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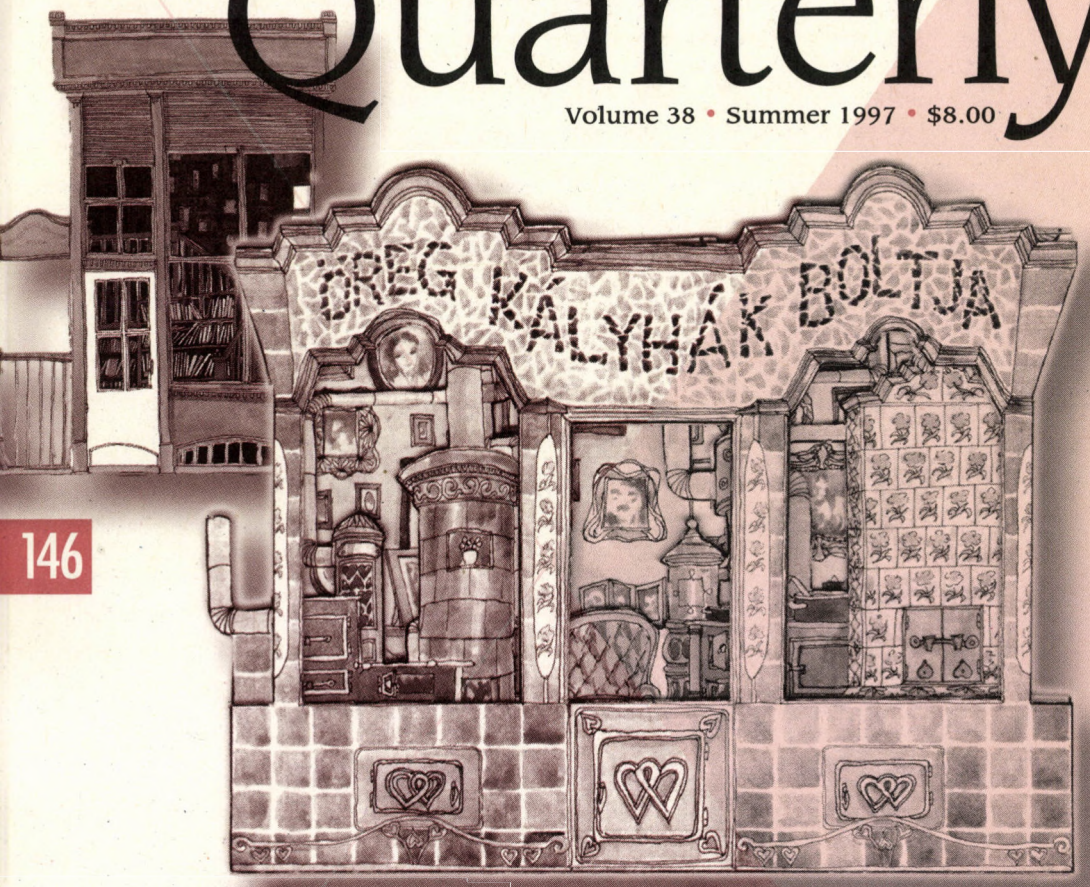

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Gusztáv Molnár

The Geopolitics of NATO Enlargement

It is not the intention of the present study to explain the necessity for NATO enlargement, nor does it deal with the chances of accession. Taking the NATO accession of Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic for granted, it seeks to address the geopolitical meaning of this enlargement that is expected to be accomplished within the next two years.

Geopolitics is philosophical geography (Mackinder), a special approach which perceives geography as unified (Yves Lacoste), but the world as limited and cut across by borders. It is a store of knowledge, says Strabo, that traders and military leaders find useful so they will not lose their presence of mind should they find themselves in a place where they do not recognize the constellations. Although the author of the *Geography* considers his work to be serious and worthy of a philosopher, he believes that a geographer should not delve too deeply into philosophical investigations, because a politician does not have enough time for such things, or, at least, not always. (See Strabo, 1. 21; 23)

Geopolitics is a synthetic view of the geographical and civilizational determination of history. Its approach is the objective observation of correlations between geographical and civilizational generalizations, which allows hypotheses to be made about history as a living process. Historians rummage through the objectified ruins of power, while geopoliticians are interested in power not yet objectified.

From the geopolitical point of view, NATO enlargement is simply the marking out of the new East-European boundaries of the West; in other words, its goal is to prevent the organization of Eastern and Western Europe into a unified geopolitical structure. In this context, the use of the terms "Eastern Europe" and the marking out the boundaries of the West instead of Western Europe should be explained. As we shall see, these new boundaries will not mean a reciprocal recognition of the spheres of influence

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of equals (West and East, America and Russia), but a unilateral and necessary expansion of the West. The disintegration of Eastern Europe in the geopolitical sense makes expansion, the containment and control of instability, unavoidable; equally unavoidable is the retreat of the West into that sphere where its inner cohesion as a civilization can be maintained, indeed, strengthened.

In his study, *Three Historical Regions of Europe,* Jenő Szűcs mentions truncated Eastern Europe as the East-European counterpart of the first great Western expansion between 1000 and 1300. Europa Occidens expanded from its previous boundary line along the Elbe–Saale–Leitha to the Vistula–Eastern Carpathian line (this essentially meant that in the lowlands between the Oder and the Morava, but still outside the eastward expanding Holy Roman Empire, two new autonomous western states, Poland and Hungary, were established and growing in strength); Europe in the east, in the Middle Ages, remained incomplete. Eastern Europe as a cultural, indeed, structural identity could only come into being in the northern forests and marshlands of the vast region comprising the European part of Russia. (Figures 1 and 2) The southern steppe zone was not yet Russian land, nor Europe, but the western extension of the Eurasian, nomadic world wedged into geographical Europe. (Szűcs, pp. 292–93)

Unfortunately, we cannot know how the structural (cultural, social, and political) identity of Eastern Europe, represented by Kievan Russia and developing within the sphere of influence of Scandinavia and Byzantium, would have turned out had it survived into the modern age. The reason is that after the relatively peaceful Khazar Empire was crushed, the Slav population, under continuous attack by the Pechenegs and Cumans, began to gradually leave the more developed territories around Kiev in the second half of the 11th century. Characterized by an increasingly simplified social structure and culture and by political disintegration, while retreating into the north–north-eastern woodlands and river valleys sparsely populated by nomadic Finno-Ugrians, Russia represented the East-European counterpart to western expansion. In addition to its incomplete character determined by climatic conditions and corresponding terrain, it was an Eastern Europe on the defensive, without the appropriate political institutions for the formation of strong central authority. The Tartar invasion of 1228 did the rest. The Tartars burned down the new towns founded by those who had left Kiev and massacred the population. "The Tartar conquest completed the displacement of Russian history begun by the Polovtsy [Cumans]. The New Great Russia of the Middle Volga was crushed almost at its birth. (...) A growing culture and civilization was practically extinguished except for one saving force, the national church. With a devastated country and crushing yearly tribute, there could be little thought for anything beyond the daily bread." (Pares, 60) Thus, when Ivan (The Great) III freed Moscow from Tartar rule, there took place the expansion of a new East-European state, which had virtually no links with the West.

Integration, or more exactly, the incorporation of territories inhabited by Orthodox Russians with close ties with the West was the first stage of the expansion. This was the time when second hand absolutism turned into a genuinely Russian despotism. The Novgorod Republic, which preserved its autonomy over a long period, and did not pay the Tartars tribute, many consider today as the precursor of a possible positive Russian nationalism (Billington). This is a rather artificial and forced parallel, even if we assume that there is such a nationalism. The fact is that Novgorod, as an economic, social, and political model, was destroyed by Muscovy. In 1476, Ivan III's troops built a wooden wall around Novgorod in the Tartar manner, sealing the town's fate. First the grumbling nobility, then the tradesmen were resettled, and finally more than ten thousand families were indiscriminately displaced to the central Volga region, and the same number of families from around Moscow were sent to Novgorod in order to forestall rebellion. Ivan III

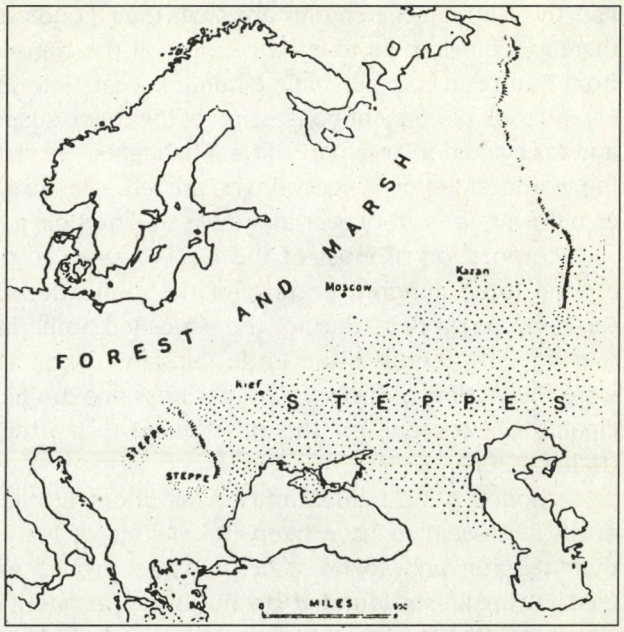

Figure 1. Eastern Europe before the 19th century. Mackinder 1904 after Drude in Berghaus' Physical Atlas.

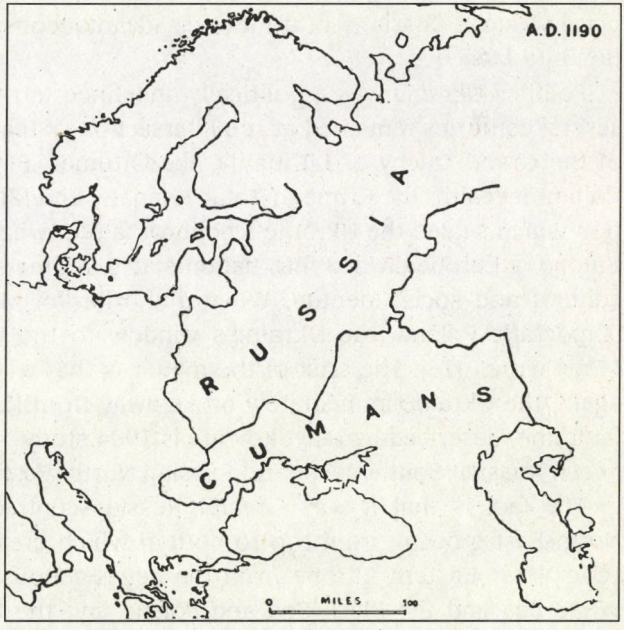

Figure 2. Political divisions of eastern Europe at the time of the Third Crusade. Mackinder 1904, after The Oxford Historical Atlas.

had the German merchants arrested, their goods and their church confiscated, thereby removing the town, a member of the Hanseatic League, once and for all from European commerce. One hundred years later, Ivan the Terrible again invaded and took permanent possession of the town, suspect for its Polish connections, and massacred a large part of its inhabitants. He crowned this act with the edifying words: "Men of Novgorod who are left alive, pray God for our religious sovereign power, for victory over all visible and invisible foes." (Pares, 118)

Incorporation of most of the West-Russian territories became possible only a good three hundred years after the unification of Greater Russian (or East-Russian) territories, during the so-called imperial age. Mihail Heller wrote that for long centuries the Little Russians (Ukrainians) and the White Russians were the victims of history. Greater Russians, unified under the rule of the principality of Moscow, on the other hand, were the formative force of history. (Heller, 120)

Orthodox principalities and towns under Lithuanian and Polish jurisdiction do in fact seem to have been the victims of history. Although they preserved their religion and social structure, they proved incapable of transforming an East-Europeanism founded on the Byzantine heritage into a political structure closely related to and intercommunicating with the expansive western model. It is easy to see why Greater Russians were the ones to create the homogeneous compound of Eastern Europe par excellence. (Jenő Szűcs) However, the absence of political sovereignty, the three-hundred-year "respite" did not necessarily place western Russians in a more disadvantageous position than their absorption into Muscovy.

Political *Ukraina* was a politically undefined territory, a frontier zone that for several centuries remained at the intersection of the continually shifting borders of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, the Ottoman Empire, the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth, the Crimean Tatar Khanate, and Muscovy. (Motyl, 24) The situation which sealed the Ukraine's political fate in what is called post–Westphalian Europe, a Europe divided into nation-states, ultimately enabled it to preserve its cultural and social identity. When authoritarian Muscovy defeated chaotically democratic Poland, the Ukraine's window to the West was closed, Alexander Motyl writes (26). The crux of the matter is that when this window was opened again, the Ukraine immediately broke away from Russia, thereby recreating the fault line, described by Milyukov in his 1904 study—within Eastern Europe—between Russian South– West and Russian North–East. (Milyukov, 86–90)

The fact is that it was Greater Russia—centred on Moscow—the Russian North-East growing from top to bottom which created that "true" but still not "complete" Eastern Europe from the heterogenous material lying between the White Sea and the Black Sea and Poland and the Urals. Siberia was then also added, all the way to the Pacific Ocean, to this new and expansive Eastern Europe.

This par excellence Eastern Europe, augmented with Siberia (established between the liberation from Mongol rule and the founding of St Petersburg in

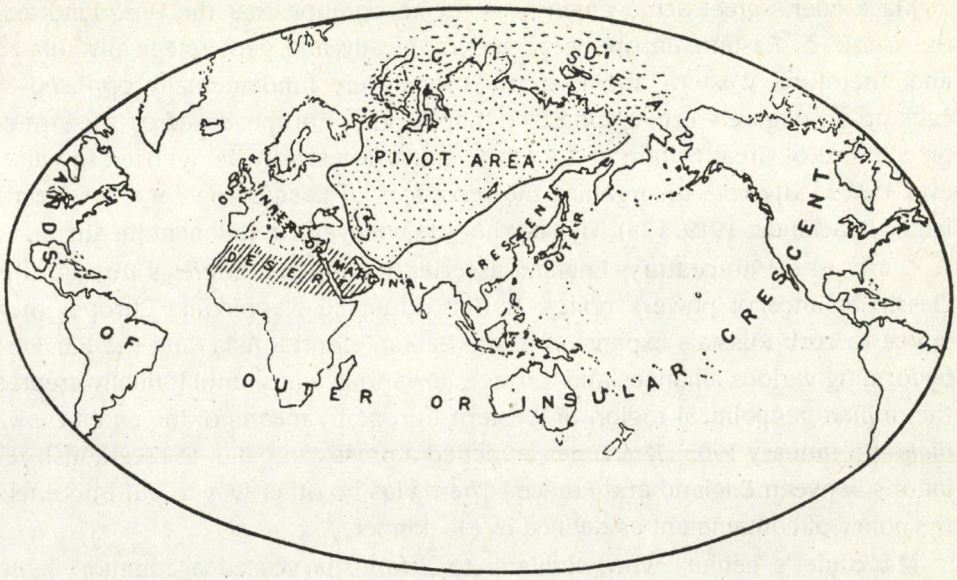

Figure 3. The Natural Seats of Power. Pivot area: wholly continental; Outer crescent: wholly oceanic; Inner crescent: partly continental, partly oceanic. Mackinder 1904.

1703), whose western frontier extended to the Dnieper–Narva line, enabled Russia to extend its empire to the whole of geographical Eastern Europe, all the way to the Elbe by the mid–20th century.

The British geographer Harold Mackinder, the most influential figure in geopolitics to date, defined Eastern Europe in terms of geography and geostrategy. At the height of British naval supremacy (when, after the Boer War, the Indian Ocean became virtually a British lake), Mackinder's attention turned to the vast territory of key strategic importance (pivot area; Heartland) which was inaccessible by sea and, therefore, could become a natural base for a continental empire and a threat to the interests of the British Empire (Figure 3).

Eastern Europe means an inland Europe, inaccessible from the ocean and turning its back on it. That is to say, it is the totality of the catchment areas of the Caspian, Black, and Baltic seas (except the Bavarian reach of the Danube). Mackinder was perfectly correct to describe the Black and the Baltic seas as inland. (It was recently established that the former was in fact an inland sea until 5500 B.C.) He was right not only because the continental power may, in the strategic sense, close down both (as happened in the Great War), but, above all, because 16th-century East-European refeudalization, which was a direct consequence of the turning of West European interest toward the Atlantic Ocean, continues to exert its influence to date.

Mackinder's great achievement was the recognition that the Heartland and the whole of Eastern Europe were geographically and geostrategically related and, therefore, Western and Eastern Europe were fundamentally opposed to each other. (Figure 4) He emphasized that Western Europe, based on the strategic alliance of Great Britain and France, "must necessarily be opposed to whatever Power attempts to organize the resources of East Europe and the Heartland." (Mackinder 1919, 139). This is what the policy of containment means.

During the 19th century, England asserted its imperial interests through the classic balance of powers policy. It first strangled Napoleonic Europe, then strove to curb Russia's expansion in the Balkan, Central Asia, and the Far East by forming various alliances and through its various allies, until it finally created the unified geopolitical region of Western Europe by means of the *entente cordiale.* (In January 1903, *The Times* launched a press campaign to reestablish relations between England and France.) There was no other way to put into effect the policy of containment as defined by Mackinder.

Mackinder's genius, who, similarly to Strabo, professed a common-sense philosophy of history, lay in that the ordinary correlations he established make

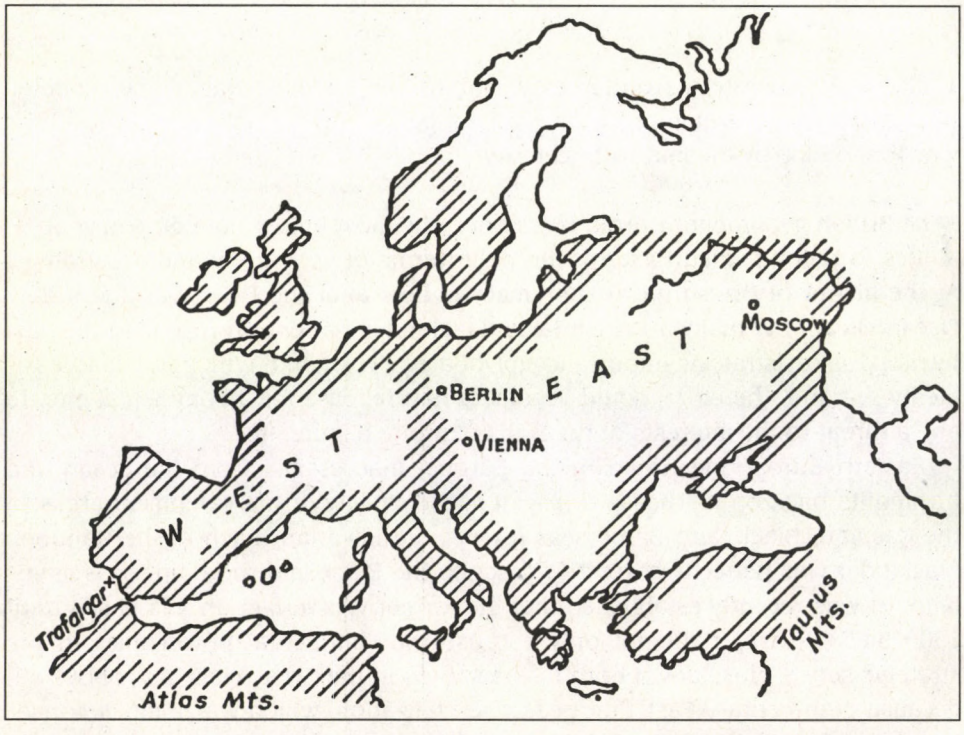

Figure 4. Western Europe open to the ocean and Eastern Europe open to the Heartland. Mackinder 1919.

it possible to interpret the entire period between April 8, 1904 (ratification of the Anglo-French *Entente*) and April 4, 1999 (the summit conference of a North-Atlantic Alliance augmented with East–European member states commemorating the 50th anniversary of the ratification of the Washington Agreement), as the living process of the geopolitical constitution of the West closing on the note of NATO enlargement.

According to Mackinder, Western Europe, as geopolitically understood, means the unity of the insular bridgehead of the naval power and Europe open to the ocean as a continental bridgehead. From the civilizational aspect, this corresponds to the (insiders') renunciation of imperial logic, and thus the exclusion of war between states who recognize their common civilizational heritage. In spite of Eastern Europe's enormous strategic advantage deriving from its possession of the Heartland, it was ultimately defeated in its gigantic struggle with Western Europe. This was because the key states, Wilhelmine and later Hitler's Germany and tsarist, then Bolshevik Russia did not share the same civilizational values, or, at least, they were unable to adequately recognize the kindred features present, so discerningly described in Thomas Mann's grand essay, *Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen,* published in 1918.

Understandably, it was a Polish exile in Paris, Michal Sokolnicki, the author of the testament that was attributed to Peter the Great, who first articulated in 1797 Russia's and Germany's association of common interests (in terms of Russian superiority). (Heller, 290) First in 1904, and—in more detail—in a book finished after World War I and based on the new power relations, Mackinder wrote about the geopolitical interdependence of these two East-European powers, fated either to cooperate or to subjugate one another. The important issue for him was supremacy in Eastern Europe and, with it, the Heartland. In comparison, the question which of the two powers would exercise control over, and organize the resources of, Eastern Europe and the Heartland in a given period, was secondary. Common sense, a fundamental value in Western civilization, would have dictated that they reach an agreement or, at least, refrain from waging a two-front war.

Had the Emperor William II taken a defensive stance on the Franco–German border in 1914 and attacked only Russia, had Hitler listened to Haushofer in 1941, (a leading German geopolitical figure, who expanded on Mackinder's views) and not attacked Russia, had Stalin's successors listened to Beria in 1953 and, by letting the GDR go, separate Germany from the Atlantic Alliance, and, finally, had the Soviet Union shared atomic secrets with China in 1957, we would have to view the 20th century as the period when a World Island, extending from the Mecklenburg Bight to the Gulf of Tonkin, was organized into a geopolitical unit, instead of the West. These obvious solutions were not put into effect simply because of the dominance of a policy of exclusion in Eastern Europe, imperial logic acting as the internal organizing principle, rather than common sense.

The very existence of Eastern Europe and the constant threat it posed was what, in the first decade of the 20thcentury, actuated the transition from British splendid isolation to the establishment of Western Europe as a geopolitical unit based on Anglo-French cooperation. Subsequently, after the subjugation of East-European states—an utterly senseless move from the point of view of "rational" Russian interests—came the establishment of a West based on a strategic alliance between North America and Western Europe, namely, the North Atlantic Alliance.

The accession of Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic to the geopolitical unit called the West (that is, not Western Europe or America) slowly brings Mackinder's century to a close. After events have run their course, the prescient owl of geopolitics retreats to its lair and the disclipine that investigates the past steps in. The most influential geopolitical concern for English and U.S. administrations since the beginning of the century, the concept of containing the Heartland, which has become literally a political practice (Gray, 258), however, has not entirely lost its relevance. This is because Russia and China continue to act like empires or, at least, quasi-empires. In the 21st century, however, the West will not have a deus ex machina of the same unbelievable effectiveness as ill-fated Eastern Europe was.

The two European spheres of influence (Western and Russian) that NATO enlargement seems to give rise to reflect a relatively accurate but essentially misleading picture of the temporary situation.

The questions of which former communist or neutral countries, interested in joining NATO, when and in what order will eventually attain full membership are not as important as believed by those supporting accession and by those afraid to be left out.

In Europe, the most important security policy question for the next decade concerns the establishment of "strategic homes" or strategic areas supervized and coordinated by NATO, of which formal NATO enlargement is only one element. Three such strategic areas are necessary if NATO wants to do something about the vacuum created in the wake of the collapse of the Cold War with Eastern Europe. (Figure 5) In the last phase of World War I, Germany, and, after the post-war treaties, France and Great Britain, tried to fill the suddenly abandoned region between Germany and Russia with their own client states, which led to eventual catastrophe. The reason for the failure is obvious: the major European powers involved were mortal enemies, and, the U.S.A., sensing what it was getting into, beat a dignified retreat from Europe.

Ronald D. Asmus and F. Stephen Larrabee of the Rand Corporation, who are working on the strategic plans for NATO enlargement, examine the question of strategic areas from the aspect of the extremely important and sensitive relationship between the states that will join NATO in the first round and potential members that will not. According to them, Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary,

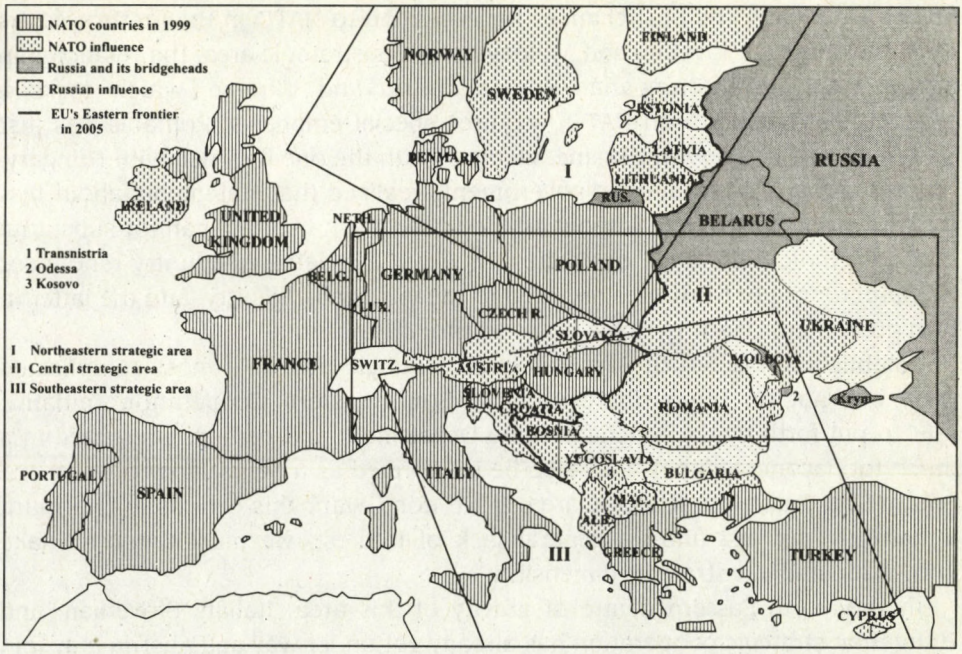

Figure 5. Europe after NATO enlargement.

and two potential member states, Slovenia and Slovakia, constitute the East-Central-European thrust of the enlargement. The Baltic States, Finland, and Sweden constitute the North-East European direction, should they decide to join NATO. The South-East European direction poses the greatest problem, with only Romania and perhaps Bulgaria as possible candidates, since their underdeveloped economy and the aversion of NATO member states to Balkan conflicts reduce their chances to a minimum. The key to the whole concept is the linkage of potential member states to a regional NATO command.

Establishing these strategic areas is indeed a strategic question, not a tactical ruse directed at the sensitivities of states left out of the first round of the enlargement. Larrabee and Asmus report that in the North-East strategic home Denmark and Germany have already begun—with American aid—to establish various forms of regional military cooperation with Poland, which is likely to join NATO, and with these Baltic States aspiring for membership but with uncertain outcome, as well as with formerly neutral countries such as Finland and Sweden. (Asmus and Larrabee, 18–19)

Applying this proposed Rand model to the entire region shows that the truly most important central strategic area must in some way extend to Ukraine, the key state in East-Central Europe. In addition to NATO member states, this regional defense cooperation should include Poland, the Czech Republic,

and Hungary with the best chances for accession to NATO in the first round, as well as Romania, Slovakia, and Moldavia. In this strategic area, the relationship between the Polish–Hungarian–Romanian trio and Ukraine, which seeks a strategic partnership with NATO, acquires special emphasis. Romania has just signed a basic treaty with Ukraine, identical with the one it signed with Hungary. The Hungarian and Romanian governments realized that statements about historical reconciliation, but without any legal force whatsoever, cannot substitute land for ethnic rights type of treaties, in which the defeated country renounces its claim to former territories annexed to the victorious country, and the latter in turn guarantees minority rights on its territory (Haraszti).

Establishing the South-East European strategic area is a most complicated task, but not an impossible one. The South-Eastern Cooperation Initiative (SECI), put forth by the American State Department and perhaps presented in a much too laconic manner, may also be interpreted as a preparatory plan for the South-East European strategic area. If we don't want this extremely important initiative to be lost amid a general lack of interest, we must urgently make known its inherent strategic dimension.

In the North-Eastern centre of gravity of this area, Italian, Slovenian, and Hungarian strategic cooperation has already got under way and Austria may join in at any moment. The recent agreement on a very promising partnership between Hungary and Romania may play an important role in developing the South-East European strategic area and in its subsequent smooth operation. It is not common knowledge that these two countries, falsely proclaimed ancient enemies in the second half of the 19th century, have effectively cooperated economically and in fighting for the common goal of repelling Russian influence. (Sturdza, 3–5) This tradition may prove particularly advantageous today in making long-range plans for their relations with their neighbours (Slovakia, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, and Moldavia) which are also, to varying degrees, subject to Russian influence.

There are thus three countries in the entire region covered by the cooperation policy outlined above, which play, or may play, an essential role in two strategic directions. They are Poland, Hungary, and Romania. NATO may and must extend towards the east its present strategic perimeter towards the east primarily through these countries.

The most conspicuous feature of the above strategic model is that the United States, as a leading European power, plays a decisive role in all three cooperation zones, while Russia plays none. Primarily this means that the concept, consistently put forward by French geopoliticians (Michel Foucher, Pierre Béhar, and others) and quietly and inconsistently by German experts, concerning a strategic partnership between Western Europe and Russia, that is, a pan-European structure without the U.S. or with the United States only as a third party, becomes irrelevant with the expansion of NATO. The return of the West to

its 11th-century boundaries and of Russia to the 16th-century boundaries of Muscovy (Heller, 631) make the construction of this Greater Europe, as conceived by de Gaulle, Mitterand, and Gorbachev, impossible. Perhaps, as Michel Foucher, the director of Observatoire européen de géopolitique in Lyons, says, "nearby Russia is only waiting for Europe, with France and Germany in the lead, to make an offer for partnership," but this new Eurasian Holy Alliance cannot be brought about disregarding the former East–European countries about to join NATO.

Russia has ceased to be a superpower (which is obvious), as well as an East-European great power (which needs some explanation). The reason why Moscow has objected so loudly and nervously to NATO enlargement is that it would entail facing the loss of its own continental power. It should really have faced this actual position years ago, at the time when it became obvious that it was incapable of the economic, military and political reintegration of the post-Soviet region. The *de facto* realization of the geopolitical pluralism (Brzezinski) inside the former Soviet Union, however, is not the final stage in Russia's disintegration. The fall of the external empire is followed by the disintegration of the internal empire of the former Muscovite Russia.

Russia had never been a nation-state in the sense that Great Britain and France once were and continued to be even after the loss of their colonial empire. This is well illustrated by the special way—as in the case of Novgorod, described in the first part of the article—that Muscovite Russia was created. It was not by way of a union of the various Russian duchies—under Moscow's leadership—to shake off the Mongolian yoke, but a most ruthlessly executed occupation of "brother" duchies by the Grand Duchy of Moscow, in symbiosis with Mongol tyranny. After so many centuries, these acts are being revenged, and we watch in dismay how presidential authoritarianism without control reverts to an oligarchy of 150–200 individuals, so aptly described in Solzhenitsyn's latest essay, "The Pre-agony of Russia."

Substantive strategic partnership between the West and Russia is not possible because there is no one to offer partnership to. The Russian Empire has disintegrated twice in this century (in 1918 and 1991). Its third and final disintegration will probably mean the end of the Russian pseudo-federation itself. In his lecture at the Constitutional and Legislative Policy Institute of Budapest in December last year, Grigori Yavlinsky, president of the liberal "Yabloko" party, said that the 89 "subjects" of the Russian Federation functioning virtually as military districts should be replaced by 8–10 large units taking natural boundaries into consideration (Yavlinsky, 9).

In the next ten to twenty years, Russia is expected to split into large region-states, a fate that, judging by the increasing problems of the Peking center, post Deng Xiaoping China will not be able to avoid either. In a New York lecture in January 1997, Lebed spoke about the disintegration of Russia as a real possibility, and, presumably, he did not merely intend to scare his audience. In his view,

the various regions of the disintegrating country would follow their own separate foreign policies. It would appear that the same compulsion that for centuries made continuous expansion a condition for the survival of this vast country, is now turning the country in the direction of a similarly inevitable implosion. With the withdrawal of authoritarianism, that is, the disappearance of visible control, the market and the norms adopted by the individuals should assume the role of an integrating force. There are signs that show that this new type of organic integration cannot evolve at all in Russia and China, or, at best, only in some regions. The Russians and the Chinese have made serious efforts in this direction in the past few years, and it is not their fault that they thus created the basis for their own disintegration.

Displacing imperial centralization with a federalism allowing rational decentralization is not possible in Eurasia, because—unlike in Europe,—the weakening, then disintegration of the imperial framework leads to the collapse of the state framework itself and so to total disintegration. For 70 per cent of the last 2000 years (since the Quin dynasty), the territory of China has formed a unified state, for 30 per cent of that period different states (Yan Zhu). It is an either/or situation. It may be assumed that China will perhaps remain intact, but not that it can make a direct transition into a functioning federation while maintaining the continuity of its statehood. This holds for Russia too.

In the twenties, Pavlov–Silvansky, who denied that there were structural differences between the East and the West, argued that the historical process of partitioning of supreme power in a Russia falling apart into principalities differed essentially from the same process in Western Europe, but only as a historical process. But the evolutionary process in Russia and France was iden-tical. (120) I am not convinced that he was right with respect to the Middle Ages, but the situation today is certainly the reverse. The historical process of disintegration is identical, but the direction of the evolutionary process is very different. Eurasian regions or quasi-states, established as a result of the erosion of the central power, directly become the subjects, or more exactly the objects, of international politics. In contrast, strengthening regionalism in Western Europe, while shattering the prestige of the nation-state, leads to the development of a new, civilizational political unit and not to disintegration because of supra-national institutions either established or in the process of being established. This means that over the years to come, the Eurasian policy of the West will be to support regions which turn toward the market economies of the developed world and to contain regions showing a tendency of turning against the West.

Western expansion in Eastern Europe is a necessary result of the inevitable internal disintegration of the Russian state. Only NATO enlargement and the development of cooperation zones established under regional NATO commands can arrest the chaotic processes started by the disintegration of an empire that was once destined to unending expansion. This new doctrine of containment

(similarly to the preceding Mackinder and Kennan doctrines) aids self-defense in the full sense of the term. Only by containing instability can the West preserve its main asset, its internal coherence.

The West has the enormous advantage that, amid the general weakening and apparently inevitable disintegration of state structures evident throughout the world, it seems to be the only region capable of establishing a completely new form of political organization, which is supported by three pillars: the individual who holds as its own the unique collection of Western civilizational values, the local state which is liberated from the absolute rule exercised by the state over its "own" territory, and the Leviathan which preserves external and internal peace. It is impossible to tell today which of the basic units of Huntington's civilizational map, outside the western, will—by mastering the disintegration processes—become capable of being organized in the political sense as well.

Huntington, the new Machiavelli (Wang Gungwu), has this to say about the new organizational form:

> The future of the West depends in large part on the unity of the West. Scholars of civilizations see them evolving through times of trouble and a period of warring states, eventually leading to a universal state for the civilization that may either be a source of renewal or a prelude to decay and disintegration. Western civilization has moved beyond its warring states phase and is heading toward its universal state phase. That phase is still incomplete, with the nation–states of the West cohering into two semi–universal states in Europe and North America. These two entities and their constituent units are, however, bound together by an extraordinarily complex network of formal and informal institutional ties. The universal states of previous civilizations were empires. Since democracy is the political form of Western civilization, the emerging universal state is not an empire, but a compound of federations, confederations, and international regimes. (Huntington, 43)

Huntington is not very optimistic. He only says that there is a chance that must be taken. It is the chance for the western civilizational entity to create a political entity of its own.

In other words, the fact that a few, strategically not very significant countries join the North Atlantic Alliance is not only a necessary closing note of the waning century of Mackinder, but also an introduction to the 21st–century theatre of the greatest (and perhaps last) adventure of Western civilization. ❧

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George Szirtes

Hungarian Sonnet for an Irish Singer

For Gabriel Fitzmaurice

1.
Words withheld. Words loosed in angry swarms.
An otherness. The whole universe was
other, a sum of indeterminate forms
in motion. Who knows what the neighbour does
behind closed doors? You hear the chime
of the doorbell, the faint mechanical
music of the radio. It's supper time.
A window opens on a cry or chuckle,
the rest is half withheld—should it be loosed
the window's quickly shut, the door slammed tight
to seal words in. Guessed at or deduced
darkness arrives feathering words with night.
There they grow wings, like owls and nightingales,
screeching or singing till their meaning stales.

2.
Screeching or singing till its meaning stales,
the cold grey light has drawn you from your bed,
the words go scuttling homeward, their bright tails
between their legs and shelter in your head.
The airport. Night. December. Rough and grey,
a blanket covers you. The windows snore
half-way between dust and snow. The day,
trying to raise itself, creeps under the door
and offers you a cup of tea. Its alien milk

George Szirtes's
Selected Poems 1976–1996 *was published by Oxford University Press in 1996.*
Hungarian Sonnet for an Irish Singer *is the title of his forthcoming collection from OUP, to be published in the Spring of 1998.*

enters your bloodstream like the wizened face
of the old woman with her tray. That silk
ribbon of liquid confirms your sense of place,
and winds you in, a line that anchors, warms,
and lets you enter its own world of forms.

3.
They let you enter their strange world of forms
out in the playground, on the rough brick wall
where they have left their messages in storms
of chalk and paint. Their distances still call
for you, back in the classroom or a street
at some resort where you once spent the summer
among arcades, to the rock and roll beat
of neon lights, and further out and dimmer,
a buoy blinking through foggy yellow air
or the gentle drone of cricket commentary
in daytime heat which wraps you in blonde hair
and scent of oil, then dies in memory,
hovering in a haze before it fails,
like faint vibrations down deserted rails.

4.
Faint vibrations of trains along the rails:
where are we now? Abroad again or home?
Between two kinds of sound. Their echo trails
along behind you (words themselves won't come).
What did your mother say before you woke
to this? Her ribs vibrated with the thrum
of inner traffic. Something like a croak
surfaced at your throat and the hot drum
of her heartbeat made your heart dance. The slow
pulse of her blood blubbed and retreated, drove
your tongue before it with its enormous O,
and educated you to the word "love".
Like all words that apply and predicate
desire and loss, it brooked of no debate.

5.
Desire and loss do not permit debate.
Where do the inner journeys go? They end
in trails of words, a kind of nonsense state

you cannot trust. And true, it is no friend
to kindness or reason. Words were treacherous.
Do you remember how at school they made
you catch the worms you would dissect? The fuss
as they wriggled and stiffened in formaldehyde?
The Latin names that crystallized that weak
mulsh of muscle? The humours of the eye
that wept and spurted a transparent streak
of laughter between a language and a cry?
The Queen's English wrapped the pain in sound
that was articulate, in which the pain was drowned.

6.
Articulate, you know how pain is drowned
and resurrected, undergoes baptism
and dies once more. The vessel runs aground
time and time again, drawn to the bosom
that nourished it. First time I saw the sea
was in December at Westgate. Huge grey jaws
snapped at the rocks, the white seethed in fury
like a pan full of fat, but cold. One word draws
the sea up, another repels it. We met
in a hut on the cliff top, cub scouts with string
and diagrams of knots. The faint sun set
on the horizon. We were children playing
with water pistols. Food appeared on the plate
like clockwork and the clock did not run late.

7.
But clockwork sometimes runs down or runs late.
The words my mother spoke were rarely home
to her, or moved at another, slower rate
which could not follow her. Somehow the room
was never hers. When she was cross, her eyes
ran before language, even before her voice,
which issued from a deep, raw, oversize
mouth inside her. We knew she had no choice,
that it would be all kindness, kisses, tears.
After the terrors (the camp, the deaths, the strange
sexual crudeness) we knew that what appears
is merely a sign and yields life little change,
that mum was a sea that ran your ship aground,
her voice a channel for that kind of sound.

8.
A narrow channel. Now the empty sound
of a ship's engine, now a soft gull peeling
from the clouds, a bruise or an old wound,
plaster cracked across the bedroom ceiling.
The ceiling rose opens in a brilliant blur
and the bulb in the rose expands in purple
echoes of itself. The rain is damp fur
on the window. Your bedclothes ripple
in the night tide as you swim the sudden dark.
Your parents' voices merge with traffic. They
are arguing. Their harsh words leave no mark
but fade into the dream of every day.
The clock goes ticking on but your life runs
straight down the hill of poetry and puns.

9.
Most poetry runs down the hill of puns —
that is what makes it treacherous and yet
so utterly persuasive. Mothers and sons
can mumble ambiguities and let
that rich thick soup of meaning nourish them.
The language outside meets the ur-language within
with the consistency of dream
which sits like a faint moisture on the skin.
My father's voice. A gentle coaxing lost
in the depths of his chest. His musculature
is iron swelling in his arms. Thin frost
covers him in a Russian forest. Pure
narrative lines run through him. He stands
in the street with the city in his hands.

10.
Out in the street, the city in his hands,
he crosses and recrosses, hard at work.
He builds his tongue of vowels and consonants
with ifs and buts, emerging from the murk
of winter. He gathers them up like notes
shuffled through the cold hands of the dead
who smile at us from under heavy coats
of dust and snow. The coins bear his own head
as guarantee. We're at a football match
above the river. The Brylcreamed players race

about the pitch in baggy shorts. We watch
the old men on the terraces. I see his face
darkening as we walk home. The light runs
along his arm which could be anyone's.

11.
His arms and mine, both could be anyone's.
We're only bodies, bodies are what we have.
We float in them among the crowd in patterns
down the tidal street towards the grave
caverns of the tube. We are a small cell
in the organism which encloses us,
lost travellers, a tiny human smell
that thickens when we rise, like Lazarus,
spectral and intimate and normal, home
among the words that mean us and reflect
our faces and possessions. We are the Rome
that all roads lead to, the dense idiolect
of heavens where we sleep and wake. It stands
in the world, half Hungary's, half England's.

12.
This tiny world, part Hungary, part England,
is the macaronic my parents speak —
my dad especially. There is no bland
unbroken stream. The words seem to leak
in drips, wearing away all sensible matter,
making minute impressions, exhausting them.
I see this and am lost in multicoloured chatter
that seems to spread and deepen: spit and phlegm
and croak and fricative whose sounds mean me
and everything that can be concentrated
into the me I vaguely sense, that free-
standing monument, marble and gold-plated,
sole owner of my lexical demesne
of spotless glass where words may sit and preen.

13.
A spotless glass where anyone may preen
when it is dark outside, the window throws
your image back at you. Who is the unseen
and uninvited guest in your dumb shows?

Only the skin—hands, legs, face—remain
hanging against the house opposite. Hair
disappears, clothes vanish. And now the rain
jewels and fractures till you're hardly there.
Trying to say "you" to those smears of light
seems inappropriate. Recall the face
of your mother, that hollowed out, tight
mask in the photograph, almost a grimace
in forty-five? It creeps under the screen
of language, blankly refuses to mean.

14.
The language here blankly refuses to mean
what it's supposed to. The signs are lost.
If you could only read the space between
or babble in fiery tongues at Pentecost.
What's gone is gone. Parents might be the first
to vanish but children soon follow. The winter sun
flashes off snow and the icy trees burst
with light. The world is what cannot be undone
nor would you wish to undo it when it speaks
so eloquently out of its dumbness, when
its enormous treasury of hours and days and weeks
resolves to this sense of now and never again.
It comes at you now in syllabic storms,
the words withheld then loosed in angry swarms.

15.
Words withheld. Words loosed in angry swarms,
screeching or singing till their meaning stales
have let you enter their strange world of forms
like faint vibrations down deserted rails.
Desire and loss do not permit debate:
articulate, you know how pain is drowned.
You slept in beds when day was never late,
your voice a channel for the kind of sound
that rolls downhill in poetry and puns.
Out in the street, the city in your hands
lays down its arms, which might be anyone's —
Hungary, England are verbal shadowlands
of spotless glass where all may sit and preen,
blank languages whose words refuse to mean.

Miklós Gábor

The Enchanted Party Meeting

(Short story)

The Party Committee of Greater Budapest once again delegated Mrs Márton Horváth to attend the Party meeting, who to our surprise approved the boldness of our speeches. Then, during the debate and contributions, what did I suddenly catch sight of through one of the windows of the room? I saw that across the street, over on the other side of Wesselényi utca, on the first floor of the house directly opposite, the window facing ours was open and behind it, in the dark depths of the room, a girl was pottering about, stark naked. She was plainly visible between the shoulders of the party secretary and Mrs Horváth sitting across from us at the chairman's table, and I was able to watch her quite safely, for the chairman and the others were sitting with their backs to the window and so could have had no inkling of what was happening behind their back, over on the other side of Wesselényi utca, their unsuspecting faces were benign, trusting, pathetic in a way, like the faces of those badly paid but well-meaning teachers who are driven to despair by the bad behaviour of their students, and who have no idea that the disciplined silence with which the class greets them instead of the customary yells, laughter and whistling, and which makes them so happy because they think they have entered a new era of their lives as teachers, that their selflessly borne suffering, dedication and pedagogic expertise will finally bear friut, and have no inkling, poor souls, that this silence is a trap, a cunningly thought-out trick, devised to disguise the preparations for a new piece of scoundrelism, and it is suppressed laughter that makes the guileless faces of the boys so stiff—so did the faces of the party secretary and Mrs Márton Horváth reflect at this moment a growing satisfaction; they found that the party life of the Madách Theatre was coming along splendidly, and observed that the party meeting in these decisive, historic days was more serious and more exciting than usual, this fired them with enthusiasm and they could hardly wait to grant the next speaker permission to speak; seeing the extremely tense expression of the faces before

Miklós Gábor
is a leading actor, now in his late seventies, who was very active politically in the fifties and is now publishing his memoirs based on journals he kept at the time. This is an excerpt from the latest volume.

them they expected a lot from the members today, they couldn't have known that the faces were grave, almost grim not because the communists were preparing to make an exciting speech but because behind their backs, over on the other side of the street, in the depths of a room, among barely discernible dark furniture, side-boards, glass cabinets, at times circling a large dining table, a naked girl is moving about, it is the whiteness of her body that everyone is following with such concentrated attention, neither the poor party secretary, nor poor Mrs Márton Horváth was aware of this, they did not know that all of them, *the whole party meeting,* all the members of the party organization, were watching the girl obliviously, enraptured, they could not have known because we *all* kept the secret faithfully, for those couple of moments the members of the party organization were truly united, holding together like the underground cells once upon a time in the past. That ordinary, naked girl was a miracle appearing as she did in the middle of a party meeting, it was as if we had all of us, the entire party branch organization, been feasted out of a basketful of bread and a basketful of fish, she was not the run-of-the-mill striptease of the imperialists, not tasteless laughter, the offensive, ribald jokes of high school adolescents could not touch her, she was poetry, mystery and silence, *heart-beat,* she was fairy-like, that girl, who in another few minutes would surely put on her swan's costume and fly away on white wings to disappear for ever, we will not see her again, we shall never be able to see her again, for even if we did see her, we would never recognize her, we can never look into her face from close up, we shall never even know whether she is really pretty or not, the approaching, eternal parting, the *impossible,* was contained within our ardour, it could not have existed without it, and what is more, the girl seemed *aware* of being watched, as if she were *pretending,* not out of coquetry, but from the goodness of her heart, that she did not know she was being watched, here I am, dear party members, she seemed to be consoling us, the poor attendants of the party meeting. From the distance she seemed young, pretty, I imagined her to be an ordinary kind of girl, the kind that really *exists,* whom we normally see only on the street, hurrying past us, never like this, naked, unless like a Degas figure, washing in a basin, you can only get to see an averagely pretty, sweetly ordinary girl like her naked if you marry her, or play Peeping Tom. This was how I imagined her. She had small, pointy breasts, just barely ripened schoolgirl breasts shaped like a snub-nosed icicle. Or at least that is how they appeared to me when I saw them, if I really did see them, during that momentary glimpse. And then, even further away, by the back wall of the room, in the oval mirror of a huge sideboard, in an ornamental mirror not even used as a mirror, for some long moments, I saw the girl's naked bottom. It is quite certain that the girl was unaware of the mirror-image, making her doubly *spied upon,* and making this, in any case most naked part of her body even more naked; what is more, I was so placed as to be the only one with a view of this small mirror and the girl's posterior, a behind-the-scenes view such as is accessible only from the

stage manager's post, from certain side-boxes, of certain areas of the stage that are not meant for the eyes of the audience, and, though this view may shatter the illusions of the spectator, he will be recompensed by being able to see, to *sneak a glimpse* of the primadonna as she comes off the stage, panting, suddenly aged, the stage make-up on her flaccid face garish and excessive in the semi-darkness, her dresser adjusting something at the back of her costume, a hook perhaps, with hasty fingers, for in the next moment the artist will be stepping out again into the light radiant-faced, with her proverbial sweet smile, rejuvenated. For a moment I was able to see, simultaneously, the faces of the party secretary and Mrs Márton Horváth from close up, and behind the two large faces, the two windows, the more distant one framed in the nearer one, and in the dark depths of the smaller window, a pale moving figure which I *imagined* to be the naked body of a pretty girl, and even *farther* than that, the secret, unwitting behind in the mirror—I could not tell, from that distance, whether it really was her behind that I saw, what I actually saw was a pale blob and a dark shadow running down it longitudinally, and I chose to dub the pale blob her behind and the shadow the slit between her buttocks, and I believed it to be what I imagined it to be so intensely that I was at once seized by a strong and fierce surge of lust at the sight. Yet we never even got a proper glimpse of the girl at all, what we actually saw was a pink and white human body moving around in the room, a pale shadow in the darkness of the room, there were moments when I became confused, for the figure suddenly seemed to be the body of a boy after all! But then, all at once, the pale blob disappeared from the mirror of the sideboard, and the naked body disappeared from the foreground of the stage, that is, of the window, and we saw nothing except the unmoving furniture, and the girl only reappeared, closer to the open window this time, in the dim light filtering into the room from the street, at the moment she began pulling on a high-necked, dark, probably black sweater, arms struggling towards the ceiling, to sheathe the ribs protruding from her young chest. This time, for the space of a moment, we were able to ascertain that it really was a young, naked, female body that we saw, with two dagger-sharp, pointy breasts, but in the very next moment there was nothing left to see, she had covered herself from head to foot, ready to make her appearance on the street, and disappeared for ever first from the window, then, reappearing in the distance for a second longer, through a door in the back wall, from the room itself. At that moment the window became suddenly and totally dark and in that same moment the voice of our party secretary, coming from the thick of historical events, suddenly reached our ears, and it was as if we were rising to the surface, to the sounds of the world, from the darkness of deep water, our ears seemed to pop from the rarer pressure of the air, every sound was intensified, and now we could have risen to speak, had we had something to say, the whole enchanted party meeting could awaken to the truth together. ❧

Translated by Eszter Molnár

Aliz Mosonyi

Shop Tales

The Rich Men's Shop

The customers come into the Rich Men's Shop and say: "We're rich. We want to buy something expensive." The shopkeeper shows them everything, but they just make dismissive gestures with their golden hands, stamp their golden feet. "Haven't you got anything original?" "What have you got in mind?" says the shopkeeper, "We haven't had anything like that for a long time! A very long time!"

