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Half-truths will not Do — *Dezső Keresztury*

Hungary and European Cooperation — *Gyula Horn*

In Defense of Villages in Rumania — *Iván Boldizsár*

Which Way to Go? — Five Views — *István Bihari, Tamás Kolosi, Péter Schmidt, Sándor Simó, Miklós Németh*

Three Unpublished Letters by Liszt to Saint-Saëns — *Klára Hamburger*

Poems, Prose and a Play — *Ágnes Nemes-Nagy, Lajos Grendel, Péter Nádas*

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111

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IN MIDSTREAM

Changes without precedent in recent decades took place in Hungary in the last few months. Hungarians these days spend more time than ever before thinking and talking about politics, the economy and social questions. There are people who, exaggerating somewhat, claim that 1988 will occupy a place in the annals compared to that of 1945. Others mention 1948 which at that time used to be apostrophed as the Year of the Turn. Let us compare things instead to 1957, the year of the search for new ways, or rather 1966, when the leading bodies of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party first discussed and passed the Hungarian Economic Reform which Parliament later enacted in 1968. The present changes are needed because what took place twenty years ago was merely an economic reform much, of which was aborted following both outside pressure and that of conservative forces at home. The present changes restore the original aims of the '68 reform, indeed they carry them forward in some respects, but they are not satisfied with that much .Political and social reforms have been introduced as well, and therein lies the importance of the transformation.

Public opinion, every section of society, the party and its leaders, the various organizations of the Patriotic People's Front, newly formed associations and clubs of professional people, students and other intellectuals and in the first place the print and electronic media, discussed new ways, more precisely a way out of the difficult situation in which not only the economy but the whole of Hungarian society found itself. The monthly *Mozgó Világ* put the question: which way to go to twenty-three well known public figures and published their answers in the January 1988 issue. We have selected five of these, the contributions of an industrial manager, a sociologist, a constitutional lawyer, a film-director, and of a Secretary to the Central Committee responsible for economic questions. His participation is a pledge indicating the importance of the compilation.

Chronologically the *Mozgó Világ* compilation preceded the May Party Conference, our paper accounts of the latter, under the heading "A Turning Point" takes precedence. Rereading both together it was truly exciting to see what some important Hungarian intellectuals proposed in conjunction with what was discussed and resolved at the Party Conference. As one of the non-party people invited to attend the Conference I can confirm the views expressed in Péter Rényi's article. The importance of this three-day Conference was not confined to the resolutions passed or the unprecedented straight talking of the debates which preceded them, what really counted was the landslide that led to changes in the top party leadership.

What I have in mind now is not only that Károly Grósz was chosen to replace János Kádár as General Secretary. That this would happen was an open secret in Budapest already some days before the Conference. What the previous leadership had not counted on was that the dissatisfaction, or rather anger, of the close to a thousand delegates would sweep away a number of members of the leadership whom they held to be particularly responsible for the economic problems and the crisis of confidence. After the Conference I can truly say I just about covered its echo in the world press, reading much in the original, and the rest in surveys. Not a single paper mentioned this truly noteworthy, indeed dramatic, aspect. Five prominent members of the previous Political Committee, one still Prime Minister last year and now Deputy Secretary General of the HSWP, another the Head of State at the time, the third the man who for many long years had been Secretary to the Central Committee responsible for economic questions and who at the time was First Secretary of the Budapest Party Committee, another Secretary of the Central Committee and, last but by no means least, the Chairman of the National Council of Trades Unions, were not merely not reelected to the Political Committee, their names were also crossed off the ticket for the hundred and fourteen strong Central Committee. Thus they were not eligible for reelection into the Political Committee. It came to pass that the new Political Committee does not contain anyone who was a member before 1985.

Which of the addresses to the Conference should we publish? The final consensus in the editorial office was that the most important passages should be included in Péter Rényi's comprehensive survey and comments but that only one, by Dezső Keresztury, should be published in full. His address, the only one to the Party Conference by someone who is not a party member, really moved his audience and, being televised and fully reported in the press, public opinion as well. Only two people who spoke—the other was György Aczél, and Keresztury was the first to do so—paid tribute to János Kádár. The

importance of the words of the Grand Old Man of Hungarian literature, speaking in the name of those who were not party members, was underlined by his being the only name mentioned by Károly Grósz six weeks later in his first statement as General Secretary printed by *Népszabadság*, the party daily, and that in connection with a key issue, the relationship between the party and society as a whole.

Keresztury, addressing the delegates had asked: Do you wish to be the party of the nation? Evidence of a widening of the base is that two men, Imre Pozsgay and Rezső Nyers, were elected to the top leadership who, within the HSWP, stand for a policy which clearly differs from what the leadership stood for in the past five or six years.

The reason why Pozsgay's and Nyers's names only appear here in this issue, why there is no article by, or about, them, has to do with production problems. The bulk of this issue went to press on May 5th, the Party Conference took place at the end of May. The most we could do was to add Péter Rényi's and Dezső Keresztury's texts to the corrected galleys. Autumn will be truly with us by the time this issue appears and, given the impetus it has received, the political situation will have left May behind by a much longer span than indicated by the calendar. A quarterly, of course, cannot race against time. Our business is rather to illuminate the background, drawing attention to the currents that cause the changes. We do our best to give an inkling of the changes which manifest themselves so to speak day after day in Prime Ministerial statements, press controversies, round-tables on the radio and on television, the first ever public sitting of the Central Committee, new economic decisions and the drafting of future legislation.

Hungary is living through turbulent days, weeks, months, perhaps years. In the quarter of a century that I have edited this journal my work has seldom been as exciting, or my duties as onerous, except for the first few issues, and perhaps around 1966–68, I feel that a new start was being made, a start for the better. I would not say yet that we were over the top as far as the economy is concerned but I discern signs that the crisis of confidence is about to pass.

But there are new anxieties, a nightmare that is not new but ever more oppressive weights on public opinion and new duties await the government in the foreign policy field. What I have in mind is the deterioration in Hungaro-Rumanian relations. Despotism in Rumania is a heavy burden for citizens of Rumanian ethnic origin and language, but members of the national minorities in Rumania, particularly Hungarians, suffer national oppression as well. Since December 1987, sometimes hundreds of Rumanian citizens a day have crossed the Hungarian frontier, some legally, holding a

passport, travelling as visitors, but with no intention of returning, others, risking life and limb, illegally, far from controlled border crossings. Ninety per cent belong to the Hungarian minority but there are ethnic Rumanians amongst them as well. In a future issue their motives, situation and prospects will be discussed in detail. Let me say at this stage that no one is returned to Rumania by the Hungarian authorities. Everyone is accorded the right to live and work here, as well as accommodation, and, those who need it, financial assistance as well. At the same time it must be said that neither the government nor the public wishes to encourage the Hungarians of Transylvania to leave their native country. The nation is unanimous in its conviction—indeed its holy creed—that everyone has a right to happiness, prosperity and the rights of citizens in his or her own native land. In the present case this means the right to be educated in one's own language at all levels and also the right to use it in one's dealings with the authorities.

In recent decades the situation has significantly deteriorated: all that has survived of the more than a hundred Hungarian secondary schools that were established after the Second World War are three that are not even independent schools but sections within a Rumanian institution. Teachers are sent to purely Hungarian villages who cannot understand a word of Hungarian and if, in a particular village or urban district, a class of thirty Hungarian children is joined by two or more Rumanians, the language of instruction is changed to Rumanian. But even worse is happening: the village destruction plan termed "programme of regional development." Since the coming of peace after the Second World War, the Hungarian nation has not experienced anything that gave rise to greater anxiety.

Stretching the production schedule to breaking point we publish a number of documents of protest and indignation, in the first place the text of a resolution passed unanimously by the Hungarian Parliament on June 21st, and the contribution to the debate of the writer of these lines. Let me say that protest and indignation have a nation-wide character. One could literally list every Hungarian organization and association, naturally including the religious denominations. One should, however, note that there was much protest abroad as well. The reactions of the press of many countries are covered by the third item dealing with Hungarian–Rumanian relations.

At the same time other foreign policy activities continued. In recent months Károly Grósz, the Prime Minister and General Secretary of the HSWP undertook a number of journeys abroad. He visited the Federal Republic of Germany, Great Britain, the Soviet Union and Poland, and

spent ten days travelling in the U.S. and Canada. Articles discussing and commenting on these journeys will appear in future issues.

The present issue contains the text of an address given on May 2nd to the Council of Europe by Gyula Horn, Secretary of State in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The tone and atmosphere of the address anticipated a most important step that soon followed. An agreement on cooperation between the European Economic Community and Hungary was initialled in Brussels on June 30th. Within its terms the EEC will, within a stipulated time, abolish all existing quantitative limitations on trade with Hungary, and ensure the same treatment to Hungary which is enjoyed by all GATT members. An important item provides that both the EEC and Hungary will take measures to facilitate commerce, mutually putting an end to every kind of discrimination. This agreement is a step in the right direction, helping to bring about a situation in Western Europe where, when they use the word Europe, they do not just mean the countries of the E.E.C. but also remember a small country which throughout its history has always looked on itself as an integral part of Europe.

In spite of the current primacy enjoyed by politics, *NHQ* 111 does not neglect literature. On the contrary. We print a long early poem which Hugh Maxton translated for a volume of Ágnes Nemes Nagy together with his introduction. In Maxton, Ágnes Nemes Nagy has found a translator worthy of her own high standing in current Hungarian letters but also—and no wonder since he is identical with the critic and scholar W. J. McCormack—a commentator of rare discernment. We seldom publish plays, not only for reasons of space, but because most Hungarian dramatic writing requires a specific knowledge of the society which we cannot presume our readers to have. True, Péter Nádas's Encounter delves deep into the Hungarian society of the recent past but at the same time it is deeply moving in a manner that transcends the barriers of language or the limits of national societies.

By a fortunate coincidence, Lajos Grendel, whose "The Whimsies of Onirism" features as the *NHQ* 111 short story is also discussed in a book review in this issue. It is not difficult to see why the author has dedicated his story to the memory of René Magritte. Grendel, who writes in Hungarian, lives in Czechoslovakia, in Pozsony, but, as the title he chose shows, he moves in the world of European literature.

Zoltán Tömpe did no more than tell the story of his heart attack. He writes good descriptive prose, authentic in all its details, yet we chose it chiefly because it gives news of one of the greatest of current Hungarian social ills, overwork that frequently transcends the limits of self-exploita-

tion. Not that he is whinging, far from it, indeed the only reference to the social background is in the final sentence.

I am writing on July 27th, on the very day that the Prime Minister of Hungary is due to call on the President of the United States. I should have liked to have been able to promise that there would be something on this trip in the *next* issue but this will hardly prove possible. All we were able to do was to produce an advance offprint of an article which Károly Grósz wrote for *NHQ* 112 for distribution at the press conferences in Chicago, San Francisco, Los Angeles, New York, Washington and Toronto.

THE EDITOR

POSTSCRIPT. At the end of August, the world's attention was directed at Hungary, or rather at Hungary and Rumania, on the occasion of the meeting between Károly Grósz and Nicolae Ceauşescu. It took place in Arad, a town which for centuries was on Hungarian soil and is now on Rumanian —a fact which Hungary neither disputes nor wants to change. It is a town whose name sounds a mournful bell in Hungarian history, for it was here that thirteen Hungarian generals of the 1848/49 War of Independence met their end by execution. Their memorial still stands there and on the occasion of the meeting between the two General Secretaries, the Hungarian delegation placed a wreath garlanded in the red white and green colours of Hungary on it.

Arad has now acquired a new meaning in the Hungarian consciousness. Following the meeting, public opinion was aroused, passionate discussion ensued and everyone tried to evaluate it. Many made no attempt to conceal their disappointment, recognizing that the principle result of the meeting between the two leaders was that, after a gap of eleven years, a meeting had actually taken place. Unquestionably, the Rumanian leadership would not have put itself to this meeting, if all of Hungarian public opinion, all of the Hungarian political leadership and the media had not burst the constraints of a number of decades and expressed at every level, including on the international stage, protest and indignation at the oppressive assimilation policy of Rumania towards her Hungarian minority. In these public expressions, in which I too am playing an active part, I do my best to stress that we Hungarians are not only protesting against the plan to destroy villages, which Imre Pozsgay justifiably called on St Stephens Day, August 20th, a 'crime against humanity', but against the oppressive policies of the preceeding decades, which did not end in the village destruction plans, of which the annihilation of some of the Hungarian heritage is only a part.

The Rumanian leader called the encounter a new chapter. An hour after the meeting, when journalists asked Károly Grósz whether a new era had started in Hungarian–Rumanian relations, the Hungarian leader answered that he did not like the word 'era', and in a further answer even said that to his mind even the word 'phase' would be too much. His view was that the Arad meeting contributed to expanding bilateral relations. The mood of the discussions of the situation and of public opinion is best expressed by his closing words 'we will see what is to come'.

The present writer, who from his very youth has tried to promote Hungarian–Rumanian friendship in articles, books and short stories, who in the most important work of his younger days, perhaps his life, followed the example of a Rumanian professor, Dimitrie Gusti; who even at the Paris Peace Treaty Conference believed that if there are two peoples in the Danube valley dependent on one other, these two are the Hungarian and Rumanian peoples; he who is a regular reader of the Hungarian-language Rumanian press (not exactly reflecting the views of that Hungarian minority) would like to be hopeful. Based on the experience of the past decades, there is more of scepticism in him. True, there was a Petru Groza period ofter the war, but even the traces of that have been made to disappear. If following the Arad encounter, an attempt is made to re-establish something of that period, my scepticism could diminish and my hopes grow.

FROM OUR NEXT ISSUES

LIFE AND POLITICS
Imre Pozsgay

AN INTERVIEW WITH MARGARET THATCHER
Endre Aczél

1968 AND AFTER
A radio discussion with Miklós Almási, Endre Gömöri Béla Köpeczi and Rezső Nyers

SAINT STEPHEN'S EXHORTATIONS AND HIS STATE
Jenő Szűcs

SAINT STEPHEN'S EXHORTATIONS
translated by János Bak

UJHOLD REDIVIVUS—THE DEATH AND REBIRTH OF A PERIODICAL
Balázs Lengyel

THE TRUE LIFE OF VERSE TRANSLATIONS
George Szirtes

BARTÓK COMES HOME
László Somfai

HUNGARIAN CHURCH MUSIC
Paul Merrick

A TURNING POINT

by

PÉTER RÉNYI

The May conference of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party has been described already in the first press reports as an event of great importance for domestic as well as international relations. Below I shall try to define what I mean by this description; first, however, I wish to stress that the conference has played a special and incomparable role, pointing beyond Hungary, in the development of the countries of socialism.

The view still held by some, even confronted with the Gorbachev reforms, that socialism is incapable of renewing itself, of reforming its outworn practices and erroneous conceptions, certainly follows from the massive dogmatism of the Stalin era and the then prevailing apologetics of the system. For a while after the death of Stalin, who had been revered as a demigod, the lead was taken by a group which, under Khrushchev's guidance, put a stop to the earlier tyranny and, burdened with vestiges of the centralism of the preceding period, began to carry out long overdue changes.

At that time this decisive turn in the policy and practice of the Communist Party and the Soviet state did not receive, either inside the party or in society, the support needed for radical transformation—*perestroika* in the current terminology. What is more, the leadership at the time did not even seek such support; probably it was not aware of the depth and extent of the distortions that had taken place in Stalin's time. It thought a few central decisions were enough to change the situation; it left intact the mechanisms and structures of both the economy and the system of political institutions; the modifications remained within the framework of the system established before. It is well worth nothing right here that the Hungarian economic reform took shape and found its place on the statute book after Khrushchev's time, in the late 1960s.

The notion of the 'personality cult' was already questioned by many at that time, saying that this was a narrow and extrinsic category which did not

cover the essence of the damage done by the Stalin era. Albeit the term was not used as a euphemism, the target of criticism was the person of Stalin himself; what was said about the circumstances which had underlain his cult and his unlimited, tyrannical power was very little or just not enough; and still less was done to effect institutional changes in these conditions. What happened later until Gorbachev—except for Andropov's brief one-year tenure of office—is already known also from the Soviet press.

After the 20th Congress of the CPSU, in the years when Khrushchev was General Secretary, a few socialist countries experienced spontaneous reform movements as well, which outdid the Soviet example, forcefully first in Poland, then still more so in Hungary. However, the reforms were at once opposed by conservative political leaders, and unprecedented severe tensions arose also inside the parties. The introduction of reforms intended to start a gradual peaceful reconstruction of the internal conditions of the system was thus out of the question. The dividing lines between reformers wishing to rescue the system and reactionaries rejecting it became blurred. It is needless here to dwell upon these processes, I mention them only as an indication of how difficult and unsafe the switch to reforms proved to be, on the one hand, because of the furious defence put up by the conservative leftist forces holding on to their power and, on the other, in consequence of attacks from the right wing striving to restore the old order.

This is why international significance has been assumed by the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party's reform line formulated in outline as early as 1956/57, during the reorganization of the party. It gradually took off in the next twenty years, especially following the Central Committee resolution of 1966 and after the introduction of the 1968 reform, that is the new system of economic management generally termed the New Mechanism. Hungary was not the only country, and the HSWP was not the only party, to think in terms of reforms, nor can it be said that they went straight ahead on the road of reforms, but they nevertheless proceeded so consistently that it was no longer possible to declare simply that reform stood no chance of success in socialism. In the beginning the party leadership took a strong line and stuck to its ideas even at the time of the Czechoslovak crisis which raised difficulties also for Hungary's economic reform. In the latter half of the sixties the people had confidence in the reform under conditions of relative economic prosperity, expanding production, growing exports and steadily rising standards of living.

The Hungarian reform had also many weak points. It certainly lacked consistency of principle, too, to some degree, but chiefly in implementation in practice. It would have been necessary long before to put a stop to loss-mak-

ing production; to begin the reduction of subsidies; to apply more strictly the principle of performance; to give all-out support to exports which earned convertible currency; to proceed with greater circumspection in obtaining foreign loans, and yet more so in their utilisation; expensive credits should not have been used to make up for a great part of the losses due to the changing world-market conditions, and so on. There is a long list of failures and shortcomings whose consequences the country still has to suffer today and will yet suffer for a long time to come.

Moreover, the party leadership realised—for it could see clearly enough already at the end of 1978—where it had missed the way. It still had the courage, at the 12th Congress in 1980, to declare that temporarily it was impossible to raise living standards, but in 1985, the economic policy programme adopted at the 13th Congress, again went too far in a pursuit of forecasts that were illusions, and lip service only was paid to the reform.

These mistakes had to be paid for dearly by the country, by the people and, in terms of political credit, by the HSWP. The conditions prevailing in the country were the subject of bitter debates for over two years, and every step forward had to be fought for before approval by the supreme leadership. The situation was serious and critical, radical changes were needed. The problems were outlined far too cautiously even in the Central Committee resolution of November 1986, and only the decisions on personnel changes made in June 1987 with the appointment of a new Prime Minister brought about the turn which the Central Committee resolution of July 1987 already formulated as an economic rehabilitation programme which, however, could not be implemented as yet.

The significance of the Party Conference of May 1988 lies in this process. Even the foreign observers who did their home work size up the results of the conference basically according to the weight of the reformers in the highest bodies; what they find most important is the shift in the proportion of those whom they hold to be anti-reformers to those whom they regard as reformers. However, this view does not enable them to see and understand what essentially has taken place.

Of course, there was much said about the reform, too, and although no one denied that it was needed, some differences could be noticed also in its interpretation. But this was not where the dividing line could be drawn, this was not what determined which candidates the delegates decided to choose and which names of former members of the Political Committee they struck off the ticket when electing the new Central Committee. Those differences determined neither the position one took up regarding the reform of the system of political institutions and the proposed constitutional amendment nor

anyone's idea of the modernisation of the party's leading role. Hidden behind the discussion of these important matters was a question which occupied mostly the participants of the Conference and public opinion in the country: namely whether the HSWP would be renewed, becoming a party which members could entirely accept as their own, one with which they could identify themselves, one which could regain the confidence of non-party people as well.

Only those who had not witnessed what had taken place at the grass roots and at the meetings of the Budapest and county HSWP committees during the weeks preceding the Party Conference, who had not felt the atmosphere on the boil of the debates about the draft statement submitted to the conference, who had not heard the severe and passionate criticisms addressed to the senior party leadership in the first place—only those could be surprised at the unceremonious tone used at the Party Conference, although it was perhaps a little more moderate than that of the preparatory talks held in narrower and more familiar surroundings. Even though it sounds ambiguous, I would safely say: this action as a whole was a sort of revolt in which party members or grass-roots party organizations reclaimed their rights, and the whole of society demanded more democracy and a better socialism.

What was most emphatically objected to was that party members were given insufficient information, their opinion was disregarded, that members of the HSWP and non-party socialists were not properly drawn into policy-making, were not initiated into the problems, and were not enabled to take an active part in the drafting of resolutions. Virtually unanimous in style, this militant action was a great stride towards the carrying out of the reform, thus also towards the renewal of the system of political institutions. It manifested also that party members' relationship to the leaders of the party had changed, and that members were not only demanding that their rights be recognised, but undertook also the responsibilities devolving on them.

As regards concrete matters, the political, economic and cultural problems, their solution will be the subject of many debates. An important issue which is part of the reform, and of the essence of renewal—particularly in consideration of the deliberations of local conferences—is that a great variety of views of different shades regarding the tendencies to be found in the HSWP and the country could be encountered at the Conference. But what struck the keynote of the entire debating process was very remarkable, something new in the history of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party, something also new even in the international working-class movement.

In other words, the Party Conference of May 1988 has imparted a new quality to relations between the party leadership and the membership, on

the one hand, and between the whole of society and the Communist Party on the other. Exercising their declared democratic rights, party members have effectively taken possession of what is their legitimate due in the Party. This is not just any old stage in the history of the party and the entire movement.

The Party Conference has heard many political and social demands expressed which are of concern not only to party members but to all citizens, to the people as a whole. First among them has been the demand for publicity, for openness and frankness.

According to Attila Pataki, party secretary of a bauxite mine, it is necessary to develop mechanisms in which the role of elected bodies, such as the Central Committee and the Political Committee will unequivocally be providing orientation and decision-making. On the other hand, the duty of the apparatus will be the preparation of decisions, coordination and control, which it will perform not for internal use but for public bodies. This means publicity inside the Party.

Another voice was that of young people: Mrs Fejes née Csilla Jenei, a student of economics, proposed a democratic method of decision-making. "Actively engaging in politics at the grass-roots level is possible only in possession of information," she said. "As long as there are secret party resolutions, it is an illusion to talk of any kind of decision-making mechanism. The decision-making mechanism can be considered democratic if different views confront each other in the limelight of publicity; this is how the decided on line can obtain majority support." This is the desire for rights, expressing the usefulness of minority opinion, thus for one of the principal requirements of genuine democracy. This demand is also an important category of the reforms to be implemented.

Béla Katona, a Budapest District Party Secretary, met with considerable response: "The most striking reason why no opinions were expressed was the lack of a sense of jeopardy. The members of various bodies had no sense of jeopardy because for years none had asked them how they had represented whose interests. Those in charge of this or that body had no sense of jeopardy either because they were convinced that political power and the leading role of the party could be maintained even without debates in which many took part. Finally the leading organs of the party themselves suffered a shock of recognition realising that decisions by a small group implied the danger of mistakes, truly correct decisions demand genuine debate. In its absence power continues, but confidence fast vanishes." The demand for openness was accompanied by its speedy satisfaction. Delays had to be identified for the ending of procrastination.

György Barta, party secretary of the University of Technology, put the same idea in these terms: "This is a forced move we have to make." He harshly criticised the fact that the senior leadership of the party "has started a painful self-examination only under the pressure of the political atmosphere, in response to the demand of party members, reluctantly and without digging deep enough into the root causes. Although what has happened in recent years is not a trifle, yet I cannot escape the thought that history will pass a severe judgement on recent years. It will demand an explanation for the delays and omissions." This outspoken criticism has also followed from the realisation that socialism is capable of reform. This appears also from what he continued to say: "There is a genuine expectation that the National Conference of the party will answer questions which existing socialism has so far been unable to solve."

What has thus been dealt with at the conference of the Hungarian party is not less than a set of common unsolved problems concerning existing socialism, all the socialist countries and outside Europe. This again concerns not only party members. The same view has been expressed by Prime Minister Károly Grósz, who was elected Secretary General of the party by the Conference: "The situation we are in today," he said, "is that all those in our country, who want socialism, all the important political and social forces, and not only party members, are directly interested in the renewal of the party, in its appropriate and modern reformation." He added: "The party has the best experience and opportunities to get all of society moving by renewing itself. The sad examples of the recent past in the socialist world are proof that where the party is paralysed, the whole of society is incapacitated, and this is a fact by which nobody can gain, but everybody can lose. This community of interests guarantees the feasibility of economic rehabilitation."

The way of renewal leads via socialist pluralism. This was emphasised also by Imre Pozsgay, Secretary General of the Patriotic People's Front, whom the new Central Committee elected to be a member of the Political Committee at the end of the conference and who since then, became minister of state of the Government. "The party debates in spring this year and the manifestations of society have made us alive to the fact that not only social discontent but also a sense of responsibility and the readiness to act have grown in the country," he stated and then pointed out that non-party people were also becoming active: "Non-party people and party members have grown conscious in a sort of way, beginning with a negative public consensus making it clear that things must not go on as before." Imre Pozsgay formulated the negative traits in more pointed terms than others did, but he

rose to greater rhetorical heights in speaking of the possibilities of economic rehabilitation: "The despair of witnessing economic losses and moral debasement has led our society not towards self-surrender but towards growing awareness. The people have carried out the turn. This country can now see in process the realisation of Lenin's basic idea that government invoking the people's interests must be replaced with government by the people."

In a crucial situation like the current one, circumspection is needed, and the dangers implied by acting on impulse must be borne in mind. This had been pointed out in his introductory address also by János Kádár, who declined to stand for office as Secretary General of the party and as a member of the Political Committee, and who was elected chairman of the party. "The aim of the comprehensive reform of our political institutions is to strengthen the people's power, the socialist system... The Party Conference should confirm that we want more of socialism, and this means more of democracy. More of democracy implies more of responsibility," he said. Criticism, the desire for renewal, the demand for change having been general features of the National Conference, the three decades of the Kádár era were still fresh in the minds of the delegates as well as in public opinion following the radio and television broadcasts of the deliberations for several hours a day.

This was declared most passionately, in an instructive and fortunate manner, by one of the non-party people invited to attend the Conference, Dezső Keresztury, the poet and writer.* Let me quote from his otherwise critical words: "This is the first time for centuries that Hungary's reputation depends not on defeated struggles for freedom but on reforms embarked on with a right sense of proportion."

Carrying on with the same train of thought and speaking on behalf also of those who had, since 1956, been leaders of the country and the Party, György Aczél said: "These thirty-two years will go down in history as Hungary's largest-scale undertaking. These thirty-two years have been legitimised not only by growing consumption, not only by higher wages, not only by changes in rural life, but also by intellectual fermentation. All this is in a great part due to an historical personage, to a rational fanatic of realities, to a man who is—as he once called himself—'the drudge of good compromises': János Kádár. I say this first of all to the young people who have no personal experience of these thirty-two years, and who did not live to see it all but will construct what we have lived for, and continue to live for, socialism."

This purpose is served by the resolution passed after the conference debates, a statement which sums up, as if in legislation, the rules of the desired

* See his address in full on pp. 19—23 of this issue.

changes: "In the present situation the main task is to strengthen inner party democracy, to develop it as fully as possible... It is the right and duty of the primary agencies and organizations of the party to urge the higher party authorities to discuss, or to subject to debate, the matter which they consider necessary to be discussed... In preparing political decisions, leading bodies should take into consideration the opinions and proposals of voluntary organizations, the agencies of interest representation and public forums. At meetings of party bodies competent to decide they should make known also ideas differing from those proposed, and take a stand on them. Control over implementation should become systematic on all levels of party work. It should extend also over whether practice justifies the policy and the particular resolutions. Information should extend also to the versions that have emerged during the preparation of decisions. Political publicity should extend to party, state and social life, to civil rights and the manner of their exercise, too."

*

I think the passages quoted allow one to conclude that something of real importance happened at this Conference. The intention and determination of renewal was manifest in a variety of ways. One might ask of course whether it was merely the logic of the situation, despair, the fear that a serious crisis might prove fatal which got things moving at the last minute. That is how a respected Austrian daily argued in doubting the readiness for renewal. But who could maintain, according to the logic of this sort of reasoning, that the mistakes themselves create the desire for change? Serious mistakes occur inside and outside socialism, many of them much more serious than those in Hungary, and a demand for reforms, the determination for renewal, are nevertheless absent.

That forces in Hungary fighting for a much more consistent continuation of the reform acted with great determination and self-confidence now speaks for what was achieved in earlier decades, for thirty years' political practice which produced reforms in the spirit of change that adjusts to the facts of the situation.

It is a paradoxical process; Hungarian public opinion is aware of this, but a process that gives rise to hope all the same, bearing in mind the line followed by the Party Conference. More cannot be said right now but that too is something in keeping with the confusion, delays and lack of courage of recent times.

HALF-TRUTHS WILL NOT DO

by

DEZSŐ KERESZTURY

I consider it my duty to address the draft declaration with the brevity defined by the available time. I do so because the country is being swept towards an extraordinarily serious crisis, also because I discern the determined good intention leading to change and renewal, but chiefly since I think it right that, at this Party Conference, those who are not party members should also be called to express their views on certain important questions. I am largely of the same age as the century. On three occasions I have witnessed the collapse of the country and the miraculous way in which Hungarians have managed to reconstruct it every time. Study and service abroad have familiarised me with those forces which have ever restricted our freedom of movement and I became aware that often we did not make good use of even what we had. I have thus experienced much and it is this that has prompted me and given me the right—as the last articulate member of a generation that did not entirely lack merit—to accept my share at least of the responsibility of straight speech.

I can remember indeed what we have lived through in our inhuman century. I am familiar with the bullying of the powers, with the eddies of emotions in the country, and the seismic nature of generational change. This is a reason why it fills me with anxiety that things have turned sour in your party, that 45,000 have resigned their membership. Perhaps they have forgotten those things whose success, in their time, led to universal joy and relief, filling hearts with the hope of better times to come. Under the aegis of a well-conducted policy of alliances the people regained its vitality, a great many dwellings were built—though still too few—cottages in villages with an upper storey and a garage attached. The inhuman mania of a permanent class-war ceased and, for the first time in centuries, Hungary's reputation abroad was based on fairly initiated reforms and not suppressed fights for freedom.

An address to the HSWP Party Conference, 20 May, 1988

János Kádár never neglected the importance of direct contact with the people he led, and I think of that as one of his most important virtues as a leader. He is not satisfied with written reports but travels the country himself and urges his colleagues and subordinates to do likewise. The practice has its pitfalls, of course. It is customary to sweep the yard clean before the exalted visitor is due to arrive and, however attentive he may be, and however searching his questions, it is not certain that he gets a good answer, indeed it is doubtful that he is told the whole truth. Half-truths are often more deceptive than plain lies since what is false is lent the cloak of verity. Such half-truths become all the more dangerous when the diverging material of a wide-ranging debate is boiled down by too many cooks and at a forced rate.

The draft declaration is made unsure by the penumbra of half-truths. Not even half of reality is described if I merely establish that something has gone wrong, and I do not really indicate the road I believe to be the right one, if I am not familiar with the wrong road that led to trouble.

I hold a high opinion of the determined intention of the HSWP to chart the crisis situation and carry out the necessary changes but the gaps in the draft, the disproportions, and the contradictions that make the extraordinary goal uncertain give rise to many anxieties. I am happy to say that the text lacks the usual august ornamentation of party jargon. The sentences are intelligible to the people—to the *hoi polloi*. I am not sure, however, whether the emphatic message will be clear in its details to one and all. I must admit that it is not so to me in its entirety.

What I consider most dangerous is a certain lack of proportion in the evaluation of education. Let me quote: "Standards of education, schooling and special training are increasingly becoming determining factors in socio-economic progress and the success of the reforms." In this essential sentence 'increasingly' is superfluous. Culture, meaningful change, sound progress have never been possible without education. But if those who drafted the document know this, why do they allot so little space to education—barely more than half a page, out of eleven, and that including the state of the schools. Is it perhaps because those are the proportions evident in the Budget as well? I know we are poor, and uncertain of the future. And yet it has become a commonplace that the spectacular advance of some small countries is largely due to the special care they give to education and schooling, to the training of minds.

The general section includes the following: the party "considers it an important duty to obtain the support of professional people, intellectuals* and

* The Hungarian word *értelmiség* means both professional people and intellectuals, depending on the context.

youth." This formulation declares intellectuals and young people to be indifferent at least, if not hostile. Why? The men responsible for the Great Hungarian Age of Reform, who fought honourably to the end in the 1848/9 Revolution, called themselves intellectuals. They included aristocrats and sons of serfs, German burghers, Serb powdermakers, Székely cannon-founder and many others united by the impetus of one great enterprise. It is of them that Kossuth said: "Without intellectuals a nation is a headless giant." The intellectuals are a highly complex group even today and although a host of social scientists discuss their problems—most essential questions within the needed reform—they remain unclarified. The text only increases this confusion because it is badly drafted. Intellectuals deserve more than toleration.

What I read here on the young disquiets me. Why must the support of young people be obtained at all costs if they were already brought up in the schools of existing socialism? And why are there dangers if its "Alliance"*—again according to the text—"is directed by the party"? Putting it straight, the truth is that a large number of young people, the best of them, do not trust the present policy of the Party. And that is bad indeed.

I am still quoting: "When modernising schooling, considerable attention must be given to the General School which lays the foundations of education and to secondary training as well." That too is a half-truth. How and why is the development the General School—one of the best dreams of my life—still timely and important? Now, more than forty years after it was established? Was this type of school perhaps also successfully developed to death, the way the *gimnázium* (academic secondary school) was relegated to the background? And yet the *gimnázium* educated the mainstays of Hungarian culture at home and abroad, as well as its stout commoners. I ask you to restore the standing of the *gimnázium*.

The family as an institution is shaken to its foundations. That increased the educational duties of schools. What I read on that subject here is very superficial. I think it is altogether mistaken to insist on the modernisation of curricula. As if the formal elements, powers of judgement, logical thinking, and ability to see things whole, could be neglected, as well as the educational ideal of good, responsible, courteous behaviour, Széchenyi's cultivated minds. I outright reject the petty notion that does not even amount to a practicalism of the poorest sort: "Let educational institutions provide a general education and trade training of the sort which, in the changed employ-

* KISZ, the Communist Youth League

ment situation, will facilitate obtaining a job and any necessary changes in occupation." All comment is superfluous.

The few paragraphs on culture and art consist of similar half-truths. Let me quote: "In recent years cultural and art life has become more colourful." Intellectual openness started not in recent years but decades ago; lately, if anything, it has deteriorated. These days we should speak of gaudiness rather than colourfulness, and of the manoeuvrings of confidence tricksters. The causes of decline include the aggressivity of fashion, and the cowardice and lack of principle of the critical spirit. For centuries our literature has been the conscience of the nation, the nurse and shaper of the nation's soul. One ought to link with that tradition again, to replace the cockfights.

I shall not go on dissecting such questions but instead draw attention to the almost total absence of two areas which are closely linked with national culture, demography and the national minorities. For whom will we plan culture and education, however cleverly and efficiently, if the people grow fewer and older, if morale is poor and so is the attitude to work, and boorishness and indifference abound? And yet much that is encouraging could be said about precisely these areas. A great many people are getting out of the habit of being drilled and broken in. It could well be that a man must only live long enough and those of his ideals will be revived for which he had once been subject to severe strictures. For instance that "the spirit serves in freedom," or that "there is no serious education without sound preparation and honest debate."

The national minorities are a most important field of our demographic and cultural world. It would only be right and proper to link this issue with the practice of honouring and implementing human rights, even going as far as replacing the former by the latter. This has brought more good to the nation than the isolated worldwide success of this or that invention or piece of literature. Peaceful coexistence with religious denominations is part of this. Much can turn to our favour if we can give true currency to Attila József's oft-mentioned admonition: "the past must be admitted" so we can become its masters. Self-criticism and toleration serve peace at home better than force. This also applies—continuing the above train of thought—to the operation of philanthropic institutions by the denominations, to ensuring freedom of conscience and worship, to more civilised forms of social intercourse, the end of the abuses of petty tyrants and other unpleasant matters. Humane virtue serves both morale at home and our good repute abroad.

You have declared that you wish to be the party of the nation. That is a high aim and it accords with our basic ideals. Europe gave birth to nations as community-integrating structures. We can only be good Hungarians and

good Europeans in conjunction, or bad Hungarians and bad Europeans. The ideal of the nation can be abused in a dreadful way, there is no need for me to remind of the bestialities of the recent past and the present done in the name of nationalism. Being Hungarian is at least as much an undertaking as a question of fate. Leading this nation in the right direction therefore demands the complete acceptance of moral responsibility.

Maintaining national identity and renewing it in an ongoing manner are equally important duties, summed up as faithfulness and faith.

I wish you the tolerance and tenacious perseverance needed to lay the foundations of this humane and useful renewal, and to carry it forward into the future.

FROM OUR NEXT ISSUES

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HUNGARY AND EUROPEAN COOPERATION

by

GYULA HORN

In geographical and historical terms Hungary is in Central Europe and, as regards most recent conditions and orientation, it is part of East Central Europe. In size and population it is among the first fifty states of the United Nations, but with regard to the resources needed to enforce its interests it tends to be one of the smaller countries. Its international relations, the orientation and aims of its foreign policy are basically influenced by the nature of domestic politics and by the fact that, as a sovereign socialist state, it is a member of the Warsaw Pact and of the CMEA.

In its international activity Hungary takes into account that, in the second half of the twentieth century, the interdependence of all countries and nations has emerged as an objective category unprecedented in earlier history. The very existence of nuclear weapons is a world-wide threat to human civilisation. The world economy is not integrated but it is universal, and no country can exempt itself from its influence. The devastation of the natural environment knows no political frontiers, no distinctions according to social systems. The situation of mankind and its prospects alike are aggravated by the unsolved problems of developing countries and the threats of international terrorism.

Consequently, a security policy based exclusively on selfish national considerations of economic development seen in terms of autarky is an anachronism in the world today. In like manner, any attempt to ensure environmental protection inside a given country or region in isolation from the rest of the world is bound to fail from the start.

Given the interdependence of states, the worth of a country's foreign

Based on an address by Gyula Horn, Secretary of State in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, to the Council of Europe, in Strasbourg on May 2nd, 1988.

policy is determined by what it does to further the welfare of its own nation, as well as by its contribution to the solution of the universal problems of mankind.

In its foreign policy Hungary, in concert with its allies, upholds the view that the realities of the nuclear age require all of us to engage in a new kind of international thinking and to adopt new attitudes and forms of action. These boil down to the following.

First: The classic proposition that war is the continuation of politics by different means is no longer valid for relations between countries with differing social systems or to relations between states in general. The preservation of world peace must have absolute priority in foreign policy, all other international pursuits must be subordinated to that.

Second: I am convinced that the way we tackle international military, political, economic and humanitarian problems and their interrelation must be changed. The essence is that all international aspects must be approached from the angle of common and mutual security as well as on the basis of their close connection and interaction.

In the military sphere this means that it is necessary to define what armed force is sufficient to ensure national defence. In addition to political declarations, concrete measures and structural transformation must back up the defensive character of military doctrines. This is of crucial importance when it comes to conventional arms and the men who operate them.

Negotiations on arms limitation and disarmament must renounce the theory and practice of all or nothing and strive to create continuity in disarmament by proceeding step by step. What must govern reciprocal compromises are not ideological or political considerations but the interests of common security. Disarmament cannot take place without genuine inspection. The INF agreement between the Soviet Union and the United States is of great value as a precedent in this respect. In the Hungarian view the system of inspection must go beyond the bilateral sphere and cover all armed forces and military activities. The U.N. could well be the organizer of such a system.

The preservation of peace in Europe in my opinion continues to be of key importance given the current security conditions. Disarmament should be more extensive and complete. The Stockholm agreement of 1986 on confidence-building measures has been an important step towards the proper handling of military questions. The INF agreement has made it possible for the continent to rid itself of come nuclear weapons, including devices having an operational range of up to 500 kilometres and double-purpose delivery vehicles.

Reduction of conventional armament

Hungary holds that the arsenals of conventional armament must be radically reduced. Without such a reduction neither nuclear disarmament nor any considerable lessening of military tensions will be feasible. The Vienna talks between representatives of the Warsaw Pact and NATO are unprecedented in the history of the two alliances. They must end up in an agreement which should, within the framework of a general reduction, guarantee the elimination of asymmetries in the arms build-up. This makes it necessary for both the Warsaw Pact and NATO to take unilateral measures in those spheres where one or the other has superiority in respect of certain types of weapons or military personnel. It would be a great step forward if credible military data were published by both sides and the problem of equivalences were clarified with regard to the area between the Urals and the Atlantic Ocean.

Hungary is one of the few countries which, even after relations between the US and the Soviet Union had deteriorated considerably in the early eighties, consistently worked hard for the continuation of the dialogue between East and West. It maintained high-level contacts with West European states also between the end of 1983 and the spring of 1985. Not even in the hardest times did it let itself be drawn into recriminations of an extreme sort, and the media of the country also used fair terms based on respect for others.

Multilateralism

The scope of activity of small and middle-sized countries was considerably extended by the continued growth of the role of multilateralism in world politics. A new feature of international development, besides the increasing importance of the U.N., is contact between representatives of the Warsaw Pact and NATO, individual socialist states and the European Parliament, the Council of Europe or the North Atlantic Council. All this is indicative of the changed situation and is indispensable to ensure that détente be irreversible, making it possible to join forces with a view to overcoming the divisions on our continent.

Within the framework of the world economy a practice of organizing by regions and groups of states occurs, a process of integration, which is, in the last analysis, a natural consequence of the internationalisation of economic processes and of the scientific and technical revolution. The internationalisation of economic processes is inevitable in our age, and it is bound to manifest itself in the interlinking of countries in other fields as well. But the

universal features of the community of national economies become weaker if regional integrations are unduly isolated from each other, if a policy of confrontation, discrimination and protectionism vis-à-vis outsiders grows stronger.

We have to cooperate in trying to find the means of harmonising national and regional economic interests with requirements that derive from the universality of the world economy. Failing this there can be no way of guaranteeing the economic security of states. In my judgement the second chapter of the Helsinki Final Act contains highly important recommendations whose implementation could secure the development of economic and scientific-technical cooperation among the thirty-five signatory states, enabling Europe to hold its own in world economic competition.

Economic cooperation

The Hungarian People's Republic has for some decades been striving for mutually advantageous cooperation with all countries of Europe. I should underline the term *mutually advantageous* since, in fact, none of our international agreements, economic or other arrangements, aim at unilateral advantages for Hungary. In all spheres of Hungary's external relations, and in all its concrete decisions, the interests of the other party are also allowed for since this is indispensable for cooperation.

The foreign policy of the Hungarian People's Republic has combined universal and national interests over the last twenty years. This has been given expression by efforts made to promote the process of détente needed for the joint solution of the problems of mankind. Hungary is one of those countries which initiated the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe and, following the Helsinki Conference, in 1976, 1979 and 1986, it transmitted to nineteen Western countries packages of suggestions for the implementation of the recommendations contained in the Final Act. It has cancelled the visa obligation for persons travelling to and from a number of states, including several Western countries, and it has built up genuinely good and close relations with Austria. The open character of Hungary's economy is shown by the fact that about 40 per cent of its total foreign trade is transacted with Western Europe.

Our country is systematically engaged in securing on its part the credible publication of economic data, the reciprocity of economic openness, and the right to establish mixed enterprises. It is pressing for the elimination of the factors hindering cooperation in the economic field.

In my opinion the development of all-European cooperation in the protection of the environment is extremely important. Guided by this realisation, Hungary has so far concluded agreements with eight states for a solution in common of environmental problems, and we have been among the first to ratify the EEC convention on the control of air pollution.

Human rights

Hungary argues that the recognition and extension of human rights is the most important criterion of genuine democracy. It must be ensured that such rights can be asserted irrespective of the social systems of states.

In connection with humanitarian problems and human rights the objective basis for cooperation and constructive relationship between nations is given. I consider it fortunate that the ideas and practices of countries with differing social systems are approaching each other in this field as well.

The Hungarian People's Republic is steadily moving towards establishing institutions of advanced democracy and upholding human rights also in external relations. The latest development is a decree on travel abroad, which lays down clearly that travel abroad is a right in Hungary, and this is in harmony also with the provisions of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

Hungary has recently acceded to the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations. From the beginning it has recommended foreign countries to liberalise the issue of visas and to stop insisting on obligatory visas. We have already come to an agreement on this point with a number of West European countries, such as Austria, Sweden, Finland and Malta, limiting at the same time the application of the system of compulsory visas in relations with Greece and the Federal Republic of Germany. Hungarian visa practice is flexible, visas can be obtained within 24 hours at consular offices and in an hour at road frontier posts and airports.

The latest measure taken in the field of information is the press law of 1987, which defines the rights of the media, and obliges state institutions, organisations and economic units to supply information to the press. The reception of foreign broadcasts is unhampered in Hungary. There is no administrative obstacle to satellite TV programmes. The movement of foreign journalists in Hungary is not restricted.

The rights of national minorities

Hungary is particularly sensitive as regards national minorities. This is because Hungarians make up the largest national minority in some countries of Europe. This very circumstance determines our sensitivity. It is true that, in most of them, as regards official policies, there are no problems concerning the Hungarian national minorities, but this is not an automatic guarantee protecting against local nationalism. In this respect it is essential to state that the established national boundaries, the interests involved in the maintenance of the territorial status quo, are European realities. Fundamental guarantees of the settlement of the national minorities question imply the consistent extention of democracy, the enforcing of human rights, and undisturbed communication with the people of the country where members of the national minority are in the majority.

The fate of Hungarians living beyond the frontiers is not merely the domestic business of the country where they happen to live. It is part of bilateral relations and, at the same time, indirectly an international issue. By this I mean first of all that the just political aspirations of national minorities must be advocated in bilateral relations as well as at international forums.

That is why at the Vienna follow-up meeting we urge full and effective equality in connection with the rights of national minorities. What do we mean thereby? A kind of natural assimilation of the national minorities takes place in almost all countries. If for no other reason, at least for the sake of a secure living, national minorities are increasingly assimilated to the dominant nation. In order to provide protection for the equal rights of national minorities and to preserve their languages and cultures they must be granted specific rights. I consider it fortunate, even in spite of the existing problems, that European states are tending to come closer in their views on this question. What is more, the requirements and norms of international life are increasingly respected by countries—though not by every country—in their national minority policies.

Their common cultural heritage is one of the most important links uniting the nations of Europe. We are convinced that the cultural identity of the nations of our continent implies that their intellectual and material production are the common treasure of all countries. The West has formulated an idea with which we completely agree, namely that politics cannot create culture, but culture can make politics. The promotion and expansion of cultural contacts also serves to enhance the common values of mankind and to promote mutual understanding and confidence.

This is also why we considered it an honourable cultural and political mis-

sion that Budapest was commissioned to organise, in the autumn of 1985, the first European Cultural Forum as part of the Helsinki process. The proposals for cultural cooperation submitted by the participants have since been on the agenda. For our part we urge the implementation of these proposals through bilateral and multilateral relations.

In conclusion, I wish to thank the Council of Europe for its activity in the interest of understanding and cooperation between the nations of our continent. We can state with pleasure that possibilities for cooperation exist in many fields, and that in recent months we have already taken part in on a good many concrete actions and other programmes.

In my judgement, the international agreements and conventions concluded under the auspices of the Council of Europe as multilateral legal instruments provide an extremely useful framework for the continued development of all-European cooperation. Competent national institutions carefully examine those conventions which have been ratified by the greater part of European countries. We concentrate our attention particularly on the cultural convention as well as on agreements regulating certain aspects of environmental protection, but we show interest also in the arrangements concerning criminal law. Hungarian accession to these multilateral instruments can considerably widen the possibilities of cooperation with others who live in our common European homeland.

THE WAY TO GO

These are five of the twenty three replies to the question "The way to go now?" put by the journal Mozgó Világ, *in its January 1988 issue. The subject of this round robin is also discussed in our editorial preface.*

In a broad meadow three roads meet.
Left and right lead astray.
Only the middle one goes the right way.

Mihály Vörösmarty: Csongor and Tünde

ISTVÁN BIHARI

THE ROAD AND THE DESTINATION

I picture a business card that lists all of my functions: General Manager of Chinoin Pharmaceutical Works, President of the Board of Directors of Medimpex, Vice-President of the Patriotic People's Front, President of the Federation of Hungarian Scientific Associations, President of the Hungarian Society for the Protection of Industrial Law and so on, with all my numerous party, social and business functions. Indeed, it would be an odd card. We used to say that we Communists are made of special stuff. Then we realized that this banality belonged, along with many other empty, fictitious phrases, to the lumber-room of slapdash writing. Yet it seems that instead of the discarded commonplaces and stereotypes new ones are emerging, and that it is not only our vocabulary that is narrowing down but also our thoughts. While we are changing our way of looking or our path, everything remains as it was because a flood of words washes away deeds. That imaginary card vividly expresses the fact that a multitude of executives in a situation similar to mine are chewing the just-in-time gum at various forums, repeating their own combination of fixed ideas. Now we no longer dare to quote Shakespeare that thought is deadly to the deed because we have succeeded in transforming even that into an empty platitude.

Years ago I was asked to submit a paper to a convention on "Market-oriented technical development." I began my lecture by asking if anything but market-oriented technical development could be imagined. Unfortunately it can in Hungary. True market relations had no influence on development for many years and thus they had no practical role in the formation of the present structure. Today we are expected to carry out alterations in the right direction, setting out from this structure while—partly for conceptional, partly for imposed reasons—the assertion of market relations is wishful thinking rather than reality. Objective systems of measurement do not function in the Hungarian economy, performances can neither be measured nor compared. In itself profitability does not give a picture of the efficiency of an enterprise either, and the redistribution of incomes radically changes a picture that is *ab initio* questionable. I often said in discussions on the reform of the taxation system that the new systems of taxation are more up-to-date and efficient than the present ones but in themselves cannot solve the problems of the economy, that

the most they will achieve is to provide a temporary solution to the problems of the budget. The assertion that taxation reform is the sole possible way of relistically measuring performance cannot be accepted, since the aim of the taxation system was always and invariably to siphoning off and not to measure performances. The necessary (?) postponement of the money, price and wages reforms puts off the transformations that will force radical changes in the economy. As long as the taxation system will be the sole means of forcing—at least for the next three years—it is very questionable whether it will really be "poor" enterprises, which will fall prey to the reform, or in fact potentially good enterprises. It appears that we are endeavouring to chip away at the tip of the iceberg through the taxation reform, although we are fully aware that the tip of the iceberg can only be eliminated along with the whole mass of the iceberg. When we always pick out of a system of complicated relations just one element and attempt to find a panacea by solving just that problem, then we will be liable to relapse again and again into our most serious and most chronic malady, voluntarism.

Again I voice the opinion—and with deep conviction—that the taxation reform must urgently be followed by price and wages reform, otherwise the reform process will grind to a halt and this time the consequences will be incalculable.

I have wasted much breath in recent years on the problems of technical development. This subject has too many facets to permit me to discuss them in full in a reply to a general question. Therefore I shall refer only to a few questions I consider particularly important.

1. The financial resources available for technical development are not in keeping with the numbers of those engaged in technical development. Internationally accepted data indicate that those currently engaged in technical development would require at least three times the currently allocated funds. Conversely, the available funds make possible only the efficient employment of one-third of the present number involved. In addition, it is also clear that research at the national and the company level is being carried on across a range that is too wide in Hungary, and this is dissipating resources that are in any case meagre. The directions of selective development to be realized in the longer run obviously emerge in the technical development phase, which makes talking about selective development an illusion as long as we are not reaching back to the roots in its realization. Concentration and balancing of the resources, well-founded decisions and a consistent pursuit of these are the foundations of efficient technical development. The application of the principle of letting every flower bloom in the field of technical development means that every flower will fade.

2. The twin concept of research and development (R&D) is often used in discussions of technical development. I have often voiced my fixed idea that R&D had become out of balance in Hungary a long time ago, and research had been given a disproportionately large share of both financial and intellectual resources. It should be kept in mind that the task of development is to transfer the achievements of research into production, to work out increases of scale, to shape optimal production parameters, etc. In the sequence of research—development—production, the bottle-neck in Hungary is development, and because of its crucial position it also lowers the efficiency of research and production. There is yet another independent function of development which is generally called the development of technology. Its aim is to continuously develop and modernize existing production technologies, hence its decisive influence on the production costs and the competitiveness of mass-products. It should be pointed out that post-war Japanese industry fought its way to the forefront by raising its development to the highest of standards without a considerable

research potential; the latter it began to build only in the second phase. We should take note that this cannot be done otherwise.

3. A multitude of examples proves that the Hungarian price system, indeed the whole system of regulations, does not assist technical development and recompense the intellectual value and financial input embodied in products. Yet in the case of licences purchased from abroad the so-called import-following price system does acknowledge these inputs. This initiates completely irrational processes in technical development, deepens and widens distorted value judgements relative to domestic and external markets, and aggravates the schizophrenia of enterprises that are trying to adjust to contradictory demands.

On the subject of contradictory demands, it might be worth considering whether the system of socialist work competition—patched up occasionally, but unchanged in essence for decades—can be maintained under the present conditions and the fact that while the priority of the value judgement of the market is receiving an increasingly heavy emphasis, a mechanism for judging values, which year after year decides on the basis of its own special systems of measurement which enterprises are outstanding, still operates without change. We have often seen that in this system of values—which is subjective in spite of all efforts to make it otherwise—a number of enterprises which won laurels over a long period later went bankrupt with a speed almost inconceivable to the public and needed government intervention to save them. The roads of market judgement of values (so far as these exist!) and of the domestic Hungarian system of values do fork at certain points. So the fact that success is no longer built on real achievements may be clouded over for long. The human being, whom we much prefer to describe as the vehicle of live labour or human resources, well, the human being does not understand what is happening around him, whether as a resource he is producing profits or losses to the enterprise, whether he is making a positive or a negative contribution to the ups and downs of the balance of payments or to the balance of the budget, etc. Thus all of our noble intentions are inverted and socialist work competition functions, not as an institution for the promotion of social cohesion, but as one for the acceleration of alienation. "Let us restore the respect due to the full-time job" calls one of our hackneyed slogans. I would say we should give meaning to work before anything else.

The assertion that we are rich in intellectual resources and that by building on these resources we can lead the economy out of the present critical situation is frequently heard nowadays. Thus the key to development would be waiting for the experts. I am inclined to accept this view, although I feel that we are slightly overvaluing our intellectual resources. But the essence of the problem is not this. Creative professional people—including the creative technologists—are biased in respect of their own work, they believe in what they have done and fight to see it realized. For this very reason the realization of technical works requires positive and negative decisions all along the course from the idea to mass-production. Making these decisions is the task of executives.

When all is said and done, the degree to which the potential intellectual resources of a country promote the economic progress of the nation depends on the standard of management, leadership and organization. These are unfortunately the weakest points in Hungary, the points whose radical changes should be implemented as soon as possible. How can one do so? Starting a wide and lengthy discussion on this sphere of problems may well be worth while. In fact all of the contradictions and manipulations of our educational training, our post-graduate training, our cadre selection and cadre replacement systems are to be found here.

The question was which way should we

go? I have tried to roughly outline a few answers. I think the others will do the same, and once all the answers are read, there will be even more hesitation in answering the question.

Would it not be worth putting the question "where do we want to get to?" Let us assume the answer would be to the building of socialism as I professed after 1945 unreservedly and with devout faith, but which I try to profess this day rationally and without hiding doubts. But in that case we must also face some fundamental questions, for example what is socialism, what will lead to socialism, and what is it that would surely lead us in the opposite direction.

I did not choose Vörösmarty's lines as an epigraph to this article by chance. These three lines were the reason why the play "Csongor and Tünde" could not be performed on the stage for years.

The road was more important for us than the destination, and we completely forgot to consider with whom we had to walk along that path. This is why I believe that we must first decide where we wish to go and only meditate on the way once the answer is available.

TAMÁS KOLOSI

WHAT IS IN CRISIS?

You asked: which way should we go? Let me begin my answer with another question: where are we? And I shall tell you straight away: in a crisis. We are in a crisis not simply here, in Hungary, but more generally. We in this country and in the whole of Eastern and Eastern Central Europe. To be more precise, that model of socialism is in crisis, which took shape in the Soviet Union in the late twenties and the early thirties and which the countries liberated by the Red Army mechanically imported in the second half of the forties.

This model of social reproduction has endeavoured to concentrate all of the resources in the hands of a single political centre and wanted to catch up with, or overtake, the capitalist countries in the Western half of the continent by using these resources for industrial development at a forced rate, first of all by developing heavy industry. The model advanced surrounded by an initial euphoria and then by fears caused by gathering clouds. It proceeded to arrange the economy and society, the political institutional system and social values, according to its own inner logic.

This model succeeded in creating a victorious war potential in the forties, it produced growth rates reaching for the skies —and fall-backs recalling hell—in the fifties, but it reached its real peak in the sixties, in the sixties of blessed memory. It is true that once we look past the rosy clouds of nostalgia, we were incomparably poorer than today. But we were happy to take an occasional trip to Czechoslovakia to buy four-colour propelling pencils and nylon stockings (some of the lucky people went to Vienna to buy showerproof jackets), and we felt at the height of freedom getting a chance to read Lukács and Déry. We had a gut knowledge that everything was in bloom, and everything was blooming for us. While the crisis of the West was evident in mass-strikes, crowds of hippies, and demonstrations of students in revolt, it seemed to us that the rationalisation of the model, its completion with the vigorous acceptance of commodity and money relations, and its more liberal realisation

through making peace with the people, and the acceptance of individual freedoms and consumer attitudes, was really opening historical perspectives.

And then came the awakening. The logic of the model pulled the great surges back time and again, the accumulation sources of the model became depleted and the soaring swing of catching up was replaced by plodding. A fundamental structure change began. There is a choice of labels describing the change: postindustrial society, services society, information society. The crux of the matter is that the basic questions of the alternative of capitalism or socialism (including in the latter the welfare state of modern social democracy that came into being as an answer to the Eastern challenge) lost their earlier prominence and value priorities were rearranged in production as well as in political and social life. The traditional socialist model of reproduction was looking for ways of drawing level economically in the terms of industrial capitalism which looked on heavy industry and engineering as the motors, emphasising quantitative growth and the increase of labour—in the physical sense. And the structural change appreciated the value of some things in the world market—interpreted not just as a market of commodities—which were secondary, tertiary or tenth-rate for this model: infrastructure, creative work, services, information-technology, the meeting of personal needs. The problem is, therefore, not only that shuffling along in the race with diminishing energy we are not getting closer to the aim, but that what we want to catch up with is no longer there and not even in the direction where we want to reach it. This is how the race to catch up became a drop to the rear, and this is the real cause of the structural crisis.

Only principal models have been discussed so far, but the differences here in Eastern and Eastern Central Europe are also enormous.

One of the countries paying no attention to the crisis of the model is trying to get away from the necessity of change by applying increased oppression. The other wants to rationalise the model itself and is hoping that modern technology will provide the means of realisation of the myth that society as a whole is a centrally manageable factory. The third is afraid to face the crisis of the model on the basis of past experiences. And there are countries, which—sooner or later, even a number of times—recognised that the radical reform of the model is unavoidable. Hungary is one of these early recognisers. This is evident in the reform processes of the last twenty years.

But then why is the poser which way should we go is a question here, on the banks of the Danube and the Tisza? Did not the change of direction twenty years ago mark out the right course? The answer seems evident. The industrial structure and the infrastructure are on the brink of giving up the ghost, the structural change just does not seem to succeed, foreign indebtedness and the deficit of the budget are growing, a state of nervousness, indeed irritation prevails right through society. These are not really milestones of a sure direction. The answers are surging up: the causes of the Hungarian crisis are:

a) unsystematic carrying out of the reform, the survival of overly strong government intervention, the restriction of the market;

b) the overly consistent forcing through of the reform, the giving up of traditional socialist values, excessive personal consumption, insufficiently decisive government leadership;

c) the oil crisis, armaments, the national curse, the Yalta Agreement, the Trianon peace treaty, the disintegration of the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

Everyone can take his pick. But is it necessary to choose? And do those milestones really indicate a crisis? The international system of conditions is not a question of choice. The reform process really came to a halt a number of times even when we talked most

loudly about the reform. The original model of reproduction has really provided stronger means for the crisis management of fields most stricken by the crisis, even if we all know at what price. And because—and this is the most important element—it is not the Hungarian economy, society and/or politics that are in crisis but those parts of the Hungarian economy, society and politics, which were least affected by the reform, which function most according to the logic of the original model of socialist reproduction, the model, whose real crisis radiates its influence in a wide sphere.

What is really in crisis? First of all the balance of international payments, which is under the strictest government control. Secondly the budget, which still finances sources of losses that came about at the time of the original model and which were repeatedly devalued since then by the world economy. Thirdly the sectors, which appeared to be the engines of progress at the time of extensive development. Fourthly the infrastructure, which in the original model was relegated from the start to the ranks of crisis sectors. Fifthly the system of values we formed at the time of the original model, and which the reform process was only able to shake. Sixthly the political institutional system based on the logic of the original model. Need I go on?

I should rather like to sum up the above. The current Hungarian crisis is the crisis of the original model of socialist reproduction, a Hungarian crisis insofar as the contradictions arise here with a difference in emphasis due to the reform processes of the past twenty to twenty-five years. The reform accumulated, and this brought Hungarian society to a turning point. A pluralistic social structure developed and a more or less monolithic political institutional system survived. An economy functioning on market principles has come about while a centralism miming the market survived. A one-sided system of values biased towards wrong priorities became questionable but other values entitled to equal rank are bobbing up only timidly. The state lost its omnipotence yet it still often shows a longing for it. Nowadays it does so, for instance, by subordinating everything to the domestic and external balance of the budget in the name of the stabilisation programme.

It happened already in the early eighties that we wanted to stabilise the position for three or four years as preparation for a new boom in the late eighties. A few of us wondered even then from where that new boom would come?

Which way will we turn in the end? Towards a new model of the Eastern and Eastern Central European societies. Towards a model in which the pluralistic political institutional system progresses. Towards a system in which the market fluctuations of commodities, capital and labour dominate economic processes and government intervention is limited to their correction. Towards a system, the priorities of which point in the direction of strategic changes in the world market: satisfying personal requirements, the infrastructure, information technology, individual initiative and creative labour. Naturally, a change of that nature will be accompanied by tensions. But tensions arise by themselves, like it, or not. The only question is whether the destructive energies of these tensions will be released or whether they will help progress.

PÉTER SCHMIDT

LET THEM CLASH, LET THEM INTEGRATE

If I had to establish a root cause of the problems of present Hungarian society I would speak about the low degree of integration in the first place. This is accompanied by looking only for the material aspect of interests (petty-bourgeoisification as one might say), their depreciation (e.g. patriotism, thinking in terms of the nation, have burned into mere slogans for the decisive majority), the anarchy of views (everybody has his own individual idea of how to redeem the nation, but people in general are incapable of finding the common denomitator) and so on. I am not alone in thinking so, the same or similar anxieties inform terms that frequently occur in resolutions and declarations such as the "reproduction of national unity", the "need for a consensus", the "restoration or interpretation of the leading role of the party," etc.

Thus the dispute concerns not the diagnosis but the aetiology and appropriate therapy. The basic controversy is the following: there is a single political centre—the HSWP—in Hungary where the issues of social development are decided. Organizationally, therefore, everything possible is done to clip the wings of centrifugal forces, that the common objectives be clearly expressed. How then could such a situation develop?

The problem can also be approached from a different angle. Some people in Western Europe argue this way, and some Hungarians agree in turn that the cause why democratic societies cannot exist in East Europe is the one-party system. A single centre forces its will upon society. We, on the other hand, who live under socialism as it functions in Eastern Europe, consider that our principal problems are that the movement of interests and opinions is insufficient in society or, if you like, there is insufficient political movement but too much schematism in society. Bureaucratic arrangements are the rule. Frequently we expect that it is precisely the party of the working class which is the fruit of historical development that will liven things up and realize this political movement. Our anxieties do not concern the monopoly of the Party but the absence of political movement. But how could it happen that the sole party which enjoys power and legality, which wanted to transform so to speak every social problem into an issue of public concern, has produced a political doldrum that turned into the basic problem?

How was it possible that social production organized on the basis of public ownership, of the ownership of the state, which organizationally gives the greatest guarantees of the assertion of central ideas and national interests and planned management, leads society into a deeper crisis, producing poorer technological progress than in other parts of the world? How was it possible that while, in the course of handling the problems of the world, it sought to solve its problems through strengthening the role of what was public and the limitation of the private, this socialism, which professed the omnipotence of the communal is trying to find a way out of the crisis by strengthening the market and commodity and money relations, thus all things private?

The questions—and one could still go on putting them—are manifold but they have a common core: what is needed to produce a healthier, integrated society that will more clearly underline real interests and differences of view yet avoid all signs of anarchy?

The role of the party is right at the centre of this course, even if many would like to sidestep the issue in this way or that. The issue is also avoided by those who take the leading role of the party as an article of faith arguing that not an iota of that principle must be given up in the interest of defending socialism.

But the issue is sidestepped also by those who recommend the fitting of more and more guarantees of democracy into the mechanism and claim that these would not produce a new social set-up, that the leading role of the Party would not change as a result. In fact a more integrated society assumes the more open presentation, and clash of interests and opinions and the handling of these on the basis of openness. That places the party in a new situation. It is no longer possible to exercise a leading role using the old methods, given a centralization of decision. The party also needs renewal.

The Hungarian experience of recent years provides much evidence for such a conclusion. We have carried out reforms in several fields. These made for more freedom of interests and opinions. But, as long as the party occupying the centre of power does not change its position—and it frequently failed to change it—then this growth only increases the conflicts and fails to bring real solutions. The economic reform led to such experiences and so did the electoral reform. Much the same can be said about the greater freedom of science, literature and the arts. The scope of movement increased, but the party leadership is often dissatisfied with this, for it looks on this as growing opposition, but the beneficiaries are also dissatisfied for they do not think their greater freedom is really useful.

In other words the fundamental problem lies in the very nature of the Party and in its role under the new conditions. That a party, which is in power for a long time, particularly when it is the only party that is legally allowed to function, will slowly cease to be a party is also shown by the Hungarian experience. This happens by necessity because a political position—expressing the interests of social classes and sections of society—makes sense only in comparison with other political positions. If there are no counterpoints expressed by political means, then the positions taken are not political but prompted by other factors, usually they assume the disguise of technocracy. Following the evolution of the one-party system the anti-socialist position existed in a latent, not legalised form in Hungary, and even this latent political position was able to legitimise the leading role of the party of the working class. Today most of the old anti-socialist counterpoints lost their meaning but the counterpoints of the new conditions have no chance of formulation. The party, which professes itself to be part of the political movement of society, thus becomes drained, loses its political movement character, and in reality it nevertheless becomes a strongly defined centre of decisions.

This is also the process in which the strengthening of the governmental character of the party takes place. Political scientists have proven in countless societies living in a multi-party structured system that a party holding the reins of power over a longer period loses sight of all objectives other than those of being the government, loses its close contact with the membership since it considers that its power is made safe through the government. Such processes were described related to the Norwegian Social Democratic Party and were in evidence also about the Social Democratic Party of the Federal Republic of Germany during the years it was in power.

Are not the laws that lie behind the discussions on reducing—or ending—the policy-forming role of the party membership in Hungary or which are raised again and again about the overlapping of the government and that of the party apparatus similar? In my opinion the party is becoming the most important decision-taking centre of society while it has gradually lost its political and movement roles having retained these at the most in the shaping of the ideology and in the implementation of the coordinated policy of the East European socialist countries. But this is not simply an error that was made, that can be rectified; it is the necessary consequence of the political structure. This is the reason why the party and the State can

not be separated today either conceptually or in practice. State office holders who do not understand the role of the party in this system and jealously guard competency are just as right as the party officials who feel that the State devours them, that they are not implementing a policy but that they find themselves on the conveyor belt of government machinery. This is the reason why I am convinced that the basic question of the reform of the political system in Hungary is in the judgement formed of the role of the party and the consequences in practice of that judgement. Without that changes in the strength of interests expressed through politics, as the core of the social problems in Hungary, cannot be imagined.

In the course of seeking for a way out, naturally, countless other problems are also being formulated in Hungary. It is worth considering these in their turn.

1. The view that the State and the party must be separated more clearly is generally held. Party resolutions have also expressed this (e.g. putting an end to overlapping, etc.) for quite a long time. The question is, however, whether this separation is possible within the political structure of a one-party system. In Europe the parties became centres of non-governmental activity, forums of political integration. In every multi-party structure each political centre wants to exert its influence on the State, which exercises central power. This is the division which is one of the major guarantees of the relative independence of the State. (The legal instruments are merely of additional assistance.) The single-party system has just one political centre which alone influences the State. The division of labour becomes simplified here: the party is the sole real centre of decisions, compared to it government machinery can only play an implementing role. Under such circumstances Parliament cannot become an important centre of political integration since that function is filled by the party organization. (This is the reason why some people say that real representation is in the Central Committee of the HSWP, which is true formally, but in reality this cannot be realised.) Nevertheless, under such conditions the government cannot function as a political government either in spite of all kinds of contrary attitudes, the most it can do is to become another political centre opposed to the party, as happened in 1954–55.

Only the notion of a self-limiting party can develop from this endeavour for separation, a party which voluntarily gives up some of its rights in favour of the State, of the government. Such trends do in fact appear in demands that the party should take decisions only on strategic issues and leave their implementation to Parliament, to the government (e.g. in economic policy). But who can say where are the limits should be? It is not possible to establish institutionalised guarantees this way. The only guarantee here is at the most the sober discretion of the leaders, which is no guarantee in politics.

Endeavours to establish the guarantees of self-limitation with the help of the law also exist. Just as it is possible to separate the duties of Parliament from those of the government, the party's functions can also be delimited from those of Parliament, and the same can be done for the party and the governement, etc. In practice that is really feasible, but that would accept as a fact that the party is part of the state organization and has become the centre of decision described above. And yet I indicated the major problem to be the fact that the movement of interests, that is political movement, was weak in Hungary. A structured society needs parties, the assertion of interests, and it is a crime to do away with this, no matter what proof is offered that this process has already taken place.

As far as I am concerned, I am in favour of the continuance of a party that registers interests and functions as a political movement. I do not seek guarantees for this in the separation of party and State—although that is also necessary—but in giving free rein to

interests. In such a mechanism the party naturally also defines, using the instruments of policy making, when it takes up a position in the judgement of social processes and when it does not, but the guarantees of self-limitation are not organizational in this case, but political.

2. Many people see the solution in the growth of internal democracy within the Party. They expect that a party, embracing about one-seventh or one-eighth of the adult population, the politically most active members of society, can deal with general democratic development also by increasing democracy. Seemingly this is true in the mathematical sense. There have even been resolutions passed by the party in this matter. Yet matters had hardly changed in recent years. Can that be blamed entirely on those entrusted with their implementation? I can hardly believe that. In practice we arrived at most at approving the idea of better information. I think it is much closer to the truth that once a society is not democratic since it is incapable of dealing with its problems in confrontation and debate and is incapable of integrating them, then it is not possible to establish a democratic atmosphere in the party either. The internal democracy of the party is very important but it is not possible to establish the democracy of the whole of the regime through that.

3. Many people believe, particularly since the last sitting of Parliament, that Parliament is the institution suitably that can become the forum of shared thinking. They consider that the nomination of two or more candidates introduced in 1985 already made Parliament adequate for that role. The other fact that made it suitable is the way its leading role is defined by the Constitution. Thus no more need be done except asserting the stipulations of the Constitution, ending the anomalies which happened in this respect also in spite of what was laid down in the Constitution. I would deny my calling as a constitutional lawyer if I denied the importance of this. I am also convinced that this integration is an important duty of a Parliament that transmits differences of interests and opinions in society. What troubles me is whether Parliament is suitable for this under present conditions. I think it may only be made suitable. But it can be made suitable only if the whole of the political machinery turns into a forum of expressing, clashing and integrating differences. Until then the outcome can only be incidental, lopsided and subjective. I am well aware that many people dispute this pessimistic attitude. A start must be made somewhere. They say the timid should not walk on ice, greater democracy of public life so far also had its roots in the details and so on. Nevertheless, I approach the problem from the other side. Undoubtedly, considerable results have been achieved in the details and it is also beyond doubt that the recommendations mentioned above would also produce changes. But the results achieved or to be achieved are relative and controversial because much has not changed on the principal fronts of exercising power—particularly in the role of the party—and this is causing internal tension. Measures introduced without the reassessment of the whole of the power machinery cause more tension than the real solutions they produced. This is why I am convinced that a reform idea is needed which, if we want organic development, can only be proclaimed by the party. If the party is not capable of this, then it will find itself on the fringe of life or swept aside by the events. What was discussed above can form an important part of these needed ideas, but it cannot be their essence. As far as I can see the essence is that the whole of the political arrangements must be made suitable for the expression, clashing and integration of differences of interests and opinions. The mechanism of accounting for interests which is being realised today through the organizations and decisions of the party is no longer satisfactory. Counterpoints must be established from existing organizations so that, possibly by the reorganization

of the trades unions, the federations of co-operative and the bodies of interest re-presentation, or even by establishing further organizations, they should be capable of taking up such roles. Only such real counter-points can give real meaning to the much-discussed leading role of the party, only this could give new meaning to the social organizations which have slowly become completely bureaucratised and even the relative independence of the state can only be envisaged in this way. Open discussion of the problems of society can also give true meaning to Parliament and local representative bodies.

The question arises, therefore, whether I wish to have a multicentred political system or in other words, whether I want to see it pluralised. My answer is definitely yes. I hasten to add that there are countless variations of plurality. In no way do I believe in the feasibility of party plurality not because the leading role of the Marxist Party opposes that in principle but because of the incredibly low standard of integration in Hungary. Under such circumstances demanding party political integration, that is the highest degree of integration, is an error, if not a sin, for that may drive society into anarchy.

Right here I come to a full stop because I used up the space that was allotted to me. I believe I put down the principal fencing posts of my worries but not by a long shot that I solved the problems. I believe that is the business of the social sciences. If some social scientists accept public and political functions today, this is because others are reluctant to do so instead of them. This is also one of our inner contradictions.

SÁNDOR SIMÓ

STAYING IN THE SHADOWS

Once upon a time, in times we now think of as peaceful, quality papers used to address a question to a few carefully selected people before the New Year. "What are you expecting of the New Year?", or something to that effect and convention requested a light and witty answer. It did not matter if such answers had scant connection with reality. In the New Year, thank God, no one remembered the answers, things happened according to their own laws. That was quite in order as far as these New Year's questions were concerned.

This time, however, the editor, brooding, asked no less than: which way should we turn? He asked this question as the ship of the nation is foundering after a host of emergency measures and unkept promises, in the twilight of mutual trust. What makes it most difficult to decide which way to turn is lacking our bearings. Indeed, where are we?

I read with terrified interest accounts by noted and occasional economists about the lamentable state of the Hungarian economy, but I more rarely see political analyses of the situation, interpretations of the human and social relations, thoughts offering a system, and programmes based on foundations thus explored. I think I understand their absence. No economic policy could be implemented without wide support, and the conditions for such support do not exist right now. This is the first thing that must be obtained.

The power structure that shapes the centralist-paternalist pattern of the social

structure in Hungary undertakes a huge responsibility. In the forty years of its operation a whole generation started and completed the active phase of its life. Those who followed them in the starting or the finishing phase of their working lives, experienced from first to last that they did not take the decisions influencing the manner and quality of their lives themselves, that they barely had a say in these matters, that these were determined by the marked-out pitch that changed its limits sometimes with drastic speed, sometimes with gentle imperceptibility. Our real responsibility is precisely that we allowed others to make decisions concerning our lives and our common life, instead taking them ourselves.

People weaned from independent thinking, and indifferent to formal disputes lost their hope that society would shape according to their wishes. They do not choose, since alternatives are needed for choice. They do not risk, since the outcome of their enterprise depends far more on forces independent of them, that are unforeseeable, than on their own ability and hard work. They do not assert their rights for they have no faith in the long-asleep and only slowly awakening legal system which could not by a long shot make up for its decades-long backwardness in a slowly awakening legal environment. They consider themselves defenceless, since the present structure of interest representation does not undertake or cannot handle a genuine protection of their interests, thus, whenever they have the opportunity, they do this themselves inefficiently, occasionally employing illicit methods. They have reservations about the information they are given, they do not listen to or read the news but search for what is behind them. They have become used to the idea that that is where there is something, and more often than not their experience does not let them down.

They want publicity, yet they are afraid of it. They know well that sincerity is a blissful state but it can be excessively abused, thus they prefer to stay in the background, where they can undertake things, work, pay, try to make money, where they can expound their opinion, and look for solutions to the conflicts that arise in their everyday life. They choose to live in the shadows.

Talking about whether the poor state of the economy or moral decline is the major problem is much in fashion. It is a vain question since it concerns the consequences of the same thing. The tactical moves of the state leadership alienated from the citizenry are futile. As they say, there are good decisions, only we do not implement them. They have virtually no strategy since that requires continuous support by the public. The citizens (note the terminology: we used to be called working people, comrades in the struggle, now we are citizens, they could simply call us human beings) progressively isolating themselves from communal existence find that the principles declared in their name and the practice regulated in contradiction with these principles offer no patterns of behaviour. Thus a sort of mirror-effect has come into being in the shadows: I see others, I adapt my conduct to them, if they are allowed to do this, then so am I. And thus organizing one's life to the detriment of others becomes a feasible strategy.

Differing private and group interests —sometimes simply the different properties—naturally produce conflicts. In healthy communities differing interests clash and meet face to face to reach rational solution in their majority. Suitable institutions must be available for the realization of this confrontation, institutions capable of expressing major conflicting interests in society, which seek compromise through debate and reach a solution that way. The outcome of numerous conflicts in recent decades shows that Hungarian institutions cannot, often do not even want to, perform their duties as representatives and even if here and there the parties involved in a local conflict come to a reasonable agreement, their agreement is only a recommendation to those higher up who will

either consent to or reject the agreement already reached. Competency is lacking in the parties to these disputes as well as in the institution channeling the dispute. Arguments which have not seen battle, intentions which did not fight for their rights, are placed in the storehouse of our experience without agreement, without solution, as inflammable material.

