situation. His

early death and Stalin's rise to power, however, broke this development.

The constitution of the Soviet Union contained democratic elements in form, since the Politburo represented collective leadership. In reality, the General Secretary controlled the security services, and with their help he established his personal domination. Stalin's almost pathological suspicion meant that at the slightest disagreement or perceived threat, he would abruptly and ruthlessly eliminate both real and imagined opponents.

During these years, competing visions for the future of communism emerged. One group believed that Marxist revolutions should be encouraged in the industrialised Western states, thereby creating a worldwide transformation. Their initial successes occurred in the countries defeated in the war. Trotsky ultimately failed, and Stalin concluded that the correct path was the industrialisation of Russia. He believed that a newly industrialised Russia would be able to influence political change in Europe.

The new leaders also had to confront the many nationalities of the former Tsarist Empire. As a result of the lost war, Poland, the Baltic States, and Finland became independent. As for the Tatars, Germans, Romanians, and Muslims, the solution was found in Marxist philosophy: national conflicts, they argued, were merely expressions of class contradictions. In a state without class differences, the national idea would disappear.

Thus, Russia was transformed into an alliance of Soviet republics. By emphasising the council system, they sought to ensure that administration was tied to the people—that is, to create a democratic structure. It is interesting that these republics were formed on a national basis. The leaders evidently did not foresee that, in a future crisis, these nationalities would possess the administrative tools needed to assert their autonomy.

The leadership of the Soviet Union hoped that its various national groups would consider themselves Soviet people first. They believed

that the problems that had existed before the Second World War would therefore not intensify.
Nevertheless, the Soviet Union became the geopolitical successor of the essentially Slavic core of the Russian Empire and pursued a pan-Slavic policy. This policy served the world-revolutionary aims of Marxist forces.
Stalin continued to implement his industrialisation plan. To this end, he abolished small agricultural holdings. Undoubtedly, by the 1930s his dream had been realised: the heavy-industry unions had become a major force in the world.
The dream of a European Marxist revolution, however, receded with the rise of German National Socialism and Italian Fascism. Under Foreign Minister Litvinov, the Soviet Union attempted to cooperate with capitalist powers. When it became clear that the West refused to act collectively, Soviet policy shifted. Under Molotov, foreign policy began to follow a geopolitical logic, positioning the Soviet Union as a European power.
Therefore, when the German Empire and the Western powers faced the prospect of war in 1939, the Soviet Union was no longer willing to participate in an anti-German alliance. Such a war would have cost the Soviet Union enormous bloodshed and offered no guarantee of recovering the territories lost in the First World War. In other words, the Soviet Union was guided by national-imperialist goals when it concluded the non-aggression pact with the German Empire in August 1939. This agreement enabled the occupation of eastern Polish territories.
The outbreak of war between Germany and the British and French made it possible for the USSR to attack Finland, and in the summer of 1940, when the Western powers were fully occupied, the Soviets annexed the Baltic States. They also demanded that Romania cede territories along the western coast of the Black Sea—lands needed to secure access to the Dardanelles.

Germany completed its Western operations during these months and hoped that England would agree to a peace treaty. However, the Soviet Union's actions were regarded as hostile. Germany condemned the war against Finland. According to post-war literature written by the victors; the incorporation of the Baltic States was made possible by the German–Russian agreement. According to the Germans, however, the pact merely acknowledged that these states belonged to the Soviet sphere of influence; it did not justify their incorporation into the Soviet Empire. The demands on Romania were seen as a signal of Russia's intention to move toward the Balkans.

Clarifying the Soviet Union's intentions therefore became an urgent task of German diplomacy. This occurred in the winter of 1940–41, when Soviet Foreign Minister Molotov met Adolf Hitler in Berlin. This meeting was decisive for Eastern Europe, because the Soviet Union rejected Germany's definition of the German–Russian spheres of interest. According to its geopolitical criteria, the Soviet Union refused to relinquish its influence in the Balkans.

This became clear in the months before the outbreak of the German–Russian War, when the Soviet Union supported the new revolutionary Yugoslav government against the offended German Empire and offered a friendship treaty to the Serbian military forces preparing for war against Germany. During the war, the Soviets clearly stated that they considered the Balkans their own war prize. In response to the weak British attempt to open a second front in the Balkans, the Soviets proposed at the Tehran Conference that the Western Powers open a second front in France, coordinated with a Soviet offensive.

During these years, Stalin appeared to abandon the world-revolutionary policy of the early Soviet era. When German forces reached the gates of Moscow, the war was proclaimed the Great Patriotic War, and Stalin made significant concessions to the Orthodox Church. After the war, however, he changed direction once

again. He supported the Greek Marxist revolution, strongly backed Western Communist parties, and in the Far East sought to promote the rise of Marxist forces.

In pursuing his imperialist offensive, Stalin even tolerated an anti-Semitic line and consistently presented Soviet forces as champions of national independence and economic stability in the eyes of the peoples of the Third World.

Soviet foreign policy did not change after Stalin's death. Internal policy, however, shifted when Soviet leaders recognised that their satellite states could not be controlled solely by military force; cooperation with the peoples concerned was necessary. In Hungary, Rákosi's government was replaced by "reform communists."

At the 20th Party Congress in 1956, Khrushchev denounced Stalin's excesses, but he continued his predecessor's foreign policy. He demonstrated this by using Stalinist methods during the Suez Crisis and in crushing the Hungarian Revolution. In 1962, Khrushchev again pursued an offensive imperialist policy during the Cuban crisis, he withdrew his missiles only after the United States agreed to remove its bases in Turkey which occurred several months later. The Soviet Union continued this policy in response to American efforts in Vietnam, and after the U.S. defeat succeeded in securing European recognition of the new imperialist frontiers gained in the Second World War. Their only concession was a willingness to respect human rights within their sphere of influence.

Of course, these concessions were largely motivated by domestic considerations. The Bolshevik Revolution was now thirty years old, and the victims and leaders of the revolutionary era were disappearing. The new generations were no longer enthusiastic communists or desperate resisters; a certain unity in society had to be created. The forced arms race prevented sufficient consumer goods from reaching the market. Radio and television opened a window to the outside world for Soviet citizens. Many longed for a

more humane life, especially after the immense bloodshed of the Second World War.

The resistance of the peoples of the occupied countries also increased. The Poles used the trade unions to gain recognition of their rights, and in Hungary concessions—at least economic ones—had to be made to secure even minimal cooperation.

The economy of the Soviet Union could not keep pace with the United States in the development and deployment of nuclear missiles, and the leadership had to acknowledge that it must either reach an agreement with its opponents or assume the risk of a new war.

Clausewitz, the great military philosopher, wrote that wars break out only when opponents believe they have a chance of winning. The military and civilian leaders of the Soviet Union realised that the USSR would have no chance of winning a Third World War against the combined power of Europe, America, and Japan.

This recognition may have formed the basis of Brezhnev's policy when he sought compromise with the West, hoping to gain time for the Soviet Union. Several summits were held with the American president, but the United States insisted on concessions the Soviet Union was unwilling to make.

