With the capture of the Fortress of Buda on 21 May 1849, Kossuth's armies completed the victorious spring campaign and Hungary was almost freed of foreign armies. However, the euphoria of victory was brief. Kossuth was unable to formulate a political solution to coming to terms with the House of Hapsburg. By July 1849, the rejuvenated imperial army aided by 200,000 Czarist troops re-invaded Hungary and quickly ground down the armies of the war-weary nation. Kossuth's government, which moved from Debrecen to Pest-Buda briefly, was forced to flee once again, to Szeged.

On August 9th, General Bem made his last attempt to defeat General Baron Ludwig Haynau's Austrian army at Temesvár. Despite numerical superiority, the Hungarians were routed by the better-trained imperials. The honvéd would fight no more after this engagement as most soldiers simply threw away their guns and headed home. Outside of the fortresses of Komárom and Pétervárad, the only intact Hungarian army was Görgey's Army of the Upper Danube. Görgey had retreated along the Tisza River from Northern Hungary to Arad, avoiding all along a decisive engagement with Prince Paskevich's kozaks. On August 11th, upon learning of Bem's defeat, Kossuth resigned and passed over to Görgey virtually dictatorial authority in the part of the country under the army's jurisdiction. Twelve deputies met for the last time in the fortress of Arad on August 12th and dissolved the National Assembly, which would not exist again as an entity until 1867. On the following day, Görgey arranged the surrender at Világos to the Russians. It must have been a sad parade as eleven honvéd generals, 1,426 officers, and 32,569 soldiers laid down their arms. The Russians captured 144 field guns and 60 battle flags. (The battle standards were returned to Hungary in 1940 by the Soviet Union in exchange for Mátyás Rákosi, who was serving time for Communist agitation.) The huszár cavalry soldiers symbolically broke their sabers and some shot their horses. Infantry muskets were stacked in neat pyramids. Görgey and Russian General Rüdinger made a final review of the troops, who then they all became prisoners of war and victims of the Austrians' retribution.

All of the officers had hoped for a general amnesty to be secured with Russian intervention. This was not the case. General Baron Haynau treated all officers as rebels, reduced them to ranks held in the imperial army and almost immediately began their court martial for desecrating the person of his imperial majesty, Francis Joseph. The garrisons of the two fortresses were the only soldiers who received any leniency.
Pétervárad surrendered on September 5th, Komárom a month later on October 5th in return for all of the officers and soldiers receiving letters of safe conduct.

An accurate tally of the victims is difficult to ascertain because contemporary records are contradictory, but about 120 persons, soldiers and civilians alike, including a significant number of Catholic priests and a number of Polish nobles, were executed. The most ignominious of these were the executions of the first Prime Minister, Count Lajos Batthyány, and of the 13 honvéd generals on October 6th. The stamps issued by the Hungarian Post last March commemorate these events and incorporate the portraits of the victims.

Batthyányi attempted to cheat the gallows by cutting his throat with a dagger smuggled to him by his wife. The military doctors saved him only to face the firing squad on the next day. The stamp with his portrait pictures the jewelry that Hungarian noble women wore defiantly in the Bach-era (following the defeat of the revolution, Austria reduced Hungary's status to that of a colony of the Imperial Crown between 1850 and 1867). The simulated shackles symbolized the iron chains, some tokenly light, others totally incapacitating, worn by the thousands of fortress prisoners.

The accompanying souvenir sheet pictures the 13 generals who met their executioners in the fortress of Arad, near the site of their surrender. Their names were to be written indelibly into the Hungarian psyche, yet some of them were not even ethnic Hungarian. Who were these heroes? The following is a brief tally of their background and age in counterclockwise order as they are pictured on the sheet. (All held the rank of the general in the Hungarian army with the exception of Lázár, who was a colonel.)

- Knezics, age 41, ethnic Croatian, Catholic, imperial rank of major;
- József Nagy-Sándor, 45, Hungarian, Catholic, imperial rank of huszár captain;
- József Schweidel, 35, Hungarian, Catholic, imperial rank ofhuszár major;
- Ernő Kiss, 49, Hungarian, Catholic, imperial rank of colonel;
- György Lahner, 54, Hungarian, Catholic, imperial rank of major;
- Ernő Pölltenberg, 35, Austrian, Catholic, imperial rank of huszár lieutenant-colonel;
- Count Leiningen-Westerburg, 30, German of the Imperial House of Hesse, Calvinist, imperial rank of huszár lieutenant-colonel;
- Ignác Török, 54, Hungarian, Catholic, imperial rank of lieutenant-colonel of the army engineers;
- Count Károly Vécsey, 42, Hungarian, Catholic, imperial rank of
major;

- Vilmos Lázár, 34, Hungarian, Catholic, imperial rank of lieutenant;
- Arisztid Dessewffy, 47, Hungarian, Lutheran, retired imperial hussár colonel;
- Lajos Aulich, 57, Hungarian, Catholic, imperial rank of lieutenant-colonel;
- János Damjanics, 45, ethnic Serbian, Greek Orthodox, imperial rank of captain;

The 14th general held in captivity was János Lenkey, a wealthy Hungarian landowner. He lost his sanity during the court martial and died in prison early in 1850. He, too, is one of the Martyrs of Arad. Initially, only one defendant, Ernő Kiss, was sentenced to death by firing squad. All of the others were sentenced to be hanged. Three of these sentences were 'commuted' to death by firing squad (Schweidel, Lázár, and Dessewffy) as a result of the 'clemency' hearing.

Haynau's cowardly, bloodthirsty retribution earned him the moniker, the *Hyena of Brescia*, the region of Italy where he was born. Hungarian folklore immediately idolized the executed generals. Prints showing their portrait-medallions could be found in every dwelling alongside a picture of "Father" Kossuth (*Kossuth Apánk*). The illustrated vignette was printed in the 1920s by the Anti-Hapsburg League. It depicts Haynau in the act of hanging the Hungarian generals, one of the most significant of the many sins that the House of Hapsburg committed against Hungary. An interesting custom originated from the fact that the Austrian officers toasted themselves with beer following the executions. The Hungarian custom is to drink a toast only with wine and not with beer in protest over the reprehensible action of the imperial officers.

General Görgey's life (he was 31 years old at the time of the surrender) was spared, although he was imprisoned for a number of years in Austria, through the intervention of Czar Nicholas I. This caused the evolution of the negative popular hearsay that he was a traitor. It was to haunt Görgey for the rest of his life, and he lived to be a grand old man of 98. The negative image even had its impact on philately: prior to this year's stamp, he was pictured on only one other Hungarian stamp (Scott #609) despite his important military contributions to the War of Independence.

Vae Victis! Woe to the Vanquished!

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