The Shop Fraught with Perils

Only the brave frequent the Shop Fraught with Perils, we're looking for danger, they say, we've come to risk our lives, where and how can we rescue what there is to be rescued? "I don't know, I don't know," says the old shopkeeper. "I just wonder where. And what for."

The Shop of Peaceful Minds

The wayfaring mariners come to the Shop of Peacefuls Minds, we've come to find peace of mind, they say, but there is no one in the shop, jut a lot of writing on the wall, I WAS HERE TO FIND PEACE OF MIND, they read each one of them, then write the same thing themselves, there is plenty of space left on the walls, surprisingly.

The Shop of Guardian Angels

You cannot go into the Shop of Guardian Angels, you can just sigh to them. PLEASE SIGH HERE, says the sign, and the guardian angels listen to the sighs, put down their knitting or crotcheting, and set off at once if they think it necessary. And if they decide it isn't, they calmly continue their crotcheting or knitting.

Aliz Mosonyi
is the author of books for children.

The Shop of Maps

The customer goes into the Shop of Maps, recounts the story of his life, the shopkeeper listens to it, takes out a map, pins a tiny flag onto it and says "Here you are. This is where life has tossed you."

The Shop of Practical Doughnuts

In the Shop of Practical Doughnuts the baker sifts soulflour through a soulsieve, and makes doughnuts out of it. But sometimes he forgets to add sugar, sometimes not, sometimes the doughnuts are sweet, sometimes not. The customers come and ask "Is life a sour doughnut? Or a sweet one?" "How should I know?" says the baker, "You've got to buy one and try one. Then you'll know."

The Shop of Rogues

In the Shop of Rogues everything is brightly coloured, there's music playing, the shopkeeper bustles around on tiptoes. The blue rogues, green rogues, red rogues look around. "Isn't it pleasant here! Shall we steal something?" The shopkeeper smiles. "But of course! Help yourselves, help yourselves, ladies and gentlemen! At your service!"

True Hearted John's Shop

In True Hearted John's Shop, John is always there in person. "I have to sit here always," reflects True Hearted John, "musn't stir from here, not even an inch. Because someone may come and say 'True Hearted John! I'll trust you with my secret. Will you keep it for me?' 'I will,' I'll say. And as soon as he leaves, someone else may come and say 'True Hearted John! I'll trust you with my secret, will you keep it for me?' 'I will,' I'll say. Well, that's why I have to sit here all the time."

The Old Dolls' Shop

In the Old Dolls' Shop the old dolls sit around on the shelves, thinking of the children of old. The door opens, the customers come in, the old dolls just glance at them, at the big paunches, the double chins, shake their heads and quickly put up the sign, NOT FOR SALE, CLOSED, NOT FOR SALE, CLOSED, and the customers jingle their coins and snap their banknotes in vain, the old dolls just creak and squeak, it's no good talking to them, the paunched, double chinned customers have to leave, no dolls on sale today. Then the old dolls walk around, inspecting one another, nod, proudly straighten their back, no paunches, no double chins there, thank goodness, that's all right then. And they sit back up on the shelves and think about the children of old.

Old Mr Little's Button Shop

Old Mr Little's Button Shop is open day and night. Mr Little keeps his buttons in a hundred and one little drawers, pulls out a hundred drawers, shows every button to his customers, there are buttons to go with all the clothes in the world, and still there are some who want to see the contents of the hundred and first drawer as well. "That drawer is empty," says Mr Little, and never opens the hundred and first drawer. He only pulls it out, with great care, late at night when he's alone; that drawer is full of stars, all the stars of the heavens, and if he pulls it out a little further, there is a brightness, you can glimpse into heaven, and hear the angels whisper.

The Devil Shop

The Devil Shop sells devils, what else would it sell? Devils should by rights be kept in cages, but not one single can be kept locked up for long, devils like their freedom, if you put a padlock on a devil's cage, he'll just blow on the padlock and be out in a trice, and if you use a lock and key, he will simply eat the key and be jumping about and singing in no time at all. Devils do not know any of the sweeter songs, just marching songs, those are their favourites, the ones in which you can yodel and shout hey! hey! hoi! hoi!; when they sing these, their eyes sparkle and they stamp their hooves. The devil shopkeeper has installed a large gramophone, and plays one record after the other. "Listen to the nice operas, boys," but the devils just hoi! hoi!, swallow keys and sing marching songs all day long.

The Shop of Memories

In the Shop of Memories the shopkeeper sweeps up every evening. She sweeps up the dust, puts it in a paper bag, writes IN MEMORY OF THIS DAY on it and the date, very carefully, and puts the bag in a drawer, and writes IN MEMORY OF THIS DAY and the date on the drawer too, very carefully. When customers come in and want to buy something, a beautiful memento in memory of a beautiful day, the shopkeeper just pulls out a drawer, exactly that drawer, and takes out, here you are, IN MEMORY OF A BEAUTIFUL DAY, the day's dust.

The Shop of Kings

In the Shop of Kings everything is made of gold, silver and diamonds, gold crowns, diamond-studded shoes, silver stoles, shiny swords, coaches, flags, and for exiled kings, small radios ornamented with diamonds, which broadcast soft, consoling music late at night, when kings in exile cannot sleep.

The Shop of Small Things

The Shop of Small Things sells small things. Small dresses, small shoes, small hats, small umbrellas, small buttons to go with the small dresses, small shoelaces to go with the small shoes, small flowers to go with the small hats. A small customer comes, buys a small dress, small buttons to go with the dress, small shoelaces to go with the shoes, small flowers to go with the hat, pays with small change, is there nothing to go with the small umbrella? Nothing, nothing, says the small shopkeeper. What a pity, says the small customer, then I shan't buy an umbrella. The small shopkeeper sighs, how's he going to get rid of all these umbrellas, no one's going to buy them. A small mouse comes along, slips into the small shop, looks at the small dresses, don't feel like a dress, looks at the small shoes, don't feel like shoes either, sees the small umbrellas, hm, hm, a taste of umbrella is just what I feel like. He nibbles a small hole in one umbrella, he nibbles a small hole in another umbrella, the small mouse's stomach is full. A small customer comes along, buys a small dress, small buttons to go with the small dress, buys a small hat, small flowers to go with the small hat, what can I buy to go with the small umbrella? The small shopkeeper looks at the umbrella, sees the hole, why, buy a hole to go with the umbrella! The small customer sees the small hole, what a pretty little hole, let me have it, I'll buy it! And now you can buy everything you want in the small shop, small buttons to go with small dresses, small shoelaces to go with small shoes, small holes to go with small umbrellas.

The Shop of Beautifully Sad Books

In the Shop of Beautifully Sad Books the shopkeeper sits waiting for customers. A customer comes, pokes at the books, what's this one like? Beautifully sad, says the shopkeeper. What about this one? And this? Beautifully sad, beautifully sad, says the shopkeeper. Don't you have anything happy? Only beautifully sad ones? asks the customer. Only beautifully sad ones, says the shopkeeper, only those. And are they very beautiful? asks the customer. Very, says the shopkeeper. And very sad? asks the customer. Very, says the shopkeeper. Well, I suppose I may as well buy one, says the customer. Just one? asks the shopkeeper. One, one, only one, says the customer, and buys a beatifully sad book from the shopkeeper.

The Shop of the Talking Dog

In the doorway of the Shop of the Talking Dog sits a terribly large dog. "You needn't be afraid of me," says the Talking Dog, "I never bite anyone. Or if I do, I warn them beforehand. But you won't hear anything like 'I'll swallow you alive!' or 'I'll eat you up!' from me. No. I'll put it nicely, gently. Like, I do feel like a bite of whatsitsname. What's your name?"

The Shop of Diamond Rings

Three robbers wearing wigs burst into the Shop of Diamond Rings to steal diamond rings. They snatch off their wigs, flash their bald heads, we're taking all the diamond rings! But the shopkeeper did not scare easily, he whipped out a rapid hair-restorer, poured it over their heads, their hair grew out at once. One became blond, another brown, the third dark haired, all ran for dear life.

The Shop that Once Was

The Shop that Once Was was once a shop, and now it isn't . But once it was.

The Shop of Heights

The Shop of Heights is terribly high up. First you have to climb up a ladder, from the ladder up into a tree, from the tree up into a tower, from there onto a roof, from there onto a mountain, from there onto another ladder, from there onto another tree, from there onto another tower, from there onto another roof, and you're there. But once you're there, you can buy yourself magic nails, magic belts, magic hooks, magic ropes, magic gloves, magic boots, and climbing down is nothing at all.

The Sackful of Numbers Shop

In the Sackful of Numbers Shop there are numbers by the sackful. The young people come, give me, give me a bigger one, a bigger one than that! 5 000, 6 000, 7 000, 7 017! They carry off numbers by the sackful, go on, put some more into the sack, put more, 1000, 1 00 000, 1 00 017! But the old people ask for small paper-bags, tell you what, a 5 or a 3 or even a 1 will do me.

The Shop of Stamps

In the Shop of Stamps a sad little lady is sorting through the stamps. "Take your pick, all the stamps in the world are here for you to choose from," says the shopkeeper. The sad little lady looks at all the stamps in the world, sighs. "Is that all there is? Have you nothing else?" The shopkeeper takes out a couple more. "Here you are, this one is spoiled, it got soaked, and here, this one got burnt, and this, this one got stolen, and this one was lost." The sad little lady looks at the stamps, sighs. "Isn't there one that can't be found anywhere in the whole wide world? Please." "Did you say please?" says the shopkeeper. „You can have it then. Here you are."

The Shop of Small Picture-books

In the Shop of Small Picture-books the shopkeeper looks at his books. "I want to sell small picture-books, and these are so big!" He takes a pair of scissors, cuts a strip off every book, looks at them again. "Ah, but they're still too big!" He takes the scissors again, cuts off another strip, takes a look at them again. "And they're still too big!" He takes the scissors again, cuts off another strip, now they're the right size. "Oh blast! Now there aren't any pictures in them," he cries. "Where's my magic glue?"

The Shop of Single Gloves

The Shop of Single Gloves is where those who have fallen out with each other for ever go. "We'd like a beautiful pair of gloves," they say. "For ever?" says the shopkeeper. "For ever," say the customers. One of them pulls on one beautiful single glove, the other pulls on the other beautiful single glove, and they go their separate ways, one to the left, one to the right.

The Shop of Serious Pieces of Advice

In the Shop of Serious Pieces of Advice, the shopkeeper, Dr Martha Stroller, strolls up and down. The customers come and say, tell us, Dr Martha Stroller, onions or apples, secretly or wittingly, awake or asleep, red or black, door or window, to open or to close, with tooth or with nail, with butter or with honey, sooner or later, to embrace or to kiss, come life or come death. Dr Martha Stroller strolls up and down, maybe onions, maybe apples, maybe secretly, maybe wittingly, maybe awake, maybe asleep, maybe red, maybe black, maybe the door, maybe the window, maybe open, maybe close, maybe with tooth, maybe with nail, maybe with butter, maybe with honey, maybe sooner, maybe later, maybe embrace, maybe kiss, maybe life, maybe death, you'd better go home now.

What Kind of Bears Shop

In the What Kind of Bears Shop the bears are the kind they are. "Why, what other kind would we be?" ask the bears. ❧

Gabriel Ronay

Into Africa

The Hunglish Patient

As far as love stories go, Anthony Minghella's film *The English Patient* has stirred up more international controversy and aroused more political passion than any recent "real life drama". Admittedly, it is the love story of the year, possibly of the decade.

The film has won two Golden Globe and nine Academy awards. In the first three months since it opened in America, it has taken $50 million. Its dreamy images and poetic recreation of past emotions have earned it extatic reviews. American film critics have been thumbing their dictionaries for new superlatives and British critics have been equally lavish in their praise of this British film. "Breathtaking and sultry, *The English Patient* deserved to sweep the board at the Oscars," enthused a British critic. Others were not so reserved.

Gabriel Ronay,
author, broadcaster and journalist, left Hungary in 1956 and was until recently on the staff of The Times. *His latest book,* The Lost King of England—The East European Adventures of Edward the Exile, *was published by Bowdell & Brewer in Britain and the US in 1990.*

Michael Ondaatje's book of the same title, on which it is based, has won the Booker Prize. A cast of international stars has added to the glitter and razzmatazz. Ralph Fiennes plays the dashing hero and Kristin Scott Thomas and Juliette Binoche provide the romantic interest. But it is Juliette Binoche with her vulnerable femininity and timid love for a Sikh bomb-disposal officer who steals the show, not Kristin Scott Thomas, the film's heroine.

The story-line is deceptively simple. Three men and a young woman are stranded in a bombed monastery near Florence in the closing days of the Second World War. In an upstairs room lies one of them, a badly-burnt Englishman. Before dying, he recounts in flashbacks his extraordinary adventures and torrid love affair with a married upper-class English woman in the African desert.

The eponymous hero's tale provides the focal point around which the stories of the other three revolve. In the book, the narrative is a judicious mixture of flashbacks and reflectiveness. In the film, Minghella has spun the threads of past and narrative present into a rainbow-coloured web. Within a few frames, the film—and Africa—begins to weave its magic.

Imperceptibly, however, the plot deepens. The mysterious Englishman turns out to be an even more mysterious Hungarian

count. Ralph Fiennes' Count Almásy is one of those Anglophile foreigners who are more English than the English. His emphatic pronunciation and formal good manners, his masculine reserve and old world gallantry are perfect. But the burning intensity of his response to Katherine's (Kristin Scott Thomas) casually ignited flame of desire reveals an outsider male's uncompromising approach to love. The film's un-English hero is a predator, its English heroine a social butterfly.

All this might have been no more than a simple narrative twist but the half-shadows of truth and fiction have yielded, in Minghella's hands, a more complex tale than any film can possibly do justice to. And this is what has triggered a curious media controversy about the Magyar role-model of *The English Patient.*

For the real-life adventures—and afterlife transmogrification—of Count László Almásy are no match for the pen of even the most imaginative scriptwriter. Life is stranger than fiction.

The real-life Almásy, diligent research revealed, was a fundamentally different person. Nevertheless, his prewar work for the Royal Egyptian Geographical Society as a desert explorer and his wartime adventures as desert adviser to the German Afrika Korps have inspired Ondaatje's story. In the book, as in the film, Almásy the ardent lover does a deal with Rommel to save his English mistress's life.

In fact, he was made a major in Goering's Luftwaffe and entrusted, among other delicate tasks, with the mission to smuggle the German spy Johannes (John) Eppler across 2,000 desert miles to Egypt in order to take a radio transmitter for a fledgling German spy network in Cairo.

His "Operation Condor" was a feat of endurance and daring. He drove a captured British Army lorry across the British lines and survived the trek with the help of water holes he had mapped during his prewar expeditions. He was awarded the Iron Cross when serving under Rommel, who, without African experience, was relying on Almásy's intimate knowledge of the desert during his Libyan campaign.

At the height of the Eighth Army's battle with Hitler's panzers, he was ordered to smuggle out of Egypt Masri Pasha, the pro-German commander of the Egyptian army, who was apparently eager to help Rommel drive the British out of Egypt. Two attempts failed. The mission was abandoned. The sporty explorer image of *The English Patient*'s role-model begins to crack.

Even more bafflingly for the story-line of a great love story, Almásy was a reputed homosexual, with absolutely no interest—either sexual or emotional—in women. According to Kurt Mayer, an Austrian filmman who is currently making a documentary about Almásy, the count wrote scores of tender and romantic letters to a Luftwaffe officer, the object of his wartime affections.

So *who* was the real Almásy? Was he the ardent lover as portrayed in *The English Patient,* or a homosexual Nazi spy-adventurer and Rommel adviser? The film, thanks to the ecstatic reviews, has aroused great public interest, especially in the United States. To judge by the number of in-depth features published in a score of leading US dailies and weeklies, news editors across the nation must have been demanding "instant backgrounders" on the real Almásy from their reporters. The result in America's most respected broadsheets has been controversial, to say the least.

From the half-baked jumble of hearsay, muddled half-truths and fag-ends of information, there emerged a curious farrago, part despairing Anglophile lover and Sahara explorer, part homosexual Nazi monster, part dotty Mid-European aristo-

crat and old-fashioned patriot obsessed with the restoration of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy. These are the "facts" presented to American readers. Then again, perhaps they are not. It rather depends on which paper you believe. Either way, they are now part of the media story.

The New York Times has weighed in with a story of apparently startling revelations: "The character compassionately depicted in *The English Patient* as a desert explorer of enigmatic origins is based on a real-life Hungarian who served German military intelligence in the Second World War and then, apparently, spied for the Soviet Union." A double whammy!

Since the newly unearthed "facts" are sloshing around in US databases and newspaper cuttings libraries, other feature writers followed this lead and added their ha'p'orth of comment. After repeating the homosexual-Nazi-agent-turned-Soviet-spy allegations, a British columnist delivered himself of the opinion that "it is not the first time the movies have refused to let historical facts get in the way of a good screenplay, but rarely, say protesters, has villany been so gilded". What perspicacity. The permeable borders between art and life have been abolished.

Back in the Old World, the American allegations have ignited strong patriotic passions. They offended Hungarian sensibilities and punctured the patriotic *amour propre* of readers. Although the film had not been shown until April and Ondaatje's book has yet to be translated into Hungarian, a Budapest daily was awash with indignant readers' letters following a Washington report on the Almásy controversy in late winter.

"Hollywood" (sic), in the opinion of one irate letter writer, "plays fast and lose" with the facts and impugns the honour of a gentleman explorer. "It would be good if, in their ceaseless search for sensation, they were not making irresponsible 'blockbuster films' in America," the Almásy fan wrote. "Americans, who cherish every tiny episode of their brief history, appear to feel no compunction in besmirching the reputation of a small European nation while making a film, without reliable information or historical advisers, about an outstanding personality of a thousand-year-old country." The small matter that the film's producer was a first generation Briton of Italian descent and that Hollywood, to its chagrin, had not been involved in the *The English Patient,* has been overlooked.

As feathers were flying and passions rising on both sides of the Atlantic, Michael Ondaatje gave a telephone interview from Oklahoma in a forlorn attempt to end the controversy. He admitted that *The English Patient* was "loosely based on the life of Count Almásy", and that the Count had never had an affair with a colleague's wife. He added that he knew "Almásy may have been a spy or a double agent", but his interest lay "in the explorer and Sahara enthusiast". He had made the Count his protagonist "for the emotional side of his African endeavour, not for his political views".

Thus the creator of *The English Patient* made a valid distinction between historical fact and fiction as far as his poetic inspiration was concerned. But that did not help to resolve the controversy about Almásy's real-life career and the controversy continued.

Thanks to a *deus ex machina* intervention, in the shape of a telephone call from a London acquaintance, this present investigation of the real Almásy has been placed on the right track. Jean Howard, a wartime British intelligence officer, is probably the only person alive who actually knows the whole Almásy story and she affirmed that the US media is groping in the dark.

As one of the code-breakers of the top-secret German Enigma signals at Bletchley Park (Hut 3), she had been following Almásy's movements across the Sahara at a delicate point in the Eighth Army's battle with Hitler's panzers.

Her information comes straight from the horse's mouth. She came across Almásy by chance as Rommel was advancing in 1942.

"We read and graded every German Enigma signal which came into Hut 3. The 50 separate ciphers covered the Luftwaffe, the Wehrmacht in North Africa, the Balkans, the Russian front, the Middle East and the specials, like the Nazi V1 weapons from Peenemünde and diplomatic ciphers.

> One day, I chanced on a previously unreported Enigma signal about Almásy's commando. It was about to set off on its desert journey to Gialo. It was set to pass through a phantom army of ours, complete, as part of our strategic deception to deflect Rommel's advance, with a false army signals station. I continued to study Almásy's radiosignals on the Abwehr ciphers for the following three weeks, for it seemed important to pick him up alive if possible.

Thus Mrs Howard was the very person who had urged that Almásy be captured. Cairo was informed, aircraft at Kufra oasis were alerted and a Desert Long Range Group operation put in place. Nevertheless, Almásy managed to drop off two agents, Eppler and Sandstetter, near Assiut. They set up their transmitter on a Nile houseboat, but it was defective. They turned to a young anti-British Egyptian officer for help. His name was Anwar el Sadat, later to become President of Egypt.

In his memoirs Sadat recalled "the bungling German spies... leading a life of pleasure on the money the Abwehr had stupidly given them." The British raided the houseboat and the spies were picked up on the holding charge of "using false currency". "Well", said Mrs Howard, "with that Egyptian officer involved, we couldn't just shoot the German spies, could we?"

It was the start of Mrs Howard's interest in the mysterious count. "After we were freed from the Official Secrets Act in 1976", she said, "I was encouraged by no less than four former heads of our service to go back to Austria and talk to Almásy. He, however, had long been dead. Nevertheless, the Almásy research was a good excuse to clear up other unfinished business with the survivors of the Abwehr who, like Rommel and the generals of the July 20, 1944 bomb plot, had anti-Nazi sympathies."

Her researches took many years and gave her a crucial insight into the man who, for better or worse, is the role-model of *The English Patient*. She translated into English Almásy's book on his prewar expeditions, *Die Unbekannte Sahara,* and she interviewed his German superiors, Oberst Franz Seubert of the Abwehr's Rome and North Africa station and Frigatten Kapitän Hans Sokol, as well as the spy Eppler. She also picked the brain of Brigadier Bagnold, the founder of the British Long Range Desert Group, who gave her a captured copy of Almásy's Condor mission diary.

Among other key players, she consulted Camilla Russell, a wartime MI5 officer, who had read Almásy's file and found that "there was nothing derogatory about him in it".

The emerging picture of a Mid-European gentleman-adventurer would *really* make compelling viewing. It answers the key questions raised by the US media but poses others. On balance, the count seemed more suited to the fellowship of the Royal Egyptian Geographical Society than Rommel's Afrika Korps.

László Ede Almásy was born into a noble—though not titled—branch of the family in the ancestral chateau at Borostyánkő in Hungary (now Bernstein in Austria), in 1895. He started his education in Graz but was soon sent to an English school at Eastborne for health reasons.

Young László had a flair for flying, got his pilot's licence at 17 and fought as a pilot on the Russian front throughout the Great War. The much decorated airman showed great loyalty to the Emperor Charles I—King Charles IV of Hungary—as the Austro-Hungarian empire collapsed in 1918. In a restoration attempt, he twice drove the dethroned monarch to Budapest, but the move was thwarted. A grateful Charles made him a count. There was, however, nothing to keep the young royalist in his kingless homeland mutilated by the Trianon peace treaty.

In the 1920s, he moved to Egypt and became an agent for Steyr, the Austrian car maker. He made regular desert journeys, not as a German spy, but to advertise the hardiness of Steyr cars. He used the trips to chart parts of the Libyan desert and made several important scientific discoveries. In the 1930s, while continuing his work for the Royal Egyptian Geographical Society, he instructed sports pilots flying Gypsy Moths at the new airport at Heliopolis. It bears his name, Al-Maza, to this day.

In 1939, with the threat of war growing, he was desperate to stay in his beloved desert and offered his services to Russell Pasha, Cairo's British police chief. The offer was turned down because of his close Austrian/German connections. He then turned to the Italians, who were still neutral, but they also rebuffed his approaches believing him to be a British spy. A dispirited Almásy returned home to Hungary.

When Hitler sent his expeditionary army to North Africa, Oberstleutnant Seubert of the Abwehr travelled to Budapest to enlist Almásy's help. He told Mrs Howard: "Despite his longing for the desert he was reluctant to help us. Only when ordered, as a reserve officer of the Hungarian Air Force, by Miklós Horthy, Hungary's Regent and commander-in-chief, did he join Rommel."

While he was clearly prepared to work for whoever suited his interest of the moment, he was a true explorer of the old school, not a fanatical Nazi spy, as alleged by Elizabeth Pathy Salett, the daughter of Hungary's Consul-General in Alexandria in the 1930s. Mrs Howard believes that she is wrong and quotes from a letter of the former Abwehr officer Seubert's thumb-nail portrait of the Count. "He was an anti-communist and a Hungarian patriot body and soul. His sense of honour as a sportsman and airman went beyond frontiers. He had an overwhelming love of the desert". Not of Hitler's war.

Rommel apparently got a similar impression of him. Almásy told Brigadier Bagnold in Cairo after the war that, at a critical point in the battle for the Libyan desert, Rommel took him aside and said: "Almásy, this is not your war... Go home to Budapest. We are going to lose it anyway."

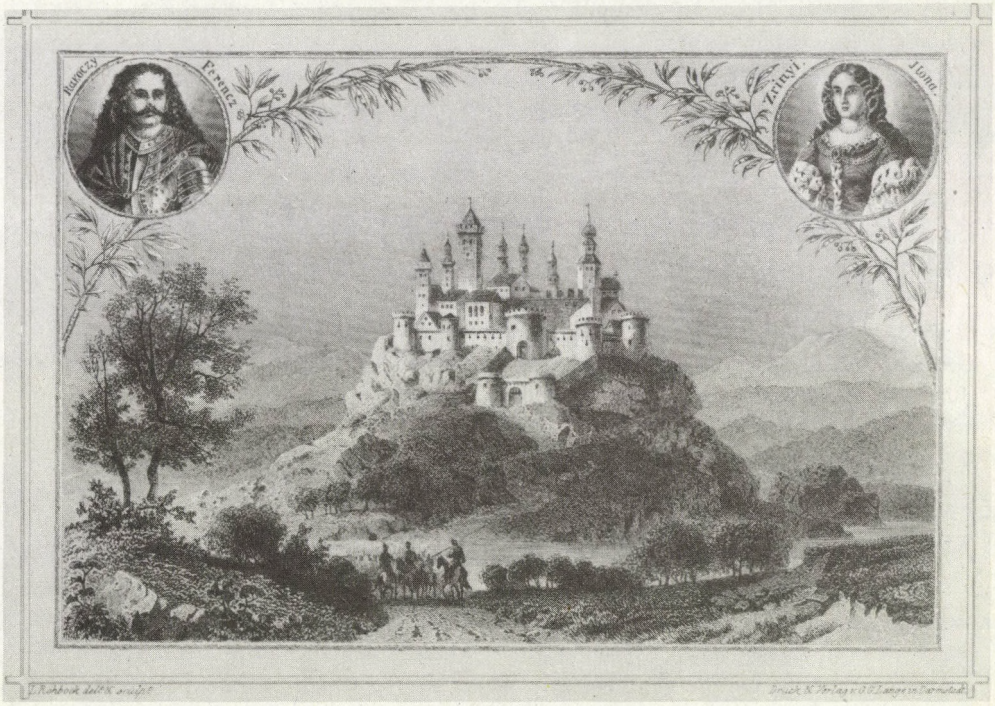
He returned to Hungary and after the Red Army liberated the country in 1945, the NKVD Soviet secret police arrested him. He escaped but was recaptured. He was beaten and interrogated for months, then handed over to the Budapest authorities. This was hardly the treatment a "Soviet agent" would have received from its masters.

The Count was tried on charges of "serving as an officer in the German Afrika Korps" by the People's Court in December 1946. Although the prosecution had sought the death sentence, he was acquitted. S.E. Allaedihn Mokhtar, a cousin of King Farouk of Egypt, told Mrs Howard that there were no miracles in postwar Budapest: "A heavy bribe freed Almásy."

Early in 1947, the Count fled across the Iron Curtain to Austria and then on to Italy. By curious coincidence, at a recent London dinner party my wife and I were seated next to the Duke of Valderano, a participant of the ensuing drama. The Duke had served as a British army officer during the Italian campaign and in Rome after the war. In 1947, he had been directed by London to get Almásy onto a British aircraft but NKVD agents surrounded the Count's Rome hotel. With the help of his wife, the Duke used a clever ruse and got Almásy safely to the airport, "with the Soviet thugs in hot pursuit". As Mrs Howard aptly pointed out, "Britain would hardly have gone to all that trouble to get Almásy out of Europe and to Cairo had he been known to us either as a Nazi or a Soviet spy".

In 1951, Egypt offered Almásy the position of director of the Cairo Desert Institute, but the role-model of *The English Patient* died suddenly of dysentery in Austria before he could return to his beloved desert.

Almásy's real life bears little resemblance to the fictional film character. It is much more complicated and exciting. But mystique is a vital ingredient of films. Historical personages and events are often "reinvented" in the artistic creative process, blurring the lines between fact and fiction. It seems likely that it will be Ralph Fiennes whose image will be burned into the public consciousness. But it is the real László Almásy whose battles with monstrous 20th-century windmills will keep literary interest alive. ❧



Munkács (Mukačevo) Castle

Miklós Zelei

Subcarpathia: Bridgehead or No-man's Land

Subcarpathia, officially in Ukrainian the Zakarpatska oblast—Transcarpathian Region, covers 12,800 sq. km. The natives are Ukrainians (Ruthenians), Hungarians, Romanians, Slovaks, and Yiddish speaking Jews. The last, 1989, Soviet census showed 1,241,914 inhabitants, with 976,749 Ukrainians (Ruthenians), and 155,711 Hungarians. After the Soviet Union disintegrated, the number of the latter waxed, and today 194,000 are bold enough to declare a Hungarian ethnic allegiance. Around 220,000 speak Hungarian. There are 29,485 Romanians, 12,100 Gypsies, 7,329 Slovaks, 3,500 Germans, 2,700 Jews, 2,500 Belorus, and 49,456 Russians, most of whom were settled there after 1945. The remaining 2,000 are flotsam from the various former Soviet republics.

For a thousand years, up to the demise of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the region was an organic part of North East Hungary. Subcarpathia as a political and administrative term came into use since the Peace of Trianon after the Great War. In 1920, the *de facto* occupation by Czechoslovakia of the fragments of the four Hungarian counties which make it up—along with much more former Hungarian territory—was sanctioned by international law. Czechoslovakia administered the region as a unit—Podkarpatska Rus, that is Ciscarpathian Ruthenia, with Uzhhorod (Ungvár) the capital, replacing the traditional centre, Mukačevo (Munkács). Since 1919 Ungvár has enjoyed priority in development.

On November 2nd 1938, following the 1st Vienna Award after Munich, a southern frontier strip was allotted to Hungary. Horthy occupied the rest in March 1939, at the same time as Hitler marched into Prague. Soviet, and now Ukrainian historians generally refer to those years as occupation by fascist Hungarian terrorists, referring to bloody and cruel oppression, although concrete details are not available—except for the murder of the Jews, to which the Hungarian authorities contributed by rounding up and delivering them to the Germans.

Soviet forces entered Uzhhorod on October 27th 1944, and soon occupied the whole of Subcarpathia. According to their declarations, the territory once again belonged to Czechoslovakia, however, they immediately set about its incorporation

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and within days the new western frontier of the Soviet Union had been drawn across it. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, Subcarpathia belongs to Ukraine, but some of those who insist on being Ruthenians take their cue from Prague. They have asked members of the Parliament of the Czech Republic to declare illegal the agreement ceding Subcarpathia to the Soviet Union. The SPR-RSČ, led by Miroslav Sladek, a right-wing party in the Prague Parliament, whose programme includes the restoration of Czechoslovakia, also wishes to reclaim Subcarpathia. Subcarpathia is a gate to Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, and Romania. On December 6th 1991, Hungary and Ukraine signed a Basic Treaty, in which both countries declared that they had no territorial demands on the other.

If one does not stop at a policeman's signal in Subcarpathia, he opens fire at the car, acting on orders, as part of the fight against the mafia. If one stops, one offers a better target. It happens that the mafia dress up as policemen.

After arriving in Subcarpathia, one is told what to do, repeatedly and with emphasis. Keep your eye on the policeman, in any event pretend to stop and take a good look whether he sports an identification breast plate, showing his number, on the left. Those are much harder to obtain than uniforms. If you can see none when drawing up alongside, step on the gas, and, if you're lucky, you can make an escape.

In any event, it's an ill omen to meet a policeman on a post-Soviet highway. It always costs money, mostly dollars. A driver may insist obstinately that he committed no traffic offence but explanations are in vain. The result could well be that the driver is taken to the station, and held there for hours. The police must show something for their work, so a report is drawn up on the offence, even if there is no photograph.

Better put up with the initial police procedure. The policeman stops you and tells you that you committed an offence. A fine has to be payed.

"How much?"

To which the policeman answers:

"How much have you got on you?"

That's when you take out the five dollar note you have put by, saying that much, as you hand it over—but don't even think of asking for a receipt. You can then drive off in peace but don't forget to get the next five dollar note ready. The police are ill paid in Ukraine too and that's one way in which they make ends meet. Sometimes it's not money they want. A rubber tube is handy, and five to ten liters of petrol may have to be siphoned over from your tank into that of the police car parked at the side of the road, and then, it's "see you again."

Unlike Romania, Croatia, Rump-Yugoslavia, still thought of as poverty-stricken in the West, and Slovakia or Hungary, where growth, however minimal, has started, here the decline in the GDP is still ongoing. The political and macro-economic state of Ukraine may allow the present minus 8 "growth" to be "reduced" to nought by the year 2000, climbing to a projected 1 per cent in the year that follows.

The lands that make up Subcarpathia today were always poor, but after 45 years in the Soviet Union, the pre-war standard of living, quality of life, and civic liberties appear a golden age. For one thing, around 1900, or between the wars, you could escape poverty by emigrating to America, then return home, and buy some land with your savings. Many did so, and many others stayed in the States. Some American relations left fortunes to those at

home, which the Soviet state always managed to lay hands on. Taxes and duty stamps were imposed until the heirs could call themselves lucky if allotted a car of Soviet make. There was no escape from Soviet poverty and oppression.

Subcarpathia is small but colourful, and its history is colourful too. There are plains and hills, mountains too, fast flowing rivers traverse it, and there is much scenic beauty. According to Anonymus (the 12th-century Hungarian court chronicler) Mukačevo was the first place settled by the Hungarians. The 12th-century Monastery of the Holy Cross in Lelesz—one of the places where documents were authenticated—is now across the border in Slovakia. The church is still in use but the walls of the cloister are crumbling, and with them some of the finest and earliest of frescos of the Kingdom of Hungary. In a castle near the parish of Borsi, also in Slovakia now, Ferenc II Rákóczi, Prince of Transylvania was born, who, early in the 18th century fought a long war against the Habsburg King and Holy Roman Emperor for the restoration of the Hungarian constitution. His Hungarian and Ruthenian serfs fought in his armies.

The Rákóczi family owned huge estates in what is now Subcarpathia. The castle of Munkács was theirs too. Ferenc Rákóczi's mother, Ilona, of the Croat Zrínyi family, was betrayed into surrendering it to the Austrians after a three-year siege at the end of the 17th century. Young Ferenc, in his teens, was initiated into warfare on the walls of the besieged castle. The castle of Huszt nearby also played its part in the Rákóczi wars. The town of Hust, as well as the mining towns of the region, enjoyed Royal Borough privileges even in the 14th century.

The Russian empire's desire to swallow Subcarpathia goes back to the 1848 Hungarian Revolution. The Hungarians were close to victory when the Court in Vienna solicited Russian help. Francis Joseph and Czar Nicholas I agreed on terms when they met in Warsaw on May 21st 1849, and on June 15th 200,000 Russians, under the command of Prince Ivan Fiodorovich Paskievich, invaded Hungary across the Carpathians. The Russian officers were astounded to find that the villages below the mountains were peopled by Slovaks and Ruthenians whose speech they could understand.

The encounter left its mark on the 400,000 Uniate (Greek Catholic) Ruthenians in their mountain hamlets. Some Ruthenians, with no aristocracy at their head and with only a limited number of educated people, drew the conclusion from linguistic similarities that they were part of the great Russian people. Their leaders, created by the winds of change, pointed them towards Russia.

Russophilism flourished amongst the Ruthenians for almost twenty years, from 1849 to the 1867 Austro-Hungarian Compromise. Its spiritual father was Adolf Dobrianski, a native of North-East Hungary. He identified the Ruthenians as Russians, and wanted to introduce Russian as a literary language alongside their own idiom. The Imperial Court in Vienna exploited such Russophile feelings against the Hungarians. Dobrianski served as a high ranking Austrian Imperial civilian commissioner alongside the invading Russian troops. Before the year was out he was decorated by the Czar for his services.

After the collapse of the Revolution, Hungary was administered by a Lieutenancy Council in Buda, subordinated to the Ministry of the Interior in Vienna. This oppressive administration gave preference in employment to members of the national minorities in Hungary who wished to realize their own national aspirations. But nei-

ther Francis Joseph nor the Austrian aristocracy wanted to make common cause with them. They used them and despised them. "Why indeed should the Court in Vienna reward a people without a single count?", the 75-year-old Vladimir Minač, a Slovak writer asks in a recent essay, but this question could be taken to apply to the Ruthenians as well.

The 1867 Compromise and the Austro-Hungarian Empire it produced finally put paid to Russophilism among the Ruthenians. After the Compromise the Court in Vienna had no more use for the passions the political ambitions of the national minorities fuelled. From then on the Emperor Francis Joseph, now also King of Hungary, used his new allies, the Hungarian authorities, to keep the national minorities in check.

Russophilism was no more, but religious and political propaganda, coming from the United States and Russia, flourished to promote the Orthodox faith and pan-Slavism. Many Ruthenians turned their back on Rome, Russia supplied North-East Hungary with religious books, and young Ruthenians were trained in Russian monasteries for pastoral work at home. K.P. Pobedonostsev, an influential member of the Czar's cabinet, said that he hoped to see the day when Galicia and Subcarpathia would be part of Russia.

This was not to happen during the settlements after the Great War. T. G. Masaryk, President of Czechoslovakia, however, declared that as far as he was concerned Czechoslovakia held Subcarpathia in trust for Russia, and would return it at the first opportunity.

The opportunity presented itself in 1944–45. Prague handed Subcarpathia to Stalin, and Stalin, in exchange, backed the expulsion of Germans and Hungarians from Czechoslovakia. In 1944 the Soviet Army still looked on Subcarpathia as Czechoslovakia, which is why it escaped the licence that prevailed everywhere else in Hungary, at least for a few days—looting, shooting of civilians, rape, confiscation of art collections from museums and private owners, etc.

Soviet forces occupied the whole of Subcarpathia very quickly. Soon after, *Smersh* ("death to spies"), the Red Army's much feared counter-intelligence organization, appeared in all major centres. Red Army officers and commanders also lived in terror of *Smersh*. Hardly was a new town occupied, the "little book" appeared from someone's dispatch case, the "little book", which listed local persons and institutions, their politics and property, and their sympathies or otherwise for the Soviet Union. Those to be used in the local administration and those to be liquidated—perhaps both, in succession—was decided on the basis of the little book. *Smersh* probably collected information amongst prisoners of war, and they did a thorough job.

Order 0036 of November 13th 1944 of the Red Army's 4th Ukrainian Front declared, in defiance of the provisions of international law, that Hungarian and German civilians of military age must be assembled and placed in prisoner of war camps by the NKVD. In May 1944 the Hungarians had deported the Jews from Subcarpathia, handing them to the Germans, in November of the same year the Soviets deported the Hungarians and Germans.

In compliance with this order, on November 14th, all men were assembled for a three days' *corvée (malenki robot)*. Officially this applied to men between 18 and 50, although in practice men between 16 and 60 were involved. Whoever they managed to get hold of, was taken off to the concentration camp at Salyava (Szolyva). Those who survived the journey

and their stay in the Salyava camp were taken to the interior of the Soviet Union. Forty thousand men out of the barely 200,000 Hungarians in Subcarpathia were involved. Few survived this collective punishment.

The liquidation of the Hungarians was systematic. Officials, teachers, lawyers were collected by the *chornaya vorona,* the black crows, the prisoner transport vehicles. They disappeared. Afterwards posters appeared, ordering Hungarians and Germans to report for work.

All these men so tricked were driven to the Salyava concentration camp on foot. Those locked up in the huts near the main gate saw that two or three loads of corpses were removed every morning, sometimes on carts, sometimes on sleighs. Several thousand are buried in the vicinity of the camp which was proclaimed a memorial park in November 1990. Those whose wives or mothers undertook the winter journey on foot and regularly brought food parcels, did not suffer want. The Russian guards generally accepted the parcel and handed it on to the prisoner for half a liter of brandy, sometimes for less, right up to the time when fathers, husbands and sons had gone from the camp, on their way to the interior of the empire. That, as everything, happened unexpectedly, so that you would not know what to do with the little you had left. They fell in, and columns of five hundred foot-sloggers, each guarded by five men with machine pistols, tackled the wintry Carpathians. The journey lasted eight days.

After Salyava, allotment camps came, such as Sanok (Szanok). There are no official figures but experts in Gulag matters estimate the number of those who perished at Sanok at 20 to 25 thousand. No water, food once a day, at night. The camp *kapos* were German prisoners. They carried huge rods and beat everyone. Here too, orders came unexpectedly. At the double, fall in, two thousand in each column, that's how many each train took. You had to climb in after running between specially trained guards. Armed young soldiers, one to four or five prisoners. A hundred into each truck, packed in like sardines, and off they went on a journey lasting weeks, into the interior of the Ukraine, and from there on towards the Caucasus and Siberia.

The reason for all the haste was the Moscow *ukaz* ordering the speedy "reunion" of Subcarpathia and the Ukraine, that is immediate Sovietization. (Subcarpathia had never before belonged to either Russia or the Ukraine, nor had there ever been an independent state called Ukraine either, making the use of the term "reunion" curious.) The autumn of terror was the appropriate time for the First Congress of the People's Committees of the Transcarpathian Ukraine held in Mukačevo, in the Peremoha (Victory) cinema. It has remained unknown to this day how and by whom the "delegates" to the Congress, held on November 26th 1944, were chosen, since no elections were held.

It is common knowledge, however, that many were not even aware what kind of a meeting they were called to attend. Once in the hall, they were not even allowed to answer a call of nature until they had voted for the "reunion" of Subcarpathia with the Soviet Union. There are numerous stories about the way they were forced to vote, but all versions agree that the resolution declaring the union was passed under the supervision of NKVD men.

A former NKVD man who was present as a guard in the Peremoha Cinema on November 26th 1944, remembers: "The cinema hall was crowded. In front, at a table, a Russian officer spoke about the purpose of the meeting: they had to decide on the future of Subcarpathia: should it

belong to Czechoslovakia, the Soviet Union or Hungary? Most were for Czechoslovakia, Hungary second, fewest wished to join the Soviet Ukraine. The officer signalled. We armed men in padded jackets guarded the doors. The officer put the question again, who wants Subcarpathia to join the Soviet-Ukraine? And the voting procedure got under way."

The resolution of that Congress is still in force. In October 1971 Hungarian students and intellectuals in Uzhhorod made a submission to the area committee of the Soviet Communist Party. Their submission included a request that the authorities declare anti-Hungarian passages in the November 26th 1944 manifesto null and void. The response was harrassment by the police. The civil rights protesters imagined themselves to be the victims of local excesses; they repeated their action, choosing the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the proclamation of the Soviet Union, addressing themselves this time to the Political Committee of the Central Committee of the Soviet Union in Moscow, and to the Praesidium of the Supreme Soviet. What followed were expulsions from universities, call up for military service, and passports for emigration to Hungary. After that the only permitted activity of the national minority took place in literary clubs kept under strict supervision.

The Hungarian version of the November Manifesto appeared in the Subcarpathian *Munkás Újság* (Worker's News) with over six months delay. Hostility to Hungary was toned down, and "reunion," which would have made even the terrorized people laugh, was translated as "union" in every case. I am quoting this re-translation:

> A historical day has dawned for the Transcarpathian Ukraine. We have rid ourselves of the German–Hungarian yoke with the help of the Red Army. We have put an end to the centuries long rule of Hungarians and all aliens over the soil of the Transcarpathian Ukraine, lands that have been Ukrainian from the beginnings of time. In the name of all the inhabitants of the Transcarpathian Ukraine the Congress of People's Committees of the Transcarpathian Ukraine expresses its gratitude to the heroic Red Army which expelled the German–Hungarian occupiers, and whose standards of war brought joy and happiness to our people. Glory to the Supreme Commander in Chief, Marshal of the Soviet Union, our father, Iosif Vissarianovich Stalin.
> [...]
> For the Transcarpathian Ukraine the year 1938 and the six years of Hungarian slavery which followed were the hardest to bear. The Czechoslovak government handed us over to the slavery of the Hungarian fascists in the hope of escaping occupation by Hitler's Germany.
> [...]
> They dealt with us in this way because we were torn apart from our mother country, the Soviet Ukraine, and we were defenceless. They dealt with us in this way because our struggle for union with our mother country, the Soviet Ukraine, could not be completed, and because we were outside that great family of nations, Soviet Russia.
> [...]
> We can only assure national progress, economic prosperity, and security abroad if we unite with the Soviet Ukraine and that friendly family of nations, the Soviet Union...[1]

After proclaiming "re-union," the First Congress of People's Committees continued its work and passed a resolution on "access to the soil and forests for the peasants, workers and clerical employees of the Transcarpathian Ukraine."

1 ■ The complete Ukrainian text is to be found on p. 2 of the Hungarian *Kárpáti Kalendárium 1975.* Kárpáti Kiadó, Ungvár, 1974.

The first paragraph declared Hungarians and Germans to be the eternal foes of the Ukrainian people. This document has not so far been invalidated either.

Today, as in Soviet times, official Ukraine looks on the November Manifesto as one of the cornerstones of its legitimacy. In 1994, on the 50th anniversary of its proclamation, Serhii Ustich, the Chairman of the Regional Council, and a member of the Kiev Parliament, celebrated the Manifesto while also paying his respects to the victims of Stalinism. "We bow our heads to the memory of the victims, we share in the mourning of the loved ones and kin of the victims, we express our sympathy to the innocent who suffered." [...] "Five decades have passed since an event which proved fateful in the life of Subcarpathians. On November 26th 1944, 663 delegates to the 1st Congress of the People's Committees of the Carpathian Ukraine signed a manifesto which expressed the will of many generations of our region to make up one family with the Ukraine. This historical document brought to a close a centuries long process of reunification, bringing together all Ukrainian lands in one integrated Ukrainian state..." (Both declarations by Serhii Ustich are to be found on the front page of the Hungarian language newspaper published in Uzhhorod, *Kárpáti Igaz Szó,* of November 26th 1994.

With the approach of another anniversary, the executive of the Subcarpathian Hungarian Cultural Federation,[2] meeting on November 10th 1996, passed a resolution demanding that the Parliament of Ukraine declare null and void the anti-Hungarian passages of the November Manifesto in which Hungarians and Germans are declared the eternal foes of the Ukrainians, for at the threshold of the third millennium it is inadmissible that any people should be branded as collectively guilty, or that valid documents should offend against the dignity of Ukrainian citizens of Hungarian ethnicity.

There was no response to this resolution.

At that time, after the declaration of the union, in December 1944, in a supplementary sweep, the NKVD collected and placed into camps all members of the German minority in Subcarpathia they could find. The Germans had moved into the Hungarian counties within the territory of Subcarpathia at the time of industrialization which took place in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. They made up 7–8 per cent of the population, their importance, however, was much greater, since they occupied key positions in industry. According to 1990 official figures, 3,500 Germans lived in Subcarpathia, the Federation of Subcarpathian Germans, however, claims 14,000. Many of the younger Germans do not speak the language, not surprisingly, given the terror lasting for decades and the absence of German schools. As an excuse for not starting any, the Soviet authorities registered them in a variety of ways, as Ukrainians, Hungarians, Slovaks—and even Swedes, since that sounded a bit like "Swabians", although of course no Swedes ever lived in those parts.