The political situation deteriorated, and a new—though milder—atmosphere of resistance and dissent emerged. Eventually, Mikhail Gorbachev became Secretary General of the Communist Party. His task was to reform the Soviet Union domestically and to find a new path with foreign powers to secure its future.

Domestically, he proclaimed perestroika and glasnost. He proposed introducing a limited market economy and granted Soviet citizens freedom of opinion. He hoped that the communist regime would be renewed and that the Soviet state leadership would be strengthened in Lenin's spirit. His foreign policy changed little; he continued to insist on the Soviet Union's offensive, militaristic approach, and although he sought agreement with the Western powers, he

imagined such agreements only on Soviet terms. Characteristically, in speeches before summits he used language suggesting that certain actions already underway could not be halted even if the summit failed.

He met President Reagan in October 1986. Reagan refused to halt the arms race or abandon the nuclear-missile program known as the Strategic Defense Initiative ("Star Wars").

The failure of the summit was extraordinary. It is impossible today to know how the Soviet military and political leadership reacted, but Soviet radio broadcasts emphasised to foreign audiences that it would be an exaggeration to conclude from the summit's failure that the world was again on the brink of destruction.

Diplomatic efforts then resumed, eventually leading to agreements that reduced tensions. The first result of these talks was the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan and, in 1989, the withdrawal of the so-called "Brezhnev Doctrine," which had asserted the Soviet Union's right to intervene militarily in the affairs of Warsaw Pact states whenever it deemed necessary.

This announcement clearly encouraged the communist leaders of the Warsaw Pact countries to begin liberalising their systems. The Soviet Union, however, insisted that these changes occur in a way that did not give the appearance of Soviet defeat. Further summits followed, including one with President Bush in Malta, where—according to observers—the parties formulated a program for the withdrawal of Soviet forces without conditions or compensation to the occupied nations.

Arms-limitation agreements were also concluded, and steps were taken to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons to other countries. The West appreciated the Soviet concessions, and in 1990 Gorbachev received the Nobel Peace Prize.

The wind of freedom swept through the Soviet Union, and the nationalities realised that alongside cultural freedom, the time had come to seek economic and political independence. However, some

Soviet military and security organisations believed that the planned withdrawal and the treaties with the West merely concealed their country's defeat in the struggle against capitalism. They also opposed the secession of the nationalities. On 19 August 1991, they attempted to halt the wheel of history with a military coup (Gang of 8). The attempt failed, and it only strengthened Yeltsin's standing in the West and consolidated his power.

The uprising of the various national forces fatally condemned the Soviet Union. The Communist Party was dissolved; the Soviet Union ceased to exist. Some of the former Soviet republics proclaimed their independence, while the Slavic states formed an alliance—the Commonwealth of Independent States—under the leadership of the Russian Federation. Only the remnant of Tsarist Russia remained intact.

The older generation shaped by the former Russian imperialism was naturally dissatisfied with this situation, and their uncertainty was heightened by the near-total collapse of economic life. I will outline this state of affairs more fully later. For now, let us look at the United States' response to this transformation.

It appears that the American leadership adopted a wait-and-see approach. The Russian–American military alliance of the Second World War, the tensions of the Cold War, and now the renewed military agreements could all have pointed toward a new phase of cooperation. Yet the situation in the United States did not evolve significantly in relation to Europe. The constitutional structure of a united Europe and its economic organisation were still incomplete. Would the United States accept a Europe dominated by German–French hegemony, especially given the economic strength such a union would possess?

It is noteworthy that the North Atlantic Alliance (NATO) remains intact, even though no clear opponent exists at present. Military alliances are formed when states feel threatened by other powers. Perhaps the purpose of this alliance is to serve as the foundation of a

military force capable of maintaining peace and intervening anywhere in the world. It has also been reported that some authorities have suggested forming an association with Russia, though the conditions for such cooperation have not been debated. It is well known that France, in particular, wishes this organisation to become an independent military force for a united Europe. But in the current situation—when American technical and nuclear superiority is overwhelming and Russia's military condition remains uncertain—it is too early to speak of such developments.

When the Soviet Union completed its military and political withdrawal from East Germany, Czechoslovakia, Poland, and Hungary, agreements were reached on various arms-control and nuclear-control measures. To many, it seemed that history itself had come to an end. The President of the United States believed that at least a new world order had been born, and some observers called it the era of Pax Americana—American peace, modelled on the ancient Pax Romana.

Throughout history, victorious great powers have often proclaimed world peace. Sometimes they succeeded in maintaining it for long periods. This may still be possible today, but I will return to this later.

First, it is necessary to examine the social and political situation in Russia, and then the economic order represented by the victorious United States in the world.

When I attempt to describe the current Russian socio-economic situation, I must acknowledge my limitations: I have never been to Russia, and I do not speak Russian. I rely entirely on daily news reports and my readings. One substantial source was Russia: Which Way Paradise? a book written by Monica Attard and published in 1997. She served as a correspondent for the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) in Moscow for five or six years, learned Russian well, and formed close personal relationships that enabled her to present a realistic picture of life in Russia. Because of her

upbringing, she sympathised with the Soviet system before her arrival and looked forward to experiencing Russian life with positive expectations.

But when she arrived in Moscow in 1983, she quickly realised she had not entered a communist paradise. In fact, the system was close to total collapse. Shops were empty, people lived in fear of the security forces, the black market flourished, and citizens joked openly about the system's failures. Most party members still believed the Soviet Union could be reformed, but they had no influence over events, as state power remained firmly in the hands of the security services and party leadership.

In 1985, Gorbachev came to power and announced his economic and political reforms. These stirred the entire society. Young people played Western music on street corners. Small private businesses were permitted, and various democratic movements began to emerge.

Soon there was anarchy in the country. The corrupt system, rooted in lies and immorality, could not be reformed. The Soviet system had proclaimed equality, which people accepted—even if it meant that everyone was equally poor. But when they realised that Soviet leaders lived at a far higher standard, enjoying state privileges, agitation began. People demanded better housing and easier access to consumer goods. Instead, during the transition period they received gas and electricity bills, medical and hospital care deteriorated, rents increased, and the repayment obligations on "cheap" homes rose sharply.

Part of society therefore doubted the capitalist reforms. Although they did not want the terrorist communist regime to return, many wished for a "socialism with a human face" to prevail in the future. This is why the communist party was able to operate within the new democratic political order. Even Gorbachev believed in restoring Leninist socialism; he did not acknowledge that Lenin's communism had also been built on terror.

Gorbachev's reforms only increased dissatisfaction. Price controls were suddenly abolished, and prices rose so sharply that the modest savings of peasants and small-scale traders were wiped out. In the first days, people still had some hidden money saved "under the bed," but soon they were forced to spend everything.

Privatisation of state-owned companies and institutions was introduced, but often carried out in immoral ways. Every citizen received 10,000 roubles' worth of vouchers to buy shares in private companies. However, inflation quickly eroded their value, and the result was that companies passed into the hands of former party leaders and their associates. According to Attard's book, 80% of state-owned enterprises were privatised in this manner.