These days even the interested parties themselves do not want open confrontation in the majority of cases. They prefer to manage their affairs and assert their interests in the shadows. They have more freedom, more opportunity for action in the shadows even for doing things they could not do if they were exposed to the public gaze.

It seems there is no direction in which one can turn without the restoration of the human factor. Without that any programme —any of the ways—can only count on citizens obliged to bear the burden, therefore seeking loop-holes. With such people only the *status quo* can be maintained with all of the disruptive faults that led to the present situation.

A start can be made only with the assurance and exploitation of public support. The work, readiness to sacrifice and agreement of the people are needed. They have to repay the debts, produce the financial cover of the economic and social change and they also have to implement the reform. If their suspended rights, their roughly handled dignity, their responsibility and opportunity to take decisions are not restored, if information and ownership rights are not assured it is likely that they will continue to live in the shadows.

Well, there we are.

If we really want to restore the human factor we must thoroughly revise our mode of thinking particularly on matters of ownership, representation of interests and information.

First of all, however, a clean breast must be made of the past. Instead of half-truths, which after all are still lies, and diplomatic verbiage, a thorough examination must be made of those major tendencies and policy decisions of past decades which led to the present situation. Generalities that apply to everything will not suitably regain public confidence. Nobody is asking for heads to roll but the people's natural sense of justice calls for the exploration and open discussion of wrong decisions and of the mechanism that led to their making.

Today workers withhold performance and enterprises do what they can to hide profits from taxation and then both endeavour to make sure of their rightful profits by resorting to solutions in the shadows. The relationship between government control, employers and employees must be changed in order to persuade the existing powers to undertake the service of a social and economic programme.

Views concerning ownership must also be revised. There are sound reasons for assuming that market-regulated and profit-oriented enterprises operating as the concrete property of concrete collectives instead as state property—considered to be the property of the public—are best suited for furthering progress. Naturally, this is not a matter of declarations. A law is needed which guarantees the status of permanent employees in the broad sense as owners and their protection in that quality. Dealing with the order of operations, business policy and personnel matters of these enterprises must be the exclusive business of the various owners.

Higher management which, in addition to supervision by authority, primarily means facilitating marketing, is the business of the competent ministries. Regulation by the functional organizations—finance, foreign trading and the State Office for Wages and Labour—must be pruned back in a number of steps.

The never-proven illusion that the worker-employer conflict can be neglected in Hungarian society must be abandoned. Safeguarding the interests of workers is necessary and indispensable. That is the

first duty of the trades unions. They must represent the rights of the workforce to work and to earn an income appropriate to their labour and their social needs. The trades unions must elect officials in a direct representative system constructed from the bottom up and not prompted from the top. Workers must have the right to recall officials who fail to represent their interests effectively. The principle that every trades union official is accountable only to his electors must be made effective.

The representative system needs to be renewed to make people feel they have reasons for taking part in political life. It must be realized at last that promptings when the officials of various bodies are elected are forced solutions balancing a lack of interest on the one hand and examples of continuous counter-selection on the other. No system can afford such a poor method in the selection of political executives and their electors, who from time to time entrust their future to a candidate can afford it even less.

"Faith is confidence in the things hoped"—I learnt in my childhood. I think few people these days are sure that our hoped opportunity for managing our future can be achieved. The situation is paradoxical: straightening the way for a democratically structured leadership is the duty of those who are in office. It is like saying that democracy must be established by decree. Well, perhaps it cannot be so established but surely one can help it along the way.

This particularly concerns Parliament. Geography and history explain why Hungary has a one-party system. But even that cannot alter the fact that Parliament must express the common interest according to the interests of many sections of society, groups, occupations and religions. In the future it must be made possible for the trades unions, the representative bodies of trades and professions, associations, churches and others to nominate candidates if a certain number of people endorse such a nomination. The chances of these candidates will have to be supported like the chances of candidates of the Patriotic People's Front. They will have to be given a share of the election fund and a fair chance of appearing at the national and local forums, including access to the media.

Controlling the fairness of elections must be in the hands of the judiciary at every level.

Parliament must be a working body realizing popular representation, carrying out its legislative and government-controlling functions continuously aware that members are responsible to the electors. It decides contested questions by a majority vote, and no other body can make decisions in respect of matters belonging to its authority.

Thorough changes are necessary in the methods as well as in the contents of information in order to enable people to exercise their civic and ownership rights and to take responsible decisions in the private and in the public spheres.

Publicity to encourage activity and decisions is certainly the key of confidence, the most important aspect in reinstating the human factor. It happens time and again that one is forced to collect and read several dozen writings in a dozen papers to obtain the fragments of information necessary for understanding a particular problem. Indeed, when time is short, one may lose interest long before reaching the goal. Surely, this is an instrument designed to take the sting out of published information. Citizens thus half-informed provide ideal material. They argue badly and can therefore be easily persuaded. They also suffer lasting damage since the inaccurate concepts they develop about things slowly create a distorted, illusory image of reality in their mind. Thus their opinions can be neglected with good reason and in the long run.

Being informed is not a gift that is the privilege of some but not of others, but the primary means of taking responsible decisions and shaping our lives. Interpretation of

information poured out in quantities that many people cannot digest does, for sure, manipulate people, if unintentionally, but the real situation is recognizable at the points of intersection of multi-channel information services as well as emerging from the clash of views of news analysts.

It is easy to see the alternatives: manipulated information ladled out in small doses and limited publicity can count on manageable, forbearing people and a situation where the implementation of the necessary social reforms is not imperative. However, those in control of this alternative cannot look on such people as helpers even if they really wanted a change. Sincere and full information and publicity that accepts confrontation and desires a consensus can count on people willing to do their bit in the service of reconciled objectives. They will stick to the reforms even if the leadership and the apparatus are reluctant to implement them.

I think there will be people who agree with me concerning the necessity for changes and the harm their postponment could cause. But I have little hope that the overgrown apparatus, which complicates deteriorated situations and much prefers to handle conflicts in the background, keeping debates within its own limits, will in the future become the standard-bearer of reform. It is even possible that the reversals of reforms that ground to a halt long ago should be sought just there, like the ill fate of the already mentioned and never implemented sound decisions. How could one assume that the people in that apparatus will support a reform knowing that many of its aspects are against their own interests? And even the knowledge that such people are motivated in two ways, that they have a vested interest in the status quo thanks to the position they hold, but as human beings they know that changes are desirable.

Mention was already made that the functioning of a sole organized political power, the HSWP, in Hungary is explained by history and geography. In the absence of power alternatives only the Party can deal with the control of its principles and practice or it could transfer the latter voluntarily to social control. It is inconceivable that a broad social reform—thus a change accepted within the regime—can be implemented without the support of a Party that faces up to its position and renews its methods.

Answers of this sort often end with excuses: "I am not expert of this problem" or "my familiarity does not suffice by a long shot when it comes to giving the right answer." These facts are more than true, yet I make no excuses, I am convinced that I am an expert when it comes to my own life as everybody else is of theirs.

Thus admitting the consternation I felt when I read what I wrote—more or less in one go—up to this point is not an apology. What scared me was that the thoughts on the changes I considered timely are in fact no more than the characteristic wishes of the good old nineteenth century. Indeed the glorious origin of one or the other demands goes back much further than the age of enlightenment.

It is not for me to decide whether such demands are outdated or whether simply the clocks run a bit slow in this part of the world.

MIKLÓS NÉMETH

ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE—SOCIAL VALUES

We should be moving towards a Hungary in whose scale of values socialist humanity goes with honouring knowledge and performance, cultural values with economic rationality, the sovereignty of the individual with social communities built on firm moral pillars.

Answering the question is of utmost urgency, yet it must not be done rashly. Public opinion, however, is often impatient and this is absolutely understandable. A year full of problems and tribulations lies behind us. The mirage and promise of the possibility of some swift progress appeared time and again, exposing political creditability to severe tests.

The period of smooth, quick solutions, free of contradictions, is over. Avoidance of conflicts only appeases the social consensus on the surface; in fact it results in the weakening of that consensus through the slow erosion of its economic and social foundations.

The repeated postponing of coming to grips with painful but fundamentally important matters, for instance the matter of loss-making economic entities, ultimately led to the weakening of the social consensus. In the five years of attempts to stabilize the economy we were unable to undertake, let alone to realize, a renewal, an adjustment to the new conditions that would not only stimulate structural change but also bring it about through the strength of the economic environment. Political realism was time and again weakened by unfounded optimism, illusory evaluation of the situation—and this blunted our reacting ability.

These processes exerted their influence over a long time and had deep roots. Reversing long-term processes that form trends requires much time and effort. This, however, does not alter the necessity for quick and decisive action once the situation is recognized.

The position is different now. Politics do not promise progress in the short term. The government wants to achieve stabilization and at the same time to lay the foundations for progress over the long term.

The June 1987 programme of development is not a complete long-term strategy of adjustment. It is only the basis on which to build an adjustment strategy during the consolidation period.

We started on this course in 1988, but we are also looking for the right answers. We have begun to bring in the programme of development but we are also shaping the adjustment policy. Our work is based on the working proposals of the government, yet we are also seeking for the possibility of consolidation.

We are solving and reproducing contradictions along a rough, untrodden course. We have to set peremptory demands instead of wishing a prosperous new year, adapting Martin Luther's famous declaration to the plural form—"Here we stand—and we can't do other."

Where do we stand? What can we do? What do we have to do?

The rapidly changing world and the everyday practice of socialism have equally produced the question "which way should we go?" In Hungary's broader economic environment, new technical and technological trends have grown strong and made their own path; these in many respects surpass anything in history as regards the speed of change as well as its extent and complexity. The challenge has made clear that the answer cannot be postponed, since the speed and efficiency of the response determines the future of the national economies and the development positions of individual countries. There is

yet another lesson to be learned: a successful answer can be given in the course of progress, from the position of rapid development as well as in a period of crisis when the way forward is being sought. In other words, we must consciously avoid the paralysing effects of the crisis and use the present situation to generate creative energies.

The openness of the Hungarian economy, the great variety of the threads and ties connecting it with the world economy throws clear light on the backwardnesses and imbalance of our economic development. The challenge has affected our socialist course. In order to brighten the future, the whole course of development must be reassessed. Only a reassessment down to the foundations can provide a proper continuation. We cannot fail to realize that quantitative factors, increase in our technical-material base at an unchanged or barely rising pace have played a role in our development that is larger and longer than should be the case.

The economy and society will renew itself in the melting pot of technological renewal: new forms of settlement evolve, the mode of living changes by new qualitative values, learning and training will become natural parts of the course of life of the individual. The economy will transform people: the world built on information and computer technology open dizzy prospects in decision-making and communications.

We cannot progress, in fact we cannot even make the first move without self-motivated people and social communities led by values. Therefore in looking for the origin and roots of our current social and economic problems, I consider the growing vagueness, which has become evident in respect of the scale of values of Hungarian society, as a decisive factor in the delayed and weak answer we gave to the world economic challenge. This vagueness has been evident equally in everyday acts and in important decisions. Traditional values such as initiative, a social-communal sense of responsibility and solidarity, the autonomy of the individual have weakened and became worn out. Knowledge has lost status, cunning has gained it. Artfulness replaced endeavour, isolation replaced the autonomy of the individual, sudden bursts of activity followed by listless resentment dominated rather than dogged initiative. This wearing out and loss of values resulted in the loss of perspective, small-mindedness in the general sense.

We are deeply convinced that there is a socialist answer to the challenge and that we must give it in a resounding manner, unafraid of novelty and bravely discarding lost illusions. The essence of social and economic progress I consider to be preserving socialist values that have stood the test of time, implanting, strengthening and spreading those new values which meet what is demanded by building socialism in this country.

Let me add that I do not envisage this process to be one in which the demands of policy could be implanted in society from outside. Society rejects this kind of transplants as alien. The guiding values to be adopted will be firm pillars for social consensus only if they emerge out of a dialogue between the political leadership and the social communities, if these bodies can sympathize and cooperate with one another. Values are not what the political leadership invents but what society, individual socialization and communal relationships produce.

The task of the political leadership is to support values that society produces and to guarantee the conditions for value creation.

The most important of these from the aspect of the competitive ability and organic vitality of society is, in my opinion, knowledge. I believe our society must respect both morally and financially the utilization of knowledge, performance, which ultimately proves knowledge, and not the possession of mere papers, be they school reports or diplomas. And this social appreciation must reach a level, which can lay lasting foundations for better conditions than we are experiencing now. We must acknowledge that we are living in a world where we have to

run faster and faster in order to hold our present position in the race.

Only a society that lays down hard demands on performance can produce the resources of helping those who, through no fault of their own, cannot meet these demands. It must be emphasized, however, that many aspects of thinking on social policy differ from those that prevail at present in a society insisting on performance. As far as possible we will care for the needy, everybody will have the opportunity to advance, but we will not be able to provide for those who do not wish to perform. We will have to regard this social attitude, the ideal of collectivism in this sense, as one of our values. The spirit of individual and collective enterprise, which is taking root slowly, the will to change and develop will have to be further encouraged based on a sense of responsibility towards the community. The attitude of "glancing upstairs," behaviour built on a paternalistic way of thinking must be ended. The central subsidies have to be ended so as to increase the autonomy of enterprises and to make of movement more general. Besides encouraging efficient, traditional socialist organizations to change towards enterprise, we will also support those who initiate independent ventures, the participants in socialist forms of small-scale enterprise. I am convinced that this is an important step for both the development of a more flexible economic structure and for the laying of the economic foundations of a responsible, democratic public life. However, once we begin to build on this, the further development of the political system to meet the needs of the end of our century and the Hungarian features of socialism is unavoidable.

The assertion of new values and the transformation of the scale of values will be hollow if there is no proper planning, regulation and appropriate political economic orientation. Rebuilding the system of a socialist planned economy in the new spirit, borne on developed market conditions is of primary importance from the aspect of desirable value-orientation. What is contained in national economic planning must be reassessed in that spirit. We must clearly outline, however, what we can predict in an accelerated world economic process. We must modernize the idea of the old omnipotent planned economy. We must limit ourselves to plan activities that we can influence, but we must project these forward more circumspectly, more precisely than before, adjusting them to our potentials and not to our desires.

The government will be able to influence the operation of the economy, the performance of the competitive sector through a developed monetary mechanism. The creation of this has already begun, some of the means are already to hand; we still have to learn how to use them efficiently. Our long-term objective with the reform of the budget is to establish methods for the efficient utilization and social, public control of the concentrated resources.

The crucial question of the political economic orientation is whether it can couple the necessity for sacrifices with the promise of realistic progress. Only this can be the positive element in a general consensus. People cannot make sacrifices simply by raising their hands, "angrily," "in desperation," in a deep sea of protests. They can make them, however, when they see that what they are doing is rational. One condition for this, that nothing else can replace, is the acceptance of the chain of economic connections, which begins with sacrifices made in private consumption and in how people live, but continues with innovation, modernization of the structure, performance-orientation, development, improvement of an international position built on the stabilization of and, ultimately, the rise of general prosperity within the foreseeable future. It is often said that the active generations bear the burden of stabilization and future progress. The considerable fall in the value of real wages this year appears to support this. But how will the fall of real wages in itself become stabilization, let alone future progress? The answer

is surely: in no way. The reduction of the purchasing power of incomes is not an end in itself. The issue is not that the state brings sanctions against its overconsuming citizens. The reduction of incomes produces reduction in consumption and requires changes in the manner of life, but all this will bring results only if the income-producing capacity of Hungarian society increases with the transformation of the product structure and better international adjustment. For this the responsibility of the leadership is essential.

The reduction of incomes cannot affect everybody equally. The collective and individual opportunities and conditions to break out of the squeeze exerted by a reduction in standard of living must be given to the active generations. Through the development of commodity and money relations we want to create an environment for enterprise and cooperative collectives, in which it will be the market that judges primarily their work. The economy will be easier to survey once prices are based on socially justified inputs and income policy will not rearrange the positions gained by efficiency. The performance requirements must be asserted depending on the rank, responsibility and sphere of tasks in the economic organization, and this should also govern incomes. The latter should reflect the quantity and quality of work performed, innovation, business success and the social utility of labour. To this end a social atmosphere will have to be established in which innovation, enterprise and judgement of the market are the basis of success or failure.

In such an atmosphere many people, particularly managers, accept that the fundamental task of economic control is to support those who prove themselves strong in the production of income on the basis of the value judgement of the market and the yardstick of efficiency, and to facilitate the course of their business success. Naturally, this assertion of performance-orientation can succeed only if the majority of the workers feel that they can develop their full potential in successful activities in the innovation chain. This feeling not only lends activity, self-respect and esteem, but also strengthens the feeling of security in creative people. In the target system of performance and innovation, and in the field of asset-mindedness the good manager will increasingly be the one who demands performance, innovation and who is capable of responsibly dealing with ventures and who is strictly consistent.

Modernization of the wages structure cannot be delayed. A wage reform must be worked out, as the result of which the central stipulations, restrictions will give room to economic limits, where wages develop through independent, responsible enterprise decisions. By the renewal of the central wages policy and by the improvement of the inner interest of the enterprises, the value proportions expressed in the wage proportions must be restored, and the appreciation of qualified labour, valuable, income-producing intellectual and manual performances must be strengthened.

Modernisation of the economic structure is a fundamental condition for the strengthening of performance-orientation since performances can be increased only within limits in an unchanged production structure. The question is whether the general shortage of capital, the limited opportunities to purchase up-to-date technologies impede us in modernization. Instead of simply emphasizing the shortage of capital, we must concentrate on the exploration of our existing potentials. There are some areas of the Hungarian economy in which capital is in overabundant supply, either because some earlier investment projects did not prove to be efficient; thus we have to find ways in which to utilize these idle capacities, or because some enterprises lack ideas of profitable developments that could count on market acceptance. We must realize, though, that what we need now is not simply to increase our capacities and the technical development and importation of technologies this involves, but the combination of all of these. The degree of market

appreciation for our economic activity depends on the synthesis of performance, well-managed innovation and flexible adjustment.

Although progress can be attempted without a synthesis of the domestic and external relations of our economic organizations and without increasing the number of their forms, this is unrealizable in practice and doomed to failure. First of all it is necessary to reform the systems of internal interests and relations of the economic organizations. Creating a greater interest over a longer time in raising the efficiency of productive work must be made possible for people, whether they work for an enterprise, a cooperative or a business association. For this to happen opportunities must be given to workers to add to the resources of the economy through their savings—instead of spending them on consumer or luxury products—naturally also in the interest of increasing their fund.

Direct interest in the assets of the organization they are working for, based on rational foundations and coupled with the spirit of enterprise, promotes an active participation in self-government besides prompting more efficient and more disciplined labour. Workers in this position will keep an eye on decisions as owners, and will be ready to demand their implementation.

Alongside the strengthening of employees' entrepreneurial attitude emerges the issue of the entrepreneurial groups within various organizations. The spread of these groups necessarily transforms the management system of the internal organizational units of the enterprises, which function on the basis of subordination and superordination. Instead of management based on instructions, relations based on equal rights and agreements may come, and the entrepreneurial type of enterprise management may also come into being.

One of the important reasons why we have to answer the questions "where can we go" and "which way should we go" is that our development depends to a considerable degree on our participation in the international division of labour. To my mind there is no realistic alternative to our adjusting to this division, which takes into account both the world economic processes and the fundamentals of the Hungarian economy and exploitation of the opportunities offered by the international division of labour offers not only a considerable additional source to the Hungarian economy but also a system of conditions on which development itself and the rise of general wealth depends on the long term.

International relations are indispensable for us not only in the narrow sense of the exchange of commodities. Today it is more important that through these we can take part in the technological and financial processes which weave through the whole world economy. In this light I consider that international relations can be divided into two fundamental types. Some make possible the acquisition of materials, fuels, machinery and equipment needed for the working and development of the economy. In the second we are seeking markets more or less within a similar framework for commodities produced by the Hungarian economy. I attribute even more importance to the fact that through these processes we become integral to the world economy and can have a share in the accessible economic and technical achievements of more advanced countries.

In our external economic relations we endeavour to do what we can to make the CMEA suitable for the adoption of modern forms of cooperation and modern forms of financial settlements beyond the actual exchange of products. We want to see this even if it would be accompanied by a hardening of the socialist market, by the rise of the level of its demands. We have clear interests tied up in the development of the economic integration of socialist countries. Economic cooperation with the developed capitalist countries is already forcing Hungarian enterprises to renew their product structure. The importance of founding joint enterprises goes beyond the capital value that is injected into

the economy in this way. Joint enterprises facilitate the adoption of modern methods of production management and general business management as well as a proprietorial sense which is still in short supply in this country.

To conclude: An answer to the question can be envisaged only within the framework of a strong, comprehensive and decisive reform policy and reform process. I am convinced that we need to think in terms of social processes in order to improve the economy. We will need a favourable social atmosphere and a social and political institutional system that is in keeping with the requirements of our age in order to continue along the course we have chosen and to achieve our economic objectives.

We must see clearly even while maturing our ideas that we have no time to waste. For each year that we delay, we are falling behind another ten.

FROM OUR NEXT ISSUES

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IN DEFENCE OF VILLAGES IN RUMANIA

IN A GOOD CAUSE

by

IVÁN BOLDIZSÁR

Many members start by saying how moved they are but I propose to strike a more poetic note. An ill-tempered old man stands before you. Ill-tempered because, as one grows old, one relives the experiences of one's youth. Reading the resolution protesting against the planned demolition of villages in Rumania which the Foreign Affairs Standing Committee has submitted to the House called to mind that the generation of writers to which I belong had other concerns in the thirties, besides re-discovering Hungary. We also did our best to help improve relations with neighbouring countries. We took a decisive stand, expressed in journalism and literary works, as well as political action, against the revisionism, chauvinism and policy of territorial aggrandissement of the Horthy regime, and I assure you that this was no easy thing. Spiritualising frontiers: that was one of our favourite expressions.

But I do not want to discuss the past, that is not just the past. One reason why I wished to take the floor was because it has been my privilege in recent years to be the first in this House to express all our anxiety about the fate of the Hungarians of Transylvania and the use of their native Hungarian idiom. I quoted Gyula Illyés at the time, as I did on another occasion, in the autumn of 1985, at the European Cultural Forum, part of the Helsinki process, where I made public to the world the anxiety felt by Hungarian writers and readers, that is by all Hungarians, concerning what was happening to the Hungarian national minority in Rumania.

But I have another entitlement, if entitlement be needed, to take the floor of the House on this issue, and this once again refers to the past. In the late summer of 1935 four Hungarian writers had the audacity to travel to

The text of a parliamentary address given on July 1st 1988

Rumania, but not to Transylvania, indeed sailing down the Danube, avoiding Transylvania, straight into what was then known as the the Old Kingdom. Two of us survive, the other is Dezső Keresztury, the Grand Old Man of Hungarian scholarship and literature; the great writer László Németh and Zoltán Szabó, the author of those two splendid sociographies, "The situation at Tard" and "Fancy misery", have died. We went to Rumania to study the rural sociology methodology worked out by Dimitrie Gusti, a sociologist of a truly European reputation, who taught at the University of Bucharest. Professor Gusti and his students proved hospitable indeed. They not only showed us around their Institute but took us on a field trip to Șanț a small Rumanian village in the north-eastern Carpathians. I can still see it with my mind's eye: a narrow line of houses and gardens, stretching for 8 km in a valley, László Németh described it in his "Hungarians in Rumania" which so many criticised at the time. I have not forgotten the beautiful traditional timber houses or the men at work at potters' wheels who so much reminded me of the Hungarian villages in the Székely country, and Székely peasant crafts and their masterpieces. I know that all of us assembled here, and our constituents too, primarily feel concern about the Hungarian villages. But I would feel truly sorry if it were to happen that I read that the bulldozers had wiped that Rumanian village from the face of the earth. Rumanian folk culture also forms an organic part of the universal European cultural heritage.

There is another reason for remembering. When we reported on our journey after our return home, that section of the press which directly and without reservation supported the Horthy regime subjected us to violent attacks. Our very trip went against the grain, they objected to the very idea of holding up a Rumanian scholar as a model, and of wishing to learn from him, but what they objected to most of all was that a young clown like me—I was twenty-three—should, under the heading "The Second Trianon of Transylvania", compose what amounted to a speech for the prosecution against the official Hungarian Party in Transylvania, who were the clones of those in power in Hungary, competing with them in the disdain they felt for, and the hostility they showed, the people.

I have just written a book on the period, that is why I know that I was attacked in precisely ninety-nine articles. The recurrent theme was that I was described as a Rumanian agent. I mention this to make things a little tougher for those in Rumania who may well wish to define this address as chauvinist, nationalist, and anti-Rumanian. But I was no Rumanian agent but the agent of Rumanian–Hungarian friendship, the agent of the brotherhood of the Danube riparian nations, and I continue to be just that. I called on great forerunners and models then—and do so now—like Kossuth, Mihály Károlyi,

Oszkár Jászi, Endre Ady—who wrote "Danube and Olt speak with one voice"—or, mentioning the contemporaries of my youth, Attila József's Danube poem. But then too we cited Rumanians as well, and I do so now again, like Bușiția, Bartók's friend, Tudor Arghezi, Eminescu, the recently deceased Mihai Beniuc and Professor Gusti himself. I have, therefore, always been the agent of a good cause. The parliamentary resolution is also evidence that when it comes to this good cause we agree with the friends of my youth.

This is another reason why I do not understand recent declarations issued from a pretty high place. According to them, the Hungary of today is chauvinist, nationalist and anti-socialist. The accusations of chauvinism and nationalism are not even worthy of a retort. But what of this insinuation of being anti-socialist? That set me thinking. I happen to be a subscriber to the Hungarian-language daily *Előre* published in Bucharest, I looked things up there. Let me note that it is not masochism that prompts me to read *Előre* though some might think so. Whenever there is something in Hungary that I do not like, that makes me indignant, or angry, or furious, I look for the most recent issue of *Előre* available to me. I spend ten minutes browsing through it and feel like exclaiming: All's right with Hungary! This country is heaven on earth! But let me quickly add a little phrase that is vital at this point: by comparison with. By comparison with *Előre* and the way things are in Rumania.

Let me quote *Előre* for June 14th, 1988: "The regional development plan," in other words the destruction of the villages, "is an important condition for the construction of a multilaterally developed socialist society." Further on, and here they are citing the Secretary General of the Rumanian Communist Party, as they do always, and on every occasion, "the measures and programme of regional development and organization must be accepted, since they express the necessity of socialist progress."

At that point I grasped why they speak of opposition to socialism. If this is socialism in their interpretation, we are against it. This is not the kind of socialism that Hungary accepts, indeed in my opinion few other socialist countries or socialist or communist parties accept that interpretation. The international response certainly appears to suggest this.

Speaking of accusations, there is another thing I ought to mention and that is what was said at the meeting of the Council of Rumanian Working People of Hungarian Nationality. Let me quote Illyés once again, two lines from "A Sentence about Tyranny": "Where there is tyranny everyone is a link in the chain." Those too who spoke at that meeting. But where there is no tyranny citizens may freely express their views and if they so wish they may even hold demonstrations on the highway.

Hungarians have, for a very long time, shown considerable self-restraint. Public opinion, the press, the party, the government and Parliament stayed silent even at a time when we knew that the Hungarians of Transylvania were in a difficult situation. We accepted the advice of a Hungarian writer from Transylvania which appeared right at the time: "Let us not fire at a plane which carries our people as hostages," meaning no more by firing than protests, naturally. But while we practised internationalism in the noblest sense of the term—which is ever our policy—the metaphorical taking of hostages continued. The "hostages" find themselves under growing threats. That is why public opinion raised its voice meanwhile, and so did the government, and the HSWP, as well as Parliament, but the essence of this speaking up is not the raking up of grievances but the last sentence of the resolution: Hungary continues to be ready to cooperate on all questions of substance. That is the basic principle of government policy, and public opinion respects this. That is why I think it right that the Prime Minister should plan to visit Rumania, though I do not envy him in this. An attempt must be made in any event, even in the present situation I do not think of it as entirely lacking in prospects. Let me, in this connection, refer to Nicolae Ceaușescu, though that may seem odd. In his address to the Central Committee, after saying, with obvious reference to Hungary: "It would appear there are some who wish to exceed all the evil which has occurred in the history of the world," he went on to say that he and the Rumanian Communist Party "are ready to contribute to the fullest extent to a principled solution of all problems that affect Rumanian–Hungarian relations." That is no more than our own desire as well as being the position of international public opinion. International public opinion—the evidence is accumulating day by day—has recognised that this regional development business not only offends against human rights but also displays an incomprehensible irrationality. Directly or indirectly they are supportive of the justice of our cause.

Let me repeat what a fellow member said in the debate on the budget: in this cause we are sailing with the wind, and that is a rare thing in the history of Hungary.

In old age man leans on his past. The spiritualisation of frontiers still troubles me. I know that even to mention it in the present situation sounds like undiluted utopia. But it was called utopian in the thirties as well and lo and behold it has come true in many places. Hungary too has contributed to the spiritualisation of frontiers by introducing a passport valid for all countries and by opening the gates to visitors from abroad. Even in the present awkward and bitter, and so painful, case I will not give up this utopia.

Many in the House have quoted Széchenyi in this debate. Let me instead quote Lamartine, a great French poet. Utopia is no more than prematurely born reality. That is what he said.

A RESOLUTION BY THE HUNGARIAN PARLIAMENT

The start of the implementation of the major programme of regional development which will extend to the year 2000 was officially announced in the Socialist Republic of Rumania early this March. The aim of the programme is the modernisation of the settlement structure of Rumania, an end to the differences between town and country and an increase of the area available for agricultural use.

The decided on plans imply a reduction of the number of villages to five thousand from the present thirteen thousand.

This programme elicited considerable anxiety and disquiet in the population of Hungary, as well as indignation and protest in international public opinion. The parliaments of many countries, various political parties, associations and public figures raised their voice in protest. Hungary took diplomatic steps and a great number of citizens participated in protests as well.

Parliament shares the justified anxiety of public opinion. The villages of Rumania contain inestimable historical and cultural treasures. They are part of the inalienable spiritual and material heritage of mankind. The destruction of all that is valuable in villages condemned to liquidation in the name of socialist progress would mean an irreplaceable loss not only to the Hungarian, German and other national minorities but to the Rumanian people itself. For the national minorities in Rumania the implementation of the plan would mean the destruction of their material and spiritual cradle, the dispersion of their communities, human tragedies and, in the last restort, forced and accelerated assimilation. The start of the implementation of the plan of regional development would also place additional burdens on Hungaro-Rumanian relations.

Forced changes of domicile which are concomitant to this kind of reorganization and modernisation of the settlement structure, that is the re-

Passed on June 31st 1988

settlement involved, and a policy which places limitations on national minorities in its totality, offend against basic human, national and national minorities rights, as well as being opposed to the spirit of humanism and the idea of socialism. The defence of human rights and the preservation of universal culture is the business of the whole of mankind. Rumania also undertook, at the highest possible level, moral, political and legal obligations to respect these rights by putting its signature to numerous international documents such as the UN Declaration of Civil and Political Rights and the Helsinki Final Act.

The Parliament of the Hungarian People's Republic expresses its hope that the government of the Socialist Republic of Rumania will review its related notions and plans, and refrain from their implementation. In this way they would remove a major obstacle hindering the coming together of the Hungarian and Rumanian nations, and the growth of their friendship, as well as the internationalist collaboration of the two countries. This is the joint aim and interest of our countries. The Hungarian Parliament calls on the Great National Assembly of Rumania to do all it can, in the spirit of respect for human rights, in order to settle these serious problems in a satisfactory manner. Hungary remains ready to cooperate on all questions of substance.

INTERNATIONAL PROTESTS AND COMMENTS

A press review

The Rumanian "bulldozer programme", i.e. "the regional redevelopment plan" to raze eight thousand Rumanian, Hungarian, German, and Serbian villages, has aroused protest in many European countries. Below we offer a selection from the European press up to 15 July, 1988.

The *Bundestag*, the Lower House of the West German parliament, on June 22nd passed a resolution calling on Rumania to respect human rights and the rights of national minorities, and to permit the sending of relief to the needy population. At the same time the *Bundestag* members emphatically demanded that Rumania not implement the "redevelopment programme" which would tear people away from their homes and obliterate their culture. The *Bundestag* argues that it is inadmissible that the culture and living conditions underlying the identity of national minorities should be jeopardized. The Rumanian government must respect the right of German and Hungarian national minorities to foster their cultural traditions and their languages. The *Bundestag* maintained that Rumania, with its policy violating human rights, would obviously become isolated also within the community of the Warsaw Pact

member states. They declared that the government of the Federal Republic, with a view to preventing the continued worsening of conditions in Rumania, would persistently strive for a dialogue with the Ceauşescu government.

At the same time the West German Foreign Minister Genscher sent a personal message to his Soviet counterpart Shevarnadze. He expressed his view that the principal obstacle to the earliest possible conclusion of the Vienna Helsinki follow-up conference was the fact that Rumania at present refused to accept any new agreement on human rights and family contacts, thereby isolating itself from the family of nations in the East and the West.

Similarly related to the "third basket" of the Vienna follow-up conference is a statement reported by the July 1st issue of *Magyar Hírlap* by David Mellor then Minister of State in the British Foreign Office at his press conference in Budapest. He said that what Great Britain expects from Hungary's neighbours in terms of respect for human dimensions is that their behaviour shall be the same as is experienced here (in Hungary). Mellor also told the BBC representative why he had declined an invitation to Rumania. He said that things were not presented there in such a way as they really stood, that he had become aware that he and they spoke entirely different languages, and he saw no reason to engage in a dialogue of the deaf. Mellor pointed out that other nations, and the community of nations as such were losing patience with the situation which Rumania had created.

The July 1st issue of *Magyar Hírlap* also reports that Freda Meissner-Blau, the leader of the Austrian Greens urged her fellow members of Parliament to take a joint stand against the Rumanian policy. In a protest letter to the Rumanian Embassy in Vienna Karel Smolka, an Austrian member of Parliament pointed out that the Rumanian leadership's intention to destroy villages is not an internal affair, since it is not only a cultural disgrace but implies the wrecking of a part of Europe. The Austrian government expressed their concern about the fact that Rumania exerted great pressure on its national minorities with a view to their assimilation to a Rumanian Under-Secretary, Aurel Duma, when he was in Vienna.

The Austrian Freedom Party invited Vice-Chancellor and Foreign Minister Alois Mock to take action most energetically against the Rumanian programme intended to end the ethnic existence of Hungarians and Germans. This is why the Freedom Party holds the view that Austria ought to submit this unprecedented barbarous action—as the party has formulated it—to the United Nations General Assembly.

Equally strong are the repercussions produced by Ceauşescu's order for the Hungarian Consulate-General at Kolozsvár to be closed down, after a mass meeting of a hundred thousand people in Budapest on the 27th June 1988 had expressed solidarity with all those suffering because of the regional development policy in Rumania.

On June 29th the *Tanjug* news agency of Yugoslavia described the closing down of the Hungarian Consulate General as an unprecedented act in relations between fraternal, socialist countries. As reported by the news agency, the leader of Rumanian Communist Party and head of state protested against the Hungarian claim that it was duty of Hungary to show concern for people of Hungarian ethnic origin who live in other countries.

President Ceauşescu emphasised at the same time that the Rumanian Communist Party was ready to make an all-out effort to contribute to principled solutions of problems concerning Rumanian–Hungarian relations.

The Yugoslav media reported that the Rumanian plan for territorial redevelopment applied also to villages inhabited by Serbians in Rumania. *Tanjug* quoted the Hungarian communiqué saying that full responsibility for the violation of the Hungarian–Rumani-

an consular agreement rested with Rumania, but the serious Rumanian step will not alter the principled policy of Budapest which favours friendship between the Hungarian and the Rumanian people, and the strengthening of the function of national minorities as a connecting link, and for the development of bilateral cooperation.

In this connection a Reuter press release of June 30th quotes the Hungarian Prime Minister Károly Grósz who said to journalists in the Budapest Parliament that it is his intention to go to Rumania in order to discuss the problem of national minorities with President Ceaușescu. At the same time, with reference to any retaliation by the Rumanians, a resolution of the Foreign Affairs committee of the Hungarian Parliament stresses that action unprecedented in the practice of socialist countries does serious harm to Hungarian–Rumanian relations, and draws attention to the fact that all this is in flat contradiction to treaties concluded between the two countries, to the norms of European cooperation, as well as to the Helsinki Final Act of 1975 on security, economic cooperation and human rights.

President Ceaușescu, the leader of the Rumanian Communist Party and head of state hinted that he might revise relations with Hungary. He accused the Hungarian government of having supported the demonstration of solidarity in Budapest, and claimed that these were chauvinist, nationalist, anti-Rumanian and anti-socialist acts. Hungary rejected every one of these accusations.

The West German paper *Tagesspiegel* of June 30th described in detail what measures of oppression and forced assimilation the *conducator* had taken and was planning to take against the Hungarian and German minorities. *Berliner Morgenpost* the same day comments that Ceaușescu, the less he is able to improve the catastrophic economic situation of Rumania, the more brutally he increases pressure on the Hungarian and German minorities. Bonn pays for all immigrants from Rumania, while Ceaușescu keeps delaying their departure. But, in the opinion of the paper, the protests by the Hungarians are of help also to the Germans.

The paper of the Italian Communist Party *L'Unità* of June 30th is of the view that Hungary and Rumania have increasingly drifted apart in respect of their idea of socialism. Dealing with the crisis of relations between the two states, the Turin paper of the same day, *La Stampa* emphasises that, in response to Rumanian steps the Hungarians call for soberness and moderation, expressing the view that the matter must be settled by negotiations.

On June 29th the Rumanian *Agerpres* news agency gave the text of Ceaușescu's speech, in which the head of the Rumanian CP and state talked of his exchange of letters with the Central Committee of the HSWP. Ceaușescu made known that what he calls activities directed against socialist Rumania must be stopped, chauvinist and nationalist activities must be brought to an end. Ceaușescu stressed the value of the Rumanian road to socialism and expressed his hope that life will show how far one or the other road has been in harmony with the realities, with the demands for well-being, with the people's desire for freedom. As regards the situation of the national minorities, the leader of the Rumanian CP and head of state declared that the problems of Rumanian citizens—regardless of the ethnic origin of their parents—occupy the CP and the state.

ZDF West German television reported that the Rumanian–Hungarian conflict has for long not been only about the absence of legal rights of the Hungarian minority, but the entire Rumanian régime itself has been placed in the dock, the whole of Rumanian socialism with its total absence of democracy and its incapacity to reform itself.

The *Stuttgarter Nachrichten* in its June 29th issue points out that the West has realised only late that the man once praised to the skies for his independent foreign policy, the autocrat of Bucharest who now un-

scrupulously wants to convert peasants into proletarians by an inhuman plan of resettlement, is in reality the last Stalinist in Europe.

The July 1st issue of the French paper *Libération* relies on the writer István Csurka for the Hungarian point of view. Csurka said that Hungary has no desire to regain possession of Transylvania, but only wishes minority rights to be respected. *Libération* of the same day underlines that the demonstration in Budapest was organized by Hungarian oppositionist organisations. According to *Libération* Rumania in tension has been on the increase since the middle of the 1980s. The Rumanian economy is on the brink of ruin. Rationing and shortages are general. The situation of the Hungarians of Transylvania already causes anxiety to a great many people in Hungary.

The July 3rd issue of *Le Soir* of Brussels states that the relationship between Budapest and Bucharest is stretched to breaking point. Relations between the two socialist countries have never been so bad, being limited to exchanges of letters since 1977. Gorbachev's *glasnost* gives Budapest encouragement to violate the prohibition of criticism addressed against an ally.

According the July 3rd issue of *ABC* of Madrid all recent acts by Ceauşescu are proof that the Rumanian leadership has completely lost its sense of reality. The Spanish paper draws a parallel between the Hungarian reform endeavours and the Rumanian reality that is "tragically differing from the ravings of the press."

The most devastating criticism is in an editorial entitled "Ceauşescu for the doghouse", published by the London daily *The Independent* on June 28th.

"To be a Rumanian at this moment of history is a misfortune. To be a Rumanian of Hungarian ethnic origin is a double catastrophe. Small wonder that the Hungarians themselves are finding it hard to contain their anger at events in Transylvania, the once-Hungarian province of Rumania where the Hungarian minority of at least 1.7 million people is concentrated. That minority is particularly affected by President Nicolae Ceauşescu's plans for bulldozing villages and resettling the dispossessed inhabitants in tower blocks, not always in the same area.

President Ceauşescu seems anxious to transform his country into a giant labour camp and to scatter the Hungarian and German minorities across the land. This is a flagrant violation of minority rights, and of the implicit agreements under which Transylvania was given back to Rumania after the Second World War. These resulted in the creation of an autonomous Magyar region, which President Ceauşescu proceeded to tear apart after he came to power in 1965.

The Rumanian people have good cause to feel bitter towards the Western powers for the opportunistic fashion in which they gave comfort to the Rumanian dictator simply because he was prepared to cock a snook at the Kremlin. At first blush it was a sign of grace that Rumania contributed no forces to the Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968. This maverick decision, which sprang from no tenderness for the Prague Spring, succeeded in diverting attention from the rigidly Stalinist policies which Ceauşescu was implementing at home.

The Americans should have known better than to accord Rumania the trade privileges of the Most Favoured Nation Clause in 1975. Other Western countries meekly followed the American lead. It was bad enough that President Ceauşescu should have been invited to London on a state visit in 1978, and worse that he should have stayed with the Queen at Buckingham Palace. By then he was well established as an East European equivalent of a corrupt and nepotistic African dictator.

Having produced the collapse of Rumania's economy and the effective disintegration of its Communist Party under his one-family rule, President Ceauşescu is proceeding apace with the systematic destruction of most of Rumania's architectural heritage. The creation of the new, grandiose Bucha-

rest was recently described in these pages as 'the most shocking piece of urban redevelopment to be found anywhere in Europe today'. The destruction of Rumania's villages, and with it a whole way of life, is in many ways even more tragic.

Amid the engrossing events further east, the West should not forget the fate of the Rumanian people. There is no question of the Most Favoured Nation Clause being renewed; anticipating an adverse decision, President Ceaușescu renounced it unilaterally earlier this year. Maximum obloquy should be directed at Rumania's representatives at the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe in Vienna, where they have been blocking progress by refusing to budge on human rights issues. In all possible forums, President Ceaușescu must be put in the international doghouse."

Quoting from the interview given by Károly Grósz, secretary-general of the HSWP and chairman of the Council of Ministers, to *Magyar Hírlap*, the daily paper of the Hungarian government the July 2nd, all news agencies lay stress on his statement that "direct dialogue between Hungary and Rumania is a political necessity, a moral obligation". All agencies emphasise that Budapest is seeking no frontier revision, that it considers the established frontiers as a fact of history.

A July 3rd AP bulletin recalls that after the Budapest mass meeting of solidarity Rumania limited anew the travel of its citizens into the Hungarian border zone, supposedly in order to intimidate thereby the Rumanians of Hungarian ethnic origin.

The Soviet mass media deal objectively with the recent events in the relationship of Hungary and Rumania. Soviet readers could obtain knowledge of the exchange of letters between the HSWP and RCP Central Committees, the Budapest demonstration, the stand formulated by the Council of Rumanian Workers of Hungarian Nationality, the meeting of the RCP Central Committee, the closing down of the Hungarian Consulate-General of Kolozsvár, the closure by Rumania of the Rumanian Consulate-General of Debrecen years ago, and the related communiqué of the Hungarian News Agency MTI. Earlier the *Ekho Planety* already reported on the resettlement in Hungary of Transylvanian refugees and, together with *Literaturnaya Gazeta*, wrote also about the "territorial redevelopment" plans.

The commentator of the Belgrade daily *Politika* in the July 1st issue, stated his opinion that in the Hungarian–Rumanian conflict "the two parties must seek a solution with a cool head, without using pressure and threat, by means of negotiations. At the talks both parties must display more understanding and complaisance. Otherwise it is difficult to alter the heritage of the past."

Another Belgrade paper, *NIN* in its July 3rd issue published an interview with Hungary's Minister of State, Imre Pozsgay. In the interview he pointed out: "We can no longer hush up the continuing deterioration of the situation of the Hungarian nationality living in Transylvania for the most part. I stress with bitterness that the measures taken in Rumania which affect the situation of the Hungarian and other nationalities living there are not in harmony with the spirit of the age. We are witnessing forced assimilation, human dignity is outraged, the institutions of a people are taken away. All this has a harmful effect not only on Hungarian–Rumanian relationship but also on the relationship between the Hungarian and the Rumanian population. The plan for the destruction of Transylvanian villages is now a particularly timely, I might as well say, acute and painful issue. Nobody believed this may happen. This would go even beyond the most horrible dreams. I do not want to use too sharp words, but I have to say that if this plan gets implemented, it will be the biggest scandal in the Europe of the 1980s."

The July 3rd *Sunday Times* published a story about refugees from Rumania who assemble in a small church in Budapest, come together at regular intervals in order to pray

for members of their families who have been left behind in Transylvania. One refugee claimed that this is the most explosive nationality conflict in Europe. According to the *Sunday Times* fifteen to twenty thousand refugees have reached Hungary thus far and five thousand have been given permission to settle. Hungary is the first among the Warsaw Pact member states to grant asylum to citizens of another member state. The refugees have not much of a choice. In Rumania a ban has been imposed on the use of the Hungarian language in official business and in Hungarian universities. Hungarian place-names may no longer be used.

The *Sunday Times* states that certain refugees have come on a visit to Hungary in possession of a passport, some clothing and little money, while others have crossed the frontier illegally, with all the attendant dangers, after leaving husband, wife, children and elderly parents, behind. The stories of the refugees outline a dark and brutal picture of Rumania: Ceauşescu has established a personality cult unparalleled in Europe and has now taken the lead in the violation of human rights. Living standards are extremely low, discontent is kept down by truncheons. Rumania has lost its contacts with the outside world, and Hungary or even Mikhail Gorbachev can do precious little to halt the bulldozers ready to level entire villages. The *Sunday Times* mentions that the Rumanian official press depicts every person of Hungarian nationality as a bloodthirsty Count Dracula. The reverse is unfortunately a nightmare that is frightfully realistic for those who have remained in Ceauşescu's house of horrors.

I. K.

ÁGNES NEMES NAGY

THE GARDEN OF EDEN

Translated by Hugh Maxton

I

One fat poppy dawdles
where field meets forest,
just one poppy its lug
droppy as a rabbit's.

It's the country. Fern swaddles
an armlong hedgehog:
he tumbles into the glen
a pot-bellied bruin

printing the sand

with his soft, spiky skin.

Vines dive under undergrowth
till they come on a log
and press their breasts
between leaves of a laurel.

Greenery shakes like water,
breaks in a solid wave
on trembling cliffs and caves—
a glint of bone
visible and then gone, a landscape altered:
sleek, bleak.

Below, the glen expands
and everything appears to melt
lightwards into a cloudbelt;
there a screen of vertical timber
(slivers that blackedge the field)
unmelts, unmoves, and never yields,
thrusting a last light into the clay,
bearing the heat—between
gapped infinity. . .
between those sliver-trees, a sea reflects.

*

Where are you going, frail and weak-boned?
Don't you hear the sky
softly ping above your eye
as glass clangs on silver
or the sky's vault echoes, don't you hear
starlings cheer?

As these swoop, don't you see
the shuddering vinery?
Fruit's thick scent as it spills
from the cluster
under their shrieking bills?
Or feel up there a deeper dark
behind the heavenly lights?
They have just begun to sparkle,
traceable on flowing screens;
pale signs of a farther sky
assume now further signs.

A minor jounce:
earth begins to turn, to bobbin Time,
germinating every thing—
boughs tacky with resinous heat—
sense your leaf-mulch bed seethe
sense you lie on exploded fruit?
How young you are! To endure your passion!

Don't you fear for your eyes?
The year's turning, cover them while you can.

Don't you fear for your gentle lips?
Too sticky for the honey of grapes.

And fear for your shoulder?
Forever tanned in appearance
with its India-copper freckles.
Don't you fear the heavy trance
of an Indian summer will lean and murmur?
And you will fall and stay fallen,
a heap amid a scorching midden,
and then will fall with a fearful shout
into a flailing grove it bound with twines.
And in that torment yet you'll taste the sting
of wild chicory its meth-lamp hissing
near invisible in the huge sun's haze,
and know your flesh blaze of its lightest clinker—

don't you fear for your eyes?

There's the Girl. She doesn't look at you!
Don't you fear for your unsullied mouth?

She's standing up to the knees in grass, green
mirrored on the palimpsest of her skin
like green exterior sunlight dallying
on a white ceiling
while the sun sits in the boughs of trees—
don't you fear for your shoulder?

*

And so, dusk.
A large chilly sky.
The clouds charge in a final muster.
Scattered nightfall equips itself
with a mane silently lashing
with light sharply piercing

with foaming drifts
with titanic gestures
with hounded muteness silent
like ineffable passion.

Languishes. Silence. Two still figures sit
at the hilltop, resting their backs
against the gruff surface
of the tree, one each side of it.

Around about them, several empty
minute volcanoes are floating
from the level plain waist deep in fog.
Lunar foothills mute in moonlight.
Which grows sharper
the night ever deeper.
Stirs the wind betimes.
                                        Above them
answering the breeze
the Tree trembles.

II

Cooling night's vapour drops onto the ground:
an angel saunters in the darkened grounds.
His mantle catching in the clinging wood
sets it to murmur, as the new wind would.
He halts. And thrusts the point
of his mansized staff into the clay;
wrapping all his fingers round the handle
resting his chin upon his hands.

Thus he can see between two bands of green
shadow on shadow on the earthly scene.
And if he pull a single shade away
new shadows in their shades display
new shadows
ready for pulling. A lumbering predator...

But no. Enough
now of this picture and its staff.
Deeply he sighs. The ceaseless torrent
of shadow on shadow is a torment.
If other figurations others furnish,
his eyes beholds the earth to be a fish:
the waters of the universe
break on its arched and shining scales:
steam spouts from its back in gales
and in a liquid hectic furnace
breaks it forth from waters icy, beingless.
'What of the blood', the Angel said,
'that seethes yet, can'st thou hear it, Lord?
For I am alone who lives silent,
I am alone who crosses space
in most dangerous passage
shrouded in darkness from hair to toe
wrapped up in my own frosted wings.
So what do I care? But he who is
divided male and female, in whom blood sings,
clasps the back of fish or pullet,
his breath rattling in his gullet
and bare arm outstretched in terror:
a gummy-eyed infant primate.
It is he whom you fix and focus
on as he fixes on lake and locust.
An why? What's your business for him?
What purpose his divided flesh from spirit,
what purpose has the night sky overhead
spindrifting in the spheres, his eyes;
petals wafer-thin racked on ligaments?
To what end disposable delight?
When bakelite and multi-storey
stagger and rise, cable and zinc...
why should he hang, a rag upon a stick,
hang on a cable, hang on a world of cable?

What's the use of a finger scored for art
that fits the runnel of a bloodied sword?

Why vaulted chambers
beneath the bone?
An infinite living network
squared off by nerves
with horoscopes incised?
What use Being beneath Being,
order of things, species of grass,
slates, stones?
Yes, blind him now, blind let him grow,
or throw him to the hurricane,
he's just electron-detritus!
And thou art mercy—'

Thus spake the Angel.
And by his shoulder
swayed the branch of a young elder
gathering its shy fragrance
in the emptiness of his glowing fist.
Thus spake the Angel, while the round
and handsized moon fell to the ground.
Thus spake he, while between the trees the light
disposed itself as density and height.
There were a million armless, white
and luminous silver palms upturned
and rippling, a million tiny balances—

Thus spake the Angel. Meanwhile through the leaves
many-branching Libra heaved and burned,
oscillating, weighing up the night—

Thus spake, thus was quiet.

THE POETRY OF ÁGNES NEMES NAGY

A TRANSLATOR'S COMMENTARY

by

HUGH MAXTON

Intellectual passion is its essence. As a translator I have regarded this quality, its rhythms and forms, as a priority. The purpose of this commentary is to illustrate some of the resources of Ágnes Nemes Nagy's poetry, some of the characteristics of the language she writes in, and some of the problems confronting the Anglophone translator. In doing so, I will doubtless comment also on her life, the country in which she has always lived, and the manner in which that culture treats questions of literary value and exchange. But the overriding concern has been to render the intellectual passion of an individual poet accessible to the English-speaking world. Consequently, technical and metaphysical problems jostle for attention in this attempt at a translator's commentary.

The business of my translating Ágnes Nemes Nagy began in 1981 when Ferenc Takács of Budapest university brought me to the Hungarian P.E.N. Club in Budapest, to meet its secretary, István Bart, and the editor of the Hungarian P.E.N. Bulletin, Mária Kőrösy. The programme of collaborative translation sponsored by Hungarian P.E.N. brings a professional literary translator into direct cooperation with a practising writer (in English, French, etc.). My knowledge of Hungarian in 1981 was nil, and today it has not greatly increased. I confess to being a poor linguist, and even suggest that there may be advantages for a writer in knowing solely his or her own language. Yet my experience of working on translation from Hungarian (or more strictly, translation into English) has more than convinced me of the extent to which such undertakings can alter one's apprehension of his "own" language. For my part, I am very happy to acknowledge the stimulation and insight provided by my official co-translators in the P.E.N. Club and in

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Corvina Press, and by the wide circle of Hungarian friends with whom I have—at every hour of the day or night—discussed the implications of a word here, an echo there.

The poet was born in Budapest in 1922 into a cultured professional family. Her father, Mihály Nemes Nagy, was a solicitor and defence lawyer, whose own immediate background was Transylvanian. That is to say, he came from that part of the old kingdom of Hungary lost to Rumania under the Treaty of Trianon in 1920. Historically, Transylvania had been crucial in the preservation of Hungarian literary culture, notably through the vernacular Bible and liturgy of Calvinism. Nemes Nagy numbers several Calvinist ministers among her forebears, and though she is not a "believer" in any real sense, the influence of this inheritance, together with the trauma of Hungary's loss of Transylvania, can be discerned in her work. She was educated at the university in Budapest, but the outbreak of the Second World War further intensified the repressive nature of Hungarian society under the regency of Admiral Horthy with disastrous consequences for an entire generation. After the war, Nemes Nagy became active in literary circles, and was closely associated with the journal *Újhold* (1946–1948). This ambitious project, edited by Balázs Lengyel (who had become Nemes Nagy's husband in April 1944), fell foul of the Stalinist authorities and was suppressed. For virtually ten years, she published no poetry but wrote a good deal for children. In 1986, she was awarded the prestigious Kossuth Prize. She lives in an inner-city apartment in Buda, on a street named after the mountain pass (Királyhágó) which links Transylvania to the Hungarian lowlands. The nearby urban scene is reflected in the earliest of her prose-poems "Transformation of a Railway Station." On the heights stands (or squats) the Castle, once the centre of Habsburg domination and now a series of museums and art galleries. Between the Castle district and the modern railway complex lies the Vérmező (literally The Meadow of Blood) where the Hungarian Jacobins were executed in 1795.

The foreign reader (or translator), coming to this poet from an outside world, finds that some features of the language pose further, unexpected problems. There is no gender, for example! In a poem such as "Night Oak" the (English-language) gender of the passer-by has to be specified (and thus limited) in pronouns: the limitation is particularly regrettable in the case of a woman poet into whose work the translator must either introduce an alienating masculine or an even more simplistic and identifying feminine pronoun. What Anglo-American critics would refer to as poetic *persona* can be difficult to convey in translating the poetry of a Hungarian woman. I have sought, without contortion, to minimize the use of such pronouns.

Where the pronoun is necessary and where no other factors suggest a feminine, the conventional "he," "his," etc. have been used.

On the other hand, there are plenitudes which create other kinds of problems. Hungarian rhymes very readily, rhyme is still widely practised, and the Hungarian attitude towards translation recommends fidelity to rhyme-patterns and rhyme-frequency. When I highlighted intellectual passion as the essential quality of Ágnes Nemes Nagy's poetry, I was beginning to acknowledge that I was prepared to sacrifice the absolutes of this attitude to rhyme in translation in the higher cause of conveying the distinctive purity, humility, and strength of her poetry. Line-length in one language cannot be measured as the same length in a very different language, and rhyme in English is both different in kind and quantity from rhyme in Hungarian. In my support, I would cite not only the current Anglophone distaste for elaborate formal rhyme-schemes—one should not be bullied by contemporary habits, and neither should one ignore them—but also the long English tradition of blank verse.

Over and above the conventional or systematic models which may be found in the poetry of the language one translates into, there remains an obligation to translate a poet into an English which is specifically apt to her, which grows through the translator's encounters with her work, and which emerges in the complex commerce of linguistic exchange in the broadest sense, the exploration and refinement of personal idiom, poetic dialogue between writer and writer, and the open discussion of differences in languages, idioms, and preoccupations.

Foreign readers will perhaps be first struck by the landscape of the poems. Trees proliferate, as do ponds and lakes. Hungary, as a geographical area, contains fine woods in its mountainous regions and on the fringe of Balaton, the largest fresh-water lake in continental Europe. But Nemes Nagy does not incorporate natural landscape in the manner of the agrarian school. Indeed, the dominant feature of the landscape—the Great Plain—scarcely impinges on her work at all. Instead one encounters a hot-water geyser, several quarries, birds (rarely particularized as to species), trees, water, the sky, and then *mists*, *fogs*, *vapours* . . . The reader may be initially dismayed by the recurrence of what strikes the English ear as the vocabulary of Keatsian vagueness. But the process of vaporization—a liquid becoming a gas—fits into a larger pattern of Nemes Nagy's imagery. Objects are trenchantly confronted, subjected to a linguistic analysis which rarely excludes the possibility of scientific terminology (physics and geology are particularly favoured). But objects frequently require a placing *between* other objects if they are to be apprehended at all. Indeed, they may have to be

considered, endured as they manifest themselves—more radically—between other states of objects. Trees are objects between the earth and the sky. Quarry walls display bands of stone with—what?—between them. Mist, in this calculus, is not a blurring of vision; it is a state of transformation, with "between" ultimately the most manifest and the most inexpressible element therein.

The underlying geology of Nemes Nagy's imaginative terrain can be said to be unstable—water threatens to burst upwards, mountain-sides crack, even the sky of "The Garden of Eden" has its volcanoes—but this instability is neither a representation of the Hungarian earth nor a metaphor for contemporary Hungarian society. It is better seen as an analogue for the epistemological condition itself; knowledge, whether it is poetic or social, metaphysical or botanical—even if it is all four of these—necessarily follows on, or precedes, the register of its causes and effects. Knowledge is a "between," a transitional state. And in the twentieth century, especially in Central Europe, tragic knowledge.

A significant number of her verse-poems including "The Garden of Eden" refer to the shoulder as a significant part of the body. Little if anything is indicated as to the nature of this significance. The simplest instance of the word appear to be in "The Sleeping Form" where the speaker addresses a person who has been wounded in the shoulder—or, perhaps it is the speaker who is wounded. The most complicated (because least evidently motivated) is in "Lazarus." The two poems share the theme of resurrection or awakening, but the first is spoken before the feasible event, and the second reports on an event which has proved terrible as well as miraculous. Resurrection, or awakening, lies somewhere between. In conversation, Ágnes Nemes Nagy has remarked that "To the Sleeping Form" is an address to the muse. It is not too much to read both poems as variants on this classical theme, the distance between them being the measure of poetry's marginal position in the economies of twentieth-century experience.

The wounded shoulder, the not-as-yet awakened figure, the agonized resurrected Lazarus lead us towards a further theme, that of survival. I cannot claim to have done justice to that poignantly tragic poem "Telegraph Pole," but in striving to translate it I believe I have gained an insight into this central theme. The title should strictly be rendered "On a Telegraph Pole," with the eighteenth-century palaver chiming discordantly with the banality of the object addressed. (The point is further emphasized in the sequel or coda, which derives its title from the habit of anthology printers of listing a further poem on the same theme simply "On the Same.") Crudely paraphrased, the speaker of the poem observes the felling of a telegraph pole—in

the course of construction work, perhaps—and meditates on its earlier felling, when it was a living tree. Only with this "second death" comes an apprehension of the tree's "survival" as a telegraph pole. The reality of one's survival may be less than the reality of another's death, and death may be found to possess a hitherto unnoticed horror if it accommodates survival in this parodic form. Bearing in mind Ágnes Nemes Nagy's interest in Egyptological matters, I asked her if this poem referred in any way to the concept of "the second death" discussed in the Egyptian *Book of the Dead*. She denied any connection with and indeed any knowledge of this notion. Some five minutes later, she admitted that she had read part of *The Book of the Dead*—in German. Whatever one makes of this authorial commentary on a question of allusion, survival and its identification with, or more exactly, its affinity to a diminished reality is a powerful, because scarcely admitted, theme. The figure in "To the Sleeping Form" contains the possible, hence necessary but not exclusive, interpretation of his being already dead. That poem is, as we have already remarked, seen by its author as an address to the muse. Ágnes Nemes Nagy's poetry may be read as a sustained poetic interrogation of poetry, its survival in the twentieth century, the tragic insight it provides into all that has not survived, the "what is not." She is one with Johannes Bobrowski and Paul Celan in the pursuit of this large theme.

A few of my Hungarian friends have expressed surprise at the extent to which we have been able to demonstrate allusion in this body of poetry, and in doing so they have suggested that Nemes Nagy may be a writer whose work is more susceptible to Anglo-American modes of critical inquiry than some of her native readers might suspect. The poem which I have entitled "Whether to waken . . . " shares its original title *(Consciousness—Eszmélet)* with a rather different poem by the Marxist/surrealist/Freudian Attila József. József ultimately committed suicide by throwing himself under a train, and the last stanza of his poem begins with the line "I live by the railway tracks." Nemes Nagy's poem concludes with a line which contains the most elemental (or vestigial) allusions to the opening line of Dante's *Divine Comedy*, available to her not only in the original but also in Babits's fine Magyar version (1940). Nemes Nagy's poem thus concludes (like József's) with an allusion to her spiritual destiny, a precariously balanced one in that it takes us to the Inferno but also to the beginning of a poetic journey towards redemption.

The long sequence "Akhenaton" *(Ekhenáton)* is, of course, flamboyantly allusive in its title. But unlike James Joyce in *Ulysses* and Thomas Mann in *Joseph und seine Brüder*, Nemes Nagy is concerned with a figure only brought to the attention of western civilization in the twentieth century. What is

known of the Egyptian reformer-king (reigned 1379–1362 B.C.) comes to us largely from Sir Flinders Petrie's excavations of Tell El Amarna in the 1890s. Moreover, for westerners ancient Egypt still conjures up associations of the grotesque and the unrelated, in contrast to the venerable role of Greeks and Jews as founders of European culture. Thus, the allusion in the title of Nemes Nagy's sequence is to a "hero" at once antique and of recent discovery, admirable perhaps but remote to the point of being inaccessible. Mann's series of novels revolving round the biblical Joseph in Egypt is one point of an allusive background against which the poem-sequence should be read. The German novelist had been deliberate in choosing a Jewish hero through whom he would demonstrate a deeper, more humane engagement with myth than that employed by the Nazi regime in Germany. Nemes Nagy indeed chooses the pharaoh who impinges on Joseph's fate in the course of Mann's tetralogy—he was, amongst other things, the patron of a short-lived realist art—but her Akhenaton inaugurates a poetic sequence in which religious declaration, erotic self-communing, picturesque evocation of "the east," and the unmistakable presence of modern artillery and air-raid all intertwine. This last point is best dealt with promptly—the tanks of "The Night of Akhenaton" are, by the author's own insistence, German. The Second World War had been "the most important event" of her life. She was twenty-three when the war ended. Her close friend, Borbála Porgesz, being Jewish, had been transported to the camp at Auschwitz where she perished, a common experience of course, but mentally searing in the extreme for the survivor. Nemes Nagy took an active part in the resistance to fascism, mainly as a courier. By her own admission, her "Aryan" blonde good looks had enabled her to move through the German-occupied city with a degree of immunity. The Akhenaton whom she created years after the war, a pharaoh superseded instantly by gunfire, is an ironic figure.

"From the Notebook of Akhenaton" adopts a tone of hieratic declaration, shot through with simple need and bureaucratic phraseology. The speaker wants a heaven literally made of concrete; echoing some of Saint Peter's words to Christ at the Transfiguration—"It is good..."—he proceeds to instruct his god to perform the appointed functions. Allusive precision can be traced even more exactly in the fourth line, where the god (or godling) is announced as soon "to sit on high, and seeing he shall see." The biblical overtone here is a perfect echo, perfect but ironically incomplete. In the original Magyar, the last four words of my line are contained in the two words *látva lásson*. Isaiah 6 : 9, and Matthew 13 : 14, use the same words (with differing grammatical suffixes), and in the King James version the New Testament text (citing the Old) reads:

> And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive.

Nemes Nagy's Akhenaton thus unconsciously announces himself to be, not the Egyptian prophet of ethical monotheism but the object of a later Jewish prophet's condemnation.

While the religious context of the phrase will call for further comment in relation to other poems, *látva lásson* . . . "seeing, he shall see" has further literary implications. Endre Ady's collection of 1909, *Szeretném, ha szeretnének*—the title might be translated as *[I] Love to Be Loved*—is prefaced by a sixteen-line poem, incorporating the repeated line "*Hogy látva lássanak.*" Grammatically, the construction is distinctive, and may be traced even in the earliest written records of the Magyar language. In Ady, the phrase is an earnestly desired poetic communion of action and effect, with the possible echo of ancient precedent standing far behind the modernist poet and his profound sense of Hungary's near-extinction. In Nemes Nagy the phrase, bedecked in biblical tonalities and yet lacking the critical context in which Isaiah (and later Christ) used it, signals a presumption, a metaphysical inadequacy. Her attitude to poetry seems to accommodate both a related scepticism as to the human efficacy of the poetic act in the face of death and unprecedented suffering, *and* a sustained, even impassioned commitment to poetry as the only means of understanding that inefficacy and so of countering it also. Allusion is a fitting vehicle for such an aesthetic, with its ironic undercutting of the immediate text which is nonetheless enhanced by the vestiges of a previous humane culture alluded to.

In treating of a writer who uses titles such as "The Garden of Eden," "Winter Angel," and "Lazarus" we have to raise the issue of Nemes Nagy as religious poet. Bluntly speaking, I would categorize her as *not* being a religious poet, if the only alternative were to confirm her in that regard. However, the religious dimension cannot be reduced to an either/or, and this may be part of the meaning of "Summum Bonum" that curiously undercut and cynical endorsement of eternal bliss in the Akhenaton sequence. There is a traditional Christian symbolism traceable here and there in the poetry, notably that of the bird as emblem of the Holy Spirit. In "The Garden of Eden" the bird is accompanied by the fish (in various forms) as an emblem of the eucharist in primitive Christian iconography. Noting these details, we should note also that Nemes Nagy studied art history and possesses a formidable scholarly range of reference. Prior to reaching any conclusion as to Nemes Nagy's religious alignment, it is worth observing how the religious theme in her work is frequently linked to the incorporation of an

already established and already outmoded Christian imagery. The imagery as imagery may be her more urgent concern, and in this she would be only faithful to that central preoccupation with "betweenness." Aesthetically contemplated, this imagery stands between religious belief and art appreciation. The Akhenaton sequence concludes with the precise credal formulation "I believe in the resurrection of the body." It is preceded, however, by a deliberately inaccurate reference to the table of chemical elements. The juxtaposition might at first sight encourage the view that the poem ends with a declaration of faith—having opened with deeply ironic scriptural half-quotations. The line occurs in the last of the italicized passages of the poems, and these have been described by the poet as "more lyrical" than the body of the sequence. These passages are also distinguished by their use of the first person singular which does not obtrude into the rest of "Akhenaton." Ultimately, however, one has to acknowledge that the credal quotation is just that, an allusion whose repetition here neither conveys nor denies conviction.

"The Garden of Eden" is the longest single poem in the canon, apart from three "narratives" *(Három történet)*. Its first part poses problems for the translator in its nervous use of the "don't you . . . ?" formulation which looks odd in English poetry. Nevertheless, this evidence of nervous query develops thematically in the poem. Figures akin to the Boy and Girl posited at the beginning of "Lake Balaton" are replicated in place of any traditional Adam and Eve. The landscape changes from undefined idyll into processes of remote but inexorable movement—"pale signs of a farther sky" generating yet further signs. Then, beginning with a reference to the ever-indicative shoulder, the poem moves into a more explicit treatment of fallen humanity. Risk of sun-burn is followed by a vision of the figure as "a heap amid a scorching midden."

Here the you of the poem will taste not the apple which ushers in knowledge, but the sting of death emblemized in wild chicory, "its meth-lamp hissing." Part One concludes with the Tree (duly capitalized), which may be the tree of life or of knowledge (as in the original Eden) but may also prefigure the tree upon which Christ will be crucified.

Part Two is largely given over to the Angel's speech, the Angel being in type between God and humanity. Christian imagery is in attendance, notably in the form of a briefly sighted wild fowl in the second verse-paragraph of this section. However, in a manner reminiscent of Yeats's "Byzantium," imagery begets imagery and the traditional cosmology—the earth as a great beast or fish—gives rise to a being no more stable than the measured, intemperate voice of the Angel. This new speaker is afflicted

with a radical split between visionary power and knowing cynicism, with the weight of detail suggesting that the latter is a more reliable guide to the future. Anticipating man's career, the Angel interrogates the Lord as to his purpose in creating such a "gummy-eyed infant primate" and in doing so outlines a doctrine of redemption which stems from man's own radical divisions. Though the imagery and rhythm are unmistakably Christian, the doctrine (in so far as it can be isolated) is strictly anthropomorphic, and the religious theme is stateable only through the Angel's impatient questioning of an otherwise untraceable God. "The Garden of Eden" concludes in one of those mysterious and perhaps absurd landscapes in which the moon (or later, in the first lyrical passage of "The Night of Akhenaton," the sun) is iconographically represented as extending beams like arms towards supplicant humanity. In each poem, grammar is left suggestively incomplete. Behind the poetry, there is another imagery which cannot be admitted *in toto*, allusion to which may indeed prompt a less than wholly absolute response.

Nemes Nagy, crucially placed in the immediate post-war period, apprehends the relation between past and present, or past and future, as essentially fractured. Her concern with survival, and its ironies, is one aspect of this larger concern with time. But unlike Mann, for whom the self-conscious narration of renewed myth is at once a fully adequate literary and political response to the barbarism of the Nazis, Nemes Nagy knows little of reconciliation. Like "between'" divisive words such as "when," "then" and "now" proliferate. The magnificent poem "Revenant" gives an account of such a categorical transition between then and now, while remaining silent on transition itself, on the inexpressible "between." Her treatment of the religious theme suggests that its efficacy can be associated with a "then" in the past, perhaps (somewhat sardonically) with a "when" in the future, but not with a "now." "The Garden of Eden" opens with an evocation of nature so easily assimilated as to be clearly at risk of immediate redundancy; its second part is an angelic pronouncement which rushes, without manifest reverence, towards the Incarnation of God and Redemption of mankind. Such a religious sensibility strikingly lacks a potential present, confronting instead spiritual redundancy and infinitely postponed renewal.

Two poems in particular extend this artistic engagement with the inexpressible between, "Hot Water Spring" and "The Sleeping Horsemen." The second is dedicated to Lajos Kassák (1887–1967), the Constructivist painter/poet of working-class and radical background. Through a snow-clad hill are discerned the forms of sleeping Beduin horsemen, through these slumbering shapes there rise other horses in whom the elements have some-

how merged: this is the success of a picture implied through the dedication, the success of another's artistic endeavour. (The imagined picture, however, would seem very different from those painted by Kassák.) In "Hot Water Spring" I find the complementary investigation of vanquished endeavour, the upward movement of water through an element abrasively of another kind, a movement which does not break forth with a supreme leap. This is the poem which turns on the need to declare its own limitation, to chart successfully a certain kind of failure. Failure, in this poetic context, can only be defined by means of a vision of success. The analogy with survival and extinction, the relevance of Lazarian resurrection, is clear. This abrogation, or discounting of the Self can be traced in Nemes Nagy's poetry as early as "Diary."

A dialogue of Self and Art, less ostentatious than Yeats's similar exercises, proceeds beneath much of Nemes Nagy's work. One crucial area of dispute is poetic form itself, and in recent years she has begun to experiment with the prose poem. A conversational tone, allied to rapid shifts of topic—too rapid, perhaps, in "The Earth Remembers"—signals a release from the consciously and conscientiously maintained conventions of the verse poems. Yet these prose poems are still loyal to a fugitive classicism. The dusty plants of "Transformation of a Railway Station" are likened, at two removes, to the Crucifixion, a theme just discernible also in the similar constructivist vocabulary of "The Garden of Eden" (pt. II, 11. 47–52). Both may owe something to the manifestos of Kassák's journal *Dokumentum* rewriting in ironically sardonic terms the anguish of Kassák's defeated *avant-gardisme*.

"Terraced Landscape" officially derives from a visit the poet made to the United States of America in 1979, Californian desert and Californian oil-wells providing inspiration for the nodding shapes of this vacant, yet curiously instinct, sandy platform; the re-appearance of the pharaoh of Tell El Amarna is not wholly surprising, though the flock of hats with which the piece all but ends is less predictable. Dante, of course, looms over the entire structure, his purgatorial circles becoming planes of less determinate shape. The hats, Nemes Nagy said in conversation, are *souls;* adding in patient explanation that what empty hats and souls (as such) have in common is absence of body. The body has been (re)moved. This elaborate and even comic substitution and exchange proceeds in its imaginary landscape of indeterminate contours, to reach resolution in some apprehension of a still remote, still more elevated, bell music. Whether circular and ascending, or merely extended in perspective, the intermittent journey gradually diminishes. The Dantean analogy is enhanced by a less accessible resemblance between this landscape and Thomas Mann's brief description of the Italian

hill-town of Palestrina in his *Doctor Faustus*, where in the twenty-fourth chapter he writes of the terraced village, its donkeys and steep winding paths. Nor does Mann neglect to tell us that Dante himself alludes to the place in the *Inferno*.

I would characterize this recent work in the prose poem as artistic self-effacement, in both senses—art itself is apparently effaced by a frequently voluble *persona*, and Self is effaced by the real art of this. Nothing could be further from evasion or laxity that this effacement, this attitude towards "the one face you have" (cf. "Diary," 6), for it points to a means whereby the dialogue between Self and Art might perhaps be harmoniously concluded. Nemes Nagy also remains a central figure in Hungarian writing through such persistent loyalty to responsibilities inherited from her predecessors and heightened by the undifferentiated terrorism of the fascist and post-fascist period. In terms of European literary history, Thomas Mann provides the best measure for Anglophone readers, Rilke also perhaps for German readers. In more local terms of literary technique, her prose poems bring her into contact with such figures as Péter Esterházy whose collected fictions are called, simply, *Introduction to Literature*. She is thus both classicist and *avant-gardist* for her informed readers, a latter-day modernist of great sensibility and intelligence.

FROM OUR NEXT ISSUES

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THE WHIMSIES OF ONIRISM

Short story

by

LAJOS GRENDEL

To the memory of René Magritte

In a certain sense I am but a reflection of the man who allowed himself to be lured into a small basement gallery in the city centre to see the elderly onirist artist's exhibition. I was stopping over in Budapest on my way to see relatives in Miskolc in the north and was to have taken a train in the afternoon. I was sucked into the tumultuous morning bustle of the city as into a vortex, and had walked past the Basilica when I stumbled into an old Budapest friend of mine, Zoltán Markó, who abducted me to reminisce over faded memories of our old days in a coffee bar. We had not seen each other for all of three years. Enough time had barely gone by for us to warm to the theme when he started to press me to come and see the master's exhibition, his first show in thirty years, which was a bare five minutes' walk from there. By then I ought to have been dashing off to catch the Miskolc express. My indecision was compounded by having only a very vague notion of what onirism was about, and the elderly artist's name meant no more to me than most commonplace names to be found in the diary features of the dailies. That was the first time I became convinced that I could only be a reflection of the man whom my friend Zoli Markó pushed and bundled down the steps to the basement, and that the slave is relieved of any responsibility by his dependency.

"Well, what do you say to that?" he shouted full of enthusiasm immediately indicating by a majestic sweep of the hand what he expected me to say.

I simply nodded, for although the paintings in the manner of Magritte were to my liking, I didn't fancy them as much as my friend did, who was given to picking quarrels and once wine had gone to his head, would brook no contradiction. I allowed him to put his arm through mine and lead me on; stopping at each of the canvases I had a word of appreciation and even flipped through the catalogue. The majority of the paintings exhibited were

from the late 40s, the rest came in from the 60s and the more recent past. The style of the later works scarcely differed from the early ones, the master merely rang the changes on his well-tried ideas and manners. It chagrined me greatly to see that neither the passage of time nor changes in styles and fashions had left any trace on his work. It wasn't so much this bizarre quality of theirs, however, as their timelessness, *atemporality*, that put me off. Each picture was different in its own way, yet each appeared to copy the one before it. This dispiriting and wearisome monotony made me restless. I could not help thinking that man was doomed to live his entire life enclosed in the same body, exposed to his own flesh and skin; and that wasn't a comforting thought at all. In order to overcome these gloomy sentiments of mine I was moved to say something nevertheless.

"René Magritte is one of my favourite painters."

While I said this I was poring over one of the paintings. In the middle of the picture there was to be seen a double-hinged gate opened wide with a naked woman, her face utterly dead, stepping out into a wooded landscape ablaze with vernal colours. Behind the gate the sky was ink-blue with the shining sickle of a new moon atop an obelisk.

"Congratulations," I heard somebody behind me say in a hoarse voice and felt the palm of a hand descend on my shoulder.

The master was standing behind me.

"Nobody who likes Magritte can be a bad man," he jested and winked.

I bowed and said my name, which the maestro repeated twice, rolling the "r" in it.

"You like her?" he then asked shooting a glance at the naked woman and without waiting for an answer said:

"You can make Bella's acquaintance tomorrow. Come and see me at four in the afternoon."