Following the supplementary concentration of Germans, the People's Council of

2 ■ Right up to the dissolution of the Soviet Union the Hungarians were not able to organize in defence of their political or cultural interests. The Subcarpathian Hungarian Cultural Federation was founded in 1989, at the time of the collapse, as the most important political and cultural organization of Hungarians who otherwise lack institutions. Ukraine has not, so far, permitted its registration as a political party.

the Transcarpathian Ukraine established a special court to deal with anyone who held any sort of office in Czechoslovak or Hungarian times, regardless of what he may have done or not done. The accused were charged without benefit of legal counsel, sentenced to up to ten years in prison or even to be shot in the head; confiscation of property, of course, ensued. In this way the professionals of every national minority in Subcarpathia were weeded out. From January, sentences of death were passed in quick succession. The arbitrarily condemned were executed in the basement of the NKVD building in Ungvár, and in the fields of Peretsyn (Perecsény), a village north of Ungvár, in the hills. The latter were buried on the spot, the former in the dead of night, between the graves in the Kapos utca cemetery in Ungvár. A politician, who in the war years had fought for the autonomy of Subcarpathia in the Budapest Parliament, was, according to the official version, executed on November 7th 1946 to celebrate the October Revolution. One defendant, who was bed-ridden, was not forced to attend his trial, but was sentenced *in absentia;* the executioner called on him at home and shot him in his bed.

Controls along the frontiers of the new conquest, that is the Soviet–Czechoslovak and the Soviet–Hungarian border, were tightened. Czechoslovakia and Hungary, though crushed and well and truly part of the Socialist camp, were reckoned to be in the West, and a second iron curtain hermetically sealed off the Soviet Union even from its own allies.

The stories told by villagers who lived near this Iron Curtain behind the Iron Curtain were not only about the cruelty of the occupiers but occasionally also about the humanity of a young soldier, or the hair-raising pettiness of the Soviet Empire. "I caught a magpie in the stable. I tied a beautiful red ribbon round its neck to let me tell for how long it stayed around. When it flew towards the frontier, the guards caught sight of the ribbon. It's carrying letters!!! Right, they shot, pistols and Kalashnikovs! But the bird made it. They looked for the person who released it. If they found out it was me... It's only now I dare to tell the story, fifteen years later. The Soviet frontier guards did not like birds. In daytime they kept the houses under observation where there were pigeons. They use them to send letters across the frontier for sure. Nights the patrol still turned up to catch them in the lofts and dovecotes, and a few weeks later pigeons by their hundreds were locked up in the attic of the *Kommandatura.*"

"It was obligatory to report the presence of strangers. Everyone possible was forced to be a stoolpigeon. Once one of their officers put on civvies and hung around near the border to see if the village would help a spy, but he made it so obvious that they grabbed him and took him to the *Kommandatura.* There the horses were happy. They laughed and were jovial, and slapped the peasants' shoulders."

"The soldiers were allowed to enter any premises at any time to find out if anyone was being hidden. You had to let them in. At night they took the bedding apart, turned the larders upside down, and emptied the cupboards, to make sure no subversive person was hiding there."

Another story: "I went out looking for myself with a dog. There was a dance, I had a drop or two too many. Enough was enough, I went home, but noone saw me. The iron curtain, all that barbed wire, was attached onto our yard. Getting home, I did not want my mother to notice I had a drink, so I lay down in the shed, in the straw, and fell asleep. At the dance they started looking for me, wondering where

I had gone. Someone said, he's escaped for sure. Not even five minutes had passed and the soldiers were there from the barracks. The officers were mounted. Dogs too. They rushed right along the frontier, through our garden. I woke up and got up to get into the stable loft but a soldier at the double saw me, pointed his Kalashnikov at me, his dog barked, you, come on! I got scared and ran ahead, all the way till morning. At first light they looked and saw it was me. I had been looking for me all night."

The years after the Iron Curtain fell saw the "consolidation" of the Soviet way of life. Stalin's death meant a slight thaw. The wish to wipe out everything covered every aspect of life, the present and the past. Bundles of documents, including land registers, were thrown out of the windows of archives. Soldiers went from door to door, every old document had to be given to them. The back-up team followed, they searched the houses and if they found any old papers that had not been handed in, internment followed. A ruling issued in the autumn of 1946 put an end to the description Ruthenians, and all Ruthenians were declared Ukrainians. Next they created Soviet citizens of the inhabitants of the conquered territories. People were forced to sign blank sheets, and once they did so the authorities wrote on top that the undersigned requested Soviet citizenship. The Germans were deported to Siberia in a number of stages. Relocation lists were prepared of Hungarian families as well, but Stalin's death put an end to this in time. Nothing had any value, nothing was respected if the Soviets were not interested in it. There was a hill in the fields of Drishino (Dercen), the site of the village burial ground since way back. In the fifties, Soviet troops made themselves at home there. Tank traps were dug around anti-aircraft guns, where the graves had been. The old gravemarkers and tombstones were rolled down the hill.

The decapitation of the Roman Catholic and the Calvinist Churches was completed in the second half of 1947. That's when they carried off all Catholic priests who had not previously been arrested, eighteen of them. Two of them died in the internment camp. The Calvinist ministers suffered the same fate. Some of them perished in Siberia. The churches were turned into atheist museums, granaries, repositories and gymnasia. The crosses were knocked off the steeples and up to the end of the eighties these damaged steeples faced the sky.

Whatever a researcher may enquire into, he is bound to find horror stories. Legends are now told in Subcarpathia about the death of Bishop Teodor Romzha of the Uniate (Greek-Catholic) Church. Eyewitnesses only dared to speak out a few years ago.

The Bishop reconsecrated a renovated church in the Mukačevo district in October 1947. Next morning he and his priests were taken by horse-drawn coach to the stop of the Uzhhorod bus. A military truck, followed by a command car, accelerated on the hillside. The driver leapt clear and the truck hit the coach which overturned, the passengers were injured and the horses were killed on the spot. The passengers of the command car, in unknown uniforms, realizing that the execution had not been successful, started to attack the survivors with iron bars but were unable to finish the job since the Munkács mail van arrived on the scene. The postal workers took the injured to the Munkács hospital, where Bishop Romzha, who had suffered injuries to his skull, soon died. The autopsy records cite a cerebral haemorrage as the cause of death. The Bishop's beatification process is now underway at the Vatican.

Barely eighteen months later, in the spring of 1949, the Greek Catholic Uniate Church in the Carpathoukraine was forced to merge into the Russian Orthodox Church. 129 Ruthenian and Hungarian priests, who were unwilling to accept this arrangement, were sent to Siberia. Hungarian Greek Catholics were recorded as Ukrainians. More than three hundred Greek Catholic Churches were handed over to the Orthodox. Members of Greek Catholic congregations were recorded as Orthodox, a fact they only discovered much later.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, not even a hundred of the confiscated more than three hundred churches were given back to the recovering Greek Catholic Church. The Greek Catholic Cathedral of Ungvár was returned only recently, and then in a very bad shape of disrepair.

Jewry in Subcarpathia was destroyed three times over. According to 1930 Chechoslovak figures, 102,255 Jews by religion lived in Subcarpathia, over 14 per cent of the 725,000 inhabitants. The 1989 Soviet census put the number of Jews at 2,700.

A major part of the Jews of North East Hungary had moved from across the Carpathians fleeing persecution and pogroms in Russia, when, following a partition of Poland, Galicia became Austrian and thus shared a sovereign with Hungary. These Jews soon established themselves economically. A Jewish community existed in Ungvár already in 1724. Mukačevo, Hust and Beregovo were all Jewish centres. The fame of the Hassidic rabbis of Subcarpathia spread well beyond their region. The Second World War put paid to this Jewish culture.

In 1941, three years before the Germans occupied the country, the Hungarian authorities deported the Jews of uncertain citizenship from Subcarpathia to the German occupied Ukraine. Those who were handed over to the German *Einsatzgruppe* in August 1941, were shot near Kamenets-Podolsk on the 27th and 28th. Many survived the machine gunning and even the *coup de grace,* and the earth was said to move for some time after their burial.

Subcarpathian Jews were finally destroyed after the German occupation of Hungary on March 19th, with Adolf Eichmann in charge. In Beregovo (Beregszász) 6,000 of the 18,000 population were Jews. In the spring of 1944, on the eve of the Passover, another 2,000 were brought in from surrounding villages. Jewish carpenters had to take up the oaken furnishings of the central synagogue, to make room for the eight thousand. They were soon taken away, most of them to Auschwitz. Today Beregovo, near the Hungarian border, is the only town with a Hungarian majority. Now forty Jews live there, six to eight of local birth, as many again from Subcarpathia, the others from beyond the Carpathians.

Those who returned from the death camps—about 2,000 out of about 18,000—were given back their dwellings, most of which had been looted. Now, at the turn of 1997, the many houses, left without an owner since so few Jews returned, are being privatized by their future owners. Those who did return had a third wave of destruction to look forward to. The Soviet system cleverly exploited the ravages of fascism. There were instructions from Kiev that when there were not at least five hundred members of the congregation who survived after the genocide, it was not worth considering the reopening of the synagogue. They demanded that rabbis, most of them survisors of death camps, should present diplomas of higher learning. Between the wars there were four hundred Jewish congregations in Sub-

carpathia, after the Holocaust the Soviet authorities only licensed four, those of Uzhhorod, Mukačevo, Beregovo and Hust. In Mukačevo, which was, and perhaps still is, the centre of Subcarpathian Jewry, 43 per cent of the population were Jewish. The congregation there seemed to upset the Soviet authorities, as they invalidated its licence, arguing that the Jews could easily travel to Beregovo, only 22 km away, by bus or train, ignoring the prohibition of travel on the Sabbath. However, that order was not carried out, since Stalin had died in the meantime.

The Beregovo Central Synagogue was ruined in the mid-sixties. Liturgical objects were mocked and trampled on; that's what the nationalization of the synagogue meant.

The congregation was forced to hand over its synagogue of its own free will. This is how Gyula Richter, an old Jew from Beregovo, a survivor of Auschwitz, remembers things: "Voluntariness mattered. We had no rabbi, and they kept on changing the chairman of the congregation until they found one who was willing to give up the synagogue. Obviously they promised him that he could emigrate to Israel. Which he did."

Having destroyed culture, they reconstructed the Beregovo synagogue as a palace of culture. The Hungarian Theatre, constantly facing financial ruin, is housed there now. There is a rabbi in Subcarpathia once again, in Mukačevo. He is an Israeli citizen.

A bleak, mendacious, humiliating and poverty stricken life naturally drove people to drink. Those who wished to earn a living and worked were said to "feather their nest," people whom no-one liked. Not even twenty years have passed since authorities in Dobrin (Dobrony), a Hungarian village in Subcarpathia, used a bulldozer to demolish a privately owned small vegetable shed. "This is enrichment! The recreation of capitalism! Not a socialist lifestyle."

When they all became Soviet citizens, names were distorted in the Russian fashion. Patronyms became obligatory for Hungarians, although they sound ridiculous in the language.

The Hungarians had hardly managed to learn enough Russian to survive and undertake better paid work when there was another language switch. All forms and notifications are now in Ukrainian. Many cannot understand it. In the words of László Dobos, a Hungarian writer from Slovakia, "Subcarpathia was the Gulag of the Hungarian language." In 1944–45 all Hungarian journals were banned, no book could be published in the language. The first Hungarian school in Subcarpathia in the Soviet era opened in 1953. It took fifteen years for a Hungarian school system to be reestablished. At present there are more than ninety Hungarian elementary schools. Hungarian secondary schools exist as well, and indeed there is now a Hungarian Teachers' Training College in Beregovo, a result of a three years' struggle with the authorities.

When *Kárpáti Igaz Szó* (Carpathian True Speech, locally known as Carpathian Lying Speech), was restarted, it was a literal translation of the local *Pravda*. Later, articles were written specially for it, but they had to be translated into Russian first, and submitted to the Communist Party for approval. Once that was given, the approved text had to be retranslated into Hungarian, the original Hungarian article could not be printed under any circumstances. No subscriptions could be taken out abroad for provincial Soviet newspapers; *Kárpáti Igaz Szó* of the Soviet years is therefore incomplete in the National Széchényi Library in Budapest. The volumes of the journal in the editorial

office were destroyed by unknown persons at the time of the collapse of the Soviet Union.

On December 1st 1991 a plebiscite declared the independence of Ukraine, made possible by the dissolution of the Soviet Union, and Leonid Kravchuk was elected the country's President. While electioneering in November, he had promised the world: "There are two things I cannot imagine, that Subcarpathia should find itself outside the Ukraine, but also that this region should not be accorded a special constitutional status, in keeping with its historical and geographical background."

At the national referendum declaring independence and choosing a president, Subcarpathians could also vote on a special self-government status for the region, and, in the Beregovo district, on a fourth issue, the possibility of creating a Hungarian Autonomous Region.

In Subcarpathia 92.6 per cent of the votes were for the independence of the Ukraine and 78 per cent for a special self-government status for the region. In the Beregszász district 90 per cent of the votes cast supported the idea of a Hungarian autonomous area. But Kravchuk, already in office, declared that the two special Subcarpathian questions put at the time of the referendum were merely meant to sound public opinion.

The Subcarpathian Hungarian Cultural Federation suggested in 1995 that it be allowed to erect a monument on the Vereckij Pereval (Verecke Pass) and to hold celebrations in August 1996 to commemorate the 1100th anniversary of the Magyar Conquest at the point where they crossed the Carpathians. The plan harmonizes with the Ukrainian National Minorities Act which permits every national minority to use its national symbols, to celebrate its holidays and historical anniversaries, and to erect appropriate memorials. All the papers were submitted in time, but no answer in writing was given, only a verbal agreement. At the urging of extreme nationalist organizations, the government in Kiev, at the very last minute, prohibited both the erection of the memorial and the celebrations. This was not stated in writing either, a further flouting of the laws of the country, inasmuch as they did not protect Ukrainian citizens who are ethnic Hungarians against threats to life and limb and a threatened terrorist action. (A hundred years ago, a Millenary Monument was erected on the Vereckij Pereval, which was then part of the Kingdom of Hungary within the Austro-Hungarian Empire. This, however, was demolished by the Soviet authorities in the 1960s.)

The Ukrainian economy is bankrupt, barely providing subsistence. Just about everyone makes a living on the black market. There is a special schedule on display in every town, showing when and in which quarter the electricity is turned off. You have to keep your eye on water taps too, and quickly fill every receptacle at every chance. Power supplies to villages are also rationed.

The monthly pensions of former collective farmers and labourers were recently raised from $6–$8 to $40–$50, but are not being paid. By early February 1997, even pensions due in October 1996 had not been paid everywhere. Teachers' pay was raised recently, from $10 to a minimum of $60. But that is not being paid either. Alongside the shortage of textbooks, this means that teachers too have to spend a good deal of their time doing "business" to make ends meet, thus missing lessons.

Petty smuggling generates much income and ensures the survival of many. Housewives are off at the crack of dawn towards the frontier, by train or bus, or hitch-hiking, with cartons of cigarettes

strapped around them. These they sell cheaply in the streets in Hungary. Those who look too fat are strip searched and sent home. Better luck tomorrow; off again with fake Marlboros, fake Pall Malls, adulterated vodka, returning home with fake Adidas, fake Reebok, fake Nike, cooking oil, soap, sugar, and other staples. Two full shoppingbags of food make quite a difference as a reserve. These unfortunates are handled roughly by customs and frontier guards on both sides, regardless of nationality or native language. Many take cheap Ukrainian petrol in the extended tanks of huge old cars—even in their doors too. At the border, everybody gets his cut, everything and everybody has a price. And then, there's no stopping business. Unless the Hungarian police put in an appearance. Sometimes they confiscate the smuggled goods, sometimes they want a cut too, but mostly they turn a tired blind eye.

One can only suspect what the really big fish deal in and how they manage things. What we have to go on is the handguns, Kalashnikovs, handgrenades and anti-tank rockets that have appeared on markets, and are now beeing seen and heard as well. On March 3rd 1994, an IL 76 freight plane was blown up at a Hungarian airfield as an episode in the Ukrainian–Russian mafia war. The necessary weaponry, explosives and personnel had crossed the Hungarian–Ukrainian frontier unhindered.

On the other hand, ordinary mortals find it difficult to cross the Subcarpathian–Hungarian border. They have to wait in the "police cage" for 24 or 36 hours, a source of income for the Ukrainian authorities. A *propusk* valid for a year can be bought for a hundred to a hundred and fifty dollars and that allows you to jump the queue. A little bakshish, in kind or money, can also hasten things. A few years ago, on the Ukrainian side of the Csap–Záhony crossing, a Ukrainian frontier guard in his cups lost his head and shot a Hungarian van driver after asking for a couple of dollars and not getting them.

Those who can no longer put up with all this, emigrate. Only a few are lucky enough to make it to America with their families, thanks to relatives there. The others must make do with relatives in Hungary. (That did not help in Soviet times.) Then pseudo-marriages offered a solution, for money. You got divorced in Subcarpathia, came to Hungary, married a Hungarian citizen, obtained citizenship, divorced the new wife, went back, and married the old one again, and brought her over the border. A quicker and more expensive version was for a couple in Hungary to divorce as well, and then provide cross marriages.

These days emigration is easy but it is now the Hungarian authorities who are making immigration more difficult. But the barriers are not raised too high. In Hungary the population is declining by 50,000 every year. The country needs the replacement which ethnic Hungarians wanting to leave their homes provide.

Many leave Subcarpathia for good, settling in Hungary. Unfortunately, these are mostly the better qualified and the more enterprising. ❧

László Varga

Watchers and the Watched

János Kenedi: *Kis állambiztonsági olvasókönyv* (A Concise State Security Reader). Budapest, Magvető, 1996. Vols. I–II, 441, 510 pp.

Hungary is a postcommunist country which, unlike the former GDR, did not make the documents of its old state security organization accessible to the public. The new parliament, democratically elected after the changeover of 1989–1990, in keeping with the intentions of the national conservative majority, passed legislation which was not in full harmony with the spirit of a genuinely democratic state. The so-called Compensation Laws limited the reprivatization of land, both disappointing those who felt themselves aggrieved and putting land ownership in a state of disarray. Following a Constitutional Court ruling, the governing coalition's attempt at retroactive justice (which was gradually reduced to dealing with those who had actually fired on unarmed crowds in 1956) was narrowed to a degree where it was no more than mere government propaganda.

Clearly in order to compensate for this, before the 1994 elections the government controlled media launched an anti-communist campaign. Instead of exposing real crimes, however, it treated the public to horror stories. The President of the Socialist Party was alleged to have acted as an ordinary murderer, and the headquarters of the post-communist Socialist Party figured as a mass graveyard. This propaganda boomeranged badly: it contributed greatly to the devastating electoral defeat of the leading government party and the absolute majority won by that very same post-communist Socialist Party. The party president described as a murderer was able to walk into parliament as a democratically elected prime minister.

A prominent role in the process of doing justice was given by the national conservative government of 1990–1994 to the Lustration Act which, however, managed to get through Parliament only in the second half of its tenure of office. In terms of this act, the names of a select circle of public figures (members of parliament, government ministers, general managers of government-owned firms, newspaper editors, etc.) who co-operated in the past with the state security department whose brief was to fight "internal reaction", would be made public, should they refuse to resign their posts after their "lustration".

The law was intended to cover four categories. First and foremost, it was to reveal the names of the agents and secret officers of the communist internal state security service. Secondly, to reveal those

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who, as part of their job, were granted official access to the reports of these agents. Within this category, however, even lawyers do not entirely agree whether this simply concerns employees of the "home defence department" or whether it also includes communist party and government officials who received the reports of state security in their official capacity.

The third category, swiftly dubbed "Lex Horn,"[1] covered those who had once belonged to the Kádárist paramilitary organization which had an active and illegal role in the crushing of the 1956 Revolution. Finally, as if it were ashamed of exposing—even if in a manner completely in keeping with a democratic, constitutional state—the communist state machinery, it also sanctioned National Socialist Party membership before 1945. In return for all this, the documents of the former state security service were, in practice, declared secret *sine die*.

The Constitutional Court deemed the law unconstitutional on two counts. First, it found it unacceptable that the range of those to be investigated was determined inconsistently, extending to the business community and, in the case of the media, even to those active in the private economy. More significantly, Parliament was criticized by the Constitutional Court for failing to guarantee the victims' right to information.

The decision of the Constitutional Court also called attention to something odd. This was the fact that decisions, even legislation affecting state security documents and even former state security agents, were being made by legislators and decision-makers who, at best, had only vague information on the documents themselves or the various categories of agents. Thus the law takes no notice of what was called the prison cell network (one of the most favoured ploys of state security, covering those who reported on their cellmates) and this it consequently ignores. The ploy was especially effective during the investigation stage when detainees exhausted by mental and physical abuse including torture easily confided to sympathetic cellmates. An even greater oversight, raising the issue of equality before the law, is that neither the act nor the decision of the Constitutional Court recognizes the category of "social contact". Individuals in that category supplied information to state security without being formally "signed up", simply on account of their official or social position.

Even before the bill was voted into law, it had become clear that it included categories which public opinion did not consider reprehensible. Gyula Horn, the President of the Socialist Party (the current Prime Minister), openly declared that he was covered by the Act on account of his role in 1956-1957. What he neglected to mention was that he came under it on two counts, since later, as Foreign Minister, he had been on the list of those to whom state security reports were circulated. Moreover, that list also included the current Speaker of Parliament as Deputy Minister of the Interior of the Németh Government (1987–1989) as well as that government's Finance Minister, who occupies the same office today. It might thus be said that the "soft" investigation is a direct continuation of the "soft" dictatorship or "Goulash Communism" of the previous era in that those who had held high positions in the previous regime were permitted to remain in leading posts under the new dispensation.

József Antall, the first democratically elected Prime Minister, had pulled the "agent card"—even before the law was passed—twice from the pack of the former state security service. He intimated that two former political allies who had turned against him had been involved with the communist state security service. One of

them is President of the Smallholders' Party, now the strongest amongst the opposition parties in Parliament. The other is the writer István Csurka, leader of the most important far-right party outside Parliament, who had to admit to having been an agent.

Antall's move caused genuine panic. His political opponents (and not only his opponents) accused him of revealing state secrets. Interior Minister Péter Boross, later Antall's successor, asked for an expert opinion from the head of the data protection department of his ministry as to whether the secrets of the former communist regime should be regarded as state secrets or not. The dilemma was elegantly resolved by the chief protector of secrets in an internal memorandum. According to his position, with the proclamation of the Hungarian Republic on October 23 1989, the secrets of the Hungarian People's Republic, and its state security secrets, automatically lost their classification. On the basis of the same legal logic, however, he proposed that its former agents' records should be declared secret again by the Minister of the Interior.

This being done, a delicate problem was resolved. The Prime Minister had not violated any state secret, but his revelations were not to set a precedent: ever since who and in what manner served the communist state security service has remained a secret. This solution ultimately suited every parliamentary and extra-parliamentary party. The post-communists, the intended targets of the entire legislation, were highly successful in making it believed that they were the ones least concerned. They were able to refer to an internal instruction, according to which communist party members were not allowed to be used as agents.

What is true is that, unlike the ÁVH, its pre-1956 predecessor, the Hungarian state security service looked for "enemies" not within the party's ranks, but where they really were, among dissidents both inside and outside the country.

The ban, however, on the involvement of party members in security operations (much like that in the GDR) was impossible to uphold, since (again as in the GDR) it would have meant forgoing the services of the most trustworthy. Accordingly, in the days preceding the final demise of state security, no fewer than a quarter of all agents were party members.

Upon his departure from office, the last communist Prime Minister, Miklós Németh, handed over to the leaders of the triumphant opposition parties lists containing the names of ex-secret agents among their newly elected representatives. Rumour has it that the parliamentary spokesman of the dominant national-conservative party in that government used that very list to cool down his fellow members of parliament demanding a radical agents' law, informing them that they themselves would be among the heaviest hit by a publication of the names of agents. Thus it was ultimately left to the next parliament, elected in 1994, to amend the act, bringing it into line with the decision of the Constitutional Court, which meant that, as time went by, its system-changing character had been lost.

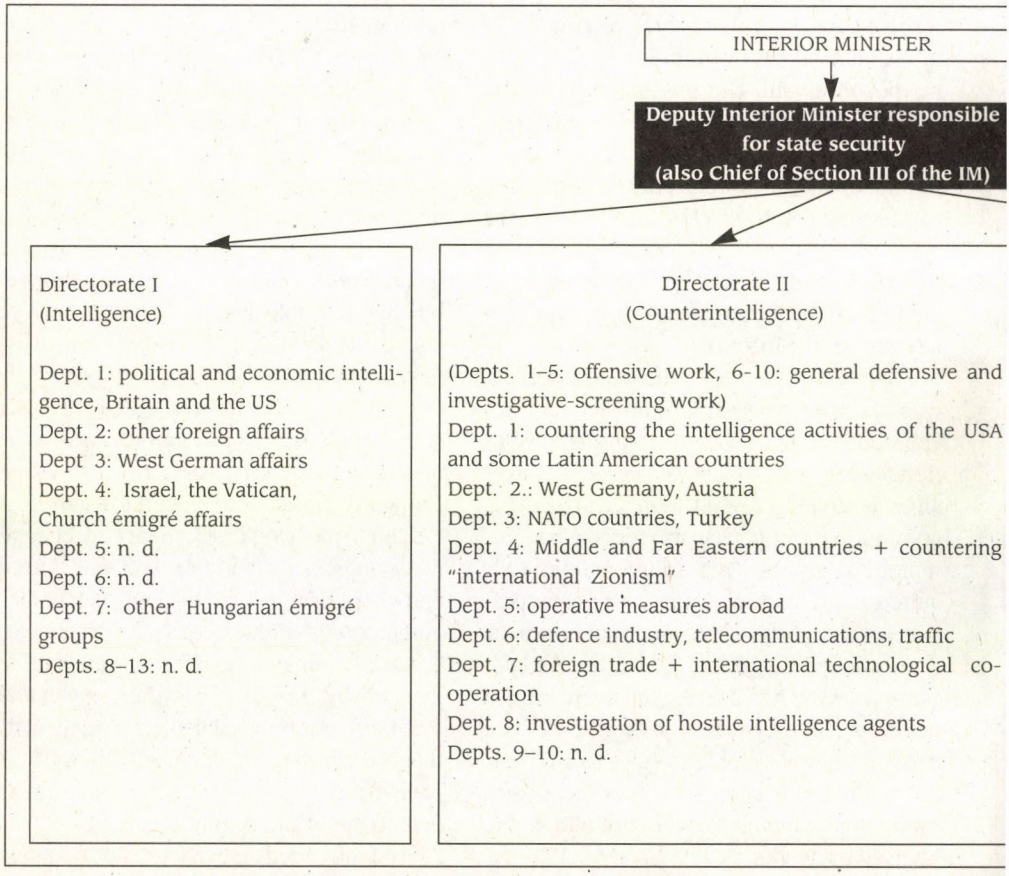
Thus, the slogan of "peaceful change" made it possible for the less well known and therefore less compromised members and methods of the state security service to be saved (some of those dismissed were reinstated by the Socialists themselves after the 1994 elections). Furthermore, it made the "conspiracy of silence" almost final, paving the way for the survival of a prettified image of the communist regime.

The amended act was a result of a compromise, enforced by the Constitutional Court, between the two governing parties

which, in this respect, had fundamentally different political philosophies. On the one hand, it radically narrowed down the range of those to be investigated, with the focus on discrediting agents of the department engaged in the fight against "internal reaction" (Directorate III of Section III, see Box). On the other hand—following the German model—it ruled that a special office should be established, whose main function would be to ensure that the victims had access to documents concerning themselves.

Despite the compromise, the law still has a number of warts. Constitutional doubts are raised by the arbitrary distinctions made between the former secret services. Thus the right to information does not extend to those who were under surveillance as members of the armed forces, even as conscripts. Nor does it extend to émigrés, handled by a secret service not specifically named by the law, whose agents' names and activities also remain classified. In short, the law continues to protect the culprits, not the victims.

Thus, if Secret Agent X or Y were named here in this article, it would be a clear violation of the law, while the contents of a file on anybody formerly under surveil-

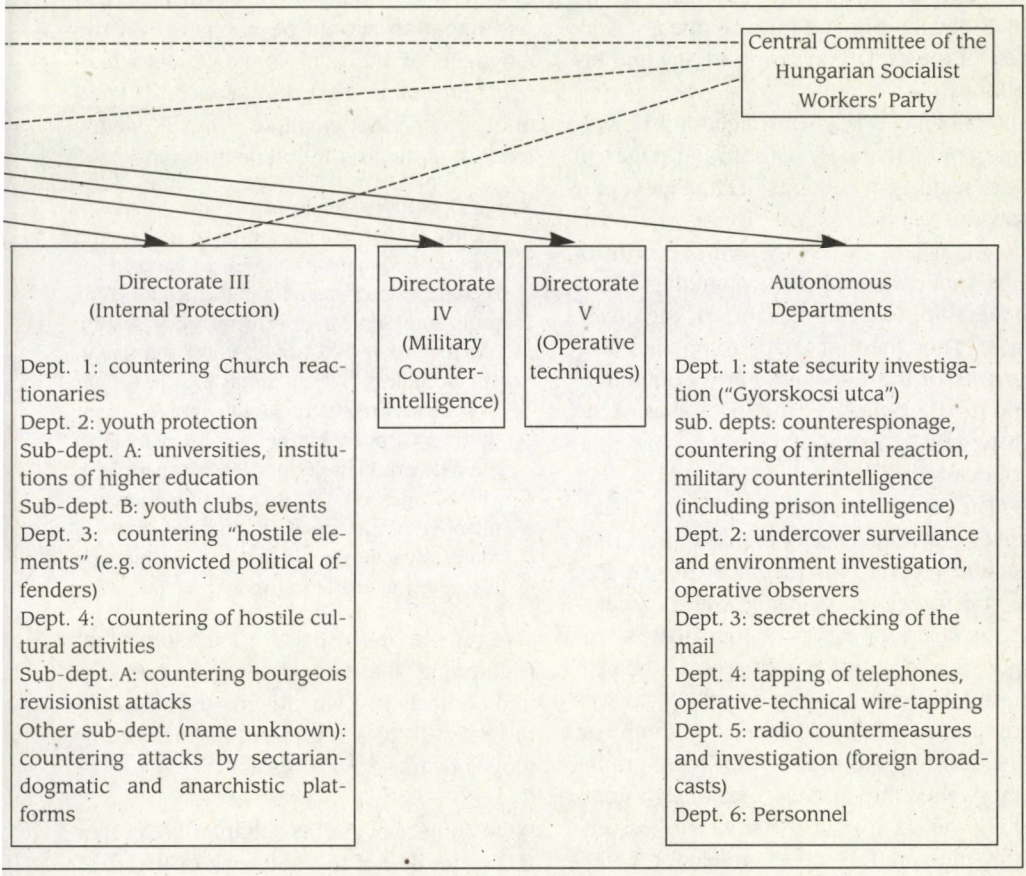


The Organization Chart of the Former State Security Service (Ministry of the Interior Section III)

lance could be reproduced without any legal consequence whatsoever. And this can even be done by referring to state security documents that can no longer be found.

Herein lies the biggest trap, both for the data protection law and for the future office, which still awaits establishment. For a substantial part, probably the most important part, of the former state security documents has now vanished without trace.[2] It is now known that at the turn of 1989–1990, as part of the last throes of the communist regime, a frenzied wave of shredding swept the secret services. (Moreover, it turned out that despite the proclamation of the Republic, the security service continued to keep democratic parties, which at that time were already legal, under surveillance.) This became known as "Dunagate".

"Dunagate" has not been investigated by any independent body to this day, and nothing has been done to establish what documents disappeared. It was discovered years later that the documents of the illegal surveillance of democratic parties were only a minuscule part of those that vanished. It is, in fact, questionable whether it was physically possible to destroy all the documents that are now missing within



such a short time. Several hypotheses are possible. One alleged that the missing documents were taken by the Russians; according to another—and this seems more likely—they are being kept, and possibly even used, by the secret services which have survived into democracy.

With his book, János Kenedi has breached the wall of silence. The book is based on an ingenious idea: it provides a view of the wide-ranging activities of the Kádár regime's state security by focusing on three commemorative days, October 23 (the anniversary of the outbreak of the 1956 Revolution), March 15 (the anniversary of the outbreak of the 1848 Revolution) and June 16 (the anniversary of the execution of Imre Nagy and his fellows).

Following a brief introduction, the volume contains nearly a thousand pages of state security documents, for the most part previously inaccessible. These are completed, where necessary, with records of those meetings of the Communist Party leadership bodies relevant to the given topic. Thus the first chapter contains documents of the Budapest Party Committee, and the third those of the top bodies of the party, the Central Committee and the Political Committee.

The state security documents themselves show an astounding diversity. They include records, for instance those taken at interrogations of suspects and witnesses, or at the meetings of the "organs" responsible. The number of reports, however, is far greater, and in several cases it is possible to follow the process whereby an "incident", while moving upwards, gradually swelled into a "case," seriously threatening the security of the state. No less enlightening are the "notes" made for "internal use only", containing an agent's report, or a study of the en-vironment, contacts, etc., of a "target person",[3] or an appreciation of the result of a house search.

These two large volumes close with a "Dictionary of State Security Slang", compiled on the basis of a "Dictionary of State Security Terms," published in 1980 and, of course, classified Top Secret. The actual title makes it clear that we are dealing with a world apart, even within a dictatorship, a secret universe not only inaccessible to the ordinary citizen, but one which insiders too need a special dictionary to understand.

The German linguist Victor Klemperer (1881–1960) achieved international fame with a work known as *LTI (Lingua Tertii Imperii)* published in 1947. A similarly indispensable handbook in German, Czech or Hungarian should be published on the language of the communist *Staatssicherheit,* the state security service. I shall quote just one example from Kenedi's book to show this linguistic ingenuity:

> Operational apartment: one or several rooms whose conspiratorial position and technical equipment allow it to be used for recruitment, for catching in the act, for compromising someone, a secret body search, etc. Its forms: "K"—under-cover apartment. The occupier of a "K" flat has a cover ID, uses state security funds for the upkeep or rent of the apartment, but he is not a member of the network himself. "T"—secret apartment. The occupier of a "T" apartment is usually a member of the network and the place is rented specifically to serve as a meeting place for the operative organs.[4]

Even in retrospect, it is somewhat frightening that a state tracks, oversees and controls its own citizens using known or less well-known undercover means employed by its secret services.

The subject of the first chapter is October 23, the day of the outbreak of the 1956 Revolution—or counter-revolution in the Kádár regime's terminology. The first com-

memoration was the same day of the following month, still in 1956. The people of the capital chose what was probably the most spectacular manner possible to demonstrate their passive resistance. In the afternoon of November 23, the city went completely silent and motionless for an hour. That silence was the people's reply to the Soviet guns, tanks, mortars and small-arms fire that had filled the air 19 days earlier. As a consequence, Kádár and his cohorts learned to fear the power of silent remembrance.

That fear permeates the first documents included in the volume. They show the preparations made by the authorities for the first anniversary of the Revolution in 1957. These preparations involved, beside the police—within which, naturally, a major role was assigned to the political police—the army, the "workers' militia", (a paramilitary organization established by Kádár after the crushing of the Revolution), the party apparatus and the agencies of central and local government. The Soviet occupier, through their advisors, also kept a close eye on these plans.

As a part of these plans, a list was drawn up of the politically suspect, on the basis of which it was decided who should be taken into "preventive custody" from 5 a.m. on October 18 until November 24. Provisions were made for continuous patrols, "operative reconnaissance work" was naturally intensified, and the Soviet town commander (e.g. in Budapest) was kept informed. The armed forces were put on full alert from 5 a.m. on the days preceding October 23, November 4,[5] and November 7,[6] until 8 a. m: the following day. Naturally, the "network persons," or agents of the political police were also "mobilized" (at this time, 631 "network persons" were attached to the Budapest Police alone, and their number nationwide was 4,300, still significantly fewer than the pre-revolution figure of 8,000).[7] They were briefed on aspects of the observation and obliged to report continuously. Special attention was paid to the cemeteries—40 policemen on foot patrol and 20 mounted policemen were assigned to the Central Cemetery.

There was no limit to detentions and investigations. In Csepel, possibly the largest working-class district of the capital, a worker was arrested at dawn who, when leaving the factory, asked the policemen on guard, "What the hell? You're carrying submachine guns. Are you afraid, or something?" It was observed, reported and duly investigated that in front of a primary school a number of children had got out of a U.S. embassy car. (The investigation ended in a fortunate manner: it was discovered that the father of one of the boys, an employee of the American embassy, had given a lift to his son and his son's friends to school.) The Budapest AP correspondent had his film confiscated after he had taken photographs. A ten-year-old-boy was detained because he went to school wearing a black tie. Everybody who dared to wear a black mourning ribbon was taken to the nearest police station, and there were grave consequences if they were not able to justify their wearing it by the very recent death of a close relative.

The tight hold on society hardly eased in the following years. Every single act of protest, whether it was a leaflet written in a child's hand or graffiti (even on a toilet wall) was duly reported, investigated, classified as conspiracy, and punished. "Our investigation has established that the producer and distributor of the leaflets was Lajos Dobri, a 13-year-old primary schoolboy, a member of a kulak family. Dobri secured the help of Nándor Pusztai, a 12-year-old schoolboy in the distribution of the leaflets. The children confessed to hav-

ing committed the act," a lieutenant colonel of the Interior Ministry reported in December 1958. The officer had won merit not so long before in preparing the Imre Nagy trial, and was to reach the peak of his career years later as ambassador in Moscow.

The densely woven web of what was then called "interior affairs"—"state protection" was its earlier and "state security" its later name—covered the entire country. When necessary, the nation-wide apparatus could be mobilized for the investigation of a case; those involved included not only the political police, counterintelligence officers, and their agents of various categories, but at least as many "social contacts", people who were obliged to provide information by virtue of their position, without any formal "recruiting" (plant or office managers, party secretaries, hotel staff, janitors, etc.).

An "exposed" case would often start on a life of its own. A poem recorded in a teenager's diary, if it happened to have a political content, was judged from the point of view of the security of the state; the report on it would be passed upwards right to the top, to the apex of the party and government leadership, in order to testify to the indispensability and efficiency of state security. A juvenile "false step" of this kind could, beside the actual punishment it entailed, wreck careers and lives, the stigma being impossible to remove. The police were inclined to criminalize the political cases of which it had knowledge. For many, there seemed to be no way out other than to co-operate with the agencies of the Ministry of Interior, taking on the role of informer. There was good reason why many of the victims of the "preventive" measures mentioned above were forced to choose that "solution"; they were marked for life all the same, remaining under surveillance, regularly reported on. In many cases it is next to impossible to distinguish between victim and culprit.

The measures, records and reports of the authorities are followed in the first chapter by accounts of specific "cases". The first began—from a police viewpoint—in March 1957, when a young university student sent a small red, white and green (the national colours) ribbon to a friend who had left the country. It was the type customarily worn on jackets and coats by Hungarians, especially the young, on March 15 in commemoration of the Hungarian Revolution of 1848. The ribbon had been given to the hero of our story by a girl he had once been in love with, and he sent it to France to be rid of a painful memory. However, he had foolishly enclosed the wish, "Let this little thing mean that we are guarding closely all that we set out to achieve in October [i.e. the Revolution half a year earlier]."

The ribbon was intercepted by the ever-vigilant postal guardians of the state's security, and from then on, his correspondence was watched, his circle of friends, his most confidential conversations, his political record, and especially his "activities" in the days of the Revolution, were carefully checked. In his reply, the friend in France asked questions, which were duly answered, and thus the act of "espionage" had been clearly committed. That was enough to set the machinery of state security in motion. The student was given a "personal file" and he was put under close surveillance. The "network persons" active at the university and among his friends were put on his trail, and the investigation was at once expanded. The outcome was relatively fortunate: only two were tried, charged not with espionage but with "incitement to hatred against the people's democratic government order", a much less serious crime. Our hero got away with five years' imprisonment, his companion with four.

Kenedi's second case study is the longest section, making up more than a tenth of the nearly 1000 page documentation. A Virgil of our absurd modern times, he guides us into the circles of state security never known to the outsider. The subject here is a genuine "organization". On October 11, 1957, in the small hours, the political police "seized 30 pieces of libellous trash. The majority of the envelopes is light blue, 7 of them are light green, 4 pink and 3 white. All 30 have been addressed by typewriter and mimeographed."

Of course, it was not the colour of the envelopes which aroused the interest of the Hungarian Stasi but what was inside: a leaflet calling on the recipient to commemorate the imminent anniversary of the Revolution in a proper manner. The 31 addressees included, in additon to the Hungarian news agency, the editorial offices of two arts weeklies, two hospitals, several universities and university teachers, as well as actors, directors, writers and religious denominations.

Following that, the alert custodians of the security of the state seized another 10 (white) envelopes from a mailbox next to the American legation. The report written on the operation made no attempt to conceal the fact that the original intention had been to lay hands on letters mailed by the American legation; it was sheer coincidence that they came upon the leaflets signed by "Hungarian Revolutionary Youth". Attached to the leaflet, there was a request in English asking the addressees (the legations of the U.S., Italy, India, Argentina, Sweden, France, Britain, Finland, Austria and Turkey) to forward the contents of the letter to Radio Free Europe or the European Service of the BBC.

During the day, a total of 68 envelopes and leaflets came into the possession of the political police. Few things can indicate the prevailing political mood in Hungary at the time better than the fact that 65 were intercepted in a "K" (conspirational) manner—i.e. postal inspection—and only three were handed in by the actual addressee (one of them by the party daily *Népszabadság*).

The investigation established immediately that the distribution of the leaflet was the work of an organized group. Efforts were made to deduce who the authors were from the nature of the addressees; total "K" control was immediately ordered and the agents' network briefed. Within four days, 138 envelopes were found, and the investigation followed two tracks. One dealt with the way the leaflets and envelopes (typewriter used, etc.) were produced, the other analysed the list of the addressees.

In another five days—and after five more envelopes—the analysis of the addresses seemed to yield definite results. The investigators established that the authors of the leaflet had to be sought among people connected with sport, and especially at the College of Physical Education. On the basis of that, a broad operative plan was drafted. The political record of the addressees was checked, members and activists of the professional and student organizations active before and during the Revolution investigated, so too were university and college students actively engaged in sports, especially swimmers; the typewriters and duplicating machines of universities and academies were inspected. The staff of the country's single sports newspaper was subjected to a particularly thorough investigation since the editors, quite incomprehensibly, were not among the addressees.

In November the investigation was extended to a possible connection conceiveable between the adressees and the circle of potential offenders. Moreover, in two specific cases, both involving university

teachers, the political police actually decided to deliver the leaflets, to see how they would react to what they received. That minor point in the story shows up clearly the essence of the operations of the state security service. No individual addressee, or anyone spoken to, could ever be certain whether he or she was adressed by a bona fide "offender" or was caught up in an act of provocation organized by the political police.

In conjunction with that, the investigation of the typewriters of universities and other institutions of higher education continued and, for safety's sake, was extended to cover those in Western missions. The intensity of the "K" inspection was increased, and, in order to play by the rules, the help of the Public Prosecutor's Office was also enlisted. All letters "addressed and placed in envelopes in a similar manner" would be henceforward opened. All mimeograph machines of the "Rotaprint" type operating in the capital—162 in number—were examined, and so were those operating them as "the operation of Rotaprint machines requires training". These measures clearly illustrate what makes a state totalitarian, even a regime which later would be widely referred to as "goulash communism".

It was established that although Rotaprint duplicating plates could only be bought on producing "a purchase book issued by the police", this did not prevent the plates from being re-used. As a result, the state-owned company using the greatest number of Rotaprint duplicators was also subjected to a thorough investigation; at the same time the circle of potential offenders was "explored" by recourse to earlier agents' reports on file. That filter still proved too wide: several hundred undergraduates and teachers were caught in the sieve (including some who were themselves active as agents as well as others who would become offenders, or rather the victims in other "cases" described in the volume). On that account, everybody against whom disciplinary action had been taken because of their activity in 1956 at the College of Physical Education was investigated.

By the end of 1958, the circle of possible offenders was narrowed down after a collation of the links between the addressees and the potential perpetrators. These were undergraduates of the Polytechnic University and possibly also of the Faculty of Natural Sciences of Eötvös University in Budapest, who had become friendly at a swimming pool with the two teachers of the College of Physical Education among the addressees. Two restaurants were identified which could have been regularly used by "the perpetrators", who also had contacts with three hospitals especially heavily involved in the "counterrevolution" of 1956. The investigation therefore began to concentrate on these circles and "facilities". More agents were drawn into "reconnaissance" work, and more potential offenders placed under observation. Thus a list was made of university students who had been bringing casualties to the "compromised" hospitals in the days of the Revolution (their leader was to be executed shortly afterwards); the investigation was then extended to university students who had been treated in those hospitals in 1956.

George Orwell himself would have found his vision of the totalitarian communist state naive compared to the scale of the investigation actually carried out because of an insignificant leaflet. Not surprisingly, though, it turned out that until May 1958, this all-embracing investigation had been on the wrong track. The first real discoveries were made, in fact by chance, only in May 1958 (but it is precisely the elimination of chance that makes an investigation "total"). Those first tangible re-

sults came from a secondary lead: the failure of the examination of the typewriters of the College of Physical Education.

It was "established" that the leaflet had not been written on any of the College's typewriters but part of a thesis submitted by a student—"The Role of Callisthenics in Physical Education in Schools"—had been written on the typewriter so long sought.

There is no need to bore the reader with further details of the absurd investigation lasting for another six months. The typewriter finally lead to the "culprits". What made matters complicated was the fact that the whole affair had nothing to do with the College of Physical Education; the author of the thesis worked briefly on a borrowed typewriter, and this nearly lead to a former minister of the Smallholders' Party,[8] a prominent architect, already sentenced on trumped up charges in 1947. Ultimately he was dropped from the case even though the typewriter had been used by his sub-tenant too. In the end, to the greater glory of communist legality, only the real perpetrator, his relatives and friends were put on trial. Accordingly, Iván Kuklis "got away" with a prison term of eight years. One might venture the assumption that the total failure of the entire nation-wide investigation, the fact that the political police failed abysmally, finding the author of the leaflet by mere chance, had a part in the relatively mild sentence.

The next story in the volume might even be called banal. Its starting-point was an anonymous denunciation charging that a female student of the Faculty of Law of Budapest University was carrying out "counterrevolutionary activity". In a letter addressed to Kádár's deputy, N. N. complained of having denounced his fellow student already twice— anonymously, of course—but to no avail. This time he found the right man to turn to. At the initiative of Minister of State György Marosán, an investigation began, the documents of which provide an accurate picture of the manner in which the political police recruited its informers, of the way in which it invaded privacy, what personal observation and trailing meant, and how it tried—not without success either—to sexually compromise the not-yet-accused victim as well as the to-be-recruited agent. The documents let us into the secrets of house searches and interrogation procedures, which again ended in a trial with a relatively mild sentence: she was sentenced by the Budapest Municipal Court to a "mere" two and a half years, a happy ending under the circumstances and given the times. However, that sentence was overturned and lengthened to 6 years by the Supreme Court acting as an appellate court. According to the reasons adduced, the girl's crime was having written the words "Long live 23 October! Long live Imre Nagy!" on a blackboard in a students' hostel.[9]

The documents included reveal the secret workings and self-defence mechanisms of the regime. Poems written by children or adolescents are subjected to investigations, and next, to charges; since the whole thing is totally absurd even according to the rules of dictatorship, the offender is declared of unsound mind, if need be. The subjects of investigations are children and teenagers, and, when necessary, adult "instigators" are found too; a half-drunken remark made in a bar is sufficient, even though it had nothing to do with the action investigated but was—or may have been—overheard by the children who then distributed leaflets or scribbled slogans on a wall.

In one of the cases, a cleaning woman for a local newspaper came under the scrutiny of the political police, and the investigation exposed all her sexual relations

and publicized them too. The fist of authority cracks down on everyone within its reach, has them sentenced, and/or breaks them for life, or recruits them if they can be blackmailed.

Hence the "afterlife" of the fallen regime: gone is the difference between vice and virtue, as if all of us were equally guilty, be we collaborators or resisters. It is not the system but society that was guilty: that is what furnishes the legal basis—the "social consensus"—for covering the crimes with a veil of secrecy, classifying the documents. Vice, and virtue too, receives similar treatment, and, in principle at least, someone who would not allow himself to be recruited, who would not turn informer can feel just as guilty and compromised as someone who collaborated and acted as an occasional or long-term informer. Let there be no doubt: this false sense of "shared guilt," if it remains un-expiated, will determine the future of Hungarian democracy for a long time.[10]

March 15 is the day when the anti-Habsburg revolution of 1848 broke out in Hungary: it is a symbol of the country's independence. Since the civil rights demanded in 1848 had not been fully respected by any government in Hungary after 1918 and until the changeover, and since no-one since 1849 had been in a position to claim that they had achieved total independence for the country, all concerned were, in one way or another, uneasy about the commemoration of the date.

In 1848 the young revolutionaries summed up their demands in 12 points. These covered every essential demand of democracy, freedom and independence, and they all more or less remained demands until 1990. The young in 1956 evoked the demands of the 1848 Revolution. After the suppression of the 1956 Revolution, the demands of equality before the law, freedom of the press, the withdrawal of foreign troops, etc., were as sensitive issues as at any earlier time. Celebrating 1848 meant remembering the lost cause of 1956.

