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MIKLÓS MOLNÁR (b. 1918) is a French-speaking native Hungarian. He was sent to a forced labour camp by the Nazis in 1944, became editor of the communist newspaper *Irodalmi Ujság* ('Literary Gazette') in 1954, and following the fall of Imre Nagy left Hungary as a refugee in 1957. He has taught and lectured in Switzerland since 1958 and – since 1990 – in Hungary itself. Professor Molnár is the author of around twenty books and the recipient of many international honours, including the Gold Medal from the President of the Hungarian Republic for his part in the 1956 revolution. The volume *Rethinking the International Conflict in Communist and Post-Communist States: Essays in Honour of Miklós Molnár*, ed. Renéo Lukic (1998), is among the recent tributes to a vivid chronicler of the twentieth century.

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MIKLÓS MOLNÁR

Translated by Anna Magyar



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MIKLÓS MOLNÁR

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CHRONOLOGY

c. 2000 BC	Separation of the Finno-Ugric languages in western Siberia
1000–500 BC	Separation of the Ugrians, Magyar people group in the southern Ural region (Bashkiria)
AD 500–800	Migration of the Hungarian tribes from the Urals to the Black Sea region
862	Established at Etelköz, near the River Don, the Hungarians venture into Frankish territories
895–900	Conquest of the Carpathian basin
899–970	Forays to the West and to the Balkans
900–1301	Reign of the House of Árpád
1001	Coronation of István I (St Stephen). Foundation of the state, Christianisation, pagan revolts
1077–1116	László I (St Ladislas) and Kálmán I (Coloman) expand the influence of the kingdom to the Balkans, Croatia and Dalmatia. Advances in justice and culture
1172–96	Béla III strengthens the power of the state and the property of the lay nobles
1192–5	The Pray Codex, containing the oldest Hungarian text
1222	The Golden Bull of András (Andrew) II; first charter of equal rights for the nobility
1241–2	Mongol-Tatar invasion, followed by Béla IV's reconstruction
1301	Extinction of the dynasty of the House of Árpád
1310–82	Two Neapolitan Angevin kings, Charles-Robert and Louis I the Great. Period of progress and expansion. Louis becomes King of Poland in 1370
1367	Foundation of the University of Pécs
1387–1437	Sigismund I of Luxemburg, the future emperor. Half a century

Chronology

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- of struggle with the barons. Withdrawal from the Balkans and from Dalmatia
- 1416–56 The Ottoman Empire threatens Hungary
- 1456 János (John) Hunyadi, military leader, governor (1446–52) and great commander, stops Turkish expansion at Nándorfehérvár (Belgrade)
- 1458–90 Matthias I, Hunyadi's son, reconstructs the kingdom and introduces Renaissance culture
- 1514 The great peasant revolt under the leadership of György (George) Dózsa. István Werböczy's corpus of civil law (*Tripartitum*) establishes the customary rights of the nobility to the detriment of the peasants, who are reduced to servitude
- 1526 At Mohács, Suleiman I the Magnificent annihilates the Hungarian army. Two rival kings, János (John) Szápolyai and the Habsburg Ferdinand I, divide the country between them
- 1541 The sultan occupies Buda, the Turks settle in the middle of the country. The division of Hungary into three parts – the Turkish, the Transylvanian and the western part under Habsburg rule – lasts till the end of the seventeenth century
- The Reformation reaches Hungary and contributes to literary development as does the Counter-Reformation
- Transylvania, under Ottoman rule, becomes a semi-independent principality
- 1568 The Transylvanian Torda Diet proclaims religious freedom
- 1571 István (Stephen) Báthori, the future king of Poland, is elected prince of Transylvania
- 1604–6 Uprising against the Habsburgs led by István (Stephen) Bocskai
- 1613–29 Transylvania's golden age under Gábor Bethlen. War against the Habsburgs
- 1657–1705 Leopold I, king of Hungary and emperor, introduces Habsburg absolutism in Hungary
- 1686 Liberation of Buda, retreat of the Turks
- 1687 Transylvania falls under Viennese domination
- 1699 Peace treaty with the Ottoman Empire, the end of 158 years of occupation
- 1703–11 War of liberation of Ferenc (Francis) Rákóczi II against the Habsburgs
- 1722–3 The Hungarian Diet sanctions the succession to the throne of the female line of the house of Habsburg. The nobility retain their privileges
- 1740–80 The conciliatory and enlightened reign of Maria Theresa