In my short existence, which can be extinguished at any moment without the world batting an eyelid and without the girls' hearts missing a beat, I have often been faced with a choice that afterwards proved to be decisive. In my younger days I enjoyed assaying my freedom and despised those fussy fault-finders who considered me irresponsible for that. I explained to the overcautious that freedom was something you must meet half-way if and when time and will were ripe to confront destiny. So I did not spend much time thinking over the master's offer: I stayed on for another day in Budapest. I felt no more at ease in Budapest than anywhere else, though not any worse either. And even if it was nice to hear everybody around me speak my mother tongue, I had long since given up the solemn illusion which in my eyes used to transform even a bandit should he happen to speak Hungarian. I thought

it natural that I was, am, and can never be anthying else but Hungarian. I had got used to being a transit traveller everywhere and never felt, beyond nostalgia for long outgrown intimacy, greater emotion in my native town than on any of the open balconies running in tiers round the walls above the courtyard in some old, rundown tenement houses in Budapest slums. I knew my Miskolc relatives less well than Zoli Markó or others unrelated to me by blood, therefore I liked my kinsfolk out of a sense of duty and propriety only. I had resigned myself to being lonely even among the members of my family and even to my wife and children being different from me, much though we could read each other's thoughts. I had acquiesced in the idea of mundane life not having begun with me and also in having to die one day. So I could well be governed by whims and be unpredictable, and go to meet freedom half-way without taking much risk.

The next day I waited for the master at the appointed place and time, outside the Astoria Hotel. He did not arrive but instead of him there came a young man who introduced himself with:

"I'm the master's secretary, please come with me."

We took the Metro to the Buda side, where we got on to a tram in Moscow Square. The master lived in a detached house in fashionable Pasarét; the garden around the villa was running to seed. The secretary led me up a few steps to a verandah, then as soon as he'd done so he disappeared and before long the master emerged in his place robed in a purple patterned cotton tunic distending on his protruding belly. Not only was his hair and beard tinted but he used lipstick as well, like many of the officers in the former royal Rumanian army. If I hadn't known him to be a painter, I might have mistaken him for an oriental magician or a nasty confidence trickster. He complained of a backache and shoved two cushions behind his back at the wall and settled reclining onto a divan groaning loudly.

"I'm all in ruins," he began amiably, and enumerated all his twelve different ailments. "The body refuses to obey any more, not even in bed either," he complained. "The body is ready to leave this mortal coil."

Conversation could hardly have begun with less ease. Where did I go to, I asked the man I am the reflection of, I the slave, the incorrigible rationalist. The master noticed my confusion and tactfully changed tone.

"So you came here from Pozsony?"

"Yes," I said.

"And are there any Hungarians still living in Pozsony?"

"There are some," I said gruffly. "Me, for instance."

"Strange," the master mused. "I was in Pozsony once."

"A long time ago?" I queried.

"A very long time ago. In a dream."

"And in reality?"

"Dream is reality," the master asserted. "Why, you've seen my work, have you? Dreams are the truer reality, more authentic... I've been to many places in my time. Chicago, Hong Kong, Papua New Guinea. Without a passport," he said and laughed. "Dreams are in here, and whatever's inside no one can deprive us of. Dreams are the revenge we take for our ill-favoured history. Don't you agree?"

An icy silence descended between us. I was reassured by the observation that the windows of the verandah were being occasionally rattled not by some dark and ungovernable power but by the rush-hour traffic in the streets; that the tram as well as the green of the trees in the garden had real life colours, the green not some imperfect copy of the piercing greens, expressing and evoking anxiety, that glared from the master's canvases.

Outside it was afternoon, the slightly muggy heat of summer failing to bring on a thunderstorm by the evening and merely making the scent of the linden trees heavier and more pervasive in the air. I thought of my wife and children at home, then of my relatives in Miskolc waiting in vain for me for supper yesterday as well as today.

"What did you come here for?" the master asked me, unexpectedly, though not rudely.

Since he received no answer, he went on asking more questions.

"Why do you usually travel?"

And:

"What is life?"

Then:

"What do our words death, love, Hungarian mean?"

Since he still received no answers to any of his questions, he supplied them for me.

"Well, all these words must certainly possess some meaning. A different one for each man. There are many answers to my questions. So many that they are almost all devoid of interest. Our lives are full of silly questions and we spend them giving silly answers to silly questions. But then you must fill the void and fill the enormous silence with something."

The master stalked me stealthily, every one of his sentences clinging to me like seaweed. It was time, I thought, to get round to the purpose of my visit.

"What I'am interested in is the girl;"

"Oh, the girl... Well, naturally, you're still a young man," he said. "Where is that girl?"

The master adjusted his cushions behind the small of his back.

"Bella?" he sniggered. "She's right here, sitting beside me."

It would have made little sense to ask how the young woman, whom the master called Bella, had managed to get beside him on the divan. She hadn't entered by the door and the windows of the verandah were all shut. I had to accept that Bella had been there all the while and I only failed to see her because the master had omitted to open my eyes. Oh, the miracles of onirism, I concluded.

"Touch her," the master told me.

Since I refused to do so, clutching my seat with both hands, the master —I couldn't help noticing—was on the point of taking pity on me.

"Kiss her. Her lips or her nipples or wherever you wish. Just to convince yourself she is real even though a mirage, a vision."

"I have not got the nerve." I said.

"Then take her out to dinner."

"No."

"It's as simple as that though. It's all yours if you can overcome your pusillanimity."

Pusillanimity was then to become a key word in what he had to say. He launched into a lengthy line of reasoning which I seemed to hear in a half-dazed state, and although his train of thought appealed to me, I later forgot every word of his arguments. Only one of his sentences stuck in my memory:

"Adrift in a shambles of a boat between two shores."

I then hurriedly left the house and decided to expunge from my life even the recollection of the man who I was but a reflection of, and who stayed on in the house to remind me as the better and freer half of my self, of freedom with his absence, and to torture me.

"You've only been given a respite," he shouted after me.

I got on a tram before he could have second thoughts and started to give chase. His last words went on echoing in my mind for a long time.

My Miskolc relatives died many years ago, and although awakening was still a long way to come, I soon managed to get the hang of the roles one needs to keep body and soul together. I am happy as the beasts of the field. The outer zone of my existence is encircled by that frightening milieu guarded and watched over by good manners, the laws of the land, and a night squad of policemen.

Translated by László T. András

HEART ATTACK

by

ZOLTÁN TÖMPE

At that time I did not feel particularly tired. I could not even say I was under any particular stress. I woke up Sunday morning to feel a strange, unaccountable excitement. I had to get up, move and walk around. I felt ill at ease. Never before had I felt a similar inner tension. This did not last more than half a minute, and then, within a matter of seconds, I was bathed in cold sweat, my hands and feet became numb and at the same time I felt a growing pressure over my heart. As if it were in a steel grip. I am thirty-five years old. Even with my sketchy knowledge at the time, I felt sure it was a heart attack. "A doctor, quick!" I whispered, as I was also having difficulty in breathing and felt like choking.

The ambulance doctor did not spend much time on examining me, there was simply nothing to be examined. It took two minutes to arrive at Margit Hospital in the little *Barkas* ambulance. This construction must have been designed for shaking kidney stones. It jolts you even while it is at rest. I had to gather all my strength to hang on to the two-span wide berth. Of course it is possible that this is part of the therapy: "To be shaken until the patient turns to foam before arrival at the hospital." Once in the hospital, everything happened with lightning speed. The next minute I was lying in the intensive ward in full Iroquois splendour; stark naked and complete with drip in my arm, oxygen tubes in my nose, ECG contacts applied to my limbs, a multitude of electrodes on my hastily shaven breast and a veritable fleet of instruments.

Alas, this medical parade did not make my heart see reason. I felt an unremitting pressure, stronger and more painful than before, while my strength gradually forsook me. I could not move any more. It was rather

boring like this, lying completely motionless, and so I started vomiting. Of course, there was nothing to throw up, and after a few goes I had no more gastric juice left either, but the endless retching threw my whole body into spasms. These attacks followed at shorter and shorter intervals, first every forty minutes, then every thirty, and then every twenty, which I could easily follow on the clock at eye level on the wall. Luckily they reassured me. They explained that I was vomiting because I had an infarction of the posterior cardiac wall, which irritated the gastric nerves. This was fortunate, otherwise I would have thought I had been eating icecream that had gone bad.

They kept dropping quarts of panacea into my veins, with growing speed, so that by the afternoon I ought to have felt better. But my heart was extremely ill-mannered and kept oppressing me with the same force in the afternoon as it had done in the morning. It did not yet make up its mind as to how large the area of its infarction should be. Around two to three in the afternoon, the glances cast at me turned commiserative rather than worried. They held out the prospect that should the oppression not ease, they might take me over to the Institute of Cardiology for an arteriographic examination and possibly a major operation. This would mean the introduction of a catheter, through my thigh, to my heart to inject a stain and establish what kind of vaso-constriction or embolism I have and exactly where.

But finally it did not come to this, as by the following dawn, after a crisis of some twenty hours, the feeling of oppression ceased. But from that moment on I was in a permanent dread when it would return. The doctor and the nurses of course reassured me that with a high degree of probability the oppression would not return, because the infarction stabilises itself. "Very well," I nodded, but I felt that it was their job to be reassuring whatever the facts indicated. I turned to an expert. A cleaning woman was mopping around my bed. I rallied all my strength and, starting the conversation neutrally, I suddenly said: "Well, unfortunately I'm not yet past the crisis." "That's so," the cleaning woman replied. "The pressure can still return. Whatever you do, however careful you are, it comes back. The other day too, a young man had an attack just when he was discharged. He never reached home, just died right on the way."

There I was; was that I wanted to hear? Now I have had it.

For some three or four days I waited for the onset of a new attack. Looking back, I was behaving primitively, but I think everybody is afraid at the door of death, and this can take a nonsensical form. Anyway, the pain over the heart stopped, but I had no strength left and could hardly speak. I was given some tea through a tube as I was still unable to sit up. It took

more than two minutes to turn on my side. This helpless state lasted for three full days. By then I could take a bit of solid food as well, but eating utterly exhausted me.

During this period I could pay attention to my other ills as well. In a couple of days the infusion ruined my veins. Every drop flowing in was painful, my arm was burning, throbbing and pulsating all along. For six days, infusion needles were inserted in three places in me, and I slowly felt as if there were three thick plastic tubes along my arm. In addition, I was given countless shots, in the wake of which my weak vein walls "punctured" in succession, causing sharp pain and palm-sized contusions—not to mention the taking of blood every four hours. My fingers looked as mottled as a turkey's egg.

I was not given very strong tranquillizers, and so I could enjoy events with a clear head. I could also meditate on what must have caused my infarction. I had given up smoking when I was twelve, right after smoking my first cigarette. My annual alcoholic consumption amounts to little more than the glass of champagne I have on New Year's Eve. Though I usually eat with relish, my diet is not marked by a gluttonous devouring of fats.

I had never felt overtaxed, although now, looking back, I think I had undertaken too much. My daily job was not free of conflicts. In addition, I have been carrying on a hopeless series of experiments to lick my two little sons into shape. Furthermore, a new secondary and extra jobs made life more varied. I accepted every work opportunity that presented itself and so I always had three or four different extra pieces of work going on. I was working in the evening, at night, during the week-end. I was looking forward to the week-ends, as then I could work more and catch up some of the arrears of work. A not inconsiderable number of week-ends found me working from early dawn till midnight, but I still never caught up with myself, always having more and more waiting in front of me. Permanent work has become a way of life for me.

My extra work always means intellectual assignments, and it has also favourably influenced my professional experience, my command of languages, my personal connections, ideas and creativity. My professional past has already paved the way for commissions coming easily and also for ideas coming easily. Although these jobs meant a fairly great intellectual and nervous strain and involved a practically complete lack of exercise, they were to my liking. I liked to be engrossed in them and they also paid fairly well. If I portioned out my surplus earnings, on a monthly average they would amount to double my salary.

What was the money for?

By the second half of the 1970s, my wife and I, both young graduates, earned eight to nine thousand forints a month between us, inclusive of language allowances and all. But we were still content, having come to a little flat of 35 square metres, built for teachers, and living at a standard that suited us both. We went to the theatre once a month, we could regularly extend our stock of books by some five to eight volumes monthly, once in a while we went out to wine and dine, and to dance, we followed fashion in our clothes, often spent our holidays abroad, and could also scrape up the money for the most important durables.

The arrival of the children cut our living standard, but we had reckoned on that. We had provided for it and shouldered it. At that time I took a degree in economics, additional to my original diploma in engineering. Because once upon a time, before I turned economist, I was still a decent man, with a decent trade and a diploma in engineering. But if in 1977, an average of 9,000 forints sufficed for a sedate intellectual manner of living, now even 25 to 30,000 would not cover the same. You just have to tot up the cost of living, the price of books and theatre tickets—you have not even mentioned the cost of travelling, foreign trips. And the two children. It was not for greed or a wish to get rich that I kept up this pace of work. I was working so much anyway that I had no time left to get rich. As I see it, those who count as rich in Hungary have no second jobs and extra work.

We succeeded in exchanging the tiny flat for a larger one, and there even came some improvement in our living conditions. This, in fact, was that the extra work with which I overtaxed myself was needed for. I do not scrape pennies together, I do not invest, nor do I convert my money into capital. I attempt to create a good-quality, exacting way of life with my income, free of financial problems. But it is virtually impossible to achieve this. To create the financial base for a higher standard of living takes up so much time and energy that work itself becomes a way of life, leaving scarcely any time for a worthy life.

Consulting with the doctor in the hospital, we arrived at the conclusion that the infarction was presumably due not to old-age arteriosclerosis, organic circulatory disturbances, nor to alcohol and excessive smoking, but to my overtaxed way of life and complete lack of exercise. So even while in the hospital, they began to make me move. On the fourth, but possibly already on the third day, came the physiotherapist. First of course we only did a few minutes of breathing exercises, but then the amount of movement grew day by day.

On the sixth day they extracted the infusion needle and removed me to the sub-intensive ward. This was a crucial day in the process of my evolution into a man. Without waiting for the doctor's permission, I myself had pushed the wheel-chair to the toilet, and I did not let them wash me. I asked for a basin-full of water and collecting all my strength, I had a wash, which meant that I made myself and the whole bed wet with a flannel. I felt utterly exhausted, but it still meant a great deal to me psychologically. I could simply no longer stand the thought of twenty-year-old girls pushing the bedpan under me and washing me from top to bottom. And by the time I gathered sufficient strength to stand it, they no longer wanted to do it.

One day I was reading peacefully in my bed, when my heart began to grow heavy bit by bit. First I did not give much thought to it. I had felt little pricks already before, but I knew it was nothing to write home about, they often occur in the first days of recovery. Only now the feeling of heaviness reached a grade that could already be called oppression. That well-known oppression. Even if weaker than on the first occasion, oppression it was. I was seized by mortal fear. The doctor and nurse came running, they took an ECG at once, and I was given drugs. Seeing my ECG, the doctor smiled: "It's just an angina." The term means not a kind of bed ticking (*angin* in Hungarian) as I had thought, but a brief, transitory spasm. The drugs took effect and the oppression passed in five minutes. This, however, was a horrid five minutes. Strangely, when I was lying with a sharp oppression for twenty hours, I suffered no fear of death. I only waited with an almost fatalistic indifference for what would happen. But once one feels to have come past the worst, one begins to think of the future, making plans, and then the oppression returns.

By the ninth day I was walking, five steps forward, five back. On the twelfth day they took me over to a normal ward, and that also brought another advance in my life. Anticipating the doctor's permission by several days, I went out all alone to take a shower. What a stimulating experience! The physiotherapist made me move more vigorously day after day and I thoroughly enjoyed being able to stand longer and longer. My mood was also improving. When I first went out to the court-yard, I felt a hilarity I had never before felt. I took off my slippers to feel the velvety grass under my feet, and gazed at the splashing water of the fountain for an hour. Grass and leaves signified life to me and I became intoxicated with the sight of them.

I felt fully recovered, someone who through simulating was a defrauder of sickness benefit. Notwithstanding all medical intervention, I entered the road to recovery, and on the twenty-fourth day I was discharged. I was to return for a rehabilitation course in a few weeks' time, and again after six months. According to the doctor, in a year's time I would regain up to 90 per cent of my previous capacity.

Right now there are two children scampering around in the room. The phone keeps ringing, the screen of my computer is flashing. Books and notes are piling up on my desk, with an empty white sheet before me, extra work. There is no escaping it.

FROM OUR NEXT ISSUES

A MAJOR AND UNPRECEDENTED ENTERPRISE

Károly Grósz

SPORT IN HUNGARY:
BETWEEN AMATEURISM AND PROFESSIONALISM

Róbert Zsolt

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FIN DE SIÈCLE AND OTHER DEVIATIONS

Miklós Györffy

HUNGARY SEEN FROM STAVANGER AND NEW YORK

János Frank

ENCOUNTER

by

PÉTER NÁDAS

Translated by Judith E. Sollosy

CHARACTERS

MARIA
YOUNG MAN
MUSICIANS*
  HARPSICHORDIST
  CELLIST
  LUTENIST

The orchestra pit is exposed. In its dim depths the musicians have not yet taken their places. Only the small lamps over the three music stands afford some light.

A platform in the orchestra pit will ensure that once the musicians are present, their heads will rise above the footlights, and so they will become participants in the spectacle.

As in early Baroque opera, the three instruments—the harpsichord, the cello and the lute—will play a chord at the beginning of important texts or especially significant words, exclamations or emphases, and in certain cases this chord will continue until the next marking, thus becoming a continuo.

However, I must emphasise that the chords of the continuo *are not meant to serve as accompaniment or background music. Rather, they complement, enhance, contradict, continue, annihilate or counterpoint the emotional content of the text; at the same time, they must also act independently, thereby comprising a large-scale musical structure, which dramatically confronts the structure of the play.*

The curtain rises very slowly and with dignity. A very small room.

A white iron bed by the left wall of the room. The bedding, arranged smoothly, is covered with a white piqué sheet. A simple crucifix hangs above the bed. Next to the bed, along the wall facing the audience, stands a white iron night-table with a drawer and a door. A crystal wineglass, containing red wine, stands on top of the night table. The bare walls are whitewashed.

Right next to the night-table is a red door, open as if to reveal a snowy landscape or a great white indeterminate expanse beyond. We feel rather than see a seemingly endless white space outside.

On the other side of the door is an iron stove painted over in silver. An electric coffee-maker rests on the stove.

A large, soft, white towel hangs from a wire stretching between the wall and the stove pipe.

From the ceiling hangs a single lightbulb with a strip of flypaper attached to it. The light is not on. The stage is steadily flooded by a harsh white light during the performance.

The musicians are in dinner jackets and/or evening dress. Maria, too, is in a long black dress. Only the Young Man wears simple street clothes: jeans, a checkered flannel shirt, a short coat.

In the middle of the stage, directly over the heads of the musicians, stands a simple white chair. It must stand almost on the edge of the stage, near the orchestra pit, in shadow, between the stage and

* *The music to this play was composed by László Vidovszky.*

the orchestra lights. To the right of the chair, slightly behind it, there is a white enamel basin, and inside it a white jug filled with water.

Maria sits on the chair, motionless, facing the audience.

Very long pause.

When the harpsichordist appears in the orchestra pit and takes his place at his instrument, Maria stands, goes to the night-table, opens the drawer, extracts a small vial and pours some white powder into her wine. The cellist and lutenist appear and take their places. Maria stirs the powder into her wine with a spoon. The musicians tune up.

Maria goes back to the chair and sits as before. The musicians abruptly stop tuning up.

Very long pause.

Maria stands, takes a few steps towards the red door, then, as if hearing a noise from outside, stops short, listens, goes to the coffee-maker and plugs it in. She sits down again and waits, motionless.

Very long pause.

The musicians tune up again, for at least two or three minutes, then stop unexpectedly. The lutenist and cellist change places and exchange their music stands, all rather awkwardly.

Very long pause.

The coffee begins to drip from the coffee-maker, hissing and steaming.

Maria remains motionless.

Very long pause.

Maria stands, goes to the stove, pulls out the plug, and, as if hearing some sounds from outside, listens, then goes back to her chair and sits down as before.

Very long pause.

In the depths of the tangible white space behind the open door, the head of the Young Man in glasses appears in the distance, rising slowly; his shoulders appear, and as he rises and comes nearer, we see his torso; he approaches, he rises, very slowly, gradually, until his whole body is visible, but he continues to approach. He stops at the door.

MARIA: Come. Though I was hoping you might not come after all.

(The Young Man does not move.)

MARIA: But then, I made the coffee, just in time it seems. The coffee is ready. *(Slowly, Maria stands and turns. Very long pause.)* So then, you're here. *(Pause.)* Yes. The boy is here. *(Pause.)* He has arrived. *(Pause.)* I'm afraid you'll be cold.

(Motionless, they eye each other. Long pause.)

MARIA: I've given up food. But coffee I adore. I didn't light the stove, I wanted you to feel my room just the way it is. Close the door, please. I didn't light the stove on purpose, so it'd be as cold as it always is. I keep it closed because around here everybody pries.

(The Young Man enters, shuts the door, and takes a look around. Maria offers her hand; they shake hands but Maria does not let go of the Young Man's hand right away. Instead, she places both hands around his. Long pause.)

MARIA: You might take off your coat. You'll be more comfortable that way. *(Pause.)* You must be surprised at my modest circumstances. But I'm quite content, I assure you. *(Pause.)* I'm curious. How did you find me? You will tell me, won't you? *(Long pause. Maria lets go of the Young Man's hand.)* Had we met on the street instead, I would have recognised you still, and then this meeting would have been even more curious, because, had we met on the street, I'd have followed you, and you couldn't have shaken me off, you would've wondered what the old bitch wants, but I would've followed you all the same, waiting for you to look back, so I could see your eyes, because I don't give a damn about etiquette, you see, and perhaps I couldn't have even kept myself from placing a hand on your forehead.

(The Young Man quickly takes off his coat as if, with this gesture, he wished to stop Maria from actually placing a hand on his forehead.)

MARIA: You'll find the hook on the door.

(The Young Man goes to the door, hangs his coat on the hook, and remains standing there.)

MARIA: You can't shake me off. When

I think of why you're here, that's all I can say. *(Long pause.)* What do you want? *(Long pause.)* You're my guest. My time is yours. *(Long pause.)* What do you want with me? *(Long pause.)*

I should call you by your first name, really, but I won't. If you didn't look so much like him, perhaps I would. Your nose, your eyes, your forehead, and unfortunately, even your lips. In twenty years, no one has kissed my lips. Or my shoulders. Can you imagine? You look so much like him, I wish we hadn't met, after all. Not that I'm afraid. Because things have their strangeness, even so. I'm prepared for any eventuality. You closed the door, I asked you to, and now we share that time in common about which neither of us can know antyhing in advance. I feel helpless, and you must feel just as helpless yourself. For nothing happens to us save what can happen. And nothing else. Perhaps that is the secret of closed doors. As if something had to happen now. As long as the door was open, we could hope against hope that nothing would happen. Had we met on the street, by accident, let's say, perhaps I wouldn't have followed you after all, but would have let you go. Go, like a stranger. As if these lips did not call anything to mind. I could have done it, you don't know me, I don't know you, and though your face is familiar, I could have ignored the familiarity. We try to escape our own pain. I could forget it all. But since you're here now, anyway, since we were not able to escape that, let me just say I'd rather not be on a first-name basis with my pain. For there is no forgetting. But we try to keep it at bay, at least. Which is impossible, of course. So that's why. You don't mind, do you? You would have preferred me to greet you as if I were your mother, wouldn't you? How is your dear mother? Did you find the place without any difficulty?

YOUNG MAN: Yes.

MARIA: Of course, this way you may think I'm flirting with you. I didn't call your father by his first name either. When he embraced me I didn't talk, I didn't scream, I didn't use words of endearment. So it would be ridiculous now, really, to pretend I could mistake you for him, though the likeness is striking, I admit. Except I didn't know you father at your age. Consequently you are just a strange illusion conjured up by my senses, that's all. Understand? A strange temporal muddle. He must have been just like you when he was very young, and had we met then, though we couldn't have, of course, I'd have given myself to him, yes, in which case you'd be my son, you could be, yes, but then you wouldn't be like this, you'd be entirely different, and then we couldn't have met like this at all, because you'd look a little like me. But it's best not to even think about it. It's awful, even as a thought. Because, in that case, what would have happened to you in the meantime? Have you ever thought, and I ask only because as long as you're here I'd like to find out what you think, have you ever thought about all the things that never happen to us? Far fewer things happen to us than not, if you ask me. Now, for instance. You came, and, as you say, found this place without difficulty. I'm talking to you, because I'm dying to talk to someone, anyone, yes, even the wall, and you listen patiently, which makes you much too endearing. But don't you think about all the things you could be doing instead? That you could be doing something instead of nothing?

YOUNG MAN: No. That has never crossed my mind at all.

MARIA: And to what do I owe this self-denial? Aren't you hungry?

YOUNG MAN: No. I'm not hungry at all.

MARIA: Coffee?

YOUNG MAN: Yes.

(Maria goes to the night-table, picks up the spoon she used to stir the white powder into the red wine and, as if she has just heard some sounds from outside again, listens, then quickly licks off the spoon and throws it behind the night-table.

They look at each other. Pause. Quickly, Maria opens the night-table, takes out two white china cups and saucers and a white china sugar bowl, puts everything on top of the night-table and closes its door.)

MARIA: We don't know how much time we must spend together, but in case you're hungry, don't be shy, I always keep something to hand. I always keep some biscuits to hand. We offer food to our guests, or so my poor mother used to say, to make up for the time they spend on us. Have you noticed? It's been like that for time on end. I haven't offered food to anyone in years. No one's given me a single moment of his time. I am alone, but I feel no pain in consequence. Sugar? *(Maria goes to the iron stove, takes the coffee to the night-table and pours it into the two cups.)*

YOUNG MAN: No, thanks. I don't take sugar.

MARIA: I do. Lots of sugar. Why don't you sit down at last? I adore sugar.

(Pause. The Young Man takes a look around, carefully runs his hand over the white bed-spread, then takes an uncertain step to the chair, turns it a little to the side, but does not sit down. Maria hands him a cup, then picks up her own. They stand looking at each other.)

MARIA: And you don't even have to tell me what brought you here. You don't have to answer any of my questions.

(Maria stirs her coffee absent-mindedly. They continue to look at each other.)

YOUNG MAN: I don't talk.

MARIA: In any case you wouldn't be able to distinguish between what I really mean to say and what I merely seem to think, but say nevertheless.

(The Young Man tries to put his cup down on the chair, but his hand shakes. He is struggling to speak.)

YOUNG MAN: I can't say it. *(Pause. He is still struggling.)* I don't know what I think. *(Pause. He is still struggling.)* Even now it's not what I meant to say. *(He puts the cup down on the chair, but spills it. He wipes the seat off with his palm and picks up the cup again.)* I can't manage.

MARIA: Take off your glasses for a moment. Do you mind?

YOUNG MAN: Whatever I say is not what I think. Whatever I think I can't say. Now, for instance, this is what I thought, and I managed to say it. But that's stupid. *(Pause. The Young Man is again struggling to speak.)*

MARIA: Would you tell me what brought you here?

YOUNG MAN: I managed to say that what I say and think is stupid. Stupid. That's why I don't talk.

MARIA: Would you?

YOUNG MAN: I couldn't get this right either.

(They look at each other for some time. The Young Man transfers the cup to his left hand and takes off his glasses.)

MARIA: When you kiss, you take them off, don't you?

(The Young Man replaces his glasses, and transfers the cup to his right hand again.)

MARIA: Well, don't you? *(Long pause.)* Without your glasses, you're distinctly good-looking. Had I wanted to appear more forward, I might even say handsome. I've thought about you often.

YOUNG MAN: How did you know I'd come?

MARIA: I've thought about you often, because I knew you were alive, and I imagined your life, though, of course, I had no way of knowing we'd meet. The birth-mark on your neck is distinctly kissable. I was taught to address an adequate number of questions to my guests in order to make them feel important, but without being indiscreet. And if you have a birthmark on your neck, you must have one on your chest and belly too. Am I right?

(Attentive, the Young Man takes a sip from his cup.)

MARIA: One's upbringing, and mine was nothing to scoff at, does not disappear without a trace. It merely becomes super-

fluous, like so much else in life. You must be twenty-five now, and by all odds, your body must be beautifully shaped. Don't mind me, I just want to look at you, pay no attention to me. Your shoulders wide and round, your arms strong, your chest full, your legs muscular, yet your ankles fine, almost delicate, like your wrists. Show me your hand.

(The Young Man drinks what is left of his coffee.)

MARIA: I knew you'd have beautiful hands, your father had beautiful hands too. The thighs almost huge, and only the hips a little too wide to be called perfectly proportionate, which lends emphasis to the stomach, and the loins look boyish and charming in consequence. *(Very long pause.)* Is this what you want to hear? *(Pause.)* It's already part of the story. *(Pause.)* Or would you rather I didn't talk about it?

(The Young Man is struggling, but can't get out an answer.)

MARIA: Why did you come here then? Why? *(Pause.)* I've got to begin somewhere.

(Long pause. Maria goes over to the Young Man, takes the cup from him, and walks back with both cups to the night table.) You're hoping for a nice, well-rounded story, aren't you?

YOUNG MAN: I take my glasses off only when I sleep.

MARIA: You're hoping I'll tell you everything, aren't you?

YOUNG MAN: I'm all alone.

MARIA: I'm going to tell you a story.

YOUNG MAN: I've got no one to kiss.

MARIA: I'm going to talk until we round it off.

YOUNG MAN: You asked. My mother is no longer alive.

MARIA: And in the end, I'm going to kill myself.

YOUNG MAN: Nor am I.

MARIA: You're talking very well, all of a sudden.

(Pause. They look at each other.)

MARIA: Where shall we begin?

(Pause. They look at each other.)

MARIA: Help me.

(Pause. They look at each other.)

MARIA: Help me, will you? *(Very long pause.)* To help. Do you know what it means? To help, help. I help, you help, he she, it helps. Do you know what help means? Naturally I realize it's no use expecting any. But I feel so awkward, at a loss, and do forgive me, but I don't know what to do. I'm the one who has to do the helping, I know. It's my turn again. It's all the satisfaction I can get. No more. Except, I feel no prompting in my hands, and I don't know how to proceed. I should begin somewhere, but I don't know where I am, or why, and how you got here, and why you're asking me all these questions. This is my life.

YOUNG MAN: Why don't you put down those cups?

(Long pause. Hesitantly, Maria puts the cups on the night-table. The Young Man makes an effort to speak.) And why don't you go back to the chair?

(Very slowly, Maria goes to the chair as the Young Man cautiously gives her his place and slips behind the chair. Both move as if on a razor's edge.) And now, why don't you put back that chair? I messed it up before. *(Long pause.)*

MARIA: Now, maybe I could close my eyes.

YOUNG MAN: No! *(Pause.)* Perhaps you should sit down first.

(Maria rearranges the chair and rests her hand on the back. They stand side by side, motionless.)

YOUNG MAN: You have to sit down first. And then close your eyes.

(Maria sits down.)

MARIA: Yes. That's how it's done when we try to remember.

YOUNG MAN: I helped.

(Maria closes her eyes. Very long pause.)

MARIA: Help some more.

YOUNG MAN: I'm helping.

MARIA: Perhaps you could hold on the back of the chair. After all, I'm remembering for your sake.

(The Young Man places his hands on the back of the chair. Very long pause.)

YOUNG MAN: See anything?

MARIA: Nothing.

YOUNG MAN: You must see the dark.

MARIA: But in the dark there's nothing, just the dark.

YOUNG MAN: In that case, maybe we should change places. I'll sit, you stand behind me.

MARIA: It's better for me like this.

YOUNG MAN: Feel anything?

MARIA: Sure! My tooth's been playing up for the past two days. *(They laugh. Maria opens her eyes.)* And this chair's hell on my behind. *(Pause.)* I feel that too. *(They laugh even louder than before.)* Nothing else. *(Long pause.)*

MARIA: We feel our bodies all the time.

YOUNG MAN: In that case, let's start all over again.

MARIA: In that case, place your hand on my forehead.

(The Young Man wraps his arms around her head, covering her eyes and forehead with his palms. Very long pause.)

MARIA: Good. That feels very good. *(Very long pause.)* No. It's no good after all.

(The Young Man removes his hand, stands hesitantly behind the chair, then backs off to the left until he bumps into the foot of the iron bed.)

MARIA: No. I can't remember a thing.

YOUNG MAN: Don't think I blame you.

MARIA: But your hands, your hands felt good.

YOUNG MAN: It would be absurd, my blaming you.

MARIA: I could tell you about my childhood.

YOUNG MAN: I couldn't blame you any more than I could blame myself.

MARIA: Did you know I was married, and my husband ran off on me?

YOUNG MAN: I just want to know.

MARIA: Or I could tell you about my first arrest. It's really very interesting.

YOUNG MAN: I just want to know what happened. To know.

MARIA: But what would be the point?

YOUNG MAN: Get to the point.

MARIA: What?

YOUNG MAN: I want to hear about my father. *(Long pause.)*

MARIA: Oh, your dear father, of course. Your dear father went plumb out of my head. *(Long pause.)* But if you don't mind my asking, who is your father? Who sent you? Because, should it turn out that I knew him, then, naturally, I'd be delighted to furnish you with any information you might require. Because you seem to have forgotten to introduce yourself, my dear. And that's a breach of etiquette. May I ask your name?

YOUNG MAN: Stop it!

MARIA: Or are you planning to rob me? Go right ahead. Whatever you can find here is yours.

YOUNG MAN: Off key.

MARIA: Or murder me? Fine. You'll save me the trouble.

YOUNG MAN: Don't make a fool of yourself.

MARIA: Your dear father, my dear, was a bastard. A crook, a common thug. And illiterate. A common little thug. And now, he's dead. Scum. If my calculations are correct, he should have rotted in his grave by now. Your dear father was nothing but a well-hung angel, my dear. *(Long pause.)* But you're very clever, I'll hand you that. The way you got me involved. When I didn't want it. *(Long pause.)* I wanted it. *(Long pause.)* Look around. See what's happened to me. *(Long pause.)* What's become of me. Take a good look. *(Long pause.)* All right, Listen. I don't want anybody feeling sorry for me. I'm old and poor. Period. You, least of all. Listen. I'm going to tell you a story now. *(Long pause.)*

I'm a little agitated. You must excuse me. Because a picture has come to my mind's eye, though that's crazy, because the picture isn't really a picture, and the mind doesn't really have an eye. I'm going to jump around.

Suddenly, this picture always pops up suddenly. All of a sudden this square is there, and not just the square, because I feel it too, I feel it as I cross the square. I cross the square. That's the picture. I feel myself crossing. It's late autumn, I know the day, the hour, but that's irrelevant, so then, it was November twentieth, when everything is gray and damp, and this square comes so vividly to mind, the feeling as I cross it, that my head reels. It was morning, and the square was deserted, I can't shake it off. Are you familiar with these dizzy spells? I'm dizzy. If I wanted to be properly understood, I'd have to describe not only the light, yes, I'd have to tell you about the light, but how can I possibly describe the light? Not just the houses, the statue on the square, the church on the other side, but everything, everything! I can't describe it. I can't imagine why I wanted to describe it in the first place. How can one talk about antyhing? One can't talk about anything. *(Pause.)* And the trees. I forgot the trees. This square will be important, I want to tell you about this square because this is where I will first see your father. Understand? You must know this square, it's where you grew up. And on this square, try to imagine it as I describe it, a man crossed this square every morning, the man you call your father. And another important thing. I mention the trees because I always had to cross the square diagonally. I don't know why. To this day I feel it had to be like that, diagonally. And no other way. Perhaps because one got closer to the trees that way. I don't know. Not that it matters. Plane trees, remember? Tall, very tall plane trees, and under the boughs, the air stifling or whatever. And the smell. Heavy, though the foliage is light. Wide leaves on long branches, casting a light shadow. This too I had to tell you. And the morning light, as it filters through the gently stirring leaves. If only I could describe it. *(Pause.)* And after a while, I noticed that this man always crosses the same way. He comes from there, and I come from here. He also had to cross like that. But that came much later. Everything gets so muddled. *(Pause.)* I don't cross there any more. *(Pause.)* I wore an apple-green silk dress, lizard sandals, with very high heels, just a few thin straps, my stockings had got lost in the meantime, or God knows, anyhow, I was barefoot, and inside they gave me one of these men's trenchcoats, with a hood, it had a red stain on the back, oh, yes, and my lizard handbag, I still had that. That's how I crossed the square. When they told me I was free, the apple-green seemed familiar, I always liked apple-green, but I didn't recognize the sandals. I couldn't buy new stockings because I had just twenty forints left, the train was forty-seven, and I bought some milk, too. But my feet weren't cold somehow. I came here because my cousin still lived here then, but another man opened the door, because the apartment had been subdivided in the meantime. *(Pause.)* But that's just words. *(Pause.)* Say something. *(Pause.)* Words, words, words. *(Pause.)* Oh, this terrible silence.

(The Young Man steps forward, almost lunges in fact, and there is something animal in his movement. He struggles in an attempt to say something.)

MARIA: There's nothing you can say.

(The Young Man struggles, then gives up, backs away to the bed, and grabs the foot of the bed.)

MARIA: Let's just forget it. Go away. *(Very long pause.)* And I knew, too, I knew all along that I couldn't keep this to myself forever. Someone would come and I'd have to talk about it, and then I could die. To be perfectly honest, I didn't think it would be you. Every gesture brings me closer. But I waited, just the same, I imagined how you live. Except, I don't want to die yet. As I was telling you the story, I felt it, and changed my mind. *(Very long pause.)*

Feeling sorry for me? *(Very long pause. Maria closes her eyes.)* The picture's gone. *(Long pause.)* It's gone blank. *(Very long pause. Both are motionless. Suddenly, Maria opens her eyes.)* Hear that sound?

YOUNG MAN: What sound?

MARIA: As if somebody were fumbling at the door.

YOUNG MAN: Not even the wind is stirring.

MARIA: There's always somebody prowling around outside the door. And peering through the window. I can't feel safe for a second. I haven't got a moment's peace. Would you mind checking whether there's anybody outside the door? Listening?

YOUNG MAN: No.

(Maria laughs.)

MARIA: I just wanted to hear your voice.

YOUNG MAN: You're scared.

MARIA: A cheap trick. But effective.

YOUNG MAN: Scared. *(Long pause.)* Don't feel bad about it. *(Long pause.)* I don't think there's anybody outside the door. I'm here. You've got nobody else to wait for, any more. *(Very long pause.)* Nothing else can happen. *(Long pause.)* Go ahead, turn around, you'll see. *(Long pause. Maria sits, motionless.)* Or close your eyes. *(Very long pause. Maria does not close her eyes.)* I want to tell you about this girl I loved once. *(Pause.)* But why should I tell you. *(Pause.)* Just now when you told me to leave. Again, I can't say it. Can't manage what I mean. *(Pause. He struggles.)*

MARIA: I didn't feel it. *(Pause. She struggles.)*

YOUNG MAN: I didn't feel it, just imagined it. Yes, imagined it. That's how they say it, to imagine. One imagines. Imagines the possible. Sees it, but the other can't. And feels it too, though nothing really happens, so the other hasn't even got anything to see. *(Pause. He struggles.)* Imagining or whatever. Or feeling. *(Pause. He struggles.)* I couldn't leave. *(Pause. He struggles.)* The feeling of imagining, or whatever. *(Long pause.)* I'm glad I'm here. No. That's no good again. I'm happy. That's no good either. I'm just here. That's all I can say, just that I'm here. I'm here. But that's not quite right. Let's say—I could say I'm all here. I'm here. Yes, it might feel better to say it like this. I'm here. *(Pause.)* I wanted to tell you about this girl, the girl I loved. *(Pause)*. I imagined or felt that if I went to the door and put on my coat and opened the door, I couldn't leave, I wouldn't know what to say. It would hurt. What could I say? So long, see you around? It would hurt a lot, but I couldn't even imagine, I couldn't feel how much. That's why I say I'm here. I wouldn't say I'm all here, I guess, just that I'm here. I'm here. *(Pause.)* And I'll even admit this is not how I pictured you. Blonde, very tall, and somehow I imagined, it's so foolish, that your hair is always swept by the wind. And young. Though I knew a great deal of time had passed since then. Not a very great deal, but a great deal. It seems so long because we never talked about it. No. As if it never happened. But anyway, I imagined you with the wind in your hair, your long, blonde hair, though it's very foolish, I know, and very young, not very young, but young. *(Pause.)* Getting ready for death. It's the eleventh hour. *(Pause.)* They're all dead. *(Pause.)* That's why this silence. *(Pause.)* This girl, she seemed like such a nothing. *(Very long pause)*. When I reckoned she was ugly and looked at her, all at once she was pretty. At other times, though I felt she was pretty, I could see she was ugly. I would've liked to see her as if it weren't me looking, but somebody else. I didn't want any of this. I never wanted anything. I reckon she's bow-legged. Or knock-kneed. And too wide in the hips. It's like that I wanted to see her, like a stranger, taking stock of her defects. That she's such a nothing. *(Pause.)* Nothing's happening. *(Pause.)* Can you feel it? *(Pause.)* You're sitting there. *(Pause.)* I'm standing here. *(Pause.)* And nothing happens. *(Pause.)* I'm talking. *(Pause.)* But it's not like when I came. Feel it? *(Pause.)* I was just quiet for a while. *(Pause.)* And when I looked at her, I saw she had huge boobs, huge. And it made me glad, because I wanted to like her, and I liked that, and

when I looked again, she was flat-chested all of a sudden, and I liked that, but then I looked again, and it looked like she had big boobs, and I felt like it wasn't her I hated so much, but myself. Wanting to make up my mind about something, something I couldn't make up my mind about. I watched her all the time. And it's no use making such a fuss, I knew, no use, she sleeps around anyhow. I also reckoned she was dumb. She wasn't bright like she was really bright, but, for instance, she knew she wanted to sleep around all the time, she made no secret of it. She couldn't have said why, but at least she knew. *(Pause.)* That's how she was bright. But when I was alone, I had to admit that she was dumb. I did a lot of thinking. When I managed not to, I was worried she might not matter any more. As if somebody who wasn't really me wanted her to matter. For instance, she had oily hair, not that it's anybody's fault, having oily hair. And constant washing just makes it worse. *(Pause.)* What I say doesn't matter. *(Pause.)* Just so long as I talk. Right? *(Pause.)* And here I thought I can't. *(Pause.)* Can't express myself. *(Pause.)* I could say this, but I don't know why I should. *(Pause.)* You just want to hear my voice. *(Pause.)* Isn't that right? You just want to hear my voice. *(Pause.)* Answer me! *(Pause.)* You just want to hear my voice, is that it? *(Very long pause.)* You're wasting your time, you know. *(Pause.)* Want to hear me talk? *(Pause.)* Want me to stop? *(Pause.)* Why can't you answer me? *(Very long pause. The Young Man pushes himself away from the bed, runs to Maria, leans very close, and with a long, inarticulate scream, yells in her face. Maria remains impassive. The Young Man jumps around the stage, trills, claps, talks melodious nonsense, drums, yelps, whistles, barks, sings wildly, increasingly wildly, until, with a zigzag motion, he stops with a scream by the night-table, panting. Maria is motionless. Very long pause.)*

YOUNG MAN: Take it. It's all yours. *(Pause. He pants.)* What do you care! *(Pause. He pants.)* I'm just an idiot to you. *(Long pause.)*

MARIA: It would be very kind of you to tell me, but you can't help me that easily. Not any more.

YOUNG MAN: Don't you understand? I'm doing the talking now. You don't have to worry. I'm telling my own tale, my own way. Don't be afraid.

MARIA: What's the use, when in the end it's going to be my turn anyway?

YOUNG MAN: And it seemed to me, just imagine, it seemed to me that she had no taste in clothes. No taste in clothes. And much too loud. But then she'd put on something nice. And had such a refined way of listening, too. *(Pause.)* Of listening. *(Pause.)* At first, I didn't like the taste of her lips. Her lips were too thin, I thought. I thought I didn't like her lips. *(Pause.)* But she kissed so obscenely with those thin lips as if she wanted to give herself, all of herself, so obscenely, she wouldn't let herself feel any more, and that made me think she wasn't interested in me, she was so tight, so hard. Well, I wasn't going to put up with that! Like she just needed me as a good lay. A fucking-machine. And this whole lip business is just a senseless habit, that's all. I hated her. I was repulsed by her. I let her have it across the face. Twice. Hard. Instead of the lay. You tight bitch. Go fuck yourself, you fucking slut. And then her lips changed, like, her lips grew thick. They weren't so thin any more, so nothing. See? They were nice and thick. And those were her lips too. Pretty. That's what I'm telling you. I wiped something out of her that wasn't even part of her, really. And then my lips could feel her lips feeling mine. *(Long pause. Absent-mindedly, the Young Man picks up the glass, holds it up to the light, and looks through it. Maria does not move.)* Pretty. *(Long pause. As the dialogue progresses, the Young Man, with the glass in his hand, hunches down by the wall almost imperceptively.)*

YOUNG MAN: I'm tired.

MARIA: I was blonde.

YOUNG MAN: I couldn't even make up my mind whether she was a blonde or a redhead.

MARIA: You were right.

YOUNG MAN: When we had no more clothes on, then I felt that everything was good. Then I felt that I had no more decisions to make.

MARIA: You're still not hungry?

YOUNG MAN: Except, sometimes I thought she was blonde, other times, a redhead.

MARIA: If you're thirsty, don't drink the wine. It's poisoned.

YOUNG MAN: There wasn't a part of her body that wasn't good.

MARIA: I should stand up.

YOUNG MAN: There was still something in her I shouldn't reach, but that was good, because I had to look for it.

MARIA: Talk about something else.

YOUNG MAN: But I left anyhow.

MARIA: As you are no doubt aware, it was I who left your father.

YOUNG MAN: I don't know why, but that's how I imagined you too.

MARIA: When I got out the second time and crossed the square under the planes, he didn't come. That damned square, I'll never shake it off as long as I live.

YOUNG MAN: The way her head sank into the soft pillow under me, half turned to the side. And blonde in the half-light, not red. It's red only when the sun catches it.

MARIA: You are probably also aware that I'd have one of the most noble names right now if my dear departed husband had not happened to be a Jew. Our marriage was the scandal of the century.

YOUNG MAN: My body against hers, my chest against hers, so tight I couldn't feel her breasts any more, and yet I felt them. My breath hot against her neck, the heat hitting my own face, but her face doesn't register a single movement of our loins. I'd like to see it, though, so I watch. To hear it. She likes to press her knees against my hips.

MARIA: Later I read someplace that aristocracy of blood had tied the knot with finance capital, which is ridiculous, because he simply swept me off my feet.

YOUNG MAN: I want to hear her voice, to hear her moan, scream, pant, but I hear only the fine intake of breath, the way it hisses through her teeth, she keeps her eyes shut, and her lips too are almost completely closed.

MARIA: You're too young to know what a classic, old-fashioned courtship is like.

YOUNG MAN: Why this reticence?

MARIA: Oh, it's most pleasant, I must say.

YOUNG MAN: Only the trembling of her eyelids, the quivering of her lashes reveal it's good for her and it's good for me. Slower, go slower. Slower.

MARIA: Maybe later, too, with your father, I lost my head because my dear husband had thoroughly bejewed me by then.

YOUNG MAN: No depth is deep enough. Oh, deeper! No slowness is slow enough. Go slower, she said.

MARIA: Spare me.

YOUNG MAN: As if we were trying to hold off forever the very thing that begged for fulfilment. She said nothing, yet she begged.

MARIA: Spare me, please.

YOUNG MAN: It's how she liked it. Holding back is pleasure, too.

MARIA: I should stand up.

YOUNG MAN: Pain is pleasure, too.

MARIA: Help me.

YOUNG MAN: Pleasure knows no bounds.

MARIA: I can't sit like this any more.

YOUNG MAN: She didn't scream, she didn't yell, and there was more wisdom like this she got even more pleasure from the pain.

MARIA: You're torturing me!

YOUNG MAN: And afterwards, for days, for weeks, you didn't get out of bed. Remember? It's the only thing worth remembering.

MARIA: No. That's not how it was.

YOUNG MAN: That's all I can remember.

MARIA: No. It wasn't like that.

YOUNG MAN: You didn't want what took place to take place.

MARIA: No. It was entirely different.

YOUNG MAN: You were in such ecstasy you no longer wanted it to be good.

MARIA: No. It wasn't like that at all.

YOUNG MAN: And then, just a single convulsion.

(Maria lets out an inhuman scream.)

MARIA: No! No-o-o-o! *(Long pause.)*

(Both sit motionlessly hunched in their places, then slowly rise. Maria gets up from the chair, the Young Man slides his back up the wall. Short pause. Abruptly, the Young Man spills the wine on the floor and slams the glass against the wall on the right. Maria takes a few steps towards the Young Man. The Young Man starts towards the bed. They meet in the middle of the stage. They stop. Cautiously, gently and a little awkwardly, they touch each other's cheeks. They stay like this for a while. Then they go past each other. Maria goes to the right-hand wall of the stage, the Young Man to the bed. The Young Man kicks off his shoes and throws himself prone on the bed. Maria squats down and begins to gather the pieces of broken glass. As she does so, she groans softly, as if she were singing and crying at the same time.)

MARIA: No. It wasn't like that. *(Short pause.)*

YOUNG MAN: It was like that. *(Short pause.)*

MARIA: No. It wasn't like that. *(Short pause.)*

YOUNG MAN: It was like that. I remember. *(Short pause.)*

MARIA: No, no, no. It wasn't like that. *(Short pause.)* No, no. *(With broken glass in her hand, Maria stands up, and turning to the Young Man, she stays by the wall on the right. Very long pause.)*

MARIA: I could still cut my veins.

(Abruptly, the Young Man turns around on the bed.)

YOUNG MAN: I'd save you. *(He lies prostrate now, and throws his legs comfortably over the foot of the bed.)*

MARIA: Do you know how to cut your veins with glass? *(Very long pause)*. Actually, I could just clench my fist, like this, and the blood would come flowing.

YOUNG MAN: I'd bandage your hand.

(Very long pause. Maria stands motionless, the broken glass in her hand.)

MARIA: I have nothing left. *(Pause.)* It's such a silly story, really. *(Pause.)* Not that it matters. *(Pause.)* It wouldn't make you any happier. *(Pause.)* I wanted to leave. That's how it began. *(Pause.)* My husband was dead by then, poor thing. *(Pause.)* But first, he left me. *(Pause.)* He fell for a dancer. A male. *(Pause.)* And he weighed two hundred and ten pounds. *(Pause.)* Not that we ever wanted for anything. *(Pause.)* He loved to gorge himself. I couldn't blame him. His grandfather was one of those feather-pedlar Jews. He went around the country. 'Feathers! I buy feathers!' *(Pause.)* I arranged false papers for him . *(Pause.)* But that's not part of the story. *(Puase.)* He was blown up by a landmine. His body, teeny-weeny little pieces. And nothing to put in the coffin. *(Pause.)* In short, he was dead. *(Pause.)* That's where I'd like to begin.

(Very long pause. The Young Man does not move.)

MARIA: After a while, I got hooked on food myself. I wasn't brought up like that. We'd gorge ourselves till we couldn't get up from the table. *(Very long pause.)* After dessert, he'd ask for a piece of salami. Or a piece of pork in aspic, well seasoned. To get rid of the sweet taste in his mouth. *(Very long pause.)* I keep on thinking of things that aren't part of the story. Of course, everything is part of the story. I am the story. *(Pause.)* I feel as though we were locked up in here. *(Pause.)* And now, the pork in aspic comes popping into my head. It's distracting, this feeling of being locked up. What a silly expression. Just imagine a piece of pork in aspic as it pops into my mind. Pop, pop, pop! *(Pause.)* Someone listening at the door. *(Pause.)* I can't tell the story properly because I feel as though the two of us were locked up in here. As though somebody's locked us up together. As if, except for us,

everybody else were dead. And it's no use my knowing that we made it. *(Pause.)* There's still time. How much time do you rhink we still have? *(Pause.)* I'm bored. Yes, I think I can safely say I'm bored. *(Pause.)* Open the door, please. *(Pause.)* I could open it myself, but I'm scared. I know there's somebody outside that door. I'm scared. I was just pretending to fool around before, but it's for real. Maybe there's nobody out there, but I think there is, so I don't dare. As if there were someone out there, constantly watching. As if we were looked up in here. *(Pause.)* Open it. Open it, please.

(The Young Man does not move. Very long pause.)

MARIA: Just for a second. Just so we can see who's out there. *(Pause.)* Or who isn't. *(Pause.)* All right. Have it your way. *(Pause.)* It has occurred to me too that that someone is also me. *(Pause.)* Just the same, I can't bear it any more. *(Pause.)* So then, I'm going to make it short. *(Pause.)* Very clever, the way you passed the buck, making me do all the talking. I knew it would happen, of course. Except, I thought I was more clever. It's very cruel of you to have stayed, you know that? *(Pause.)* But in that case, I'd like it to end quickly, at least. *(Pause.)* You've taken my bed. *(Very long pause.)* Funny how the pork in aspic's up and gone right out of my head. I left off where I wanted to leave. But it keeps coming back anyway, as if to confuse me on purpose. *(Pause.)* How interesting. *(Pause.)* It was on this square I saw your father for the first time. *(Pause.)* Yes. And for the last time, too. *(Pause.)* Though not really for the last time, because he keeps coming to mind, popping up, as they say, so vividly, no, not vividly, but as if I were walking or standing there too, in that old picture and not here, what I mean is, not in the picture, but the square, on the square, the trees, and that smell, that stifling smell of plane trees or whatever makes my head reel, and I can't decide whether I see these old pictures because I'm dizzy, or the other way around, perhaps I'm dizzy because I feel as though I weren't here at all, but there, it's the remembering, as they say. *(Pause.)* It won't really be for the last time until I die. *(Pause.)* You must think me very sentimental. *(Pause.)* However, that's not what I meant to tell you. But that the first time around I got three and a half years. I served three, and I've already told you how I crossed the square in my apple-green silk dress, and how I didn't recognize my sandals after three years, and then your father came towards me. That's how he saw me for the first time. And I don't know why, but it was like seeing the first man after three long years. The first male. That, too, is significant. *(Pause.)* A man. *(Pause.)* We had a good crowd in there, God knows, and I even got used to being among women all the time. *(Pause.)* And as we go past each other like this, as we pass, and walk on and on, my back begins to ache, and suddenly I want to see him from behind too, but he turns too. And for a moment we stopped, then he continued on his way. *(Pause.)* But come to think of it, I wanted to begin from when I made up my mind to leave. *(Pause)*. I had just one small room left, a back room, like this, everything I was allowed to keep I crammed in there, but that's not why, I couldn't have cared less, as if I had nothing to do with anything any more. They said they're taking one thing, then another. Suit yourselves! I just didn't care. *(Pause.)* I wasn't afraid, then. *(Pause.)* They kept on bringing the papers, sign this, it's ours! I was more surprised than anything that I still had things to sign away. And they were pleased, while I was amused to see how put off they were that I had had so much. *(Pause.)* Because, I had. *(Pause.)* It was all so silly. *(Pause.)* But then I got a letter informing me that the hearing was set for the second of September, in Döbling, in Austria, and should I fail to attend, I'd automatically lose the case, my lawyer wrote, because the relatives, claiming that I was dead, wanted to get their hands on the bath-house, which

comprised part of my inheritance. My husband's relatives, I mean. *(Pause.)* A bath-house. *(Pause.)* It was in this bath, he said, that he first made love to a man. *(Pause.)* That's why I said just now that everything is part of the story. *(Pause.)* And so it interested me. *(Pause.)* Nothing else. I wanted that stupid bath-house, and nothing else. But that stupid bath-house, that I had to have. He told me, too, that it was built of yellow tile. Yellow tile. The whole thing was right in front of my eyes, somehow. Or inside. His father had built it. That yellow tile. *(Pause.)* It was part of me now, because he was dead. *(Pause.)* Well, now, where was one to turn, when all one's best connections are gone? *(Pause.)* Needless to say, I knew who was behind it all. *(Pause.)* How ludicrous! Having to prove that I'm alive when I'm alive. How was I to prove it? *(Pause.)* Zaza. Zaza again! *(Pause.)* Again, you'd have to know so many things. *(Pause.)* You see, Zaza was behind this thing. *(Pause.)* I wonder if I should go into this thing at all. *(Pause.)* A digression. It would constitute a digression. *(Pause.)* I haven't even started yet, but there's no getting to the end. *(Pause.)* There's no getting to the end like this. *(Long pause. Maria takes a hesitant step, as if she meant to go to the chair, then as if she meant to throw the broken glass to the floor, but she stops, stares at her open palm, then slowly and awkwardly leans against the wall.)* Oh, Zaza, she was crazy. We also called her Zuzi. She's dead, too. Not really crazy, though who knows. She looked a fright. She never had a man, they say, but I can't believe that. And she had this thing about keeping the family together. She was my husband's elder sister. Once, when she was in a state, she asked, do you speak French? *(Pause.)* I'm asking you. *(Pause.)* Because she'd speak nothing but French. She was educated at some Swiss school. To forget those feathers, you know. But she sounded like a kitchenmaid. Anyway, once, when she was in a state, she said to me: when I was already a civilized people, ma chérie, you were just a monkey up a tree. *(Pause.)* Just like that .Ma chérie. *(Pause.)* We laughed all the time. We laughed for ten years, I think. *(Pause.)* We laughed a great deal. We laughed all the time. We laughed so hard, we cried. *(Pause.)* And that looney Zaza was also supposed to have said behind my back: what a breach of etiquette! A countess? In a proper Jewish family? A Hungarian? *(Pause.)* Oh, how we laughed. I don't know what we laughed about so much. We laughed at all sorts of silly things. *(Pause.)* Then the man at the police station says to me, he says, listen, madame, don't tax our patience with such nonsense. If you have a nice, comfortable chair left, just sit down and wait out the end. The end of what, my good man? That's just it! Your own end, madame! *(Pause.)* Well, then, kiss my ass. I haven't got the time to parley with you any more. I went down to the docks. *(Pause.)* Besides, I wanted revenge against Zaza. *(Pause.)* Isn't that silly! *(Pause.)* The freighters were still anchored at Újpest then. It was newly fenced off with barbed wire, and armed guards at the gates. Well, I went and sat myself down on a bench. Thinking I was terribly clever. Pretending to be enjoying the sun. And in the meantime, I kept my eyes open. When one of those older sailors came out, I waved him over. He had white hair, blue eyes, and stooped shoulders. Can I be of service, madame? He was very polite. And softspoken. Where are you going? I ask. I'd like to have a word with you. Just to that bar, for a beer, he says. May I come along? My pleasure, I'm sure. He couldn't have taken me for a whore. A very good-looking man. An officer, probably, that's why he's so refined. While I waited for him to answer, because he didn't answer for some time, you see, it even occurred to me how it wouldn't be such a tragedy if he did take me for a whore. But I felt distressed all the same, because I had never been a flirt before. And this seemed like such a frivolous thing to do, and us not even introduced. I was a fool.

And there I was, thinking I was so smart. Anyway. He said he's sorry, he quite understands, he sympathizes, but they're headed for the Black Sea, and that wouldn't suit me at all, under the circumstances. Well, we had a good laugh over that. But come back tomorrow, and though I can't promise anything, I'll see what I can do. *(Pause.)* I still had my jewels. *(Pause.)* Every day for a week I went back to that bar. *(Pause.)* Passed from hand to hand. Everybody spoke in a whisper. Very politely, because they thought I belonged to this man, Feri. This old sailor. Who had sailed away in the meantime. *(Pause.)* And when I ask for my usual beer, the bartender jerks his thumb towards the back, I should go back there. Inside it was almost pitch dark, and a man from the secret police. Oh-oh, I say to myself, the jig is up. But no. Because he whispers that he'd be delighted to help me. *(Pause.)* The summer was unbearably hot. The asphalt was melting. *(Pause.)* I packed a small suitcase. *(Pause.)* People were taken poorly on the street. *(Pause.)* I put on my apple-green silk dress and my lizard sandals, and on August the twenty-third, at eight o'clock in the morning, I boarded the train. *(Pause.)* It was so empty, I thought there must be some mistake. *(Pause.)* The man's name was Lajos Kucsera. *(Pause.)* It left at eight-twenty, right on schedule. *(Pause.)* And the finest passport imaginable in my handbag, with a photograph. *(Pause.)* So, then, adieu. Kiss my backside. We're off. *(Pause.)* I'm just getting settled as the train pulls out of the station, imagine, we're still picking up speed, when the compartment door is ripped open. That's the one! Three men burst in. Don't move! Just like that. Don't move! *(Pause.)* It feels good, talking about it. *(Pause.)* So I don't move. *(Pause.)* Actually, I've never told anybody before. *(Pause.)* So then, that's how I ended up crossing the square in my apple-green dress. *(Pause.)* I've always had to distort it a little. *(Pause.)* But now, as I tell it, it seems quite amusing, really. *(Pause.)* Because I even remember thinking I'd have my tea at Demel's, and that's when they ripped open the door. *(Pause.)* Do you know Demel's? *(Pause.)* They've got the best salads in the world. Very famous. And the paté! It's at least as famous as Sacher's. *(Long pause.)*

(Abruptly, the Young Man lifts his legs off the end of the bed and, very slowly, sits up.)

MARIA: They really should've left me enough time to imagine a salad or two, with some paté. *(Pause.)* But to be perfectly frank, they fell on me at once. *(Pause.)* It's not something one likes to talk about. *(Pause.)* One of them closed the curtains, the other pressed his hand to my mouth. The third hit me. *(Pause.)* We didn't like talking about this inside either, not even among ourselves. *(Pause.)* Like in a fairy tale, the smallest did the hitting. *(Pause.)* We stuck pretty much to their methods. Matter of factly, with some humour, we talked only about their methods. *(Pause.)* But at the time, I had no idea what that meant.

(As if trying to say something, the Young Man jumps to his feet, struggles, then just as quickly, sits down again. Maria does not seem to notice.)

MARIA: That's how we talked about it. But our hearts weren't in it. *(Pause.)* It's not the humiliation, no. One can get used to the humiliation, more or less. But this thing doesn't seem to have a definite sequence. No sequence. That's what makes it so difficult. No sequence. Actually, it's got a sequence, but for some reason it seems terribly difficult to describe. *(Pause.)* So maybe it is the humiliation.

(The Young Man can no longer control his restlessness. He lies down, jumps up, sits down, drums on the bed with his hands, presses parts of his body as if in pain, covers his face with his hands, looks at the ceiling, opens his mouth as if trying to say something, then decides against it. He accompanies the rest of the monologue like this, with increasingly wild and contradictory gestures.)

MARIA: I found myself on the floor, and then one of them struck me, he had a gun in his hand, the other kicked, kicked me

in the face, the third just stood there. But how I got on the floor, for one thing? He hit me on the head with the butt of his gun. When I covered my head they kicked me in the stomach. *(Pause.)* I couldn't very well protect all of me at the same time. *(Pause.)* They could've held me down. But they let me squirm. That's how they liked it. That was part of the method, you see.

(The Young Man jumps to his feet again, takes a few faltering steps, stretches out his hand to Maria as if he were asking something and protesting at the same time, then stops in his tracks. Maria does not seem to notice. Uncertainly, the Young Man withdraws and plops down on the bed. During the following monologue he remains motionless.)

MARIA: And not a sound, can you imagine, not a sound. *(Pause.)* All the stuff fell out of my bag, and as I squirmed and they kicked, I could hear the sound of grating, cracking, crushing as the things were crushed under their heels. *(Pause.)* Nothing else. Just that. *(Pause.)* And it didn't seem to be the powder compact, the lipstick, the mirror, but my head. *(Pause.)* But the second was far worse. The first time around, you don't understand. I don't know how many days the first lasted, I don't know, maybe three, I don't know because the first time around you don't know what's happening, but the second time you suddenly realize what had happened the first time too. The second time they took me away it was spring, and I thought, no, a second time I can't, not a second time. *(Pause.)* There's another way to reckon time. *(Pause.)* Zaza sent me packages. Very fine things. My spring coat was from her too. One of these beige burberry coats, with raglan sleeves, the latest thing. Well, when I came to and had enough strength, and felt I couldn't take it any more, I tied the sleeves of this coat around my neck, and I pulled and pulled. So I could die at last. I wanted to strangle myself. I didn't have the strength though. They threw me into a cellar or something. I don't know where. And it's ridiculous, really, because it can't be done like that. There was no light. I couldn't hang myself. *(Pause.)* The second time also contains the first. *(Pause.)* The first time you don't know. *(Pause.)* You live. You're still alive. *(Pause.)* The second time, your father was involved the second time. *(Pause.)* Maybe that's why I wanted to kill myself. Because of him too. Or instead of him. *(Pause.)* No. *(Pause.)* I never thought of him. *(Pause.)* And yet... *(Very long pause.)*

(Suddenly, the Young Man jumps up, then sits down again. He searches with his feet under the bed for his shoes, finds them, pulls them on with some difficulty, then, controlling his agitation, stands up.)

MARIA: But we left off on the train. I was still lying on the floor. *(Long pause.)*

(The Young Man makes an effort, would like to say something, then takes a step towards Maria. Almost unconscious of what she is doing, Maria too takes a step towards him, leaving the wall.)

MARIA: I may have mixed up the times a little, but it feels good, talking about it. The second will make the first clear to you. At first even I couldn't understand what was happening to me.

(Long pause. They take another hesitant step towards each other.)

MARIA: You're not bored? *(Pause.)* The times get mixed up a little. *(Pause.)* But it's good, talking about it. *(Pause.)* I'm grateful for the opportunity. *(Pause.)* It's a great relief. *(Pause.)* It's very good, talking about it. *(Pause.)* I won't be able to stop now. And afterwards, it'll be terribly difficult. But now, it's good. *(Pause.)* It's terribly good, talking about it. *(Pause.)* You can't imagine how good it is, talking about it. *(Pause.)* It's just simply good. *(Pause.)* I'll be free at last. *(Pause.)* It's good. Good. It's simply wonderfully good.

(Meanwhile, the Young Man takes another step towards Maria. Maria strews the broken glass in a large semicircle on the floor. The Young Man stops abruptly.)

MARIA: You want me to show how I

tried to strangle myself? *(Pause.)* Then I'll go on with the story. *(Pause.)* Like this, I pulled. The sleeves of that coat. *(Pause.)* What a fool. It makes me laugh. To think I could get off that easily. *(Pause.)* But we left off on the train, we're still on the train. *(Pause.)* But perhaps it's not very interesting.

(Very long pause. They look at each other. The Young Man attempts to say something. He is distressed.)

MARIA: Talk. *(Pause.)* You must excuse me, I talk too much. *(Pause.)* I'm very inconsiderate. *(Pause.)* Talk. *(Pause.)* Whatever became of that girl?

(Very long pause. They stand motionless, facing each other.)

MARIA: What do you want now?

(Very long pause. They stand motionless, facing each other, their nerves taut.)

MARIA: I see. *(Pause.)* Don't come any closer. *(Pause.)* Stay right where you are. *(Pause.)* I couldn't handle your feeling right now. Stay right there. *(Pause.)* Or sit down on the chair. *(Pause.)* What's the matter now? What happened? Nothing happened. I just got carried away and forgot about you. I'll try to guess what became of that girl now. *(Pause.)* She cried. *(Pause.)* And then, let's say, somebody cheered her up. *(Pause.)* I don't need your love right now. *(Pause.)* Somebody cheered her up. Thoroughly. *(Pause.)* And once again, nothing happened to you. *(Pause.)* As if nothing had happened. *(Pause.)* Nothing. *(Very long pause.)* Why don't you say something? *(Pause.)* That's how it was. *(Pause.)* Am I right? *(Pause)*. Am I very cruel? *(Pause.)* Why don't you say something?

(Treading on the broken glass, they reach each other. Pause. Softly, they touch each other's cheeks. Very long pause.)

MARIA: Well, then don't.

YOUNG MAN: Let me open the door.

MARIA: Why don't you sit down instead?

YOUNG MAN: I'd like to go outside for a while.

MARIA: Or I'll put you to bed. I'll bathe you, put you to bed, cover you, lull you to sleep, if you want. But I won't stop now.

YOUNG MAN: I can't stay here, either.

MARIA: It's too late, I can't stop now.

YOUNG MAN: I could never stay in any one place for long.

(They let go of each other.)

MARIA: That girl. I bet you made her up. You made her up for my sake, to make me talk.

YOUNG MAN: I could never love anybody.

MARIA: I protested. I played for time. Don't forget that.

YOUNG MAN: I wore my father's body. That confused you.

MARIA: I wanted it too, of course.

YOUNG MAN: We've got only our parents' body to wear. No other body. But in this way, we have one at least. Or so it seems.

MARIA: Go if you want to.

YOUNG MAN: I'm ashamed of myself, ashamed that this body is not me. It's just a body. It's not me. I'm weak. I feel sorry for myself, and make others feel sorry for me, and all the time, I'm ashamed. I can't stand it here, either.

MARIA: Then go.

YOUNG MAN: I feel all right only when I'm going. When there's nothing. Then it's good. When I can go, it's good. It's good when I'm going, and there's nothing. The next minute it's bad again, but then I can feel sorry for myself, and that's good, though I feel ashamed. It was good when I left that girl. I wasn't lying. It's best when I'm going.

MARIA: Then go.

YOUNG MAN: She thought I'd stay, but I pulled on my pants, and left.

MARIA: Go.

(The Young Man takes a few hesitant steps towards the door, stops, quickly goes up to the door, takes his coat from the hook, then suddenly looks back.)

(Maria stands motionless.)

YOUNG MAN: Say something more. *(Very long pause. He steps outside and stops in the no man's land between inside and outside.)* Just to show you how disgusting I am, I'll even ask you to help.

(Very long pause. Slowly, Maria goes to the chair and sits down.)

YOUNG MAN: Help. It's all the same to you now, I'm leaving just the same. You might as well help. *(Very long pause. The Young Man slowly comes back inside. The door remains ajar.)* There's nothing else you can do now, so help. I'm not ashamed to ask. *(Very long pause.)* Help. *(Very long pause. The Young Man takes a few steps towards the chair. On the way, he drops his coat. He stops behind Maria.)* Thanks. You've made me so uninhibited, thank you, I can even say thank you. For making me uninhibited. Thank you. *(Very long pause.)* I didn't go. *(Very long pause.)*

(Maria does not respond. The Young Man screams hysterically.)

YOUNG MAN: Should I kneel? Feel more gratitude? Or what? What should I do now?

MARIA: Why don't you shut the door?

(The Young Man goes to the door and closes it. He stays there. Very long pause.)

MARIA: And every morning, this meeting on the square. Just imagine. I'm walking, I always walked diagonally, and he came from the opposite direction. Meanwhile, the snow had melted. Spring had come. *(Pause.)* I'm telling you the most beautiful love story in the world. *(Pause.)* A beautiful, warm spring. *(Pause.)* You needn't worry, it happened long ago, in never-never land, I've never told it before but as I tell it now, it turns into a fairy tale too. *(Pause.)*

(During the following monologue, the Young Man walks around the room restlessly, trying to find a place for himself: he tries the corners, climbs under the bed, behind the stove, tries sitting, squatting, lying on the floor. He touches and smells everything, looks inside the night-table, the stove, but can't stay any place for more than a few seconds. On the other hand, he avoids the bed, he neither sits on it nor lies down on it, and his avoiding it must be made clear. His search for a place may be comic, morbid or awkward, as long as no part of the stage remains unexplored.)

MARIA: I never turned to look at him again. He didn't turn round either, I suppose. I can't say for sure. *(Pause.)* Except that once. One last time. But that was different, he asked me to, and I felt that something was about to happen. So that was different. *(Pause.)* I never turned around to look at him otherwise. Except, my back ached. As he walked away, there was always this terrible pain in the small of my back, as if my back knew that another day would have to pass before I could see him again, but when he came, he came again the next day, came towards me, and I often thought, what luck, that God had made not one day, but day after day, in succession, we looked to last the entire day. He came fatigued, but the next day, when the sun shone, he was in high spirits, he carried his hat in his hand and the breeze ruffled his hair, I loved that, that breeze, his hair, the breeze touching his hair, but whatever he looked like, it made no difference to me, because after a while I knew, I don't know how much later, I knew that his looks didn't matter at all, should they gouge out his eyes, pour acid in his face, should his head be missing one fine day, yes, his head, I wouldn't care as long as he came, as long as I could see him every day, as long as he comes every morning across the square, like that, diagonally, the way I had to, the way I did, too, under the planes. *(Pause.)* The planes burst into leaf very late. When the other trees are long since green, the plane is still bare. *(Pause.)* After a while, I can't say just when, but perhaps it makes no difference, I knew who he was, and he knew who I was, I knew that he knew. But he began to greet me before that. Very subtly. Nothing demonstrative. If he wore his hat he tipped it slightly, very slightly, and if he carried it in his hand, he bowed, he didn't nod, no, now he bowed! Very subtly, very

discreet. *(Pause.)* Naturally, I did not reciprocate. *(Pause.)* After a while, he stopped. *(Pause.)* I was dressing much better by then. With what Zaza sent. *(Pause.)* But I've already told you that. That's when I got that spring coat, the beige one. *(Pause.)* But that was appropriate, that except for my body, I should have nothing left of my own. *(Pause.)* I rented a bed. *(Pause.)* This cousin of mine got me a good job, not under my own name, of course, but under the woman's whose bed I rented. And so she gave me half of what I earned, the other half went for the bed. *(Pause.)* But I had the use of that bed only from eight at night till eight in the morning. *(Pause.)* I locked and unlocked the cabin doors and scrubbed the tubs. I was a supervisor at the bath-house. *(Pause.)* Yes, the bath-house. *(Pause.)* My clothes I kept under the bed. *(Pause.)* Imagine. The bath-house. Of all places, the bath-house. *(Pause.)* The afternoons I spent in a café. And once, he came in, too. *(Pause.)* We slept in one of those large double beds, the walls were damp, everything smelled, and the other woman, who shared the bed, held my hand as she slept. She was groping for a hand. *(Pause.)* But why the bath-house? Why? *(Pause.)* And after a while, the landlady wanted more, not just half. But I already gave you something from the packages! However, that wasn't enough, either. *(Pause.)* When the sun was out I didn't feel like going to a café. And as I strolled in the park, enjoying the sun and feeling high, once, on one of these afternoons, he came again. I knew it was him, my back began to ache, it began to ache right away, because he wasn't facing me now, as in the morning, he was coming from behind. I didn't quicken my pace at first, just pretended to stroll along. Taking in the view. But I knew it was him. I wouldn't turn around, but I knew, never have I known anybody's footsteps better than his. He followed me. I thought I'd go into that street there, and shake him off. I didn't want to talk to him. He followed. I don't know why, but talking was out. Not that. Just the looking. I thought I'd continue walking and lose him, because there were a lot of people around, but some place where there were fewer people, he wouldn't dare be seen with me. He followed. In that case, he wouldn't mind even if I had the plague. We walked along the street, the sun was shining, I was up front, he was behind, the street deserted, only the eaves dripping quietly, and I was scared. I don't know why. But I felt his fear. I couldn't very well turn around and address him, it ached terribly, him following me, and the fear ached too, and I could feel that, like me, he couldn't speak, that he couldn't do anything except follow me. So we walked. I turned the corner, never mind where, hoping he'd give up, but he followed me still. Also, I pretended I was in a hurry. But then he'd pick up the pace, too, calling my bluff. I broke into a run. It was getting dark by then. He didn't run, but he followed, and after a while there was no place to run, and he caught up. Meanwhile it had grown dark. *(Pause.)* And in the morning, we walked under the planes just as before. When we met, he stopped. I passed him. The trees were still bare. *(Pause.)* Sometimes, in the afternoon, he'd stay away. And he didn't stop in the morning either any more, as if he were trying to tell me something, because things between us were worked out. The rules were being established. *(Pause.)* For example, sometimes we walked in step. Left, right, left, right, three little monkeys in a pot. And I knew he was thinking that too, and we were enjoying ourselves, we laughed. We didn't laugh, just walked in step, and that meant we were enjoying ourselves. It was like laughing. *(Pause.)* At other times, it was horrible. We couldn't keep in step, no matter what, there was such sadness. As if there were no end in sight. Just these horrible streets. We waited for evening, so it would end, but the evenings were growing longer by then, and I couldn't go home by eight any more. *(Pause.)* Home. *(Pause.)* We couldn't stop. *(Pause.)* That

other woman held my hand, and I too pretended I was sleeping. This was my home then. This hand. *(Pause.)* And then he quickened his pace, which confused me. It confused me. And he passed me. He didn't turn around, just continued walking. He passed me. This confused me. But I couldn't stop, either, and as I followed him, the sun was shining, I understood that he couldn't bear it any longer. We wanted it to end. He had broken the rules. So let it end. We walked on. I stopped. Had it ended, that would've been unbearable too by then. I turned and walked the other way. Let it end. He broke into a run and passed me again. This confused me. But now I couldn't very well turn back again, I didn't want it to end that much, I followed him, and understood that these were the new rules now, and they had to be followed. *(Pause.)* From then on, he walked in front. *(Pause.)* And the woman whose bed I was renting argued that I was getting tips, besides, the job's under her name. I paid. *(Pause.)* The sun was shining, always. *(Pause.)* I followed him. *(Pause.)* The sun was shining. *(Pause.)* This time the evening came with him walking up front. *(Pause.)* At noon I had a quart of milk and two rolls. I was pretty. Blonde, pale and thin. *(Pause.)* Like the girl you made up for my sake. *(Pause.)* If he met someone he knew and had to stop for a chat, I passed him, and waited.

YOUNG MAN: I wasn't lying.

MARIA: Sometimes I pretended to disappear.

YOUNG MAN: I wasn't lying.