The communist regime declared itself the spiritual heir to the 1848 Revolution, but was paranoid about any kind of spontaneous commemoration. The celebrations of the 1970s are the subject of the second part of Kenedi's book. In 1972, the official festivities were followed by a spontaneous commemoration. It was nothin extraordinary. A number of young people simply wanted to call on the memorial sites of the 1848 Revolution, and some went as far as to distribute, on their own initiative, a poem written a couple of decades earlier, which was not banned by the (officially non-existent but nevertheless highly active) censorship but actually taught in secondary schools.[11] The poem was neither revolutionary nor anti-regime, but the action had not been officially approved and was thus presumed to be an offence. The poem was confiscated on the spot, its "propagators" detained and—naturally—convicted.

This is the most uncomfortable chapter of Kenedi's book. The case did not involve people continuing to resist after the "counter-revolution" in any way but simply youngsters wanting to pay tribute in a genuinely spontaneous manner, a tribute which may have even corresponded to the rules of the game of the semi-dictatorship. Such a retaliation could have been interpreted as arbitrary even at the time, Hungarians in general were unaware of the fact that in 1972, then again the following year—in the "success years" of Kádárist consolidation—the authorities punished "demonstrating" youngsters without mercy.

At the 1997 Hungarian national film festival, a documentary film was shown, based on Kenedi's research, in which those convicted in that case were inter-

viewed on the 25th anniversary of the events. The testimonies could even be regarded as a kind of critique of the book since, in the state security documents and reports, there is no trace of the physical and psychological pressure to which the large number of detainees had been subjected. The film is all the more uncomfortable to watch since at that time most of us were happy to calm our consciences with the comforting thought that, unlike its pre-1956 predecessor, the ÁVH, the political police of that time did not resort to such methods. The methods had indeed become "subtler".

The most controversial chapter of Kenedi's book is concerned with the third memorial day, June 16, the day on which, in 1958, the Prime Minister of the Revolution, Imre Nagy, was executed along with Pál Maléter, his Minister of Defence, and the journalist Miklós Gimes.[12] The democratic opposition had commemorated the anniversary for years. In 1988, however, the "conscience of Europe" woke up,[13] and, on the 30th anniversary, the Prime Minister of the Hungarian Revolution and those executed with him, were symbolically buried in Paris in the Père Lachaise cemetery.

In Budapest, however, similarly to the March 15 demonstrations fifteen years earlier, any commemoration resulted in police action. Suspects were closely watched by state security agents, and those "disturbing order" were detained. Kenedi publishes ample documentation in the light of which it may astonish readers that a year later— on June 16, 1989—the commemoration was turned into a state-sponsored event. The documents dealing with this may well be the most thought-provoking in the volume. They make it clear that the state security service, while faithfully serving its master, the Communist Party, throughout, was not simply an observer of events, persecuting participants but also shaped the very same events itself.

It remained in harmony with the Party leadership in so far as it tried, using its own means, to keep the "commemorative act" —the public funeral of those politicians executed thirty one years previously—within limits corresponding to the intentions of the government. Those limits, however, were being pushed farther and farther by the political opposition which had by then become broad, and based on the organization of the veterans of 1956, the Committee for Historical Justice.

The authorities—and this was already a sign that they were backing down—permitted the reburial of the victims[14] but the original idea was that the ceremony should be depoliticized and confined to the cemetery. The documents published by Kenedi show the step-by-step retreat of the authorities, the way in which they were forced to resign themselves to the fact that the ceremony would be held on Heroes' Square, perhaps the most solemn site for festive events in Budapest, and the one with the greatest crowd capacity. The documents also demonstrate the process whereby the communist secret service stepped out of its role of mere observer and retaliator, and turned into an active shaper of events.

The day of June 16, 1989 went down in history as "the day of national reconciliation". This was one of the ways in which the secret service earned "undying merit" for itself, producing the slogan and making sure through its agents that the public took it up. What is really astonishing, however, is not this fact but the extent to which the factors shaping public opinion, especially the press, were dominated by the secret service even then. (See Appendix II) It becomes clear that some of the new, "independent" papers were created at the initiative of the secret service; furthermore, it had the right to instruct

the media as to what its foreign correspondents should report from abroad.[15]

Not only the opposition but also several prominent exiled politicians were the victims of that manipulation. Thus, for instance, a special operative plan was worked out regarding Béla Király,[16] declared "Public Enemy No 1" by the secret service (as indeed, for every major figure) which covered the questions to be asked by the television crew sent to interview him as well as the bugging of his hotel room.

Beside Király, the man most feared by the state security service was György Krassó, a leading member of the democratic opposition, forced into exile in 1958. Since, like Király, he also came home for the funeral, agents were planted all around him, and efforts to discredit "the radical Krassó" were immediately initiated. After his return Krassó was indeed isolated, and his idea of revolutionary change was branded as extreme radicalism, a kind of "lunacy", by every democratic party.

The documents published do not, and cannot, expose the hidden moving springs in the background to the changeover controlled by state security. Thus it is merely an assumption on the part of this writer that it may have been the Polish transition—ultimately a failure from their point of view—which was regarded by the communist secret police as a model.[17] They must have expected that the process of peaceful transition would be completed by the election-winning conservative-national government under the leadership of a post-communist Head of State. This attempt was thwarted by a clever move by democratic (or, to use the Hungarian terminology, "liberal") parties which succeeded in forcing a referendum.

However, Kenedi has done everything possible—and sometimes even the impossible—to publish at least some of these documents. Thus relevant Communist Party documents are added to the secret service documents (and not only in the last part of the book either). The records of the meetings of the Party leadership, and especially those of the Political Committee, are as important a part of the history of the June 16 funeral as those of the secret service. They make it evident that the majority of Party leaders, who presented themselves as reformers before public opinion here and abroad, were anything but dove-like—sometimes downright hawkish—when they were among themselves. History simply passed them by, in many cases without their awareness.

There are many obstacles to be overcome by potential students of the documents. In granting freedom of research, Hungarian law makes a difference between "recognized" historians and the general public. In the case of post-1980 documents, however, even being a historian is not enough. A special, though thus far fairly easily obtainable, permit is needed. Although there has been a declaration that the documents of the communist state security service lost their "Secret" classification after the change of system, they nevertheless have to undergo a lengthy "data protection" investigation before they are declassified and become accessible. The above mentioned records of the Political Committee have survived only on tape, which in itself complicates things to the point where researchers with less stamina give up and leave empty-handed.

The documents in the last part of the book have not been welcomed unambiguously even by the veterans of the 1956 revolution, the initiators of the 1989 funeral, since these show that, at least to some degree, they too were subject to manipulation by the secret service. That owing to these manipulations, they sometimes became its tools is, quite understandably,

hard for them to swallow. The documents of these organizations are products of a kind of underworld and, as such, are undoubtedly dirty, but they have to be exposed so that we can gain a genuine insight into what happened.

That is why the records included in the third chapter are the most important available documents of the changeover. Two things are unambiguously proved by them. One is that the state security services worked closely together, and, from the first minute to the last, their most important pur-pose was the total defence of the communist order. They did not become "democratized", and despite their declarations of "peaceful" transition, the means they used to that end were also totalitarian. On the other hand, as the reverse of all this, the transition itself proceeded fully in line with those traditions, and the majority of the documents of the changeover remains classified up to this day, inaccessible both to researchers and the general public.

By using the commemorations as his point of reference, Kenedi provides a peculiar kind of cross-section of the whole of the Kádár regime. He grasps three focal points, the first of which is the communist restoration after the revolution, giving a peculiar "bottom view", as it were, of the retaliation following the revolution, by dwelling on its every-day operation rather than on the notorious trials. The second cross-section, 1972–1973, as a kind of arithmetical centre, shows the "consolidated" Kádár regime at the peak of its power, when "all was well", and the seemingly impersonal dictator could celebrate complete success. That was the time when his lieutenant, the charmeur and implacable lord of cultural policy, György Aczél, was pleased to see that "goulash communism" was "our own," that Hungary was the gayest barracks in the Gulag" since, unlike in Czechoslovakia and Poland, in Hungary there was no trace of unrest of any kind. There was peace and quiet, and even the young were no problem. The crack in the looking glass were spontaneous demonstrations by young people, which made it clear that the regime which had thought of itself as "liberal" was unable to tolerate even a couple of harmless poems, mobilizing the Workers' Militia and the Communist Youth Organization against them, to support the political police.

The end-point is 1988–1989, the "peaceful" transition which turned out to be one of the most successful operations of the political police. It achieved its peaceful survival and former communists could daydream about how capitalism, too, can be built from above, instead of a genuinely democratic society from below.

The odd nature of current legal regulations backfires in the book in a peculiar manner. Kenedi is forced to grant anonymity to individuals, providing only the names of those he managed to contact, and who were willing to have their names published. In that way, however, one of the most important dimensions of history—and a major task of history-writing— is lost. Without names, the story becomes an inventory of examples, and is unable to depict the real process. One of the "villains" appears in all three chapters—but he cannot be identified by the reader. In the first volume he is still a simple denunciator, in the second, prosecuting counsel in the case of the "March youngsters", in the third, now an undersecretary in a ministry, he plays a key role in the rehabilitation of Imre Nagy.

In his introduction, Kenedi makes it clear that the bulky documents published by him show the sewers of the regime, the way in which the state security service wished to see, and present, itself and its enemies, or rather the enemies of the

regime. Its picture of the world was pieced together from observations, bugged apartments and telephone conversations, interference with the mail and informers' reports. The documents published make the perverse nature of that approach evident. It is the mentality of the voyeur who penetrates deep into people's intimate sphere wherever he can, with a special—far from chance—preference for the sexual, where he can enjoy his own impulses to the full.

The book, as one Hungarian reviewer has put it, points beyond itself: not only the secret services of dictatorship are judged to be guilty by our moral sense but every ideology, means and method which, either legally but mostly illegally, encroaches upon our privacy, putting the citizen at the mercy of an invisible power, and which, where it cannot condemn in a court, slanders and discredits, breaks careers, and radically interferes in lives. ❧

NOTES

1 ■ Prime Minister Gyula Horn admitted to having been a member of the paramilitary organization named by the law.

2 ■ A committee was set up by the Minister for the Interior, consisting of historians and archivists and representatives of scholarly institutions, in order to survey the documents of the Ministry of the Interior, including those of the secret services, but this very fact itself so outraged the senior governing party, the Socialists, that a continued operation of the committee appeared to threaten the coalition itself. (The present author, in his capacity as Director of the Archives of the City of Budapest, acted as the chairman of the committee for four months).

3 ■ A "target person" was the person being "confidentially" (secretly) investigated.

4 ■ In other words, such "T" apartments were the scenes of meetings between a state security "keeper" and his agents.

5 ■ The anniversary of the launching of the Soviet attack that led to the crushing of the revolution.

6 ■ It happened to be the 40th anniversary of the "Great October Revolution".

7 ■ It is characteristic, though less widely known, that the number of agents rose to over 8,000 again in the 1980s, remaining at this level up to 1989.

8 ■ The democratic party that won an absolute parliamentary majority in the 1945 elections.

9 ■ The real "crime" was nearly lost in the sentence though; it had been emphasised during the trial: the young lady had also decorated the bulletin board of the communist youth organization with the remark: "I shit on you".

10 ■ This mentality of "shared" guilt also determines the purification of the individual. A single informer confessed to having been recruited, but the embarrassment and silence of public opinion did not produce an absolution.

11 ■ The poem was copied by the "perpetrators" from a travel agent's brochure.

12 ■ The death of Minister of State Géza Losonczy in prison, unclarified up to this day, at the end of 1957, as well as the secret execution of Sándor Szilágyi somewhat earlier, are also associated with that day.

13 ■ The "free world", although supporting the Hungarian Revolution in 1956, nevertheless accepted that the country was a part of the Soviet sphere of influence, and abandoned it to its fate—and not only from a military point of view. It exploited the uprising in its propaganda but later gave tacit assent to Kádár's brand of "goulash communism". On the 30th anniversary of the executions—a few weeks after Kádár's fall from power—that deal was unequivocally repudiated by the Western democracies, by conservatives, liberals, Social Democrats and Eurocommunists alike.

14 ■ In 1958 the deaths of Imre Nagy and his associates, were registered under false names, and they were buried anonymously; the bodies of Maléter and Gimes were simply buried—nameless—on top of each other, and that of Imre Nagy was found buried face down, with his hands tied behind his back.

14 ■ The "commissioned" reports sent from abroad were basically meant to suggest that that the transition must be accomplished peacefully, under the aegis of national reconciliation. It became clear only afterwards that the real purpose of "peaceful transition" was to quietly ensure communist dominance in the economy, the press, the administration, etc. Although at the time of the 1990 elections, every democratic party, pro-

mised a spring cleaning (which never took place), it is only the extreme right, no longer represented in parliament, which continues to demand it. These radical demands were considerably discredited by the fact that those who clamoured for them the loudest had been prominent communist journalists.

16 ■ Király had been the commander of the National Guard and led the defense of Budapest in 1956; after the death of the Social Democrat MP Anna Kéthly in exile, he became the most prominent Hungarian exile.

17 ■ This was, in fact, a reverse scenario. The scenario for Hungary would have been a democratic government and a communist president, while in Poland the government remained communist with Walesa as president.

Appendix I

Serial number .....
(to be completed by the registering organ)

Supplement
Top Secret

Organ issuing data sheet .....

No. of B File .....
Covername .....

DATA SHEET
On the Network of the Organs of State Security

A NAME OF THE NETWORK PERSON

Sex: male (1), female (2), date of birth.....(3)
Citizenship: current:.....(4)
original:.....(5)
Nationality: .....(6)
MSzMP (Communist Party) member (7), KISz (Youth Communist League) member (8)
Education: university (9), other institute of higher education (10), secondary school, finals (11), elementary (12)
Academic degree: academician (13), university professor (14), Doctor of sciences (15), Candidate of sciences (16)
Branch of science: technological (17), physics (18), chemistry (19), mathematics (20), medical (21), biology (22), arts (23), legal (24), philosophical (25), economic (26), history (27), other (28)
Profession, qualification: a).....(29)
b).....
Position: top management (30), middle management (31), low-level management (32), independent subordinate (33), non-independent subordinate (34)
Work place:.....(35)
Languages spoken: English (36), German (37), French (38), Italian (39), Spanish (40), Arabic (41), Hindi (42), Japanese (43), other European: .....(44), other Oriental .....(45)
Level of language skills: poor (46), good (47), perfect (48)
Marital status: single (49), married (50), divorced (51)
Place of residence: In Budapest..... district (52)
Outside Budapest..... locality (53)

B RECRUITMENT

Year.....(1), executing organ ..... (2)
Classification: secret agent (35), contract agent (4), agent (5)[1]
Grounds: patriotic (ideological, political) (6), evidence against compromised or discredited (7), financial gain (8), personal and other interests (9), combination of grounds (10)
Method of recruitment: rapid (11), gradual (12)
Changes in ground of recruitment .....classification of network .....
function .....
Objective of recruitment was: obtaining or discovery of secret information (13), execution of operative combinations (14), recognition or finding of person engaged in hostile activity (15), prison intelligence and information (16), preventive protection (17), operative control (18), execution of partial tasks in network operations (19), activities as resident (20), owner of "T" apartment (21), mail checking (22), special technical operative task (23), other special assignment (24)
Co-operation: accepted enthusiastically (25), hesitatingly, after a great deal of persuasion (26)
His/her conditions were: not be given a covername (27), will provide no written report (28), will not work against certain persons, groups or countries (29), will not have meetings at conspirational places (30), at public places (31)

C CURRENT AREAS OF ENGAGEMENT: I.....

(Select correct answer from those listed below and write its number after the Roman numeral I)

APART FROM CURRENT ENGAGEMENT, MAY ALSO BE USED FOR:
II. (SUITABLE):
(underline correct answer)
Infiltration, involvement, planting: in espionage matters on a domestic basis (1), hostile organizations (2), beside hostile persons (3), abroad in hostile intelligence, propaganda or émigré organizations (4), for the controlling of intelligence officers, agents (5), initiation and involvement of game operations, recruitment (6), operative cross-border actions (7), positioning in the long term (8), short term (9), liaison, courier (10), recruiting (11), investigation tasks (12), surveillance of incoming foreigners (13), of diplomats (14), infiltration through foreign representations (15), for defense against subversion and loosening up, organized operations (16), for the exposure and disruption of hostile activity and organizations (17), for the protection of military, defense industry and major government facilities (18), in the field of the protection of the national economy (economic organization, science, technology, international co-operation, etc.) (19), foreign trade (20), logistics and telecommunications (21), for the defense of state secrets (22), against Zionist subversion (23), other Church and clerical areas (24), for the observation and security of Hungarians travelling abroad (25), dishonouring and compromising operations (26), in the field of illegal currency dealings and other criminal activities (27), for misinforming the enemy (28), youth protection field (29), controlling of those with observation files (30), for the surveillance of former political convicts (31), of those engaged in a hostile activities in the cultural and scientific fields (32)
Other.....(33)

1 ■ The ranks in the hierarchy, in their descending order of importance, were: secret officer; top secret agent; secret agent; contract agent; agent

D CONTACTS, TRAVEL

Has contacts abroad: with employees or agents of hostile intelligence organizations (1), with members of hostile organizations, institutions and émigré organizations (2), with other suspicious, hostile elements (3), with relationships through which he/she can get into contact with the above listed organizations and persons (4)
Which country? a.....
b..... (5)

Inside Hungary, has contacts with: Soviet (10), or Hungarian military personnel (including family members and civil employees) (11), important political and social (12), scientific (13), cultural personalities (14), internal security personnel (15), employees of foreign organizations under observation (16), with persons suspected of spying (17), of other hostile activities (18), persons previously sentenced for such activities (19), relationships through which he/she may infiltrate hostile foreign organizations or the environment of hostile persons (20)

Has been to the West: officially (21), as a tourist 22), on family visit (23), illegally (24)

May travel to the West: officially: on a long-term assignment (25), regularly (26), occasionally (27)
To which country? a).....
b)..... (5)

On a private basis: for a longer period (28), regularly (29), occasionally (30)
To which country? a).....
b)..... (5)

E POTENTIALS FOR OPERATIVE WORK:

Has opportunity: to receive officials of foreign representations (1), foreign nationals (2), in a private capacity: officials of foreign representations (3), foreign nationals (4)
To participate officially: at receptions of foreign persons (5), of officials of foreign representations (6), to participate in a private capacity: at receptions of foreign persons (7), at officials of foreign representations (8), to live a wide social life (9)
May be extracted from his/her workplace: for a longer period (10), shorter period (11)
May be extracted from his/her family: for a longer period (12), shorter period (13)
Because of present employment, may not be used for other purposes for a longer period (14), shorter period (15)
Due to his/her job and/or contacts, knows (may know) important state secrets (16), served in the People's Army or the Interior Ministry as an officer (reserve) (17), non-commissioned officer in the ranks (reserve) (18), received special training (missiles, signals, reconnaissance, etc.) (19)
There are important military or arms industry facilities or major traffic centres in the environment of his/her workplace or domicile (20)
Has bank account, property, financial interests in a Western country (21)
Through his/her Western contacts or financial conditions, can establish a livelihood abroad (22)
Has already been noticed and checked by hostile intelligence (23). Collaborated with intelligence organization during the war (24), after 1945 (including game run by us) (25)

Possesses and can use in operative work: rented apartment (26), holiday house (cabin, fishing hut, wine cellar) (27), automobile (28), motor boat (29), sailboat (30), other vessel (31), shop (32), workshop (33), studio (34), surgery, law office, other office (35)

F MORAL AND POLITICAL PROFILE, ENVIRONMENT

Was sentenced: for political crime (1), common crime (2), has committed any of these but has not been sentenced (3)
Enemy of the socialist system (4), loyal (5), a true supporter of the system (6), indifferent (7), a supporter of bourgeois democracy (8), nationalist (9), religious (10), atheist (11), indifferent (12), Zionist (13), anti-Semite (14)
Was expelled from the MKP, MDP or MSzMP [various names of the CP at various times] (15), resigned his/her membership (16), was a member of a rightwing party or organization before 1949 (or in the past) (17)
Origin: members of former ruling classes (18), members of former armed and police forces (15), bourgeois, intelligentsia (20), other employee (21), labouring classes: worker (22), peasant (23)
Environment: (relatives, friends): former ruling clases (24), members of former armed and police forces (25), labouring classes: workers (26), peasants (27). His/her attitudes, origins, environment are known among his/her Western contacts (18)

G CLEARANCE, TRAINING LEVEL

Cleared, trustworthy (1), reliable but not yet checked (2), trustworthiness not reliably cleared (3), not to be trusted (4), lost his cover (5), abandoned his cover (6)
Pursues the agent's work: with pleasure (7), with displeasure, reluctantly (8), out of fear (9), for career considerations (10), for financial gain (11)
Training: is familiar with network operation, has operated a network (12), has not yet operated a network but suitable for it (13), has received operative technical training (14), special intelligence-counterintelligence training (15), secret liaisoning (16)
Has executed secret operations abroad (17), against foreign representations (18), in operative investigatory work (19), job completed as a result of his/her work (20)

H CHARACTER, STATE OF HEALTH

Temperament: quick-tempered, agile (1), irritable, unbalanced (2), phlegmatic, impassive (3), melancholic, moody (4), calm, balanced (5)
In company? inhibited, introvert (6) uninhibited, extrovert (7), bold, takes the initiative (8), timid, dependent (9), ingenious, reacts fast in delicate situations (10)
Memory: good (11), passable (12), poor (13)
Squanders money (17), frugal (18), miserly (19)
Rude (20), polite (21), sincere (22), partly sincere (23), liar (24)
Keeps a secret (25), inclined to be talkative (26)
Lives a sober life (27), drunkard (28), moderate drinker (19)
Homosexual (other sexual aberrations) (30), prostitute (31), ready to enter into sexual relations (32), has harmful habits impairing his/her work as an agent (33)
State of health: healthy (34), has physical illness not impairing his/her work as an agent (35), suffers from organic illness (heart condition, nervous disease, diabetes) which does not allow him/her to be exposed either to mental or physical strain (excitement) (36)

I APPEARANCE, SPECIAL SKILLS

Tall (1), medium height (2), small (3). Thin (4), medium built (5), fat (6). **Eyes:** black (7), brown (8), blue, greenish (9). **Hair:** black (10), brown (11), red (12), blond (13), grey-greying (14), balding (15), bald (16), dyes hair to any colour when required (17)
Appearance: conspicuously good-looking (18), plain (19), ugly (20), physically handicapped (21), limb missing (22), hearing-impaired (23), has poor vision (24)
Hobbies: ham radio (broadcast-reception) (25), photography, film-making (26), stamp collecting (27), collection of paintings, sculptures, antiqques (28), coin collecting (19), automobile driving (30), flying (glider) (31), parachuting (32), hiking, pot holing (33), hunting (34), fishing (35), winter sports (36), water sports (37), ball games (38), soccer (39), gymnastics, indoor sports (40), fencing (41), tennis (42), horse riding (43), card games (44), chess (45), horse races (46), shooting, bowling (47), model building (48), fine art (49), literature (50), music, opera, ballet (51), film, theatre (52), dance (53), museology, history (54), archaeology (55), book collection (56), record collection, tape recording (57), radio building, D.I.Y. (58), gardening (59), other..... (60)

J EXCLUSION, TRANSFER, IN RECESS

Cause of exclusion: has become a traitor (1), left the country illegally (2), refused to return (3), committed a crime: political (4), economic (5), other (6), refused to co-operate (7), failed to accomplish task (8), did not attend meetings (9), asked for the breaking of contact (10), gave up cover (11), lost cover (12), was recruited for a specific task and finished it (13), his/her opportunity for intelligence work ceased, change in operative situation (14)
Has become MSzMP member, leadership member (15), KISz leadership member (16), has become an Interior Ministry employee, position Secret Officer (17), change in personal or family situation (18), change of workplace or responsibility (19), immoral lifestyle (20), unreliable, insincere (21), released (22), ill (23), died (24), other..... (25)
At the time of exclusion, his/her demands were: fulfilled (26), partly fulfilled (27), rejected (28)
Cause of transfer:.....Date.....
Name of associate organisation being transferred
to.....Date.....
Cause of recess:.....Date.....
(From.....To.....(recess initiated by: network person, operative organ
Date of completion of form:.....year.....month.....day
Inspected by:

Subdept. head, rank

[Excerpts from Order No. 0012 by Interior Minister András Benkei promulgated on July 31, 1972]

Appendix II

MINISTRY OF THE INTERIOR
Directorate III/III

TOP SECRET
Until destroyed!

Approved
Dr István Horváth
Police Maj. Gen.
Minister of the Interior

Agreed:
Ferenc Pallagi
Deputy Minister

Subject : Ensuring the security of preparations for the burial of Imre Nagy and his associates

Operative Plan of Action

On the basis of the permission of the Government of the Hungarian People's Republic and the decision of relatives, the burial of Imre Nagy and his four associates will take place on June 16, 1989, in the New Central Cemetery in Budapest.

The family members as well as The Committee for Historical Justice are wishing to ensure the character of the event as an act of respect, recognizing at the same time that a political aspect will inevitably arise, but they will make efforts to keep it—as much as possible—within limits.

As opposed to them, certain extremist social groups—mainly SzDSz [Alliance of Free Democrats], FIDESz [League of Young Democrats] and the Republican Circle are attempting to turn the ceremony into a political demonstration. (...)

The main direction of the activity of the state security service must be to support with all force and means at its disposal the character of the event as one of respect, *commemoration and rehabilitation,* while *preventing, halting, limiting, detouring and influencing toward a positive direction* all extremist attempts which may be expected from both sides.

Accordingly, it should make special efforts:

■ To obtain, analyse and evaluate the ideas of Hungarian émigré groups and the various internal alternative groups regarding the funeral. To provide up-to-date information to the political leadership, and to work out proposals for political and government action.

■ To work out and carry out combinations and active measures abroad and at home, orientating toward the tribute-paying line of thought, placing rehabilitation and the paying of final respects to the fore. Pushing back and deflecting every initiative to the contrary.

■ To initiate operations of misinformation emphasising that the events may be taken advantage of by extremist elements to stage provocations, which could lead to a halting of the process of democratization and to restoration.

■ To initiate measures in the foreign affairs area, through our network of contacts, mainly toward the US State Department and the US Embassy in Budapest, calling attention to the fact that any action of extremist adventurism may disrupt increasingly broadening and strengthening Hungarian-American relations, and would negatively affect our initiatives made toward a pluralistic social order.

■ In matters involving games,[1] to convey information to the hostile special services suggesting that a course of events contrary to the intentions of the authorities may lead to a strengthening of the forces urging restoration [i.e., an abandonment of the current relative liberalism]

■ To control the activity of politicians, businessmen, press correspondents and camera crews arriving from abroad.

■ To investigate and reveal analyses and assessments by officials of foreign representations operating in Hungary concerning the funeral as well as to find out about any eventual effort to influence the events.

■ The deliberate use of the Hungarian mass media—Hungarian Television, Hungarian Radio, the government and independent press—to spread the suggestion that it will be a proof of the maturity of the nation if the events of June 16 proceed in an orderly manner.

■ To spread, through our system of contacts, information influencing the political mood in the desired direction, emphasizing that the current leadership is making positive moves and initiatives, for which reason it would be highly undesirable if extremist forces provoked restoration by their actions on June 16 or October 23. (...)

In order to co-ordinate state security efforts, an operative committee has been set up, consisting of appointed leaders of Directorate III/I, III/II and III/III of the Interior Ministry, which will have regular weekly meetings—at 16:00 o'clock every Monday—until the funeral. memoranda will be made of the meetings, which will be submitted to the leadership of the ministry.

For the operative control of the funeral of Imre Nagy on 16 June 1989 the following mutually related measures are being planned:

IM (Interior Ministry) Directorate III/I:

In the field of intelligence gathering: it will mobilize the operative forces at its disposal abroad, and will make efforts to provide continuous information on:

■ the plans and activities of Hungarians living in the West regarding the events, and their general attitude and mood;

■ it will pay special attention to the discovery and obtainment of information regarding the preparations, plans and activities at home of the Hungarian groups and émigré political personalities travelling to Hungary for the event; (....)

It will analyse and provide up-to-date reports on views and opinions observed in *Church, especially Vatican circles.* It will take steps to win the support of church circles with the purpose of moderating domestic tendencies.

In the area of the employment of contacts (agents, social, official) it will aid, by consistent positive influence:

■ the loyalty of external émigré public opinion and that of the incoming groups, emphasizing the tribute-paying and mourning character of the events and playing down their demonstrative elements.

1 ■ The term had a twofold meaning: 1) indirect influencing through 2 or 3 persons; 2) (indirect game) intelligence or counterintelligence operation, the imparting of misinformation to an institution, e.g. through a letter or report.

■ Through cover organizations and diplomatic channels, it will influence the political and official circles of the receiving countries in a positive manner, in line with our interests.

IM Directorate III/II

■ To inform, through official and informal channels, the government organs of the NATO countries—especially the USA and the Federal Republic of Germany—that certain extremist forces want to exploit the funeral to disrupt and prevent the paying of respect, and for adventurist political action, endangering thereby the increasingly vigorous process of democratization.

■ To influence the diplomats, journalists, trade and business specialists of the capitalist countries accredited to Hungary through "friendly conversations" in the direction that, using their own means, they should make efforts to prevent the exploitation of the funeral for the purposes of political demonstration.

■ Persuading the émigré politicians—especially Béla Király and Sándor Kopácsi—to declare themselves in support of the memorial character of the funeral through the press and T.V. (...)

Use of the channel of operative games:

■ Contact covername [henceforward cn.] "Hedgehogcactus",[2] employed in Game cn. "Tarot", will send—in a coded letter—the following information to the CIA centre: "Certain extremist groups are planing to exploit the funeral of Imre Nagy for anti-government disruption. In such a case, the authorities are expected to act harshly. The IM has been put on special alert."

■ Contact agent (henceforward C.A.) cn. "Muddygrass", employed in Game cn. "Tarot", will verbally inform the officer of the BND [the West German Federal Intelligence Office] on the information regarding preparations for the funeral of Imre Nagy. Will talk about the plans of the extremist groups intending to disrupt the funeral and the expected reactionof the authorities. Emphasizes that he believes a conflict would have a negative impact on the process of democratic evolution.

Via the network

■ C.A. cn. "Red Thorn" will remind USA Diplomat cn. "Stone Rose" in a personal conversation that he saw [U.S.] Ambassador Palmer on TV among the marchers at the March 15 celebration. Personally he is very pleased with the wholehearted sympathy of the Americans for the Hungarian cause and that they support the democratization process by their participation, but at the same time he is worried about the funeral of Imre Nagy. He has information from university circles that some extremist groups, in violation of the memorial character of the funeral, intend to provoke a political demonstration. He believes that such a step might seriously endanger the process of democratization. It might provoke violent action from the authorities.

The notions defined in the basic concept will be passed on:

■ Via Agent cn. "Agave", a person in close contact with the Austrian Embassy in Budapest, to the Austrian government.

2 ■ The names of agents and games are fictitious, in accordance with the data protection law in force in Hungary.

■ Via Occasional Operative Contact cn. "Candleflower" to the "friendly" contact between the U.S. and British diplomats.
■ Via S.A. cn. "Stonecrop" to British Press Attaché Stoneman. (...)
■ Via S.A. cn. "Coralberry" to the press attaché of the French Embassy in Budapest and to French Intelligence.
■ S.A. cn. "Cactus" will arrange that a camera crew of Hungarian Television interview Béla Király (USA) and Sándor Kopácsi (Canada) on the preparations of the organization of Imre Nagy's funeral. The report should emphasize the memorial character of the funeral will be emphasised and both persons should be made to condemn any attempt to take dvantage of the funeral for political purposes.

IM Directorate III/III
(...)

Department I:
■ (...) follows continuously the attempts of the organizers of the funeral and the organizers of the planned demonstrations to build contacts toward the Church, takes the steps necessary to halt, prevent, and to influence these.

Department 2:
■ (...) Follows by technical and network means the development of the position of FIDESz.
■ Through S.As., cn. "Balsam" and "Flamingo Flower", it will strengthen the anti-demonstration position.
■ Via S.A. cn. "May", it will leak the divisions within FIDESz regarding the issue to the press.
■ It will keep the presidents of DEMISz [Hungarian Democratic Youth Organization] and MISzOT [National Alliance of Hungarian Youth Organizations] continuously informed on the developments (...)

Department 3:
■ (...) obtains information (...) on the ideas of the TIB [Committee for Historical Justice] and the relatives.
■ Wishes to influence, by using its operative positions, the activities of the TIB and some alternative groups for the purpose that no political demonstration should take place beyond the funeral.
■ Among those operating in various alternative groups S.As cn. "Knotweed," "Passion Flower", "Rhododendron", "Agave" and "Sword-Flag" will be instructed to exert an influence on their environment, as a result of which they will abandon the idea of initiating, or participating in, a political demonstration.
■ A special action plan is to be made for the employment of the services of S.A. cn. "Crown Imperial" inside the TIB (...)
■ S.A. cn. "Inca Lily" will be employed on the basis of a special action plan in order to discover and influence the plans of Imre Mécs in connection with the above. (...)

Department 4:
■ S.A. cn. "Calla" will follow the co-ordination meetings of SzDSz in connection with the demonstration. In selecting the scene for the mass rally, he will argue in favour of holding it in the cemetery. If other sites are suggested, he will vote in favour of the less important ones. (...)

■ S.A. cn. "Friesia" will obtain information from Sándor Szilágyi at the meetings of the Shelter Committee about the conferences, the planned sites and the manner of organization. At the sessions of the board of the Bajcsy-Zsilinszky Society he will find out about the plans concerning participation of the organization.

■ S.A. cn. "Lady's Mantle" as a leader of the (...) district group of SzDSz, will represent the position of "the relatives"' in the group, influence the members and Ferenc Kőszeg[3] in that direction. If he is invited, he will accept to become an organizer... (...)

■ S.A. cn. "Bellflower" will explore the plans and ideas of the MDF [Hungarian Democratic Forum] and its participation in the mass rally.

■ (...)

Departments III/III-4 and 6 will, in close co-operation, discover the travel and participation plans of György Krassó and Zoltán Zsille.[4]

Department 5:

■ In the period preceding the funeral, it will collect information through network persons, official and social contacts from the Hungarian National News Agency (MTI) and the print media on the preparations and planned moves of the various alternative organizations with special regard to information received by the MTI National Press Service from the (OS.)[5]

■ With the help of S.A. cn. "Sage" and S.A. cn. "Torch", it will collect information on the intentions of the leadership and members of the Openness Club. They will be instructed to initiate an appeal for calm on behalf of the Club regarding the funeral.

■ With the help of S.A. cn. "Autumn Crocus" and "Bride's Eye" (...), it will plant articles appealing for peace and calm in the newspapers *Reform* and *Unió*.

■ Through S.A. cn. "Bride's Eye", it will initiate the publication of articles suggesting national reconciliation and the keeping of calm in the daily *Magyar Nemzet*.

■ Through the Foreign Relations Department of Hungarian Radio, it will obtain information on the foreign radio correspondents registering, and, in close co-operation with Department II/II-12, will check them.

■ Will Instruct Secret Officer (henceforward S.O.) Í-87 to provide as much information as is available to him on the progress of activities within Hungarian Television (programme planning, live broadcasts, etc.) involving the funeral.

■ Will instruct S.A. cn. "Artichoke" to provide information, as far as possible, on broadcasts planned by the MR PAF [Hungarian Radio, Editors of Political Broadcasts] involving the events (...)

■ Follow with increased attention the activities of prominent actors who played a role during the events of 1956, and are now wishing to play an active part in the period preceding the funeral and during it. (...)

■ Through S.O. Y-32, it will obtain information on the plans and participation of the leaders of the Union of Hungarian Writers in the events and on their possible speeches to be delivered there (...) attempts to achieve that the Union urges the avoiding of political

3 ■ Ferenc Kőszeg: One of the editors of the dissident magazine *Beszélő*, a leading SzDSz politician.

4 ■ György Krassó, Zoltán Zsille: prominent dissidents who returned from exile in 1989.

5 ■ OS: National Press Service a private initiative news agency founded in 1989 to break the monopoly of MTI, the National News Agency.

provocation during the ceremony. (...) Will pay special attention to the activites of Dr [sic] Miklós Mészöly and Gáspár Nagy[6] (...) Will pay increased attention to the activity of the Union's Deputy President, Gyula Fekete (...)

■ Will brief and instruct those members of their networks who have specific tasks and memberships in the various alternative organizations in order to find out about the plans of those organizations regarding the funeral.

■ S.A. cn. "Quince" (SzDSz, Széchenyi Casino)

■ S.A. cn. "Rowanberry" (Openness Club)

■ S.A. cn. "Scabious" (libraries)

■ SZT Captain Y. 47 will report continuously on the ideas and plans of the Wallenberg Society.

Department 6:

(...)

■ Will instruct S.A. cn. "Berberis" to mention, as his private opinion, his concern about the organization of political demonstrations and the dangers inherent in the incalculability of official reaction, in conversations with members of parliament belonging to the current governing parties as well as with representatives of the opposition parties of the Federal Republic of Germany. In his discussions with representatives of the SPD and the CDU he must stress that the reaction of the powers that be may halt the reform movement, and may have unforeseeable consequences even with regard to what has already been achieved. The S.A. will be in regular contact, to the extent of the need for news, with the representatives of cover organizations of the BND [German intelligence] and the CIA.

■ during his visit to Austria, S.A. cn. "Camellia" (...) will deem the turning of the funeral into a political demonstration politically rash and irresponsible, as well as dangerous from the point of view of strengthening alternative organizations. (...)

■ Will make it the task of S.A. cn. "Forsythia" active on the Board of the MDF, to voice his opinion that the already tense political atmosphere must not be further worsened, and the authorities irritated by a political demonstration mobilizing huge crowds. (...)

Will increase its control of the Solidarity Workers' Union in the period in the question. (...)

Responsible for the execution of the Plan of Action will be the heads of the services involved, and for its co-ordination, the head of Directorate III/III of the IM.

The Plan of Action contains the tasks of the period preceding the funeral.

A special plan—co-ordinated with the Budapest Police Force—will be prepared regarding June 16, 1989.

I request approval for the execution of the measures contained in the Plan of Action.

Budapest, May "..." 1989.

Police Major-General Dr József Horváth
Chief of Directorate

6 ■ The novelist Miklós Mészöly and the poet Gáspár Nagy were both noted for their staunch stand against the party-state.

PERSONAL

László Márton

Countess Hohenembs Turns Her Back

or

Farewell to the Century

I wish to talk about the relationship that binds a (Hungarian) writer living at the turn of this century to an (Austro-Hungarian) empress assassinated at the turn of the last, one who was the Queen of Hungary, into the bargain, but above all, who was insistently herself.

I had a dream about her the other day, I dreamt that she was locked inside a bottle, like the genie in *A Thousand and One Nights,* Yes, I think I could start off like this. Except this was not a dream, but a slice of reality, a dismal and ludicrous part of reality as unworthy of her as it is inseparable from her. Be that as it may, I must start with the bottle.

I went up to the National Library in Buda Castle one afternoon, in order to check up on some information for this article. On the way, I couldn't help stopping in front of a shop window at the foot of Castle Hill. There she was, in the window, or to be exact, it wasn't her, but a famous portrait of her painted by Winterhalter, what's more it was a part of that portrait, fossilized into a sort of emblem, or icon, depicting a lovely young woman's head with a diamond diadem in dozens of copies. The shop in whose window she was thus pilloried happened to be a confectioner's, and the bottles which bore the flattering portrait of her lovely face on their label held a cream liqueur called "Sissy".

If I want to avoid insincerity and speaking in generalities, I must first speak of this millenary cream liqueur, as well as Romy Schneider's equestrian prowess on the big screen. I am not primarily interested in why and to what extent the figure of Elizabeth has been turned into kitsch by popular culture (after all, what in the 19th century was fossilized into an emblem is bound to become syrupy kitsch in the 20th);

László Márton
is a novelist, essayist and translator, who wrote this as an introduction to a forthcoming German edition of the journals of Konstantin Christomanos, who was Queen Elizabeth's teacher of Greek and accompanied her to Greece on more than one occasion. The name Countess Hohenembs was not a pseudonym but one of the titles the Queen used when travelling abroad.

rather, I would like to ponder whether in our age, which is the spiritual and material heap of ruins of previous ages, Elizabeth's fate as an individual and as a queen and empress can still be retrieved and understood. Beyond the stylization of her person, beyond the heated Eros, can we still grasp something of the meeting-point between the personality (though solitary and isolated) and the age as a whole (though on the verge of collapse and disintegration)? In short, if we ignore the clichés and the kitschy fantasies, can we come any closer to Elizabeth, herself the heroine of keeping one's distance?

If asked to chose between being put on the label of the bottle or being locked inside, she would surely have opted for the latter. I am sitting in the National Széchényi Library (which is located in that part of the royal palace where her apartments had once been), and I am reading in the legislative records that after her death, "the blessed memory of the charitable guardian spirit of the nation" was enacted into law. If I get this right, the Hungarian Parliament made her into an angel by decree, and for a change—this time around—it is not the conviction but the theological support that is lacking from the high praise. Popular opinion and platitude converged. I also learn that elisabeth had visited Hungary 62 times, and spent a total of 2,663 days here, most of them in Gödöllő, the rest in a building which in the meantime was shelled, then rebuilt for a different purpose, and where I am now reading a book about her.

Whether royal palace or national library, the building in which I am looking for information for my essay on Elizabeth is a very real building, and the window through which I am looking down over the city is a real window in a real building. Through this same window an imaginary person is looking down at an imaginary city at an imaginary point in time, this on the first page of *The Novel of the Coming Century,* written by Mór Jókai in 1873. It might be worth our while to conjure up this imaginary moment and compare it to our own real moments in time.

> One hundred and one cannon shots from the citadel on Gellért Hill saluted the dawn of the august name day of Árpád of Habsburg. Árpád of Habsburg is the illustrious sovereign king of Hungary, and Emperor, King, Grand Duke, Marquis, etc., etc., of countries allied with Hungary.
>
> Twenty-seven years earlier—that is, in 1925—Árpád, the founder of the nation, was canonized by the Papal Curia in Rome.
>
> This was due to the circumstance that the most august Queen and Mother had chosen to give this name in baptism to her newborn son as a token of her sympathy for her most loyal Hungarian people. (...)
>
> Thus, on July 15 1952, a hundred and one canons heralded the dawning of Saint Árpád's Day.
>
> His Majesty is not woken from his dreams by the windowshaking canons of joy. It is not King Árpád's way to sleep till five in the morning. The only time that is truly his is when the rest of the world is fast asleep—the early hours; by five, His

Majesty has completed his cold bath and taken his hour-long lone constitutional in the castle gardens, accompanied by no-one. By the time of the first shot, he is standing again by the open window of his bed chamber, from where he is afforded a view of Pest and the fields of Rákos.

Indeed a splendid view.

The sun is just appearing behind a cover of clouds, bombarding the golden mist of the sky with its sharp rays of light; and the bluish-shady masses of stone of the splendid city appear to be drawn on this background of gold. In the distance, rows of resplendent palaces line the banks of the Danube; the smoke-belching factories of old recede to the Újpest estates; six standing bridges all the way to the suburb of Soroksár yoke the giant river. (...) Only one gigantic sign rises above the mist, higher than any tower, the steeple of the new minster. (...) This minster also bears the name of Saint Árpád. Its foundation stone was laid on the day of the king's baptism.

Anyone who in 1952 might have looked down from the shelled-out Castle to the other side of the Danube did not really see any such splendid view. At first sight, this has nothing to do with Elizabeth but something to do with me. In 1872, when Jókai day-dreamed about how, eighty years later, the Magyarized ruler of the Danube Monarchy (under Hungarian hegemony) would protect (naturally, relying on the Hungarians) Central and Western Europe from the Russians in a world war that would then break out, barely five years had passed since the Austro-Hungarian Compromise and just one year since the Franco-Prussian War; the Monarchy appeared to be the guardian of stability in Europe, and Hungarians experienced the euphoria of political consolidation and economic boom, and they loved their King. (They did not love the Emperor, albeit he was one in person with the King.) What's more, they chiefly loved the King because he was the Queen's husband, and the whole nation was one in adoring the Queen.

At that time the Queen was thirty-five and beautiful. The hero of the novel, Árpád the Second, the Habsburg ruler who had become Hungarian, and who (need we add) was brought up a Hungarian by "the most august royal mother", was the offspring of this self-same (Platonic) love.

Of course, this takes us no closer to her than the long, shabby street on the Pest side of the river on the outskirts of town which is lined with drab, grey houses, and which is named after her, and where the trolley, given the number 70 in honour of the occasion of Stalin's seventieth birthday, took its passengers all the way from Kossuth Square. This long street is called Queen Elizabeth Road. I must have been around five when it was explained to me that the street was named after her because "she was good to the Hungarians", and because "she had been murdered". I had no doubt in my mind that she was killed because she was fighting for freedom; after all, around that time—this being the sixties—I was taught that "throughout its entire history, the Hungarian people fought for freedom." Of course, what freedom was was not really clear but around that time that question did not arise, at least not in me.

Still, my first impressions—at least those I can recall—link the concept (or sound?) of freedom to the name of Elizabeth. The year when I first spelled out Elizabeth's name on the No 70 trolley they opened the rebuilt Elizabeth Bridge, which had been blown up twenty years before. When I first saw the bridge, it was still blood-red (because of the lead oxide, they explained), but a few weeks later, it was white. Only its name had not changed. It did not suffer the fate of Francis Joseph Bridge to the south, which the dictatorship had right at the start rechristened Liberty Bridge. Later I also learned that the northern neighbour of the Elizabeth Bridge was the Chain Bridge, and the bridges of Budapest shaped themselves into a full exegesis of the world. Chain on the right, Liberty on the left, Elizabeth in the middle. What's more, there's another bridge to the left of Liberty, the Petőfi, named after Petőfi, the poet of liberty. Sándor Petőfi (1823–1849), before he was cut down in flight by the Cossacks, wrote a number of poems about all chains having to be broken, and that he was ready to sacrifice Love for Liberty, and yet he was ready to sacrifice his very life for Love. He also urged his readers to hang all kings. He said nothing about hanging queens; that possibility had probably never occurred to him.

I spent an appreciable part of my boyhood on the No 70 trolley. It stopped in front of our house. The wall of our house was a dirty grey and spattered with bullet marks, it was decades after the war, and not quite one decade after the suppressed revolution. The quarter where I spent my boyhood, the seventh district (Elizabeth Town) was built in the last years of the nineteenth century, quickly, and with a sense of purpose, in the months when Christomanos wrote his diary. The city was meant to be a metropolis, the impressive, well-ordered capital of a self-confident country (or at any rate, one that was noisily concealing its lack of confidence.) I began to become familiar with what, for want of a better word, we call Life barely seventy years later, in the shot up and crumbling Socialist Realist "headquarters" of a Russian satellite. The No 70 trolley transported me in around thirty minutes from the 5th district and the square named after Lajos Kossuth, who had been the most adamant enemy of the Habsburg dynasty, to the 16th district, and Queen Elizabeth, who was the wife of the Emperor Francis Joseph. It started at Kossuth Lajos Square, rambled along the street named after Emeric Kálmán, from whose operettas both Romy Schneider and the cream liqueur emerged; it crossed Andrássy Avenue, I shall have a thing or two to say later about the man who lent the avenue his name, and which at the time was called People's Republic Avenue; then the trolley turned into Mayakovsky Street and crossed Lenin Boulevard, neither needing an introduction, proceeded along Damjanich Street, named after a rebellious Honvéd general executed in 1849, crossed Dózsa György Road, named after a rebellious peasant leader executed in 1514, passed the empty spot where once had stood the Stalin statue toppled during the 1956 Revolution, and finally reached Queen Elizabeth. In those days, the revolution was called a counter-revolution; Count Gyula Andrássy, with whom

Queen Elizabeth was in love, was called People's Republic, and the Emperor Francis Joseph, who was the husband of Queen Elizabeth, was called Liberty.

As I have said, all of this congealed into a solid and compact world-view. I, for one, did not realize how much rebellion, insurrection and revolt was involved, how much fighting for freedom, and all of it condemned from the start, whereas I was taught that the world I lived in epitomized the idea of Liberty come true. I noticed neither the complete chaos of values nor their complete historical determination, which is related to precalculated forgetfulness in the same way as the Hungarian battles for freedom are related to their precalculated failure. Just as I only woke up as an adult to the odd fact that it is customary to call the monarch the Emperor Francis Joseph and his spouse Queen Elizabeth.

This chaos characterizes the end of the present century just as it had characterized that of late nineteenth century Hungary. It was encumbent upon us to love and respect Lajos Kossuth, the enemy of the Dynasty, as much as Francis Joseph, who after the Compromise of 1867 became the embodiment of royal legitimacy and the living guarantee of the consitution. What's more, not only did we love and respect him the same way, but we even merged their figures, as if both men were striving for the same thing and had more or less stood for the same thing, too. We were prone to believe what was not true, namely, that on the one hand Hungary was a great power, a part of the Empire, and on the other, as a constitutional monarchy, it was also a sovereign nation independent of Austria; that the 1867 coronation signalled the triumph of the 1848 Revolution; after all, Andrássy, who in 1851 was hung in effigy because of his participation in the rising of the Hungarians was the one who, as Hungarian Prime Minister, crowned Francis Joseph and Elizabeth.