- 1780–90 Joseph II, an enlightened absolute monarch, tries to impose reforms but fails in the face of resistance by the nobility
- 1795 At Buda, execution of the leaders of the ‘Jacobin conspirators’
- 1800–48 The language reform movement. Flourishing of Hungarian literature
- 1830 Publication of the work *Hitel* (Credit) by Count István (Stephen) Széchenyi, the initiator of modernisation and founder of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences
- 1832–48 Period of reforms in the Diet. Lajos (Louis) Kossuth emerges as leader of the liberal–radical opposition. The Diet committees support national demands
 The opening of the National Theatre at Pest. Suspension bridge to link Pest and Buda. The first railway line from Pest to Vác
- 1848–9 Revolution at Pest (15 March). War of independence. King Ferdinand V sanctions the ‘April law’ of constitutional transformation and abolition of serfdom. Hungarian government at Pest
 War of liberation against Austria (September 1848–August 1849). Abdication of Emperor Ferdinand. The young Francis-Joseph I is enthroned (2 December 1848)
 After the victorious spring campaign the Hungarian (Honvéd) army retreats. The National Assembly, transferred to Debrecen, proclaims Hungary’s independence and the dethronement of the Habsburgs (14 April 1849). Kossuth president–governor
 In response to Francis-Joseph’s appeal, the army of Tsar Nicholas I invades Hungary. The Hungarian army lays down its arms in front of the Russians at Világos (15 August). Kossuth goes into exile
- 1849–67 Executions and repression. Neo-absolutist regime, passive resistance. Beginning of the reconciliation
- 1865 Ferenc (Francis) Deák embarks on talks with Vienna regarding the restitution of constitutional freedoms
- 1866 The Austrian army is defeated by the Prussians at Sadowa
- 1867 Austro-Hungarian compromise based on mutual concessions. The start of the 51-year period of dualism. Count Gyula (Julius) Andrassy’s government
- 1868 The Hungarian Parliament adopts liberal laws regarding education and the rights of the national minorities of the kingdom. Hungarian–Croatian compromise
- 1871–9 Gyula Andrassy minister of foreign affairs of the dual monarchy

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- 1873 Pest, Buda and Óbuda are united, Budapest is born
- 1875–90 Kálmán (Coloman) Tisza heads the liberal government, the advocates of independence are in opposition
- 1896 Hungary's millennium
- 1905 The Liberal Party loses the elections
- 1906–10 Coalition governments. Serious conflicts with the minorities, with the trade union movement and with the Social Democratic Party
- 1908 Annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina (2 million inhabitants) by the monarchy
- 1910 Last census before the war. Hungary (without Croatia) has 18,246,000 inhabitants of whom 54.5 per cent are of Hungarian mother tongue. More than 1.5 million Hungarian citizens have emigrated to the United States
- 1912 General strike
- 1913 István (Stephen) Tisza's government
- 1914 The assassination of the crown prince at Sarajevo. Outbreak of the First World War
- 1916 The death of Francis Joseph I
- 1918 The defeat and disintegration of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy (October). Democratic revolution. Abdication of King Charles IV. Mihály (Michael) Károlyi president of the Republic
- 1919 The Republic of Councils and the dictatorship of the proletariat. The collapse of Béla Kun's regime (1 August); Romanian occupation. Admiral Miklós (Nicolas) Horthy and the national army enter the capital
- 1920 Miklós Horthy elected regent of the kingdom
 The Treaty of Trianon (4 June). Hungary loses, excluding Croatia, two thirds of its territory and 10.5 million inhabitants, among them more than 3 million Magyars
- 1921–31 Count István (Stephen) Bethlen president of the Council of Ministers. Consolidation. Revisionist foreign policy
- 1927 Italian–Hungarian treaty
 Monetary stabilisation. The new currency, the pengő, is worth 12,500 crowns
- 1931 Economic crisis. The departure of Bethlen
- 1932–6 The government of Gyula (Julius) Gömbös. Turn to the right and *rapprochement* with Hitler
- 1938 The first anti-Jewish law. Hitler's arbitration at Vienna: Hungary regains part of Upper Hungary (Slovakia)