MARIA: But only rarely, because I saw when I came out from behind a door or an advertising pillar, I saw how this hurt him. *(Pause.)* Then he stopped in front of a gate and turned to me. This confused me. So he must've changed the rules again. But he did it so fast, I had no time to stop, a brown gate, an old brown gate, this confused me, but maybe I didn't even want to stop and would've passed him had he not spoken, softly, very softly, why won't you speak to me, Maria? This confused me. And then, I stopped after all. I thought it would only be for a moment, I wanted to get away, but I saw his hand on the bell, and he rang, he was watching me and I was watching him, and maybe that's why I couldn't move, and somebody was already opening the gate, and he motioned to me courteously, go on in, so courteous and fine, as if this were the most natural thing in the world, a woman stood behind the gate and she didn't look at us and didn't greet us, she just looked straight ahead, as if looking at us would strain her eyes, that's how she led us across the yard, with nothing but fields beyond, she stopped in front of a door and opened it for me, for me, I knew, and I entered. He closed the door and turned the key twice. There we were surrounded by whitewashed walls in a nice, clean room. The sun shone through the window. It shone on a crucifix above a white iron bed. An iron stove. A white chair. A white enamel basin and jug. A towel. Nothing else. *(Pause.)* He stood by the door, I held the back of the chair. *(Pause.)* It was quiet. *(Pause.)* Like now. *(Pause.)* He stroked me, because he didn't caress me, no, he caressed me, he was inside me, after all, he couldn't caress me like that, he stroked me, as if I were inside him, he stroked me all over, stroked me inside and outside, until, no, it wasn't like that, he just stroked me, stroked my lips, and as if he were stroking my womb he stroked me without end, and I knew he stroked me like that so I'd speak, so I'd let out a sound, any sound, he stroked me, there was nothing else, his body one fine caress, his heavy body, beneath his body even the suffocation a tender touch, and he stroked me until, oh, forever, for such a long time, until the pain came, pain in a beautiful, misty meadow, that's where the pain reached me, so this too is over now, but still I would not speak. Perhaps we fainted, perhaps we slept. Yet the sound of footsteps could now and then be heard beneath the window. We slept in each other's arms. Yet I seemed to see that

terrible room. It was night. *(Pause.)* Night. *(Pause.)* That's how it happened. *(Pause.)* It was afternoon when they came to get me at the bath-house. The second time around, they got me at the bath-house. I had just come outside in that spring coat through the back, the way the staff used. They took my arm gently from behind and whispered in my ear, not a word! *(Pause.)* What would I have said? And to whom? *(Pause.)* They blindfolded me. But I knew they were taking me away. The car sped along a highway. *(Pause.)* We were in this room only twice. *(Pause.)* Twice. *(Pause.)* They didn't say a word. Where's the joyride to, gentlemen, if you don't mind my asking? You see, I knew what was coming. But they said nothing. I thought I knew what was coming. Then we made a turn, the gravel squeaked under the wheels. It must've been some sort of a courtyard, maybe evening, and cool. They led me up the stairs and opened a door. They pushed me in. They didn't follow, just closed the door. Here, too, there was silence. And a peculiar smell. But I could feel that I was not alone. *(Pause.)*

(From this point, the Young Man begins to raise his voice. He starts in a whisper, but by the time he says the last words, he is shouting. Accordingly, Maria too must raise her voice until, quite independently of her meaning, she is also shouting.)

YOUNG MAN: Enough!

MARIA: Somebody took a step towards me and untied the blindfold. The others started beating me.

YOUNG MAN: Enough!

MARIA: These two did the beating. The third watched from an armchair.

YOUNG MAN: Enough.

MARIA: That, you see, was part of the method.

YOUNG MAN: Don't!

MARIA: They wrapped me in a blanket and beat the soles of my feet with a rubber hose. The third questioned me calmly from the armchair. They stuffed salt in my mouth.

YOUNG MAN: Enough!

MARIA: I came to in a cellar. How strange, I'm still breathing.

YOUNG MAN: Don't!

MARIA: They took me away, again, by car. And I didn't know if it was day or night. We went up a wide stone staircase and it was so terribly peaceful, with people coming and going on the stairs, and these two said, good day, Comrade Attorney and things like that.

YOUNG MAN: Enough!

MARIA: How do you do, Margitka? I remember this Margitka perfectly.

YOUNG MAN: Enough!

MARIA: When we stopped, they knocked on a door. Come in, someone called from inside, but to me it sounded like his voice, and I went mad.

YOUNG MAN: Don't!

MARIA: I must've gone mad, you see, and so I must've just imagined that they removed my blindfold. That they removed the blindfold and opened the door. He was sitting at his desk, conversing with a woman, and the woman was standing, leaning against the desk, just like that, lightly leaning against the desk.

YOUNG MAN: Don't!

MARIA: At first he didn't even look at us, he was talking to the woman, but they handed him a dossier and left, and the woman left too through a side door, but first she gave him a sign that they'd carry on later. He didn't recognize me, but I saw him.

YOUNG MAN: No!

MARIA: At last, I saw him.

YOUNG MAN: No!

MARIA: He jumped to his feet, but it was too late. I had seen him. I saw him at last. What're you doing here? What a ridiculous thing to ask me. He was holding the dossier they had given him.

YOUNG MAN: Enough!

MARIA: I had never said a single word to him, ever. Not one word. Obviously, I will not take this case. What a ridiculous thing to say to me. But thank God, I never said a single word to him. Not one word, ever.

YOUNG MAN: Enough!

MARIA: And with that, he rushed out of the room.

YOUNG MAN: Don't!

MARIA: Then the cellar again, they took me down there again. And for a long time, nothing happened. I don't know for how long, but for a long time. Then they resumed the beatings.

YOUNG MAN: Enough!

MARIA: But I could feel his presence, up above. I didn't think about him, but I felt it.

YOUNG MAN: Enough!

MARIA: I felt nothing else, not the beatings, only that we're in the same house. The house hurts.

YOUNG MAN: Enough!

MARIA: We're in the same house. The house hurts.

(The Young Man rips the door open, runs out, and disappears.)

MARIA: The same house. *(Very long pause.)* We were in the same house.

(Maria sits motionless in her chair and nothing happens for at least two minutes: indeed, were it not for the fact that Maria's waiting becomes increasingly tense until she can hardly restrain herself from jumping up, we'd think that this is either an intermission, or that the play is over. But this stylized, lonely and defenceless tenseness proves to be a kind of intermission. When the waiting has passed the highest point of intensity, the Young Man reappears in the door way, from behind his place of concealment, and very slowly enters the room. He drags himself to the bed and collapses. Gradually, Maria's tenseness dies away. Another long pause follows, as long as the previous one. They sit, exhausted. When the pause passes the highest point of intensity, Maria stands up very slowly, turns just as slowly, and moving her head very, very slowly, looks around the room. The door remains open. Exhausted, the Young Man sits loosely and motionlessly on the edge of the bed. Very slowly, Maria takes a few steps, then very, very slowly bends and begins to pick up the pieces of broken glass from the floor. When she has finished, she takes the broken glass to the chair without speeding up her movements, pours the broken glass from her palm onto the seat, arranges it in a small pile, then very slowly goes over to the enamel basin, picks up the jug, puts it to the side, takes the basin over to the bed, and lays it at the Young Man's feet. Pause. She kneels, slides closer, takes one of the Young Man's feet in her hands, and looks up at him for the first time, straight into his eyes. The Young Man stares apathetically into space. Maria pulls one shoe off the Young Man's foot, then the other, arranges them inside the shoes. She pushes the basin under his two naked feet and stands. She takes his hand and unbuttons his cuffs, first one, then the other; first she picks up his hand, and only then does she unbutton his cuff. She runs her finger gently along the Young Man's neck, then proceeds to unbutton his shirt. Pause. She unbuckles his belt. She pulls off his shirt and places it at the foot of the bed. She unzips his fly, bends over him, puts one arm over his naked shoulder and slips it under his arm so she can lift him slightly. With her free hand she pulls off his pants. This is a difficult manoeuvre and she has difficulty, but the Young Man does not assist her. Pause. After slipping the pants down halfway, she kneels again, takes the legs and pulls the pants off. She stands, puts the pants down next to the shirt at the foot of the bed. She bends over the Young Man again, lifts him slightly, just like before, then squats down in front of him and pulls off his underpants. She stands and neatly places the underpants next to the rest of the Young Man's clothing. She puts her arms around the Young Man and pulls him up. The Young Man stands in the washbasin, naked. Maria goes back for the jug and takes it to the basin. Pause. She pours the water into the basin. She kneels, takes a washcloth from the basin, submerges it repeatedly until it is thoroughly soaked, wrings it out, slips it on her and, and looks up at the Young Man.

MARIA: Nice, fresh water. *(Pause.)*

The Young Man does not respond. Maria straightens up and with the washcloth, begins to wash the Young Man's neck, shoulders, chest and back. Meanwhile, she rinses it several times, wrings it dry, squats and stands repeatedly. When she has washed him to the waist, she begins to speak in a soft monotone, as if reciting a lullaby, but continues washing him down at the same pace as

before; she washes the Young Man's loins, backside, goes between his thighs with the washcloth, then wipes the thighs, then, squatting and finally kneeling, she washes his legs and feet.

MARIA: It was summer once again, and once again I could cross the square. The plane trees are at their best then, as the sunlight filters through them, I didn't tell you about this light yet, it can't be done, but though I made sure to cross the square in the morning, in the morning again, he wasn't there, nor in the afternoon. *(Pause.)* He was so thoroughly absent, I couldn't leave. *(Pause.)* Ever again, I thought. *(Pause.)* But then he came towards me, like before, across the square, he came, I went, but I didn't think, somehow, I didn't think it would be like this, but then, a year had passed since. *(Pause.)* It was summer, and hot. *(Pause.)* He stopped, and I stopped too. We stood like that, in the sunlight. An ordinary morning, with people coming and going. Maybe he passed me first, I don't know any more, I simply can't remember, perhaps I don't want to, perhaps it's too important, anyway, I passed him by. *(Pause.)* Revenge. And I was there the next morning too. And the morning after that. As if I wanted to forget, though I knew I didn't want to forget, I wanted revenge. I've got the right to cross this square, after all, I've got the right. But it didn't last long. He stopped. He was thin now, though not pale, just some yellow skin on an unfamiliar face. It was plainly skin on an unfamiliar face. He said, turn around, Maria, just this once. I wish to say goodbye. I'm going. This confused me. And he went past me. He had no briefcase. This confused me. He went past me. I said nothing, even then. Or ever. But I had to turn around. Yes, I had to, then. He walked across the square without looking back, not he, but I could see him pulling something out. He pulled it out of his pocket. *(Pause.)* That was his goodbye. *(Pause.)* It's the surest way, they say. He shot himself through the mouth. *(Pause.)* He had put and end to my life.

(Maria straightens up, walks slowly to the stove, takes the towel off the wire stretched across the room between the stove pipe and the wall, and takes it back to the bed. The Young Man stands motionless. Carefully, Maria wipes his body down to the thighs, sits him on the bed, pushes the basin aside, kneels, and carefully wipes his legs and feet. She stands and hangs the towel back on the wire. She goes back to the bed, draws back the cover, lays him down, covers him, and arranges the pillow under his head. Pause. For a moment, they look at each other. Then Maria takes the clothes from the foot of the bed, carries them to the chair, folds them up very neatly, and places them on the back of the chair. She goes back to the bed, pours the water back from the basin into the jug, takes them both back to their original places, and arranges them as before, with the jug inside the basin. She picks the Young Man's coat up from the floor, takes it to the door, and hangs it on the hook. The door is still open. She goes to the night-table and stands with her back to us, so we must guess what she is doing. She opens the door, takes out a glass, pours wine into it, puts the bottle back, closes the door, pulls out the drawer, pours white powder from the vial into the wine, stirs it, puts the box back, and drinks the wine. Pause. She looks at the Young Man.)

MARIA: It's finished. *(She turns, goes to the chair, brushes the pieces of broken glass into her palm, and with her other hand, places the clothes on the seat. She goes back to the bed, takes the Young Man's hand, and pours the broken glass from her palm into his.)*

MARIA: I didn't think it possible.

YOUNG MAN: Just like I said. *(Pause.)*

(They exchange a quick glance. Then Maria leaves through the open door, disappearing slowly in the white space, her figure receding and sinking, first her legs, then her torso, until only her head is visible. In the orchestra pit the harpsichordist stands up and goes out. Maria's head, too, disappears in the distance. The lutenist begins to strum awkwardly and irrationally on his instrument. The cellist stands up, too, turns off the small lamp on his music stand, and leaves. The lutenist continues strumming on his lute. Very slowly and with dignity, the curtain falls.)

IN FOCUS

THE SEVENTIES: STEPS BACK

Iván T. Berend, the President of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, an economic historian, has published much on the antecedents and history of the economic reforms in Hungary. In the present article he describes the ideological and political background of the hold-ups and retreats of the seventies.

When the reform ideas of 1966 were legislated on in 1968, there was a clear notion concerning further progress. This included a price system which would better reflect costs and international market movements, and the reform of central planning by ending obligatory directives, the break-up of giant enterprises and trusts into smaller economic units and an end to their monopolistic positions, a freer flow of capital, including the issue of bonds and the transformation of the banking system, as well as the abolition of restrictions on the movement of manpower and wages and incomes that better reflect performance.

In the early 1970s, however, these steps were not taken, and even economic changes which had already been set in motion were reversed. According to Berend, one reason for this was that the earlier reforms were rejected in the other socialist countries and that the Hungarian Party and state leadership had to defend itself against criticism from abroad.

At the same time, the internal critique of the reform gathered strength. Vested interests backed such criticism. The reform mechanism demanded much of management that had earlier operated in considerably more comfortable circumstances. The emphasis on professional skills alarmed those persons who occupied leading positions exclusively on the basis of their political and ideological reliability and personal contacts. Such people dominated middle management.

This, however, naturally, was not made explicit in the criticism. The defence of socialism, and the defence of the interests of industrial workers were the slogans relied on. It is certainly true that the standard of living of the rural population rose faster than the average after the introduction of the reform and caught up with the average standard of living of industrial workers, but it was not right to say that industrial workers financed the rising standard of living of village people. The truth was that the successful combination of large-scale and household plot farming, and the self-exploitation of the peasants, absorbing almost all their leisure, explained the rise in their incomes. It was this that also substantially increased the production of food and thus also improved the supply of food products to towns and the standard of living

of industrial workers. In 1972 the opponents of the reform obtained the support of some of the top political leaders and demanded the amendment of reform measures. The reformers were forced into a flexible retreat. They made certain concessions, at the expense of which the basic achievements of the reform could be maintained, even if in a diluted form.

The retreat manifested itself primarily in the following measures:

—the fifty largest industrial firms were placed under direct central control,
—the taxed and centralised part of enterprise income was increased,
—the differentiation in wages was limited as well as the possibilities of differentiation in profit sharing,
—household farming and the industrial supplementary activities of the farm cooperatives were restricted.

The effect of the higher progressive taxation of household farming was indicated by an interview in the daily *Népszabadság* published in 1975. The interviewee complained: "This too is like the kulak list, but this time the limit is not 35 acres, but 50,000 forints annual income".

As a result of increased taxation of household farming, the number of sows on the household plots and in the auxiliary farms declined from 417,000 to 290,000 in the second half of 1974.

The reform was attacked with ideological arguments, such as that state ownership was of a higher order than cooperative ownership, that the household plot could not be considered part of a socialist economy, that it was a mistake to rate professional and managerial skills higher than political suitability in the selection of managers, that bourgeois or petty-bourgeois ways were threatening society, and that professional people were overpayed and given too high a status.

In addition, a Central Committee Working Team on Cultural Policy issued a statement on "The anti-Marxist views of some social scientists", and a purge among sociologists followed.

As part of these moves Rezső Nyers and Lajos Fehér lost their positions as Secretaries to the Central Committee, Jenő Fock ceased to be Prime Minister and Mátyás Timár Deputy Prime Minister.

However, the politics of a strong hand and setting things in order did not improve the economic situation and indeed contributed after the oil crisis to the insufficient response of the Hungarian economy. This, between 1977 and 1979, led to a further internal change in the line. The reformist groups again became stronger within the leadership, and the spokesmen of the opposition to the reform lost their positions. Since it had been possible to save the basic achievements of the reforms of 1966–1968, those could then be continued.

Berend, T. Iván: "A magyar reform sorsfordulója az 1970-es években" (The fatal turn of the Hungarian reform in the 1970s). *Valóság*, No. 1, 1988, pp. 1–27.

R. A.

FIN-DE-SIÈCLE PREMONITIONS

For two centuries now the political class in Hungary has shown itself to be strong-willed. Both the supporters and opponents of absolutism and dictatorial government by terror have always been resolute. The period of consolidation following 1956 set out in much the same way. Those who favoured and those who opposed reforms presented their views in the strongest terms. But since only quasi-reforms were realised and not real reforms, caution, hesitation and procrastination have gained the upper hand. This is what Gombár terms *velleities*. Yet a political structure providing for general agreement and tolerance, and making compromises possible, not only has to tolerate differing political opinions and wills, but must also rely on mutual tolerance and accord between the different wills.

After formulating these views, Csaba Gombár mentions concrete examples in Hungarian science, culture and politics. Elemér Hankiss writes of a "slovenly society", Gáspár Miklós Tamás identifies trends of "balkanisation" in contemporary Hungary. According to Magdolna Balázs the generation born in the period of consolidation to which she herself also belongs, is incapable of identifying itself either with the official party and state institutional system, or the populist and civic rights opposition; according to Miklós Szabó, the existing economic structure cannot be subjected to the market; according to Zsolt Papp, value systems are confused, disturbances concerning values have come about and the attitude of not being committed to anything now has some standing in Hungary; according to Tamás Kolosi, the structural groups of society have remained latent, the positions cannot become distinguished, momentary interests obscure long-term strategies, and consequently unfought clashes characterise contemporary Hungarian society.

Later, Csaba Gombár strives to sketch a logical outline of the past thirty years. He identifies the following changes and new phenomena compared to the 1945–1956 period and to the neighbouring socialist countries:

1. Compared to the earlier over-ideologised condition, pragmatism has become stronger in politics. The image of the future is outlined as practical goals of modernisation, replacing ideological visions.

2. Openness is on the whole much greater, but steps backward have been taken at frequent intervals, and it is therefore possible to speak of fluctuating openness. The expansion of openness includes the growth in the number of periodicals, newspapers and mimeographed media, in political debates on the radio and television, and the proliferation of amateur movements and societies.

3. The judgement of the foreign policy situation has become more realistic. In earlier decades, and even centuries, the political class considered the foreign policy elbowroom of the country to be either narrower or wider than it really was.

4. The necessity for reform in the economy and in society has become accepted, the earlier revolutionary attitude has been replaced by a reform approach.

5. A process has occurred which is sometimes called a second bourgeois development by Hungarian historians. This means a rise in the standard of living, the variety and enrichment of Hungarian culture, more travel abroad. Replacing the heroes of labour, heroes of enterprise are at the centre of public interest. Nobody any longer speaks of Stakhanovites, instead of them successful managers, such as Ede Horváth, General Manager of the Rába Engineering Works of Győr, Róbert Burgert, General Manager of the Bábolna State Farm, and Sándor Demján, General Manager of *Skála* chain stores have become "heroes" who are known all over the country.

6. The carefully progressive centre has become the basic political force. This centre has gradually created a consensus involving the different communist factions, the former social democrats, the writers, the churches, and finally the Hungarian diaspora in the West. This political centre had become groggy after 1974, when it incorporated the opponents of the reform but has again gathered strength in recent years.

After this Csaba Gombár explains what has not changed. His ideas can be summed up as follows:

1. Many Hungarians have not digested the events of 1956.

2. Democracy within the Party lags behind democratisation in other areas.

3. The definition of the majority that supports the policy of the government is uncertain. Leading politicians stress that they rely on the majority. At the same time they tend to condemn this very majority for actual or assumed shortcomings (petty-bourgeois behaviour, aping of the West, materialism, nationalism).

Finally, Gombár lists the following questions which remain unanswered: national identity, value crisis, civic society, Central European consciousness, national question, Jewish question, Gypsy question, religion, churches, basic communities.

Gombár, Csaba: "Velleitásaink" (Our velleities). *Századvég*, No. 4–5, 1987, pp. 5–26.

R. A.

REFORMSPEAK

In Hungary nowadays professional politicians keep on emphasising the need for reforms. At the same time, according to Fricz, hardly any progress has been made. Although he considers the tax reform in 1988 a step in the right direction, when he speaks of reform he really means organizational and structural reform the introduction of which would fundamentally change the functioning of the political, economic, cultural, etc. institutional systems.

He approaches this apparent contradiction through four questions.

1. Who is interested in the reform? In general, everybody approves its introduction, but neither the average man, nor the average professional man, maintains contact with the narrow group of experts who work on its execution. Consequently, the reform steps have no mass base. Being introduced from above, the majority do not feel them to be their own and there are of course those who feel threatened by them.

2. How can a reform be realised which can rely on cooperation between above and below? Other attitudes are necessary to ensure the success of the reform, individuals must become entrepreneurs in the economy, and citizens in politics. But there are few precedents in Hungary.

3. How can one prevent, in such circumstances, that a reform should be introduced which does not bring about essential and substantial changes? According to Fricz, there are no institutions to ensure the social control of political decisions.

4. How can the reform in that case mobilise the necessary energies of the masses? According to Fricz, the reform has to provide a flexible framework for individuals and teams on the job. That will develop individual enterprise, decision-making and the acceptance of responsibility.

The experience of earlier reforms (1953, 1968) shows that instead of conservative reforms introduced from above, a reform movement is needed which is initiated and supported from below. Two circumstances may contribute to this:

1. The intensification of the crisis can force the reforms, and 2. the political leadership can become more open to the channelling of the autonomous endeavours. An example for this was a 1982 government resolution which legalised work in the second economy, earlier illegal or semi-legal, making possible the establishment of small enterprises, partnerships, etc.

Fricz identifies as the biggest danger to the reforms the fact that, while we read and hear more and more about reform, the absence of the concrete measures turns it, in the eyes of the public, into an abstraction. It becomes a myth and its coming is passively awaited.

Fricz, Tamás: "Az első reform előtt. Töprengések a reform bevezethetőségéről és tömegbázisáról" (Before the first reform. Meditations concerning the possibility of introducing the reform and its mass base). *Valóság*, No. 1, 1988, pp. 27–36.

R. A.

ETHICAL CRISIS

As a young university student, András Hegedüs was a member of the underground Communist Party and took part in the Hungarian resistance. In 1955–1956, enjoying Mátyás Rákosi's support, he was Prime Minister of Hungary. In the sixties he was one of

the revivers of Hungarian sociology, and was the head of the Sociological Research Group of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences until his dismissal in 1968. The sociologist who was replaced for condemning the Warsaw Pact intervention in Czechoslovakia, has since then frequently published in the West, but from time to time articles by him have also appeared in Hungarian periodicals.

In the present piece he draws attention to the universal mythification of economic interests by Hungarian economists. He attributes this primarily to the activities of the reformers. These social scientists—in opposition to the conservatives who consider the principal motive of conscious action in a socialist society to be the pursuit of the common interest—incline to identify particular interests as the main incentive.

However, Hegedüs points out, many people frequently do not act in accordance with their interests, but often even contrary to them. To understand such situations, it is important to analyse the medium of social consciousness including moral attitudes, the aesthetics of everyday life, the conscious or traditional commitment to values, the view about the right conduct of life. This blend of elements is called *ethos* by Hegedüs.

In modern society—including the societies of the East Central European type—conflicting ethics, or at least such which differ from each other in essential features, coexist. Their nature cannot be deduced unequivocally from economic conditions since, on an identical level of development, it is possible for very different ethics to develop, depending on the given environment. The economic system is nevertheless the most important determinant. It follows that in order to understand economic activities it is necessary to explore the formation and mechanisms of the principal types of *ethos*.

In contemporary East European societies the power elite invokes the *ethos* of socialist egalitarianism. In the formation of this the glaring contradictions of early capitalism, the socialist utopias, the ideas of Marxism and of anarchism all played an important role. When the socialism of the East European type was being shaped, it appeared at the start that the socialist egalitarian *ethos* would cover the whole of society. After some time, however, a new kind of inequality started, including the formation of a hierarchy. This hierarchy took shape as a system of privileges granted to the bureaucracy and to a professional class which was important from the political aspect. (The notion of a bureaucratic *ethos* is a category suitable for the analysis of societies of various periods, but as a special concept it can also be used for the interpretation of the characteristics of a socialist bureaucracy.) The economic crisis of the past decade placed the socialist bureaucratic *ethos* in a state of crisis, together with the principle serving the justification of the new structure of inequality according to which, in the hierarchic order, income had to be distributed according to the different degrees of responsibility borne by the individuals.

In the meantime, the Protestant *ethos* has continued to survive in socialist societies. A very important obstacle to its full development has been, however, that in these societies it is hardly possible to establish bourgeois private property. The tragic-hedonistic ethical attitude has also survived, and is even spreading rapidly. According to Hegedüs, this hedonism is an alien body in contemporary Hungarian society, and is, in addition self-destructive, since it involves a drive to make more and more money which destroys even the strongest personalities.

It is the *ethos* of socialist humanism which rises above the capitalist (protestant) and the bureaucratic (socialist) ethic, as the tragic-hedonistic ethic represents a retreat and not progress. The substance of the new ethic is that after having laid the foundations of their living, people spend their energy on developing their personality, on learning, and on the enrichment of human contacts. In contemporary Hungary the development of the humanistic socialist *ethos* can only be observed

in marginal groups, including the movement of independent clubs, the production associations eliminating subordination, in various sections of the political opposition, and in the institutions of the unofficial culture.

In the meantime, Hungarian society struggles with a moral crisis. Indications of this are loafing on the job, spreading corruption, and suicide which has become pandemic. The centres of power should be able to help indirectly in the solution of the moral crisis, primarily through reforms which change the forms of ownership.

Hegedüs, András: "Tézisek az ethoszválságról és a gazdasági krízisről" (Theses on the *ethos* crisis and the economic crisis). *Tervgazdasági Fórum*, No. 2, 1988.

M. L.

REBIRTH OF *MINERVA*, A UNIVERSITY JOURNAL

The University of Pécs owed its existence—after some perfunctory and more or less legendary beginnings in the Renaissance—to the Peace Treaty of Trianon, which deprived Hungary of both of her complete, four-faculty, regional universities. The University of Pozsony (except for the Faculty of Theology which moved to Sopron) was transferred to Pécs, and with it went a young teacher of literature, Tivadar Thienemann. Thienemann soon realised the vital importance of high-quality publishing for a new intellectual centre, and—in spite of overwhelming financial and political difficulties—started a new journal, which he called *Minerva*, as a forum for all those intellectual endeavours in Hungary, which corresponded to his highly ambitious but at the same time very tolerantly conceived programme of historical literary criticism. *Minerva* survived from 1922 to 1944, and became the main organ of the different schools of *Geistesgeschichte* (this apparently untranslatable German term was originally created as a translation of the English Moral Sciences) in Hungary. Considering the rather troubled intellectual history of Hungary, it is not difficult to understand that reception and (retrospective) evaluation of *Minerva* was always (to say the least) far from even-handed, therefore Tibor Tüskés's paper must be looked on as a truly pioneering endeavour.

First of all, Tüskés explains clearly and cogently the nature and character of *Geistesgeschichte* as cultivated by Thienemann and as it appeared in the major articles published by *Minerva*. Thienemann "admits the effects of western ideas and investigates the influence of European literatures, insisting as he does on a history of literature with broader perspectives; at the same time, however, starting from the idea of the spontaneous parallel development of individual national literatures, he does not identify Hungarian literature as a mere receptive medium of Western inspirations, but looks to it, first of all, for something of special and autochtonous value, which makes it European just in its originality." *Minerva* included broad comparative studies as well as essays serving a relevant national self-knowledge. Though the young Thienemann undoubtedly started under the influence of German scholarship, his mature concept of *Geistesgeschichte* comprised in itself other inspirations as well, and can more appropriately be considered as something like an original Hungarian variety of the (Anglo–American) history of ideas, or perhaps still more of the (later) French *histoire des mentalités*. With its exceptional openness to other disciplines such as sociology, linguistic, history of art, history of civilization, folklore, research into myths and fables, psychology and philosophy, the literary scholarship of Thienemann and of *Minerva* paved the way for fruitful synthetic and holistic perspectives. Thienemann himself set forth (anticipating later structuralist developments) a characteristic and well-defined concept of literature based on the triangle of author, work, and public; but he never excluded other opinions and other kinds of

approximations, be they as far from his own point of view as classical positivism. *Minerva* thus became one of the leading intellectual organs of the Hungary of the time, with an influence far surpassing the small number of copies in which it was published.

This article on the periodical of the old University appears in the first number of a new journal, started under the auspices of the recently reestablished Faculty of Arts of the Janus Pannonius University in Pécs. In a completely changed (and changing) political, economic, and social environment the new university-periodical *Janus* has of course to find its proper face and must evidently differ almost in every respect from its historical antecedent. The first year of *Janus*, with its conscientiously edited three numbers, gives rise to the hope that the new journal will continue the tradition of uncompromising standards and open-minded tolerance practised by the old. In an age too ready to forget its intellectual antecedents, we follow its course with keen interest and anxious sympathy.

Tüskés, Tibor: "A *Minerva* mai szemmel" (*Minerva* through today's eyes). *Janus*, Vol. 1, No. 1. Autumn 1986. pp. I. 2. 1–I. 2. 13.

L. V.

CHRISTMAS AND EASTER CUSTOMS OF THE SOUTH SLAVS OF PEST COUNTY

In 1690, when Buda and the overwhelming part of Hungary had already been liberated from Turkish occupation, the Patriarch of Ipek, Arsen Chernoevich requested admission to Hungary together with 40,000 Christian families. The Patriarch himself, and the merchants and craftsmen who came with him, settled at Szentendre, which is on the right bank of the Danube, 15 miles north of Buda. Small-town prosperity ensued, and Szentendre became, in the 18th century, one of the centres of Serbian culture. The poorer immigrant families settled in the neighbouring villages, including Pomáz. Buda and Pest liberated from Turkish rule also had a substantial Serbian and Croat population. (The way these terms were used at the time do not always provide sufficient information for distinguishing between Serbs and Croats.) On Csepel island, south of Budapest, South Slavs fleeing from Turks had settled already in the 15th century. In the twentieth century, Szentendre became an artists' colony, today many buildings house museums. Today too there is an Orthodox Cathedral, but the town has hardly any South Slav population left, just as the Serbian population of the Tabán district of Buda has disappeared. The language still survives in the villages, and so do customs, although industrial employment, owing to the proximity of the capital, has made strong inroads into the traditional way of life.

Mária Kiss presents the customs attached to the great feasts of the year, to Christmas, Easter, to the Saturday preceding Palm Sunday, which is called "the Saturday of Lazarus," to Good Friday, as well as to kermesses. She is interested in how these customs have changed in the past approximately 150 years. The historic survey is assisted by the fact that South Slav intellectuals in Hungary have, as early as the last century, described the ethnography of their compatriots. (These included György Berkity on the customs of the Croats on Csepel island in 1839, Jakov Ignatovic on the customs of the Serbs of the Tabán district of Buda and of Szentendre, Pavle Sofric on the life of the Catholic Croats and Dalmatians at Szentendre at the end of the last century.) Continuity is provided by the circumstance that at the beginning of the 20th century, in the interwar period, both Serbian and Hungarian ethnographers studied them.

The writings of Ignatovic provide a colourful picture of Serbian small-town life, where the urban elite and artisans, with differing etiquettes, arranged their own balls. In addition to the fashionable dances of the

period, they danced different variants of the *kolo*, the Serbian national dance.

Customs involving magic still survived at recent Christmasses: straw in sheaves was taken into houses, and the laying of the table and the food eaten on Christmas Eve were prescribed. Hungarian, Serbian and Croat verses were recited. Lent was strictly kept. On the Saturday of Lazarus the burning of the dirt swept together in the courtyard, and washing, served purification. At that time a green branch was carried around in the villages. On the first Monday after Easter, meals were taken to the cemeteries. The consecration of cattle took place on Sundays next to the cross in the centre of the village. The kermesses have lasted longest. They sometimes went on for two or three days. A special cake is baked for this occasion, which is offered to all participants. Visitors from Yugoslavia, families which moved there from the surroundings of Budapest, attend the kermesses. The *kolo* is still danced in the courtyard of the church, but already in a new form. At Pomáz the kermesse has acquired secular and political hues, being linked to the organization of the National Minority Days.

Kiss, Mária: "A szokásformák állandósága és változékonysága a Pest megyei délszlávoknál" (The permanence and changeability of customs amongst the South Slavs in Pest County). *Népi kultúra — népi társadalom* (Popular culture—popular society). Yearbook of the Ethnographical Institute of the Academy of Sciences. Vol. XIV, 1987, pp. 317–336.

T. H.

HUNGARIAN VINTAGE BALL IN SOUTH CHICAGO

For some time now more and more has appeared in Hungary about Hungarians overseas, the descendants of emigrants of the turn of the century between the two wars, 1940s, post-1945 and 1956. What was lacking almost entirely, however, was the investigation of the ethnic culture of the Hungarians in the USA and Canada. What was done was the work of American and Canadian social anthropologists. Zoltán Fejős, who writes about the cultural symbols by which contemporary Hungarian communities express their Hungarian roots in the multiethnic environment of the United States, therefore provides something new.

Fejős illustrates a theoretical question by describing the vintage ball arranged by a Hungarian Calvinist congregation in South Chicago in October 1984. The congregation itself operated in the suburb of Burnside between 1910 and 1960. At that time this suburb still had a considerable Hungarian population, in addition to Poles, Italians, and other Caucasian ethnics. But in the 1960s the influx of Negroes rapidly transformed the composition of the population. In 1963 the Hungarian church moved further south and in 1976 moved even further south again to a garden suburb. The members of the congregation live dispersed over a wide area, those born in Hungary account for less than one third, and the majority of services are held in English.

Vintage balls were popular all over Hungary already at the end of the 19th century, and spread from the wine-growing districts to other regions as well. They consisted of a festive and joyful march and then carousing and a ball. The participants put on Hungarian costume of the theatrical sort that was similar throughout the country. It had grown out of certain simplified forms or the costume of the farming towns of the Great Hungarian Plain. The vintage ball can really be considered a new form of entertainment with a number of urban features, which fitted into the universal process of urbanisation.

The Hungarians who emigrated around the turn of the century, even if they came from villages, became industrial workers and town dwellers in the United States. According to Fejős, this explains why the vintage ball, which expressed urbanisation, was soon adopted by them. The description of a Hun-

garian vintage ball held in Cleveland in 1907 has survived. Such balls became, towards the outside world, the expression of the ethnic characteristics of people of Hungarian origin. At the bicentenary of the United States, in Washington, D.C., the inhabitants of Albany (earlier Árpádhon), Louisiana, representing ethnic Hungarians presented a vintage ball.

In Chicago too, vintage balls go back to pre-Great War times. In the 1980s, the ball was held in the big hall of the congregation. Already in the course of the preparations there was much cooperative activity among the members of the congregation: in the kitchen where they prepared the meals, and in decorating the hall with autumn leaves, bunches of grapes and fruit. They also erected a field-guard's shelter, which they decorated with corn stalks and festoons. The making of the prizes to be raffled began months before and these included numerous objects of a Hungarian character such as peasant dolls. The meeting consisted in essence of a dinner, but the food eaten had a single Hungarian feature, a sausage spiced in the Hungarian manner, which had been made by members of the congregation. Fashionable dance music was provided by a local combo, made up of a guitar, a saxophone, a drum and a synthetiser. (The leader was of Hungarian descent on his mother's side and member of the congregation.) The programme included some pieces of a *csárdás* rhythm, to which Hungarian dances could be danced.

The particular nature of the entertainment was provided by the vintage play. This began with a speech by the minister, and then those of the guests (approximately 25 per cent) who wore Hungarian costume marched several times around the hall singing. After this, Hungarian dances were presented first by small children and then by adolescents, in Hungarian costume, and then the stealing of the grapes began, the plucking of the fruit grapes hung in the hall—for which a fine was paid to the judge in the field guard's shelter, as a contribution to church funds. Finally the dance followed, and at midnight the raffle.

According to Fejős, the vintage ball is a peculiar American-Hungarian cultural construction. It is not a custom which has been kept up from the old country. In commenting on it, one should not judge the degree to which Hungarian traditions are authentically maintained. What counts is how the participants—and the outsiders—interpret the elements of the custom. The vintage ball is in fact a symbolic form of behaviour which serves the expression of cultural diversity.

The article was published in the first volume of the annual of the Institute for Hungarian Studies established two years ago.* The duty of this new research institution is the study of Hungarians living outside the borders of Hungary, applying interdisciplinary methods.

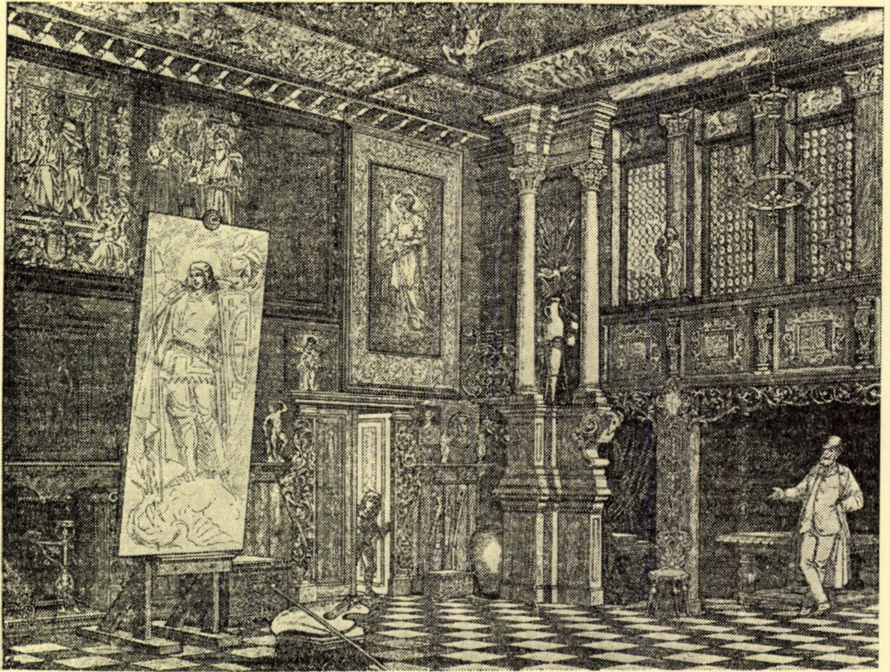
Fejős, Zoltán: "Magyar ruha, szüreti bál és az amerikai—magyar etnikus kultúra néhány kérdése" (Hungarian costume, vintage ball, and some questions of American-Hungarian ethnic culture). *Magyarságkutatás*. Annual of the Institute for Hungarian Studies, 1987, pp. 267–282.

T. H.

A HUNDRED YEAR OLD STUDIO

A few years ago the last member of the Storno family, a West Hungarian dynasty of painters and restorers, died in Sopron, and his rich collection was bought by the Hungarian state. The collection had already been on view for many years, in one of the most beautiful burgher houses in the main square of the city and is one of the sights of Sopron. Its special atmosphere was and still is provided by the fact that by and large it maintained the condition in which it was arranged by Ferenc Storno father and son in the 1870s.

* See *NHQ* 107



Ferenc Storno jr: The Storno Studio. 1889. Woodcut.

Ferenc Storno senior (1821–1907) was born in Hungary and brought up in Bavaria. He was not an artist in the traditional sense of the word. He came from a craftsman family, and although he would have liked to become a painter, he was apprenticed to a chimneysweep. But he was attracted by medieval architecture, and when still young he filled dozens of sketchbooks with the drawings of medieval buildings and motifs. He was not admitted to the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna, but the famous Viennese portraitist, Friedrich Amerling, got him a job there: he designed various objects, mainly lamps and candelabra, in the Gothic style, for Viennese workshops, and later he was commissioned by the monuments committee of the Austro-Hungarian Empire to draw old buildings and church furnishings first in Austria, and later in Hungary too. He received his first commission for restoration work in 1860. He cleansed the biggest Gothic church in Sopron, of the work of later periods, including Baroque altars. In their place he himself designed Gothic altars and furnishings, and himself also painted the church interiors. Later he prepared monument surveys for the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, and from the 1870s he carried out restorations of monuments throughout Hungary. He was assisted by his son, Ferenc Storno junior (1852–1938), who had studied in Vienna, and also by Kálmán Storno (1858–1934). The work of the Storno family was extremely versatile. They did their artistic, restoring and decorating work on an industrial scale. They restored entire churches, made and designed altars, panels, glass windows, frescoes, statues, ornamental decorations, but also illuminated addresses, invitations and albums.

At the peak of their nationwide fame, the

Storno family decided, at the beginning of the 1880s, to build a studio for themselves, where they could not only work but also receive their clients. The studio was designed and built by Ferenc Storno senior and junior in the renaissance style. They placed late renaissance and baroque pieces which had become superfluous in the course of the restoration of old churches (the places of origin were carefully noted) into a uniformly composed interior, complementing them by numerous artifacts made by themselves. They combined all these in a way that presented an end of the century view of the German Renaissance. The wide interior was expanded by a gallery where they placed their collection of arms and a rich collection of designs and sketches. Their own paintings hung around the walls, and the ceiling was decorated by an allegory of time and eternity, surrounded by friezes depicting the four eras of the world. They also designed an advertising booklet, but this did not appear in print. The Storno family did not really find their place in the changed attitude of the turn of the century to art and monuments, and the number of their commissions declined. In the end they had no use anymore for their studio. But the family kept up the studio, just as the dwelling filled with artifacts, in its original condition.

This studio interior, a work of art in itself, is among those few painters' studios of the late 19th century in Europe which did not have to be restored but which have been maintained in all their original details. The engraving published here, which was originally made for the planned advertising booklet in 1888, thus shows the present condition.

Askercz, Éva: "A Storno család Sopron, Bécsi utcai műterme" (The studio of the Storno family in Bécsi utca, Sopron). *Arrabona*, Nos. 22–23, 1986, pp. 71–97.

G. G.

FROM THE CLASSICAL AVANT-GARDE TO VIDEO

"The cinema is not an art-reproducing human action." The article which presents a survey of the relationship between films and the fine arts from the avant-garde films of the 1920s to the video of our days, begins with this claim. The sentence quoted was written by György Gerő, a pioneer of the Hungarian cinema, in 1927, and although history has since then completely refuted him, what he said did not seem as absurd in its own time as it does today. On the contrary, in the course of its history, the cinema again and again has tried to rid itself of the framework of the feature film, i.e. a told story, and to formulate a new visual language concentrating on its own inherent laws and means. Experimental cinema was always closely linked to avant-garde art, something that was especially true between 1915 and 1925. German expressionistic films visualised psychological phenomena. Illusion and vision, reality and dream were imposed on each other. Thus, Robert Wiene's *The Cabinet of Dr Caligari*, with its world created by painterly means, became the archetype of a cinematic presentation of demonic forces.

The constructivists, while searching for new connections in the world, followed the process of construction by the camera. The work of Viking Eggeling was the ancestor of the abstract film: he considered the photosensitive material a raw material for the graphic arts, just as video artists today do the computer. Eggeling's *Diagonal Symphony* relying on musical rhythms, is a graphic film which does not refer to any kind of external reality. Moholy-Nagy looked on the film as an opportunity to "paint ... directly with light and shadow." The heavenly order which appears in the pictures and films of the constructivists has the force of a search for the essence.

The instrument for the radical transformation of the cinema is the intellectual mounting in which the abstract and the sen-

sual side of the creative process merge. György Gerő considered mounting to be the essence of the film which copies on each other the various composed ensembles of vision. The montages of the painter Lajos Vajda were made between 1934 and 1936 relying on the same principle. The variations, shifts and transparencies characterise both artists, and their intellectual kinship is obvious even if there is no proof of a personal influence on each other.

After the avant-garde movement had run out of breath, the cinema and painting moved apart. The increasingly perfect instruments (raw material, optics, etc.) made the cinema uniform. There were fewer and fewer film-makers whose personal visual world can immediately be recognised by a special focus, shadow effects, etc. There were the creators of the pictorial film, the truly cinematic films (Bresson, Tarkovsky, Fellini, Zoltán Huszárik, András Jeles, Gábor Bódy, etc).

The relationship between the two branches of art—the cinema and painting—has changed fundamentally thanks to the video clip. The technical ease of the video clip has created a true revolution. It has become a most popular art. Since the 1960s all artistic trends have exploited the video, including concept art, minimal art, performance and land art, and the most different subcultures as well. The video clip has completely dissolved the duality of the amateur and the professional, and has set free all art forms, from the documentation of private life to the abstract video clip. The latter has brought back that self-centred visuality which the cinema had lost after constructivism. The camera combined with a computer holds the same promise today as the film did in the twenties. The new language of vision is provided by the electronic visualisation of an idea or mathematical theory. Never before have abstract intellectual problems been seen and sensed like that.

György, Péter: "A klasszikus avantgardtól a videóig" (From the classical avant-garde to video) *Filmvilág*, No. 9, 1987, pp. 4–8. Special number: "Film és Képzőművészet" (The cinema and the fine arts).

I. N.

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Valóság—a monthly of the social sciences

Századvég—journal published by the Jurisprudence Seminar of Budapest University

Tervgazdasági Fórum—quarterly of the National Planning Office

Janus—journal published by the Janus Pannonius University of Pécs

Arrabona—yearbook of the Győr Museum

Filmvilág—a cinema monthly

SURVEYS

ANDRÁS RÓNA-TAS

HUNGARY AND THE EXPLORATION OF CENTRAL ASIA

There are two reasons why I feel the role of Hungary is important in the history of the exploration of Central Asia. First, one has to question what special causes and what specific reasons for renewed activity by Hungary and her people led Hungarians to visit so remote an area. Secondly, the bulk of the source material and the background information indispensable to an understanding of what was discovered, and even a large part of the published material, is in Hungary; much of it is in Hungarian and so practically non-accessible to non-Hungarian scholars.

The history of contacts with Central Asia, and the knowledge those contacts produced, can be roughly classified into four periods. The first lasted up to the conquest of the Carpathian Basin by the Hungarians around AD 895. The second ended with the occupation of the major part of Hungary by the Ottoman Turks in mid-16th century. Then follows a long period ending at the turn of the 18th century. The last and most important period begins with the age of the Hungarian Enlightenment. I have deliberately closed my subject at the outbreak of the Great War and shall refrain from mentioning any subsequent events, however important.

The great explorations in the past had several, mutually connected reasons, such as commerce, religious missions, political intentions, colonisation, and most recently, simple scientific curiosity as well. However, one almost always finds in the background the historical and economic imperatives of the Europe of the time. Hungary was no exception, although there was one specific, unique motivation here. The Hungarians came to their present European homeland from somewhere in the East, in a relatively late migration that had not been forgotten. Vague memories and later speculations about a Greater or Eastern Hungary, the search for brothers who had remained behind, and the attempt to discover the origins of the Hungarian nation, all contributed to the desire of Hungarians to travel in the East. Of course the idea of the nature of the eastern origin of the Hungarians had changed over the centuries, but it had never ceased to motivate, so lending a specific colouring to the variegated history of the European exploration of Central Asia.

The Tun-huan material has thrown some light on just what the Tibetans knew about the Turks. That is important at this point as much as it tells us something of the environment in which the Hungarians lived between the 5th and 9th centuries within the limits of the Turkish world. On the other hand, almost nothing is known of what the several kinds of Turks knew of Tibet, a knowledge they might have shared with the Hungarians. There is certainly a considerable

gap between the mention of the Tibetan khagan and *blon-po* on the stele of Kül tegin in 732, the data in Kashgari's work written about 1072 and the early Buddhist works translated from Tibetan.

I shall not dwell on Tibetan knowledge of the Turks, because it only has an indirect bearing on the Hungarians and because I shall have something to say about this in another contribution, to this symposium.

The second period can be divided into two sub-periods, before and after the Mongol invasion of Hungary in 1241–42. The Mongol threat to Europe became apparent early in the 13th century. The activities of the Dominican missions to the East, which originally tied in with the eastern threat to the Holy Land, were extended to the Mongols. There are historical reasons why many Hungarians were amongst these Dominicans, and they brought the first authentic news to Europe of the Mongols, who came from unknown Central Asia.

In the 1220s, more than twenty years before the missions of Plano Carpini and Friar Ascelin, Hungarian Dominicans went to Cumania, in present Moldavia, and passed on the earliest intelligence of the Mongols. We have as yet only indirect reports about them and about the journey of Friar Otto in 1232, but more is known about the travels of Friar Julian in 1235–36and 1236–37. Friar Julian only went as far as the Volga region on his first journey. His account of the Mongols was studied very seriously at the papal court, and in 1237 Friar Julian was invited by Pope Gregory IX to a personal audience in Rome. Friar Julian's letter written the same year to Salvius de Salvis, Bishop of Perugia, contains the first detailed description by a European of the origin, history, campaigns, customs and contemporary leaders of the Mongols. Friar Julian also mentions a letter the Tatars, i.e. the Mongols sent to the King of Hungary, which was written in *litteris paganis sed lingua tartarica*. Other letters to European rulers are also known of and it is clearly stated by Plano Carpini that the letter in Persian Güyük wrote in 1246 was originally composed in Mongolian, and so there is no reason to doubt that this letter too was written in Mongolian. If Igor de Rachewiltz is right in saying that the hitherto accepted dating of the Yisüngge stele, 1225, needs revising to 1250s, then Friar Julian recorded the earliest Mongolian texts known to history, since the concluding Mongolian lines of Töregene's Chinese inscription date from 1240. Though Friar Julian's record does not appear to be a literal translation, it does offer an invaluable source on the early chancery practice of the Mongols. In the account of Friar Julian's first journey by Friar Riccardus it is stated that the Dominician friars found in the old *Gesta Hungarorum* the history of the immigration of the Hungarians from the east and information on Eastern or Magna Hungaria. They went there because they "felt pity for their pagan brothers." That was what motivated the Hungarian Dominicans to go East, of course as envoys sent by or with the support of the King of Hungary, whose eastern diplomacy played a key role in Europe at that time.

Friar Julian's story rapidly spread across Europe and was known to travellers like Plano Carpini, Rubruc or Odoricus de Pordenone, who subsequently visited Mongolia. It is perhaps not without interest that one of Odoricus' manuscripts is now in the Hungarian National Library and has been described by Professor Ligeti.

The horizon of the medieval Hungarian chronicles written before the Mongol invasion ended at the Ural mountains, the Volga river and the Caucasus. Those written after the Mongol invasion of 1241–42 already report on the Khitans, on Mongolia and other parts of Central Asia. Most of the new knowledge was acquired from 13th and 14th-century European travellers. However, one should mention that some of the information was due to Hungarians. Here I would briefly mention the eastern diplomacy of King Sigismund, later Holy Roman Emperor

and King Matthias, and also the Franciscan missionaries. In 1457 Aeneas Sylvius Piccolomini wrote of *missis ex Hungaria viris religiosis* by Pope Eugene IV (1431–1447), and we also know of an Hungarian envoy who visited the court of Ulug Mohammed in 1419–23. Among the motives for the 15th century missions one discovers once more a wish to make contact with the "Eastern Hungarians", whom Aeneas Sylvius declared were *rudes homines et idolorum cultores, quorum eadem lingua sit cum hungaris Pannoniam incolentibus.*

The growing Ottoman threat and the ensuing occupation of the major part of Hungary put an end to all Hungarian initiative in keeping up contact with the east. Only the Transylvanian principality was able to maintain contacts of its own. As will be seen later, Transylvania was to play an important role.

Our next source of information is a 17th-century one and is connected with the activities of the Jesuits in China. In the *Historica narratio* of Father Schall (published in 1665) there is an interesting record of a "Western Tatar" nobleman from the Volga region who was a Christian. He related to Father Schall that a Hungarian Jesuit captured by the Ottomans and later sold to the Tatars was living near to the Volga. In a letter to Rome that Hungarian Jesuit had asked not to be redeemed, but for other missionaries to be sent with whose help he could convert his ancient kinsfolk. The most important information for Father Schall was that China might be reached by a short land route from that Volga region replacing the long, dangerous and expensive voyage. The search for safe and shorter continental routes to China was one of the major reasons for travelling in and through Central Asia at that time.

There were other contacts with the Jesuit mission as well. Father Grueber is known to have crossed Tibet on his journey in 1659–62. But his original goal had been not China but Transylvania, then a quasi-independent Hungarian principality. Father Grueber was born in Linz, in Upper Austria, and his close contacts with Hungary, and interest in the country, can be gauged from the fact that after returning from Tibet he went to Transylvania, where he served as a field chaplain under Prince Apafi (1661–1690). In 1669–70 he lived in Nagyszombat and certainly had contacts with the Hungarian university founded there by the Jesuits thirty-five years earlier. Father Grueber died in 1680 in eastern Hungary, in the town of Sárospatak.

Csoma de Kőrös was born in Transylvania more than a hundred years after the death of Grueber. It is interesting to speculate about what was known of Tibet in Hungary, especially at the school in Nagyenyed that Csoma attended. I am tempted to give an account of what I have discovered on the matter, and to discuss the probable contribution of Grueber and other Jesuits. However, I must be brief, and so I shall only mention one detail. In 1799 Gyarmathi's work on the Finno-Ugric affinity of the Hungarian language appeared. The book by Schall is quoted in that pioneering study precisely in connection with the eastern Hungarians. It is known that it was Gyarmathi who gave the most effective assistance to the young Csoma de Kőrös and encouraged his plans to go east and discover the eastern Hungarians.

Csoma's life and work are well known, and so I shall not dwell here on the role he played in the exploration of Central Asia, but I should like to draw attention to one point all the same. All earlier travellers, whether envoys, diplomats, missionaries or whatever, were in one or another way *sent* to Central Asia; they travelled under the aegis of a political power, or a religious or commercial organization. Csoma set out of his own accord without official support of any kind, but with a set scholarly aim. To understand that unique occurrence in the history of Central Asian exploration, one must look at the historical background of Csoma's decision. The main factors behind

it were linked with the pecularities of the social structure of the eastern European nations, the special role and status of the lesser nobility in political and intellectual life, the position of the Hungarian Székely, along with the specific features of the Hungarian Enlightenment. Consciousness of national identity and the problems of its roots were so important to Csoma that he was prepared to devote his life to the subject.

The same motives guided his younger compatriot Antal Reguly, who travelled, between 1843 and 1847, to the Volga region and southern Siberia. Though Reguly never visited Central Asia, we owe to him an interesting study of the Dzungars.

The example of Csoma and Reguly were inspiring enough for many later travellers to attempt to follow in their footsteps. Tivadar Duka, a medical practitioner who took part in the 1848–49 Hungarian Revolution, devoted his life in India, and later in London, to collecting all the material available on Csoma, while himself contributing substantially to the sum of knowledge about Central Asia.

The founder of Hungarian Turkic studies, and a man who put a radically new stamp on Turkic and Central Asian studies, was Ármin Vámbéry, who travelled in Central Asia between 1861 and 1864. What he discovered on his travels, and what he later achieved, is generally known, but what concerns us here is an important change in the aims he set himself. In his book *Travels in Central Asia*, Vámbéry wrote,

> It is common knowledge that the Hungarian language belongs to the stock known as Altaic, but whether it should be placed in the Finnic or in the Tataric branch of that stock remains to be decided. That enquiry, which interests us as Hungarians both from the scholarly and the national points of view, was the prime motive and cause of my journey to the East.

But then he adds,

> The consequent view that we Hungarians travel to Asia to seek those of our race who were left behind there is an erroneous one. To have espoused such an object, whose attainment would be impossible on both ethnographical and philological grounds, would lay a man open to the charge of gross ignorance. What we are desirous of discovering is the etymological construction of our language, and for that reason we seek precise information from cognate idioms (pp. vii-viii).

Less is known of Vámbéry's compatriot, Vilmos G. Leitner. He was born in 1840 in Pest, studied in Constantinople and Malta, and completed his studies at King's College, London in 1859, where, in that same year, he was appointed a teacher of Turkish, Arabic and Greek. Leitner was the founder of the Oriental school at King's College. In 1865 he went to Lahore in the Punjab, where he founded Punjab University College, whose principal he was in his later years. His expeditions to Kashmir, Ladak, the Tibetan borderland and Dardistan led to the discovery of the Dard language, and he also gained fame for his excavations of Greco-Buddhist art. His interest in Tibetan can be gauged from a donation he made of a Tibetan Prajnaparamita text to the Hungarian National Library. As early as 1873 he was elected an honorary member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences.

In that same year a strange man called László Berzenczey left Hungary for Central Asia. As a prominent revolutionary, he had had to leave Hungary in 1849. After travelling all over the world he obtained an amnesty, returned and in 1869 became a member of parliament for his birthplace, Marosvásárhely, in Transylvania. The route Berzenczey took through Ekaterinburg, Siberia and Tashkent to Kashgar is documented. In 1874 he was captured by Yakub Begin Chakmak and was rescued by a British expedition. It is not entirely clear along what route he reached India, from where he returned home the same year.

The very same year, Gábor Bálint, later

to be professor of Altaic Studies at the University of Kolozsvár in Transylvania, visited Mongolia. He studied the languages of the Volga region and, while among the Kalmucks, he also met a Tibetan lama. After a stay in St Petersburg he proceeded through Siberia to Mongolia. He hoped to decipher the Turkish runic inscriptions in Krasnoyarsk with the help of the Hungarian or Székely runic script with which he was familiar. In Urga he studied the Mongolian language, folklore and ethnography and also learnt Manchu.

Two years later the brothers Ágost and József Zichy traversed Mongolia. The former was an orientalist and a member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. Ágost Zichy studied the ethnography, language and religion of the Mongols.

The next Hungarian scholar, Károly Újfalvy, was born in Vienna. He was educated in Bonn and Paris, and brought back rich anthropological and linguistic material from his expeditions to Central Asia. It seems to have been forgotten that Ujfalvy was the first European to discover the Yagnobi language, which later proved of essential importance to an understanding of the Middle Iranian languages and the history of Central Asia, since Yagnobi is the closest living cognate of the Sogdian language which played a key role in the medieval history of Central Asia. Ujfalvy's studies in the Tibetan borderland and Baltistan in 1880 were much assisted by Leitner. Of his aims he wrote:

Im Herzen Asiens, in Ferghana und Kaschgarien, hoffte ich nähere Spuren der Ahnen meines Volkes zu finden. Doch rasch war ich zu der Ueberzeugung gelangt, dass, was meinen grossen Landsleuten Csoma und Vámbéry nicht gelang, mir ebenfalls nicht gelingen sollte und konnte (p.ix).

Béla Széchenyi's original aim was to reach Lhasa, and recently highly important new information on the expedition was published by Professor Petech and Dr Giuli Tozzi. Space only allows me to quote Széchenyi briefly on his reasons for going:

Und wenn ich nun Asien zum Gegenstand meiner wissenschaftlichen Forschungen ausersah, so geschah dies aus dem Grunde, weil ich für diesen Erdtheil, als eine der hauptsächlichsten Wiegenstätten der Menschheit, hervorragendes Interesse hegte, ja weil ich mich sogar der Hoffnung hingeben durfte, an Stellen zu gelangen, wo ich Spuren unserer Vorahnen, oder Völker und Stämme finden würde, die uns Ungarn Sprach- und Stammesverwandt sind (I, p.vi.).

In this case the primary motives were already the interests of humanity as a whole, and whether or not to seek the "eastern Hungarians", or linguistically related peoples, remained undecided.

Széchenyi's studies of eastern Tibetan dialects and Gustaf Kreitner's ethnographical and geographical records have still to be dealt with. The undoubted scholar on the expedition was Lajos Lóczy, while Sven Hedin is usually credited with discoveries in Trans-Himalayas. Fewer realize that the Royal Geographic Society, having some doubts about Sven Hedin's work, asked Lóczy to provide confirmation. Lóczy not only backed Hedin, he also affirmed that he himself had been to the range before Hedin and had independently given it exactly the same name. That had resulted from a détour by the Széchenyi expedition. In Calcutta Lóczy lighted upon Csoma's autobiography and decided to follow Csoma's route into Tibet. He went to Darjeeling and through Kalimpong and Sikkim to the Tibetan borderland. There he climbed the Jelep Pass, which lies only 250 km from Lhasa. He drew a detailed map of the region, thanks to which Younghusband was to reach Lhasa twenty-five years later. On the 4,423-metre-high pass Lóczy made a sketch and drew the contours of the Trans-Himalayas, but the discoveries he made in 1878 were not published until 1907 and then only at the urging of L. A. Waddel.

Csoma's tomb in Darjeeling became a place of pilgrimage for many Hungarians, of whom I should like to mention just one more: Ferenc Hopp, who visited Darjeeling

in 1882. In 1919 Hopp founded the Hungarian Museum of East Asian Arts, where the archaeological material gathered on Jenő Zichy's third expedition is now.

It would be not without interest to quote Count Zichy's handwritten dedication to his fellow members of the Hungarian Parliament in 1897, before he left on this third expedition, or to quote from his book *La migration de la race hongroise, Principe et résumé de mes recherches historiques*, published bilingually, but for the sake of brevity I shall confine myself to citing the introduction of his book on his third expedition:

Die improvisierte Geschichte unserer Urvergangenheit, aus welcher die ganze heutige Generation ihre edleren Anregungen empfangen hat, ist infolge der in neuerer Zeit, Gott sei Dank dafür, immer mehr sich entwickelnden streng wissenschaftlichen und kritischen Thätigkeit in eine eigenthümliche Lage gerathen. Wir fühlen und wissen, daß es Wirklichkeit gewesen, aber wir sehen, daß die Hülle, in welcher der naive Glaube diese Geschichte vor unsren geistigen Augen erschienen ließ, gewissermaßen aus Papiermaché besteht, welches unter den Hammerschlägen der Kritik zerstäubt.

Zichy's reaction against romantic ideas was gradual, and there were several objective and subjective reasons for it. His role was more one of a patron, as was Széchenyi's, and it was typical of Hungary at that time for organized, costly expeditions to be led and directed by aristocrats. Zichy's third expedition was the most serious undertaking to set out from Hungary before the Great War. It is to Zichy's credit that he learnt the lessons from his first two expeditions and engaged the best scholars of his day to accompany him, among them Béla Posta, who can be considered the founder of modern Hungarian archeology, János Jankó, an outstanding Hungarian ethnographer, and József Pápay, a renowned scholar of Finno-Ugric. Of the members of the expedition only a few actually accompanied Zichy to Mongolia, where he discovered the Tonyukuk inscription the same year as Elizaveta Nikolaevna Klements and independently of her, sending a copy to V. V. Radlov. The main area covered by the expedition was southern Siberia, but there they purchased the archaeological collection of Kuznetsov, which also contains materials from Central Asia, and is now in the Museum of East Asian Arts.

Interestingly the Hungarian scholar who came next, György Almássy, originally rigidly excluded any problem concerning the prehistory of the Hungarians from his objectives, which he defined as the zoological and botanical description of Central Asia. But as he confessed in the introduction to his voluminous work on his first journey, he did not entirely manage to divert himself of the mantle of his national tradition and the example of his predecessors. His account contains linguistic information and an abundance of ethnographic material on the nomadic way of life, and one can only regret that its publication in Hungarian has prevented it from becoming known to scholars elsewhere.

Almássy's second journey was less successful, but he invited along the young geographer Gyula Prinz, who halfway, at Narin gol, left Almássy and set out on an independent expedition. In 1909 Prinz visited Central Asia for the second time.

The last great figure to be mentioned was Sir Aurel Stein. Only recently part of the correspondence of his family has been discovered in the archives of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. This sheds new light on his youth and early ambitions. Apparently he had first planned a journey to India as early as 1884. In the early Hungarian chronicles it was claimed that the Hungarians who conquered the Carpathian Basin were descended from Attila's Huns, so that the year 895 was only a *secundus introitus*, a reconquering of the former homeland. Although that claim has turned out to be mere speculation aimed at legitimising Hungarian rule, the possible kinship between the proto-Hungarians in the 5th century and the Huns remained an open question. It can easily be demonstrated that the Huns were the link

that connected Stein's research with Hungarian history. Moreover, Stein was fully aware of the role the Turkic background had played in the formative period of the Hungarians. In a letter written in Hungarian in 1912 to the President of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Stein declared, "I am truly glad that, under the aegis of the Indian Government, I was able to work in a field, the historical background of the early Hungarian and Turkic migrations, which is closely connected with the interests of Hungarian scholarly research." Stein first went to India on a Hungarian grant. The first post he obtained from the Indian Government was the very one which had been created and later occupied by Leitner: head of the Oriental College in Lahore.

Leaving aside the merits of Imre Schweiger's discovery of Nepalese art, I should like to conclude my paper with a curious story. In 1964 the Museum of East Asian Art bought a piece of a fresco with a head of Devadata from a private owner. The Museum's expert, László Ferenczy, identified it as a valuable piece and pinpointed its provenance. It had originally belonged to the material brought back by Le Coq from his last Turfan expedition. How and when had this object reached Hungary? In 1918 Le Coq visited Budapest, and made presentations of three pieces from the Turfan collection, one to Zoltán Felvinczi-Takács, one to Count Pál Teleki and one to a member of the Zichy family. The Devadata head is the piece presented to the Zichy family, most probably to Count István Zichy. What prompted Le Coq to give such an unusual present and why just to those three gentlemen? Ferenczy is surely right in presuming that Le Coq wanted publicity for the Turfan collection. But he can give answer as to why the gifts were made to those particular persons.

The Csoma de Kőrös Society was founded in 1920 with the aim of studying Asia and the Oriental background of Hungarian prehistory. However, the first initiative was taken and early consultations took place in 1918. Counts Pál Teleki and István Zichy, as well as Zoltán Felvinczi-Takács, together with Gyula Németh were the founders of the Csoma de Kőrös Society. Whether Le Coq was consulted or not, we do not know. But Le Coq made a good choice and selected people who would continue the good work on Central Asia. That is the last, small link of the chain which connected Hungary and Central Asia at the end of the Great War and simultaneously the first with the Csoma de Kőrös Society, under whose auspices we are gathered here.

ÉVA KOCZISZKY

KARL KERÉNYI THE MYTHOLOGIST

The recent publication in Hungarian of some of Karl Kerényi's books is the occasion of this study. By interpreting Kerényi's concept of the myth, it will attempt to assess the significance of this work in the study of antiquity today, and more precisely, in its present reception in Hungary. To fully comprehend this question, the reader should be aware that Karl Kerényi has been received most ambivalently by Hungarian officialdom both while working in Hungary and ever since. Until emigrating to Switzerland in 1943, he stood by himself within Hungarian classical studies for his wide European horizon just as much as for his views on the responsibility of scholarship. (As a conse-

quence, he was never given a chair at the country's leading university in Budapest—he taught at the University of Pécs from 1934 until he left Hungary—and was the target of many attacks and unjust criticism.) In the 1930s he was one of the most important figures on the Hungarian intellectual scene (with his close circle of pupils, his periodical *Sziget* and his relationship with the novelist, playwright, and essayist László Németh, the novelist Béla Hamvas and the poet Sándor Weöres).[1]

"In the Wake of the Myth"

To understand Kerényi's thinking, uniform even in its mutability, what he means by myth and by mythology should be classified. To start with, he definitely dissociates himself from the aesthetic, or rather poetic, view according to which myths are refashioned stories, and from the allegorical-historical view; he prefers to say that myths do not refer to something outside of them but are "aspects of existence," "world aspects," and mythology is "the world-fabric turned into image and language as such."[2] His reference is Schelling's "tautegory," meaning that the myths signify themselves (tòn autón agóres), being "pregnant" and "live world realities" by themselves; mythology, for the person who is living in it, signifies not only a way of thinking but a way of life and a way of action as well.

Myths, the myth, mythology—the distinction should be explored. In his *Mi a mitológia* (What is Mythology, Budapest, 1939), Kerényi tried to avoid, as much as possible, the term "myth"; he felt its meaning (word, speech, speech as distinct to deed) did not enlighten and that it has been outworn by its modern ambiguity. It was only later, in the wake of André Jolles's[3] etymology that he restored the term, accepting Jolles's translation of *Wahrsage* and linking it with Walter F. Otto's concept,[4] according to which myth as a word is the "direct evidence of that what there was, what there is, and what there will be."[5] Even after that, Kerényi in fact preferred to speak of "mythology," as this expression unites "mythos" and "logos," two things which to many are opposites in their essence. Kerényi, however, not only denied that "myth" and "logos" exclude one another, but postulated their unity as a basic principle, since they signified an organic unity for the ancient world as well, and since the "narration of myths," "mythologicizing" (μῦθους λέγειν, μυθολογεὶν) also involves an explanation, an interpretation as well. There is no such thing as an undefined mythology, even if it is the "world texture" itself. Finally, Kerényi speaks of the myth as such mainly in the context of poetry and the arts, calling it the dimension of depth of some truly great masterpieces, an "internal happening" which makes it a work of art as against its mere materialness. Meanwhile he still has the "truth" of the myth in mind, its "foundation of existence," as he elaborates it in this outline of principles already quoted.[6]

It is not difficult to recognize in these endeavours the intentions of German Romanticism, aiming at the ideal of organic completeness, which draws no sharp borderlines between art, philosophy, and mythology. Each is a way of line and thinking, viewing existence in its totality, each an organism living a lively life, and Kerényi cautiously distances himself from the aestheticism of German idealism (and from its reinterpretation by Stefan George's circle), since it is a different case if scholarship and science represents this programme aiming at human completeness than if it is done by art. In fact, and in spite of these divisions, his is a heroic undertaking, in a certain sense even more heroic than that of Romanticism, as he can already clearly see the failures of the latter. Yet he consciously chooses as his tradition that delicate play of balance which wishes to create a harmonic unity between the timelessness of the idea and the historical nature of the material. Kerényi formulates

this duality by saying that mythology on the one hand is art (that is to say, in the spirit of Schelling, timeless world content taking on form), and on the other it is material, a concrete historical reality as well.

Festively contemplated experience

Kerényi united these two basic aspects most felicitously in his concept of the feast, which to the present day has remained his most lasting and captivating line of thought.[7] For Kerényi the feast is principally a moment when timelessness and time touch. "Festiveness should be grasped not where it appears, already lifted into the timeless height of art, but where it still impinges on time and steps out of it, as it were, where it is still time itself in its festive exceptionness."[8] Using the terms of German idealism, one may say that this is the irruption of a higher reality into everyday reality, the appearance of the idea in reality. To use the terms of the history of religion, this means that every festivity is tantamount to "the original founding feast," that is to say it repeats the original feast founding gesture, which is not the outcome of human efforts but "something divine must contribute to it."[9] This divine contribution makes the feast a feast, during the celebration of which man is once again together with the gods, just as during the old theoxeniae (feasts given to the gods). As Hölderlin puts it in his hymn to *The Rhine* (one of Kerényi's favourite poems): *Dann feiern das Brautfest Menschen und Götter, / Es feiern die Lebenden all, / Und ausgeglichen / Ist eine Weile das Schicksal.*

It would be difficult to gauge how much Kerényi's notion of the festivity owes to Hölderlin, whom he considered as one of the greatest of poets and the truest mediator of the Greek gods. But a singular coincidence can throw some light on it. I have in mind Martin Heidegger's lectures on Hölderlin, which he delivered three years after the appearance of Kerényi's *Das Wesen des Festes* in 1938 (on the poem "*Andenken*," in the winter of 1941–42), in which he speaks of the feast in a manner that in many respects resembles Kerényi's.[10] According to Heidegger too, the calendar natures of the feast, its close relationship to historical time, belongs to its very essence. ("The feast is the basis and essence of history," he writes.) Like Kerényi, Heidegger is of the view that the original happening occurs again in the feast. (Kerényi: in the feast "everything is like it was on the first day."—Heidegger: "Das Festliche ist jenes, was anfänglich sich ereignet".) Although the precedence given to the divinity, which can be always observed in Kerényi, is alien to Heidegger (in Heidegger's interpretation of Hölderlin, the feast is not inspired by the gods, nor is it arranged by the people—the feast "happens"); all in all, their line of thought runs a similar course. According to Heidegger, the feast tears us away from the everyday sphere, making us free and open to that out-of-the-everyday, which could be also called the truth and unhiddenness *(aletheia)* of existence. And according to Kerényi, "the feast reveals the sense of quotidian existence, the essence of things that surround man, and of the forces that are active in his life."[11]

The feast in this sense constitutes the focus of Kerényi's thinking, where the fundamental polarities which lend tension to his œuvre meet: timeless idea and historical time, divine and human reality, deed and word (in the festive unity of myth and cult), and from where there radiates the reality of mythology, permeating art, philosophy, and science. Or, to turn this train of thought around, all that Kerényi can transpose into the realm of the feast is animated; turning into living mythology. Not only through the brilliance that surrounds the festively contemplated experience, but also through the free play of the intellect by which the interpreter treats his material on such occasions. (In this sense one may call, for instance, his *Hermes* book, festive.[12])

It would not be pertinent to expect Keré-

nyi's life's work to be festive in its entirety, as the festive, by its very essence, is a climax. But his writings outside this sphere do not succeed in producing this unity of concept. Malicious critics can see a mere whirling around of concepts, or will miss a traceable, demonstrable reasoning, or again, will believe they can discover a gap between the truly exceptional professional attainment and the presumptions and conclusions.[13] With some ill-will, they may even quote Johann Arnold Kanne's comment on Creuzer, that "by equally affirming the idea and the philological demand, he fell between two stools."[14]

Of the citeable contradictions, here I only wish to outline the confusions around the concept of truth; these mainly derive from Kerényi's wishing to synthetise several methods and notions. This is also true for his programmatic work already referred to, in which he quotes Karl Ottfried Müller: "If this is the relationship between mythology and life," he continues the starting idea of mythology being lived, "it makes the question superfluous on what basis mythology was considered to be true. 'This most witty of people,' Müller says of the Greeks, 'had for a long time clung to their myths so strongly that this disposition, despite all open-minded, natural sense of observation, did not allow real history to prevail.'"[15] So there still exists a "real history", which can be perceived with an "open mind" and a "sense of observation"—as against the myths which in this context are still, at a certain level, products of the imagination, even if they did determine the acts and thinking of the Greeks. How otherwise would we compare them to "real" history? That is to say, here already one can sense the problem to be discussed later, namely that Kerényi after all does not clarify what the absolute truth of mythology consists of, and he even dismisses the questions as superfluous by stating that mythology is being lived, it *is*. This inconsistency may, of course, be also taken to mean that it is actually only the Müller quotation that does not fit in the text. But Kerényi seems to experiment with at least three notions of truth: that of ethnology, according to which mythology *was* real for the primitive community that was living in it, and its value as truth *was* an absolute (hence it follows that it is not so *for us*); that psychology, according to which mythological notions are basically timeless realities of mind, and finally, in a later period of his life, he also referred to Heidegger's concept of truth. Those speaking of Kerényi's non-philosophical thinking may perhaps have this kind of inconsistency in mind. But the problem can be traced even further on. It touches, for instance, on the uncertainties in separating mythology, art, and folklore.

Returning to the notion of mythology as art and as material: I have mentioned that Kerényi marks out his own position by combining the two. While the first by itself would be tantamount to the creative position of Romanticism, and Kerényi hallmarks the second (alongside Karl Ottfried Müller's traditional historical school) with the name of Usener, who considered mythology a language and identified the scholar's task as creating the grammar of this language, the intermediate position held by Kerényi could be outlined through a musical metaphor.

A simile

Kerényi often used the following simile: "If one wants to review and analyse a poetic work, one has to heed the creative hand. But the music critic is faced not only with the fact of the composition, with composing as the artist's activity, but also with an impersonal current of notes, the creation of new relations and formations of notes. So he turns in two directions as it were. The study of mythology too has to consider as its actual subject the gush of mythological material, always flowing into new relations, always appearing in new 'variants'. He should not forget that such variants are at the same time also the 'variations' of one and the same

theme."[16] This is a virtual declaration of war on the plastic, sculptural approach of Classicism, and on its most notable twentieth-century proponent, Kerényi's master, Walter F. Otto as well. Why and how so?

A classicising, visual approach grasps religious ideas in a plastic sculpturesque manner, the like of which has been used ever since Winckelmann (and since Hegel almost with a compulsory validity) in viewing and depicting the classical Hellenistic period. The concept of the "musical" principle of the Greeks, on the other hand, is linked to Nietzsche, and through him to the non-Classical, reaching back to an origin which is rooted in the specific Greek experience of existence. This is a depth out of which there derives the light of the Classical age and its beautiful *confrère*, an irrational, pre-individuational, common primeval experience which lies hidden behind the beautiful surface of Greek art. Kerényi's reference to musicality is a declaration in this sense, whether he speaks of "the impersonality of sound" or the single common theme behind the variations. And when he marks out the correct scholarly position for this specific material, he stresses that this position cannot be restricted to the externality of the visual, but, using Frobenius's concept of *Ergriffenheit* ("captured state," "seizedness"), precisely indicates that the mythologist is at the mercy of the divine powers whom (to use his own term) he "introduces." For a further comment let us turn to Georg Picht,[17] who (presumably in the wake not only of Nietzsche but of Kerényi as well) called the "space of sound" a "mythical space *par excellence*," since vision is necessarily directed at "objects" and hearing at "forces," at "powers."

It would seem far-fetched to use Kerényi's simile for speaking of his musical thinking. Yet it is no accident that his respectful critical comments[18] on Walter F. Otto's work on Dionysus[19] outlines that musical reality which here he calls the "soul-depth," an "amorphous realm," a mental reality that is not identical with subjective experience but is more than that: an objective reality as well, yet not only a personal or an impersonal one, rather an intermediate one, which in fact is both and which later, under the influence of Jung, he called "archetypal image."

"We will understand [the gods] most easily if we consider them eternal characters, great world realities. 'Their power lies in them being real,' says the greatest expert on them. For a complete understanding, we can emphasize that this truth always emerges within the soul, world realities as gods are realities of mind. From a historical point of view we may add that the hold of mental realities has changed with time. In the knowledge of one of life's laws, we may call the decrease of this hold a natural decay. The convincing ideal structure of the classical Greek deities exists timelessly, regardless of this."[20]

Earlier I referred to the new opportunities opened up by a psychological understanding of myth that unfolded after Freud and Jung. But in Kerényi's context one should immediately make the reservation that from the outset he rejected Freudianism, the first depth-psychology. He considered it unacceptable to derive religious consciousness from neurosis; since he regarded religion as an objective reality, not as a flaw in the emotions and the intellect.[21] He was in sympathy with Jung. The archetypal primordial images discovered in the unconscious offered a base of understanding to scholars of the history of religion which enabled them to bridge the chronological distance of several thousand years, and so to treat mythology as an absolute present anthropologically. One only has to penetrate into the layer where philologically clarified material meets the primeval experience of the soul, and they mutually throw light on each other. This is how a historical discipline also became a study of human character, and indeed of self-knowledge, and the path leading into the depth of time at the same time turned into a path that leads inward as well. While today

we feel sceptical of this psychological paradigm and do not believe in a common human content of consciousness that exists irrespective of cultural and historical determinations, by so doing we have also become poorer. For the understanding of myths, this seems to have been the last foundation with a claim to universal human validity.

