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THE RESPONSIBILITY OF EUROPE

by

GYULA KÁLLAI

For many centuries now Europe has been much more than a geographical term. "European" does not only mean that one belongs to a certain continent, it has been interpreted in many different ways. We like to recall that it has often served to describe culture, civilization, science and social progress.

From Homer and the great Greek dramatic poets, through Dante, Shakespeare, the Encyclopedists, Hegel, the French and Russian realists, our poets Petőfi and Ady, up to Thomas Mann, who in the grim era of fascism was called a *European* by the Hungarian poet Attila József, there is a long line of those who, as natives of this continent, as Europeans, added new intellectual treasures to the common culture of mankind. This continent also became the cradle of the new society—socialism. And it is here that the idea of international cooperation for world peace has been formulated.

One knows only too well, though, that the two World Wars also originated in Europe. Here are the bloodiest battlefields of human history and most of the war memorials and mass graves, here were the death camps, gas chambers and places of mass extermination—eternal memorials of the sacrifice of tens of millions killed in those wars. Colonialism, which brought so much suffering, affliction and humiliation to the peoples of other continents, and the wily methods of imperialism were first invented by European rulers and ruling classes.

*

Thanks to the changes of the past quarter of a century, the emergence of the world socialist system, the favourable shift in power relationships, the struggle of the socialist community in the diplomatic field and the peoples' fight for peace, the time has now come for this continent to be transformed into a home of peace and security.

The struggle waged for the peace and security of Europe is inseparable from the fight which the Soviet Union and the socialist countries have been conducting for the gradual and fuller implementation of the principle of peaceful coexistence right from the time of their birth. In the present world situation the need for this policy and the conditions of its realization have best matured on this continent, for the main lines of force between the two opposing world systems are running here, where the focal points of the major tensions are also to be found. Observance of the principle of peaceful co-existence may at the same time be the guarantee of prospects for peace on the continent.

The responsibility we feel for the fate of Europe, however, cannot and does not mean that we can be indifferent to events which take place in other continents and give rise to grave concern. Our conscience dictates and our sense of responsibility tells us to do our job in the awareness that our role is, through Europe, inseparable from the progress of international life. We therefore also have to concern ourselves with events beyond the geographical boundaries of our continent.

We are firmly convinced that mankind is taking historic steps forward on the road towards social progress and the elimination of wars on Earth. The socialist community is stepping up the struggle for the maintenance of peace, and this effort is joined by a growing number of nations on all continents. All that is needed to attain this aim is at the disposal of mankind —the increasingly powerful socialist world, the Communist and workers' movement waging its historic fight in the West, and the strength of hundreds of millions supporting the anti-imperialist national liberation movement.

Whichever way we look in the world, there are still significant forces which ignore the interests of peoples, which protect the rule of exploiters by every means at their disposal, from demagoguery to bribery, which denigrate the ideas of social progress, and of socialism, and which persecute progressive-minded people. In our days U.S. imperialism is everywhere in charge of, or backing such a policy of international reaction. This inhuman policy which utterly despises the peoples is today the number one (though historically the last and most powerful) enemy of peace, progress, and socialism. To unite against it, therefore, is a peremptory command of our age, a fundamental interest of every people and nation.

*

We can note with satisfaction that the necessity of this unity is understood by a growing number of people throughout the world. In this a

decisive role is played in the first place by the policy of peace of the Soviet Union and the progressive forces of the world. Larger and larger masses rise to action in order to save the world from wars, and to turn political settlement, instead of the use of force, into the dominant practice of international life. These forces struggle for the enforcement of the principle of peaceful coexistence. Imperialism is unable to hold up this process. It is unable to do so, because interests desiring peace and security, and mutually advantageous and fruitful co-operation, have grown in such a way that they practically extend to the whole of human society.

These interests are today endorsed and professed not only by the socialist countries, not only by the Communist and workers' parties, they are recognized by an increasing number of bourgeois parties, religious movements and capitalist Governments. Therefore we can say that the aim of our international policies today is to enforce more strictly, or to the full, the principle of peaceful coexistence.

Inspired with responsibility for the fate of nations, the Warsaw Treaty Political Consultative Committee, at its meeting held in Budapest in March 1969, proposed the convocation of an all-European intergovernmental conference. The central idea of this constructive, long-range programme of peace is to create firm guarantees for the peace of this continent and at the same time to develop cooperation among states. The participants have ever since been working hard, with circumspection and an open readiness for many-sided discussions, to bring about this conference.

This activity has produced tangible results. The Soviet Union and Poland have concluded treaties with the Federal Republic of Germany; a four-power agreement on West Berlin has been signed; and agreements have been reached between the German Democratic Republic, on the one hand, and the Federal Republic of Germany and the West Berlin Senate, on the other. The chances that a European security conference might meet, on the basis of the present situation and the inviolability of the existing frontiers in Europe, as well as of the principle of renunciation of the use of force, are growing.

We are making considerable efforts to promote disarmament. These are important results of the peace policy of the socialist countries, but these results are advantageous to both parties.

We want this positive process to continue; the aforesaid treaties to be ratified and put into force; the German Democratic Republic to be fully recognized in accordance with international law; the two German states to be admitted simultaneously to membership of the United Nations; the European security conference to be convened already this year. The Euro-

pean nations, which are primarily concerned, surely want the same. In the Western countries, however, there are considerable forces which want something different. They prevent, restrain and slow down this process. To fight on the political front against these is in the fundamental interest not only of the Governments of the socialist countries but also of the peoples of Europe.

We can state with satisfaction that most diverse forces of European society—workers, peasants and intellectuals, young and old, men and women, Communists, Socialists, Social Democrats and Christian Democrats, secular and ecclesiastical organizations—are working with increasing activity for the creation of a Europe where security and co-operation are the rule. Growing efforts are exerted to ensure that these forces come to an understanding among themselves and in common look for the constructive steps that have to be taken.

This is an incontestable success. The initial results can be carried further only if the masses act to support them. If people do not allow the bigoted circles of imperialism to use the issues of European security for manoeuvring, deception and cheating. A series of historic examples demonstrate that the questions which are decisive for the fate of mankind and of continents, which determine the future of the world, can really be solved and brought to complete success only with the active participation of the masses. Co-operation among the nations of the continent is therefore an important condition of success.

The foreign policy interests of the Government and those of the population in Hungary are entirely identical. But even so it is necessary that the masses should express their political views. The active assent of the Hungarian nation building socialism is the firm basis of the diplomatic activity of the Government. The desire for peace of the Hungarian nation and the wishes of every man of good will are given expression by the social forces which last September formed the Hungarian National commission on European Security and Co-operation.

A distinguished group of Belgian peace activists—representatives of diverse political and ideological trends—proposed the convocation in June 1972 of a meeting of political, economic and social forces of all European countries to encourage international social action and to coordinate such movements. In our view the task of the conference should be to give expression to the growing interest taken by all European nations in the establishment of security and cooperation, and thus to involve the nations in the shaping of a kind of Europe the security of which, for the first time in history, would be guaranteed and permanent. Essential prerequisites for

this security are the ratification and entry into force of the treaties mentioned above, the full recognition of the German Democratic Republic and the simultaneous admission of the two German states to membership of the United Nations.

*

Those who followed recent foreign political events in the Western world with attention may have noticed how responsible statesmen talk about the convocation of the European security conference. While a good number of Governments agree that the time is ripe to convene the European security conference this year, NATO and the United States of America chiefly employ delaying tactics. Official statements by U.S. politicians designate—without giving any reason whatsoever—1973 as a possible date for the holding of the security conference. It is hard to overcome the suspicion that this foot-dragging is indicative of their hope that by that time it might become possible again to deteriorate the European atmosphere, so as to thwart the convocation of the conference, or to make it impracticable for a long time to come.

In spite of imperialist manoeuvres, however, reason and a sense of reality begin to come to the fore in Europe. The political, economic, technical, scientific and strategic achievements of the Soviet Union, the strengthening of the European socialist systems, the evolution of new power relationships in Europe, make even the leading circles of the capitalist states realize that a new world war would not only break the weaker links of the capitalist chain of power but would end in a total defeat of the principal forces of contemporary capitalism. They have had to allow also for the fundamental interests of nations which demand peace and security. Their policy begins to show certain signs of realism as they come to realize this. They try to line up their foreign policy with the actual situation. This explains why the Second World War has not been—and, we hope, will not be—followed by a third, and why the nations of Europe could live in relatively peaceful conditions for more than a quarter century now. There is no other alternative to the policy of peaceful co-existence. The development of Soviet–French relations is an example to prove that co-operation based on the appreciation of mutual interests can be a generally acceptable norm of intercourse between countries having different social systems.

Great efforts must be made to ensure that the consistent struggle of the masses, and the work of the National Commissions fighting for the strengthening of peace and security will be followed by a series of well-

prepared multilateral consultations. The Hungarian National Commission is of the view that the establishment of European security would close the grave historical period which began with the Second World War, whose aftermath is still weighing heavily on the peoples of our continent today. It would usher in a new era, for it would open the way towards the implementation of the principle of peaceful coexistence of states with differing social systems. The conference would be attended, beside the European countries, by the United States and Canada, so that the European security conference would mean practically that the main forces of the capitalist and socialist systems would agree to make the principle of peaceful coexistence a general rule for relations among countries on the European continent.

Peace is one and indivisible, and the realization of peaceful coexistence on a continental scale would have a fruitful effect on the whole international situation, and serve as an example to all the other continents.

European peace and security will not be stabilized as long as the fires of war are ablaze in other areas of our globe. Nations fighting for freedom all over the world begin to see the international significance of European security and its interdependence with their anti-imperialist struggle. That is how the three great revolutionary forces of the contemporary world are united and are becoming invincible: the world socialist system, the international Communist movement, and the nations' struggle for independence supported by the united progressive forces of the world. That is how the struggle against the common enemy—imperialism—is intensifying on a common wide front. That is why the peace-loving peoples of Asia, Africa, the Middle East and America turn to us, to Europe, with mounting confidence and hope, encouraging and urging us.

Europe can now show the nations of the world that it deserves their confidence.

CULTURAL POLICY AND CHANGING REALITY

by

GYÖRGY ACZÉL

I.

I should like to discuss the recent Tenth Congress of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party. Though I am not prepared to elaborate all the consequences that can and should be drawn, or the tasks involved, in a systematic and complete manner, I should nevertheless like to draw attention to certain general lessons and considerations that can be derived from the Congress which are important from the point of view of the political and even more so the ideological approach to cultural questions.

If one wished to sum up the essence of the congresses of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party with lexical brevity one would not be far off the mark if one said: the Seventh Congress was the congress of consolidation, the Eighth Congress reported the end of the organizational aspects of the socialist transformation of the village and the laying of the foundations of socialism while the problems of perfecting the system of economic management and developing it further were at the centre of the attention of the Ninth. One can hardly describe the Tenth Congress as briefly and as concisely. At this Congress we took notice of the fact that the building of socialism, which covers a long period, does not always require basic measures that are effective over the whole of the social structure, nor does it demand that they be taken at the same rate, there is therefore no historical law which decrees that every single congress should deal with a new "sensational" question that can be condensed into a single slogan. The Tenth Congress in particular reflected a situation where, following the laying of the foundations of socialism and great movements affecting the whole of the social structure, attention necessarily concentrated on more "commonplace" and "quieter" questions, which are no less important and perhaps even more complex,

Based on shorthand notes of an address given at a conference of cultural representatives attached to Hungarian Embassies to European Socialist countries.

and which noticeably and of course continuously occupy the leadership of the party and the country and the people as a whole throughout that historical period in which socialism is built. Our lives also convincingly prove how right Lenin was when he emphasized that to create a new work discipline, to construct new forms of social relations between men, and new forms and methods to induce them to participate in work—this is work that will spread over many years and decades. This is most gratifying and most noble work.

A concrete analysis of a concrete situation

The "many hues" of our congresses also show that the building of socialism goes on under continuously changing, developing and progressing inner and outer conditions. In order to find our way amongst them, in order to make our aims, which are basically and on principle unchangeable, come true, we shall always need the basic method of Marxism which Lenin called the concrete analysis of a concrete situation and which he used himself in a classic way.

I shall, as a preliminary, first mention an example which is apparently a long way indeed from culture and which proves how great the importance of an accurate analysis of the given situation is. Towards the end of the Fifties, in the course of one of the vehement arguments going on about the cooperative movement in Hungary, the question was asked whether Lenin's classically concise proposition: "rely on the poor peasant, ally yourself with the middle-peasantry and fight the kulaks" was still valid, and if so, in what way. János Kádár then asked back: "Where does Lenin say that we should rely on those who *used to be* poor peasants, ally ourselves with those who *used to be* small peasants, and fight those who *used to be* kulaks?"

What Lenin said is always valid, wherever and whenever the peasantry is sharply divided according to class into kulaks, middle peasants, poor peasants and agrarian proletarians, that is into the bourgeois, petty bourgeois and proletarian strata in the village, and the fight is on for socialist objectives. It is clear however that at a time in Hungary when the first and decisive step, the formation of agricultural producers' cooperatives, had already occurred, when putting the barely established cooperatives on a firmer political and economic basis and helping a united socialist peasant class to come into being and to develop was the primary objective, it would have been a grave mistake to take a proposition by Lenin which applied to other clearly defined socio-historical conditions and employ it in a basically changed situation in a dogmatic, that is an anti-Leninist, way.

A concrete analysis of a concrete situation and a consistent application of Marxist principles and theories is indivisible. One cannot allow anyone to take facts out of context, or transitory phenomena, referring to them in the interests of questioning or revising Marxist truth. Nor can it be permitted however that new facts of social development be neglected in the manner of dogmatic thinking. I am not mentioning both distortions for the sake of some sort of symmetry but because both of them again and again threaten the healthy development of the movement. That is why we decisively reject the renegades of Communism who, under the guise of concrete analysis subject the basic, historically proved and valid truths of Marxism to revision, but we at the same time reject the false "loyalty to principles" of the dogmatists, who, as the lessons of history show, have proved themselves insensitive to the new facts of a changing reality. Nor do we follow those who, in Lenin's words, become "enchanted" by a certain form of the growth of socialism, who are afraid to face turns of events made unavoidable by changes in the objective conditions, who "continue to pursue simple, well-drilled truths that are beyond all doubt at first sight, such as that three is more than two."

The Tenth Congress of Hungarian communists also bore out that the building of socialism is the sort of historical process where uninterrupted change and development was and remains a fundamental essence, and which at the same time allows all that a socialist society offers to emerge and become more and more distinct.

Remember what an inspiring aim and objective socialism was to all class-conscious working people in the years before Liberation! Let us confess that many of us hoped, when stepping across the "threshold" of the new society, that following the carrying out of this or that task there would be "quiet", stability, and even a time of rest. Our wishes were stronger than the admonitions of theory.

It happens these days also that some fight for a social objective or aim as if it were the final one. In that way this or that stage appears as metaphysically teleological to many, and the process as a whole and long-run aspects are hidden from them, they in fact no longer see things as a process. And this though the Marxist classics emphasize again and again that socialism and communism are a process, they are not rigid and immovable but on the contrary the most dynamically developing society.

The existential principle of Hungarian society is an increasing apperception of contradictions as they arise, bringing them to the level of conscious awareness and dealing with them in action, a progressing beyond achievements which are at the same time preserved, a society where achieved

objectives and carried out tasks are at the same time starting points from which one moves towards new aims and objectives. Notions according to which socialist or communist society means some sort of finished ideal or metaphysically interpreted "completeness" are therefore improper.

Our daily work must also be governed by laws which have always been fundamental to Marxism: loyalty to the basic truths of Marxism–Leninism and defence of the purity of our scientific theory, reorganizing at the same time that the world is changing, changing also, and largely, because we are transforming it! One can only interpret these changes correctly and direct them effectively in the interests of the unceasing strengthening of socialism if our notions are adapted to changes in reality in "every separate stage of the historical process, and in keeping with the concrete social and political situation."

The cohesive force of this double obligation which consists of two indivisible sides of one, since one of the most important properties of true loyalty to principles is the unceasing strengthening of the truths and effectiveness in practice of our theory on the basis of the generalization of new phenomena and experiences is always the "concrete analysis of a concrete situation."

Earlier on I emphasized the differing characteristics of party congresses, now, in the present context, I would like to say with the same justification that the congresses held since 1956 expressed the unchanged nature of the policy of our party inspite of their differing character, or rather precisely thanks to it. Allow me to express an apparent contradiction: the policy of the party does not change because it is always changing. It is firm and principled, or, if you wish to put it that way, unchanged, because our party is always ready to renew and transform itself, that is it is continuously changing and renewing itself.

The Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party is acting in the spirit of Lenin's teaching when it implements the dialectics of permanence and change. The historical position and role of the Hungarian party cannot of course be identified with that of Lenin's party which cut entirely new paths in the historical situation in which the Bolsheviks found themselves, the Hungarian party however, analyzing the lessons of the counter-revolution, endeavoured and still endeavours to work out its own style of operation while following Lenin's example. Not only our theory but also our own often painful experiences convinced us that only those who change can stay unchanged.

Allow me to refer to just one piece of evidence taken from the recent past to indicate that this is not just a play on words. A continuous and essentially unchanged feature of our policy is the unceasing strengthening of the links

between the party and the working masses. In order to ensure that mutual confidence should be permanent and be strengthened, certain concrete aspects of policy had to be modified and developed in many respects. To give an example, the reform of the system of economic management was made necessary not only in order to speed up socio-economic development, but also in order to further strengthen that mutual confidence which links the party and the people. There can be no doubt that a rise in the standard of living and a reckoning with the direct daily interests of those who work is an indispensable demand made by this confidence and that the change and improvement of the system of economic management is in harmony with this demand.

We would have been incapable of influencing and changing reality in accordance with our basic intentions if we had not presupposed the movement of life, analyzing it in a Marxist manner; if we had remained tied to the leash of methods that had proved themselves earlier we would have certainly lost contact with both social reality and the masses. It is this unceasing confrontation, this continuous comparison of theories and principles and practice, policy and social reality which helps to avoid the danger of subjectivism which principally, but not exclusively, threatens parties in power. Parties fighting to obtain power are more directly compelled by life itself, day by day, to keep an eye on themselves and to correct their own policy. A party in power is to a far greater degree exposed to the danger that its intentions and aims, that which it decrees, are "reported back" to it as if they were the situation itself, that, acting on the basis of such "reports back" difficulties might occur which would have been objectively avoidable. If activity is not confronted with reality, if no notice is taken of the fact that intention and result do not coincide, if the lessons provided by a criticism of practice are not continuously studied, contact with reality and the masses is lost, and a subjectivism which is so dangerous in politics will result, a subjectivism which takes one's wishes to be reality itself. In order to avoid this danger of subjectivism a continuous attention to changing conditions and movements within society, a continuous drawing of conclusions on the basis of a Marxist analysis of the situation, self-correction and self-criticism are an indispensable necessity in politics in general, as well as in cultural policy which is part of it.

Carrying on the Leninist cultural revolution

Building socialism on a higher level also means new tasks as regards an enrichment of everyday life and the culture of a way of life, primarily with

the intention of strengthening and developing its communal and socialist content.

The primary meaning of the culture of everyday life in Hungarian society is a continuous growth of knowledge, skills and know-how coupled with a socialist consciousness, in other words the further unfolding of the cultural revolution in Lenin's sense of the term.

The acquisition of culture and education does not mean merely a command of factual knowledge, but a growth of personality, the elaboration of all the talents and abilities and the socialist system of values of each individual, so that individual men, linking their aims in life, their efforts and activities, to the progress of the community and of society should, precisely in this way, become truly men, individuals and persons.

The wholeness of the personality cannot be separated from responsibilities that extend beyond oneself, to others, to the community and to society. An attitude that is directed purely towards individual profit, in itself leads to a narrowing of cultural and human horizons. Someone cannot become a truly cultured man who merely asks what "profit" there is in something for him, who asks himself: why should I go to the theatre, read prose or verse or fiction, why should I listen to music when I can do well enough without all these, when these do not play any role in me achieving a higher standard of living, in my ability to buy more goods, and so on. Those for whom culture is an aim in itself, who wish to rise to the heights of culture in order to elevate themselves above the profane thoughts of everyday life and the smells of earth and common humanity, are no closer to being a type of man who can be called socialist. Neither "realists" governed by the profit motive, nor sterile aesthetes can be considered as examples to be followed, nor must it be forgotten that both are significant products of the intellectual attitude and sensibility of the bourgeoisie.

Further growth of socialist democracy, one of the most important objectives outlined by the Tenth Congress of Hungarian communists, is impossible without carrying forward the cultural revolution in Lenin's sense of the term. In these days where the scope of real decisions is extended day by day, where science and technology are developing at an ever increasing rate, one can only speak of actual, meaningful socialist democracy if individual men can participate in the direction and control of common affairs with increasing competence. That is why it is high time that cultural policy should overcome that frequently apparent damaging point of view which narrows down culture to problems of art and literature and which restricts cultural policy to influence exercised on artists and writers, an important enough task in itself, but not an exclusive one. In the words of the report

of the Central Committee to the Tenth Congress "The tasks facing the country as well as the speedy progress of science and technology demand a growth in the qualifications of men, and a continuous extension of a knowledge on a society wide scale. That is why the further perfection of the school system and of public education is a basic problem of further socialist progress."

A way of dealing with problems of consciousness and culture, raised by the system of economic management, that accords with concrete demands has not been properly worked out yet. I am not at this stage primarily concerned with the demand, pretty important in itself, which the Congress also discussed, that one must show greater determination in putting a barrier in the way of those endeavours which, in opposition to a position which is a matter of principle for the party, give priority to enterprise profit over basic considerations of cultural policy. What is even more important is that increased attention to material incentives can only lead to an enrichment of a socialist humanity besides increasing economic efficiency if there is no gap between these material incentives and incentives designed to encourage the conscious and spontaneous readiness to accept social responsibility.

The growth of socialist consciousness within public opinion is an extraordinarily contradictory process. Opposed ideological forces and tendencies were more clearly polarized at the time of the great social turning points and their social direction was more directly discernable. In conditions of relatively peaceful everyday progress however, when and because principles and attitudes do not appear with dramatic weight, the danger arises, inspite of the strengthening of the socialist content of consciousness, that socialist attitudinal features peacefully coexist with petty-bourgeois, nonsocialist conditioning, the latter what is more can increase in strength both in individual men and, as a result of badly interpreted group interests, in certain collectives also. In this way, and for a short time, a work brigade and a whole factory, an enterprise and a particular industry, and industry as such and agriculture might find themselves in opposition to each other. In the words of the Central Committee's report to the Tenth Congress. "Socialist democracy that provided a foundation for, and extended, the rights of citizens, and the reform in the system of economic management which better expressed individual and communal interests made the relationship between work done and the social interest more conscious than heretofore; they furthered the sense of justice and fairness of the masses, they gave firmer roots to the knowledge that work is the basis of prosperity in socialism and that true personal prosperity can only be sought in harmony with the interests of the community. At the same time the remnants of

bourgeois morality survive, in part reproduce themselves and temporarily revive in the transitional area of society. Individualism, egoism and gross materialism have lately become stronger as a subordinate side-effect of development."

An indispensable and honourable task awaits the sciences, principally the social sciences, and the arts as regards the growth of a readiness to accept a fully understood and fully felt social consciousness. One might say that in this respect there are still insufficient incentives for creative work which reflects and aids this struggle in a manner that accords with reality, a struggle which every man must fight for himself, for the unity of private individuals and social man, and the harmony of private and public life.

Material Goods and Cultural Goods

An improvement in the material conditions of life and a regular rise in the standard of living accompanies socialism and is its great achievement. One must however be aware all the time that the increasing amplitude of material goods is not an end in itself, but a means and precondition of the emergence of a rational human and socialist way of life.

The situation in Hungary as regards the standard of living is unfortunately not good enough yet to spend one's time, as some do, brooding on ways that might put an end to general prosperity and abundance to avoid so-called "damaging consequences"! On the contrary, further efforts are needed to ensure a continuous rise in the standard of living.

Many are inclined to forget that socialism in Hungary inherited feudal-capitalist conditions, debit items that cannot be comprehensively done away within a few years but only in the course of long decades. Let me just refer to the housing situation. According to 1941 census figures 83.9 per cent of the urban population in Hungary lived in one-room dwellings. 97.9 per cent of the houses had a ground-floor only, 71.1 per cent had wattle and daub or mud walls, 20.2 per cent had reed or thatched roofs. The huge sacrifices made in Hungary in order to deal with the housing question, particularly in the last fifteen years, are well-known. In spite of this there is still considerable anxiety whether the housing programme which is being implemented will be able to satisfy justified and burning demand which, in keeping with the nature of life, is continously growing.

One cannot agree with those who call an amplitude of goods the "god of consumption" identifying it with the devil. All those who try to oppose the effective growth of the economy and the cultural revolution to each

other, and hence the party's policy of improving the standard of living and the conditions of life, and a many-sided growth of the human personality, are thinking in terms of false alternatives.

One reason why further efforts must be made in the interests of raising the standard of living is that the cultural level of large masses of working people can only be raised in organic harmony with the continous improvement of conditions of life. On the other hand an increase in education and culture, and participation in the joys which culture has to offer is, under socialism, an organic part of the improvement of the standard of living and the conditions of life.

That is why what had to be done in the formation of the demands of a socialist and cultural life also became more and more complex. Let me repeat, culture is not limited to, say, literature or music, it includes the shaping of a way of life in the widest possible sense of the term, covering leisure, human relations and the environment of man.

The income level of the peasantry has reached that of the working class on a national average. That is a major success and achievement for socialism. Equal attention should however be given to the fact that the level of refinement of the way and manner of life of the peasantry has not kept up with the improvement in their economic situation. Every effort must be made to arouse a demand for a fuller life and a socialist way of life and to ensure that, in keeping with what is possible, the financial and material means necessary to satisfy such demands should be made available to an increasing degree.

Modern plants and factories are being built, but is it any the less important that the "climate" at the place of work should also be modern and socialist?

We Hungarians are proud of our new housing estates, but there is less reason for pride when one considers that community life is barely putting down roots or growing there. Another fact also makes our gall rise as well as giving rise to joy. Everyone is glad that the number of families which have the use of a car is growing fast year by year, but we are opposed to a car becoming a status symbol or the purpose of people's lives. Let it remain a means of transport and let the real need of people travelling by car be going to look at the countryside at a monument or a museum, or to listen to a concert. If the desire for a refined and cultured life does not grow as material circumstances improve then a growth in demand would fully exhaust itself in the acquisition and owning of consumption goods, and could lead to serious distortions. More attention ought to be paid to these very real dangers.

There is of course no way in which a cultured, socialist way of life could be given shape from one day to the next. This objective cannot be achieved by the kind of relatively fast changes of a structural character which were characteristic of the period when the foundations of the socialist social order were laid. We must be ready to undertake "longterm" work when creating a socialist way of life, a fact also emphasized by the Tenth Congress. I am recalling this here since, if what has to be done is recognized, two extremes that easily interchange can be avoided, that is that everything should be done all at once or that nothing should be done at all. If objectives that cannot be carried out are set, or if no objectives are set, the result is much the same. If we say for instance that the level of educational and cultural facilities available at certain homestead clusters, and villages, and on the outskirts of certain towns must be brought close to that of the best cultural centres and that the implementation of this is a difficult task that will take many decades, than the objective is a real one worth working and fighting for. If on the other hand it is said that cultural inequalities can and must be done away with within a few years, that is as good as saying nothing, in fact it is worse since failure which is certain in cases like that takes the wind out of one's sails and demoralizes one.

Ideology and Culture

Shaping a socialist consciousness cannot even be imagined without taking action against non-socialist views. It is important that the concrete, changing preconditions of ideological activity be borne in mind precisely in the interests of the effectiveness of this struggle.

The conditions of ideological activity that go with peaceful coexistence as a long-term policy for instance have significantly changed in ten odd years. Let me refer to a few aspects of conditions in Hungary only, that can also be perceived on the surface: more than six million people from abroad come to Hungary every year, or travel through; television broadcasts from abroad, including western ones, can be received in more than a third of the country; just about a quarter of a million men and women from the Hungarian People's Republic travel to capitalist countries every year, and so on. It is clear that a situation which derives from the policy of peaceful coexistence as well as modern technology, speaking symbolically, the recognition that the country is "draughty", that is far from air-tight, must also prompt the drawing of new conclusions as regards the fight against softening up. As a result the fight against softening up must be given a more scientific basis

and the self-consciousness of citizens must be increased as well as their articulateness in debate. The achievements of socialism and the attractions of the new way of life form the real basis of this self-consciousness and this articulateness, furthermore the fact that only socialism can create the possibility and reality of a truly human life.

The effective criticism of theories and views designed to "soften-up" Marxism–Leninism are a significant field in which ideological activity that counters softening-up takes place. We act in a consistent way against revisionist-reformist as well as ultra-left distortions; a working-class position implies a rejection of the world view of a petty-bourgeoisie in retreat, frightened by the shocks of the class struggle, as well as of the "new" world view of the petty-bourgeois "ad absurdum", the petty-bourgeois *enragé*. The effectiveness of this struggle does not in the first place depend on the adjectives, on the "labels" but on the degree to which we are able to give a positive and Marxist answer to the real questions of the present age, to those questions which these theories and views "answer" in their own way.

"Marxification" goes on throughout the world now; the achievements of socialist practice and the convincing truths of Marxist–Leninist theory must also be considered "responsible" for this. These days most bourgeois thinkers with any pretense to seriousness "fit" certain Marxist propositions into their theoretical systems. One must not imagine that in cases such as that one is always confronted by a conscious agent of imperialism. But it does not follow from this that a possible honest subjective intention is able to hide the untrue objective content and the political danger of this sort of theory from us. I am speaking of possible honest intentions, but that is not the only kind by a long shot, a fair number of conscious apologists of capitalism fly certain demands of socialism as a "bait" with the Jolly Roger, aiming to confuse, they "integrate" certain Marxist propositions.

The "fashion" for socialism and Marxism in bourgeois ideology is based on the achievements of the socialist social system and the attractive power of the socialist way of life as well as on the increasing bankruptcy and loss of credit of open bourgeois apologetics.

That is why bourgeois ideologists, in words at least, wish to cover the bareness of capitalism with the cloak of socialism. That is why there is a variety of convergency theories, that is why distorted maxims such as "socialism without communists" and "anti-communist socialism" were born. The endeavour to construct a "Marxist" social theory detached from the international communist and labour movement and from the practice of the socialist world order, and in opposition to it, satisfies this political need.

Marxification must also be analyzed concretely and historically. Non-Marxist and anti-Marxist efforts must be clearly differentiated for a start. One must pay considerable attention to the causes which gave rise to Marxification, to the direction of movement, and the frequency of recoil; one must under no circumstances equalize those who feel solidarity with the international communist and labour movement, the questions directed towards Marxism of those who sympathise, and the "Marxification" of the renegades who wish to blow up the party and the socialist system. The picture is complex, the directions change and the positions might change. We can be certain of one thing though: those who wish to construct a "Marxist" social theory detached from, in opposition to, and confronting the international communist and labour movement, cannot be called Marxist, but only anti-Marxist, whatever they may call themselves, however complex motivations and reasons they may try to fit into their theory. Anti-communist socialism and anti-Leninist Marxism are squared circles.

Changes must also be continously attended to when further elaborating and applying cultural policy to an analysis of the internal conditions of ideological work. One must bear in mind for instance that as socialist social reconstruction successfully takes into possession certain fields, such as public education, the argument shifts to other fields, and so do the non-Marxist views. These "shifts" do not merely mean that points of view alien to Marxism appear in new guises but also, in the long run, that they in part lose their validity and are confined to a narrower field. In respect to culture, for instance, the fact that the socialist reconstruction of the village is putting an end to the social basis of the populist-urbanist dispute has had an effect on the work of certain writers and artists and on the shaping of certain ideological features. It must be said however that we are still a long way from being able to say that either the objective basis of this conflict, or its radiation effect on consciousness in the shape of certain new and not so new nationalist and cosmopolitan theories and views has come to an end.

The changed circumstances, and they have changed in our favour, also define the only proper present application and interpretation of what can be called fellow traveller policy. "Acknowledging" that points of view get closer to each other and coincide includes "acceptance" of all we agree with, and the expression of the fact that we honestly undertake a policy of co-operation without any tactical *arrière pensée*. But the obligation to acknowledge "acceptance" does not mean that we keep silent about, overlook, or gloss over differences of opinion, though this often and mistakenly happens in practice. On the contrary, clearly stating what we agree with provides the best basis for arguing more sharply and with more determination on those

questions with which we do not agree. It may well turn out that it is precisely this policy, and there are already signs that this is so, which turns a large number of fellow travellers, that is transitional, partial and temporary allies into permanent ones.

Limits and Values in Art

We are sometimes asked: why is there no *either-or* in Hungarian cultural policy? It is not true that there is not, we avail ourselves even of the *either yes, or no* distinction as regards the publication or non-publication of a work, or even its prohibition. As regards ideological judgement the question arises in one way if one speaks about a man's life and work, and in another if one discusses a single work. One can certainly say, speaking of an ideologist, that X. is a Marxist or that he is not a Marxist, but even if he is, this does not mean that every one of his words, or every period of his life has to be accepted. It is much more difficult to decide whether this or that film or novel is socialist realist or not. This is not so because of any desire on our part to confuse categories. We never accepted an ideological third way and we shall never accept one. But what we want to do is to always draw the limits of the basic and unchallengeable *either-or* that divides Marxism and bourgeois and petty-bourgeois ideologies precisely and in accordance with the demands made by Marxist analysis. If phenomena are involved that can be unambiguously placed here or there, it would be opportunism and beating about the bush not to do so. But if the world of art, culture or ideology—largely precisely because of what has been achieved—produces phenomena showing an internal contradiction, then taking these phenomena and labelling them in this way or that in accordance with the rules of formal logic would side-track the ideological struggle. Acting in that way would mean either the intrusion of bourgeois views into Marxist ideology, or rejecting points of view close to ours or definitely approaching them together with the bourgeois views. The object of Marxist analysis is always, and this is to give effect to a genuine *either-or*, to break up contradictory phenomena into elements that agree with us, which approach our ideas, and those that are alien to us which have to be rejected, arguing with them and rejecting them though accepting the former. Lenin's Tolstoy and Herzen analyses are still valid examples for us when it comes to judging contradictory works and creative artists.

Why do we not say more definitely whether a particular work of art is or is not socialist realist? That is how the question is often put.

Every art has a "codified", one could call it classical, hard core of socialist realist works which is also taught in schools. But it must be remembered once again that judging works of art that grow, are enriched and live together with reality also presupposes concrete analysis and exchanges of views, that is discussion and debate on the part of critics and the general public. Judging new phenomena and employing the standards of Marxist aesthetics is not easy. Socialist realist art which already extends to many parts of the world displays an unbelievable colourful wealth of approaches, forms and styles. The Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party supports those artistic experiments which serve the wealth of forms of socialist art and literature, help is given to creative artists so that their individual talent can emerge. This is not some sort of "achievement of Hungarian cultural policy." The Bolshevik Party already formulated this Marxist–Leninist position in 1925, and the Twenty-Fourth Congress expressed itself in the same spirit. The report of the Central Committee to the Twenty-Fourth Congress states: "In our view attention must by paid to experiments by creative artists and we are ready to fight for a complete unfolding of individual abilities and talents and for a wealth and variety of forms and styles based on the methods of socialist realism."

This method of course makes the judging of works more difficult. We naturally consider differing creative personalities such as Balzac, Stendhal, a large section of the Russian classics or Thomas Mann as critical realists just because a sufficient historical perspective is already at our disposal, allowing us to make such a judgement. The stream of socialist realism is emerging ever wider and a "model-work", novel, film, picture or sculpture can no longer provide a standard or signpost. The stream of socialist realism is wider than ever before, it cannot all the same, ever become "shoreless". Unceasing and continuous analysis and discussion is necessary to allow the limits to be clarly defined, they cannot always be present ready for instant classification. The less so since the criteria characterizing socialist realism are also subjected to the dialectics of permanence and change, in critical thinking just as much as in public opinion and naturally also in the process of artistic creation itself.

Party committedness in the sense of committedness to social progress, the labour movement and socialism, and identification with the objectives of progress and socialism is a permanent and necessary feature of socialist art. This permanent feature appears historically in changing forms, it is continuously concretized in proportion with the changing conditions and problems of the labour movement and of socialism. A particular sensitivity shown to social change is certainly characteristic of socialist realism but this

quite obviously shows itself differently in the arts at times of social transformation filled with major upheavals and at times when the building of socialism takes place in conditions of relative calm.

The endeavour to ensure that the people should understand works of art, and consider and feel them to be their own, is an essential aspect of socialist art. This cannot be done at one fell swoop either, this is also a stormy and contradictory process both for art and for the people. If the stratification of taste is added, which is just about unavoidable when judging works of art, the effects of which are further strengthened as the links of art with the masses are extended, then it becomes clear that the demand for an *either-or* in this field cannot be separated from the need for discussion and analysis. Publishers' readers, editors and critics are rightly reprimanded if they do not reject what has to be unambigously rejected and if they do not welcome what is unambiguously welcome, but a large proportion of works have a much more complex character, therefore the work of critics is certainly not easy. It is a well known fact of literary history that a whole series of works now considered to be unambiguously socialist realist were not immediately recognized as future classics of socialist realism. If one or the other of us had been asked to read Sholokhov's *Quiet flows the Don* or Fadeyev's *Nineteen* at the time, I am not sure that we would have recognized them as party-committed, socialist realist works with the same warmth, lack of ambiguity and definiteness as we rightly consider them socialist realist classics today, just as, and let us not forget this, it was not always clear to everybody that Attila József was a classic of socialist art. Or let us think of the discussion on whether Brecht's work can be considered socialist realist or not. I am not speaking as if I thought that there are a great number of undiscovered classics about. All I am trying to indicate is that every age needs time to recognize and work out its value judgements regarding new and still unfamiliar developments.

It would be a grave mistake indeed to conclude for that reason that values and value judgements are relative, or to arrive at a nihilist position. One must oppose with great determination those "critical" trends, to be found both at home and abroad, which wish to just about eliminate those Marxist notions from thinking on art and literature which are absolutely necessary when making judgements on aesthetic values. This "critical" effort wishes to eliminate categories such as realism, party-committedness or decadence which took shape in the course of history and which provided the guidelines of Marxist aesthetic judgement. We consider establishing the value and respect due to Marxist aesthetic categories in critical thinking on an ever firmer basis to be one of our most important tasks. Critical indecisive-

ness however, which the Tenth Congress rightly condemned, can certainly not be done away with by an instant, determined and state-authorized categorization of works. A proper and convincing scale of values can only be constructed on the basis of concrete analyses and discussions that take principled and consistent Marxist thinking as their starting point as well as of a continuous rise in the standards of theoretical and aesthetic thinking.

A proper interpretation of the concrete analysis of a concrete situation also demands that it be recognised that more than one person holding office in the field of the arts confuses an analysis of the concrete situation with making a fetish of the status quo. This attitude must be rejected. Those who surrender to damaging views and improper demands raise spontaneity and instinctiveness to the level of methodological principles. There are some who, relying on the principle of the concrete analysis of the concrete situation, take into account every given fact every absurdity, every damaging phenomenon that stands in the way of progress, petty-bourgeois taste for instance, to give just one example. "Reality" is accepted as an unavoidable fact by them, instead of fighting to advance the right tendencies and push back the improper ones. This point of view is also largely responsible for uncertainties in criticism which thus express surrender to instinctiveness.

What I have said can, I think, be summed up by arguing that the analysis of a given situation is a Marxist duty at all times, that the aim to be realized, the socialist society that has to be constructed, and the communist society that must be created, must be borne in mind at all times in such a way that our policy and cultural policy must be continuously confronted with reality on the basis of the principles of Marxism–Leninism, keeping a clear eye on the long run. The mistakes of the past were largely due to neglecting this. Only the Marxist–Leninist method of concrete analysis of a concrete situation can provide the relatively best answers to What now? and What next? This is one of the chief guarantees for thinking in tune with the people and for the avoidance of the gravest errors, subjectivism and dogmatic and revisionist distortions.

The general and the peculiar aspects of socialist culture

The conditions under which socialism is built change in time, but even in as small a country as Hungary they also change from place to place in accordance with local conditions. The organization of agricultural cooperatives was completed in one year in one county and in three in another, in Szabolcs for instance there are still some small-scale production villages where the fields

are still privately owned. If we have to reckon with a variety of circumstances and conditions even in Hungary, how much more so have we to do the same within the alliance of socialist countries which includes countries and nations with differing histories, differing traditions, and different natural and cultural properties, nations and countries that find themselves on differing levels of socialist development! It is clear that these differences must be continuously borne in mind by policy and cultural policy, the more so the larger and more extended the community of socialist countries is, and the greater our endeavours are to bring them closer to each other.

In my view what is truly decisive is taking into account and making effective all that is common, identical and generally valid, all that which links up the policy of the socialist countries and their cultural policy as well.

What follows from our common aims and from the historic role and basic laws of the socialist social system is, mentioning only features relevant to cultural policy, the Leninist principle of the party and state direction of culture, ensuring the necessary conditions for the further advance of the Marxist world view, efforts to overcome and progress beyond the contradictions of an elite and a mass culture, and the divergent development of technological and intellectual culture, removing all the objective and subjective obstacles that stand in the way of the link and interaction of culture and the masses, and reliance on revolutionary and progressive national traditions and on socialist and other progressive forces throughout the world.

The honest friendship resting on firm, principled foundations, which links Hungary and the Soviet Union is one of the indices of an internationalism which is a permanent and essential feature of our policy, and of our cultural policy which is part of it.

The bourgeois policy of softening up loves to neglect and overlook the common features which characterize the policy of socialist countries; it endeavours to absolutize differences that are apparent in forms of implementation, in means and methods. As far as we are concerned however, and this applies to cultural policy as much as to policy as such, the primary objective is making the general and common features characteristic of socialism more conscious. The cultivation of our relations is a necessary element of Hungary's internationalist policy, and an important method and form of the strengthening of the unity of the socialist camp and the labour movement. A consistent enforcement of this internationalist attitude, both at home and abroad, is one of the best antidotes of the efforts to divide made by the bourgeois policy of softening up. And it also helps if the differing features of the cultural policy of socialist countries are treated with mutual under-

standing, a sensitivity for peculiar local conditions and, last but not least, with a readiness to learn at all times.

The validity of common regular features based on the identity of social systems, of joint aims and common ideals is beyond argument, this does not mean however that the cultural policy of the socialist countries is uniform or that it ought to be such. The universal common regularities are not some sort of abstract "asomatic" beings. They express the essential identity of the economic and social institutions of these countries in an "individual form" which is indeed highly concrete.

Just as it is important to bear in mind that the particular can only exist because there are universals, one must not forget either that universals can only appear in the shape of historically concrete particulars. In the long run a prescribed mould hinders the coming to the fore of precisely the universal.

The Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party deals with the general political, ideological and cultural-political tasks in the building of socialism by analyzing concrete historical processes and by bearing in mind their effects and consequences. It follows from just this that we would commit a great error indeed if we took these methods, means and ways of dealing with things that are based on concrete historic experience, and proclaimed them to be some sort of "pattern" or "model", if we desired explicitly or implicitly that some other socialist country should transplant them into their own practice. It is precisely the careful analysis of our own circumstances and changing conditions that has taught us to respect the practice of other socialist countries when it differs from ours.

To give an example: federations of artists and writers in Hungary have no state administrative functions as they do in some socialist countries, nor do they have their own publishing houses. This naturally did not happen this way because someone somewhere worked it out as a "theoretical principle" that things should be done this way. This way of doing things took shape as a result of concrete development in Hungary. This aspect of Hungarian cultural policy may well appear as exaggerated "centralization" when compared with other ways of dealing with the problem which proved successful elsewhere. On the other hand the fact that the control of publication in Hungary is carried out by individual artistic and cultural workshops themselves, on the basis of central principles of cultural policy, and carried out responsibly, but independently, may seem to be "decentralized" when compared with other methods of dealing with the same problem.

I could also refer to dealing with the problem of the limits between professional and amateur art. These two are more sharply differentiated in Hungary than in some other socialist countries. But it is clear, and this is

decisive, that as a consequence of the socialist social system we also want to make sure, much the same as other socialist countries, though the means may differ, that art belongs to the masses, not only passively but also creatively and actively.

The chief criterion of the evaluation of differences in the practice of brotherly socialist countries must be the extent to which they prove satisfactory in the given circumstances, that is their suitability in making effective such endeavours of a universal character as are basically held in common. This judgement is part of the competence of the party, government and people of the given socialist country, while it is of course true that every particular and successful experience arouses interest in the other countries of the socialist community. One must therefore beware of emphasizing the differences in a one-sided way while forcing that which is common or universal into the background either when addressing those at home or those abroad.

I also mention this since there is a tendency here and there to arrange these differences in a hierarchical order, instead of giving them due attention in an analytical way. As a result of this attitude this or that piece of sound advice is directed towards one socialist country or another, that this should not be done, judged or organized in this way but... Let me add that this sort of thing is generally said by the type of man who has a prompt heart attack if this kind of criticism, designed to put things right, is addressed to him. As a rule there is some sort of nationalist pride behind this sort of attitude, things are not quite as bad when it is merely unconscious. It is provincial narrow-mindedness to presume that something we have in Hungary will prove itself elsewhere also under different circumstances. There are reasons why this type of view is often associated with isolationism and a meprisal of international experiences in building socialism.

Those who are incapable of thinking in terms of the dialectical unity of the universal and the particular where their own country is concerned will not be able to exchange experiences with other countries, both giving and taking, in the proper internationalist manner. They will either allow their pride to puff up, coming to believe that "we invented the philosopher's stone", an attitude that often goes with isolationism, or else and there are many examples of this also, they turn general regularities into rigid doctrines, which is as damaging in domestic as in international affairs.

The common root of these errors, to return to the basic notion of this paper, is the absence of consistent and principled Marxist thought and of that concrete analysis which is linked with it. To put it another way: the presumption that there is some sort of infallible formula, either here or

elsewhere, all that has to be done is to find it, or rather to invent it. As against this an emphasis on what is common, on what agrees, an honest and mutual discovery of what "one's own" experiences mean, and a non-mechanical implementation of international experience is what gives shape continuously to the varicoloured community of the unity of socialist countries, and leads to the progress of Marxist–Leninist theory, the further flowering of socialist culture, and the extension of the socialist way of life.

The analysis of the concrete situation is the scientific and class-duty of the Hungarian Marxist party, both in general and also when planning and giving shape to the successive steps of cultural policy.

ECONOMIC REFORM, DEVELOPMENT AND STABILITY IN THE HUNGARIAN ECONOMY

by

JÓZSEF BOGNÁR

Before the socialist revolution got under way the economies of the East-European states were in a peripheral situation as compared to the economies of Western-Europe. The "third wave" of industrialization—which started towards the end of the nineteenth century and continued early in the twentieth—met with slight success only as compared to the first two waves (the forging ahead of Great Britain and Germany). Considerable results were achieved in the setting up of the infrastructure, covering a wide field from public education and the regulation of waterways to the construction of railways, the semi-feudal social structure however and the organization of political power in harmony with it hindered the spreading of impulses to modern sectors of industry and agriculture. The major part of imported capital also flowed into non-dynamic sectors.

It therefore fell to the lot of the socialist revolution to make up for what was omitted by the past and carry out the great work of social transformation in addition—a task which in itself made it necessary that the nation strain every nerve. The new society had to industrialize against a background it inherited from a period of war in a grave international situation which put obstacles in the way of capital imports and the adoption of up-to-date technology, as well as the development of foreign trade on the basis of mutual advantage. An embargo list drawn up by the United States, and adopted by West-European countries, covered 50 per cent of the commodities in general use in international trade.

Under such conditions economic development and industrialization could only take place on the basis of an almost completely centralized model of economic guidance which kept the distribution of incomes under strict

The slightly enlarged text of a lecture delivered at the Institute of Foreign Policy, Rome, on June 4th, 1971.

control, disregarding short-term economic aspects and regrouping means without restraint. The social transformation, however, did not allow "economic centres" to come into being whose interests were not in accord with the objectives of the revolution. Economics, what is more, is a system of rational aims in the functioning of which material interests play a considerable role, while the revolution which originally was mainly propelled by economic motives, thought in value judgement categories after consolidation, generally eliminating those who attempted to slow it down for rational reasons. It also has to be taken into account that socialism has a very firm and definite value system the implementation of which on an extended scale requires much time and considerable material means; it has nevertheless endeavoured to guarantee the right to work, that is full employment, from the very first. If industrialization is initiated with the aim of achieving full employment in a country where 50–80 per cent of the labour force are employed in agriculture (60 per cent in Hungary in 1938) it can only be extensive that is using up manpower and saving capital.

At this stage of development economic guidance was implemented by a system of mandatory plan directives, compulsory for all.

As regards the plans of the national economy—about which I shall have more to say later—a distinction must be made between notions of economic policy as such (that is, the coherent arrangement of aims and means in respect to a determined period) and the methods applied to carry them out.

If what the plan prescribes is divided amongst the enterprises and the methods are prescribed in detail covering organization also (supplies, selling, stocks, times of delivery, indices in kind measuring performance etc.) then what is involved is a system of central plan directives.

At a time of revolutionary transformation the system of central plan directives proved suitable for concentrating available resources on changing distribution of labour between industry and agriculture, on guaranteeing full employment and on developing a new pattern of industry at a fast rate. The plan directive system did all this without the help of foreign capital and without taking over foreign technology, and did it what's more under conditions which were called "western economic warfare" by eminent Swedish economists.

Naturally there are drawbacks and dangers attached to this kind of stepped up economic growth which took place in the midst of a social revolution and the struggles which accompanied the latter. History, however, seldom, one could say almost never, allows a generation to choose freely among alternatives, methods and ways if their forefathers lagged behind, for whatever reason. (I want to declare emphatically that I do not pass moral or

any other kind of judgement on our "forerunners" for many of them were well aware of the dangers deriving from falling behind and tried to do their utmost to protect the nation from the consequences. This is shown by the abortive Hungarian revolutions of 1848–1849 and 1918–1919. There is, however, no doubt that the intellectual graph of our "leading class"—the aristocracy and the gentry—dipped with a speed past belief after the beginning of the nineteenth century.)

The following disadvantages and dangers are side-effects of speeded-up economic growth taking place concurrently with a social revolution:

a) Drastic and administrative methods prevail in social life as a whole extending also over the economic field. Economic life cannot depend on interests and must therefore be organized by administrative methods. At a time of intensified class struggle, however, steps cannot be taken to oppose arbitrary or even irrational central decisions and directives for, at such times, it is difficult to tell apart those who oppose the social transformation and experts (economists, engineers and agricultural scientists) whose activity and attitude is in accordance with a rational economic attitude.

b) In the case of a system of central plan directives a powerful bureaucracy develops which generally identifies the movements and regularities of economic life with the internal norms of the state apparatus, considering itself the vehicle and most competent representative of the transformation process. This bureaucracy generally tries—regardless of its intentions—to perpetuate and consolidate its position. Every system of guidance has its internal logic; in the case of the central system of directives this means that deficiencies, difficulties and disorders are due to the fact that enterprises are not given full enough directives. (There is some sort of minimal freedom of action even in the most centralized system.) It is therefore obvious that the system of directives must be developed into a totalitarian one. That it did not do so can only be ascribed to the impossibility of guiding an increasingly complex and interdependent economy on a directive and totalitarian basis without running the risk of serious economic and political troubles.

c) Seen from a purely economic point of view the main problem was that, in the given climate, there was practically no incentive to be efficient. The new industrial structure was mainly the outcome of theoretical and technical considerations: an industry in the process of development can in no way reach international standards of efficiency, on the other hand, it proved impossible to calculate given an artificial price system and the embargo. As a result, investments exceeded planned costs and were carried out with a considerable time lag, producing not only higher costs but also technical obsolescence, and the stock of uncompleted investments rose from year to

year. Accordingly, disequilibria were produced in the international balance of payments and on the market for consumer goods, since purchasing power rose at a fast rate as a result of the high investment level. So, on the one hand, commodities and resources stagnated while, on the other, demand based on purchasing power could not be satisfied. Last but not least it should also be mentioned that agricultural production in the absence of incentives grew at a slow rate only, and as a result its "export dynamism" considerably decreased.

This particular situation in economic policy required more than once that the line followed hitherto be changed; this, however, was at first confined to making targets more moderate, to improving equilibrium, by reducing imports, or to improving the supply of consumer goods market to a certain extent. As a result of experience, the featherbedding of heavy industry was decreased by and by, although it rose out of its ashes in some countries and came to life again, and light industry and agriculture obtained somewhat larger subsidies.

All these methods only served to reduce certain difficulties and to decrease tensions temporarily; radical improvements however, cannot result from changes in day to day economic policy decisions, but only from changes in the system of management.

In view of this in Hungary also a radical reform of the system of management was introduced on January 1st 1968.

The Economic Impact of the Reform

What is the main point of the Hungarian economic reform, what are the experiences gained and the results achieved, and what kind of difficulties have cropped up? When looking for an answer it seems best to approach the above questions through different avenues. I think it preferable to examine the effect of the reform from a wide perspective, in the first place from the point of view of the economy and of enterprises, subsequently from that of the state and political organs and, finally from that of the effect it had on the political features of society. As a conclusion the results, problems and conflicts will be dealt with which the introduction of the reform has triggered of.

By way of a preliminary I wish to mention cursorily that the introduction of the Hungarian reform has given rise to certain misunderstandings and has been interpreted with prejudice mainly by the press of capitalist countries, and some of their theoreticians, and by certain left-wing extremists (dogmatists). These interpretations mainly emphasize one of the components of

the Hungarian reform, that is, that it allows "market impulses" to manifest themselves more freely and tries to adapt itself to the requirements of the market to a greater extent than the earlier system of management had done.

In this context let me call attention to Lenin who declared at the time the NEP was introduced that one cannot shift over to a "direct exchange of commodities" in socialism and that—under socialism—the market is absolutely indispensable. Nor did Stalin refuse to admit the necessity of the market, though he did not consider investment goods commodities, besides, his explanation of the economic mechanism of a market is unacceptable. His errors were later corrected in Soviet economic literature. In this respect the Hungarian reform only took measures which have never been challenged theoretically, but matters had developed in an opposite way in practice: it prefers to adapt itself to demand instead of establishing a "hierarchy of needs" determined bureaucratically from above which provided theoretical reasons for industry to undertake production abstracted from consumer demand.

A number of economists in capitalist countries, however, take it for granted (or hope) that "concessions" made to market impulses will—owing to their internal logic—finally lead to a situation in which the market will first dictate to economic management whereafter the economy (the system of rational aims) will gain mastery over the system of rational values as a whole (for example, equality, right to work, free tuition and health services, cheap cultural goods and services and so on) and then Hungary will relapse into state capitalism. Right now I would like to point out that at the same time when enterprises obtained greater freedom of action, the state also attained increased importance, though in other fields of the economy, and not in allotting plan directives: on the other hand, the system of rational values became more active and its "pressure" made itself felt, finally, the possibility of workers to have their say, through trade unions, in questions concerning production and in economic problems in general has considerably increased, political democracy has also grown, manifesting itself—in the economic field—in working men and women and public opinion putting pressure on the government for the sake of a higher living standard and increased consumption.

The reform means—seen from a purely economic point of view—that the owner of capital (or more precisely: the state power exercising the rights due to the owner of capital) henceforth does not implement the socio-economic plan through mandatory directives given to enterprises, and compulsory to all. The plan is therefore no longer a system regulating natural processes

in the first place, or of interconnected directions but an instrument of economic policy which determines the rate of growth for a medium time-span (five years), establishes the dynamic conditions of equilibrium under which the system of aims is realized and the system of methods is mobilized, prescribes priorities of development and ensures the intellectual and material conditions needed for speeding up technical development, contains the indispensable conditions for raising the standard of living, real incomes and consumption, keeps up conditions of full employment and, finally, forecasts the country's export-import policy in accordance with domestic objectives. The implementation of the plan, however, takes place by economic means, that is, by developing an economic environment which is in accordance with the shift of the main points of effort.