Many expected American assistance at this time—perhaps a "Marshall Plan" for rebuilding Russia. Instead, the International Monetary Fund endorsed the Russian reforms, and the United States merely attempted to ease the turmoil by providing loans. Yeltsin's government was disorganised. At times it supported a fully free-market economy; when difficulties arose, the controlled-economy reformers regained influence. Organised crime escalated, and public security deteriorated. In some companies, especially in heavy industry, employees went months without wages. The army was clearly weakened, and young soldiers deserted in large numbers.

Amid this social and economic crisis, the political landscape was equally unstable. It is telling that the re-established communist party managed to secure at least one-third of the vote. In Parliament, voices were also raised by those who saw the crisis as evidence of Russia's defeat. Alexander Rutskoy, vice-president of the Duma, sharply attacked Boris Yeltsin, accusing him of tolerating the hunger of the people while selling off institutions and companies built by their fathers and grandfathers, and of refusing to stand up to the International Monetary Fund.

Vladimir Zhirinovsky, a showman-like ultranationalist politician and leader of the LDPR party, also gained prominence. Though his prospects for election were hopeless, his position allowed him to express the views of the Russian masses without regard for foreign-policy consequences. He promoted a pan-Slavic Russian foreign policy and strongly opposed NATO's planned expansion into Eastern Europe, which he saw as an attempt to encircle Russia.
Following my outline of the Russian situation, I now return to illuminating the American economic and political situation.
When President Bush announced the new world order, his vision was, on the one hand, the victory of capitalism over communism, and on the other, the belief that the United States alone remained supreme militarily. America's technical and economic superiority appeared to guarantee peace, and the country began to be seen as the world's police force.
However, the exhausting rivalry of the Cold War had pushed the leading state of the free world to the brink of bankruptcy. Thirty percent of U.S. industry was devoted to armaments, and year after year the trade deficit worsened. Imports consistently exceeded exports, and as a result the value of the dollar fell. By contrast, European currencies and the Japanese yen strengthened, as European and later Asian economies were built on exports.
After the Second World War, the United States announced the Marshall Plan—an action contrary to the spirit of American capitalism, but necessary to counter the threat of Soviet expansion. The capital provided to European nations revived their economies. During the Soviet transformation, however, the already weakened and indebted American economy could not make a similar sacrifice. For two decades, the U.S. attempted to maintain balance among the major currencies, but it could only assist the struggling Eastern European and Russian economies through loans. These loans were issued by the International Monetary Fund, but the interest rates

prevented inflation from being curbed or living standards from improving.

After the collapse of Soviet offensive policy and the signing of arms-control agreements, American industry increased its production of consumer goods. This process took several years, but it soon became clear that Japanese and Asian markets were increasingly difficult for American exports to penetrate. Japanese economic growth slowed, and the smaller Southeast Asian countries also faced difficulties, as declining U.S. imports left them unable to meet their obligations to Japan.

The situation was further complicated by technological progress. Computer technology, once used for military purposes, became available to industry, and the personal computer transformed the structure of large corporations. Downsizing began in major companies—not only in America but also in U.S.-owned firms abroad that relied on cheaper labour. Unemployment rose steadily across the world. Labour-market reforms came to an end: social benefits introduced after the war to compete with communism were cut back. American capitalism also began its attack on the so-called "welfare state," arguing that capitalism had triumphed and the world must now accept the rule of capital. The United States was prepared to defend its economic interests—even by force. The first military action of the new world order was the Gulf War against Iraq in 1990.

At that time, America succeeded in assembling a military coalition that included major European states, several Arab countries, and forces from the Far East. The combined strength of this coalition left no doubt about the outcome. The U.S. Navy and Air Force dealt heavy blows to Iraq, and when ground operations began, it appeared that Iraq had no choice but unconditional surrender. General Schwarzkopf's armoured divisions advanced rapidly toward Baghdad.

What happened in those decisive hours remains difficult to understand. Many were puzzled when the U.S. president halted further troop movements and instructed diplomats to arrange an armistice. The press reported that the Soviet foreign minister had sent a message to Washington shortly before this decision, though its contents have never been disclosed. Later, President Bush stated that some allies had protested against the destruction of Iraq and that the United States had intervened only to liberate Kuwait.
These events suggest that even the Cold War's victorious United States may not possess unlimited political and military power. It must take into account not only its allies but also other powers in the world.
In 1998, the United States again considered it necessary to clarify Iraq's military position and reassess the situation in the Persian Gulf. At that time, France, China, and Russia threatened to use their veto rights in the United Nations Security Council, and the United States chose to proceed through diplomatic channels.
I have already noted that the new Russia strongly opposes NATO expansion, and it is clear that the Russian government is doing everything it can to preserve its sphere of influence in the Balkans. Although it accepted the accession of the Czech Republic, Poland, and Hungary to NATO, it sought to defend Serbian interests in resolving the Bosnian conflict. In the case of Kosovo, it also attempted to achieve a diplomatic solution.
All this shows that the leadership of the United States is aware that it cannot maintain world dominance indefinitely. History has shown that world peace can only be enforced by a power willing to use military force.
But American democracy is not suited to this task. Isolationism remains a minority view, yet there are signs that, after two world wars, American political life is turning inward, with interests increasingly confined to the two American continents. The United States has created a free-trade zone on the North American

continent (NAFTA), and there are indications that South American states are also interested in joining. Since the Vietnam War, democratic political forces have been reluctant to support U.S. military interventions.

Meanwhile, unrestricted American capitalism—without regard for political considerations—does everything possible to maximise the benefits of free trade and technological advantage. With its electronic systems, capital can be moved quickly and freely to any part of the world. Its unscrupulous attacks on world currencies can create crises, destabilise social orders, and even threaten the collapse of capitalism itself.

What are the consequences of these currency attacks, especially in Asian countries where capitalist financial systems are still emerging after long periods of colonial repression? Many believed the solution lay in the intervention of the IMF, which offered easy and immediate loans—but with harsh conditions and heavy interest burdens. How can a country emerge from crisis under such circumstances? In earlier times, the solution would have been to increase exports. Today, however, with the U.S. market increasingly difficult to penetrate and the United States struggling with unemployment, this solution has failed.

World economic literature is grappling with this issue. Keynesian theory holds that economic revival can be achieved through the issuance of low-interest or interest-free domestic capital and large-scale public works. But this cannot be applied easily in the economic system of the new world. Many argue that such interest-free domestic capital could only succeed in a state whose currency and economic weight could withstand an anticipated attack from global capital markets. According to the literature, only the United States, Germany, and Japan could do so. The U.S. administration has repeatedly expressed the view—especially regarding the Japanese-American trade imbalance—that Japan should stimulate domestic consumption. There was even a

suggestion that Japan should rearm. American economist Lester Thurow proposed that, given Japan's narrow and crowded housing, a major housing program would yield significant benefits.