How then does Kerényi's psychological understanding function? To start with, Kerényi, like W. F. Otto, from whom he had acquired it, starts out with the mythological idea, the uniform "original" idea, out of which originate individual variants, the variable stories. This means that he acts precisely in the opposite way to, for instance, Nilsson, or to other analytical schools, such as structuralism. "Our outlook ... starts out from mythological ideas, which become more versatile and richer in content, the more ancient and original they are," he writes in *Protogonos Koré*.[22] "By mythology is meant a spiritual event which creates divinities, or in other words, creates them in a way to conjure up and grasp realities valid in our world. The realities that manifest themselves to the intellect are timeless. The figures in which they manifest themselves are stages in a development, as of the blossoming of a bud. But in the final analysis every development becomes disintegration and every blossoming decomposition. It is not the decomposed state which is the original one, the starting points are not the Erynyses as the spirits of vengeance, and not Persephone and Demeter separately, side by side, but Demeter–Erinys, who comprises Persephone, her own Koré-ism." Here I would like to point to three, closely connected things: the cult of the ancient, of the origin, the ultimately "monotheistic" tendency of a theogonic process taken back, and finally Platonism, as indicated by "idea."

As far as the first is concerned, this (along with several other elements) is actually a Romantic inheritance. This is characteristic of Creuzer's symbolism[23] (which traces the Greek back to more ancient Oriental religions, primarily to the Egyptian) just as much as of Welcker's *Götterlehre*[24] even the "techniques" used are largely the same, for example, etymology. But the ancient, the primordial is to be taken here not necessarily, and indeed not principally, in time but in logic. The ancient is not necessarily identical with the historically earliest (though sometimes the two coincide), but is archetypical, or as Kerényi puts it, idea-like or "formula-like." To grasp all this undoubtedly requires empathy and imagination. Apart from this, however, Kerényi considers his own procedure scholarly, comparing himself to the archaeologist who from later finds can predict, with more or less certainty, earlier ones which have not been made. So with a philological instinct for the primordial he traces the individual divine traits back to a primordial image—for instance Dionysus, Hermes and Apollo to a primordial child, or Artemis, Persephone and Hecate to the idea of virginity, of "Koré-ism"; in the same way he traces the individual divine characters back to that primordial experience, the world reality lived through, which was once in play in the birth of the character.

This is how, for instance, in connection with Dionysus, he speaks of "repletion with life," the exuberance of ebullient life. But this "idea-like" quality (of whose Platonic character more will be said) can never be clearly and simply seen in Kerényi, but always means the overlap of contrasting realities. This is why in one place he calls the most ancient mythological ideas "bud-like." "Such buds are the most primordial mythological ideas. Above all the idea of origin and genesis. Everybody lives it through in his own origin and beginning, and inasmuch it always becomes realized again and again, through every living creature, in the visible world as well. In mythology it appears in a mythological form, in the form of wondrous primordial beings. Or in a way so that the female destiny becomes the symbol and expression of origin and beginning. Zeus, Apollo, Dionysus, Hermes, Asclepius, Hercules—they all can be considered the unfold-

ing of a primordial child, uniting a mythological begetter and begotten, of a bud looked at now from this angle and now from another."[25]

"Bud-like" is undoubtedly not a felicitous expression, as it links the image of the organic, nature world with something that is not itself originating. Even apart from this, these are the points in his work which may most easily cause caricatures of interpretation. Even the reader not responding satirically may feel the conclusion much too general vis-à-vis the inventive interpretation.The tracing back to the primordial often reaches a layer where the primordial inferred by an inner sensation and reconstructed by proceeding along a scarcely documented, remote branch of mythology, seems almost obsessional. It is the interpretation that makes reading Kerényi's works intellectually enthralling and not the rather sparse world concept in the unravelling. Alfred Bäumler speaks of a similar reaction to Rachofen and Jacob Grimm, but with understanding and esteem rather than criticism: "*They both reveal that their work springs from their hearts' passion* [my italics]; they do so with certain of the weaknesses that render them suspicious to scholarly interpretation: verified results are missing, the reader is offered one kind of road, one way of vision rather than established results, their work bristles with rashness and errors."[26]

Here I only wish to draw attention to the fact that Bäumler's comment in fact also carries on the Creuzer polemic. And in this Kerényi also had a place. In a letter to Kerényi, Thomas Mann points out how much Goethe owed to his conversations with Creuzer, and the extent to which these assisted the birth of the second part of *Faust*. The parallel seems fairly obvious: Thomas Mann implicitly compares his own relationship with Kerényi to that between Goethe and Creuzer. Kerényi did in fact take the hint; in his letter of reply (a cautious protest against the parallel between himself and Creuzer) he employs a fairly critical tone on Creuzer, stating that Creuzer did not understand Goethe's theory of symbols and had misinterpreted the symbol.[27] In saying this he might have had a correction of himself in mind too, namely that he, in a Goethean manner, wanted to hold the two aspects of the symbol—image and meaning—in unity, and was not searching for a meaning lying outside of it—as is also suggested by the term 'primordial image'. The analogy may be true in a positive sense as well from this critical standpoint: perhaps Kerényi too, despite the scholarly criticisms directed at him, will one day become a "classic."

Doubts could certainly be raised even in connection with the course of interpretation. For instance with regard to his assertion that the "primordial," the absolute closeness to the "origin" can be demonstrated, for example, in a Botticelli painting as clearly as in an archaic cultic custom. He says of Botticelli's *Birth of Venus:* "The 'Birth of Venus' is not the correct title for the painting. It is the arrival of Aphrodite—to Cyprus, according to the Homeric hymn, Aphrodite's arrival to us, into the modern age according to the meaning and function of the picture. It is living mythology, at least as much as the Homeric hymn itself. . . . Here is an aspect Protogenos Koré, the first-born Maiden of the world. Botticelli's picture helps us to conjure her up. And her we must conjure up if we wish to understand the Greek goddesses. She stands closest to the origin."[28] It is art above all that links us with the realm of Greek imagination. It is really art that acts as the primary medium of transmission for mythology. But is the transmitter at the same time also the "primordial," that standing "the closest to the origin," precisely in the context of an early Renaissance painting, with the scholarly, allerogicizing, playful and fabulous, disguised mythologism of its day? If one brings to bear the standpoint of the history of art, the answer will call not only this primordiality into question. The intellectual inspiration for the painting is considered to be Pico della Mirandola's neo-

Platonic philosophy of love, based on Plotinus.[29] Compared with Kerényi's Aphrodite (as presented in this study), this philosophy is highly spiritualised and views the myth with this spiritualising intent. Strictly speaking, therefore, Kerényi "fallaciously" reasons away the traditional title and theme of the painting.

So in the name of the "timelessly valid world content," all borders cease to exist (those between art and mythology just as much as those between the Homeric hymn originating within contemporaneous religion and the Renaissance picture); at the same time, the history of traditionalism is also dissolved in this assumed origin. (Along with this, the process of interpretation is also suspended, and hermeneutics becomes revelation.) Thus time itself ceases to be and becomes, one might say, Platonic appearance, or, in so far as it is present, it is destructive, since—to return to the citation which provided the starting-point for our line of thought: "in the final analysis every development turns into disintegration and every blossoming into decomposition."

It is this decomposition which the theogonic process of Kerényi's way of thinking rejects, in trying to reach back to a primordial revelation. As with all faith in revelation, all theogonic thinking, ultimately this too is 'monotheistic', as is elaborated in Schelling's phylosophy of myths, one of Kerényi's basic sources.[30] This "monotheism" often appears to be monomania, in which missing experience is compensated for by faith (which he marks as the task of the scholar in *Religio Academici*[31]), and which "presses forward into vacancy" (something which he refuses to the scholar in the same work, but which one feels to be so typical of its formulator). He is forced to do so by the "want" itself, as none of the "logic of negativity" can handle, in a sufficiently sober manner, with what there is—in Kerényi's case, for instance, with (in the beginning of his *Hermes*) the fact that Greek gods mean practically nothing to the reader of the day. Of course, bearing in mind the humanistic tradition and educational ethos that permeated Kerényi, is it possible to do anything else than to conjure up—with the penetrating force of his personality and the ideas he experienced—that which is considered non-existent by the world which surrounds him? This, however, is no neutral answer.

Reading his works one gets the impression that he always needed a kind of surchargedness, a somewhat artificial elation in order to arrive from the state of need to that of saturation, to rise from our godless world into that "higher reality" which is the subject of his writings. Jung must have been often accused of similar prophesizing as well. Still one may feel that Jung was surrounded in an absolutely natural way by his brainchildren: the souls of the dead (with whom he was conversing, as he wrote in his reflections, the primordial images and ideas which, germinating from the depth of his consciousness, permeated him). In Kerényi, however, all this often seems to be strained, self-induced. Two of his similes regarding the position of the scholar also bear out something like this. One is the parable in *Religio Academici*, in which Kerényi (based on Book Three of Cicero's *De nature deorum*) compares the scholar to the Roman pontifex who, standing at the end of a tradition, entertains "considerate cautiousness" to the divine sphere. The other simile adapts the closing thought in Karl Reinhardt's book, *Platons Mythen*. According to Reinhardt, Plato's myths are the "myths of the soul," that is to say, Plato the philosopher, recalls in his myths the world of his forefathers: their myths come to life as the idiom of the soul, and through this the soul came to know itself in its creative being. The myths that have entered the soul area ideas as such; being both the idiom, the image of that which really exists—of truth as the state of unhiddenness of existence. From here one can derive Kerényi's concept already referred to, that the Greek gods are idea-like, and also his Platonism for religious history ("Plato-

nismus" in *Europäische Revue*, 17, 1941). This in fact is a general feature; W. F. Otto, Mircea Eliade and others have all called themselves Platonist.

But Kerényi went a step further: he considers Platonistically intimate scholarship the inheritor of mythology. As he put it, at the close of his study *Gnosis*, mythology today can no longer be re-lived in a naïve manner, and so one has to aim for a discipline that looks upon the human with a sense of totality akin to the mythological.[32] Within the history of religion this means that in a certain sense it turns itself into "mythology." This in itself, of course, is still a possible set of objectives, as were its Romantic precedents (which professed the unity of art, religion, and philosophy), and also Nietzsche's declaration of the inseparableness of philology and philosophy. The question rather is what this can serve today, more than two thousand years after its Platonic version and more than a century after its modern model. Considering scholarship, which gradually but growingly loses human involvement, one could scarcely find a closer and livelier counter-image. At the same time, these very disciples are also marked by the ambition to act as the trend-setters of thinking. And this may take us precisely in the opposite direction. Seeing the loss of totality, the failure of the logic of negativity, one may be forced onto the road of modesty, renouncing the superiority of the pontifex still in direct contact with his tradition and faith, and the privileges of the artist creating myths, of Plato who, through his myths, "created a city."

So even if I do not consider his work topical or rather followable, we can honour and read him, apart from his extraordinary attainment, for this Platonic fidelity to the idea. Still, even in this context a critical correction should not go unremarked: greatly Platonic though he was, he was not at all Socratic. To those who did not know him personally, the stories and anecdotes about him may show him as being fairly unversed in Socratism: above all in self-irony, in overcoming vanity and haughtiness. This lack is also reflected in his works, for instance in his value judgements. In the fact that he seemed to nurture a real *Hassliebe* as his major intellectual experience. Kerényi's *Örök Antigone* (Eternal Antigone) exhibits very close ties with Hölderlin's *Antigone*, which he noted through a motto, and yet he later wrote there was no philologist who could "take seriously" Hölderlin's translation.[33] The situation is similar with Nietzsche: earlier he considered Nietzsche's Apollonian concept a misunderstanding, and he introduced his Dionysus study by saying that Nietzsche had evaded the nature of the Dionysian too. Yet it is obvious how much Kerényi learned from Nietzsche in this respect as well. His great work on Dionysus that closed his œuvre, wishes to rival Nietzsche and Otto; in that much, it supports what we have just said.

Unfortunately the argument of this extremely complex last work is not as clear as it was in the previous writings. It seems incoherent and at places confused. To grasp the leading idea in the work, one has to start out from the polemic title *(Dionysos, Urbild des unzerstörbaren Lebens)* and suppose a recurring dispute with adversaries past and present—a polemic with the disruption of the balance, which characterizes the later Dionysus interpretations, most of which appeared simultaneously with his work. Most of these scholars emphasize cruelty, the destructive force, barbarism against the foundation of culture (grapes, wine), the disruption of order. Kerényi, on the other hand, calls attention to "indestructible life," to life that triumphs over the cycle of genesis and transcience somewhat inopportunately (after all, what form of life has seemed to be indestructible in our century?), but with a profound humanism, following mainly the conclusions of his youthful article "Gondolatok Dionysosról" (Thoughts about Dionysus). It is worth referring here to a study by Albert Henrichs that points out that the Dionysus picture is of a doubtful topicality and feels the lethality of the deity to be missing from

the work.[34] This is undoubtedly surprising if one comes to think of the earlier accusations that Kerényi was a decadent, a mystic of death whom everything reminds of death and, on the other hand, a romantic glutton for life.[35] This it would be difficult to do justice to here. One may say against László Mátrai that far from being irrationalism and decadence, this is precisely humanism, in as much that to understand death and embed it in life is something that human existence must confront. It might follow from the weakening of this position that his readers find precisely that thematically so important death aspect to be unconvincing in the great work within this historian of religion, who had dealt so much with death, intended as his *chef-d'œuvre*. Or can it be due to the lack of self-ironical detachment in a profound thinker that his descent to Hades does not seem to be genuine?

Whatever the case may be, the Dionysus work is a sad conclusion to a life's work which otherwise is replete with lively challenges.

The present of mythology

Wherein does Karl Kerényi still have a message for us, and what areas of his thinking do we concur with?

Even his opponents once granted Kerényi a position in the mainstream of the intellectual life of his time. This touches our present as well, whether one considers his views on art or his constantly renewed philosophical interest, which ranged from German idealism to Heidegger. At the same time, it cannot be denied that the aura of the last century surrounds him. So far we have registered this by saying that the horizon of the understanding of an object changes easily into the "timelessness" of the classical ideals—hermeneutics into revelation, the rare climax of festivity into bridging the gaps sensed between periods in time by a mental intensification. We have surely become more reflective during the time that has passed since Kerényi's golden age. The "philosophy of the myth"—in the future construction of which Thomas Mann assigned such an illustrious place to Kerényi—also proceeds along more thought-out paths. Manfred Frank, who has chosen the same tradition as Kerényi, and who originally studied Schleiermacher and German Romantic philosophical thinking (for instance, in his book on the romantic Dionysus already cited), breaks with the ontologicising concept of myth of the direct view of essence precisely in the name of this tradition, and considers mythology as a cast of thought of a poler (reflecting) construction which with its symbolic parlance (in this respect he, too, owes much to Creuzer) bridges the distance between the holy and the profane, and, through reflection reaching back, legitimises and creates existence. Even in the age of Romanticism, Frank considered it impossible to build on the sacred (that is on the presence of the gods)—and in this he identifies the topicality of Romanticism. As a consequence, he views myth too from the aspect of Schlegel and Schelling's request for a "new mythology," saying that in certain ages the non-existent can provide a more fertile foundation than the existent (see the *Sollen* in ethics). Therefore his Dionysus is *der kommende Gott*, the imminent god, the god in the offing, who has never been really present, has never (yet) been realized, and is therefore ours, is therefore topical.

Kerényi's path avoids the view of suffering and cruelty, the greater-than-ever value vacuum which, in Hermann Broch's words, is greater than it was in the past, and in which the existence-creating presence of the gods has become doubtful even in the depths of the soul. Even if we may come across them at all, the road to them will remain blocked as long as we do not face up to their absolute loss of the present, which is both more and less than their "Want." Because "Want" is still a simple negative imprint of the presence, the mark of the one-time existence, but now even the "Want," the imprint of

their one-time existence is no longer absorbed in the texture of the world. And Kerényi's ideal of a religious culture, his humanism prevented him from facing up to this. To a certain extent we can envy him for this. For us the path of handing down tradition has become so much more circuitous that even if by some divine grace we were to possess Ariadne's thread, we would hardly know where it would lead us. Shaken in our human substance, and consequently with the blockage of the road leading inwards (Novalis's *Weg nach innen*), it may seem that we really can only withdraw to the non-existent as the foundation for all further thinking. Heidegger's radicalism and intellectual power seems to be needed to enter into a dialogue with Hellenism as the position of the humanism one so highly esteems in Kerényi has become irreparably weakened. The protest in the *Letter on Humanism* holds true for him too, namely that this anthropology also bases the humanism of the *homo humanus* on the preconceived, ready explanation of nature, history, the world, the world basis, in other words takes as ready something which should be precisely the task of the humanist to call repeatedly into question.

This undoubtedly is the highest standard by which to gauge a scholarly œuvre, and offhand I could not even mention anyone else in twentieth-century Hungarian scholarship to whom this standard can be applied. If many things were perhaps unpredictable during his intellectual prime that have since become easily calculable, he cannot be blamed for this. This most strongly affects what should be done by Hungarian scholarship, perhaps more vibrant than ever before but also with far fewer prospects since Europe has become split into two. At the end of the "Thoughts about Dionysus" Kerényi could still write: "But did the Greeks ever think of their Dionysus something like Otto's reflections, or these here? The Greeks—and with them the ancient followers of Dionysus—had it much easier. For them there was the essence of Dionysus in myth and image, in vision and the evocative forms of the cult—fully expressed. Expressed even beyond what the word 'arrestedness' may involve, in the way this is expressed by the style as something more than can be grasped by the mind. The ancients did not have to think about all this, and the innermost, the most essential substance cannot be interpreted by our thoughts either. Why do we then strive to do so? What does this arrestedness have to do with us?

"This arrestedness is a possibility inherent in our nature and in our land: in Pannonia, in Dacia, in the whole of our world having turned southward, and divided peremptorily by the Carpathians from the North." (p. 203)

Since then even the Carpathians seem to have turned. Hungarian nature, the Hungarian world turning towards the South, towards antiquity, has itself become a southern dream, a flight of fancy.

NOTES

[1] János György Szilágyi: "Károly Kerényi and his Greek Mythology," *The New Hungarian Quarterly*, 1978, No. 71, pp. 160–68.

[2] Karl Kerényi: *Töchter der Sonne. Betrachtungen über griechische Gottheiten*, Zurich, 1944, 61 pp.

[3] André Jolles: *Einfache Formen*, Tübingen, 1929.

[4] Walter F. Otto: *Die Gestalt und das Sein*, Tübingen, 1955, 88 pp.

[5] Karl Kerényi: *Auf Spuren des Mythos*, Munich–Vienna, 1967, 292 pp.

[6] The myth is tackled in this sense in "Werk und Mythos" in *Auf Spuren des Mythos*.

[7] "Das Wesen des Festes", *Paideuma*, *1*, No. 2 (1938) pp 59–74.

[8] *Op. cit.*

[9] *Op. cit.*

[10] Martin Heidegger *Gesamtausgabe*, Vol. 52, 1982. Though it is, of course, not impossible that it was Kerényi who influenced Heidegger (the reverse of this being obvious in many respects), in the absence of any adequate data, I still would not speak of such influence. Hans-Georg Gadamer, on the other hand, was admittedly influenced by Kerényi in his feast theory. H. G. Gadamer: *Die Aktualität des Schönen*, Stuttgart, 1977, 52 pp.

[11] *Op. cit.* p. 72.

[12] "Hermes, der Seelenführer. Das Mythologen von männlichen Lebensursprung", *Eranos-Jahrbuch* 1943, Zurich.

[13] See e.g. Karl Krause's article in the 1961 issue of *Gnomon* on Kerényi's *Griechische Miniaturen* (1957), Ludolf Malten's review on *Griechische Mythologie* (*Gnomon*, 1953), Albin Leaky's review on *Töchter der Sonne* and on *Niobe. Neue Studien über Religion und Humanität* (Zurich, 1949). *Anzeiger iir Altertumwissenschaft* (1950).

[14] Johann Arnold Kanne's letter to Jac. Wagner, June 12, 1912.

[15] Károly Kerényi: *Mi a mitológia?*, Budapest, 1939. (In German: "Was ist Mythologie?", *Europäische Revue* 15, 1939, pp 557–72)

[16] *Ibid.* 356.

[17] Georg Picht: *Kunst und Mythos*, Stuttgart, 1986.

[18] Walter F. Otto: "Dionysos", *Mythos und Kultus*, Frankfurt am Main, 1933.

[19] In Hungarian: *Gondolatok Dionysosról* (1935); in German: "Gedanken über Dionysos", *Studii e materiali di storia delle religioni*, 11, 1935, 11–40.

[20] *Protogonos Koré* (Budapest, 1941).

[21] In German: Kore. Das göttliche Mädchen. Die Hauptgestalt der Mysterien von Eleusis in mythologischer und psychologischer Beleuchtung, *Albae Vigiliae*, Amsterdam–Leipzig, 1941, pp. 13–82.

[22] *Op. cit.* p. 447.

[23] Friedrich Creuzer: *Symbolik und Mythologie der alten Völker*, 1810.

[24] Friedrich Gottlieb Welcker: *Griechische Götterlehre*, 1863.

[25] *Op. cit.* p. 430.

[26] Alfred Bäumler: "Bachofen, der Mythologe der Romantik", introduction to Bachofen's *Der Mythos von Orient und Okzident*, Munich, 1926, CXXIX sq.

[27] Karl Kerényi–Thomas Mann: *Romandichtung und Mythologie. Ein Briefwechsel*, Zurich, 1945, p. 67.

[28] *Progotonos Koré*, p. 427.

[29] Edgar Wind: *Pagan Mysteries in the Renaissance*, London, 1958.

[30] Schelling: *Philosophie der Mythologie*, Suhrkamp-Ausgabe pp. 529, 19.

[31] The Hungarian study was also published in Italian: Religio Academici. Un aspetto nuovo della religione romana. *Atti del V Congresso Nazionale di Studi Romani* 1940.

[32] Karl Kerényi: *Humanistische Seelenforschung*, Munich–Vienna, 1966, 202.

[33] In: *Antigone—Theater der Jahrhunderte*, Preface p. 27. Munich, 1966.

[34] Albert Henrichs: "Loss of Self, Suffering, Violence. The Modern View of Dionysus from Nietzsche to Girard" *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology*, 1984, 205–40.

[35] Reference to a notorious article by the noted Hungarian writer Miklós Szentkuthy (1908—1988), which provoked profound resentment in Kerényi and his circle.

MIHÁLY HOPPÁL

HUNGARIAN MYTHOLOGY

Mythology, as a category of the study of comparative religion, should be understood (in the context of the present paper) as a system of notions reconstructed by the help of folk beliefs, folk tales, sagas, sayings, archaic prayers, incantations, folk arts and folk customs of a given culture.

To receive a clearer picture of the state and structure of Hungarian mythology, the mythology and Gods of the other Finno-Ugrian peoples should be resorted to. Unfortunately, however, the Hungarian material does not allow an opportunity to do so, since it is completely different from the other Finno–Ugrian and even the Ob–Ugrian material which is considered to closest to it from the linguistic point of view. This may be accounted for by the Magyars parting from their closest linguistic kins several thousand years ago with the consequent disruption of language and cultural connections.[1]

As the material of Hungarian folk belief contains no early texts which scholars

can identify as the products of the myth-creating (such as the sagas of the Northern Teutonic peoples), indirect sources have to be recoursed to. Sources for mythological *data* may be archeological finds, references by the authors of antiquity to the Hungarians, medieval historical chronicles, written sources, including the literary heritage of the past centuries, and folklore. The value of oral popular tradition, customs and folk art (especially woodcarving and embroidery) must be emphasized since these preserved certain elements of ancient mythological thinking, despite various foreign influences. Of special value are those nineteenth-century works on mythology, whose authors made conscious efforts to collect contemporary folklore[2].

Because of the diversity of the sources the quality of the data available will not be uniform; however, the historical layers within Hungarian popular belief cannot be discovered without these sources. One of the problems of reconstruction is that the *data* significantly affect our overall view; consequently if we neglect particular groups of sources, our historical picture of Hungarian folk belief would be much changed. A further complication lies in the fact that the Hungarian people in adopting Christianity at the beginning of the 11th century expressed the concepts of the new religion through words which had long been in the language, mostly of Old-Turkish origin (such as the words for fasting, blessing, curse, confess)[3].

Another interesting feature of Hungarian popular belief is the extent to which the individual mythic (or pseudo-mythic) figures, the heroes of the stories, are connected to individual folklore genres and the individual groups of sources. Thus, for example, the seven-fold stratification of the world under the ground is only referred to in certain spells (the seven layers of the earth under the ground).

In turning to the oldest historical layers of Hungarian mythology, our primary recourse is to archeology. For example, burial with one's horse at the time of the Hungarian Conquest and the custom of sacrificing horses, as mentioned by some chronicles, may be considered to be an important element in the system. The graves were placed beyond water, the tombs were carefully arranged, the dead were placed in their graves with their feet (i.e. faces) to the east, and with them well buried and personal belongings and everyday objects for personal use. All this may figure as important typological items for comparative investigation.[4]

Remnants of shaman mythology

Our chronicles carry traces of certain totemistic myths. According to the story related to the *turul* (a huge bird similar to an eagle), the mother of the ruling family of the Árpád-dynasty was made pregnant by a turul-bird. Another fragment of myth relates the story of the brothers Hunor and Magor pursuing the magic deer, their adventure of capturing wives, i.e. the events of founding the clan.[5] Incidentally, the motif of the magic deer of celestial origin appears in the *regös-songs* containing several mythological elements as well[6].

Hungarian research is in agreement on the important role of shamanism in forming the mythical worldview during the period of the Conquest. Its traces have been investigated by Vilmos Diószegi in his "The Remnants of Shamanism in Hungarian Folk Culture".[7] The elements of shaman mythology have survived over the centuries; Hungarian popular belief has preserved almost to the present day motifs whose best parallels are to be found among the Siberian peoples. Thus, for example, the Hungarian would-be shaman becomes "knowledgeable" through an illness, that is passively, against his will as it were; he must suffer for his knowledge (compare the "hacking" motif) and he must climb the tree that reaches the sky. Only those who bear some kind of

a sign from their births can become shamans (for example, born with teeth or with a caul, a belief related to the "superfluous bone" of the Siberian shamans). As far as the shaman's equipment is concerned, Hungarian popular belief has preserved a memory of the shaman's drum in the form of a sieve[8] along with a memory of the antler headpiece, the shaman's ladder (as the tree reaching the sky) and extasy as well. The belief-stories on the magical fighting bulls contain important motifs and, data to understand the shamans' view of the world.

The structure of Hungarian mythology, referred to as the system of folk beliefs in recent research, may be defined through different considerations, just as the mythologies of different peoples (their systems of Gods) may be defined at levels essentially different from each other (groups of Gods and spirits)[9]. What follows will first deal with a cosmology that provides a frame for the whole, then, after describing the Hungarian image of God, a description will be given of the supernatural beings that occur in Hungarian popular belief and finally the beliefs relating to persons with supernatural abilities will be described. This is only one of many possible approaches and within the given limits cannot include each and every detail.[10]

The regulating principle of this cosmology divides the universe into three, the upper middle and the lower or other world. The upper is the world of God(s) and the personified planets (Sun and Moon) and the stars. The middle world is the dwelling place of man but supernatural beings (different ghosts, forest and water spirits) are active in its vicinity too and here we encounter the deeds of people with supernatural abilities, e.g. the shaman and the witch.

In the mythological worldview which may be reconstructed with the help of Hungarian folk tales, a central place is occupied by the tree reaching the sky or the tree with no end (the world-tree for the other Finno-Ugrian peoples). This huge tree symbolically connects the sky and the earth, the world of the Gods and the place where men live their lives, while its roots go down into the world under the ground; at its base one can go down into the dark underworld through a hole. It is only the hero with a shaman's skills (the young shepherd) who is able to climb this huge pole in order to enter the house of the Moon and the Sun, the silver and the gold castles. According to some folk-tale texts, this tree bears fruit (golden apples) but the yield is stolen by fairies every night. In other types of tales there is a huge eagle nesting in the branches of the tree or the eaglets are saved by the hero who is taken by a huge bird, usually a griffon[11] from the underworld to the surface of the earth, to the base of the tree from where he sets off on his adventure. Some scholars try to link all these motifs with the concept of the shaman's journeys to the lower and upper worlds.[12]

According to some beliefs, the huge tree reaching the sky acts as a support for the sky, which covers the world like a tent; holes in it are the stars. The sky above us has seven or nine layers and these layers are equivalent to the branches of the tree, whose number is the same. The Moon is mentioned in the Hungarian spells as a man ("new Moon, new King...") while the Sun is looked upon as the personification of the Mother Goddess and is identified with the female principle ("the woman-dressed-into-the sun").[13]

The probable memory of religious practice related to the Sun, an honouring of the sun, is preserved by the data on the morning prayers and gesture greeting the sun that has been found in the archaic folklore of certain groups of people (the Csángós of Moldavia and the Cumanians). Among the Csángós of Gyimes, the respect for a mythological figure previously unknown has been found: probably a mythological creature resulting from the unification of a Christian Maria-cult and an earlier pagan Goddess.

The Moon played a role primarily in folk medicine; in some cases the power of spells[14] was believed to be strengthened by their being performed in moonlight. The spots of the moon were explained by reference to Saint David playing the fiddle and Cecilia dancing; another explanation (probably of pagan origin) is that it is the figure of a shepherd that can be seen in the moon. There are several names given to the Milky Way: Straw Way, the road of Old God, the road of God or Our Lord Jesus, the road of Prince Csaba. All these denominations preserve or may preserve the essence of former mythological notions. The name of a mythic creature devouring planets *(markoláb)* is known in Hungarian popular belief and solar or lunar eclipses are attributed to this creature.

The sky where heaven is to be found is opposed by hell as the underworld, the third part of the cosmology. Heaven *(menny—a* word inherited from old Finno-Ugrian times according to linguists)[15] is the realm of brightness, somewhere up there where the souls of those who behaved decently and humanely in their earthly lives find their way. In contrast, hell *(pokol)*, which is of Slavic origin, is the realm of darkness where the wicked go after death. This opposition in Hungarian popular belief is probably the merging of Christian teaching with older dualistic ideas. Hell is under the ground, the world under the ground has several layers just as does that in the sky.

God and the Devil

It is worth mentioning here that the concepts of the other world show an interesting dichotomy (Hungarian mythology is of course not unique in this respect); namely, the opposition of the underworld and the Other World may be clearly distinguished. While the former generally refers to hell, the dwelling place of the damned, the Other World is a more neutral expression, denoting some kind of world beyond the water generally referring to the realm of the dead. Thus in the image of the world, we find a vertical pair of oppositions and a horizontal one, at the level of the concepts of the earthly world and the other world.

Related to the cosmology, mention must be made of the creation myths. They have mostly been handed down to us by Christian tradition on the Bible (see the collections of Ilona Nagy and Annamaria Lammel).[16] A rare exception is the fragment on the creation of the earth, more exactly on bringing up earth from under the water (through the helper of the Creator, who may be the devil —in Hungarian *ördög* or *lidérc*—or the goblin in the given creation myth),[17] which is known all over Eurasia.

The main figure of the pantheon in Hungarian mythology is the figure of the creator referred to in several ways, God or the Lord, in Hungarian *Isten* and *Úr*. (In popular usage Lord God, but the compounds Old God, Good God, God Almighty are also known.) He is the lord of the world, the supreme controlling being who holds in his hands the fate of every human and living being, he is helpful and just but also metes out punishment. All this may be characteristic of a general concept of God, be it of pagan or Christian origin. What is interesting is that he has no separate cult, nor any separate group of myths; the word itself is rather a common word indicating quality (thus, the punishment of God refers to his function of controlling fate). He dwells in heaven from where he watches the affairs of the world, to some extent passively, although, as in mythologies, the function of hurling lightning, typical of the principal Gods, is attributed to him (cp. *istennyila*—lightning).

Our linguists have been unable to give a sound and unequivocal explanation for the origin of the name *Isten* for God (in the recent past the Russian researchers A. Halmisky and V. V. Ivanov raised the possibility of explanation from the old Hun-

garian word *ise* "father" and old Turkish *tengri* "God, sky" or the Hittite *Istanus*).[18]

Together with God, the devil *(ördög)* also participates in the work of creation; as the demiurge of our mythology it is from him that the beings causing unpleasant things to man originate (thus, the fly, the tick, the flea or similar creatures). His dwelling place is hell, his empire is in the depths of the earth where the damned souls go after death. In everyday language he is looked upon as the embodiment of all kinds of evil things (we have data for this going back to as early as the 16th century).[19] Pairs of clear opposition may be attributed to the principle God and his enemy (God = up, good, bright; devil = down, evil, dark). Soviet researchers consider that Erlik, the lord of the netherworld, known from Turkish mythology, displays the most similarities to the Hungarian devil.

In the mythology of the Eurasian peoples, in most cases women, but at least one goddess, belong to the pair of chief Gods related to the male sex and opposing each other. The God of the Hungarians has no wife, but a puzzling name indicates that at one time there may have been a mother Goddess fulfilling important functions in the system, commanding great respect; her name is *Boldogasszony*: Happy Woman or Happy Mother.[20] This figure of popular belief is probably the unifiction of pre-Conquest Christian concepts; the Mother Goddess assisting delivery and giving life may be compared to the figure of the Ob-Ugric *kaltes* woman on the one hand, and that of Mary in Christianity, the mother of God, whose constant attribute in Christian liturgy is *boldog* happy, on the other hand. The names of the goddess contain the word *asszony* (woman), which is of Ossetic origin, but also the word mother—indicating that she is the wife, the woman of someone; she had a husband—lord, and that, because of his positive features, could not have been anyone else but the male chief-God.

Nature spirits

When comparing the group of supernational beings in Hungarian folk belief with the Gods of the Slavs, Latins or Buryats, we find that while in the mythology of other peoples these Gods of a lower order constitute large groups, families, the case is completely different in Hungarian mythology. (In my opinion, this is not the result of corruption or loss but an important typological feature.)

It is characteristic of Hungarian belief system too, though not to the same extent as with other Finno-Ugric peoples, that it peoples nature with spiritual beings. Thus, for example, the forests are dwelling places of mysterious creatures but they are not the masters of nature; nor are they God-like, instead, they simply scare people passing by. As their names change from region to region, the indication is that they do not belong to the basic layer of the mythology of the pagan age; *vadördög*—wild devil (an old man whose body is covered with hair and has a wild complexion), *vadleány*—wild girl (she walks naked, she has long hair and nails), *erdei leány*, *éneklő kisasszony*—(forest girl, singing lady used by Transylvanian Hungarians).

Another group of the nature spirits (the term coined by Éva Pócs)[21] is that of the water creatures. The male, *vízi ember*—water-man, who lives in rivers, lakes and marshlands is, according to popular beliefs, dangerous to people because he pulls them under the water (his figure may perhaps be compared to the water creatures of other Finno-Ugric peoples, such as the Mari *Vid-Ava and Vit-Kan)*.[22] The Hungarian name for the female water creature is *sellő*, she was imagined as a beautiful young woman but since she lived in the water she had the body of a fish from her waist downwards.

Mythological consciousness frequently looked upon changes of weather as the direct interference of certain Gods and personified

the different phenomena (wind, rain) separately (e.g. the Polish Pagoda or the Greek zephyr). We find very little data to this effect in Hungarian folk belief. Mention, however, should be made of the Windmother, *szélanya*, imagined in the form of an old woman who guards the winds in a cave and lets them out from time to time. In folk tales she dwells in the branches of the world tree. Recently, research has considered the figure of the *Sárkány*—Dragon, a frequent agent in both folk tales and myths of beliefs either assisting the hero or opposing him, as a weather demon.[23] His appearance (with seven, nine or twelve heads) does not differ from the dragon figures of other peoples. It is interesting, however, that the word *sárkány* is of Turkish origin in Hungarian.

There are some terms in Hungarian popular belief which are suitable for denominating several demonic creatures: spirit, soul and ghost. All kinds of mythical creatures without a body were referred to as spirits *(szellem)*. The mytho-poetic sense of this denomination may hide a group of mythic creatures imagined as wind-like. Similar to this type is the term *lélek*—soul, originating from the group of words meaning *lélegzet* (breath),[24] which was primarily used for indicating the unpalpable substance leaving the body of the dead. The Finno-Ugric peoples were familiar with several concepts of soul, including one which may leave the body of man when sleeping or in esctasy. Among the Csángós of Moldavia belief stories were recorded about the soul leaving the body of man in the form of a wasp.[25]

Research considers as pseudo-mythic creatures those figures of popular belief whose names are familiar to us but their exact figure and form of appearance are not or the different accounts present very different descriptions of them. Such are the fictitious demons of illnesses: *fene, guta, nyavalya* which have survived in the form of curses or bad wishes in the mythopoetic consciousness as elements of modern folklore.

Nightmare

Also known in popular belief are a few creatures whose role is to frighten people and whose figures are difficult to describe and whose names are common nouns only (e.g. *kísértet*-ghost and *halál*-death); also familiar is *lidérc* (nightmare), and this mystical creature may appear in several shapes, a rich diversity described by a great number of belief stories. The nightmare is one type of the devil's lover in Hungarian popular belief, but the rich diversity of the beliefs connected to it demonstrate that different kinds of mythic motifs are assimilated in the figure (a flying star with a fiery tail, a wandering light of nightmare, ghosts, dead people haunting their homes, a creature bringing riches, etc.). The origin and etymology of the name *lidérc* are not known to us, nor do we know the origin of most of the Hungarian words used for frightening children either. The Hungarian belief system possesses a fairly large group of creatures whose only function is to scare very small children if they, are too noisy, misbehave or do not want to go to sleep. Their most common names are: *bubus, mumus, bankus, bunkus, bönkös, kankus, kunkos, kankas, kókós, kókár, mánkus, mumák, mummu, mamó, hemmes, mankuj, vankuj*.[26] Actually it is only the names of these creatures which are known to us, used in short threatening sentences: "The .... will get you!"; "The ... will come", but nothing is known about their appearance, in spite of the fact that we have at our disposal thorough collecting over the whole Hungarian language territory. Several thousand examples make it clear that the use of certain words to frighten is connected to certain ethnic groups which may be well-defined (e.g. *kókó* is used by the Palóc, *kókus* is used in Szabolcs-Szatmár County and *mókár* and *bankus* are used only in the regions populated by Cumanians). Although these are words used in childrens' language, the great number of the variants of phonetic forms as well as their

widespread use all over the country make us belicve that they refer to the memory of an ancient mythological creature (with strongly negative features). Comparative mythological examination, especially of the phonetic forms of *bubus-mumus-mummu* as well as the forms of *rézfaszú bagoly* (owl with a copper prick) and *vasorrú bába* (witch with an iron nose), may bring interesting results in the future.

Fairies and giants

Different pseudo-mythical figures appear in the texts of folk tales and myths and they are usually placed at the lower levels of the mythological systems. Such are in Hungarian the *manó*—imp, the *törpe*—dwarf, the *óriás*—giant, the *tündér*—fairy and the *boszorkány*—witch. The first two are small though extremely strong and shrewd creatures with long hair and beard and they appear only, together with their companion the giant, in folk tales. The giants live far away in hills somewhere on the periphery of the world while the dwarfs and the imps live in the woods or under the ground and to this their function of guarding treasure is related.

As to their dwelling place, the creatures of the lower level of mythology live outside the human world of culture, they live in the natural environment where their life is led (woods, caves, mountains, lakes, marshland, waters). Among the female creatures the best known are the fairies *(tündér)*, described by our folk tales and legends as benevolent, highly attractive and beautiful creatures. It is characteristic that their palaces are in the underwater realm emanating eternal happiness. The etymology of the name has not been conclusively revealed by linguistics but we know examples of similar mythological names when the meaning of the common noun itself in dicated the most important characteristic feature of the figure (in this case the semantic group of 'sparkling', 'radiating', 'enchanting')[27].

If the fairy is the beautiful young female creature of the lower level of mythology dwelling in water, then her negative counterpart is definitely the *vasorrú bába* (witch with an iron nose) who is depicted by our tales as an ugly, ill-meaning old woman.[28]

The group of extraordinary heroes of historical epic tradition, about whom we do not even know exactly whether they did actually exist and whether those miraculous and scarcely credible events they participated in did really happen to them, may also be considered as part of the mythological system. Such traditions interwoven with mythical elements are connected to Botond the hero with enormous bodily strength, the horn of Lehel, the fight of King Saint Ladislas, the latter being preserved by medieval church frescoes as well as the figure of Miklós Toldi of legendary strength.[29] Our ancestors who founded clans became mythical heroes in the course of time and were incorporated into the consciousness of the people. The figures of myths relate the beginnings of history while the historical heroes slowly become mythical figures (thus King Matthias) as time passed. What is important in this process for the community is that it is able to identify itself with the heroes of mythical history or historical myth: all reconstructed mythological systems or those believed to be true have the function of strengthening identity. That is the most important social role of mythologies today.

NOTES

1. See Mihály Hoppál: Folk Beliefs and Shamanism of the Uralic Peoples. In: Péter Hajdú (ed.) Ancient Cultures of the Uralian Peoples) 215–242. Budapest: Corvina, 1975.
2. Arnold Ipolyi: *Magyar mythológia* (Hungarian mythology). Pest, 1854. Szépirodalmi, Budapest, 1987.
3. Lajos Vargyas: *A honfoglaló magyarság hitvilágának legfejlettebb rétege a nyelv és a folklór tükrében* (The most developed layer of the world of beliefs of the Hungarians at the time of the Conquest as reflected in language and folklore). In M. Hoppál–M. Istvánovits

(eds.) *Mítosz és történelem* (Myth and history) 15–28. Budapest, 1978.

4. István Dienes: *A honfoglaló magyarok és ősi hiedelmeik* (The Hungarians of the Conquest and their ancient beliefs). In: Péter Hajdú (ed.) *Uráli népek* (Uralic peoples) 77–108. Budapest: Corvina, 1975.
5. Antal Bartha: *Mítosz és történelem* (Myth and history). In: M. Hoppál–M. Istvánovits (eds.) *Mítosz és történelem* 13–15. Budapest: MTA Néprajzi kutatócsoport, 1978.
6. Gyula Sebestyén: *Regös énekek* (Regös songs). (Magyar Népköltési Gyűjtemény) Budapest: Athenaeum, 1902.
7. Vilmos Diószegi: *A sámánhit emlékei a magyar népi műveltségben* (The remnants of Shamanism in Hungarian folk culture). Budapest: Akadémiai, 1958.
8. Mihály Hoppál: Traces of Shamanism in Hungarian Folk Beliefs. In M. Hoppál (ed.) *Shamanism in Eurasia.* 2: 430–449. Göttingen: tlerodot 1984.
9. Especially interesting and valuable is the work by V. V. Ivanov and V. N. Toporov — cp. *Mify narodov mira* I–II. Moscow. Sovietskaia Entziklopedia (2nd edition 1987).
10. Mihály Hoppál: Belief System. Worldview and Mythology. In: A. Paládi-Kovács–A. Gulya (eds.) *The Social Function of Folk Customs among the Finno–Ugric Peoples* 129–133. Congressus Quartus Internationalis Fenno-Ugristarum. Pars IV. Budapest: Akadémiai, 1981.
11. János Berze-Nagy: *Égigérő fa. Mitológiai tanulmányok* (The tree reaching the sky. Studies in mythology). Pécs: 1958.
12. From recent literature see E. Novik: *Ritual and Folklore in Siberian Shamanism* (inRussian). Moscow: Nauka, 1984. M. Harner: *The Way of the Shaman.* San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1980.
13. Cp. Zsuzsanna Erdélyi: *Hegyet hágék, lőtöt lépék*. . . Budapest: 1976.
14. Éva Pács: *Ráolvasások* (Spells). Vols. I–II. Budapest: 1986.
15. Cp. *A magyar nyelv történeti-etimológiai szótára* (An Historical and Etymological Dictionary of the Hungarian Language) 2: 894. Budapest: Akadémiai, 1970.
16. Annamária Lammel-Ilona Nagy: *Parasztbiblia. Magyar népi biblikus történetek* (Peasant Bible. Hungarian folk biblical stories). Budapest: Gondolat, 1985.
17. Mihály Hoppál: *A magyar lidérc-hiedelemkör szemantikai modellje* (The semantic model of the Hungarian beliefs on *lidérc* (nightmare). Ethnograpia 1969. No. 3: 402—414.
18. In 1986 they gave articulation to their opinion during a personal conversation.
19. Péter Bornemissza: *Ördögi kísértetek* (Devilish ghosts). Budapest: 1955.
20. Lajos Kálmány: *Boldogasszony ősvallásunk istenasszonya* (The Goddess of the old Hungarian religion). Értekezések a nyelv- és néptudományok köréből (Studies on linguistic and folk sciences). 1886.
21. Éva Pócs: *Néphit* (Folk beliefs) A chapter for Magyar Néprajz (The ethnography of the Hungarians, to appear in 1989).
22. Cp. I. N. Szmirnov: *Cseremisz (mari) hiedelmek és áldozatok* [Cseremisz (Mari) beliefs and sacrifices]. In Hoppál (ed.) *A tejút fiai* (The sons of the Milky Way) 293–314. Budapest: Európa, 1980.
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24. B. Büky: Presuppositions about the soul and related concepts in the world of the ancient Hungarians. In: M. Hoppál–J. Pentikäinen (eds.) *Uralic Worldwiew and Mythology* (in preparation).
25. Sándor Bosnyák: *A moldvai magyarok hitvilága* (The world of beliefs of the Hungarians of Moldavia). In: Folklor Archivum 1980.
26. Mihály Hoppál: *Gyermekijesztők* (Words to scare children with). In: Népi kultúra–Népi Társadalom II–III: 247–264. Budapest: Akadémia, 1969.
27. Cp. Dezső Pais: *A magyar ősvallás nyelvi emlékeiből* (From the linguistic relics of old Hungarian religion). Budapest: 1975.
28. Sándor Solymossy: *A vasorrú bába és mitikus rokonai* (The witch with an iron nose and her mythical relatives). Ethnographia 1927.
29. Mihály Hoppál: *A Toldi mitológiai háttere* (The mythological background of Toldi). Új Írás XXI: (1981): 11: 69–101.

ISTVÁN KÄFER

SLOVAK AND HUNGARIAN CULTURE, PAST AND PRESENT

Frontiers divide. Up to here everything is mine, no one is allowed to touch it. Frontiers can be drawn and changed, states can be abolished or divided. However, a nation cannot be squeezed within the frontiers of a state or within any other borders. Primarily because the existence of a nation makes no sense in itself, only as one within the community of nations. For that very reason nations could only take shape in interaction with other nations from the moment of their birth. The problems start when a state wishes to identify with a nation and wants to make use of the nation in order to exercise its state functions. It is then that the theory and implementation of political nation, *Staatsnation, Kulturnation,* terms so sadly known to our regions, are born. They go hand in hand with the birth of ideologies justifying discrimination and privileges at the expense of others. All that is alien to the notion of nation since the nation is not a category of power. The nation is not violence but an undertaking of duties; it cannot indulge in conquest for it has no borders. It is open to the reception of the culture of other nations and it is also ready to share its own. It has nothing to be anxious about because it cannot be robbed of intellectual treasures. The state is a more rigid category, with a role in maintaining order essentially unchanged since ancient times. The nation, on the other hand, has appeared in different guises in history: a changing, incessantly developing acceptance of community consciousness. Its germs are as old as the formation of human communities. The initial form in which it found itself could be a religious, historical community sharing a common fate (thus, the Jewish community, or the defence of South-Eastern Europe against the Ottoman Turks, with religion and ethnicity acting together).

In more recent times, ethnic groups and languages have become central to the notion of the nation. Equality of opportunity for social and national development were looked upon as the obligatory norm for everyone. This was realized by a Hungary which was anything but independent, as well as by all the nations within Hungarian boundaries at the turn of the 18th and 19th centuries. A search for the past and for ethnicity as never experienced before started within a country which could look back on a history of nine centuries, and within the Habsburg empire as a whole. It was amid this fervid search that the peoples living here matured to become modern nations; even their greatest sons failed to recognize that their national essence and culture had common roots that were inseparable and intertwining. Only very few were able to see that our people was transformed into a nation not by a new interpretation of old glory but by an education and culture moulded in the course of actual search.

To continue elaborating on the essence of the nation would become an end in itself if we did not deal with the concrete, the question of the Slovak–Hungarian cultural borders alluded to in the title. All the more so since the idea of the nation has been an illusion up the present day in these parts. The naivity of our great men is worthy of respect, although they have so frequently been refuted and even ridiculed by history. Who took seriously Széchenyi's warning that what people looked upon as natural in the case of the Hungarians should not be taken amiss where non-Hungarian peoples were concerned? Who took seriously Ady's visions

scourging the nation or László Németh's idea of Central Europe or Attila József's warning to settle our national affairs?

National grievances and their relief

The nation suffered hideous blows. Both in Hungary and in the neighbouring countries. Secularising both the name and spirit of the nation, oppressive ideologies were produced which changed aspect according to developments in the world situation. It is not alien to these national ideologies to plant misty dreams of ancient empires in the consciousness of the people instead of enriching them in material and intellectual values, in reciprocity and tolerance. This ideology did not consider it shameful to find explanations for deportations, for murder, for the expulsion and resettlement of people, not to mention refined methods of genocide. Later, however, when, in these regions, the masses that had been kept out of the political nation finally found their rightful place, a different kind of extremism arose: together with the atrocities committed in the name of the nation earlier, the idea of the nation was condemned for long years, but nothing was done to put an end to the troubling of minds.

The Czech writer Bohumil Hrabal explained why he could never become a nationalist. He argued that the primary reason was that he was able to project himself into the place of others and tried to recognize and understand the problems of other nations. Yet in our regions even today the greatest influence is frequently exerted not by men of letters like Hrabal but by intellectuals who have climbed to that status of the semi-educated which is the most dangerous. They see, and present, the common past in the old distorted mirror. Looking into this mirror, some consider the past as a liberation, others as captivity; some look upon it as meting out justice, others describe it as a trampling upon rights; moreover, the same hero of the past respected by some as a champion of national freedom is condemned by others as a criminal serving the interests of an alien kind—and this binary set could be extended at length.

We Hungarians too were at one time captives of an approach to history of this kind, and it is we, and especially the millions of Hungarians living outside the borders of the country, who are being punished for a policy of Magyarisation pursued by our forefathers at the time of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. In the literature and history of the neighbouring countries we are those on top, the embodiment of a dual oppression, both social and national, and if we celebrate our forefathers or ancestors, they are in the eyes of our neighbours the barbarian destroyers of their old empires, of the flourishing cultures of a much higher order than ours. The Budapest of the celebrations of a thousand years of Hungarian settlement in 1896, on its way to becoming a great metropolis, appears as an apocalyptic monster, the picture of Sodom, in the Slovak literature of the time. They speak of pseudo-patriotic Hungarian nationalist phrases, a moral cesspool—and this approach continues in the present editions of the Slovak classics without any appropriate explanation. Not to mention that the children of the Hungarian minority in neighbouring countries read the same stuff about the past of their own nation in their textbooks and prescribed reading. These wounds are still too close in time, let alone those we receive now.

However, there are national grievances which are on the way to being mended. Who would foster prejudices or a desire for revenge against the Turks today; who would demand reparations from them? In a similar manner, there must be few Czechs, Poles, Slovaks, Hungarians, Serbs, Croats, Ukrainians, Slovenes or Italians who hold the Austrians or the Austria of today responsible for century-long oppression. On the other hand, the Hungarian state prior to 1918—moreover, the Hungarian nation—is even today fre-

quently cast in the role of scapegoat, in spite of a fate shared over several centuries that derived from historical necessities, and what is more, in spite of a large majority of our common distorted development being rooted in the historical roles played by the Turks and by House of Habsburg.

Today the deeds performed by Prince Géza and Saint Stephen the King when founding the Hungarian state are looked upon by us as completely natural. And yet, they turned against their own kind making use of foreign languages, foreign customs, foreign power in order to survive. It was into this country, and this national consciousness, that the forebears of the Slovaks were incorporated. This is a view still held by their present descendants. Leafing through their history books, their language and literary textbooks, we encounter our kings of the House of Árpád not as the rulers belonging to a foreign power but as the crowned heads of the contemporary country. The photograph of Saint Stephen's crown appears, even in the most Slovak of publications. Without it there is no Slovak history, without the Stephen and Ladislas legends, without Anonymus the chronicler, Kézai and the rest there is no Slovak literary history, without Slavonic elements in the Hungarian Funeral Oration there is no history of the Slovak language; indeed, our highly treasured linguistic relic offers an analogy to our fellows as well: if the Latin funeral ceremony had a Hungarian translation, there had to be a Slovak one too. Here too we cannot put up the barriers. If they also look upon our great men as theirs, we can only be happy about this. They cannot help it that *this* is Slovak history, their difficulty lies in its modern interpretation. There was no Slovakia but there was a Hungary. The problem could only be solved if intertwining were to be considered natural by both and if we did not try to find our national image at a time and place where and when it could not have existed.

We are faced immediately by border problems, both intellectual and physical. If attempts are made to squeeze Slovak history within the borders of modern Slovakia, these will never result in elements that enrich the national consciousness; on the other hand, if we look upon the Hungary of Saint Stephen and the House of Árpád as a *Hungarian* country which cannot include the non-Magyar peoples within it, we are not coming any nearer to reality either. The Slovak nation cannot strengthen its national consciousness by fighting its Hungarian ties, or by hiding them or moulding them into something Slovak and confining them within the borders of today. Our kings will not become Slovak by being called Stefan, Ladislav, or Matej and by having their reigns studied by Slovak historians limiting them to the territory of modern Slovakia only.

Bálint Balassi is part of Slovak national culture, not because he was born in today's Slovakia but because Slav melodies were present in his tunes too. In a similar manner, Zrinyi's Juranics and Radivoj do not injure the Hungarian character of his great poem *The Siege of Sziget* if our approach today, because of its being written in Hungarian and because the timeless warnings it imparted to the common homeland of the time, does not enclose it within the borders of our national literature to the exclusion of all else. The question is not where it belongs, nor is it a generous, manipulated, allowance that it belongs both here and there, it is rather the search for a *common* reality and its character, the good faith of the present approach, the manifestation of the concept of nation of truly historical thinking. Men of intellect must be able to find their way to this manner of thinking about the nation both here in Hungary and in the neighbouring countries. If they do not, shall we not do so either? Those searching for peace between nations have no other option but to indicate, as their consciousness dictates, where the road leads in the wrong direction. In the meantime, those must never ignore understanding who, trapped in a cul-de-sac, did not end up there of their own free will.

János Vitéz did not became part of the Hungarian national consciousness because of his actual works since it was not possible to read them in Hungarian. In Latin they were accessible only to a select few. Thus the great humanist has been part of our consciousness because of the value judgement passed by our literary and cultural tradition and not owing to our own readings. In 1984 Ferenc Sinkó published an article on the work of Vitéz in an issue of *Vigilia*, quoting from the speech Vitéz delivered in March 1455, in which he called upon Europe to render aid against the Turkish menace: "Hungary does not yet benefit from the good deeds of strangers but now it is in need of them (...) For if so far it has provided others with the good deeds of defence, if it has protected others with its wounded side, now the time has come for you to make a return, displaying your gratitude (...) Should a defeat ensue, the shame would have to be borne together with all Christians but ill-fortune would have to be suffered by the Hungarians themselves only (...) And then those who, by refusing, are now running from their sufferings, will unjustly accuse the Hungarians of their inability to take action..." This excerpt is truly moving and one can agree with Ferenc Sinkó when he says that "being familiar with it is part of our national self-consciousness." The blind alley appears in the final sentence: "It should be translated into Serbo-Croat too. South of us there are many who argue that Vitéz, as well as Janus Pannonius, György Fráter and Miklós Zrínyi belong to them and not to us Hungarians. It can be accurately discerned from his letters and speeches what he declared himself to be..." Yet, they have every right to argue as they do if we try to expropriate him for ourselves and attempt to mould him into the sort of Hungarian he could not possibly have been. Thus Croats fitted into Zrínyi's notion of being Hungarians and Janus Pannonius did not long for the blue skies of Italy from an ethnic Hungarian national state either. He expressed those feelings not even from a Croatophone region but from lands which in Latin were called *Regnum Hungariae* and where, up to the 18th century, nobody was requested to account for his nationality. Naturally, it is even more pathetic if our southern neighbours try to take them away from us by reference to the present state that includes their birthplace; it is even more excruciating if this is done because of their names and origins. That is something that does not concern the Croat nation, nor the Hungarians.

The rather childish dealing performed with the name of János Vitéz in our regions would be worthy of a footnote. In the article quoted we may find: János Vitéz, Johannes Vitéz de Zredna, János Vitéz of Zeredna, Johannes Vitéz... In our literary bibliographies, we encounter Zrednai and also Ján zo Sredny, quoted from a Slovak source. The current *Encyclopaedia of Slovakia* contains: "Vitez zo Sredny, Ján, family name Ján zo Sredny (c. 1400)—9th of August 1472, Esztergom, Hungarian People's Republic. This same reference work includes him among the great historical figures of Slovakia (and also emphasises his origin from a Croatian noble family) because he founded the Academia Istropolitana of Pozsony and, as Bishop of Esztergom, his diocese was three quarters in present Slovakia.* However, on that basis, he could also be called Rumanian since he was Bishop of Nagyvárad and, indeed, related to the Hunyadi family on his mother's side. Equally he could be looked upon as Czech since his role in the betrothal of the daughter of George Podebrad to King Matthias was crucial; the Poles too are connected with him for it was he who urged Prince Casimir's candidacy for the throne when he broke with Matthias because of the latter's war against Bohemia. Furthermore, his nephew headed the *Sodalitas Litteraria Danubiana*, the first scholarly society in Central Europe. Thus in

* His province as Archbishop of course extended over a much larger area. *(The Ed.)*

1497 an international society was founded without national problems. Its members would surely protest violently against efforts made in the eighties of our century to deprive them of the essence of their humanist thinking, manner of life and, if you like, their *national* consciousness, thus Latin culture, and the love of the country where they lived.

Changes in national consciousness

Difficulties with certain terms—and also what is behind them—greatly contribute to the survival of rudimentary national attitudes. Zoltán Ács's useful and valuable book *National Minorities in Historical Hungary* was published recently. Yet even this praiseworthy work, which does not move along blind alleys, is not fully consistent. The author deserves our sympathy just because of the title. He provides a long explanation for national minorities and nations: "In the modern societies formed in the 18th and 19th centuries, national minorities as a historical and political category meant people dependent on the majority nation. Then this national minority gradually came to be conscious of its own individuality and sooner or later desired full independence for itself or wished to join its relatives and in the state where they had developed into a modern nation and in which they lived." Relying on Jenő Szücs, he clearly states that national minority is "an artificial historical creation" whose emergence is due to politics. Giving too much importance to such formulations by our forefathers is not advisable. We are the heirs who suffer for it. In the past, in Hungary, there existed a national consciousness which could unequivocally be identified in the works and deeds of János Vitéz, Bálint Balassi or Péter Pázmány. Nor was it any the less modern in its own age than that of today is in our time. However, in those days the crucial role was not that of belonging to a particular people but a natural symbiosis of peoples who shared a country. It is not advisable to speak of national minorities at that time since they did not exist. All that existed were people speaking different languages who possessed a common national consciousness which was called *natio Hungarica*. They mixed, became assimilated, mutual migration processes took place among them, some, like the Jazygians, or the Cumanians disappeared completely. The Latin language possessed a magic power prior to the age of national awakenings. Mátyás Bél, the bearer of *magnum decus Hungariae* without a badge and a diploma, was such a *hungarus*, possessing such a strong and proved national consciousness modern in his age, compared to which the Hungarian or Slovak interpretation of today is a pitiful stutter. The language of today is pretty clumsy in respect to certain terms. *Natio Hungarica* does not mean the Hungarian nation. In fact, it is untranslatable, it can only be explained, using original manifestations of the spirit, literature, art, or architecture. Not only the Cathedral of Pozsony or the Calvinist church in Farkas utca in Kolozsvár can be cited as evidence but also the Basilica and the Parliament in Budapest. The stones of both the latter found their way to the Magyarising capital of the Magyarising state thanks to the work of Slovak and Swabian masons, Hungarian and Italian navvies.

Current Slovak arguments try to extract the Slovak elements in Mátyás Bél; in the last resort, however, he was the *magnum decus Hungariae*. What impiety then, if I state that this *hungarus* national consciousness has survived in the education and culture of the Slovak nation up to the present day, indeed, that the Slovak nation becomes the poorer and engages in a war with its own past if it denies this or tries to Slovakise it by expropriating it. Around 1960 a point was reached where the Slovak nation had no past, only a present and a future. They ought to discard their written records, beginning with the first printed Slovak text in the Agenda of Esztergom, all the way to the classics, including Vajansky who cannot be accused of being

friendly to Hungarians. The Slovaks were not part of a nation which elsewhere was the dominant one. That is why Vladimir Minác says that the Hungarians were the nemesis of Slovak politics. Instead of building a nation, they were forced to defend themselves against the Hungarians.

Thus there are two peoples that possessed the *hungarus* national consciousness for centuries. They intermingled: under the Turks Magyars migrated north, then, after the Turks, Slovaks migrated south. Around the year 1800 both imagined they could define themselves terms of their ethnic origin, considering this to be the decisive element in their national being. *Hungarus* became Magyar or Slovak as a result of an inevitable process that was experienced everywhere in Europe and in the world. However, Slovak national consciousness at the level of folk songs and folk art was all that could be fitted into new concept and practice of the Hungarian *Staatsnation*. As a consequence of machinations, subtle or not so subtle, of state power, linguistic assimilation was to be its lot. A large number of individuals of such ethnic origin found themselves in the highest political or cultural position, in what was already exclusively a Magyar state; the great figures of their literature acquired their culture in Hungarian and, indeed, began to write in Hungarian. Slovak national consciousness was of the same value as Magyar; thus we may speak not of a nation and a national minority, only of the fact that the Slovak national consciousness did not receive the external stimuli necessary for its development, it was considered alien in its homeland, and Magyar national consciousness found itself at least as far from its former *hungarus* nature as the Slovak. Nevertheless, some kind of national arrangement started following 1920; it was mainly the best of the millions of Hungarians who found themselves in the position of members of a national minority who tried to reestablish contacts with those who had not long before belonged to a national minority, but the Hungarian national consciousness failed to incorporate the effort of preserving the *hungarus* past—if only for the sake of the future. Today the situation is that, using the principle of not-interfering in each other's domestic affairs as an excuse, we have stopped investigating the non-Hungarian components of our *hungarus* past and have stopped trying to raise it to the level of public consciousness. In a generous gesture, we present Slovak culture with Slovak literature and history, excluding them from the old *hungarus* world yet at time we are still outraged at the appetite of the Slovaks. But the old *historical* country can not be—and need not be—divided up. Hungarian and Slovak culture must be viewed together in their intertwined state from both sides; any other method or attempt does not serve the interests of our nations. One of those ways is taking citizenship, ethnic origin and nationhood, mixing them and arranging them in battle or rather in a more refined version than those of whose influence acts all the more quickly. It is impossible to create national peace if we believe that the Hungarians in Slovakia are different from those in Hungary and the Slovaks living here are different from those on the other side of the border. Crying alien to the nation, to both nations, to every nation, casts a shadow on the intellectual collaboration of our nations. Instead of elements connecting Slovak and Hungarian national cultures, it is those that separate them that are stressed.

I shrink from the term *Felvidék* (The Upper Region). This may be simple-minded of me in the eyes of my more enlightened fellow men but there is nothing I can do about it, since I daily experience the poisoning of our genuine national spirit, of our culture which is intertwined with that of Slovaks, in the good sense of the term. I think of this *Felvidék* as being a chip off the same block as *Bratislava*. It began to mean Upper Hungary in the language of Lajos Kossuth when Ludovít Stúr and his fellows replaced the good old name of Prešporok with the much disputed version created by Šafarik. Naturally,

it would be ridiculous to rename Bratislava as Prešporok; it would cause irreparable offence to the Slovaks nor is there any need for it. However, it is also hostile for Slovak historical works to speak of "the crowning of kings in Bratislava." We are also inclined to forget that Péter Bornemissza sang of Germans in charge of the Felföld (Up-Country) and Rákóczi's host battled in Felső Magyarország (Upper Hungary). Even fewer people know that the Hungarian Cultural Association in Felvidék (Upper Region) started as a business undertaking to fight the Slovakization of the region, using a journal called *Felvidéki Nemzetőr*. This exchange of insults will never come to an end, it only offends. It is always easier to misinterpret and manipulate than to speak out the bitter truth which may perhaps lead to peace. If, in Hungarian, I write of the Diet of Pozsony, this does not mean that I wish to change the European status quo, I am merely being true to historical reality.

The national and the universal

One of my classmates felt a vocation for the priesthood and we did not meet until about twenty years after our school-leaving examinations. Then he suddenly appeared in one of my Slovak-language classes, telling me that he was the parish priest of a Slovak village. Soon after I visited him there, in a village where the Slovak language has survived despite its proximity to Budapest. The litany is sung in Slovak, accompanied by Slovak hymns that are good enough to be in the collections of ethnomusicologists.

A newly ordained priest had arrived in the village. Naturally, he came from a Slovak family. An open-air mass, his first, was celebrated on a beautiful, bright day in the presence of thousands, surrounded by the hills and forests of Pilis that had known the footprints of the kings of the House of Árpád. These, however, are celebrated as ancient Slovak regions by two Slovak poets, Gregor Papuček and Alexander Kormoš. Following the mass, the young priest, speaking in the local Slovak dialect, thanked his parents for raising him, and the talk of the congregation was loud with Slovak as well. The enthusiastic account in the following week's issue of one of the Catholic papers, however, only breathed the air of Hungarian saints. When I complained to my old friend, who had suffered much in his time trying to reconcile the two nations about the absence of even a brief reference at least to the common roots of Slovak and Hungarian Christianity, not to mention Hungarian minorities policy, my friend made a bitter dismissive gesture: none of that stuff, or they'll even declare the favourite area of Budapest weekend walkers to be Slovak. On the other hand, one of my Slovak friends, whose view of the world is certainly not that of an idealist, complained on the hill where the Cathedral of Esztergom stands that it had been a great mistake to leave this ancient Slav site to Hungary. True, he would have been willing to give something in exchange. I do not know what Maurus, otherwise known as Mór Jókai,* would have thought of that or Bishop Adalbert of Kassa, their martyr, or for that matter the Mater Septem Dolores, the Patroness of the Slovak Nation would think about this. Their reaction would, perhaps, be the same as that of the Slovak women in the small Pilis village who respond so fervently in Slovak to the litany: 'Our Lady of Hungary *(Uhersko)*, pray for us.'

There are so many things connecting us that it is hard to find anything that separates us. True, what connects us may also be viewed and interpreted from the angle of the barriers separating us.

In an essay by Milan Rufus, our ties are not taken at face value. In something he wrote for the 150th anniversary of the birth of Ludovit Štúr, his description of the fate of the Slovaks directly concerns the Hun-

* Jókai, the 19th-century Romantic novelist, a native of Komárom that could be presumed to be part of such an exchange. *(The Ed.)*

garians too: "Since Štúr, we have been unable to synthesize the national and the universal at any level of thought. We have fallen into the trap of extreme and base provincial nationalism or equally provincial internationalism—we have looked down on our own nation... What is a springboard for the sons of the other nations, is essentially a weight keeping us down. A Slovak intellectual is basically made up of complexes (...) When in contact with world culture, we never felt equal, if you'll allow me to mention our most secret thoughts (...) Where the conditions for the full manifestation of the nation are always absent, the nation becomes permanently introverted and lives for itself. He is like a patient suffering from a severe illness who, because of his own pain, is unable to feel sympathy for that of others, condemning himself to the fate of the isolated patient who by chance is taken pity on by a Scotus Viator though he is generally not accepted as an equal partner by anyone (...) The nation is a body in the first place and not an intellectual value created under the pressure of the intellect. In itself it does not ensure any kind of standardised humanity, it is not a ready-made objective but a potential which must be put into practice..."

Years ago a seemingly healthy discussion developed about Vladimir Mináč's notions contained in *A Nation Lives Here* and *Blowing Embers*. Both works deal with the formation of the Slovak nation and argue that it could not have come about without the Hungarians. The debate lapsed and has not been restarted, the argument being that we are not trying to find the separating factors. But Mináč also emphasizes our being intertwined.

"The memory of our nation is unbelievably short (...) the moment of our birth is in an almost palpable proximity (...) We clearly felt the continuity, the connection between our existence and the national past (...) the memory of our nation is not the result of recognition but a stock of feelings (...) Slovak politics have always lacked independence: they never prompted changes, but only reacted to them. The ideas are defensive, the direction of their movement is an opposite one (...) Vienna and Budapest, St Petersburg and Berlin, Prague and Zagreb, Lutherans and Catholics, noblemen, intellectuals and the people: oh, the images of so many nations are but spurious, concocted myths, that's all. We were so good at pitying ourselves! We looked down on the Hungarian nation (...) After the rejection of the Petitions (...) the Hungarians were but kin to the Mongolians for Štur. This undervaluing on racial—if not racist— principles is repeated by our half-educated dilettante linguists and historians: for them the Hungarian language is a makeshift and Hungarian history was stolen from here and there (...) Following the final victory of the Slovak language, but mainly following the Ausgleich of 1867, the gap between the Czechs and the Slovaks widened. The two nations became two separate economic and political units, the demarcation line of the Morave turned into a real border. The Czech bourgeoisie turned its back on Slovakia, it did not need Slovakia—especially if it wanted to stay Slovak (...)

However, the sense of the nation is not only, or not primarily, in the existence and mobility of the nation but in its being one of many nations. It makes up the great work of civilization together with them. In that respect, we are only at the beginning of our self-fulfilment. All our ancestors were bilingual, they had a first-class knowledge of Hungarian, the language, the literature and the history, which they never tried to hide. They were proud of it and admired what they found agreeable (...) The non-Hungarian nations of Hungary were not torn from the Hungarians during the revolution, the Hungarians had disowned them much earlier. As early as the end of the 18th century, the Hungarian nation took up arms against its national and political oppressors in order to become an oppressor itself within half a century (...) The Hungarian people,

which in those days primarily meant the peasants, suffered under the yoke of the county gentry, being exploited by them just like peasants speaking other languages and —at least at the beginning—there was no trace of chauvinism in them. If there was any chauvinism in the Hungarians, it only had social roots: most burghers, tradesmen, wine growers were alien to them. Saxons, Serbs, Slovaks. The people, in the words of the song, liked "the beautiful Slovak words and the fast Serbian language" (...) We had been sentenced to death before we had been born as a modern nation. With our uprising, we actually rose from a grave dug earlier (...) And it was a mercenary's destiny that lay in wait for our revolutions, for the whole Slovak movement. Our first armed rising was in all probability a historical necessity. That it was unable to come to an accord with the Hungarian revolution and by the force of circumstances was directed against it, was fully the fault of the Hungarian revolution. Or, rather, it was the sin of the nationalist and feudal overtones which had been reactionary in the Hungarian revolution from the start (...) The Hungarian revolution in retreat took on new, authentic revolutionary features; immediately before the defeat it was just and generous in its Szeged laws. But all this was too late. Everything had changed. The Slovaks were no longer fighting their own national and democratic revolution: they had already become part of the machinery of oppression. The tragedy of the Slovak movement culminated: the failure of the first attempt drove the Śtúr group into directly serving the Court. We desired to gain our freedom as a reward for good behaviour, by lending a hand in oppressing the freedom of others. A shameful service, the service of mercenaries! Bad sowing yields a bad harvest; the causes hidden in the depths of the Hungarian revolution led to consequences which gave birth to new causes: the knot of Hungary was to be entangled for many years to come (...) To become a real Slovak, fully worthy of the name, means becoming every man's brother (...) Except for our longing for justice, we possess almost nothing. God save us from committing an injustice, forgetting our own sorrows. At that very moment we would lose our essence, our meaning—and our ability to resist. We shall always be a small nation but, as long as we defend our truth, we shall not be helpless. Ours is not passing power but the lasting soul: this is the sense of our nation."

Understanding each other's past

I could cite manifestations of Slovak culture and thought at length. I could comment on recent rules for using old Hungarian family names in an old or new Slovak version. These rules far exceed the length of this article. Mention might also be made of the South-Slovak invasion of modern Slovak literature, some of them bestsellers. We might also discuss all the Hungarian references as well as the linguistic, historical and ethnographic data in Ladislav Ballek's *Assistant* and *Acacias*, in Peter Jaroš's *The Thousand-Year-Old Bee* and its sequel *Mute Ear, Deaf Eyes;* the most recent Slovak family chronicles from the turn of the century to the twenties (including the nationality problems in the emerging working class and peasants' movements, the northern campaign of the Republic of Councils or Vincent Sikula's *Matej*, the moving depiction of Štúr's era seen through the experiences of an enthusiastic, near-blind peasant bookseller. Equally one might be surprised at the description of Laco Novomesky's youth in Štefan Drug's book when the first captions wonders at the birthplace of the Slovak poet, using both a question and an exclamation mark: *Budapest?!* "A Slovak poet and...Is it possible?" Well, that is where we have got to. Today the young in Slovakia are scarcely aware that Budapest was the real capital of their ancestors. Societies, millions of books, dozens of newspapers, journals with a circulation of a hundred thousand—and the peo-

ple?! The official figures tell us that, in 1891 of the 500,000 inhabitants of Budapest 27,000 were Slovaks and thus, ahead of Békéscsaba with its 26,000 Slovaks, more Slovaks lived there than anywhere in the country at the time, many more than in any town in what counted as the Slovak inhabited area of the Hungarian half of Austro-Hungary. The border acts as such a powerful barrier that it does not even occur to young Slovaks today to look for memories of their grandfathers on the EMKE corner, in Deák tér, on Rákóczi út in Budapest and in other places where not only Kollár's pulpit stood but thousands of "the rich poor" lived and worked. More than one topographical guide to Slovak literature has been published. Even the smallest (not always Slovak) village in Slovakia is included if a seldom published penman lived there or was born there. There is no entry for Budapest, which would not take last place in a map of Slovak literature.

In a similar manner counter-examples could also be listed.

Shall we look for what connects us? Will we be ashamed to admit that what is ours is theirs too and vice versa? Is it simpler to tear out from the common what we look upon as ours? If an impartial and unbiassed observer coming from a faraway country were to take the pain and trouble to familiarize himself with the facts of the connections and cultural kinship of the two peoples he would be unable to understand why we claim to be so separate. And yet in relation to others, our centuries old knee-jerk reactions are just about to dissolve. Béla G. Németh writing on the Ausgleich of 1867 in the December 1984 issue of *Új Írás* argues: "The other nations making up more than h?lf of the population of the country at the time were not yet simply 'other ethnic groups' but nations well on the road to becoming modern nations (...) The Ausgleich was concluded while fully neglecting the demands of these nations, without them and above their heads (...) with the Ausgleich, the Hungarian nation adopted the same role in relation to the people in the country of other ethnic background which Vienna had played in relation to the Hungarians in the 1850s... The public attitude taken by the whole nation in politics was determined by a readiness to take offence and near-schizophrenia under the aegis of an illusory, exaggerated desire to play the role of a great nation. For this system never admitted fully and openly, and for the most part never even clearly told the Hungarian population that the country's sovereign integrity as a 'political nation' and *Staatnation* which it had proclaimed as a real ontological condition for its existence, as morally sacrosanct, could not be maintained without the Austrians, the other half of the Habsburg Empire ... In Hungary ... one may speak of an oppression of national minorities that only sporadically manifested violence... only sporadically... But there is an irrefutable argument for reflecting on indirect pressure and even more so on the injuries to self-consciousness ... the objective is not to create a list of ranking of innocence or guilt but to understand one another's past, including our own, as fully as possible and thereby to come as close to each other, to ourselves."

It is for those in power at the time to decide how thus interpret the fact that nations have no borders when it comes to contact between countries and people. National minority policy also falls within the scope of current politics. But nation and power are in constant interaction with each other. The greater the number of people in a country who understand what a national means and who do not hide their opinions under a bushel, the more sensitive will be the country's leadership in settling the relationship with its neighbours, to the satisfaction of all concerned. The smaller the number of intellectuals with a sober view of belonging to a nation are available to those who decide on the affairs of the country, the more problematic the internal and external connections of the nation will tend to be.

At the beginning of the 18th century the

Slovaks of present Hungary did not leave the mass of their kind with a passport and permission to emigrate. They remained within the borders of their country. Two centuries later, however, a large number of Magyars became the subjects of an alien state overnight. Neither this nor what came afterwards was the work of nations. Members of national minorities are citizens. Their status is clearly defined by the terms themselves. The rapprochement of nations, their interlinked past and culture, grafting the real concept of nation—as jointly interpreted—onto public consciousness may also safeguard the lot of national minorities, much more so than the zeal of offices and institutions. The hallmark of national progress is the nature of the relationship with other nations and the minorities of other nations. Those who expect a settling of the relationships between nations to come about through the disappearance or absorbtion of national minorities do great harm to the progress of their own nation and even of their own state. This we should be aware of also because we are familiar with a percept that we can never give enough to national minorities and thus must give even what they have not asked for.* We have nothing to grudge each other because our past is indivisible. But to quote Béla G. Németh, "our past is constantly changing... with the continuous changing of the other component of identity consciousness, the values of our objectives... And every change... brings about a crisis which in its turn requires a continuous process of identification so that we can speak constantly of a real consciousness of national identity. If this process of identification is disrupted, if it is suspended for the sake of a stability or approached from the wrong angle, we shall find ourselves in peril of clinging onto a static category of the nation underpinning the slogan of national identity, doing so at a time of unbelievably rapid transformation, in communities and in values indeed a time of their crisis. We Hungarians really had the chance to learn that this does not solve anything and at the same time it excludes from the movement of groups and structures larger and more universal than the national, and from the sharing of an identity with them."

* This is a reference to Lenin. *(The Ed.)*

WILLIAM LANOUETTE ON HIS LEO SZILÁRD BIOGRAPHY

Conversation with William Lanouette

Of Leo Szilárd, the scientist who was born in Budapest in 1898 and died in California in 1964, it was once said that he was protean and difficult to grasp. He was a member of that famous generation of scientists born and educated in Hungary who achieved world fame for the enormous contributions they made to science abroad. It was he who initiated the momentous letter that Einstein wrote to President Roosevelt which led finally to the development of the atomic bomb.