Enterprises and co-operatives (the institutional framework and basic units of economic activity) determine the rate of growth of production as well as the necessary transformation of the pattern of production with the object of making an appropriate profit, on the basis of demand, price formation (including producers' prices, raw material prices and prices of investment goods) and the labour market, and taking into account forecasts regarding domestic and external markets as well as technical development. "Appropriate profit" means in this context that after taxes are paid on the basis of instruments of production and the labour force employed, and profit, enterprises should have sufficient material resources to provide for development (investments), for the improvement and expansion of institutions of social policy enterprises are in charge of, and to ensure material incentives for those employed by them. Material incentives means in this case payments over and above normal wages and salaries, for example, profit shares, special payments and rewards, extra grants awarded to the old hands and so on. If an enterprise wants to carry out larger investments it is entitled to raise a bank loan. In 1967, that is before the reform, enterprises were allowed to keep 14 per cent of the profit, whereas in 1969 and 1970 they obtained about 50 per cent. In the course of the fourth Five Year Plan (1971–75) 65 per cent of investments—including those executed out of banks credits—will be effected on the basis of enterprise decisions. The stock of savings of enterprises tied up in banks is to increase considerably, and will be used mainly for investment purposes. I should like to add in parenthesis that at first a false conclusion was drawn from Marx's highly important socio-philosophical statement that all value derives from work in the last resort; it was thought that enterprises had to be given capital—including fixed capital—and land, free of charge, that is, without a use charge. It is obvious that this led to a waste of scarce material resources such as capital and land.

Enterprises and co-operatives now make decisions of their own not only in respect to productions of their own not only in respect to production and the use made of profits but also when buying and selling. Enterprises themselves decide the sources from where they want to obtain raw materials and investment goods, and the choice of customers is also within their own discretion. The transfer of decision-making powers regarding buying and selling made it necessary to determine the rate of foreign exchange anew, and to rearrange spheres of authority in foreign trade. Hence, for the sake of a clearer survey of the cost relations of the domestic economy a key of conversion has been established for domestic purposes only; it was determined on the basis of the average cost of producing one US dollar and/or one Soviet rouble. An enterprise selling its products on either a socialist or a capitalist market receives the sum total of the invoice in forint calculated on the basis of the key of conversion. If it has sufficient inland currency it can commission a foreign trade enterprise to import raw materials, semi-finished products, investment goods or consumer goods. A number of enterprises and co-operatives have obtained independent export rights (to ensure a more thorough exploration of markets abroad) while specialised foreign trade companies are now commission-agents of productive enterprises but the two can form a pool for the carrying out of certain special taks; in this case they take risks jointly and distribute the profit. Two problems arise here from the point of view of economic equilibrium; on the one hand, import flexibility is greater in certain articles than export capacity; in such cases duties and in particularly serious situations deposits also are prescribed. (Great Britain often had recourse to the deposit system, for the last time in 1967–68.) On the other hand, there are Hungarian ventures and export articles which produce a dollar or a rouble at higher costs than the national economic average (which is 60 forints in the case of the dollar and 40 forints in the case of the rouble); however, exports cannot be suspended or prohibited because exportable commodities of a higher profitability are not available for the time being. In such cases the Ministry of Finance establishes, on the basis of an agreement reached with the enterprise or co-operative, a subsidy which diminishes from year to year; the enterprise undertakes either to reduce the costs of production or to change over from the production of the unremunerative product to that of a remunerative one.

Faster technical development and other factors as well require more unrestricted price mobility. Therefore, about 30 per cent of the prices are now not fixed prices but subject to free bargaining between seller and buyer. In the case of commodities which considerably influence the standard of living and affect the economy as a whole, the government continues to

determine prices through a special Prices Office. Price policy was criticized on good grounds from two economic points of view: firstly, because the new technology was relatively expensive and labour cheap, and secondly because agricultural prices were low as compared to industrial prices. The latter problem has been eliminated since and the income of the agrarian population has caught up with the incomes of industrial workers. A general industrial price reform would have involved too great risks and certain negative effects of the price system have therefore been amended concretely, the average wage-control system was discontinued, duties imposed on the means of production and deposits were reduced etc.

Fixed prices prevent excessive price rises that do not reckon with possible consequences, as well as inflation, the sphere of freely moving prices however comes close to ensuring that flexibility which is made necessary by the equilibrium of consumer markets and the introduction of new articles. Prices as established by industrial enterprises rose by 2.5 per cent between 1968 and 1970 whereas prices of consumer goods only rose by 2 per cent. In the second half of 1970 two important problems emerged which have not been dealt with so far: first, prices in the building trade have risen (because of "overdemand") both on the investment market and in the building of dwellings and, secondly, world trade (import) prices have considerably risen on capitalist markets. The latter case is less serious and partly offset by the fact that there are fixed contractual prices on CMEA markets; in spite of this a really satisfactory solution has not yet been found since it is risky to increase the deficit of the budget, or to pass on price rises to consumers the latter mainly for political reasons. If the effect of price rises could regularly be averted or kept down, enterprises would once again find themselves in an artificial ambience that is in a glass house as it were in case import prices rose by 4–5 per cent a year, and the wastage of raw materials starts again.

A further important change is that cooperative enterprises were given equal status with state ones.

The Reform from the point of view of State and Political Organs

As a result of the reform a part of the power state organs were hitherto vested with has been shifted to enterprises. Thinking statically one might arrive at the conclusion that the state, in other words: the group of people employed by the state, has lost its hold over a certain field of authority and greater power was handed over to enterprises.

Such questions, however, should never be approached in a static way for both society and the economy are dynamic. Earlier views on power as well as on the tasks and role of the government have changed. According to notions entertained earlier, the state not only initiated but directed and controlled execution, and by so doing vested the enterprise, in a certain sense, with prestige and official authority. Today it lies within the jurisdiction of the state as arbiter to produce a compromise (equilibrium) between conflicting demands of the system of rational aims and the system of rational values; this function of the state has now obtained primary importance in addition to its role as initiator. The influence and pressure of public opinion, trade unions and the media (television, radio and press) have increased. On the other hand, the system of rational aims, that is the economy, strives for greater authority and influence, and for a social climate in which it can follow its own laws. The government has to establish an equilibrium between the two systems embodied by different social and political institutions from plan period to plan period, from budget to budget, and in the case of each new problem as it emerges. In this context I use the word equilibrium in the widest sense and include political, social as well as economic equilibrium. What kind of state has a greater power in respect of essentials, that is, the relationship between intentions and realization: a state that takes the initiative and gives directives at first hand and thus keeps the motion of adverse forces directly or indirectly in check, or one taking the initiative and then arbitrating? It is clear that a state apparatus freed from the pressure of worries associated with the preparation of petty instructions is capable of showing greater, more complex and more essential initiative than earlier. The role of "arbiter" significantly improves governmental ability to predict the expected attitude of those interested in economic activity.

I should like to mention a few more factors and activities, additional to these two most important circumstances, in which the role and influence of the state power (the government) is significantly greater than earlier.

a) Since the reform the redistribution of incomes has become more and more important. In the interests of a correct and just income distribution, the state has to draw off a part of incomes (by way of taxation)* and allocate the latter—through the budget—to other purposes. This new objective which has grown to considerable proportions as compared to the past, had to be assumed by the state because the flow of incomes from certain strata of the population to others produces, or could produce, an undesirable pattern of distribution.

*Wages and salaries are not subject to income tax in Hungary.—*Ed.*

b) The various economic (industrial—agricultural) Ministries became so-to-speak modern information centres. It is well known, and made evident by history, that information centres are, and always have been, power centres at the same time. It is easier to make correct decisions when accurate information is available.

c) The executive power was, and continues to be, in charge of the infra-structure. Due to the fact that the state power now does not have to go into the details of economic matters to the same extent, new forces are released, and a new impetus is given to this activity, which is of utmost importance from the point of view of productivity and efficiency.

d) The fact that monetary means do not mechanically follow central directives made a new financial policy necessary. One might also say that monetary means play a considerable role when it comes to the direction and influencing of economic activities, and to developing a suitable climate. It is known that monetary means are only effective within certain limits. This is also shown by the actual situation and the problems of western economies. In spite of this they have an immense significance in our days also, if applied with due circumspection and differentiation, that is in a selective way. Their application cannot of course be separated from either natural processes or politics or more precisely, from the socio-political effects exerted by monetary means. One might ask though whether there are any important means, methods or processes in the economy which can be separated from politics?

Finally, it should be noted that the largest investments of the highest technological importance such as the construction of irrigation plant, or the supply of the economy with computers, what is called the computer-programme, continue to be in the hands of the state.

The transformation of the Political Aspect of Society and the strengthening of Socialist Democracy

The following factors allowed political democracy to be strengthened:

a) Since the economy—one of the most important domains of social activity, a subsystem as practitioners of cybernetics are wont to say—has been organized on the basis of individual interests, and that of enterprises, the necessity to take administrative and drastic measures could be eliminated over a wide field. Earlier the politically committed stratum followed, under party discipline, the plan directives; the neutral stratum, however, those who are not politically committed, could only be persuaded by political methods or by force to behave in a suitable economic way for lack of material

incentives, or because of the primitive forms of monetary incentives. This is tolerable, and even unavoidable, particularly for a short time and in a grave situation, in the long run, however, the economy must be directed by economic means. The implementation of this postulate has set aside administrative methods and eliminated the necessity to use force over a broad field of social activities. In this sense, the reform as such has created an auspicious basis for the evolution of political democracy.

b) The role of the government as arbiter allowed for and encouraged the putting forward of alternative solutions compatible with socialism in the political, social and economic area. The view prevailed earlier that there can only be one optimum socialist answer to one and the same question. The economic reform and the correct framing of priorities of economic policy allowed for various alternatives, and after a certain time the leading bodies themselves (state and council organs) found it quite natural to work out and submit different variants, and even required this from those who made proposals. As a result discussions were arranged—within the limits of socialism—on highly different questions, contrary views were expressed and the way of thinking became more differentiated.

c) Since the power and scope of authority of managers increased, it became necessary to create countervailing forces in order to protect working people. In Hungary workers' councils were not set up since economists, and those in charge, agreed that managerial competence must be strengthened and ensured in the first place. It had to be taken into account that managers now have to make correct decisions on a number of questions which, earlier did not fall within their competence, and which had been handled with very little professional economic knowledge. For the reason the trade unions play the role of a democratic counterweight, carrying out the "classical role of representing interests" in addition to organizing competitions in production that are in harmony with the demands of economic progress and efficiency. Since the introduction of the economic reform the authority of trade unions became consolidated in both society and factories, and the stand the trade unions take on every important economic and social question, particularily incomes, is of consequence, and must be taken into account.

d) The role of the legislative power grew and it now exerts a greater influence on the executive power. The special committees of Parliament take part in the preliminary drafting of bills and in addition order the Ministries to render account on important questions public opinion is particularly interested in. Discussions when Parliament is in full session have also become more lively, contrary opinions are more frequently expressed, and questions are frequently addressed to Ministers.

A similar development has taken place at local Government level also, where Councils more thoroughly and with an even stronger hand, control the work of the executive committee on behalf of their constituents.

Historians and sociologists assert that Jacobins "curtailed" political rights more than once in the interest of greater economic liberty. In certain historic situations it is, of course, imaginable that politics and the economy steer an opposite course, for international reasons or in view of internal conditions; experience, however, shows that in a consolidated socialist society the trends of greater economic and political freedom are conditional upon, and invigorate, one another. The word trend is used since it is known from experience that the possibility of cyclic fluctuations cannot be excluded on the basis of 3 or 4 years' experience.

Problems, Experiences and Results

Distinctions have to be made between problems and experiences in each case. Some problems are characteristic of a certain stage of development of socialist society and derive from that "new kind of integration" of the economy with social activities, the aim of which is to increase efficiency and intensity. On the other hand, other kinds of problems can emerge in any economy which for the sake of stepped-up (intensified) development, considerably increases material incentives, that is it boosts internal demand. These kinds of problems of economic policy run their characteristic course, and have certain peculiarities also in a socialist economy, but one cannot speak of processes which are exclusively, or primarily, characteristic of socialism.

To begin with let us consider the first group of problems. Conflicts between the system of rational values and the system of rational aims have considerably increased—although differences could be settled by compromises up to now. The system of rational aims gained strength in the social sphere because the leadership and a considerable part of the people have clearly understood that the economy needs new driving forces in the period of intensive development, on the one hand, and that freedom in decision making is only illusory in a world of sweeping changes, on the other, there is no other choice, one can either take part or drop out of the contest, the consequences of the latter alternative are "graven in the nation's memory" for good. The situation of economists has improved as a result of the reform and they now try to consolidate the norms of rational management in the economy, and they andeavour to persuade public opinion to think in the same way.

The system of rational values, however, is tenacious partly because of the particular system of values of a socialist society and partly by virtue of Hungarian traditions. It is a matter of course that there are considerable differences between—say—a writer or artist, and an old trade unionist, a militant of the Labour Movement, as regards their interests, way of thinking and motivation. Writers and artists are against the system of rational aims in almost every society, and derive a hierarchy of values from their own art. An old trade unionist, however, always champions the principle of equality against a differentiation of incomes. Workers are also making more demands since the incomes of the peasantry have recently increased at a faster rate as a result of the higher profitability of agriculture. Levelling took place and earlier disproportions were discontinued in this way, it is, however, well known that people react more sensitively to changing factors than to static ones. This situation helped to loosen certain inflexibilities of the wage system—for life is full of inconsistencies—and allowed for the showing of greater moral and financial appreciation to the stable labour force.

Pensioners in the first place were worried about price rises (the number of those 60 and over amounts to 15 per cent of the population); price rises had also occurred earlier but were rarer and larger, and were not discussed openly to the same extent. Pensioners are now granted an automatic increase of two per cent a year in their pensions.

Those who support the system of rational values are incapable of understanding that the material goods needed for the functioning of the value system are produced by the circulation and turnover of the system of rational aims; the efficient functioning of the latter is also dependent upon certain conditions. Whatever our view of these conditions may be: whether we like them or not, consider them a matter of course or feel an antipathy against them, they cannot be disregarded. There is, of course, no doubt that accumulated wealth *per se* does not make people any happier, and this is what upsets the supporters of the system of rational values. On the other hand, everyone is indignant when there is a scarcity of goods!

The essence of the problems of economic policy could be summed up as follows:

1. Can economic growth and technological progress be speeded up, while maintaining full employment, conditions of equilibrium and the relative stability of the domestic currency?

2. Can one look forward to an even rate of growth, or must one reckon with a break being put on it from time to time by factors producing periodicity (the trade cycle)?

The experience of recent years shows that, given a speeding up of the growth rate and of technological progress, demand increases both on the consumer and on the investment goods market. This means a sudden rise in import elasticity in a country of average technological development which is poor in raw materials. Equilibrium then depends on whether the growth in exports is sufficiently dynamic to keep up with that in imports in conditions where domestic demand is also growing fast.

In the medium term there could well be problems related to investments also. Considerably greater demand, and growth-mindedness of enterprises disposing over significant financial resources, involves more investment. Investments however presuppose considerable capacities of execution and absorption, the production of building materials, and a building industry that is well-organized and that has an appropriate structure. If a contradiction arises between these two processes, that is investment demand and the capacity to carry out investments in an economical way, then building costs rise, projects are carried out slowly, efficiency suffers, unexpected imports become necessary and export products do not produce the hoped for income. Growing import elasticity, the insufficiencies of the investment market and the slowing down of investment-circulation (increased amortization) exercise a growing pressure on the budget. The burdens of the budget increase for other reasons also (infrastructure, rise in building costs, the expectations of the population and of the value-rational system).

The dynamism of exports was higher than import elasticity in the first three years of the reform, and the balance of payments therefore improved. Problems connected with a slowing down of investment circulation had not appeared yet, the budget deficit was therefore kept in tolerable limits and prices rose less than expected.

In 1971, however, imports grew faster than exports, problems connected with the position of the investment market appeared in force, and the budget deficit was higher than planned.*

Under such conditions the growth dynamics of investments had to be slowed down, and measures had to be taken by the central authorities also. The annual growth rate had been 18–19 per cent between 1969–1971. Certain restrictions had to be employed for that reason, both in the state and the enterprise sphere, and the price of building materials had to be raised. The latter measure was meant not only to lessen demand but also to provide an incentive for production since the import of building materials

* The problems of the economic situation and the government measures taken that arose in 1971 and which forcefully affected the 1972 budget were discussed by Jenő Fock, the Prime-Minister, at the Conference on the Economy, later by the Central Committee of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party and by Parliament in the course of the budget debate.

is too high, and economically unjustified. As a result of decisions taken at government level fewer major state investment projects than originally planned will be initiated in 1972 and conditions under which credits are granted have been made more difficult.

As was only to be expected, putting a brake on things demanded more direct intervention by the government than the speeding up of growth. When the brakes are put on, national and enterprise interests are more likely to be in opposition, at least apparently so, since the enterprises, prompted by growing demand, would like to continue their investment policy. On the level of the economy as such the unfavourable consequences of this process are already apparent, the government must therefore put obstacles in the way of such action. This type of government policy can only partially be implemented in an indirect way, by changing economic conditions, direct, that is administrative measures are also necessary. The aim of putting brakes on and of more forceful government intervention is, on the one hand, the reestablishment of equilibrium conditions, on the other the creation of conditions of increased rationalization in the enterprise sphere.

If cyclical conditions, that is the periodicity of the growth rate, will prevail in the future also and that, in my view, can hardly be avoided, then two types of the same system of economic management must be established, one for the period of acceleration, in which incentives and indirect methods will be dominant, and the other for the period when the brakes are put on in the interests of restoring equilibrium, where restraining measures and direct intervention are given a relatively larger role. A system of management containing methods that exclusively act as incentives or restraints cannot be imagined. Both types of methods are needed in both periods of economic policy, that is that of acceleration and that of slowing down, the two being opposed but complimentary factors of the same system of management. Economics is in the first place the science of proportions, and economic management is the art of proportions. The correctness or otherwise of a given concrete economic policy or system of management depends on proportions in the first place. Brakes are sometimes necessary in the interests of restoring conditions of equilibrium, but in the world today stability and security are to be found in dynamics. The only purpose of periods of slowing down is therefore the initiation of a new period of acceleration on a more rational and effective basis once equilibrium is restored.

ON TRANSLATING HUNGARIAN POETRY

by

WILLIAM JAY SMITH

I firmly believe that only poets should translate poets, but how does a poet translate from a language of which he knows not a word? It may seem madness, and probably is; but poets are not to be put off by madness. I have tried it a few times—with the aid fortunately of trustworthy advisers who did know the language—but never on the scale that I attempted last November when with my wife, at the invitation of the Hungarian P.E.N., I spent several weeks in Budapest. I had been there for a few days in June 1970, and had felt, as did Robert Graves and many others before me, immediately at home in this country of poets. But to return last fall in the worst possible weather and at the height of an influenza epidemic seemed to many of our friends sheer lunacy. Arriving on a very dark evening after a snowstorm, we may have felt so momentarily ourselves, but any doubt we had was dispelled at once by the bright faces of our hosts; and we were soon embarked on a most enjoyable venture.

Charles Newman, the young American novelist who was in Budapest when we arrived to aid in the work of translating prose for the *New Hungarian Quarterly*, was asked at one point, he told us, by a visiting American college girl what he was doing in Hungary. He explained that he was translating Hungarian prose. "Oh, you know Hungarian?" she asked excitedly. Not a word, he explained; he translated from literal drafts—from *rough* English into *good* English. "How fascinating," the girl exclaimed, "you must know *both* languages very well."

Moving from the rough to the smooth is for anyone who has written, much less translated, anything is never easy. But Julia Kada and Gyula Kodolányi with their excellent command of English and their fine feeling for poetry helped me begin the transition. My wife and I took Hungarian lessons regularly. And altough we could not hope to learn very much about so complicated a language in a few weeks, I soon began to look at this

strange tongue a little more meaningfully and to listen to the poems read aloud if not with greater understanding then at least with a deeper appreciation of the sound values. Not only did I begin to get a sense of what Hungarian looks and sounds like, but after working on István Vas's poem "On Approaching Fifty," in which so many of the delights of the Hungarian cuisine are catalogued, I began—after having sampled all these dishes—to have some idea even of how Hungarian tastes. All this is not to say that I now know any Hungarian whatever, but I do have that mad confidence which a poet-translator must have that the poems I have worked on are of a rare beauty in the original and that they deserve to be given another life in another language so that they may become better known throughout the world.

Budapest is a fine place to work on poetry—one feels immediately surrounded by poets who are not only read but appreciated. How account for this magnificent concentration of poetry in so small a country? Robert Graves has said that wherever horses and cranes still exist as they do in Hungary there is bound to be poetry. Whatever else it has been, Hungary has constituted an island in the center of Europe, maintaining for over a thousand years the integrity of its language and its culture. It is the nature of islanders to turn inward—to seek in themselves the roots of legends, tales, and songs centuries old—and in this seeking there is always poetry. The writing of poetry in this instance has meant not only purifying, but literally keeping alive, the words of the tribe. A people living surrounded by other languages and cultures learns to listen more carefully to the sound of its own voice, to probe more keenly its tragic depths, to allow black humor—with its crystal surface—to bubble up from the deep. Islanders not only turn inward, they also reach out; and poetry is the most enduring of bridges, whether based on the Oriental philosophy of Sándor Weöres or the urbane European meditations of István Vas.

There is a buoyancy in the air of Budapest which must have something to do with the creation of its poetry. The city's concentration of mineral springs working their way through cracks and cavities in the bed of dolomite on which the city rests may have something to do with it. The Romans certainly found it a fine place to be, as did the Turks. The gusto and effervescence characteristic of great poetry are naturally there. Poets in all countries have always gravitated to springs; fountains are emblematic of their art. There is immediately a feeling of great activity in the city: everybody is on the move, rushing about in an intent and determined way. One expects this in any great capital, but in Budapest it seems ingrained, an inner buoyancy that demands expression. It is said that the inhabitants of Budapest stop for

only two reasons—for an accident or when someone asks the way. Perhaps the third reason is when compelled to put down a few lines of poetry.

Budapest was immediately congenial to me; and what poet would not feel at home there—in a city where a worker's quarter on the banks of the Danube (why, I never discovered) is called the "Field of Angels"? The poets I met spoke directly and unhesitatingly, whatever language they used. I had been with Gyula Illyés only a minute or so when he remarked on my slightly Oriental eyes. When I explained that they were no doubt the legacy of my Cherokee forebears, he welcomed me at once as a brother. "We had the same ancestors," he said, "yours went one way out of Asia and mine another."

In the work of Illyés I found the vigor that one would expect from the author of *People of the Puszta*. His prose poem "Work" is a magnificent expression of his inborn sense of craft, inherited from his wheelwright father. And this sense of craft is carried to a point of extreme sophistication and subtlety in the poems on creation, which one feels might have come from the pen of Paul Valéry. His recently published unfinished poems seem not so much pieces abandoned as poems meticulously left for the reader himself to finish. If I read them correctly, I find in the poetry of István Vas deep feeling and profound terror under what seems a light, and at times even casual, surface. There is, of course, this same kind of gentle but forceful directness in the man himself. And when I encountered towards the end of our stay Sándor Weöres perched like a gnome beside the electric coffee-maker in his plant-and-booklined apartment, I was convinced—whether it took the form of a child's speech of that of a Chinese coolie—that the language he used was magic.

How much of the magic in the work of Weöres, Vas, Illyés, or Ottó Orbán (more accessible perhaps to the American reader because of his extensive knowledge of modern American poetry) comes through in my English remains to be seen. On my last evening in Budapest István Vas, who has translated T. S. Eliot, confessed that he was somewhat disappointed by my version of his poems. But he was quick to add, profoundly aware as he is of the problems of translation, that his disappointment sprang perhaps from his uncertainty about the subtleties of English. Reading his poems in another language, he said he experienced, as he had many times previously, doubts about whether his poems were really poems, indeed whether or not he was himself a poet. Miklós Vajda, who was sitting next to him, assured him at once most firmly that he was. And I thought of Robert Frost's observation that it is never the poet who *calls* himself a poet; that is always for someone else to do. And I thought also of feeling, on reading competent French versions of some of my own poems, that they had nothing whatever

to do with the poems I had written. And I thought also of the very nature of translation, and realized as I had so many times that all translation, no matter how brilliant, is a failure. Just as, in the deepest sense, the writing of poetry itself is a failure, a failure in translating, in carrying over, the full impact of an original experience.

Back in the United States, I reread my versions of the Hungarian poems and they seemed far removed indeed from the poets I had met and the city I had got to know slightly. Were they even remotely adequate? One evening I read "Boccherini's Tomb" by István Vas* to a young American poet who knows nothing about Hungarian poetry. He said when I had finished that he could hear in between the lines of my translation the melody of Boccherini of which the poet speaks so eloquently, even though it was unfamiliar to him. And that does seem to me what István Vas wanted his reader to hear in the original. Then if even a small part of their hidden melody survives in any of these poems, I have perhaps captured at least something of the buoyant spirit of the original Hungarian.

* To be published in "The Hungarian P.E.N.—Le P.E.N. hongrois" this year.

POEMS TRANSLATED BY WILLIAM JAY SMITH

GYULA ILLYÉS

DO YOU REMEMBER?

Do you remember—when you were skating—
the long grass on the shallow
bottom, under a thin membrane
of ice; and the fish darting up below?

The green ice cracked: you raced ahead.
Around your foot there burst a star.
You raced ahead; with sparkling thunder,
racing with you, went the star.

You raced against danger: for as long
as you glided on ice you would not sink.
The braver you were, the safer by far;
safer always the greater the risk.

WORK

They stuck pigs in the throat. Might I not have done it myself? They tossed chickens with their heads cut off out into the courtyard. With a child's thirst for knowledge, I watched their final spasms with a heart hardly touched. My first really shattering experience came when I watched the hooping of a cartwheel.

From the huge coal fire, with pincers at least a yard long, the apprentices grabbed the iron hoop, which

by then was red hot up and down. They ran with it to
the fresh-smelling oak wheel that had been fixed in place
in the front of the blacksmith's shop. The flesh-colored
wooden wheel was my grandfather's work; the iron
hoop, which gave off a shower of sparks in its fiery agony,
was my father's. One of the apprentices held the sledge
hammer, the other the buckets. Places, everyone.
As on shipboard. As at an execution. The hoop, which
in its white-hot state had just expanded to the size
of the wheel, was quickly placed on it; and they began
to pry it out with their tongs. My father swung the
hammer with lightning speed, giving orders all the while.
The wood caught fire; they poured a bucket of water
on it. The wheel sent up steam and smoke so thick
you couldn't see it. But still the hammer pounded on,
and still came the "Press hard!" uttered breathlessly
from the corner of the mouth. The fire blazed up again.
Water flung again as on a tortured man who has sunk
into a coma. Then the last flourishing bush of steam
evaporated while the apprentices poured a thin trickle
from a can on the cooling iron which, in congealing,
gripped lovingly its life-long companion to be.
The men wiped the sweat from their brows, spat,
shook their heads, satisfied. Nothing—not the slightest
flicker of a movement—could have been executed
differently.

BRAZILIAN RAIN FOREST

In Old Buda, a street almost as wide as a square
coming down from Újlak Church. The one-storey
houses here are even lower than usual. The pavement
once swelled to the level of the windows, and remained
there as in some frozen flood. From such a house,
a tavern still privately owned, a tall slender young
woman who is well-dressed comes out into the Friday
twilight. Her eyes are glazed; she is dead drunk.
She sways gracefully. The basalt cobble-stones of the
broad street mock her by pretending to be the stepping

stones across a mountain stream, and that's why she may only step on every second one. Since the stones are wet, the scene is made all the more probable. It is raining, fully and evenly, as in the tropics, although it is November. The pouring rain is broken into threads by the light of the street lamps. The woman's dishevelled hair drips also into so many threads. She is soaked to the skin.

She is soaked to the skin, but does not feel a thing. Otherwise she would not push away the threads of rain as if she were parting the reeds of a marsh or thrusting aside the bead curtain of some southern barber shop. But after this bead curtain comes another and then another, ten, twenty, a hundred, thousand upon wondrous thousand.

All this, of course, is illusion. The situation and reality: the woman walks amid the lianas, the hanging tendrils of a Brazilian rain forest, and above her are trees teeming with bright-coloured parakeets, snarling monkeys, serpents, and other creatures that do not even exist in South America, but have come here only for this occasion. At such a time who would not think of coming to her aid? As Chateaubriand says, this is how the most exciting adventures with native women really begin. Yes, but there is something rarely taken into account—the distances in a rain forest! Between the two of us, my sailor's eye tells me, a thousand miles at least.

ISTVÁN VAS

ON APPROACHING FIFTY

An account of one day

I go to bed late these days,
Look up this and that, translate a bit.
Now I have just intoned Ben Jonson,—
The curious conceits, the wise words.
Each new task still excites me,
And the craft—
When suddenly I remember what awaits me;
A coward, I put out my cigarette,
And calm my disturbed imagination with sleeping pills.

I fall asleep quickly these days, but usually wake up
At three in the morning. In most cases, scared.
I calm down: I'm still at home;
But my mind is grinding out the morrow
When it occurs to me
That I must go on an empty stomach to have an X-ray.

And I know how far behind me everything is—
Affection, hatred,
Doubt, mysticism,
The desire to travel,
Love, faith, country—
Everything that could have been,
And everything that has been lost—
For I'm not living now; I live only in my cells,
My fluids, my organs,
As if there were nothing else at the core of me—

Narrowing, harrowing, shrinking,
As they begin to understand the situation.

Now there's no shower to wash off the nightly
Gloom, for there's no water on the fourth floor;
I have to make do with a quick shave.
It's still foggy outside. I haven't been out in the street
So early for a long time. I'm no longer a clerk,
And yet the singer in me is even more in the dark.

Singer and song narrow and shrink:
The season of love is over;
Tired of laments, the series of young
Elegies run down, the old heart
Yearns for new deception, for the sea again—
And yet the way of all flesh opens out instead.

At the clinic that lovely dark
Young woman is wheeled in
And looks up with eyes frightened and dimmed with pain
(This is what they mean by the way of all flesh.)
And the two old friends supporting each other
To the X-ray room, one still cheerful in spite of age.
"We'll wait for her to finish" says one, while the other slobbers with morose
Indifference, and nods in his senile way.
And the man and wife, trembling,
Toddle, arm in arm—how can they bear it?
He who becomes prisoner of life and death at the same time
Why does he crawl along the way of all flesh?

What else can salvation mean to me,
Except to understand what heart and brain cannot?
What else is there that God can do to me?
But make me understand or damn me for it?

And now I'm the one who sends grotesque writhing curves on the screen;
And the ray sends its light through the flesh
To the depths where the pain-wet machine

Of digestive shame keeps eating me up,
And the way is blocked by the old
Poorly healed scars of... a duodenal ulcer.

How did it go so long unnoticed?
When I suffocated in the forest of numbers?
Or later, once I had resigned
Myself to the life of a clerk,
And the attacks of
Gastric neurosis were the only signs of despair?
Or just when I tried to find relaxation in the small pleasures
Of a clerk's life?
Dropping in for a dish of goulash, a wine-and-soda in secret,
The quick lunch in the pub of the Ujpest stadium;
Was the strong taste of food in the workers' quarter too much for me?
The blood sausage, smoked sausage, pork chops, good peppery stews,
The fine fat-dipped pâtés before lunch,
The fire-bite of pointed paprika,
The heavy sauce of a peasant stew,
The cabbage soup eaten at dawn?
How pleasant it was to drink at a bar
Ordinary wines, home-distilled brandies;
And I keep the smoke of a Levente cigarette
Alive in a brain, whose fertile soil yearns continually for it!
If all this left its ravaging traces deep in my body
Now, even in its crippled state, I say it was worth it.

"This is an ugly picture; what can I say?
Of course, it's no business of mine,
But an operation's not absolutely called for;
It can be worked on a bit."
Outside there is still a cold wet fog;
I inhale it deeply, as in my youth.

It's the same man who inhales the fog—
The same old mist but not the same old misty youth—
As in an old-fashioned novel
Which has one hero for all three volumes—
Who gropes his way along, and by the time he learns to live,
The way of all flesh has caught up with him.

Now I can afford doctors and medicines,
Not like long ago when for *her*
I was helpless, wanting to ease
Her final agony,
Oh, shameful, clumsy misery
When she started on the way of all flesh!

In the double imagination of memory and fear
Sensuality can be terrifying:
By the time I enter the familiar room of the café
My being is bathed in sweat.
I gaze out at the fair and dark heads,
The kind guffawing ones, those who will follow me.

If I'm not with them tomorrow, who will ask where I am?
Who will ask where I am if I must stay away for good?
Who has noticed the resignation, the shy, shivering farewell
In my quick nervous hello?
And those who dropped out for years, without saying good-bye?
I wander off alone, swaying in the cold wet dark.
I tremble as I feel life like a sea ebbing away;
And, depressed, get ready for the concert;
The waves of music will replace
The sea perhaps, and the concert will serve as a sentimental farewell
Before the knives, tubes, hospital beds.

But beautiful women, fine clothes, sham pleasures
Take up too much of the night
And the waves of Mozart somehow
Cannot catch up with my excited
Perception.

But after the intermission comes Schubert,
The Seventh, C-major.
And the *allegro* and *andante*
Suddenly bring together
All that has been: my youth.

And its intermingling themes, changing *motifs*,
Its strength and sweetness,

The trill of the idyll in the storm,
All that I wanted,
And all that was impossible.

And the horn of the second movement drones on,
Saying it is good this way and that,
And the interlacing of all the movements,
Returning to the main theme,
Resounding in the finale with the final ecstasy
Of life and death together.

While we sit inside, winter loses its force;
A light wind whistles through the city.
Above the deserted streets shine
The proud lamps, the pert new neon signs;
Swaggering light of Budapest,
Ever-fresh city, how I love you even now!

Big old rooms of the city's center,
How I love you, cavern colored with books!
In you I loved, wrote, lived for eight years,
Whichever way you turn, I want you, life.
Oh, to watch the lamplight in the Károlyi Garden!
To sense you, my last love.

To sense you and in you the blessing
And terror of the years, the embrace
Of all embraces, the integral calculus of our loves
During one single night,
Light shining on my crippled existence,
Illuminating continually,
Whichever way it turns, the way of all flesh.

Only this last cigarette—
This one Kossuth to inhale deeply...
Don't pity me in the hospital nor in the tomb.
I am forever the man who now gazes out into the night.
Do not believe me if I complain.
One more glass of Badacsony red wine,
This last one and then no more!

I sip it slowly—in farewell
To what was, is, and will be again.

Hell may be preparing within me, if not below me:
I know the better part of me is immortal,
And through all decay, all metamorphoses,
It will carry with it this night—
Amongst knives, tubes, pains and starlight—
And with this wine, this cigarette ends this night.

THE MAD TOWN

Just for a cup of coffee? How exactly should one put it?
Be still, my heart, be still! Perhaps that's the way to put it.
When do we have dinner? We'll be ready by nine.
I can't really tell him
How exciting this trip is; and how afraid of it I am,
Or that I'm not even sure whether one should go back.
Go back. Challenge fate
And that town born of Bedlam.
Who would have believed
That the journey by car would be so boring? That speed
Would put you to sleep. I mean speed without danger;
The milestones, the red traffic lights,
The highway. Who would have thought
That one would dose off, rushing upwards? Why—upwards?
In vain did this height extended by towers,
Arches, lanes and steps open
The fearful stone hollows of its jaws: one cannot see it
From a car at night; all of a sudden we reach the top.
How did it happen so smoothly, without a jolt?
Did I sleep through it all? Here stands the unfinished
Cathedral, and the shell of the square below.

And where should we have our coffee? In the square, of course. Here or over there?
From here you can see better the steeple shaped
Like a pink bullrush topped with a big white stone flower.
Black coffee, ice cream. This young man

Confesses why he wanted to have coffee right here:
Here he'd lost his first girl whom he'd known for six years;
Now he likes to stop in this town
At night, after dinner.
Should I tell him
How I also said good-bye here? Even if I were on my own
I couldn't. And he wouldn't even understand it.
And what could I tell him about? The hot sun,
The frightening night, on the double torture-bed,
The dividing pain, the sobbing, yearning
In different directions, the sticking together in spite of all
Until death, even for a love that cannot be saved. Or the other night later,
The cold rain, the terror of
Losing a final shelter, the threat of the stone closing in on us,
In other words, the grip of two loves. And meanwhile the maze
Of circular lanes and alleyways, by day
And night, the unfinished
Cathedral, the shell-square below.
But all that
Is still present; it neither attacks nor threatens any more,
It only looks at us, almost comforting—
The dread of that time turned to certainty.
And she is somewhere far away,
The beauty of her face stripped down to bitterness; she grits her teeth
And no one but the two of us knows anymore who she was.

Only be still, my heart, be still—this way perhaps,
After all, everything has calmed down. The grip of love—
It would be ridiculous for a cautious old man
To mention this sort of thing. And the great terror
That would have to be faced finally in a more familiar town.
Here there is nothing but *cassata, Campari,* coffee.
The popular tune behind us, comfortingly new
As well as excitingly familiar, and the madness turned to stone,
The deserted shell-square, the unfinished cathedral,
And the town's motto: *cor magis tibi pandit,*
It opens wide your heart—opens wide for what?
Right now only for dozing off while speeding
Amid the red-painted shining stones
Signalling in the illuminated dark.

SÁNDOR WEÖRES

VARIATIONS ON THE THEMES OF LITTLE BOYS

1
When I'm six I'll marry Ibby
And drive a big Mercedes—Ibby
Won't get in it—she can't come
'Cause she'll have to stay at home

2
CHARLIE IS A FOOL
JONIE IS A FOOL
NOT ME—IM REEL COOL
I got brains evry place—
LOOKIT—even up my ass

3
Squads, right
Squads, left
I lead the squard—Hup! Ha!
We're going to bury my Grandma!

4
Watch my Daddy build a house:
First the chimney puffing smoke
Next beneath it comes the roof
Then the windows front and back
Can't see through them they're so black
But you can see through the walls
Because they are not there at all
Now the walls are on their way
And one by one the rooms around
When the house gets to the ground
My Daddy cries, "Hip, Hip, Hooray!"

5
Tommy, running through the yard,
Catches Suzy, beats her hard—
Out of her beats the bejesus—

Then cuts her up in little pieces,
Strings her innards heart and liver
From one fence over to another.
Suzy's thinking: "This won't do
I will not let go of you.
Reassemble me, you fool,
Or you'll go to Reform School!"

6
On the house the sun shines bright
But in the sky there hangs night
And so Good Morning and Good Night

7
Peter and Pussy (begging your pardon)
Do nasty things in kindergarden;
Look at the pigs!
The other children stand and stare.
Teacher Abby says, "Look there—
Ugh, what pigs!"
Flashes her pointed pen,
Waves it in rage; Abby then
Writes: "Dear parents—dissipated lot—
Look what nasty kids you've got!
Can't you give us something better?"
Debauched parents then reply:
"Dear Abby: We sure try.
Now we marry, now divorce—
Makes all kinds of kids, of course."

OTTÓ ORBÁN

POETS

They stand in the gateway of the century the haunters of the future
with their naïve intelligentsia ideas about beauty and society
in stiff collars walking stick in hand
carving original naturalness into fatal postures
their instincts undermining the postures
in a dying world where no more credit is given to academic death-tolls
to tearful bluffing and enchanting elegizings about a fleeting mood
they are the credulous dancers at Time's carnival
the lions of this chandeliered ballroom where always
perfume mingled with gunsmoke
real sorrow with sham
and simple courage drowned in a flood of heroic appearances
they invented new notions ideals and points of reference
as well as new anxieties new disgraces
masters and dupes of the modern
they are the ones pathetic and admirable
who went to Spain China Russia Japan
to wink back at History's concubine and extend a hand to mankind
here where a lesser Orpheus wrote cheap verses on dizzying vistas
where a bearded madman sang the praises of violence in Biblical tones
shadows and roses
where a Latin adventurer flashed like a bull's forehead
where the good and bad both hugged the ground in terror of the sky
in the company of goatherds and farm labourers who didn't give a damn
about poetry
where they discovered love and exploitation
they are the witnesses that man was not meant for death
his ashes are consumed by grass
but his bones stick up from the earth like swords.

CONCERT

As they surround the house, there is no mistaking
their expertise. No superfluous gesture. No false step.
All goes with classic simplicity as in some baroque piece
of music or in a dentist's chair. An operation, not

a manhunt. Rifles at the ready, at ease, steps right and
left, as at a dancing school. This way, please, after
you—a thrust barely noticeable yet firm between the
shoulderblades, no touch of refined cruelty. A minuet
of machines: traffic moving to perfection. Diesel-rondos,
khaki-sonatas. After formless agony an elegy of relief:
the wind rinsing the houses. Blood-clotted tufts of weeds,
sputum of mud-walls dotting a cuplike village. Standing
out like a Greek idea on the autumn anarchy the
colonnade of goose steps. A marching masterpiece.
In the Alpine purity of measure and proportion is
celebrated the practice of generations. O brushes!
O chisels! O arrested movements! No ordinary moment:
the hunter and the hunted on the same plinth of a hill.
The dénouement is more prosaic. The house as if on
second thought thrusts high its roof, then falls flat on
the ground steaming like a cow-flop. Dust circles for
a while before clearing away. One error on the map,
and earth the wiser for it.

THE YOUNG YEARS OF MOHOLY-NAGY

by

LÁSZLÓ PÉTER

László Moholy-Nagy (1895–1946) was one of those artists who emigrated from Hungary after the White Terror following the First World War and acquired fame abroad. How he began, the first stages of his career as an artist in Hungary, is still unknown, but the environment and influences which originally helped to form him are well worth investigating. No monograph or comprehensive biography of this artist exists in his native country. A number of scattered essays is all that has been written about him there; and the majority of these are no more than extracts and summaries of foreign articles.

What we know is that he was born in Bácsborsod, a small village in Southern Hungary, in the district of Baja. The village itself does not even figure on many Hungarian maps: the New Hungarian Encyclopedia refers to it in a single line. Even to-day about half of the some 2,000 inhabitants still live in dispersed hamlets.

His father is reported to have been a landowner, but I myself believe he was a tenant on the estate of the wealthy Latinovits family. He failed, went to America to try his luck, and disappeared. The two boys, László and his younger brother Ákos, were brought up by their mother.

2

One of the few things we know about his childhood was that in autumn 1905 he was enrolled in the first class of the State Grammar School *(gimnázium)* of Szeged.

Only his contemporaries could give a true and convincing picture of the teachers who influenced László Moholy-Nagy, and the atmosphere and spirit of the school.

László Bach was a friend of his in Szeged: he was four years his junior

and so was in a lower form: I learned from him that Moholy-Nagy lived with his mother and brother at No 4 Pusztaszeri Street. They had come to Szeged from Mohol, where their uncle, Dr. Nagy, a lawyer, lived; he supported the family left without a father. The boys later adopted his name. In the first four forms school reports mention László Moholy Weisz, in the fifth László Nagy (Weisz) and from the sixth in 1910, the name appears simply as László Nagy.

Moholy-Nagy did well at school from the very beginning, and as such was exempt from the payment of school fees. In the Hungarian school system the top mark was 1, the lowest 4. In the first class he had top marks in everything but handwriting, where he was given a 2. In the first three forms he was declared "excused" from gymnastics and in the fourth form, no longer exempt—or perhaps he was ashamed to ask for it—he had a 2 in gymnastics. He had the same mark in the fifth, but gained a 1 in the sixth, so his record was excellent throughout his school career.

In the upper forms he learned Greek and he also took up two extra-curricular subjects: French in the third, and shorthand in the fourth form.

Imre Bach (1895–1966) was his best friend. He was the brother of László Bach, a well-known professor of clinical medicine. Imre also did well at school, he and Moholy-Nagy became classmates in second form.

*

The school report gives the bones of Moholy-Nagy's school career, the picture of a good pupil interested in everything, doing well in everything he touched. His form master for five years, who according to Hungarian custom, moves up with the class, was János Horváth, a teacher of Latin and history. He was young at the time: when Moholy-Nagy started school he had been teaching for only six years and had been appointed to the school only a year before. At the outset he taught not only Latin but also Hungarian. From the sixth form on Adolf Wagner, a teacher of Latin and German was his form master and taught his own subjects, Latin and German, in this class. In Moholy-Nagy's last year Wagner went on sick leave in November, 1912, and his colleague, Joseph F. Striegl, whose subjects were Hungarian and German, took over. The form, then studying for their "matura", or final examination, already knew him well, for he had been teaching Hungarian language and literature from the third form on. If the school had any influence on the literary and artistic tastes of Moholy-Nagy, the credit must certainly go to János Horváth and Joseph F. Striegl.

The boy won several prizes in the form of books and even scholarships. Among these books were "The Country of the Nile" by Dezső Malonyai,

a volume of Jules Verne, a life of the poet Arany, a world history and "Modern Electricity" by Gibson. In the fifth he won the school's Bamberger scholarship, amounting to 60 crowns: in the sixth he won the same scholarship, increased now to 80 crowns.

In the second form he was one of the twenty-eight pupils of the school who, taken by two teachers, Ármin Bátori and Ervin Szluka, went on a study trip in Transylvania between May 16th and 21st 1907. They went to Arad, Déva, Vajdahunyad, Gyulafehérvár, Kolozsvár, Nagyvárad, all part of Hungary at that time. School records do not give the names of those who went on later excursions, and it could be that lack of funds prevented any taking place in some years, but it may be assumed that Moholy-Nagy went on such as were organized. He was certainly among those who went on a trip to Dalmatia, since he referred to it in a later letter, written to Antal Németh in 1924. The probable question was where he had travelled until then, for he answered: "Back in my childhood in Dalmatia (Ragusa!) and Bosnia. After the war: in Vienna and Germany."

This study trip was the most important of its kind during the years he spent in the school. It must have created a deep impression on the sixteen-year-old schoolboy to judge from the exclamation mark after Ragusa. Any future biographer of his is welcome to make use of the full report on the excursion in the school records. Headed by two teachers, János Horváth and Imre Peidl, later Bakonyi, thirty-four pupils started out from the Szeged-Rókus station on the 20th of May 1911 for the seven-day trip. They arrived in Fiume via Zagreb and Szabadka. On the 22nd they boarded the steamship "Gödöllő" which cast anchor in Cattaro on the following day. From there they went on several excursions: to Ragusa and to the island of Lacroma. They rode on the Bosnian narrow-gauge railway in the valley of the Narenta to Sarajevo. They left for home on the 26th of May and arrived back after an exhausting night journey.

One-third of the boys only had to pay half of the 75 crowns' cost of the trip, and some of them were given free travel "covered by the Excursion Fund". Young Nagy, a poor and excellent pupil, can be assumed to have been among them.

Unable to join the school literary and debating society before they reached the seventh form, Imre Bach and Nagy enthusiastically took up shorthand. In Szeged shorthand—owing to the work of propagandists such as János Bódogh, Lajos Jakab and Dávid Katona—was very popular at the time. This peculiar fad for shorthand persisted as late as the twenties. Attila József, the poet, was also under its influence of this craze in his young years.

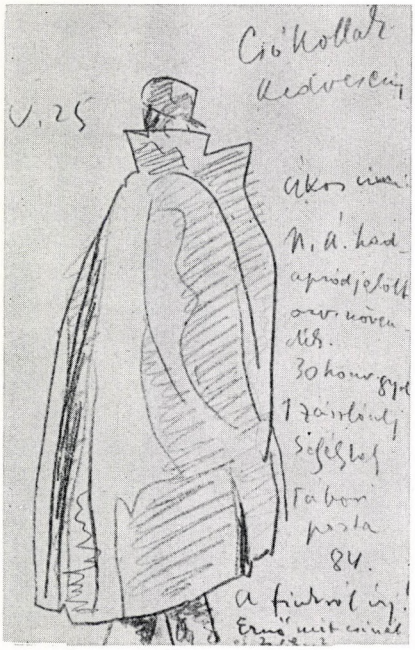
The shorthand club of the school organized an "accurate commercial

Photo: Mrs. János Magyar

László Moholy-Nagy: Selfportrait (1918–19)

Photo: Endre Kovács

László Moholy-Nagy: Portrait of Zoltán Réder (1918)



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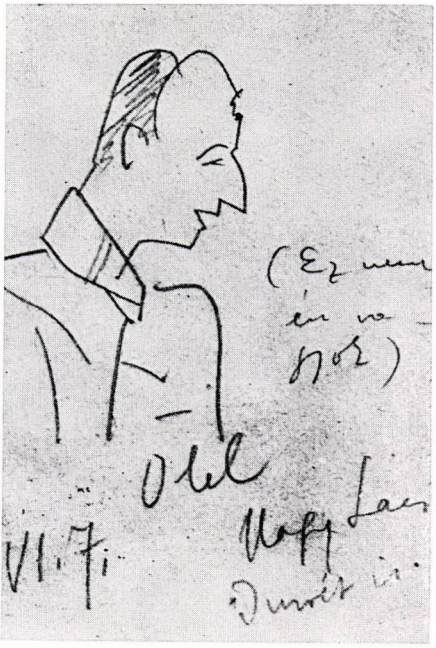
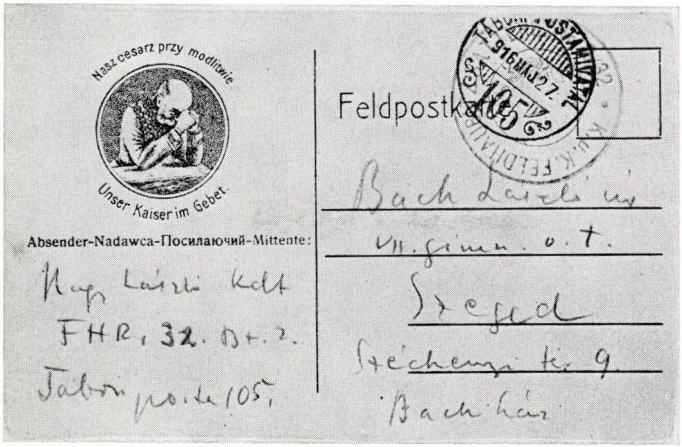
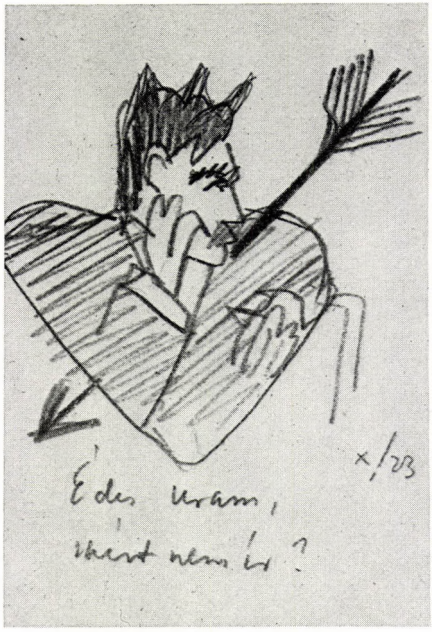


Portrait of unidentified man

Army Post-Cards Sent by Moholy-Nagy

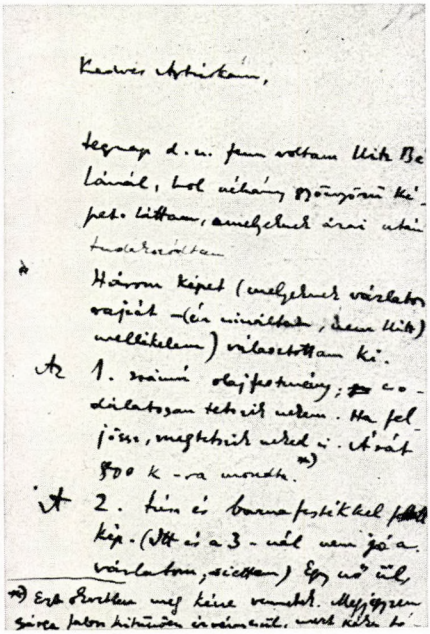




Moholy-Nagy's selfportrait

Portrait of Ernő Bach, March 24, 1918

Letter to Arthur Bach, July 2nd, 1918



Kedves Arthurkám,

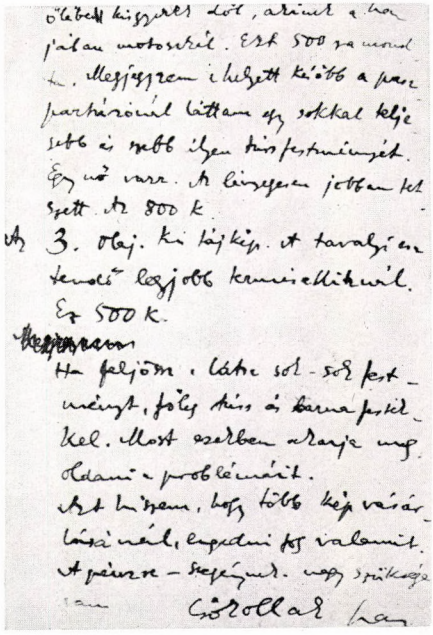
tegnap d.u. fent voltam Uitz Bélánál, hol néhány Mánzsuri képet láttam, amelyekről írni akartam

* Három képet (melyekről vázlatot rajzolt – (én nincsenek, dem Uitz) mellékelem) választottam ki.

Ár 1. számú olajfestmény; ~~az~~ e o - dialatosan tetszik nekem. Ha fel jössz, megteszik neked is. Ár ára 800 k - ra mondta. **)

Ár 2. kéz és barna festékkel ~~festett~~ kép. (Ár ára a 3 - nál nem jó a vászna, sietett.) Egy nő ülő

**) Erős Szerkezet meg kéne mondott. Megjegyzem szívesen látom kitűnően invenciót, mert kéne ké-



ölelkező kiszáradt dió, akinek a hajában motorokról. Ezt 500 ra mondta. Megjegyzem ehelyett kétszer a pár parkírozónál láttam egy sokkal kifejezőbb és szebb ilyen kis festményeket. Egy nő varr. Ár kicsivel jobban kidolgozott Ár 800 k.

Ár 3. olaj. ki táj kép. Ár tavalyi ezen tendenciát legjobb kompozíciókról. Ez 500 k.

Ha feljössz, látsz sok - sok festményt, főleg kis és barna festékkel. Most azokban arányok megoldani a problémáit.

Ár kívánom, hogy több kép vásárlási nál, engedni fog valamit. Ár pénzre – szükségünk. nagy szükség

Gróllal kan

shorthand" competition on April 27th 1910: the first prize went to Imre Bach; László Nagy received a certificate of merit. In the same year the Shorthand Association of Szeged organized another commercial shorthand competition where he also won a "certificate of merit, first class". At the time he was in the sixth form, in 1911, there was a school competition in shorthand: Moholy-Nagy won the first prize in the group of 120 syllables a minute, and was given a prize of 10 crowns.

In autumn, on September 14th 1911, the school shorthand club elected Imre Bach as the co-president, László Moholy-Nagy as secretary, and Ákos, his brother, as librarian. A seventh-year pupil had never been elected president before, this was a privilege formerly reserved to eighth-form pupils. Imre Bach (who had been junior clerk in the fifth) broke this tradition because he was the best shorthand writer in the school. So did Moholy-Nagy. His younger brother, Ákos, was in the sixth form at the time.

In the 1912 school records László Nagy signed the annual secretarial report, which gives us further information on his activities in shorthand. On November 11th 1911 there was an internal school domestic competition where his paper was faultless in the 70-syllable-per-minute group, and in the annual end-of term competition he won 10 crowns in the 120-syllable group. The first prize in accurate parliamentary shorthand was awarded to Imre Bach (15 crowns), the first prize in commercial shorthand (10 crowns) to László Moholy-Nagy. The report further declared that "in our club the following persons made contributions to the theoretical knowledge of shorthand in their papers and lectures: Imre Bach, Arnold Grüner, László Nagy and Ákos Nagy, who read essays on shorthand. Valuable stenographic criticisms were given by Imre Bach, Arnold Grüner and László Nagy."

In the eighth form Imre Bach was still president of the shorthand club, but László Nagy was no longer secretary but treasurer. The secretary was now Zoltán Gönczi, the librarian again Ákos Nagy. As a consequence the name of László Nagy now figured in the school record under the financial report of the club. The secretarial report also mentioned him partly as a lecturer, along with Imre Bach and Arnold Grüner, and partly as a successful competitor. He won the first prize in the parliamentary shorthand competition at the end of the term and gained 10 crowns.