The same economist noted that sooner or later the United States would be unable to sustain its trade deficit and its debt, now estimated at one trillion dollars. The United States would therefore have to retreat into its own sphere of influence. New regional clusters would then emerge in the world. A united Europe would be one of the strongest of these economic units, and its euro currency would likely take over the role of the U.S. dollar as the world's reserve currency. In the Far East, the Japanese yen would come to the fore.

The U.S.–Russian relationship remains unclear. Is the Yalta Convention still in force? In any case, an eventual American withdrawal would abolish the anti-European alliance implied by that agreement and leave only limited global cooperation.

After the emergence of Europe's economic and political unity, it will be necessary to clarify the relations and interests between Europe and the new Russia. When German Chancellor Kohl and French President Chirac visited Moscow in the spring of 1998, Russian President Yeltsin spoke of the need to establish a political axis of Paris–Berlin–Moscow. This proposal was essentially a rephrasing of earlier Soviet policy suggesting association with the European Union. The American press reacted sharply. "Made in France!" they cried in protest.

There is no doubt that French political thought, when speaking of European unification, has always envisioned a Europe stretching from the Atlantic Ocean to the Ural Mountains. They ignored the fact that Russia's borders extend far beyond the Urals to the Pacific coast. Given current difficulties, it is unlikely that such a power bloc could be created now. However, in relations between Europe and Russia, it is essential that both sides agree on the boundaries of their spheres of influence.

Russia's new Balkan policy and NATO's expansion into Eastern Europe demonstrate that—as during the Molotov–Hitler negotiations of 1941—it is again necessary to take Russia's Balkan interests into account. Then, German imperialism chose war. We can only hope that Russia will be more understanding today, as it now faces a united Europe that has no colonial ambitions.

Russia must abandon its pan-Slavic ideas and retreat to the imperial boundaries established after the Second World War. The Helsinki Convention was built on the principle that post-war borders were inviolable, but history shows that borders constantly change as power shifts. Western literature would like to believe that the elimination of borders will ensure the integrity and development of national minorities living in foreign states. Undoubtedly, if Hungary and Romania were both members of a united Europe, Romania would have to accept a loss of sovereignty over its national minorities.

Western European borders do not appear to be subject to revision. This cannot be said for Germany or Poland. After its unconditional defeat in the Second World War, Germany had to accept the Oder border. The historical legitimacy of this border is questionable, just as the basic treaties concluded by Hungarian governments will not stand the test of time.

If Russia is willing to modify its offensive pan-Slavic policy and acknowledge the eastern expansion of a united Europe's borders, peaceful coexistence between the two power blocs could develop, and economic cooperation could extend from the Pacific to the Atlantic.

Finally, I would like to look at developments in Hungary during the last decade of the twentieth century.

When the Soviet Union began its strategic retreat, it sought to do so within the framework of the Russian–American agreement. It instructed its satellite states to introduce more liberal economic policies and prepare for a democratic multi-party system and

cooperation with the West. Hungarian governments carried out this task. Leaders of some other states, however, attempted to break away independently despite Moscow's instructions. The East German party leader and the Romanian dictator paid a heavy price for this.

In Hungary, the first multi-party election was held in 1990, and nationalist parties won an overwhelming majority. The people expected a true change of regime, but they were disappointed. The national government did not introduce significant political or economic reforms compared to the previous communist rule. It legitimised a new constitution that contradicted Hungary's historical constitutional traditions. A Constitutional Court was created with the aim of preventing any radical change.

The economic situation did not meet the hopes associated with the change of regime. After the relative prosperity of "goulash communism," American financial interests demanded repayment of the loans Hungary had taken in the hope of loosening the communist system. There is evidence that some of these loans were diverted to Moscow and used to establish the personal wealth of communist leaders.

The privatisation of state-owned enterprises began and was accompanied by inflation. The emerging economic and social situation was very similar to the picture I have already described in the transformation of Russia. As a consequence, the mood of the population became gloomy, and crowds said, "It was better under Kádár's leadership (communism)."

As in Russia, the communist party was able to re-establish itself in Hungary, even if under a different name. In 1994, it secured a large proportion of the mandates. However, the socialist party's programme could not be implemented, and its survival was possible only because it accepted the conditions of the International Monetary Fund. They recognised this, and in the press reports preceding the 1998 elections they mocked the opposition, saying

that even if elected, they would be unable to act against the rules of international big capital. This was partly true, because a small country such as Hungary is unable, in today's circumstances, to revive its economy and reduce inflation by creating a strong currency and issuing low-interest domestic capital.

The political transformation did not bring real success. There is no doubt that freedom of expression and speech has returned. The multi-party system provides some opportunity to clarify political views, but in the spirit of the Russian–American agreement, the instruments of information have become the property of international forces serving the existing global system. As for the basic treaties with successor states, this means that we must forego our legitimate national demands, including the need for a peaceful revision of the Treaty of Trianon.

These basic agreements were founded on legally uncertain grounds, because future commitments cannot be incorporated into a state treaty—this is excluded by the principle of parliamentary sovereignty. In other words, a later Hungarian Parliament may declare that it no longer considers itself bound by these agreements. This, of course, depends on the political situation at the time.

The 1998 elections brought a change of government. There was a shift toward national parties, clearly a consequence of the socialist forces' inability to lift the country out of its economic crisis and their failure in matters of public security and national interest.

In foreign policy, the issue of Euro-Atlantic integration provoked fierce debate. Opponents of joining NATO believed it would be harmful to oblige our small country to participate in defending "peace" in distant regions. Although the military alliance emphasised that it was not directed against Russia, from a Hungarian perspective it cannot be ignored that Transcarpathia is now in the possession of Slavic imperialist forces, and geopolitics tends to extend such influence to the Carpathians as a natural frontier. In any case, if hostile forces were to attack Munkács

(Mukachevo, Ukraine), there would be little hope of Western assistance; the country would inevitably become a battlefield. Western powers also regard this as a transitional situation and are attempting to push the European and Russian spheres of influence further east. The question is how successful this will be when the Eastern great power (Russia) strongly opposes further NATO enlargement. At present, even in the case of the now-reduced Yugoslavia, they are undertaking only diplomatic action.

The country must also understand that Central and South-Eastern Europe will ultimately be divided by a boundary between the emerging Western European unity and the Slavic Orthodox forces. Both Hungarian political life and the Hungarian economy must face this reality. But if Western aspirations prevail and the North Atlantic Alliance is transformed into a defence organisation of a united Europe, it will be in Hungary's interest to remain part of Europe's defence system and to defend Western civilisation in accordance with our European traditions. Taking all this into account, joining NATO was the right decision. It would have been preferable to secure our political and economic participation in a united Europe first, but we cannot direct world politics.

Political and economic forces that profoundly affect our destiny are in motion. The struggle between Russian and European powers is taking place on the diplomatic stage, and given the unsettled situation in Russia, there is hope that a new Russia will accept a European definition of its sphere of influence. In that case, however, it will be necessary to review the Helsinki Agreement and revise the Eastern European imperialist borders that were accepted at the end of the Second World War. From our point of view, the end of the war meant the restoration of the Trianon order, so we ought to raise the question of revision.