- 1939 Hungary occupies Carpathian Ukraine
 The second anti-Jewish law
 Rise of the Hungarian Nazis, the Arrow-Cross, at the elections
- 1940 The second Vienna arbitration: northern Transylvania is returned to Hungary
 Adherence to the tripartite pact of Berlin–Rome–Tokyo
- 1941 Hungary attacks Yugoslavia. Suicide of Prime Minister Pál (Paul) Teleki
 Hungary enters the war against the Soviet Union (26 June)
- 1942–4 Miklós (Nicolas) Kállay appointed head of government. He attempts overtures towards the Allies
- 1943 The Hungarian Second Army is annihilated at Voronezh on the Don. Secret negotiations with Britain
- 1944 Germany occupies Hungary (19 March). The pro-German government of Döme Sztójay
 The deportation of about 437,000 Jews from the provinces to Nazi concentration camps
 The Red Army crosses the Hungarian border
 Horthy proclaims armistice on the radio (15 October). The Germans occupy strategic points.
 Horthy appoints the Nazi Ferenc (Francis) Szálasi as president of the Council of Ministers
 Bloody terror of the Arrow Cross. Assassination or deportation of 105,000 Jews from the capital
 National Assembly and provisional government at Debrecen (22 December). Three Communist ministers
- 1945 Armistice signed in Moscow
 Yalta Conference (February)
 The Soviet army liberates Budapest (13 February) and the whole country (4 April). Allied Control Commission presided over by Marshall Voroshilov
 Legislative elections (4 November). Smallholders' Party 57 per cent, Communist Party 17 per cent. Coalition government, including four communists
- 1946 Proclamation of the Republic. President Zoltán Tildy
 New currency. One forint equals 400,000 quadrillion pengős
 Nationalisation of the banks and of the iron and steel industry
- 1947 Three-year plan of reconstruction
 Peace treaty signed in Paris. The Soviet army remains. Arrests and processes aimed at the Smallholders' Party. Deportation of

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- its general secretary Béla Kovács to the Soviet Union. Forced resignation of the president of the Council of Ministers, Ferenc (Francis) Nagy
- 1948 Forced fusion of the Social Democratic Party with the Communist Party. The party's name is changed, its general secretary Mátyás (Matthias) Rákosi leads the country. Police regime. Further nationalisation of economic and educational institutions (Roman Catholic and Protestant ones)
- 1949 The trials of Cardinal József Mindszenty and other Church dignitaries
 Elections: the Popular Front candidates achieve 96.27 per cent of the suffrage
- 1950–2 The trial and execution of László Rajk
 Total dictatorship of the Communist Party. Forced industrialisation, persecution of the kulaks, trials, executions. János Kádár is arrested
- 1953–5 The death of Stalin. The reformer Imre Nagy becomes prime minister. Mátyás Rákosi remains the leader of the party. Struggle between reformists and Stalinists. Imre Nagy is ousted (March–April 1955)
- 1956 The Twentieth Congress of the Soviet Communist Party (February)
 The opposition movement of Hungarian writers and of the Petöfi Circle grows. The Russians oust Rákosi (18–21 July)
 The solemn funeral of Rajk and other victims of Stalinist terror (6 October)
 Mass demonstration and insurrection in Budapest. The first Soviet intervention. Imre Nagy president of the Council of Ministers. Cabinet of democratic coalition and the establishment of Workers' Councils. Hungary withdraws from the Warsaw Pact (23 October–3 November). The Soviet army invades Hungary (4 November)
 János Kádár takes over. Arrests. The exodus of 200,000 Hungarians
- 1957–63 Mass repression. The trial of Imre Nagy; five executions (16 June 1958). Trial of writers and freedom-fighters. Over 300 executions
- 1961 Recollectivisation of agriculture
- 1963 General amnesty. Political relaxation
- 1968 The launching of economic reforms
- 1972 The reform reaches an impasse

- 1985 The Kádár regime, reputed to have been prosperous and the most liberal, runs out of steam. Heavy foreign debts
- 1987 Democratic opposition spreads. Decline in purchasing power and consumption
- 1988 Kádár is eliminated from power
Foundation of democratic political parties
- 1989 The crisis of the regime deepens
National funeral for Imre Nagy and the other victims of repression
Round-table negotiations for a democratic transition
Proclamation of the Hungarian Republic (23 October)
- 1990 Legislative elections. The Democratic Forum forms a centre-right coalition government, headed by József (Joseph) Antall
Árpád Göncz president of the Republic
- 1994 Legislative elections. The Socialist (ex-Communist) Party gets an absolute majority. Gyula (Julius) Horn forms a coalition government with the Liberal Democrats
- 1996 Commemoration of the eleventh centenary of Hungary