*

The pupils of the seventh form were allowed to join the school literary and debating society. Here Moholy-Nagy was active, he won second prize in the German competition for a translation of the poem "Pannonia" by Johann Vogl (1802–1866), in the original metre. The first prize was won by Ferenc Kende,

a pupil of the eighth form, whose father was a Hungarian teacher at the school. At the same time Imre Bach won a prize of 10 crowns for the Latin competition, the translation of the first book of the Aeneid in hexameters.

The printed records reported on the activities of the literary and debating society during the term: "In our meetings and in school celebrations and commemorations the folllwing persons have contributed much to the success of these events: Péter Bereck, István Bródy, Ferenc Gabnay, Pál Hubert, Kálmán Kelemen, Ferenc Kende, Gyula Panyiczky and Antal Temmer, of the eighth form, and Imre Bach, Dezső Knauer, László Nagy, Albert Weiner and Mark Weiner of the seventh form."

The report on the eighth form read as follows: "We organized the usual annual competitions. In Hungarian László Nagy, of the eighth form, won the first prize. The mathematics competition was won by Imre Bach, eighth form." The literary group moreover gave a prize to the most serious critic, László Nagy, and to the most experienced lecturer on specific subjects." As the lecturer of specific subjects is mentioned without giving any name it is not clear whether this also refers to László Nagy.

In a school performance on March 2nd 1913 László Nagy appeared as an amateur actor. He played the part of the lackey in a one-act burlesque, "Incognito", by Ney and Pokorny. László Bach remembered also that when he was in the third form László Nagy, then in the seventh, coached the lower form for a scene from the novel of Ferenc Molnár, "The Boys of Pál Street", which he had probably dramatized himself. He himself took over the part of the teacher.

Although there is nothing to show that Moholy-Nagy played any musical instrument, he showed his interest in music in the fifth form, when he became a sponsoring member of the school orchestra formed in the autumn of 1909—along with Imre Bach. The school reports also give their names later among the sponsoring members.

The written "matura" or leaving examination was on May 16th, 17th and 18th in 1913. In Hungarian literature the subject was an aesthetic and literary assessment of an epic written by Miklós Zrínyi in the seventeenth century, and the set text Latin paper was on part of the work of Sallust, an encouragement written by Catiline to his accomplice. The oral examination was held between June 9th and 15th, before Pál Timár, director of the Budapest Principal Grammar school.

Both friends passed their exams with "excellents"; they also passed their complementary exam in Greek, with similar results. Imre Bach wanted to be a doctor—in which he succeeded. László Nagy, when his formmaster asked him about his plans, in order to fill in the appropriate space in the

school record, said he wanted to be a lawyer. It is claimed that this was his mother's wish.

*

In the autumn of 1913 László Moholy-Nagy and Imre Bach took a furnished room in Budapest. They also shared a room later in Berlin until Bach married and went home. In Budapest they began on their university studies. Nagy's mother later came to live in Budapest as well, with Jenő Nagy, her son by her first marriage; she lived at No 12 Mészáros Street.

Then came the First World War. Moholy-Nagy was a second-year student of law when he joined the army. He sent a card by military post to László Bach as early as May 25th 1916. The address was as follows:

Mr. László Bach
7th form pupil
Szeged
Széchenyi square 9
Bach House

On the left side of the postcard he put his own address:

László Nagy
cadet
FHR 32. Bt. 2
Military post no: 105

The drawing on the postcard is obviously a self-portrait, in a cloak. The text ran:

"Love and kisses. Ákos' address: Á. N. cadet medical student, no. 30. Infantery Regiment, First Division, medical aid-post, Military post no. 84. Write about the boys! What's the news of Ernő and Zolika?"

According to László Bach Ákos Nagy was captured by the Russians and never returned to Hungary; he remained in the Soviet Union. László Nagy wanted information on the four Bach children, including Ernő Bach (1904–1945) whom he mentioned by name. Ernő was the younger brother of László Bach, became a doctor himself, and was ultimately murdered by the Nazis. Zolika was the nephew of László Bach, Zoltán Réder (1909–1945) the son of Mrs Béla Réder née Boriska Bach (Fő utca 52), later a dentist. In 1918 Moholy-Nagy painted his portrait, which is now in the possession of Mrs. Dezső Moskovitz, née Teréz Réder, Béla Réder's sister.

The second postcard by military post was also addressed to László Bach on June 7th 1916. It is addressed to

Mr. László Bach
Szeged
Széchenyi square 9
Bach House

Sent by:

Cadet Nagy
FHR 32. Bt 2, Military post no. 105.

The sketch is very probably the portrait of one of his companions. Scribbled on it is "This isn't me. Love Laci Nagy."

The next card was addressed to Artur Bach (1891–1926) the oldest brother. Despite their difference in age they were also on very good terms with each other. (László Bach always said that László and Ákos Nagy were regarded as brothers by the Bach family.) Artúr Bach was a bank clerk in the capital. He joined the army soon after the outbreak of the war, became a lieutenant, was wounded thirty-six times, and knowing his case was hopeless, killed himself with a dose of morphine. László Moholy-Nagy surrounded his caricature with the shape of a heart and asked: "My fine gentleman, why don't you write?" The address:

Lieut. Artúr Bach
Szeged
Széchenyi square 9

Artúr Bach was probably wounded and at home with his parents, at the time, which was why he did not write. The sender was by then:

Lieutenant Nagy
Budapest I. Mészáros utca 12

The postmark was October 23, 1917. So he was clearly on leave at home with his mother.

The third postcard was addressed to the mother of the Bach brothers and sent in fact by Ernő Bach (Budapest II., Fő utca 52, II. floor) but the drawing and the handwriting were László Moholy-Nagy's. "I kiss your hand. Laci"—the common equivalent of "Greetings" to a lady—and the signatures of Imre and Ernő were added below. The picture is Ernő Bach in his uniform. The exact date can be seen on the picture-side of the card: March 24, 1918. It was posted the next day.

It is very likely that it was about these and many other similar postcard that Moholy-Nagy wrote in 1924 to Antal Németh: "I wanted to be a writer, and for me *the* writer was Dostoievski. Then during the war I made coloured pastel sketches, mostly on postcards. A friend of mine to whom I had sent some as a greeting found them enchanting. His praise pleased me. So drawing, which had been a pastime up to then, became a more regular occupation. When I was wounded and got home I gave up my literary ambitions."

The friend who encouraged him was very probably Artúr or Imre Bach. László Bach also possesses a letter written to his brother Artúr.

2 July 1918

Dear Artur,

Yesterday afternoon I visited Béla Uitz* and saw some marvellous pictures there. I asked their price.

I chose three pictures (the sketches are by me, not by Uitz)—I enclose them.

No. 1 is an oil painting: I find it wonderful. You will like it too when you see it. He said it costs 800 crowns. (This one must absolutely be bought. Incidentally, I think it will be marvellous against a yellow wall as a background, because of its blue colours. Blue and yellow are complementary colours.)

No. 2 is painted with Indian ink and brown paint. (My sketch of this one and of no. 3 is not good, I hurried.) It is a seated woman with a small child in her lap, she is playing with his hair. He said this costs 500. By the way, later I saw a much more complete and more beautiful picture of a sewing woman done in Indian ink, at the man who mounts his pictures. I liked that much better. It costs 800 crowns.

No. 3 is an oil painting, a small landscape. The best Uitz product of last year. It costs 500 crowns.

If you come you will see a lot of paintings, especially with Indian ink and brown. He wants to use them to solve his problems.

May be if you buy more pictures he will let you have them for somewhat less. The poor fellow is in great need of money.

Kind regards

Laci

*

When László Nagy wrote this letter, so characteristic of himself and of the painting of Uitz, he had already decided to devote himself to art. "I have been drawing since I was six or seven" he wrote in the letter to Németh. "I began to write poetry when I was twelve." His first poems appeared in the local daily, the "Szegedi Napló": on November 5th 1911 they published *Love poems...*, on December 3rd 1912 *My mother*. His first experiments in art were his sketches of his wounded and fallen companions on the Russian front, his drawings conveying an abstract and yet infinitely realistic impression of barbed wire.

In 1917 he was seriously wounded. He was nursed first in Odessa, then at home in Szeged. By that time he had already started painting, but he had not yet given up all literary ambitions. Iván Hevesy started a magazine

* Béla Uitz (1887–1972) a painter. He was an important representative of the Constructivist trend in painting after the First World War.

in November 1917 entitled *The Present*, Moholy-Nagy wrote short stories, poems and criticisms for it. When, in the issue of April 1918, which proved to be the last, the magazine listed its collaborators, they mentioned him among the writers of short stories.

His name also figured on the editorial board, along with Artur Bach, Joseph Baranyay, Árpád Garami and Béla Zsolt. In the first issue he wrote a short story *Mary*, in the no. 3–4 double issue of February 1918 he had two poems ("The Victorious Neck", and "As a Telegraph Wire of Alien Secrets") and two book reviews ("Pinterich the Bachelor", a novel by Elemér Pajzs, and "The Wanderers of November", short stories by László Fodor). In the fifth number he had another short story (Encounter) and he reviewed the volume of poetry (Tormented Spring of Love) by Árpád Garami, the editor. This was the first time, in April 1918, that he used the name Moholy before Nagy—but without a hyphen.

"When I was wounded and got home I gave up my literary plans"—he wrote. "I spent my evenings in a free art school and learned to draw nudes, and during the day I worked passionately at drawing landscapes, figures, portraits. I made the regular exhibitions organized by TODAY the standard for my work—its intellectual movement determined my work..."

He continued his law studies and obtained his internal certificate, but he never passed his finals. He organized his first exhibition in 1918 in the National Salon.

When the counter-revolution took over he went back to Szeged. There he shared a studio with a sculptor, Sándor Gergely (1889–1932) another illustrious member of the artists grouped around TODAY and ACTION: (Gizella square no. 3—today the Square of the Arad Martyrs) and they held a joint exhibition there late in October 1919. Gyula Juhász* wrote about the exhibition in the October 31st issue of the review "Szeged and its Region": "We have to declare that never before has art of this European standard and importance appeared in our town as in this modest studio. The public can see here the daring and powerful outcome of the purest and most serious modern artistic endeavours, and those who have a feeling and a heart for high artistic qualities will take off their hats to this honesty, talent and courage."

This statement is significant in that it indicates that Gyula Juhász, whom many people considered conservative in his tastes, was responsive to new experiments in art; he later also showed himself sensitive and perceptive to the poetry of Lajos Kassák. In those days of October 1919, moreover, to speak up for modern art was in itself a courageous political action.

* Gyula Juhász (1883–1937) a well-known Hungarian poet.

A few days later, on November 4th, the poet again wrote about the two artists in the paper "Southern Hungary".

"There is no doubt" he wrote "that these works of art, their new spirit and their new forms, equally demand new vision and a new soul: the old complacency is of no avail here; it is not enough to know the classical and the Romantic schools and even the knowledge of Naturalist and Impressionist dogmas is not enough. This is new art in the noblest and truest sense of the word, an art beyond Impressionism..."

Moholy-Nagy, Juhász declared, wanted to create something new, like Kokoschka and Chagall, but he was original and unique. "Both are monumental artists but their monumentality is real and is not limited to mass... In this young, strong and courageous art there is the soul of the new world now being born. These lines and colours, these substances and forms are linked in brotherhood with the art in the music of Béla Bartók, in the free verse of Walt Whitman, an art which has not as yet been exactly defined but which exists and stands out with vital force, and which will undoubtedly renew the image of art on earth even as the era of Pericles or the Renaissance."

Gyula Juhász also followed Moholy-Nagy's later career. On October 17th 1920, a year after the exhibition in Szeged, he mentioned in an article that the painter was already working in Berlin and that he seemed to be successful. On November 6th he wrote that Moholy-Nagy had sent him the catalogue of the Franz Gurlitt firm about his exhibition, and that he had been given a commission to illustrate the works of Walter Hasenclever, the famous Expressionist playwright. Gyula Juhász proudly added: "The author of these lines discovered him in Szeged at the time, and predicted the growth and success of his remarkable talents."

*

Moholy-Nagy's self-portrait was probably painted in these years: he gave it to his friend, Imre Bach. It is now in the possession of his widow (picture no 2).

In 1932 Moholy-Nagy returned to Budapest for three days. The daily "Népszava" (The People's Voice) wrote an article on October 22 1932 entitled "A lecture by László Moholy-Nagy in the Ernst Museum": "After an absence of twelve years László Moholy-Nagy, a former teacher of the Bauhaus, the apostle of the new art or, in his own words, the new vision, has come back to Budapest. Contemporary man, having discovered and correctly assessed the interrelationships in the world, cannot content himself with the methods of expression used by painters up to the present;

a man who lives in his own time will make use of every opportunity that time offers him. Until recently photographs were no more than souvenirs or the kitschy imitation of painting. Modern man, however, has also pressed the camera in to the service of the new vision, he attempts to create with it, to produce documentaries, to arouse social responsibility. After the lecture he demonstrated the new opportunities offered by the camera and the relation between new trends in the arts and photography. His lecture was an enthusiastic profession of faith in the new vision, with its mission to liberate contemporary man from the chains of tradition and lead him towards social freedom. This was the gist of his lecture, which was received with cheering applause by a large and passionate public."

In the issue of the newspaper "Az Est" (The Evening) of the same day György Bálint, the leading journalist on its staff, wrote about Moholy-Nagy's work in an article entitled "The Hungarian apostle of the applied arts". He interviewed him and discussed the main characteristics of his work. "When I was a young man"—said Moholy-Nagy at the end of the interview—"and came up with new ideas and new viewpoints, everybody laughed at me. And yet I was right. That is why I still feel attracted to what is new and courageous, at which other people laugh."

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THEORY OF RELATIVITY BASED ON PHYSICAL REALITY

by

LAJOS JÁNOSSY

This is the title of my monograph which was recently published in English.* It gives the result of more than ten years' deliberations on the subject—and I think what it is about may also be of some interest to the non-specialist.

Starting from the experimental facts which are analysed in some detail, the book attempts to build up the well-known theory. The important results of the special theory of relativity, but also of the general theory, are thus dealt with in sufficient detail to allow the monograph to be used as a textbook as well. Nevertheless the aim of the book is not so much to add one more to the many excellent textbooks which already exist, but to re-analyse the facts which have led to the formulation of the theories of relativity and at the same time to give a somewhat new version of the physical meaning of the theory.

We very often meet with the opinion that the theory of relativity is based on a number of ingenious *ad hoc* assumptions concerning the notion of space and time and that the theory necessarily follows from these assumptions. Sometimes we meet with the paradoxical view that only one logical possibility of the form of laws of nature existed and therefore nature is "compelled" to satisfy these necessities. With such an attitude experiments become of very little importance—after all the experiments only confirm facts which are more or less a "logical necessity", and in accepting such a point of view one is simply inclined to disbelieve experimental results which are not in accord with the theoretical concepts.

The point of view adopted in this monograph is the opposite. I am convinced that all our knowledge comes in the end from the analysis of real phenomena—in the case of the theory of relativity as well.

In building up a theory from experimental results we need of course to

*Akadémiai Kiadó, Budapest, 1971, 360 pp.

make abstractions. The theory is not simply a means of accounting for the experimental results in a "simple manner." After a theory has been constructed, however, and has been applied successfully to new phenomena—it is still important to review the whole process again and make it clear how we reached the theory and upon which phenomena it has been built.

II

I myself became acquainted with the theory of relativity at an early age. While still a schoolboy I read a well-known popular book of Einstein's on the theory of relativity.

At that time, when reading the book, I was confronted with a very natural dilemma: I had either to understand the book—or alternatively to admit that I was still too young and therefore I could not yet understand it. Under such moral pressure I chose to understand everything, even the things which appeared very strange. So to prove that I had really understood everything I tried to explain the theory to everyone who cared to listen to me.

The theory being highly fashionable at that time (in the middle twenties) I found a public to practice on—and at least I developed a good technique of explaining the theory. Most of my audience seemed to be satisfied—I remember, however, that I had less success with my stepfather, György Lukács, who objected to some of my arguments. In retrospect I see now that his objections were very much to the point—and very much later, while the present monograph was being prepared, I had very many valuable talks with him on the philosophical aspects of the subject.

III

An uneasy feeling over the philosophical concepts of the theory nonetheless persisted all the time—even during those periods when I tried to convince myself that everything was perfectly clear.

I had an interesting experience during the war years when I had to give courses of lectures at the University of Manchester: the course also contained the theory of relativity. In giving the course I tried very hard to explain the theory very cleary, and I tried to make my students understand the theory so clearly that they would have no further difficulties with the concepts involved.

I think I was successful and indeed I gave my students the feeling that

they understood the whole thing. As I had to repeat the course from year to year my technique gradually perfected itself. However, the unexpected result of this lecturing was that I myself became more and more convinced that the philosophical concepts were unsound and that there was a need for a thorough analysis of the subject to clear up the question of what is the real physical significance of this beautiful and very successful mathematical theory.

IV

Doubts about the concepts of the theory of relativity are very frequently found in the minds of laymen and indeed, of experts as well. I often receive letters from laymen, but occasionally also from physicists, expressing such doubts, and also very often putting forward remedies for the alleged faults.

A number of alleged paradoxes which are supposed to prove the inconsistency of the theory exist. These paradoxes are all well-known and it has already been shown by the classical authors of the theory that all these alleged paradoxes are simply based on a misunderstanding of the theory. It is interesting to note from this point of view, that the paradoxes which are constantly being put forward are always the same—they can be classified in categories, and they have to be answered again and again the same way. This is not the proper place to deal with these paradoxes—I have dealt with some of them in the monograph and also in a popular book on the subject which appeared in Hungary. I also discussed the most typical examples in a lecture delivered some time ago in Vienna.*

So, simply to give an example, I quote one of the very often repeated problems. It is alleged that according to the Theory of Relativity the velocity of light is the greatest possible velocity. Let us, however, imagine a torch with which we project a spot of light on to a wall. If we move the torch the spot of light begins to move. The velocity of the spot is proportional to the distance between the wall and the torch; thus if the distance is sufficiently large, the spot may move on the wall with a velocity exceeding that of light. This argument is produced against the theory of relativity.

To show the fallacy of this argument I emphasize that indeed a spot of light may move on a wall with a great velocity. The motion however, is of the same kind as if we see something move on the screen in the course of a cinema performance, or something appears to move on a television screen. In both cases the screen is illuminated in successive instances in a different

* Atomic Energy Review, 5. No. 2. 159, 1967.

way. In watching the screen we cannot help interpret this type of illumination by supposing that something is really moving on the screen. Indeed, if point A is illuminated and very shortly afterwards the illumination of A is stopped and a nearby point B is illuminated, then we cannot help feeling that point A has jumped into the place of B—although in fact nothing has moved—all that has happened is that the two different points have been illuminated in close succession. We thus see that only a loose formulation, to the effect that "the spot moves along the wall" implying that this is not an optical illusion but that a "real thing is moving"—leads to the apparent paradox.

V

I do not intend to pursue further paradoxes—but I will however venture a remark. The fact that the very same problems are raised again and again and the fact that though these problems can be easily solved, it does not help in the least, is a sign that perhaps after all not everything is clear, even if the theory is free of real contradictions.

In my opinion the theory can be reformulated in such a way that it does not lose any of its great achievements—and yet it attains a form in which it can be easily understood and does not give rise to permanent misunderstandings.

Such a formulation can be found when analysing, without prejudice, how the mathematical formalism came about originally and how it was built up on the facts. In carrying out such an analysis it is important to realize that there can be no contradiction between facts; if facts appear to be contradictory then the contradiction is due to the way we try to interpret them. We have to construct a theory so as to reflect the real facts in an adequate manner. If the facts do not support our concepts then the fault is with the concepts.

The theory of relativity was first formulated as an interpretation of the result of the experiment that Michelson and Morley carried out at the end of the last century. The result of the experiment was most unexpected and created a world sensation. The surprise arose because the experimental result contradicted what appeared to be very natural expectations. The shock which this most unexpected result caused seemed at the time to justify the most extravagant hypothesis—and at the same time it cast doubt on the question as to whether or not our usual way of thought is reliable.

Many such doubts arose on various subjects in the period before the First World War and there was therefore a strong resonance between a certain

type of agnostic manner of thought and the earthquake which happened inside physics, the most exact of natural sciences.

Today we may have recovered from the shock physics received at the end of the last century, and may thus try to form a more sober view of the significance of the Michelson experiments and the other phenomena which were discovered, and which support the theory of relativity.

VI

To characterize my own approach to the problem I give an example which touches, however, the essence of my arguments.

When we describe phenomena mathematically we have to express physical quantities with the help of numbers; these numbers are the measures of the quantities involved. So we give the length of objects, their weights—we give the quantity of electric charges and others.

In order to express a physical quantity by numbers we need a convention. In the simple case of a length we need a unit of length. Thus we postulate that a given object, e.g. a yard-stick, is the unit of length. If we want to measure the distance between points A and B on the solid Earth we find out how many times we have to take the length of our stick so as to reach from A to B. This number is the measure of the distance AB in units based on the length of the stick. The essential point of this argument is that to measure a length we have to carry out a comparison between the properties of real objects.

In representing more complicated phenomena we need systems of coordinates. Thus with the help of three numbers (the coordinates) we can determine the position of points relative to the system of coordinates. The system of coordinates we use is in fact also a convention—just like the unit of length—and in investigating phenomena we must never foget that we have introduced the systems of coordinates for the purpose of facilitating our work—but that what we are really after is to describe the relations between objective processes, and in this description the system of coordinates only plays the role of a convenient tool.

In many treatments of the theory of relativity as well as other branches of physics, the system of coordinates has grown to be a fetish. It is forgotten that the coordinates are made by us, for the description of objective phenomena, and that they are not things which have an objective significance of their own.

It is often quite correctly emphasized that the laws of physics have to

be formulated so as to be independent of the system of coordinates we use (or, what is the same, of the system of reference). The latter statement is, however, a triviality if we know that the system of coordinates is constructed by us to help in the description of phenomena—and that it does not imply that they have their own objective existence.

VII

In another article* I discussed the question of non-Euclidean geometry. Using the arguments of that article, I come to the conclusion that if we speak of the structure of space and time we are really making statements about the properties of solids and the mode of the propagation of light. A thorough analysis shows exactly which are those properties of light and matter which are described when we speak of the "non-Euclidean structure of space and time."

The monograph produces arguments in favour of rehabilitating the concept of the ether which concept was—in my opinion—in part unduly criticized. An interesting quotation from Einstein's work shows that this point of view does not contradict the views of Einstein as much as is supposed by many authors.

* See *The N.H.Q.* No. 35, "The Rhythm of Time".

POST-PEASANTS AND PRE-CITIZENS

A village talks

by

ISTVÁN MÁRKUS

(Gernelyapáti is the pseudonym of a village inhabited by some three thousand people, lying thirty-four miles from Budapest. It is the village in which the author, commissioned by the Sociological Research Institute of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, has been carrying out a sociological survey since the autumn of 1971. The survey is planned to last several years and eventually to cover other villages in the neighbourhood of Budapest, and is mainly concerned with still-existing peasant attitudes and the gradual transformation of the peasant way of life. These conversations were recorded. Part II follows in Number 47.)

AT THE SCHOOL

First teacher: Work has become self-torment here, a real *self-torment*... It's a fine impressive picture, this village. It's a sight worth seeing. The High Street, these high buildings, some of them are two storeys high, although the ground floor... well, as a matter of fact, one doesn't live on the ground floor, it's used for storage, for the vegetables which are to be sold later. The living quarters proper are to be found upstairs, three or four rooms in recently built houses; some people even build an attic room under the roof. It's used as a room for the schoolboy or schoolgirl of the family, while in other places they put the helpless old people there... Though sometimes the old people live in the basement alongside the concrete storage and drying rooms, or perhaps there is a tiny, properly floored room given to the grandmother to live in. It is furnished with her old furniture and she cooks her meals there as well, while her daughter or son, one half of the highly active couple upstairs, have brand new furniture.

There are a hundred and twenty cars in the village. A hundred and twenty for eight hundred families at the moment, but this winter there'll be twenty or thirty more, and in two years there'll be at least two hundred. One knows

who is getting on in the world well enough to forecast who'll be buying a new car soon. Except, let me tell you, the other side of the picture, that diligence and hard work has become a kind of self-torment in this village.

Second teacher: The methods of work, the way they work, above all on their household plot, are the same self-afflicting methods they used to be in the old days. In this village the household plot is devoted to market gardening, growing early vegetables and fruit for the city market—forced potatoes, peas, cucumber, cabbage, celery, parsley—high-quality vegetables which sell at a good price. On the local co-operative farm itself they are also only too eager to grow green peas, cucumbers and the like by adopting large-scale farming methods on huge areas of land. I mean above all the women, since the overwhelming majority of the men work outside the village on the railways, in factories or for the Budapest Transport Company.

First teacher: Because the other point is that from the 1930s on an increasing number of industrial workers have come from local families here; some of them learned a trade on the railways, they're now locksmiths, turners, mechanics, and so on. It became the fashion to work in factories after 1945, or more exactly, the early 1950s... The women, however, have been left behind in the village, doing peasant work, mainly growing vegetables and potatoes. These women, who make up the majority of the membership of the co-operative farm, grow vegetables even on the household plot. They agree to cultivate a few acres of co-operative land on what is called a "family basis". Here again they grow potatoes, cucumbers and peas and are paid according to the yield. The share of that produce which they are given will then be marketed along with their own produce in Budapest.

Second teacher: I come from Transdanubia, a different sort of region. They rear animals there and the pace is slower. I was shocked by what I found here. When harvest time comes—and it lasts for weeks—half the village turns out in battle formation, the women, the old folk, the children and young people—they all come, we see them out in the pea and cucumber fields of the co-operative at break of day. Even small children, four or five years old!

First teacher: Well, I don't know that the car they have really makes life any easier. What happens is that they drive out to the field to collect the stuff, and of course everyone that has a car uses it to take the produce in to Budapest. Mind you, I remember that in the thirties, when I was a child, my father did the same; they used to drive the horse and buggy to town once a week. But today, they go in three or four times a week. They start during the night and come back in the early morning to get down to another full day's work...

And these women, over forty years of age most of them, stick to the old peasant costumes. But it's impossible to drive with several skirts on. Whether they like it or not, they've got to change. Not because it is only too ridiculous to sit at the steering wheel with all those skirts, but because the skirts hamper their movements. Although some of them won't drive on principle. They insist on wearing their dozen skirts, and prefer to take a grown son or daughter to drive for them. They don't want to drive; they would feel conspicuous sitting behind their stalls at Budapest markets in any other sort of clothes. Or perhaps they think they can get more money for their parsley like that... Their customers have grown used to market women in peasant clothes...

Second teacher: Some five hundred people here commute today to work in factories, on the railways, and elsewhere; that's the overwhelming majority of the men. When a man is on night shift he'll come home in the early morning, and have his wife meet him at the railway station some three miles from the village, on her bike... The woman will be carrying two hoes and they go straight from the station to the field to hoe. He may have a short sleep in the afternoon, then in the evening, back to the factory. That's the sort of thing you have here.

First teacher: Why they keep on working in the town I don't know, now that they've gone in for intensive farming—the co-operative farm pays well —and their household plots are extremely profitable, you know. They keep on at the factory because it brings in money as well. At least they think they have to keep on. They go on because they would be sorry to give up the two thousand forints they're earning there.

I'm not exaggerating if I say that everyone in this village does the work of two. And they do an honest job of work. I don't think that there are any complaints against our people in the factories. They have been taught to be industrious, and drilled in it, until it has become their life-blood.

Second teacher: And from the end of the school year until September the children are out in the fields at crack of dawn every second or third day, harvesting the cucumbers and peas, alongside their parents. And in September, when they start school again, we don't know what to do with them, they're so tired.

Do they drill their children in this sort of diligence as well? Well, yes. But it's an unreasoning and inhuman diligence. It's the drive for money, in fact. There is a TV set in practically every home here. But they don't watch it. They literally drop into bed in the evening like the dead. Or if they sit up to watch it, they fall asleep before you can say Jack Robinson.

The only thing that keeps them awake is work. If they've got work to do,

they'll manage on as little as three or four hours' sleep, then up they get and off they go. But when it comes to watching or reading something, they're too dead with fatigue.

Business administrator on the co-operative farm, aged 25: Well, if you want to get a picture of the work done in this village, you'd better take a careful look at what they are doing outside, in addition to their regular agricultural production, at the intensive labour and energy put into the household vegetable plots, and into the vineyards and orchards, and consider as well the work of those who commute, the people with a double life and double work-load, there are about five or six hundred of them, it's reckoned. And on top of all that, the whole labour of selling, transport, storage, forwarding and so on and so forth. This is a tremendous amount of work—I have not yet tried to calculate how much it comes to, and its value, but I am sure that we'd get some astounding figures.

Simply take the business of selling, from early spring on, when they appear on the market with the earliest forced fruits and vegetables, and possibly with the last of last year's potatoes that they had managed to store. . . They load the stuff, transport it, unload, watch over it, sleep on the sacks, perhaps until the family car goes home and comes back with a second load. . . And then the selling itself, and the weighing . . . If all this were done by others, by a separate organization, I mean, who knows how many people, how many man-hours and how much in wages would be needed. Here all this is done by the family, dissipating their energies, and yet they resist any attempt to relieve them of this part of the work. Of course, this is what eliminates the risk and assures them their profit. They are not only thinking of the extra income, but as they themselves pick the time and place of selling and are free to select their customers, they make the most of conditions of supply and demand. If a man from Gernelyapáti, for instance, or rather his wife, who goes to market with the produce, thinks that the prices are not good enough, she turns round and brings the whole lot back; this often happens. Or they will take the stuff over to a different market. They don't count their own time in terms of wages, but I can safely assure you that in this way they earn more than whatever they would make in a different job which took the same amount of time and the same amount of energy.

For what is left in their pockets is not merely a simple profit from the sale; it is part of the rapid reactions and market-manoeuvres of the commercial world, shot through and through—don't let's make any bones about it—with the incentive of material interest, and therefore represents a sales job undertaken most willingly, undertaken in fact, ardently and with fervour. It is a job which in the final analysis links up, both objectively

and subjectively, you see, with the essence of their entire productive work—forgive me if I get too involved, there was a time when I was very much interested in political philosophy. I took my degree in theory at the Karl Marx University of Economics. When they strain their backs in the potato fields they know in advance that this potato will sell for so much and that one for so much, and when they are ploughing or sowing or planting the field they already know what it will bring in. In other words, the productive activity of the family here in the intensive mini-enterprise we call the household plot has been traditionally but quite logically linked with direct, flexible and specialized commercial selling. In the final analysis what is worth doing and what isn't can be measured by their net incomes, what work intensity and energy input will pay and what won't can be seen from their choice.

The actual situation here, my friend, is that the hidden but still surviving forms of individual peasant production simply enslave the people. They do freely what in fact they have to do to keep up with the Joneses; the toiling and moiling going on here is simply fantastic. All done of their own free will. And why? They want to be somebody in the village, just as their fathers, the old well-to-do smallholders were somebody in their time. Position! Position is God the Father in Gernelyapáti, money is only secondary, it is God the Father's son, and labour, unceasing labour, represents the third member of the trinity which, though three, is three in one . . . Well, yes, I went to Sunday school too, every child here does, it's part of the whole set-up.

As for the co-operative farm—don't imagine that as a result it is ineffective. The figures will surprise you—just look at them over the last ten years. Each year has shown an improvement, and there was no serious upheaval when the co-operative farm was first formed, or later when it amalgamated with others. The explanation? Well, the management—all local people—and all of us, myself included, peasant kids from Gernely, with various levels of schooling, all of us were well aware of local conditions and what was needed. In other words, the proper, adequate forms of incentive were found and applied. I've been back three years—throw a stone into the air and it comes back to earth, coming back to a job worth six or seven thousand forints a month was incentive enough. Though that wasn't the only reason. After all, it's ours. It's the puppy of our dog, as they say.

No, we didn't work on the system of a percentage of the crop, it wasn't necessary. We had the working day unit system from the very beginning, and we still have it. I'm also paid for doing market research, negotiating with the canning factory, corresponding with British firms, and doing eco-

nomic calculations on my own system over green peas. But how does the working day unit system work? In so far as the work-consuming intensive crops are concerned, and these are the basic crops, everyone was told, within definite upper and lower limits, according to the size of the family and the obligations undertaken: "This is the acreage you are working, and you are required to do such and such and this and that on it", and then the working day unit was registered for each according to what it produced.

This means that earnings were proportionate to whatever you produced on the piece of land entrusted to your care, to whatever you and your family produced on it. With some intensive crops we occasionally used the percentage system, but even there, the basic system was the one of the working units, earning according to what they produced. The whole idea was Uncle Marci's, who was running the farm then. People praised it, and God knows why none of the other co-operative farms introduced it. It worked out well here. In our co-operative farm a working day unit was worth 60 forints as far back as 1961, which means that in the season a man was able to earn at least a hundred and often two hundred forints a day; and a family of some two or three increased the figure proportionately. That did the trick. We had developed a proper system of incentives, you see.

What about the working capital? Ah, that's another matter. The point is, by this method our co-operative farm has got a high-quality labour force and is successful. Development, especially in a modern sense, is quite another cup of tea. You can imagine, it's not going to be easy to go one better than these self-propelled market gardens on the private plot. For the time being there's no point. A new generation will grow up after a time that won't be so ready to drudge its life away. May be by that time we'll have been able to mechanize the large-scale intensive crops in the right way... but then, it costs more than you get out of it and what would be reasonable to invest in it... In fact I really don't know whether it's urgent or there's no need to hurry... Right now the villagers, working as small family units accumulate twenty times as much as the large enterprise... The authorities didn't like it very much, and that's why Uncle Marci had to go.

The sociologist's lunch-time meditation under a walnut tree: The former chairman of the co-operative farm had built up the large-scale enterprise in the light of the actual conditions of the time. He knew his ground. What he relied on was the exceptional industry and work discipline of this village—way above the average. And, secondly, and connected with it, the demand for high and rapidly rising living standards. Thirdly, there are the lingering peasant characteristics of these identically industrious men and women who are making such a good job of their market gardening and selling. This holds

good also in the way these people gave in to the clever and strong-handed chairman. He became their superior—a man on good terms with "those higher up", and so considered beyond the reach of men still thinking as peasants or imbued with lingering peasant attitudes. They submitted to the clever and energetic patriarchal leader of Gernelyapáti, whom they recognized —whether all of them did I cannot tell—as the head of the new-type peasant community, the representative of their interests, their agent and organizer, even tolerating the embarrassment of being searched by him, and enduring his rudeness and tyranny. The ex-chairman provided the needed incentive for the peasants who had been recruited to the co-operative farm—who at the same time derived at least half or two-thirds of their living—in fact wealth—from working their household plots and individually selling the produce—to induce them not only to do the work and to do it well, but to find it to their interest to accept him as their chairman and boss. Voting him out, or his own resignation, meant the people of Gernely are growing out of the peasant condition, or their peculiar "delayed peasant condition" in which it was still possible to treat them in such a high-handed manner, letting them get rich but ordering around like a tyrant the very men and women to whom he had given a direct interest in every phase of the work. In the last ten years these families have grown so rich, by the sweat of their brows, in this well-organized double market gardening—the collective and the household—that they probably now regard themselves as anyone's equal, with the exception of their God and their priest—certainly the chairman's equal. They have grown out the custom of obeying him. He himself has done his bit towards forcing them to outgrow the habit of obeying him, in fact, forcing them to turn against him. Now they want objective professional management, management by experts, instead of patriarchal tyranny. Or is it something else they want?

Uncle Marci, 67—the former chairman of the co-operative farm: I was a chairman of the co-operative farm for ten years. I was good for ten years and now I'm no good. It's surprising... The rows weren't new. From the beginning there were rows with the authorities, who kept on saying that the members were getting too much money, that the rate for the working day unit was too high, that the percentage share of the crop was excessive. Officially. That is why I had to quit as chairman. Officially. But there were other attacks on me too. That I acted as a little king. Me? A little king. Now they attack me for exactly what they used to praise me for, that I was firm, that I wouldn't put up with corruption or slackness, that I insisted on discipline and that everything had to be in order...

It is true that I insisted on order and discipline. I wouldn't overlook the

smallest bit of pilfering or negligence at work. Sometimes I myself personally checked the sacks; it had to be done. I had to get them used to the idea that nothing, absolutely nothing, could be stolen from collective property. Our tractor and truck and car drivers had to learn that reliable, careful work was all important. I was strict with everyone, I wouldn't make any concessions. It didn't matter whether he was the son of a wealthy farmer or a farmhand, everyone was expected to observe the rules. But otherwise, in private life, if there was no complaint against them, I was friends with them all, you can ask anyone. I was born here, half the people of the villagers are relatives or pals or were with me in the army... It was the only way to establish the kind of order large-scale farming needs. I am prepared to defend it anywhere you like.

When I became chairman, I laid down definite principles for myself. One, that maximum incentives had to be provided for everyone, or as they say today: give them a personal interest in the work. Maximum—as much interest as possible. The emphasis is on the word maximum, and that's what they failed to grasp. For here, you see,—something people like me know from personal experience of farming here—you have to remember the standard of living there used to be in this village. There have been market gardens here for a long time, and on good soil—the land is very good here... People in Gernelyapáti achieved a better living standard than that enjoyed by most Hungarian villages, because they were knowledgeable and worked hard... It was no child's play to get these people and women to accept large-scale farming in common, and develop their enthusiasm for the job. It's very easy to be wise after the event. But the thing was to make them feel more than onlookers... to make them recognize it was their own business and feel that it was their concern, so that they'd go hard at it and not just sit down on the job, so that they wouldn't need a slave driver standing behind each of them—we couldn't afford to support slave drivers. So my maxim was to pay, to pay as much as we could possibly afford without depriving the co-operative of any money it needed... in other words, so that they could see what was in large-scale farming for them. To pay as much as we could, the maximum! that was my first principle from the very beginning even before the new system of economic management came in. And two, that all these well-paid people, whoever they were, were expected to do a careful and honest job of work, and I took strong measures in all cases of negligence. Always. The two are complementary, comrade, as I see it. I got the sack through it, that's all right, I've done my duty as a man should, and they'll do justice to me some time in the future.

Railwayman's widow, 73: I was only eleven years old, when I went to

work in the turnip field; there was a huge estate owned by a baron which used to be here and we went to work there. We were part of a team of contract labour, that's what it was called then... hoed up the weeds and pulled up the turnips one by one... I went on working there later, oh, all the time. The other baron who was his brother had a vineyard of some six hundred acres near by, and I went to work there too, even after I had got married... During the war I had a baby boy called Gyulus. He's the assistant station master of the main station in Miskolc now... I was still feeding him when my mother-in-law, may she rest in peace, used to bring my midday dinner for me to the vineyard at twelve. She used to bring the baby along too, and I'd feed him there in a corner of the vineyard.

My husband worked on the Hungarian State Railways for thirty-two years; he'd work for twelve hours at a time and then have twenty-four hours off, but most of his free time he'd work with me. We did casual labour, and work at harvest time... He'd get off the train at Cserényszeg after work, instead of coming home; there used to be a farm there, he'd have a nap there and then come straight on to do the harvesting...

We built this house through a loan from the State Railways. We borrowed 3,500 pengős to buy a tiny decrepit house on this site... We paid the loan back in three years... and then my husband borrowed another 2,500 pengős from the savings bank of the State Railway and we pulled the old house down and built this one on the site... Yes, we had four sons and two daughters, we managed to send all the four boys to the town school... we couldn't have them living in a shabby old ramshackle house any longer... that's why we built this one here with my good husband so that we could be a bit better off...

All the four boys are on the railways, thank God, all of them have good jobs, and all the girls have married railwaymen. In fact things have gone just the way we wanted them. My husband was a railwayman and he was respected and they thought a lot of him. We weren't poor. We weren't rich... Thank God, all four of our boys are respected, and I'm not saying it out of pride because I brought them up. The oldest of them passed his final secondary exams, he's been living in Miskolc for the past fourteen years, he's assistant station master at the main station in Miskolc and he's a lieutenant on the reserve... And the next one is traffic manager at Ferencváros station, he's been working at the same place for 28 years... The two younger ones are also railwaymen, but they live here in the village; perhaps you saw my son Ferkó's new house as you came along the High Street from the station... They bought a plot there, three years ago, the plot alone cost them a hundred and sixty thousand forints, and now the

house is finished... My son Ferkó is a hard worker, and he made a good match, thank God, they inherited a bit of property, but they're hardworking as well. My youngest, instead of knocking off after a day's work on the railway, goes straight on to work on the co-operative farm. He's a driver's mate on a lorry there and often does a night shift as well... His wife also works in the co-operative. You know, they have a small piece of land on the bank of the river Gernely, and it yields three crops a year, they farm it so well that they get three crops a year...

I have thirteen grandchildren. My favourite is Ferkó's baby son, he's three and a half now, and this little scrap of a boy is always wanting to work. "Granny," he says to me, "can't I help you with the work?"

Model farmer, former member of the County Council, 71: Oh, yes, the decisive moment was undoubtedly in 1928. 1928, 29 and 1930. That's when we started to grow early potatoes. I mean pre-germinated potatoes, and I was one of the first to do it... I was the first to use chemical fertilizers in this village... I saw it when driving my horses to market in Budapest. Along the highway there was a plot with exceptionally high rye growing on it and a board saying "treated with chemical fertilizer", and there was the control plot alongside it with a much poorer rye. No sooner had I got home than I went straight off to Aszód to see the district agricultural supervisor of the time... I knew him and he knew me too, he knew I was what they called "the bookish peasant" at Gernelyapáti; he explained all about that particular fertilizer straightaway and sent me to a shop... I bought two hundredweight and another two hundredweight of it was sent to my address soon afterwards by the firm that manufactured it, free of charge, to make experiments... I had advisers visiting me, and I had to write everything down very carefully... Well, it worked, and it spread like wildfire in the local market gardens... That was when we began to grow peas, cucumbers, tomatoes, paprika, and so on, and that's why this village was not as hard hit by the economic crisis as places where the peasants were still growing wheat and maize and keeping pigs and cattle in the old way... That's how we weathered the depression and later the compulsory delivery of crops in the time of Rákosi. People have always had money here, because they've got special skills... and this is true today as well.

Master of ceremonies at village weddings, locksmith on the railways, and now working privately as a TV repair, 67: Have you heard that I used to be what they call the professional master of ceremonies at the village? Well, I was in my time. Every autumn and spring, in the wedding season, I was best master of ceremonies in at least two or three weddings a week... I was even sometimes invited over to do the job in neighbouring villages. I had

a reputation. The fact is that I was damn good as a master of ceremonies.

I don't do it any more. Not because I'm too old, I do as much work as any of the young people... I just gave it up, left it for the younger folk to do. I got bored with it, if you want to know. My daughter is a teacher, you know. She lives in my house with her husband, who is a teacher as well. She said to me, "Daddy, no more clowning, I beg you"...

I went to a secondary school run by one of the religious orders. I was there four years. I was a boy with good brains. I wrote poems, quite a few of them! In fact, I wrote a great deal of poetry when I was at school. I had to leave school for I got mixed up in a typical school scrape. There were sons of gentry at the school as well and they were mixed up in it too... We pinched a few bottles of the old wine in the monks' cellar, drank it, and made a party of it. I was thirteen then. Of course, the sons of the gentry got off scot-free, but I was expelled. So I went to be an apprentice on the railways, but I went on writing poetry. Later I joined a group of strolling players... but I had to go back, my mother was in tears and my father threatened to cut me off with a shilling...

The masters of ceremonies at weddings before my time all followed the old traditions. They learned the poems from the Handbook for Masters of Ceremonies and then recited them off word for word. I started something new. I wrote the poems myself. A new one for every occasion, with something comic in it... I didn't spare anyone. I said exactly what I thought of everyone at the wedding party, only I put it in a joking way, of course. I criticized them and their meanness and the way they made such a god of land, money and property, that land had to marry land, and a match was only possible between equals... Honestly, as best man, I can say I opened their eyes more than a bit, and I did the same later in my political work... I was the branch agit-prop man at the Central Repair Workshop of the State Railways for eleven years, and master of ceremonies at home on Saturdays and Sundays. My comrades used to complain that the two were incompatible, because wedding parties are associated with wedding ceremonies in church. But, I convinced them that it was better if it was me there at church at the head of the wedding procession and managing the affair than some bigot.

You know, they not only put up with the criticisms I made in my poems at wedding parties, but later on they actually insisted on them. They laughed at one another's expense. Wicked people, that's what they are here, sir... I became so much the fashion that they practically queued up for me, they used to bid for my services. In the end I used to get 600 forints for a wedding.

Pride, that's what you'll find here, sir. The well-to-do farmers sucked this empty pride in with their mother's milk, they are indescribably proud even today. It's hard for an outsider to notice it because outwardly they are so kind and smooth-tongued, but we in the village know it only too well. Those lower down the ladder, the former poor peasants who have also been getting richer in the past twenty years, compete with the old gang in hard work, spending and building and in that empty pride as well. They go the same way. That's what Gernelyapáti is famous for.

They turn their noses up at a decent craftsman. And don't want to pay him a proper wage. These people are infinitely mean with money. They'll only spend on the things they envy each other for. When the priest's house was rebuilt, last year, they collected six hundred thousand forints. Oh, yes, the contributions were supposed to be secret but, everyone knew what everyone else grave. At a wedding party in a comparatively poor person's home as much as thirty or forty thousand forints are collected in dancing with the bride—you know the way they throw money in a basket as the price of a dance with the bride. This might come to as much as two or three hundred thousand in the house of a well-to-do farmer. They throw a bundle of banknotes into the hat, not just a five hundred forint note.

I'll go on my motorbike in mud and rain, in the pitch dark, to fix their TV sets; they pay me exactly thirty-three forints and forty filléres or fifty-seven forints and eighty filléres; that's the way they want my bill, down to the last fillér, that's how they like it. People with seven hundred thousand forints in the savings bank are prepared to make a row over ten filléres on the Budapest market. They have a trick of sticking dough underneath the scales to make it heavier, and they've got other tricks as well. For only 20 filléres, mind. It's in their blood. It's what a good mother teaches her daughter... So the young folk won't be any better... Pride, meanness, looking down on one another. That's village life here, sir.

THE HOSTAGE

(Short story)

by

ISTVÁN EÖRSI

1

Why shouldn't I give it away now?* This guerilla-corpse here, from whose pocket you, my honoured murderer, will fish out this notebook, was once known as Simon Simon. (He had a name before that, but that isn't of any interest now.) Don't stare, you got it right, it's me, I was the Ambassador of Francemand in Guazilina, I was the person who was kidnapped three times within two years, and for whom the civilized world mourned when I was executed by the guerillas because the President of Guazilina refused to release the twelve prisoners they demanded in exchange for me. He was quite right, those twelve chaps were worth more to Guazilina than I. It appears, however, that I have some value in guerrilla eyes because, with a due appreciation of my merits, they shoved a police officer into the city lake instead of me. They had soaked him for four weeks to make him unidentifiable.

2

Or may be I'll get away with it? (Since I carried it off today in the raid with my romantic escape through the lavatory window of a pub, then, by God, nothing is impossible.) If I really get away with it, the world will be the poorer by a joke. Who would be more furious if these notes were to be published: the Francemands or the guerillas? Both would be more furious. Both parties would deny their authenticity. They would outlie each other like Trojans. Too bad that I cannot enjoy it to the end. Nicolo would of course reproach me that I put the lies justified by world history on the same

* The original text was written in Francemand, but the author, especially when he lost his temper, used quite a lot of Friton expressions as well; the translator, for the sake of easier reading, made a single text of them and also chose the title.—The editor separated the notes from one another with numbers; those items of the manuscript which were deleted by the author are put in brackets.

level as the unjustified lies. He would be quite right. Lies are lies by any count, even if their end, moral value and usefulness differ. But lying simply as an activity is always from an outside point of view equally (disgusting) amusing.

3

Dialogue with Nicolo, when I was a hostage for the first time.
ME: To play chess alone. Move a piece in the knowledge of all the counter-moves. Then sit on the opposite side and make a countermove in the knowledge of all the moves. But never let it come to a draw.
HE: One has to let it come to a draw if one plays honestly. There are no accidents in chess. In life, accidents exist but there are no draws.
ME: There is a factor in life as well which assures a draw to the select.
HE: And what's that?
ME: Boredom. For those who don't care victory and defeat are both a draw.
HE: From a purely objective point of view, however, it is we who caught you. You are in our hands, not we in yours.

I did not argue with him any further; Nicolo is very intelligent, but obsessed by power. If I had explained that he was equally in my hands because I could have killed myself and this would have involved the ruin of the prisoners, may be even of the entire organization, he would have put me in chains to prevent any such attempt on my part.

4

I must get it straight in my mind. Where did I get the Idea? Because of Marcellina? Marcellina is very beautiful (perhaps even more beautiful than my wife), I think both Carlo and Edmondo are in love with her. Even Nicolo, but Nicolo would never admit such a thing, even to himself. Nicolo thinks that joy is a sin as long as the greater part of mankind goes hungry, suffers etc. etc. But for all this Nicolo is not a virgin; but Marcellina probably is.

5

Nicolo abhors dirt. The filthy shirt he forces himself to wear in spite of his natural tastes is an affirmation of his ideology.

6

(Get it clear to myself whether I would not have banished the Idea from my mind were it not for my wonderful wife, who persisted in calling my genitals "my ducky". Why ducky? And why hers?)

7

My wife has painted the portrait of my personal secretary. My wife is not without talent, but she lacks the humility necessary to art. I once heard that my secretary, when posing for her, asked whether he was keeping his head at the right angle. "Your head?"—asked my wife, "which *is* your head, ducky?" She called my secretary ducky as well.

8

À propos secretary. The ability and cunning of the counter-intelligence and the men of the military police in general is somewhat exaggerated. If my secretary wants to outmanoeuvre me he gives orders to have a microphone put in his own room as well, behind the bell. When I discovered mine I asked my good friend the cultural attaché to have a look round in his room. He found it behind the bell too. So did the commercial attaché. I personally examined the secretary's bell when he was on leave. I even left a receipt for him behind the bell, just for the hell of it.

This reminds me of the third time I was a hostage, when Nicolo and I became a little intimate (if you can use the term "intimate" where he is concerned) and I warned him not to grumble about the pragmatism of guerilla headquarters because there was a microphone behind his bell. "You're wrong, I don't even have a bell." "Then it's behind the switch." He called Carlo and got him to remove the switch. And of course, according to the rules, the microphone was there.

9

"A penny for your thoughts"—Marcellina asked me yesterday in the public park, where we had to act a spooning couple. "So are you to my

thoughts as Food to life"—I answered with great finesse. "Why do you always say such silly things?" "Come live with me and be my Love." "You're quoting poetry again"—noted Marcellina discontentedly. "Why are you always quoting something or other?" "Because the thoughts of others are less boring than our own." "I don't love you, José, when you're so cynical." (I'm José to the guerrillas. Amusing, isn't it?)

10

I solemnly declare that my first kidnapping was purely due to chance. To be more exact: to boredom. I abhorred the very idea of the reception given in honour of the women's delegation, from Francemand. I didn't come to this damned Guazilina to chat with Francemand women. I am fed up with Francemand women (including my wife). So I sneaked out through the back door while my wife was busy painting the secretary. Only my dog accompanied me. The guards who are detailed to protect me waited unsuspectingly at the main entrance. Carlo and Edmondo also waited at the main entrance, but of course outside the gate. I think they were already impatient and even somewhat dispirited when I turned up at the corner around half past nine. I had planned to walk in on my return at the main entrance to enjoy the open mouths of the guards. Carlo and Edmondo moved up beside me, each taking an arm, and told me not to show any resistance. Why should I? At last some thing real was happening to me: I also hoped that my wife would have finished the secretary's portrait by the time I got home. (By the way, she really did finish it: she gave him significant green ears.) Edmondo went on saying over and over again that I wasn't to get upset, but I rather think he was encouraging himself, because whenever a man in Guazilian uniform passed us he convulsively squeezed my arm. My arm was black and blue afterwards. I showed Nicolo the marks later. Apart from that everything would have gone smoothly if my dog, who had innocently followed me to the car, had not burst into frenzied barks. The car started, he ran madly after us, caught up with the car when we reached the traffic lights, and began to leap at it. Everybody stared at us. "Let me take him in"—I suggested in all goodwill, but Carlo rejected my proposal. The dog kept after us and Carlo shot him in a side street. Edmondo called him a murderer for that and did not speak to him for three days. "He would have brought the police down on us"—said Carlo—"and anyway, what would we have done with him here?" Edmondo did not deign to reply. He turned to Nicolo and cried in a high-pitched voice: "I know that the

class struggle requires victims, but a dog is a dog and not the superstructure of capitalism; the dog should not have been shot."

11

Carlo is a revolutionary because of anger and superfluous energy. He is unbelievably brave. The night before yesterday he kidnapped the officer from the regular patrol. The patrol proceeds in single file round the building of the Foreign Ministry. Where they turned the corner Carlo grabbed the last of them (not yet round the corner) by the throat. This was his forty-third action in the capture of prisoners. Edmondo is a revolutionary because of his good heart. He couldn't hurt a fly, but he is ashamed of it and so wants to take part in all of the really daring actions. His pockets bulge with grenades and cartridges, he tries to look madly belligerent, but if he doesn't have to, doesn't shoot. He is very thin, very tall and his beard stands out even among the bearded guerrillas. His hair is thin and unkempt. When on a conspiratorial mission, he hugs the wall so obviously, it is visible from two miles away that he is on an illegal job. He stops after every five steps, glances round and sidles along the wall like something out of an animated cartoon. If he has a delicate job, he even takes off his thick-lensed glasses so as to be unrecognizable. Then he stumbles over every stone. He is so clumsy and forlorn that even Marcellina rewards him on occasion with an encouraging smile. (Or possibly with something more?) Nicolo however treats him roughly, he fears that sooner or later he will land us all in clink. Edmondo of course is hurt, and keeps on asking "Why don't you care for me?"

12

My first captivity lasted seventy-two hours. Seventeen political prisoners were released for me, including one of Marcellina's brothers, who had been sentenced to death. Two weeks later I read that the other brother had been caught. But the Idea had begun to haunt my mind earlier.

13

Mankind can be divided into two large groups. One group calls his reflection in the mirror "Me" the other "you". I constituted a separate group even as a child: I called my image "he".

14

Brief notes. The reason: I am crouching in an attic and watching a doorway. I carry a transmitter. What is the Task? And what does it matter? (The main thing is to put down tolerable sentences.)

15

In the small town where I was born every second street was named after my father's ancestors, i.e. they had my name. I wanted to make Nicolo understand how exhausting this was for a child: of course he did not understand.

16

Yesterday Marcellina—for the first time in her life—did not call me José but Simon. She even caressed me. True, ten minutes before I had nearly come to a sticky end. A doubtful swop—but who cares? I'm in it already up to the neck.

17

An idiotic way of life. This is all I have written for two months. Time has passed in the meanwhile but it could only be expressed by dates. Every day hiding, running away, hiding. Philistine monotony.

18

Good-bye, literature. There's the chap. You hulking brute, don't think you'll...

19

Another narrow shave. Where the hell did Carlo get the ambulance? From Santa Claus?

20

When I was a hostage for the first time I listened to the wireless with Nicolo. It ranted on about me of course. All the wirelesses of all the world

were ranting about me. And I hadn't done anything. I'd only let myself be kidnapped. Before that I had done quite a lot of things for forty years, as an adolescent I had fought against the Nazis, later I produced some worthwhile books (but nobody bothered about them) and I only attracted slight attention. But now! "The civilized world"—shouted the speaker—"the civilized world strongly condemns the taking of hostages, a leftover from the days of barbarism, carried out to-day with all the weapons of advanced technology. The kidnapping of Simon Simon is a warning to all of us that the time has come when we must stand together in the defence of civilization," etc. etc. etc. Nicolo switched off the wireless when the word civilization had been used for the tenth time, and asked me what I though of the above peroration.

"Could be wittier"—I said. "For instance, ... taking hostages with automatic pistols embodies the same contradiction as cannibals grilling their prisoners under an infra-red-broiler."