At the end of the last century, the Hungarian political elite presented itself *vis à vis* Austria as the representative of a *Kulturnation,* at the same time it demanded from the national minorities within the borders of Hungary the loyalty due to a *Staatsnation*. There was a historical moment when all Hungarians more or less honestly believed that things which were blatantly contradictory could be reconciled, and that this reconciliation could be the basis of responsible political action. National sovereignty and the arrogant parading of the fiction of sovereignty, coupled with European integration through the Austro-Hungarian Empire; equality before the law, the rise of the middle classes, and progress, coupled with the superiority of the nobility springing from a "barbarian ethnic consciousness", along with stubborn and selfish insistance on privileges; pride in the fact that at the end of the ninth century the "conquering" Magyars had subjected the Slavs in the Carpathian Basin and pillaged Western Europe, coupled with the wish that Rome would one day canonize Prince Árpád.

But this illusion was only completely deflated later, in the last years of the nineteenth century, and only a much later point of view makes it clear what

nonsense it obviously was. There was a time—the ten or fifteen years following the 1867 Compromise—when the illusion of the reconciliation of opposites, even if not true, had at least enough truth in it to be bona fide acceptable. And if this was the case, it was in large measure due to the person and splendid phenomenon that was Elizabeth. In 1848, Sándor Petőfi wrote, "There is no king any more whom we love!" Thirty-five years later, Mór Jókai, the friend of his youth who shared his principles, said at the unveiling of Petőfi's statue that if he had lived long enough, Petőfi, too, would have seen that there was a king whom we loved after all—the king of Hungary. Obviously, like so many of his contemporaries in Hungary, Jókai was really thinking of the much loved queen.

From the 1860s onward, Count Gyula Andrássy embodied and virtually conveyed the Hungarians' collective love for Elizabeth. Elizabeth returned this love, which found fulfilment in a coupling that was political and not physical, with the king's knowledge, agreement, and after a while, even with his active participation. Saying there is no king we love any longer gave notice of the end of a love affair, it was a separation at bed and board; the nation thought of itself as a wife, turning her back, keeping her thighs tightly closed. Saying there was indeed a king who was loved bears witness to a new love triangle; the nation proudly noted having regained a manhood, lost at the time of Turkish domination. The nation also loves her husband, who does not happen to be its husband, but his wife's, whom the nation has officially raised to the status of an angel. This *ménage à trois* was regulated by agreements advantageous to all; it could be that these agreements were not all that advantageous to others who helped to make up the Empire, but let us not go into that right now.

Love took on the noblest and most innocent shape possible; another royal Elizabeth projected her shade on the figure of elizabeth from a distance of six centuries. I am thinking of Saint Elizabeth of Hungary, wife of Margrave Ludwig of Thuringia, whose cult continued in the cult of Queen Elizabeth despite the fact that the latter was not known for her piety. The piety she evidenced, especially in her later years, after the loss of her son, was more pagan in nature. And yet, behind the emblem she was growing into, the figure of the saintly woman of old showed herself who, I might add, belonged to the House of Árpád.

I was five years old when, just before its opening, I saw the rebuilt Elizabeth Bridge. It was red from the anti-rust paint covering it, but I thought the redness was blood, the blood of the Queen. Didn't I believe that the Queen had been killed because she was kind to the Hungarians and because she had fought for Liberty, which spanned the Danube just five or six blocks down from the bloody bridge frame, and from whose turul bird up on top it was then the custom for the more determined suicides to jump into the Danube? Need I add that the turul, the eagle or falcon-like bird of Magyar sagas, was the totem of Prince Árpád?

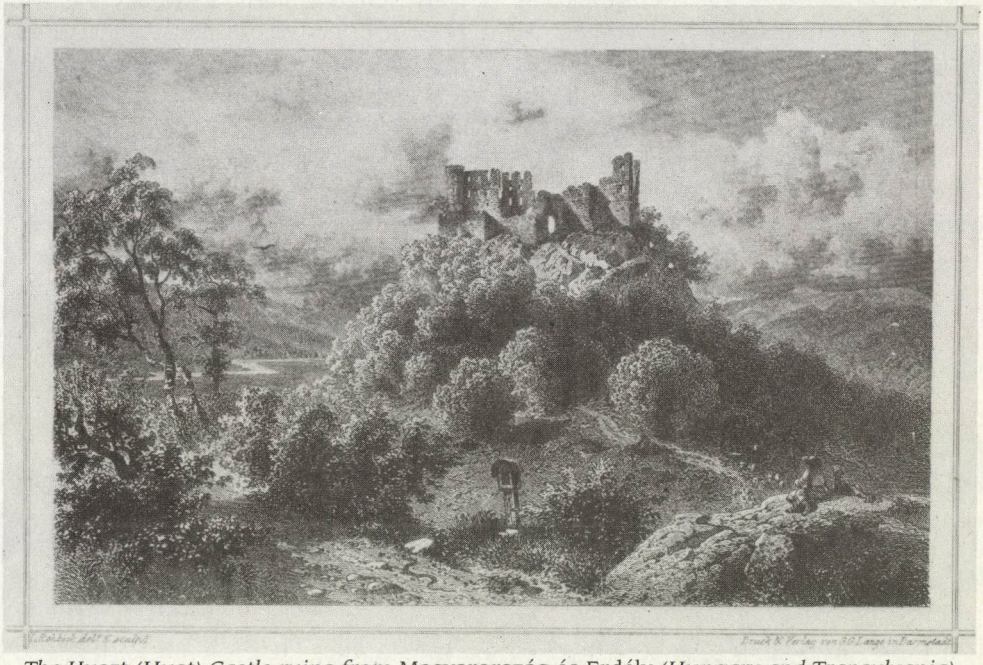
At the time, I did not know that the Queen had not shed blood, her injuries had been internal. I did not know that she was assassinated on the shores of the Lake Geneva, where she sojourned using the name of Countess Hohenembs, this being one of her many titles, and that she bore this name when Luigi Lucheni's sharpened file pierced her heart. I had no way of knowing that the word "liberty" meant something different to Elizabeth and to the Party apparatchiks who gave that name to bridges, hills and farming co-operatives. In 1952, when Mór Jókai's dreams should have turned into reality, "Freedom!"—like that, with an exclamation point—was a compulsory greeting, and anyone who wished someone a good day instead of freedom was asking for a bad day. I did not know that it was the assassin Lucheni, of all people, who believed that with his sharpened file he was fighting for freedom, for this exclamation-pointed, compulsory commodity. Nor did I know that this kind of freedom could be achieved not using sharpened files, but using rocket launchers and heavy artillery, and maintained with the aid of barbed wire and watch towers. Poor, mad Lucheni! And poor, mad Sándor Petőfi, the poet of liberty whose mind and soul were aflame, whom Bettina von Arnim called the Sun God!

Petőfi, who in 1848 felt much like the anarchists of half a century later, suggested in one of his poems that the kings should be given spades and hoes to dig their graves with. Petőfi was Hungarian, and Hungarians are not used to having their wishes fulfilled, nor their threats turned into reality. He had no way of knowing that twenty years after his death, words would mean their exact opposites, or mean nothing at all. He had no way of knowing that a hundred years after his death, in the middle of the twentieth century, it would be common practice to have victims dig their own graves before they were killed. Behind Petőfi's evident outrage, however, you won't find ideology, nor even empty hate but an amalgam of love and hate, an Eros without a sense of direction, running amuck. Elizabeth sensed this Eros; this was what attracted her to the Hungarians; it was what, in 1848, fuelled the fire of revolution; it was what turned the surviving leaders of the revolution into subjects loyal to their king. This Eros played a role in the dissolution of the Empire, and in the fact that the Hungarians were multiple losers in the first two thirds of the twentieth century. I can still feel this Eros in me, a century and a century and a half after the event—an attraction for the Queen, as well as Sándor Petőfi's naive outrage.

I imagined Queen Elizabeth as a giant who had so much blood in her that it could cover an entire bridge. I imagined some sort of serpent-like creature, because her nickname, Sissy, reminded me of the hissing of a snake; indeed, her slim, black figure has something of the winged serpents of Antiquity in it. I often heard this nickname later, though I cannot be sure that she would have approved of such familiarity in her subjects and their descendants. I imagined that she got her nickname of Sissy because she was related to Sisyphus.

In the photographs of her later days, her tightly closed lips suggest something of the relentless effort involved in rolling a rock uphill.

Elizabeth came to Hungary for the last time in 1896, in honour of the Millennial. The country feverishly and spectacularly celebrated the thousandth anniversary of the Magyar "conquest"; Prince Árpád's turul bird gyrated over the Carpathian Basin once again, and wherever he touched ground he turned into bronze. Ever since, turul birds are thick on the ground all over the country, that did not just celebrate a thousand years of existence, but the fact that although it should have vanished four hundred years earlier, it was still going strong, apparently booming, with a bright future, and yet total collapse could barely be postponed, and not for long. elizabeth, wearing black, and all alone, was barely noticed, if for no other reason, because the emblematic presence of the presiding genius of the nation obstructed public awareness of her real person. By this time, Elizabeth had been living for years in the world recorded in the diaries of Christomanos. I can see no passage between the two worlds, that of the shield of Hungary, and Böcklin's dream-world, and I have no design to link or coalesce these two female figures, the beautiful Queen active in politics and the solitary wanderer, Countess Hohenembs. Countess Hohenembs is about to take her leave from Hungary, for ever; she turns her back on the gaping crowds of the nineteenth-century Millennial celebrations and we, in the last years of the twentieth century, can finally take our leave from the twentieth century with that same gesture. ❧



The Huszt (Hust) Castle ruins from Magyarország és Erdély *(Hungary and Transylvania). Text by János Hunfalvy, illustrations by Ludwig Rohbock. Darmstadt, Lange, 1860.*

Tamás Kolosi–Matild Sági

Social Changes in Postcommunist Societies

Prior to the politico-economic transformation, several hypotheses were put forward about the possible social effects of the changes. A significant majority of sociologists argues that, in conjunction with the emergence of a market economy, postcommunist societies must expect larger and more extensive inequality. Indeed, around the time of the change of regime, income inequalities were already increasing steadily in Hungary. In 1988, the average income, calculated on the basis of household per capita income, of the upper decile was 5.8 times that of the lowest decile. In the following two years, this ratio stood at sixfold, in 1992, the average income of the upper decile was six-and-a-half times as high as that of the lowest, and in 1995, per capita income among the wealthiest Hungarian families was more than seven times (7.26 times) that of the poorest (Kolosi and Róbert, 1992, Kolosi and Sági, 1996).

This growth can be ascribed to the fact that incomes in the upper income groups grew faster and deviated more from the average, while the relative position of lower income groups did not change compared to the average. In the period after 1989, it was not the poor who dropped below the average, but the average itself which "slipped"—growth in average income stood below the rate of inflation in every period studied. Between 1990 and 1995, real incomes of households diminished by an average of more than 20 per cent. This was primarily at the expense of the middle-classes—including the upper income groups; the most spectacular deviation from the average involved families in the middle-income group in the post-communist period (in 1992 and 1993). Here, real income fell at a greater rate than it did in the lower income groups, but in the following two years, middle-income families also experienced an accelerated decline in their standard of living, relative to the two upper-income deciles.

Growth in inequality was accompanied by a transformation of the structure of inequality. The rearrangement of incomes clearly shows a movement towards ratios common in Western market economies. Income differentials between executives and staff, between professionals and the unskilled, and between those employed in

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the private and the public sectors all grew. More professionals were made redundant, but fewer unskilled workers (Kolosi, Bedekovics, Szívós, 1995).

All in all, in the post 1989 period, and with a concurrent economic crisis, a general decline in incomes occurred in Hungary. The *relative* position of the poorest did not change greatly, the middle-class and the upper middle class showed a considerable slide, while a very narrow social group, the upper-income decile, and especially a narrower section within that, acquired strikingly high incomes, which come close to the income of their counterparts in Western societies. The explanation for this lies both in the transition to a market economy and in the fact that Hungary opened economically towards the more developed West; higher (average) incomes in the West greatly influenced the size of the increase in income enjoyed by the uppermost-income strata. All those who succeed on the international market—major businessmen, executives and those holding key positions in wholly or partly foreign-owned companies as well as a small number of professionals, who sell their expertise entirely or partly on the international market—possess incomes close to (though still below) those of their Western counterparts. These incomes derive mainly from Western sources (Tóth, 1995). As opposed to this thin upper crust, the lower social strata have to survive in a narrow and underdeveloped home market, which does not offer high incomes. Growing inequality is therefore explained by the centre-periphery relationship and by the fact that in the socialist period ideological objections to inequality meant that an unnaturally low level of income was maintained for those who would have best been able to sell their skills and qualifications in the already open international arena. Thus the income at the top end of the scale was augmented by two "push" factors, creating the large difference in incomes which will probably be present until the economy pulls up to those market economies in Hungary's immediate neighbourhood and for as long as the gap here between Western level incomes and the average remains acutely significant.

Hungary has never been outstandingly egalitarian, falling into the "rather-egalitarian" third on the egalitarian-liberal axis. In the period after 1989, however, the growth in inequality meant that inequality indexes exceeded those in Western welfare societies (Sweden, Luxemburg, Germany), reaching the French and Italian level. All the same, even five years after the political changeover, Hungary can be regarded as more egalitarian than not only the American or the English speaking societies in general, but the degree of inequality is essentially smaller than that of the European periphery, which is most similar regarding economic development (Ireland, Spain, Portugal, Greece and Turkey—Andorka, Ferge and Tóth, 1997)

In the creation of inequalities these main trends exist: a) inequalities have increased to a large extent; b) in the structure of inequality, in contrast to the workings of socialist redistribution, typical market economy trends have asserted themselves; c) a growth of inequality resulting from an economic crisis and the restrictive economic policy was linked to a decline in the standard of living; d) the switch-over to a market economy inevitably suspended levelling by central government intervention, resulting in a considerable gap between the upper groups and the average; e) the social welfare system prevented the poorest groups from dropping behind the fast diminishing average; f) as a result of all this, the position of the 40–50 per cent of the population in the middle, that is that of average citizens, deteriorated.

We assume that with the beginning of economic growth, it is these middle strata who can begin to move upward, and the 20–30 per cent in the least advantaged position will not, by themselves, be able to find a course for improving their own growth chances. It is therefore our conviction that in the absence of economic growth and the application of measures of social policy only, it is not possible to rein in the general pauperization of the lower strata. We believe that, while economic growth automatically improves the situation of the middle classes, economic growth can only result in improvement for the poor, with the conscious use of social intervention.

Change of elite

For the examination of social change, other analysts claim that the consequences of the change of regime are best displayed by the new ruling strata. The general consensus is that since both in Soviet-type societies and market economies unskilled workers occupy the lower levels of the social hierarchy, no major change is to be expected during a peaceful (not revolutionary) transition. The questions to be addressed are what the change of regime implied in terms of mobility processes for the upper strata of the social hierarchy, what has happened to the old ruling strata, and where have the new elite sprung from.

In studying changes in the elite, attention has to be turned to two different aspects: first, what has happened to the old elite following the change of regime, and, second, where has the new elite been recruited from. We have here distinguished persons in elite positions, in the market and non-market sphere; this was because our hypotheses were intended to cover the transitional period when a market mechanism began to take the place of the previously dominant redistributive system and inequality began to crystallize around the market. Was the old elite able to switch over from its advantaged position in a redistributive economy to a similar position in a market economy? In other words, did those acquiring elite positions under the new conditions come from the old redistributive elite or from priviliged positions in the old "second" economy?

What happened to the old elite and the recruiting of the new elite are two different dimensions of the post-1989 shift, dimensions which are closely related in the hypotheses of a number of social scientists. They set out from the fact that the changes were actively promoted by the old elite, and this help was only given because at the time they had already prepared their "golden parachutes". According to this hypothesis, during political and economic transformation the old elite was able to convert its political domination into an advantaged economic position, and so the twin questions of what will happen to the old elite and where will the new elite be recruited from, are in fact the same question (Hankiss, 1990, Szalai, 1990, Staniszkis, 1991). According to this approach, political capital would have been converted into advantaged economic (and political) positions—this probably would have made legitimation a great deal more problematic for the new elite.

The old elite and leadership change

One third of the former redistributive elite retired immediately, or very soon after venturing into the marketplace. The relatively smooth leadership change was helped by the fact that the social system was relatively gerontocratic: a leading post was taken up only when the holder was

advanced in years and the general pattern was that only old age brought about retirement. One-third of the former redistributive elite made use of this well-proven technique of escape: they did not experiment in the market, but they did not suffer the "shame" of dropping out of the elite either—they simply retired. According to our data, it was not only the very old who took early retirement: 18 per cent of the redistributive elite who retired following the change of regime were under 55 years of age.

A quarter of the former elite retained their redistributive elite positions. This relatively high degree of stability can be attributed to two factors. The first is that, although those in charge of the large state businesses had to follow the redistributive logic, starting with the reforms of 1968 they were more or less independent. Also starting from this period, those directing economic life in Hungary were managers rather than commissars. Therefore the managers of state businesses acquired a cultural capital (in addition to their positional and economic capital), the expertise in other words, that in the period around the change of regime made their adjustment to the new situation considerably easier. The second factor that strengthened the stability of the old redistributive elite was that some of the pre-war cultural elite also belonged to this group; their situation was not changed essentially by the political and economic change. This is true at least for Hungary, and for those more liberal countries (and especially Poland), where politics and centralized communist attention left a relatively large space along the lines of such structural dimensions that were less in connection with politics. This tendency was less operative in those countries where cultural position assumed significant political overtones (e.g., the former Czechoslovakia or Soviet Union).

It should be observed here that cultural capital, "in the possession of professional people", has a historically defined tradition in Hungary. In periods when the allocation of capital, or the inheritance of material capital from generation to generation ceased, cultural capital was the only type of symbolic capital to be handed down. As the only symbolic capital that could be invested or handed down, the role it played in social inequality was far beyond its usual importance in capitalist societies.

In Central Europe (that is, from the point of view of our analysis in Hungary and Poland) all this was accompanied by a historically defined intellectual tradition of a feudal character and its survival. It was obvious already in the case of the inter-war dual social structure (Erdei) that the intelligentsia found its place at the top of a social structure beased on estates and not the market and that, in keeping with this, they were characterized by the life-style and norms of a feudal elite. After the Second World War, the former, economic "elite" were removed; with nationalization, the *raison d'être* for economic positions dependent on both feudal and bourgeois foundations ceased to exist. However, everything that people carried in their heads could not be taken from them, and so, as nationalization and the formation of Soviet-type societies proceeded, the cultural elite had little difficulty in taking over the earlier role of an economic elite on a feudal basis. Not only did they take it over, but they could hand feudal intellectual values and standards down to their descendants, just as they did culture itself. Indeed, those who rose into the professional class during the mass upward mobility of the socialist period also adapted to this tradition. The result of this was that in post-socialist societies, cultural capital doubly stabilized its carriers, "cementing" them into their former favourable posi-

tions: the distinguished role of cultural capital in itself—not negligible even in capitalist countries—was further distinguished, first because no economic capital existed alongside it; second, because the feudal links, the "good contacts" (later to be fruitful even for the emerging economic elite) offered members of the cultural elite opportunities to assert their interests.

Last but not least, of the old redistributive elite, only 13.6 per cent were still in elite economic positions in 1995. The possible conclusion is that the old political-redistributive elite presumed that they would be able to profit from their positional capital in the new market economy. For this reason they supported political and economic transformation, but only very few benefited from it.

All this means that, as a consequence of the change of regime, a "power vacuum" existed in the place once held by the old redistributive elite that had to be filled with those who had previously not been at the top. This power vacuum takes us directly to the other question, the recruitment of the new elite.

Recruitment of a new elite

With the arrival and strengthening of a market economy, the market elite appeared as an entirely new type of elite. As we saw, before the change of regime, their proportion within the elite was negligible. For structural reasons, too, this new elite has been recruited from "somewhere else", whereas in the case of the redistributive elite, continuity is to some extent feasible.

One of the important consequences of the structural transformation is that the ratio of the market elite grew within the new elite, and the ratio of the redistributive elite diminished. In 1995, one-third of the new elite was active in the non-state sector, a threefold growth in the ratio that pertained before the change of regime. This also means that the opportunity to enter the redistributive elite from the outside is far smaller than the opportunity to enter the market elite. Studying recruitment into the redistributive elite after the change of regime, the stability of this elite becomes even more obvious. Two-thirds of the "new" redistributive elite were already in similar positions before 1989; more than one-fourth came in from non-elite positions, and a few were young people at the beginning of their careers in the redistributive hierarchy following the change of regime. Comparing these proportions with the ratio of withdrawals from the old redistributive elite, it may be said that: 1) as an effect of market changes, the absolute number and proportion of the redistributive elite within the elite is diminishing; 2) this decline continues, as there are fewer newcomers replacing those who leave the redistributive elite; 3) thus, those members of the old redistributive elite retaining their positions after 1989 make up the greater part of the "new" redistributive elite.

In the case of the newly formed elite, the situation is exactly the opposite. Their numbers and ratios generally grew together with the widening of the market in Hungary. Although only a small proportion of the elite before the change of regime had been entrepreneurs or heads of privately owned businesses, almost half of the new post-1989 market elite were recruited from the former redistributive *elite*. This, however, does not mean that their political capital was convertible into market capital. Rather it means that, as a result of privatization, the managing directors of former state-owned businesses, staying in the same posts, "became" members of the market elite. The former managing director privatized his "own" company on condition that he himself stayed in

his old position. However, experience has shown that the first directors of privatized companies stayed in their posts for a relatively short time, since they were unable to adapt to the needs of the new owner the market provided.

Another 40 per cent of the new market elite moved upwards in the hierarchy; in the case of this 40 per cent, we can clearly talk about the "revolution of deputy managers" (Kolosi, 1991). Naturally, the proportion of those who stayed in the economic elite and kept their former market positions is relatively small—since the size of the market elite in the redistributive system was minimal—and an even smaller proportion moved into top management, immediately on completing their education.

In line with empirical research into the initial stage of the change of regime (Kolosi and Róna-Tas, 1992, Mateju, 1993, Róna-Tas, 1994, Sági, 1994, Böröcz and Róna-Tas, 1994), our results largely support the hypothesis claiming a "revolution of deputy managers" (Kolosi, 1991). A consistently advantaged position cannot be lost overnight during a peaceful transition; the existence and conversion of symbolic capital allow this elite, adapting to new circumstances, to stay on. At the same time, according to Kolosi, it cannot be left out of consideration that, at least in the early period of transition, positional capital that had once been advantageous, may become a handicap. Earlier political positions can arouse much hostility when interpreted by the new political elite and the media. Intense public exposure may actually diminish the usefulness of power and resources acquired under the previous regime. Of course, contacts subsequently may be successfully converted into capital along with cultural and material capital; however, the benefits of this capital are weakened by public exposure of political positions earlier held. Taking advantage of this situation, those in the second line—who had held elite positions as advantageous as those of the persons now subject to scrutiny—try to make the best of the momentary power vacuum. The progress of the second line and accelerated generational change are both present in this period.

It can therefore be concluded that while there was the possibility of converting symbolic capital, there was only limited opportunity for converting power positions into capital. We assume that for the overwhelming majority of those who successfully carried out such a conversion it was cultural capital that had made their arrival into the redistributive elite possible, and this allowed them to shore up their positions in the redistributive or market sector of the new elite. The conversion of a position of power into economic capital was considerably hampered by the fact thatthe redistributive elite had grown old. Success during the transition was for the young, and a significant majority of these continued as members of the redistributive elite. Another factor hampering the transition was that "market skills" meant something different in the redistributive economy and in the post-1989 market economy. This is what made possible the relatively important number of those falling out from the former market elite, and this is what limited the old economic guard, a considerable number of whom could only remain in power in state-owned companies, or lost their posts after privati-zation (even if they were able to found other—usually smaller—market enter-prises).

The present redistributive elite, for the greater part, was recruited from "eligible" members of the old redistributive elite, with a smaller number coming from the pre-1989 opposition and their sympathizers. The deputy managers were espe-

cially successful. Thus today's market elite consists of those who built up resources and capital in the old redistributive elite, in the old second economy or who had been in exile in the West (Kolosi and Sági,1997).

Structural transformation in postsocialist societies

During the eighties in Hungary—and to a lesser extent in other East European countries—two structuring dimensions were conjoined, a "primary" and a "second" economy, functioning under the differing principles of redistribution and the market. Redistribution was the dominant factor and functioned as the main source of inequality. The "market" played more of an equalizing role (Kolosi, 1988, Szelényi, 1990, Manchin and Szelényi, 1987). At the same time, the majority of Hungarians—in the golden age of the second economy no less than 72 per cent of families (Kolosi, 1988)—had a stake in both economies. Consequently the two dimensions were not sharply separated as far as the public were concerned. Generally speaking, the relation between the second economy and the redistributive system—even with the dominance of the latter—was one of mutual dependence. The redistributive elite depended on the second economy since its performance strengthened the legitimacy of the system. Most service activities and a great deal of food-production took place within the second economy; participation—and the self-exploitation this involved—in the second economy made it possible to achieve and maintain a high standard of living. In other words, the second economy contributed greatly to the fact that Hungary was called "the merriest barracks in the Gulag."

But the second economy was a far cry from a pure market model. Producers depended on political decisions, the future of their enterprise and of themselves could not be predicted in the long term. Although this period saw attempts to encourage a market, these always came up against the permanent barrier of redistributive policy. In addition, the enterprise model of the second economy operated mainly to fill the gaps in the redistributive economy (most typically for private servicing enterprises), and also cooperated with it to a large extent (the so-called economic partnerships, which allowed for internal sub-contracting). Therefore redistribution was more than an external barrier, it was also a force that kept the second economy alive as a curious structural dimension.

The great structural rearrangements took place in the post-1989 period. First, the relation of the two structuring factors, redistribution and the market, had changed so much that the former two to one ratio was reversed in favour of the market. The pace of these changes can be seen in the reduction of staff in state-owned businesses and institutions. Before 1989, virtually all employees fell into this category. In 1995, the total workforce in the public sector was down to 49 per cent. In the competitive sphere (i.e. excluding administrative and financial bodies) private enterprise accounted for more than two-thirds of those employed. Thus the redistribution and market ratio in Hungary has almost reached the level of Western European welfare states. In the future we can expect only very slow shifts in this ratio in the region. With the removal of ideological obstacles to private enterprise and with the availability of capital, pure market conditions have developed in the transition societies eliminating businesses in the old second economy. Those who were willing and able to take risks could start an enterprise that had no dependence on the redistribution system. The new market participants were those players in the

Hungarian economy who were on a new growth path, and they linked with participants from developed western economies interested in the region. Participants had to adjust to the pure market conditions that were becoming dominant, and not to the logic of redistribution. The "blurred" relation between redistribution and the market in the 1980's became a more sharply separated relationship in the post-1989 period. Under purely market conditions, it is harder to continue with significant activities in the second economy. Private companies, now in the majority, do not permit their employees to do so; against this, there is no need for the security and stability of employee status if the individuals own enterprises proper. Thus those who had been active in the old second economy found themselves at a crossroads: they either have to accept participation in a market with its own clear rules, or they drop out from the market.

At the same time, those in an advantageous position along the redistributive axis had a choice as well. They could either participate in a market that offered greater profits and more opportunities than their redistributive position (here their previously accumulated symbolic capital was of considerable help) or they had to be content with their position in the now relatively less advantaged redistributive elite.

Thus the duality of redistribution and the market (the "L-model" of Kolosi, 1988) was succeeded by a model where the connecting points of the two are much weaker. The linking stems of the "L-model" were succeeded by two parallel dimensions, or as Szelényi (1990) put it, the two pyramids began to move away from each other. As the two dimensions spearated, those finding themselves in the common part had to decide on which "half" to take on under structural conditions that were becoming more polarized.

This does not mean that Hungarians gave up their old, well-established strategies, that is activity in the secondary and third economies. For the elite, the separation of redistribution and the market was marked, but the "small men" and, even more, those in the middle, used both their experience in the old second economy and the opportunities available under pure market conditions to survive. The number of one- or two-person enterprises rapidly grew, providing a framework in which the majority continued the work that they had previously been engaged in within the second economy. The difference lay in two factors. First, in contrast with the second economy of the 1980's, not everyone wants to be a part-time entrepreneur, there is simply no room in the market for the less marketable persons. This also means that along the marketable-not marketable dimension, society split as the market economy became dominant. The social position of those who did not possess marketable skills and experience doubly declined: first, their being less marketable weakened their position on the labour market. The likelihood of becoming unemployed was greater now that a job was no longer a right guaranteed by the constitution. On the other hand, as market conditions crystallized, they lost the income they had had in the old second economy. This happened concurrently with the economic changeover, when the standard of living of the majority of the population declined.

The primary goal of these part-time small enterprises, however, was not market venturing but tax avoidance. The form is the only legal possibility for business expenses (often not only work expenses of work, but living expenses too) to be legally deducted from taxable income. This explains the fact that while the ratio of "full-time" entrepreneurs has continuously risen since the 1980's, reaching 10 per

cent of the working population in 1995, almost as many "part-time" entrepreneurs making use of enterprises and companies appeared in the early nineties.

Losers and winners

Apart from encouraging part-time "quasi-entrepreneurs," a process of significant restructuring for individuals took place in Hungary, resulting in speeded up intragenerational mobility. The key feature of this mobility was not change of occupation, even though becoming a full-time entrepreneur is obviously a case in point. Considerable mobility occurred rather in the redistribution–market dichotomy. Many people were driven out of the market, but others had a choice and had to choose.

Winners were those who chose well; potential winners were those who at least had the possibility to choose. The potential winners were those who accumulated, or "inherited" from their parents enough symbolic capital in the 1980's to "invest" it wisely in the market economy. Those who could choose were all those who accumulated cultural capital that made them marketable in the more developed and already open Western European market as well, including the Western companies establishing themselves here. Potential winners were also those who were not in an overexposed political position, but had accumulated considerable positional capital under the old redistributive regime. And last, but not least, all those who—through the compensation process or through other means—inherited significant financial capital that they could invest, or those who had accumulated that capital in the more liberal period of the 1980's. Some of the potential winners were older business managers, the great part of the conservative cultural elite who are still able to take advantage of older social and kinship contacts, and those whose position on the redistributive axis was so good that they opted for redistribution when they had to make a choice. As a consequence of this the redistributive elite did not change decisively; the changes involved a quick mass generation change within the redistributive elite, produced by the "deputy managers" who replaced their elders as these retired in large numbers. At the same time, the market was chosen by the other group of the "potential winners" along the former redistributive axis—the younger managers, the cultural elite who were marketable and were willing to change as well, and the political elite who possessed cultural and material capital as well. As market processes crystallized, the redistributive axis of the "L-model" split into two, those who chose the market and those who did not.

The market axis of the "L-model" also seems to be splitting in two. With pure market conditions becoming dominant, all those who could find their breaking into—or staying in—the market in the second economy of the 1980's also chose the market. Not the odd "quasi-market" second economy, but the crystallized form of this which is separated from redistribution. The majority of the remainder were squeezed out of the market, and a minority—making recourse to the part-time private enterprise—sooner or later also have to make a decision. They either drop out of competition, or they opt for the pure market.

The losers are all those who did not even have the opportunity to choose and those who chose badly or were afraid to choose. Other losers are those who lost both the quasi-security net of the socialist economy and the supplementary financial security the old second economy provided and those who became employees from the group who had

maneuvered between the two stems of the L-model. It was already evident in the socialist period who were going to be deprived and who were going to be exploited both by redistributive and market conditions. Some were squeezed out of the workforce, but the great majority of unskilled workers and fewer skilled workers and lower grade office staff evidently found themselves in the position of being exploited by both capital and the government. They are the ones who the second economy can no longer reward and the higher standard of living that the rationality of the capitalist economy will eventually provide is not yet in place to compensate for what they have lost.

Finally, the third group of losers are probably lower level executives, professional people with modest qualifications, lower-level managers, and elite skilled workers. They were bound to the redistributive stem of the L-model, and neither wished nor dared to give up this position. It is even more painful for them to live through the reduction of the distributive and privilege assigning governmental functions. They would rather take up a rearguard position as this sphere quietly rots away than accept the risk of change. ❧

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Katalin Bossányi

Two-thirds Country

Income Inequality in Hungary in the Nineties

One third better off, two thirds worse off is how income differentiation in Hungary after the passing of communism can be formulated. Will this trend last, or are these merely short-term effects of the switch to a market economy? What is the motor of upward mobility and loss of status? How do income differences compare with those formerly existing here with those in other former socialist countries and with those in the OECD countries: these are questions I shall try to answer by using *Társadalmi Report 1996* (The State of Society 1996) based on a household budget analysis conducted by TÁRKI, the Social Research Information Centre, the research of Tamás Kolosi and István Tóth, and the subsistence level calculations of the Central Bureau of Statistics.

To make sense of the changes in the nineties we have to look back all the way to the sixties. At that time income differences (never made public officially) diminished, largely due to industrialization and the collectivization of agriculture. Towards the end of the seventies, they started to grow again due, at first, to the market presence of the second economy and then, early in the eighties, to the incipient liberalization of the market. From the very start, because of the market reforms, differentiation was on a larger scale than in any other country in Eastern Europe. A 1989 survey divided the population into ten income deciles, the income of the highest being four and a half times that of the lowest. When the Central Bureau of Statistics first published their subsistence level calculations, 4.8 per cent of the population were shown as not attaining it.

The end of communism produced changes on a dramatic scale. It was not only income differences that grew at great speed: the shrinking of the economy, the appearance of unemployment, and the fall in the standard of living made inequalities that had also been present earlier as well, highly visible. They were all too obvious to the man in the street and became a source of considerable irritation, especially the presence of conspicuous consumption, in the context of conspicuous urban pauperization and the only too obvious appearance of a horde of beggars and the homeless. By 1992 the top decile had an income six and a half times that of the bottom decile, an index which reached 7.3 in 1996. Other income inequality indices also

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pointed to a growing gap. The scissors opened wide, and did so quickly, if the income of the top fifh is compared with those at the median. The income of the middle class became more modest even when compared with the average, and the lower middle class plumetted to a level barely above that of subsistence. According to the Central Bureau of Statistics, 25 per cent of the population (30 per cent according to the sociologists) lived below or barely above subsistence level in 1996. The Central Bureau of Statistics changed the method of calculating the subsistence level in 1995, making it impossible to compare time series. In addition, some sociologists consider published data to be unreliable. According to them, a subsistence level based on a social consensus provides a sounder basis for calculation if the poverty threshold is defined as a percentage of the average income. In 1995, according to Rudolf Andorka and Zsolt Spéder, 12.5 per cent of the population had an income which was less than half the average. In 1996 this figure exceeded 13 per cent. This is the index which is most commonly used in international comparisons, since it provides a clearer picture of income differences.

By 1996 the structure of property ownership in Hungary had also changed radically. Here too an odd sort of arrangement is discernible, foreign ownership, domestic private ownership and state ownership accounting for around 30 per cent each. Employment figures reflect the above: 70 per cent of those in employment work for private owners engaged in the competitive market, 11 per cent are unemployed. Wages make up a smaller proportion of total incomes; owing to unemployment, the proportion held by social welfare benefits has grown, and so has—for other reasons—that of interest paid on capital. Demographic factors, additional to the market, contributed to differentiation in incomes and standards of living. By 1996 there were three dependents to every earner in Hungary, which certainly does not help things moneywise.

These dull figures throw a veil over unbelievably rapid social change and differentiation. The movements of this *paternoster*—to use Tamás Kolosi's metaphor—are evidence of the rearrangements due to a market economy, of processes of change and adjustment that took place in the market and in society within an extraordinarily brief span of time. In the economy, these structural changes reflect much more than the dominance of the private sector. The services sector grew apace and the weight of industry and agriculture diminished. In 1996 these two accounted for 30 and 4 per cent respectively of the GDP. At the same time, the public sphere—state and local administration, quangos and large foundations—waxed. As a result the numerical ratios between various sections of society also changed relatively quickly. The proportion of management and professionals grows year by year (8.8 per cent of those in employment), as does that of self-employed artisans, traders and businessmen (3.5 per cent). That of unskilled workers (10 per cent) and of agricultural labourers and peasants (1.9 per cent) declined.

Considerable income insecurity was typical of the immediate post-communist period. A third of the population was better off financially one year, and worse off the next. This has reinforced the feeling of having lost out, which is thought to be general. The consensus of sociologists points to school leavers, the unskilled middle-aged, large families, women over 45 in clerical employment and those receiving small pensions as the principal losers by the changes. Gypsies were absolute losers. Those who did relatively well include the young with a good financial or

cultural background (high qualifications and a working knowledge of foreign languages), the highly skilled middle-aged and the professional elite. The absolute winners were the new bourgeoisie. According to TÁRKI, great swings in fortune are most common amongst middle income earners; in comparison with them the position of those in receipt of high or low incomes is relatively stable. The movement of this social paternoster indicates that between 1990 and 1996, educational qualifications, occupation, location of domicile and gender were more important than earlier.

Contrary to general opinion, the income position of women did not deteriorate as much as presumed, even though the majority of them fall into the stable lower middle and lower income groups. Up to 1995 female unemployment was no higher than that amongst men, but it has grown steadily since. The position of the young has deteriorated. The financial position of those under 25 changes from year to year. What they gain on the swings they lose on the roundabouts. Compared to other age groups, the position of those between 36 and 45 appears to be improving steadily. Of them, twice as many as the average were able to improve their financial position. At the time of the changes those between 46 and 55 were most likely to be in an elite situation, and it is from them that the members of the new elite were recruited. The position of the retired—as a function of inflation—was relatively stable up to 1995, and has deteriorated since. They are firmly embedded in the lower middle income category.

The market rewards high educational qualifications and a knowledge of foreign languges; a relatively good income position is typical even of those who have merely completed their secondary education, passing the appropriate exam, although here a third of them are on the slippery slope. The income position for the majority of the business elite, including those commonly described as the redistributive elite, is stable and sound. Half of those in lower management have been able to improve their position. The clerical staff and the young contain a greater proportion of those with a fluctuating income, characteristically they are on the slippery slope. The only category which is in an even more insecure position is made up of people engaged in business in a small way, smallholders and self-employed artisans and small retail business proprietors. The location of domicile slope has become steeper than earlier. A slide into the abyss, and a stable low income position are typical for homesteaders and village residents; the income fluctuations of townspeople are in keeping with the average, and those who live in county seats and in Budapest have maintained (and indeed relatively improved) their earlier favourable position.

According to statistical research, growing inequalities of income will primarily be maintained by the fact that after 1990 the incomes of the upper deciles rapidly diverged from the average, while the position of the lower deciles hardly shifted away from the average in the first two or three years. In 1992–1993 the growth in the average income of the lowest decile was barely lower than the rate of inflation. In 1994 their income fell back by 15 per cent; in 1995 the real income of those in this category grew slightly. Between 1990 and 1995 the real income of households declined by 20 per cent on average. All this happened primarily at the expense of the middle classes—including their upper layers. In 1992 and 1993 middle income groups fell below the average to a greater extent than those whose income position was worse, in 1994 and 1995 they also experienced a greater deterioration in their

standard of living than those belonging to the topmost two and the lowest two income deciles.

The conclusion can therefore be drawn that it was the middle classes who footed the bill for the changes. The perception that the rich got richer and the poor poorer was, however, not fully confirmed. Indeed the rich got richer. It should be mentioned, however, that income in the top decile shows a considerable scatter. "The upper ten thousand" is formed by as few as five to ten thousand families. The lower reaches of the top third decile in fact merge with the upwardly mobile, relatively small number of middle class persons. The poor, however, have grown poorer relatively, but not absolutely. This is explained by the social safety net, which may be frayed but nevertheless offers some security. Two thirds to three quarters of the income of the bottom two deciles are made up by social benefits. These people are thus eliminated or kept out of the labour market in one way or another.

Recent developments in Hungary can only be understood if it is realized that the labour market has shrunk and, at the same time, the role of social redistribution has grown. There are more retired people, more unemployed and dependents compared to income earners. There is a clear demarcation line between those who make a living in the market and those who live on handouts from the state. The essential dividing line, when it comes to inequality, is whether someone remains active in the labour market or drops out. According to the 1996 Household Budget Survey, half of those who lose their jobs are either finally eliminated from the labour market, become permanently unemployed, or are able to make something extra on the black market. At the same time, the annual unemployment turnover is still around 60 per cent. Last year, the unemployment rate increased amongst school-leavers, outside Budapest, and amongst Gypsies.

Since the employment rate declined most in Hungary amongst all the countries in Eastern Europe—a million and a half jobs disappeared in six years, due to a shrinking market and to speedy privatization—this is both a cause of and an explanation for the acute differentiation in incomes, and of the ongoing criticism and political correction of the state's social role. Tamás Kolosi and Matild Sági, in their contribution to *Társadalmi Riport 1996,* state that, before the changes, "two thirds state redistribution—one third market redistribution" defined the income situation. At that time the market (and starting with the seventies, increasingly the second economy) ironed out the income inequalities created by state redistribution. The situation has been reversed, and it is the market that counts in differentiation. The result is that it is up to the state to blunt extreme inequalities. It seems that this reverse two thirds–one third relationship is likely to endure, and the scale of redistribution by the state will not be diminished at the expense of social benefits. The conclusion can be drawn that, in the long run the scale and character of income inequality in Hungary will be more like what pertains on the fringe of the OECD countries. This tendency will have to be borne in mind by any government, regardless of party composition, when reforming the major distribution systems.

It pays to lay particular emphasis on the 1996 processes. It would seem that we have reached a boundary mark, perhaps even a turning point. In terms of the average for the year the economy stagnated, but it palpably livened up in its second half. Both Hungarian and international forecasts suggest that Hungary can now look forward to slow but stable growth. The 1995 measures ensured macroeco-

nomic equilibrium and a reduction of the foreign debt. Shortages that go with growth can be financed. A turning point has also occurred in the transformation of the socio-economic structure. There are a number of signs which suggest that the major changes which accompanied the end of communism have come to an end. The systematic transformation that went with changes in the economic structure may also be approaching its conclusion. The decline in employment has been halted, income inequalities have grown slightly but not on the scale of previous years. The *paternoster* is still operating, but the speed seems to have slowed. In conjunction and in connection with these processes, for society as a whole, the objective financial position of households further deteriorated in 1996; as a result of an economic policy which aimed at equilibrium by restricting consumption, real incomes were reduced by 8–9 per cent, and there is more poverty about, but there were changes too in how the burden was borne. Income differentiation has continued, but the rich and the poor, those in the top and bottom income groups have lost more than those in the middle. A contributing factor was that the grey and black markets play a major role at the two extremes, both the rich and the poor relying on them. Last year, however, sources that spring from such murky waters were no longer able to make up fully for losses in legally earned income. The figures allow one to conclude that the incomes of those in the top three deciles grew at more than the average rate—the scissors opened up upwards—but the incomes of those in the two bottom deciles have declined more than the average. This shows that the trend that started in 1990 has come to an end. Now the poor are indeed getting poorer because of restrictions on welfare benefits, chiefly on family support, but the relative pauperization of the middle classes has come to a halt. Both features may prove decisive in the future for income inequality and for the social structure. The changes are also evidence that economic stability will prove lasting, and will be accompanied by a consolidation of society if the poor are helped by a target-oriented social policy. Social progress can only be hoped for if there is lasting growth. Social policy cannot help the middle classes, one cannot support sixty per cent of the population. For that very reason middle class incomes cannot be stabilized and the middle class cannot start to wax if annual growth does not reach 3 or 4 per cent.

If we wish to understand income inequalities in Hungary, we must consider the ways in which they resemble those in developed market economies, and how they differ from what prevails in other transition economies in the Eastern European region. As regards inequalities of income, OECD countries can be classified in five distinct groups. The first is that of the Scandinavian countries with highly developed welfare systems, the second includes the market economies of continental Europe, such as France or Germany, the third those rich countries, such as Japan which, perhaps for cultural reasons, lack a stable welfare system, the fourth includes the Anglo-Celtic countries that lack a comprehensive welfare system, and the fifth is made up by countries on the fringe of the more developed ones, such as those on the shore of the Mediterrenean. Income inequalities are smallest in the Scandinavian group, then they grow step by step across the categories given above. Income inequalities are largest in the OECD countries' backyard, thus in Greece, Portugal or Ireland. In the OECD countries the degree of income inequality is largely defined by the stability and size of the middle class.

European welfare states are characterized by a relatively large middle class and a small proportion of those whose incomes are extremely high or extremely low. The situation is reversed in OECD countries without welfare systems and in countries on the fringe. International research into the relationship between poverty and welfare expenditure unambiguously shows that there is more poverty where the welfare systems are less well developed.

According to István György Tóth, income inequality in Hungary under communism was much like that in the Scandinavian countries. After the changes, the situation was much as in continental Europe, around 1993 already more or less corresponding to a German standard—always bearing in mind that there the scissors opened up at a much higher income level; by 1996 the similarity was stronger with France (though in the absence of the highly developed French welfare system) but differentiation was still smaller in Hungary than, e.g., in Ireland. According to "observers" Hungarian income differentiation will accelerate further unless growth proves lasting, until it reaches the Mediterrenean level around the year 2000. Hungary is adjusting to the OECD trend as regards the dimensions of welfare spending and poverty. We are gradually moving away from the welfare model and approaching that of the continental states. If deviations in the relative proportions of the richest and the poorest are taken as the basis, Hungary already ranks with the most unequal countries. As regards the gap between the richest and middle income earners, inequality in Hungary is already greater than in Portugal or Ireland, which are more or less on the same level of economic development as Hungary.

Last year the World Bank published a report on income differentiation in the countries of Eastern Europe. This stated that income inequalities in Hungary were the smallest in the region. Research by Zsuzsa Ferge, Rudolf Andorka and István György Tóth prompted the World Bank to amend their figures. They showed that right up to the mid-nineties, of the economies in transition, income inequalities in the Czech Republic, in Slovakia, and in the new *Bundesländer* were smaller than in Hungary. Income inequalities in the other Visegrád countries are still smaller than in Hungary. Hungary's present position is between the "reform countries" and the countries to the East. The further eastward we move, the greater the differences. The largest income difference in the Eastern European region are found in Bulgaria. Those in Russia and the former member states of the Soviet Union are still greater.

Opinion polls in Hungary show that Hungarians are irritated not so much by the fact of income differentiation but by its scale, and the mode of *enrichessement.* Many hold that these days one cannot earn more than the average and stay honest. *Enrichessement* is not accepted as legitimate. This problem was specially considered last year by both the World Bank and the EBRD. In their opinion, given that inequalities are unavoidable, it is highly important in the interests of popular support for a stable market economy that the mechanisms for rapid enrichment should appear to be morally above board and thus acceptable to the majority. The advice given by the World Bank in connection with the reform of the Hungarian social welfare system should also be taken to heart. The World Bank maintains that money should not be withdrawn from the Hungarian health and social security systems, but that institutional reforms should ensure that these moneys are spent more efficiently.

Studies at home and abroad of income inequalities as they existed around the

middle and end of 1996 show that Hungary is a two-thirds country. This is an asymetrical relationship. The income situation of two thirds of the population is deteriorating, that of one third is improving. The pyramid is not put on its head by the marked presence of the Black Market—it acounts for 30 per cent of GDP—but it improves the position of both the richest and the poorest. The huge question, whether present inequalities are merely a feature of a crisis struck period of transition, and whether a growth that has started will allow the middle class to make up the leeway, is wide open. In that case present income inequalities will continue but differentiation will be open to the median and upwards, and will be closed downwards. Deliberate social action may help to reduce the scale of pauperization, and support and protection for the poorest may be guaranteed by social programmes. The worse scenario—and many sociologists currently believe it the likely one—means that present inequalities will be frozen. This may well lead to a brake on social mobility and the petrification of the present situation. ❧

The Perényi Château at Nagyszöllős (Vinogradov).

Béla Kádár

Economic Strategies before Integration

The history of the 20th century offers ample evidence that isolation or separation from the international system of economic relations both result in economic distortion and backwardness, even in times when international economic co-operation is less intense than it is today. The former socialist countries and those nations of Latin-America, Africa and Asia which chose an inward-turning path to growth paid a heavy price for their attempt at isolation: a huge decline in their share of the world economy, impoverishment and retardation in development. It cannot be reasonably believed that nation-states which find themselves in the field of attraction of regional and global areas will be able to halt at their own borders the "electromagnetic waves" of economic and technological trends and developments.

Despite reiterated claims to the contrary over many years in the countries of "existing socialism", the genuine integrational processes in Europe occurred within the framework of the European Communities and the European Union. In the case of Hungary, organically embedded in the European region by geography, historical evolution and economic ties, it is the requirement of integration (with all its interrelated factors involving the country's external and internal defence, the protection of national values and the environment, and economic development) that may ultimately end Hungary's character as a "ferryland" between East and West, and all that goes with being a small nation wedged between narrow economic borders. I intend to examine the problems of Hungary's European integration in terms of economic processes, which now have a much greater influence on social development than ever before.

Is there a rational alternative to Hungary's integration into Europe? Reliance on the nation's own resources, the revival of a smaller or larger Comecon, reliance on EFTA, the North American Free Trade Association, the dynamic countries of East Asia all belong to the realm of dreams and political and economic romanticism, given the facts of economics and geopolitics. 68 per cent of Hungary's total exports go to EU member states, and the EU's share in the financing of Hungary's debt and in the total of foreign capital invested in Hungary is over 60 per cent. The West also provides 80 per cent of our foreign currency income from tourism.