It is not easy to write a Szilárd biography. Although two volumes have been published of his writings and recollections (M.I.T. Press 1972, 1978), a third released in 1987 by M.I.T., a record of his arms-control work, has had to be compiled mainly through letters, papers, petitions, and reports. He published very little, considering the extent of his work, and in a fragmentary way, in the professional, political and daily press, not to mention his literary efforts *(The Voice of the Dolphins)*. All this is why we can be ap-

preciative highly of the work of William Lanouette, who lives in Washington and who has been delving into a life which was lived in Hungary, Germany, England, and the United States in several branches of science. Dr. Lanouette first visited Hungary as a guest of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, returned later on the occasion of the Pugwash conference held in Budapest, to seek Szilárd's traces. He returned a third time in the summer of 1987 for more archival research and interviews. Since my own research is very close to his, I tried to help him in this. After several lengthy conversations, I suggested that we should try to prepare a sketch of Leo Szilárd and since the research is not yet completed, the best way seemed to be an interview.

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How did you come to write Leo Szilárd's biography?

I was writing an article about the nuclear breeder reactor for *The Atlantic Monthly* magazine, and in order to understand the breeder I had to retrace the history of atomic energy; first to look at the concept of the chain reaction, then to look at the concept of the chain reaction that made more fuel than it consumed, the breeder. And I discovered that both were the ideas of Leo Szilárd, whom I had only known about as an arms-control activist in the 1960s. I had covered atomic energy since 1969, at first looking at the SALT negotiations and the Nuclear Non-Proliferation treaty, and later the Anti-Ballistic Missile treaty. So that my first introduction to covering atomic energy was to cover the area of nuclear arms control. Then, beginning about 1972, I started to specialise in nuclear power as a subject, and I have covered both ever since. So in writing about the breeder reactor and discovering that Szilárd was the person behind the idea, and discovering that as far as I knew, he was largely unknown for these achievements, I thought I had to know more about this man, and I looked about when I was doing the article, and there was no biography.

You mean that there was no comprehensive biography. Because there are short ones, e.g. the one by Eugene P. Wigner.

Well, that is only a twelve-page memoir. I was thinking of something that would really explain Szilárd's intellectual development and explain how somebody could come from science to public policy, which is the control of the science which he had been trying to bring about. There was no biography that I could find. There was a collection by the M.I.T. Press of his scientific papers; there was by that time a set of his recollections, of "his version of the facts." This was a very limited dictation in 1960 when he was in hospital with cancer. Later I discovered a short biography for high-school students, but that was all that had been published about this remarkable man. There was nothing really thorough which explained Szilárd's intellectual roots, or his development or how it was that somebody like him could first of all do so much that was so important, and second, go unrecognized. And the fact that he was unrecognized was as exciting to me as a biographer as the many achievements during his life.

Would you tell me something of Szilárd's most important achievements?

First, I think his achievement is the scientific work that he did. He was the first, in 1922, to see a connection between entrophy and information. He published this idea first in Germany in 1929. Second, he concieved very early the idea of a cyclotron, which is an accelerator of neutrons for bombarding atoms and studying their behaviour. He did this about one year before E. O. Lawrence in the United States designed a cyclotron. His idea was never used by Lawrence, never known by Lawrence, but it is interesting to see that he was ahead, independently, of what was the most progressive application of nuclear studies at the time.

He was the first person to conceive the nuclear chain reaction and the way it might come about. He did this in the fall of 1933.

At the same time, in order to expand on this concept, he devised the notion of the critical mass, which is the amount of fissionable uranium or thorium—at the time he did not know what they were—that must be brought together to start and maintain a chain reaction. In 1934 he patented the chain reaction concept, and five days after that he went to General Electric in the United Kingdom and said, "I have an idea which, if it works, will create a new industrial revolution. We will have a new power source that will displace coal and oil." They thought he was crazy. And because he wanted to keep his concept secret from Germany—from where he had just escaped—he was not about to explain what he wanted to do in detail.

He then devised the Szilárd–Chalmers effect, a way to separate isotopes using a chemical process. Usually, people until this point had to use an atomic process by which they broke down the atoms. This was a chemical system in which someone who could mix liquids together was able to break down the atomic components. This was a great research tool for people throughout the 1930s.

In 1939, when he discovered that uranium had been split, he said "this is the element I have been looking for for five years." He immediately saw the military implications and tried to test his theory.

Have you found any documents to prove that he immediately noticed the military application of the idea?

The documents came mostly after the fact, except for his assignment of the patent to the British Admiralty. He said he would do this because it had military implications. It is documented that from 1934 on he certainly knew that atomic bombs could probably be built. In 1939, with Walter Zinn at Columbia University and then with Enrico Fermi, he tested the behaviour of uranium and discovered that extra neutrons were released when it split and this was probably the key to sustaining a chain reaction. By that summer he devised a graphite-moderated reactor with a lattice concept by which amounts of uranium were suspended in a greater frame and they gave off enough neutrons to continue a chain reaction. He wanted to test this concept. Fermi thought it was so improbable, why waste your time. But he was determined, because of the military and the political implications, to pursue his research. And so he went to Albert Einstein and told Einstein about chain reactions. And Einstein, with Szilárd's encouragement, signed a letter to President Roosevelt, which started first the Uranium Committee in 1939 and finally the Manhattan Project in 1942.

This is really part of his political activity rather than scientific activity.

For the scientific activity he designed, in July 1939, the concept of a graphite-moderated reactor. He followed up the Einstein letter with a memorandum, explaining how the chain reaction might be brought about. In 1940, when not much activity was occurring, he prompted a second Einstein letter and wrote a second memorandum, the so-called A-55 memorandum, which became the basis of the construction of the first nuclear reactor. He co-designed with Fermi, in 1941 and 1942, the first nuclear reactor for which they share the patent.

Six weeks after the first reactor operated, he designed a breeder reactor. He thought up the concept of a reactor that would make more fuel than it consumed. According to Alvin Weinberg, the former director of the Oak Ridge National Laboratory, it was also Szilárd who thought up the name "breeder". Weinberg says that he and Wigner and Szilárd were walking across the campus of the University of Chicago, thinking of a name for this concept, and Szilárd said "let's call it breeding, let's call it a breeder". Then he designed two more breeders during the war. After the war he turned to biology where he also made several important discoveries.

What are the most interesting?

The first was the chemostat, which was a way of maintaining in a steady state the

development of bacteria. Until this time you had to assume that bacteria would continue to develop and you could only measure the finite points in their development. This was a way by letting things in at one end and letting them out at the other to keep the bacteria growing in a steady state, and then when you introduced something you could immediately test the results.

He also did pioneering work in the theory of how the mind works, of how human memory works, and he did quite a bit of research also on human reproduction, as a way of achieving population control throughout the 1950s. Perhaps his best known recommendation was on a double blocking immune system for viruses, which is something that was tested by François Jacob and Jacques Monod and for which they won a Nobel Prize in 1965.

Did they pick this up from Szilárd?

Not the idea, but the conviction that it was correct. Jacques Monod, in his essay in the first volume of Szilárd's works (published by M.I.T. Press), says that against every instinct that he had, he resisted Szilárd's suggestion, and when he tested it, he found that Szilárd was right. This is probably the biological concept that Szilárd is best remembered for.

He also conducted research on the process of aging, on reproduction, and at the Salk Institute, on memory.

And the effect of smoking?

He tried to influence scientists to study more the effect of smoking on health beginning in the 1950s. It was in the year that he died that the Surgeon General of the United States recognised and announced that this was an area of importance.

Do you think that his work in biology is as significant as in physics?

I don't think so, because he did not have the opportunities in biology that he had in physics to apply his discoveries. These were more theoretical, because he did not have a laboratory at his disposal and he was not at that point in a community of scholars. You have to remember that once Szilárd had got to Germany he was in the community of some of the most successful and progressive scholars of nuclear physics, like Einstein, Planck, von Laue, Nernst, Franck. When he got into the United States and into the Manhattan Project, he and Fermi were at the centre of a community of scholars that also had the facility to do something practical.

But after the war Szilárd's work was much more theoretical. He shifted fields, so it took him several years to learn the basics of his new study, and he did not live long enough to really carry out his ideas. I suspect that if he had lived another five or ten years in the atmosphere of the Salk Institute, he would probably be as well known for biology. But I think it was the availability of a community of scholars and the resources that allowed his ideas in physics to be immediately tested and to be proven of value.

It does not happen often that a scholar of his stature changes disciplines at the peak of his career. Was this due to his political ideas?

No. I think that it has to do with his intellectual curiosity. He studied engineering in Hungary and he studied engineering for one year in Berlin. Then he found that physics was more appealing, and he studied physics, he taught physics, he taught several courses at the University of Berlin. And he was involved in the study of X-rays with Hermann Mark at the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute. He proposed some studies with Lise Meitner, although they only carried out one of them.

But it is interesting that by 1933, when he left Germany for England, he seriously considered studying biology. The reason was as follows: he said that it had taken about a hundred years for physics to go from the basic level of laboratory understanding to the postulation of certain theories, to the testing, to the use of certain laws, and then finally to a theoretical level which, in quantum physics, led to a new break and to an entirely new form of science. He thought that physics was pretty well played out by

this time, and that biology was the next subject which, in a few years, would reach the theoretical stage where it would really take off with something new. And he was right. He was about to study biology by becoming a demonstrator in physiology at the University of London. But an interesting thing happened. He read about a speech by the Cambridge physicist Lord Rutherford saying that atomic energy would not produce any useful results and that those who thought it would, were talking "moonshine". And this got Szilárd thinking: an expert, he said, is somebody who tells you what you can't do. And within a couple of weeks he had thought of the chain reaction. Good-bye biology, hullo physics. And he was in physics until the end of the Second World War when he finally took up biology again.

But I think that if he had not thought up the chain reaction and if nuclear physics had not developed as significantly as it had at that point in the 1930s, Szilárd would have become a biologist then. As it was, he became a biologist and was in on the ground floor of the new biology, which led to many important discoveries in the 1960s and the 1970s. So he was ahead of himself in seeing the potential for this next field.

Can you give a similar short sketch of his political activities?

His political activities are very interesting, because I don't think he ever considered himself to be political. He had very strong opinions about everything and he was also a very practical person. If he saw a solution to a problem, he would say: do this! He would do this for his family members, he would do this for his friends. He would say, this was clearly the most logical way to do something: do it! As a result, when he came out of the Austro-Hungarian Army in 1918, he was terribly frustrated with the collapse of the Empire, with the terrible inflation, with the monetary chaos that was going on in the wake of the war, and while he was a Technical University student, while he was studying mechanical engineering, he said: there are simple ways of solving these problems. And he wrote a few pamphlets on monetary reform. He and his brother founded a small group, so that they could print the pamphlets and hand them out.

In Budapest?

In Budapest, at the Technical University. But he did not think of himself as a political leader. I don't think he ever made speeches; he just thought that if he had the ideas, then someone in power could carry them out.

Did he have any connection with more organized student groups?

I am not sure if he was a member of any student group. The only activity I have heard about through Béla Szilárd, his brother, was this small group that they founded: the Hungarian Socialist Students Association. I have no indication that he got involved in student politics. I think he would have considered this a waste of time. He would want the real person in power to have his ideas, not to be a student playing at politics.

And how about his activities during the Republic of Councils?

At this time he and Béla were, I think, very enthusiastic about the potential that may come from that, and Béla remembers at one point a group of students renting a truck and putting posters on the truck and driving around Budapest. But the only other activity that he was involved in was handing out his ideas on leaflets, and attending the Galilei Circle, and, I am sure, speaking up about his ideas on economic reform. And then, when the Horthy government took over, Szilárd was persona non grata.

And what about his alleged activity in the Red Army at that time?

I've only heard that from one source and I've tried to check it and have no proof at all. My reaction is that it may be possible, but I don't think he liked the army enough to want to volunteer for the Red Army. There is a photograph of him and his artillery unit in the Austro-Hungarian Army. Everyone else is standing up and looking at the camera, while Szilárd has his elbow up on the

artillery piece, and he is leaning against it as if it were a tree or a stone wall, or something that you would just lean against. Certainly not something that an artillery officer would lean against. I think, his attitude about the army was that it was boring because he believed from the outset that the Central Powers would lose. For that reason, I have difficulty imagining that he actually re-enlisted in the Red Army and fought. I have heard that rumour, but one very close friend of his, who knew him from the age of 18, says that he knew nothing, though at this period he was still at the university. It is certainly worth pursuing, because if true it would be another fascinating aspect of Szilárd's life, but from what I have seen so far, I don't think it is true.

And what happened after the Republic of Councils?

In the Horthy period Szilárd and his brother were shadowed by police agents—because they were Jewish and had been active in politics.

This was at the beginning of the Horthy period?

Yes, even in the last weeks of the Béla Kun regime, the Horthy people thought that the government would fall and they started to pick on people. By September 1919, Béla remembers being followed to his office—he was working part-time. Leo tried to leave the country, he could not get a visa anywhere and he could not enter the Technical University, because of the anti-Semitism. He remembers people being beaten up because of their political views and because of their Jewish background. It was a very unpleasant period for him. When he finally got out of this country in December, he stayed out for three years. He was, I think, afraid to come back. He stayed in Berlin.

So in your opinion he left Hungary because he had some political objections to the Hungarian regime?

More than objections. I think he found it thoroughly distasteful, and dangerous.

I mean that he had political motives. It was not that he considered the cultural and scientific atmosphere in Berlin to be better?

I think it was both. People who left the Technical University for Germany frequently went to the Technische Hochschule in Charlottenburg, in Berlin, and that's where Leo and Béla went. Now, within a year Leo decided he wanted to be a physicist, and not an engineer, and he left. But Béla stayed on at the Technische Hochschule, and that was a logical step for Hungarian scientists at the time who wanted to continue their engineering studies. In fact, Wigner studied at the T.H. and completed his Ph.D. there.

Did Leo Szilárd want to leave his country, not to live in Hungary anymore, or just to study at a better university, and then to come back and continue his activities in his homeland?

Again, I think it was both. I think he thought he was in physical danger by staying because of his activities under the Béla Kun government. And I think that he found that the teaching of engineering here was not satisfying his intellectual curiosity and he wanted to go somewhere else. I think it was both.

He did not want to come back?

He did come back for several visits, but he did not want to come back for good. It seems to me that he was quite happy in Berlin. He was willing and often did come back to visit his family here, but I don't think he saw a professional future here in physics, which was his new field.

In Berlin he became part of the university circle, he was soon teaching courses that supported the work of the famous physicists.

It is my impression that he pretty well gave up politics for most of his period in Berlin. Friends who knew him then do not remember him attending any meetings. They remember him reading the papers and commenting about politics, but they don't remember him being a member of any organizations.

Szilárd became very restless about 1928 or 1929, even before the collapse of the

Weimar republic. I don't think he knew what he wanted to be after he became a *Privatdozent*. He was teaching one or two courses each semester. I don't think that was challenging enough for him. He asked Einstein for help to go to the United States and he tried to get a fellowship there in 1931. He did not succeed, but he did study over there for a while. I think he saw by 1933 that biology was appealing to him. I think that by 1928 or 1929 he was wondering what he would do with his life in physics. Would he just continue teaching a course, would he become an experimentalist? Szilárd wrote a very revealing letter to Eugene Wigner in 1932 in which he said he could not understand what it is to be a scientist. Should he find a position in a university and thereby carry out his duties? Should he become an experimentalist? Should he become theoretical—he did not really want to be theoretical because he was not very good at mathematics.

So it was something like a crossroads?

It really was. He did not know how he could be a good scientist. And the opportunities in Germany were perhaps so many that he did not know which way to go. He thought of going to America largely to get involved in the science over there.

But at the end of this period, just before Hitler came to power, he became politically active. As far as I know, he left Germany just before the danger became really serious.

I think we can go back even further. In 1928, 1929, 1930 he was getting restless. He went to England in 1929, 1930 and 1931—in part to promote the Einstein–Szilárd Refrigerator, in part to promote the ideas about an intellectual order that might reform European politics. At this point he wrote something which is a truly revolutionary document. It is the outline for a group he called the *Bund*, which sounds very Platonic, in which you get the 'best and the brightest', you identify them in secondary school, you educate them together in university and you make them in effect an advisory council to the government. He saw that the Weimar republic was collapsing, and he saw his *Bund* as perhaps the only way to save the German republic. As a result, he concocted a scheme that went on for pages, as to how these people would be selected and how their views would be reported to those in power. This, I think, is the first activity since leaving Hungary, where he was clearly trying to get his own proposals into the hands of politicians. He was politically active at this point in the sense that he was making a prescription for saving Germany from itself.

Then his political activities, I think, became very pronounced in 1933. He tried to warn several of his friends to leave Germany, including Michael Polányi. He said the Hitler regime was about to come into power and it was going to be no good for anybody with a Jewish background or anyone with a liberal background. In January 1933, he came to Budapest and tried to warn his family: Hitler's coming to power, it was going to be no good for anyone in Europe. Leave Europe now, he said.

He had his sister and his parents still here. Did they leave?

No, Béla did not leave until 1938. His sister Rose had moved to Switzerland in 1920 to work, but went back and forth. His parents stayed here. His mother died in 1939 in Budapest and a few months later his father moved to New York, to live with Béla. He died in New York in 1955.

So here was Leo trying to tell his whole family to move. He himself got out of Germany on the 30th of March, which was just the day before the Nazis started checking the borders, restricting the removal of money and in some cases turning people back who had political credentials that were not acceptable.

So he got out of Germany just in time.

The first thing he did at this point was to try to organize what became the Academic Assistance Council. For the next year, he worked almost all the time trying to settle refugee scholars from Germany. He succeed-

ed in finding the right people in England to head this. He went around the country, he gave the names of people to Englishmen who could come back into Germany. They systematically identified the scholars who were in trouble. They set up offices in Vienna, in Geneva, in Zurich, in Paris, in Brussels, and as the people came out of Germany he tried to find jobs for them.

But Szilárd's biggest political gesture was to keep his discovery of the chain reaction secret. He thought that if Hitler had the atomic bomb, he would take over the world.

So he understood that an atomic bomb could be constructed on the basis of that chain reaction?

He believed that by the end of 1933. Then he tried for a while to get other scientists to censor their work. First he was a little more subtle; since he thought only he knew about the chain reaction, he would not mention that; what he would do was to try and get the scientists to combine all their patents under one group. He proposed this to Amaldi and Fermi in 1935 and again in 1936. He said these patents did not belong to any one person, they belonged to all scientists, they should be controlled in a way that they could decide about the destiny of their discoveries. He got himself into trouble in the 1940s thinking that the scientists who created the chain reaction should have a say in how it was used. But as early as the 1930s he thought that the scientists should have a say, and he proposed these institutions in order to create this control.

The next political action he took was to leave Britain. He said he would leave a year before the war started. It turned out he left 19 months before the war started, and decided not to return 13 months before. Once he discovered that uranium was the element that would bring about the chain reaction, he tried to prove that it would happen, with Fermi, with Zinn, with others. When he knew that and when he knew that the Germans were really going to take over the uranium mines of Czechoslovakia, that they were going to take over Belgium, which controlled the biggest source of uranium in the Belgian Congo—at that point he went to Einstein. He said they had to warn the Belgians about this. This was in July 1939, in New York. By the second meeting with Einstein, in August, Szilárd said they had better warn the American President. From then on Szilárd's political activities, right through to the time of his death, involved thinking up ideas that politicians should carry out to construct or to control the A-bomb. In that sense he was deeply political. Perhaps he was a bit naive, but I think that many of his ideas, if they had been carried out, would have been very useful. He did succeed in getting Nikita Khrushchev to agree to the Moscow–Washington hot line, at a private meeting they had in 1960 in New York. He thought that if he had the right ideas and if these ideas were put before the politicians, they would recognize them as being the best policy.

So Leo Szilárd had some ideas which were similar to what was later called "détente". He wanted closer connections between the superpowers, which were not really superpowers at the time. As I see it, Szilárd wanted the leaders of these two nations to sit down and to come to military agreements and on the use of atom bombs.

By 1944, he proposed the international control of atomic energy. That was in November 1944, eight months before the bomb was dropped and this was the first of his many arms-control proposals. In 1945 he took four concrete steps to stop the bombing of Japan. He said they had been racing against Germany, Germany did not have the bomb and they were about to be defeated. He did not want those bombs to be used on Japanese civilians. Instead, if the weapon was developed at all, it should be put under international control, so that no one would use it. International control would include the great powers: at the time the Soviet Union, France, Britain and the United States. He got Einstein to write another letter to Roosevelt suggesting that he should

see Szilárd. Roosevelt died before he could see him. Then Szilárd tried to get to President Truman and he was sent to talk to the future Secretary of State, James Byrnes. Byrnes completely misunderstood his proposal for the international control of atomic energy. He wanted to use the bomb to impress the Russians in Eastern Europe. Then Szilárd tried to influence, and did influence, the writing of the Franck report. In this report, James Franck, the physicist, and others argued that the bomb should be demonstrated on neutral territory. It should not be used to kill civilians. The Franck report was rejected by those in charge of the Manhattan Project. Finally, two weeks before the bomb was tested, on July 1st, 1945, Szilárd started a petition among scientists of the Manhattan Project in which he asked them to back a proposal to the government that the bomb be demonstrated but not be actually used against civilians. The petition never reached Truman before he made his decision: Szilárd's military superiors sat on it. After this Szilárd said he would renounce atomic energy and he would work for the control of nuclear weapons. In 1947 he proposed broadcasts between President Truman and Stalin. Each of them should broadcast once a year to the other country. This is something that Gorbachev and Reagan finally did in January 1986.

Szilárd started to propose by 1945 meetings among scientists, who he thought had a special knowledge and a special responsibility for the control of atomic energy. He was resisted by the State Department because of the beginnings of the Cold War.

Did he have any difficulties during the McCarthy era?

Yes, he did. He tried to attend a conference in Paris after proposing in an open letter to Stalin that the leaders of countries should communicate more freely, and he was denied a passport to leave the country.

Was this the only thing?

This is all I know. I found no other evidence.

Because he was shadowed by the FBI.

Oh, that happened to him before the end of the war, and continued afterwards. He was suspect first because he was so open with his ideas and he defied General Groves, who decided that every piece of work should be compartmentalised. Szilárd said that scientists cannot be compartmentalised, they have to share their ideas. And so he became suspect.

This was a contradiction since first, in the 1930s, he wanted to keep his results secret, so that the chain reaction should not be used for making bombs.

There is a big difference. He wanted to keep it secret when scientists published everything openly. Now he wanted to make it open for those who were working secretly within the government. He got into trouble with Groves, and Groves had him shadowed by the FBI. Groves referred to him as an 'enemy alien', wanted to have him arrested and put in jail. After the war he was shadowed because he was proposing communications—this enough was a threat—communications with the Russians about the control of atomic energy.

That was in the McCarthy era?

In the McCarthy era, anybody who had any connections with the Russians was automatically suspect. They shadowed him, and they could never find anything that was serious, but it was enough to suspect him. And then, in 1951, in a meeting with Russian and English physicists in Chicago, he got an agreement from the Russians to try to have exchanges between Soviet and American scientists. And this finally reached fruition with the Pugwash meeting, which was first held in 1957. He was one of the founders of the Pugwash idea, he attended almost every meeting during his lifetime, except when he was in hospital. He was very active and often very outspoken. Pugwash was an excellent forum for him, because he

understood the Russians very well. Coming from Eastern Europe and being European, he understood how the Americans could misunderstand the Russians. He often tried to be a mediator and to make fun of both the Russians and the Americans.

Szilárd was remembered by many participants in the Pugwash conferences as being a very important person. One of the most important things he did for Pugwash was to attend a meeting in December 1957. The first meeting was held in Canada. They did not know whether they would hold more meetings. There was a continuing committee meeting in December, in London. He was not a member of the continuing committee but he sat in. Joseph Rotblat remembers that at the meeting Bertrand Russell, who was one of the founders of Pugwash, wanted to make Pugwash an open political association of scientists; to take direct political positions and advocate policies to their different governments. Szilárd argued eloquently against Russell, and said no, the beauty of Pugwash is that Soviet and American scientists can be frank, can explore their mutual interests, and then when they have agreements, they can suggest them to their own governments, and not make them faits accomplis in some public announcement. Szilárd carried the day. So Russell agreed that Pugwash would remain an off-the-record activity. As a result, Pugwash has been to this day a forum off the record in which frank ideas can be exchanged. Russell went on to found the Committee of One Hundred, which was a public scientists' political organization. But Pugwash, because of Szilárd's influence, remained a private, frank, open exchange of ideas between East and West.

Can you tell me something about Szilárd's Hungarian connections? I mean his connections with the other great Hungarian scientists in exile.

He was very close to Wigner in Berlin. They often took walks together, they talked often about science. In 1934 he helped Teller to get established in England, when Teller came out of Göttingen University. He was very close to Nicholas Kürti, who is at Oxford. In the United States he and Wigner and Teller were instrumental in making sure that the American President learned about the military potential for atomic energy.

How about John von Neumann?

Neumann he knew and liked very much in Berlin—they even taught a course together. But he did not do any work with him in the United States. Neumann, Wigner, and Szilárd were very friendly in Berlin in the years that they were there together. They also socialised in Princeton in the 1950s, despite growing political differences. I have no evidence of Szilárd and Neumann meeting very often in the United States. Neumann was working on a very different project during the war, and would not have seen Szilárd. And after the war Neumann was increasingly working on military projects and working in mathematics. Szilárd was working in arms control and in biology. So professionally their ways parted. I think Neumann and Szilárd remained admirers of each other, but I don't think that they were as close in the United States as they were in Germany.

There must have been some differences in their political views too.

This was a problem for all of them. Szilárd among the exiles was the only one who remained, I would say, progressive or open-minded about the future of atomic energy. Wigner increasingly became interested in civil defence, which Szilárd criticised. Teller wanted to develop the H-bomb, which Szilárd criticised. And Neumann became a consultant to the Pentagon, and was really part of the military-industrial complex, which Szilárd criticised.

There is a sign, though, that Szilárd remained close in a personal way with all three of them. They were fond of each other. You can see in interviews with Teller and Szilárd that while they disagree over policy, they are smiling at each other, they are

joking. They are having a good time. After Szilárd's death, Teller remained very close to Mrs. Szilárd, and Wigner wrote a letter to her saying that although in recent years they disagreed over politics, this should not in any way throw a shadow on what was the greatest friendship of his life.

Do you think that this friendship was due to their Hungarian origin?

I think so. I think that they had a very strong cultural identity. I think they liked being with one another, they liked *their* view of the world as it differed from the German, or the English, or the American view of the world. And, I think, they felt very comfortable together, they could trust each other. They worked together in 1939, especially Teller and Wigner and Szilárd, in the first days of the Manhattan Project. It was their effort alone that got that project going.

Is there something that remained Hungarian in Szilárd's way of thinking?

Very much so. He considered himself to be Hungarian in the sense that it gave him a freedom to see the world through different eyes. He always felt that he was looking at things, if you will, speaking about things differently, and this he thought gave him a freedom to really be original and not to fall into the traps of being German, or being English, or being French. I think he was very proud to be Hungarian.

Gábor Palló

BOOKS AND AUTHORS

THE FIRST YEARBOOK OF THE NEW INSTITUTE FOR HUNGARIAN STUDIES

Magyarságkutatás. A Magyarságkutató Csoport évkönyve. Edited by Gyula Juhász and Csaba Gy. Kiss. Budapest, 1987. 331 pp.

It might sound odd, almost unbelievable to anyone interested in Hungary and the Hungarians that until quite recently there was no centre or institution in the country devoted to the scholarly study of the past and present of those 4–5 million ethnic Hungarians who live outside the borders of Hungary. Although one can give many reasons, explanations and mitigating factors for this negligence, indeed much pertaining to this subject was published in recent years as well, it was certainly a welcome and timely decision that, in 1985, the Research Team for Hungarian Studies was established within (or rather affiliated to) the National Széchényi Library. The director, the historian Gyula Juhász summed up the aims of this both scholarly and political venture in the Introduction to the first issue of its Yearbook: "Interdisciplinary research into the society and culture of the Hungarians [in Hungary and of those] who lived beyond the country's frontiers, the study of the history, present state, legal and economic position and cultural features of the Hungarian national minorities, whose history and present position shows so much variety."

Besides an obvious interest in the several million Hungarians living in areas that have only been outside Hungary since the Treaty of Trianon, about whose deteriorating conditions alarming reports have reached the public, attention is also directed at the 1.5–2 million strong Hungarian diaspora in Western Europe, America and Australia. This originated in late 19th-century economic emigration, and whose numbers were greatly augmented by the political turmoils of the past fifty years.

Another field to be studied by the new institution is the present and past state of the Hungarian mind: attitudes to and interpretations of history, awareness of the cultural and geopolitical position of the country, dreams, illusions, myths and awakenings embedded in the national consciousness, the impact of various ideologies and intellectual currents.

The third major concern of the institute is monitoring the reception and promotion of Hungarian culture abroad, including the state of Hungarian studies at universities and other institutions there.

Such a wide range of duties requires the contributions of many scholars at many centres of learning. It was essential to coordinate their work. The present Yearbook, a collection of scholarly papers, testifies to the wide interests as well as the strong intellectual foundations of the predominantly young members of this team of researchers. Even a non-specialist can obtain an impression of the aims, methods, attitudes and conclusions of the authors from the English-language

summaries or even from the English titles provided. The modest appearance of this publication is amply offset by obviously sound editorial work (there are few factual mistakes and even fewer misprints) and even more by the wealth of material included.

The eighteen papers of this volume constitute three groups. Those on history, represent the strongest line of the new institution. Jenő Szűcs examines two interesting cases of ethnic survival: Islamic groups, who joined the Hungarians prior to the settlement in their present country in the 10th century, managed to preserve their religion and other customs for well over three hundred years, no doubt due to the tolerance on such matters shown by the Kings of Hungary. Likewise an island of Hungarians held out from the mid-15th to the late 18th century in Southern Bessarabia, on the Dniester River, surrounded by Rumanians, Tartars, and Ukrainians, as long as central power was weak and tolerant in the area. László Kővágó discusses the resolutions and policies of the Communist International concerning the formation of a federal political organization comprising all the nations of Central and South-Eastern Europe. This remained an official and widely accepted policy item, combined with a call for the break-up of the newly formed states of the region, throughout the 1920s. In the mid-thirties it was abandoned in favour of channelling all national forces into an anti-fascist front, and ever since there has been an almost total silence on this issue. Ignác Romsics surveys the ideas of Count István Bethlen, Prime Minister of Hungary* between 1921–1931, concerning the political resolution of the conflict between Rumania and Hungary in multinational Transylvania. He considered autonomy within Hungary, complete independence, autonomy within Rumania, and membership in a Polish–Rumanian–Hungarian federation, usually combined with a Swiss-type cantonial system. László Diószegi writes on an abortive 1931 plan by Edvard Beneš, then Foreign Minister of Czechoslovakia, for closer economic cooperation between his country, Austria and Hungary. Gyula Juhász presents the detailed diplomatic background to the Second Vienna Award of 1940, when Ribbentrop and Ciano as arbitrators ceded back the northern part of Transylvania to Hungary. Pál Péter Tóth's article is about the March Front of 1937, when a group of young Communist intellectuals combined with some populist writers in the hope of checking the Nazi advance and of finding a solution to Hungary's grave domestic problems.

The second part focuses on the national minorities and the relations between the Hungarians and their neighbours. Rudolf Joó shows how the linguistic and national unity of the states of Western Europe proved an illusion as a result of the growing consciousness of ethnic/cultural minorities and due to the movements for regional autonomy and decentralization.

András D. Bán writes about Róbert Braun, a largely forgotten Hungarian scholar, who studied the Slovenes during the Great War, and was an assistant to Oszkár Jászi, that champion of minority rights. Together they sought practical, and later theoretical, means to find democratic solutions for ethnically heterogeneous regions. Imre Molnár presents a case when the opposite of such a solution was attempted. Between 1945 and 1947, a Slovak-language newspaper, *Sloboda*, was published in Hungary, in support of the Czechoslovak policy of creating states without national minorities by expulsions and forced population exchanges. The paper urged the Slovaks living in scattered groups in Hungary to resettle in Slovakia in the homes abandoned by the Hungarian minority expelled from there. This fate struck almost all members of the German minorities of Central and South-Eastern Europe, excepting in one country, following the Second World War.

* See *NHQ* 107

Andrea R. Süle writes on the treatment of the Germans of Hungary until these policies were finally abandoned in 1948. A happy contrast of more tolerant attitudes is presented by the brief but thorough study of Lajos Arday on the history of the few thousand Slovenes of south-western Hungary who were not transferred to Yugoslavia by the 1920 Trianon peace treaty. The author also discusses the neighbouring Hungarian villagers of the Mura valley, who became attached to the Southern Slav state at the same time. András Bertalan Székely in a perceptive contents analysis of the textbooks used in the secondary schools of Czechoslovakia and Rumania for teaching world history to Hungarian students shows how far they are both from a realistic, unprejudiced approach as well as from the spirit of mutual respect. The likely impact on the mind of these Hungarian minority youths of the distorted presentation of the past, and especially of the role Hungarians played in it, appears to be sadly realistic.

The third part, headed *Society and Culture* shows a great diversity of subject matter, demonstrating how wide a field Hungarian studies cover. György Éger's "The social characteristics and the settlement qualities of the frontier regions of Hungary" depicts some of the largely inevitable adverse economic and social effects of the frontiers artificially drawn in 1919. He supports his opinions with substantial statistical evidence. These areas are doomed to a peripheral and backward status, at least until the frontiers cease to be serious obstacles in the way of the movement of persons and goods.

Julianna Puskás, well-known in America for her studies on Hungarian immigration, prepared an interesting microanalysis of the behaviour and slow assimilation of American–Hungarians (settled mainly in West Virginia and later around New Brunswick, N.J.), who all originated in a particular village in Hungary. To some degree as a contrast, Zoltán Fejős described some cases of ethnic cultural survival in a Hungarian community on the outskirts of Chicago, where strong remnants of Hungarian consciousness can still be observed, despite the break-up of their old communal settlement, thanks largely to the efforts of the ministers and elders of this Reformed (Calvinist) church.

A most thoughtful essay is by Csaba Gy. Kiss, discussing the major tendencies and repercussions of the fact that since the break-up of the historic Hungarian state five separate branches emerged in the literature of the Hungarians within the Carpathian Basin, with literary life in the Hungarian diaspora as an additional factor. Public awareness of this fact in Hungary, and the recognition of it in the neighbouring states, leaves much to be desired in the context of states continuing to endeavour to create ethnic and cultural homogeneity, but—as the author points out—there are forces working against this latter tendency since "literature is opposed to frontiers." Gyula Balla gives an account of how the weakest of these branches of Hungarian literature, that of Ruthenia (Carpatho-Ukraine) is beginning to draw strength from local (regional) literary traditions. The last article, by Sándor Enyedi, is a dramatic chapter from the history of the Hungarian theatre of Kolozsvár. When Hungarian sovereignty again ended there in September 1944, the fight for the survival of the Hungarian National Theatre, and for much more, started.

The selected bibliography of the most recent publications of the members of the institution (prepared by Péter Dippold, the head of its archive) reaffirms the good impressions gained from reading the Yearbook. One can put down this volume with the conviction that, in the former Royal Palace of Buda there is not only the beautiful Széchényi Library worth visiting and using, but also a centre of learning, which is bound to play an important role not only in furthering Hungarian studies at home and abroad, but also in international research on national minorities all over the world.

Géza Jeszenszky

THREE VOLUMES OF SHORT STORIES

Miklós Mészöly: *Sutting ezredes tündöklése* (The Glory of Colonel Sutting). Szépirodalmi, 1987. 199 pp.; Lajos Grendel: *Bőröndök tartalma* (The Contents of Suitcases). Madách, Bratislava (Pozsony), 1987. 138 pp.; Dénes Csengey: *Gyertyafénykeringő* (Candlelight Waltz). Szépirodalmi, 1987. 224 pp.

Miklós Mészöly, the great outsider of contemporary Hungarian literature, the eternal innovator approaching seventy, has just published a new volume of short stories. The bulk of the book is made up of two longer novellas. One is *The Glory of Colonel Sutting*, which also lends the book its title. It is an unusual, poetic, dreamlike piece, nothing like Mészöly's previous work. The only indication that something like this may have been in the offing is that over the past decade Mészöly has turned away from the strict, descriptive prose of his earlier years to reveal an inclination for poetry. He has written structured free verse, and his short stories have become imbued with poetic elements. And whereas his individual phrases, the single structures which make up the text, were written in the form of prose, their compilation, which makes up the text's composition, followed the conventions of poetry.

The Glory of Colonel Sutting is like that. Without having an actual story-line it carries two themes: revolution and love. They are rhymed with each other, their hidden correspondences are revealed. The text is constructed from elements of the milieu of nineteenth-century Eastern Europe and Hungary. The individual elements are held together by the figure of Colonel Sutting who is, however, nothing more than the enigmatic compendium of a few symbolic motifs, obscure actions and intentions. Formally, the colonel is an officer of the Austrian imperial army, but for most of the narrative he withholds this. In fact, he is preparing for the revolution. Meanwhile he seems to have neither home nor family. "His ancestry was doubtlessly shrouded in mystery, and his name reverberated from the Beskids to the Lower Danube like rye or barley rattling through a sieve-full of peas." At first we find him in the vicinity of Lemberg, in the castle of a noble lady, not long after the suppression of a peasant uprising whose traces keep haunting us. Colonel Sutting is the lady's lover, her husband is in Vienna awaiting some promotion. The colonel, "not for the first time in his life," absented himself from the suppression of and exaction of reprisals against the revolt, instead paying suit to Crescence Privorszky. Gossip had it that the colonel had appeared similarly in other places before: "Europe knew few battles or skirmishes in which the colonel had not turned up in one capacity or another. An embassy, a commission, a secret post—the hushed mind will contrive to humble reality"—and "in amorous embraces he knew no limits. He was extravagant only to be all the wealthier elsewise . . ."

His loves, like the one for Crescence, were times of grandiloquence and rapture. To Colonel Sutting "love is a season greater . . . than the little tyrannical passages of time shredded into days." With regard to love—as to revolution, which seems to grow out of his loves—Colonel Sutting lives aloft the banal everyday of the present. Love and revolution is one and the same to him; the sentence above cited is later rephrased: "Revolution is a season greater, Crescence, than the little tyrannical passages of time shredded into days and borders."

The colonel has some mysterious mission which takes him away from Lemberg through the Hungarian Great Plain and across the Danube to Szekszárd. The epic frame of the

narrative is basically this journey, during which Sutting studies the "terrain" where conspiracy and, later, fighting is to take place. There is no indication of his association with others or an organization. But the content of the novella is to be found not only in these strewn mosaic pieces of events and settings—there are some suggestive flashes of nineteenth-century castles, carriage rides, suppers at the inn, riding in the woods—that never come to form a rounded whole. The style of the novella is also part of the content, reaching back to a time of romantic pursuits of love and revolution, a lyric, at times almost pathetic expression which, of course, appears here as discretely intimated anachronism. The story's slightly archaic tone, its finely measured ardour and mysteriousness, in short, a dreamlike vision expresses our nostalgic longing for love and revolution.

The second, longer novella of the volume is entitled "Crazy Journey." It is much closer to a regular narrative than the first, without, however, lacking dreamlike overtones. A suspended unreality runs through the piece which in the end is seemingly explained and justified as the reader finds out that the narrator of the story who related the events in the present tense is actually no longer living. His account of the "crazy journey" which ended in a fatal accident is recorded in a "black box". Yet this explanation is only superficial since it is no less unrealistic than it appeared at the beginning of the story. There is really no explanation, there are again only details, mosaic pieces that do not match, events which are accumulated without meaning and yet realistic—all the more so because of the handling of these elements.

Pointing in this direction is the novella's full title: "Crazy Journey, or a Minute Account of Some Insignificant Circumstances." The scene is some godforsaken Hungarian railway stop after the Second World War. The damages of war are still evident all around, there is a severe lack of carriages, with hardly enough to assemble a train. Thus one of the central figures in the novella is a pompous carriage from the time of Francis Joseph which had been abandoned but is now superficially restored to be used again. The passengers on this "crazy journey" travel in this on a spur line in the country from somewhere to somewhere. More precisely, they intend to take the journey, but something always comes up. First they have to wait for hours before the train even starts; the engine is taken away for another purpose; then follow more hours of delay; until finally the fateful crash occurs—and the passengers never reach their destination. Mészöly describes in detail the carriage, only to revive the period in which it was constructed—grotesquely in contrast with the shoddy passengers just emerging from wartime. Though Mészöly's style is rarely symbolic, the association is unavoidable between the outmoded carriage that had to be restored because there was nothing newer, better, and Hungary with all its flocked-together people tossed about by fate, going from somewhere to somewhere. Perhaps it is not irrelevant that the narrator talks about himself in the first person plural (the royal plural in Hungarian), though it becomes evident that he is only a single person, with a few details of his past here related.

These details of a life, which are mostly events from the war, provide one level of the narrative. They are remembrances of the narrator brought to mind by passengers during the journey. Another level of the story is the "minute account of some insignificant circumstances" of the voyage which focuses on the description of the passengers. Though being described in detail the passengers strangely come no closer to the reader at all, instead they become legendary beings. In this respect the "Crazy Journey" is much like one of Mészöly's earlier short stories, "Where the Star Goes," which is an account of a bus trip. Much more important than the simple symbolic level is the legendary aspect of "Crazy Journey," which actually canonizes the randomly gathered travellers. It is surely no coincidence that there are twelve of them,

that during the delay they partake of a last supper, a pork feast, at the invitation of the station master, that they include a mother nursing her child, that one of them survives the accident: a mythically large, voluptuous matron who, in the delirious night following the last supper, had introduced a youth to manhood—all these mythical motifs are surely not accidental, even if they cannot be used as explanations. Nor is "Crazy Journey" a blasphemous story of redemption, only of people who unsuspectingly live in the unpredictable vicinity of death and it is precisely this that lends them a holy innocence.

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Lajos Grendel is one of those younger Hungarian writers of fiction who look to Mészöly as model, master and immediate forerunner. Grendel lives in Czechoslovakia and has published three novels so far. They all deal with damaged and confused personal and national identity of the Hungarians in Slovakia, and the expression of the loss of identity serves as a vehicle for conveying a more general experience of existential insecurity. As a writer, Grendel is especially vulnerable to the fate of a minority which is increasingly losing its sense of community and its public forums, a fate which reciprocally affects his concept of the role of a writer as well as of literature. Grendel is constantly driven by doubt and insecurity about who and how to write, and in whose name. His peripheral position is reminiscent of Franz Kafka, who also lived in that country, and who, as a German-speaking Jew within a Czech majority, which in turn was a minority within the Austro-Hungarian Empire until its dissolution, lived through a sense of being inexorably alone without belonging anywhere, and who also condensed his experience into universally valid allegories. Grendel, too, is inclined to see in his politically and ethnically determined position merely an exemplification of what everyone experiences today: the dissolution of communities and of genuine existence.

The Contents of Suitcases is Grendel's newest volume of short stories, inspired—as the dedication of the title story indicates—by Borges, also a follower of Kafka. The book evokes another author closely related to Kafka and at one point directly cited—Robert Musil who was also one to have doubts about traditional literature. The novella entitled "The Contents of Suitcases" sets off truly in the manner of Borges, and deals with a writer one day noting a dubious figure following him. He begins to imagine who might be following him and why, but he is already launched into the process of writing so that it becomes unclear if the following has actually occurred or is "nothing more" than literature, something that he imagined upon seeing the dubious figure. The latter does indeed knock on his door. As it turns out, he is a dilettantish writer carrying a suitcase full of manuscripts that publishers have refused, and he now expects the author to read some of them. The author agrees, if only to get rid of the intruder. But as it happens, the dilettante has many more suitcases of manuscripts and that—as revealed already in the first few pages—these manuscripts comprise all possible human fates. The unnumbered papers compile in their endlessly disjointed sentences all possible works of literature. "I knew that there lay the story that I had just completed, on that Saturday afternoon"—the one that the reader is holding in his hands. The author is envious of his visitor and astonished that he did "exactly what I should do: wander freely and without responsibility"—but at the same time he realizes that from writing does not stem reality but literature—and if he sits down to write a novella he will never get closer to reality, he will only serve a convention called literature, confirming to a model that already exists, somewhere.

The short story "Czechoslovak Hungarian Novella" also deals with the same universal absurdity in relation to Grendel's specific situation. It too begins with a motif characteristic of Borges. An assistant profes-

sor of humanities at a university assigns his best student a thesis on the greatest Czechoslovakian Hungarian poet. Though the student has never heard of the poet he uncovers the facts on him under the professor's guidance. He finds out more and more about the poet: that in the small town where he lived he had been persecuted for some eccentricities in a typically provincial way, which led him to move, never to be heard of again. The problem is that no one except the professor remembers his allegedly fabulous poetry. There is a relative who might know about some manuscripts, but he dies suddenly. The student realizes that he can do nothing but interrupt his studies, move to the small town, and devote his life to finding the poet named Imre Páll. "It is his task to resurrect Imre Páll, and then to write Imre Páll's lost poems, and like his great poetic forerunner, create the legend of these poems so that the path that ends somewhere can be continued by another writer in another time." Finally this short story, which stems out of a sad and provincial "Czechoslovakian Hungarian" medium, rises to universal relevancy in a single, poetical sentence: "Only so can we expand the limits of finitude and conquer time, which strikes everything that steps out of the haze of pre-existence and comes to show itself only to relinquish the perfection that in non-existence it possessed." Thus the price of existence, especially of literary existence, is perfection.

Grendel tries in his other novels to achieve an equally compact tension between our everyday world and the irrationality of existence. He always begins excellently. Even in the first paragraph the reader catches a "burnt smell," a sense that something stinks. The foreboding lack of apprehension or even curiosity of a writer living on the borderline between daily reality and literature intimates a sense that something is wrong. Some of his conclusions are striking, almost impertinently pointed switches from priggish mundane accounts to fantasy. The novella "A Bashful Account of the Middle of a Dream" ends with the narrator, who is on an official trip in a distant small town, all of a sudden unable to prove his identity, because it turns out that many years have passed and he has changed completely. This seems to be a typical Kafkaesque falling into sin. But Grendel is precise in his wording, and he transforms the Kafkaean model to his own designs: "I am grown old, as the mirror shows, and I have lost the illusion of freedom. Or perhaps it's the other way around: I am grown old because I have lost the illusion of freedom." Grendel and his generation are not afraid of sin, but of old age and subjugation.

On the whole, these novellas are all a little too abstract and sterile. There is a little too much literature in them, and too little reality. Less and less nowadays, because overused by many writers including Grendel, reality can serve as the subject for a short story or novel, but never as its method. "The End of a Cheap Novel" concludes again with a writer in a distant small town meeting the characters of a novel he left unfinished. The characters finish the novel for him, with an ending that is not very original, something like that of a cheap novel. That life concludes the writer's unsuccessful novel outline just as clumsily, and that in fact is the subject of a literary work, a finished one this time—is no more an original idea than that of the unfinished novel was. Grendel knows how to speak "literature," he knows how to edit a Borgesian existence-enigma, he has the know-how to write, he has aphorisms that hit the mark, but for all that, his material seems to be abating. Because it is not true that the infinite richness of the world fits into no matter how many suitcases—not even the richness of Hungarians of Slovakia. And real works are never phantoms. They become realities just as much as a suitcase.

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Lajos Grendel is forty years old. Dénes Csengey is of the same generation, and he has just published a volume of short stories,

Candlelight Waltz. Csengey has been known for his sociographic essays. He wrote a notable book on Tamás Cseh and his music. Cseh was the surprising and most interesting popular singer of the seventies. With his author friend Géza Bereményi writing the lyrics of his songs, Tamás Cseh sang about the wasted disillusionment of that generation, now in their thirties, that in the sixties had felt it could reach the sky. In this music and the subculture it stood for, Csengey analysed with personal ardour the general outlook and social condition of his contemporaries. In his present collection of short stories, he partly continues to study the same subject, primarily through the portrayal of the critical moments within his own life, and partly the road that led there, the failures of his parents' generation in the fifties.

It is the latter that Csengey masters most convincingly. Almost half of the book consists of the "Stories of an Old Driver," a three-part cycle throughout which the old driver relates the fateful years of his life. He might be the author's father, or one of the fathers of that generation. The first story takes place in the final days of the war, when small-town Hungarian Nazis fleeing to the west force the still naïve driver-to-be to go along with them, thus making him witness to terrible atrocities. Escaping, he returns home. During the stepped-up industrial drive of the fifties he has to push his old truck to exhaustion while his wife is at home about to bear a child. Stress, alcohol, and fear demoralize him, he cheats on his wife on the night of her labour. The woman later cuts the throat of her husband's seductress. The girl herself was the seventeen-year-old, degraded, humiliated, and morally depraved daughter of the declassé mayor of the small town, and for this reason perhaps her murder did not draw the harsh punishment as someone else's would have. The old driver tells his story in first person; presumably the novella is based on an actual taped interview which comes through in the written work. The sociographically inclined Csengey is obviously not a stranger to such technique. Basing his writing on this type of articulated material from real life serves him well, without it his literary style becomes mannered and cumbersome. Such a schoolishly overwritten, crammed style characterizes his two novels about the decline of traditional peasant life—perhaps inspired by his grandparents. Affected exaggeration, overloading and convulsive metaphoric language mark also the less effective short stories about his own lost generation. His heroes are always fleeing everything, they suffer from anomie and try to dampen their malaise with alcohol. The emotions and passions are clearly honest but lack proper form, and they are expressed through grimly imitated, acquired means. *Candlelight Waltz* is foremost a testimony of warning, and with this an unintended sociographic document, of the deeply rooted, bitter voice of the youngest generation of Hungarian intellectuals.

Miklós Györffy

LETTERS FROM AMERICA

Gyula Fekete: *Meditáció Amerikáról* (Meditations on America). Magvető, 1987, 247 pp; Zoltán Sumonyi Pap: *Az igazi Menlo Park* (The Real Menlo Park). Magvető, 1987, 288 pp.

In the past fifteen years more books have been written by Hungarian authors about the United States of America than ever before. The reason for this is quite prosaic. Hungarian writers, who in the past could not even dream of visiting the United States, are now able to travel there, for a few weeks, months, or even years. The reason why they could not have dreamed of it before is simple: money. Not even the financially most succesful Hungarian writer could afford such a journey; the Hungarian forint is not a freely convertible currency and when converted into American dollars even the wealthiest Hungarian writer cannot consider himself well-off. In addition, Hungarian literature is no more a convertible currency than Hungarian forint is—though I dare hope that this is only due to our linguistic isolation.

However, in the past fifteen to twenty years stipends, relatives settled in America, or Hungarian communities there have enabled many writers to reach that distant country. They have enabled them to see the outline of Manhattan, the lights of Kennedy Airport drawing closer and closer, to view Niagara Falls and the steep hills of San Francisco, to experience the provinciality of Iowa City or the endless expanse of urban Los Angeles—anxiously or in awe, sceptically or with an open heart.

There is another, less prosaic, reason too. For fifteen, twenty years a Hungarian writer could not go to America and then return to tell about it, even if an invitation or a stipend had been available. He could go there only as a refugee. Politics had drawn a curtain on the outside world.

Then the curtain was lifted. The relatively large number of accounts of America burst forth like an explosion (a comparison that I hope is not too irresponsible), erupting with a force much greater than if it had not been subdued. Restraint has its positive effects sometimes, though the price is quite high. Thought becomes inhibited and the individual tends to become injured in the process.

To a writer this kind of injury can be turned into a virtue. It lends character, colour, and passion to the bias one inevitably carries upon entering a foreign country for the first time. I mentioned that there are those who arrive in America with an open mind, but I must admit that this was an attempt to be inclusive. Because there are very few people who are able to be truly open-minded when they step off a KLM or a Lufthansa, a British Airways or a PanAm jet in New York, or Washington, D. C. And I am not speaking the names of these airlines lightly; their aircraft were, like the United States, mere phantoms to us only two decades ago.

Thus only few Hungarian writers have gone to discover America. That richest, industrially most developed country in the world, with perhaps the most interesting democratic traditions. The country with the shortest history, the most colourful, most heterogeneous, in some respects most easily manipulated, most infantile, most glittering and most frightening country in the world. A country to admire, but also to fear, a country that holds the future, if we look at it from here in Central Europe, and yet a country that is not the future for Central Europe or any other country in the world which seeks to discern its own future through the haze of time. Stepping off the plane we bear

like a second skin our prejudices and our preconceptions. They cannot be shed. In fact, they prove an advantage to Hungarian literature about America. We did not really come to discover America, but rather to find out more about ourselves, our Central Europeanness, our Hungarian essence, as seen in light of this completely different, vast country. Our American journey led most of us to examine ourselves, our home and the meaning of humanity in general—accompanied at times by aggression, impatience, or pain. No Western European country has done that to us, ever.

An extreme and exciting example of such self-analysis is Gyula Fekete's book *Meditations on America*. The author is one of the most passionately outspoken writers who confront Hungary's demographic, moral, national, and cultural decline, often against official and non-official opposition. He examines, even in the United States, the question of what is Hungarian—what are Hungary's hopes and illusions. His concern lies not only with Hungarians, but also the many smaller, poorer peoples whose sons have left their homes in great numbers, especially for the United States.

The fact of being invited is cause for meditation itself, since those who invited Fekete were Hungarians living in the States. There is no other country in the world where there are so many Hungarians who represent such a broad political and human spectrum and who are so aggressively Hungarian. There are those who emigrated early in the century to escape poverty, those who left between the two world wars to escape political or racial persecution, those right-wingers, fascists, and later liberal democrats who sought refuge there after the Second World War and those who escaped in 1956, many for political reasons, yet suffering far less intolerance than the earlier groups. They are so different, some hating the homeland's present political system along with the whole country but who harbour a love for the homeland of the past. These are roots that neither distance or politics have been able to tear up, roots, however, that fate is bound to destroy in the next generation. They represent a whole spectrum of attitudes. Each is opposed to the other, one is accused of betraying his roots only because he wants to leave them behind; or because for love of his native language he visits the native country, which is seen as the equivalent of support for its present political system; or because he fights against the home country in his hate of its political system.

The attitude of the emigrants readily lends itself to meditation. Gyula Fekete introduces many of them, in a short scene, a discussion, or an excerpt from a letter. Obviously he sympathizes with those who wish prosperity to the homeland in spite of differences in political attitude. And with those who guard their roots, at least by passing their native language on to their children, though Fekete knows that this is only a short interlude in the process of Americanization. Language and a sense of Hungarian patriotism is inevitably lost within a generation or two, even if America has proven not to be the melting pot it was long considered to be, and even if ethnic identity has become idealized.

Fekete focuses on two basic moral questions which he tries to examine from every aspect. One is the question of freedom of movement. The author remarks that those countries are considered to uphold human rights which do not prevent free emigration. Yet those that limit immigration are rarely considered to obstruct human rights. Yet they infringe on the declared rights just as much as those which prohibit emigration. In fact, their favourable economic conditions, Fekete says, turn them into intellectual colonizers since they select only the best educated, thereby drawing them away from the poorer countries. They make a profit, in that they escape the cost of training university graduates.

The cost that a country spends on someone's education and upbringing is also the

individual's debt towards that country, a cost he does not repay in work if he leaves. Though Fekete tries to weigh all the different aspects of the question, he considers emigration morally acceptable only in case of someone who is escaping persecution or death. He has reservations about accepting someone who leaves because he cannot develop his talents at home, trying to find better conditions elsewhere. Nonetheless it is evident that all those famous Hungarian atomic scientists, mathematicians, biologists, and musicians who moved to America could hardly achieve as much at home as abroad, under better financial, research and travel conditions.

Fekete declines to allow emigrants moral absolution if they leave for material reasons. Commitment to one's home country he considers a greater moral imperative even at the price of sacrifice than any real or imagined goals for individual happiness.

Without wanting to argue at length with Gyula Fekete's deliberate arguments, I wish to counter not with theories but with the experienced fact that if a state prohibits emigration it does so not only to protect its intellectual wealth but often for harsh political reasons. If the individual's country prevents him from profiting from his talents, then he is also hindered in repaying his material and intellectual debt to his home country and to the world.

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Zoltán Sumonyi Papp is a poet and also director of the drama department of Hungarian Radio, where he was formerly a reporter and editor. He was sent to the United States by his employer. His book, *The Real Menlo Park,* as a traditional travel account, in no way resembles Fekete's essayistic meditation. Sumonyi Papp also focuses on his meetings with Hungarians living in America. This is not surprising, as I know from my own experience that one can meet them in the most unexpected places, even when one does not set out to do so. But even among Hungarians Sumonyi Papp is more of an observer than a passionate *homo politicus.* He is an understanding, often ironic, and at times supercilious observer.

Even if malice is not necessarily a positive human quality, it can have a favourable effect on a piece of literature. Here it makes Sumonyi Papp's portrayals enjoyably colourful and entertaining. His corpulent host, a cook well known in America, comes to life as a regal, commanding figure. A poet and university professor is vividly portrayed in his feverish infatuation and amorous cooing. The author can be almost merciless as the drive to write pushes him past the limits of personal tact. But then there is also his account of the wealthy Californian-Hungarian artist whose loneliness he relates not just relentlessly, but also with empathy and understanding.

Perhaps the most pleasant scene in the book is of the meeting of poets in Seattle relating how they can understand each other in spite of language difficulties. It is a unique testimony to the international spirit of poets when Sumonyi Papp, who speaks good Russian, translates at the spur of the moment the Akhmatova-inspired poem by an American poet into Hungarian, and later checks his extemporaneous translation to find it not too different from the original Russian.

In both books there is a continuous sense of strangeness. I, too, have always felt this during a stay in America some fifteen years ago. It is a feeling that could not be remedied even by the fact that my English is better than that of these two authors. It is this feeling of strangeness, which indivisibly combines admiration and opposition, which is the main inspiration of our books on America.

IMRE SZÁSZ

A CONTEMPORARY ENGLISH BIOGRAPHY OF MIKLÓS ZRÍNYI

Angol életrajz Zrínyi Miklósról, London, 1664. (An English Biography of Miklós Zrínyi, London, 1664). Edited and introduced by Iván Sándor Kovács. Zrínyi Military Publishing House, 1987, 472 pp. and illustrations. (Zrínyi Library II.)

Samuel Pepys noted in his diary on 22nd September 1663: "Every day brings news of the Turkes advance into Germany, to the awakening of all the Christian princes thereabouts, and possessing himself of Hungary." These words reflect the interest which the English suddenly developed in the Turkish war raging in various parts of Hungary in the 1660s, a war culminating in the battle of St Gotthard in the summer of 1664. It was in this context when news from Hungary was eagerly listened to in London coffee-houses that one of the leading Christian commanders of that war, Count Miklós Zrínyi (known to his English contemporaries as *Nicholas Serini*) became, for a short time, a figure of great interest and admiration. Sometime in March 1664 a book was published by Samuel Speed with an introduction by O.C. which eulogised the Hungarian military commander under the following title: *The conduct and character of Count Nicholas Serini, Protestant Generalissimo in the Auxiliaries in Hungary, The most Prudent and Resolved Champion of Christendom. With his Parallels Scanderbeg and Tamberlain.* This was the first book in English devoted to a single Hungarian historical figure and the only full-size book (168 pages) about Miklós Zrínyi published in any language during his lifetime (he died in November 1664).

Although this book is not particularly rare, it has not been generally known to readers in England or Hungary, and the decision of the Zrínyi Military Publishing House in Budapest to reissue in facsimile the original English text of 1664 with a Hungarian translation is more than welcome. In recent years research on Zrínyi's foreign connections and on the reception of his exploits and fame outside Hungary has achieved spectacular results, so it is now timely to examine English views on this outstanding military commander who, apart from successfully fighting the Turks, wrote incisive political essays and also the best Hungarian epic poem *(The Peril of Sziget)* of the Baroque period. This is what the *Angol életrajz Zrínyi Miklósról* attempts by providing us (apart from the text of the 1664 biography) with a number of "supporting" studies. The longest of these is by historian Katalin Péter ("Zrínyi's English Admirers") who tries to place English interest in Zrínyi's character and actions in the political context of the period, pointing out the obvious (and perhaps deliberate) mistake which makes a "Protestant Generalissimo", another potential Gustavus Adolphus, out of the Catholic Miklós Zrínyi. There are no clues to the possible identity of the compiler of the 1664 biography, but Katalin Péter rightly asserts that O.C. had no intention of creating "a work of lasting literary or scholarly value"—the book was put together from several texts of varying reliability and quality, some of them being new translations, others (the chapters on Scanderberg and Tamerlain) already existing compilations. None the less, at least one chapter in O.C.'s biography "mirrors ... certain thoughts in Zrínyi's prose", so the author of this particular part must have been familiar with the Hungarian general's writings and might have known him personally.

Another essay in the *Angol életrajz Zrínyi Miklósról* surveys the iconographic representa-

tions of Miklós Zrínyi in Restoration England. Gizella Cenner-Wilhelmb, an art historian, describes two extant pictures of Zrínyi: a portrait by H.D., engraved by John Chantry and attached as a frontispiece to the O.C. biography, and an equestrian engraving by William Faithorne the Elder (reproduced on pages 157 and 379 respectively). Of these the first is a fictitious portrait which bears hardly any resemblance to the historical Zrínyi, although it shows certain similarities with portraits engraved roughly at the same time in Paris and the Netherlands. Mrs Cenner-Wilhelmb cannot decipher the initials H.D.; she does not even have a hypothesis as to the identity of the painter in question. Yet there were at least two (non-English) artists in the 1660s who signed their work in this manner—the Dutch Hendrik Danckerts (who is reputed to have lived in London for twenty years) and the French Jérôme (Hieronymus) David who lived and worked in Rome. Either of them could be the author of the original, copied by John Chantry. It is also worth mentioning that another book covering the Turkish war, Henry Marsh's *A New Survey of the Turkish Empire, History and Government Compleated* (London, 1664, printed by J. Best for Samuel Bolton) has for its frontispiece a grand portrait of Miklós Zrínyi in full military splendour, apparently unknown to the iconographer of *Angol életrajz*. On this, Zrínyi holds a commanding position in the middle of an octagon, with tiny, medallion-like portraits of other historical personalities (the Emperor, the King of France, Scanderbeg and Tamerlain) in the four corners. This somewhat fanciful portrait (also the work of John Chantry) as well as Chapter XIV. of this edition of *A New Survey ... Compleated* shows the very high regard in which Zrínyi was held at the time. At the end of the book which, among other things, gives a full account of Miklós Zrínyi's winter campaign and the burning of the important bridge at Eszék, the English author concludes: "This illustrious person *Count Serini* hath already attained so high a pitch of fame that his Name is renowned throughout all Christendome..." and goes on saying that soon this name will fill the Turks with the same terror as those of Tamerlain the Great and Scanderbeg.

As to the other texts assembled in *Angol életrajz*, they are, by and large, the result of the collective effort by four students (Andrea Bukovszky, Éva Gömöri, Andrea Rab and Péter Zajkás) of the Eötvös Loránd University of Budapest, working under the guidance of Professor Iván Sándor Kovács. Members of his Zrínyi seminar translated *The conduct and character of Count Nicholas Serini* as well as extracts from another contemporary publication relevant to the same subject, *A Short Relation of the Rise and Progress of the Turkish Warrs...* (London, 1664). Sándor Bene, a student of Hungarian and Latin wrote an informative essay on the little funerary anthology *Lacrymae Hungaricae* which was devoted to the memory of Miklós Zrínyi. This anthology comprising Latin poems by three Hungarian residents in London at the time (P. Jászberényi, F. Széki and F. Szendrei) as well as epitaphs by three other foreigners (P. Schilling, J. Megalinus and J. Pastorius) was published some time in 1665 by Nathaniel Brook who, alongside with Henry Marsh and Samuel Speed was the London bookseller most interested in popularizing the events of the Turkish war in Hungary and upholding the reputation of the most daring military leader of those years, Miklós Zrínyi. It is worth mentioning that in the course of 1663–1665 no less than *twenty* separate publications were issued in London (with the exception of *Lacrymae Hungaricae* all in English) dealing with the Turkish war and discussing Zrínyi's role in some detail.

Apart from the introduction (which also gives a concise account of past Hungarian research on Zrínyi's English reception) Iván Sándor Kovács was also responsible for most of the copious and scholarly notes in the book. There are but a few instances where he stands for correction: in Wing's *Short-Title Catalogue of Books Printed in England...*

1641–1700, only copies extant in British, Irish and American libraries are noted, so no wonder that copies of 17th-century English books in Hungarian collections are left unmentioned. *The conduct and character... of Serini* was given a permit to be printed (imprimatur) by George Stradling on the 24th of February 1663 which—according to the old English calendar—is in fact 1663/64, so there is no discrepancy between the text of the permit (which names Sheldon as Archbishop of Canterbury) and the actual date of printing (p. 390). Finally, news travelling from Hungary or Vienna to London took considerably less time in 1664 than Kovács believes: while he reckons that it took a month on average (p. 406), in the case of the battle of St Gotthard where the Turks suffered a decisive defeat, the news reached London in no more than 18 days!

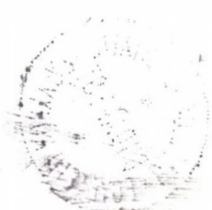
Angol életrajz is richly illustrated throughout and its layout and typographical solutions give much credit to the Hungarian printing industry. The book is supplied with a three-page summary in English and with indexes of personal and topographical names.

George Gömöri

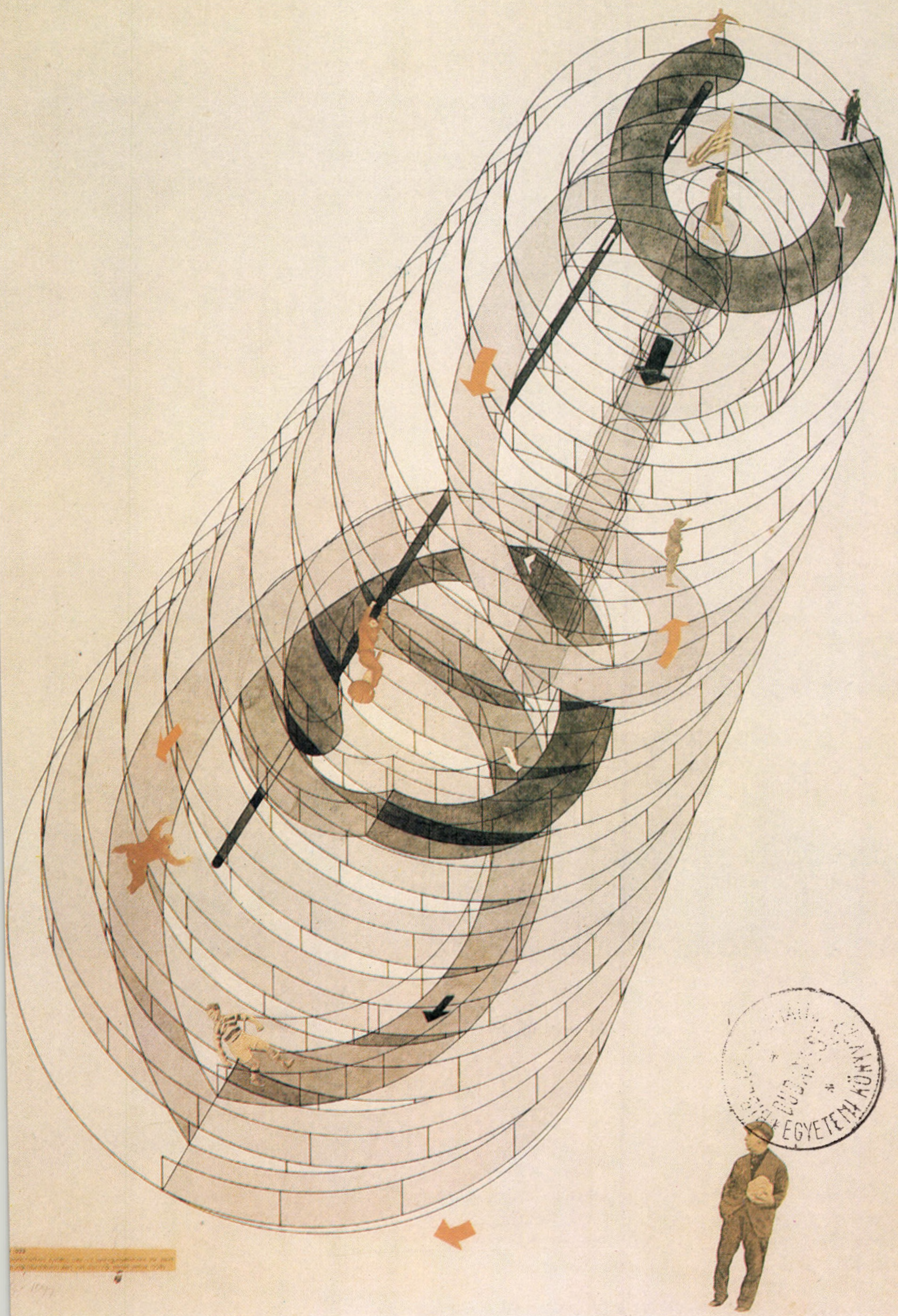
MARCEL BREUER: WATER COLOUR, 1922.

Private collection, Köln

FARKAS MOLNÁR:
FIORENTIA, 1921–1922.
Hungarian National Gallery, Budapest



FARKAS MOLNÁR: COVER DESIGN FOR
BAUHAUSBÜCHER-SERIES, VOL. I., 1925.
Albert Langen Verlag, Munich



LÁSZLÓ MOHOLY-NAGY: KYNETIC CONSTRUCTION, 1922. *Theatermuseum der Universität, Köln*

All reproductions by Levente Sepsi-Szücs

Tibor Weininger: Mechanical play, 1926. Design
Theatermuseum der Universität, Köln

Gyula Pap: Patou. Poster design, 1930. Collage
W. Schnepel collection, Bremen

royal orfeum

baker

ATHENAEUM
BUDAPEST

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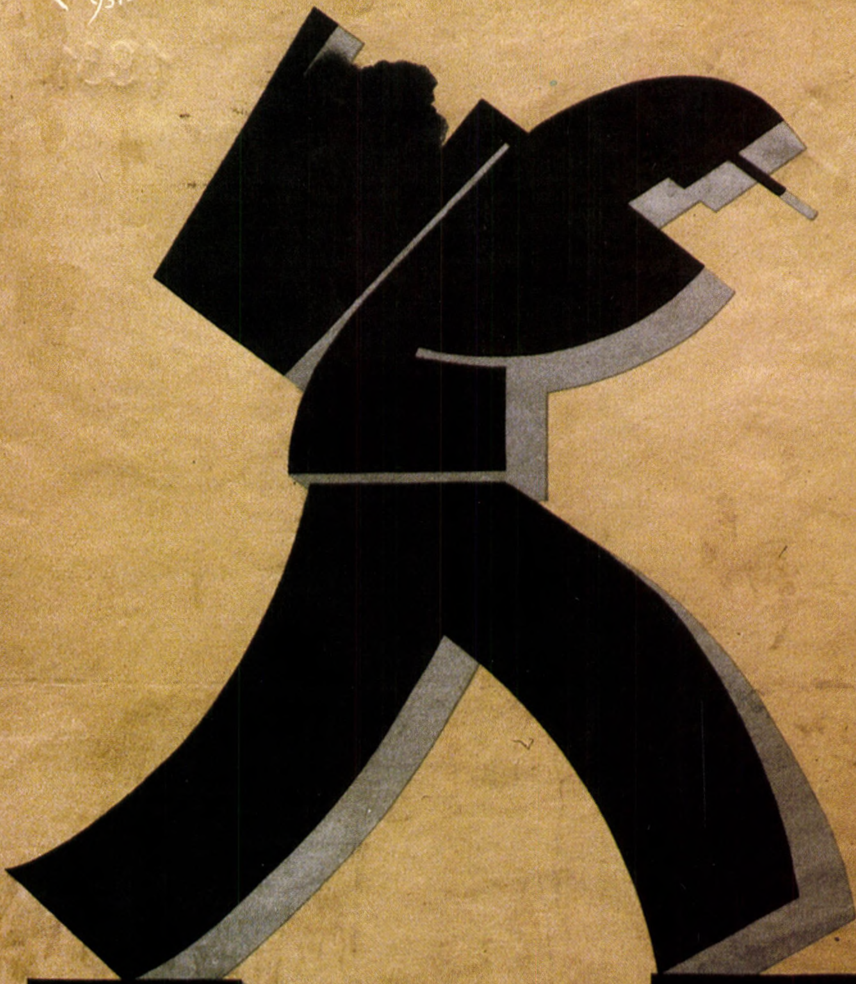
TIBOR RÉZ DIAMANT: BAKER, cca. 1928

Tibor Sáfár

Sándor Bortnyik: Modiano, poster, cca. 1930

IMRE LÁNYI: MODIANO, POSTER, cca. 1930.

Tibor Sáfár



Aladár Richter, Jr.: Budapest gas coke. Poster, 1931

Tamás Lossonczy: Chain reaction, 1946. Oil, canvas, 95×150 cm.

Tamás Lossonczy: Opposite natures, 1977. Oil, canvas, 40×50 cm

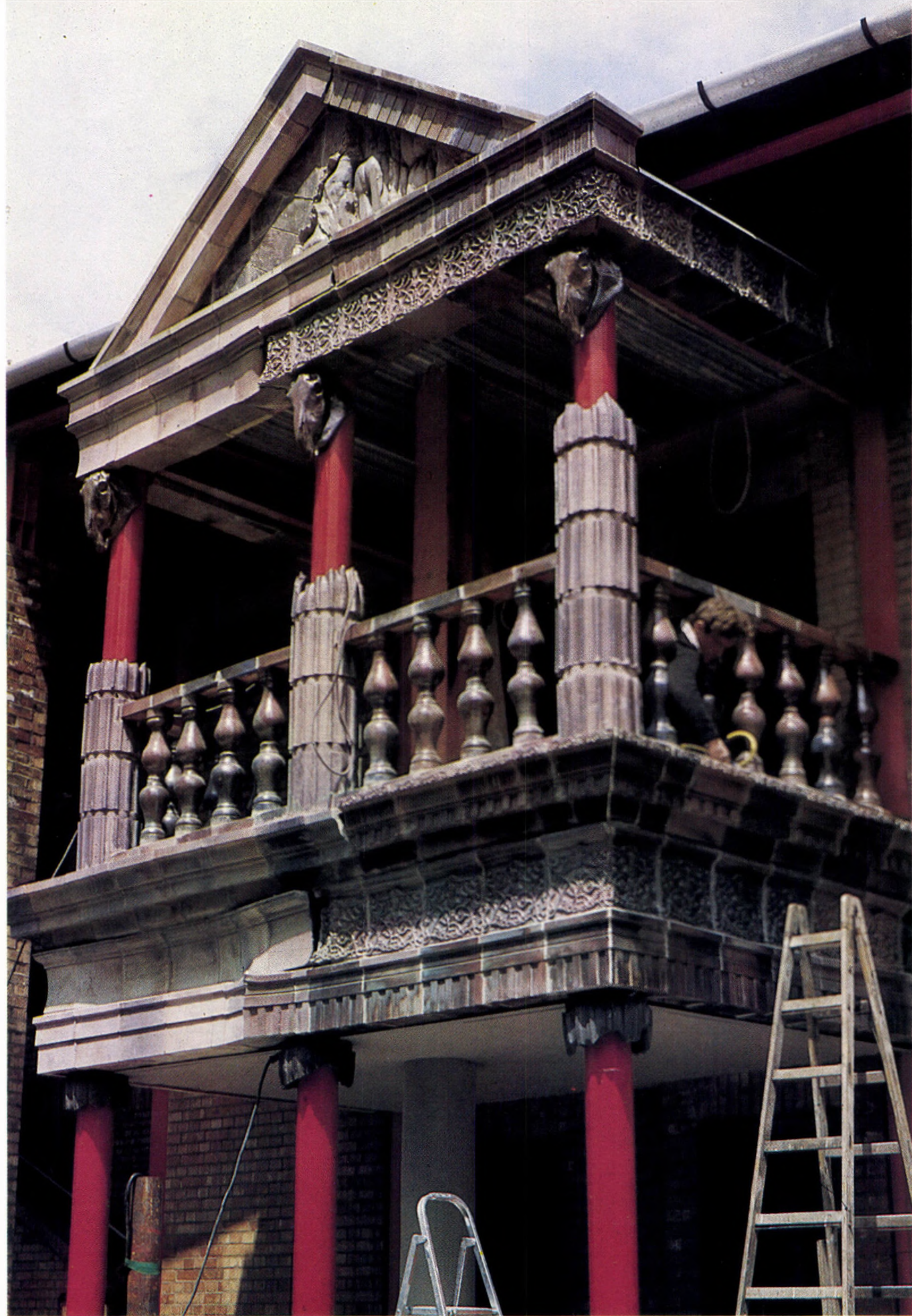
Miklós Sulyok

TAMÁS LOSSONCZY: INFINITY, 1986. OIL, CANVAS, 160×120 CM

IBOLYA LOSSONCZY: LISTENING TO FAINT SOUNDS, 1967. BRONZE, 14,5 CM
Miklós Sulyok

Imre Schrammel: Relief on the bridge between the two buildings of the Pécs tional Theatre. 1986. Pyrogranit, 75 Sq. m.

Detail of the relief



Imre Schrammel: The façade of the Enchanted Castle in the Budapest Luna Park. 1987. Salt glazed chamotte, 77 Sq. m.

ARTS

THE BAUHAUS IN BUDAPEST

Two Exhibitions

This spring saw the opening of two exhibitions in Budapest which threw new light upon some Hungarian artists of the 1920s and '30s.

Mounted by the Kunstverein of Cologne and displaying sketches, designs and drawings made in the Bauhaus, of the two exhibitions that in the National Gallery was on a larger scale, nor was it confined to Hungarian artists.

The miniature show mounted by Katalin Bakos in the Fészek Club, on the other hand, displayed only Hungarian posters reflecting the influence of the Bauhaus. But the two exhibitions offered a common lesson: when seen in a broader, Central European context, the œuvres of many Hungarian artists appear in a light different than when they were exhibited individually or along with the works of other Hungarian artists.

Until recently, Hungarian art was handicapped by a not insignificant distance from the international art trade, its rates and values in general. But the rediscovery of the avant-garde of the 1920s and '30s brought a vivid interest in, not just the really great masters such as Klee and Kandinsky, but practically in everybody who once belonged to some of the major workshops or groups, and this has led to the recognition that certain Hungarian artists had been in the European vanguard. This does not only concern names such as László Moholy-Nagy, who has in fact been internationally recognized, but a great many major and minor masters without whom no authentic Bauhaus or De Stijl exhibition can now be held with any claim for completeness.