"I asked your real opinion. Keep your jokes for the journalists."

"It's a collection of platitudes. My real opinion about them has to be a joke."

"Are the platitudes true or false?

"That makes no difference.

"What do you mean, no difference?

"Just as it makes no difference whether you are carried off to hell by a green devil or a yellow devil."

Nicolo waved a hand and left. But the next day he took up the matter again.

"Your whole famous civilization is based on the hostage system. You nab some Blacks or separatists or revolutionaries or counter-revolutionaries and call on all their companions to behave themselves, and then, sooner or later their comrades will be granted a pardon. They will not be cut up into four pieces, only into two. They will not sit in jail for ten years, only for five. If a popular movement attacks what is called civilized society, are all those who took part arrested after its failure? Not at all. Because who would there be to work, then? They just take hostages from among the rebels. All the civilized consolidations of the entire civilized world are built on the dung of the hostage system. What d'you think of that?"

"And what will your consolidation be built on?"—I asked.

"I want to consolidate the absence of consolidation."

"Well, well... Where does theory lead us? To platitudes again."

21

I am happy in this forest cottage after spending so much time in the shelter. And solitude agrees with me. From time to time a chap arrives, bringing or carrying a message; sometimes boxes with ammunition also arrive, but in general I am alone. The smell of the forest calls up in me memories of the very different forests of my youth.

Francemand, as everyone knows, is a beautiful country, a big country, a rich country. But the region of Friton is not so generally known. Friton is a part of Francemand. The Fritons (had) (have) had their own language, customs and traditions, just as the Bretons in France or the Welsh in Britain. From time immemorial my ancestors have been leading Friton separatist movements. They mostly ended their lives in jail or on the battlefield, some were poisoned, two got as far as the gallows. Then they automatically got their streets in the Friton cities.

The people who shed their blood for "the sacred Friton cause" in the meanwhile of course forgot their language, and the wonderful old minstrel songs are only understood to-day by old people. My father also only knew odd fragments of Friton when, in the late thirties, he took over the leadership of the movement "For Friton Freedom". It was his luck the Nazis occupied the country before he was pinched for his work for the Friton cause. So he organized the resistance against the Nazis instead of Francemand with such striking success that in 1945 he found himself the hero of the whole Francemand people. It is very difficult to lead a separatist movement from this position. As I had been hiding with my father among the old Friton mountains I had also become a national hero. After the Liberation several magazines published my photo, I was in boy's shorts and carried a tommy-gun. They even made a poster of me. I remember standing in front of that poster and saying loudly: "This is an idiot."

During the Liberation struggles I had learned Friton as a pastime, because my father always left me out of any dangerous ventures, he overwhelmed me with fake duties and left the old fighters in charge of me. At the end of the war, to everybody's surprise, I wrote melodious Friton poems. But my father did not wish me to become a main street before my time, so he sent me to the Language Department of the Philosophical Faculty of Francemand University. At twenty I had already published a comprehensive study of the Celtic languages. At twenty-two I published a bilingual anthology of Friton folk poetry running to 2,300 pages. In this book I had included the thousand-year-old history of an ancient people, their unique poetic treasures in their original language and a translation

into Francemand which was almost as good: what I wanted to do was to make my people part of the universal cultural heritage. But it didn't come off. No book ever before got the shit treatment this one did. It seemed the universal cultural heritage felt itself already too rich and had no intention of enriching itself further. After Homer, the Bible and the Kalevala the population felt no pressing desire to burden their children with the Friton Bear-Songs. Some scholarly reviews praised me (in moderation) but the overwhelming majority continued to remain completely unsure whether Fritons were something to eat or drink. I harboured suicidal ideas, then I shrugged my shoulders and enrolled in the Academy of Foreign Affairs. I abandoned my ancient Friton name, which was a mile long, and chose the idiotic name of Simon Simon because I registered it on St. Simon's day.

22

To be a Friton is an anachronism. To be a Francemand is an infamy.

23

"Why did you choose the career of diplomat?"—my secretary asked me once, a long time ago. "Because I have a gift for languages." "Then why didn't you *stay* a linguist?" (So he knew, he had discovered that I had started as a linguist twenty years before.) "Because a diplomat works less and earns more." He intimated with his smile that I was pulling his leg and he wasn't to be shocked: he always smiled like that when he had no appropriate answer. "And moreover, it is more difficult for a linguist to acquire a young, beautiful, rich wife. How is the portrait getting on?"

24

After my first ransoming they wanted to send me to another post. I protested. "The representative of Francemand cannot retreat"—with this idiocy I managed to stay in Guazilina. Discover why this was so important. I was absolutely unattracted by guerilla-romanticism and I only liked to think of Marcellina because she was so different from my wife. No "ducky," no painting. And no talking either. No talking.

25

Francemand supplies Guazilina with the radar sort of instruments which can locate guerillas by sound. We also give Guazilina military aid: we deliver the aircraft from which incovenient political prisoners, handcuffed together, are dropped into the sea. Yes, and of course we provide them with the precision-made patent handcuffs as well. In my capacity as Ambassador of Francemand I officially supported the Guazilina regime against the guerrillas. But my private ego challenged the Ambassador to a game of chess.

26

How much pain can a man stand? I would commit (any) almost any infamy to avoid living through another week like this. I am still in bed, but this is nothing now.

My wisdom tooth was about to come through, but changed its mind and turned sideways. My jaw was inflamed and even breathing was painful. At last they brought along a blindfolded dental surgeon who was in sympathy with the guerrillas. He was a small redhead, with gleaming buck teeth, as befitted his job. He was very intrigued about our way of life and philosophy, more than anything else he wanted to talk, but Nicolo told him to make it snappy. He resected my tooth for three and a half hours. Edmondo was told to assist him but unfortunately he fainted twice. "What's the good of all this suffering?"—he asked plaintively. Finally Marcellina took over, she pressed my head to her bosom while the little red man worked in my mouth with chisel and hammer. "I envy you, sir" he joked, jerking his head towards Marcellina. Then he disappeared in a fog created especially for this purpose.

I came to in this bed; Marcellina sat beside me on a chair. "How do you feel, Simon?" she asked. I moaned, I could not answer, I had lockjaw. "Why did you come to us? Because of me?" I nodded. Things become simple if you can't talk. Marcellina's eyes filled with tears. "Take care of me, Simon" she said and lay down beside me. There was no point in her saying this, I could hardly move. I get along quite well now but she does not lie down beside me. Only a sudden emotion could do this to her.

27

They said that I quoted poetry even in my dead faint. "Over them triumphant Death his dart shook!" And, to make things worse, in English.

Nicolo said that this proved that I was penetrated by decadence "to the marrow of my conscience." I told him not to praise me to my face because it would make me conceited.

28

The Idea materialized in me when the guerrillas failed to kidnap the Dutch Ambassador. "They need an ambassador again" I thought. I imagined Marcellina thinking of her second brother while busily cleaning her gun.

But between the Idea and its realization there was a disquieting gulf. I was accompanied everywhere by security men. And in addition my wife got it into her head that she was going to take care of me. She planted herself on me, even on my face, which she made the object of her artistic ambitions. My secretary, liberated from the role of a model, took especial steps to assure my safety. I discovered that apart from the official guards I was also dogged by private detectives in disguise. I felt myself a prisoner, almost as much as when I had been a hostage.

Help came by chance, the pimp that brought us together...

Just as I was coming from the Prime Minister, I looked out of my car and saw Carlo. I said to the driver "Stop" and went over to him. "Good morning, Carlo." He looked at me and saw the security men behind me. "Have you a moment to spare," "Why not?" he asked. "But you do know that I will be the *second* corpse, don't you?" His hand was already in his pocket. "Listen, if you happen to want to pinch me again, I shall be in the National Theatre the day after to-morrow. I will go out during the second act, and the security men only come to fetch me after the performance is over." "Why are you doing this?"—asked Carlo suspiciously. "For money. Tell Nicolo that I want money." "O.K." "But don't come along because you might be recognized. And don't kidnap my wife!"

("Who was that?"—asked my wife when I went back to the car. "One of my kidnappers"—I said lightly. She was furious. "You're impossible! You make a joke out of everything!" She didn't speak to me for two days. She even stopped saying "ducky". Then they kidnapped me.)

29

"I am the ruling class which cannot live the old way any more."

Nicolo nodded. "I guessed at once that you didn't want money."

"You're mistaken. I do want money. One million dollars."

Nicolo laughed. "Where should we get it?"

"Ask it for me. Ask six million because you also have to live on something. Transfer one million to a Swiss bank."

"We're asking for political prisoners for you. Exactly eleven."

"Last time you asked for seventeen. Make them pay the difference. A million dollars per head."

"And what do you need money for?"

"Who knows? Perhaps one day I'll get tired of being an ambassador and also tired of you, and I'll want to go back to my own country and be free and independent and occupy myself with the Friton language and literature as my personal hobby."

"Friton?" asked Nicolo. "What is Friton? Some new kind of Esperanto?"

30

When I was a hostage the second time they did not hide their men from me. Besides Carlo and Edmondo I made the acquaintance of Juan, José, Ricardo—but what are names? You have to know them—they are gay, ready to die, their every second word is a superlative and every second superlative is accompanied by an oath. The police applied electricity to Raoul's testicles, Roberto's back is full of fantastic burns. "You will fall"—I thought more than once—"if you are lucky, you will fall gaily whistling. If you are lucky. Those who have no luck will see the day of victory."

31

"The day of victory"—what a platitude! I wrote it? But at that time...

32

Before they exchanged me for twelve hostages and six million dollars I suggested to Nicolo that I follow the classified ads in the Government daily. The ad with the code-word "Come home" will be for me. He worked out all the details.

33

Officialdom, if it's in its interest—will find a counter-argument to all your arguments. It might be logical, ideological or practical—or only "just because." So it is better not to argue with Officialdom but to use patriotic phrases to defend yourself by attacking: against these Officialdom is equally powerless. I went home to Francemand and at my audience I surprised the Minister with the never-failing proud Francemand phrase. He cancelled my transfer.

34

In the next year I was exemplary in my work. I overwhelmed the Foreign Office with my long-winded reports; I even remember working out a memorandum about the increase of dogs in Guazilina and the hypothetical reasons for it. My secretary (in his capacity of State representative) and my wife (in her capacity of wife) never tired of wondering. I never tired either. Then one day I read in the Government daily that a guerrilla had been caught whose family name was the same as Marcellina's. How many more brothers had she got? From that time on I studied the classified ads with increased care and my zeal in office work relaxed.

35

I wouldn't have believed it if I hadn't seen it with my own eyes: Nicolo wept. Today, on March 17th, Edmondo was run over. In all his usual conspiratoral flurry, without his glasses, he stepped from the pavement and was run over by a lorry. Marcellina saw it and ran home crying. That is as it should be. But Nicolo? "Why don't you care for me?"—he quoted Edmondo, and tears flowed from his eyes.

36

When on the third occasion, the Government of Guazilina was not prepared to give either hostages or money for me, and could not be shaken by the threats of the Francemand Government, Nicolo of course took the stand that I should be shot.

"You must admit that we cannot bring discredit upon ourselves. If we release you without any compensation we can shut up shop".

"I admit it" I said.

"Would you kill him, Nicolo?" asked Marcellina indignantly.

"We have to kill him. This isn't a dirty trick on our part. You have to take a risk for a million dollars. Once we succeeded, another time we didn't."

"But he didn't do it for the dollars" shouted Marcellina.

"He accepted them" said Nicolo.

"It's all according to the rules of fair play to shoot me" I interposed.

"Fair play's shit. I proceed according to the rules of logic."

"And who will do it?" I asked.

Silence followed. Nicolo wheeled round and looked at his boys. When his glance rested on Carlo, the sturdy, fair-haired youngster snapped at him: "Don't count on me. I'm not an executioner." And walked out of the shelter.

"Perhaps one of Marcellina's brothers who is still or already free should be mandated to perform this distinguished task" I suggested modestly.

Nicolo looked at me musingly. Suddenly his face beamed: I had seen this smile many times before when he had found a solution to a theoretical problem.

"You should do the job yourself," he suggested. "You organized your kidnapping yourself."

"Except the first," I said. "I'm ready to take over my executions too, but not the first. The first is up to you."

Nicolo's brow darkened. "Then I'll have to do it myself." He cursed profanely. I had never heard him swear before. "Well, come on."

He picked up his revolver, got up and nodded to me to follow him. I shrugged and started after him. It occurred to me that it is advisable on such occasions to piss beforehand, but I did not know how to mention it. After all, it's not so important. "The chap is not nervous" I thought "But I would like to know why the back of his neck is sweating."

On the threshold we were stopped by a fellow at least six feet five inches tall—I don't remember his name. "Stop being idiots."

"We're not idiots. And anyway, we have our instructions."

"We don't fight to obey idiotic instructions. We're not policemen, we're guerrillas."

At this point poor Edmondo intervened, wiping his glasses.

"I think, Nicolo, Simon could join us. In point of fact, he's been with

us all this time. He's a good man, a brave man, I like him, he wouldn't let us down."

Marcellina rushed to Edmondo and kissed him. The boys slapped him on the back.

"I wouldn't mind" said Nicolo "but unfortunately we need his corpse. We have to plant it in the city lake. If he could fight in our ranks without his body it would be an ideal solution."

"But Nicolo" shouted Carlo, who had suddenly appeared, "We can get hold of a body. Bodies are as common as dirt. We can soak yesterday's police officer and announce that Simon is no longer alive. Does it matter if the body is only found in a few weeks time?"

Nicolo glanced at me. "You won't betray us?" "No." "And why won't you betray us?" "Because it isn't worth while."

37

Today, before he took me to this bloody place from where we shan't get out alive he asked again: "Why don't you betray us, José?" "I've already told you that it isn't worth while." "And is it worth while not to betray us?" "No, that's not worth while either." Nicolo passed his hand over his brow—he was tired. "Then what can we expect from you, José?" "I am a comfort-loving man. Out of two not-worthwhile things I choose the more comfortable. It would be most uncomfortable to betray you."

Of course to scribble this (work of genius) nonsense by the light of a torch, expecting death, is not very comfortable either. And in addition someone stepped on my hand in the dark.

38

Until now I have not been required to shoot. They hired me simply as an observer. But still, the danger of death is continual. I have discovered that danger makes you asexual. Where the risk is too big, Eros runs away. The racecourse and the roulette table are absolutely unerotic. So is guerrilla warfare. (Erections are rare. Their cause is mostly .....) (The cause of the rare desires is mostly anxiety: "why old man, can't you really any...") Still, desire does rise occasionally, Marcellina, women seen from the window, and so forth, but it is clear that they don't fit in.

39

Still it would do no harm to have a good ..... once more.*

40

It is now perfectly clear that I shall die in the building of the National Broadcasting Company of Guazilina. We occupied the studio, Nicolo read a proclamation, in the meantime the electricity supply was of course cut off, we wanted to escape in the dark, but all the exits were blocked. To use a poetic expression, the gates are bathed in the lights of reflectors. No human being is to be seen. They will probably wait for dawn and then finish us off. Half the army will be here by dawn. Carlo said that somebody squealed and the building was already surrounded when we entered it. True, the regular guards were not in their places.

41

Hooray! There are emergency exits leading from the cellar to the neighbouring street. Will I escape from here too?

42

Hooray cancelled. One of Marcellina's brothers stepped out at the furthest exit and was shot immediately. It seems they don't want to take prisoners. Prisoners can be exchanged. We scurried back immediately, although it would have been simpler to get it over.

43

Last week, while listening to the Francemand radio, I heard a bit of news of personal interest. My wife had married the President of the Francemand Association of Fine Arts. Now she can paint to her heart's content. With my death I am obligingly sparing her the crime of bigamy. That is how a husband should behave.

* The word is unprintable.

44

(When I was a child I threw pebbles into the water and observed how the small rings rippled outwards and then slowly the surface was smooth again. Had anything happened?)

45

I am forty-three. My wife is twenty-five. We have been married for three years. The marriage was my wife's decision. We had been walking in prehistoric times in the marvellous capital of Francemand when she stopped abruptly before the windows of a jeweller. "I want that ring." "Why should I buy you a ring?" "Just because." I shrugged, bought the ring. "If I have a dress made for our wedding you will have to wait at least two weeks." "I'll wait" I said without thinking, then suddenly realized what it was about and I asked: "Who said that I'll marry you?" "You don't want to marry me?" she asked, dumbfounded. I pondered. Why shouldn't I marry her? Sooner or later I would have to marry again if I wanted a foreign post. Two months later we went to Guazilina.

46

Carlo climbed up on the roof, he was shot at right away. His legendary luck did not abandon him even then, he crept back safely. Nicolo got a coded radioed message instructing him to break out, "at all costs, before dawn." "At all costs". The expression is positively ludicrous in the present circumstances. We are eleven, just enough for a soccer team, but God knows, against an army...

47

The one million dollars are in the Swiss ..... bank.* My father will have to dispose of the sum. He can give it for Friton use, Francemand use personal use, or wipe his arse with it.

* The editor does not feel entitled to give the name of the bank.

48

Start. Through the main entrance. According to Nicolo the main entrance is most lightly guarded because only madmen would try to get out there. At the same time another guerrilla group will attract attention to itself on the other side of the building. I begin to feel confident. There is a two to three per cent chance that I get away with it. Now, for the first time, I also ask for a gun. All my life I have been amused by dramatic gestures, now, as a reward, I am going to be a dramatic corpse myself.

49

"What are you scribbling?" asked Carlo. "My will." "What the hell for? We're just beginning to live..."*

(Translated by Éva Vajda and Bertha Gaster)

* Here the notes break off.

PROTECTION OF HISTORICAL MONUMENTS

by

DEZSŐ DERCSÉNYI

When on April 15, 1872 the Provisional Committee for the Protection of Historical Monuments in Hungary was set up —the first such institution in Hungary—the safeguarding of the cultural treasures of the country had already been in existence for a quarter of a century. The Hungarian Academy of Sciences had by no means ignored the question, and Lajos Kossuth, the leader of the War of Independence of 1848–49, even issued a decree for the protection of "remains unearthed as trenches are dug". In point of fact the Austrian organization founded for this purpose, the *Zentral-Kommission für die Erforschung und Erhaltung der Baudenkmäler*, created in 1850, was extended to cover Hungary as well after the defeat of the Hungarian War of Independence. It was in all probability on account of the close association of historical monuments and buildings with national revival and national liberation struggles that Vienna only allowed an independent Hungarian organization to be set up five years after the political settlement, the Compromise of 1867.

The first methods of restoration were decided by this association. What passed for restoration was generally rebuilding, as for instance the Castle of Vajdahunyad in Transylvania, or Visegrád in the Danube Bend close to Budapest, or the renovation of the two most important churches in the country, the Church of Our Lady, better known as the Matthias Church in Buda, and the Cathedral of Pécs. Most of the projects undertaken under the impetus given by the new organization and, later, the implementation of the Protection of Monuments Act of 1881, were restorations in a given style, that is, work imitating the architecture of a single chosen period (i.e., some past period in favour at the time of the actual rebuilding). Despite this fact, or rather because of it, great importance must be attached to these early indications of a Hungarian approach to the protection of

monuments, and even to the practice of restoration which can still be regarded as valid today.

In his impressive work published in 1906 on European legislation for the protection of historic buildings, Baron Gyula Forster, chairman of the National Committee for the Protection of Historical Monuments, stressed the need for a modest attitude and the renunciation of desires for personal aggrandizement on the part of the architect charged with the restoration. He believed that it was more important to protect the treasures of the original creation rather than reconstruct what would be a new monument—a monument to the historical knowledge, architectural talent and imagination of the restorer.

It is interesting that at the same time as Forster was expressing this theory, István Möller was in fact undertaking precisely such work of restoration in, for instance, the conservation of the Romanesque church ruins at Zsámbék and the restoration of the Cathedral of Gyulafehérvár (Alba Julia) both of which are considered valid even today. At that time—1889—there were few examples on the Continent of a medieval church being preserved as a ruin, as was the case with the thirteenth-century church of the Premonstratensian Order at Zsámbék, in preference to "reconstructing" the missing parts. Not even the existence of a school of art history in Vienna provides a satisfactory explanation for the very modern attitude to be found in Hungarian views on the protection of historical monuments at the turn of the century, for the teachings of Riegl and Dvorak, it is generally agreed, had no influence on the Austrian approach to historical buildings until the beginning of the present century.

The First World War led to a serious setback, due not so much to direct damage to buildings as to the deterioration of the economic and social position of Hungary and the scarcity of funds for maintenance and restoration. Under the Republic of Councils of 1919 attempts were made to replace the now obsolete organization with another and to introduce new, up-to-date methods of conservation, but the time was too short, and the defeat of the revolution not only wiped out the innovations, but left even the sounder pre-war efforts without a sequel.

There was a radical change in 1934 when the National Committee for the Protection of Historical Monuments was reorganized as a professional institution, headed by the art historian Tibor Gerevich. The large-scale works begun at the time resulted in the excavation of the Romanesque Royal Palace of Esztergom, the ancient Christian basilica of St. Quirinius at Szombathely, Western Hungary, the palace of King Matthias at Visegrád, and the Cathedral at Székesfehérvár (the Hungarian Saint-Denis) all of

which were opened to the public and constituted a body of work which not only greatly enriched the cultural heritage of the country, and provided fresh material and wider horizons for art historians, but was carried out by methods still regarded as admirable.

Up to this date Austrian attitudes to conservation were dominant. The new phase, starting in 1934, was characterized by the beginning of Italian influence. This was the inspiration of the new draft bill on the subject which finally became law in 1949, and which also led to the introduction of modern cataloguing and scientific research. These short fifteen years produced something new in the way of organization, scientific approach and the methods of reconstruction, and paved the way for further progress after the Second World War. Such work was badly needed, indeed, after the Second World War, and especially after the last year of fighting in Hungary, which caused heavy damage to historical monuments and buildings in the country.

Church property suffered relatively less damage than secular buildings (although the Cathedral of Szombathely, for instance, was hit in an air-raid, and the Matthias Church of Buda was severely damaged almost directly after its recent restoration). Town houses suffered particularly (no residential building in Buda remained undamaged) as well as country mansions which had been abandoned by the owners. The damage there was less architectural and more in the loss of furnishings and cultural treasures, but none the less they constitute a serious reconstruction problem, for they have to be converted to new purposes and new uses if they are to justify their restoration as architectural or historical treasures.

Although the twenty-five years which has elapsed since the war are disproportionately short in comparison to the century of organized care for monuments, the work done during this time is no less an achievement than that of previous periods. This is largely because the scale of destruction demanded vast efforts; the organization for the protection of historical monuments was consequently improved, and the best methods of restoration studied and worked out.

Protected areas

Modern legislation for the protection of historical buildings was passed, and a complex organization developed for the purpose. As opposed to general Continental practice, this important task comes under the Ministry of Construction and City Planning as part of urban development; and in the

same way the law on the protection of historical monuments and buildings is part of the general Building Act of 1964. As a result city development plans are able to include to problem of historical monuments and buildings. This approach is very helpful in the protection of monuments on a national scale and chiefly in the development of unified concepts on the preservation of historic parts of cities. There are today thirteen Hungarian towns a part, or parts, of which are scheduled as under national protection. We are at present working on similar measures to ensure the conservation of districts in other towns and for the protection of about the same number of rural settlements.

In the protected areas not only the restoration of historical buildings, but alterations or remodelling of houses or buildings not specifically scheduled as such—and even plans for new buildings—must be licensed by the authority for the protection of historical buildings. This control is not, of course, designed to prevent the appearance of modern architecture in the areas concerned. What is intended is to make sure that the architectural standards of any new buildings should be equal to the environment and their form and design appropriate to the general landscape and city scene. A separate detailed plan provides for the restoration of the buildings, and over and beyond this proposes measures for such major issues as, for instance, the organic relationship between the area under protection and the rest of the town. The general predisposition is for lively city districts rather than museums. Naturally the traffic problems of the protected areas, the paving of roads and squares, and city lighting all have to be considered and planned, and special attention has to be paid to such small structures as telephone booths, kiosks, etc.

The organization in charge of the preservation of historical buildings in Budapest is the Budapest Municipal Inspectorate, and elsewhere the National Inspectorate for Historical Monuments, which acts through the officials of the national and local building authorities. Any construction work on a historic building or any restoration of objects of art connected with such buildings may only be begun when a licence has been granted and the work must be carried out in conformity with official instructions, and under official control.

The experience of these years has shown that a centralized authority for the protection of historic buildings and monuments is able to cope efficiently with many very different and often difficult problems, such as the Hilton Hotel to go up in the Castle Hill District of Buda, one of the most important city areas under protection. The solution originally planned—which in my opinion would have spoilt the view of Castle Hill and impaired the atmosphere of the district as well—was only successfully discouraged with

vigorous support from the Ministry of Construction and City Planning, which also helped to effect the proper changes in the plan. (*The Times* of London wrote appreciatively of the Hungarian handling of the problem, and several Hungarian papers published translations of or references to the article.)

The technique of restoration

A second special feature of the Hungarian approach to the conservation of historic treasures lies in the technique of restoration. While the present organization goes back to the plans of the 1919 Republic of Councils, the technique is based on the further development and improvement of modern methods plus scholarly research—chiefly excavation—or careful investigations, often almost archaeological in character, into the architectural history of existing buildings. Both of these methods are necessary on account of the sad history of Hungarian architecture. The fact is that the Tartar ravages of 1241–42, the one and a half centuries of Turkish occupation between 1541 and 1686, and the impact of Baroque architecture in the eighteenth century, which flourished with such vigour that in the nineteenth century it dominated the building and reconstruction of entire towns, together destroyed and transformed the architectural remains of Hungarian history. All the scientific methods available have to be brought into play to obtain information about the original treasures of the country.

This work of exploring, opening up and restoring has brought to light the remnants of medieval towns buried under Baroque or later plaster coatings. It has revealed forts and castles which played such an important part in national defence (such as the castles of Buda, Visegrád, Diósgyőr), and valuable remains in the cultural and industrial fields, in addition to sculptures, walls and balconies in something like their original beauty. The walls of medieval churches have often yielded not only the secrets of hidden Romanesque portals and traceried windows, but entire series of murals as well. This work of excavation and research has given Hungary a certain wealth of architectural and art objects believed lost, or not even known from written records, and, naturally, in some fields indeed entirely remoulded the image of Hungarian architecture and art history held earlier.

It would have been disastrous in terms of conservation if the material which had been carefully and scientifically explored had not been restored with the same strictly scholarly approach. Restoration work in Hungary is not only based on research, but in fact rejects any plan for complementing a structure or building it into a complete whole by adding missing parts.

In other words the aim is to preserve and present the manifest remains actually found. This almost ascetic attitude is prompted by respect for historical truth and makes for historical authenticity in the final presentation.

At the same time it would be a mistake to suppose that the work of restoration in Hungary ends by producing some scientific specimen or museum object. Historical monuments and buildings are regarded as witnesses of their own times—in effect historical sources—whose authenticity must be preserved, but which should be made to live in the eyes of those for whom the work of conservation is undertaken. I believe that such attempt to stimulate the imagination—which I like to consider the fourth desideratum in the conservation of Hungarian historical buildings—does not contradict the absolute rule of authenticity.

Austrian conservation methods directed our first approaches, Italian methods our second. What directs them now? I can only answer that a truly Hungarian method has developed on the basis of the results of international co-operation.

We attach very great importance to the example provided by the Soviet Union and other friendly socialist countries, which calls attention to the importance of protecting art in the new social order. These countries gave us the first impulse towards the preservation of historic buildings on a city scale, for the Erfurt conference, initiated by the German Democratic Republic, the Academies of Sciences of the USSR and of the People's Democracies, marked the launching of a most worthwhile series of conferences.

In the field of scholarly research Hungarian archaeology as a whole, but primarily in the exploration of historic monuments, owes a great deal to the exemplary work carried out by our Czechoslovak colleagues. On the other hand the exploration of walls under the particular circumstances of war-ravaged Hungary, the methods of investigation dictated by work on heavily damaged houses, was something that developed in the course of the work, which is why, given similar circumstances, it is closely akin to the techniques practised in the GDR.

In the conservation and restoration of fine mural paintings we still look to Italy, and in fact our best restorers have studied in the Centro di Roma. The techniques we have developed in the restoration of stone sculpture, on the other hand, must be regarded as definitely Hungarian, and we are proud of our achievements in this field, especially in the restoration of the walls at Visegrád and the balcony of Siklós Castle.

In our methods of architectural restoration we have been travelling the

same road as those who drew up the Venice Charter—which is why we are happy to adopt it. We have adhered, however, to the view suggested in the Charter itself, that it is to be regarded as a framework which has to be elaborated by every nation according to its own position and special conditions and requirements.

After the ravages of the Second World War the conservation of the treasures of Hungarian culture developed into a great and important task, partly because of these methodological problems. I mentioned castles, churches and houses in particular, and the problems connected with them. The financial resources involved are in a large measure provided by the central government, as well as by other bodies as, for instance, the City Councils. (The Greek Orthodox churches or Romanesque churches in a tiny village of a few hundred people, for instance, could hardly be preserved out of local funds.) The modernization of town dwelling houses is a special problem, because these buildings, it is considered, can only be maintained if they are adapted as flats with every modern convenience.

Considerable work is also being done on the preservation of ruins—which is understandable in view of the dearth of historical buildings owing to the ravages of history. The architectural ruins and remains of a Roman *provincia* in their original locations (Acquincum, the capital of the province of Pannonia—today the Third District of Budapest; Savaria—Szombathely; Gorsium—Tác, and Sopianae—Pécs, with their Roman ruins, mosaics and statuary) are as characteristic of the colourful historical remains found in Hungary as the Turkish mosques and baths, and the Hungarian castles which were at the same time defensive fortresses and homes and refuges of art and literature. Hungarian church ruins are valuable remains of medieval architecture (the thirteenth-century Benedictine Abbey of Vértesszentkereszt, for instance).

Last but not least there are the remains of folk architecture, which are doomed to extinction not so much by war as by the improving living conditions of the village, the introduction of large-scale mechanized agriculture, and the new demands of their users. Apart from the outdoor ethnographic museums whose building is encouraged, preservation in the original location is also looked on with favour. Experience indicates that what folk architecture remains can only be preserved if most of it is given new functions. An example in point is Hollókő, a small North Hungarian village, where the buildings unsuitable for dwelling purposes are restored for community use as baths, post office, medical centre, tourist hotel, etc.

ANCIENT BUILDINGS AND MODERN ARCHITECTURE

by

MIKLÓS HORLER

The protection of ancient buildings, in Hungary when first formally instituted by the State, carried none of the implications of what is now a worldwide problem in the context of man and his environment, but it was nonetheless clear from the beginning that it was bound to exert a major influence on human surroundings.

The eclectic tastes of the last century tended to conceal its relation to architecture as such, in fact, as eclecticism faded, conservation seemed to appear for a while as a trend unrelated or even opposed to living architecture. For a considerable period it seemed indisputable that there was no connection between the two, and it was only much later that the question was raised: What is in fact the correct relation between the historical treasures of architecture and new buildings, between the apparently static protection of architectural monuments and the obviously dynamic, creative activity of modern architecture?

The problem in its present form is not new. It has only come into prominence since the Second World War, when it began to be discussed in both professional and general circles. As the protection of the architectural treasures of the past widened its scope it became clearer and clearer that such buildings can be neither correctly assessed nor efficiently protected if considered in isolation. Interest came to be focussed more and more intensely on relationships, and the protection of historical monuments and buildings was extended to cover their surroundings, groups of historic buildings, and even whole historical quarters and built-up areas. Such a development could not of course be restricted to the separate protective activities of small specific groups, and in the course of time the protection of ancient buildings became an important element in urban development, tourism, and regional planning.

When such considerations first emerged before the Second World War,

many asked whether it was permissible to disrupt the harmonious unity presented by groups of historical buildings by inserting modern edifices among them. Informed opinion rejected such a course, largely as a reaction against the speculative building rush going on all over Europe at the turn of the century, which destroyed irreplaceable groups of historical buildings in the process, such as the mediaeval inner city of Pest, though fortunately most of the historical Castle quarter on the right bank of the Danube was spared, not however without some really horrifying examples of bad taste.

It is consequently by no means surprising that Hungarian public opinion regarded modern architecture and the protection of historical buildings as two incompatible activities, and could only conceive a new building within a historical environment as an unmitigated disaster. The objections raised, however, did not lead to a clear explanation and subsequent condemnation of the socio-economic grounds for such proceedings, nor in attempts to eliminate them, but rather to the development of a fanciful petty bourgeois form of neo-baroque architecture. Nothing seemed more natural in Hungary than to put up houses reminescent of the Baroque among the architectural monuments of the historical past, in preference to modern forms of architecture. This attitude was more or less accepted not only by the architects but by public opinion as well, and even the overwhelming disaster of the Second World War was unable to bring about any radical change.

After the devastation produced by the Second World War the problem appeared in a new form: gaps had to be filled up, steps taken to deal with partially or completely destroyed groups of historical buildings, and the principles and methods of reconstruction became the subject of intense discussion and debate. The first ten years after the War saw reconstruction on an unprecedented scale in many parts of Europe, when the public, unable and unwilling to accept such unprecedented, deliberate devastation, demanded and obtained the resurrection and reconstruction of whole groups of historical buildings. In most cases such work was due to the extraordinary nature of the wholesale destruction; it should not be interpreted to mean any change in the internationally formulated principles determining the protection of historical buildings, dating back to the thirties, nor as any theoretical rejection of modern architecture. Nevertheless it led public opinion to consider such buildings or old districts as "museum pieces," to be separated from the normal development and dangers of daily life and isolated from them as far as possible. A popular analogy was the "broken vase", which had be "plastered up" with some "neutral stuff" in order to be restored and preserved. On the analogy of this broken vase, many people regarded historical districts as comparable museum pieces

where the holes cut by history and war were supposed to be similarly plastered up by some "neutral stuff".

The fear of irretrievable mistakes and blunders from unsuitable modern architecture finally led even the experts of those times to the conclusion that buildings destroyed beyond repair should be replaced by others in a "neutral" style. Several houses were consequently built in the "gaps" left in the Castle quarter in Buda on this principle.

There was, however, another school of thought at the time advocating the reconstruction of destroyed historical buildings after photos; such suggestions were often discussed with a real chance of acceptance.

At the end of the fifties, when architecture was finally freed from the eclectic use of selected historical styles, a wholesale reappraisal of the relation of modern building to the past had to be undertaken. The first modern houses in the Castle quarter were the result, and they opened new horizons on the whole question of building in historical surroundings. One of the first of these buildings, the block of flats at 32, Úri utca, has become something of a milestone. It symbolizes the newer architectural attitude resulting from a sound and frank assesment of the relation between past and present, which is now accepted not only by architects but also by wide sectors of public opinion.

This is now the recognized attitude in other fields where the protection of historical buildings is concerned and extends the scope of the problem, which was ar first limited to the question of appearance. It became more and more evident that "the place of modern architecture in historical surroundings" is far too wide a question to be considered only in relation to "filling up gaps" on purely aesthetic grounds. It is not a question whether new houses should be built among old ones, but about the developing relations of men with their self-made world, in the light of the twin factors of continuity and change.

Or to put it another way. If monuments of architectural art cannot be isolated from their environment nor groups of historical buildings from the agglomerations and conurbations in which they are embedded—which is indeed a fact—then neither can the protection of historical buildings as a whole be insulated from the daily life of the world. The protection of historical buildings as it develops must and will reach a point where it ceases to lead to isolation and a failure of connexion with the world, but on the contrary is fully integrated into and becomes a natural, vital function of living society.

Those who believe in this line of development have long been intent on integrating historical buildings into the life of their surroundings instead of

isolating them from it; not only on preserving the historical appearance of a town, but also on making sure that in the entire complex process of restoring whole historical town districts and indeed the internal architecture as well, or the reconstruction of single historical buildings, the architects carry out their tasks with a full appreciation of the architectural values of today, and the modern facilities available.

Many are still opposed to this attitude, not only in Hungary but in the rest of Europe as well. Some of the blame should undoubtedly rest on the shoulders of contemporary architects or those responsible for the environment, as well as the part of the public hostile to the conservation of historical buildings generally. Those who try to safeguard historical buildings from the intrusions of modern architecture are often justified in pointing to the errors and blunders committed so frequently in modern building in the name of life, progress and the future.

There is, of course, the extreme standpoint which regards all historical buildings as irrevelant encumbrances, and the main obstacle to the realization of grandiose architectural conceptions, and would be only too happy to be rid of them, or at most shut them away in tolerated reservations, excluding them from the life of the town or city where they would be "in one's way". Others in this category exhibit an indulgent attitude to historical monuments and buildings, regarding them simply as emotional sources of pleasure and content to let them be; they have nothing to do with real life, there is no need to take them seriously...

All these attitudes led and still lead to numerous blunders. They represent a considerable danger to historical monuments and buildings, and certainly do nothing to further the unreserved acceptance of modern architecture by those interested in the protection of historical buildings.

ICOMOS, the UNESCO organisation for the protection of historical buildings, has decided that the subject of its next international meeting will be the relation between the protection of historical monuments and modern architecture. This rather complex and delicate question in fact includes basic problems connected with the protection of historical buildings and will be fully discussed in Budapest at the Third General Meeting of ICOMOS in 1972. The leading representatives of ICOMOS have indicated that Budapest has been chosen as the venue of the meeting because Hungary is one of the countries where this question in being attacked on correct and sound principles, and it is to be hoped that the results so far achieved in Hungary will conveniently illustrate the solutions suggested at the Conference.

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It is worth repeating that the relation of modern architecture to the protection of historical buildings and historical districts is wider in scope than generally believed. It means the relations of the living world of to-day to historical monuments and buildings; in fact, the proper relationship of past and future. The right or wrong answer to these questions reflects a right or wrong relationship to the past and a right or wrong interpretation of progress. I believe that the past has no value by itself, but only as in relation to the future, and as serving the future. But since time is a single and invisible process antyhing existing in time is necessarily connected with what has been before.

So the past cannot isolate itself from the present, and the present cannot ostracize the past. After all, every generation begins its life within a framework inherited from the past, and despite all efforts parts of the framework will endure. Most human settlements are architectural frameworks inherited from the past which, if only for practical reasons, have to be accepted and developed as best one may. (Which is precisely why urban renewal takes so important a place today in problems of town planning.)

It all amounts to the permanent coexistence of past and present. There are constant changes in time and place, but the basic character of any single human settlement as determined by nature, society and history remains unchanged. And historical buildings, as the principal witnesses of this basic character, cannot be preserved for long unless they remain organic ingredients of the whole as it moves from the past to the future, and so continue to exist with and through it.

This is the concept that underlines work in Hungary, that is, believing that the only proper way to preserve and protect historical buildings is to fill them again with life, to preserve them as active elements of the living world and organic parts of the environment.

Since the constant juxtaposition of past and present is one of the basic characteristics of living towns and villages, the appearance of modern architecture within the historical environment is part of the process of historical development itself. In every period a contemporary architecture will necessarily appear according to the necessities of life, and it must just as necessarily appear in a "historical" environment.

Considerable thought and imagination is required in the act of intervention in the jungle of the many different buildings and styles from the past, in order to preserve the fine old "trees" and "groups of trees", and cut down those that are worthless. New "trees" will then be planted which, far from eclipsing and annihilating the old ones, will establish a harmonious synthesis of past and present. In the restoration of a historical building and its integra-

Photo: Lajos Dobos

Photo: Lajos Dobos

Csempeszkopács, Roman Catholic church

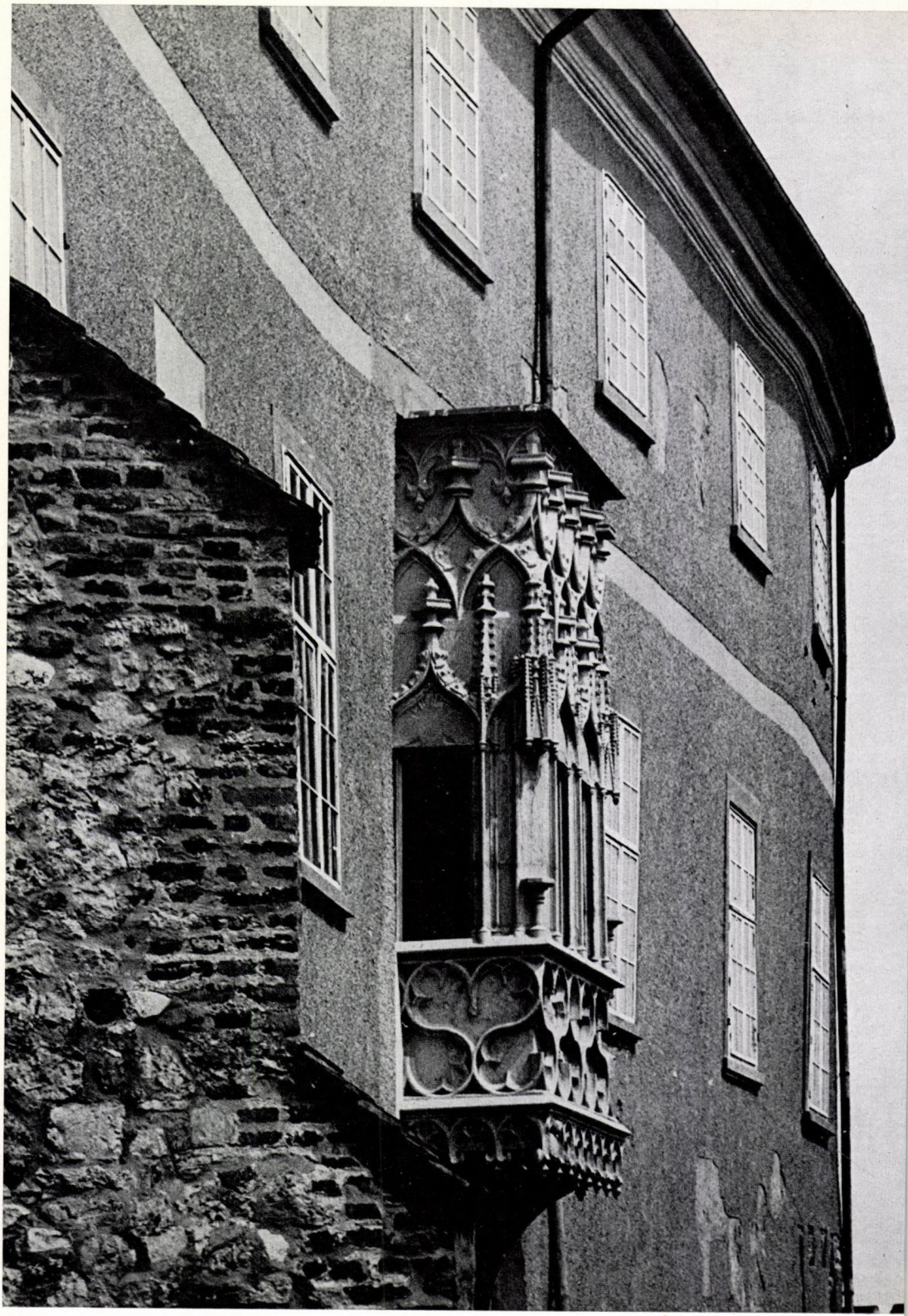

Photo: Lajos Dobos

Photo: Lajos Dobos


espresso

Photo: Lajos Dobos

bove:
udapest, corner of Szentháromság utca and Úri utca. A new building nongst old ones. (Designers Zoltán Farkasdy and Csaba Virág)

▲ *Photo: Tamás Mihali*

Budapest, 1 Táncsics utca. Headquarters of the National Committee of Historical Monuments. (Designer Pál Havassy)

tion into contemporary life, priority must always be given to historical truth, and all the work done must be conditioned by fidelity to historical accuracy. The historical environment cannot be merely limited to architectural works of art—the whole existing village or quarter is essentially a major historical compound, and the architectural works of art are only its most important, most valuable and most characteristic components. To make use of them, to give them a modern function, to modernize them, is the way to secure their survival, but historical authenticity must not be sacrified in the process. The preservation and renovation of architectural works of art, of course, necessarily calls on the resources of modern architecture; the relationship between the new and old can be seen not only in the juxtaposition of buildings on the skyline of a town, but also in the inner structure and the daily life of any single historical building. Now, if it is accepted as a fact that architectural works of art are valuable elements in our daily environment, it follows that all the architectural work needed for their maintenance must conform to the highest possible standards.

This is actually the principal problem connected with the reconstruction of our historical city centres. We cannot remain content with the restoration and evocation of an old city skyline if the life within it is out-of-date, or if the buildings have been renovated in some inconsequential fashion. Historical buildings have to be modernized with both eyes on the future, not the present, if they are not to perish through a form of built-in obsolescence, or through constant alteration and adaptation.

As far as the adaptation of new buildings to historical surroundings is concerned, earlier arguments have for the most part lapsed and modern architecture is generally accepted. This, of course, does nor mean any attempt at uniformity, since architectural designs in the last few years show a wide range of experimentation in the search for an answer, not always with success.

The results up to date will in all probability fail to persuade everybody of the soundness of this principle. Nevertheless, I believe it to be the only

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Budapest, Országház utca 28. The Chamber of the Old Parliament Building

Szombathely, Iseum (Designer Gyula Hajnóczy)

Visegrád, the Tower of Solomon. A steel net suggests the original gothic vaulting. (Designer János Sedlmayr)

Photos: Lajos Dobos

conceivable way of restoring historic urban areas. Theories and speculation are of little use in this context. What is needed is the sound sense of the architect, his sense of responsibility and his insight into the essence of the task confronting him. It is what we might call the morphology of the visible environment which must dictate the design: the rhythm of the buildings resulting from the distribution of building plots, the general height of the various buildings, the roof forms and angle of inclination and finally, the general proportions of all the surroundings. A fairly large number of successful new buildings prove conclusively that the observance of such conditions can lead to an integrated, civilised and comptely modern solution.

It is the basic principle of Hungarian work applied to both single and architectural works of art and groups of historical buildings, that they are not merely objects of aesthetic value but living documents which reflect the social and economic conditions of the various periods. They must be protected because they preserve the inherent properties, the individual characteristics and the whole complex variety of architecture, and thus bring us nearer to the knowledge of structural laws. If they are not protected in their structural unity, their protection will be for the most part senseless, and they will shrink to mere objects of emotional pleasure.

The modernization of single architectural works of art and groups of historical buildings is therefore inconceivable without the full rehabilitation of their original sites, distribution and arrangement. A building that is old in appearence but entirely new inside is an anomaly contradicting the laws governing the protection of architectural works of art of both the past and the present.

There is a definite problem frequently occurring in the modernization of historical buildings when the new function designed for it is disproportionate to the possibilities of the building. A new, oversized function of this kind involves a double danger:

(a) the inner structure of the historical building must be partly or entirely sacrificed, and

(b) certain functions which the old building cannot fulfil must be housed in separate annexes.

Neither of these consequences is desirable, nor is this an advisable method of modernization. Modernization, I repeat, must not take place to the detriment of historical values, or else it becomes worthless. Whether the new function materializes at the cost of the interior, or by the building of annexes, the historical and aesthetic value of the building will in any case be greatly diminished, and, furthermore, such structures are almost in every case contrary to the demands of modern architecture. It is therefore

a basic principle to be observed in the modernization of historical buildings that they should not be given new functions incompatible with their size and style.

In accordance with the Hungarian view about historical buildings and their protection we believe that it is impossible, and impermissible, to resurrect any building that has been utterly and entirely destroyed—even if the technical virtuosity to do it is available. Historical buildings and surroundings are valueless unless completely authentic and they can only make their valuable contribution to the life of today and tomorrow as such. If some period of history or some society has ravaged and destroyed part or all of its heritage, this is equally a historical reality, and we should let it be a lesson to us. The delusory reconstruction of lost treasures is a dangerous game, for it ends by suggesting that war and violence can do no harm to human culture which cannot be repaired by the technical ingenuities of later generations. In the name of the protection of historical buildings and the architectural art of today we owe it to ourselves and to society as a whole to see that lost treasures are not replaced by anything but the art and architectural treasures of our age.

After the Second World War there were a large number of historical buildings all over Europe where the outer shell remained more or less intact but the interior was entirely burnt out. In most cases these buildings were reconstructed from photos, drawings and analogous buildings. Hungary is one of the few European countries where this was not done. The new home of the National Inspectorate of Historical Monuments in effect symbolizes the Hungarian attitude on this question; an entirely modern interior was created within the walls of a burnt-out baroque palace.

This is also the Hungarian attitude to the equipment and furnishing of historical interiors, because modern furniture arranged with good taste and a proper cultural appreciation of the surroundings will adapt itself harmoniously to all historical surroundings.

In conclusion it is worth while touching briefly on the relation between the restoration of architectural works of art and modern architecture. The restoration of architectural works of art involves a certain amount of architectural intervention in addition to the work of conservation and repair. This intervention may occur in the process of adapting a building to a new use, or in dealing with accretions or distortions in order to restore it to its original form and recreating lost beauties, or in order to simplify the correct interpretation of fragments. All this is part of the task of architects, including the preparatory work of investigation and research. Some of it, closely connected with the work of conservation, can only be carried out by

the use of traditional materials and building methods. The changes due to most of the work, however, whether adaptations to a new use, the replacement of out-of-date or ruined structures, or the revelation of lost beauties or educational aids, must be immediately recognizable as work of the present age.

I repeat, historical buildings cannot make their proper contribution if they are not completely authentic. The purpose of restoration is not to "correct" history retrospectively, nor to ignore destruction and transformation as non-existent. something that would in any case be impossible; all efforts in this direction inevitably end in falsification. But the reparation of defects, the revelation of newly discovered remains from earlier periods and so forth must be seen to be the work of the present age, its only aim being to strengthen historical and aesthetic values, to clarify the relations of the building with different periods, and to facilitate the architectural interpretation. Like modernization and genuine integration, it all follows from the requirements of our age, and must therefore reflect this age as honestly it reflects its own historical period, and must be equally clear to contemporary man and to his descendents.

It is therefore the principle and the practice of the Hungarian organization for the protection of historical buildings to carry out all its undertakings on a strictly scholarly basis, but with recourse to the resources of modern architecture and the imaginative skill of the modern architect.

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The wider interpretations of the relation of modern architecture to historical surroundings are consequently now intelligible; in point of fact, modern architecture in this context goes far beyond the restricted question of a city skyline and penetrates into every part of the historical aspect of our daily background—from the Roman shrine to the mediaeval fortress, from the Romanesque church to the tower of the Árpád period, from the modern flat in a Gothic house to the fashionable restaurant established in a Baroque cloister. The coexistence, interdependence and survival of past and present, the continuity of history, can thus become a normal and general part of our lives. Surviving to-day only by chance, historical buildings once deliberately integrated into the living world, adaptable to ever-changing framework of life, and surviving it, will continue to enrich it for the generations to come.

THE CENTENARY OF BUDAPEST

by

LAJOS MESTERHÁZI

It perhaps occasions surprise that the centenary of a several thousand years old settlement is celebrated, a town that had been the capital of Hungary for many hundred years (and, for some time, under the reign of King-Emperor Sigismund, the residence of the Holy Roman Emperor.) The fact is however that an Act of 1872 decreed the unification of the three neighbouring settlements on the Danube, Buda, Óbuda and Pest, which had close economic ties also prior to this date. It is also true that the joint council of the three towns held its first meeting a hundred years ago, and it is equally true that a place called "Budapest" had figured on the maps of Europe for a hundred years now. In this sense the centenary celebrates the founding of the city.

The geographical position of Budapest is 47° N and 19° E on both banks of the Danube, the river flowing from North to South. It has a population of 2 million and extends over an area of 525 sq.kms. This is over five times as large as the administrative area of Paris: the average population density indicates the prevailing natural and urbanistic conditions: over half of the 525 sq.kms are covered by wood and forests, parks, orchards, pleasure gardens and even ploughland. The centre consists mainly of 3–5 storied houses, except for recently built housing estates. Small houses surrounded by gardens spread in every direction. Three quarters of the town's houses have a ground floor only.

Budapest is generally considered beautiful, polite visitors usually speak in superlatives, particularly about the setting.

Nature has indeed been kind to the city. The centre of the Carpathian Basin had been a point of concentration of geological cataclysms. The rock mass of the Gellért Hill faces us on the right bank of the Danube, it is a two-hundred million years old deposit of the ancient Sea of Thetis. A fresh-water sea, marshes, and volcanoes had all been there: there is no other place

in Central Europe where so many geological periods left their mark so close to each other. The stormy past bequeathed seventy-five hot springs on Budapest which produce over 60 thousand cubic metres of thermal waters daily of a most varied composition: they contain salt, sulphur, magnesium and radium. Caves of rare interest have been discovered in the hills, one of them is a whole system of caves of several stories, extending along ten kilometres under Castle Hill. Gellért Hill has caves with a therapeutic effect: there is the stalactite cave of Pálvölgy and the Báthory-cave with layers showing the unrivalled remains of prehistoric and historic times, a museum built by nature. The climate is friendly, —1 °C (30 Fahrenheit) is the lowest and +22 °C (72 Fahrenheit) the highest average monthly temperature. This explains why almost every type of European vegetation occurs here. The slopes of one hill—the Sashegy—are a botanical reservation. It contains vegetation that has survived from the ice-age, found only in Budapest and Northern-Europe, as well as Mediterranean flowers which normally grow only on the shores of the Adriatic, many hundred kilometres to the South. Not many big cities can boast that within their administrative area, a short walk only from a bus terminus, people strolling in beech or oak forests can come across roes, foxes, wild boars, and in winter red deer and fallow deer. The highest point of the Buda hills is 529 metres (1612 feet); looking down from them the scenery changes kaleidoscopically, the Danube embankment itself with the seven bridges—amongst them the classicist Chain Bridge, and the Elizabeth Bridge with its bold lines—and the representative buildings of the centre of the city, offer a view that is indeed worthy of praise.

These natural conditions explain that man settled very early here. A few years ago the oldest traces of human habitation in Europe to our knowledge, were found near the limits of Budapest: part of the skull and tools of the man who lived in Vértesszöllős 600,000 years ago. This discovery helped to calculate the probable age of the oldest fossils found in the Castle Cave of Buda the age of which has not yet been definitely determined. At the southern limits of the city a place can be seen which Neanderthal man used as shelter for several thousand years. The traces of a Bronze Age settlement were found in a Northern district of Buda and many traces of Celtic settlements have been discovered on both banks of the Danube. To add to these natural conditions, it ought to be said that the land is first class thanks to river sediments and wind-borne soil. The hills offer stones that can be worked, and lime for burning; there is clay for making bricks, tiles and pottery, the wood of the forests and the coal on the Western limits are used as fuel. What is most important is that the islands and the state of the banks provided the best places for crossing the river. This makes it easy to understand

that as far back in history as we know there had always been a settlement on this site. The towns were fortified and prosperous since apart from the goods they produced themselves, the products of two very distinct regions were exchanged here. Overland trade carried goods from East to West, and the Danube was used as a waterway by North-South and South-North trade. All the towns on this site were fortified since this important junction has been the object of innumerable struggles from the earliest period on.

And it was on the route on which all migrating people moved southward after crossing the Carpathians.

The Roman Town

Earlier probably due to the expansion of the Roman empire, migration moved from West to East. Various Celtic tribes controlled the crossing point, the last were the Eraviscians, Roman legions conquered the place from them and called it Aquincum, by adding a Latin suffix to the town's Celtic name (AK INK: rich in water).

Aquincum was originally a military town, designed to protect the frontier. It was built on both banks of the Danube; the Romans also built two fortresses on the left bank of the river, the remains of one of them, Contra-Aquincum, survive at the Pest bridge-head of the Elizabeth Bridge. The military town soon grew into a prosperous trading centre. One of the most precious open-air museums of Budapest conveys an idea of the town's wealth: it consists of two amphitheatres in Óbuda, and of old Roman quarters which in their scale and equipment give some idea of life in the ancient town.