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Successful adaptation to the most important economic partner is vital to the survival of a small country sensitive to foreign economic processes. The level of the costs of adaptation is a major factor in the development of countries sensitive to foreign trade. For the external conditions of Hungary's development, the very existence of the Union is itself a relative advantage: Hungary has to accommodate to the unified economic environment and the documentation and administrative system of the Union and not to the different requirements for the markets of 12 or 15 member countries.

The costs of adaptation to its main market are unavoidable for foreign trade-sensitive Hungary; however, full membership in the Union may ease the process of catching-up and adaptation. Staying outside the Union would mean losing the opportunity of the financial subsidies available from the Union, which have thus far helped every less highly developed country that joined, from the countries of Southern Europe to Ireland, to achieve economic growth higher than the European average as well as a faster rate of modernization. The extent of the actual financial support available from the Union can be judged only when the new arrangement for funds, coming into force in 1999, is known, and the negotiations on accession have already started. Earlier foreign estimates ran to 17 per cent of Hungary's annual GDP, but currently the estimate stands at 4 per cent. Even that far more moderate amount would approximate to the average annual direct capital inflow of the years between 1990 and 1996. If all other conditions were to remain unchanged, full membership would increase the growth rate of the Hungarian economy by an average 1 per cent annually.[1] Staying out would not only mean the loss of supporting funds but would also divert the current working capital flow, and might even result in the relocation of investments from Hungary to other Central European countries with more favourable conditions, with all the attendant losses in exports. Staying out would therefore do considerable damage to the country not only in the form of "lost profits", but also in loss of resources, both actual and potential, as well as lost jobs and exports.

Hungary's integration into the union is thus not some kind of a political objective for its own sake or a road that can be avoided at will, but an integral part of the strategy required to improve the country's standing. It should be noted that there are major interest groups both inside and outside Europe which, for a variety of reasons, are not interested in the Eastern enlargement of the European Union. That a large number of economic and political interest groups urge admission to the Union is not the essence of the bargaining position of Hungary. The various widely publicized foreign calculations and declarations grotesquely overestimating the costs of enlargement and belittling the value of the "dowry", the endeavours to postpone accession and the positions aiming at extending the conditions of admission by setting minimum limits on environmental protection and social policy, are all clear indications of the power of counterinterests regarding the Eastern enlargement of the Union.

With all the evidence already in, the theoretical and practical information about economic and economic-policy mechanisms and with the experience so far, it needs no further proof that the profits of integration, the order of magnitude of costs and gains will depend, for both the

1 ■ Ch. Keuschnigg—V. Kohler: "Austria in the European Union: Dynamic Gains from Integration and Distributional Information", *Economic Policy*, April 1996.

individual associated countries and the whole of the Union, on the level of economic development achieved by the individual countries by the actual date of their accession. In the case of the better prepared countries, more mature in terms of their market economy development and integrational capability, integration will help boost the GDP and the value of the given country to the Union to a greater degree. Although assisting the new member countries in preparing themselves would be very much in the interest of the European Union itself, so far it has shown little inclination to supply funds—with the exception of the PHARE programme which runs into 0.2 per cent of the GDP of the candidate countries and whose details are being modernized at a very slow rate—to aid the preparatory work going on in the period preceding accession. As a result, the country has practically nothing beyond its own resources in preparing for accession, and this has to be done on the basis of a plan of action expressing national interests and mobilizing all resources at its disposal.

Planned preparation for accession and the risks of its execution is less difficult in what is needed for integration coincides to a very large extent with what Hungary needs for modernizing, catching up and improving its competitiveness. Even if the country were to stay outside the EU, the tasks deriving from the need to improve economic performance would be the same; only the order of things, the timetable and the deadlines might be different. On the other hand, the work of preparation is made extremely difficult by the uncertainties surrounding the Eastern enlargement of the Union as well its further development and foundations at depth. It will only be seen after the completion of the Intergovernmental Conference, whose purpose to determine the structures of decision-making, the techniques of operation and the timing and conditions of establishing the European Economic and Monetary Union, whether the process of Eastern enlargement would not be delayed because some issues regarding the inner development of the Union remain unresolved. In the current situation, the operational plan of the preparatory process must be developed without any knowledge of the actual date of accession, the naming of the countries in the "first wave" of accession, the establishing of the concrete conditions of accession and without the hope of obtaining the funds for promoting preparation for accession.

It is important from the point of view of timing, concentration and scheduling whether the country will have four or eight years for further preparation. Nor is it irrelevant what the concrete conditions of accession will be and, on the other hand, what will be the chances of obtaining funds and access to the Union's agricultural markets, what delaying demands may be expected from the member countries of the Union, and how Hungary's neighbours both within and outside the Union might develop following the first wave of accessions. All this can only be done, to use the terminology of tactical missile warfare, by employing techniques suitable for tracking moving targets, and by replacing static judgements of position by the determination of dynamically changing positions and requirements.

Hungarian economic policy may reasonably start from the assumption that the country could become a member in the year 2002. The basic conditions for preparation will be an improvement of the current maturity for integration, the treatment and maximal resolution of the issues of special tensions expected in the next four years, and achieving the critical minimum of competitiveness needed at the time of accession. It cannot be tolerated that a

situation should emerge in which, because of a failure or insufficiency of preparedness, the country itself is compelled to ask for a postponement of accession in its own interests. If there is a rational economic policy and accelerated preparation, the net profit of full membership for Hungary will be undoubted. At the same time, it must be openly stated that, in many areas, preparing for integration will entail painful losses and heavy sacrifices as an inevitable consequence of improving the current account balance, the clearing of structures, the adoption of European regulations and the pressures of increasing competitiveness.

Preparation for integration and protecting the balance

The Hungarian public, including the political elite, is largely unaware that the conditions of accession do not include fulfilling the convergence criteria of the European Economic and Monetary Union. On the other hand, from the point of view of the pace of preparation, it is no consolation that in the 15 member states of the Union, the average rate of internal debt reached 73 per cent of the GDP in 1996, and the budget deficit 4.2 per cent of the GDP. The Maastricht targets were met only by Luxembourg, Germany, Britain and Ireland. Foreseeably, selecting countries for the first wave of accession will be influenced by their relative closeness to the Maastricht criteria. From this point of view the yardstick will probably be the performance of the years 1996 and 1997 and the targets of the 1998 budget. In the case of Hungary, the average rate of internal debt compared to the GDP in those three years did not exceed the 1996 average of the Union countries, thus, from a static aspect, Hungary's divergence from the fiscal convergence criteria is insignificant.

From a dynamic point of view, however, Hungarian fiscal policy must face some major challenges. On the revenue side, considerable losses are expected because of the government's pledge to completely eliminate the 8 per cent extra import duty introduced in 1995 (already reduced somewhat in 1996) during the year 1997. In agreement with the free trade agreements made with the European Union and the CEFTA countries, Hungarian customs duties will be reduced to a very large degree as far as nearly four fifths of total Hungarian imports are concerned; thus, four fifths of Hungary's income from customs duties will simply vanish by the end of 2001, regardless of accession. The relative magnitude of those losses are indicated by the figures which show that the ratio of customs and import duty payments in terms of the GDP—4.5 per cent in 1995 and 3.6 per cent in 1996—is expected to drop to 2.5 per cent in 1997 according to the budget target figures, and will barely exceed 0.5 per cent four years from now. Thus, in the coming four years, a demand for extra customs and trade incomes running into 2 per cent of the GDP will occur in the budget so that the balance may be improved.

Similar tensions may be expected on the side of personal income taxation and social security payments, which, compared to the European average, are high and will consequently have to be reduced. Tax payments by individuals made up 7.3 per cent of Hungary's GDP in 1996, and payments to the social security funds ran to 12.6 per cent of the GDP. The improvement in the economy's competitive position, the reform of the structure of the budget, a stronger motivation for achievement and the attempt to bring the black economy into the open will demand a sizeable reduction of those burdens, which, in turn, may decrease government revenues in terms of the GDP by 3 to 4 per cent.

The pressures for increased spending are not insignificant either. Integration into Europe and Hungary's NATO membership, expected to come into force on 4 April 1999, will speed up the modernization and development, long overdue, of the Hungarian Armed Forces. Developing and increasing the NATO-compatibility of weapons systems, computer use, logistic structures and professional skills mean increasing real costs from year to year in the defence budget, and will mean an extra spending of 0.5 per cent in terms of the GDP by 2002. Naturally, speeding up the process of joining the Schengen Agreement would be contrary to the interests of Hungary in more than one respect. Apart from the borders with Ukraine and Yugoslavia, at this moment it cannot be foreseen where the East-Southeast forward perimeter or border of the European Union will be drawn. Nevertheless, curbing of international organized crime and strengthening law and order demand a considerable development of the quantity and quality of border protection, customs and tax control organizations, and this will require a relocation of another 0.5 or 0.6 per cent of the GDP.

Maturity as regards environmental protection is likely to emerge as one of the most sensitive areas of the accession negotiations. Attempts by some member countries to overemphasize the requirements of European environmental standards by referring to the potential threats due to the environmental or social invasion supposedly originating in the associated countries are already discernible. A medium-developed country would, of course, hardly be able to make up for several decades of negligence within a couple of years, since that would require expensive developments and halting activities that are particularly deviant from the European norms. No well-founded estimate can as yet be made of the amount of extra spending needed in this area, but taking over the prescriptions regarding products and those involving production sites, it may, even if postponement is allowed, run as high as 1 per cent of the GDP.

Extra budgetary spending on a similar scale is required for developing and strengthening the competitiveness of Hungarian agriculture. The need for speed emerges most markedly here since by the beginning of the accession negotiations, Hungary must have well-established ideas regarding the resources, the ranking of objectives and the techniques to be employed. Special attention is to be devoted to the development of R&D and to the allocation of the necessary "seed-money" in the budget. The future development of Hungary depends, to a large extent, on the degree to which it will be able to pass from a position of a production site to one of a research and development site. The specialization advantages of the country lie largely in the proper exploitation of its abundant resources of highly skilled R&D staff. The intensification of the country's absorption capacity in today's international R&D demands doubling current spending, increasing the government contribution by approximately 0.5 per cent of the GDP.

An area of special significance for international business is the balance of trade and of payments in general. From the aspect of the balance of payments, a cushion is provided for the next two to three years by the quantity of privatizable government property, the value of which is estimated at around 4 billion dollars as well as by the high level, about 10 billion dollars, of the country's foreign currency reserves. It is however, foreseeable that foreign capital investors, after a few more years' waiting, will begin to transfer home a considerably higher share of their profits than they are doing at present. The amount transferred, on investments totalling 15 to 20 billion dollars,

may run to 1 to 1.5 billion dollars. By the turn of the millennium, the order of magnitude of profits being repatriated may exceed that of the debt service burden of the government and the National Bank. Owing to the growing attraction of capital of the other associate countries, the earlier size of green-field investments can be upheld only if the Hungarian economy can be shifted to a growth path. If this does not happen, there will not only be a decline in capital investment but also capital already invested may move to more dynamic countries, where higher returns may be expected.

Preparation inevitably requires intensifying competitiveness and stimulating export-oriented development. From this point of view, the current trends are far from reassuring. In an election year, there is a considerable temptation for the government to shift problems resulting from the balance over into the politically less sensitive area of foreign trade. A deficit in the foreign trade balance, however, may result in a loss of foreign confidence and, following the "consumption "of state property and foreign currency reserves, would entail new pressures for restrictions which may halt the process of preparing for integration. Preventing those dangers from materializing—and starting on foreign trade oriented growth—requires the expansion of the range of competitive commodities and increased financing, under more favourable conditions, for investments, production and exports. It also demands a system of incentives for domestic suppliers of transnational companies as well as the encouragement of small and medium-size firms so far not really interested in exporting to start directly export-oriented operations. A further requirement is the preferential, "Euro-conform" development of economic sectors leading in gross foreign currency earnings, such as the tourist industry, the food economy and certain subdivisions of the engineering industry.

At present, hardly more than a 0.1 per cent of the GDP is available at a government level for investment, technological development and export incentives. Launching a comprehensive program of structural modernization, export and investment stimulation and business development requires developing a set of measures the value of which would run into 0.5 to 1 per cent of the GDP. Finally: the budget must have a sufficient scope for movement by the beginning of the next millennium in order to be able to absorb the support funds expectable in the case of Union membership as well as the external "pre-integration" financial support, which may possibly increase in the period between the signing of the accession agreement and actual accession. The lack of scope for movement or absorption capacity may easily prevent the country from availing itself of external support.

Looking for a way out, Hungarian style

The challenges posed by integration to the balance are well indicated by the fact that, from a dynamic aspect, the ratio of budgetary revenues in the GDP will decline by 5 to 6 per cent while the current integration requirements demand extra expenditures reaching 4 to 5 per cent of the GDP. If all other conditions remain unchanged, due to preparations for integration and other objectively occurring factors, income reallocation and balance improvement requiring at least a tenth of Hungary's current GDP will have to be carried out.

The recipe suggested for situations of this kind by Anglo-American economic thinking, currently the mainstream, consists of continued balance cuts with reductions mainly in the government and social

services areas. Although the streamlining and rationalization of large government and social welfare systems and their adjustment to the requirements of the future is a constant for the operation of the national economic model, the capacity for carrying further burdens of a society already at the edge of its ability to function in some of its subsystems cannot be disregarded. Nor can it be overlooked how much can be gained within four years from structural reforms with regard to maturity for integration.

One of the main pillars of the pre-integration strategy based on the current Hungarian conditions will be the use of revenues from the sale of still unprivatized state property for development purposes. In the past year and half, the use of a part of the privatization incomes for debt repayment was justified by the otherwise unfortunate fact that the government did not have a properly grounded and well worked out development strategy. Using still saleable government property for the same purpose would not reduce the domestic debt to any significant degree—only by 10–12 per cent at most—after which, in the absence of improved efficiency, the debt spiral would start anew.

The measure of Hungary's indebtedness today is not critical by international standards. Financing a "feel good" package from privatization incomes on political grounds in the election year would not serve the country's interests. The political sensitiveness of the coming year, the foreseeable changes in the political field of force and the lack of a comprehensive development programme all suggest a temporary suspension of the privatization process for reasons of national interest, especially in the "high voltage" areas.

On the other hand, the incomes from privatization may contribute to financing a major share of a Hungarian strategy of development and preparation for European integration, and the initiation of economic growth. Development reserves of a similar order of magnitude are offered by the reduction of the level of interests to be paid on government debt.

The reduction of inflation by an annual 4–5 percentage points at the cost of the intensification of competition from imports— and a worsening trade balance due to the elimination of import restrictions— is realistic. With a far-sighted and well-coordinated economic policy focusing on the wood rather than on the trees, it will be possible to continue to reduce inflation by 3–4 percentage points per year in 1998 and 1999 as well. The decline in the rate of inflation, increased competitiveness of the Hungarian banking system, which still operates at a low efficiency level and high cost, the more direct and less expensive forms financing government debt by the general public and the foreseeable growth in savings when and if real interest rates on savings increase, may have the combined result that the interest expenditures in the budget (one tenth of the GDP—or an amount equalling the minimum costs of preparation for the EU)—could be considerably reduced. Pushing down the interest payments within the budget to the 5 per cent level maintained during the years between 1990 and 1994 in the next four years is a realistic target.

A reduction of the interest burden on the budget will directly expand the scope of movement with respect to financing. The accumulation of business savings in bank accounts, the low level of the exploitation of production capacities coupled with considerable labour reserves may start economic growth—without having recourse to measures artificially encouraging demand and without the inflationary threats these would entail. Moreover, in the medium term, growth and the expan-

sion of production will, through a reduction of the ratio of fixed costs, trigger off an additional inflation-reducing effect. The co-ordinated requirements of the improvement of productivity and employment may be realized in case of an economic growth rate exceeding 3 per cent. A 15 per cent growth within four years in the GDP may increase the number of jobs and the attendant budget revenues by 4–5 per cent.

Exploiting and integrating the "pull" effect of foreign capital investments, linking them organically to the Hungarian economy, requires strong support for the domestic background industry, for the subcontracting network of small and medium-size firms, the development of the financial infrastructure via privatization with capital increase, with operation regulations and with the development of banking technology background.

The development of firms committed to the Hungarian economic interests may be influenced by programmes arranged along the lines of long-range specialisation, the demands of rational energy use, environment protection, professional skills and research requirements. On the other hand, in the process of the planning and execution of co-ordinated regional development programmes, the stimulating role of government policy cannot be exclusive but rather complementary and supportive in character, appearing in the framework of a partnership. Instead of a project-type view, it should be related to programmes involving targets, strategy, organization and resources, requiring concentration on the potentially most profitable activities, rather than scattering resources. In such a case, the stimulating-developing role of the government would not conflict with the regulatory norms of the various international organizations or the European Union.

One of the major resources for the improvement of the situation is to legalize the grey economy, at least in part. The turnover of the "shadow economy", ignored by official GDP statistics, was estimated at 1,500–2,000 billion forints in 1997. The cumulative effect of the last two years' economic policy on people and businesses was for them to leave the legal economy and move into the shadows. The process was strengthened by the spread of corruption and the weakening of control. The partial legalization of shadow-economy activities, which has extraordinary dimensions in Hungary today, could be aided by a two-pronged approach: by the reduction of taxes and social welfare contributions as well as the burden of administration and by firmer enforcement of the law—an integrated stick-and-carrot approach. This would increase the revenues of the budget and the statistically registered GDP, improving, in a statistical sense, the various macro-financial and development indicators so closely watched abroad while accession to the Union is in process.

The requirements of a Hungarian modernization strategy can therefore be met in the context of a concentrated, co-ordinated operation involving synchronized moves of various origins toward the same objectives, with a schedule taking the country's capacity for adjustment, and for bearing burdens, into consideration. The greatest uncertainty regarding the future of the economy lies not in the elements of its present position or short term prospects, none of which are good, but in the nation's capacity for the kind of political action needed for reversing the fate of the country, and preparing for integration. The economy and economists have a special responsibility—just as they had at every major milestone or period in the history of the past decades—in the development of a political field of force serving and assisting the laws of the economy and common sense. It is the future of the country that is at stake. ❧

Miklós Györffy

Doses of Reality

Balázs Györe: *Ha már ő sem él, kérem olvasatlanul elégetni* (If He Is Already Dead Too, Please Burn This Without Reading It). Budapest, Liget, 1996, 156 pp. • *A valóságban is létezik* (This Also Exists in Reality). Budapest, Liget, 1997, 152 pp. • Attila Hazai: *Szilvia szüzessége* (Silvia's Virginity). Budapest, Balassi, 1995, 205 pp. • Jenő Thassy: *Veszélyes vidék* (Dangerous Territory). Budapest, Pesti Szalon, 1996, 468 pp.

Writers born in the 50s and 60s, who make up—or soon will—the main body of contemporary Hungarian literature, have not infrequently been described as having "lost their story", or as "suffering from reality deficiency". Many of them are postmodernists, based on the tacit or explicit conviction on their part that the role of literature is not to describe reality, but to create a literary reality, in other words, texts which exist purely on a linguistic-literary plane. In their view, literature should not be concerned with anything other than itself, its own medium, language, and with the patterns and processes of literature itself. This kind of literature takes virtually no account whatever of what is termed social reality, and hardly any of the reality of individual lives.

Balázs Györe (b.1951) is one of those who is not reconciled to giving up reality. His two small volumes of prose published recently, *If He Is Already Dead Too, Please Burn This Without Reading It* and *This Also Exists In Reality* are among those almost obsessive writings of his in which he tries to reconstruct the reality of his own life and its context. For Györe, too, reality is something evanescent, diffuse, but he considers it his duty as a writer at least to attempt to assemble the vestigial fragments of it into something akin to what "exists in reality". Consequently, reality for him is not merely a series of events, much less the chronology and circumstances which shape the sequence of events, but rather the essence of all these things in a verbal form, possessing both "real" and literary validity. It springs from reality, but only becomes real in the writing.

In his own idiosyncratic manner he collates and comments on snippets of reality and fragments of stories all originating in his own life, i.e., they "also existed in reality" (or perhaps "exist"), and the narrator is Balázs Györe, a private person and author, himself. And just as he presents himself as a protagonist in his own personal reality, so does he present his other characters, calling them by their real names and relating only such things about them as he remembers actually happening, or which happened as he remembers them. In doing so he effectively eliminates all trace of fiction; at the same time, however, the continuous rambling hither and thither, the faltering, agonized reflection and the starkly fragmented style have the effect of undermining any sense of reality with regard to the events and emotions narrated.

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To be more precise, they implant in the reader's mind the very question with which Balázs Györe himself is tussling: what is there in his life that is real in the sense of being constant and tangible; what is it that gives him as a person his life, and their identity? Does such a thing exist at all?

If He Is Already Dead too, Please Burn This Without Reading It shows a certain self-restraint, almost as if it were a task he is imposing on himself, concentrating on a relatively short period of the author's life, the nine months in 1970 when, shortly after finishing secondary school, this Budapest lad became a journalist on a local newspaper in Székesfehérvár. There is nothing especially remarkable in this situation; even the author seems to regard it as quite a pleasant period of his life, if one disregards the fact that, at this sensitive and impressionable age, one is prone to "self-heroics" and consequently every tiny detail may be hugely significant. The simple, objective, compact sentences, which on occasion seem to give an almost ledger-like listing of details insignificant in themselves, arouse the feeling that there may be something more to this, which we need to identify—and it could be hidden in the most apparently inconsequential details. In any event there is a friendship dating from this period which appears to be important, and which continued for a long time afterwards too, and there are episodes recalling the story of how this friendship continued later. Friendship is, moreover, one of Györe's favourite themes, more so even than love; scenes from a friendship also provide some of the subject matter for *This Also Exists in Reality*.

In *If He Is Aleady Dead Too...* the Székesfehérvár recollections nevertheless provide a relatively solid framework for his reflections, comments and questions, images culled from various points throughout his life, from childhood to the time of writing. In *This Also Exists In Reality,* on the other hand, the structure is looser still. Any vestige of narrative style has been supplanted by reflective-associative fragmentation; this comes across in practice as an almost openly poetic style (Györe started out as a poet). Here we see even more strikingly something which characterized Györe's previous prose texts: rough and ready phrases lie side by side with notes, snippets and finished sentences, semi-processed chunks of text drifting on the borderline between life and literature, while the author, piling on question after question, tries bewildered and, in the end, rather half-heartedly, to sort them into some kind of order, to decipher and interpret them. What he gleans from this contemplative-speculative process itself becomes the material and the subject matter of this work. At this point Györe's text becomes diffuse and ephemeral to the point of being almost unintelligible, whereas earlier—and even in certain parts of *This Also Exists in Reality*—he managed, by dint of the originality with which he shapes his text, to create magical moments of reality where the past becomes one with the present, the transient with the constant, actual events with reconstructions from memory couched in words, and in which we perceive the grave deficiencies in our relationship with our own past. The lost story fails, however, to turn up; Györe's generation, striving towards remembrance of things past, merely stumbles by chance across unconnected fragments which have no reality other than their personal nature, the fact that they exist, and that they belong to their originators.

Attila Hazai (b.1967) is a noteworthy talented younger writer. *Silvia's Virginity* is the title of a collection of his short stories, "twenty-eight tales", written in the 1991–1994 period. Hazai no longer be-

lieves even in personal reality. In his tales the absurdity of daily life, of banality, are shaped into an impersonal text. On the surface, these are genuine stories, with a proper beginning and development; they are quite readable, and sometimes a hint of the personal may even be discerned in them, but in fact what we are seeing are nothing but grotesque caricatures, puerile phantasms born of foolishness, triviality, vapidity. Sometimes empty banality slips over into the horrific or obscene, but this has not the least effect on the vapid tone of the narrator. The thickheaded narrator cannot distinguish between what is important and what is trivial, between the conventional and the wildly bizarre. There may even be a kind of grotesque charm in the way in which, almost by chance, it is as if the elements of a story begin to hang together. But then it suddenly peters out, the initial impetus is lost, as if there were simply not enough puff to finish the story. It is possible to make a story out of anything that happens. If it is a story, then anything can happen in it. Whatever may happen, however, none of it means anything anyway.

The short story entitled "The purchase" tells of how Rezső, a bachelor, buys a flat from which the previous owner, a deserted husband, is not yet in a position to move out. The two of them share the flat for a time, then the adulterous wife returns and the couple ask Rezső to withdraw from the purchase. Rezső, however, does not agree to do so. And there the story ends. The hero of the two-page story "The Panting Beast and His Girlfriend" latches onto somebody on the tram who breathed in his face and decides to follow him home and strangle him. There he is invited in as if he were a guest, but then, after he has spent a few minutes in the room with the breather and his girlfriend, they turf him out with a fury to match the friendliness with which they had welcomed him in at first. In the three-page long "The Evening Meal" a boy and a girl shop for their evening meal; then, in the street, the boy shoots the girl several times at point-blank range, after which he has to carry her over his shoulder to get her onto the bus. By the time they reach home the girl has recovered and carries on to prepare the evening meal. The hero of "The Disgusting Worm" paints a hundred and fifty pictures a day in order to get into the book of records, in the hope of impressing the girl with whom he is hopelessly in love. One day he finds revolting traces of food and slime left by a disgusting worm in his flat and vows to wreak vengeance on it. In the end he finds a letter in which the unknown and revolting monster, incensed at all the dirty lies the man has written about him—i.e., in the short story which we are in the process of reading—threatens him in the most vulgar terms.

Other than describing what they are about, it is impossible to say anything meaningful about the substance or character of these stories, since their meaninglessness precludes interpretation; they only "mean" what they are. The utterly apathetic hero of "Respite" is unable to feel or hear anything, so he first of all kicks his chest of drawers until he manages to break his little toe, then he puts the fragment in his pocket and sets out with the aim of getting himself beaten up. After a number of unsuccessful attempts, he manages to get himself so thoroughly flayed that he can no longer get to his feet, but he at last feels pain again. In "The Pirates" two children find their grandfather dead in the bathroom. They decide to have a look to see what is in his stomach. They stick a knife into him, whereupon the grandfather cries out. "Sorry granddad, we thought you were dead", the children say to him. The young man who is the hero of "The

Pullover", after spending the best part of the day sleeping, sets off to call on a new acquaintance, an electrical engineer, to pick up a pullover which he thinks he must have left there the previous day. At his acquaintance's flat he finds that there are other people there; they sit on the floor and say nothing for a long time. Eventually a pig appears from the bathroom; their host wants to slaughter it, but the young man who has lost his pullover comes to the pig's defence. "If you're so fond of it, why don't you sleep with it?", says his host. Thereupon the young man copulates with the pig. Then, just as he is about to leave, he says "If you do slaughter it, save its womb for me. Just put it in a plastic bag and I'll call round for it sometime." The sections of text covering the different phases of this purported story follow one another in utterly meaningless fashion: how the young man has slept the day away, then takes the underground to go in search of his pullover; how he got to know the electrical engineer the previous day and sat around on the floor with the engineer's acquaintances, and finally how the pig makes its entrance wearing a large pair of women's knickers. The pullover of the title plays no further role in the story. The only reality which exists in Attila Hazai's stories is a very bizarre mish-mash of the banal and the disgusting in which the narrator, feigning imbecility, evidently derives some kind of malign pleasure. This may be one way of responding to losing touch with reality, or at least that is what this book appears to suggest.

For Jenő Thassy the question of whether he has a story, or whether his life has been real, simply does not arise. If anything, Thassy has had more than his fair share of real life, even if his story is about how someone can lose everything which belongs to him and into which he was born. Jenő Thassy was born in 1920 into an old Hungarian landowning family. He became an officer in the army just at the time when even army officers, or perhaps especially army officers, had to ask themselves to what extent they could remain true to their oath and yet maintain a clear conscience. Was it indeed possible for an army officer, whose duty in theory is to obey the orders of his superiors, to have a conscience, or even a personality at all? From Géza Ottlik's novel, *School on the Frontier,* we know how military cadets in the inter-war era were brought up in the doctrine of unquestioning obedience. Jenő Thassy, progeny of the erstwhile ruling caste, nevertheless decides to attempt resistance, using the opportunities and the abilities at his disposal. He chooses the path of resistance when the Hungarian army becomes fatally embroiled in the Second World War, moreover, on the side of the Germans yet again. Just as in the First World War.

He set himself an impossible task: to avert the historical tragedy. All he succeeded in doing was to survive the disaster. In 1946, at the age of 26, he emigrated and, after living in France for a few years, he settled in the United States. A number of his novels and short stories have been published in French and English, but his autobiography, which is written in Hungarian and has just been published in Budapest under the title *Dangerous Territory,* was intended to be his major work.

Dangerous Territory, which recounts the story of the fateful first quarter-century of Thassy's life, is both an enthralling portrait of an era and a gripping adventure story. Take even the opening scene; the atrocities he depicts cannot be merely the product of a writer's skill or inventiveness. It is 1919. Hungary has lost the war as part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and the ally of Germany, while its neighbours, their

members swelled by the Empire's rebellious ethnic groups—or in some cases newly-formed, such as Czechoslovakia, Romania and Yugoslavia—are thirsting for vengeance on their erstwhile oppressors. Under the Paris peace treaties, then being drafted, Hungary would later be carved up to such an extent that even large contiguous Hungarian-speaking areas were ripped apart. Meanwhile, however, there were also some who were trying to grab a share of the booty using their own resources. The Thassy estate, which bordered on Yugoslavia, is ravaged by Serbian soldiers who, like common criminals, murder the master of the house for his money and shoot his first-born son. His wife, who is pregnant with their second child, is brutally beaten and it is only thanks to the timely arrival of help in the form of the Jewish family doctor that she and her unborn child survive. When Jenő Thassy is born, they try for a long time to hide from him what dangerous territory he has been born into.

His mother supervises his upbringing. On the one hand she tries to shield him from the dangers lying in wait for him on all sides, while on the other, by chance as much as by intention, she gives him a good grounding in the kind of moral courage he will need in the face of such dangers. The Thassy estate on the banks of the Drava river was by then only a fraction of the domain formerly owned by the family; a large part of it was lost when Hungary's borders were redrawn. Thassy's mother, however, proves to be a modern woman and a lady of some mettle; she learns how to farm, even introducing new methods, and does her best to make a living from the remaining three hundred acres to enable her to maintain the lifestyle of the landed gentry and educate her son. Gradually, however, despite their bonds of kinship or friendship with the oldest and wealthiest families in the country, decline finally reaches them. Jenő Thassy is educated for four years at expensive Jesuit boarding-schools in Pécs and Kalocsa, but then has little choice but to enrol in a military academy where all expenses are met by the state, in view of the patriotic merits and heroic death of his father.

Jenő Thassy's memoirs were written after all these vicissitudes; they are the product of much bitter experience and disappointment. Of course, he occasionally projects something of the knowledge he has since acquired onto the story of how he thought and the choices he made as a young man, but one thing was patently clear to him from the beginning: Horthy and alignment with Germany would take the country down the path towards dictatorship. He did not veer to the political left as a result, he "merely" became a modern European. He joined the resistance, because he stood for learning and modernity as well as for the time-honoured, historical traditions of his class. Neither does he forget how much he owes to his Jesuit education—strange though it may seem in Hungary today to see priests portrayed against the "neo-Baroque" backdrop of the Horthy-era but not in the role of conservative reactionaries and collaborators. It is also strange to see aristocrats and landowners emerging as a better alternative to the leadership aspirations of Horthy and the pre-fascist government of Gömbös. Count István Bethlen, conservative prime minister of the 1920s responsible for the post-Trianon consolidation, comes across in a light in which he has long deserved to be regarded by the common consciousness. And Imre Biedermann, a wealthy Jewish baron and owner of a vast estate in Baranya county, becomes the young Thassy's real teacher; he is the person who sets him on that "slippery"

path whose ultimate goal is no less than "to save our country, our institutions, the world, for that was what Baron Imre Biedermann, member of parliament, landowner and hussar captain of the reserve, so ardently desired. The first half-hour's lesson with him was later to put me in uniform and lead me into dangerous adventures. I had found my apostle and committed myself to being his student, but I had no idea at the beginning where this path would eventually lead."

Jenő Thassy thus completed his education at the Ludovika Military Academy and became an officer. In 1942, on his first posting—in the recently re-annexed Kassa (now Košice, in Slovakia)—the commander of the young lieutenant's battalion was Jenő Nagy, one of those Hungarian officers who mounted the armed resistance, thereby sacrificing their military careers and, indeed, their lives. After Biedermann, the highly cultured and imaginative Jenő Nagy had a profound formative influence on the character of Jenő Thassy, who soon also committed himself irrevocably to the principle and practice of "rescuing whatever could be rescued". Whereas Jenő Nagy and many of his companions were executed by the Hungarian military leadership which unhesitatingly served the interests of the Germans, many others, including Thassy and some of his fellow-officers, landowners, aristocrats, Jesuits, nurses and city wide-boys, operated with a modicum of success on the dangerous territory of a Budapest careening towards the siege and the end. They saved lives and they saved their honour; they survived the disaster by remaining human. However, there was hardly time to draw breath before the next act in this historical tragi-comedy commenced; this time Thassy fled to the West. Not all his companions realized in time what was happening; some paid for this with their lives, among them Imre Biedermann, who had survived the Holocaust only to be killed by ÁVÓ thugs in 1947.

Dangerous Territory deserves a special place in the enormous pile of literary memoirs dealing with the last days of old Hungary, all of which, with self-flagellating scrutiny, seek to answer one question: where did we go wrong? Where did we take the wrong turning? This book is written by an established writer, but it is not written to further his reputation as a writer; he regards his story as more important, and more interesting, than if he were to push his own literary persona into the foreground. His way of reporting his experiences, however, comes across as the product of deliberate stylistic choice, it is carefully thought-out and finely wrought. It is with great elegance, moderation, dry wit and gentlemanly dignity that he recounts the story of what happened to him in that impossible country where he came very close to being murdered in his mother's womb, but was then allowed to live for long enough to realize that he did not belong. ❧

Norman Stone

History of a Troubled Region

The History of Transylvania. Béla Köpeczi, General Editor; Gábor Barta, István Barna, László Makkai and Zoltán Szász, Editors. Akadémiai Kiadó, Budapest, 1994. XVI + 806 pp, 125 black&white, 29 colour photos + 21 maps.

It was one of those slightly surreal English academic occasions. In 1970 or thereabouts, Ceauşescu of Romania was courting the West, and a delegation came to Cambridge. There was a lunch, presided with perfect style by Professor Sir Owen Chadwick, the *Grand Seigneur* of British historians. Those of us who knew something about Central Europe were invited, and some others, to make up the numbers. The Romanian team was just what you expected from Iron Curtain countries on such occasions. The head was a cunning old pig, and there were two or three fairly obvious representatives of secret organizations, double-chinned, gold-toothed and monosyllabic; there were also two or three nervous-looking, thin, diffident scholars, speaking decent French or English. Conversation resembled a large boulder, needing to be pushed uphill, but the Grand Signor was exceedingly good at it, and the lunch puttered along, not disagreeably. At the end, time for speeches. Sir Owen performed with aplomb. Then the old pig stood up and talked for about half an hour in Romanian. There was no interpreter; there did not have to be, because the man's gestures did the work, and phrases such as "Great and Indivisible Romania" do not need translation. In most cases, the British listeners had no idea what the man was on about.

The point was, just the same, clear enough: Showing off nationalism, Ceauşescu would persuade the West that he was really another Tito, anti-Soviet even though Communist; in that way, he could build up credits. In this, he was quite successful, and even spent a night at Buckingham Palace, to receive a knighthood from the Queen. Our little number in Cambridge was part of the parade. Of course, back home in Romania, the history that was being taught reflected this.

Much of it bears on Transylvania, the largest and, scenically, easily the outstanding part of the country. It had belonged to Hungary until 1918, but had had, for cen-

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who now teaches International Relations in Ankara, Turkey, was for many years Professor of Modern History in the University of Oxford. As one of Mrs Thatcher's academic speech writers, he was a major figure of the British intellectual Right. His review, in The Times Literary Supplement, *on the original three-volume* History of Transylvania *in Hungarian annoyed Ceauşescu and his minions as much as the work itself.*

turies, a very mixed population—Romanians the chief element in terms of numbers, but with large Hungarian and German populations as well. There were various nationalist versions of the history. In the classic Romanian version, there had been a Latin-speaking population there since Roman times, which had been driven into subjection by assorted barbarians, the latest of them the Hungarians, until liberation occurred in 1918. In point of fact, it is exceedingly interesting that a Latinate language, such as Romanian, survived in the Balkans, where nearly all else became Greek or Slav. There is a Hungarian version, which, for me, was encapsulated by a Protestant clergyman whom I met, just after Ceauşescu's fall, in the Székely district. Calvinism was an international movement—as a Scotsman, I know something about this—and it produced, often enough, the same type of clergyman, irrespective of country. This one was not unlike the Reverend Ian Paisley: highly intelligent, charmless, voluble and stentorian, looking on his Romanian neighbours in much the same way as the Reverend Ian looks upon the Ulster Catholics. He sat in a nasty concrete block, surrounded by fine old books, and pronounced that "if we had just been left alone, we should have been like the Dutch"—meaning, prosperous, law-abiding, well-educated and clean. The targets of his blame were the fancy Catholic aristocracy and their innumerable hangers-on who arrived when the Austrians took Transylvania in the early eighteenth century, and the Romanians, who were obviously in his view just Gypsies.

Hungary had ruled Transylvania after 1867, and it was people of this kind who dominated affairs. The Romanians faced discrimination in schools and public appointments, and by the end of the nineteenth century, this had become something of an international scandal. As Géza Jeszenszky's *Elveszett presztízs* shows, a delegation of Romanians presented their case in England for the first time in 1894, when there was a small gathering at Exeter College, Oxford—the forerunner of my Cambridge lunch, three-quarters of a century later. For most of this century, English writers have tended to take the Romanian side, just as, over Yugoslavia, their sympathies lay with the Serbs. A Lord Owen, setting out to mediate over Bosnia, would read his R. W. Seton Watson or his A. J. P. Taylor; over Transylvania, he might add Patrick Leigh-Fermor—brilliantly-written books, which get away from the combinations of vainglory and self-pity that can be the stock-in-trade of nationalist histories.

The Hungarians of Transylvania, under Romanian rule, were fed such nationalist history, and faced nasty discrimination in many other ways. At the time of writing, there may be some hope that a new, would-be European, régime in Romania will improve matters; and, certainly, there is so very much in Transylvania that is hugely promising, if only people could agree as to how it should go forward, that "Europe" may be the answer. We can begin with this present, excellent, history of the place.

It is a large, one-volume, abridgement of a three-volume original, produced by the Hungarian Academy of Sciences in 1986. The original, outstandingly well-illustrated, caused something of a scandal, and was banned in Romania. British readers of *The Times* were bemused to find a full-page advertisement taken out, denouncing the book for obscure misdeeds, in Balkan English (the advertisement was apparently placed by someone in Athens). I reviewed the book for *The Times Literary Supplement* and could not see what, in a sane world, the fault was. It is true that the authors are learnedly dismissive of the old

line that Romania descended in a straight line from Ancient Rome, but this is very far from being straight-forward Hungarian nationalist history. It is sometimes so fair-minded that it just misses out mention of some well-documented Romanian atrocities in, for instance, the rebellion of 1848, when, on the whole, the nascent Romanian nationalists took against the Hungarian liberals.

Transylvania's history is exceedingly complicated. In the very first place, a vast amount of it followed external events—invasions from outside, from Trajan's Romans to Stalin's Russians. Romanian patriots said that they descended from the Romans, but this book shows (and convinces me) that the story is a great deal more complicated and interesting than that. The Romans were in "Dacia" for too short a time to take root properly, and the Latin-speaking population fled south; in the next centuries, as Greek was re-asserted under Byzantium and various barbarians swept in, the Latin-speakers became poor shepherds, their language infiltrated by various Albanian words pertaining mainly to agricultural activities. Their descendants are still there, in north-western Greece, as "Koutzo-Vlachs", but other branches of them moved northwards across the Balkans again, eventually re-establishing themselves in Transylvania in the early thirteenth century, where, for the first time, they are noticed by Hungarian chroniclers.

This sensible and eruditely-argued version angered official Romania—Ceausescu's affinity with the later Roman Empire being such that he even employed food-tasters to make sure that he was not being poisoned. Maybe this version is wrong: if so, proving that would be formidably difficult. Unfortunately, the account of the origins of the "Saxons" has not survived the abridgement. Many were not really German at all, but Dutch or "Flemings". In the high Middle Ages, they were used in Central and Eastern Europe because they understood how to drain land: thus, there is a place called "Fläming" in Brandenburg, and I have sometimes wondered if "Flamănda" in Moldavia has the same root.

Another truncation was probably, in these ecumenical times, inevitable. You can in fact treat *Transylvania* not just as a football between two or more nationalisms but as a little epic in the history of Protestantism, much as John Motley did for the Dutch. Like the Dutch, the Scots and the Swiss, Transylvanian Protestants became, despite their size, poverty and remoteness, something of a great European power, their influence, later on, far greater than their numbers warranted. They preserved Hungarian culture at a time when, under the Habsburg, it languished. Their cultural contribution to Central Europe is, again, surprising—it even includes non-Euclidian geometry, or, if you like, the foundations of Relativity, although, as it happens, the man who did this, Farkas Bolyai, was a Catholic. Why is it that, even now, Hungarians hit the jackpot in the world's tables of mathematicians? This Transylvania might have said more on these points. However, as an overall account of a wonderful subject, it triumphs, just the same. ❧

George Szirtes

Budapest Diaries

Magda Denes: *Castles Burning: A Child's Life in War.* W. W. Norton, 1997, 384 pp. • Susan Varga: *Heddy and Me.* Penguin, 1994, 302 pp. • Susan Rubin Suleiman: *Budapest Diary: In Search of the Motherbook.* University of Nebraska Press, 1997, 232 pp.

"Only through time is time conquered," it says in *Burnt Norton.* The moment in the rose garden, "The moment in the arbour where the rain beat, / The moment in the draughty church at smokefall" may be remembered in time. Eliot talks of moments. The moment thickens in the smell of a derelict house, the texture of dried orange peel or the taste of a favourite biscuit, and we seem to be walking through the amber of time into an experience which explains where we are and where we have been. But it is an experience in language too, albeit a peculiar experience, with no reliable syntax, a syntax without conjunctions and prepositions, or perhaps only conjunctions and prepositions, without substantives, a world of adjectives and adverbs desperately seeking nouns and verbs. Even to say something simple, like "Then grandfather walked into the room" seems somehow to be cheating, imposing a logic on something less clearly defined. But we dare not think so. The thought is too terrible. The great ship of our identity has certainly been on a journey: what we are is what we have come to be. But we have not been on deck all this time, nor at the wheel. We seem to have spent years wandering about the cabins below glimpsing water or land through the portholes, which in any case are liable to misting and scratching, and who knows what, if anything, we saw yesterday, or even what there might have been to see. We make our own sensory deprivation.

Calendars and clocks are the masters of narrative. The child in the nursery school writes a story linked by a dozen uses of the phrase "and then", which ticks and judders like the minute hand of an old clock, dragging events in its wake. What the Russian Formalists called the *fabula* and the French later referred to as *histoire,* forms the ghost-bass of "and then" out of which the more complex plots—the *sjuzet* or *récit*—is woven. Do we live life forward as *fabula* and recount it later as *sjuzet*? Does life happen to us as the former, even though we experience it as the latter?

There is something disgusting in the perfect lie of the admirable anecdote with its careful shaping and pointing and self-referentiality. Time after time the anecdote is rolled out, is pushed across the table in all its paucity of imagination. Perhaps we simply distrust any form that has been achieved too easily. The ordering of events, the selection of detail, the amplifications and reductions seem to conform too readily to patterns made to please. At a party near the end of his life Dylan Thomas is supposed to have said. "Someone in this room is boring me. I think it might be me."

I cannot quite dismiss this disgust. The post-modern dislike of closures springs

from a healthy instinct not unlike this. But that, if the reader will excuse an awful pun, is not the whole story. The difficult closure, the true closure, the mad truthful anecdote which has closed about its events without us quite realizing when or how it has done so, is still a triumph, but it has to be invented and re-invented time and again. "History is a pattern of timeless moments," said Eliot, who found that the use of memory was for liberation and rejoiced because he had to construct something on which to rejoice. One constructs the ship of memory to retain one's freedoms, but it is a haunted ship and would sink immediately if it were not.

The great historical narratives employ the devices of fiction but do so with a peculiar responsibility to the specific fabulae from which they gain their authority. Either my grandfather walked into the room or he didn't. Either there was a holocaust or there wasn't, (and if there wasn't I would like to know what became of my grandfather). *And then* he was arrested and put on a train, *and then* he was interned in a camp, *and then* he was beaten. And then? Tick-tick-tick. To laugh and forget that events took place, as Kundera knew, is not the same as distrusting the narratives of those events. To be disgusted by the easy fiction is to sense an event betrayed. The cheap *sjuzet* has no believable *fabula.*

Here are three intellectual emigrée women of comfortable middle class background, shaping narratives out of their personal childhood memories, the memories of their friends and relations, and the researches of historians. The memories are of loss, deprivation and danger. Susan Varga is a lawyer and journalist, Susan Rubin Suleiman a Professor of French, and Magda Denes a past president of the New York State Psychological Association.

Suleiman's is perhaps the simplest approach. She returns to Hungary in 1993 on a one year's residency as a Fellow at the Collegium Budapest Institute for Advanced Study and keeps a diary. The book is essentially that diary, with a preceding chapter about an earlier visit in 1984, an end chapter about a return visit a yeat later, and a short prologue concerning the circumstances of her family's departure from Hungary in 1949, when the author was just ten years old.

The prologue states the motif of the whole book, indeed of all three books. "One is not only the child of one's parents. History too nourishes us or deprives us of nourishment." History and parents: parents are our first contacts with history, their constant presence is our first apprehension of timelessness and their aging the most acute reminder of our own fabula. They fade from our presence as our concerns elbow them aside. The pun of Suleiman's sub-title referring to the *anyakönyv* or registration documents as the "Motherbook" points us to the author's central concern. As a mother herself she seeks to establish her identity by reference to her own mother. Although she is struggling with an earlier dislike of her, mother equals history. Resolving the conflict with mother is resolving history. Of course, in the course of the diary we learn a great deal about Hungary in 1993 too. What she learns in this respect is not particularly surprising. We skim through the political and social situation, follow the rise of right wing nationalism, explore her connections and friendships among Budapest's liberal community ("small town, Budapest", as she remarks half way through the book), and half-humorously observe her frustrating struggles to sound the clarion call of feminism in this insignificant, godforsaken, worrying, if perfectly charming part of the cultural empire. This element of the

book is intelligent but not deeply informed journalism. Its value lies less in its originality of perception or grace of literary style than in its benevolent wide-eyed reportage. At the same time, Suleiman is persistent in enquiring into her own past on the basis of relatively few clues, some "parenthetical notations" on an incomplete family tree and a vision of ten years earlier when, as she says, "I suddenly saw, as clearly as if projected on a screen, my mother as a young woman, holding my hand as we walked down a boulevard in winter, setting our faces against the wind and playing the multiplication game". It is those faces against the wind that strike us with most force: this is part of that genuine history of moments Eliot invoked; it is Suleiman's moment in the rose garden, and if we read this book with more than anecdotal interest it is because we find that vision engaging. Quite early in the book the author gives us an account she had written in 1984 following her first return visit. This passage, in italics, is the only extended passage of meditation she gives us. "It was at this time, I believe, that I began to conceive of history as a form of luck... But, as I grow older, it occurs to me that I have often felt that way about my life: seeing it, for better or worse, as my own creation, and, at the same time, contradictorily, as the product of blind luck". She remembers passing a corpse in 1945 and pondering what it was like. "After a while," she says, "I stopped thinking and even looking. I concentrated on putting one foot in front of the other." In effect this is what she does in the diary too. Of course she looks and feels and records her feelings but the interlude of thinking and digesting seems too short. For all the encomia on the book jacket praising the intelligence, candour, honesty and insight of this, according to Alix Kates Shulman, "postmodern" memoir, Suleiman might actually have employed greater intertextuality or pushed further at the limits of linear narrative and tried to understand the movements of those feet of hers a little more intensely. *Budapest Diary* is enjoyable, entertaining and, naturally, moving, but it is moving chiefly by virtue of what happens—or, rather, what happened—outside the book. I don't think the relationship between that which is diary or social narrative and that which is quest is convincingly established. That which happened in the past, the events, consitute the *fabula,* of whose meaning she is vouchsafed a vision in 1984. The fabula is not the book, though. Everyone has stories. The trick is to seek the meaning and construct the form that meaning seeks. I like Suleiman's book but I wish it had been wilder, funnier, messier, and wiser.