Not in the imperialist spirit of "Take everything back!", but through European cooperation. In this way, the unity of the European nations could emerge. And if the idea of a Christian rebirth were to

inspire the countries, our nation would have both the right and the opportunity to once again become the leading nation of the Carpathian Basin.

Epilogue

My generation was born at the beginning of the twentieth century. In our childhood and youth, we were subjects of the Habsburg king, and Hungarians lived in the illusion of great national dreams.
The First World War buried this illusion, and we had to face the grave problems of the truncated Trianon nation. The country had to be rebuilt after a four-year bloodbath, and the situation was made even more difficult by the arrival of hundreds of thousands of refugees fleeing the detached territories. These former Hungarian public administrators and other state officials had no place in the socio-economic systems of the successor states, and they left their birthplaces in search of a new life in the diminished homeland. Many were forced to live in barracks for years or squeezed into tiny flats. Their circumstances hindered their career prospects, and the opportunities of their children were also restricted.
In industry and commerce, there was almost no room for them. The Jews, who dominated these sectors in Hungary, secured most positions for their own children, while the sons and daughters of the displaced middle class—because of their education—were not prepared or socially equipped to enter these fields. They therefore sought their livelihood in public administration. The large number of unemployed graduates typified this situation.
Even so, under the leadership of Miklós Horthy, the state gradually closed the era of revolutions. Although he could not solve Hungary's deep social and economic problems, he set the country on a path that might have ensured peaceful development—had he been given enough time.
Unfortunately, the global economic crisis of 1929 struck Hungary's agricultural sector. Wheat prices collapsed, and our products became unsellable on world markets. It was this situation that political agitators referred to when they spoke of the "three million beggars" in our country.

Under such circumstances, it is understandable that society as a whole saw the key to a better future in revising our borders. From a young age, my generation believed that one day we would march to the Carpathians and fight for the rebirth of Greater Hungary.
The First World War, which cost us two-thirds of our territory and placed three and a half million Hungarians under foreign rule, had one positive side: we regained the independence we had lost after Mohács. Since our liberation from Turkish occupation (1701), we had swung from one dependency to another. The Habsburg kings sought to rule us by the sword while preserving the outward forms of the crown and constitution. Our lack of independence is reflected in the names of Rákóczi and Kossuth. The Austro-Hungarian Compromise of 1867, crafted by Ferenc Deák, was indeed a viable arrangement with the Austrian Germans, strengthening us against the Slavic danger.
However, after such long foreign rule, Trianon-era Hungarian society was not politically mature enough to understand the "science of possibilities," as Chancellor Bismarck put it. The restoration of the 1914 borders was the only imaginable policy for a nation stunned by the Trianon decisions and crushed by the world economic crisis. Tens of thousands of people from the occupied territories longed to leave their temporary, tattered homes and return to their birthplace, and we did not wish to abandon their cause. When, during the Second World War, we regained certain areas, Western anti-German propaganda thundered that the anti-Hungarian German government had suppressed some of our frontier claims, while English-speaking critics insinuated that they supported our "Everything Back!" slogan.
The political naivety of Hungarian society is illustrated by how we welcomed Lord Rothermere's son, who inflamed our emotions with the "Justice for Hungary" movement. But the English merely wished to signal to France that they did not look favourably on French attempts to dominate Eastern Europe in a neo-Napoleonic spirit—

something that seemed possible if the German and Russian giants were exhausted.
There was no political party or group in Hungary capable of opposing the revisionist sentiments of society.
My generation, however, also saw Hungary's social problems. The youth were naturally impatient with the policies of the ruling classes, strongly demanding the uplift of Hungarian workers and the implementation of radical land reform. It is telling that representatives of radical National Socialist groups found common ground with Marxist Social Democrats. It was well known, for example, that Ödön Málnási built friendly relations with working-class leaders who, from the left, pursued the same goal: the constitutional uplift of Hungarian industrial workers.
In 1941, the conflict that had begun as a European war became a world war, and the coalition of the First World War reunited against Central Europe. Many in my generation feared that we were again drifting into war on the German side, and a new Trianon shadow began to haunt us.
This is exactly what happened. The spirit of the nation split into pro-German and pro-English camps.
The best minds of the nation recognised by 1942–43 that the conflicts could not be resolved. After resigning as Prime Minister, László Bárdossy wrote a historical study on the era of György Fráter (1520s), aimed at those involved in the Second World War. He argued that choosing between the Germans and the English was not an option for us. The political situation was further complicated by the fact that the centre of gravity of the enemy coalition lay in Moscow and Washington. The United States had no coherent European policy, and Moscow planned to break through Europe over the body of our country.
The conservative Hungarian leadership desperately sought a way out. They did not deny limited cooperation with Germany, but they tried to establish contact with England and the United States to

secure Hungary's future in the event of conflict with Germany. However, every sign indicated that they had already assigned Hungary to the Soviet sphere of influence, and all attempts to form a relationship with the British government—including its Secret Service—were unsuccessful.

The German occupation of Hungary on 19 March 1944 further disturbed my generation. The country's sovereignty was gravely crippled. Those favouring Germany did not feel guilty, believing that full cooperation would have prevented the occupation. It was typical that a colleague who had served a year on the Eastern Front—though opposed to communism and deeply aware of the suffering of the Russian people under the regime—recommended partisan warfare against the German occupiers. Even the radical leader Ferenc Szálasi refused to take a role under the Germans because they insisted on retaining the right, as an occupying power, to decide the fate of the Jews. He refused to accept this condition. Miklós Horthy felt that cooperation with Germany had to be restored.

A definitive break did not occur until no other viable route remained except seeking a truce from the Russians. Miklós Horthy continued these efforts on his own, but he could not reach agreement because the Russians insisted that Hungary turn its weapons against its former ally.

When Ferenc Szálasi came to power on 15 October 1944, there was little hope left of avoiding defeat. The only remaining hope was that after Germany's collapse—and with the influence of England and the breakdown of the great alliance—Hungary might avoid falling into the Russian sphere of influence.

For my generation, this political situation forced each of us to make a personal decision. Some removed their uniforms and withdrew into their families.

However, the vast majority of the Royal Hungarian Army—professional and reserve officers alike—did not surrender. They

defended both the capital and Transdanubia to the last square mile, fighting for the country and its social order under the most difficult circumstances. Meanwhile, the government carried out a large-scale evacuation of people and assets; this was possible only because the overwhelming majority of the population cooperated with the leadership.

The Bolshevik regime that came to power did everything it could to slander this generation, which had stood firm during the hardest months of the war. Those filled with the purest Hungarian spirit were branded “fascists” and “murderers of their own people” simply because they had attempted to preserve the country’s independence.

The heroes who defended Budapest—newly formed divisions reinforced by the veterans of the Transdanubian battles—were persecuted if they survived. The new regime erected monuments only to the Soviet hordes who had abused Hungarian women and girls. Much later, in 1989, even the Reform Communist Party, at the request of the Hungarian Warriors’ Comrades Community, agreed to the establishment of a Hungarian heroic monument for these defenders.