The Roman age produced a change in the direction of migrations. From then on the city was attacked from the East by migrant German tribes until the Huns occupied it at the turn of the 4th and 5th century; as a result they controlled the whole of Pannonia. After the collapse of Attila's empire the area was once again invaded by Germanic tribes, Goths, Suebians and Lombards occupied it, the latter stayed for some time, and by agreement, transferred it to the Avars in the 7th century along with Transdanubia, the Western bank of the Danube. This agreement had sad consequences for the historical remains of Hungary: Alboin, the Lombard king, had committed himself only to a transfer of the land. So he burned and totally destroyed the wealthy towns of Pannonia which had been more or less intact until then: this happened also to Aquincum. The Avars built earthworks there. After the defeat of the Avars the earthworks became the

Eastern fortress of the empire of Charlemagne. Aquincum was once again a frontier town, this time of the Frankish empire.

The Beginnings of the Medieval Town

The first groups of Hungarians had arrived with the Avars as far back as the 6th–7th century. The main group arrived late in the 9th century and eventually established the kingdom of Hungary covering the whole of the Carpathian basin. The Avar–Frank ring-shaped fortress and the fortified remains of the former amphitheatre were turned over to Kursan, one of the lieutenants who occupied the area: Óbuda, the right-bank town, developed around this fortress.

The left bank, the remains of Contra-Aquincum, were handed over in the 10th century by another chief, Taksony, to the Ishmaelites, a trading people from the Volga region of Mohammedan faith and Bulgar race. Both towns grew rapidly. In the middle of the 13th century the Tartars, who invaded the country, devastated Pest on the left bank of the river, a rich trading town with a mixed population, and a royal residence, and many churches and monasteries on the right bank. Both were totally destroyed. We can only guess precisely where these two early Medieval Hungarian towns were located. The Tartars, fortunately, left quickly and King Béla IV., the "second founder of the State" began to build his new fortified residence, primarily on Castle Hill in Buda. The experiences gathered during the Tartar invasions suggested that this was the most easily defended part. This proved correct even recently: the steep hill and the underground cave-system unfortunately enabled Hitler's divisions to defend themselves for fifty days in the winter of 1944–45.

The three towns were rebuilt in the 13th century in a Romanesque-Gothic transitory style, in the 14th, mainly by French architects, in the Gothic style, and in the 15th century, under King Mathias, in the Renaissance style. In those times travellers spoke of Buda and of the royal palace as one of the marvels of Europe, they said that beside Venice, Rome and Paris, Buda was the largest, richest and most beautiful town in Europe. Buda had a university and a printing press. The inhabitants grew wine, fished, and practised many crafts but, just as had been the case earlier, trade was their principal concern. Pest was the main centre of horse and cattle-trading between the East and South-East and the West and North, and also the centre of the corn trade. The largest wine market of the time was in Buda. The European banks of the 14th–15th century had their

representatives in Buda and almost all nationalities of Europe were represented in the town; the Jews and Italians had their separate streets, there was a "German town," a "Hungarian town," and Serbians had settled in Pest. The official language was Latin but the streets must have been a perfect Babel. After so many devastations the few remains give us an idea of the wealth of Buda and Pest at the end of the Middle Ages. Buda had water-mains, well-equiped public utilities and institutions, beautiful public and private buildings, statues on squares and unrivalled cultural treasures such as the Bibliotheca Corviniana, one of the largest and finest collections of illuminated manuscripts of the time.

Turkish Rule and Liberation

All these were dispersed or burned, most perished in the middle of the 16th century. After over a hundred years of defensive warfare against them, the Turks broke through the line of the Lower Danube, invaded the Hungarian Plain and occupied Buda in 1541.

Turkish rule over the central third of the country lasted one hundred and fifty years. Foreign oppression could not entirely suppress the vitality of the town: the industrious and clever population soon recovered and, between military campaigns, Buda, and at that time particularily Pest, were again famous market-places. The town became the "most Western Eastern town" of the Ottoman empire or, in other words, the "most Eastern Western large town" in Europe. But it was still a border town, a military town. The pomp of the fortress of Buda went dead, the Turks built only military objects, they carried off the art treasures, or destroyed the paintings and statues which were abhorred by their faith, they left the palace of Sigismund and Mathias to decay, they converted the churches into garrison mosques and deprived them of their ornaments. The only thing left to us by their rule are a few baths.

The Hungarians waged a continuous war against the Turks for one hundred and fifty years. One figure will illustrate the dimensions of this struggle: in the 15th century Hungary had a population of five million, one-fifth of the population of Europe at the time. At the beginning of the 18th century the population of the country was still five millions. The entire population increase perished in the struggle waged against the Turks. The wars and difficulties at home finally exhausted the Ottoman empire and toward the middle of the 17th century conditions were ripe for an expulsion of the Turks: but it took several more decades until the Hapsburg rulers decided

to do so and to build up the necessary European coalition army. This army won its first great victory which changed the course of history in Buda in 1686. Later, in further battles it succeeded in pushing back the Turks to the Lower Danube, onto the Balkan peninsula.

After the siege Buda was in ruins again. Everything that had survived Turkish rule perished. It was a mournful victory: the Turks practised a scorched earth policy and the army of Eugene de Savoy also behaved like foreign conquerors. The population of the towns perished or left. At the turn of the 17th–18th century Pest had only five hundred inhabitants. The truly resident population of Buda was no higher, their numbers were bolstered by the military and civilian administrative personnel. Revival was much more difficult than after the Tartar invasion: for a lifetime it appeared that there would be no town of any significance on this location.

The Birth of the Baroque Town

Favourable natural conditions, transport and commerce, however, produced a miracle once again. By 1720 Buda had 10,000 inhabitants, Pest 2,600, at the middle of the 18th century their number was roughly equal again and the two towns together had a population of around 50,000. The crisis was overcome and development continued rapidly. Toward the end of the century there was no doubt that despite all devastations this place was to be the capital of Hungary. The royal palace was rebuilt and the university came back.

The Baroque and Louis Seize buildings of Buda, Pest and Óbuda were the products of this era of revival. The year of construction of the parish churches and secular buildings and indicates the speedy growth of the two towns, especially of Pest. Toward the end of the 18th century it grew far beyond the ancient walls built in the Middle Ages. After the devastations of 1944–45 reconstruction in Castle Hill and its surroundings in Buda followed the traces of those times: today this part of the town is more or less what it had been in the 18th century. This ensemble of *caves*, medieval ground floors and gateways with a Baroque finish is a unique outdoor museum of architectural history. The Royal Palace and the Mathias church are outstanding buildings. This latter obtained its present shape in the period of Eclecticism, with Neo-Gothic additions by Frigyes Schulek: Miklós Ybl made eclectic additions to the former and the new dome gave the building its final form. With all this mixture of styles and ages both buildings are precious, they are as it were parables in stone of the city.

The foregoing suggests that the cruelties of history were made up for by the favours of nature in the life of the town. But nature was not always kind. The Danube floods inflicted considerable suffering on the riverine population; even today, a system of embankments 50 miles long and 30 feet high is still necessary. The iceflow of 1838, which ruined about half of the houses in the reborn and prosperous city, was a particularly tragic chapter in the history of Pest floods. Some old buildings several miles from the Danube still carry a memorial tablet pointing out the then water-level. But the town's vitality was so great at the time that it could turn even this disaster to advantage. Most of the houses ruined by the flood were obsolete, one-storied houses: instead of them fine large houses were built in the city on plots that had considerably gone up in value. Many of these buildings still exist although the smart classicist ones on the Danube embankment perished mainly at the time of the War of Independence in 1848–49, and some fine examples also during the siege of Budapest in 1944–45.

Pest was rebuilt in the 1840s in a big way. The change was apparent not only in form but also in content. The Hapsburg dynasty, after having recovered the twin towns from the Turks, wanted to make them uniformly Catholic and German-speaking: this was a condition for receiving permission to settle in the towns. Early in the 19th century the majority of the population still spoke German, and in the capital of Hungary the German theatre preceded the Hungarian one. At those times the centres of Hungarian literature and culture were still in the provinces. In the first decades of the 19th century however the Magyarisation of the towns was almost an explosion. Growing Hungarian capitalism and the prosperous bourgeoisie of Pest and Buda wanted to shake off the yoke of their quasi colonial status and did not tolerate discrimination when comparisons with Vienna were made. In the "reform period" early in the century the town found itself at the head of the Hungarian national movement. Literary societies were born, the National Theatre, the National Museum, the Academy of Sciences, were founded. The first permanent bridge was built over the Danube, and Pest became the centre of Hungarian economic and political movements. The Stock Exchange, the first large-scale industrial enterprises and the first banks were established. Under pressure from revolutionary street demonstrations, the first representative national assembly was convened in Pest in 1848, proceeding to elect the government. Until then the national assembly consisting of noblement sat in Pozsony (Bratislava), the town nearest to Vienna, to show its exaggerated loyalty to the Court.

This government of 1848 was the first to declare the unification of the three towns; the resolution, however, could not be implemented since the Hungarians were defeated in the 1848–49 War of Independence.

Centre of Hungarian Industry

Until then the prosperity of the town had been due to trade and commerce; then industry took over. In conformity with the destiny of the town linked with communication the first large-scale enterprises on a world standard were shipyards and the first universally accepted patent which started from Budapest was the hard-cast steel railway wheel. The local textile and flour mills, based mainly on the driving power of the Danube, now introduced steam-engnes. Instead of dealing in corn the town of Pest now sold flour. Instead of marketing livestock they processed the meat; and brewing and the distilling industry grew. These industries were the most important until the end of the 19th century, when the engineering industry, and later the electrical industry grew to significance.

This rapid growth of industry naturally produced population growth, and, as a chain-reaction, the renewal of the building industry and the modernisation of the infrastructure. Budapest became the centre of the entire railway network of Hungary and its attendant and auxiliary services. Social life, the press, and the cultural life of the town flourished, and Pest also became the centre of the revolutionary movements which grew stronger after the second half of the century and reached their peak in the proletarian revolution of 1919.

War and Liberation

The latter was put down by a Hungarian reactionary group around Horthy with outside military help. The next twenty-five years were an era of oppression and stagnation. The town had to suffer the vengeance of the oppressor, whose reprisals were aggravated by economic crises. This sinister period reached its peak in the siege of 1944–45, when the fascists turned Budapest into a "hedgehog position." Whole parts of the town lay in ruins. Buda was in a particularly bad state. The retiring troops looted equipments of factories and carried off the streetcars and buses of the town, they blew up all the bridges over the Danube. Railways stations and airports were unfit for use.

Almost everything had to be started from nought. Those who had seen

Budapest in 1945 were justified in saying three or four years later that a miracle happened. The town was alive again, and this revival was due to industry and the workers, those workers who started to produce among the ruins, with machines built from debris, in April–May 1945, when their daily meal consisted of a bowl of thin soup.

A country that had a population of 8 million before the war, an overwhelmingly agrarian country, had a large capital, Budapest in 1938 already had over one million inhabitants. It was at the same time almost the only large industrial town in the country, and was naturally a pole of attraction in the economic, cultural and social spheres and in all walks of life. It was characteristic of the disproportions that not more than twenty years ago half of the country's industrial manpower and total industrial production was concentrated here. The structure of industry was very complex and was based on two main features: good communication facilities and an extensive agrarian background, involving three million landless peasants who provided cheap labour. Since then tremendous changes have occurred in the life of the whole country. Collectivized and mechanized agriculture now employs only one-fifth of the labour force of Hungary: this figure indicates the rate of industrial growth in the provinces and the speed of mechanization in agriculture. Industry also developed in Budapest but despite its growth it now accounts only for one third of the country's industrial production.

Parallel to this development overdue structural changes and modernisation was carried out. Nothing had been done in 25 years of stagnation. Today growth industries in Budapest are mainly the following: the production of vehicles, including shipbuilding which has been revived, (the Budapest shipyards export river and sea craft of small tonnage to many maritime countries), engineering, especially precision and automatic machine-tools, electronics and telecommunications and chemicals, perhaps the most dynamically developing sector, particularly the pharmaceutics. Hungary is second only to Switzerland in the per capita production and export of medicines. The majority of these are produced in Budapest. Plants which do not fit into a big town, which pollute the air, are too noisy or too dirty, are being successively relocated but some traditional food and light industries are encouraged to further growth. The building industry has been growing rapidly in Budapest, mostly basing itself on prefabricated elements. Modern housing estates which spring up like mushrooms prove that we build more houses in a single year now than during all the twenty five years between the wars.

Priority is given to dwellings: the housing programme wishes to deal with the most serious problem of the now two-million population of the capital within a few years. An underground railway is also in process of

construction express lines to outlying areas since transport is the second most serious problem. Public utilities are also being developed on a large scale, the third major problem of the city is the *obsolescence* of an infrastructure neglected for several decades.

Many important public buildings have been erected: a Sports Stadium which accomodates 100,000 people, university buildings, office blocks and modern hotels to serve the rapidly growing tourist trade. The latter should help to develop Budapest into an outstanding watering place in keeping with available natural conditions. Considerable amounts have been spent and are being spent on the restoration and maintenance of monuments that survived the storms of centuries.

Among the almost fifty museums, collections and galleries in Budapest the most interesting are the National Museum, the Ethnographical Museum, the Budapest Historical Museum and the Museum of Fine Arts—the latter has many a surprise in store for visitors from abroad. There are twenty theatres including two Operas. The town has twenty-seven institutions of higher education, some of them universities, with roughly 50,000 students, five times the number of students between the two world wars. Those who walk on the Danube embankment at the period of exams and see the studying students sitting on the steps leading down to the river over some miles conclude, that Budapest is a school town, a city of youth.

One cannot provide accurate data on restaurants, bars and places of amusement in Budapest, because a new one is opened every week, partly to cater for the people who live on the new housing estates, partly to satisfy generally growing demands. There are old patisseries and modern espressos, bistros, bars, small family snack bars, restaurants with music, cheap small inns with a garden and international luxury restaurants. Budapest is a gay town and its people, although less so than Southern Europeans, like to spend some of their lives in the streets and frequent public places. They are keen on good food and good drinks: the many patisseries and bistros and espressos are nearly always crowded.

The people of Budapest have suffered much but their vitality was never broken. Their character has been impregnated by many bitter historical experiences but also by the impetus of many fresh starts. Their basic feature is irony and self-irony and its expression—the big-city folklore which has never lost its liveliness—the Budapest joke, the famous Budapest jokes with which the people react every day to domestic and international events with always new and sparkling wit. These jokes show that the people of this city are sharply critical but never spiteful. They are open-hearted like the arms of the town on which the gates are wide open.

SOCIOLOGY IN HUNGARY: IMPRESSIONS AND APPRAISAL

by

HERMAN R. LANTZ

I appreciate the opportunity afforded by the editors of this *Quarterly* to present my impressions of Hungarian sociology. These observations are based on conversations with sociologists during my visit as a guest of the Institute of Sociology of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences for the month of June 1971, and the observations are based on the reading which I was able to undertake during this period. It is at once apparent that I feel a sense of deep inadequacy in preparing a statement on Hungarian sociology given my limited experience with its historical background and context. In discussing my impressions I will try to call attention to trends rather than individual sociologists, who may or may not exemplify these trends. It is simpler to deal with the matter this way, since any single sociologist may be working with more than a single orientation; indeed, some individuals may be involved in several orientations which may differ from each other.

General Impressions

At the most general level there appears to be a problem of ambiguity regarding the nature of sociology; what a sociologist is, and what he does. I suspect that such ambiguity is present within segments of the administrative apparatus of the state and among some sociologists as well. Varying views may be held. Some may view sociology as a social-philosophical discipline with or without critical overtones; others may view sociology as a scientific field of inquiry whose essential function is to describe; others accept such a view of sociology but believe that one must take a position if the data warrant it. Others may look upon sociology primarily as a method for the collection of data; some are unclear about any special training neces-

sary for sociology; others have well conceived ways of preparing sociologists for their tasks. As a result, the problem of distinguishing bona fide sociological work from amateur sociology may at times be equally difficult to grasp, for administrators, professionals and laymen. The reasons for these many views of sociology are several.

The discipline of sociology has not been established very long in Hungary. While sociology in Hungary had its origins in the pre-socialist society, it began to emerge seriously relatively recently in the context of a developing socialist society that was undergoing rapid transformation. Such a society, with all of its accompanying problems of underdevelopment, anticipated that sociology could be of assistance in the resolution of problems associated with the vast social changes taking place. The impact of these social expectations was to delay the inevitable dialogue between sociologists as to the essence of sociology. Was it in its method, in its perspective, its critical capacity, its value neutrality, or was it in all of these? Sociology in Hungary possibly has not had sufficient time for such a dialogue, so that positions regarding these matters may be less clear than would be the case under other circumstances.

The fact that sociologists have not moved more rapidly toward full professionalization, including advanced training and the fulfilment of degree requirements, has only served to contribute to the difficulty. The question of why sociologists have not become more rapidly professionalized is difficult to answer. Is it a matter of financial incentive? Some suggest the fulfilment of degree requirements does not insure competence; obviously, it does not. All the professional degree guarantees is a minimum of competence. But some standard is necessary, and if the standard is to represent a level of achievement, it becomes the responsibility of sociologists to see that standards are established. In addition, in a very practical sense professionalization brings with it the possibility for greater rewards both within the society and without in many ways, financial and otherwise. Certainly opportunities for vertical mobility will be greater for the professional; the potential for salary increments will be greater, and the opportunities for involvement with the international community of sociologists will probably also be greater. In addition, an a argument could cetainly be made for the learning experience in working for an advanced degree, including the preparation and defence of the dissertation.

This state of affairs has other complications. There is a relative absence of a model for training. Sociologists come from a variety of backgrounds in economics, social philosophy, psychology and social science. The absence of a model suggests that the ingredients of sociological training have not

been fully thought through and established, but this lack of a tradition has also provided a fluid situation in which sociologists have not had adequate professional stimuli against which to measure their own progress and growth. Much will depend on the nature of sociological training within the next decade. If such training is adequately supported and financed, one can expect the emergence of core training and a group of new professional sociologists, who will be seeking their place in the research and teaching structures. It is easy to conceive the emergence of rivalry, especially if opportunities are limited, with both positive and negative consequences, between those currently involved in sociological work and another generation who conceive of themselves in a new professional image. There may also be hardships for some of the very talented sociologists now working in Hungary. These people may find themselves by-passed in their careers by those whose basic competence is not necessarily greater, but who have managed to fulfil professional requirements.

If the nature of sociology is ambiguous, and if this is compounded by the view that somehow anyone can become a sociologist, the result may be for government administration not to take sociology very seriously, or to take it seriously when it is convenient to do so. This lack of clarity regarding the nature of sociology may be functional for administrations, since it enables them to select the information they seek from a wide variety of professional and non-professional sources. Once sociology is fully established professionally, it may become increasingly more difficult to by-pass professional sources in favour of non-professional, and those state administrations that wish to by-pass professional sources of data will find it increasingly problematic. Although the tendency to ignore professional sociology is always a problem in any society, sociology becomes potentially vulnerable in a society in which professionalization is possibly behind schedule. Moreover, if others do not necessarily take sociology seriously, what is the impact on Hungarian sociologists themselves? Might they be inclined to take their work, which in my opinion is often of high quality and stature, likewise less seriously? To the extent that they do not take their work seriously, does it result in some degree of alienation? In my opinion, the ambiguity regarding sociology and its accompanying professional problems will deter sociological development, not only because of what has already been pointed out, but because it may place sociology in a position of reacting to requests for information, rather than delineating for itself the legitimate from non-legitimate areas of inquiry. Should this happen, their scientific status may be in doubt; and they may find themselves in a somewhat more fixed position of being the technician.

Let me turn now to some observations on the nature of Hungarian sociology. At present, Hungarian sociology appears to be moving in several directions, each of which may have its own features. Sociologists differ with respect to their substantive interests, the extent to which they employ empirical methods, their conception of the role and function of sociology; is it to report, criticize, or to combine reporting and criticism? Sociological work in Hungary is manifest in virtually all of the traditional areas of sociology, in education, industry (including the study of motivation), life style, family, deviant behaviour and social pathology, basic demography, mass communication and public opinion, sociology of science, regional and urban planning, political behaviour, bureaucracy, social stratification, sociology of music and art, and sociology of law. Details on the nature of these investigations and trends in research may be found in a wide variety of publications. What underlies much of this work is a concern for the nature of the social structure and organization, how the institutional arrangement function within a socialist society, and the nature of the emergent problems which may be at odds with socialist values. This includes the emergence of contradictory structures which are antithetical to socialist values, and it also includes the problem of structures moving in their own direction, as may often be the case with bureaucratic structures. While there is an overall commitment to the values of a socialist society, sociological efforts to achieve such values may differ, depending on the interests of sociologists and their orientation.

Sociological Groups

There are those who work with what appears to be a social-philosophical orientation. One major concern centres on ways to facilitate self-realization and fulfilment of the human personality at all levels. But a special concern involves the development of cultural appreciations, art, music and literature among the population, especially workers. I gather that contemporary socialist institutions are examined in light of these goals. While the main thrust of this group is not empirical, those working with this humanistic orientation presumably make use of the empirical work of others.

It is difficult to assess such an orientation but it is an orientation which appears to have created a good deal of interest. It is a positive sign that sociologists in Hungary can work in the style which best suits them. While science is subject to given procedures, the creative process within science is not subject to such rules. Important though this work is, I have some

observations. A first observation is that I do not believe that people who are not involved rather heavily in empirical work are in the best position to use the empirical work of others effectively. One has to understand research design, methodology, and something of statistical analysis in order to assess the merits of a particular piece of research. Otherwise, it is infinitely possible in employ research of limited value because it has been overestimated in significance, or to ignore other work which is methodologically sound. The tendency to employ poor research to support a particular theoretical position, or to combine poor and good research together in order to develop theoretical formulations represents a hazard for all sociologists, but the danger may be greater for the sociologist whose orientation is non-empirical. I do not know whether this is a serious danger in Hungary, I simply raise the question.

A second observation is that the direction of this work is exceedingly interesting and significant because it can move in several ways which are difficult to predict. Thus, there is the challenge of openness. The fulfilment of the person in essentially humanistic and artistic dimensions is a development in which the boundaries and parameters of human experience are unknown. One logical outcome is individualism and a critical capacity, the essence of which is the ability to select one's values out of a larger social array. These are the ingredients of self-realization; these are also the ingredients out of which ideologies and new doctrines emerge. Such a development, should it come to pass, could be significant in humanistic terms. Nevertheless, it could pose special problems in areas dealing with change, criticism and social constraint.

A third observation with regard to this orientation is the possibility that problems of self-realization and cultural development, in a society which continues to have other understandable basic problems in areas of housing, education, health care and food, are essentially low priority problems, in my opinion. Moreover, it is difficult to understand how people in the society can be expected to show great interest in personal, social and humanistic development so long as other basic issues remain unresolved. Thus, I would see sociological energies, no matter how well intended, not directed to the problems of highest priority, but I recognize that this may be a debatable point. I am intrigued by the themes of optimalization and humanization which I have encountered among some Hungarian sociologists. Certainly the goal of achieving productive capacity to provide for society's basic needs, within the context of achieving some semblance of humanistic development, is a worthy and significant goal. I would assume that those sociologists pursuing the humanistic orientation believe that they can avoid some of the difficulties

of many Western societies, in which there is an overemphasis on consumption. This overemphasis may be related to the problem of alienation; it may also be related to the social pathologies. It would be truly remarkable if it were possible to by-pass these problems of the post-industrial society by socializing people to seek a new set of values, but the acid test will come when Hungarian society has resolved its basic problems in other areas. Until such time, the real danger may be that these social-philosophical-humanistic concerns toward self-realization could serve to divert attention from the basic problems still to be faced. Should this happen, the energies of these sociologists might, in some ultimate sense, not be serving the very humanistic or social ends they seek.

Another group of sociologists seem to be oriented toward an examination of emergent social forms which are manifestations of new structural arrangements or the persistence of old arrangements that remain. The work is largely empirical, with principal invesigators for the most part directing the research themselves. Here one sense a *critical perspective* directed at how social structures in the socialistic context are functioning; what problems are resolved; what new problems have emerged; what old problems persist? One must note, however, that criticism is designed to correct problems within the scheme of socialist values and goals. It does not involve a rejection of socialist values, and it certainly does not involve an approval of Western capitalistic norms. I consider this work exceedingly important for reasons I shall develop at a later point. Sociologists with this orientation may examine the functioning of institutions in terms of new forms of exploitation and social inequality in such areas as housing, education, industry and bureaucracy, and the consequences of these for human motivation. One can look at these problems with a dialectical perspective in which the opposite of what you anticipated emerges. For example, at the present time two major sources for a condition of opposites are to be found; first, in the nature of bureaucratic structures, and second, in the general state of underdevelopment and basic shortages. In a socialist society which has at its core social planning and social management, the major apparatus often becomes the bureaucracy. Yet the bureaucracy itself can become an obstacle to the very management and social planning it proposes to deal with. It can become top heavy with personnel, unresponsive to the needs of its constituents, and grow autonomously in its own directions. The bureaucratic structure which is a structure for managing may not want to be managed, and herein may be one of the basic contradictions in efforts to deal with social planning.

One may ask why the bureaucracy is often so difficult to manage. Many

answers are involved, but one notes that within the bureaucracy a condition of opposites emerges as well. One aspect of bureaucratic structure is rigid and formalistic, but the tendency to move on its own direction, encompassing new functions, represents the individualistic and deviant tendency in all structures. The question is whether such tendencies are inevitable? I suspect they are, and should this be the case, it means that as social planning grows, so do the number of and size of bureaucracies. This will surely generate the need for public control to insure the social responsibility which means additional bureaucratic and administrative units. Thus, the sociological concern with how new structures continue to create new problems, or perpetuate old problems, will remain a vital concern of both theoretical and pragmatic interest. Indeed, the very success of all social planning may depend not only on delineating dysfunctional elements, but on discovering how to regulate bureaucracy in a socially useful way.

The second major source for the emergence of opposites lies with the basic conditions of underdevelopment. So long as shortages in goods and services are present, agencies of management and bureaucracies are vulnerable to efforts and schemes to divert the distribution of services; the result continues to contribute to social disprivilege. It would be naive to assume that the problems I have discussed are not present in the bureaucratic structures of planning societies in the West. They are, and continue to be, a source of considerable concern.

While the sociological group just discussed has essentially a critical orientation focusing on the potential and real imperfections, there are other groups with different styles. For example, there are those sociologists who would argue that the role of criticism and change is not the proper sociological role. Instead, the sociologist studies both structure and process if and when problems are found; these along with other results are reported. But the approach is designed neither to rationalize what is present, nor to change what you have. I would assume that this latter group could often take the position that the sociologist need not assume an explicit critical stance. Criticism is often implied in the data. Moreover, change which can flow from criticism is essentially a political matter going beyond the role of the sociologist. While my professional sympathies are with all these groups, it is necessary to simply state inherent problems with each orientation. These are dangers which Hungarian sociologists are familiar with. In regard to the groups oriented to the role of sociological analysis and criticism, there are two basic problems. If one undertakes research with the assumption that problems already exist (a reasonable assumption) is there a danger that this is in fact what will be found? Does one not become committed to

finding problems? Is there a danger that problem areas will obscure the positive contribution of particular institutions? Is it possible that in the effort to analyse a problem insufficient attention may be paid to the research design and collection of facts? I do not say that these problems do in fact exist, I say only that they can. For these sociologists who see themselves in more traditional terms, that of studying, reporting, but leaving ultimate decisions of criticism and social policy up to others, there are obvious advantages. Work can be pursued with considerable objectivity and results can be reported without necessarily taking positions on the data. On the other hand, there is the question of how much detachment can take place before social responsibility is abandoned. In this regard, some comments are in order regarding the sociological groups directly in the service of particular bureaucratic structures. These sociologists may be involved in surveys to ascertain the opinion of the population on specific issues or surveys of the impact of particular policies. They appear to be more directly involved in serving a particular bureaucratic structure than appears to be the case with other sociologists. I would assume that the difficulties here are fairly obvious. While I believe that sociologists all over the world, East and West, have problems concerned with their own autonomy, I think that the more involved sociological groups become with funding and supporting agencies the greater the danger. It is a danger which can appear in the types of problems one selects to study, and also in the analysis and interpretation of results. Once the control of these factors is in question, we have something other than science emerging. On the other hand, it need not be that way at all. It is possible for sociologists to be in the service of government administrations while maintaining their own professional integrity. I can only say that this is a position which is often difficult to maintain. There are many aspects of behaviour in the interpersonal relationships of research teams and their clients which still need to be explored. Yet on the basis of what we know, there is reason to be concerned with the problem of scientific autonomy under these circumstances. From a pragmatic point of view such sociology may not always serve the structure it purports to serve. I think that often sociologists fail to recognize that administrative structures have the capacity to absorb critical findings, especially when these contribute to the strength of the administration, just as non-critical reports can make administrators rather uneasy about what's "really going on". In this instance, I, as a professional sociologist, remain concerned about the impact on the total scientific role, as a result of prolonged involvement with a particular administrative structure. To what extent is the role of scientist reduced so that he is no longer

the creator of knowledge, but he is instead the marketing expert with skills at collecting data and distributing data to achieve ends set by other agencies. This problem continues to be disturbing for sociological development in many Western societies.

On the Future

I anticipate a great deal of interest in sociology on the part of young people in Hungary, and I expect this to become manifest at universities. I sense a vital interest in society on the part of young people. Indeed, the interest in sociology may grow at a more rapid pace than the society's capacity to absorb sociologists. Barring unforeseen events, I can readily see a convergence of the different sociological styles now present in Hungary. I anticipate that these styles will be based rather heavily on empirical methods, and these methods will grow in sophistication. I would expect the development of research teams to grow certainly as long as there is a shortage in sociological skills, but perhaps later as well. I expect new substantive areas will develop. The whole area of health care and the sociology of medicine, for example, could become an important and fruitful area to develop. Social criticism and appraisal of malfunctioning institutions within the context of socialist values may continue so long as it is based on data rather than speculation. Critical sociology operating within the context of socialist values focused on the imperfections of bureaucracies and related structures may be a rather significant source of support for the dynamic growth of these structures. Such sociology ferrets out the sources of tension which these social structures generate, and such knowledge may be constructively employed to reduce the stresses and tensions. I consider much of the work which is problem oriented in Hungarian sociology to be potentially extremely important and significant, first, because of the selection of substantive areas where new social structures are being analysed. Not only is the detail on social structure and process important, but in some ultimate sense such work will move us closer to the social parameters within which human life and experience emerge. What are the limits of change at both the personal and social levels, and what are the consequences of such changes? These are among the most basic and complex questions of our modern age. They are especially important in the context of experiments with new forms of behaviour in the areas of sex, family behaviour, and general youth culture. Are we capable of molding ourselves and our societies in any direction, or are there limits beyond which both we and social life

begin to suffer? Some of the sociological efforts now going on in Hungary may give us clues on the adaptability of personal and social life.

Empiricism and Sociological Theory

I anticipate the growth of empirical sociology in Hungary within the next decade because empirical work will constitute a high priority given the needs of the society. This may serve to draw talent away from such important areas as sociological theory. The development of sociological theory is complicated still further because theory and social ideology are interconnected. The growth of sociological theory may, to a large extent, be influenced by ideological pluralism. Ideological pluralism within the context of socialist values can provide a base for competing theoretical positions at the sociological level. Sources for ideological pluralism may emerge from different structures within the society, all concerned may be committed to socialist values but their methods of achieving socialist values may differ. Sociologists sensitive to these important differences may be in a strong position to study different ideological positions in terms of their theoretical importance. Sociological research on the functioning of new social structures could also contribute significantly to the development of theory.

Alienation and Sociology

While alienation is a current subject for study and inquiry all over the world, there are special aspects which Hungarian sociologists may wish to remain sensitive to. In speaking about alienation and the sociologist I am thinking of three aspects, involvement, impact and change. I would further propose that while all three facets can reduce alienation, all three are not necessary: the presence of even one can be significant. My remarks are concerned primarily with alienation and the work role, although these have a bearing to the broader question of alienation and life. When one thinks of alienation as "apart from" one thinks also of its opposite involvement. But it is not involvement in the abstract which is important, but involvement charged by a desire for social good, not involvement for purely egocentric gain (to dominate and exploit). It is difficult to assess motivations and goals, but at least the reader should understand these general considerations.

One can argue that Hungarian sociologists have one essential ingredient

that can minimize alienation from their work role. In a basic sense their work is supported and is expected to have a bearing on the development of Hungarian society. Thus, involvement is an ever present possibility.

At the second level, impact, we begin to deal with something more problematic. By impact I refer to the interest which one's work creates in colleagues, bureaucratic structures, mass media. All or none of these groups may have much interest. And when such interest is lacking, one can feel a sense of remoteness regarding the meaning of his work. It is at this juncture that I wish to introduce a point mentioned earlier. Insofar as sociological efforts are not taken seriously, we have a factor of potential alienation of sociologists from their work.

The third level, the capacity to influence change, can be the most complex of all. It is necessary, first, for sociology to have a realistic awareness of its limitations with regard to social change. In many instances, sociologists everywhere are lacking in basic data about what to change, and they are often unaware of the consequences of change. Thus, the most significant contribution of the sociologist may not be in the area of social change, with all its unintended outcomes, but with the study of basic conditions, processes and consequences.

On the other hand, sociologists are involved in change. It may be salutory to recognize that if a sociological position based on data is supported and considered as a basis for change, the sociologist is implicated in the change process, even though the decision the sociologist supported was not accepted in all, or even a majority of instances.

This is essential as an ongoing proposition because its presence can sustain relatedness to the social world. That is, it is necessary for one to perceive that impact and change are realistic possibilities, complex though they be.

The role of the sociologist requires a delicate balance between adherence to professional and scientific norms and needs for involvement, having an impact and producing change. Professional and scientific integrity can help to sustain research at a high level. On the other hand, when professional and scientific norms become too perfectionistic, so that little is being accomplished, the needs for involvement, impact and change can exert counter-influences. But the possibilities for self-delusion are numerous. Each position carries with it its own rationalizations. Adherence to one or the other does not insure that one will not be alienated. Certainly the purist in the scientific role can be alienated and detached. But involvement carries with it other complications. One often expects those who are involved not to be alienated. But if involvement is at the expense of scientific integrity, then

the individual is part of a charade, both with himself and others, and the result can be alienation from self. This ultimate moral choice of integrity versus opportunism confronts all of us from time to time.

I trust that these remarks have done justice to the very fine efforts of Hungarian sociologists. It goes without saying that I am much impressed by what Hungarian sociologists have accomplished, and what I expect to be accomplished in future years. There is much that colleagues in my country can learn from the sociology of Hungary, and much that Hungarian sociologists can learn from us, and this is part of our relatedness to the scientific and social community.

Finally, I want to express my very deep appreciation to the Hungarian Academy of Sciences in Budapest and to my own National Academy of Sciences in Washington, D.C., for the privilege and opportunity to go to Hungary. My sociological colleagues on the staff of the Institute of Sociology in Budapest and other units in Hungary were good enough to give of their time, energy and patience in order to acquaint me with their sociology and country. I shall always be grateful for this generosity, and I shall remember them warmly as colleagues and friends.

Selective Bibliography

The following list of materials obviously does not begin to represent anything resembling the extent of sociological productivity in Hungary. It is deficient particularly with regard to earlier writings of important sociologists, and the list does not cover more recent writings. Nevertheless, these are materials that were suggested to me by my colleagues during my visit. Information regarding copies of these materials may be obtained from the Institute of Sociology, Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Budapest, Hungary. All these books are published in English or French.

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SURVEYS

KÁROLY VARGA

THE "TRASH TAX" IN HUNGARIAN CULTURAL POLICY

In Hungary a tax has recently been imposed on such items as garden dwarfs and porcelain puppies with bandaged heads. In a caricature published in *Ludas Matyi*, a comic journal, a couple is pictured rocking in a boat on a lake surrounded by swans, when a diver suddenly emerges and says:

"Hello, kindly pay up the trash tax!"

This joke refers to a number of decrees issued under Hungarian cultural policy which establish an institutional framework against "kitsch". This is the result of a struggle that has been going on for years.[1]

The "trash tax" is an important statement of Hungarian cultural policy according to Vilmos Faragó, writing in *Társadalmi Szemle*, the monthly journal of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party: "The Hungarian cultural policy relies on interaction between the persons in charge and those to be guided in such a way that the latter have a say in the direction of the policy."[2] The fact that a cultural contribution from producers has been elicited, rather than an administrative suppression of certain cultural products, points to the increasing influence of the public in establishing Hungarian cultural policy. The variety of cultural products and services available to the customer, the CONSUMER, can now be defined, in a sense, by his readiness to make sacrifices. In this regard the "trash tax" is the outcome of our new economic mechanism which no longer protects enterprises running at a loss. In other words, productive enterprises must now be profitable and in view of this more responsive to the demands of the consumer.

However, cultural products and services are peculiar commodities, and it is not at all certain that a product much in demand is necessarily the best. In other words: the cultural preferences of the masses differ considerably from the more refined tastes of the scholarly minority of the population.[3]

[1] The most important stipulations of the trash tax decrees are the following:- "In order to further the aims of cultural policy a Cultural Fund must be established under the Ministry of Culture. The Cultural Fund is financed by firms which manufacture and market particular cultural products and services." (Decree No. 23, of August 8, 1967, of the Hungarian Government.)

On the basis of this governmental decree, the Minister of Culture has issued three departmental orders determining the assessment of the cultural contribution—called "trash tax" in common parlance—as well as establishing which products and services are subject to such taxation. The order of the Minister of Culture declares: "The Fund fosters the creation and propagation of works on a high intellectual and artistic standard as well as meeting the increased cultural demands of workers, peasants and youth. Accordingly, the creation and propagation of works of art and of artistic products and services can be subsidized out of this Fund." (Departmental order of the Minister of Culture, No. 4, of June 21, 1968.)

[2] Vilmos Faragó: "Division of Roles." *Társadalmi Szemle*, 1968, No. 11.

[3] László Marczali, head of the General

Cultural products cannot be left at the mercy of supply and demand. In this regard, intellectuals with classical educations have, of course, the most subtle consciousness and appreciation, and the introduction of the "trash tax" can be considered the successful result of a persistent campaign by this influential group. Literary, artistic, critical and social journals did their part by influencing public opinion through slogans such as: "More protection for culture of the highest standard!"

The *flexible principles* of Hungarian cultural policy are demonstrated by the fact that the taste-shaping passion of Hungarian cultural critics did not result in administrative measures which either treated the public like infants or thwarted the endeavours of cultural enterprises to make profits.

The "trash tax" provides financial assistance to higher culture, a freer choice for the public and at the same time an attempt to improve its tastes. the The contradiction involved here is to some extent to overcome by keeping intentions and methods apart, that is, separating the level of ends and that of means. In this way the laws of the "plan" and of the "market" dominate this cultural policy without hindering, on the contrary, by mutually assisting each other. The following section attempts a more detailed analysis of the "trash tax" using a model to explain the "hows" and "whys" of cultural policy within society's institutions, and seeks to provide a better understanding of this peculiar structure's inherent inconsistencies, mysteries and social motives. This model, conceived by George Gerbner, is called "institutional approach in mass communication".[4]

1. What is Cultural Policy?

Politics, according to Gerbner, is that "process of action which involves the wielding of, or struggle for, the power to control the division and distribution of certain public property and values". If this is in fact so, cultural policy can be defined as that special case of politics when "those public goods and values are the common culture of a nation, a considerable part of which is the

Directorate of Publishing, in an interview with a reporter from the daily newspaper *Népszabadság*, proposed the introduction of material incentives in accordance with the new economic mechanism in order to stimulate the spirit of enterprise of the printing industry. At the same time, he mentioned the positive aspect—that state subsidies in book publishing had become more selective as a result of the "trash tax". For example, crime stories and purely "entertainment literature" have to bear a larger portion of production costs than works of higher cultural value. (*Népszabadság*, November 1, 1970.)

4 The writer of this study has recently spent two terms under the Hungarian–American exchange programme for scientists at Pennsylvania University in the *Annenberg School of Communication* whose dean, George Gerbner, is of Hungarian origin. Gerbner's "institutional approach" represents among American mass communication theories, an unusually "European", or "pro-Marxist" trend.

Gerbner divides cultural policy into three subject matters: (1) institutional process of cultural-political decision, (2) the content of mass produced and transmitted public message systems stemming from the above decisions and (3) the "cultivational function" of these message systems, that is, how the picture of life and society portrayed by the mass media affects the population in the long run. Gerbner's comprehensive model mainly concentrates on the first group of problems and has therefore been named "institutional mode of approximation". Previously the most intensive research had concentrated on the second group of problems: relying on international research, he has, for example, investigated the image of the "teacher", "film heroes", "psychopathic persons" from a global viewpoint. His theory can be considered a detailed elaboration of the theory of institutional determination of mass communication. Gerbner's paraphrase of McLuhan's slogan, "The medium is the massage", is "The corporation is the message" or more comprehensively: "Society is the massage", for society with its established system of institutions, exemplifies this concept. cf. G. Gerbner: "An Institutional Approach to Mass Communication Research." In L. Thayer (Ed.): *Communication: Theory and Research*. Springfield, Ill., Charles C. Thomas, 1966.

result of mass production and communication". Gerbner warns against obsolete and naive discussions of censorship, "for mass production cannot exist without guidance, constraint and control", and against the overemphasis of aesthetics in determining cultural policy "as if absolute qualities—which, in fact, are highly class and tradition oriented —and not the exercise of power are the determinants of cultural policy".[5] If selective choice among cultural products is ensured, this will bring about different, and in each case, separate proportions among genres, qualities, trends and so on. The complexity of these different proportions finally results in a structure which is dynamically identical to itself and reflects the actual interests and ideas of power within society. These proportions within a culture generally reflect the ideas of the authorities controlling it, but if they temporarily lose control, tension results, causing a shift in cultural policy, and in the final analysis a struggle is to be expected.

Many variables determine whether cultural policy becomes literally a question of life or death or it tasks the milder forms of encouragement resp. retardation. There is also the factor of the positive or negative relationship of society's real guiding forces to different cultural trends and their products. Hungary hinders the production and marketing of fascist, non-humanitarian, pornographic cultural products which are contrary to the people's interests, to Hungarian foreign policy and which endanger the power of the working class. In the case of other cultural products, the undesirability of which is not so unambiguous, e.g. in the case of a merely entertaining "C" class film, cultural policy does not strive to eliminate the product but reduce its relative impact by keeping it within certain narrow limits and in proper proportions. The "trash tax" decrees were issued at a time when certain cultural products considered undesirable by competent authorities of cultural policy, appeared in too high a proportion and made it necessary to change the institutional structure of granting selective preferences.[6]

5 G. Gerbner: "Cultural Politics and the Study of Mass Communication." Unpublished manuscript. University of Pennsylvania.

2. *Why Did the "Trash Tax" Have to Be Introduced? An Investigation from the Viewpoint of Cultural Production*

The decree by the Minister of Culture enumerates 14 kinds of cultural products and services subject to cultural contribution, in part automatically owing to their genre, and in part on the judgement passed by a competent jury. Of the 14 items, eleven are mass-produced cultural products whose output can be considerably increased without raising input due to the advantages of modern industrial technology. The products and services subject to contribution, according to the classification by the competent departments of the Ministry of Culture, are:

—All items under the direction of the

6 The three categories—"preference", "tolerance" and "hindrance" implied in the above analyses are reminiscent of the model of Clyde Kluckhohn, the well-known anthropologist, who distinguishes between dominant, variant (tolerated) and deviating values of the single cultures and characterizes cultures on the basis of the relative breadth of the three value layers. ("Values and Value Orientations in the Theory of Action." In Talcott Parsons and E. A. Shils [Eds.]: *Toward a General Theory of Action*. Cambridge, 1951.) The set of three categories was the subject of a number of cultural-political and cultural-sociological analyses in the past years. (cf. Károly Varga: "Értékelmélet és empirikus értékvizsgálat" [Value Theory and Empirical Value Investigation]. *Valóság*, October 1965; Cultural Theoretical Working Team of the Central Committee of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party: "Az irodalom és a művészetek hivatása társadalmunkban" [The Mission of Literature and Art in Hungarian Society]. *Társadalmi Szemle*, July–August 1966; Gyula Vonsik: "Az irodalom, a művészetek, a társadalmi ízlés" [Literature, the Arts and Social Taste]. *Alföld*, January 1967; Károly Varga: *Az ízlés és műsorpolitika szociológiájáról* [On the Sociology of Taste and Repertoire Policy]. Budapest, 1968.

Department of the Fine Arts (e.g. small artifacts of plastic, glass, porcelain, etc.; fancy articles for home decoration; photos of actors, sportsmen and artistic photos taken either in Hungary or abroad), these items are necessarily mass-produced and are therefore in direct contrast to the relevant "high" arts (sculpture, painting and the graphic arts which have preserved their traditional technology of producing individual pieces)

—It follows as a matter of course that the five kinds of publications under the direction of the *General Directorate of Publishing* are mass-produced and, therefore, subject to contribution (two groups of books, a certain type of fiction, e.g., explicitly light reading such as crime stories and adventure stories, and a certain type of non-fiction, e.g. cookery and needlework books, certain types of newspapers and magazines, as well as the scores of popular songs and playing cards). In the case of these publications, the consumer's viewpoint is more important than the technological aspects of mass production since printed matter cannot be compared with, say, hand-written works—i.e., works produced by a lower standard of technology—but only with works produced by identical technology, so that the only difference is in the function of the product and in the motives determining demand,

—The *Theatrical Department of the Ministry of Education and Culture* can determine which theatrical works are subject to contribution. This means an exception on the basis of tax assessment and refers to artistic services Toffler calls "quasi mass produced".[7] This is a technological "rationalization" insofar as a company has only to rehearse a production once and then continue to perform it as long as the public is interested. This, however, is not a new technological solution and does not allow greater output without a proportionately increased input;

—Of the three items under the direction of the *Department of Cinematographic Art*, two refer to films, and a distinction is made regarding the presentation of films produced by a cinema undertaking or by a social picture theatre; films in the so-called "C" category are subject to trash tax. The third item imposes a tax on the film theatre if a fashion show or other type of non-cultural programme is produced in it. In the case of films, the question of mass production is an important criterion for taxation, for the cinema has only been taxed on the basis of consumption, from the aspect of regulating demand.

—Mass-produced dance records and music in restaurants—items under the direction of the *Department of Music and Dance*—are automatically subject to contribution. The making of dance records necessarily involves mass production and can suppress, owing to its very nature, individual musical performances or non-recurring concerts; music in restaurants is only "quasi mass produced" and is subject to taxation because of its function.

Glancing down the list of products and services, one cannot fail to notice that most of the objects taxed are mass-produced. It is noteworthy that radio and television, those electronic media which mass-produce the message to a great extant than any other medium, are services, not included in the list. This, however, is not a matter of principle but an organizational question; the Minister of Culture and the President of Hungarian Radio and Television have agreed that the latter will pay a lump sum to the Cultural Fund as "trash tax".*

7 A. Toffler: *The Culture Consumers*. New York, St. Martin Press, 1964.

* Where the trash tax is not assessed on the basis of mass production for instance in the case of theatrical works and "services", certain special viewpoints come to the fore. Provincial theatres generally produce one operetta a year trusting that it will prove a box-office hit. One provincial theatre, however, performed four operettas and in that case trash tax was unavoidable and amounted to a considerable sum. Imre Kálmán's operetta *Cigányprímás* in view of the highly undesirable penchant of the public for Gypsy

3. *Art's Economic Dilemma*

Past analysts of this question, e.g., R. Purcell[8] or A. Toffler, establish that certain kinds of art have always produced less per effort involved than the average social production level. What is generally considered high art was such intensive work in every age that it could only survive through the patronage of the powerful and the rich.

The introduction and application of industrial technology to the arts changed the financial situation insofar as certain art forms, both old and new, became self-sufficient. Moreover, "big business" made millions, whereas other art forms, as discussed by W. J. Baumol and W. G. Bowen[9], remained financially insecure relying on state and philanthropic assistance. It became a decisive question as *to what extent a certain branch of art was able and willing to adopt a new technology.*

Now, if cultural policy wanted to protect, for one reason or another, a branch of art which was neither able nor willing to adopt a new technology thereby increasing production and profit, some sort of solution had to be found within the means available.

The Cultural Fund made possible by cultural contribution is *the attempt now being made by Hungarian cultural policy* to solve this question by combining taxation and state subsidies. The Hungarian cultural policy intends to give preferential support to "the creation of works on a higher intellectual and artistic standard and to ensure that such works are readily available to the public". As indicated by the decree, financial support is obtained, firstly, from the budget and, secondly, from the "trash tax" imposed on those branches whose progress it seems desirable to channel positively.

4. *Investigation from the Viewpoint of Cultural Consumption*

Strangely enough, there are two kinds of consumers of cultural goods: one is the public which consumes and enjoys art and pays a certain predetermined price for it in the same way it pays for other commodities; the other group of consumers is the one which closely follows public sentiment for the arts, which has a well-founded interest in the public's enjoyment and consumption of art. Gerbner calls this second group "clients" of communication.[10] Such clients hope to make a large profit from the public consumption of the arts, one example is American mass communication. Here, the image of the product to be sold is "smuggled in" to the attention of the public.

However, Gerbner's conception examines this relationship, i.e. public consumption of

romanticism, was considered the utmost limit of admissibility and although it is a "classical" operetta, was charged tax. Trash tax also has to be paid for musicals if it is obvious that a rubbishy book was written to satisfy box-office demands only. However, even when there were high standards of excellence trash tax was assessed more than once when light entertainment coincided with box-office success, for example trash tax was levied on Louis Armstrong's concert in the Sports-Hall and on Marcel Achard's "L'Idiote" which was performed more than four hundred times. In such cases the commission which has to decide whether trash tax has to be paid or not fiercely protested against the term "trash tax" popularized by the press.

Trash tax is refunded—within the competence of the Theatrical Department—to works of art which deserve financial support. The trash tax paid for Gypsy orchestras that play in restaurants, and for dance music in night clubs, are the highest sums assessed, enabling the arts to be patronized, a considerable percentage of the fees TV pays for televising theatrical performances also goes to the Cultural Fund.

8 R. Purcell: *Government and Art: a Study of American Experience.* Washington D. C., Public Affairs Press, 1956.

9 W. J. Baumol and W. G. Bowen: *Performing Arts: The Economic Dilemma.* New York, The Twentieth Century Fund, 1966.

10 G. Gerbner: "Institutional Pressures upon Mass Communicators". In *The Sociology of Mass Media Communicators.* (Ed.) P. Halmos. *The Sociological Review 1969. Monograph,* No. 13. University of Keele, England, 1969.

culture which others select and finance in another way—i.e. in the category of "cultivation". Those in charge of cultural production and marketing pass on to the population, within their sphere of interest, those special "symbolic compounds dissolved in culture" which the community needs in order to behave in a manner acceptable to the institutions in power.

5. *The Public—the Consumer of Culture*

The decree of the Minister of Culture establishes: "Direct consumers and/or users can be charged with cultural contribution entirely or partly in accordance with the guiding principles of general price policy and within the framework of legal price regulations. The contribution of enterprises is subject to payment to the debit of their profits, and is payable to the Cultural Fund prior to paying corporation income tax." This means that the consumer bears the tax, and enterprises only remit the collected taxes to the Fund. Since radio and television operate on a monthly subscription basis in Hungary, these institutions are an exception to the rule and pay "trash tax" by a special arrangement without charging their listeners separately for it. (It would be impossible to ask radio and TV to charge their subscribers "trash tax" after having broadcast that part of the programme which is subject to it.)

The basic idea of this disposition is that certain products and services subject to "trash tax" have such an appeal to the consumer that even the corporations producing them are willing to incur greater sacrifices. Presenting the matter in a different light, the object of the decree is that consumption of products subject to "trash tax" will diminish to a certain extent and, as a result, interest will focus on those cultural products which are exempt from this tax. However, interest in articles subject to this tax will certainly continue, and it is expected that the higher prices will provide the material support that less remunerative cultural products need. The authors of this decree well know—and this should be particularly emphasized—that cultural products subject to taxation satisfy a real need of elementary force and the funds so obtained together with budgetary subvention, are able to solve the "economic dilemma" of non-remunerative art.

Now, what does "need of elementary force" mean? We are probably not far off if this function is defined, generally speaking, as the reproduction of labour. As work becomes more specialized, more diverse recreational activities are required. The more intensive and concentrated work is, the more leisure-time must provide relaxation.[11] Apart from sleeping and idling, typical ways of spending spare time are: entertainment without effort on the one hand, and various social and cultural activities on the other, which—although they differ from work as regards the type of effort required—do not reduce tension acquired in worktime but only change its outward form. Such diversions in traditionalist societies are churchgoing, or the delight in high quality art. These require concentration, and the latter, a certain acquired knowledge. This is one of the reasons why those on a lower educational level are excluded, to a certain extent, from enjoying classical art; symbolic ambiance is unfamiliar to them and, without this, they cannot derive pleasure from, nor comprehend, works of art. The knowledge required is sometimes of a technical nature as, for example, in the case of music, but for the most part, it is simply a background in history, literature and history of art. In order to properly appreciate a work of art the spectator must know who the artist was, and what he was trying to express. In other words, he has to have knowledge of a canon consecrated by tradi-

[11] C. Greenberg: "Work and Leisure under Industrialism". In E. Larrabee and R. Meyersohn (Eds.): *Mass Leisure*. Glencoe, Ill., The Free Press, 1958.

tion, or at least its spirit, and this requires a great deal of knowledge in order to *experience* a work of art rather than just "view" it.

If, however, this kind of "cultivated delight in art" comes to the viewer easily, without an abundance of background information, cultural activity generally never has the same regenerative effect as relaxing, diverting entertainment.

This duality is further examined in Löwenthal's study, comparing the *Weltanschauung* of Pascal and Montaigne.[12] Pascal has always been strongly wedded to an elevating, ecstatic type of relaxation which only means engaging in another kind of effort, whereas Montaigne became aware that modern times were headed for hedonism, and that such recreation has—beyond, and partially as a substitute for religious and artistic rapture—a fundamental and functional significance.

Thus, the public generally requires that kind of entertainment which distracts like daily nourishment, and it is instrumental in the reproduction of labour. The public instinctively consumes less of high quality art for it senses that a spoonful of it is sufficient. Wilensky's empirical investigation has proved that entertaining programmes are, practically speaking, consumed *en masse*.[13] And, in fact, only an ascetic, highbrow steers clear of the light entertainment he so despises.

Thus, the public is and continues to be —one might say in accordance with the laws of nature—a steady consumer of the entertaining and relaxing elements of culture.[14] Now let us consider that other consumer of culture, the controlling power, that is the "client".

12 L. Löwenthal: "Diversion and Salvation in the 16th and 17th Centuries", in his book: *Literature, Popular Culture and Society*. Englewood Cliffs, N. J., Prentice Hall, Inc. 1961.

13 A. L. Wilensky: "Mass Society and Mass Culture". *American Sociological Review*, April 1964.

14 Cf. H. Mendelsohn: *Mass Entertainment*. New Haven, Conn., College and University Press, 1966.

6. *The "Client" (The Controlling Power), as the Consumer of Culture*

The Cultural Fund furthers the dual objectives of Hungarian socialist cultural policy: the creation of ideologically desirable high-quality works of art and their ready availability to the public. Selection from intellectual and ideological viewpoints is a consideration even in the case of "entertaining" cultural products. The "trash tax" decrees must fulfil an important function in this respect too. Some of the merely entertaining cultural products, e.g. the operetta, bear the mark of a bygone petty bourgeois culture (sometimes reminiscent of the Austro–Hungarian Monarchy). The trash decrees fight the preservation of the lower middle-class tastes of earlier generations and accordingly carry on an ideological combat with the genres of entertainment.

Another category of entertainment products and services evokes the atmosphere of Western commercialized genres. In this respect the "trash tax" is aimed against a kind of commercialism that appears to be on the surface but which could well have a more pervasive effect in the long run.

In short, the "trash tax" charges cultural production which is remunerative for technological reasons in order to sustain, at least partially, non-remunerative cultural production, and taxes productions in great demand for the benefit of productions in lesser demand. In addition, it exerts an educational effect on the backward strata of the production, and on the taste of people who cannot escape from commercialized routine trash. Educational influence derives from ideological sources, on the one hand, while it also desires to put people on the right track to a better understanding and appreciation of high quality art, on the other.

"Quality" is an important concept which runs like a red streak through the "trash tax" decrees, from production technique and genres to ideological trends, grouping works on a scale ranging from eminent to weak.

