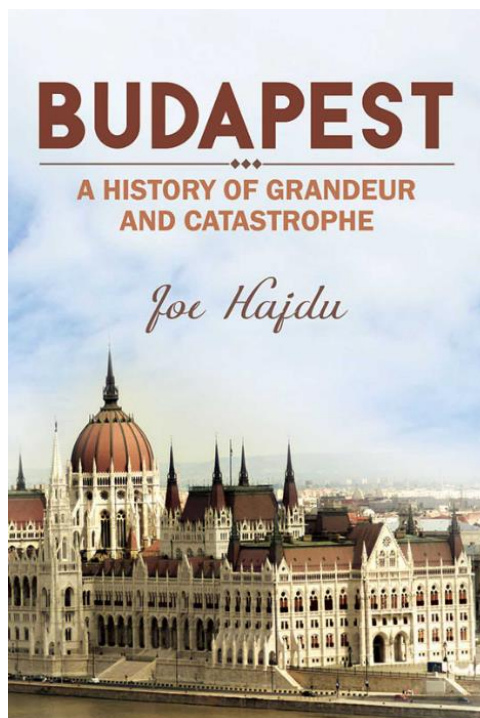


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Budapest: A History of Grandeur and Catastrophe – Joe Hajdu

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About the Book

Budapest today is a palimpsest of its history and partially crystallized present. Its earlier history is best seen on the Castle Hill of Buda, the seat of Hungarian royal power since the beginning in the 13th Century. This peaked in the glory years of King Matthias' reign in the second half of the 15th Century, when Buda was one of the largest and wealthiest cities of Europe.

The Ottoman conquest that followed a generation later was a catastrophe whose effect would last two centuries. However when the new Castle Hill of Buda arose, it became a version of Baroque central Europe, controlled by Imperial Vienna. Pest, on the opposite banks of the Danube, is a symbol of the grandeur of the late 19th Century metropolis. Elaborate, historicist buildings and monuments first inhabited by the members of the rising bourgeoisie that had achieved prosperity in the booming Budapest around the year 1900.

This era still largely defines the visual appearance of the central city. Nearly half a century later Fascism, and then forty years of Communism, again produced economic dislocation and social tumult in the lives of the people. This is best shown through descriptions of the fate of individual families in Budapest. Since 1990 the metropolis and its people have gone through a frenzied transition for which there was no template: authoritarian socialist economy to volatile capitalism and democracy. The story of the key players and groups in this tumultuous process particularly vivid.

Today Budapest is a city whose role in Europe is still being crystallized. However, inventive entrepreneurs and creative artists are making the city a more and more vibrant home for its citizens and a favoured destination for a rapidly increasing flow of visitors.

About the Author

Dr. Joe Hajdu is a cultural geographer. He is attached to Deakin University in Melbourne, Australia as an Honorary Fellow. In a long academic career he has carried out research in Australia, Germany, and the United Kingdom. His previous books have included a cultural geographic study of Australia aimed at visitors who seek to immerse themselves into the topic beyond what the standard tourist guide provides, a description of the cultural impact of the Japanese on the Gold Coast in northeast Australia

in the 1980s, a study of the effect on economic linkages and people's lives of the West-East German border prior to 1989, and a recent book on the transformation of Berlin after 1990 from being a marginalized, divided city to again being the capital and culturally vibrant metropolis of a reunited Germany. Budapest: A History of Grandeur and Catastrophe is his first research and book project carried out in his birthplace, Hungary.

Budapest: A History of Grandeur and Catastrophe by Joe Hajdu is published by Austin Macauley and is available on **Austinmacauley.com**, **Amazon** and all good booksellers.

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