Susan Varga employs a greater range of devices. Her mainstay is a series of tape-recorded conversations with her mother, the Heddy of *Heddy and Me*, from which she quotes quite generously. But she is equally prepared to paraphrase, to describe the process of recording and to consider the light that process throws on the relationship between her mother and herself; she employs her own memories, considers the pattern of her own life as it colours, and is coloured by, the past, makes conscious reference to her researches and background reading (rather more than in Suleiman's case), and is generally more free and easy with chronological structure. Unlike Suleiman she is not herself a mother and has in fact chosen a lesbian relationship, so the quest she undertakes—a quest clearly regarded as a quest and maintained as a priority throughout—is not undertaken to establish similarity and reassurance, but to explore difference. Nor does Varga take particular pains to make herself agreeable to

the reader. These are neither virtues nor vices in themselves, but they provide a certain energy which helps to hold the various elements together. Varga was only five when she left Hungary in 1948 and, as she confesses "I have virtually no memories". The story that emerges through her conversations and researches is the sadly well known one of wealth, persecution, loss, arrests, death, survival through hiding, ingenuity, and luck. Although the story is of Heddy, it is the desire to get to know her real father, Feri, who died before she was eighteen months old, that launches her on her venture; Feri, whom she partly blames for simply turning over and dying in a labour camp. Suleiman's father had been a promising Talmudic scholar, Varga's father was also bookish, but worked as a wealthy feather merchant. Within eighteen months of his death Varga had a new father, but the story follows the fortunes of mother, grandmother and baby, a female triumvirate. Suleiman's notion of history as luck informs Varga's too, though in her case the luck is fairly supported by courage, canniness and stamina. Underneath the voices of the narrative there is the sheer adventure of survival; subterfuge, smuggling, improvisation and those great descents and ascents which characterize the cliff-hanger. At the beginning of the book, Varga's mother recounts the experience of her girls' school reunion where everyone had to tell her life story in three or four minutes. The brief curriculum vitae, which is everyone's highly edited *fabula* or specifically angled synopsis, contains all the terrible sound and fury of the period's history. Those who survive to tell us all are ever fewer in number. Soon enough there'll come a time when there will be nobody. The strength of Varga's book is that she paints such clear and vivid portraits of the central figures of her mother's story that the events that befall them, although they are the material of anecdote, are freighted with meaning. Of course, this meaning is partly literary. The splendidly outsize character of the author's grandmother, Kató, once a singer later a vastly energetic matriarch, is to some degree a literary creation, a formal edifice built out of adjectival clauses. We know her both as a figure that really existed and as a compulsive fiction. We believe in her partly because of the inner dialogue between Heddy and Varga: it underwrites the inner life of Kató.

The most intensely written of the books in Magda Denes's *Castles Burning* which is based wholly on personal memory. Denes is five when the story begins in 1939 at the point where her wealthy publisher father leaves for America, deserting his family who proceed to descend into the maelstrom that follows. Father disappears: mother, son and daughter remain. Eventually all the males in the story have gone, the two young loved ones—the author's brother and the boy who loves her— are both killed. The central character here is Denes herself, proud, demanding, precocious, tough, brave, bossy and very intelligent. The missing father is not only not longed for but actively, and understandibly, despised. The driving force of this book is the author's love for her brother Iván and her handsome cousin Ervin, the two lost boys. Her brother is her first love and closest ally. They cover for each other and support each other. However resourceful or brilliant the other characters, including the mother, the aunts and uncles, the helpers and hinderers, friends and enemies, our eyes are for them, their adventures and their personalities. And how well we know them! The narrator, who is five at the beginning and thirteen by the end, presents us with complete conversations and fully recovered incidents, so that we begin to feel that, by the end, the narrator is divine and

incandescent. It is a piece of brilliant scene painting and character creation, and by far the best written of the three books. It is also the most deeply disturbing.

What disturbs is precisely the complete realization of character and the perfect extended recall. What has become of Eliot's moment in the rose garden? What kind of will has strung these moments together, and at what cost to faithfulness? Is it documentary or fiction? We are told nowadays that there is a phenomenon called Recovered Memory in which troubled adults claim to remember childhood incidents of abuse. We are properly suspicious of these. Should we be equally suspicious of such long and intense narratives presented as memory?

In the Edwardian scholar Edmund Gosse's autobiographical book, *Father and Son*, the author recounts a meeting with a male tramp. The late Dennis Potter scripted a television adaptation of the book in which the male tramp turned into a woman who sexually molests the young Edmund. How are we to read this? How far have we walked through the doors of fiction, and how far might the descendants of the tramp be justified in pursuing a libel suit? Presumably, if he had not been a tramp but an influential public figure there might have been some cause for legal caution. The English poet, Charles Tomlinson, in his poem about John Constable, wrote: "The artist lies for the improvement of truth. Believe him." And one does. One trusts the artist to be true to his art. Yet there is also a debt owing to sheer incidental truth, or at least some obligation on the artist to indicate whether he is speaking in or ex officio.

Denes writes with the intensity of an artist: her scenes are directly and immediately present. There is no postmodern hedging or decentering here. We follow the characters through their travails in war-time Budapest and we care deeply about them. We undoubtedly believe in something. Certainly the awfulness of awful stories has an impact in itself, though we know that, however awful and heartbreaking a story might be, there is worse yet, and that the very act of telling and survival is evidence of this, so it is not the events themselves alone that invite our attention and emotional commitment. Emotional commitment is given to evidence of emotional truth. *Castles Burning* is written as though the whole narrative unfolded in a single flash of lightning. One trusts the voice to tell the truth as it believes it to be in the light of that flash. But one also thinks of all the dead who have no voice and cannot speak.

The best book of this kind I know is by the Polish born writer Eva Hoffman, whose *Lost in Translation* will be seen as a classic of cultural death and resurrection. Like Denes she is not afraid of taking the subjective view; like her she remembers in copious detail; unlike her, though, she constantly evaluates the whole process and this gives the reader a foothold.

These three particular books are full of lost fathers, lost boys and men, emigration, and daughters reconciled with mothers. Even without the specifics of their dramatic *fabulae* they would be interesting as sociology, as part of the history of female consciousness and literariness. They are also valuable as historical evidence. Only one of them has the visionary brightness that both convinces and confuses. Unfortunately its author, Magda Denes, died shortly before her book was published. ❧

Béla Pomogáts

Spokesman for the "Literary Nation"

Lóránt Czigány: *Gyökértelen, mint a zászló nyele* (Rootless as a Flagstaff). Budapest, Szabad Tér, 1994, 352 pp.

The name of the Hungarian literary historian Lóránt Czigány, who has lived in London since 1956, is well known in intellectual circles in Hungary and even better known to the Hungarian literary and artistic diaspora in the West. He is one of those émigré writers and scholars who early recognized that they may have their own particular tasks in nurturing the culture of the nation, and that in performing these they should engage in dialogue with representatives of the cultural life in Hungary. This was a recognition shared by others as well—the better part of the young intellectuals who, after the repression of the Hungarian Revolution of 1956, left for the West where they have shaped their life and work in the service of this idea.

As a young student at the University of Szeged Czigány participated in the revolutionary events as a member of the National Guard. After the Soviet intervention he fled to England, where he studied at Oxford and London. He worked in the British Museum Library, where he was responsible for Hungarian books and built up a high standard collection. He was a guest professor in the United States in Berkeley; he worked for the BBC World Service, Hungarian Section and contributed to *The Times;* for a short time, during the term of the first post-1989 democratic government, he served as a diplomat at the Hungarian Embassy in London.

As a literary historian he has focussed on the reception of Hungarian literature in Britain over the ages and on Hungarian émigré literature. He has published extensively on Hungarian literature, both classic and modern; the majority of his essays are still only found in the pages of Hungarian language journals published in the West. His major work was *The Oxford History of Hungarian Literature: From the earliest times to the present,* published in 1984, a long-awaited, large-scale synthesis in English of eight centuries of Hungarian literary output. In 1990 he published, in Budapest, a volume of essays, entitled *Nézz vissza haraggal!* (Look Back in Anger), on the vulnerability and struggles of a literature that was "nationalized" and placed in the custody of the party-state; here he gives an account both of timeservers and fine examples of moral integrity. His volume *Gyökértelen, mint a zászló nyele*

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(Rootless as a Flagstaff), a selection of his essays and shorter articles on Hungarian literary life and its best men of letters in exile in the West, appeared in 1994.

Some of his writings portray those masters of Hungarian literature in the West who have now received their due recognition in Hungary—such as the novelist Sándor Márai, the essayists László Cs. Szabó and Zoltán Szabó, and the poet György Faludy. He offers a sensitive picture, also a self-examination, as it were, both personal and as a member of a generation, of the late István Siklós, whose work as poet and essayist is part and parcel of modern Hungarian literature and who was also instrumental in organizing British contacts for Hungarian literature during his long years at the BBC World Service, as contributor to and then as head of, the Hungarian Section. He also surveys the important centres of Hungarian intellectual life in the West and of Hungarian-Hungarian dialogue, giving an almost chronological account of the Szepsi Csombor Circle in London, the Kelemen Mikes Circle in the Netherlands, and the Hungarian as a Native Language Conference staged annually in Hungary.

In the spirit of the best Hungarian (and English) essay traditions, Lóránt Czigány portrays his masters and friends with ample documentation, data and facts, and always maintaining objectivity. He himself comments on the moral importance of a historian's impartiality in an appreciation of the Australian Hungarian journalist Kázmér Nagy's history of the Hungarian political emigration. At the same time, he reveals his own emotional ties, for instance with his masters in London, László Cs. Szabó and Zoltán Szabó, with a degree of masculine reserve. The portraiture here becomes especially meticulous and these two great figures are brought to life through personal stories and anecdotes.

Czigány speaks of the representatives of the "great generation" that was ahead of his own with affection and appreciation; at the same time, he makes it clear that he speaks for another, younger generation whose experiences, attitudes and chosen values are different. Along with other writings and references to this effect, his reflections on a controversy among émigrés in 1967, "The Distinctive Mark of the Afterbirth: The Dispute of Generations" in *Új Látóhatár*, written in 1992, clearly attests to a distancing of this sort between generations. In it he broaches the causes and motifs distinguishing those young Hungarian intellectuals who fled to the West after the defeat of the '56 Revolution, from their older companions and from those who came over in the earlier waves. The "fifty-sixers" arrived in the Western world with markedly different expectations, and having been used to exercising sharp criticism of Communist party rule, they also asserted their critical faculties abroad, this time against the recipient societies.

Lóránt Czigány measures the experiences he has had in his new country and especially in émigré circles from the viewpoint of these "fifty-sixers". The shared past of the fifty-sixers and the individual and common mental after-effects helped a strong generational identity to emerge. Indeed, a genuine sense of identity amongst that generation of "fifty-sixers" could nowhere else have emerged and asserted itself but in exile—in Hungary the Kádár regime destroyed the generation of intellectuals tied to 1956. Czigány's long essay, "Rootless as a Flagstaff: The Disintegration of the Natural World View in the Poets of the Generation of '56" examines the work of the group of poets who fled to the West after the fall of the revolution and continued to publish in Hungarian (Sándor András, József Bakucz, László Baránszky, György Gömöri, Elemér

Horváth, László Kemenes Géfin, István Keszei, Ádám Makkai, Imre Máté, Tibor Papp, István Siklós, Vince Sulyok, Géza Thinsz, László Z. Tóth, György Vitéz) and claims that their specific vision was an outcome of this "fifty-sixer" mentality.

A distinctive element, Czigány argues, is a mythical cosmogony with cataclysmic memories, which clearly go back to the depressing recollection of the historical defeat: identity crisis, extraterritorial consciousness, nostalgia for the homeland, linguistic uncertainty, sense of guilt for having run away and for the fate of those left behind, and finally, the disintegration of the traditional value system, which may have been caused equally by the awareness of defeat and the identity crisis caused by the status of being in exile. It would be interesting to examine how these same elements might have shaped the vision of those poets of the fifty-sixers' generation who have remained and published in Hungary (in their order of birth: Sándor Bihari, László Kalász, Ágnes Gergely, László Marsall, Márton Kalász, Ádám Bisztray, László Bertók, Dénes Kiss, István Csukás, Judit Tóth, Ottó Orbán, Magda Székely, Ferenc Buda, Béla Horgas, Zsuzsa Takács, Dezső Tandori, István Ágh—of whom four were imprisoned before and after 1956). As I see it, the disintegration of the value system, an identity crisis, nostalgic longing to leave, and the memory of the historical cataclysm have greatly influenced their poetry as well.

With no small degree of self-regard, Czigány confesses to be a representative of the fifty-sixer émigrés for whom the heritage of the Hungarian uprising is, beyond commitment and remembrance, also a programme in their exile. He is convinced that an intellectual in this situation should not be content to pursue his own literary or scholarly interests in the free world: he has duties towards his homeland, he has a mission to fulfil. An émigré, he avers, is "a person who *displays an active opposition behaviour abroad* and carries on activities which are at variance with the *official* political goals of his homeland and, in order to attain his goals, he is at times willing to enter the services, paid or unpaid, of alien states, irrespective of the nature of personal or political considerations and the date when he left his homeland." In his interpretation, an émigré is a politically committed, active person whose major task should be none other than to criticize or even attack the status quo in his homeland with the goal of changing the power system there.

Among the literary circles of the emigration, such a political programme naturally assumes a less combative form—after all, literature is not politics. The literature of the Hungarian emigration, in Czigány's view, has certain tasks to perform in the spiritual and cultural sense, correcting for example the unacceptable manifestations of domestic intellectual life (such as are unacceptable also in the homeland): "the claim for correction results from the use of a different measure (differing from the domestic)", and on the other hand, keeping apace with domestic literature; this need "calls for the knowledge of the latest events and works of domestic literary life". This attitude represents a departure from the attitudes of suspicion and refusal so characteristic of the previous, primarily political, generation of émigrés who spurned all literary works generated in the old country and ignored almost all men of letters active in Hungary. Such émigré "fundamentalism" proved futile and caused damage to the emigration itself.

As his books bear testimony, Lóránt Czigány has represented the attitude of openness in emigration. Because of this

openness, he has followed the development and achievements in literature not only in Hungary but also in the Carpathian basin—in Transylvania, the Uplands (now Slovakia), and the Voivodina—as well as the silent but tough spiritual struggle Hungarian literature waged for the sustenance of the heritage of 1956, the recapture of freedom and the sovereignty of literary life. Such openness justifies and explains the contact Czigány has kept with literary and scholarly life in Hungary from the 60s, and the role he took on from the 70s onwards as organiser and mover in all-Hungarian cultural organisations such as the Hungarian as a Native Language Conference and the International Hungarian Philological Society.

Émigré literature, Czigány says, has had important tasks to perform in shaping the life and strategy of all Hungarian literature. Nevertheless, it is not simply a Western addendum, as it were, to domestic literature; it is a separate entity, with such specific features as extraterritoriality and inner autonomy—"the fact that its institutional structure has been built not by state grants and its functioning ensured not by similar constant outside support, but of its own strength. This explains why it has several centres; it has no central organization, only a value system based on broad consensus." Hungarian literature, as it has developed in the Western world, has been able to receive European and American literary trends, directly. Czigány gives examples of this in his analysis of the influence of Pound's or Eliot's poetry on the young Hungarian poets in Britain, at a time when these two poets were hardly known in Hungary, nor in a Central and Eastern Europe under Soviet cultural dictatorship.

The concept of Hungarian literature, consequently, has been different for Czigány and other émigré writers: it is a literature existing neither solely in the aesthetic sphere alone, nor exclusively in the rituals of a cultural community—the former as prescribed by Western traditions, the latter by East European traditions. The concept of literature has actually replaced the concepts of land and nation; the bonds that people feel directly, such as provide the experience of a "homeland" for Hungarians living in a national community and in the vital current of the mother tongue, whether in Hungary or in minority status in the Carpathian basin, manifest themselves in an abstract world—that of literature, of books and reading. Literature, as Gyula Illyés said, embodies the idea of a "homeland in the heights," and the nation, in the words of Zoltán Szabó, Czigány's master, becomes a "literary nation".

"Zoltán Szabó knew and professed", Czigány writes, "that there was a literary nation into which one could only be 'born' through writing, and although people who belong together might be divided by the irrational frontiers, they cannot be alienated from one another. A literary nation is being kept together by what Renan called a daily referendum, something that has hardly anything to do with the limitations that go with citizenship. The ballots from Paris or Kolozsvár (Cluj) in this daily referendum are just as valid and legal as those from Budapest or Szeged."

This concept of the literary nation has not become obsolete after the historical changes that have taken place since 1989. Exile as a form of existence has lost its *raison d'être* and the majority of the representatives of Western Hungarian literature, if only with their work, have returned home, just as Lóránt Czigány has returned, but the concept of "literary nation" may still unite that community of people, fifteen million Magyars, whom history has made citizens of half a dozen countries in the Carpathian basin or dispersed all over the world. ❧

János Kőbányai

At the Crossroads of the Soul

Komlós Aladár: *Magyar-zsidó szellemtörténet a Reformkortól a Holocaustig* (Hungarian-Jewish Intellectual History from the Age of Reform to the Holocaust), Vols. I–2. Budapest, Múlt és Jövő Publishers, 1997, 323, 392 pp.

Aladár Komlós (1892–1980) is remembered as a prominent critic, a contributor to *Nyugat,* the dominating literary journal early this century, and the author of the definitive work on János Vajda, one of the first modern Hungarian poets of note in the nineteenth century. Another aspect of his work has been all but forgotten: he was the sole important critic and theoretician of Hungarian-Jewish literature. Indeed, between the 1938 anti-Jewish legislation and the occupation of the country by the German army in 1944 no-one did more for Jewish writing in Hungary. Some of his forgotten writings are basic and theoretical, others are profiles of particular authors, or the summing up of a period or trend. These pieces, which appeared before 1945 in a variety of papers and anthologies in Slovakia, Vienna and Hungary, provided a challenge: a posthumous whole had to be produced out of a vast collection of pieces which are fragmentary in character. Articles on a variety of subjects and authors suggested the need for a treatise of a broad sweep. He himself hinted as much in an essay, "Towards a Future History of Hungarian-Jewish Literature," which survived in a basement. All the doubts and uncertainties finally bore fruit: a bundle of typewritten sheets was found "full of men long dead, of forgotten names, of facts that will interest no-one."

Disillusion and the study of the work of the two or three generations who preceded him led Komlós to the recognition that Hungarian Jewish assimilation had been a mistake, that it was a road which led nowhere. Menacing portents showed that this was a course that had to be abandoned forever. In the shadow of restrictive and monstrous anti-Jewish legislation, albeit without any visions of the horrors of the *Endlösung,* the question which a work that remained fragmentary put to itself was: if assimilation failed, then what future spiritual forms could be envisaged for Hungarian Jewry?

Aladár Komlós wanted to cover systematically the period that was concluded early in the 1940s, with Hungary coming increasingly under fascist domination. His aim was to discuss the process as part of which the Jews of Hungary metamorphosed into Hungarian Jewry. This was the period of the accelerated Hungarian nineteenth century that lasted from the Age of Reform in the early eighteen hundreds to what Marxists call the end of the original accumulation of capital, which

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included the Jewish *haskalah* (Enlightenment), patterned on the German model, that galloped away at even greater speed. Within these progressive processes, dual in origin but identical in direction, Jews arrived in the twentieth century almost as a determinant element of Hungarian capitalism, an assimilated part of the nation. Komlós, a member of the *Nyugat* generation, one of the advocates of modern Hungarian poetry (see *New Hungarian Verse,* Pantheon, 1928, *Writers and Principles,* Nyugat, 1937) needed this historical survey as a marker for his own age. A community facing absorption in the melting pot had the greatest need of this, since, precisely because of a self-surrendering strategy of assimilation, it lacked an élite, and was therefore left without spiritual and practical guidance in confronting the approaching catastrophe. Aladár Komlós, in his clearsighted and unambiguous pieces, virtually by himself, demanded the creation of a Jewish intellectual élite and took an active part in organizing it. What he endeavoured to do was to make sure that the tragedy which befell Hungarian Jewry would bring some good, that Jews should critically think through that road which led to the antichambers of their destruction, that they should put some order into their lines under the aegis of principles and quality, of self-knowledge and duty.

Komlós recognized that further writing on this issue had to be grounded in scholarly historical and sociological research, particularly into the history of ideas. He had to find that point in space and time where Hungarian Jewry cut the umbilical cord which tied it to universal and, particularly, Eastern European Jewry, instead of acting as a graft to improve Hungarian culture. Komlós found this in nineteenth century Arad, in the *haskalah* led there by Rabbi Áron Chorin. This ferment was encouraged and supported by the more relaxed social and intellectual climate of the Hungarian Age of Reform, and later in the 1848 Revolution. As part of the process of social, economic and legal assimilation, Jewry found a home in conjunction with modernization, and by the end of the century had become integrated with the receptive medium. This process was sceptically characterized by Komlós in the introduction to his work: "In as much as Hungarian Jewry was concerned with its own history, it almost exclusively concentrated its attention on celebrating the enthusiasm with which it strove to become Hungarian in the past hundred years."

As a working novelist and poet, Komlós was convinced that a study of writers and their works could lead to the fullest possible information about a people. This hypothesis was undoubtedly still valid in his own age. His aim, nevertheless, was to present trends and processes and not lives and works. (In this sense the title he chose was somewhat misleading, but he may have only meant it as a working title.) What he did was to consider every work written by a Jew between 1800 and 1890 which could be described as an intellectual product. Not just literature, for he gave priority to aspects derived from legal, linguistic, historical, Jewish and Oriental studies, journalism, and editorial work, as well as printing. The thoroughness of his scholarship, his systematization skills, his knowledge and a point of view that allowed him to make comparisons all call for admiration. Even those willing to undertake it could not do that work today. Many of the sources have perished, and few scholars are familiar with Hebrew and Yiddish, and their literatures, and thus with the original context of a people about to abandon its ancient traditions.

The margin notes to the manuscript and an irascible remark here and there—

which a scholar's dispassionate discipline then prompted him to delete—show that Komlós must have worked in the early Forties suffering from the day-by-day irritations of an ever more unbearable deprivation of rights. Inaccurate references and passages quoted from memory (put right when the manuscript was prepared for the printer) suggest that, at the time, he no longer had access to libraries and had to rely on his notes and memory. How and when he started and when he finished collecting the immense amount of material is something not even members of his family know. It is certain, however, that he wished to continue, if circumstances permitted.

> This book, the first half of the planned work, more or less covers the 1800 to 1890 period. It extends to the point where the Jews of Hungary become Hungarians, prosperous and educated. These are the years of preparation and apprenticeship, years in which the major achievements of Jewry are still confined to capitalism and scholarship. In the new age starting in 1890 their own individuality puts in a forceful appearance. [...] Towards the end of the Eighties, a new ferment appears in Hungarian life, a ferment produced by Jewry. The Jews had not come to full flower yet, creativity in literature had hardly started, but there was preparation and soon Jews would be strong enough to fertilize Hungarian intellectual life in an unparallelled embrace. They were about to show what they were capable of.

History soon took the chronicler to Bergen-Belsen. The scholar survived, the chronicler of his people did not. Only one post-1945 writing on a Jewish subject is known, a 1947 address: "The 17th of February 1946—Commemoration of the Hungarian Jewish Victims of Fascism and the War", which he concealed in a minor Zionist publication. The Aladár Komlós who had intimations of the tragedy of the Holocaust and who had returned from the camps, having confronted the terrible scale of destruction, did not complete this. He felt superfluous what, in his prophetic writings of the Forties he had designated as his own task and that of his generation. On the surface, the political changes of 1945–47 explain the lack of the continuation, and with it a break in the tradition. In fact every step forward, every search, seemed superfluous to one who had lived through and survived the Holocaust. It must have been difficult to live with such a work in one's desk drawer without devoting oneself to publication and the completion of the second half, which really only needed arranging and systematizing material that was already written. One would have thought that the awareness of the energy expanded and a writer's pride would have been sufficient motivation. Publication was surely possible up to 1948, at the very least in part, or he could have spoken about it. Afterwards, up to Komlós's death in 1980, publication was out of the question. Was the manuscript perhaps lost, temporarily mislaid? Komlós complained in a number of memoirs and interviews that the Holocaust had broken the back of his career. A trunkful of his writings were destroyed, including an almost completed novel, unpublished poems and other writings enough to make up a volume.

The treatise ends where the posthumous collection of papers starts, with the appearance, early this century, of József Kis, the poet, founder and editor of journals, and his generation. Komlós systematically proceeds from him, or rather the literary review *A Hét,* which laid the foundations of *Nyugat* to what, to him, was the end of the story, a roll call of all those lost to literature because of the Holocaust. He never again dealt with a Jewish subject, albeit, unlike many of his contemporaries, he never denied his Jewish antecedents.

True, he never mentioned them either, except for his stay at Bergen-Belsen.

The second volume of the present edition is structured following the pattern of the first, and that of Komlós's other comprehensive work, *Az új magyar líra* (New Hungarian Verse). Thus a projection of the theoretical writings provides the historical, sociological and social-psychological background, and the profiles of writers then follow, even if not in the number and with the weight that would have been present if Komlós had had the chance to proceed to the middle of the twentieth century as methodically as he handled the material of the first volume. The essays, studies, articles and reviews are not arranged in the chronological order of writing, the very first paper, "Jews at the Crossroads," being in fact written first in 1921.

There Komlós defines his identity in terms of the spiritual space within which he wishes to operate. "My blood is Jewish, my skin is Hungarian, and I am a man. Our Hungarian nature is more visible since it is on the surface. This threefold determination is the final result of an anatomical dissection", he concludes to his satisfaction.

In this paper Komlós urges an unusual, self-preserving strategy of assimilation:

> There are two kinds of men who assimilate. Some have acquired the rhythms and habits of the Hungarian gentry: they wear Tyrolean hats, kick over the traces from time to time, and use gentry catch phrases. But these Jews, gentrified and assimilationist on the outside, are truly the ugliest ghetto Jews deep down inside. Their soul was conceived of the most unfortunate possible cross: the amoralism and cowardice of the ghetto Jew and the frivolity of the Hungarian gentry. [...] The other type of assimilant is my ideal: a Jew who educated himself to acquire the backbone and refined morality of the élite of Western Christendom, and for that very reason does not demean himself in the mendacious aping of shoddy superficialities, but steadfastly and boldly proclaims himself a Jew.

He struck this early note again in the shadow of the Holocaust, reformulating his ideas as an elevating paradox.

> A people that grew up in the stale air locked behind its walls necessarily becomes vertiginous as soon as it meets a handsome culture when it steps out of the gate. If it is our will that European culture be fertilizing irrigation on our soil and not a destructive flood, we must dig channels for it, and not build dams to hold it back. We have need of assimilation not in order to help us to cease being Jews but precisely in order to save our Jewish identity. ("Jewishness, Hungarianness, Europe," 1943.)

This wisdom achieves a recognition that points to a way out on the brink of catastrophe—although it no longer had practical meaning. The tragedy certain to come about was not due to outside causes, but to "neglecting to create a valuable world of their own." It was predictable, and there were many warning voices that an unbridled and accellerated change of values and culture had to lead to cracks in the pillars of identity that shored up the bearing of the participating generations. Abandoning a culture, and frequently a religion too, robbed notions like bearing, loyalty and self-respect of their substance.

> It has frequently been pointed out that in a ghetto you could strike or kick a Jew and go unpunished, but the Jew nevertheless felt superior to the *goyim*. The Jewish faith was a powerful stronghold. But following emancipation, the dams of his racial self-respect were breached and he started to be ashamed of his ancestry. An emancipated Jew believed what was said about him, that he was verminous and branded. The Talmud had made him a sceptic when it came to soulful rhetoric, now there was all the less reason to believe in inner promptings since they sprang from a Jewish soul. That is why he wanted to assimilate, he idolized and imitated his neighbours. That is how he became the man

of understanding, he understood passionately and pliantly, indeed snobbishly. At the time of emancipation he made a break with his religious traditions. ("The Jewish Soul," 1937).

Studying the genesis and history of psychological factors, being aware of and defining them must lead to a clash between psyche—race as the expression of the soul—and the idea of a nation.

> There is no reason why we should deny that Hungarian Jewry differs from members of the nation whose religion is different. Race or denomination? I do not believe there is such a thing as a denominational difference that is merely denominational. As time passes, what was originally a difference in faith only turns into a difference in morals and way of life, indeed, without exaggerating one can call it a racial difference. The difference between Hungarian Calvinists and Roman Catholics is also that. Of course, the Jew is of a different kind right from the start; in the case of Calvinist and Catholic Hungarians religious differences intensified into racial differences. This, however, only means that our race is at a greater distance from the others than they are amongst themselves. Let me repeat, there is no reason whatever why we should deny this. It is precisely because we are different that we can believe that our being is necessary, and we can carry out duties for which other Hungarians are less suitable. [...] Only the simplest of minds cannot grasp that a soul can insist on being part of two communities, that Jewish solidarity does not exclude solidarity with Hungarians. ("Preface for a Future Hungarian Jewish History of Literature,"1936).

This title is the only intimation of his future work, although he did not then use this article as a preface. And indeed, the preface for an intended comprehensive work is not about literature but about the interface of identity and the nation.

A Jewish writer or Jewish literature can indeed be defined on the basis of the acquisition of psychological reality and, within that, of Hungarian Jewish psychological reality. Criteria of "descent", religion, choice of subject or language, and their petty permutations cannot provide a material which permits the distillation of a useful concept or definition which would seize what is more essential than literature. Every true literature is rooted in the problem of existence as such. Komlós's still most timely teaching is that the genuinely universal is always locally unique and original.

> Every writer of Jewish parentage must be reckoned part of Jewish literature, regardless of the particular manner he chose to deal with the problems of his origins. It would seem that this interpretation expresses a surrender to racial theory. And yet I do not believe that Jewish brain or blood cells differ from those of other peoples. Nor do I know whether Jewish hormones exist. It is the Jew's social position which differs, and it has done so far for two thousand years, and that suffices to explain the peculiar Jewish modes of feeling and cognition. ("Towards a Future History of Hungarian-Jewish Literature").

Aladár Komlós worked out the theory. He put up the walls but it was not given to him to furnish the house. But we are in possession of much more than bare walls. The profiles of writers and poets do not merely include a wealth of material, they also place the accents and focal points, defining the line of development, right from the *origo,* from József Kiss, who as one person embodied both possible courses: tradition and abandoning tradition right down to the post-*Nyugat* generation of great promise which perished in the Holocaust. In addition to the great names, another hundred or so figure in the studies, each receiving at least a few lines. He takes a final farewell from them in an in memoriam roll-call, from the persons and from that republic of souls whose citizens they were. ❧

Mihály Gera

Budapest Books for the Coffee Table

Budapest anno... (also in English, French and German). Corvina, 1979, 1984, 188 pp.; New, abbreviated edition, 1996. • Zsolt Szabóky–György Száraz: *Budapest* (also in English, French and German). Corvina, 1982, 1989, 122 pp. • György Lőrinczy: *A budai vár* (English edition: *The Castle Hill in Buda,* also in French and German). Corvina, 1967, 107 pp. • Károly Hemző: *Budapest* (In English, French, German, Spanish, and Italian). Corvina, 1993, 107 pp. • Tamás Révész: *Budapest:: Egy város az ezredfordulón—Budapest: A City before the Millennium*. Herald, 1996, 108 pp.

Statistical evidence shows that Budapest is rapidly becoming one of Europe's major tourist destinations. Accordingly, the number of visitors who want to take home some of the visual experience in the form of postcards or expensive coffee-table books is rising.

In fact, there has been no shortage of photographs of Budapest, ever since Daguerre's invention was taken up by Hungarians in 1860. The beauty and endless variety of sights to be seen and recorded every day and every hour were not difficult to find. The attraction to photographers included the frequently cited spectacular setting of the city, the majestic river Danube, at one time, allegedly, blue, splitting it down the middle, with graceful bridges arching over it; the hilly and richly wooded right bank, the Buda side with its elegant villas and the splendid mansions on Castle Hill, now a World Heritage site; the Tabán area, unfortunately demolished in the 1930s, which used to be famous for its hot springs and vineyards, its old atmosphere only surviving in old photographs; the ancestral village, Óbuda, already populated at the time of the Romans. Then, of course, there was the teeming life of the Pest side, with its districts all different in mood, its public buildings, coffee-houses and shops. The monuments, ornate government and municipal palaces, historicist residences and tenements and odd, closed courtyards showed a busy world that was different in the morning, different at noon, and once again different in the evening. The city's public squares also changed from minute to minute. At one moment it was the sudden emergence of a crowd, at the next, the equally sudden desertedness of the same spot that called the photographer's attention. Interest in Budapest never ceased, it seemed to grow as time passed.

There was no shortage of gifted photographers in Hungary. If anything, they were too many, and they scattered all over the world. No decent history of photography can afford not to mention the names of André Kertész, Robert Capa or Marton Munkácsi, all of whom produced masterly

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photographs of Budapest, too. But the names of Lucien Hervé, Le Corbusier's photographer, Francis Haár, a widely reputed artist both in Japan and Hawaii, Paul Almásy in France, or the recently deceased Juan Gyenes, court photographer to the King of Spain, are also well known. So are those of Suzanne Szász, Eva Besnyő, Brassai, László Moholy Nagy—and the list could go on and on. The fame of those, however, who stayed at home, such as György Klösz, Rudolf Balogh, Aladár Székely, Kálmán Szöllösy and others, for all their talent, hardly spread beyond the borders.

Up to this day, with the single exception that proves the rule, no album has been produced to cover the pictures of Budapest made by the truly great photographers, either as a collection of a single photographer or as an anthology. Budapest has been far less fortunate with respect to albums than with photographers. Quantity is not the problem. There can be no complaints there. There has hardly been a year in the last fifty which saw no album on Budapest published.

Those albums published before 1989 were, with a few exceptions, based largely on the same principles, and have the effect of mélanges of rather indifferent taste. The majority, somehow, are too solemn, too dignified. They remind the viewer of special, festive events when the children, otherwise scruffy, are washed squeaky clean and dressed in their Sunday best for the sake of important visitors. In the name of some misinterpreted or false interest, the simple incidents of daily life are missing in these pictures, and so are the finely designed but decaying blocks of tenement houses, the normal disorder of streets, even though they were duly recorded by the photographers.

Unsurprisingly, publishing houses were only following orders from above, obeying even in the seventies a paranoid ideology, according to which the foreign tourist, especially if coming from the West, was a necessary evil, a potential enemy who would pick out what was less than perfect because his real purpose was to give a bad image to the country, a country moving from achievement to achievement on the road to socialism. Nor had they much consideration, if any, for photographic value, so the photographer's individual vision, his personal view of the city, was to be eliminated. All these albums reflect that the publishers and their ideological superiors were only concerned with a beautified Budapest washed clean, a city that never really existed.

Photographers tell incredible stories about the restrictions imposed on them by the publishers. For instance, pictures involving buildings decked out in flags would not be accepted for fear of appearing nationalistic. Someone leaning out of a window of a historic building was considered disgraceful. Anyone appearing in a picture had to be cheerful, well-dressed, radiating faith in a bright future. Showing a well-known public building from an unusual angle was nothing less then heresy. In most cases it was decided in advance what to photograph and how. If the photographer deviated from the commonplace and from the conventions, the commissioning authority would deem the picture inauthentic and divorced from reality.

After the desert of so many barren, stereotypical pictures, *Budapest Anno...*, in several languages, including English, issued by Corvina Books, and containing mainly the photographs of György Klösz, was a huge success. Published in 1979, this book was the exception mentioned above that confirmed the rule. Its success among professional circles and with the public at large was enough to lead to a second edition in 1996, albeit with fewer

pictures, unfortunately. In the photographs of György Klösz (1844–1910), the real turn-of-the-century city is seen in the way it revealed itself and its ordinary life to the curious eyes and the camera of Klösz. The album takes its readers on a tour of a city still retaining some of its former small-town atmosphere, as it de-veloped with dazzling speed and energy; the tour guide is an exceptionally gifted craftsman with a fine sense of composition and an all-encompassing attention. First we look over at Buda from the Danube bank of the Pest side, then we make a short tour of the Buda side. We look down on the tiny old houses of the old Tabán district, peer into a couple of aristocratic townhouses, then wander along the streets and squares of Castle Hill, noting with some surprise how barren Dísz Square, a splendid place today, still looked in the 1860s. The next stop is the Royal Palace, followed by a visit to the cog-wheel railway on Svábhegy, after which we descend a bit to take in a few street scenes followed by public baths (Budapest was, and still is, famous for its medicinal springs). We continue our way over Margaret Bridge, pausing for a glimpse of Margaret Island and then come headlong into the bustle of Pest. There are pictures of a bakery, an engineering works, a crowded marketplace, snapshots of coffee-house life, a market hall and warehouse, with the denizens of Pest watching the photographer at work with curiosity in their eyes. It is an especially intriguing feature of the album that Klösz was, in fact, not really interested in people. He was a chronicler of cityscapes and buildings. His purpose in traversing the whole town with his mobile studio (carried on a horse-drawn carriage) was to record the streets and squares of the city and its typical buildings. It is our special fortune that this was impossible to do without people being present, too.

Zsolt Szabóky's *Budapest,* published in 1982, with an introduction by the writer György Száraz, rises out of the line of expensive albums illustrated with photographs. In this case, however, it is not so much the individual pictures that deserve praise but the album itself as a whole for its well-thought-out integral unity. This is as much as suggested by the epigraph on the jacket: "The city is not only a sum of streets and squares. It consists also of legends, popular songs, jokes, memories of ordinary days, celebrations and disasters, colours and smells." Szabóky was well aware that a single book can hardly show everything, so his album is built on a series of characteristic details that reflect something of the city's unique atmosphere. In twenty-four parts, the scenes—and chapters—include such headings as the bridges, the river, the Palace, A small town of the future? Disorderly Buda; Margaret Island; Pest, the young city; Le style 1900; shopping in the markets. While in Klösz's work the people were incidental, Szabóky deliberately seeks the simple moments of ordinary days and the protagonists of simple moments. There are pictures counterpointing each other; one is devoted to houses, streets, squares, bridges, the other to the people inhabiting the city or moving about it. Thus the Gothic church is linked to the picture of the tourist photographing it, the statute of Pope Innocent XI, hidden in the leaves, with the janitor sweeping the pavement, or the Hilton Hotel in the evening with all is lights on with a picture of the people taking the sun on its terrace. The accompanying text follows closely the photographs while being a highly readable piece of work on its own; through it, an erudite historian shares with us all he knows about Budapest, just as if we were taking part in a conversation with him. The captions do not overburden us with a mass of

unneeded detail, yet the precision with which they provide important or illuminating facts is praiseworthy. We are only furnished architectural information where it is necessary, and so are we told that the entrance seen in the picture was made of Italian marble; that the building of the former Post Office Savings Bank is an example of a type of Art Nouveau unique to Hungary, decorated with majolica tiles made by the Zsolnay Manufacturing Works; but we also learn that prominent coffee-takers on the terrace of the Gerbeaud Patisserie in Vörösmarty Square have included Pola Negri and the Duke of Windsor, then the Prince of Wales. Szabóky's album is eloquent proof that the photographer himself, his unique way of looking at things is a major element in presenting a city. Szabóky's work has lost none of its value over the years. If anything, it became even worthier, and more than one edition has been sold out since.

György Lőrinczy's *The Castle Hill in Buda,* published in 1967, though small in format, also contained many novelties. Its eighty-four pictures show every nook and cranny of Castle Hill, discovering details which remain hidden to the passer-by.

Not only the publishers and their editors, but the photographers themselves can be blamed for the large number of annoyingly flavourless, indifferent Budapest albums published. They were all too well aware of what the publishers would buy, and possibly more than once, too. "It's all very simple," I was told once by a photographer, since deceased, and with a great many cityscape albums to his own name. "All you have to watch for is that there should be no cars, no people and no shop windows in the picture, nothing to tell of today's fashions because that would make a picture impossible to sell again two years later. But if you are clever enough to photograph every newly restored building the moment the scaffolding is taken off, then you will be able to find buyers for your picture for at least the next ten years."

The monopoly of the old publishing houses ended in 1990, and publishers now appear to be making feverish efforts to make up for what was lost and, unfortunately, cannot be brought back, since the capital itself is changing from day to day. Many of the photographers (like György Lőrinczy) who would have been best suited for the job are no longer alive. Despite that, even a simple list of what has been published in the past seven years would be too long.

Albums aiming, anyway mostly unsuccessfully, at completeness, are no longer in vouge. In their place are books based either on the personality of the photographers or smaller volumes conceived as parts of series*. In nearly every single shot of the hundred and five colour photographs included in Károly Hemző's *Budapest* (published in 1993), we encounter a reporter eager to investigate urban life. Hemző has a fine sense for capturing the moment worthy of recording, and is not ashamed to have feelings of his own: he photographs what he is attracted to. He is less interested in what is enduring than in what is ceaselessly changing. His pictures are thus full of people coming and going, working or just standing by, people who are clearly our contemporaries, here and now. Hemző's Budapest is a loud place, full of fine buildings, sculptures, but first and foremost people, especially young people. His album is loosely structured, full of surprises and unexpected images. He is on intimate terms with his native city, which he cherishes with a child-like love.

* ■ See George Szirtes's review article in the *HQ* 1994, No. 133, pp. 119–122.

In Tamás Révész's multilingual *Budapest. A City before the Millennium* the well-known sights are hardly present. There is often sadness, sometimes irony. The people in the pictures are far from happy (most have been caught partly or fully with their backs to the camera); they appear to be rather apathetic, with plenty to worry about. "In my pictures," the author writes, "I would like to reproduce the airy grandeur of Canaletto's paintings through photography, while also attempting to give a kind of documentary insight into the workaday world of its inhabitants." This is the first album of Budapest to record not only what is beautiful but also what we have thus far kept bashfully silent about: houses with peeling walls,a gutted entry phone, a homeless man sleeping on a bench (in front of a 17th-century Turkish baths) or a beggar on Szabadság híd (Liberty Bridge). One of the album's especially interesting features is the eight shots taken from the same places from where György Klösz tookphotographs at the end of the last century. Klösz's original photographs are printed side by side with Révész's pictures taken with a special camera (Noblex Pro Panorama).

A mi Budapestünk (Our Budapest) is a wonderful multilingual series that really fills a gap. The volumes cover the espressos of Budapest, the Danube bridges, courtyards, parks, forests, taverns, and the list goes on in whimsical directions. All feature pictures by eminent photographers.

This rather capricious and far from unbiased inventory mentions only albums that have been published in English too, and some of them may hopefully be still available in the better bookshops. However, this account would be incomplete if two collections still awaiting publishers were left unmentioned.

One is Tamás Féner's portfolio of Budapest, exciting from the technical point of view, seen and admired in exhibitions several times, which, however, has not yet inspired anyone to base an album on it. Féner approaches Budapest in the same way as a painter approaches his model: by adapting its offered features to his inner vision. He changes them when he feels like it, for instance, slanting the perspective or photographing a deserted city where human beings make a very rare appearance.

Péter Tímár's series of photographs are aerial pictures which turn out to be the personal confession of a photographer well versed in architecture (he is a graduate architect) about a city called Budapest. While Féner bashfully keeps his liking for Budapest to himself, each one of Tímár's pictures is a poem, happy or angry, full of passion, and always sincere. ❧

George Barth

The Rise of the Piano

Katalin Komlós: *Fortepianos and their Music: Germany, Austria, and England, 1760–1800.* Oxford Monographs on Music, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1995, xii, 158 pp.

1995 saw the publication of two very important studies of the early piano, one a more traditional work, and the other so untraditional as to be almost experimental. Stewart Pollens's *The Early Pianoforte* (Cambridge, 1995) is just what it claims to be: "the first comprehensive historical and technological study of the pianoforte based on important primary source material"—an exhaustively detailed organological study of the piano from its origins in the fifteenth century to the beginning of its rise to prominence in 1763. Katalin Komlós's *Fortepianos and their Music,* which so felicitously takes up the piano's history where Pollens leaves off, is, though less specialized and less comprehensive, much more complex: It is a study of the developing piano that illuminates not just its history and character, but the "reciprocal relationship" between the styles of its music, and the tastes and aesthetics of the builders, composers, performers, publishers and publics who brought it to prominence. Though brief in length, this is an ambitious and unusual book, rich in detail, written in clear and unaffected English, and concerned almost as much with imparting a sense of the social and artistic milieu of the day as with communicating information about the instrument and repertory itself.

The book is divided into three main sections, "The Instruments," "The Music," and "The Players." The first of these, one fifth of the book's length, lays a foundation, sketching the origins of the piano, noting the preponderance of squares *(Tafelklavier)* over *Flügel*-shaped grands in the early years, describing the slide into oblivion of the rival clavichord and harpsichord during the piano's rise to popularity, and noting its growing compass, changing keyboard, and the ways in which its sounds—characterized as German/Viennese or English—reflected or challenged contemporary aesthetic ideals. David Rowland in *Early Music,* February 1996, and Kenneth Mobbs in the *Galpin Society Journal,* March 1996, have pointed out some errors of fact in Komlós's details about instruments and compass. While these occasionally undermine her arguments (as, for example, when she contends—based on her mistaking a later edi-

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tion for an original—that Eckard's sonata op. 1, no. 2 had an unusually wide compass), they are less serious than they would be in a study like Pollens's because Komlós concentrates on "the practical rather than the technological," (vii) that is, on what directly concerns the player: what one feels in the hands or under the feet, what one hears, and how these affect what one might imagine, what one might prefer, and what one might do.

Of the book's three main sections, the second, just over half the book's length, is clearly the most significant for Komlós. In "The Music," she wishes to demonstrate first and foremost that compositional texture is often importantly revealing of instrument preference, and more particularly, that the differently developing German/Viennese and English instruments became in the last two decades of the 18th century excellent vehicles for two contrasting styles, the former more concerned with rhetorical clarity and articulation of a transparent, linear music dependent on quick and efficient damping and a varied spectrum of sound, and the latter with projecting thicker textures, legato touch, and a bravura style dependent on fuller but more homogeneous tone made possible by dampers that allow ample *Nachklang*.

Komlós concentrates here on solo and small ensemble repertoire, fully aware that in eliminating larger genres she is omitting "perhaps the most important group of works in classical keyboard music" — Mozart's piano concertos. (vii) Her decision is in keeping with the thrust of her study, which is designed to remain closer to the world of the *Liebhaber* and to investigate a wider range of pianist–composers and genres popular among amateurs than the usual tour of the "greats" takes into account. She explores instead the work of the minor composers Eckard, Burton, Schroeter, Vořišek, Gallassi, and Attwood, as well as the "lesser greats" Emanuel and J. C. Bach, Clementi, Dussek and Koželuch. Of the three Viennese giants, Mozart and Beethoven receive comparatively little attention (though what little they receive is lucidly presented), while Haydn is afforded lavish coverage in more than one chapter because, Komlós asserts, "he alone was exposed to the inspirations and possibilities of both types of the eighteenth-century pianoforte." (vii)

But is this entirely true? Indeed Beethoven, unlike Haydn, never left Vienna to sojourn in London, and the extent of English influence on his piano works has been debated since Alexander Ringer's influential article on the subject appeared in 1970.[1] But Komlós clearly believes that Beethoven "received important impulses from the London Pianoforte School, through the personal acquaintance and the compositional influence of Clementi and Cramer," (106) and mentions the English piano he received as a gift from Thomas Broadwood in 1818. (29) One might more reasonably argue that Beethoven's presence in this study be limited because most of the works that could be said to reflect English influence appear after 1800. But even that premise does not entirely satisfy me, convinced as I am by Malcolm Bilson's assessment of earlier works like the Adagio con molta espressione from Beethoven's Sonata in B-flat major, op. 22, of 1800, which he calls "pure 'London' thinking" that "would sound best heavily pedalled," and "(demonstrates) the significance of the English damping system as opposed to the

1 ■ Alexander L. Ringer, "Beethoven and the London Pionoforte School," *Musical Quarterly* 56/4 (October, 1970): 742–58. Both William Newman and J. H. van der Meer later took issue with some of Ringer's claims.

Viennese."[2] Komlós is willing to admit speculation at this level in parts of her chapter on emerging piano textures, but seems unwilling to take it up fully here in her central thesis.

Indeed I find myself surprised more than once by Komlós's reserve in drawing conclusions. For example, in her chapter entitled Sonatas: Accompanied and Unaccompanied, she doesn't read the "curious exchange of rolls in the (Viennese) 'accompanied sonata'" (91)—where the violin suddenly comes to the fore as soloist in a slow Romance, Larghetto or Cantabile after a first movement that has sounded like a piano concerto—as a sign that Viennese pianos were still felt to be too weak to project cantabile lines, even though she recognizes this clearly enough elsewhere in the chapter. Similarly she adds no comment when she reports Andreas Streicher's insistance that it is because the fortepiano's soundboard *"carries away from (the player)* the sound that is actually produced" that he "thinks his instrument is producing *hardly any tone."* (27) I marvel at her ability to resist calling his bluff: what a salesman he was!

Komlós's fourth chapter on the emerging piano style, Clavier Instruments and Textures, is less convincing to me for opposite reasons.[3] This is the only section where I feel she tends toward some unwarranted assumptions, as for example when she suggests that Eckard's sonatas "reflect a remarkable pianistic thinking." (38) His "array of dynamic markings," which she finds "surprisingly wide" is no wider (at least in terms of loudness, the only thing that might help to distinguish piano from clavichord) than those Emanuel Bach used in a number of his works for clavichord. I suspect she knows this is dangerous ground: later in the chapter, after pointing out that there are very few articulation or dynamic marks in Clementi's opp. 1 and 2, and concluding that "nuances of performance, at least at this early stage, seem not to have concerned [him]," she offers an observation that is both sensitive and pertinent, yet is nevertheless posited as a question: "Then, early 'pianistic' writing may have more to do with sensitivity and elaboration of detail than with forceful texture and sonority?" (47) It is best to put it as a question—to suggest thereby that it is probably only partly true—because, if "early 'pianistic' writing" *always* has "more to do with sensitivity and elaboration of detail than with forceful texture and sonority," it becomes even more difficult to distinguish it from clavichord music, the very problem she faces with Eckard's op. 1, which is indicated in his preface as being "suitable for the harpsichord, the clavichord, and the fortepiano." (37) My doubts about this chapter finally inspired me to conduct an experiment, submitting its excised examples to a colleague who performs on both harpsichord and fortepiano and knows the clavichord as well, for an assessment of their suitability at the harpsichord. The results, while confirming the broadest outlines of Komlós's arguments, nevertheless also confirmed that artists can read these early keyboard textures in more than one way: what seems uncharacteristic to one can seem natural enough to another. Komlós needs a more rigorous

2 ■ Malcolm Bilson, "Keyboards," in *Performance Practice: Music After 1600.* ed. Howard Mayer Brown and Stanley Sadie (New York: W. W. Norton, 1989), 236.