The most characteristic criteria of quality are complexity, novelty and the non-schematic presentation of reality. The "loyalty" of works of quality is never as unambiguous as that of pure entertainment. Simple-minded patterns without ambiguity are characteristic of the latter, which might be defined as finite combinations of a limited number of constituents. These kinds of products played an important role in the cultural scene in the fifties, and can retrospectively be labeled *socialist trash*. The spirit of the "trash tax" decrees clearly shows that this kind of "loyalty" is no longer welcome.[15]

Complex, aesthetic high-quality art is as full of contradictions as reality itself, and, therefore, is not always a comfortable partner to those actually in power. The people's power, which is open and progressive, welcomes this reliable comrade-of-arms who can become embarrassing at times but whose objectives are basically sound. The distorted views and fear occasioned by the personality cult also invaded art.

The decrees reflect the intention to subsidize high-quality art; this points to society's tendency to liberate creative forces. At the same time it appears that such patronage of art contains norms which are peculiar features of traditional Hungarian literary education. Patronage of art has been the manifestation of power and wealth throughout history. Flourishing states embellished their capitals with works of famous artists, collected works of art from all parts of the world in their museums, and supported eminent poets. The amount of financial aid assigned to the support of the arts seems to be determined by two variables. First, it depends on the prosperity of society, and second, upon decisions establishing what portion of the goods produced should be allocated to the expansion of the economy. Thus, intensive sponsoring of arts can be the sign of either affluence or economic decline, that is, "standstill". Conservative ages and societies have often been notorious for spending money and energy on high arts accumulated in earlier less cultured ages which probably could have continued to serve potentially remunerative production purposes. All this refers to Hungary in an indirect way only. One can only presume that behind the intense and diverse attention devoted to higher culture there is a relative backwardness in technological education, at least when compared to the modern achievements in other industrial cultures.

7. *How Has the "Trash Tax" Been Introduced? A Process Analysis of Cultural Policy*

Based on the empirical investigation of the press of four countries, Gerbner developes a model of cultural policy which contains nine "power roles" and a number of concrete mechanisms with respect to the application of cultural-political power.

15 This may be a good place to point out the illuminating remark György Lukács made a few years ago in an interview he gave to the journal *Kortárs:* "The trouble with low-quality art—mainly in capitalism but in socialism too—is that it keeps a person in the condition he actually finds himself in. The trouble with the mockery of operettas or cabarets is not the fact that things or people are ridiculed, but that the performance does not transcend gibes. People believe that they have done their duty by laughing at absurdities. Many things are permitted in our days that were unimaginable in the Rákosi era. This is undoubtedly a considerable progress. At the same time there is a great drawback in it... If I listen today to what is called a bold political cabaret routine, and laugh like the entire audience from the tram conductor to the top leaders, this laughter has no consequence whatever, I remain in the same condition I was in earlier. In my opinion the difference between high and low culture lies precisely in this... It is not true that life cannot be criticized other than by this kind of vulgar and cynical laughter which results in nothing. I am certain that even a simple man will see that Daumier's drawings represent quite another kind of mockery than a cabaret routine. That is, mockery is in the former case, real art." György Lukács: "Az új gazdasági irányítás és a szocialista kultúra" (The New Economic Guidance and Socialist Culture). *Kortárs*, April 1969.

Gerbner has analysed the interaction between press systems and educational institutions in the United States, Great Britain, France and the Soviet Union. His model claims to provide a valid basis of comparison of the actual dimensions of cultures.

If the Hungarian "trash tax" is examined in the light of this model, it appears that, in socialist countries, the mechanism of decision-making takes final shape in law-decrees or departmental orders of ministries (whence the chain of programmed decisions begins), although it begins by compiling the demands of the broad strata of society.

Gerbner's analytical model distinguishes nine power roles with the communicator in the centre, the typical sources of their power separated according to their function.[16] From the viewpoint of the "trash tax", those enterprises which collect the tax from the public can be considered *communicators*, they raise the prices of products and services and contribute to the Cultural Fund at the expense of their profit, prior to paying corporation income tax. Such enterprises are the firms of the Art Foundation, publishers, theatres, cinemas and record companies. A chain of vertical directives defines this question in the case of the Hungarian Radio and Television making it both an operative communicator and a supervising body.

Of the nine power roles, five are *internal* in respect to the media. These are: (1) the clients who determine the conditions of granting capital and operative means, (2) supervisors who draft operative policy and control its execution, (3) the collaborators, (4) the competitors and (5) the suppliers of services with specific sources of power and functions. In respect to the media, the following are *external* power roles: (6) authorities, (7) organizations, (8) experts and finally (9) the general public whose power lies in the fact that they are the "consumers" of any "product" offered by the media.

16 G. Gerbner: "Institutional Pressures", *op. cit.*

8. *The "Ascending Branch" in Cultural Policy*

A "flow diagram" can be plotted in respect to the development and scope of the "trash tax" decrees making use of power roles, their sources and functions as analytical categories. The cultural-political programme —as expressed by the decree—has an ascending and a descending brach. The ascending branch starts from one of the "power roles" (7), (8) or (9), that is, from organizations, experts and the public. Gerbner's investigation has shown that in the mass communication system of the Soviet Union *organizations* are the communicator's main clients and, thus, the main channels of decision-making ascending from below; this is contrary to the Western, stereotyped view, according to which the Soviet administrative system is exclusively centrally guided. From the viewpoint of cultural-political decision-making it is expedient to investigate the category of *experts* together with the fourth power role; that is, with the notion of competitors. One of the functions of the competitors is vigilance, expressed in *journalistic criticism* which is a power role of decisive significance in Hungarian cultural policy. The difference between "critics" and competitors is that the latter compete with each other as a result of the driving force of "scarcity" while "criticism" contains implicit solidarity.

The introduction of the "trash tax" was preceded by a public discussion which went on for years in the most important Hungarian literary and critical journals and even in certain weeklies and daily papers.[17] The

17 Cf. *"Lektűr — Giccs — Álművészet"* (Reading Matter—Trash—Sham-Art), a survey of the journal *Kritika* concerning trash in historical novels, theatre, cinematic art, the fine arts and applied art. November 1966.—A lengthy discussion carried on in 1966–1967 in the journal *Alföld* on taste formation and people's education, etc.— On the same subject, the following monographs have also been published, e.g., Anna Földes: *A giccs az irodalomban* (Trash in Literature). Budapest, Gondolat Publishers, 1962; István Hermann: *A giccs* (Trash). Budapest, Kossuth Publishers, 1971.

critical element of the discussions manifested itself when the disputants pointed to the "disastrous" effects of the profit-oriented management of publishers, firms and co-operatives interested in the production and sale of cultural articles. Intellectuals with classical education scoffed at the "peculiar contradiction" in a cultural policy which stands for the protection and dissemination of refined artistic taste (a basic principle of Hungarian cultural policy) in schools and through people's education, while at the same time allowing, and even promoting, the sale of gaudy products and trashy services.

However, the general public plays the most important power role on the ascendant branch of cultural-political decision-making. Its influence is particularly felt in the "trash tax" decrees. Strangely enough the public, in its power role, comes into conflict with experts voicing their opinion in public criticism, as well as with competitors who criticize the actual communicator on the basis of academic canons. At the same time, the cultural-political contribution ("trash tax") came into being as a result of the preliminary spadework of the "experts", enabling the public to play a more active role in cultural policy through its behaviour as buyer.

The "trash tax" bears the mark of the new economic mechanism: it establishes the framework of a non-administrative (or not purely administrative) control by administrative means. In the fifties, at a time when cultural policy relied exclusively on administrative measures, a number of present-day cultural problems simply did not exist because there was no profit-actuated business mechanism to challenge the established political line. When profit-orientated business became the rule as regards certain articles and products, cultural policy had three alternatives:

(1) to abandon the patronage of high-standard culture;

(2) to curb trade in lower standard cultural products and thereby eliminating profits which after all accrued to the state;

(3) to allow the "market" to regulate trade of cultural products and services to the extent its willingness to make sacrifices in order to acquire products and services, to increase the state's profit and, finally to reassure high-culture-lovers that a part of the surplus profit from the products of lower standard culture would be devoted to the support of high standard culture.

9. *The "Descending Branch" in the Light of the Communicator's Increased Responsibility*

Society's will, deriving from social demands, became embodied in a governmental decree. The details were regulated by orders issued by the Minister of Culture in agreement with other competent authorities, e.g. the Minister of Finance and the President of the National Material and Prices Board. These authorities are parties to the cultural-political decisions discussed above.

As a result of the decree, the scope of certain activities has been enlarged and new activities have been introduced. Expert opinion on books to be published, the programmes of theatres, and the classification of films to be produced has been given a new task as prescribed by the "trash tax" decree: it must be decided, in other words, whether the products and services presented are subject to contribution. The Lectorate of the Fine Arts and Applied Arts is the Jury for small works of plastic art; all dance records are subject to contribution without being judged by a jury, whereas a domestic jury decides which programmes of the Hungarian Radio and Television are subject to contribution.

The function of authorities, the sixth power roles affecting the communicator, has always been and continues to be of decisive importance in socialist cultural policy. Authorities regulate social order as a whole, and the cultural sector is of significant importance from an ideological-political viewpoint. One of the implications of the "trash tax" decree

is that it sharply delineates the profiles of the power roles, clearly separating their earlier indistinct functions. The "social order regulating role" of authorities, the role of the client who establishes the conditions of capital supply and the role of the supervisor or "chief" of operative policy and the control of its execution, have become more differentiated as a result of the decree (and other tendencies in cultural policy). For example, when the *Directorate of Publishing*, a major department of the Ministry of Culture, establishes which books and periodicals are subject to contribution, it functions as an authority in respect to social order. On the other hand, when managers of publishing houses decide the proportion between products exempt from or subject to contribution, the supervisor whose role it is to establish operative policy acts on the enterprise level. The role of the supervisor is, naturally, principally executive. "Clients' interests permeate the climate of communicator decision-making", writes Gerbner. The overall social interest is expressed in the expectation of the Ministry as client. Investment goods are provided, and subsidies are granted, but the conditions, of the grants are prescribed. The independence of enterprises means that they can manage their own business and are allowed to interpret the viewpoint of the Ministry as client at their discretion.

The reform of the economic management gave greater independence for productive enterprises which can now manage their business at their own risk with a view towards profitability. A similar reformation is now taking place in the sphere of cultural production but with an essential difference.[18] While the independence and responsibility of the communicator, the producer and marketer of cultural products and services have increased, however, the criteria of decision-making can never be restricted under socialist conditions solely to the standards of profitability. The communicator with increased responsibility has to adapt the viewpoints of material independence and profit to ideological and cultural requirements. In practical life he has to mediate between traditional humanist criticism and the consumers of culture, whose taste, in fact, is quite frequently undifferentiated. The communicator should not forget that he also has to fulfil the task of educator, and that his main mission is to spread culture.

The "trash tax" decrees clearly express the expectations (and their precise interrelationship) which influence the communicator in the field of force between the different kinds of "power roles", and bifurcate in the final analysis towards two poles: strategic aims for the sake of spreading ideologically and artistically higher quality culture, while making tactical concessions to popular demand which reflects the current standard of taste and to economic considerations based on this demand.

[18] An editorial of *Népszabadság*, the daily newspaper of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party, comments on this subject as follows: "The assertion of socialist independence in work is an important principle and practice of Hungarian cultural life. What does this independence mean? It means that leaders and workers of workshops in the field of culture as well as the creators of culture are not infants, in need of tutelage, whose task has to be prescribed, but adults who perceive reality, see life in its true colours and are in command of considerable experience. They need, however, an interchange of ideas, words of encouragement, debating partners and adequate information. All this has to be furthered by forums of decentralized cultural life and can only be fulfilled by high-quality workshops of mature socialist independence." (February 1, 1971.)

MIKLÓS PÁLOS

PERSONNEL DEPARTMENT, 1971

The governmental regulations on the future development of personnel departments extend over ten single-spaced typewritten pages of foolscap paper. Everything is set out in detail, since a thorough analysis has been made previously of the results and deficiencies in this type of work.

In order to appreciate the significance of this regulation, we should know that the work of personnel departments has not always been regarded favourably. About twenty years ago, owing to the misinterpretation of certain viewpoints, the work of these departments was cloaked in secrecy, and their activities were one-sided. People were not judged by their qualifications and abilities; instead these departments spent their time investigating people's "antecedents". In addition, this procedure did not really help to uncover the fascists and enemies, but only hindered those members of the bourgeoisie who discerned the positive features of the new society and wanted to be honest and useful members of the new community. This atmosphere of distrust and deception also hampered the work of conscientious "cadre officials". Many people declined promotions because they resented the obligatory procedure of writing out their life history. They knew very well that such "confessions" would only lead to further mud-slinging. Workers and leaders alike compared the personnel department to the "sword of Damocles" hanging above their heads.

The chief of the personnel department of a Budapest enterprise was recently questioned on the development of cadre work.

"In the capitalist system", he said, "the personnel department's task was to hire and fire workers, arrange salaries and manage welfare problems. These tasks would seem to be the same for us now, but in reality they have a very different pattern, determined by the social system. Today political and economic work are not considered as two different entities. We maintain that leaders should fulfil three requirements: political, professional qualifications and the ability to lead —this triple requisite essentially reflects the same intention. After the liberation in 1945 came a period when political factors took priority over professional qualifications. Today, however, owing to the stability of political conditions, it is feasible to require and realize all three conditions. If we appoint somebody to an important position, the regional party committees are entitled to give their opinion—in some cases they make the final decision—but it is up to the personnel department to decide whether the person in question is qualified for the job."

The above-mentioned governmental regulation appraises the results of cadre work in the past in these terms: "In course of the last ten years the former centralization of cadre work disappeared, along with its superficial and unwieldy methods of evaluation. The cadre work of the State has been generally characterized by competence and sincerity. These results were the outcome of political consolidation, economic and cultural development."

Despite these results the governmental regulation stated that the interpretation of the principles which governed the selection of leaders was not yet uniform, and there were also incongruities in their practical execution. The new economic guidelines stress further consolidation in the work of personnel departments and the elimination of inconsistencies. This is considered a basic requirement for the future strengthening of the political system.

The basic principle

The basic principle which has recently been adopted by personnel departments is

the following: anyone can be appointed to a leading position if he meets the requirements. Party membership is not required, but in the case of a high position, the political attitude of the candidate will obviously be taken into consideration. In the case of candidates with similar abilities women currently seem to have an advantage, as there is a marked trend of placing more women in leading positions. This particularly applies to enterprises whose staff consists mainly of women. In one of Hungary's large textile plants—the Hungarian Cloth Factory—90 per cent of the staff are women. Twenty years ago the managers were all men. Now, due to substantial cadre work, this ratio has considerably improved: 20 per cent of the work managers are women who have proved their abilities in economic and organizational work.

In order to facilitate progress in cadre work, new chiefs were appointed to the personnel departments in many institutions. They made every effort to evaluate people on the basis of their performance and the attitude of employees has greatly improved because they realized that if there were several candidates for one position, the best-qualified was selected, the choice was not influenced by family ties, personal relations or other connections. Cadre work became more democratic: in decisions concerning personnel matters, lower-echelon leaders had more scope of authority. They implemented the principle that the destiny of a worker should be decided by those who best knew his work and attitudes.

Another positive feature of recent cadre work is that the determination of qualifications is more accurately evaluated. The government gave the ministers a mandate to determine in each of the establishments under their control which posts could be filled only by candidates with certain qualifications. At the same time, instructions were given to the effect that requirements should be reasonable, and the claims made upon workers should be realistic. In some cases where previous regulations required exorbitant qualifications for certain positions, the number of jobs requiring unjustified qualifications were reduced. It was also decided that people over forty should not be compelled to finish secondary or higher studies.

The Record

The former secrecy of cadre work was eliminated when the new governmental regulation stipulated that the records must be open. The official viewpoint in regard to this states: "The record is the basic document for evaluating the workers' performance and attitude, and at the same time it is an important instrument for his education." A decree stipulates that the record should be taken into consideration in matters concerning promotion, transfer, dismissal, etc.

Instructions for drafting the record state that it should contain an evaluation of the persons's attitude toward socialism, his social activity, his participation in vocational training, the quality and output of his work, and professional skill. The record should also include the worker's attitude towards and relations with fellow workers and clients, his conduct outside his job, his initiative, independence and sense of responsibility. The record should contain only credible facts and opinions, and comments should be specifically justified and void of generalities.

The record must be made available to the worker as well as the opportunity for him to add his remarks. If the leader and the worker disagree on the statements in the record, the remarks of the worker should be added to the record before it is filed. If the worker refuses to sign the record, this should also be marked. The record must be kept in the file but the worker should have access to his own record at any time. If a worker is transferred to another job only the record signed by him can be forwarded.

It is quite complicated to draft a record, and only competent leaders can be relied

upon. The assessment of the qualities of a leader is already partially within the scope of the personnel department. A growing number of enterprises and institutions have realized that cadre work needs trained experts and psychologists. Nearly a hundred large enterprises and national institutions have hired psychologists—full or part-time—to find the appropriate methods, which, in a given period, under certain conditions, in a particular working place produce the most efficient result.

Experience shows that these specialists who just begin to familiarize themselves with their task, understand what they must do. Ten years ago, one of the major heavy-industrial enterprises, the Foundry Works of Ózd, decided to resort to every available branch of science dealing with the activity of the working man, in order to solve the problems in the life of the enterprise. They thought that technical cadres, whether high or low, had almost no psychological knowledge, and were in fact biased against this branch of science. In the daily life of the enterprise they would pay attention to people as human beings. Now they have accepted the fact that, based on the results of psychological investigations in an enterprise, useful changes could be proposed for the personnel department, and for technological and economic managers as well.

Ability Tests

In the Foundry Works of Ózd, the managers, quite obviously, required new ability tests. In Hungary, labour protection regulations stipulate those jobs for which previous ability tests are required. The labour protection regulations of the Foundry Works list about fifty such jobs. The psychology department of the enterprises analysed the scope of these activities, and the ensuing ability tests showed that among cranemen, high-alloy steel forgemen, wheelers and rolled steel workers 155 persons were poorly qualified and another 70 unfit for their job. Seventy-nine others were sent for medical examinations.

The National Savings Bank has branches all over the country, it deals with banking affairs, savings accounts and credit. This establishment tries to find new leaders from among its own staff members. Recently 400 new leaders, mostly young people, have been appointed as heads of branch offices in the capital and in provincial towns. The personnel department decided not to subject these people to ability tests prior to their assignment. They said that those promoted on the basis of their long practical experience should not be tested, as this would lead to insecurity and indicate the management's lack of faith in their abilities. The psychologist of the personnel department visited them after their appointment to offer comprehensive psychological advice.

Interviews

Here is the letter written by the personnel department offering help: "You have attended lectures on psychological topics in courses organized by the personnel department. We hope that they convinced you that work psychology can be useful in getting to know people and learning to lead them. This time we wish to extend the application of psychology to personal advice-giving. To this effect, we would like to take up 3 hours of your working time on two occasions; we will of course secure the permission of your chief. Participation in the advising session is on a voluntary basis. Enclosed please find a card: we request that you sign and return it in case of your non-participation. If you agree to participate, no answer is needed. We thank you in advance for your help and co-operation..."

At first there was some reticence, but eventually people began to relax as they talked with the psychologist. And at the end of the session, most people were grateful for the opportunity to discuss their problems.

Privacy was strictly respected in these talks; the psychologist gave them the opportunity to discuss personal problems and, in addition, he tried to inquire into the abilities of the new leader, as well as to make him confront them himself, without recourse to examinations. Together they drafted a scheme which conveyed to the new leader an image of his own leading capacities. The questionnaire used for this purpose had the advantage that no "bad" characteristic was included, but only the indication of positive features.

Under the rubric "self-confidence" the interviewee could "choose" between the terms "sure of oneself, active, convinced, ambitious, resolute, courageous, convincing, independent, satisfied with oneself, conscientious, audacious, knowing how to make the best of life, enterprising, straightforward, level-headed".

"Optimism" is given the following attributes by the psychologist: gay, persistent, polite, serene, contented, sharp-witted, light-hearted, audacious, well-informed, cheerful, jovial, reliable and sober-minded.

Case studies under the heading of "What would you do?" were conducted separately. The young leader was given three hypothetical situations which could occur in his working place. Here are the three cases which indicate clearly to what sort of problems a leading official in a present Hungarian bank is expected to react.

The first case:

"You are the head of a branch office with a staff of about 30. The members of the staff have known each other for several years. Upon request of the trade union, a refrigerator has been provided for the staff where they keep their foodstuffs.

"Shortly after the appearance of a new colleague the fresh foods of fine quality which need no cooking frequently disappear from the refrigerator. Several members of the staff suspect the new young worker but they cannot prove their charges. The new man suffers in this climate of suspicion, his colleagues do not speak to him, he is sad and tormented. Finally he turns to you: he denies the accusation of theft and asks your protection against the insinuations."

The second:

"You are in a leading position but in matters affecting personnel you can decide only in co-operation with your superior.

"Your best friend is a headmaster. In course of a private talk you learn from him that one of your workers, who has been working in a depot of valuables for about one year was the cashier in the school of your friend ten years ago—he was 16 then—and embezzled a fair amount of money; he was convicted and served his sentence in the Prison for Minors. Your friend asks you to keep the matter confidential. The case was superannuated; the worker had received his good-conduct certificate. He never mentioned this incident in his life history. His previous working place gave a good record about him but there he did not handle valuables."

The third case:

"You are in a leading position but in matters affecting personnel you can act only in agreement with your superior.

"Riding on a bus you happen to hear two women, unknown to you, who discuss an incident in connection with a member of your staff, who was apparently drunk upon return from an official tour in the provinces, and consequently molested one of the young women concerned. She wants to denounce him to the police. The identity of the person is established with almost 100 per cent certainty by factors mentioned in the discussion (name, scene, time). You, however, never noticed or heard anything about this man being a drinker or a hooligan: you considered him to be a very decent person although your personal relations, owing to a marked difference in character, were not very good."

The answers to these case studies had to be given on the spot, so there was less time to think them over than in real life. In these

cases several correct solutions were possible: the psychologist wanted to know the solution chosen by the newly appointed leader. Part of the purpose of the investigation was to see to what extent he would give up his position and yield to the cadre officer who came "from the top".

In the investigations made in the Savings Bank, the following typical character reactions were discerned—with many individual variations, of course: the lenient person who exaggerates human philanthropy; the cautious type who inquires immediately into the past of the person in question; the man who respects authority and immediately turns to his superiors; the democrat who involves the whole staff in the decision-making process; the man relying on himself who does not ask anybody, but tackles the matter and decides what to do.

The material compiled by the psychologist is put in the files of the personnel department, but no names are given, only numbers—so that the statements of the investigation do not reach the boss of the appointed leader—only the psychologist knows which person is behind the numbered files.

Beyond individual advice-giving in the Savings Bank tests, questions were also asked concerning the climate of the working place. The psychologist knew from experience that owing to the nature of office work, such difficulties and problems would appear less quickly and reach the manager less intensively than in the case of a factory.

Several types of questionnaires were used in this investigation of the working climate. Some were filled in during personal talks together with the worker: again no name was given. In this questionnaire, the purpose was to discover which job the worker preferred from among those posts he had had previously. What was his original choice of career? Did he succeed at it and to what extent does his present work agree with or differ from his original expectations? How does he assess his present work with respect to variety, difficulty, salary, status, social benefits and vocational training?

Some extracts from the answers: 41 per cent of those in the sample continue to occupy their minds with the problems of their working place beyond working hours; 10 per cent wanted to take a better paying job at the outset; 29 per cent wanted to be teachers and 61 per cent of the sample in the Savings Bank originally had other career preferences, including 16 various jobs. Eight per cent were ready to change for a wage-raise of 100 forints, 15 per cent would change for more social benefits, 9 per cent for increased status and 29 per cent for more moral prestige.

To this the psychologist said that moral prestige of a job could be increased without a significant increase in cost, and this was the field where the best results could be achieved.

The questionnaires were given to the workers with instructions to fill them in, put them in a closed envelope and drop them into a previously displayed lock box.

The psychologist, after having examined the material, put forth another remarkable proposal: days spent on sick leave should be analysed with regard to the climate of the working place. In his opinion, a general malaise was the symptom of illnes, and frequent illnesses could also be a symptom of bad climate at the working place.

The influence of psychology in industry is rapidly gaining ground; a young psychologist working at an international transport company summed up the task: work should be made enjoyable. People like to work, to create, and they believe that their work should not be paid only with money.

MIKLÓS SZÁNTÓ

THE HUNGARIAN DIASPORA

I recently received a letter from Andor Mészáros, a sculptor of Hungarian origin, now living in Melbourne, Australia. "Someone", he wrote, "who was called Sándor Barna at home and is called Stanley Brown, within a week of his arrival has not only never been a good Hungarian but will never make a good Australian either. Every culture, like every individual creation, consists of two parts. It has a local value and an eternal human, international quality. For ourselves we can enjoy the Hungarianness of our culture, and for Australia we have distilled the eternal human quality of our culture, and what is more, for Australia's benefit. Those Australians who have come to understand the universal values of Hungarian culture have usually become interested in the typically Hungarian values as well."

Behind these lines can be perceived deep inner changes in the nature of Hungarian emigrant life; the outlines of a new patriotism appear, which no longer shuts itself up in national ghettos in the host countries, is not inconsistent with the interests of these countries, and at the same time accepts that the thousand-year-old history of Hungary did not end in 1945. The emigrant is a patriot when he is a vital link between the Hungarian people building anew on the old foundations and the peoples of the receiving countries.

A long road had to be travelled, the polar ice cap of the Cold War had to be cracked by the "Gulf stream" of relations hips which altered direction some fifteen years ago.

What essentially was the earlier spirit of the emigrant? Ferenc Molnár, in a sketch written in New York some time ago, described the Hungarian emingrant as a sick man. "It begins by him feeling himself to be a tourist. As a mature man he escaped from somewhere to Paris or London or Rio de Janeiro or New York. He either liked the town or he didn't and he felt like a tourist. Then the months passed. And then the years. The tourist has not gone home. The tourist has got stuck. The tourist has become an emigrant. From a healthy man he has turned into a sick man. He has not noticed it yet, but others have already deduced it from his increasingly uncontrollable nerves, the great quantity and the small quality of his complaints, the rapid development of his hypercritical faculties, the steady decrease in his desire to meet his compatriots and his ever worsening English, because unconsciously he has given up the useless struggle in middle age with a foreign language. The emigrant does not yet notice any of this. He merely observes that he cannot sleep without sleeping pills. This happens to some earlier and to others later. To single men earlier. To family men later. To the well-to-do later. To the poor earlier. Children do not catch it: emigration is not a childhood complaint."

The fate of the emigrant is a hard one, and defences are needed. One way of dealing with stress is to take offence, to blame others. Where offended people meet quarrels easily arise. One of the most frequent topics of conversation in Hungarian emigrant circles —often called the Hungarian sickness—is the inability to get along with one another.

The author of this article is the editor of the fortnightly *Magyar Hírek*, which keeps Hungarians abroad in touch with events in Hungary. This article, first published in the Budapest Catholic monthly *Vigilia*, deals with the approximately million and a half Hungarians who emigrated from Hungary before or after the war and are now living in Western Europe and on other continents, and does not refer to the Hungarian communities long-settled on the territories of neighbouring countries.

Groups seem to form in accordance with the date of emigration, and each group, organization and club is a stronghold at everlasting war with the others.

Another group of the offended is not angry with the world: they suffer from the wounds of real and assumed offences received in the homeland. They attempt to justify the fact they are made emigrants by conditions at home. The intensity of this justification increases in a direct ratio with the individual's feeling of uncertainty and the tension of adaptation.

Adaptation is not a one-sided process; the other side of it is being accepted. A Belgian scholar—Beda Claes—published a sociological study in 1962 in which, through the answers given in various questionnaires, he analysed the problems which arise when Belgians marry foreigners. Forty-one per cent of those questioned considered the marriage of a Belgian woman with a foreigner as undesirable. Twenty-seven per cent approved of it, on certain conditions: that it was a genuine love-match, that the man adapted successfully to Belgian life, broke with his old background and was a confirmed Catholic. Only 7 per cent regarded mixed marriages as natural without any further provisos, the remainder were cautious, noncommittal, and expressed no opinion. A number of studies of the process of adaptation by young Hungarians after 1956 were made in various countries, and there was near unanimity that the incidence of psychological disorders was very high among them.

The rapidity with which an emigrant adapts depends on whether he is successful or not, on his family life, as for example in the case of mixed marriages, and the changes rung on these factors: the wife accepts him but the relations do not, or the whole family accepts him as an exception; they accept him, but not his culture and customs, and urge him to renounce a part of his personality, to break entirely with his previous life.

The Causes of Emigration

Emigration is in itself a peculiar break. With it something ends and something begins. Life has dramatic turning-points when everything comes to a concentrated head: the greater or smaller contradictions on the different levels of daily life mature into a conflict, the thousand small wounds inflame and bleed. The man—or indeed woman—refuses to continue his own history, bursts the banks in which his life previously flowed; the resolutions sharpen to a decision, and life moves into new channels. The emigrant renounces something, the attraction of the opposite becomes overwhelming, and the moment indelibly burns its mark into the soul.

It must be remembered a man's life is not only political. At the time of great historical events every political happening is mixed with the worries of private life, with family and personal interests. At the time of the great wave of emigration from Hungary, before the First World War, the life of millions was carried on in a long ten-year situation of conflict, when the spectre of starvation faced people with the need for some sort of decision. Basically, the situation was the same between the two World Wars. In 1945 the end of the Second World War found hundreds of thousands of Hungarians in various parts of Europe, thrown up there by the tides of war and faced with the question: where and how will they continue the civil life from which they were forcibly uprooted?

It would be a grave mistake to give stereotyped answers on the causes of emigration, of the moment of decision. The points of departure, the decisions, the angers of conflict, may be various, but the force which gives sufficient and effective energy to lift a man from the land of his fathers, and to transport him to alien soil also helps him to provide him with the reserve energy he needs to withstand the first, almost inevitable tribulations. It stops him running

away, it drives him to face all the difficulties and survive them. The emotion, the concentrated strength is so great that its memory, as if petrified, is sharply preserved through the years to come. It plays a part in the process of putting down roots, it determines the colour, temperature, and often even the time-scale of adaptation, but above all it organizes—on an emotional level—the emigrant's relationship with the homeland he has left.

Even those Hungarians who left Hungary a mere fifteen years ago, most of them quite young, and who have visited Hungary regularly each year since 1965—those therefore who keep in step, as it were, with the homeland, who know and understand current Hungarian difficulties and problems—in their more intimate moments lay bare those few weeks which are the natural barrier between the here and the there. That period was a second beginning in their lives, a historic break, beginning a new calendar. They often say that at that time, at a certain point, the old film of their life broke, only to start unrolling again, reorganized, in a different time and place. There is a sort of no-man's-land between the two points. The old roots no longer hold them, the new roots have not yet grown.

A full break, however, is impossible: most emigrants have a dual tie. The first great exhibition of Hungarian artists living abroad was held in Budapest in August 1970. One especially fine piece of work admired by the visitors was the statue by Andor Mészáros, entitled *The Emigrant*. One of the frequent themes of classical mythology was two-faced Janus, one face looking back to the past, one face looking forward to the future. It is interesting that Mészáros worked the back of the figure in the utmost detail, the sad face full of intelligence, while the whole front of the figure is amorphous and expressionless.

The situation of emigrants was transformed by the move of the Hungarian Government when it declared an amnesty, and so made and makes it possible for emigrants to visit their homeland even if they left without passports and contrary to Hungarian law. The opportunity to make regular visits has significantly alleviated the homesickness felt by emigrants. It has altered the relationship between various groups of emigrants, and placed on a new foundation both the ties linking them with their homeland and the conditions which have rooted them and nourished them in the soil of the host countries.

Hungarians in the West

The majority of Hungarians in the West live in the USA. The 1960 census indicated that 770,000 Hungarians live there, if we take the following criteria: those who have come from Hungary themselves, those who have at least one Hungarian parent, those whose mother tongue is Hungarian, and finally those who regard themselves as Hungarians. (This figure does not include the children of Hungarian parents who were themselves born in America, i.e. the third generation, some of whom have remained in Hungarian areas and in regular contact with their grandparents, probably speak Hungarian, and are aware of their origins.)

There were significant settlements of Hungarians in Canada even before 1945. According to the various estimates there are today 90,000–100,000 Hungarians living in Canada. In South America the largest Hungarian settlement before the war was in Brazil. Today it totals approximately 60,000. In the Argentine there were about 10,000 Hungarians before the War, who were joined by another 4,000–5,000 later. Among the other South American states Venezuela and Uruguay have fairly large Hungarian groups; according to my estimate Hungarians total approximately 15,000 in the middle and southern parts of South America.

Outside Europe there are also a large

number of Hungarians living in Australia: approximately 35,000. There are also Hungarians living—generally in small groups—in many parts of Africa and Asia. In this area the largest group whose mother tongue is Hungarian lives in Israel.

In the period before the Second World War the only part of Europe to have a fairly significant number of Hungarians living there was France. Various estimates gave them as some 40,000 people; today perhaps 50,000 Hungarians live in France. Between the two World Wars many Hungarians worked in Germany. Their number today probably exceeds 50,000. In England there are something like 20,000–25,000 Hungarians, 15,000 in Belgium and about 10,000 in Switzerland, the Netherlands, Italy and Sweden respectively. In the rest of Europe there are much smaller groups of Hungarians.

On the American continent there are about 1,000,000, in Australia 35,000, in Africa and Asia—mostly in Israel—185,000.

These 1,500,000 individuals are Hungarian as regards their country of origin, language and culture, but it would be a mistake to assume that the emigrants are a homogeneous group, divided from each other and from their homeland only by geographical frontiers. The Hungarian emigration is differentiated, and highly structured mass.

The Structure of Emigrant Communities

The "million and a half staggering out to America", as Attila József described them, went there as temporary workers. They were not emigrants in the classic sense of the word. The First World War cut off the way home, and the selfish and short-sighted policy of the Horthy régime afterwards turned them into permanent settlers over there, and they thus became emigrants. What could these greatly suffering people have against present-day Hungary? But we can take a nearer example. A few years ago in Middlesborough, England, the members of a small Hungarian club—mostly 1956 arrivals—organized a concert with the participation of artists from Hungary. The mayor of the town came and so did a well-known correspondent of an important London newspaper to be spending the week-end in the town. "Are these people émigrés who escaped from socialist Hungary?" the journalist asked me. "Then how's it possible that almost all of them have visited their homeland in the last year or two? And how's it possible that entertainers come from Budapest to entertain them? I don't understand the whole thing: one either is an émigré or one is not."

The subsequent conversation lasted till dawn, and it was not because of language difficulties that my companion experienced such difficulty in understanding the situation. It may indeed appear odd to those with only a superficial knowledge of the situation. The Hungarians there—by then British subjects, who had put down roots in England and were respected there—had fled from Hungary, and had asked for and been given political asylum as such. However, most of them left Hungary motivated by an urge for adventure, they wanted to see the world, or start their tangled family lives anew. Only a very small number of them were enemies of socialism. Many of them, even if they had feelings of political antagonism, were not hostile to the system but to the political line of Stalinism—it was the way power was used, a way in itself alien to socialism, which roused their hostility. The Hungary of today understands the motives that drove them and has made it possible to normalize relations with them. The 1965 amnesty gave it a legal form. Nearly 90 per cent of the Hungarians living in that small English town have visited Hungary in recent years, and there are many who come every year. The Hungarian body concerned—the World Federation of Hungarians—helps their

clubs with books, records and by sending artists and entertainers. Are these Hungarians émigrés from present-day Hungary? János Kádár made the point clear in a lecture he gave, when he referred to the small number of professional émigrés whose livelihood is in unceasing anti-Hungarian activity: there are those who live in emigration and there are those who live on emigration.

Diaspora

Gyula Illyés, in several of his articles, uses the term *diaspora* to define all kinds of emigrant Hungarians.

The dates or periods in history which dictate the groupings of the Hungarians in the West have already been indicated. The date of each diaspora means a great deal. It characterizes and explains the circumstances of departure, the types of social classes and strata, the degree of difficulty encountered in adaptation, and the nature of the relationship with the homeland.

The large-scale emigration before the First World War was mostly composed of poor peasants. The receiving country was primarily the USA, and the Hungarians worked in industry there, mostly as unskilled or manual labour. Their aim was to save up a relatively large sum in a few years to enable them to return to Hungary and buy land there. They lived in ethnic ghettos, cut off from the people of the host country and its social organizations, culture and language. This situation only changed between the two World Wars. In those years emigration became more difficult, long economic crises shook the world, there was heavy unemployment, and the US frontiers were largely closed. The emigrants of this period left Hungary for Canada and South America if they were agricultural workers and to European countries, such as France or Belgium, if they were workers, primarily miners. Thus the goal of emigration changed, as did the receiving country and in part the class from which they came.

In the years which precede the Second World War, in the terrible years of fascist hate and terror, a very valuable, talented section of the Hungarian intelligentsia had to leave, in part because of Jewish origin and in part for political reasons. They included Leó Szilárd, the atomic physicist, the Nobel Prize winners Eugene P. Wigner, and Dennis Gabor together with many writers, artists and musicians, among them Béla Bartók. Most of them went to the USA. Many took leading parts in the antifascist movements. Many fighters—and martyrs—of the European resistance movements came from the ranks of the progressive Hungarian emigrants.

At the end of the war and after there were large, widespread movements—in both directions—through the fragmented fronts, then the lines froze as the Cold War began. Anti-communist organizations were formed in the West from among the members of the former Nazi army and the Hungarian regiments allied to them. The USA, Canada and many other countries stopped the free entry of immigrants. The USA continued the system of quotas.

When the war ended the soldiers and the adolescent members of the paralimitary fascist youth organization remained organized in units and retreated into Germany and under the command and influence of officers, whose sympathies were mostly fascist. The retreating army was followed by the leading officials of the Horthy administration often fleeing together with their families; in some towns and villages all the officials left, especially where they believed their own panic-mongering rumours and obeyed the order to leave with the army. With them and behind them came gangs of bloodstained Hungarian Nazi criminals, "the Arrow Cross", threatening and forcing on even those who in the meantime had realized the senselessness of escape.

When the guns stopped thousands started

out to look for their lost families. Many of them, once they had found them—or not—returned home. Others were caught up by the prevalent fever and together with them, or alone, continued their way into the world. Between 1945 and 1947 many Jewish Hungarians who had lived through the death camps left the country. Their families, wives and children had died in the course of the catastrophe and their wounds were so deep they could no longer continue their lives in their old home. They preferred to abandon their past completely and to attempt to start a new life somewhere else. The different fronts and opened frontiers saw the coming and going of hundreds of thousands from East to West and West to East. It took years before the waves of this tempest-driven sea of people subsided. The front-line run through Hungary for a year. Valuable properties were destroyed, factories and livestock were taken away, towns were devastated by bombs and artillery fire. The country was quite literally in ruins. The people were in rags, hunger, and inflation crippled the country. There were many who simply did not believe it could be rebuilt in any acceptable time. Thousands of these people of little faith pulled up stakes and left.

As always in Hungarian history, the emigration was countered by a movement in the opposite direction. From the Soviet Union, from the various countries of Europe and even from far distant continents came flocking those progressive Hungarians of the socialist faith who wanted to be present and take part in the building of a socialist Hungary.

By 1948 the early coalition period had ended and the power of the working class became irrevocably victorious.

Between 1947 and 1956 many members of the former ruling classes and many right-wing politicians left the country and involved themselves in the life of Hungarian communities abroad. All this was helped by the growing Cold War. Criminals, smugglers and racketeers also smuggled themselves over the borders in great numbers. All those who left were aware that they would be unable to continue their old, familiar way of life in the conditions of the new Hungary. The serious errors of the Rákosi régime made their effects felt in those years. Many valuable people, scientists, technologists, artists and skilled workers and peasants, attached to their country, left Hungary during the difficult years because they felt outraged. Many also left who otherwise had no trouble with the régime but were frightened by changes which they did not understand.

In 1956, 200,000 people left the country. (Of these about 50,000 have returned.) This large-scale defection was due to a combination of the political mistakes of the fifties and the ruthless use made of them by external and internal enemies, the general mass confusion and the crisis of confidence.

People still defect in our day; occasionally those who leave the country on a holiday fail to return. They usually travel on the invitation of relatives, are mostly young, in the professions, or skilled workers. Most of them do not regard themselves as emigrants, and play no political role abroad. Irrespective of why they left, however, their going is still a loss and they injure the state in that the skills they acquired at home—at great cost to the country—are employed for the benefit of foreign countries.

The Second and the Third Generation

In addition to the first generation of emigrants who left their homeland, we have to consider the second generation, born in the host countries, and in many cases a third generation too. But we cannot use the term emigration in connection with such second and third generations. The fact of Hungarian origin is, however, important, and in many cases the families do not hide but rather keep alive the consciousness of their connection with their country of origin.

When the American policy of the "melting pot" was at its height, when it was planned to assimilate immigrants as quickly as possible, it was general for the second generation of Hungarians to leave the Hungarian settlements and marry into native American families. This process was helped by a score of historical reasons. In both the world wars Hungary, alas, fought on the side opposing the major host countries, and consequently many felt that a Hungarian name which emphasized their Hungarian origin might make them suspicious to their neighbours and hinder their careers. Those physicians and lawyers of the second generation whose interest was to retain their Hungarian clients stayed on at the settlements and married into the Hungarian families living there. Those who retained their religious ties or played a part in Hungarian organizations also stayed, retaining their language and continuing to regard themselves as Hungarians. (As a rule children in families where both parents or the mother is Hungarian tend to speak Hungarian and are more aware of their origins.)

The second generation is still burdened with a number of inhibitions due to the fact that their parents were immigrants. Their consciousness of being Hungarian is a factor of their good or bad relationship with their parents and of whether they live with their parents or not. Another is whether they get on in life. A number of sociological studies of emigrant life draw attention to the fact that the conflict of generations is exceptionally strong. Two different world views, two sets of customs and habits collide. The conflict of the generations is typical of our age. Emigrant life, however, with its special ambience, multiplies the conflicts. For most families throughout the world the mother tongue is the natural means of communication between parents and children. The language you learn at your mother's knee is the language of the country. But where the parents are immigrants there is a difference between the children's original mother tongue and the language acquired in kindergartens and schools. Parents and children have different cultures, and the child is often the parents' bridge to their surroundings. He acts as interpreter and transmits the strange new customs. At the same time it is difficult to bridge the gap between fathers and their sons which is almost inevitable in the circumstances. How much disappointment lies hidden behind the usually embarrassed answers when one asks if the child can speak Hungarian. How many times one has heard it said, sometimes indifferently, sometimes aggressively: "He understands everything, but always answers in English." There is no problem if there is mutual tolerance, if parents and children agree in their judgement on the opportunities offered by the world, and if their image of the homeland leads to a pleased acceptance of their origins on the part of the children.

A well-known Australian woman artist of Hungarian origin once said somethig to me that came from the depths of her being and was a great pain to her: "My husband is a cultivated and witty man. One of the great sorrows of my life is that our children will never know how witty, how full of ideas and cultured their father is, because in English he only speaks the language of business and everyday life. He is only witty in Hungarian —and the children don't speak Hungarian."

The difficulties become unbridgeable if the old people surround themselves with the painted props of a long dead world, locking themselves away from the modern trends of the host country, when they see the new Hungary through the misty glasses of the past, and come into conflict with their children on both these counts, since the children are not tied to the past and are attracted to the future. Then they break away from the sad fathers, and throw off their own Hungarianness as an outworn dress.

There are certain features in many of those who left in 1956 which resemble the earlier behaviour of the second generation. This diaspora consisted largely of men. It scat-

tered, married into the families of the host countries, and we have often heard the complaint that their children do not learn Hungarian. After the first few difficult years this group kept itself aloof from Hungarian organizations or church congregations, and many of them did not read Hungarian newspapers or books.

Today there is an appreciable renewal of ethnic communities in the leading countries of the western world. The old-style, forced assimilation only produced superficial results. The ethnic group continued to exist, the problems became merely marginal, but —as the events of our days show—they assume an important role in times of conflict and crisis. As the newer generation comes of age it has a renewed interest in the past of their families. Many accept their European identity and the young people of the Hungarian ethnic group are no exception. Experience shows that the second generation also goes to see Hungarian films and reads the magazines published in two languages. They may not read and write Hungarian very well, but many of them have a good command of the spoken language. The third generation exhibits a livelier, freer interest in Hungary. They are not burdened by the many inhibitions of their fathers and grandfathers. As a number of American and Canadian universities accept Hungarian as a second foreign language, many of them have an interest in renewing their command of the language they learned from their grandparents and spoke well as little children.

And what are their political attitudes? The bulk of those who emigrated up to the Second World War represented progressive political ideas, and were organized in left-wing organizations. This was the main reason why for years thousands of them were refused citizenship by the official circles of the host countries. During the war the Hungarians belonging to the progressive organizations fought against fascism and as an acknowledgement of this fact the majority received their citizenship papers after the war. The progressive Hungarians who remained in the West after the Liberation in 1945 lived through a period of great difficulty. They were growing old, they suffered from the atmosphere of the Cold War, the political mistakes committed at home and the changes in Hungary, which they often could not understand. Their numbers and influence have decreased. At the same time the émigré circles who opposed Socialist Hungary have also grown old. The right wing of the political émigrés is broken into fractions and is slowly disintegrating. Because of the advances of the forces of peace and the achievements of the socialist countries, among them the Hungarian People's Republic, the emigrants antagonistic to Hungary are rapidly losing ground, and their disintegration now seems inevitable.

The great majority of Hungarians abroad are not antagonistic to modern Hungary. They are friendly, but they are not a homogeneous group either. They are broken into many groups, varying according to the date of emigration, their position and their academic qualifications. The people who belong to this majority may be members of religious, cultural or sports organizations or unconnected with any outside organizations. One must be careful not to categorize these people along exclusively political lines. There are, for example, those who support socialism yet are far from a Marxist ideology.

The politically neutral majority very largely approves of the manifestations of cultural-intellectual life in Hungary and is even willing to help, if help is needed. This becomes especially clear in the course of certain campaigns which engage their sympathies: large masses were active in helping the victims of the recent floods, in the training of Hungarian athletes for the Olympics, or in the question of preserving their mother tongue. In 1970, 120,000 Hungarians visited their homeland. They came from all the corners of the earth, and this is not including the Hungarians who came for a visit from

the neighbouring countries, i.e. Rumania, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia. The bulk of those visiting their relatives here belong to this politically neutral group friendly to Hungary. Most of them have come more than once in recent years and remain in constant touch with their relatives. They have learnt of the successes, problems and troubles in the building of socialism, they keep pace with the contemporary realities of Hungarian life. (That is, their information is up-to-date, not that they necessarily agree or identify with Hungary politically.) At any rate, as an effect of visiting their homeland, the friendly majority widen their horizons appreciably.

The bulk of today's émigrés, those who left in the last twenty to twenty-five years, came from different strata, with different goals and different equipment from their predecessors. And there is something else. Circumstances have altered radically in the host countries during the past sixty to seventy years as well. The Hungarian districts, the ethnic ghettos of New York, Cleveland, Detroit and Sao Paulo, have largely disintegrated. Living in a closed community in those days also meant that Hungarians mostly married other Hungarians. The emigrants of today enjoy different opportunities, by virtue of their knowledge of the language, their skills and their schooling. The attitude of the ruling circles in the host countries has also changed towards immigrants. They are anxious to create a united nation from the diverse immigrants. They do not lose sight of the pitfalls, and they are aware that it is the second generation that is important, whose children grow up with the national consciousness of their new country in their hearts.

For the second and third generation the word homeland means something quite different from its meaning for their fathers and grandfathers. The "old country" does not mean to them the glorified world, the immediacy of the sensations of childhood and youth that it means to their parents or grandparents, but a far off country which perhaps they only know of from the tales of their mother or grandmother.

The basic economic-technological processes which irresistably drive our world ahead, and the accelerating pace which characterizes them, also affect the picture. They have an influence on the situation of emigrants and on their relationship with their homeland. In the first place is the shrinking of distances, the revolution of communications. The previous generation was divided from the homeland by time and broad oceans. To exchange letters was often a matter of months. In our age communication by post, by telephone, in person or through intermediaries has speeded up and multiplied. Visits between relatives are eased and helped by the new migration of tourism which moves hundreds of millions every year. Travel has become a matter of course, an everyday necessity. Thus relatives living beyond the frontiers have become almost neighbours. Telecommunications provide a flood of information, and the Hungarian living at the furthest corner of the earth can come across news of Hungary daily, direct or indirect, and acquaint himself with the creations of Hungarian culture. Contacts between nations in the fields of commerce, diplomacy and culture increase. Agreements multiply. Today national exhibitions are everyday events, there are film weeks each year, there are Hungarian books in the bookshops, sports events take place, folk ensembles give concerts, the concert halls and radios provide a chance to hear Hungarian music. This reaches everyone, but has a different impact on those living in different countries.

Nor can the second and third generation evade this impact. They feel everything Hungarian to be connected with themselves and relive again and again all that they have learned from their parents about being Hungarian and life in Hungary before they emigrated.

Religious organizations are another significant force binding emigrants to Hungary.

In the main their thinking is up-to-date, they perceive that contact with Hungary is of mutual value. They organize a great many group visits to Hungary—sometimes led by the priests themselves—and their experience of Hungary often radically alters the political moods of their members, and the opinions which they previously held about contacts with Hungary.

With regard to the Hungarian language, the present situation is the result of a long process of development. The present stage might be symbolized by the Budapest "Mother Tongue Conference" which was held in 1970. The young people who left in 1956, and who are most closely in touch with their families at home, are themselves mostly family men today, and it is now or never that the children being born in their families will learn Hungarian. The bulk of the first generation which left Hungary after 1945 has reached retirement age, and in these families the grandchildren have already arrived. The second generation works practically day and night, and the care of the third wave, the grandchildren, devolves on the grandparents, the majority of whom want their grandchildren to be conscious of their Hungarianness. This is shown by the fact that the evergrowing army of emigrants who come home for a visit often bring their children with them to learn a little Hungarian. This year the World Federation of Hungarians received very many letters from families all over the world asking about ways of sending their children over for special summer holidays. Everyone knows that children very soon perfect their knowledge of a language in the company of fellows of their own age, and certainly the children enjoy themselves here.

From all corners of the world where there are Hungarians in larger groups there was a demand, letters were received, emphatic queries were voiced by visitors, all urging some form of organization for this purpose. Steps could and should have been taken earlier, indeed, there may very well have been some negligence, but the "Mother Tongue Conference" was the first time all the conditions were propitious for a discussion on methods of teaching, and maintaining and developing the knowledge of Hungarian language and literature by Hungarians living abroad. The Conference assessed the present position, and discussed the various forms of organization which at this decisive moment could provide effective help for teachers of Hungarian to those living in the West. We can now help their work with language books, records, tapes and many other means.

The final statement of the "Mother Tongue Conference" emphasized that in its frank, open, debating atmosphere different opinions and points of views freely confronted one another. Friends of the Hungarian language have joined together from all over the world; the preparatory committee includes experts both from Hungary and abroad, essentially they represent the Hungarians of five continents. It has become clear that the preservation of their knowledge of the Hungarian language is the task of the Hungarians living abroad, and no one can do that for them, but it has also become clear that they can only carry out this task with help from Hungary —without that every attempt is bound to fail.

Some of those who took part in the "Mother Tongue Conference" were the victims of a series of attacks by extreme right-wing Hungarian organizations after their return home. But the majority of Hungarian emigrants did not join in these attacks. They clearly realized that the betterment in international relations, the atmosphere of improving economic and cultural contacts make these Cold War actions out of date. The attitude which flaunts its Hungarianness in words but is helpless in deeds, which in practice has done nothing to help the next generations living abroad to preserve their knowledge of Hungarian and their consciousness of their Hungarian origins, is both negative and arid.

The "Mother Tongue Conference" marks a new stage of development following and

running parallel to the other forms of contact, family, semi-official, spontaneous and organized. If debate and co-operation for mutually valued goals is the essence of a dialogue, then the "Mother Tongue Conference" proved a real dialogue. At the closing session of the Conference Professor Denis Sinor* of Bloomington (Indiana, U.S.A.) summed up the historical situation in which a dialogue is both possible and necessary. He said: "Hungary is a socialist state. No one here wants to change this fact. It would be ridiculous for those living abroad to want to change it. I think that it is very important that when we speak to our compatriots living abroad we should interpret the Hungarian reality objectively. It is not necessary to be a socialist abroad, where we live, in order to be able to interpret the Hungarian system of government in an objective and sympathetic light. This is vital for both sides. We either remain in contact with socialist Hungary or lose contact with Hungary. It is as simple as that! But looking at it from the other side: the homeland either accepts that we live the way we live or it loses us. There is no other solution!"

Hungarian consciousness is something wider, more complex than the ability to speak Hungarian. "There is an interesting change everywhere in the world in the concept of belonging to a nation," wrote Gyula Illyés in an article in *Magyar Hírek*, the journal of the World Federation of Hungarians. "Someone who speaks good Hungarian is not on that account necessarily a good Hungarian, but someone may be a good Hungarian even if he cannot speak the language well. This is a surprising and new phenomenon. To be a patriot, to belong to a nation, is not as limited as it was fifty or a hundred years ago. Kölcsey's saying: 'The nation lives in its language' is not valid in the same way as it was then. The nation no longer lives only in its language. It lives beyond it, too, and even without it. There is national sentiment without the national language. There was in the past too. Széchenyi and Eötvös, the great figures of the Reform generation, were good Hungarians first, and only then learned to speak Hungarian well. The frontier of belonging to a nation is wider than the frontier of a language. Let us preserve our language abroad too, for our children as well, but let us not be dismayed if circumstances prevent us from preserving it, and let us not condemn those who failed to preserve it. They are not renegades because of that. Belonging to a community is these days becoming a matter of choice, like joining a party, religion or movement."

In its aim of ensuring a well-adjusted future for Hungarian emigrants and ameliorating the stresses that exist amongst them, the Hungarian Government is anxious to help in their peaceful adaptation in the host countries. It accepts the existing situation. This is expressed in law by the fact that the state accepts and recognizes the dual citizenship of the émigrés, and has no desire to trouble the lives of those of our compatriots who have put down roots abroad and established themselves there. The evidence for this lies in the many measures it has taken to build on a basis of settled relationships and mutual sympathy, which equally correspond to the interests of the Hungarians living in all parts of the world.

* See Denis Sinor's essay: "Teaching Hungary". *The N.H.Q.* No. 42.

BALATON SAILING— AN IMPORT FROM BRITAIN

In the first half of the last century the Balaton, the biggest lake of Hungary—and at the same time of Central Europe—still lay in its bed unexploited.

That was the image of it that impressed itself on the mind of Lajos Kossuth, the leader of the Hungarian War of Independence of 1848–49, who had spent the summer of 1842 at Balatonfüred. He wrote an enthusiastic article published by *Pesti Hírlap* on his experiences. He was delighted with the beauty of the lake and its region, but, as a true journalist and patriot, he was unable to close his eyes to the backwardness of the area.

"... one's heart aches as one looks at this vast water. It is dead as the cursed Dead Sea in Palestine! Twenty square miles of smooth roadway, unchanging and unspoilable, on whose "azure brow"—as Byron writes of the sea—not even time can produce wrinkles; twenty square miles of smooth roadway, bigger than some counties, and even some principalities, and surrounded by the most beautiful parts of the country, and yet not a boat dances on it... Were this lake elsewhere, farther to the West, flourishing cities would surround it and swift steamers would celebrate the triumph of the mind on it..."

This griefstricken call had some result. At the initiative of Count István Széchenyi, the great economic and social reformer of the times, the first steamboat to ply the lake was built—of British design and with British engines. It was launched in 1846 and brought new life to the area.

The lake, which poets with typical and pardonable boasting, dubbed "The Hungarian Sea", even as late as the 1880s still supported only this single ancient steamer, its wooden hull changed by that time to iron.