The Bauhaus exhibition in the Budapest National Gallery made it clear that the Hungarian exponents of the Bauhaus were far from mere ciphers. Alongside Moholy-Nagy and Marcel Breuer, outstanding designs by Farkas Molnár and Andor Weininger came into sharp relief, as did the versatility of Weininger, who featured with his design for a Globular Theatre and that for a mechanical play of colours, and even as a versatile and popular musician on the Bauhaus stage, where he played several instruments and was often the soul of the whole Bauhaus orchestra.

Gyula Pap also appeared in a new light. Pap was not generally known in Hungary as having such close personal and artistic links with Johannes Itten, and his designs of metal objects had never before been presented in such a complete way as at the present Budapest exhibition, including the catalogue. Gyula Pap was thought of in Hungary as a gloomy Surrealistic painter; however, the exhibition *Wechselwirkungen*, in Kassel in 1985, already showed him as an excellent draughts-

man, and here again he appeared in a new, even less widely known aspect, as a metal designer. At long last, the name of István Sebők, who as a young man disappeared in the Soviet Union, has also appeared in Moholy-Nagy's *Light and Space Modulator* (also known as *Lichtrequisit*), which in fact was the work of the two of them; it has now turned out that it should *not be viewed* as an object, a sculpture or an ensemble of perforated sheets placed side by side in strips. In fact, the object as such may even remain invisible, left in darkness. What the composition is is the play of light, the "light music" flashing and undulating, projected on the surrounding walls and into space by a construction of sheets that rotate with different speeds and rhythms at different periods. This work is a representative of the "matterless" pictorial phenomenon, the trend termed light painting, and so are Moholy Nagy's photograms, which also capture light, that fleeting and immaterial vision, on photographic paper.

Marcel Breuer's work with Bauhaus links took up a fairly large section (in proportion with its weight and importance) of the division entitled "Workshops" in this clearly arranged exhibition. Here it becomes clear what seeing the lifework of an artist in a proper context means: Breuer's wit and the extraordinary ease and elegance of his forms are further enhanced and stressed by their proximity to the other works produced by cabinet-maker's workshops, of which even the better-quality pieces lag sadly behind Breuer's standard. It seems that world fame comes not fortuitously, Breuer outshines all the many gifted designers. The organizers have also demonstrated how his drawing and growingly simple solutions follow a clear and self-evident internal logic; the newer assignments the artist set for himself wrung out of him, as it were, designs for the most ethereal furniture possible, already on the verge of looking matterless.

The Kunstverein experts did not forget the works of Alfréd Forbát, Ernő Kállai, the textile artist Otti (Ottilia) Berger and the graphic artist Margit Téry-Adler. This was not intended as a gesture towards the fact that the exhibition was held in Hungary, but as a recognition that their work was an organic part of the Bauhaus as a whole. (The exhibition went on from Budapest first to Spain and then to Cologne.) Of course, the organizers betrayed a realistic sense of proportion in arranging the material when emphasizing the art of Paul Klee, Johannes Itten and Oskar Schlemmer. An assemblage of their work was followed by materials coming from the various workshops. Their arrangement was helped by the judgement that has not changed essentially in the eyes of posterity: in relation to Klee's or Schlemmer's painting or Itten's educational standard, the other participants became arranged within a hierarchy almost inevitably. Without this complex but most graphically rendered scale of values, one would not even see so clearly what distinguished places the Hungarians occupied within the Bauhaus.

Happily coinciding with this large exhibition was the smaller display that made viewers aware of the radiation of the Bauhaus, of the direct effect which would not have come about—or at least not to such a degree—had the Bauhaus not had personal links with Hungarian art. The applied graphics cultivated within the Bauhaus from 1923 onwards, was initially not intended for the commercial scene. It was simply meant to signify the appearance of the school, its image condensed into uniform graphic signs. Nonetheless, changing conditions and the Bauhaus's conformity to changing circumstances, led to it taking up graphic work of an economic function, and this practically gave the green light even for artists of an avant-garde commitment such as Lajos Kassák, Róbert Berény and Sándor Bortnyik, to undertake commercial graphic work; all of them did poster designs too, even though this time there were no conditions of the same weight as there had been in 1919, when posters could and had to be designed for the Republic of Councils.

If the Bauhaus had not taken the first step in a break-through in this direction, Kassák would hardly have written in 1926: "A properly typographicized poster of a department store, with its straight cut letters easy to hold together, the dark and light space divisions of the paper surface, as a calm and simple object inspires more confidence and higher demands than would any individual artistry . . ."

Berény's posters were the most highly effective in this exhibition, with his Modiano poster, based on little circlets rhyming to one another being the best in the whole display. Bortnyik's posters also reach a fine standard, with the influence of the Bauhaus appearing most directly and tangibly in them. As Katalin Bakos, the exhibition's designer writes in the catalogue: "Bortnyik learned the principle of composition based on rational construction, the harmonization of image and typography, the significance of contrasting colours and dimensions, the exploitation of negative surfaces and the use of photographs and other artistic means from the Bauhaus, and used all this in his designs and in education." This of course was possible because in 1921–22, Bortnyik was living in Weimar, and even though he did not enrol in the Bauhaus, he inhaled the air of the school, in the evenings he had discussions with his Bauhaus friends, he followed their work and showed them this own pictures regularly. Bortnyik's return to Budapest, where the poster had for long counted as a requisite of urban life, rated as a real event, and when in 1928, he founded a private school, the *Műhely* (Workshop), he handed down all that he himself had learned in Weimar to many of his pupils.

The exhibition of posters clearly showed that this style, called the Bauhaus influence but also including features of international constructivism, exerted its effect on the drawing and expression of artists who otherwise were removed from these endeavours. Tihamér Csemicky's *Fair* is one of the most dynamic and concise pieces of graphic art, with a diagonal composition, compelling attention; István Irsai's *Tabula rasa* is a masterstroke of an effective blend of a single object and expression, while his variation of the Modiano theme also excels in its simplicity.

Although the influence of the Bauhaus on Hungarian posters has obviously declined in proportion with the growing losses of those who mediated it and the distancing in time, it has left a perceptible and lasting mark in the streets of Budapest. And this is all the more noteworthy as this was perhaps the only field where this has been possible; here the artists did not have to keep pace with the rapidly advancing German industry, which resulted in the objects designed in the Bauhaus being turned out in better and better quality materials, using more and more advanced technology. So it still became possible, through graphics alone, to smuggle a bit of constructive order, formal purity and rational composition into Pest, so resplendent in art deco. Indeed, all this could even be put out in the street.

ÉVA FORGÁCS

BIO-NONFIGURATION

Exhibition of Tamás and Ibolya Lossonczy

The Szombathely Gallery held a joint exhibition of the painting of Tamás Lossonczy and of the sculptures of his wife Ibolya Lossonczy in the winter of 1987–88. Of Tamás Lossonczy's work what was presented was mainly his newest painting, though there are some from the 1950s and 1960s and even a few from the years between 1945 and 47, the second period of Hungarian non-representational painting.

Although most of the works date from the last ten years, we must look back to the 1940s because this was the time when Lossonczy's painting developed those features which, apart from a few changes, have remained basically the same.[1]

Hungarian non-representational painting has the usual two branches: one of works of purely geometrical forms such as *Bildarchitektur* and collages of Lajos Kassák and László Moholy-Nagy of the early 1920s, the other of pictures produced from the reduction of visual, organic forms and figures created by artistic imagination. The work of Lossonczy, Tihamér Gyarmathy,[2] Dezső Korniss[3] and Ferenc Martyn[4] belongs to this latter group. This form of expression which, for want of a better term, can be called organic non-figurative, evolved in Hungary in the 1940s: Ernő Kállai who returned to Hungary to escape German national socialism became the organiser, spokesman and theorist of this trend. Immediately after the war abstract art gained strength but it came to a halt by the end of the 1940s because of the enforced degradation of art into the illustration of political slogans. Abstract artists simply had to hibernate for some fifteen years.

[1] *NHQ* 107
[2] *NHQ* 106
[3] *NHQ* 80
[4] *NHQ* 73

In the work of Tamás Lossonczy the formal and contextual ideals of abstract art of the 1950s have persisted while, since the early 1960s, the younger generations of Hungarian artists began to direct themselves towards pop art, hard edge, minimal art and in our days to new painting. The earlier mode of expression was shown by the public again in 1971 when Tamás Lossonczy had his one-man show. The Hungarian non-representational art of the 1940s, had been forgotten; because of its unfamiliarity, the rising generations could not be attached to it. Miraculously Lossonczy's art shows almost no trace of this long break; his somewhat esoteric painting has remained interesting to this day. Now, with the new painting gaining ground one cannot help wondering what would have become of Hungarian art if it had not been under central direction but left to its natural development. The repeated rediscovery of the works of Lossonczy and other non-representation painters offers additional material for studying the important art of the 1940s.

The most original works in the show are certainly *Chain Reaction*, painted in 1946, and *Dawn*, in 1947. In *Chain Reaction* small balls of different colour modelling atoms are organised into a decorative composition: the work exemplifies the theory of Ernő Kállai's according to which scientific discoveries, the microworld revealed by the microscope, have opened a new, unknown province to painters and this "hidden face" of nature appears in non-representational compositions. Lossonczy later produced several similar compositions such as *Dawn* (1947) consisting of four circles or *Light Replacing Dark* (1957), also made up of circles.

Two large paintings stem from the 1960s. One is the monochromous 195×720 cm

Primeval World. Here the artist's place decorative forms have turned into space with a surrealistic tone. The forms evoking sometimes slippery snakes, sometimes a wrinkled elephant-trunk, are coiling in the picture field; beside them small plane figures with bristly little lines on their edges are floating as a counterpoint. The most fascinating feature of the work is its biologism hinting at the subconscious world of instincts, the primeval pullulation without mental control.

The other large painting, *Inner Forces*, stems also from 1962–64. As in *Primeval World*, greyish-blackish motifs resembling snakes and lianes are winding before the brownish background. In front of them rises an abstract form made up of man-made geometrical shapes. The two pictures are related not only in style but also in content. *Primeval World* represents a luxuriant growth of vegetation without man in a state when time, space and material are concentrated almost in a single point. In the other work the man-made torso composed of geometrical forms enters the biological vegetation, but its place and role is just as contingent as of the natural forms.

One of the best works of the 1970s is a small, colourful and dynamic painting, *Opposite Natures*. Before a violet background a white, amoeba-like figure fringed with hairs flees from a swaying creature looking like a stylised no. 3 or an open mouth preparing to swallow it. The semantic field of abstract pictures is open, they can evoke many associations. One can conceive the work also as the free play of forms and colours; looked at like this we are fascinated by the relationship and the rhythm of colours and forms.

By the late 1980s Lossonczy seems to have evolved a new surrealistic period. This mode of representation seems to recur in cycles; he was painting in a similar fashion in the 1940s and 1960s. In the first period these non-representational compositions were built up with elements of the micro-world, in the second with biological forms penetrating into space; now as in *Infinity*, these pictures including surrealistic elements are composed of coloured, plane and decorative motifs. In *Infinity* an irregular, yellow-spotted and blue-yellow-claret-striped rhombus floats; it has a brigthly cross-striped tail looking like a sock. In the middle of this figure, which evokes a paper-kite, there is an oval hole through which we look at the blue-white background, the cloudy sky. Apart from its bizarre forms, its garish colours also draw attention.

The exhibition presents also Ibolya Lossonczy's sculptures: organic non-figurative forms tending toward each other. These rising forms nearing each other are small; most of them are designs. Of an untitled ten-piece series three are of bronze, the rest of plaster. This sketchiness characterizes also the works of other sculptors such as Jakovits[5] and Barts tha,[6] of this period. Since the late 1940s Ibolya Lossonczy has not produced many works; she presented them at a show again only in 1981. They reflect the attitude of the organic-nonfigurative sculptors of the European School.

Lajos Lóska

[5] *NHQ* 79
[6] *NHQ* 107

IMRE SCHRAMMEL'S ANTI-SCULPTURES

Imre Schrammel has been playing and continues to play a major role in the revival of Hungarian sculptural ideas that had become fossilised. He works with clay-earth, water, fire and air. The first of his works connected to the theatre was the relief made for the foyer of the theatre auditorium on the first floor of the Cultural Centre of Vác (1975–76)[1]. In this work Schrammel concerned himself with the idea of mimesis in a broader sense that everybody is identical with himself and carries his own individuality but at the same times is also compelled to identify with his environment in a given situation; as a result of the conventions evolved and alive in society everybody is compelled to both himself and somebody else. This is what he formulated through clay in the idiom of the forms he created out of it: every form is identical with itself but at the same time fits into a larger unit, into a comprehensive order of composition. He has worked the material with a strong, almost coarse, impact: the forms are created by striking, cutting and kicking and even jumping onto them. The result is a crater-like surface and the gesture is one he introduced to Hungarian sculpture.

In 1984 he was commissioned to provide the reliefs for the passage walk, twenty metres long and five metres high, that connects two theatres in Pécs: the reconstructed theatre built at the turn of the century and its chamber theatre fashioned out of the old library. In this work Schrammel started with the basic conception of drama, what happens between characters. However, this alone is not enough for the composition because the nature of the story or the choice of the characters that appear or do not appear may be decisive and there is also the grotesque and the ironical to take into account. This was what Schrammel was originally thinking of when he said that the figures of the clown, the dancer, sculpture and death should be presented; later he rejected the idea.

He wrote of his method of tackling the commission that "In almost every age sculptors wanted to free their conceived and designed sculpture-form from the prison of its material and hence cut out the superfluous . . . Thus the sculpture grows in space, expands, wins its space, indeed involves some points of support removed from it in its space-organising magic circle. Hence its essence is stretching from within outwards into every direction of space. With the compressed sculpture we have put an end to this. We force, press, "squeeze" it into a quadratic form and thus deprive it of its space-organising qualities. And yet this mode of panelization is very modern because mankind has fallen into its own trap and forces itself in the same way into fetters both at the material and spiritual level. This production of anti-sculptures forces those parts of the sculpture jutting out into space back into the uniform shape of pillar or cube, thus transforming these parts into explosive potential energy." Because of the technical impossibility involved, this concept could only be partly realized. In its final form the work is a huge "set" with a half-raised curtain on the right divided by four pillars into five elements: in the individual elements female torsos from front and rear, buttocks, bosoms, different heads—Christ's head, the herm of Saint Ladislaus the King, female heads—alternate with musical instruments and architectural elements of the old theatre building, changing in positive-negative rhythm. The whole "set" and within it all vertical elements: the pillars with their crowns of animal-masks, the parallel row of torsos, the architectural elements —are closed horizontally at top and bottom by the dynamic mass of a thick cornice: this accentuates the vertical elements. The left side is the theatre-side; the combination of

[1] *NHQ* 65

the impression of the formations and objects results in an arbitrary transformation of reality, in the image of a different reality. The right side suggests the world beyond the curtain, it presents the story as something immaterial. The composition is flatter at its two edges, while near the centre the relief protrudes more, here the relief "throws out its chest"—wrote Schrammel. All these together provide a particular interpretation of the theatre: against the horizontal extension of the plot of the realist theatre or the vertical depth of the absurd theatre, with the enlarged moments of the work, it involves "true" presence. Simone Weil has spoken of the drama immobile, motionless drama; this is what Imre Schrammel represents through his symbolical figures, outlining the macrocosmos by his micro-world. The work has no realistic plot, the characters it presents are almost everyday, yet enigmatic and full of poetry: their double presentation—real and veiled—triumphs over time. The theatre's true aim is perfect presence is what the work suggests.

In the execution of the sculpture Schrammel has broken with the domestic methods of conventional sculpture: he does not diminish the form from the outside by dismantling the material but—as one builds a house or a dish—he increases it from the inside. His knowledge of materials and his experience has led him to the idea of the "dismantling form emptying from within" which he saw for the first time in China, twenty-five many centuries, and the necessity of applying it has matured in him gradually. This work of Schrammel—although for reasons beyond his control he could not realize everything he had wanted—contains significant innovations in content and form.

The reconstruction of the Enchanted Castle in the Amusement Park of Budapest took place at the same time as the work in Pécs. The commission was to find a structural and ornamental solution for the salient part of the balcony of the two-storey-building, and was partly architectural, partly artistic. Three steel columns support the first floor-balcony and the closing tympanum. The ceramic elements attached remained true to the neo-classic balcony and were made in the same style. The levels at the height of the first and second floor are covered with a broad articulated cornice. On the left it has no ornaments but on the right, at the top and bottom of the first floor, it has metope—like and in the middle, lace-like appliqué ornaments: these are repeated also on the upper level. The balcony is closed by a balustrade-railing with dolls made serially; the upward-leading column has been covered with chanelled elements at the height of a man to avert the horror oculi: on the crowns we meet again the animal masks found from Pécs. On the right side of the tympanum Schrammel has produced his anti-sculpture in a single group: he has pressed his figures into quadratic fetters, turned them into pillars, and so, adhering closely to the plane they are both decorative elements and building stones and coexist with the building organically. In this work at least, Schrammel has managed to do away with the separation of sculpture and architecture, which our age has been conditioned to.

SÁNDOR LÁNCZ

THE PHOTOGRAPHY OF LUCIEN HERVÉ

Among the many Hungarian talents that were forced to scatter all over the world in the first half of our century, perhaps the most brilliant counterpart of the nuclear physicists, computer designers, and mathematicians who settled in America was a group that worked mainly in France, the photographers Brassaï, André Kertész, Robert Capa and Lucien Hervé.

Capa was the reckless witness and self-sacrificing victim of our century's wars, Kertész the fascinating evoker of tiny realities and elusive nuances. Brassaï and Hervé, besides creating an image of Paris seen from both the exterior and interior, acquired an especial reputation for photographing great artists.

Renaissance rulers used to keep historians in their court to record their deeds. The great modern artists choose their court photographers to support their work in another way, to record what has become in our age almost an organic part of the work and one way of approaching it: the medium and process of creation. The artist as the creator of works, and works in the process of birth as the creators of their creators.

Brassaï's photo of one of Picasso's paintings does not simply show the painting but another picture of Picasso which could come to life exclusively through the filter of Brassaï's lens. Lucien Hervé's picture of a building by Le Corbusier or some detail of it is not a building by Le Corbusier but a variant of it which can be seen nowhere else. Hervé accompanied the process of construction of Le Corbusier's buildings and his work on them for fifteen years. These photos collected in many albums are Le Corbusier's buildings turned into pictures. His colossal œuvre would not be the same without Hervé's photographs as what it has become taken together with them.

The exhibition in the Budapest Gallery does not contain these architectural photographs by Hervé but another, less-known but equally important aspect of his art, which is, from a certain viewpoint, their counterpoint. These are not the parts of human conglomerates triumphally designed and created by architecture, but what time and man utilize of architecture and things made not for construction but for reconstruction and demolition. However, the artist does not find destruction in them, but beauty, a different kind of beauty, hidden and humble. Instead of the beauty of the significant creations of art, *la beauté de l'insignifiant*, "the beauty of the insignificant" in Hervé's words. Or what he termed in the title of a fine earlier volume, paraphrasing the popular saying of *le beau court la rue*, "the streets are strewn with beauty."

Hervé's photographs here raise these beauties scattered in the streets of big cities out of their environment and elevate them to the rank of beauty. What we see is what we could see everyday in the city but do not have the eye to see. These so-often-seen but never recorded sights, these peeling, crumbling, broken walls, bare of paint, prepared for bill-posting, disfigured by peeling posters, these flagstones sharply illuminated or in obscurity or speckled with shadows reveal specific, never-seen sights to us which are the source, licence, and apotheosis of abstract painting. The artist himself gradually realized this connection—probably in the process of his work. So the way in which he discovers "the beauty of the insignificant" is closely connected "with the birth of contemporary art" *(. . . ses rapports avec la naissance de l'art contemporain . . .)*. His pictures suddenly reveal the visions which Leonardo had seen with his prophetic discovery of the demiurge of pictorial abstraction. Here everything is at its most realistic, reality recorded through the objectivity of the optic objective, and at the same time with the magic screen of our dreams, fantasies, intellectual possibilities.

Imre Juhász

Lívia Gorka: Green vertical wing, 1987. Painted clay with a white quartz surface. 56×17×13 cm.

Lívia Gorka: Crumpled wing, 1987. Ferrous glazed clay, 28×30×24 cm

Lívia Gorka: Bird (dark green), 1987. Coloured clay, ashen glaze, 30×68×16 cm

Lucien Hervé: Cocteau. 1949

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Lucien Hervé: Matisse. 1949

Lucien Hervé: Le Corbusier. 1951

Lucien Hervé:
Moi et Elles, 1956

Arnold Schoenberg: Self-portrait, 1911. Oil on cardboard, 48×45 cm

Arnold Schoenberg: Hatred. Oil on canvas, 43 × 30.5 cm.

These photos give us an eye for what in general we have no eye for.

These streets are strewn with beauty. But who can lift it? Those who in their own art travel the road which Hervé's master, friend and subject discovered for himself: *Observer, connaître, comprendre, traduire et exprimer*—said Le Corbusier, "observe, learn, understand, translate, and express." Hervé's best photos pass along this road leading to the bottom and to the top before, for and along with us.

Le Corbusier also put the basic and not easily answerable question that can be asked of all art:

"Where does sculpture begin?

Where does painting begin?

Where does architecture begin?"

Asked of photography which, with film, is the newest art in history born out of technology, this question is even more problematic. Where does the art of photography begin? Run your eye over Lucien Hervé's photos but not cursorily. Stop before them, and the answer can be found. Lucien Hervé evoked Paul Valéry in one of his albums: "The stone confesses sombrely what it entombs." Hervé's photographs render these confessions visible.

György Somlyó

LIVIA GORKA'S POTTERY

I have no formal art college training, says Livia Gorka, and this gave me a great degree of freedom in my work. Of course, self-trained artists have to learn and Livia Gorka's teacher was no other than her father, Géza Gorka (1895–1971), a master of modern Hungarian pottery. She continues the family tradition in the second generation.

She doesn't exhibit frequently. The recent exhibition in the Vigadó Galéria follows a gap of fifteen years. But the pieces shown there are so important that I felt compelled to visit the artist in her studio in order to recapitulate the exhibition. For the sake of comparison I also looked up the review I wrote on her 25 years ago. "My father taught me," she said, "the primacy of chemical knowledge in this genre. I only work with foreign materials, clay from Poland and Brasil, feldspar from Norway, kaolin from Czechoslovakia and quartz from West Germany. I don't put on the glaze, the decor subsequently, colour and decoration are an integral part of the clay, they are created together. I form or cut the material with a single definite movement into the desired shape. I am very proud indeed of my new kiln from Switzerland. This differs from others as the flame is in direct contact with the clay which results in different structural and colour effects. I always use a temperature of 1,280 °C, this always produces the colours I like. I create the colour-scale by oxidizing and by reducing the baking. Sometimes I make mistakes, but from time to time these mistakes result in my finest and newest colours, and afterwards I repeat the particular 'mistake' consciously. I think there are similar phenomena in mathematics or physics. The artist entrusts himself to the fire, the fire judges and in the end smoothes all differences and creates peace."

Twenty-five years ago I had this to say: "In the form of her ceramics she follows the most ancient history, the times before the use of the potter's wheel and incidental figures of stones in a ravine. The handling is raw, rustic, similar to the natural and wonderful play of the surface and colour of natural stone... She is inspired by prehistoric archeological finds, animals and geology." Most of this is still valid today, with the very im-

portant difference that both her message and the form of her works have changed. I should say that today her plastic works are pure associative abstracts. The subject of her exhibition in the Vigadó Gallery could be flight and animals—birds, the symbol of birds. When I visited her studio she told me: "Soaring high, leaving earth behind, levitate, this is what I always desired and I do think that I have every right to it after so many active years. I can say what I want."

She plays with the bird forms, sometimes with quite open, sometimes enigmatic allegories. Some birds have a head and tail too, some are just a pair of wings, sometimes abstraction is final, the forms are unrecognizable. Her figures are then like *objets trouvés;* yet she didn't find these objects, she created them herself in an almost intellectual way. On the wall beside the oven there is a reproduction of the Winged Victory of Samothrace and even if it weren't there this figure would be recognizable as her archetype; but only in spirit, Livia Gorka doesn't approach her *ideal* predecessor, not even in the form of quotation or paraphrase. The material of the exposition can be clearly divided into green, brown and blue groups.

The colours of the green group are created by adding copper oxide, ash and barium. I said 'group' to be able to describe the exhibition systematically, but this doesn't mean identical forms or colours. The vertical pieces were formed by bowing, pressed together in the middle, so they receive a biconic, X or hour-glass form. These forms—I thought—could also be made from a thick lead plate, but then the objects would have no aura. The vases also have brownish or white spots as well as their green. This last colour is represented in several shades from verdigris to dark green. The different shades of brown are created by manganese and iron oxide, and by different coloured clays from Hungary, which are unsuitable for agricultural use, and can be only used for making adobe. These clays are yellow, red and grey.

Most striking in the brown group is the U or tulip-formed cycle. The colour of the blue pottery—achieved by cobalt and manganese—represents the most widely spread shades. The birds also recur in this group, either as a single wide wing, or as real doves. I feel that my descriptions of the works are perhaps unsatisfactory, but it is generally difficult to approach abstract art verbally. And I hope that the illustrations will make everything clear at just one glance.

Technique is interesting in every kind of art, but the nature of materials determines pottery. In the art of Livia Gorka, as she colours the clays themselves, the edge of her works reminds one of geological layers: the material is almost the substance itself.

János Frank

THEATRE AND FILM

SINGING TO UTOPIA, PLAYING WITH THE ABSURD

Sztevanovity–Horváth–Presser: *A padlás* (The Loft); Müller–Tolcsvay–Bródy: *Doctor Herz*; Mihály Kornis: *Kozma*

Cybernetic fairy tales are nothing new. In the 1930s the engineer Timofeyev in Bulgakov's play *Ivan the Terrible* was sitting in his Moscow apartment before his home-made time machine. He too was harassed by a concierge just as Radi is in the new Hungarian musical *The Loft*. "Radi" is actually the pet name of a radio-ham who has retired from the "central state office" to devote his life to cybernetics. *The Loft* was written by Dusan Sztevanovity and Péter Horváth and the music is by Gábor Presser.

In modern fairy tales the eccentric inventor of dubious machines is always an outcast from regular, sensible society. He is everyone's enemy, with the exception of the children and childish robots. With a keen commercial sense Stephen Spielberg has combined the two types into a single figure, that ugly, childishly innocent and vulnerable E.T., the Extra Terrestial, who ends up with a whole army of policemen in pursuit. Obviously, Spielberg's creation was not entirely original. Two decades ago J.B. Priestley wrote a fairy novel—which, just like *The Loft*, is dedicated to "people from nine to ninety" —*Snoggle*, this being a character from space who is helped to return to his birth planet by a group of children after they outwit a policeman, a sharp detective and the army.

All the elements of fairy tale are there in *The Loft* as well. The forgotten figures who have been roaming around as ghosts for hundreds of years are just as extra terrestial as E.T., with one difference: they are not strangers from a different planet, they are strangers here on earth. They want to reach another world, the star of remembrances, which they hope to make their home. They are just like children: the Eighth Dwarf, who stands guard down in the mine waiting for his friends to return, in vain because they have taken up with Snow White; the Prince, who awoke Sleeping Beauty with a song without thinking that he could kiss her; the Child who dared cry out that the emperor was naked. Only those can see the ghosts who have a pure heart and a good soul. One such is sweet Mamóka, who loves to eat plum dumplings. In this wonderful attic, however, even the police are hopelessly good; right from the start the chief of detectives seems to have a vague memory of innocence, and by the time the story ends it is his childish spirit that prevails. This is a story where even a burglar has a chance to go straight—if only as a ghost after death.

In listing these well-tried motifs that appear in *The Loft*, I am not questioning the authors' originality. (I could also mention

Frigyes Karinthy's short story about a violinist who climbs up under the big-top of the circus to play a melody that he had nurtured in his heart. *The Loft*'s girl clown as fiddler on the roof is obviously taken from Karinthy, her solo is both a confession of love and a hazardous deed undertaken to save a life.) And there are more familiar references: to crime stories in which choosing the right wire to cut while the clock of a bomb ticks towards the final second is a matter of life or death.

However, this musical fairy tale anthology is held together not so much by the story line but by the mood it evokes. And of course its music. Gábor Presser's dream-like, floating melodies perfectly characterize the figures; especially fitting is the music for the concierge. Nevertheless, I would prefer the characters to be more individualized and the fairy tale world to be more credible. All the same, strict aesthetic considerations are brushed aside by the piece's sincerity of tone and feeling. The real wonders are not the interstellar journey of homeless figures from fairy tales, not the ability of those who have a pure and child-like heart to see ghosts and not an android with the name of Robinson—but the attic itself, a place where dreams do come true. The real wonder is that such a place exists, just when we had thought that it didn't.

Dusan Sztevanovity said in an interview that "In a difficult situation, the many beliefs of different people add up not weakening, but strengthening each other. Our fairy tale says that there is a point where conflicting convictions meet. If the many different people, ghosts, grandmothers, and radiohams who come together in the attic are able to join their beliefs in friendship for just a single moment, they can defeat the 'concierges' whose only faith is in following any and every laid-down rule, senseless or not. I believe in disparity, and if this belief comes across from the stage, then we have succeeded."

What is most attractive in director László Marton's staging is his ability to strike a balance between playful dazzle and poetic intimacy. He does not flaunt a spectacle, he does not produce a cheap cabaret; he is able to reach lyricism on a stage inventive in its simplicity. The roof that opens up like a shell, the stars of that cover the audience, or the detective storing the plum dumplings in a plastic evidence bag—all these are more than just tricks; they embody a philosophy about theatre that is refined without being highbrow. This production at Budapest's Vígszínház dares to speak up modestly for the rights of the inner person at a time when we are intellectually drained by the big events, by those delivering ideas, those bursts of saving the world and nation. This is a production speaking up for compassion, and friendship, and love. And perhaps even for plum dumplings.

Another Budapest theatre, the Madách Színház, is also playing a new Hungarian musical, *Doctor Herz*. The set is reminiscent of Meyerhold productions of sixty years ago, as for example Mayakovsky's *Bathhouse*, whose characters travelled to the future in a complicated time machine. They still believed in an utopian past. Doctor Herz, the young retired Nobel laureate who revolutionised modern physics, in disgust at his profession and the world, turns to Gandhi, Einstein and others for inspiration. An utopian past is disillusionment. It brings with it withdrawing to an attic or a private laboratory, into ourselves. Because deliverance can be found only in our soul, our selves, in inner reality, in a reality that exists only in our imagination. Psychological energy becomes physical reality, assures Jan Herz, and with the aid of his wondrous machine he brings to life our most secret desires. For one it is the loved one of his dreams, for another his favourite hero and for a third his special dish.

Written by Péter Müller, with music by László Tolcsvay and lyrics by János Bródy,

the musical is hardly new in its ideas. Erich Kästner's novel *The 35th of May* created an Eldorado where every thought came true at a click of the tongue. As to science serving humanity badly, there are the well-known theatrical dissidents, Dürrenmatt's *Physicists,* who feign madness and are taken to a mental institute in order to have the results of their experiments cancelled. But Herz does not cancel anything, on the contrary, he seeks to develop his work in a well-equipped super-attic. What he is working on is no less than immortality, although it is not quite clear why. Why seek immortality in a world that the hero considers despicable? Could it be that Herz is not disgusted with the world after all?

And who is this Herz anyway? A materialistic scientist or a mad mystic? Perhaps the cybernetic scientist Michurin who crosses the occult with physics? None of the above! He is an intellectual gadfly who, as the projected montage at the beginning of the play implies, clowns in the company of artists and makes fun of the media celebrating his Nobel Prize; he even races cars as a hobby. Yet if he is all this, then what does that pathetically redeeming gesture of setting fire to his lighthouse (attic) laboratory mean? Why destroy his Noah's ark to save a handful of people from being evicted by Government?

Péter Müller's highly intelligent play displays so much—from scientific terminology to sounds of the heart—that is takes time to order all the details in one's head. There is the theory of relativity and a message from the ancient civilization of Lumania, there is cybernetics, physics and psychology, there is Einstein's violin and Winnetou's Apache Indians, there is Hamlet holding a skull and Saint Peter performing a wedding, there is a wedding ring that resurrects a wife—who, while dead, had helped her daughter choose a computer-selected match; there are mystics and politicians, there is a hymn to peace and a prayer to God, there is moralizing over humanity and talking politics about bureaucratic government, whose threat has to be met head on . . . If it is true that we are such stuff as dreams are made of—as one of the songs quoting *The Tempest* has it—then the waking time of the play's author must not be easy. With all this psychology and philosophy, and politics, the whole piece carries one message: sing! In singing you escape. There seem to me to be too much turning of the cog-wheels of the mind to reach so simplistic a solution.

Contrary to the dramatic line of the piece, the songs express quite simple feelings and thoughts in quite a simple way, though by neutral musical and poetic generalities. This is director Viktor Nagy's first major production and it reveals talent. He is able to command the stage, it is clear that what we see is what he wants, and he knows what he wants. As a spectacle, the performance is riveting, the lighting and liveliness of space-filling elements enable us to forget the dramatically unjustified presence of a troupe of dancers and unimaginative choreography. We are surrounded, when a commando unit attacks the theatre, and the only reason we don't rise in our seats to make a run for it is because—as of yet—the seats are not hydraulic. To be sure, we are floating, if only astrophysically.

Before either of the above plays opened, the author of *The Loft* launched a suit against the author of *Doctor Herz*, for plagiarism. In his claim, Dusan Sztevanovity stated that Péter Müller had used his own dramatic concept and motifs. In fact, the original idea stems from Sztevanovity and the two authors had at first collaborated on the script of *The Loft*. After it quickly became evident that their ideas were in conflict, they stopped working together. Thus two plays were born. The outcome of the suit is still pending but it has served as a good advertisement for both musicals.

A yellow wall fortifies the stage, barbed wire running along its top. A vacation resort for the privileged on the sunny shores of

Lake Balaton. Downstage are three women bathing in the sun, upstage a truck half dug into the sand, from its platform ashen ghost-like figures scrambling forward.

The scene is metaphoric: beach is like camp—camp is like beach. It just depends on how you look at it. *Kozma* was written by an accomplished author of plays and novels, Mihály Kornis, who is in his late thirties, and is in performance at the Pesti Színház in Budapest. In this play the pictured metaphor is an historical visual aid. On the private shore are a younger and an older woman, along with the latter's daughter, who display a well-developed instinct for the unquestioned ownership of the land. Their presumption they flaunt with a natural, almost raw frankness; they feel right at home here as seen by the fact that they are naked (the playwright's original intention, not carried through in the production). They feel independent of the world in the background that they do not see. The latter, in the form of the stranded truck, which is, however, an integral part of the territory since it could not have come through the wall, is, with its human load, again a metaphor. A transport of forcefully brought together victims, political prisoners, deported or evicted. Their movement and the objects they leave about are sensed by the sunbathing women like a metaphysical storm, like a dark cloud passing overhead, like stirred-up dry leaves, or dirt carried by the wind.

The catalyst of the event is Kozma, who steps out from the top of the driver's cab. Metaphorically speaking, he has brought the shadowy figures here. It turns out later he has come "from above," something that carries both a bureaucratic and a transcendental meaning in the play. Unlike the human transport, Kozma is actually seen by the women. (The seeing of "ghosts" has taken on a magic role in recent Hungarian works for the theatre.) Kozma goes through a peculiar transfiguration, since the three women —widows of the communist movement—all think they recognize in him their deceased husbands. Their forced confessions shed light on a whole web of lies, secret betrayals and subconscious complexes. By shedding their masks they reveal a whole new set of biographies, but again we do not know if they are true or false, if they really occurred or are just figments of the imagination. All that is certain is that all three are both privileged within their own circumstances and are their victims. Their being merry widows appears to be a grotesque "historical" creation: three graces of the political élite, a historical tragedy implied in the background, all set in a surrealistic frame.

Though *Kozma* is designated as a tragedy, it is much more social philosophic theatre of the absurd, as opposed to the existentialist theatre of the absurd. Its irony that effects a continuing sense of uncertainty stems from the constant, subtle contiguity between the real and the symbolic explanation that hovers over it. Böbe, Csilla and Hédi are heftily real, unclaimed, ardent women on the one hand, and model figures on the other. Comrade Kozma from "above"—whatever that may mean—is the potential Man and the father-confessor (redeemer) Godot, whom we don't wait for, but who necessarily comes (in reality or in conscience), and whom, uncomfortable for us, we prefer to eliminate.

The problematic aspect of the play is the Chorus of the Dead in the truck. They have no individual faces, and as the vocal expression of the dead they provide a musical accompaniment in the form of the songs and marches of the last forty years. The songs profane references to social cataclysms in the main course of the action. Thus they fulfil their dramatic function. The musical and choreographic realization are both striking. The young actors that make up the group are disciplined and strong. But I am afraid that the meaning of the musical references to specific periods, and in a sense to the mythology behind our daily lives, can be understood only by those who have lived through these last forty years in this country—which is probably not many in the audience.

Director István Horvai has a clear, explicit and consistent concept for the play's form and content—a concept that may be too explicit. The professionally executed production is rational, stylized, his Brechtian handling of the material seems to jump ahead of itself in bringing to the stage a dramatic summary. He could have allowed the real situation to develop, and slowly, gradually brought into the story the play's irrational, symbolic motifs with their lingering sense of uncertainty. As it is, the production is a little sterile without being able to keep interweaving the real and the symbolic spheres. The play's mystic elements are out of order here, there are no theatrical effects other than the murmur of the dead conveying a storm in the shuddering minds of the three women; the truck's disgorged props do not turn into wind-blown "pieces of trash" in the sense that they should and the actors cannot convey any suggestive ambiguity.

Kozma's figure is the least clear. He is at the same time real and transcendent, everyone projects into him the dead that burdens his or her conscience. He is both eyewitness and interrogator, both judge and redeemer. He, more than any other, should vibrate with that sensual ambiguity, that playfulness between profane and sacral interpretation that sustains the piece. True, the author himself could not credibly define Kozma's character. The drama occurs, but in its performance it remains sterile.

Tamás Koltai

THE INVESTIGATIVE CAMERA

Hungarian Film Week 1988

The now traditional annual film review, when the productions of the previous year are shown to Hungarian and foreign critics, was held in February as usual. My reason for returning to it is the general survey it offered: among the films themselves—at least among the feature films—there was no outstanding work.

As usual, the five days ended with the sittings of the so-called social jury followed by the première of Pál Sándor's *Miss Arizona* shown outside competition which, despite a cast including Marcello Mastroianni, Hanna Schygulla and Urbano Barberini, is not really good. Twenty films in all were in competition. Considering the present financial situation of Hungary and the Hungarian film industry, this is no small thing even if this number was reached only by a re-arrangement of proportions: of the twenty entries seven were documentary films.

The documentaries were so excellent that I dare not object to this shift of proportion even if their ratio was unhealthily high. Their quality, importance and value mitigate the suspicion that this increase in numbers is merely due to material reasons. One may suppose that a process is taking place in film akin to that in writing where memoirs, reports and non-fiction in general are more popular and more estimated by the public than purely fictional works. This may be one of the reasons for the rise of documentarism in the Hungarian cinema but it is certainly not the only one. Gyula Illyés used to say that in Hungary even the troubles of the water company fall on the poets. This is now true for film-makers and especially to documentary makers.

The Hungarian documentary cinema now developing sets itself the goal of filling in historical, sociological and political blank

spots and of opening their black boxes. To my knowledge this commitment and social responsibility is unique in the world. Film is the most courageous and in some cases the most poignant medium for glasnost and social criticism, the medium which delves deepest and reveals historical crimes.

Most awards—three—were given to a film by the brothers János and Gyula Gulyás, *Törvénysértés nélkül* (In Keeping with the Law), a shattering picture of the internments and relocations during the Rákosi era, the Hungarian Gulag. They interviewed surviving victims of this brutal infringement of the law, including those who had survived the Holocaust and were caught in this experience; on the principle of *audiatur et altera pars,* they also interviewed some of those responsible for this injustice. A film by the sociologist Bálint Magyar and the director Pál Schiffer *A Dunánál* (Magyar Stories), reviewed in the previous issue of *The New Hungarian Quarterly,* balancing the experience and vicissitude of Dunapataj, a Hungarian village, in and after October 1956, belongs to the same category. Then there is Sándor Sára's marvellous *Sír az út előttem* (The Road Weeps Before Me), part of a monumental trilogy dealing with the bitter fate of the Széklers who had returned from the Bukovina. These Hungarians had fled from Transylvania to Bukovina more than 200 years earlier because of Maria Theresa's interference with their privileges. In 1941 events drove entire Hungarian villages home to Hungary; the nationalist Hungarian government of the era first settled them in the houses and villages of Serb peasants who had been driven out of or had fled their homes. After the lost war they had to flee again and were resettled in those villages of Tolna County from which ethnic German peasants had been deported. What is especially fine in the film is both the poignant rendering of the people's ordeals and their spiritual greatness, the empathy and solidarity of yesterday's homeless with those who have been deprived of their homes today, into which they had to move under the pressure of existence and the need to give bread to their families.

The documentaries that survey our days are of an equally high standard. József Magyar's *A mi kis ügyeink* (Our Little Affairs) is well-constructed, refrains from demagogically over-reaching the situation, and it is this self-discipline that makes it revealing and valuable as an observation of our days. It shows convincingly how a combination of apparently minor omissions, infringements of the law and favouritism can cause large, insoluble problems in our lives. László Vitézy's *Úgy érezte, szabadon él* (Floating Free) is a last-minute warning that we must do much more for those young people exposed to drugs and a general danger of sinking into deliquency. Tamás Almásy made a film on the critical situation of the workers of Ózd—once the bastion of the Hungarian steel industry; he draws attention to a side effect of *perestroika,* namely unemployment which it is our duty to counterbalance. Géza Böszörmény and Lívia Gyarmathy gave us *Faludy György költő* (The Poet George Faludy) part of their series of historical portraits. This contains a fascinating interview with the Hungarian poet who has been living in Canada for many years. Faludy left Hungary in the autumn of 1956, after spending years in the internment camp of Recsk in the company of many others, including Géza Böszörményi himself; he has never been to Hungary since. (There is a rumour that, on an invitation from the Hungarian Writers' Federation, he will come here on a visit in September.)

What is to be expected from this documentary boom? A deeper national and historical awareness, an expansion of social criticism in the spirit of *glasnost* among other things; what we cannot expect is the retention of the international prestige of the Hungarian cinema that our feature films have achieved. A clear proof of this is that the annual Gene Moskovitz Prize awarded

by foreign critics has never yet been given to a documentary. The documentary film is to a certain extent, an internal matter of Hungarian history, sociology, ethnography. From a Hungarian viewpoint this is not necessarily negative but there is the very real problem of how to make common property out of a genre which is seldom attractive even to those who make higher demands of film. The overall experience, from New Delhi to Utrecht, from Munich to Saloniki, is that the documentary genre has to struggle everywhere with its circulation, its reception. It needs some kind of communal and social support which I think can be best provided by television in our days. I am convinced that—apart from a few exceptions—the genre is par excellence a television genre. There is considerable evidence to show that on the screen these films have a broad public and often a sweeping success and are placed high on the list of favourite programs.

Owing to the more complicated problems of feature films and my intention to return to them in the order of their presentation, I make here only a few general remarks limited to a rapid survey of the existing trends without going into the details of the virtues and shortcomings of individual films. It is a fact, however, that this year's review did not give us those one or two films with pulling power which would afford the Hungarian film its usual rank. The films presented at the review were mediocre although they did show some promising signs. I refer primarily to the middle generation and the responsibility with which they are tackling their goals: Márta Mészáros's *Napló szerelmeimnek* (Diary for My Loves), András Kovács with *Valahol Magyarországon* (Somewhere in Hungary), Sándor Sára's *Tüske a köröm alatt* (A Thorn Under the Fingernail), Ferenc Kósa with *A másik ember* (The Other Person) and Erika Szántó whose *Eviáni küldetés* (Mission to Evian) was inexplicably shown in the information section. These film-makers are trying to answer the half or unanswered questions of our past and present with a moral responsibility and seriousness. Their question and exclamation marks are similar to those of documentary-makers; there is a unity of themes and passions in the Hungarian film but their artistic powers do not yet match their ambitions. In the case of the younger generation, Béla Tarr's *Kárhozat* (Damnation), Ferenc Grünwalszky's *Egy teljes nap* (A Full Day), Sándor Sőth's *A szárnyas ügynök* (The Winged Agent), Péter Gothár's *Tiszta Amerika* (Just like America), Ildikó Szabó's *Hótreál* (Deadreal), we do not object to their ambition of providing an authentic picture of the conditions, mood and mentality of the young (and not only them) because like the reality, this picture is far from cheering. On the contrary, this is a virtue that gives cause for optimism. Mária Petschnig, a sociologist and one of the judges quoted Gyula Illyés in this connection: "Whoever expresses the horrible beautifully, resolves it." I do not think that those who reproach this review and the Hungarian film for general critical attitude and the presentation of a gloomy overall picture serve the cause of progress.

My objection is that the expression of the horrible is not artistic enough. Of course, this applies in different measures to individual films and I have no room here to give a fair and nuanced appreciation of all the works. The tendency, however, is more or less general: a sort of new schematism seems to be developing which differs from the old in the sense that it is not an apologetic schematism—not the manifestation of social conformism—but conveys an otherwise just criticism through schematic means. Sometimes this is due to the lack of an inspired script-writer, sometimes to an inadequate expression of justified passions. So we know the concrete social model for Sára's *A Thorn Under the Fingernail* or Kovács's *Somewhere in Hungary* but the exaggerated black-and-white rendering of the figures weakens their credibility. This is true for some other films which have no such model.

In the films where the major message is

one of depression, disillusionment, a gloomy future or disintegration, it is often disturbing that one feels the efforts of the director's intention where one should feel the reactions of a character of flesh and blood; a thesis appears instead of a character. Interestingly, in the documentaries, as in Vitézy's *Floating Free,* the hero's attitude to life is markedly strong. On the other hand, in Béla Tarr's *Damnation,* beautifully filmed, the camera moves through a permanently rain-sodden landscape, in which the bleak, empty scenes have nothing to do with the plot; the feeling aroused is of hopelessness and disintegration. The camerawork is truly masterful. One of my colleagues wittily called it "Last Year in Tatabánya" (Tatabánya is the mining town where the film is set). But we never are allowed close to the hero, and so cannot understand his disillusioned heart despite the fire of his passionate, hopeless love. The plot does not complement the style with its own psychology. This is even true for the other films which are stylistically inferior among directors of this age group.

So: the social sensitivity of the documentary-makers is alive in the directors of feature films too but psychology, insight into character, accuracy of analysis which characterized the Hungarian films of the 1960s and 1970s has not *yet* matured.

ERVIN GYERTYÁN

ANGEL, VICTIM OR PROTAGONIST

The image of women in the Hungarian cinema today

If the current ideal of womanhood is to be found in a single individual in the Hungarian cinema of the last ten years or so, then it is, most probably, in the person of the actress Marietta Méhes. She has been particularly favoured by younger directors such as János Xantus and Gábor Bódy.

Xantus's *Eszkimó asszony fázik* (Eskimo Woman Feels Cold) is a case in point. A talented young concert pianist meets his Blue Angel at a party: a childish-looking blonde with neutral doll-like eyes. It is her absolute vacancy of expression that obsesses the pianist. Blue Angel is a misnomer: Dietrich's face did contain something demonic while Méhes's is empty and indifferent, entirely without significance or statement. "Transparent Angel" would better describe her for her attraction lies in her *tabula rasa* quality. Her face is angelic but it lacks beneficence or mockery. She is the opposite of the traditional vamp; her function, however, is therapeutic. The therapy she offers men is quite simply this non-presence, this non-reflection.

All in all, she is a reference to *Natura,* nature as animal reflex and existence, which can be a refuge despite its indifference. The quality of mercy of *Natura* springs from this indifference; nature neither helps nor condemns and not being judged or condemned can be more than being sheltered. This is the reasonable hope the Transparent Angel, so splendidly embodied in Marietta Méhes, offers.

The double face of *Natura* is reflected in what the girls can offer to her lovers. Her indifferent presence provides a temporary shelter but not positive aid when they find themselves in trouble. Indeed, she expedites

their process of decay and (physical) destruction. To this extent she is similar to the traditional vamp, but her indifference is her weapon.

The same actress features in Bódy's *A kutya éji dala* (Dog's Night Song.) Here the quality of victimhood is added to her ascetic features in this strange story of the relationship between a neurotic policeman and his wife. She escapes by becoming a pop-singer—the escape-route also taken in the previous film—inventing for herself a different environment in which to have her qualities projected on her. The metaphor is appropriate in that a pop-personality is *passe partout*, empty of internal individuality.

There is not even anything positive in this Transparent Angel's escape from her sadistic husband; it is simply a gesture of removing herself from her material circumstances.

This double face of the Hungarian ideal female finds an even clearer expression in the films of György Szomjas. The heroine of *Könnyű testi sértés* (Light Physical Injuries) is essentially destructive. After entering into a relationship with another man while her husband is in prison, she sets up with them a bizarre *ménage à trois* on his release. This in itself reflects the situation of being unable to find or afford a sublet. (Having two lovers simultaneously is also the situation in Xantus' film.) Through this the negative power of the woman is increased, her independence is affirmed and her indifference destroys the male figures.

Another film of Szomjas's produces more elaborations on this female archetype: *Falfúró* (The Wall Driller). Here we have a house-wife cum victim, capable of reacting to events but too passive to change their course, to save the integrity of her family. Her rival is another Transparent Angel, an exceptionally beautiful though absolutely expressionless woman who is also a prostitute. Amoral by nature, she easily enters into a pseudo-sentimental relationship with the male protagonist without being menaced in any way by the emotion she brings to it, despite losing the coherence of a prostitute by not charging for her services. She simply embodies undefined male desires and insticts for self-destruction.

The film's theme seems to be that of change, both of career and of partner. The hero quits his dead-end job and sets up a small service business in order to better his family's circumstances. His wife who is off work on maternity leave, abandons her child and joins a strange cooperative of prostitutes, all on maternity leave and all trying to escape the monotony and blankness of a working-class life through prostitution.

The loser can only be this small businessman, who still retains sentimental hopes, some illusions and even moral values. The girlfriend possessing nothing, has nothing to lose and easily destroys him—as her vocation as Transparent Angel requires. The film's ending contains the man's uncertainty as to whether or not the wife has joined the "cooperative" of prostitutes. The final impression is that the women of the film can only choose between being victims or vamps.

What all the above films have in common is in absence of emotion in their presentation of the characters' love-making. Their faces are devoid of feeling: they express either animal indifference or mild annoyance. They make love in postures which recall the mating of animals, the incapacity to communicate and the humilitation of the woman. They couple in ways that prevent them from seeing each others' faces or in places (public toilets for instance) that suggest that desperation is a necessary component of the act.

The theme of the victim is also explored in Gyula Gazdag's *Hol volt, hol nem volt* (A Hungarian Fairy Tale). The film begins with a young Cinderella-type woman who meets her Prince Charming at the Opera; they spend the night together and she is left with a son as a souvenir of their encounter.

He is six when she dies and he sets out to find the father registered on his birth certificate. (In Hungary children of unknown fathers are given a fictitious father, complete with profession and address.)

Arriving at the given address in a small town the boy finds living there alone a young and caring nurse. The two are obviously attracted to each other in their famililessness. An official from the Department for the Care of Foster Children traces the boy to the town, meets the two and establishes a family unit with them. The director acknowledges the improbability of this ending by sitting the three of them onto a gigantic stone griffon, which then flies off into future with them. Overall the film is a sly comment on the current crisis of relations between men and women in Hungary.

The image of woman as victim or vamp also occurs in Péter Bacsó's *Banánhéjkeringő* (Banana Skin Waltz). The action revolves around the two principle female characters. One is the ex-girlfriend of the hero; she is a nurse who instinctively lives by a sense of moral order and thus seems to be destined for destruction. The second, more Blue than Transparent Angel, is the young surgeon's fiancée, who demands merely of him that he concern himself with his career and with the conspicuous consumption demanded by their social standing.

The episode on which the film turns is an instinctive gesture of kindness by the hero: on his way to his wedding he encounters a disturbed young woman walking naked down the street and covers her with his raincoat. The day in question is March 15th, a national holiday only partially celebrated by official Hungary for reasons of its pre-war nationalist overtones. The gesture arouses interest in the young man on the part of the police, who share his fiancée's suspicion of an act whose only motive is compassion. It is in fact the banana skin on which he slips and falls: the bride-to-be marries a businessman on the make, the police continue their harassment and his superiors sack him for his radicalized behaviour. Reunited with the nurse, he visits the disturbed young woman in the garden of a psychiatric clinic. Here in another surrealistic ending they take a way out: amid the dance of all the other characters—the waltz of the film's title—the doctor and nurse too shed their clothes and walk hand in hand out of the garden. All that the woman can offer is companionship in an unknown future.

The notion of woman as nurse is further explored in the young director Mária Sós's *Boldogtalan kalap* (Unhappy Hat) in which the stories of several divorced couples and their conflicts over their children are recounted. The adult maturity of the women is in sharp contrast with the infantilism of the men. As nurses, the women show patience and empathy towards the ex-husbands, who are reluctant to face their responsibilities as adults and fathers. Presumably the men's sense of self has been guaranteed by their wives, to whose strength they attempt to return to.

All the same, the solution offered by the women is only temporary. They passively accept their own situation, make no effort to change it. They are traditional heroines attached to the environment and values they have been born to.

The heroine of the future we are more likely to find in the neophyte woman, who has emerged out of the turbulent and traumatic history of Hungary in our century. She has no roots or traditions through which to identify herself. She has nothing to lose by experimenting, indeed her change of environment demands that she experiment. Frequently frustrated and unsuccessful in this, she is hardened and has to formulate her own moral code and, often, her own ideology. In the eyes of others she is seen as a source of conflict, as someone requiring special treatment. She can never forget the crucible of experience through which she has formed herself: she is tempered in a way no

other woman is. She has nothing to lose but her chains as a famous call to action had it.

Part of the extraordinary importance of the films of Márta Mészáros lies in their interest in the neophyte. (There are clear autobiographical overtones: she lost both her parents in early childhood and was shunted from one environment to another.) The recurring protagonist of a Mészáros film is an orphan girl, free and amoral, who has to confront alien surroundings, often petit-bourgeois and presented as a sort of paradise.

A typical handling of this theme is in her *Eltávozó nap* (Girl) which shows the dehumanisation of an eighteen-year-old girl working in a Budapest factory. The mother who abandoned her as a child is now living with a new family ignorant of the girl's existence in a small village. She writes to her mother, proposing a visit, receives a positive reply and goes there, to find a welcome which is anything but warm and maternal.

The girl realises that her mother's refusal to recognize her as a daughter is out of fear of the reaction of her husband and the village. She in turn takes on cynicism as a defence, unable to express feelings to anyone. She has become an emotional vampire: herself bitten, she only wishes to bite others and will remain unhappy while making others unhappy.

Another leading theme in Márta Mészáros's work is the dilemma of motherhood. What is a woman to do in unfavourable circumstances when she wants a child—have the child and renounce the father or renounce the child and retain a lover and companion? Choosing the latter is to deny her own personality, a choice not acceptable to a sociated woman. (By sociated I mean a woman who accepts the laws of her own environment.)

This theme is most powerfully combined with the figure of the neophyte in *Örökbefogadás* (Adoption), one of the director's masterpieces. A divorcee in her forties living alone, Kata feels threatened by her age and her lack of opportunities to meet a potential partner. (Incidentally a recurrent topic in recent Hungarian films.) All that is open to Kata in the small village where she lives is to form a sentimental attachment with a married man.

Her longing for a child seems to be doubly justified, through her right as a woman and through the greater need of a forty-two-year-old woman living alone for a child to bring up. In this situation, the average woman would not discuss her need with her lover but simply get herself pregnant. Kata, however, is not an average woman: she feels freer than her age and circumstances imply and has no desire to blackmail her lover. The exponents of this relatively high morality are working-class, which is not idealisation on Mészáros's part. The stability and morality of relations among peasant and working-class partners have traditionally been higher here in Hungary than among the middle and upper classes. There has been little of the hypocrisy and female dependence that exists in a middle-class marriage. The harsher facts of their life demand that the woman works and through this she has earned certain rights, one of the more important being sincerity.

Kata accordingly informs her lover that she wants a child. He, with two children already, rejects the proposal and this rejection threatens the relationship. At this critical time, Kata makes friends with a sixteen-year-old orphan girl who uses her spare room for trysts with her fiancé. This neophyte is well versed in the way of the world and offers shrewd advice to the older woman—who initially wishes to adopt her—in a gesture of desperation.

Eventually, Kata recognizes that the girl needs a good husband rather than a good mother. After meeting her lover and his wife at home, she also realizes her own greater autonomy and resolves her dilemma by adopting a baby from an orphanage. The film's ending leaves open the future of Kata and child, and hints at trouble in the marriage through a quarrel at the actual ceremony.

A completely different problem is focused on in the recent and obviously autobiographical *Napló gyermekeimnek* (Diary for My Children) and *Napló szerelmeimnek* (Diary for My Loves). The link with her earlier films is maintained through another orphaned girl. The setting is not, however, that of a small village or town but amid high-ranking party functionaries—they too being neophytes in the new order. Most have returned from exile in Moscow to take up posts in the party or in the Ministry of the Interior.

The heroine has been adopted by a woman holding high rank in the Ministry of the Interior, placing her squarely at the centre of the Stalinist regime, a position made all the more piquant for her parents' death during one of Stalin's purges. She pits her strength and will against those of her step-mother until she recognizes the latter's near demoniacal power. By the age of eighteen, she resorts to a form of passive resistance in order to retain some spiritual independence. Yet she is not without compassion for her step-mother, who is represented by Mészáros as a victim as well as instrument of the regime, a priestess of a strange religion which kills or destroys all those who come into contact with it. Her own capacity for love, such as it is, is turned solely towards Stalin. This touches off one of the most powerful scenes in all of Mészáros's work: on learning of his death, the step-mother closets herself into the bathroom and weeps desperately in the bath in a sequence which erotically suggests her vulnerability as a woman.

In these conditions, the girl's own capacity for loving is stunted. Her first passion is for a much older man, a surrogate father. Formerly a member of the circle of Hungarian communists in exile in Berlin —rather more democratic than their Moscow counterparts—he is ideologically and personally an enemy of the step-mother, a staunch "Muscovite". Despite his sense of responsibility and his abilities as a manager, he is imprisoned at the beginning of the fifties. The girl's love for him is a protest against the tyranny exercised by her immediate and wider surroundings.

She recognizes that to escape this tyranny she has to make someone of herself in the world of the arts or sciences, seen as a spiritual haven. She decides to become a film director, a choice even more unusual in the Hungary of the fifties than of today. The cynical male rejection of her application to enter the Film Academy spurs her on and she employs a ruse to gain entry into the Film Academy of Moscow, the scene of her parents' destruction. Her step-mother's mourning of Stalin in her Budapest bathroom is echoed by the girl's witnessing of the reactions of various Soviet functionaries, confused and disorientated by the death of the supreme leader. This is the period that culminates in the events of late 1956 in Hungary.

The final sequence of the second film involves the girl attempting to acquire a permit from the Hungarian Embassy to return home to Hungary at the end of October of that year. This is refused by an official, equally anguished by the events and concerned for his own existence and career.

The girl's future is left open. Is she to join or remain in opposition to her step-mother? Has she become entirely cynical and amoral? Presumably these questions will be taken up in the final part of the trilogy, which is now in preparation, centred around the events of that autumn in Budapest.

The significance of this cycle is that Márta Mészáros has removed her neophyte-orphan figure from the periphery and placed her at the centre of great events. She is no longer facing problems peculiar to a woman but has been emancipated by history, as it were, into an integral individual, with all the responsibility and choice that implies.

There are few such signs of a common consciousness to be found among women in Hungary today as there are in the films of Mészáros; even fewer women have the

courage to seek for this status of integral individuality—the price is still too high.

Finally, I would like to turn to another director who has tried to revolutionize the image of women: Péter Tímár, whose first film *Egészséges erotika* (Sound Eroticism) caused a furore among critics and audiences alike. The title itself gives pause for reflection. Can what is a substitute for normal sexual relations, a repression of the sexual drive, be called sound? The question is put to us in the setting of a small provincial factory manufacturing wooden packing cases for fruit and vegetables. There being little demand for its product, the factory is clearly in an "unsound" financial position, which has its effects on all the individuals involved. They communicate through a bizarre truncated language, simplifying grammar and phrasing—castrating the language. It is a functionalized, repressive medium which clearly corresponds to Marcuse's criteria for a one-dimensional language.

The individuals are one-dimensional too. Their behaviour illustrates the link between language and personality. All the workers are women, all the managerial staff are men. This dividing line is so strict that a newly employed fireman quickly succeeds in blackmailing the manager into re-categorizing him too as management.

The one-dimensionality of the men is embodied in their substitute for sexuality. They have mounted a monitor in the ceiling of the room where the women change before or after their shift. Thus the women are doubly exploited: first through their actual work and secondly through the invitations extended to participate in the peep-show. These the manager lays on to friends, local high-ups and even potential clients, whose need for his products is non-existent. Those invited also become addicts and are open to blackmail by the manager whose sales thrive. (While shaking a yoghurt tub in his hand, Tímár makes his points in the obvious manner.) The monitor is eventually discovered by the women while they are decorating the room in preparation for a celebration. On Constitution Day, they flirt outrageously with the male guests in order to mug them one by one outside and, more alarmingly, to set up a strike for extra payment for their changing-room 'performances'.

Strikes are not an everyday occurrence and the local authorities are flummoxed. To put an end to it, they set fires around the factory; this only has the effect of causing the women to set to fire the factory itself. Since the fireman has emptied all the extinguishers in order to store smuggled petrol in them, the whole place burns down. The workers and, at the last moment, the management succeed in getting out. The point is that the administrative and political powers-that-be have been rendered impotent. Finally a team of young sociologists arrive from Budapest to collect the questionnaires they had earlier distributed. These, of course, are on the frequency and nature of sexual intercourse on the part of the respondents. Tímár, who has spared no-one in the film, thus closes with a comment on the irrelevance and incomprehension of intellectuals.

In effect, what he seems to be saying is that the agents for radical change in Hungary will be, not management or intellectuals, but women workers. Only they possess the soundness of the title in their sense of sexuality and morality.

Irén Kiss

MUSICAL LIFE

THREE DAYS WITH SÁNDOR VERESS THE COMPOSER

PART III

In the summer of 1948 I was sent by the Hungarian Ministry of Culture and the Hungarian Art Council to Basle to attend the first post-war international folk-music congress. I gave a lecture and met many experts, both old and new acquaintances. There and then the International Folk Music Council was established.

By the time I returned to Budapest, changes were already in the air and I felt fairly unhappy about them. Once again I began to be pre-occupied with the problem of whether to stay or not—though this time the causes were different to those in 1938, being based on principles, artistic and political reasons, and I no longer saw my future as encouraging as I had believed right after the war.

In early 1949 I set out again, this time through Prague to Stockholm. I did not board the train with the intention of leaving Hungary for good. I was planning to wait and see in which direction the situation would develop.

The immediate purpose of my journey was to attend the Stockholm première of my ballet, *Térszili Katica.* I had written this with Aurelio Milloss in Rome, and we planned in 1943 in the Budapest Opera House but our plans were upset by the war. The Royal Opera House in Stockholm scheduled the world première for February 1949, with choreography by Milloss and rehearsed under his direction. I left with some missing parts of the scene I had completed in Budapest. I set out on the evening express and arrived in Prague the next morning. There I should have taken a plane for Stockholm, but there was a blizzard on this occasion too and I could not continue my journey until the day after.

The première took place in Stockholm—everything went well, the ballet had a great success. A date was set for the Rome performance too, and early in March we embarked with Milloss in a large, four-engined, prop-driven airliner and went to Rome. It was a long journey, those aircraft could only do at most 600 kilometres an hour and so we travelled from morning till late at night. In Rome I went straight to the Collegium Hungaricum, where I had my quarters. The rehearsals started a couple of days later and, if I remember correctly, the Rome performance took place towards the end of April. Under the Italian stagione system, this was followed by a given number of performances. In Rome, for instance, the ballet was staged on seven occasions, which proved most fortunate, since the royalties allowed me to stay on in Rome.

Though not without some difficulties, my wife managed to follow me from Pest. We met in Zurich, but she was seriously ill when she arrived. On the instructions of her physician, the unforgettable Imre Hajnal, I took her immediately to the Red Cross Clinic in Zurich,

where she was treated for five weeks. The far from insignificant expense of this treatment was fully covered by Paul Sacher and his wife. Sacher commissioned me to write a piano concerto and by way of a fee he shouldered the high costs of my wife's hospital treatment. This was a very fine gesture on his part and not the only one of its kind either. Sacher helped me however he could. Eventually my wife recuperated and followed me to Rome.

Térszili Katica had a performance in Rome. Meanwhile the Rajk trial took place in Budapest. I was able to follow the trial reported directly from the court room. It's impossible to describe the shock this had on me. I had been closely acquainted with László Rajk and his entire family. Rajk's eldest brother, Gyula, was one of my best friends. Their father was a bootmaker from Székelyudvarhely in Transylvania. Most of the seven Rajk brothers had come up to Budapest, where they, including László, had been brought up by Gyula. So I had known László Rajk from Budapest and met him and Gyula practically every week. Gyula was a highly talented writer and he wrote fine short-stories in the style of Áron Tamási, the Transylvanian writer. I know from personal experience that László was an absolutely honest, straightforward man. Now I listened to the trial on the radio, and Rajk's prepared voice, his confession of all the crimes he could never have committed, and the death sentence profoundly exasperated me. It left me in a state of shock. This was the last straw and I made up my mind not to return to Hungary but go into exile.

We stayed in Rome waiting for our luck to change. The royalties from the ballet performances lasted for some time but were slowly running out. Then, unexpectedly, came a piece of good luck. In the summer of 1949, Ottó Gombosi, an old friend of mine from the Budapest years, who was by then a professor at Columbia University, spent a holiday in Basle with his Swiss wife. The Music Department of Berne University was going through an interregnum following the death of its Professor and with no one nominated to take his place they invited visiting lecturers. Gombosi was a musicologist with a world reputation and, as he happened to be in Basle, he was invited as a visiting lecturer for the 1949 summer term. When his time was drawing to a close, they asked him to recommend someone else for the post. Gombosi knew I was sitting in Rome waiting for something to turn up and immediately recommended me. He said I would teach a subject that had never before been cultivated by anyone at Berne University—ethno-musicology. And so one fine day, out of the blue, I received a letter from Berne University asking me if I would accept the post of visiting lecturer. This was the invitation that brought us to Switzerland.

We set out from Rome by train one late November evening. It was raining torrentially but before going to the station I asked the driver to make a detour and take us to the Trevi, so that I could throw my coin into the fountain, to ensure symbolically at least my return to Rome. And then we boarded the train with our pile of suitcases. By then we had collected a great many things in Rome—books, scores, whathever. Next morning we arrived in Berne.

Our life in Berne began with my wife falling ill. Back in Rome she had been bitten by a mosquito and a festering sore had to be operated on. So we spent the first three weeks in a small hotel, the Poste et France until we could rent a two-room flat. Although I only started work long after the term had begun, the Swiss paid me my fee for the whole semester, indeed in advance, without any deduction. This is how, by the end of November 1949, our life in Switzerland—and my university career—began.

My subject, Hungarian folk music and those of Central and Eastern Europe, must obviously have been of interest to the students. Very many of them signed on for the course and attended my lectures diligently. No one had previously dealt with folk music at Berne University, not even with Swiss folk music. When the winter term ended in the spring of 1950, I was taken over by the Berne Conservatoire as a teacher of musical theory and compo-

sition. At the time the Conservatoire had an eminent director in the person of Alphonse Brun. He was a fine violinist and excellent teacher and he was also the leader of the Berne Symphony Orchestra. In this last capacity I heard him several times, for example when he played the violin solo in Bartók's *Two Portraits* beautifully.

Well, Brun showed an interest in me as soon as I arrived in Switzerland, and when I finished the university term, he invited me allowing me a free hand in teaching and I introduced a fundamental reform. The theoretical subjects included, alongside harmony, counterpoint and formal studies, solfeggio as well. I introduced the Hungarian method of Tonic sol-fa, previously unknown there. So, although there was a pressure of work, I spent my first few years at the Berne Conservatoire in a pleasant and harmonious atmosphere.

Two years later Brun also engaged my wife as a piano teacher. She too enjoyed complete freedom in teaching and because of this she achieved fine results, particularly with her younger students. She was the first to create a young children's choir out of the students and she even formed a children's orchestra. Her first demonstration concerts at public examinations were a real sensation. Brun greeted all these innovations with understanding and eagerly supported them.

A few years later, Brun set up a faculty of composition, where I became the first professor. I was slowly being surrounded by highly gifted students, who have since achieved reputations for themselves. Heinz Holliger, the oboist and composer, too, was one of my leading students. Heinz Marti has by now become a noted composer in Switzerland. I had a very talented Rumanian student, the violinist Sergiu Luca, who was producing fine work in my composition class. In short, the class was developing handsomely, and, for the first time ever in the Berne Conservatoire, we were able to hold an end-of-term concert with works that were all compositions by the graduating students.

Soon after, Brun suddenly died. His successor, Richard Sturzenegger, followed the direction set by Brun and he too was an eminent musician. My relationship with him was also most harmonious but unfortunately it did not last long. Within a few years he too fell ill and died. During the directionships of Brun and Sturzenegger, I was able to work most fruitfully, although my hands were always full.

Meanwhile, I received several invitations from the United States. The first came in 1965, when I was invited for a lecture tour and travelled all over the States, West, East and South. As a result I was engaged for the 1965–66 terms as teacher of composition and folk music by the Peabody Conservatory of Baltimore. For the following year I was invited by Goucher College, near Baltimore. This institution also enjoys an academic status, and I felt very much at home there. It is in a fairly small town called Towson, situated in beautiful surroundings. In one of the wings of the modern college building I had a study complete with a Steinway piano and an excellent recorder and play-back. I spent a very pleasant year there.

In 1968, before my return to Europe, a major American university invited me to give a lecture. As a consequence, I was offered a contract by Maryland University to teach composition. I had only to sign the contract in order to take up the post. I returned to Berne with the contract completed but still unsigned only to find a letter from the local university which invited me to take a permanent chair. There I was with two university contracts in my hand. For three months I fretted over whether to accept the Berne contract and go over from the conservatoire to the university or to pack everything up all over again, including my library of books and scores, and move to America in a kind of second emigration. Finally I opted for Switzerland and have never regretted my choice.

The autumn of 1968 saw the beginning of my years as university professor in Berne. They went by smoothly, until on reaching the statutory age of seventy, I resigned and retired.

These nearly ten years at Berne University brought many new impulses, but they also took up most of my time. There are fairly large black spots in the astronomical map of my composing and these point to my years at Berne University, which kept me otherwise engaged.

As regards the subjects of my courses, suffice it to mention that there was no term in which I would not have lectured—from some point of view or other—on Hungarian folk music and analysed one or more works by Bartók and Kodály. Folk music was one of my main subjects and twentieth-century music the other. The curriculum on folk music could naturally never ignore Hungarian folk music collection. Indeed, I always began with it, to lay for them the foundations for a systematisation. And this took up a decade, until on my retirement I was finally once again able to turn to my own work as a composer. So my career has come full circle, my "sonatina period" in Pest in the 'thirties was the last period in my life when I was absolutely free to engage in composition. Then it was due to the fact that I had both the luck and the misfortune of not having a job. This freedom returned when I retired from the university chair and since then composition has again become my main occupation. How much value or sense this has, is another matter, one which is not for me to decide.

While on the subject of composition, let me mention the works I have written in Switzerland or at least the major ones.

I started to compose again in 1951. I was most lucky to have been able to work. While still back in Budapest, I was in correspondence with the Müller-Widmann family, whose role in Bartók's life is well known. The head of the family, Oscar Müller was a professor at Basle University. With his wife Annie Müller-Widmann he lived in a beautiful house in a residential quarter above Basle, surrounded by loads of plants. They collected pictures and bought canvases from many modern painters; the house was practically covered with them.

The Müllers always spent their summer vacation in their chalet at Lake Sempach, and since I was on holiday at the same time, they placed their Basle villa at my disposal, where I could be all by myself to do what I wanted. Professor Müller even opened up his wine cellar for me. They had a beautiful Bechstein, once used much by Bartók, who whenever he was in Switzerland, was always taken up by them. As a former pupil of Bartók's, I thus later inherited this opportunity. If I am not mistaken, I lived and worked in that environment for twelve years. I wrote many a good piece there, the *Klee* Fantasy being the first among them.

In the summer of 1952, a one-man show of Paul Klee's was mounted in Basle and for this they had collected as many works as possible from all over the world. Some 700 of his pictures were exhibited in the Basle museum. For me this was something absolutely new as in my years in Budapest I knew nothing of his works. On visiting the exhibition, I stood in open-mouthed wonder. While I was staying in the Müller villa that summer, two or three times a week I spent practically an entire day in the museum, gaping at these pictures. Klee's work had such a strong effect on me that it gave birth to a musical picture—with most unusual musical formations. It was these that brought about the work. But there was also a practical prompting: a commission from the Berne Chamber Orchestra for the 1952–53 season. Previously they had performed my *Transylvanian Dances*. The Klee experience and the commission together produced the seven piece cycle. Scored for two pianos and a string orchestra, the work had it first performance in Berne, with the two piano parts played by myself and my wife, and the Berne Chamber Orchestra conducted by Hermann Müller.

The Klee cycle was a turning point for me as a composer. It was here that I was first able to actually do something with an inner freedom that I myself had achieved. These fantasies are not programme music, the visual impressions are shaped directly, intuitively into aural impression. Naturally, the pieces were written if not according to the rules at least according to the logic of their musical construction. Here I treated tonality much more freely than in

my earlier works. This is especially evident in the closing movement, Little Blue Imp. I did not intend to abandon diatonic tonality for serial composition, after all. Without any particular intention on my part the subject of the movement formulated itself in the whole-tone scale and this has left its mark on the composition. In the closing section of the movement the figural dodecaphony of the elaboration was conscious on my part. The twelve notes are developed freely in a certain musical perspective, and let me stress this is not Schoenberg's system. The movements are fairly different, they include strong dissonant structures, and also one "Old Melody," one of my favourites among all the movements I have ever written which is on a firm modal basis. The modal material develops through a rich ornamentation. It begins with the long solo of second piano, and then an orchestral interlude is followed by the first piano. There again comes an orchestral interlude also employing the original material, and finally the two pianos and the orchestra close the movement in a lengthy dialogue. In the ornamental colouring of the modal basic material both pianos participate.

The *Klee* Fantasy has had very many performances by many ensembles in many countries. For me this work meant entering a new realm of music and my horizons were enormously expanded.

My next important piece was the Piano Concerto. As I have mentioned, it was commissioned by Sacher, who also conducted its first performance at a public concert of Südwestfunk Baden-Baden. I myself was the soloist. In this work too tonal and dodecaphonic writing exist side by side. The first two movements are still diatonic with strongly chromatic colouring. But the third movement is constructed from a figural twelve-tone row which runs through the whole movement and determines its musical expression. It is built on very fast thematic elements and is very difficult from the point of view of piano technique. It uses a string orchestra joined to a large percussion section. This work too has been performed quite frequently.

My own interest then slowly turned towards the twelve-tone system. This interest had its beginning as far back as when I was teaching at the Budapest Academy of Music. There I began to be preoccupied with Schoenberg. One of my students, György Ligeti, contributed actively to this even during his student years. I assisted many such efforts in my composition class and I myself also began studying it more intensively. After my arrival in Switzerland I was becoming more intensely engrossed. Even while I was still composing in a tonal manner, my style soon shifted in the direction of chromaticism. In retrospect, when you can see the wood and not just the trees and can review your own works from a certain perspective, I can see how boldly I embarked on this road in my First and Second String Quartets and in some of my other works. This internal development urged me to gradually abandon conventional tonal practices and to bid farewell to modality, to aim at a total exploitation of our tonal system, that is to say at an equal use of the twelve notes within the octave. I went through various phases of this development. At one time I was concerned with Schoenberg and tried to create musical textures and constructions based on his principles. The most obvious example of this is my Concerto for String Quartet and Orchestra, where the first movement is a strict adaptation of Schoenberg's system. But the second and third movements depart from it and are written in a free chromaticism. The course of my own development has led me to the recognition that Schoenberg's path is not the road to the future. He was a great originator.

One of the typical features of twentieth-century music is the strength of its effort to break away from tonality. To put it simply, twentieth-century music began with the arrival of the Orient on the West European stage. This gave rise to very many new impulses. In late Romanticism, the music of the West exploited the major-minor tonic system to such

an extent that it was really impossible to produce something new within those frames—what was produced either became an imitation or a kind of vapid, romantic dead-end. This was already felt by Liszt in his old age; the masterpieces he composed in the last years of his life bear out that he was clearly aware of this crisis and was seeking a way to resolve. He experimented with bitonality, with a new explanation of harmonic relations—and through these he built a bridge towards the twentieth century, to Debussy and Bartók. Around the turn of the century, the development of Western music had indeed arrived at a great turning point, with two geniuses who "broke in from the East." Stravinsky with his *Le Sacre du printemps* embarked on a road along which neither the general public nor even most musicians were able to follow. It is easily understandable why the first performance of *Le Sacre du printemps* in Paris occasioned the greatest scandal in music history. It liberated emotions—both pro and con—hardly any work of music had previously done. Bartók's *Allegro barbaro* of a similarly explosive effect dates from 1911, two years before *Le Sacre.* But the trail-blazers of the new music, the predecessors of Stravinsky and Bartók, also came from the East. A great part in this development was played by Mussorgsky, and along with him, by the awakening interest in folk music in Eastern and Central Europe. The invasion of this corps of folk music into European music was a tremendous novelty which also created a new relationship with the old way of thinking before tonal dualism in West European music.

These reflections are important to me because the contexts I recognized in them have showed me the direction in which I should proceed. Schoenberg's dodecaphonic system signified a transition; what was important in it was that it made it possible for me, through trying out certain musical constructions, to move away from the major-minor tonic system and partly from the modal system too, and to set out towards chromaticism. There are two phases in chromaticism: free chromaticism and chromaticism formulated into a system. This is the last stage in this process.