After 15 October 1944, I too took the oath to continue the struggle with the Royal Hungarian Army.

The Russian occupation was completed on 4 April 1945. Characteristically, the new regime proclaimed this day a national holiday. Yet this day can only be compared to the national disasters of Mohács, Nagymajtény, Világos, and Trianon.

The Russian occupation of Hungary finally ended in 1991. The suffering endured by the remaining sons and daughters of the country still lives in the memory of the people, and many accounts have been written about their experiences.

After spending these decades in exile, I feel it is my mission to record my own memories and offer a moment of reflection to the

many tens of thousands of families who also had to leave our ancient homeland and were thus lost to Hungary.

The decision to say farewell to Europe and board a ship for distant shores was a grave and painful one. Some tried to remain in Europe, but opportunities were limited in the difficult economic circumstances. It would have been easier to settle in Germany, where language and culture were not entirely foreign to us, unlike the overseas world. But we feared that if our children completed their schooling in Germany—even close to the Hungarian border—they would still be lost to our nation. Moreover, we did not wish to serve the Germans after the unjust Bolshevik accusations levelled against us. We had fought for Hungarian freedom, truly to the last man.

The optimists among us tried to view emigration as a new conquest, though I still smile at this naïveté. Our immigration to Australia resembled the waves of settlers who once migrated into Hungary from German lands. Mór Jókai's beloved novel The New Landlord celebrated that process of fusion between peoples. And so we, too, became "new landlords" far away, in a strange land, our families gradually absorbed into the melting pot of the peoples living here. Some of us clearly saw our destiny. When Sándor Márai wrote The Eulogy (Halotti Beszéd), he expressed the truth in poetic form.

I too searched for a compromise. I believed that when the struggle between the two powers in the Cold War finally ended—whether through war or through agreement—there would be an opportunity to rebuild a truly free and independent Hungary, and that I could then take my family home. I even imagined that I would not return empty-handed. Along economic and legal lines, I studied the Anglo-Saxon system so that I might contribute to the country's development with the knowledge I had acquired.

But the struggle between the two superpowers lasted half a century, and the limits of a human life did not allow me to return home.

So today, at the turn of the century, the surviving exiles can only bid farewell to this homeless generation.
Sándor Márai wrote our Eulogy in the early 1950s, but even this prophetic poet did not foresee that after fifty years—even though he remained productive in his Hungarian language far from home—he would burn out and end his life with his own hands.
He feared that our memories would fall apart. In this, he was pessimistic. They did not fall apart; indeed, the image of the old Hungary remained alive—perhaps precisely because we were so far away. At local community festivals, we spoke of our most celebrated poets, while at the same time in Hungary, along the Danube and the Tisza, writers under the oppressive Russian system recited poems praising Stalin.
Our writers in exile quickly produced heroic stories and essential materials to create newspapers, booklets, and books.
Our compatriots in Hungary do not know the books written in exile. The names József Nyírő, Albert Wass, György Oláh, or István Eszterhás mean little to them, but we quote them, proving that we did everything we could to preserve our Hungarian heritage and that we were preparing to return.
And when the angel of Death entered our circle, most of us did not have a stranger at our bedside, but could say farewell with the consoling words of a Hungarian priest. The Hungarian pastors were the main cohesive force of these emerging communities. Overseas, public administration no longer supported them, yet they sustained themselves solely through the donations of the faithful and served Christ and our scattered Hungarians in the ecumenical spirit of the Vatican Council.
Sadly, Márai was right when he wrote that our Hungarian culture meant nothing to the foreign authorities who received us.
They carried out an international decision. Hundreds of thousands of refugees had to leave Europe because, under Russian influence, their presence was unacceptable to the victorious nations.

Our hosts expected us to forget our mother tongue and assimilate into the life of the host country as quickly as possible. No one criticised us individually, but our immigration documents listed only two occupations: labourer and domestic. Indeed, this generation of migrants was overshadowed by the fact that they had lost their citizenship, nationality, mother tongue, and professional qualifications, and almost without exception arrived in their "new home" without any property. Rising above this demanded heroic sacrifices from all of us, and the ability to endure humiliating situations.

When we immigrated to Australia, there were rumours that families would be separated upon arrival and that our children would be placed in institutions to distance them from us. This did not happen, but life forced many Hungarians to seek help from the Church by placing their children temporarily in institutions while the parents struggled to overcome housing difficulties. Naturally, this foreshadowed the process by which our children gradually adopted the language and customs of the host country and, as a result, became somewhat alienated from their parents.

Márai writes in his poetic language: "…you read Toldi to your child, and his response is 'OK!'" This was indeed the case. I too spent one or two hours each evening reading to my sons whatever Hungarian books I could find. I read Egri Csillagok (Stars of Eger) five times, and Jules Verne's Sándor Mátyás (Mathias Sandorf) became worn in our hands. Yet our boys received their education in English-language schools, and especially once they reached secondary school, the possibility of a Hungarian education diminished greatly

I loved the Hungarian poets, and in my youth—under my father's guidance—I became a good reciter of poems. I still remember how he taught me to express myself well. His words still echo in my ears:

On dry branches with listening lips,
how long will you sit there,

you disheartened birds…
My pain remains that I could not pass these most beautiful forms and expressions of Hungarian culture on to my sons.
We all had to face the fact that Australia had become the homeland of our sons and daughters. Their youth was spent here, and this society provided the framework for their development. These are the memories of childhood and school years, and today they look back nostalgically on their Australian youth. They are aware of their Hungarian ancestry, but they have accepted that fate brought their families here, and they wish to live their lives in this land.
This process reached its conclusion when, following the laws of life, they found partners. Irish, Scottish, and French daughters became their wives, and it was natural that our grandchildren's language would be English.
Of course, among the loving family, the grandchildren learned a few Hungarian words to delight their grandparents, but this does not change the fact that this second generation belongs to Australia as their homeland.
The same happened in families where young Hungarians married each other. Everyday life in English did not allow them to preserve Hungarian as the family's conversational language. At best, the parents tried to keep more Hungarian memories alive within these communities.
Among the grandchildren studying in high school, there remained a strong interest in their ancestors. They often delighted us, their grandparents, by choosing Hungarian themes for school assignments. In such cases, it became our task to produce the appropriate source material from our Hungarian-language library.
We received a letter from far-off Brazil, where Márti lives as a widow. We both knew her from Szeged. She was a girl from Arad (now Romania), and later in Budapest she met and married a boy from Buda. I believe their son, Csaba, was born in Germany. Now Csaba, a middle-aged engineer, has married a Portuguese woman.

Márti sent us a photograph of one of her grandchildren. From the picture, a blond, brown-faced Hungarian smiled at us—his complexion inherited from his dark-skinned Portuguese mother. On the back of the photograph was written the boy's baptismal name: Raphael Vince de Oliveira Cavalcante. This is how this displaced generation says farewell and will never return home. We mix our English with Hungarian in our speech, and perhaps now we belong neither here nor there.