Balatonfüred, on the north shore of Lake Balaton, has been the best known spa of Hungary since the eighteenth century. In those days its harbour was graced—apart from the old steamer—by a few yachts owned by some of the aristocratic families of Hungary. As Balatonfüred was one of the famous watering places of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, it was frequented by the members of the royal family. Francis Joseph I visited the spa twice, and several archdukes and foreign monarchs had stayed there. In 1866 it began to be rumoured that Queen Elizabeth—who, in contrast to her husband Francis Joseph, was very popular in Hungary—would visit Balatonfüred. The news gave rise to a building boom, in the course of which a new wing was added to the hospital, bath-bouses were built on the beach, and provisions were made for the entertainment of the royal lady. The aristocrats who made up the high society of the county arranged for more sailing boats to be taken to the lake. Count Béla Széchenyi was the first, his four-ton yacht, which the Duchess of Sutherland had sent him from England, was moved to Lake Balaton from Lake Fertő. He also owned a six-ton cutter, stored in a shed at his château in Nagycenk as well. He had a special carriage built to be drawn by eight pairs of bullocks to carry the boat to the landing stage at Balatonfüred. Properly equipped and decorated this would have been good enough for the adored queen. Count Széchenyi invited Englishmen to rig the yacht. William Teasdale, who later bought a house at Balatonfüred and settled here, and James Massion, then director of the Újpest Shipyards, quickly made the boat really shipshape. On August 12, 1866, fully rigged, the yacht was launched on Lake Balaton, her sails proudly billowed as a salute was fired and flags fluttered.

The eagerly awaited queen, however, failed to arrive. The aftermath of Sadowa was not a proper time for such a journey. Nonetheless the investments were not in vain, the prepa-

rations for the royal visit had started a boom in boat buying on the lake. In 1867, the Balaton Yacht Club was founded under the gracious patronage of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth. Count Ödön Batthyány was elected Commodore, with Count Béla Széchenyi as Second in Command. The members were largely aristocrats; according to the Club rules 25 was the maximum number admissible. Even the smallest boat registered with the Club had a displacement of two tons. The aim of the Club was to further sailing and to liven up things around the lake. The London *Universal Yacht List* for 1869 already included five yachts owned by members of the Hungarian Club.

It was, of course, expensive to maintain the yachts and to pay their crew, and they were relatively rarely used. Gradually the sailing boats disappeared from the lake, so that by the mid-1870s only one of them was still there, Count Béla Széchenyi's, the one he had received as a present from the Duchess of Sutherland. A description of *Una Boat* has come down to us: it was built in Cowes on the Isle of Wight, of teakwood and hickory imported from America; it displaced four tons of water.

There was another sailing boom on Lake Balaton again when Richard Young, an industrious Englishman who knew a great deal about boat-building, turned up there.

An English friend of Young's had travelled along Lake Balaton by the Danube-Save-Adriatic railway, then already operating on the southern shore. He noticed the deserted waters on which no ships could be seen, and sent a wire to Young in Southampton, since his friend had earlier complained to him that business was slack in his shipyard. The telegram read: "Sir in Hungary I discovered a landsea without any sailing boat."

Young was so impressed by the news that he wound up his business in England in 1870, moved to Lake Balaton together with his workers, and built a shipyard at Balatonfüred. His plant was located at the entrance to the harbour at the start of the Rabindranath Tagore Walk, which is lined by four rows of poplars.

He soon became popular at Balatonfüred, the newspapers of the time show this, some short stories even were written about him. Viktor Cholnoky, writer and journalist, who edited a newspaper in nearby Veszprém, particularly liked to write about him. He described Young as follows in a sketch, "The Miracle-Working Englishman".

"One day, taciturn strangers appeared and began to build a barn-like affair of wood behind the walk. But they did not nail boards to uprights or beams—as they do when building a brick-drier, or the house of the dead in a village cemetery—they used strange tricks. They built the round-roofed granary out of long and narrow staves soaked yellow, and they pulled a tiny little copper cap with a hole in it on top of each of the bright copper nails which they struck through the laths, the end of the rivet being bent back through the hole. They left a big door on the structure and hung only coarse sailcloth over it.

"This fantastic edifice was a shipyard, and its builder an Englishman, one Richard Young of Southampton. It's strange, but true, wherever there is water, especially water that can be saddled by a ship, you will find an Englishman. These two cool, for long tranquil and always impressive, elements—water and the Englishman—seem to have an affinity for each other. One is attracted to the other, or the other is attracted to the one...

"This Richard Young was not the football-playing type of Englishman as we know the sons of Albion today. He was not a smooth-shaven auburn-haired man, but both his hair and narrow sideburns were red, flaming red, and so was his short-clipped moustache. His eyes were grey as oyster-shells, and they were framed in gold-rimmed glasses. I used to watch him shyly as he was working there in his granary, and could hardly imagine what made a man who was wearing gold-rimmed specs on his nose,

drive the copper nails into the hull of the boat himself. His broad and thick-soled shoes, his apparently heavy navy-blue jacket which nevertheless followed the lines of his body lightly, his short wooden pipe which never went out, were constant subjects of my admiration. But the biggest mystery in my eyes were his white flannel trousers. When I had to get hold of some ink to write my homework, my hair and tongue were spotted with blue by the fifth sentence, and by the time I was writing the tenth, my ears and vest were inky as well. Richard Young on the other hand, joined the timbers of the hull in his white flannel pants he wore them as he walked through the shavings and as he poured tar from the wide-spouted tin-can to fill the crevices between the laths. And yet when he came up to the restaurant to have his lunch, he was just as spick-and-span as of a Sunday when he went to the Calvinist church to pray."

He was described in a similar vein by other Balaton area papers which, during the five years of his activity there, were full of his praise, especially during the summer season, and also spoke highly of another Englishman, John Audley Gossling, then Consul-General in Budapest.

By 1880 Young's workshop was in full operation, and he had begun to adjust himself to life in Balatonfüred. He must have been welcome there. The newspaper *Veszprém* gave considerable space on February 8 that year to the Füred pharmacist's name-day celebration and Young was included in the list of guests.

"All of a sudden hands moved in a friendly gesture toward a red-haired bearded young man, who was in the centre of attention and was hailed with a general Speech! Speech! from all directions. He said Long live the Magyars! in a foreign accent, that prompted a resounding Long live the English! in return and Long live Mr. Young!

„Who is this Young? Honoured reader, he is a most interesting Englishman. He has settled at Balatonfüred, he builds boats and wants to be a Hungarian. He cannot talk to anyone, except to a fair lady, nevertheless he likes it here, and little wonder, for everybody is fond of him already. He is a cheerful and pleasant man who dances the czardas like a native. He is industriously studying Hungarian. By spring he expects his wife and children to join him, and he will never leave this place, he has grown so fond of the region and its people. He is an excellent athlete, a real acrobat, a skilful boxer and a good cornet-player; this man will indeed be a favourite at Füred. There is no party in the district where Mr. Young is not present, he has become so well-known during his brief stay that there is hardly a person with whom he does not exchange greetings."

In March that year another Englishman entered the scene, Sigismund Ransbourgh, who started to teach English in the town of Veszprém. Members of distinguished local families were eager to take lessons from him.

The two Englishmen soon made frineds and, when Young went to see him at Veszprém, Ransbourgh asked his opinion in regard to the plans for a Veszprém–Balatonfüred railway line. The paper *Veszprém* published a letter by Young: "I could not go deeply into this topic", he said. "I am writing, however, to a well-known English railway engineer to consult with him... I regret that I do not know Hungarian yet, this has been the only thing that inhibited me from making a closer study of the subject, but I repeat that a railway line in this region would be most advantageous and anyone who would undertake building it would be bound to be successful..."

But thirty more years had to pass before a railway line was constructed in the vicinity; the trains on the northern shore did not start rolling before 1909.

In April 1880 Ransbourgh sent the *Field Newspaper* to the editor of *Veszprém* which carried the news that Consul-General Gossling in Budapest was arranging for his yacht to be delivered to Lake Balaton for his own use. The paper went on to give an enthusiastic

description of the yacht. It was to be completed in early April at the Hull shipyards and transported aboard a steamer to Trieste, from where it would be freighted by train to Siófok on the south shore of Lake Balaton, to be launched by the end of April. "She is an eight-ton yacht, the biggest on the lake, and she will be most comfortably fitted out," the paper added.

The *Veszprém* also carried an account of the launching of the first sailing boat made in Young's shop. She was named *Mariska*. Young probably gave her the Hungarian version of his wife's name.

"The ship called *Mariska* is fair, indeed; she was launched last week. The good-sized vessel was decorated with British and Hungarian flags and the arms of her owner. Mr. Young himself was dressed in a sailor's uniform, and his crew wore red caps. A bottle of wine was suspended from the prow of the boat. It was thrown against the side of the ship by Miss Antónia Écsy, the young sister of the Manager of the Baths, to signify the festive christening of the boat. Then Young took a small party on a cruise to Siófok. The return trip lasted 68 minutes."

In April 1880 *Zala*, the other newspaper in the Lake Balaton region, stated: "Balatonfüred is attracting worldwide attention day after day. Thanks to the initiative of John Audley Gossling Esquire, the Budapest British Consul-General, boats built by Young are already flirting with the waves of the Hungarian sea. This year's bathing season has already surpassed the previous one in its offerings of pleasure and excellent amusement, and it is to be hoped that our aristocrats will find everything at Balatonfüred that foreign spas provide at exorbitant prices."

On May 16 *Veszprém* reported that: "On the 11th of this month the British Consul-General arrived with his family and servants, with his horses and carriages, and his yacht is also due to arrive soon. Last year the last guest was English, this year the first one is of that nationality. The English find the beauties of Lake Balaton so attractive that they have settled there for the summer, and Mr. Young has really become acclimatized together with his family. He is building an ever increasing number of ships... It is to be hoped, and it would certainly be most desirable, that the Budapest boats will also hold a regatta on the Balaton and will transfer part of their operation to Balatonfüred so that the Hungarian Balaton should not be ornamented exclusively by craft flying the British flag."

On May 26 *Zala* mentioned that Young offered all those interested excursions in his ships. He, for instance, took a group of twenty bookshop assistants from Budapest on a trip to Tihany. Consul-General Gossling stayed at Füred for five months, and his boat, which came from England, had already arrived at Siófok. The paper also reported that a member of the government and the British Consul had arrived from Stockholm.

Veszprém carried the first enthusiastic accounts of the arrival of the Consul-General's yacht. The ship anchored at the landing stage at Füred on May 23, "the Consul-General himself had taken the wheel at Siófok, where she was launched. The ship was built in London." (An earlier report mentioned Hull!) "She offers all the comforts in a nutshell. She is a real masterpiece, no one here could have imagined a splendid little boat, so accurately designed, so comfortable and luxurious though small in size. The owner was kind enough to permit all people of good will to inspect her. We cannot recommend strongly enough that all visitors to Füred have a look at her.

"These—by now two—sailboats [the Consul-General's and Young's] already lend an impressive air to Füred. The fair boat was beautifully and most enthusiastically received. We have good reason to hope that our aristocrats will also increase the number of such instruments of pleasure at the spa, and that Füred can look forward to a most attractive future.

"The Bavarian Crown Prince—Ludwig—is also a great friend of water sports. This

afternoon he and his party were entertained aboard Young's yacht *Mariska* at Tihany."

Zala, on June 9 reported: "Consul-General Gossling's fair yacht came over from Siófok on the 23rd of last month. Her arrival was hailed by a big crowd on the beach, with three gun salute and a loud 'Hurrah'. The boat was ornamented with the flags of all the countries of the British Empire, with the Hungarian tricolour flying from the top of the mast. The ship is painted black with a gilded hoop on the edge. The underwater parts are covered with massive copper plating."

In the meantime Young's workshop was busy building boats, and when the Füred season of 1881 opened with splendid festivities on May 22, *Veszprém* joyfully reported: "The Balaton has been transformed into a small seaport; the yachts of the British Consul-General Gossling, of Young, Ernő Némethi and Sándor Endrődi, and several tiny ships were anchored in front of the bathhouse around the steamer *Kisfaludy*."

By 1882 Young's shipyard was doing a roaring trade. *Veszprém* reported on May 28 that "New yachts and boats, ornamented with flags, were seen by the landing stage at Füred. The good Mr. Young of England has enlarged his boatyard, he is now making big sailing boats that have outgrown the old premises."

In its Balatonfüred report dated July 12, *Zala* reported that innumerable smaller and larger ships with different types of oars and rigging were gracing the smooth surface of Lake Balaton, craft in which wonderful excursions could be made to more distant parts of the lake. Creating this small flotilla was an excellent idea on the part of Mr. Young, the ingenious British boatmaker, practising this sound and condition-improving water sport had given the public a new amusement.

That year Consul-General Gossling did not spend the summer at Füred. To be sure *Veszprém* complained about his absence. For its editor's taste, there were too few aristocratic families holidaying at the lake, and the paper remarks that "the former Consul-General of Britain, Audley Gossling, who has done more for Balatonfüred than a hundred Hungarian peers, and his family are also absent. This can be understood, his time in Budapest came to an end and so, regrettably, he went home." But apparently he was not able to break away for good. On August 20 *Veszprém* joyfully announced that Consul-General Goslling had arrived for the races of August 22–23, and so had Richard Young's brother.

The first real sailing regatta was held that year at Lake Balaton. Although it was pouring with rain on the first day of the two-day event, many visitors and spectators arrived at Füred by steamer and by carriages.

According to contemporary reports a gun salute started the race, and a Gipsy band struck up the Rákóczi March. All the field-glasses were trained on the starting line. The steamer *Kisfaludy* was anchored just opposite the finishing line, not far from the beach. On the first day the oarsmen competed over 2,500 metres. The next day was bright, and the much anticipated yacht race was held. A race of four-ton yachts, the first in our homeland. Distance: 1,800 metres on a triangular course, according to *Veszprém*.

By 1883 Young was no longer making only sailboats. As *Veszprém* reported on March 1 that year: "Count Tasziló Festetics, the squire of Keszthely, ordered a small propeller from Young, the boat manufacturer at Füred. Count Ferenc Nádasdy's yacht was built by the same shipyard."

That year another regatta was held. There were more and more ships built by Young, and he himself had become so popular with the aristocrats that he was elected to the committee of the regatta, in case of disputes his vote was decisive.

By 1884 his business was flourishing to such an extent that he had to expand his workshop once again. On March 6 the journal *Balaton* reported: "The aristocratic world is placing such a pleasing number of orders with Young that his staff will be increased by

a number of shipwrights from Hamburg and England."

On April 3 the paper was already reporting that the workers had arrived from England and construction to enlarge the plant were under way.

That year another sport club was formed to promote sailing on Lake Balaton, the Balaton Sailing Society, with Count Mihály Eszterházy as its president. Its aim was to popularize the sport of sailing on Lake Balaton, to provide for docks, and safe drydocks for winter storage, and to arrange regattas, in other words to encourage interest in watersports "and to increase the pleasures available around Lake Balaton".

By summer that year two more sailing boats had been launched, both of them built by Young's shipyard. A near tragedy occurred at that year's races on July 19, the first day, a terrible storm started, directly after the end of the race. The owner of the *Szélvész* (Typhoon) disembarked and only a member of the crew was left on board. The gale carried away the boat together with its one-man crew. Seeing the danger, Young sent out two of his British sailors. As darkness fell there was no trace of any of the three. They were sighted from the steamer *Kisfaludy* around 9 p.m.

The next day on the 20th, at 6.30 p.m., the three men believed to have been lost, fortunately arrived at the Füred landing stage amidst the roar of canons and hurrahs; they were safe though chilled to the bone.

In 1885 the Balaton Sailing Society changed its name. The members of the Society, chiefly aristocrats, thought it would help things if they secured the patronage of the Crown-Princess Stephanie, and changed the name to "Stephanie Yacht Club". They sent a delegation to the Crown-Princess in Vienna, asking her to agree. She graciously assented and the *coat of arms* of *the Hungarian Kings* was added to the club ensign. A club-house was built at Füred next to the shipyard. The building still stands and today houses the "Vitorlás" (Sailing) Espresso.

The season of 1885 started on May 25 with a race of yachts anchored at Füred. *Veszprém* reported: "Orders are pouring in from high society to Mr. Richard Young's shipyard which has already enriched the harbour of Lake Balaton in recent years with a number of ships that proved themselves to be superb."

Canon shots marked the opening of the regatta already at 7 in the morning. A total of seven vessels were entered, a twenty-ton ship, two ten-ton and three-ton ones. The ten-ton cutter called *Vészmadár* (Bird of Ill Omen) came in first. The new British sailors brought from England by Young demonstrated their skill on this occasion.

His customers, largely Hungarian magnates, had grown fond of Richard Young in the course of his long years of work. They welcomed him in their sports, and he even was made one of the officers of the Stephanie Yacht Club and a committee member for sailing races. Soon they decided to buy Young's shipyard, lock, stock and barrel. The reasons for this sale remain far from clear to this day; it is not known whether Young offered them the shipyard or whether the rich club wanted to have control of it. The fact is that on November 14 at the meeting of the committee it was announced that the Club had "bought and taken over Richard Young's shipyard together with all his boats". They paid 3,800 florins for the yard and 4,000 florins for the shipway, a great deal of money for those days.

What happened to Young ? The story that he once went out on the lake before the out break of a storm, and, when people warned him not to set sail said: "Your Lake Balaton is too small to get me!" never to be seen again, having drowned in the scorned Lake Balaton, is unlikely to be true.

If this had been the case, his body would certainly have been cast up and found, and would certainly have been shipped to Füred to receive the last respects there where he and his family lived and where he attended the Calvinist Church.

I, however, looked through the local records of deaths for the years of 1885–87 in vain. I did not find his name anywhere. And if he had died nearby, there would surely be some record of his death in the newspapers of the time, but I found no trace of the alleged tragedy. Viktor Cholnoky, who was a great admirer of his, wrote in his sketch that Young had returned to England, and I think that was probably the case.

Afterwards the Yacht Club invited a Mr. Ratsey, a boatwright from Cowes, to be the manager of the shipyard. He brought skilled English tradesmen with him who stayed in Hungary.

Richard Young, of whom the journals of the times and his friends wrote only in terms of the highest praise, must be looked on as one of the initiators of sailing on Lake Balaton. He populated the until then dead lake with sailing craft, and his attractive personality won him a great many friends. He moreover also enjoyed the respect of ordinary people. He also employed local men in his yard, men who knew nothing of boat-building, but who learned to love the trade and Lake Balaton as a place that could provide employment as well as pleasure.

Let me once again quote Viktor Cholnoky: "The miracle-working strength of this red-haired, but calm and quietly smiling Englishman suddenly turned everything about him into movement and energy, he transformed all the treasure that is hidden under the cloak of Hungarian sluggishness—love of nature, learning to love one's craft, and an understanding and growing love of the beauties of Lake Balaton—to productive ends... For wherever an Englishman sets foot, there is no place left for romanticism to be sure, but there is fertile ground for work and with it for satisfaction."

FERENC ZÁKONYI

BOOKS AND AUTHORS

THE ACHIEVEMENT AND THE "ACTA SANCTORUM" OF JÓZSEF LENGYEL

JÓZSEF LENGYEL: *Acta Sanctorum and Other Tales.* Selected, translated and with an introduction by Ilona Duczynska. Peter Owen, London, 1970. 256 pp. £2.10

In recent years a contemporary Hungarian novelist has established a reputation in several countries where he is spoken of in the same terms as some of modern literature's greatest writers. On August 4th of last year his seventy-fifth birthday was celebrated in the press and on radio and television. The English-speaking public is in an especially favourable position to appraise this author's achievement—whom readers may have already guessed to be József Lengyel—because more of his works have been translated into their language than of any other Hungarian writer. This is attributable to his almost uniquely exportable literary genius (at least in terms of most Hungarian literature), to the nature of his universally relevant subject matter, his topicality and also it must be said here to the discrimination and dedication of his translator Ilona Duczynska.

Some authors, even literatures, owe their foreign "lives" to translators. Nowadays, the tongues of the larger nations have become more integrated along with the world community. In their literatures, the translation "lag" has virtually disappeared. But not yet for the smaller nations, whose literatures often still rely heavily on the flair of translators working usually in isolation in other countries with little prospect of immediate publication and still less of financial return.

In the extent and quality of her services to Hungarian literature in English Ilona Duczynska stands alone, being surpassed elsewhere if at all perhaps only by the late Ladislas Gara in France. Following her three previous volumes of Lengyel's prose comes a new book—sixteen short stories under the title of *Acta Sanctorum*—all four published in London by the distinguished firm of Peter Owen. Some years ago, Ilona Duczynska introduced in collaboration the poet Ferenc Juhász to English readers (from Oxford University Press); with her husband, the eminent economic historian Karl Polányi, she brought out the first English selections from the work of a score of modern Hungarian writers in their pioneering *The Plough and the Pen* (1961, Peter Owen, London; and McClelland & Stewart of Canada). In the meantime, Hungarian readers have become familiar with her historical and biographical writings on the early revolutionary movements in Hungary in 1917–1919.

The great event of the Hungarian Revolution of 1919 marks her initial point of contact with Lengyel's work. Indeed, subsequently it proved to be the crucial point of departure and that of greatest practical effect in the later course of the lives of both author and translator. For both of them played significant roles in the revolution, though they did not meet one another until recent years. Moreover, in some sense, for each of them the revolution still goes on.

József Lengyel's earliest works consisted of experimental verse, short stories and journalism. Then came, very much later, two novels dealing with the Revolution. The first, *Visegrádi Street*, treated it in documentary fashion. Only as late as 1966, with the translation of the second novel, *Prenn Drifting*, were English readers introduced to his work. The title is a reference to the book's leading character Ferenc Prenn, a picaresque anti-hero almost. He "drifts" indeed upon the turbulent waters of a society in flux in which everything then was vulnerable to a strongly running tide of the joyously possible; all the seamarks of national allegiance, social class, public and private morality were being washed away. Prenn's previous driving forces, naked self-interest and instinctual self-preservation, are temporarily rechannelled in this the first educational and uplifting experience of his life; before him—though briefly only—there opens a vision of a personal destiny within the fuller meaning of an enfolding purpose.

This revelation of human and political opportunity was to be a continuing preoccupation of the author's—if one rightly expressed in artistic terms only obliquely. Despite the recurrent comic component this novel was far from being a mere literary sally into the fashionable realm of the Absurd. What was happening at the time was nothing less than the birth of a tumultuous national variation on the universal theme of the transformation of mind and society by emergent international communism; and as this and subsequent works show it was to set an indelible stamp upon the literary themes and life of Lengyel. But that first revolution met with failure. Thereafter, the author lived a lonely existence in the tensely polarized field of meaning between the two extremes of chaos and resolution. Of these two, chaos—in his creative interpretation of the word—was the more welcome, then and now. As the author puts it: "The restless people... the protesting ones I hold to be the optimists. Pessimists are the ones that acquiesce, clap hands—crouching animals, vicious, ready to bare their teeth."

"Perhaps chaos must come first... perhaps only out of chaos can that complete, higher order of things take shape that will re-establish the great coherence in human affairs." (*Acta Sanctorum*, Introd. p. 11)

In his second novel Lengyel shows the demoralizing effect of blasted hopes and counter-revolution's new "order" upon the mind of the humble Prenn. But at its conclusion as in several later works the author looks to the future; he introduces a new character, István Banicza, who will take up the torch and play his part in more recent times.

What befalls these and also other anonymous characters in succeeding novels and short stories springs largely from the experiences of the author himself. Lengyel became both emigré and prisoner: fleeing from the chaos of defeat, he yet found no final fulfilment in the new forms of hope. He went first to Austria where he continued his literary work. Next he moved to Moscow where he edited a Hungarian paper and published his first novel in 1932. His arrest in 1937, the eighteen years subsequently spent in Siberia, and his return to Hungary only in 1955 are the materials of his maturer prose writings about the trials or testing time of camp life and the very different testing of return. The trial that was the more easily borne was the first, the trial of the camp—and of all the camps in Lengyel's stories the least complicated and the most logically expected was the Nazi concentration camp. Such was the one where Banicza meets Prenn again on the eve of their release at the end of the Second World War: that is to say, release from a regime of avowedly perverted morality that could at least be said to have a determinable end. This is the theme of the novel *The Judge's Chair*, whose English version was published in 1968.

More subtle and infinitely more moving is Lengyel's probing of the dilemma of the second trial, of how to precipitate and to

realize the greatest of all hopes of social justice and reform. This many-faceted hope may in one sense be said to take on the attributes of an ultimate mystery. The possibility of a quasi-religious metaphor or parallel perhaps prompted Lengyel, while writing in Siberia, to give the title "Acta Sanctorum" to one of his short stories, which title he has now decided to give to the present English selection. This new volume was in some measure anticipated by the third book to appear in English: two long novellas, *From Beginning to End* and *The Spell*. The first describes an ex-detainee's journey southwards after his release from Siberia; the second is set in and near a Siberian village. This latter portrays the state of internal spiritual emigration of one whose mind has lost the power to explain or support, one desperately sick at heart—perhaps from what was done to him, perhaps even from what he had done to others. He craves isolation, shunning human contact, in the remote countryside. Only a dog, unforgettably portrayed here, that seeks him out like some unerring force of consoling Nature, is able to be his companion—but he is powerless to protect even a dog against the brutal claims of another man, its titular owner and eventually its embittered executioner.

This is not the place for a detailed analysis of the many aspects of Lengyel's art, nor for a mere outline of the present volume's sixteen stories (selected from the much larger number that exist in the Hungarian). Instead, we shall attempt to indicate certain of the author's themes and human concerns which emerge in his literary achievement.

Lengyel is a political writer, but in the widest sense and profoundly so. His writings he describes as having as their theme "European man, and more particularly, the European Communist." The author's intimate relation with communism is of central significance. The reader at once senses that this goes far beyond party adherence or simple affirmation: it pervades his œuvre and his view of life. It has been a faith, creed, life; it had to be witnessed to, felt, lived. Like the great religions of earlier times it too has its sacred texts, prophets, congregations, even its revered burial places. And, as we may see from the truly sensational title of Lengyel's latest collection, it may inspire deeds on the part of those who may be in some sense saints. His writings have been concerned with the establishment of communism in his country, and with the supremely important theme of the severe tensions between humanism and structures which everywhere in our century are on a totally new dimension. In Lengyel's writings this latter theme presents a sobering picture. Never, though, a pessimistic one—for that we have the evidence of the stories, and Lengyel's explicit words in the present volume's Introduction.

Some words about the author are in order. Lengyel rightly occupies an honoured place in his own country. In 1963 he received its highest award, a Kossuth Prize; a collected edition of his works has appeared; stories have been adapted for film and television. He has travelled to countries as far apart as China and England. He still on occasion takes a vigorous part in writers' debates in Budapest, though he leaves his city flat as early as possible in the spring for his more appropriate cottage in the remote village of Monoszló. His recent work includes lectures on Tolstoy delivered at the Eötvös University in Budapest; his last published book was *Viennese Excursion* (1970), being reminiscences of his early emigré existence; of a new novel, one chapter has been printed in a leading literary journal; new editions of several earlier works continue to appear.

In the Introduction to *Acta Sanctorum* (pp. 8–11) Lengyel also states the following:

"the novel is not 'documented history'; every structure that is a creation of art possesses vistas and imponderables which point beyond the matter from which it has been built." Such books "are facts in themselves, ranking with what actually occurred; higher even, for they are more succinct, better

fulfilling the task which is the task of all art—the communion of man with man. Art is something wedged in between the world's factual realities; by virtue of its existence it, too, is such a reality. Its impact gives an enhanced existence to the merely factual. A work of art—when it is truly great—can raise that which is merely factual to the conscious recognition of its meaning. I am writing about matters, which could not have been communicated by others, which it was up to me to tell about... I am not a literary "realist"—in my details I am naturalistic. The striving towards essence must lie in the composition. I take my guiding line from Attila József: "Say what is true, not merely what is factual."

This truth is not one of an imagination that expresses itself in " 'literary frills' " (40). It is an art of economy, of isolation, the identifying of the significant incident which then throws it into high definition; an art of personal isolation, too, during the waiting before the telling—as a character in one of the stories puts it: "pacing back and forth in the empty room... you entertain memories from the past, or simply wait, for wait you must" (158).

Despite the deceptive ease with which his biography may be superimposed upon his œuvre, Lengyel's writing shows not so much the life of Lengyel as Life through Lengyel. The range of his fiction extends at two levels. First there are several clearly defined chronological periods, from 1919 up to the 1960s. The stories in *Acta Sanctorum* touch on some of these; incidentally, there are rather more set in the Soviet Union than in Hungary, two are set in Germany and Italy, and a concluding parable in Bokhara and Afghanistan. A secondary level is established through widely separated historical-literary references acting as a counterpoint to the narrative-present. In "The Woman that Would Not Be Queen" famous female characters in history are paraded—Cleopatra, Catherine the Great, even Lady Macbeth—as contrasts with Cordelia that literary-historical figure of fearless forebearance. She is likened in this story to the main character, "the carpenter's daughter", the "Liebknecht child" who becomes the wife of a certain "great man"—such a story of which the narrator deliberately utters the disclaimer "I can only see [it]... as a fairy tale" (194). Transposition into the timeless —into the realm of a truth which never actually happened—is illustrated, in the story which gives its name to the present collection, by Lengyel's allusion to "The Thousand and One Nights of Saint Bartholomew". This compound simultaneously introduces the fantasmagoria of fairy tale, the final triumph of a story-teller, and of course the historical actuality of terror in the name of religion and the state. Looking beyond schism to individuals, one may say of religion that at least it was a device for identifying those extraordinary persons termed saints, if not necessarily for producing them. Many of the great women of history, even Cordelia to some extent, were driven on by pride; many of the greatest female saints were mystics. The male is perhaps the more active, and therefore the more social, of mankind's family as Lengyel's title suggests.

The study of medieval history is perhaps not the most inappropriate discipline through which to interpret the events of this century's last few decades. Both periods, widely separated, have had and have needed their saints. Still, according to the Translator's Note to the present volume, it is rather the Saints Outcast than those Established who are closer to the grain of Lengyel's works. And, theology aside, materialists will note that it is the "Acts" of such saints that are celebrated here.

But what may such saints do, exactly? We can say best what they do *inexactly*. They testify, not by mere preaching, rather always by acting: they act across, and if necessary against, the programming of authority which nevertheless they—if only ultimately—do acknowledge. In these stories, the testifying takes the form of various

characters' episodic non-consecutive dialogue, and at times the more coherent commentary of a narrator who rather self-consciously affirms his recording role. Such a narrator may more often seem rather sage than saint—one moreover whom life has brought down, reduced to that status. Lengyel's art is one of memory. To remember: that is the distinguishing human faculty. Likewise the willingness to suffer still from what has long ceased to be a present source of pain. In one sense, though only one, Lengyel's tone often is valedictory. Old age, from the vantage point of which one may look back over an expended life, is stressed. Nothing here of the poetic-romantic: now *not* to be young is very heaven. For surviving old age has its own unique qualities and powers. The older the birch tree the more sap it yields, the tougher its grain, the greater the heat its wood throws from the fire (155); and for the novelist, age and experience are essential in his craft (187). But as to action, the sole recorded or common moral quality of such sheer endurance resides in the exercise of the power to tell, or simply of mutely witnessing—if only to some past personal failure.

Saints do not so much proclaim belief in, as they are vehicles of, absolutes. In the stories there may be found several virtual absolutes. But the one most explicitly presented is that of life itself as an absolute value: and, within that of nature, human life, in which resides the conscious will with its tenacity and resistance in the face of man's calculated inhumanities.

Within the limits of this article we must confine ourselves to three concepts which follow from this life principle. These are what we may call "saint-like action," optimism, and the—by no means paradoxical—belief that order (human ordering) and reordering depend upon the recognition of the necessity of recurring states of chaos. These themes are doubtless related to Lengyel's early adherence to communism and to his belief in the necessary condition of continuing revolution in human societies, as suggested by the interview recorded in the Introduction to *Acta Sanctorum*.

These concepts may be seen exemplified by the main character of "The Woman that Would Not Be Queen." She is a prime example of the sort of saint-figure of this volume, she of whom it was said "all her power lies in her passivity." Love, goodness, positive humanity, these too perhaps she could have shown. But like Cordelia, with whom she is tellingly compared, the woman from the beginning shows one essential quality: " 'she is unable to flatter.' "

"Here, too, the starting point is a negation... And let us try and have a look into other regions of human thought. What would be the first thought of a physicist? "It cannot be that energy that has existed should vanish into nothingness. Somewhere it must be hiding under a different shape." From this follows the law of the conservation of energy. "They do not live as they should"—this is the starting point. As given in the Ten Commandments: "Thou shalt not kill," "Thou shalt not commit adultery," "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's..." If this is felt as not appropriate, let us take a more apposite example: "The revolution becomes a necessity, when the oppressed class will no longer, and the oppressing class can no longer live as they lived before." Only after that comes the positive stipulation in which it is to be worked out: how does man wish to live."

"Negation... is not a satanic principle. A divine principle it is, for it negates the everlasting reign of the Devil. Satanic is that kind of "Yes" which asserts the eternal frailty of man." (199)

It is through a series of solitary figures that Lengyel proceeds to reveal Life through the incidents of different lives. The main character in "Tree of Knowledge", set in Hungary, in his tiny house in a vineyard, is measuring his life against something. The materialist confronts his own failure in the light of conscience. Yet he finds some

consolation in his long-dead wife's cheap coloured picture of the Holy Virgin. Though baptized a Lutheran

"The Immaculate Conception was the incomprehensible miracle he believed in—he the vine-grower, who throughout his life had sown seeds, grafted vines, begotten children, and known death face to face."

Just like the charcoal burner in "The Spell", who had failed to protect the only creature that came to comfort him, the recluse was haunted by the memory of a possible failure in years past. While in hiding during the last weeks of the war, as battle raged nearby—someone, an unknown man, was left hanging from a branch of the old apple tree in the vineyard's garden. The tree, made to serve as an instrument of execution, subsequently lost the power of reproduction: the seeds of its starlike core were barren. Many years later, its owner was moved to cut down the offending branch, because his little granddaughter had suspended a swing from it. The little girl had angrily challenged him. Alone again, one winter's day, he is thinking back over the past. He knows that he is near death. Why? He addresses death

"But it is unjust that I have to die. Your justice is an unjust power. If I knew the words to lay a spell on you—I'd say it!"

"Say that the little girl is right," says Death regaining strength and grinning with his funnel-shaped mouth.

He shrugged."

The story ends with a vision: it is the power of the sun shining brightly in midwinter, seen through his fast-waning tears. "The Root and the Seed" ends on a similar note, with a quotation from the German mystic Angelus Silesius

"When in your sunward gaze you find your sight is fled,

Your eyes then are to blame and not the source of light."

Each vision is of the inexhaustible, exemplary force of Nature. It is one of optimism in the existence and awareness, of principle. The principle of life, as given. But more particularly, since it is human life viewed through the lenses of conscience and the will, the principle of Principle, which is the unending search for the revelation of the Good.

The story called "Acta Sanctorum," which gives its name to this volume, ends on a similar note. One night a harmless old professor of physics is arrested, presumably during the period of the Purges. With amazed incomprehension he sees the meticulous routine of his life—which he had regarded politically as innocuous as the laws of his discipline's self-contained "field"—destroyed by chaotic and unnatural forces of what claimed to be a new order. But under pressure what he does—and does not do—propels him in the direction of what we may call sainthood. Formerly he used to fly into a rage when anyone smoked in his Institute; Lengyel laid great stress on this, feeling years ago that this justified his titling the story "The Little Angry Old Man." But even such ingrained prejudice could not withstand the transvaluation of the times. In all other things—that is, in respect of everything that made for good—his character held. The old gentleman was forced to crawl up onto a writing desk "as he thought little boys at school lie down, except for taking down his trousers" to be beaten by a young interrogator with a steel ruler. He could do only one thing: rid himself, by his own will, of his old prejudice, as a protest and as a sign of solidarity. Stealthily, during the humiliating thrashings, he would stuff his pockets with cigarette stubbs from the desk ashtray in order to take them back to his cell-mates. These trials were his way to perfection. The kindness which his students had known in the past his cell-mates were now to know; steadfastly he declined to seek his own safety through falsely naming and denouncing others. One day he failed to return to his cell. One of the other prisoners, an expert in probability calculus, was inclined to consider it ever more likely that he had been moved to another cell.

"Nobody ever saw the old Professor again. It could not even be said with certainty that he had died. Earth and the heavenly bodies followed the laws of his science and did not turn from their courses."

Courage, resistance, sharing. These are the themes of the title story, as of others too. These are qualities in which there is an absolutely central—yet artistically perfectly assimilated—political component, which gives a fibre and a conviction rarely found. More specifically, we encounter here the representation of the initial stirrings of revolutionary instinct, its development, and also a mature pride in communism. The first of these may be seen in many stories, nowhere more so than in the subtle interplay of statement and implication as to the paramount question of possession—which may mean either ownership or control—both of private property and the lives of others; also the deep-seated need to share even so intangible a thing as the apprehension of beauty. There is the boy with his dreams of violence and his revulsion at the role that his social class has destined him to play in life, who decides to leave the privileged seclusion of the family holding in "Vineyards, Tunes, Dreams"; there is the old sage of Bokhara who plants walnut trees, not for his own but for other peoples' children to eat; and there are the uncomprehending prisoners in "Acta Sanctorum" protesting against what they have to endure as "an outrage against communism."

Pride in the quality of discrimination and in the courage which manifests and holds to it is the theme of one other story "The German." The scene is a deserted street in Potsdam; the time is 2.30 in the morning, in the year 1929. Two riotous young men are out looking for trouble; at last, they waylay a stranger, whom they determine to beat up. But he doesn't flinch from their challenge to identify himself by party: "'You can strike me dead but I'll tell you: I am a communist.'" Everything was against him that night: in the lonely street he was outnumbered; around him there was the mounting hysteria of fascism, with industrial might and social tradition geared to an alien order. Yet—he spoke up. He confessed. The story ends. The two youths, also communists, will never forget that witnessing which put them to shame. And around them the setting too, as always perhaps, witnesses: Potsdam, the sarcophagus of Frederick the Great, the Garnisonskirche from which each hour rang out chimes whose refrain hymned the practice of loyalty and honour... to the grave,

"I'm not thinking of the many people who demand and preach: *Treu' und Redlichkeit*, loyalty and honesty to the grave, but of those—and I don't think they are scarce either—who practise it... There—reputation, honour, military virtue, civic duty. Here—a man who stood up for what he believed in with no hope of fame or victory... and that's what is called common courage." (46)

KENNETH MCROBBIE

MIXED FEELINGS

ÁKOS KERTÉSZ: *Makra*. Szépirodalmi Könyvkiadó, Budapest 1971. 303 pp.

Ákos Kertész did not choose the surname of his hero as the title of his book by mere chance. The plot and all the subplots of the novel lead to him, everything is done by or for him and all the other characters are seen from his point of view. The story begins with an unexpected sudden change in his life: Ferenc Makra, a young factory worker leading a well-balanced life, becomes in-

comprehensible to everybody and even to himself owing to his inexplicable actions.

He defends a woman of low morals to whom he feels completely indifferent in a violent fight with drunk and brutal friends, but not even at the police station does he take credit for his generous action. He leaves his family and quits his job, getting away from an environment where he was loved and respected. He meets a woman who essentially differs from all his earlier friends, and he goes to live with her. She is a painter looking on her art as a calling, a woman who in her relationship with him follows her emotions and not custom or tradition, who wants a partner and not marriage. His new artist friends discover Makra's instinctive talent for sculpture and yet when, having seen his work hammered and welded of iron sheets, making use of the tools and materials he always worked with, his woman friend encourages him to train and develop his talent, he chooses to leave her, though he loves her rather than accept the burdens of life as an artist.

His second escape takes him back to the factory environment he started out from. He wants to feel that he belongs there, he does his best to live according to their established norms. He works well, gets married, he is respected, still he cannot be reconciled to himself because of the memory of the past love he once felt and because of the pull his genuine talent has on him.

The feeling that he has ruined something is ever more depressing. In the meantime his family life is becoming increasingly complicated, he is unable to regain his balance and this also contributes to his third, final escape: he commits suicide.

What pulls the strings that move this man and what kind of forces does he obey against his own inclinations and interests? Makra finds the explanation when suicide becomes the only remedy he knows for a hopelessly confused life. "He wanted to be like the others, like everybody else, in a word an invisible and happy grey point, one of a mass who is never noticed and who sleeps peacefully... who is respected by the concierge and to whom the grocer raises his hat, who buys his cigarettes and razor-blades at the same tobacconist's who takes the kids for a walk on Sunday mornings while his wife cooks a consommé on which fat floats in golden rings." These words are bitter and biting after he had taken his struggles, for whatever goals he wanted to achieve, very seriously.

This character is not a caricature, but reality expressing the needs and ideals of an important number of workers, something that strongly attracts those who, having experienced togetherness would rather surrender themselves than this cohesive community. Ferenc Makra wants to belong to this community and he finds doing anything different or striking repulsive; he makes every effort to catch up with the others. And because this stratum regards art a luxurious activity acceptable only as entertainment and not as a profession, Makra is ashamed of the joy of creation that he experienced once, he hides it, and he wouldn't even consider changing his stable and honourable skill for a questionable profession. He breaks away from Vali who would be a true partner to him, both as a man in love and as an artist, because of her double, unforgivable abnormality; she is an artist who fanatically believes in her calling and she is a woman who despises all manners dictated by tradition, she is not interested in legalizing their relationship. The clue to his attitude, to his relationship with Vali, is the conservative moralizing of the same community that turns him against art as a way of life. These working-class people judge the relationship of man and woman not on the basis of their real togetherness but whether their relationship is legal, whether they are married or not. They accept the sexual life of married men outside marriage, and smile cynically if nothing is done openly, if there is no "scandal"; in the same situation a woman is denounced as immoral.

After the fight that resulted in the first

change in his life Makra escaped from those he wanted to resemble because he felt that his action was unjustifiable and inexplicable. He could not tolerate the sight of defencelessness and humiliation, that is why he stood in the way of that brutal lot, but because he could not express this even to himself all he could feel was the incomprehensible strangeness of his action. In fact he was escaping from his real nature; all in vain, since his talent and intentions always directed him to actions different from the "normal". But by so doing his fears, that the failed to become assimilated to the "orderly life" of his fellow workers, become permanent; and his fears urge him to lead a life approved by his fellow workers, but contrary to his real self. Ground between those two forces he wasted his exceptional energy on unworthy goals, finally putting an end to a hopeless struggle with a self-destructive gesture.

This is Ákos Kertész's second novel. He created a memorable character in Ferenc Makra, the story of whose tragic life makes most interesting reading.

LAJOS GALAMBOS: *Nyilj meg ég* (Open Up Skies) Kossuth Könyvkiadó, Budapest, 1971. 439 pp.

For ten years, since the publication of his very first writings, Lajos Galambos has been judged as someone with a passionate interest in public life a writer who likes to start an argument if this will allow him to influence the society he lives in. At the beginning of the sixties some of his short stories and novels led to expectations that he would be an authentic and artistic interpreter of the life of his generation. But the books Galambos published in the years that followed justified these expectations less and less, and proved only that he was exceptionally prolific. His last novel makes a conclusion obvious that applies not only to one particular writer but to one of the strong and continuous traditions of Hungarian prose as well.

This bulky collection is a mixed bag. It includes short stories, reports, and short novels as well. The literary value of good reports is indisputable and some Hungarian prose-writers sensitive to social problems have produced a number of outstanding reports that will outlast their subject. The title piece of the book shows Galambos as a follower of that tradition, the reports he writes turn specific cases into events of public interest. He writes about a village, where a large water works was built on the outskirts supplying the county town with drinking-water. But the wells of the village provided bad and unhealthy water, so the community leaders decided to take advantage of the opportunity and built pipelines giving the village fresh water which would protect their health and would save them a lot of trouble. The only thing the villagers had to do was to fill in the ditches covering the pipeline with earth and to connect it to their houses. But the vast majority refused to do even that much. Some thought it was too much work, some said it cost too much money, some argued it was the duty of the state, others didn't even bother arguing. These examples of narrow-minded selfishness and backwardness are described by Galambos in simple and straightforward sentences and their mere confrontation with what they are opposed to achieves the purpose of the report. Other reports are, however, restricted to a general sketch of the story as if he just picked a few pages of his notebook at random. They show his respect for themes idealizing writing modelled after life. By so doing he follows a tradition again —this time a bad tradition. His short stories show his close ties with realistic prose using traditional means in an even more chemically pure way. Galambos aims to write in a way that is true to reality and provides a cross-section of society, he nevertheless, in most of his short stories, falls short of the highest standards since he does not show any formal originality. The faults and mannerisms of his art make the transmission of his

thought ineffective. His overflowing love of telling a tale makes his short stories sound verbose and loose structured. He is a writer spellbound by his plot who often lacks self-control. In "Sauce hollandaise", three short stories were mixed up to make one; the love of an aging man for a young girl, the portrait of a selfish young couple, and the story of a business crime. Each could have been a good short story on its own, but in this form they become crowded. Many short stories, after a good start, are damaged by an amalgam of doubtful value of naturalism and sentimentalism. Galambos is often arbitrary and the accidental is allotted excessive dramatic functions.

A novella, "Imre Kenéz's Decline and Death in Hungary in 1948", offers compensation. Here there is no trace of loquacity, carelessness or primitive story-telling. The piece has a controlled, artistic structure; characterization is always to the point, and the piece as a whole is put together by a steady hand to bring out the tragedy of a man—and through him that of an attitude—who is unable to compromise even when defending his convictions.

This short novel and a few reports give some inkling of the artistic talent of Galambos but most of the pieces in this volume are ineffective examples of traditional realistic prose.

FERENC KARINTHY: *Három huszár* (Three Hussars) Szépirodalmi Könyvkiadó, Budapest, 1971. 701 pp.

Selections from Ferenc Karinthy's latest novel *Epepe* were published by this journal. (No. 43.) This selection of short stories written in the course of a quarter of a century presents a writer able to cover a surprising variety of subjects while displaying a homogeneous style.

He is at home in both the world of artists as well as of sportsmen, and he is able to find the right words to describe both the habitués of drink-shops on the outskirts of cities, and committed scientists. The attraction he feels towards colourful characters with an unusual and interesting life results in pieces that make good reading. For a writer to invent stories that arouse the interest of the readers with such ease and to find characters who reamin memorable even after a brief appearance is a dangerous facility. It is dangerous because it tempts to give up depth for colourfulness, and typical features for sensational ones. Karinthy has almost always succeeded in rejecting this temptation, hardly any of his works cover only the surface. Karinthy is now fifty. He played first-grade water-polo when young and he used this experience as a mine which supplied him with many a good story. Games are described, always from the angle of players and never that of spectators. The reality behind the game is imperceptibly unfolded. It can be a chance to show agression, an escape from an unsuccessful life, wit and horse-play, or a test for the imagination of man.

The writings of Karinthy are linked up by his inexhaustible lingusitic humour. It is his thorough knowledge of his material, the Hungarian language, that enables him to make use of the atmospheric value and associative power of words as well. His linguistic interests are described in his short story "Kangaroo" where he characterizes the hero, a linguist: "There is no situation in life when a linguist is away from his work. In between two kisses he is wondering whether the Hungarian word *csók* is related to the Finnish *suukko*, *száj*-mouth reminds him that the word is of ancient Uralic origin and his thoughts continue down along the same line, all the way down to the inferior marks of Turkish origin."

This linguistic humour is a defining feature of Karinthy's style which succeeded in shaping the collection of his writings on various subjects and of different genres into a book of homogeneous short stories.

GYÖRGY NEMES: *Tettenérés* (Caught in the Act). Szépirodalmi Kiadó, Budapest, 1971. 324 pp.

In an age when detective stories have become fashionable again all over the world literature also attempts to attract the public by making use of the framework of thrillers. This worked out well in György Nemes's novel. His principal character could hardly be described without the categories of crime, quilty conscience or police investigation. The story starts with the death of a young sixteen-year-old girl who drowned in the lake of a sanatorium. The circumstances direct public suspicion towards her foster-father who happened to stay in the vicinity at the time of the tragedy. A police investigation found him innocent of the death of the girl, but another inquiry—examining the conscience of his family, acquaintances and employees—showed a man who is incomparably more dangerous than a simple murderer.

Róbert Görczi, a historian and head of a research section, has been possessed by the idea of power all his life. This power was first given to him by the Secret Police to which he belonged for many a year—in the fifties this organization initiated the political prosecution of completely innocent men—and the distortion of purposes and methods, in the organization enabled him to utilize his position in an uncontrolled way. Later he built up a career as a scholar by the same methods.

The structure of the novel is based on the "confessions" of people related to or dependent on Görczi. The diary of his foster-daughter, the vision of his wife on the brink of a nervous breakdown, the monologues of a friend and a co-worker and the conversation between two friends of his foster-daughter's supplement each other's story and are linked together in a strong grip. The portrait drawn becomes increasingly frightening and horrible in this way. The very existence of this man requires unconditional obedience and he destroys everybody who opposes his will by using open terror, or if necessary cunning viciousness. His strongest weapon is that he arouses a guilty conscience in people of weak will, and blackmails them by means of true, past or fictitious authority. Every action of his is motivated by an unrestrained desire for power and even if he does not turn every "victory" to profit, he wants to see the people in his company broken and humiliated ("...he looks unnatural when he smiles...," wrote his foster-daughter), and he is happy only when he can prove the worthlessness of someone. He was able to rationalize this when a secret policeman ("...it is not your duty to find value in people. You only have to search and find out where they are wrong"), as he could as a leading historian ("A historian examines the past to shape the present and if he finds unpleasant things it is up to him to decide which detail becomes important and when.") Scholarship is only a pretext and one of the means in the struggle for power.

It is impossible to over-estimate the danger to society of the misuse of authority and its distortive effect on people. György Nemes portrays this monster of mythical proportions as an irredeamably sadistic despot. When his father turns out to be a one-time fascist this undoubtedly suggests that the aggressive power-hunger of Görczi is a pathological hereditary trait. This sudden change at the end is unjustified both from an artistic an a social point of view, and it reduces the effect of the previous skilful construction and psychological tension.

LÁSZLÓ VARGA

RECENT POETRY

OTTÓ ORBÁN: *A föltámadás elmarad* ("The Resurrection is Off"), Magvető, 1971, 126 pp.

JÓZSEF TORNAI: *A bálványok neve* ("The Name of Idols"), Magvető, 1970, 264 pp.

FERENC JUHÁSZ: *A halottak királya* ("King of the Dead"), Szépirodalmi, 1971, 170 pp.

In 1964, following the publication of the second volume of his poems, Ottó Orbán wrote an essay on the relation of knowledge and imagination, challenging, to some extent, the criticism accusing him of imitation. In the process he defended the use of texts of poets of the past quoted or inserted in one's own poems, either consciously or unconsciously, a method adopted by Rafael Alberti, Pound and Eliot. Orbán, who is now thirty-five, was doing a great deal of translating at the time. He has indeed continued to translate, mainly from Spanish, English and American poets, and has learned much in terms of technique and daring from the last two, who include Donne, Blake, Auden, Dylan Thomas and, more recently, Robert Lowell. His poem Költészet (Poetry), which appears in his latest (fourth) volume A föltámadás elmarad ("The Resurrection is Off") is a clearcut answer to the questions raised in that essay of his, as the following rough translation of a few lines will make clear.

"In the end the imagination will rise to its duty, will rise clear of its foam-curled southern seas and reef in its illusions like a sail."

He has always been interested in the potentialities and snares of the imagination. "I learned to write poetry in the air raid shelter" he writes in his latest volume, "while waiting for the next air raid to come". The war and persecution of the Jews overshadowed his childhood, and he learned early, as the opening poem of his first book indicates, that "man can endure heavier burdens than what he imagines bearable". From the time his first volume appeared he has set his face against "blissful life-lies". To quote him again: "Don't believe it is the truth when someone tells you there's a wild duck on every lake." Ibsen created one of the key symbols of twentieth century literature: can one live without wild ducks? Orbán's reply is categorical. It is not only possible; it is essential to do without them. But this is not simply a matter of intention and desire, but of perseverance, consistent work and self-control. "A föltámadás elmarad" is a powerfully poetic representation of this struggle.

In these poems, no matter whether the writer drew his inspiration from experiences in Budapest or India, even the most intimate feelings and moods are connected with world history and world affairs. Imagination and knowledge, image and idea, feeling and logic or sometimes irony and an exceptional intellectual comprehension form a unity in the poems: his childhood experiences are brought to consciousness and transmuted into poetry in the light of an adult understanding. He is both objective and accurate, as can be seen from his poem Koncert (Concert) "As they surround the house, there is no mistaking their expertise. No superfluous gesture. No false step. All goes with classics simplicity as in some baroque piece of music or in a dentist's chair." (From William Jay Smith's translation, on p. 61 of this issue). Orbán is a good poet; he has a weakness, however, for an overabundance of metaphors which tends to blunt the impact of some of his best work: on such occasions the imagination falters in its appointed task.

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"Rilke", a poem written by József Tornai in the early 1960's, provoked a certain amount of discussion. That period saw the author

of *Duineser Elegien* ("Duino Elegies") who had been frowned on in Hungary in the Stalinist period, again restored to favour. In the 1960's Tornai declared: "I don't understand you, Rilke, your opalescent metaphysics are dull as a church to me." The bitter experiences of those years led many people to misunderstand the poem on Rilke, although Tornai did not wish him rejected once more. What Tornai was trying to do was to indicate the different nature of different experiences. In place of the angels of Duino the poet sees aircraft carrying nuclear bombs, and in place of the inner voice he hears the rattle of trucks and tanks. But at the same time, while underlining the differences of differing experiences, he acclaimed the German poet who could "take man back to childhood again and who sang indestructible songs above the rattle of rockets and our consciences."

Born in 1927, Tornai published his first book of poems in 1959. "Bálványok neve" ("Name of Idols") which appeared in 1970, is a selection of the best pieces from his previous five volumes. To-day it seems clear that "Rilke", the poem he wrote ten years ago, expresses the essence, the aim of all his poetry. Tornai seeks an awareness of the material and objective reality of the contemporary world, while at the same time desiring to explore the history and prehistory of social and material existence.

As he wrote in his poem *Ha isten szeret* ("If God Loves Me")

I loved the earth ploughed red
the water from the hill's sand-mouth
the rivers gliding down from the sky

Nor did I shoot in the house's
side with a tank

in my dreams I walked naked along the street

may you take me back
my rock needle clod sollen God
(translated by Frederic Will)

Natural objects and metaphors drawn from Nature play an enormous part in his poetry and in his moral approach. They express his insistence on what is eternally human in this rapidly changing world of ours. "We can make rockets, yet we are completely archaic beings", he explains on the jacket of his new volume. "That is my fate; I am modern and ancient. So, I must cope with the major basic problems of this double bondage: with the sense of history, of human relations, time, the origin of things, raptures, and sufferings which I cannot and do not wish to escape."

It is in terms of this double bondage that he recalls the memory of the first Hungarian king, Saint Stephen, the founder of the Hungarian State, or speaks of Stravinsky, Bartók, Hemingway, Gorky, Schubert and Ravel and a number of Hungarian poets ad historical figures. The keyword, fear, the attitude, prophetic. He uses a variety of forms, including epigrams and prose poetry. There is an echo in his poems of the work of contemporary African poets; he has recently been translating into Hungarian the poetry of people still organized in tribes before achieving statehood.

1950 saw the publication of Apám (Father) a long poem by the then 22-year-old Ferenc Juhász, who since that time has come to be regarded as one of the best-known and most discussed of contemporary Hungarian poets. A little later he was given the highest art award of the nation in recognition of his poems. Both at home and abroad he is considered by many to be one of the most representative figures of European poetry appearing after the Second World War. In 1970 his poems were published in the Penguin series of Modern Poets. There are critics who claim his work has reached a state of deadlock, chiefly on account of the inordinate length of his poems and the exuberance of the metaphors they contain. They say he has lost control of the words; on the other hand admirers contend that his images are elaborated with great care and precision. (See poems in Nos. 23 and 38.)