After the *Klee* Fantasy and the Piano Concerto in the summer of 1954 I wrote a chamber work which was first performed by the Redditi Trio at the Venice Biennale. The violinist, Aldo Redditi, is Italian, but the viola player Dénes Marton, and the cellist, his wife, Anna Virány are eminent Hungarian musicians. The work I am speaking of is the String Trio, which has a slow and a fast movement. Both are based on a twelve-note row; the one in the slow movement of a melodic and the one in the fast movement rather of a figurative.

A row of melodic character—this means a great deal to me. Whatever I have done during my life, in whatever system I have been trying to arrange notes, I have never abandoned melody, for me it has remained the backbone of music. Of course, one can speak of melody in many different contexts. But, at least for myself, I cannot dispense with melody as a musical category, a category in musical thinking. When I exploit the twelve-note system, I conceive it in terms of a melody-centred twelve-note row. This has remained the dominant principle in my musical thinking. In it an inner need encounters a certain logical, historical point of view. After all, during the development of music, a growing number of notes have come to fill musical space—let us say an octave: the five notes of pentatony, the seven fundamental notes of the major-minor system, until finally we have reached a stage where we wish to consider all twelve notes of our tonal system equal as building elements. (Naturally, by arranging these building elements according to some principle.) To think in terms of the twelve notes has now become so natural to me that whatever I do, whatever musical idea there emerges within me, it spontaneously embraces this horizon. This is a very good feeling because it offers incredibly large freedom: one is not confined within limits.

Because every scale system comprises limits, which from the very outset determine what

will fit here or fit there, and all the composer has to do is in fact to take a look at what notes will feel comfortable beside one another. There are notes which call for each other's company, while others will sit uneasily next to each other. If one senses this, one will seek, both unconsciosuly and consciously, for notes which complement each other. But now, whenever I develop some kind of musical conception for myself, this is being determined by an internal freedom—I am not restricted by the limits of diatony but can make free use of the twelve notes into which our octave is graded. I can make use of it in any manner as long as there is an inner logic. It is like walking in a beautiful, spacious meadow where the paths are not bordered by fences and I can go wherever I want to. Naturally, here too there is a logic of how one will move and where one will walk. To turn back to music: this spacious horizon, this inner freedom is only worth something if it goes hand in hand with a certain musical logic. The twelve notes cannot be put side by side just anyhow. Both Schoenberg and Webern had their own logic; but they raised borders around themselves which are much stricter than the rules of the major-minor tonic system. If one pulls down these borders, one will feel the unbelievably strong inspiration of the open field. This is the stage I am at right now, this is how I now visualise composition to myself.

As to the compositions I wrote after the String Trio, the Concerto for String Quartet and Orchestra was also commissioned by Sacher—this I have already spoken about. I attach significance to one of my most recent works, the Clarinet Concerto, which was conceived in the spirit just discussed. Meanwhile, I also wrote a large-scale work for soloists, choir and orchestra, on seven poems by Hermann Hesse. This was the first work I wrote after shucking off the burden of teaching. The freedom I achieved within and without—the fact that I no longer had to live according to a time-table, gave the work a special impetus. The title, *Das Glasklängespiel* alludes to *Das Glasperlenspiel*, a fine novel by Hermann Hesse. The work is still waiting for its première perhaps because its choral part is so demanding.

Speaking of difficult choral parts, let me also tell you something about the time I spent in Australia. This was in 1967, after my stay in the States, when I spent nine months in Adelaide as a visiting lecturer at the local university. Australian Radio commissioned me to write a work for their radio choir, and I wrote an *a cappella* piece in seven movements, to words by Christopher Brennan, a noted Australian poet, entitled *Songs of the Seasons*. When I asked them how difficult a piece they had in mind, they told me this did not matter. This choir's members all have perfect pitch and so I could write whatever I wanted. A choral composer can scarcely be granted a greater freedom than this. After the world première in Australia, these seven madrigals have also been performed in Switzerland and West Germany; the Stuttgart performance, by the Hellmuth Rilling's fabulous choir, was particularly successful. Of course I cannot expect it to be sung day after day, as it makes great demands on the choir.

I do not want to talk about what I am working on now as I am superstitious in this respect. I never talk about a work before it is completed—so let us leave what I am working on behind a veil. If these pieces will ever be completed they will be known anyway.

One can never tell in advance whether one will be able to complete what one has started. There are many causes for this. I too have unfinished works.

I am anyway convinced that a piece of music is completed not at one's desk but during the performance, on the concert platform. Music always constitutes communication, it always involves an audience. A composer who only writes for himself, is either a tragically flawed man or is acting under the influence of adverse circumstances. A composer never writes for himself, always for someone else, at least for an imaginary audience, an imaginary other. The centre of composition is always communication. I consider music to be the greatest of the arts because it is the most human of them.

Ferenc Bónis

JÁNOS BREUER

SCHOENBERG'S PAINTINGS

"Visions, Impressions and Fantasies" — a 1912 exhibition in Budapest

January 1912 saw an exhibition entitled *Neukunst Wien* in Budapest; included were twenty-three paintings by Arnold Schoenberg. Understandably, Hungarian art critics took no special note of the event. Schoenberg himself was of the view: "... as a painter I was absolutely an amateur. And ... I had no theoretical training and only a little aesthetic training—this only from general education but not from an education which pertained to painting."[1] The exhibition was also ignored by Hungarian and other Schoenberg scholars, at least until 1974, though they may have gathered some indirect information on the event. In the Appendix to a catalogue of Schoenberg's works,[2] in 1959, Josef Rufer published an excerpt from a letter of January 13, 1912, in which the painter Vassily Kandinsky assured the composer that his pictures had been sent to Budapest quite some time before. By itself this is obviously not adequate proof that the exhibition actually took place. However, in the catalogue of the centenary Schoenberg exhibition mounted in Vienna in 1974, the Austrian art historian Robert Waissenberg, if only in a footnote,[3] refers to the catalogue of the Budapest display, adding that it lists 23 paintings by Schoenberg. The footnote says that the Budapest exhibition was held in January 1912. This was the trail I set out on and, by 1976, I was able to reconstruct the reception Schoenberg the painter had received in Budapest. Since then I have been able to supplement this through documents that have been published in the meantime.

Schoenberg had his first and only one-man show in October 1910 in the Heller Gallery, Vienna, where he displayed 46 canvases. Some of his pictures were exhibited, in December 1911, by Kandinsky in his group, *Der Blaue Reiter*, and after that Kandinsky included some of these in a *Blauer Reiter* exhibition that toured several German cities. There are conflicting reports on how the composer and the painter had met each other, but it is an established fact that Kandinsky, along with Franz Marc, attended a Schoenberg evening on January 1, 1911, in Munich, and said he recognised features in the Viennese composer's music that related to what he was doing in painting. Kandinsky wrote an article for an anthology on Schoenberg's music, published in 1912 in Munich. In this he had some warm words on the composer's merits as a painter,[4] while the *Blauer Reiter Almanach*, which also appeared in 1912, edited by Kandinsky, carried an article and music scores by Schoenberg. Both volumes were published by Reinhold Piper and Co., the firm which supported Kandinsky and his circle.

The *Neukunst Wien* exhibition in Budapest was organized by Albert Paris von Gütersloh (whose original name had been A. Conrad Kiehtreiber), a Vienna painter, writer and actor (1887–1973), a student of Gustav Klimt. In a letter undated but written before December 14, 1911,[5] he asked Schoenberg to participate in the show, and in a later, also undated, letter he informed him that "It will be convenient for the pictures to arrive in Budapest before December 30. In my previous letter I forgot to ask you to indicate the prices of your pictures, in view of any possible purchases." Gütersloh also wrote to Kandinsky about the delivery of the pictures to Budapest.[6]

On December 14, 1911, Schoenberg wrote to Kandinsky (the date of this letter

provides indirect proof of Gütersloh having written earlier on the planned Budapest exhibition): "I am to send my pictures to Budapest for an exhibition. I have been allotted a whole room for twenty-four paintings. Now I have no idea which ones you have. Could you not notify me? And: would you be willing to send the pictures directly to Budapest? That is, those that I specify to you..."[7] Kandinsky replied by return of mail, the next day: "With regard to Budapest, I will naturally be *very* glad to do everything."[8] But since Schoenberg received no further information on his affairs regarding Budapest, on January 12, 1912, he wrote once again to his painter friend: "I would like to know if you sent my pictures to Budapest promptly. Then: what did people say about them? Reviews, etc.?"[9] In his reply of January 13, Kandinsky reassured the composer: "I sent everything to Budapest long ago with the following exceptions [...]: 1) 'Self-portrait', 'Landscape' and two 'Visions' were exhibited by us..."[10] But three days later, on January 16, he wrote in a different vein, informing Schoenberg that his pictures were going across Germany as part of the *Blauer Reiter* travelling exhibition: "So please excuse my arbitrary action, won't you?—I scarcely believe that they are still waiting for those pictures in Budapest."[11]

There, however, Kandinsky was mistaken. Schoenberg's pictures had been waited for in Budapest; so much so that on their arrival the whole *Neukunst Wien* exhibition was rearranged, even if not exclusively for the sake of these canvases.

The *Neukunst Wien* exhibition was housed in the Artists' House, founded in 1909. The building is still standing in the heart of the capital, on the corner of Váci utca and Kristóf tér, and although for some fifty years it has not functioned as an exhibition hall, the shape of the windows on the mezzanine still betray its former function. In opposition to the academic tastes of the day, its director, Dr Miklós Rózsa, modelled the gallery on the Salon des Indépendants of Paris, and many noted progressive and avant-garde artists took part in its direction. The Artists' House mounted the first international Impressionist exhibition in Budapest (opened on April 24, 1910), and it was the first to bring works by Picasso and Matisse to the Hungarian capital.

The exhibition opened on January 6, 1912. The catalogue, on coated paper and very fine in execution, complete with illustrations, listed works by Robin Christian Andersen, Anton Faistauer, Paris von Gütersloh, Anton Kolig, Egon Schiele, and Arnold Schoenberg. Of Schoenberg's pictures, his noted Self-portrait from the Rear, one of his works on show, was reproduced in the catalogue (7);[12] the preface was written by Paris von Gütersloh (whose paintings were reviewed in the catalogue by Ignotus, an eminent Hungarian writer and editor.

The catalogue says of Schoenberg's painting that "Only people who, like him, have arrived at representing the innermost, eerie soul of all things, directly with the realism of hallucination, and without the compromising sphere of the 'beautiful' —since they do not feel to have the right to measure the Delphic world with the gauge of justice and beauty, and since in relation to this world they do not wish to be pragmatic, nor do they wish to spoil their talent in martyrdom by proving the seemingly impossible (which would all be within the power of their intelligence)—only people like this can understand Schoenberg's[13] pictures, and even they only insofar as their experiences tally or their desire for compromise finds satisfaction in these pictures.

"Only bad artists convince one, the real character only wishes for faith. Like religion, he turns to our power to feel ourselves also as very conditional.

"And if Schoenberg's pictures will achieve no more than making us wary of our senses (which transmit quite different phenomena to us, that are 'natural' and 'comprehensible' in a philistine sense), they

have perhaps achieved their paramount purpose."

The importance the exhibition was treated with is implied by the fact that Paris von Gütersloh's preface occupied the first three pages of the morning edition of the prestigious Budapest German daily newspaper *Pester Lloyd* (January 4, 1912). Another German daily, the *Budapester Presse* also called attention to the exhibition through an editorial by the German art critic Ludwig N. Abels, which, however, gave a more sober judgement: "Arnold Schoenberg, the much talked-of, highly gifted composer, as a painter belongs to this [the *Neukunst Wien*] group, but here he does not rate as one of the leading elements."

Viennese painters, who in their own country were held in no esteem, were given a splendid official reception in Budapest. This must have been on the basis that anything coming from the imperial and royal capital can only be highly significant. While the Hungarian prime minister, Count István Tisza, wrote a furious attack around that time on the group of The Eight, the intellectual relatives of the Vienna modern painters in Hungary, the minister of Religion and Public Education, Count János Zichy, received in Budapest the three Austrian painters, Faistauer, Kolig and Gütersloh, the day before the opening.

The significance of the event is also borne out by the fact that the gallery had been transformed for this one single occasion. "The management of the Artists' House have re-arranged the exhibition rooms in Kristóf tér in compliance with the request of the Viennese artists. To balance the pictures, largely in dark tints, the exhibition halls have been transformed into all-white interiors, to lend a black-and-white effect to the whole exhibition," wrote the Budapest daily *Az Újság* (January 4, 1912).

The press was not influenced by the more than friendly official reception granted to the Viennese painters. Most of the reviews in the daily newspapers indignantly rejected the works of the Austrian moderns. Most articles of them drew parallels between the new trends in Austrian and Hungarian arts and, using the exhibition as a pretext, vigorously assaulted innovating Hungarian painters too.

At the time Schoenberg's pictures were not yet on display: the daily press reported on the arrival at the *Neukunst Wien* display of the collections of Arnold Schoenberg and Oskar Kokoschka on January 16, 1912. The exhibition was remounted and reopened on January 20. In fact, Kokoschka did not even feature in the catalogue, as the original plans were for the Artists' House to put on a one-man show of his works in the first half of 1912.

The title given to the group of Schoenberg's canvases on view was *Visions, Impressions and Fantasies*. The catalogue listed 23 pictures and gives their purchase prices.*

	Crowns
* 1. Gaze 1910 (124) (or 126, 127, possibly 128—each being undated)	500
2. Yellow Head	500
3. Red Head (perhaps Red Gate, 246)	600
4. Red Gaze 1910 (123?)	400
5. Tears (129)	300
6. Blue Gaze (125)	300
7. Ties	200
8. Thinking (135)	500
9. Gustav Mahler 1910 (76)	1,000
10. Vision of Christ (133)	1,000
11. Hatred (236)	300
12. Vision (Satire) (132)	300
13. Flesh (138)	200
14. Night I (Night Landscape, 146?)	600
15. Night II (Night Landscape, 140)	400
16. Night	400
17. Self Portrait 1911 (7)	1,000
18. Green Self-Portrait 1910 (4)	500
19. Blue Self-Portrait 1910 (5)	500
20. Brown Self-Portrait	600
21. Critic I (117)	200
22. Critic II (118) caricatures	300
23. Art Patron (119)	200

(As to the prices, instead of expressing the crown in terms of the contemporary dollar or pound, let me mention that when the young Béla Bartók was appointed a teacher at the Budapest Academy of Music in 1907, his annual salary was 4,500 Crowns.)

In some of the cases the pictures cannot be identified with the list of Schoenberg's paintings with certainty (indicated above by question marks), and in the case of Nos. 2, 7, and 16, it is impossible. Josef Rufer's catalogue knows of the existence of a picture entitled Yellow Head, but marks it as missing.

The titles of some of the pictures may have perhaps been changed later and Schoenberg might have given away some of his canvases as presents: these may still be lurking somewhere. Again it is possible that some of the pictures were purchased at the exhibition in Budapest. This I can neither prove nor disprove though it does seem fairly improbable. In his history of the Artists' House, Miklós Rózsa almost certainly did not have Schoenberg in mind when he wrote of the *Neukunst Wien* exhibition that "... as a fine illustration of the progressive bent of the Hungarian art-loving public, the Viennese artists scored a much greater moral and *financial* success here, abroad, than they ever had at home, in Vienna."[14] (Italics added.)

For an assessment of Schoenberg the painter, it was far from favourable that he exhibited alongside an artist of such eminence as Oskar Kokoschka. (As a matter of minor import—that the Budapest critics of the time neither could nor needed to know—Kokoschka and Schoenberg had been close friends for many years.) Even the progressive-minded critics of the daily press gauged Schoenberg's painting against Kokoschka's, understandably at the former's expense.

"Schoenberg is absolutely insignificant," wrote Aladár Bálint, an art and music critic of fine discernment and father of the painter Endre Bálint; he had all the more passionate words to say of Kokoschka (*Népszava*, January 24, 1912). "In Oskar Kokoschka's pictures, in spite of all their violent artificial wildness, an amazing artistic talent flashes through... All we say about Arnold Schoenberg's collection is that they are at some points almost dreadful creations of a most pathological imagination," wrote the daily *Budapest* (January 20, 1912). Artur Elek, a staff member of *Nyugat*, the most prestigious Hungarian literary journal of the period, after acknowledging Kokoschka's merits, went on to say: "A few lines suffice to finish off with Arnold Schoenberg. Schoenberg is a musician, who as such is famous, indeed infamous in Vienna and Germany. But his paintings are dreadfully rudimentary and incompetent. It is somewhat humiliating for Budapest that they were not afraid of exposing them to the criticism of the Hungarian public." (*Az Újság*, January 20, 1912.) György Bölöni, who can scarcely be accused of conservativism, was of a similar opinion: "I have not much good to say about Schoenberg. Objections are not against the direction of his efforts, but what he produced does not offer much of the endeavours into which he wants to adapt himself." (*Világ*, January 21, 1912.) The reviewer of *Magyarország*, signing himself e. m., wrote about Schoenberg: "A certain dilettante taste runs through all his things. Kokoschka is a truer, more humane, genuine painter." (January 20, 1912.)

However, Kokoschka too is condemned by e.r., the critic of *Budapesti Hírlap*, who goes on to write, "Of Schoenberg's 'visions' we have even less to say. He wants to express a series of fantastic and dreadful ideas in the idiom of a painter, but as he reveals no particular gift either in drawing or in colouring, instead of inspiring horror or admiration he rather elicits a sense of annoyance." (January 20, 1912.)

Interestingly, the German dailies of Budapest wrote in much friendlier terms on Schoenberg's painting, showing greater recognition than had done the critics of the 1910 exhibition in Vienna. One should not see in this a truckling to the imperial capital, as the same papers carried deprecatory reports at the opening of the *Neukunst Wien* on January 6.

On January 20, the *Budapester Presse* wrote: "The red eye that looks at us out of a yellow whirl has a shattering effect hard

to fathom. Undoubtedly interesting are the canvasses 'Self-portrait', and 'Christ' which tend towards the bizarre. Nonetheless it is difficult to shake off the idea that earlier Schoenberg was a teacher of the Vienna Conservatoire." (That is to say, he is a musician and not a painter—J. B.)

The *Neues Budapester Abendblatt* had this to say (January 19): "Anton (sic) Schoenberg is represented by a whole range of oils and other sketches and pictures. Right away there is his head of Christ, whose mysticism is almost amazing. The head of the Saviour is barely lifted out of a grey shadow as He gazes upon us, only His eyes sparkle in an unearthly light . . . The accomplishment of the master is confirmed by his head of Gustav Mahler and by a few caricatures, of which special mention should be made of the two portraits of Critics."

On January 20 of the same year, the *Pester Lloyd* wrote: "Arnold Schoenberg, a fantasist of colours has sent two dozen strange ideas from Berlin, some painted in a most interesting fashion. It is better not to read the titles in case the terms Red Head, Blue Gaze, Yellow Head, Red Gaze discourage lingering before the colour jokes on show. But if we look at these things purely from the point of view of colours, some of them deserve our attention."

Ervin Ybl, the then twenty-two-year-old art historian later to become prominent, went beyond a description of superficial impressions. Even though writing in a daily paper (*Magyar Nemzet*, January 20, 1912), he devoted a serious aesthetic analysis to Schoenberg the composer as a painter. A rare document of the time, his thoughts should be quoted in their entirety even though in the final analysis he too rejects Schoenberg's painting for theoretical rather than emotional considerations.

"The great differences in the expressive idioms of the various arts have never been seen more decisively than in the second exhibition of the *Neukunst Wien* in the Artists' House, where we have been reminded of this precisely by Anton (sic) Schoenberg. A genuine musician, whenever he paints, he wants to follow the specific forms of expression of music. We have already seen excellent paintings which elicited definitely musical reactions from the viewer, but in those the expressive idiom was only subjectively musical. It was particularly the rhythm of the lines, the stress put on the tint or the ornamental and decorative endeavours that touched upon musical spheres. But Schoenberg's artistic credo is completely different: he wants to provide a musical basis for the objective element of painting. Alongside the indispensable importance of expression, painting also has to offer absolute pictorial values; neither expression nor the pictorial values can be allowed to dominate and in a genuine work of art the two are inseparable. Schoenberg separates the two and by so doing, he puts his art into a tragic position. As a musician, he naturally takes the side of autonomous expression by actually abandoning the pictorial. Music provides expression, emotions and visions in an absolutely autonomous manner, as it is not restricted by imitation, and so Schoenberg in his painting too neglects to imitate nature, upon which he could base the subjectivity of painting as upon the objective. Schoenberg neglects nature, but there is another course open to him on which he could bring pictorial values, namely ornamentation. In ornamentation the pictorial values are joined to expression even without imitation, but he spurns even this course. He breaks with the imitation of nature and with ornamentation, yet he wants to be a painter; and, from the point of view of painting as an art, this is absolute nonsense. Schoenberg's mode is the outcome of faulty reasoning, whose pictorial result may give rise to discussions but one cannot speak of any artistic value in connection with it."

Rather than bow to critical authority, let me now quote a few lines from a letter Kandinsky wrote to Schoenberg on November 16, 1911 to provide a different point of

view. "In your pictures ... I see a *great* deal. And two roots: 1. 'pure' realism, that is, things as they are, and at the same time their *inner* sonority. It is that which I foretold in my book[15] as the 'fantasy' of the most austere things [...] This 'fantasy' I love very much, particularly since I have seen your pictures! The second root—dematerialization, romantic-mystical sonority (another thing which I also am doing) pleases me less in *this* application of the principle [...] yet these things are also good and interest me very much."[16]

As to whether Arnold Schoenberg was present at the Budapest exhibition, which displayed the largest number of his paintings after his début as a painter in 1910 in Vienna, there is only one piece of evidence. Zsófia Dénes, a Hungarian writer and journalist (1885–1987), in the 1910s was in close contact with Paris von Gütersloh, the organizer of the exhibition, and in the early 1920s, during the years of her exile in Vienna, wrote a report of her visit to Schoenberg in Mödling for the Vienna-based *Bérsi Magyar Újság*. In November 1976, more than sixty years after the event, she believed she could remember seeing Schoenberg at the opening of the exhibition and hearing him playing his own works on the piano.

The facts, however, seem to refute this recollection, even though the composer was very much interested in his Budapest exhibition. All the many Hungarian press reports listed the exhibitors who attended the opening, but Schoenberg's name is nowhere mentioned. The re-arranged display of January 20 had in fact no official opening ceremony at all, while by January 6, as has been pointed out already, Schoenberg's pictures had not yet arrived. Although it was customary at the exhibitions held in the Artists' House to raise the tone of the opening ceremony with music (works by Bartók and Kodály had been performed there too), I could find no mention of Schoenberg's music in this context. Furthermore, the composer never in his life played the piano in public.

In the autumn of 1911, Arnold Schoenberg moved from Vienna to Berlin, and he began to keep a diary on January 20, 1912, the very day on which his Budapest exhibition opened.[17] He wrote this journal in minute detail, yet it includes no reference whatever to the exhibition or to any trip to Budapest. At the time Schoenberg was engrossed in preparations for a composer's evening of his to be held on February 4.

Finally, no-one in the Hungarian musical world knew of Schoenberg's alleged stay in Budapest, and indeed, they knew practically nothing of the exhibition as such either, the only exception being Imre Balabán, a pupil of Bartók's. Béla Bartók was not even in Budapest during the time of the exhibition. He was on a folksong collecting tour, but he presumably would have broken it off in the hope of meeting Schoenberg. He was keenly interested in modern fine arts, and it has been established that he had already been in contact with Schoenberg by 1912. Neither the exhibition nor Schoenberg's presence are mentioned by Antal Molnár (1890–1983), the Hungarian musicologist and music critic, (who in the early 1910s was preparing for a performance of Schoenberg works as the viola player of the Waldbauer-Kerpely String Quartet [from the 1920s on known as the Hungarian String Quartet]), in a pioneering article entitled "Arnold Schoenberg" that *Nyugat* carried (June 1, 1912).[18]

Thus it can be safely stated that the contemporary Hungarian musical scene knew nothing of Schoenberg's exhibition. However paradoxical it may sound, Hungarian cultural life encountered Schoenberg's painting five years earlier than it did his music. The first work by Schoenberg performed in Budapest, the second of his *Three Piano Pieces*, op. 11, was heard on December 9, 1917. This was not in a concert but at a performers' evening organized by the periodical MA, edited by Lajos Kassák, a leading figure in the Hungarian literary and artistic avant-garde.* The evening mainly consisted of

* *NHQ* 106.

literary works, but the Schoenberg piece was played by Piroska Hevesi, a Bartók pupil and the sister of Gyula Hevesi, later a commissar in the 1919 Hungarian Republic of Councils, alongside works by Bartók and Busoni and using a Schoenberg score she was given by Bartók. The first proper concert in Budapest to feature a Schoenberg piece took place on December 8, 1920, when the Rosé String Quartet of Vienna played his String Quartet No. 1, op. 7. This, however, is another story, one which would lead us far away from the chronicle of Arnold Schoenberg's exhibition in Budapest.

NOTES

[1] "Schoenberg Talks About His Paintings" in: Ernst Hilmar (ed.): *Arnold Schönberg Gedenkausstellung 1974*, Universal Edition Wien, 1974, p. 110. Halsey Stevens: "A Conversation with Schoenberg about Painting," in *Journal of the Arnold Schoenberg Institute*, Vol. II, No. 3, June 1978, pp. 178–80. (The section quoted here is on p. 179).

[2] Josef Rufer: *Das Werk Arnold Schönbergs*, Bärenreiter Verlag Kassel, etc., 1959, p. 180. *The Works of Arnold Schoenberg*, Free Press of Glencoe, New York, 1963, Appendix.

[3] Hilmar op. cit., p. 106.

[4] Wassily Kandinsky: "The Paintings of Arnold Schoenberg" in *Journal of the Arnold Schoenberg Institute*, Vol. II, No. 3, June 1978, pp. 181–4.

[5] Hilmar op. cit. p. 219.

[6] See Note 2.

[7] Ed. Jelena Hahl-Koch: *Arnold Schoenberg, Vassily Kandinsky: Letters, Pictures and Documents*, Faber and Faber, London, Boston, 1984, p. 39. I wish here to express my gratitude to Ms. Hahl-Koch making available a copy of the English edition of her book.

[8] Hahl-Koch op. cit., p. 40

[9] Hahl-Koch op. cit., p. 41

[10] Hahl-Koch op. cit., 9. 42

[11] Hahl-Koch op. cit., p. 43

[12] The figures and some titles in brackets here and in the listing of Schoenberg's paintings in the catalogue of the Budapest exhibition follow the numbering of the "Catalogue of Schoenberg's Paintings, Drawings and Sketches," by Lawrence Schoenberg and Ellen Kravitz in *Journal of the Arnold Schoenberg Institute, Vol.* II, No. 3, pp. 185–231. This catalogue has also served as the basis for the English titles I have been able to identify.

[13] The composer's name appears in all the documents as Schönberg. For the sake of clarity in the text, I have used everywhere—with the exception of the Notes—the Schoenberg variant.

[14] Miklós Rózsa: *A művészház története* (The History of the Artists' House), Budapest, no date, p. 13.

[15] Kandinsky refers to his book *Über das Geistige in der Kunst*, which, however, was only published in 1912; yet it obviously must have been ready by November 1911.

[16] Hahl-Koch op. cit., pp. 35–6.

[17] Anita Luginbühl: "Attempt at a Diary," in *Journal of the Arnold Schoenberg Institute*, Vol. IX, No. 1, pp. 7–51. The notes from between January 20 and 27, 1912, on pp. 9–14.

[18] New edition: Ed. János Breuer: *Zenei írások a Nyugatban* (Musical Writings in the Periodical Nyugat), *Editio Musica*, Budapest, 1978, pp. 84–93.

KLÁRA HAMBURGER

THREE UNPUBLISHED LETTERS BY LISZT TO SAINT-SAËNS

"Deux Musiciens de haute lignée, faits pour s'entendre de plein coeur." The sentiment was the younger composer's, Camille Saint-Saëns (1835–1921), but was quoted by Liszt, then 73 (1811–1886), in a letter to him in the summer of 1884, from Bayreuth.

The friendship between the two composers, the esteem they felt for each other's works and their mutual propagation of them are well known. Georges Servières describes this in the article "L'amitié de Liszt et de Saint-Saëns" (*Le Ménestrel*, July 14, 1922) Thirteen of the letters Liszt wrote to Saint-Saëns have been published by La Mara, in a more or less arbitrary form, as was customary with her.[1] The same letters, supplemented by seven more and some notes, though without any commentary, were published again in a special Liszt number of *La Revue Musicale* (May 1, 1928), edited by G. Lebas, director of the Musée de Dieppe. La Mara has also published six letters by Saint-Saëns to Liszt.[2]

In the spring of 1985, on a fellowship in France, I had the opportunity of studying Liszt's letters to Saint-Saëns in the Musée de Dieppe. I was delighted to find three letters which have never before been published and which, with their kind permission and assistance, I here publish for the first time.

By way of a preliminary comment, taking into consideration the findings of recent research I would like to somewhat enlarge on the sketch Georges Servières made in 1922 of the relationship between the two composers.

Liszt expressed his esteem for his young fellow-composer several times in letters to his lady friends, the Princess Carolyne de Sayn-Wittgenstein and Baroness Olga von Meyendorff.[3] The two composers dedicated several works to each other. Of his independent works, Saint-Saëns dedicated *Veni Creator spiritus* to Liszt and his Third Symphony in C minor to the memory of Liszt. (As it becomes clear from the third letter to follow here, the dedication had been approved by Liszt.) Liszt transcribed Saint-Saëns's *Danse macabre* for the piano and dedicated his late Second *Mephisto* Waltz for orchestra to Saint-Saëns. Indeed, as borne out by his letter of February 26, 1881, to Olga von Meyendorff, he intended to dedicate his *Csárdás macabre*, precisely because of its Hungarian character, to the French composer as well. (This last work, however, was only published in 1951, well over half a century after Liszt's death.)

It becomes clear from Liszt's correspondence with Saint-Saëns how selflessly he had studied the scores of his younger contemporary, offering benevolent criticism and professional advice. It is generally known that Saint-Saëns owed the world première of his opera *Samson and Delilah* in Weimar to Liszt, and that Liszt also had other works by Saint-Saëns performed there and elsewhere. The letters also show how Liszt took every effort to pave the way for the first local performances of the opera *Henry VIII* in Vienna, Prague and Budapest.[4]

What makes Saint Saëns's role in Liszt's life different from those played by other French composers, and indeed—apart from a narrow circle of Liszt's pupils—by all his other contemporaries, is that he not only accepted what Liszt was willing to offer but did everything, even at the cost of some sacrifice to himself, to have Liszt's works performed and popularized. He did so—and this is not inconsiderable—because he sincerely, though not uncritically, admired Liszt the composer. He did so in a France where Liszt would have most wanted to have

himself accepted as a composer and where he had come up against the strongest, most narrow-minded opposition and lack of understanding. It has only become possible to fully gauge and properly evaluate this role and assess Saint–Saëns's unique advocacy in the knowledge of all the details of the failure of Liszt's *Gran* Mass in Paris in March 1866 and of the history and press reception of the great "récompense" the composer's last "triumphal march" in France in 1886; equally necessary for this evaluation is an understanding of why Liszt continued to refer to the wounds he received there and the betrayal of his former friends, d'Ortigue and Berlioz, mortally offended.[5] So too we need the knowledge of why he became tired of striving in his ripe age for a distinction that would have been due to a young composer in a country that accused him of courting popularity and only accepted him in his capacity as a pianist.

In the knowledge of this, one can really understand what it must have meant to Liszt at last to encounter a highly gifted composer (who also was a conductor and virtuoso organist) in the country dearest to him, who held him in high esteem as a composer and exploited all possible ways and means to win other people over to his art.

Saint-Saëns played works by Liszt even before 1865. In March 1866, at a time of the spectacular fiasco of the *Gran* Mass, when all Paris was mocking "L'Abbé Liszt et sa Messe," he did not hesitate to perform, together with Liszt, the Credo and the Sanctus of the mass, explaining them, as it were, in the salon of the wife of Prince Metternich, the Austrian ambassador to Paris. Two months later, he and the pianist Francis Planté played on two pianos Liszt's *Les Préludes*, the first movement of the *Dante* Symphony and one of his *Legends* (presumably the one in A major on St Francis of Assisi) to the guests of Gustave Doré. Later too, he regularly played works by Liszt to smaller and larger gatherings, together with Planté, Augusta Holmès, his own pupils or with Arthur Friedheim, a pupil of Liszt's. A major such occasion was a highly successful soirée on May 31, 1867, in the La Muette château of Madame Erard, the widow of the famous piano manufacturer, whose family had been among Liszt's most sincere friends in Paris from his days as a child prodigy right up to his death. Also present was Berlioz, so loyal to Liszt, who was already seriously ill. The concert was organized by Liszt's son-in-law, the politician Émile Ollivier, who introduced the works. Saint-Saëns played with Planté on two pianos, performing *Les Préludes*, *Tasso* and the fantasy *Ruinen von Athen*. The concert was described as a "délicieuse fête" in the June 2, 1867 number of *La France Musicale*, which expressed regret at the absence of the composer. Compared to the press reaction of the previous year, this showed a very positive development in the recognition of Liszt in France.

This event is referred to in Liszt's letter from Rome, dated July 5, 1867, the first of the three letters which have remained unpublished:[6]

No. 1

My most honoured friend,

My thanks and congratulations come to you very late but you know how sincerely attached I am to you, and you will forgive me for being able to find such little to write to those I love and esteem the most.—News of the soirée at Madame Erard's only reached me a fortnight afterwards. I thank you for honouring *Tasso* and *l'Héroïde* with your interpretation. To be sympathetically understood by you, dear Monsieur St. Saëns, is more than the satisfaction of being flattered, for you belong among *the ones* who know what Music is all about today, and prove it in your works. Among others your *Veni Creator*[7] bears the stamp of being nobly inspired, and of being composed by a consummate master of the art.

I am delighted at the success of your exhibition Cantata[8] and heartily look

forward to all the success which is due to you. Accept simply and with despatch the lofty aims which occasion the renown brought by your merits.

I asked Mme Ctesse de Mercy[9] to request from you a brief list of your published works, in particular those for several instruments. Those I have heard in Paris make me greatly desire to hear them again, and I would further like to pass them on the friends who should know them: namely M. Sgambati[10] here and M. de Bülow[11] in Munich. Be good enough to send me the list—or even better, give it to me yourself in six weeks time in Thuringia. From 20th to 28th August there will be a great deal of music-making—including the kind not heard everywhere: first of all at the convention of musicians ("Tonkünstler Versammlung") which this year will take place at *Meiningen* on 22nd August, and then at the Wartburg celebrations where on 28th my Oratorio "Saint Elizabeth" will be performed.

I invite you most sincerely to come, and remain your affectionate and devoted,

F. Liszt

5th July 67, Rome

I leave here for Weimar towards 25th July.

A splendid organist, Saint-Saëns repeatedly included Liszt's works in his recitals. He scored a great success with his transcription of Liszt's Légende *Saint François d'Assise, La prédication aux oiseaux*, which he performed in 1878 in the Trocadéro in Paris, in 1881 in London's St George's Hall and in 1882 in Weimar (the concert was attended by Liszt, who was delighted by the transcipition). He also took the trouble to sit down with the noted conductor Pasdeloup, to explain the *Faust* Symphony to him and advise him on how to conduct the work. But he did even more than that. Sparing no effort and even risking a fiasco, on March 18, 1878 he conducted—at his own expense—a Liszt orchestral evening in the Salle Ventadour, billing the *Festklänge*, the *Dante* Symphony, two movements of the oratorio *Christus* ("The Shepherds at the Manger" and "The Three Holy Kings' March"), the movement "Gretchen" of the *Faust* Symphony and an orchestrated *Hungarian* Rhapsody.[12]

I wish to take this opportunity to thank M. François Lesure, Director of the Music Department of the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, for his information that the Théâtre Italien was housed in the Salle Ventadour between 1841 and 1876. This means that the hall referred to under two different names is in fact one and the same premises. M. Lesure has also been so kind as to provide me with a copy of the review of the evening devoted to Liszt the composer which appeared in the column "Concerts et auditions musicales" in the *Revue et Gazette Musicale de Paris*, on pages 94–95. (An abridged version appeared in: Pierre-Antoine Huré—Claude Knepper: *Liszt et son temps*. Paris, 1987, Hachette. pp. 581–583. No.231. "La courageuse entreprise de Saint-Saëns.")

24. 3. 1878

"The beautiful and powerful conceptions, the grand and penetrating sonorities, the gracious interludes, the wearisome verbiage, the apocalyptic enigmas of Liszt's music resounded last Monday, sometimes superimposed one upon the other, in the hall of the Théâtre Italien, little accustomed to such accents. It was a courageous enterprise to devote an evening exclusively to the hearing of these compositions, the spirit of which the audience at first found difficult to grasp, and some of which will without doubt always arouse antipathy; still, living as we do in an epoch where Berlioz is acclaimed, then Liszt could not remain neglected in France as a symphonist, and M. Camille Saint-Saëns has done well as an artist to take the initiative in revealing them to us (we regard the recent performance of *Tasso* at the popular concert as a mere preamble,

a trial of opinion, the Hungarian rhapsodies having introduced us to an incomparable *orchestrator* and arranger rather than a composer).—The session began with *Festival Sounds* (*Festklänge*, the seventh of the symphonic poems). While as far as possible divesting ourselves of the habits engendered in our aesthetic appreciation by the classical masters, as well as the romantic, and striving to broaden our attitudes, the matter in question being the new art of which Liszt is one of the chief exponents, we were unable to assimilate sufficiently the indeterminate poetic element which in this genre of composition replaces the more precise beauties of organization (unity of design, interesting development) essential in a classical work. The impression that remained was that of a brilliant discourse not lacking in new and original detail, but which only occasionally had real eloquence, too often becoming lost in irrelevant digression.—At the beginning of the grand symphony in two parts based on the *Divina Commedia* by Dante, we are presented with a description that runs to excess and aberration. Five long minutes is far more than one can reasonably be expected to endure. This concert of the damned is a terrible and inescapable monotony. Liszt here makes the mistake, on this as on so many other occasions, of trying to ascribe to music things it cannot express, and to take on a poem much better and more richly served by means of the concrete written idea. Fortunately a radiant moment at last breaks through the chaos; the episode of Francesca da Rimini, placed by Dante, if memory serves correctly, in the second circle of his Inferno, interrupts the lugubrious symphony, providing the most striking imaginable contrast. This episode can be approximated with the love scene in *Romeo and Juliet* by Berlioz, which, however, it does not equal, and the duet from *Tristan und Isolde*. It is one of the best constructed and deeply felt pages Liszt has written; the harmony, as always, is very original, but not at all harsh or strange; the orchestration, splendidly colourful, adds to its attractiveness (1). The damned then resume their miserable concert, though in a slightly less tortured manner: a ray from the present aureole seems to have remained in their night to alleviate for a while the frightful darkness. The second and final part of the symphony depicts Purgatory: its character, in the first half, is sad and serious, with a real nobility in the melody and harmony; there is no realism here; there are pages of real beauty, even if rather uniform in colour. Liszt has not ventured to follow the poet into Paradise; as the programme tells us, "he stops on the threshold, from where the distant choirs of angels can be heard singing the *Magnificat* at the foot of the throne of the Eternal." This coda, which is quite prolonged, is grandiose and full of effect. The chorus is written for women's voices, while children's voices intone the *Magnificat* to a melody only distantly related to the liturgica versions of the canticle.—Two extracts from the oratorio *Christus*, 'the shepherds at the manger' and 'the three Holy Kings' opened the second part of the concert. *Christus* is a more recent work than the ones mentioned so far: its composition only goes back to 1872 (!).[13] Liszt has apparently returned here to organizing his ideas along lines closer to the classical manner; German critics (*Christus* was first performed in Vienna, then Weimar[14]) even claimed to discern a complete change of style. Though clearly over-zealous in their estimations, nevertheless *Christus* is certainly considerably more bearable to worldly minds and ears than the bulk of the *Symphonische Dichtungen*. The two pieces given by M. Saint-Saëns were a perfect choice. The first, with the title 'the shepherds at the manger' has a ravishing pastoral colouring. The oboe naturally plays an important part; in the second section a viola solo has a most fascinating dialogue with the upper wind instruments. Even without considering the descriptive intentions the composer doubtless had, and viewed as absolute music, the piece is ex-

quisite. For the main theme Liszt made use of a popular melody played by the pifferari in the streets of Rome during Advent. The march of the three kings[15], which was spoilt by being taken too quickly, is also most charming, broadening gradually into music at once very solemn and very ethereal: surely the voices of those in heaven are united with the voices of the three kings.—Why could we not have had a third extract from *Christus*, for example the ravishing *Stabat mater speciosa*, instead of the interminable, incomprehensible and unendurable andante 'Gretchen' from the *Faust* Symphony? If this is the road to the future then let us get back as soon as possible into the old rut and return to Haydn! For here the effort needed to open the mind to the new ideas lies beyond what the listener not gifted with quite special faculties is capable of. Still, enough has been said of the piece, which was given a very cold reception, and let us end this review of the works performed by declaring, by contrast, the success of the rhapsody in *G*[16], one of the most brilliant among the fifteen Liszt has written. Given such an ending, its effect is assured.—A few words now about the performance. It is not surprising that all was not absolutely beyond reproach, despite the goodwill, devotion and excellent musical faculties of M. Saint-Saëns; there are difficulties in these works for which eight or ten rehearsals are scarcely enough, the performers furthermore being not so convinced as their conductor of the excellence of the music they were interpreting. M. Saint-Saëns often chose a too rapid tempo in directing them; even so, he conducted with unusual resolve, always in perfect possession of the music, taking great care with nuances and entries. At the end he was recalled with applause; this, sadly, was a little cool, though well deserved through all the efforts he had put into a cause which is dear to him, and which probably did not triumph as he would have liked, even though the hall was well attended, no piece passed without applause, and the event produced not the slightest trace of any protest.

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(1) Among the unusual and remarkable orchestral effects was one which has aroused considerable curiosity among most of the musicians who *saw* it performed: an arpeggio diminished seventh chord executed rapidly on the harp, *glissando*, consequently causing all the strings to vibrate. The diatonic tuning of the instrument makes it at first hard to explain what otherwise is just a very simple effect often used in solo playing, but which Liszt is probably the first to have introduced into the orchestra. Two adjacent strings are turned in unison enharmonically by the pedals: in this way the complete series of minor thirds is obtained which make up the diminished seventh chord: *C, D sharp, E flat, F sharp, G flat, A, B sharp, C etc.*"

The article speaks for itself. It clearly reflects the total lack of understanding that greeted Liszt's works in French music reviews—even the relatively well-intentioned and well-grounded one in question and even as late as 1878. (It is true, however, that it was far from a felicitous idea by Saint-Saëns to perform the "Gretchen" movement out of the *Faust* Symphony as an independent piece. The article also explains why Liszt felt so mortally offended by the rejection he encountered in Paris and why he described Saint-Saëns's efforts as a "Herculean deed." So too does it explain why he was overcome by his French colleague mounting the concert as a surprise, so that he should have no chance to dissuade him from it.

Saint-Saëns himself wrote that he had been rehearsing for two weeks, but bad organization left the hall almost empty.[17] Later he recalled the concert in his book *École Buissonnière* by writing: "Nobody can imagine what I had to go through to put on this concert: a hostile public, the ill-will of the Théâtre Italien, who loaned me their famous hall, but slyly forbade that the concert be advertized properly, orchestral

indiscipline, objections from the choir who, thinking that Liszt was covering the costs of the concert, wanted their fees increased, and then finally total failure—as anticipated."

Liszt was deeply moved, as he also wrote to Carolyne Wittgenstein and Olga von Meyendorff. To Saint-Saëns he expressed his gratitude in a letter of March 30, 1878:

Nr. 2.

Dear friend,

What a surprise this concert was in which you honoured my symphonic works with a performance! After so brilliantly composing "La Jeunesse d'Hercule,"[18] here you are in the process of accomplishing labours analogous to those of the mythological hero who rescued Prometheus. The terrible vulture is missing from the domestics who surround the great rebel (among whom I venture to count myself) but the flocks of ravens and baby vultures apply themselves eagerly to the same task...

For some years now I have accorded you my admiration and support; henceforth I add to them my sincere appreciation for your recent heroic action of 18th March at the Salle Ventadour.

Please accept my continued
and cordial expressions of devotion,
F. Liszt

30th March 78—Budapest

Before Easter I shall be back in Weimar, where soon I hope to see
your *Dalila.*

Liszt added a postcript to the letter he wrote from Bayreuth on April 14, 1878, asking if Saint-Saëns had received his thanks "sur votre très osé concert Liszt," which he had addressed to the Durand publishing house.

Saint-Saëns also praised Liszt's works in his studies and books, applying some particularly warm words to the symphonic poems, which he considered to be masterworks.[19] One can easily envisage how pleased Liszt must have been to be able to read in 1885, in the memoirs of Saint-Saëns: "One whom everyone insists on calling a great pianist to avoid having to acknowledge that he is one of the great composers of our age." And at the end of the chapter: "Everything has been done to impose German music upon the Parisian public (...) To end with I would express the wish that a tenth of this energy be spent on behalf of the works of Liszt, so vivid and colourful, even melodious, which are popular in Russia[20] and will become so in France the moment people take the trouble to make them known as they deserve."[21]

All this throws light on the friendship between Liszt and Saint-Saëns and the significance of the three, so far unknown, letters by Liszt to the younger composer.

Liszt wrote the last letter, here published for the first time, about six weeks before his death. Or rather, he signed the letter he had dictated, as by the time his eyesight practically failed him, and the letter is written in a strange hand. Liszt was about to undergo an operation on his eyes, which, however, could not be carried out.

Saint-Saëns composed the symphony referred to in the letter—the Third Symphony, in C minor, for orchestra and organ—on a commission from the English Philharmonic Society. From 1871 on, he frequently appeared in Britain and was considered there to be the best French musician. He himself conducted the première of the work in London.

Nr. 3.

Dear friend,

Happy in the friendship of which you have shown me so many proofs, I remain full of heartfelt gratitude. The success of your symphony in London has given me great pleasure, and it will continue *crescendo* in Paris and elsewhere. As a dedication I would ask you just to put my name. I likewise am constrained to rest

content also with writing it at the foot of these lines due to my enfeebled sight.

Your cordial and devoted friend,

F. Liszt

Weimar, 19th June 1886

Concerning the dedication mentioned in the letter, Saint-Saëns had to content himself with dedicating the work to the memory of Liszt, who died on July 31, 1886, in Bayreuth.

APPENDIX

No. 1.

Mon très honoré ami,

Mes remerciements et félicitations vous arrivent bien tard; mais vous connaissez la sincérité des sentiments qui m'attachent à vous, et m'excuserez de trouver si peu de moments pour écrire à ceux que j'estime et affectionne le plus.—La nouvelle de la soirée chez Madame Erard ne m'est parvenue qu'une quinzaine de jours après. Merci de l'honneur que vous avez fait au Tasse et à l'*Héroïde* en les interprétant. Etre sympathiquement compris par vous, cher Monsieur St. Saëns, me vaut plus qu'une satisfaction flatteuse, car vous êtes des *quelques uns* qui savent de quoi il s'agit aujourd'hui en Musique, et le prouvez par vos oeuvres. Entre autres le *Veni Creator* porte le cachet d'un maître noblement inspiré et consommé dans l'art d'écrire.

Je me réjouis du succès de votre Cantate de l'exposition et m'associe de coeur à tous vos succès qui suivront. Prenez simplement et au plustôt le haut bout de la renommé qui est dû à vos mérites.

J'avais prié Mme Ctesse de Mercy de vous demander une petite liste de vos ouvrages *imprimés*, en particulier de ceux pour plusieurs instruments. Ce que j'en ai entendu à Paris me donne fort envie de les réentendre, et je desire aussi les communiquer à quelques amis comme il faut: nommément à M. Sgambati ici et à M. de Bülow à Munich. Soyez assez bon pour m'envoyer cette liste — ou mieux encore remettez-la moi, dans six semaines en Thuringe. Du 20 au 28 Août on y fera tout plein de Musique, et de celle qui ne se rencontre pas partout : d'abord à la réunion des artistes musiciens ("Tonkünstler Versammlung") qui aura lieu cette année à *Meiningen* le 22 Août, et puis à la fête de la Wartburg où l'on exécutera le 28, mon Oratorio " Sainte Elisabeth ". —

Je vous invite cordialement à venir, et demeure votre affectionné et dévoué,

F. Liszt

5 Juillet 67, Rome

je partirai d'ici vers le 25 Juillet pour Weimar

Nr. 2.

Très cher ami,

Quelle surprise que ce Concert où vous avez honoré mes oeuvres symphoniques en les dirigeant ! Après avoir si brillamment composé " la Jeunesse d'Hercule ", vous voici en train d'accomplir des travaux analogues à ceux du héros mythologique qui délivra Prométhée. Le terrible vautour manque à la domesticité du grand insubordonné (parmi laquelle j'ose me ranger) mais la troupe des corbeaux et des vauterelles s'empresse fort à la même besogne...

Depuis nombre d'années ma très admirative estime et sympathie vous sont acquises; désormais il s'y joint une sincère reconnaissance pour l'acte héroïque que vous venez d'effectuer, le 18 Mars, à la Salle Ventadour.

Veuillez bien me croire à toujours
votre cordialement dévoué

F. Liszt

30 Mars 78 — Budapest.

Avant Pâques je serais de retour à Weimar, et y verrais bien tôt, j'espère,

votre *Dalilah*

Nr. 3.

Très cher ami,

Heureux de l'amitié dont vous m'avez donné tant de preuves, je vous suis recon-

naissant de coeur. Le succès de votre symphonie à Londres me fait grand plaisir, il continuera *crescendo* à Paris et ailleurs. Pour toute dédicace je vous prie de mettre simplement mon nom. Je dois aussi me contenter de l'écrire au bas de ces lignes à cause de l'affaiblissement de ma vue.

Bien devouée et cordiale amitié

F. Liszt

Weimar, 19 Juin 1886

NOTES

[1] *Franz Liszts Briefe*. Ed. by La Mara (Marie Lipsius), Vols 1–9 (Hereinafter *Briefe*), Leipzig 1893–1905, Breitkopf and Härtel.

[2] *Briefe hervorragender Zeitgenossen an Liszt*, ed. by La Mara, Vols 1–3, Leipzig 1895–1904, Breitkopf and Härtel.

[3] To Carolyne Wittgenstein in *Briefe* (10, 5, 1866, 12, 5, 1866, 22, 3, 1878, etc.). To Olga von Meyendorff in *The Letters of Franz Liszt to Olga von Meyendorff in the Mildred Bliss Coll. at Dumbarton Oaks*. Transl. by William R. Tyler. Intr. and Notes by Edward N. Waters, Dumbarton Oaks 1979 (9, 12, 1877, 30, 1, 1878, 7, 3, 1879, 24, 3, 1879, 1, 2, 1880, 26, 2, 1881, 5, 5, 1882, etc.).

[4] *Samson and Delilah* received its première in December 1877 in Weimar. Liszt was not present and he only saw the opera later. On *Henry VIII* cf. Liszt's letters of April 29 and May 15, 1884 from Weimar. The opera has never been produced in Budapest.

[5] For more on this, see Émile Haraszti: *Liszt*, Paris, 1967, Picard; Klára Hamburger: *Liszt*, Budapest 1987, Corvina (English ed.); Klára Hamburger: "Liszt and Émile Ollivier" in *Studia musicologica*, 28, 1986.

[6] For the original text of the letters, see Appendix.

[7] *Veni creator spiritus*, 1858, "dédié à l'abbé Liszt".

[8] The cantata Saint-Saëns wrote for the 1867 world exposition, *Les Noces de Prométhée*.

[9] The Belgian Countess Louise de Mercy-Argenteau, a fervent music lover. She made great efforts to publicize, both home and in France, the works by composers of the new Russian school. Her husband was the chamberlain of Napoleon III, and after he died she moved to St Petersburg, where she lived until her death in 1890. Liszt was in correspondence with her.

[10] Giovanni Sgambati (1841–1914), Liszt's most eminent pupil in Rome, composer, pianist and conductor.

[11] Hans von Bülow (1830–1894), pianist, conductor and composer. Liszt's favourite pupil, and at the time in question still officially, as the husband of Cosima, his son-in-law.

[12] Unfortunately I have been unable to identify the piece. None of the first 15 Hungarian Rhapsodies (or the six orchestrated ones) are in the key of G, which is mentioned in the *Revue et Gazette Musicale de Paris*. Saint-Saëns himself only speaks of "a Hungarian Rhapsody" in his memoirs *École Buissonnière*.

[13] The columnist is mistaken, as the backbone of the work was written between 1862 and 1866, with the 6th movement dating from between 1855 and 1859 and the 13th movement from 1867.

[14] Part 1 of the *Christus* Oratorio, the "Christmas Oratorio" was first performed in Rome on July 6 1867, conducted by Sgambati, and it was next heard under Anton Rubinstein in Vienna, on December 31, 1871. The world première of the whole work was given in the Stadtkirche of Weimar, conducted by the composer, on May 29, 1873, and this was followed by the performance on November 9, 1873, in the Redoute in Pest, under the baton of Hans Richter.

[15] The Hungarian colour of the work, which was also stressed by Liszt, went unnoticed by the reviewer.

[16] Cf. Note 12.

[17] *Harmonie et Mélodie*, Paris 1885, Calmann-Lévy, pp. 155–80. Also: *École Buissonnière*, Paris 1913, Pierre Lafitte, pp. 199–207.

[18] *La Jeunesse d'Hercule*, op. 50, a symphonic poem by Saint-Saëns.

[19] Apart from the works mentioned already (cf. Note 17): *Portraits et Souvenirs*, Paris, no date, Société d'éd. artistique, pp. 15–34.

[20] At least he was highly popular among The Mighty Handful, the most significant Russian composers of the day.

[21] *Harmonie et Mélodie*. In a letter of thanks (Weimar ,August 20, 1885) Liszt writes: "Je vous suis bien reconnaissant de la part que vous m'accordez dans votre volume *Harmonie et Mélodie*."

HUNGAROTON RECORDS: MARCH 1988

How many piano concertos did Bartók write? The usual answer is 2.99, given that Tibor Serly completed the orchestration of the last seventeen bars of the third, but Zoltán Kocsis (Hungaroton SLPD 12869–71) increases the total to six by including the Rhapsody op.1, the Scherzo op.2 and, more than a little oddly, the Music for Strings, Percussion and Celesta. What results is a remarkably full portrait of Bartók, going from one of the earliest works he chose to publish right up to the last he came close to finishing. Of course, there is nothing to represent the two decades from 1905 to 1925, the period arguably of Bartók's richest and most challenging music (the first two quartets, *Bluebeard's Castle, The Miraculous Mandarin*, the Ady songs, the violin sonatas...) But echoes and pre-echoes of this period are to be found in the deep-textured and characterful playing of the Budapest Festival Orchestra under Iván Fischer, while Kocsis is, as one might expect, a formidable soloist, exact in attack, quite astonishingly precise in the fastest music, often suggesting a hard, implacable frenzy in his insistent playing of ostinatos. There is no inappropriate "expressiveness" in the slow movements, not even in that of the Third Concerto, with its cryptic marking "Adagio religioso": Kocsis does not take this at face value, nor does he see it as ironic, but instead he enters the music coolly, from outside, like a small child visiting a cathedral. It is extraordinarily effective; but so too is his close matching with the percussion in the slow movements of the First and Second concertos, and perhaps most of all in the third movement of the Music for Strings, Percussion and Celesta.

András Wilheim's scholarly notes remind us that Bartók himself refused to play the piano in this work "because it is not a solo part". Nor indeed is it, though Kocsis might persuade one otherwise occasionally, as in his atmospheric contributions to the adagio or his sheer alacrity in the fast movements. But the fact of his standing out draws attention to a persistent fault in the set, which is that the orchestral performance is on a different level from that of the soloist (though strangely the disparity is most conspicuous in the Music for Strings, where Kocsis is supposedly just part of the orchestra). For instance, although the finale is very seriously slower than Bartók indicated, lasting for seven minutes against the stipulated 5′ 40″, one certainly would not wish it any faster given the difficulties that the strings experience in their articulation; nor are their wind companions any happier in trying to keep up with Kocsis in the first movement of the Second Concerto. Another problem is the soupy Romanticism, quite against Kocsis's style, that Fischer indulges in from time to time: the diatonic variants of the main theme, appearing in the last movement of the Music for Strings, are particularly over the top, though there is also exaggerated richness in the opening movement of this work (again the timings tell the story: Fischer extends the movement to 7′ 20″, nearly a minute longer than Bartók advised).

It is a pity Kocsis could not have been partnered by an orchestra that might rival his own virtuosity, especially in the Second and Third concertos (one wonders how much the increased orchestral brightness of the Second Concerto, by comparison with the First, was owed to Bartók's experience of American orchestras during his first tour of the United States in 1927–28). However, there is some compensation in the understanding that the Budapest Festival Orchestra show in their phrasing and the percussion playing is excellent. It is also good to have a strong performance of the Scherzo op.2, which is almost never played in the concert hall, but which, despite its modest title, is one of Bartók's biggest instrumental works: here it plays for a full half-hour. It is, admit-

tedly, a bit of a pot-pourri, with some sections that sound like Strauss or Liszt along with others that look straight forward to *The Wooden Prince*, and the form (ostensibly that of a scherzo with trio, plus slow introduction) is so distended and subject to divagation as virtually not to exist. But there is more of the real Bartók here than in the orchestral suites that followed, and the piece has the mysterious charm of any genial monster.

If the string quartet and the piano concerto were characteristic genres for Bartók (which is one reason why he wrote more of himself into the Scherzo than into the suites of 1905–7), his friend Kodály was surely most at home in choral music. Even discounting the large provision of educational pieces, more than half his output was of choral works, and after the early 1930s he wrote little else, with hardly anything beside three big orchestral pieces—the "Peacock" Variations, the Concerto for Orchestra and the Symphony—to interrupt the flow of folksong arrangements, small choruses, liturgical pieces and occasional larger works. So far roughly two-thirds of this repertory has appeared on record in five volumes, covering the ground from student compositions to the works of the composer's eighties, though the selection is not chronological. Even if it had been, it is hard to imagine that anything like coherent development would have emerged in Kodály's choral music: once he had found how to make folksongs into spirited little choral pieces, as he had by the mid-twenties, this became his unvarying technique; and the "free" compositions are so much in the same style that it is exceedingly difficult to tell which numbers have folksong origins and which do not.

The nature of the problem is well shown in the third volume (Hungaroton SLPX 12492), a re-release of the classic recordings made in 1966–68 by the Budapest Zoltán Kodály Girls' Chorus under Ilona Andor. Most of the pieces here are folksong arrangements, but they all have the same bright, ingratiating manner; and though the performances are a tribute to Andor's training, the impression is all too like that of looking through a rack of embroidered shirts in a Budapest shop: one's appreciation of the skill rapidly weakens in the face of so much sheer abundance, and of peasant skills being subjected to commercial expertise. Much to be preferred, for the delicacy they bring to traditional material, are the Two Folksongs from Zobor (1908), which stand alone in time (Kodály had begun collecting folksongs only three years before, and he made no more choral arrangements until fifteen years later), and which are included among a group of generally more substantial items sung by the Hungarian Radio and Television Chorus under Ferenc Sapszon (Hungaroton SLPX 12398).

The same choir is conducted by János Ferencsik in the first volume (Hungaroton SLPX 12352), which assembles several of the more ambitious pieces that lack orchestral accompaniment, chief among them the patriotic *Hymn of Zrínyi* (1954), setting a defiant seventeenth-century text in rousing fashion for solo baritone (here Lajos Miller) and mixed voices. Also here is the dramatic motet *Jesus and the Traders* (1934) and other pieces, though again the non-Hungarian listener may feel alienated both by the folksong musical language and by the fervent nationalism, which is a feature of the *Ode to Liszt* (1936) as much as the *Hymn of Zrínyi*.

The fourth volume (Hungaroton SLPD 12555) is once more a garland of shorter numbers in the main, with only one true folksong (not including the "Marseillaise", which Kodály Magyarised in 1948) but with many pieces that might be. One side features again Ferenc Sapszon and his choir; the other is recorded by the Male Chorus of the Hungarian People's Army under István Zámbó. Both these ensembles are well drilled, but the freshest singing comes from the Jeunesses Musicales Chorus under Gábor Ugrin in the fifth volume (SLPD 12554), which is entirely of sacred music. The range here is from excessively sentimental early pieces (the *Ave*

Maria of 1900; the offertory *Assumpta est Maria* of 1901) through canonic settings from the collection *Bicina hungarica* to the Hungarian Mass for unison voices and organ, written in Kodály's last year. Here the extraordinary thing is that, at the end of a long creative life, Kodály should so directly have echoed Liszt, as if there had to be some model, such as folksong more commonly had supplied.

Lajos Miller, the hero of the *Hymn of Zrínyi*, is also to be heard in the latest instalment in the Hungaroton series of early Verdi recordings, *Attila* (SLPD 13934–35). Composed for Venice in 1846, this work is distinguished by a dominant bass role, richly taken here by Yevgeny Nesterenko. The booklet note, by Péter Várnai, informs us that the work was disliked by Pest audiences in 1852 because Attila was "presented as an unpleasant character", but in Nesterenko's interpretation he is very much the noble infidel, magnanimous and eloquent. The real villain is the perfectly foul Christian heroine Odabella and her beloved Foresto, the tenor lead: they are repeatedly distrustful of each other, and at the end have an unseemly squabble about which of them is to have the honour of stabbing the hunnish king. Sylvia Sass, though her vibrato is not always controlled, has the vocal largeness and fury for Odabella, and she is well paired with the rugged János B. Nagy in a love duet for homicidal monsters. Miller's role, effectively done, is that of Ezio, who preserves an ideal of Republican morality into the murky Rome of the fifth century. Kolos Kováts has the secondary bass role of Leone, described here as "an old Roman," though surely in history he was the Pope. Lamberto Gardelli, conducting the Hungarian State Orchestra, does all the rum-ti-tum accompaniments with his usual energy.

PAUL GRIFFITHS

OUR CONTRIBUTORS

BIHARI, István (b. 1927). Chemist. Since 1982 General Manager of Chinoin pharmaceutical works. Vice-Chairman of the National Council of the Patriotic People's Front, Member of the Presidium of the Hungarian Chamber of Commerce. Has published much on business management and on the technical progress in various professional reviews.

BÓNIS, Ferenc (b. 1932). Professor of Musicology at the Liszt Ferenc Academy of Music in Budapest. Heads the Music for the Young Department at Hungarian Radio. His main field is the history of Hungarian music. Books on Bartók and Kodály include *Béla Bartók, His Life in Pictures and Documents* (in English). See "The Magnum Opus of Bence Szabolcsi," *NHQ* 53, "Fritz Reiner, an early Bartók Conductor," 63, and the first two parts of "Three Days with Sándor Veress, the Composer," 108, 109.

BREUER, János (b. 1932). Musicologist, critic, staff member of the Hungarian Musicians' Association, editor of the journal *Magyar Zene*. His special field is 20th-century Hungarian music and its international connections, on which he has published several books. See "Pál Kadosa—Composer, Pianist, Teacher," *NHQ* 80, "Adorno's Image of Bartók," 81, "Kodály in England," 87, "Kodály and Britten," 88, and "Schoenberg and his Hungarian Advocates," 110.

FORGÁCS, Éva (b. 1947). Art historian, on the staff of the Budapest Museum of Applied Arts. Has published *Kollázs és montázs* (Collage and montage), Corvina Press, 1976 and studies on the Bauhaus and the art critic Ernő Kállai. Recent contributions include: "The Precise Surrealism of Albert Kováts", *NHQ* 90, "Károly Schmal's Three-Dimensional Pictures," 94, "Decorative and Functional Textiles," 99, "New Sensibility, III.," 101, "The Rediscovery of Hungarian Art Deco," 102, "Eclecticism," 104, "Interactions—Hungarian Artists in the Weimar Republic," 106 and "The Mythology of Today," 107.

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GRENDEL, Lajos (b. 1948). Writer. Read English and Hungarian at the Komensky University of Pozsony. On the staff of Madách Publishers of the same town. Has published novels and short stories since 1970. His first novel *Galeri* (Gang) was published by the Madách Publishing House. In Hungary he published two other novels: *Hűtlenek* (The Unfaithful), Szépirodalmi Publishers, 1970 and *Áttételek* (Transmissions), Európa Publishers, 1985.

GRIFFITHS, Paul (b. 1947). Music critic of The Times of London. Has written books on Bartók, Boulez, Cage, Maxwell Davies, Ligeti, Messiaen and the string quartet.

GYERTYÁN, Ervin (b. 1925). Our regular film critic.

GYÖRFFY, Miklós (b. 1942). Our reviewer of prose fiction.

HAMBURGER, Klára (b. 1934). Musicologist, music editor of Gondolat, a pub-

lishing house for non-fiction, since 1966. Her biography of Liszt, first published in 1966, has been frequently reprinted and was translated into German and English. A revised edition in English was published by Corvina Press in 1985. See her "Liszt Triumphant," *NHQ* 95 and "Liszt, Musicien Humanitaire," 103.

HORN, Gyula (b. 1932). Secretary of State in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Studied economics in the Soviet Union. Starting with the sixties, on the staff of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and later of the Foreign Section of the Central Committee of the HSWP, and then head of the latter. Has published "Our Southern Neighbour—Yugoslavia," 1972, "The Crisis of Imperialism in our Age," 1974, "The Economic Development of Albania," 1977. See "Détente and Confrontation in East–West Relations," *NHQ* 102 and "New Thinking in International Politics," 108.

HOPPÁL, Mihály (b. 1942). Ethnologist, a graduate of the University of Debrecen. On the staff of the Ethnographic Institute of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. His field of research is folk beliefs, popular medicine and shamanism, on which he has published widely. *Shamanism in Siberia*, edited by Vilmos Diószegi and Mihály Hoppál, was published by Akadémia Publishers, in 1978. See his "Contemporary Forms of Shamanism," *NHQ* 95.

JESZENSZKY, Géza (b. 1941). Historian and librarian. Studied history and English at the University of Budapest; was a schoolteacher; on the staff of the Karl Marx University of Economics, Budapest. Wrote a dissertation on "The Colonial Question in the Great War and at the Paris Peace Conference, 1914–1919". In recent years has been working on "The Changing Image of Hungary in Britain, 1890–1914," with the support of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. Author of several articles on modern history published in scholarly journals. See "The Times and its Image in Hungary," *NHQ* 87 and "The Hungarian Question in British Politics," 100.

KÄFER, István (b. 1935). Slavonic scholar. A graduate of the University of Budapest. 1959–1962 taught at the University of Pozsony, Czechoslovakia; 1966–1981 on the staff of the Group of Scientific Research on Eastern Europe, now teaches at the Department of Slavonic Studies of the University of Budapest. His main field is Hungarian–Slovak literary relations. Has published *Az egyetemi nyomda négyszáz éve* (Four-hundred years of the University printers), Helikon, 1977; *Magyar—szlovák irodalmi kölcsönösség* (Hungarian–Slovak Literary Reciprocity), Tankönyvkiadó, 1984 and *A szlovák és a cseh irodalom magyar bibliográfiája* (The Hungarian Bibliography of Slovak and Czech literature), Akadémiai Press, 1985.

KERESZTURY, Dezső (b. 1904). Poet, literary historian, essayist, member of the Editorial Board of this review and a frequent contributor, a former Minister of Culture and Education. Has published books of poems, collections of essays, a life of János Arany, the 19th-century Hungarian poet, as well as translations from German poets. His most recent contribution was "János Arany and English Literature," *NHQ* 100.

KOCZISZKY, Éva (b. 1953). Classical scholar. Read Ancient Greek, German and Hungarian at the University of Budapest. Since 1977 on the staff of the József Attila University of Szeged; since 1985 on that of the German Department. Her main field is the survival of Greek antiquity and the problem of mythology. Her *Mnémosyné — A görög tragédia Hölderlin értelmezésében* (The Greek tragedy in the interpretation of Hölderlin) is about to be published.

KOLOSI, Tamás (b. 1946). Sociologist. Read philosophy, aesthetics and Hungarian

literature at the University of Budapest. On the staff, later Head of Department of the Institute of Social Sciences of the Central Committee of the HSWP. Specialises in social structure. Since 1985 has also taught at the Department of Sociology of Budapest University. Publications include *A párttagság és a társadalmi rétegződés* (Party membership and social stratification), 1985, *Struktúra, rétegződés, egyenlőtlenség* (Structure, stratification, inequality), 1985, *Status groups in Hungary* (a collection of articles on sociology), 1986, *Strukturális csoportok és reform* (Structural groups and reform), 1986 and *Tagolt társadalom* (Articulated society), 1987.

KOLTAI, Tamás (b. 1942). Our regular theatre critic.

LÁNCZ, Sándor (b. 1919). Art historian and critic, a graduate of the University of Budapest, research fellow (now retired) at the Art History Research Group of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, specialises in modern and contemporary art with an emphasis on post-war Hungarian art. Has published several books on Hungarian artists. See "The Visionary Art of Lajos Szalay," *NHQ* 81 and "The Rediscovery of Hugo Scheiber," 105.

LÓSKA, Lajos (b. 1951). Art critic. Read Hungarian literature and Art History at the University of Budapest. From 1975 on the staff of *Művészet*, an art periodical. His main field is contemporary graphic art, with special emphasis on the sixties and seventies. See "The Classical Scribbles of Árpád Szabados," *NHQ* 103. "The Painting of Béla Veszelszky," 104, "Hungarian Graphic Art 1986," 106 and "After the Transavantgarde," 107.

MAXTON, Hugh (b. 1947). Poet. A graduate of Trinity College Dublin and of the New University of Ulster. Taught English at the University of Leeds, Georgetown University, Clemson University of North Carolina and the University of Antwerp. To date he has published five collections of poetry. He is widely known to be the literary critic W. J. McCormack, whose most recent work, *Ascendency and Tradition in Anglo-Irish Literary History*, was published by the Clarendon Press, Oxford.

NÁDAS, Péter (b. 1942). Novelist, playwright, essayist. In addition to four collections of short stories (1967–79), a trilogy of plays and a volume of criticism on the theatre, he is the author of the novels *Egy családregény vége* (The end of a family saga), 1977 and *Emlékiratok könyve* (Book of memoirs), 1986.

NEMES NAGY, Ágnes (b. 1922). Poet, translator. Selected poems, translated and introduced by Bruce Berlind, was published in English by Iowa University Press in 1980. See "Intersections of the Animate and the Inanimate" by Eric Mottram in *NHQ* 83. Translations include plays by Corneille, Racine, Molière, and Brecht, and poems by Rilke, St. John Perse and many other English, French and German classical and modern poems. See her poems in *NHQ* 23, 25, 62, 68, 73, 76 and 100.

NÉMETH, Miklós (b. 1948). Member of the Political Committee and Secretary to the Central Committee of the HSWP. A graduate of the Karl Marx University of Economic Sciences of Budapest. Since 1971 taught at the same university, and was, after 1977, a Deputy Head of Department at the National Planning Office. After 1981 on the staff of the Department of Economic Policy of the Central Committee of the HSWP, which he headed for some months in 1987. That same year he was elected Secretary to the Central Committee.

PALLÓ, Gábor (b. 1942). Scientist. A graduate of the University of Budapest, read Chemistry and Philosophy. Since 1967 on the staff of the Research Group on the

History of Sciences of the Technical University of Budapest. Has published books on the history of theories of radioactivity and the structures of materials around the turn of the century. His special field is now the activity of Hungarian scientists abroad.

RÉNYI, Péter (b. 1920). Journalist. Retired Deputy Editor of *Népszabadság*, the central daily of HSWP. See among recent contributions to *NHQ*: "A Népszabadság Interview with Bruno Kreisky," 83, "The Interview in the Elysée," 88, "Socialism and Reform," 91, and "Tragedies, Catharses, a New Life," 97 and "A Hungarian in Carlton Gardens," 101.

RÓNA-TAS, András (b. 1931). Anthropologist. Graduated in oriental studies and cultural anthropology from the University of Budapest in 1955. He did field work in the Mongolian People's Republic (1957, 1958) and among the Turkic peoples of the Volga Region (1965, 1973, 1978). He is professor of Altaic Studies at the József Attila University, Szeged and President of the International Association for Tibetan Studies. Earlier visiting professor in Bonn and Vienna. His main field is comparative historical linguistics. Publications include: Tibeto-Mongolics, The Hague, 1966, Studies in Chuvash etymology, Szeged, 1982, Language and History. Contributions to Comparative Altaistics, Szeged, 1986 (all in English).

SCHMIDT, Péter (b. 1926). Constitutional lawyer. A graduate of the University of Budapest. Chairman of the Department of Constitutional Law at the same University. Publications include: *Állami jogszabálygyűjtemény* (A compendium of legal norms), I–II., Tankönyvkiadó 1971 and *Szocializmus és államiság* (Socialism and statehood), Kossuth Press, 1985.

SIMÓ, Sándor (b. 1934). Film director. A graduate of the Technical University of Budapest and the Academy of Cinematic and Theatrical Arts of Budapest. Has directed *A szemüvegesek* (Those with glasses), 1969, *A legszebb férfikor* (The most beautiful age of man), 1971, *Apám néhány boldog éve* (Some happy years of my father), 1977, *Viaduct*, 1982 and *Isten veletek, barátaim* (Farewell, my friends), 1987.

SOMLYÓ, György (b. 1920). Poet. Has published numerous volumes of poems as well as books on poetry. Author of a novel, of a book on the poet Milán Füst. Has translated many French, English, Latin and North American poets. Editor of *Arion*, a yearbook of poetry, fiction and criticism in several languages, published by Corvina Press, Budapest. See his poems in *NHQ* 23, 32, 57, 91 and his "The Wound of Philoctetes," 86.

SZÁSZ, Imre (b. 1927). Writer, critic, translator. Read Hungarian literature at the University of Budapest. An editor on the staff of various publishing houses and periodicals. In 1985 he published *Ménesi út*, a novel Other books include: *Felhőfejes* (Cloudheader), 1967, *Gyertek este kilencre* (Come at 9 p.m.) 1969, *Száraz martinikoktél* (A dry Martini), 1973.

TÖMPE, Zoltán (b. 1951). Engineer and economist. A graduate of the Kálmán Kandó Technical College and of the Karl Marx University of Economics of Budapest. 1974–1982 worked for Videoton Foreign Trade Company, 1982–1985 for the National Marketing Institute, since 1985 on the taff of the Computer Studies Institute of he Hungarian Academy of Sciences. Speialises in the economic and social effects of nformation technology.

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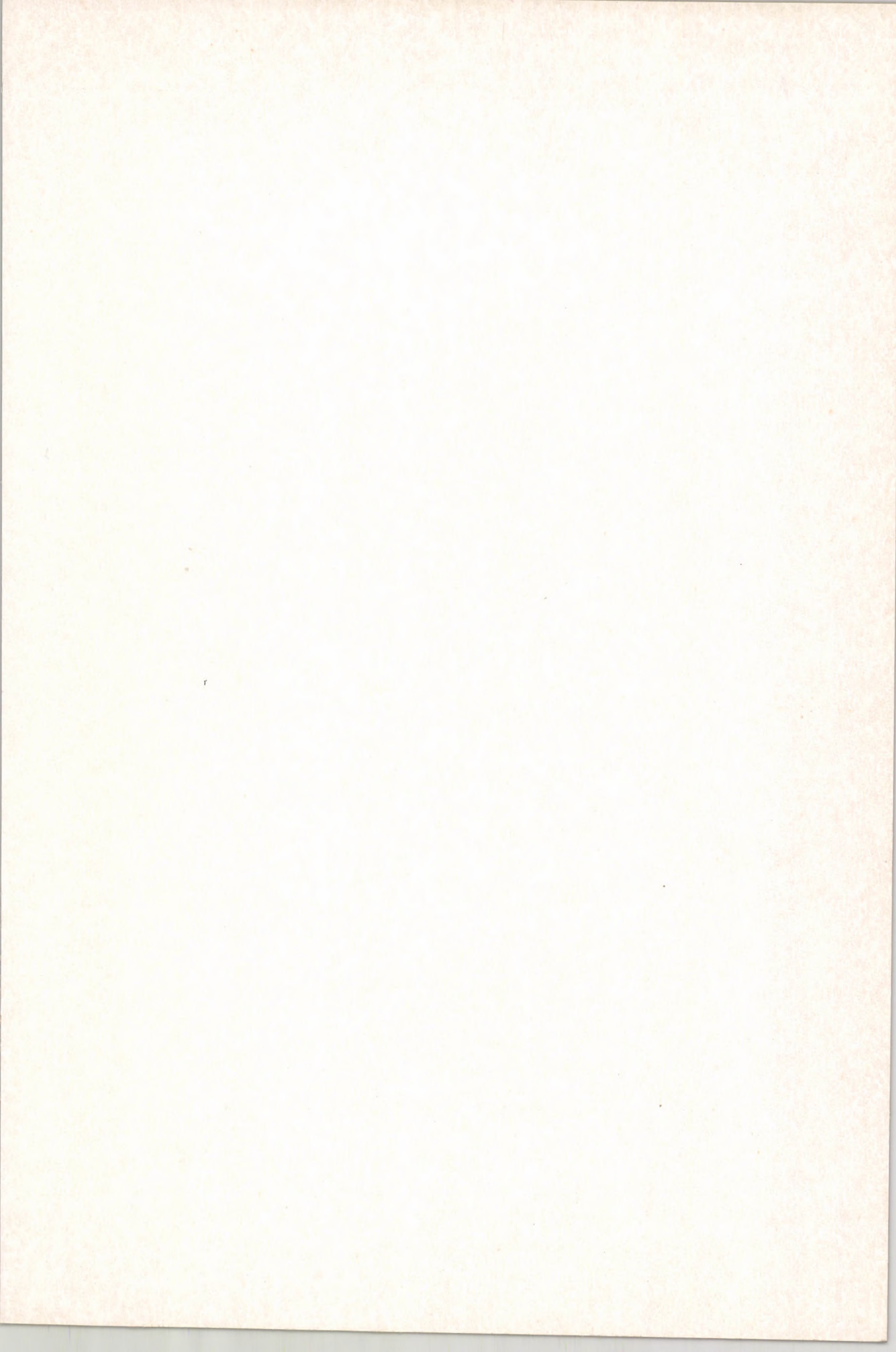

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