Over the past decades, the exiles did their utmost to be the spokespeople for the independence of the occupied homeland. We sent books and publications to politicians. I am confident that, as a result, the Hungarian question is now known to the world, and that Hungary will not again face the ignorance that characterised the Trianon peace negotiations after the First World War.

The passage of time has prevented this generation from participating in the rebuilding of the liberated country, for the Russian withdrawal did not mean a complete change of regime.

The exiles will die here, and they cannot pass on their sword to their descendants to continue the struggle, as those living between the Danube and the Tisza once could. We will remain on the lists of the missing from the Second World War, and our names will not even be preserved by a heroic memorial.

We often ask ourselves whether it would have been better to choose prison or the gallows.

Yet if we look back at the circumstances of the time, we can only say that each person had to make his own decision. One cannot condemn those who saw no hope in continuing the struggle and trusted in the humanity of the victors; nor can one blame those who fought to the end; nor those who refused to give up and ended in exile. History swept over us. The young soldiers of the past are now old men, and we know—as the poet writes— "we crucified them on the gate of time."

In this spirit, we visit the Hungarian cemetery in Rookwood, and there we say farewell to those who lived with us for so long, waiting for the realisation of Hungarian freedom.

This cemetery is the largest in central Sydney. In addition to the Catholic and Protestant areas, there is a Jewish section, and as a result of the great European immigration following the Second World War, almost every nationality has its own parcel of land. The Hungarian cemetery was originally part of the Catholic section, but our pastors—true to the Hungarian spirit—ensured that our Protestant brothers and sisters could also rest here.

In the second decade of immigration, our people recognised the need for this parcel, for they saw that the loss of the 1956 War of Independence meant that we, the refugees, were unlikely ever to return home. They found a beautiful plateau for our section, close to the main road, with many palm trees. On the western side we face the crypts of Italian families, while in the other directions lie mostly old Australian graves.

When the community took possession of this area, we cleared it together and planted cypresses. Those small seedlings are now huge trees, encircling the cemetery cross, which is, of course, erected and marked as a "Cross of Heroes," since every family had heroic dead.

On November 2, the feast of St. László, the Sydney Hungarians gather here, determined not to forget those who died on the war front for our great revisionist hopes, or who suffered martyrdom at the hands of the victorious and cruel enemy and their servants.

I cannot give a full account of this cemetery, for every tomb reminds one of the great migration of our people. All made the greatest sacrifices; with their lives they demonstrated their love of their country and their faith, which they could not deny.

Before some graves I will pause and recall a few words. I remember those with whom I had personal contact and whose lives I knew directly.

Near the Heroes' Cross stand two gravestones of the Barcza family of Nagyálacsony. Two generations rest here. György Barcza was the last ambassador of old Hungary to St. James's Court in London; he was among those who played a leading role in the Hungarian emigration.
Close by is the grave of the Jani family. Here lies my comrade, the elder Jani János, a former finance counsellor, who with his wife lived to a fine old age. They faithfully supported their son's household and helped raise their grandchildren.
Vitéz István (Stephen) Jani, my friend, will also rest here, beside his beloved wife, Györgyi, who left him unexpectedly at a young age. Györgyi was my Ica's dear friend, and whenever we visit the cemetery, we always recite the Our Father over their graves.
Another friend of my wife, Ica, also rests here. Otmár Majsay, a former chief of staff, buried his loving wife, Éva, here; she was well known in the Hungarian colony and earned great merit in establishing the Hungarian Saint Elizabeth Old Age Home.
Here rests Major Vitéz Imre Kalándy and his wife, our beloved Boriska, who left us far too soon. The Kalándy family grave also preserves the memory of his father. Lieutenant General Kalándy had already been retired when the enemy reached the capital. He voluntarily joined the defenders. He died in captivity, and his resting place was never found. Imre's brother, a flight lieutenant, died a heroic death. His grave is in Rákoskeresztúr, but his memory is now also recorded on the Australian grave.
Three sad graves hold the remains of young people who left their grieving parents in the flower of their youth. Péter Göllner, my son András's close friend, died in a bicycle–car accident and was later followed here by his parents. Ottó Földiák also died very young, and the death of fifteen-year-old Tibor Vincz was especially tragic. He was diligently helping to clean his parents' abattoir when he was accidentally electrocuted.

The main path leading to the centre of the Hungarian cemetery is now almost completely filled, with only one or two parcels still empty. Among them is our own grave site. My Ica and I will move there one day, to rest among our old friends.

Near the cross, in the second row, is the grave of our priest, István Galambos. He was only forty-five when he left us, worn down and despairing. His friends, who erected his headstone, chose well when they inscribed on the marble a quotation from Cardinal Mindszenty:

"I proclaim the sanctified traditions of our nation,
without which some may live,
but the nation cannot…"

There are many soldiers in this cemetery. Here lies Kisléghi László Petőcz, lieutenant of the mounted gendarmerie (1920–1945); László Tömő, flight lieutenant (1912–1975); and István Molnár Olajosi, gendarme sergeant, who bade farewell with these words: "For our country, unto death… With God, for the homeland!"

Győző Zoltán was the captain of the Hunyadi Armoured Division, and his grave still proclaims his unwavering love for Hungary: Pro Patria et Libertate (For Country and Liberty).

We also remember Captain Pál Botond, a battalion physician and poet in our exile. On his grave, his wife chose a line from one of his poems: "*My words are the voice of a distant home, and in them I feel its sigh."*

Here rests István Mátéffy, gendarme commander, who left us at the age of sixty-eight. He never complained, volunteered for every task, and remained the respected leader of his men.

Supporters of the Hungarian language and literature still remember Gyula Szentirmay, our "bookseller," who served our language without profit or reward. He died at eighty-six, but in his final days he cared only about the fate of his library.

In our small colony we also remember Dezső Oláh, the former war correspondent and Budapest photographer, whose work will preserve the memory of our Australian years for a long time.

Let us pause before the grave of Béla Neszmély Dolecskó, a composer. He left us in 1970, yet we all remember his gentle manner, his individuality, and his tireless work for the Hungarian community. Beside him rests his wife, Mária Tauber, whose singing stirred our Hungarian hearts.

We never fail to pray over the grave of our beloved friend Bandi Mészáros. He died of cancer at fifty-six. A former lawyer and officer, he was forced to work as an industrial painter. He did his work without complaint and remained a true Hungarian gentleman.

Here lies Sándor Magurányi and his wife, Ilona. Sándor served in the Hungarian diplomatic corps, and their memories reached back to the days of the monarchy. They lived modestly and remained noble representatives of the old world. Their son has since followed them here.

"Uncle" Imre Kantek, a retired postal supervisor, could never forget the past. His epitaph reads:

Extra Hungariam non est vita,
Si est vita, non-est ita.
*(*Outside Hungary there is no life;
If there is life, it is not the same.)

I remember Dr. György Csanády, once a village mayor in Pest County, who in this distant land worked as an immigration officer. He was a reliable, good Hungarian man who always fulfilled his duty.