3 ■ Since Komlós points out that *Clavier* meant clavichord for the Germans in the second half of the 18th century, and since *Klavier* came to mean piano in the 19th century, it would have been wiser to substitute something like "Stringed Keyboard" for "Clavier" in this title.

method to make her conclusions convincing, and that may or may not be possible to achieve.

In "The Players," over a third of the book's length, Komlós describes the disparate worlds of *Kenner und Liebhaber,* the tutors and treatises that began to proliferate with the piano's rise to popularity and the proverbial "rise of the middle class," and the aesthetics of performance from the days of first generation piano players to the close of the century. Here she is most successful in inverting many of the timeworn ideas about late 18th-century musical society. She paints a composite picture that is utterly unlike the one many of us grew up with, reminding us that for the vast majority of musicians, it was square pianos, not grands, that were the focus of the age, and light solo and chamber music, not the "great" concerti or even the more monolithic sonatas, that were the object of most admiration.

Partly because of the complexity of the task Komlós has chosen, and partly because of her approach to historical description—she always stays very close to the details—*Fortepianos and their Music* at times feels more like a series of essays relating to a single theme than a monograph. Only occasionally is the reader given a sense of the big picture in advance of detail, and as a result this meditation on texture is not always easy to assimilate. For example, in her penultimate chapter, entitled "Piano Tutors and Treatises," Komlós spends seven pages discussing ideas presented in particular treatises before clarifying the fact that the tutors and treatises she has been quoting here and throughout her book are not at all alike, that some are for "mere" amateurs, some for amateurs who wish to become professionals, some for professionals, some for teachers—and of course, that some were widely distributed and often quoted and others by comparison almost obscure. She is wisely concerned that we not develop a "fetishistic reliance" on such treatises (132), and points out just how difficult it can be "to determine whether some 'rule' or other is merely a local custom or the personal opinion of a theorist of limited experience." (131) But typically, she expresses these important thoughts as a cautionary note near the end of the chapter rather than as a starting point. Where one might expect a summary of theory to induce some "recognition" of important universals, one finds instead a reminder that the sources are so unlike as to make comparison almost treacherous, and that we need to absorb more and more "context," that "rich and varied repertory" through which "the character and the elements of any given piece of music reveal themselves." For Komlós breadth is the key: "The best composers and thinkers of the time should guide one towards the maximum understanding of the style." (131)

But this brings up an interesting point of tension: Given that Komlós has demonstrated that some of the "best" composers and thinkers had little to do with the defining or dissemination of style in the late 18th century, one wonders if in fact the "merely local" isn't being given short shrift. If "only in the context of a rich and varied repertory will the character and the elements of any given piece of music reveal themselves," (131) how was character recognized by those *contemporary* musicians who were "merely local"? (Charles Ives always insisted that a devoted journey into the "merely local" brings one ever closer to the universal.)

More fundamentally, does not this tension arise because Komlós wants to examine "the music of the past in its own contemporary terms"? As Komlós shows, the inevitable result of taking the past "in its own terms" is a paradigm shift, since in

some sense the "terms" of the past invert many cherished hierarchies: amateurs come before professionals, square pianos before grands, potpourris before monumental sonatas and concertos, and Pleyel before Mozart. If Pleyel, as Komlós points out, "was known equally in Italy, in Paris, in Vienna, and in London," and if his music "[represented] to some degree the international, 'anonymous' language of the classical style," (101) he was far less "local" than Mozart, whose music was a "rare guest in London concert-halls" (104) and was far less often published there than that of his contemporaries Haydn and Koželuch.

On the other hand, how do we—in the absence of corroborating evidence—identify a notion that is "merely" local—say, "merely" Emanuel Bach's own? By the number of times and the intensity with which he insists on it? I think here of how often Bach insists on certain rules of ornamentation—seemingly to the point of exasperation—more than likely because he finds their trespass so widespread, so popular, and so detestable. Yet we'd sooner follow him than, say, Milchmeyer, who recommended accompanied trios partly because mistakes could more easily be coverred up (85), and whose musical judgement we therefore find "questionable, and even controversial." (129) How do we make such decisions?

Well I think we pay little attention to public values and lots of attention to tradition in the deepest sense. After all, even in Pleyel's day one really had to choose ones "terms." In the end much of what we value most turns out to have been "merely local." Many of us are interested in the "terms" of Mozart's day as a means of understanding more deeply the music we treasure most.

I would be more comfortable with another notion of how "character" reveals itself, one that preserves a "leap" between the transcendent experience of "recognition" and the hypotheses that arise from surveys of particulars. "Recognition" in this transcendent sense arises from the kind of theory that represents a field of generalizations whose base of evidence is so wide it can't be taken into account all at once: this is the kind of theory that integrates new knowledge into the old, that is, into tradition. Hence there is something about the deepest understanding of style that does not come directly from the inspection of particulars.

But to return to more positive thoughts, Komlós's final chapter, entitled Aesthetics of Performance, is an example of her fascination with the particular at its best. The topics presented are in chronological order, and all relate to the central idea of performance, but most impressive is the local logic connecting them: we proceed from topic to topic almost seamlessly to cover the rise and fall of the appreciation of the clavichord; the evidence for a growing recognition of a technique especially appropriate to the fortepiano; cultural preferences for neatness and lightness among Viennese musicians; "taste," "feeling" and other Viennese values versus Beethoven's "subversive style"; the shift from focusing on dynamic differences to sustaining of sound as an ideal; the grand manner of Dussek as compared with Himmel's elegant, Viennese approach; Hummel's "neatness and clarity" versus Beethoven's sloppiness and effect-driven technique; the importance of improvisation (and the failures therewith by Dussek and Steibelt); and finally—a truly appropriate close because it is almost shockingly abrupt—the suggestion that *Beethoven's* improvisation (which she cautiously suggests may be reflected in works like his G minor Fantasia, op. 77) may owe more to Emanuel Bach than to anything Viennese.

There is no other "conclusion"! But what could be more like one of Emanuel Bach's more daring fantasies, where every new topic in this "improvisation" seems psychologically right as it is introduced, yet the trajectory of the whole journey is so extraordinarily varied that it is almost impossible to reconstruct in retrospect? This is especially impressive because Komlós allows her documentary evidence to disclose so much detail. It is a tour de force, delightful reading, and it leaves this reader with a much heightened sense of *Geschmack und Empfindung.*

There are many other points about this book that deserve praise, among them the revealing table of pianist-composers active in London around the time of Haydn's visits coupled with Haydn's own list of those he knew, and the chapter entitled Questions of Interaction and Dissemination that makes it clear, among other things, just how isolated North Germany—and Emanuel Bach—were from the rest of Europe. Most of the examples in this book are superbly chosen, the fruit of long experience with the instruments and of historical study that is both broad and deep. *Fortepianos and their Music* is indeed a study of texture: the texture of everything from keyboards under the hands to the arrangements of parts in autograph copies of piano trios; texture, in other words, in the broadest sense, the texture of a music culture. ❧

Wooden church in the Carpathian Mountains from Mária Pataky: Rákóczi Földje *(Rákócziland). Officina, Budapest, 1939.*

Mária Eckhardt

Liszt as Father

Franz Liszt: *Lettres à Cosima et à Daniela*. Ed. by Klára Hamburger. (*Musique-musicologie* Series, General Editor Malou Haine), Sprimont, Mardaga, 1996, 238 pp.

When Charles Suttoni published an expanded and annotated bibliography of Liszt's correspondence in 1989,[1] he estimated the number of letters written by Liszt at around 10,000. By then, approximately 6,500 had appeared in print, a large proportion either in truncated form or in a presentation lacking suitable editorial or scholarly standards. Nor is Liszt's correspondence with his immediate family better known. His letters to his mother (with a few exceptions) appeared in a German translation by La Mara, frequently diverging from the originals; his mother's surviving letters to him were not included.[2] His correspondence with the mother of his children, Marie d'Agoult, has been available together with a modest commentary since 1934, thanks to his grandson Daniel Ollivier's largely faithful publication.[3] Still, the long-awaited new critical edition, announced ten years ago by Serge Gut and Jacqueline Bellas, would certainly provide much new and interesting material. It is also to Daniel Ollivier's credit that Liszt's correspondence with his oldest child, Blandine (1835–1862), appeared in print.[4]

Only a few extracts of the correspondence between Liszt and his only son are available, this however is hardly surprising, since Daniel Liszt (1839–1859) was barely twenty years old at the time of his death.[5] Letters to Cosima (1837–1930), the middle child, are now first published, one hundred and ten years after Liszt's death. If Cosima had wished she could have kept control over publication, but she only permitted the printing of extracts, and even those not in their original language, and usually only to the official chroniclers, Hans von Wolzogen and Richard du Moulin-Eckart. The explanation clearly lies in the complicated psychological situation into which Cosima was placed first as a child, through her parents' conflicts, and later as an adult, through the relations between her and her first and second husbands, Hans von Bülow and the idolized Richard Wagner; through their relationship with each other and with Liszt, her father.

We do not know, nor does the introduction to the new volume inform us, whether any prohibition existed against publishing Liszt's letters to Cosima after her death (1930) as was the case with Wagner's *Brown Book* and Cosima's *Diary*. These were finally published by German Wagner specialists in the mid-1970s,[6]

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causing a sensation as they both shed further light, and even altered the established picture of Wagner and Liszt as it had been conceived by Cosima and the Wagner family. These two volumes were followed in 1988 by a new edition of the Liszt–Wagner correspondence,[7] which added about twenty letters to the largest of the existing collections (by Erich Kloss),[8] even though it was disappointing in terms of notes and scholarly commentary.

Finally, Klára Hamburger, the Hungarian musicologist, who had already supervised the Hungarian edition of the *Brown Book* and *Cosima's Diary,* which she also translated, undertook the publication of Liszt's letters to Cosima. She had made her name not only through her excellent Liszt biography and her book-length guide to Liszt's major compositions[9] but also through her inclusion of unknown Liszt letters in her many published articles and studies. Klára Hamburger's career had almost predestined her to present this important collection of letters.

There are 120 letters to Cosima in the volume, supplemented by 33 letters to the oldest of Cosima's five children, and Liszt's favourite grandchild, Daniela von Bülow. The introduction, the commentary and the appendices contain several other letters from Liszt (to Blandine Liszt, and to two other grandchildren, Eva and Siegfried Wagner). There are two further letters in the appendices which are not by Liszt, but aid our understanding of his letters: a letter from Cosima to Marie von Schleinitz, and one by Blandine Liszt to her father. The major part of the documentation survived in Cosima's papers and is deposited in the Archives at Bayreuth. Thirteen letters and a fragment of one letter, however, are a part of the Blandine Liszt–Ollivier papers placed in the Manuscript Collection of the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris, at the request of her son Daniel Ollivier. Unfortunately, neither Cosima's nor Daniela's letters to Liszt are known, and presumably have not survived. For this reason the collection can only present one side, unlike the Blandine correspondence, which presents both.

The necessary biographical background to accompany all the original material is provided in Klára Hamburger's extensive introduction, and her commentary on individual letters addresses concrete and detailed issues.

The first group of letters are those written to the child Cosima, who, after the final breach between her parents in 1844, was brought up in Paris, along with her brother and sister, under the loving supervision of her grandmother Anna Liszt, with the assistance of governesses. Liszt, the travelling virtuoso, who retired in the Grandduchy of Weimar in 1848 as Hofkapellmeister, followed his children's progress only from afar, though maintaining sole responsibility for their upkeep. The first four letters (from the period of 1845 to 1849) conjure up the same kind and devoted father whom we have already known from the published correspondence to Blandine and to the children as a group. (Two of these four letters had already been published in 1900 by Cosima, and so, exceptionally, these have figured fairly frequently in the Liszt literature.) Unlike Marie d'Agoult, who broke off all contact with her children, Liszt gave them everything he felt they needed. There was just one thing that he didn't realize: nothing can take the place of actually being with them. He didn't even understand the joy the children felt when, in 1850, they met their mother by chance, after living for nearly six years in the same city without ever seeing her. Fearing with good reason that Marie would paint a distorted picture of him for the children (as she had already

done in public with her novel *Nélida*), his reaction was to place them under far stricter supervision than they had been up till then. The authoritarian, sometimes even ruthless, tone which Liszt struck in the ensuing letters is clear evidence of the influence of his new companion Carolyne Sayn-Wittgenstein; it was likely to do anything but awaken childish love. The letters of this period, written to Cosima (almost without exception they appear in print for the first time) will hardly surprise those familiar with the publications of Robert Bory,[10] Jacques Vier[11] and Daniel Ollivier,[12] which reveal the paternal tongue-lashing Liszt directed at the children, addressed in part directly to Blandine or all the children, and in part indirectly, through Anna Liszt. The tone changed once again when Cosima became the fiancée (1856) and then wife (1857) of Hans von Bülow, Liszt's favourite pupil. From then on Liszt wrote anew with warm love to his daughter, but with the respect due to the adult woman. From this point onwards the letters become very interesting from a musical point of view too. Liszt discussed specific issues regarding the conception and reception of his own works in countless cases; the Missa Solennis is one example. Additionally, from then on, Richard Wagner's name begins to appear with increasing frequency in letters to Cosima. Liszt's children had known him personally and respected him through their father from their early years in Paris (1853). As is well known, Liszt and later Cosima's husband, Hans von Bülow, were instrumental in furthering Wagner's interests.

Cosima and von Bülow's marriage turned out to be a disaster, and Cosima's respect and admiration for Wagner shortly developed into passionate love. It was in November 1863 when they declared their feelings for one another, although by then Cosima had already borne two of von Bülow's children (Daniela and Blandine), and von Bülow had become the main exponent of Wagner's works. Liszt strove desperately to save the marriage, but was unable to prevent Cosima from leaving her husband and permanently uniting herself with Wagner in 1868. By that time she had borne two of Wagner's children, in 1865 and 1867, and was carrying a third. There are six rather interesting letters from Liszt in the collection from this difficult period, largely unknown earlier. That of December 14, 1865 is the most desperately outspoken and full of questions: what would become of the three people of irreconcilably tangled lives, who in different ways were equally and immeasurably important to the heart of Liszt? *"Dieu vous garde!"*, the tormented letter exclaims.

Liszt's fatherly love for Cosima, by now his only remaining child, was put to a great test when Cosima decided openly in favour of Wagner, turned Protestant in order to marry him, and, rejecting her French upbringing, embraced Wagner's German nationalism. Cosima's letter to Marie von Schleinitz, which Hamburger includes in the book's appendix, is shocking: Liszt's daughter wanted her father to make her decision known to the humiliated, cuckolded von Bülow, and as he was not willing, Cosima refused to speak to him for years.

At this point Daniela von Bülow, Cosima's oldest child enters the correspondence. Although in 1870, the year of Wagner and Cosima's marriage, Daniela was only ten years old and hardly knew her grandfather, Liszt wrote to her conveying between the lines an affection which in truth was directed at his daughter. It is as if the first two letters in the book, to Daniela, are to atone for the stern letters which Liszt had written to the adolescent Cosima: " *...toujours près de vous et vôtre bien aimée Maman. Dites-lui mon grand désir de la revoir; fasse le Ciel que ce soit*

bientôt." "[My heart] ...is always with you and your much loved Mother. Tell her how much I long to see her again; Heaven let it happen soon," he writes to Daniela in April 1871. Within a few months, thanks possibly to the intervention of Marie von Schleinitz, contact was re-established, and from September 1871, Liszt was writing directly to Cosima once again, although the final reconciliation had to wait a further year.

The bulk of the letters from Liszt to Cosima, 96 in the volume, were written between September 1871 and October 1882. They are of extraordinary interest: we find countless new details about the changes in Liszt's life, about the compositional history of individual works, such as Volume III of the *Années de pèlerinage* and the *Via Crucis*, and about the failure of certain plans for compositions. (Hungarians perhaps quite justifiably blame Cosima for dissuading Liszt from writing a Saint Stephen oratorio.) In actual fact, in a 1992 study, Klára Hamburger had already given us a foretaste of the interesting information on the background to some compositions that these previously unpublished letters contain.[13] One of the main themes of Liszt's letters to Cosima is, naturally, Wagner and the staging of his works in Bayreuth, in support of which Liszt spared no effort. This undiminishing enthusiasm with which Liszt championed Wagner's works to the very end is touching, especially considering what the publication of Cosima's diary revealed: Wagner responded to works by the aged Liszt with utter incomprehension, even with loathing. It is also touching how openly Liszt spoke to Cosima of difficulties regarding his relationship with Princess Carolyne Sayn-Wittgenstein and Baroness Olga von Meyendorff, the two women who were at that time closest to him. At the same time, he was unequivocally supportive of Carolyne, to whom Cosima had shown deep antipathy since adolescence. (On the other hand, we know that in the presence of Carolyne he defended, praised and offered explanations for Cosima whenever he could. Carolyne, namely, saw quite clearly how Wagner used Cosima, and also through her, Liszt, in order to endorse his own special interests.)

We had already suspected how important the family bond was to Liszt which in his old age he hoped to have with Cosima and Wagner. The newly published letters confirm this. It is startling, however, to what degree Cosima subordinated everything to her adulation of Wagner, who was extraordinarily jealous of Liszt. "On a number of occasions Cosima could have made her father happy," writes Hamburger, "but she always fulfilled her husban's demands instead." Without doubt the most painful thing for Liszt must have been that, after Wagner's death in 1883, Cosima retired into seclusion and did not wish to see her father again, breaking off even written contact with him. Liszt magnanimously acknowledged his daughter's decision (*"Je comprends, admire, et l'aime de toute mon âme,"* ("I understand, admire, and love her with all my soul,") he writes and accepted that Daniela should once again take Cosima's place in his correspondence. At this time, however, the contact with his granddaughter differed from that of 1870 and 1871, as at the end of 1881 Daniela spent several months in the company of her ailing grandfather; a genuine love developed between them. The lovely comment in the short letter from August 22, 1883 may be understood in this light: *"Sur toutes choses, nous nous entendrons toujours très simplement, même par le silence."* ("We understand each other in everything, all the time, very simply, even in silence.") It is worth mentioning that it was with the help of Liszt that von

Bülow came back into real tender contact with his daughter, who had grown up and been completely absorbed into the Wagner family. That Daniela had a favoured position among Liszt's six grandchildren may be documented also by the "Angelus!" movement from the third volume of *Années de pèlerinage* and the whole of the *Weinachtsbaum* cycle, dedicated to her. Naturally, we find a great number of references to these works in the new book. Finally, it was Daniela who reunited Liszt with his daughter: after more than three years, in May 1886, Cosima visited Liszt in order to invite him personally to Daniela's wedding. The letter of 29 May 1886, the last in the volume, contains Liszt's reply to his grandchild, accepting the invitation.

Hamburger has furnished the book with both a superb introduction and instructive notes. She provides the location and catalogue number of all the letters, lists all the earlier publications, even when they were only partial, distorted or in translation; she then offers a commentary on all the facts, names and events in the letters. A number of rare photos are included, which link up well with the content of the letters; these are largely reproductions (by Dániel Ujváry) from the collection at the Liszt Ferenc Memorial Museum. The thematic bibliography is ample, and the indexes at the end are useful: there is an index of names and an index of Liszt's compositions that are mentioned in the letters. Indeed, even a glance at the indexes shows how important (not only from a biographical point of view) it was to gather these substantial letters into an up-to-date publication. Even if one or two letters to Cosima or Daniela may still come to light (Hamburger has herself found one at Versailles), they will not diminish the value of what is in this book. Nor has Klára Hamburger mechanically adopted data from the earlier literature: thus the letter (Bayreuth catalogue number Hs. 51/II-3), which was published by Hans Rudolf Jung as having been written to Cosima, is not included in the new book, as it was obviously not addressed to Cosima, but to Daniel Liszt.[14]

The book is part of a series by a Belgian publisher, edited by the Director of the Royal Museum of Instruments in Brussels, Malou Haine. Its publication was overseen by Philippe Gilson, whose editing is careful and consistent; only occasionally does one feel that he has insisted on certain formalities, requiring notes even where there is nothing to be said (D9, Note 4, D10, Notes 2–3, for example.) Evidently, it is in accordance with his editorial principles to place insertions and margin notes at the end of the letter, irrespective of where they actually belong, at times forcing the reader into guesswork (in the case of the D28 "apostille", for example.) Misprints are relatively few, generally occurring in the occasional German passages, (D23, for example), in Hungarian diacritics, (ő ű) or in numbers (the dress rehearsal for the "Gran" Mass, second version, was not 1879, for example, but September 23, 1870, D1, Note 6) and also in the references to the indexes. As a whole, however, the book is clearly presented and lucidly arranged: a simply and economically, but carefully executed publication. ❧

NOTES

1 ■ Charles Suttoni: "Liszt Correspondence in Print: An Expanded, Annotated Bibliography," *Journal of the American Liszt Society*, Vol. 25, Jan/June 1989.

2 ■ *Franz Liszts Briefe an seine Mutter. Aus dem Franzözischen übertr. u. hrsg. v. La Mara*. Leipzig, Breitkopf & Härtel, 1918. Certain parts of the correspondence with his mother appeared in their original language too. Among them the most significant are: Jacques Vier: *Franz Liszt. L'artiste—le clerc, documents inédits*, Paris, 1950. The complete existing material collected into one book, in its original language, has not been published.

3 ■ *Correspondance de Liszt et de la Comtesse d'Agoult,* ed. by Daniel Ollivier, Vols. I–II, Paris, Grasset, 1933–34.

4 ■ *Correspondance de Liszt et de sa fille Madame Émile Ollivier,* ed. by Daniel Ollivier, Paris, Grasset, 1936. Blandine Liszt-Ollivier was the mother of the editor, Daniel Ollivier.

5 ■ See Alan Walker: "A Boy Named Daniel," *The New Hungarian Quarterly,* Vol. XXVII, No. 101, Spring 1986, pp. 204–220.

6 ■ Richard Wagner: *Das Braune Buch,* ed. by Joachim Bergfeld, Zürich, Atlantis, 1975; Cosima Wagner: *Die Tagebücher* 1869–1883, ed. by Martin Gregor-Dellin and Dietrich Mack, München–Zürich, Piper, 1976.

7 ■ *Franz Liszt–Richard Wagner Briefwechsel,* ed. by Hanjo Kesting. Frankfurt A. M., Insel, 1988.

8 ■ *Briefwechsel zwischen Wagner und Liszt.* 3rd enlarged ed. by Erich Kloss, Leipzig, Breitkopf & Härtel, 1912.

9 ■ Klára Hamburger: *Liszt Ferenc,* Budapest, Gondolat, 1966, 1980; In German: *Franz Liszt,* Budapest, Corvina, 1973, 1986; In English: *Franz Liszt*; transl. by Gyula Gulyás, Budapest, Corvina, 1989. Klára Hamburger: *Liszt Kalauz* (A Guide to Liszt) Budapest, Editio Musica, 1986.

10 ■ Robert Bory: *Liszt et ses enfants Blandine, Cosima & Daniel. D'aprés une correspondance inédite avec la Princesse Marie Sayn-Wittgenstein.* Paris, Corria, 1936.

11 ■ See Note 2.

12 ■ See Note 4.

13 ■ "Zur Bedeutung der unveröffentlichten Familienbriefe für das thematische Werkverzeichnis Franz Liszts," *Studia Musicologica* 34, 1992, pp. 435–443.

14 ■ Hans Rudolf Jung: *Franz Liszt in seinen Briefen,* Berlin, Henschelverlag, 1987, No. 49, pp. 121–122.

Tamás Koltai

Waiting for a Conflict

László Garaczi: *Prédales* (Preywatch) • István Tasnádi: *Kokainfutár* (The Cocaine Courier) • Péter Nádas: *Találkozás* (Encounter) • László Kamondi: *Médeia-variációk* (Medea Variations).

A recent festival of contemporary Hungarian drama presented a selection of Hungarian plays written in the last two years. The audiences included some fifty theatre professionals from twenty countries and the plays were selected by the editors of the journal *Színház* (Theatre). The event involved workshops, play readings in English and German and discussions, all of this with an expressly "stock exchange" tenor. We tried to "sell" the plays which may draw interest abroad well. Thus among the guests were translators and festival managers alongside directors, actors, dramaturges and critics. Among the visitors were Bernard Faivre d'Arcier, director of the Avignon Festival, and the playwright Tankred Dorst, director of the Bonn Biennial, who made no secret of their intention to attract authors and stage workshops into international programmes sponsored by themselves. Accordingly, events were not just centred around the relevant texts but also on the creative teams that had brought about the productions. In other words, the selection was motivated by the theatrical qualities of the works.

Naturally, nobody could have expected to encounter only masterpieces. Though in recent times the text has strengthened its position against the director's theatre, the international convertibility of contemporary national dramatic literature has still remained modest. On a recent occasion discussing new Hungarian theatrical writing, one of those present argued that in Hungary they prefer to direct Shakespeare as a "modern Hungarian play" rather than a work by a contemporary Hungarian playwright. In a certain sense the recent festival refuted such notions. Gábor Máté, for example, whose production of *Measure for Measure* set in the present has already been reviewed here (*HQ* 144), now staged a genuine Hungarian play in the Katona József Theatre. The subject of the play is the impossibility of writing a play today.

The forty-one year old László Garaczi's *Preywatch* could easily have been the badge of the festival. The prey which the playwright wishes to bag, seize or trap is a subject that can be elaborated on—a conflict—a plot through which the world, or at least the narrower reality we know, can be portrayed. A few years ago Garaczi spent several months on a scholarship in a writers' colony in the United States, surround-

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ed by writers of different nationalities. Just like Egon, his alter ego in the play. Egon tries to write a play but cannot find a plot, and suffers a block. Garaczi had promised a play to a Hungarian theatre company but did not deliver. Or more exactly, by the time he completed the play the theatre no longer wanted it. His play is *Preywatch* itself, which, as it can be seen, has finally been accepted by another company, the Katona József. Garaczi even includes this incident in the play, which is basically a series of ironic self-reflections, a game with reality and the imagination.

The writer-protagonist of *Preywatch* is seeking the material for his play in the characters of his assembled fellow writers at the colony and the relationships among them. Here it is not six characters in search of an author but an author in search of six to eight characters. They include an overweight Ukrainian poet who cannot hold to a diet and who is convinced that all the famous people in the world are of Ukrainian extraction, a narcissistic Chinese-Japanese-French writer-cum-film director, an avocado-addicted Hungarian female author, who dreams of seducing Terence Hill, a Lithuanian who is at home in Slavonic literature but denies that Chekhov wrote a play called *Platonov,* an Englishman who tells frivolous stories about his boy-friend and would certainly like to be included in Egon's play. But the play does not want to be born. Egon admits that he is looking for a "real, juicy, Hungarian-style full-blooded conflict", but he can only arrive at this by getting the characters to hack off and eat each others' fingers. (This actually happens in a sardonic fanciful scene.) He excuses himself for his helplessness with "I want realistic, indeed topical conflicts... but this shubby, petty reality is simply against me."

Naturally *Preywatch* is not only about how reality slips through a writer's fingers, but also about human communication become impossible: "It's a case of eff you Jack, I'm all right and as a result everyone suffers in isolation," one character says. A primary symptom of this collapse of communication is that the characters, who find it hard to cope with each other's language (or with their English) either do not understand each other in the literal sense, or misunderstand each other. The linguistic humour springing from this creates the funniest layer of the piece. For those who take pleasure in the nonsense produced by a garble of cultures and the various kinds of a lack of culture, the confusion of fancy with reality, *Preywatch* works, otherwise it is fairly infantile. In this sense the play is helped along by the production, which backs up the text at several points through its own frivolity. Since there is no possibility for any traditional "interpretation" and the characters have no background, not even a hint of one, all the actors have to do is be strange, unusual, funny, interesting and "post-modern", whatever that means.

István Tasnádi, at the age of twenty-seven, is one of the younger of our playwrights. After productions by some alternative companies, his play, *The Cocaine Courier*—which won him a first prize in competition—reached the stage of the Csiki Gergely Theatre of Kaposvár, one of the country's best companies. For the festival production, in the Katona József Theatre the audience was seated on a revolving turntable, the brainchild of the director, István Znamenák. From there they watched the various locales unfolding where the action took place. This pseudo-naturalism ultimately clashes with the stylization of the text, which becomes manifest in a cheeky verbalism as it did in *Preywatch.* When reading *The Cocaine Courier* you feel that the playwright does

not take his own plot seriously—it begins on various floors of a tenement house and continues at a swimming pool, the Athenian Acropolis, a night club, an airport and other similar settings. The production, however, derides all this with the rotation of the stage and the addition of a narrator. The style is grotesque approaching the absurd.

The play opens as if it meant to be based on the nonsensical humour of brief TV sketches. We see the inhabitants of a tenement house going through their banal daily rites. The characters have no depth but are mainly linguistic clichés. (The new theatre seems to have a penchant for grammar as an instrument of characterization.) Later the plot unfolds, with a mysterious rich femme fatale at its centre. This venturesome lady invites the inhabitants of the house to join her on a trip to Greece where, after various adventures, an episode of drug smuggling ending tragically closes the story. The cocaine, swallowed in nylon bags, causes the death of a young man. None of that can be taken too seriously, since more than one of the characters die during the play—only to come to life again later. (One of them falls overboard into the sea, in which there immediately appears a shark fin. He reappears at the end to announce that he does not understand a thing about the whole play.)

Tasnádi makes sure that the audience is confused in other ways too. The first scenes promise a post-modern cabaret, are then followed by a drama of jealousy, a straightforward thriller, while the conclusion is histrionic melodrama. This production even surprised the author himself. The director, with his scenic gags, intensified the play theatrically, resolving its verbalism. It became clear once again that the stage, if hand in glove with the author, helps "sell" a play.

The Katona József Theatre, or rather its smaller stage, the Chamber, had another festival production too. *Mausoleum*, a play by the forty-four year Lajos Parti Nagy, a lyrical grotesque piece that relates the events during a strange night in the courtyard of a dilapidated suburban tenement house, has already been reviewed here (*HQ* 143). This play also sparkles linguistically, which lends a singular lyricism to the basic situation, so much so that its director—Gábor Máté, already mentioned in connection with *Preywatch*—could even visualize it as an oratorio. The fifty-five year old Péter Nádas's *Encounter* is from the outset close to an oratorio, or in any case a musical composition. This is not a new play, being the central piece of a trilogy written in the 1980s, which received several performances. It is a work which created its own style and dramatic structure, practically a "classic", presumably the reason why it was included in the festival programme.

Nádas, who is primarily a novelist, indeed, an internationally acclaimed one, once wrote about his intentions as a playwright: "I have tried to rely on the musicality of the language to create a subtle linguistic medium in which the actor is compelled to speak with his whole body, with the inner aspects of his body. To relate in the idiom of the body that which I have indicated with the musical information of the text. My starting point therefore was—and this again is a most primitive thing—that the theatre is not literature, but it is not life either. The theatre is in fact most theatrical! Well, then let it be theatrical!"

The plot of *Encounter* is not easy to set down. Maria, a woman preparing for her death, receives the son of her former lover and tells him about his father. For many years Maria had cherished these memories in an unheated room. In this middle-aged

woman, dressed in black festive clothes, the young man at last is confronted with his dead father's mistress, whom he had often pictured to himself, and with the true story of his father. The story of Maria's life unfolds in fragments. She was born into an aristocratic family, she married a Jewish capitalist, and after the death of her husband in the fifties, she was arrested and deprived of all her property and belongings. After her release she found happiness in a short, passionate relationship. Every morning the same man came towards her in the square. These mute encounters went on for several months, until the man finally led her into a room where they finally consummated this passion, still without knowing anything about each other. One day Maria was arrested again, beaten up and dragged in for questioning—in front of the man who was her lover. He gave back the case, and Maria was then condemned. After her second release, the man came towards her every morning in the square just as before, until the morning he took out a pistol and blew out his brains before her. The young man lives and suffers through every thread of this story. Finally Maria undresses and washes him with ritual deliberation and puts him to bed. Then she brings the story to its end by pouring out some poisoned wine for herself and leaving the room. The Boy is left on his own.

A political and a sacral story are here superimposed, turning into the personal fates of the two characters. The performance is anti-naturalistic and ceremonious, and structured by the music composed, according to the author's intentions, by László Vidovszky, and played on three instruments. Music here plays a completely equal part, which counterpoints, supplements and furthers verbal communication. As a result the staging of *Encounter* poses difficulties for the director. History and myth, the everyday world and the sacral, past and present, are intermingled in the play. The story gives place to happening, and this cannot be directly related but only conveyed, placed into a situation that has a simultaneously unique and archetypical effect. Contrasts can only be dissolved in the ritual: the encounter between Maria and the Boy, the Father incarnated in the Boy, a Father who crossed the same square as Maria day after day, the silent passion between the two, which only twice found fulfilment (in a room which is a copy of the room where Maria and the Boy are now meeting), the third encounter of Maria, twice imprisoned and beaten up, with the man in his capacity as prosecutor, and after her release, the man's suicide in the square, the Father's late absolution in the Boy, the purgation of the crime through the washing of his body, Maria's suicide with the poisoned sacrificial wine, the bequeathing of the "story" to the Boy—all this calls for acting that differs qualitatively from conventional psychological realism.

The performance in the Budapest Chamber Theatre, directed by András Éry-Kovács, used the bare requisites in keeping with the stage-directions: a white-washed room with only the door in red. "There were those who eluded Nádas by saying that no such theatre exists, this is a phantom," one of his critics wrote. "The main artistic merit of the new performance of *Encounter* is that it proves in a convincing and identifiable manner that such a theatre does exist and is possible, for example in this form."

Festival guests went to the Miskolc National to see *Medeia Variations*. This is no regular play either, but is based on an idea of the director Zoltán Kamondi (37). During the rehearsals, he set down a basic text that was based on improvisa-

tions and which relates a family tragedy modelled on various news items of the same type. In this case the "author" does not seem to have to search for a prey: the subject was offered by real life, following the example of the ancient myth. Kamondi's contemporary Medea kills her children and commits suicide because her husband has deserted her for another woman, taking his sons with him and selling their home without consulting his wife. Details of this raw, naturalistic, lumpish story devoid of any pathos take place on the ground-level, upon which is built the mythological elaboration of the story, a montage based on the dramatic works of Euripides, Grillparzer and Anouilh. The construction is organized along the linear plot, as events unfold the fragments of the play succeed each other, dissolve into each other, carrying the play forward like a relay race towards the denouement.

Kamondi had already nettled people by continuing Oscar Wilde's *Salome,* set in a Nazi death camp. He was called a dilettante for applying a mythological situation from another age to our days. Now again it was said that one cannot treat as equal Medea of Colchis and a working class woman doing the washing-up in the kitchen of a high-rise tenement. But Kamondi never intended to do this. He is simply curious to find out what has happened to the myth, or what did the myth disappear into? Those who draw on Euripides—Grillparzer and Anouilh, did the same thing. Kamondi has been bolder inasmuch as he included all three of them in the "racket", and himself gate-crushed as a fourth. It is naturally unbecoming as scholarship for someone to make a compilation from various texts, but why should a theatrical work humour literary scholars?

The metaphorical core of the production is a kitchen of a flat in a high-rise—just as small and just as prefab as in real life. The set designer has built around this a stairway linked to mythological fancy, and on this the actors repeatedly overstep the invisible bounds of time and style. For example, a ruffian steps out of the kitchen aggressively waving flat allocation documents and by the time he reaches the top of the stairs he has turned into Kreon. The ancient Preceptor is profaned into a Teacher supervising day boarders, the Herald into the Postman en route, while the neighbours turn into a chorus commenting in rap rhythm. Jason turns into a macho, shifty and primitive modern husband, and by the end acts out pertinently the semblance of Sunday orderliness. For all this, the actors do not have to change either mentally or physically, remaining in modern dress. (Only doctrinaires think that classical versification calls for a toga and cannot be performed in pants.) It is precisely the repeated clashes of the everyday and sublime myth, naturalistically stunted language and dramatic poetry, redundance and eloquence which provide the dissonant charm of the play.

Its human credibility springs from a present-day Medea who is "coherent" and unmovable. She never leaves the "kitchen", encloses into the six square metres of the kitchen the common grief of the antique heroine and the mother in a housing-estate news item, her mutterings and tirades springing from the same shrouded suffering. She verifies with her physical reality that the myth has only been transferred to the kitchen sink and has not grown cold. And fate has turned into fatelessness. ❧

Erzsébet Bori

The Dolls of Yesteryear

Péter Tímár: *Csinibaba* (Dollybirds) • Attila Janisch: *Hosszú alkony* (Long Dusk) • János Szász: *A Witman fiúk* (The Witman Brothers)

It is wonderful that after many years there are again Hungarian films that can tempt audiences into the cinema. *Dollybirds* is an emphatic answer to a question which occasionally crops up, namely, whether we should be making films at all in the present economic situation, when no-one outside the industry is interested in this luxury. The present resounding success does not only ease the crisis in film production, but it could also help ourhistoric cinemas to survive. The latest fashion is the multiplex: in the past year three such cinemas have opened in the capital, a deadly blow for the grand old film theatres built before the war, the elegant Puskin, the opulently gilded Urania, the Art Deco Atrium. The only thing that could still save these old cinemas is two or three *Dollybirds* in Hungary every year.

Péter Tímár's musical comedy was well received by the film industry, the audiences were enthusiastic, the sound track was available on disc within weeks. Meanwhile, instead of basking in the glory, the scriptwriter and the director went to court. According to the writer, his script, which could have given rise to a cult film about the sixties, had been stolen; according to the director, he did only what he had to and what was possible. With this script and with this much money. Péter Tímár made *Dollybirds* not at all badly, and the most persuasive argument is that the audience agrees. "A sixties music and dance reverie," promises the film's secondary title, and Tímár cunningly sees to it that there is room for this too in his double edged film. If you really want to, you can believe that *Dollybirds* is about the sixties. The many young viewers who have only heard about the period from their elders—the myth making "great" generation—can take it for granted that this is what life was like in Hungary in 1962. Longer and longer hair, shorter and shorter skirts, boys with their guitars getting ready for the Helsinki World Youth Festival, anti-government demonstrations at showings of *La Dolce Vita* in the cinema, Bambi (a synthetic orange juice) sipped through a straw. Fairy stories.

1962 was only six years after the 1956 Revolution and the subsequent bloody reprisals. The prisons are full and hundreds of political trials start up. It is true that there are only half as many as in 1961, and the sentences are lighter now too: a few months for attempts at crossing the border illegally or conspiring against the state. Not long before such charges carried the death penalty, but most of the

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1962 "conspirators" are simply romantically inclined teenagers, playing at being freedom fighters with wooden swords and potato-cut seals. The "Hungarian question" would only be taken off the United Nations agenda a year later, the first important amnesties would also take another year—but something was already beginning to happen. This something would eventually march into history as the "Kádár-system".

Government power and the people's silent consent were based on the fact that society was tired of opposition and accepted the bargain: you will not get involved in politics and in exchange we will let you live within the strict framework of liberty rationed by us. In 1962 the foundation stone for "the merriest barracks" in the Soviet bloc is laid. The demographic bomb, caused by the post-war baby boom, meant that a young generation, brought up in peace and relative well-being, stepped onto the stage and created for itself a philosophy and a sub-culture aggressively opposed to the old one. Bursting with energy they relentlessly believed in progress, in scientific, economic and social development, and militantly proclaimed that they can and must change the world.

Dollybirds' appreciative audience doesn't want to acknowledge the irony the film uses in treating, not just the period, but also the people who look back nostalgically to the Kádár era, as if in a trance. Péter Tímár does not so much demolish as ridicule and caricature the myth the "great generation" built up about themselves during those years. Apart from a few essentials, *Dollybirds* has nothing to do with the sixties: it is in every sense a film of the nineties. It looks back at an era with the eyes and intelligence of the millennium, and only wants to remember the good parts of it.

This recipe for success is the mirror image of the mechanism that made the most recent Hungarian box office success, *We Never Die,* so effective. Róbert Koltai's film, made in 1992, appeared to be about how we survived the fifties. In reality he held up before us a deceptive mirror which showed the picture of ourselves we wanted to see. For what is a Hungarian really like? Good humoured, quick witted, with a talent for making do, a little coarse but with a heart of gold. It is impossible not to like him. Péter Tímár skilfully suggests the same portrait of a nation. There is the shared platform on which the modest and the mighty, the policeman and the tenant, the communist and the non-party-member, can meet. The authority of the state is only represented by lowly, clownish figures, who at the bottom of their hearts are not so bad: they are more laughable than frightening, it is only their rank which makes them different from their victims. So there is no guilty party: the political situation and impersonal history are to blame for everything. *Dollybirds* has no main character or storyline. One critic justifiably called it a television variety show, since the film is only a string of loose episodes: solos, cabaret acts, song and dance routines follow one after the other, and the actors are media stars, popular soap opera actors. It is a credit to the director's talent that the well chosen locations and stream of ideas can make us forget the pressure schedule and astoundingly small budget the latest Hungarian success was made on.

The lighthearted *Dollybirds* shared the prize for best film with a substantial masterwork. Attila Janisch was also honoured as best director for *Long Dusk,* which is based on the short story "The Bus," by Shirley Jackson. Janisch and his regular co-scriptwriter, András Forgách,

note that the script makes liberal use of the literary material. They borrowed only the metaphor of the bus journey, and developed it further, placing the story in a Hungarian landscape, in a Hungarian world. In their version, the main character does not confront her past or suffer for the fact that she has given herself away. There is no judgment—*Long Dusk* is not a moral story. This woman has simply become old and, in the strict sense of the word, she has to wake up to the fact that her life is at an end. A short while ago, she was celebrating her birthday and her latest professional success with her colleagues, when, answering an unexpected urge, she sets out on a journey in the familiar countryside, never to find her way back again. She gets on an old bus which, like a bad, bungling time machine jolts and shakes her very soul and takes her back to her childhood, to her parents' house, to timeless times, to the beginning of the end. The film is about death, more precisely, dying. Which is not a precise moment—more a process. It is a task which we have to prepare for, a condition we have to fit into. The precise metaphor for this process becomes the journey with its own recurring passages, its beginning lost in the mist and its inconceivable end. The elderly woman—at first unconsciously, then of her own free will, sets out on the journey into the unknown.

Long Dusk says without words, simply with the strength of the images, and by making the story into a visual construct, the things we cannot talk about. The actors make no philosophical pronouncements or remember the past in gauzy flashbacks or make deep and meaningful declarations; there is only banal dialogue about the rain, the timetable, and plans to report the insolent driver. But the landscape, or a building or objects say much more than words; a field of golden sunflowers, a forest path disappearing into darkness, a petrol pump, an old lorry, a portrait of parents on the wall, a beautiful doll with real hair from a childhood long gone. And the human face is the face of Mari Törőcsik, who plays the old woman. This great actress lent her own ageing features and unembellished presence to the packed seventy minutes of *Long Dusk*.

János Szász's film, *The Witman Boys,* hints at the unspeakable. His previous work, *Woyzeck* brought the director significant national and international recognition. After receiving prizes at the Hungarian Film Week and at various festivals, it was also awarded a major European prize, the Felix, in 1993.

The Witman Boys was made from a short story, "Matricide", by the early twentieth century author Géza Csáth (1883–1919), and uses themes from his other stories. Csáth was almost as versatile a talent as his famous cousin, the poet and novelist Dezső Kosztolányi; besides short stories he also wrote plays and criticism. He came up to Budapest from southern Hungary and was a neurologist at a clinic in the capital. He wrote a strange book based on his practice in a genre which is difficult to categorize, *Diary of an Insane Woman;* the appearance of this book marked the beginning of the rediscovery of Csáth in the seventies and eighties. Despite a half finished life's work and unfulfilled talent, he has had a cultlike following, especially for his short diary, which documents a tormented life and an increasing addiction to morphine. A collection of his stories, translated into English, made its way into Penguin's East European classics series and ran into several editions.

The short story on which *The Witman Boys* is based, is a dark work, the chronicle of a matricide. The unexpected death of the father upsets the balance of the family;

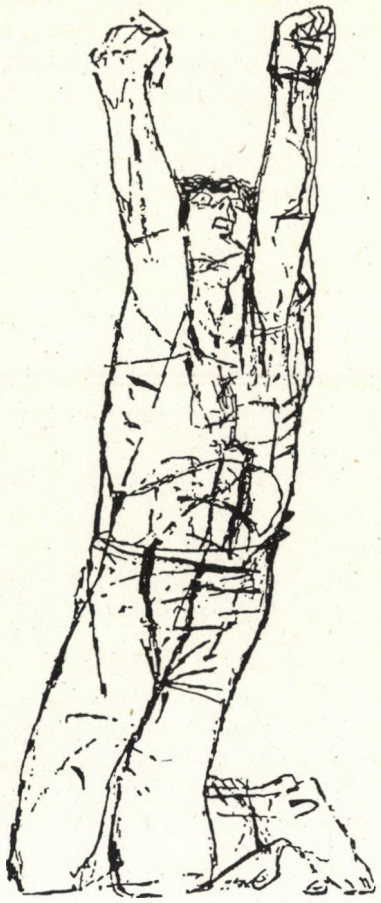
the boys find themselves in an emotional vacuum and discover with dismay the things that an orderly middle-class life had hidden from them up to now: that their mother does not love them and never did. In the absence of a father or authority figure, the children go their own way, loafing around, torturing and dissecting animals—researching the mystery of pain. They start with frogs, followed by cats and dogs and finally an owl. In the course of their aimless wanderings, they come across a brothel. One of the prostitutes is kind to them—as a whim or because she identifies with them. The boys are so starved of love and human contact that they practically become her slaves and when she asks them for a gift, they decide to bring her their mother's jewels. The nocturnal invaders make a noise, the mother wakes up and the children stab her to death in cold blood.

The writer-director János Szász said in an interview: "What interested me was why those rotten kids don't run out of the room when the mother wakes up?" The question is sharp and the film answers it. Even so *The Witman Boys* is a flawed work.

There is not one natural image in it, the admirably dramatized story is told with extreme artifice and, in places, with self-indulgent visual means. Tibor Máthé photographed and lit the film to death. He uses the camera as a paintbrush, every frame is a Rembrandt. The interiors are bathed in golden light, the film wallows in soft, warm colours and what he does with the natural sources of light—porcelain lamp shades, red light shining onto snow—is positively perverse. (Of course, there may be other opinions on this. Hungarian cameramen are much sought after in Holywood and Tibor Máthé got the prize for best photography for both *Woyzeck* at the time, and now for *The Witman Boys).*

Mrs Witman is played by Maia Morgenstern. Knowing Csáth's short story, this could appear to be mistaken casting, since in the story the mother is a plump, weak woman and the reader feels something like loathing towards her. Szász made things very difficult for himself giving the part to the slender Morgenstern, with her beautiful, slightly worn face and sharp-edged, restless personality. Csáth does not take much trouble over her character, but tells us succinctly that the woman did not love her husband, does not love her children, does not love anyone, is indolent and unfeeling. In the film, the formula is not that simple. Mrs Witman does not love her husband here either and he is only seen in two fleeting scenes, but they are enough to show that there is nothing about him to love. The relationship between the mother and the boys is also more complex and contradictory in the film. However cool they are towards each other and however much the distance between them grows, we still cannot assert that the woman does not feel anything for her children. Csáth's themes—animal torture, the erotic adventures of teenagers, matricide—appear to be very easy to transfer to film fruitfully and effectively. In reality they are deadly traps, each and every one. Portraying them is not merely a technical question, just as what you can or cannot ask child actors to play is not a directing problem. János Szász has been able to gain close access to unmentionable taboos with unerring moral integrity and sensitivity. As close as possible, but not one step past the point where he might have harmed them and for this I respect him greatly.

After *Woyzcek, The Witman Boys* is another venture flying in the face of providence. It seems that Szász will not be satisfied with anything less. ❧



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B ***RECRUITMENT***

Year *..... (1), executing organ ..... (2)*
Classification: *secret agent (35), contract agent (4), agent (5)*
Grounds: *patriotic (ideological, political) (6), evidence against compromised or discredited (7), financial gain (8), personal and other interests (9), combination of grounds (10)*
Method of recruitment: *rapid (11), gradual (12)*
Changes *in ground of recruitment .....*
classification of network .....
function .....
Objective of recruitment was: *obtaining or discovery of secret information (13), execution of operative combinations (14), recognition or finding of person engaged in hostile activity (15), prison intelligence and information (16), preventive protection (17), operative control (18), execution of partial tasks in network operations (19), activities as resident (20), owner of "T" apartment (21), mail checking (22), special technical operative task (23), other special assignment (24)*
Co-operation: *accepted enthusiastically (25), hesitatingly, after a great deal of persuasion (26)*
His/her conditions were: *not be given a covername (27), will provide no written report (28), will not work against certain persons, groups or countries (29), will not have meetings at conspirational places (30), at public places (31)*

From László Varga: Watchers and the Watched, pp. 51–77.

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