I also pause before the grave of Tibor Pálfalvy. He was a lawyer, but coming from southern Hungary he spoke several languages, and so he earned his living as a translator. He loved Hungarian literature and eventually left his fine library to the Hungarian House.

The grave of Feri Günther bears only this: Our father, who lived 70 years. This southern Hungarian, who never forgot his homeland, eased all his sorrows by listening to classical music.

Mihály Tóth's epitaph simply states: Here he lies in peace. Yet his death was tragic—he was a relatively young industrial victim. I valued him greatly as a conscientious electrician.

In the lawn cemetery section of the Hungarian parcel, the visitor may read: Here rests Dr. Rev. Franz A. Debreceni. Behind the German-sounding name lies a Hungarian Székely from Transylvania who migrated to Chile after the war. There he married a Spanish woman. When the Communists came to power, they moved to Australia, where he became a minister in the Protestant Church. Otherwise, he was a shoemaker and earned his living making orthopaedic shoes.

Many epitaphs speak bitterly of the past. The family of István Takács from Décs wrote:

His tired body rests here forever,
but his soul flew home to the sweet Hungarian soil.
A precious treasure was his beloved homeland.
His birthplace was everything.

The inscription for Sándor Papp (1902–1978) reads: "*My dust is here; my soul is in the Carpathians awaiting the Hungarian resurrection."*

In Australia—and in Sydney as well—the distances between cities are great, so for family reasons many Hungarian families did not choose to be buried at the Rookwood cemetery. That is why I cannot stand before the grave of my friend Elemér Szorkovszky, who moved to Queensland after many years in Sydney. His remains lie in a rural cemetery there, yet almost everyone in Sydney knew him as the tireless president of the Hungarian Association.

In one of the cemeteries in the northern part of Sydney rests Uncle Ernő Altorjai, who came here to retire with his son, my friend Ervin. Székely Land (now Romania) was his homeland, and as a representative of the Independence Party he had been a member of the Hungarian Parliament before the First World War. But in Hungary, after the communist takeover, he was fortunate if he

received even a bite of dry bread. He had to leave his country. Since then, my friend Ervin has also been laid to rest beside his father.
In the same cemetery rests Dr. Hunyor, a former chair of the forensic council, who withdrew from public life and devoted all his efforts to educating his sons. His efforts bore fruit: both sons became well-known medical doctors in Sydney.
Dr. Tibor Vértes, a medical doctor, also has his grave here. Tibor and I often met; he was a neurologist, and he frequently consulted me about legal matters.
In one of the lawn cemeteries rests Klári Lehoczky, a good friend of our family. Her family came from Hungarian-Croatian roots, and together with her husband, my friend Laci, they raised their children with exemplary care. Our sons were close friends with theirs.
I believe that József Bogsányi was buried in Canberra. He was the head of the Hungarian Saint Elizabeth Home for the Aged for many years and also led the Hungarian Royal Gendarmerie community. He often spoke about the early years of the gendarmerie, having been involved in the organisation even before the First World War.
In Western Australia, my friend Péter Kemény was cremated. As pastor of the Lutheran Hungarian communities, he served in a role that extended across all of Australia. He could never deny Hungarian Christianity and could never bring himself to cooperate with the Russian-appointed "peace pastors."
On 25 July 1990, my dear old friend and lifelong companion Dr. Ákos Oláh left us.
Éva Malonyay, our colleague from the Magyar Ítélet newspaper in Canberra, wrote this farewell in her chronicle:
"The Lord has called to Himself Dr. Ákos Oláh, a respected member of the Canberra Hungarian community, supporter and former secretary of the Canberra Hungarian Women's Association, and personal friend of many of us. The former reserve lieutenant had long awaited the heavenly call. In his emigration he served his nation as a scout leader;

with his dignified character and great culture he honoured his homeland.
Both Hungarian and Australian friends and grandchildren took part in the celebration of his life—a solemn English-language service, with the Hungarian flag covering his coffin. Dr. Zoltán Hegyi offered prayers, and Dr. Lajos Kazár delivered a moving farewell.
Then the Hungarian Hymn resounded—the hymn that Dr. Ákos Oláh could never again sing with us. The heartbreaking words 'God bless the Hungarian' hurt doubly, for they were meant especially for us in a foreign land.
We shared the family's mourning with deep sympathy."
Our first priest, Father Ferenc Forró S.J., does not lie among his congregation here. In the 1970s he was relocated to a Bavarian monastery due to a serious heart condition, and after a few years of service he departed this life.
Béla Barlay, Army Major General, lived in a wheelchair for ten years in various homes after a severe stroke. He always longed to return home, but as a former member of Counter-Intelligence, his family considered it unsafe. So, he flew to Burgenland to be close to his homeland. He lived only a few months longer—another stroke took him. His family was then able to transport his body to Siklós. Thus, he now rests in Hungarian soil, awaiting the resurrection of both his country and his body.
My childhood friend, borosnyói Miklós Tompa, gendarme captain, was cremated somewhere in England. He was of Transylvanian origin and carried the fate of Transylvania close to his heart. As a commander of a battalion of the Saint László Division, he fought the enemy even beyond Hungary's borders.
The Heroes' Cross in our cemetery is also the memorial for my nephew. I remember Kálmán Falcione, armoured division lieutenant, before this cross. He died a heroic death in Vérmező, defending Budapest.

My thoughts go to the shore of the Don River, where somewhere my friend Captain Pál Topay dreams his eternal dream in an unknown mass grave. We spent many hours walking around the army barracks before the war, and I was always grateful for his glowing Hungarian patriotism. Truly, he did what his homeland asked of him. Another hero of the battles at the Don was Vitéz Lajos Tolnay, a highly decorated and battle-hardened soldier who is also buried near us, in the Penrith cemetery. He did not deny his military past here; in fact, he rose to the rank of Major in the Australian Army.
My thoughts wander across the world, for the old exiles of my generation can be found in almost every corner of the earth. In contrast to the small Hungarian village of Tekirdag in Turkey, with its Hungarian streets, stands the twentieth-century "world Tekirdag" with its hundreds of thousands. These hundreds of thousands are all lost to the Hungarian future. The list of losses is more severe than the defeats at the hands of the Muslims (Ottomans) or at the Don (Communists), and those responsible for these crimes will one day have to give account before the Lord for denying the Christian spirit and rejecting the heart of Jesus' teaching, summed up in the Lord's Prayer:
Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who trespass against us.
After these reflections in the cemetery, I often wondered what the epitaph of this generation should be.
Many times, I have thought of a verse from Endre Ady's **A Magyar Messiások** (The Hungarian Messiahs). Indeed, this generation can say that they received no reward for their efforts, for they could do nothing—oh, nothing could be done. Let us not judge ourselves, but trust in the Lord that our efforts were not in vain.
That is why I feel that on my grave, and on the graves of the great lost Hungarian masses, the words of the Apostle should stand as a message and an example for us and for our descendants:

"I have fought the good fight; I have kept the faith."

2 Timothy 4:7, St. Paul Blessed be the name of the Lord.