Ferenc Juhász is of the Shelley school: he is a fanatic believer in the power of poetry. Poetry is "intervention, endeavour, designed to change life and the course of the world". He maintains that poetry and the poet "bear more responsibility" today for the survival of humanity and for mankind "than in any previous age". To-day, in the nuclear age, when the existence of the whole of mankind is for the first time in history threatened with destruction, poetry is the counter power which can prevent it. In dozens of prose poems Juhász pays tribute to poets and artists such as Picasso and Henry Moore who, in his opinion, express man's unyielding creative powers. Poetry and the arts in general, says Juhász, speak of life and death, even tough their forms may continually vary according to the age and the issue. The task of the arts is to be conscious of the threat of death, and overcome it. As he writes in his essay Mit tehet a költő ("What the Poet Can Do"), the arts must always voice the "shortcomings, sufferings, misery, solitude and struggles" of mankind and "must always express the beauty, advancement and rare joys of humankind." Elsewhere he writes, "The poet makes use of the ancient belief in speech as a defence against fear".

Although he has, as he says, learned something from practically everyone, he regards Dante as his master and the Divine Comedy as the greatest poem in the world. Dante inspired him to write "poems of epic dimensions" and to attempt to "formulate the universality of existence through systematic and accurate work."

Ferenc Juhász is one of those who revived the verse epic in Hungarian poetry after the Second World War. He has established a genre of his own. Although he describes his rhyming poems, running into several thousand lines, as epic poems, he emphasizes that "though they contains the rudiments of action in their material and possess the elementary features of a plot, they are in fact lyrical poems, personal affirmations, original chants and laments".

His latest book A halottak királya ("King of the Dead") a poem of over five thousand lines, and broken into a verse-scheme of *abba* is, nonetheless, above all, a lyric, while retaining such characteristics of the regular, classic epic poems as invocation and enumeration. To put it more exactly, it is the arrangement in appropriate order of lyric poems of different lengths strung together by a thin epic thread and connected through the person of the central hero. The main figure is the king of the dead, Béla IV, the ruler who rebuilt Hungary after the Tartar invasion and destruction of 1241 and 1242, one of the most tragic events in Hungarian history. The work describes the causes behind the event and the size of the devastation as well as the need and faith to begin all over again. According to Juhász, A halottak királya is organically connected with his previous epic poems (he wrote most of it at the same time).

Juhász believes wholeheartedly in the unity of existence, "I believe every part, the whole of the universe.....lives and moves according to uniform laws"; he respects, and fears, modern technical achievements and he is constantly concerned with methods of making use of natural and scientific facts in poetry. He is also obsessed with accuracy. Juhász devoted his poems to social, biological and cosmic cognition of the world on an encyclopaedic level. He claims that the poem is a summation, a "total adding up." While passionately loving and genuinely appreciating Baudelaire, he dismisses the French poet's statement, promoted by Poe, that a long poem is a self-contradiction, as disingenuous. In contrast to Lorca, Juhász declares that the poetic image is not merely a translation of reality but is in fact the naming of things. In this view, "incredibly little from the material world has been elaborated" by poetry. And there is a baroque luxuriance in the enormous mass enumeration of minerals, plants and animals in Juhász's epic poems. Man is at once a social and a natural being and neither aspect can be ignored; which is

why the hero of A halottak királya can speak of the "plant" of his heart and why Juhász makes use of plants or minerals to express the human. Rhetoric is a characteristic feature of his work. He makes full use of the traditional poetic armoury, the repetition or accumulative use of words, similes, personification, and so on, to produce his rhetorical effects, perhaps most successfully in the sheer repetition and accumulation of words. As in the following.

"The Angels, my Angels blow four sorts of trumpets of austere music:
a trumpet of rubies, a trumpet of sapphires,
a trumpet of emeralds, a trumpet of jasper,
brooding sadly."

And this type of repetitive effect runs through the poem. An object or a thing is expressed in metaphors or symbols, repeated constantly in different sequences. Spring, for instance appears, six times within five lines as "proud Green resurrection", "wild Red upheaval", "Green Blazing", "Flower Saviour", "Green Christ", or "Plant Boy". A halottak királya in fact reveals that Juhász uses comparatively few but genuine metaphors, and plays on a wide range of nuances to produce great variety.

Once the reader abandons his doubts and begins to appreciate the concept of the poem, he tends to be attracted by the poet's view that poetry is power and that the poem, unlike the sciences, is a summation, a total adding up. And if he finds that the detailed descriptions and enumerations make just as good a reading as delicately abstract hints, he will derive great pleasure in recognizing the rational and intelligible order lying behind the apparent confusion of words, similes and metaphors. Yet, I suspect he will still have his doubts; the five thousand lines of A halottak király can be read—but only just.

LÁSZLÓ FERENCZI

FOR YOUR BOOKSHELF

Some works by Hungarian authors published in English translation during the second half of 1971.

FICTION, PLAYS, POETRY

ILLYÉS, Gyula: *Selected Poems*, Chatto & Windus, London

KARINTHY, Ferenc: *Steinway Grand, Hot Air*, Samuel French, New York

MIKSZÁTH, Kálmán: *The Two Beggar Students, The Magic Caftan*, Corvina Press, Budapest

REJTŐ, Jenő: *The Blonde Hurricane*, Corvina Press, Budapest

THE ARTS, ARCHEOLOGY

CZEGLÉDY, Ilona: *The Castle of Diósgyőr* (also in German and Polish), Corvina Press, Budapest

FEHÉR D., Zsuzsa–POGÁNY, Ö. Gábor: *Twentieth Century Hungarian Painting* (also in French, German and Russian), Corvina Press, Budapest

GEREVICH, László: *The Art of Buda and Pest in the Middle Ages*, Akadémiai Kiadó, Budapest

GINK, Károly–KISS, Ivor Sándor: *Folk Art and Folk Artists* (also in French, German and Russian), Corvina Press, Budapest

REISMANN, János: *Budapest, Theme and Variations* (photo album, also in German), Corvina Press, Budapest

WEINER, Piroska: *Old Pewter in Hungarian Collections* (also in French and German), Corvina Press, Budapest

CZOBOR, Ágnes: *The Budapest Museum of Fine Arts* (also in French, German and Russian), Corvina Press, Budapest

NÉKÁM, Lívia: *Old Hungarian Pharmacies* (also in German), Corvina Press, Budapest

CSATKAI, Endre: *Old Trade-Signs in Hungary* (also in French and German), Corvina Press, Budapest

SZABÓ, Miklós: *The Celtic Heritage in Hungary* (also in French and German), Corvina Press, Budapest

URBACH Cs., Zsuzsa: *Early Netherlandish Paintings in Hungarian Museums* (also in French, German and Russian), Corvina Press, Budapest

MUSIC

EÖSZE, László: *Zoltán Kodály. His Life in Pictures* (also in German), Corvina Press, Budapest

KODÁLY, Zoltán: *Hungarian Folk-Music* (2nd ed.), Corvina Press, Budapest

KÖRTVÉLYES, Géza–LŐRINC, György: *The Budapest Ballet* (also in German), Corvina Press, Budapest

SZENDE, Ottó–NEMESSURI, Mihály: *The Physiology of Violin Playing*, Akadémiai Kiadó Budapest, co-edition with Collet's Holdings Ltd., Wellingborough

VIKÁR, László–BERECKI, Géza: *Cheremis Folksongs*, Akadémiai Kiadó Budapest

LINGUISTICS, SOCIAL SCIENCES, LITERATURE

BODROGLIGETI, András: *The Persian Vocabulary of the Codex Cumanicus*, Bibliotheca Orientalis Hungarica, 16, Akadémiai Kiadó, Budapest

DIÓSDI, György: *Ownership in Ancient and Preclassical Roman Law*, Akadémiai Kiadó, Budapest

EGRI, Péter: *Avantgardism and Modernity.* (A comparison of James Joyce's *Ulysses* with Thomas Mann's *Der Zauberberg* and *Lotte in Weimar*), Akadémiai Kiadó, Budapest, co-edition with The University of Tulsa, Oklahama

EÖRSI, Gyula–HARMATHY, Attila, ed.: *Law and Economic Reform in Socialist Countries*, Akadémiai Kiadó, Budapest

FRISS, István: *Economic Laws, Policy, Planning*, Akadémiai Kiadó, Budapest

KOVÁCS, Ferenc: *Linguistic Structures and Linguistic Laws*, Akadémiai Kiadó, co-edition with B. R. Grüner, Amsterdam

MAKAI, Mária: *On the Dialectics of Moral Consciousness* (Studia Philosophica 14), Akadémiai Kiadó, Budapest

NEMES, Dezső, ed.: *Chapters from the Revolutionary Workers' Movement in Hungary*, Corvina Press, Budapest

TŐKEI, Ferenc: *Genre Theory in China in the 3rd–6th Centuries*, Bibliotheca Orientalis Hungarica 15. Akadémiai Kiadó, Budapest

NATURAL SCIENCES

ALEXITS, G.–STECKIN, S. B., eds.: *Proceedings of the Conference on Constructive Theory of Functions. Approximation Theory*, August 24–September 3, 1969. Akadémiai Kiadó, Budapest

BECK, T. Mihály, ed.: *Proceedings of the 3rd Symposium on Coordination Chemistry*, Debrecen, Hungary, 1970, Vol. 2. Akadémiai Kiadó, Budapest

BUZÁS, Ilona, ed.: *Proceedings of the 2nd Conference on Applied Physical Chemistry*, Veszprém, *August 2–5, 1971*, Vol. 1-2. Akadémiai Kiadó, Budapest

ERDEY-GRÚZ, Tibor: *Kinetics of Electrode Processes*, Akadémiai Kiadó Budapest, co-edition with Adam Hilger Ltd., London

GÉCSEG, Ferenc–PEÁK, István: *Algebraic Theory of Automata*, Akadémiai Kiadó, Budapest

HOLLÓ, János–KURUCZ, Éva–BORÓDI, Attila: *The Applications of Molecular Distillation*, Akadémiai Kiadó, Budapest

JÁNOSSY, Lajos: *Theory of Relativity Based on Physical Reality*, Akadémiai Kiadó, Budapest

KELEMEN, Endre: *Physiopathology and Therapy of Human Blood Diseases*, Pergamon Press, Oxford

LISSÁK, Kálmán, ed.: *Results in Neuroanatomy, Neuropathophysiology, and Neuropharmacology* (Recent Developments of Neurobiology in Hungary, III), Akadémiai Kiadó, Budapest

LIPTAY, György, ed.: *Atlas of Thermoanalytical Curves* (TG-, DTG-, DTA-Curves Measured Simultaneously), Akadémiai Kiadó, Budapest, co-edition with Heyden and Sons Ltd., London

NEIMAN, M. B.–GÁL, D.: *The Kinetic Isotope Method and its Application*, Akadémiai Kiadó, Budapest, co-edition with Elsevier Publishing Co., Amsterdam

RADNÓT, Magda–KENYERES, Ágnes: *Joseph Imre, Jr.* Akadémiai Kiadó, Budapest

RÉNYI-VÁMOS, Ferenc–BABITS, Antal: *Anuria*, Akadémiai Kiadó, Budapest, co-edition with Pitman Medical and Scientific Publishing Co., London

SÁRFALVI, Béla, ed.: *The Changing Face of the Great Hungarian Plain* (Studies in Geography in Hungary 9) Akadémiai Kiadó, Budapest

STEFANOVITS, Pál: *Brown Forest Soils*, Akadémiai Kiadó, Budapest

SZABOLCS, Imre: *European Solonetz Soils and their Reclamation*, Akadémiai Kiadó, Budapest

TÖLGYESSY, J.–BRAUN, T.–KYRS, M.: *Isotope Dilution Analysis*, Akadémiai Kiadó, Budapest, co-edition with Pergamon Press, Oxford

TRENCSÉNI, Tibor–KELETI, Béla: *Clinical Aspects and Epidemiology of Haemorrhagic Fever with Renal Syndrome*, Akadémiai Kiadó, Budapest

WEISZFEILER, J. G., ed.: *Proceedings of the Microbiological Research Group of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Vol. VI*, Akadémiai Kiadó, Budapest

DEME, Sándor: *Semiconductor Detectors for Nuclear Radiation Measurement*, Akadémiai Kiadó Budapest, co-edition with Adam Hilger Ltd., London

GERGELY, György, ed.: *Ellipsometric Tables of the Si-SiO_2 System for Mercury and HeNe Laser Spectral Lines*, Akadémiai Kiadó, Budapest

KOVÁCS, István ed.: *Proceedings of the Fifth Meeting of the Maize and Sorghum Section of EUCARPIA*, Akadémiai Kiadó, Budapest

SZIGETI, György ed.: *Proceedings of the International Conference on the Physics and Chemistry of Semiconductor Heterojunctions and Layer Structures* Vol. 1–5. Akadémiai Kiadó, Budapest

TECHNOLOGY

GILLEMOT, László, ed.: *Proceedings of the Research Institute of Non-Ferrous Metals IX.*, Akadémiai Kiadó, Budapest

KÉZDI, Árpád ed.: *Proceedings of the 4th Budapest Conference on Soil Mechanics and Foundation Engineering 3rd Danube-European Conference, October 12–15, 1971*, Akadémiai Kiadó, Budapest

SORS, László: *Fatigue Design of Machine Components*, Akadémiai Kiadó, Budapest, co-edition with Pergamon Press, Oxford

SPORT

FLÓRIÁN, Tibor: *The Schliemann Variation of Spanish Opening*, Chessplayer, London

LUKOVICH, István: *Electric Foil Fencing*, Corvina Press, Budapest

Á. Sz.

ART AND ARCHAEOLOGY

RISE AND FALL OF THE SZENTENDRE SCHOOL

For many years one of the functions of the Hungarian National Gallery in Budapest has been to organize and show the works of artists active in different regional exhibitions of the works of local artists. In the winter of 1971 it was the turn of Pest County and this in fact practically amounted to an exhibition of the artists' colony at Szentendre since the overwhelming majority of the artists of Pest County work at Szentendre, either in the artists' colony as established at present, or in the town. As a result it was possible to gain an overall impression of the present position of the Szentendre school, which is of particular interest for this school has played an important part in modern Hungarian art.

The Szentendre school was never a single homogenous style, but its main lines of development were easy to discern: the surrealist movement in Hungary crystallized around the names of Béla Czóbel, Jenő Barcsay and Lajos Vajda. These trends are still alive today; Czóbel's work is often shown in exhibitions. In his latest large mosaic, that will eventually decorate the Szentendre Cultural Centre, Jenő Barcsay has created one of the most significant works of his life. It was in the past few years that Pál Deim, and the representative of constructive abstract art, László Balogh, following in his wake, found their own formal language. And those more influenced by Vajda such as Piroska Szántó, have also painted their most important works in recent years. The springs of the Szentendre school, therefore, have not run dry, although for some years now a process of gradual decay could be observed. These trends, however, re-expressed with considerable originality still followed the main shape and form that began to develop in Szentendre between 1940 and 1950, although there were already indications that of a greater independence of outlook and the gradual disintegration of the common artistic attitudes. The forms and inspiration provided by the Szentendre itself increasingly lost their initial force, at first mere tokens and then the last connection vanished.

During the past years, however, a radical change has occurred. In the little Danube town so much loved by painters a new artist's colony has been built, in which painters, sculptors and graphic artists have been admitted through application to the Art Association, and the only criterion for joining was individual merit as an artist in no sense an adherence to the Szentendre School of painting. Even the relative affinity that had characterized the earlier artists working in Szentendre was consequently disrupted and new quality was introduced by the sculptors who by and large had before never worked in Szentendre. It is, of course, too early to tell whether a characteristic school of sculpture will develop at Szentendre which will be at least as homogeneous as the Szentendre school of painting was. For the time

◀ Erika Ligeti: My Young Brother (limestone, 1967)

Photo: Attila Károlyi

Photo: Attila Károlyi

Róbert Csikszentmihályi: Encounter (bronze, 1970)


Pinaki 1990

ENDRE DOMANOVSZKI: BIRTHDAY (OIL, TEMPERA, 87×61 CMS, 1965) *Photo: Károly Szelény*

MARBLE TABLE WITH RELIEF ILLUSTRATING THE BOOK OF SAMUEL
FROM THE COLLECTION OF FERRUCCIO BOLLA, LUGANO

Photo: Vincenzo Vicari

DETAIL OF THE ABOVE.

Photo: Vincenzo Vicari

STRATIONS TO THE ARTICLE BY EDITH THOMAS ON P. 201.

being it is rather the growth of the individual talents that can be observed, and no features common to all.

First and foremost Róbert Csikszentmihályi and Erika Ligeti show promise in their beginnings. The first is working in a very specific genre of Hungarian sculpture, the making of medallions, and has brought an undeniably new voice to it. His medallions are dynamic, with a heavily marked plasticity. They do not look to the goldsmith's art, but toward the dramatic attitudes of monumental sculpture without, however, losing the sense of proportion, or forgetting the limitations of this type of art. Erika Ligeti is a figurative sculptor. Her strength lies in her savoury humour, her bent for the grotesque. In her portraits she echoes the style and zest of Hungarian Romanesque sculpture.

With the formation of the new colony and the appearance of these sculptors the Szentendre school in the old sense has in essence ceased to exist. The new colony, on the other hand, is still necessarily heterogeneous, and cannot yet be determined.

The question may well arise whether it can be determined at all. Not only because the resident artist colonies rarely acquire an individual profile, but also because at the present stage of development it seems that artists' colonies have lost their significance. The *Bauhaus* idea, the collective work of the various communities of artists, is not the same as the intellectual and formal coherence that develops in artist's colonies. The present position of the former Szentendre school leads one to this conclusions. The former school must be regarded as a significant stage in the history of Hungarian art, but necessarily superseded by later developments.

LAJOS NÉMETH

NEW WORK BY ENDRE DOMANOVSZKY

New work by Endre Domanovszky—tapestries, paintings and drawings, were shown as part of the Budapest Art Weeks organized in the autumn of 1971. Domanovszky, whose art has been a serious and significant factor of Hungarian painting in the present century in every one of his periods, presented a new aspect of his image at this exhibition. His recent work cannot be examined on its own, it cannot be separated from an assessment of his entire oeuvre, of his environment, and of the art of our century in general.

Domanovszky was born in 1907. As a gifted student of the College of Fine Arts he was given a Rome scholarship at the age of twenty, and at twenty-two his first exhibition was given the unanimous approval of critics, of the public and of buyers.

His first steps were not determined by fashion: he chose the neo-classic style as a suitable initiation. He kept it up only as long as he found it necessary, despite the fact that his first successes encouraged him to persevere. But he wished to progress further, and so he changed his genre and his style: since the middle thirties he has been designing tapestries. These were shown in two exhibitions in Budapest, and were awarded the diplôme d'honneur at the Paris World Exhibition in 1936.

The restless years of the World War drove him out of his peaceful studio and

changed his art: until then his style had been cool and calm, he had built his pictures with large forms. He turned to dynamic expressionism and continued to work in this style, also after 1945: the subject of his work changed that was all, and the blacks of despair were replaced by lively colours full of joy. This was the period when Domanovszky produced one of his outstanding tapestries, "The Miners" (sometimes called "Miners at Rest" or "Trammers"). This work was publicly shown in 1947 at an exhibition aptly named "Towards collective art".

Domanovszky's choice of genre shows that in all phases of his development he has been attracted by monumentality, he wished to adress a large public. The opportunity to work according to his wishes and to fully display his talents was offered to him only after the Liberation. Then he started to paint murals like "The worker-peasant meeting" painted in 1955 at Dunaújváros, then "The Dancers" at Oroszlány, "The MusicMakers" in the Budapest suburb of Újpest and after 1960 a new series of tapestries.

These works lead us into the present: the recent exhibition consisted mainly of tapestries. This change of genre does not mean a "reversal" of a "break" with his earlier work. The nature of the material meant that he used different techniques when working an tapestries and when working on murals. He has kept his burning colours though and he has also kept one of his main virtues, a certain solidity of structure, and the well-weighed balance of the details which compose his work. When, in the early sixties, at the beginning of his "tapestry period" he expressed what he wished to say mainly in colours, both in his paintings and in his tapestries, this was not an anti-thesis of his former artistic self, on the contrary, it was a synthesis of his entire life's work.

It may seem odd that while one calls him a painter one does not consider his paintings to be his master-pieces, but his tapestries, murals and pannelling, and then again his tapestries. However art in our century, and there fore also Domanovszky's art, offers less and less opportunity for "classical" compositions and encourages artists increasingly to compose monumental works which accord with the demands of the public. This of course does not mean that Domanovszky has abandoned his brush. Like all artists, he also needs experimentation, he wishes to concentrate his energies, to obtain experiences, and all this can only be done in more small-scale work appreciated by a restricted public.

Domanovszky's renewal began with panel paintings, such as "Cinerarias" and "The Birthday"—these pictures and many others show the first ripe fruit of a process which started in the tempera- and pastel-series "The Tapestry Weavers" and flowered in a poignant lyricism of colours.

There is no doubt that Domanovszky's main works are the tapestries of his new period. Their exhibition highlighted the achievements of the artist's new period. This series of tapestries form the backbone of the exhibition under review.

"The Dispute" was the first composition of the series. This work, in its composition, harmonies and contradictions, is a summary of Domanovszky's earlier aspirations, and at the same time the source of later works which are more audacious, more colourful and much more disciplined, although imbued by a spirit of freedom. "The Dispute" is composed in a very strict rhythm: (2–3–4–2–3), the linking of the figures shows careful consideration, and all these demonstrate clearly that Domanovszky has found the solid bases of this new genre in the experience provided by earlier works (including the composition of the mural for Dunaújváros). The new work also testifies that Domanovszky was aware of what he had to add to his earlier achievements to make the new piece do its work: he represented the material and put the accent on colours: his sparkling yellows, and deep-hued browns nuanced his figures, and his blues called the

spectator's attention to the most important parts.

Five other compositions followed "The Dispute": "Weaving Women", "Summer", "Monuments of Vas county", "Horses", and "The Spinnery". The most audacious design appears to be "The Monuments of Vas county": here the cavalcade of colours dissolved in impetuous movement is united by small details worked out in almost graphical order. The last work, "The Spinnery", is its counterpart: it is a unified and mature work, cool and level-headed. Its structure turns the strict order of its colours to advantage: this work can be assessed as one of Domanovszky's most outstanding, the culmination of his life's work, a precious treasure of Hungarian national art.

GYÖRGY HORVÁTH

KING DAVID LEAPING AND DANCING

In the possession of Dr. Ferruccio Bolla of Lugano is a table which dates back to the times of the Roman Emperors. The reliefs on it are unique in the scene they represent. They are illustrations of the events described in the Old Testament, in the Second Book of Samuel, Chapter VI, 13–23, King David dancing before the Ark of the Lord, Michal his wife reproaching him, and the gifts which David distributed among the people of Israel.

In a previous study of mine I discussed some early Christian marble tables of Oriental origin, which illustrated scenes of the Old Testament in a Hellenistic spirit; these marble tables were used in the services of the early Christian Pennonian and Arian rites.

Aware of my work in this field, Dr. W. Rosenbaum, an art dealer of Ascona in Switzerland, sent me the photograph of the top of a round marble table with figural decorations he had bought in 1962, asking me for my opinion.

My subsequent investigations revealed with increasing certitude that the object under examination was a unique work of art hitherto unknown both in the history of art and history of religion; its functional use is to be sought in the Jewish cultural environment in Roman times.

The marble table top is 70 cm. in diameter, and not more than 2 cm. thick. The marble is greyish in colour, and below the central figure, to the left, is a large yellowish-brown stain. The surface is smooth, but not finely polished. It is badly worn, and there are deep scratches and incisions on the unadorned part of surface in the depressed middle section on both sides of the figure. The relatively deep scratches and incisions as well as the abrasions are probably due to the original functional use of the table.

In my attempt to decide the subject-matter of the reliefs I took as my starting-point the fact that the dominant features of the faces and the shape of the heads were unmistakably Semitic in character.

The Semitic character of the figures led one to suspect that the origins of the scene might be found in the Old Testament. The dancing movements of the main protagonist, the central figure, inspired the subsequent

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Based on the author's *King David Leaping and Dancing*. Akadémiai Kiadó, Budapest, 1970, 45 pages with illustrations.

question: who dances in the Old Testament? The Second Book of Samuel, Chapter VI, 13–23, describes the return of the ark to Jerusalem, and how King David "danced before the Lord with all his might."

A bust-length figure of a woman, moreover, is carved on the border of the marble slab, level with King David's head. The woman, like David, has marked Semitic features, and she undoubtedly represents his wife Michal, the daughter of King Saul, for according to the Old Testament text, "Michal, Saul's daughter, looked through the window and saw King David leaping and dancing before the Lord."

The actual text of the story, as given in the 1611 Authorized Version of the English Bible, runs as follows:

13 And it was so, that when they that bare the ark of the Lord had gone six paces, he sacrificed oxen and fatlings.

14 And David danced before the Lord with all his might: and David was girded with a linen ephod.

15 So David and all the house of Israel brought up the ark of the Lord with shouting, and with the sound of the trumpet.

16 And as the ark of the Lord came into the city of David, Michal Saul's daughter looked through a window, and saw king David leaping and dancing before the Lord; and she despised him in her heart.

17 And they brought in the ark of the Lord, and set it in his place, in the midst of the tabernacle that David had pitched for it: and David offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before the Lord.

18 And as soon as David had made an end of offering burnt offerings and peace offerings, he blessed the people in the name of the Lord of hosts.

19 And he dealt among all the people, even among the whole multitude of Israel, as well to the women as men, to every one a cake of bread, and a good piece of flesh, and a flagon of wine.* So all the people departed every one to his house.

20 Then David returned to bless his household. And Michal the daughter of Saul came out to meet David, and said. How glorious was the king of Israel to day, who uncovered himself to day in the eyes of the handmaids of his servants, as one of the vain fellows shamelessly uncovereth himself!

21 And David said unto Michal, It was before the Lord, which chose me before thy father, and before all his house, to appoint me ruler over the people of the Lord, over Israel: therefore will I play before the Lord.

22 And I will yet be more vile than thus, and will be base in mine own sight: and of the maidservants which thou hast spoken of, of them shall I be had in honour.

23 Therefore Michal the daughter of Saul had no child unto the day of her death.

This adequately explains the subject of the scene on the marble table top, and it is even more confirmed by the sling in one hand and the stone in the other, recalling David's combat with Goliath.

Other carved decorations on the border of the marble slab are connected with the same story. Continuing anti-clockwise around the perimeter of the circular slab from the bust of Michal we find a sacrificial calf, olive leaves and olives, and eleven small round loaves of bread, representing the *asisa*, or small loaves with raisins, illustrating the gifts which "David dealt among the whole multitude of Israel, as well to the women as men" (see illustration).

There is a simplicity, power of draughtsmanship and sense of form in the craftsmanship, and each figure and object lies flat and almost two-dimensional on the table surface following the rules characterising Egyptian art, which provides an indication of the origin and place of discovery of the marble

* A misunderstanding of the Hebrew *asisa* on the part of the translators.

table. This type of table decorated with reliefs was used mainly by the Christian communities of Egypt, Nort Africa and Asia Minor, that is, within the sphere of Hellenistic cultural influence. A Frankfurt art dealer bought the table in Egypt, it went to Ascona, where it was sold through the intermediary of Dr. Rosenbaum to Dr. F. Bolla, in whose possession it remains.

The next step is to attempt to date the table and establish it religious function, and here it is necessary to collate the different texts of the Bible.

This has involved a study of the original Hebrew text, the Greek text of the Septuagint and the Latin text of the Vulgate. An analysis of verses 14, 19, 20 and 21 throws light on the table-top reliefs by providing answers to the following questions:

(1) Did David dance naked or was he "girded with a linen ephod"?

(2) What did David "deal" out among the people at the feast?

(3) Why was David naked?

The Table below shows the correspondences and differences in the Hebrew, Greek and Latin texts:

Text	Ephod	Bread	Roast meat	Pastry fried in oil
Hebrew	with ephod	bread	roast meat	asisa
Septuagint	without ephod	bread	—	cake fried in oil
Vulgate	naked but subsequently put on an ephod	bread	roast meat	fine flour fried in oil

The Hebrew and the Latin texts both contain a sentence declaring that David was clad with an ephod, and therefore correspond.

Verse 14 of the Septuagint version, the translated text for Greek-speaking Jews living in Greek-language territory, contains no supplementary sentence to that effect. That is, the general opinion in the Greek-speaking lands, at the time the Septuagint was written and in common use, would be that David danced naked.

David's nakedness and his behaviour is confirmed in all the texts by the abuse Michal heaped on him (v. 20) and David's reply (v. 21).

In terms of what Michal considered disgraceful or scandalous behaviour, it is of little importance whether David wore an ephod or not; the ephod was a short garment reaching to the loins, that is, leaving most of the body bare. But as far as all those are concerned who took their knowledge of the Bible from the Greek text of the Septuagint, David was naked, and this is how he is represented on the marble table.

There is also no doubt about the identity of Michal, the daughter of Saul, David's wife. The artist by representing Michal in bust form kept firmly to the Biblical text according to which "Michal looked through a window and saw King David leaping and dancing before the Lord, and she despised him in her heart" (v.16).

To the right of David, on the border of the table, are the gifts David distributed among the people of Israel (v.19). The Hebrew, Greek and Latin texts all agree that the flesh was roasted oxen, and that a bullock had been slaughtered.

Below the sacrificial animal are olive

leaves. Oil was an indispensable ingredient of festive meals. According to the Septuagint and the Vulgate what David dealt among the people was cake made of fine flour and fried in oil. The Hebrew text says *asisa*, that is, a kind of small loaf prepared with honey and raisins for festive occasions.

By comparing the figures represented on the marble table and these early texts of the Bible it therefore seems possible to clarify these questions, and provide satisfactory answers. Scenes from Jewish history and mythology are rarely painted or carved, because the "making of images" is forbidden by Jewish religious law, and the strictly religious Jews were in most periods against them. The marble table probably originates from the Jewish community of Alexandria, where a laxer atmosphere prevailed.

The conceptual difference between the Christian and Jewish method of representation at that time is easily understandable. The relatively young religion of Christianity was anxious to propagate its doctrines by all means available to it, by preaching the Gospel, through the use of mural paintings, mosaics and sculptures, whereas for the followers of the Jewish faith, with a past of some thousands of years, as they believed, behind them, a mere glance at some representation was enough to recall an entire biblical scene.

There is no other representation of David dancing, Michal and the gifts known to archaeology, and the top of the Lugano table is consequently unique.

One of the most difficult questions to resolve was to determine the original function of the table, for the scene it represents does not appear in any part of contemporary Jewish ritual. The festival grace before meals during the Feast of Tabernacles, when religious Jews build temporary, green-decked booths in their homes or gardens, and take their meals there, provides a more plausible approach to the solution: "...and that day I shall restore the tent of David which has fallen..." The C. homily of Cedaka Hakkohen b. Sar Salom's "Midrash Chag Ha-Sukkot" (manuscript in the Oxford Bodleian) provides an explanation of the booth. The 9th point of the homily mentions the Tabernacle which is called a Booth. "...and how great the joy and exultation will be—for the Tabernacle is to be built in our days—when all the people will gather to sing songs, dance and applaud and rejoice by doing all that warmeth the cockles of the heart, for see, King David—peace to his ashes—also leaped and danced—as it is recorded—before the Lord when he brought in the Ark of the Covenant."

From this it is possible to deduce that the marble table with the scene on it from the Second Book of Samuel Chapter VI, 13–23 was probably placed in the *sukkah*, or booth, where it had a certain functional use during the Feast of Tabernacles.

Reference has already been made to the fact that the marble is considerably stained on the undecorated part of the surface, where the gifts were put; the stains derive from some substance producing a brownish-reddish colour. The analysis of scrapings of this substance indicate something containing chlorophyl with occasional streaks of haemoglobin, pointing to oil, fruit and animal products.

As for the dating of the table, here we have to depend upon historical and religious sources, with the addition of a few archaeological finds.

It is known that even the most orthodox Palestinian Jews were under Hellenistic influence in the third century B. C. The Greek Bible, the Septuagint, was written in the first half of the third century for the Hellenized Greek-speaking Alexandrian Jews, and the table represents the variant of the biblical story common at the time the Septuagint appeared.

In the period of the Jewish Tannaim (exegists, makers of religious laws; A.D. 10–220) there was a renaissance of the cult of David, identifying the awaited Messiah with him. The first generation of the Tannaim

made their appearance about A.D. 10–80; their dogmas were a reaction to the Christian tenets which looked upon Jesus as the "King of Kings" and the "Son of David." The interest of a certain group was focussed on this point between A.D. 10 and 220, and it may be supposed that they supported their teaching by graphic scenes of the Old Testament connected with the life of King David.

In the middle of the third century (in A.D. 256), the synagogue of Dura-Europos, which contained mural paintings representing acts of David, as well as important historical memorials relating to the activity of the Tannaim, was destroyed. Prior to that event the synagogue had been restored for the last time and these frescoes painted in A.D. 244–245. Of almost the same period as the Dura-Europos synagogue is the Christian baptistery at Dura rebuilt from a private house in 232–233. Among the frescoes of the baptistery are scenes from the story of David and Goliath.

The cult of David among the Tannaim, and the frescoes representing scenes from the life of David originating in the first half of the third century, indicate that the spiritual movement which the present author regards as a David renaissance was on the increase up to the middle of the century. In this period Jewry was influenced by the culture of the late Roman spirit to the extent that the most important events of Jewish history came to be painted or carved on the walls of synagogues. We can thus fairly conclude that the marble table representing King David dancing was inspired by the cult of David prevalent in the second and third century; it probably dates from about the end of the second or the beginning of the third century A. D.

To sum up. The reliefs carved on the surface of the table—now in private hands in Lugano—represent the events described in the Old Testament, in the Second Book of Samuel, Chapter VI, 13–23. The table was made in Egypt or North Africa at the end of the second or at the beginning of the third century A.D. and it appears that the craftsman who made it was habitually accustomed to express his artistic ideas in a somewhat abstract style.

Since very few figural representations of Jewish origin exist, because the Jewish people discountenanced all representation of the human image, the marble table with the David scene is unique of its kind.

EDITH B. THOMAS

MUSICAL LIFE

NEW RECORDS

PÁL ESTERHÁZY: *Harmonia Coelestis* (1711) *Cantatas* (Revised by János Breuer). Krisztina Laky, Anna Ádám (Soprano); Attila Fülöp (Tenor); Kolos Supala (Bass). Chamber Choir of the Academy of Music Budapest; Girls' Choir of Győr; Ferenc Liszt Chamber Orchestra. Conducted by Frigyes Sándor, Hungaroton LPX 11433–35 (Stereo-Mono).

The name of the Esterházy family is familiar to music lovers. This was the noble family that Joseph Haydn served all his life.

One of its eminent members was Pál Esterházy, born in 1635, who held some of the highest posts in the Hapsburg Empire, as Marshal of the Palace, commander-in-chief in Southern Hungary, taking part in the siege of Buda, and eventually Palatine of Hungary.

He was an amateur composer and poet, and the music he composed is significant in a number of aspects, one being that it was the first time in Hungarian church music that the complete set of instruments in use in Western European music of the time was employed. This series of fifty-five cantatas, entitled Harmonia Coelestis, which was published in Vienna two years before his death in 1713, was probably composed many years earlier, since it was known to exist in 1701.

The Harmonia Coelestis is not some kind of Hungarian curiosity. The musical roots of the composer are not Hungarian, they spring almost entirely from the soil of the Western music of the time, and his work was conditioned, if somewhat belatedly, by the best examples. And readers familiar with the history of seventeenth-century music are well aware such a delayed approach had little influence in those days on the quality of the music.

Pál Esterházy followed well-trodden paths with his cantatas, and yet—or perhaps for this very reason—every bar of the music is alive and vivid, and moreover recalls the richt heritage behind it. The music belongs in the category of sacred concertos, the birth of which is usually connected with the Cento Concerti Ecclesiastici series begun in 1602 by Lodovico Viadana (1564–1645). It was a very important form of music, used by Heinrich Schütz around the middle of the seventeenth century, and finally, after passing through countless transitional forms, emerging as the baroque cantata.

Viadana's "invention" represented a striking innovation in church music in relation to the basic forms of the sixteenth century in that the instrumentally accompanied aria —that is, the opera convetion—was introduced into church music. Forty of Pál Esterházy's cantatas are in aria form, six are duets and nine are choral compositions—in a few instances the solo voice alternating with the chorus—all with orchestral accompaniment,

and all of them, naturally, connected with the great religious festivals.

In terms of style they are dominated by Italian influence, but several of the pieces indicate that the works of Schütz and his contemporaries were not unknown to the composer.

This series is unusually varied in atmosphere and content. Only a small part of the text was taken from the traditional Latin liturgy; the majority of the cantatas were composed to his own verses—in Latin, of course. Their melodies are similarly his own. This explains the emergence of their charming simplicity: some of the pieces are so lightly, limpidly and appealingly melodious that they simply cannot be forgotten.

Simplicity is also apparent in the—overwhelmingly strophic—forms of certain movements. As a result a movement here and there sometimes appears somewhat static, but by no means dull, and moreover, gives an opportunity for variations and explorations around the fundamental mood of the piece. One can never tire, one feels of the various movements of jubilation, whether expressed in solo form, as No. 12, or choral as in No. 14. Cantata No. 28, celebrating the resurrection of Christ, is perhaps the finest of this type of movement. In contrast No. 18 is a marvellous choral lullaby for strings and two recorders: *Dormi Jesu dulcissime* ... Two movements, Nos. 29 and 53, come very close to Schütz and other German composers of the time. The subject of No. 53 is the famous biblical episode of the conversion of Saint Paul, *Saule, Saule, quid me persequeris?* (Schütz set this same text in Luther's translation to music in 1650; SWV 415.) Perhaps not even the most modern composers of that time would have dared to introduce the movement with a roll of timpani—with Pál Esterházy this innovation gives it unusually dramatic significance. In Esterházy's cantata we also hear how the rejoicing chorus greets Saul transformed into Paul—with trumpets, drums and shouts of *vivat* in trochaic rhythm.

It is impossible to discuss the half a hundred pieces here. I am, however, certain of one thing: if anyone once begins to listen to the series—quietly, undisturbed—he will hardly be able to stop.

Only a very few bars of somewhat poorer quality can be detected throughout the more than two and a half hours of recording. Frigyes Sándor controls the music with a delicate perception. The two women soprano soloists avoid any suspicion of vibrato, recalling the practices of those times and echoing of the crystal-clear, ringing soprano of boy's voices. The male voices similarly aim at simplicity, shunning the theatrical. The result: simple, pure and honest music.

JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH: *The Art of the Fugue.* Ferenc Liszt Chamber Orchestra. János Rolla, Kálmán Kostyál (violin); Gábor Pongrácz, Vidor Nagy (viola); Mária Frank (cello); Gábor Lehotka (organ); János Sebestyén and Zsuzsa Pertis (harpsichord). Conducted by Frigyes Sándor. Hungaroton LPX 11445-46 (Stereo-Mono).

Music lovers must have heard J. S. Bach's monumental *The Art of the Fugue* in any number of recordings, but nonetheless I should like to call attention to this new Hungarian version.

I don't want to go into the controversy which rages around this famous work, as it fills a small library in itself. I would only venture to express an opinion on one aspect of the performance of this mysterious cycle: I am convinced that only a performance using a number of different instruments can bring this masterpiece close to the modern listener.

It is common knowledge that Bach composed this last and greatest masterpiece very shortly before his death—in fact, he dictated it when he was already blind—and whether deliberately or not, we do not know, he neglected to indicate the instruments for which it was designed. Viewed from a certain, higher standpoint, this is really only a

minor question: German baroque music was as natural as their mother tongue to every musician of the time, because essentially it takes on the same significance on whatever instruments it is played. Nowadays, however, the idiom of baroque is no longer one's natural element. The contemporary listener perceives only a certain kind of music, one out of many possible kinds, in Bach's art; this art cannot be so exclusive and unequivocal for him as it was for the listeners at the time. It follows, therefore, that the structure of *The Art of the Fugue*, so immeasurably complex in places that it seems almost impossible to follow it with the mind, needs to be *interpreted* in the literal sense of the term. Perceiving and following the lines of the voices is made considerably easier when they are assigned to an ensemble of various instruments or an orchestra. I pay my due need of respect to the recordings of *The Art of the Fugue* by outstanding organists—but nonetheless, the image presented through the organ is far too homogeneous in sound, whatever the effort made to differentiate the voices through the most resourceful changes of registry.

These are the principles that have dictated the performance of this work by the Ferenc Liszt Chamber Orchestra led by Frigyes Sándor in recording this work. Basically they adopted the instrumentation suggested by Wolfgang Graeser, with the difference that in this recording only the strings are used, though the canons are of course heard on the organ, and on the harpsichord. More variety is given to the series of fugues by the use of string orchestra, string quartet and string trio combinations. (Graeser also suggests woodwinds and brasses.)

The conductor is one of the most important violin teachers in Hungary, and moves in the world of strings with exceptional understanding and authority. The perfectly balanced sound, the cohesion and integrity of the orchestra are obviously due to him. And the three-voice Contrapunctus VIII—introduced by the violin, viola and cello soloists—reveals very clearly the individual virtues and understanding of the three string artists. Throughout the movement the entry of the full string orchestra is almost imperceptible, so completely unbroken is the flow of music. The orchestra's performance of the Contrapunctus IX is also outstanding for its virtuosity and liveliness, and the Contrapunctus XI is taken in a manner suggesting, as it should, the relationship of the theme to chorale melody, for it is well-known that its melodic line was drawn from the chorale still in use in churches; the relationship is clearly evident from the opening words *Aus tiefer Not schrei ich zu Dir*—particularly in the inversion of the theme.

The listener will derive particular pleasure from the organ performance of Gábor Lehotka, who brings exceptional intelligence to his playing, on an organ dating from baroque times.

The recording was made in the Lady Chapel at Pannonhalma, and on the organ of the St. George Collegiate Churh at Sopron.

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN: *Concerto for Piano and Orchestra No. 4 in G Major, Op. 58. Sonata for Piano No. 26 in E Flat Major, Op. 81/a "Les Adieux"*. Zoltán Kocsis (piano). Hungarian Radio and Television Orchestra. Conducted by Ervin Lukács. Hungaroton LPX 11496 (Stereo-Mono).

A list of the recordings of Beethoven's Piano Concerto No. 4—one better than the next—would fill several pages. The reason I draw attention to this new recording is quite simply—Zoltán Kocsis, the phenomenal young pianist discovered in recent years, who is at present a fourth-year student of the Budapest Ferenc Liszt Academy of Music.

He is only nineteen, but he has already had several successes to his credit. He won the Beethoven piano competition sponsored by the Hungarian Radio at the age of seven-

teen. Since then he has been heard very frequently on the concert platform. The Radio Orchestra took him as soloist—as well as Dezső Ránki, a pianist of the same age, winner of the International Schumann Competition—on its concert tour of the United States in November 1971. Kocsis appeared thirteen times with the orchestra, each time registering an undoubted success.

Zoltán Kocsis is truly a master player—in the highest sense of the term. His emotional range is astoundingly rich, and he is capable of converting every feeling directly into music. (He incidentally composes, on a professional level.) He is familiar with the innermost laws of music, and is ruthless with himself in pursuit of its technical realization. Technical perfection is an obsession with him: one or two wrong notes at his public concerts, and he is in agony. Fortunately his great strength as a performer is combined with an intimacy with the composer, and an insight into his intentions.

I do not wish to claim that "there has never been anything like it", especially because the recording is not of a particularly high calibre. In many places the orchestra fades, particularly when listened to on mono. But if we lend an unbiased ear to Kocsis's playing, even in the piano concerto, the determined virtuosity of an exceptional musician nonetheless comes through. The *Les Adieux* sonata, where the technical recording is adequate, gives a more favourable picture of Zoltán Kocsis. The beginning of the first movement already captivates the listeners with its infinite calm and the sense that at any moment this calm may explode into a vortex of changing moods. The most interesting aspect of the performance itself is that Kocsis is devoid of all the impetuous extravagancies of youth. The music he makes is infinitely clarified, meticulously thought out, and yet in every change of mood we hear the expression of a young unbroken spirit of exceptional sensibility.

ANDRÁS PERNYE

COMPLETE COUPERIN

FRANÇOIS COUPERIN: *Pièces de Clavecin, I–IV.* Edited by József Gát. The introductions by Couperin to the respective volumes in the original French. Boosey and Hawkes, Ltd. — Editio Musica, Budapest. Vol. I, 140 pp., 1969; Vol. II, 146 pp., 1970; Vol. III, 123 pp., 1970; Vol. IV, 133 pp., 1971. In English, French, German and Hungarian.

The activities of François Couperin, "le grand", the court musician of the French King, Louis XIV. and Louis XV., demand no great explanation today, when old music is enjoying an unprecedented revival, and his works are heard at concerts and in records in ever increasing number. His works have of course been sifted and reassessed in the light of our age; it is increasingly evident today that it is his works for harpsichord in the first place that are of enduring value and most worth reviving.

But this is not exactly a new discovery. The great master of the history of French music, Aristide Farrenck (1794–1865), was perhaps the first to call attention to Couperin's twenty-seven suites in his monumental work *Le Trésor des pianistes*, which

was published in twenty-three volumes between 1861 and 1872. It was obviously his work that inspired Friedrich Chrysander (1826–1901) and Johannes Brahms (none other than the great composer) when in 1869 they published Couperin's harpsichord works as the Fourth Volume of the *Denkmäler der Tonkunst*. Later the suites appeared in yet another French publication (L. Diémer, Paris, no year of publication), and lastly the complete works of Couperin, with Maurice Cauchie as editor-in-chief, appeared in Paris in twelve volumes between 1932 and 1933. Apart from these editions they have only been published in various selections—among others, in an edition exceptionally important for Hungary by Béla Bartók. The fourth, and latest edition of the *Pièces de clavecin* of François Couperin, which appeared in 1971 in a joint publication by Editio Musica, Budapest and Boosey and Hawkes, is an important event for lovers of old music the world over.

The greatest composers, therefore, no less, were involved in the publication of Couperin's works. Both Brahms and Bartók found their imaginations caught by this enigmatic master, resembling in some aspects the masters of miniature delicacy of the Middle Ages. And so was Debussy's, who came across Couperin in his search for the roots of genuine French music and mentioned him in connection with his own—markedly programme—music for the piano. It is difficult to decide today, of course, what grounds Debussy's reference really had, and especially through how many indirect relationships some kinship can be established between the two masters—but one thing is certain: after Couperin hardly any French keyboard music was written that was not programme music.

The question of programme music itself is, of course; exceptionally complex where Couperin's art is concerned, which was one of the very reasons why I called him enigmatic. If often happens that if we take the word "programme" literally we are liable to be led even more astray from the individual movements than if we had no picture of them at all. Who would imagine, for instance, that the movement entitled *Les Nonètes* from the First Suite divides into two sections according to its reference to blondes and brunettes, and that the former have to be represented only in the minor key, and the latter are only allowed to be pictured in the major key? One could just as well imagine it the other way round... Or, while we are on the subject of the First Suite, whose basic key is G Minor, why should the movement entitled *Les Sentiments* happen to be in G Major, when, according to the musical reasoning of modern man, the whole thing should be carried out exclusively in a minor key?

The key to these pieces of programme music has already been sought by many, and in many ways; perhaps those who came closest were those who perceived the intellectual links between Couperin's music and Watteau's painting. It is quite imaginable that the ultimate forms of Couperin's musical gestures were not based on living models in every instance, but were suggested by Watteau's paintings. And yet, if we think of the delicate, dancing movements of Watteau's *The Indifferent*, lightly floating to some unknown music, we could well be asking, then what might one called *The Enthusiast* be like... By this token we could fittingly describe many of Watteau paintings as enigmatic as well.

Here we can do no more than merely indicate the profound and infinitely delicate simbolism of Couperin's art, and the esoteric character of his world, in which a single small gesture will reveal its meaning only to a sensitive and absorbed musician or listener. This is a minature world, but within its narrow limits it is perfection itself. It is no wonder that not even J. S. Bach was able to avoid its influence at the time.

The complete edition of Couperin's Harpsichord Music published in Hungary successfully passes the twin tests of scientific accuracy and practical serviceability. Those

familiar with Couperin's art are well aware that the master worked out a completely genuine system of ornament signs which was all his own, and in his keyboard method entitled *L'art de toucher le clavecin* published in 1716 he explained its practical application in extraordinary detail. And this was indeed fortunate; had he not done so we would not be able to reconstruct the authentic sound of his music. The four volumes, comprising more than five hundred pages, follows note for note the original text of the *Pièces de clavecin* that appeared in 1713, 1716, 1722 and 1730, and the backs of the jackets of each of the four volumes carry the key to the twenty-two ornament signs Couperin used. So whichever piece from whichever volume we consequently choose to play, we have the table of ornaments before us with no need to turn any pages. This clever arrangement was fashionable in the eighteenth century, but after that—unfortunately—it was forgotten.

The complete edition was compiled by József Gát, musical scholar and harpsichord player, who died in 1967, at the age of 54, before the appearance of the first volume. As we reported some years ago, an outstanding Hungarian record of his playing of Couperin's Order I and II was even then in existence (Qualiton, LPK 11316).

This complete edition of Couperin's works for the clavecin is the finest achievement of the past twenty-five years of Hungarian music publishing.

A. P.

FROM OUR COMMEMORATIVE ISSUE ON GYÖRGY LUKÁCS

LUKÁCS AND HUNGARIAN CULTURE
Ferenc Tőkei

GENERATIONS (poem)
István Eörsi

NOTES FROM A DIARY (1911—1921)
Béla Balázs

THE AESTHETICS OF THE YOUNG LUKÁCS
Lucien Goldman

THE YOUNG LUKÁCS
Béla Hegyi

LUKÁCS IN THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY
Gerald Graff

THE LUKÁCS I KNEW
Árpád Kadarkay

THEATRE AND FILM

STAGE ADAPTATIONS

RAMAYANA; BARTÓKIANA; CONFRONTATION by Miklós Jancsó and Gyula Hernádi; CSÁK'S LAST DAYS by Imre Madách and Dezső Keresztury

During the past few years much has been said about the relative backwardness of the Hungarian theatre, as compared with other forms of art there, particularly films, and the neighbouring countries or general European standards. The Hungarian theatre has for long been oppressively dominated by a literaturecentred attitude. Theatres were supposed to be proud of their expertise in playing the "well-made" play from classics to thrillers. Hungarian plays written after 1945 followed the same road and those foreign works of art were given preference, which were traditionally designed and could be easily interpreted by customary realistic methods. The neglect of the absurd was not merely due to ideological reasons; even Brecht's works were abandoned for years after a few abortive attempts. But in the past few years traditional naturalism has lost its sway; not through spectacular failures but in a long receding way of dull, grey and boring performances. Even the usual recipe of a guaranteed success no longer produced the delicious dishes that were expected: Ibsen, Shaw, Miller became part of a routine, an academic exhibition. Once again we have learned that there is no gap separating the artistic-cultural climate of an individual country and the rest of the world.

Károly Kazimir's theatre, the "THÁLIA", which with dedicated persistance over the last ten years has attempted to create something individual and unique, ruthlessly abandoned the "well-made" play, both thriller and modern classic; Miller, Williams, Anouilh were out and instead they put on works adapted for the stage partly with the aim of acquainting the public with these works, partly of experimenting with an epic-documentary style. They have had some remarkable successes such as, "Rozsdatemető" [Generation of Rust] by Endre Fejes; "Tóthék" [The Tóth Family] by István Örkény, some mediocre performances as well as complete failures (like the stage version of the "Thibault Family" in the last season). For many years in the summer Kazimir has been trying out theatrical versions of great epic poems (Kalevala, The Divine Comedy, Paradise Lost, in his summer season in the Theatre in the Round (Körszínház), a large reconstructed exhibition hall of the Budapest International Fair. Many admired Kazimir's attempts and recognized his at least partial success; but it has also become the subject of jokes. "The Old Testament this year, I expect" was one of them. Kazimir went on his way; last summer he did the impossible in presenting a stage version of the monumental-monstrous "Ramayana". It was his

most striking success. He achieved his aim; a work of art unknown to the Hungarian audience became a cultural experience for thousands of people, and as, since this production, it has gone into the permanent repertoire, the number is still increasing.

"Ramayana" in what is probably its first appearance on the European stage, was a disturbingly beautiful production. Its forty-eight thousand lines were reduced to two thousand by Kazimir and István Jánosy, the translator. The choice of lines and scenes was convincingly dramatic. Instead of Vishnu's incarnation or the divine prince Rama the character of Sita, the wife of the prince, took the centre of the stage, the part conceived as a modern dramatic human role, from her voluntary acceptance of her husband's exile, through temptation, torture, heroic resistance and unmerited rejection, culminating in the final apotheosis. In spite of the exotic environment, atmosphere and characters the basic themes of the plot are valid in the here and now, and whatever particular, strange characteristics, Kazimir consciously preserves the wise unearthly calm of the characters, their resignation and passivity, their acceptance, tolerance, arouse a certain nostalgia in our hectic age rather than repulsion or alienation. Kazimir has always been accused of eclecticism in style, and Kazimir has never cared. The collection of Indian gestures and attitudes, together with the philosophical meaning behind them assorted gracefully with the psychological realism in the interpretation of the principal heroes, and the modern effects, at once alluring and repulsive, like the orgy in the court of the evil three-headed Ravana, which was accompanied by music from "Hair", the burning cigarettes in the three mouths of Ravana, and the family umbrella of the turn of the century under which Rama, Sita and Lakshmana spend their jungle exile. And success, which is surely more than another accident, again came to Kazimir in the autumn at the Thalia, when after several partly successful documentary plays "Bartókiana", which opened the season, proved as popular as "Ramayana".

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Bartók's music was officially ignored during the Stalinist period. A theatrical performance is not the place, nor the way to popularize a musical style. But one thing is certain. The play, from material collected by Kazimir and Károly Kristóf, strictly out of authentic documents, letters, interviews and newspaper articles, brings Bartók's exceptional intellect to life again with striking effect. The spectator spends three hours in close intimacy with Bartók, and after these three hours—is left with a human pride in the existence this great man. The groups persecuted by Fascism are often mistakenly reduced to Communists and Jews. Bartók was neither.

He was excommunicated and driven into exile simply because he would not abandon the ideals implicit in his music, the ideals of humanism.

The play recalls the various stages of his life. The important background to Bartók's activities—the auditorium, the organ, the concert platform of the Academy of Music—are put on the stage. The actors rise from the auditorium in the roles of the former leading figures of the Hungarian cultural world, as well as various foreign musicians of great importance in Bartók's life, like Egisto Tango and Sergio Failoni. Great Hungarian contemporary poets, Ady, Attila József, similar in their ideals to Bartók, are quoted. The likenesses are not naturalistic. Kazimir uses background projections of well-known faces and action and, the actors themselves recall the well-known figures by a little external touch here and there, Bartók's bow-tie or Kodály's pointed beard. The two young actors otherwise bear no physical resemblances to their models: but the outstanding simplicity and warmth which András Kozák brings to the part of Bartók provide some of the most beautifully dramatic moments of the season.

Even in the world of "the director's theatre" the Twenty-fifth Theatre, which was described in our last issue and which started the season of 1971–1972 in its new home in the intimate, modern small theatre of eighty seats of the Journalists' Union Centre, managed to produce something unusual. The theatre commissioned Miklós Jancsó, the film-director, together with his scenario-writer, to adapt his film "Fényes szelek" (Confrontation), which was both criticised and acclaimed to the stage, "Confrontation" was criticized passionately because a whole generation, still active today, wanted—or did not want—to recognize itself in the film, which took place in the years following the 1945 Liberation against the background of the National Organization of People's Colleges. "Confrontation" dealt with the impulses and activities of a new generation of worker and peasant youth attacking the gates of knowledge, for the first time en masse in Hungarian history; their unallayed enthusiasm, revolutionary zest, their impatience, the violence of their sectarianism, their inclinations and disapportments were all heightened by the frustrations of Stalinism. The theatre version retained the loosely drafted, thin plot of the film: the confrontation of students of a People's College with those from a Catholic school run by priests; but the framework here is indeed peripheral, the centre of the stage is taken in typical Jancsó style by a continous storm of dynamic movement, which the director uses with maniac consistency. " Movement is information"—says Jancsó. They all concentrate on the burning restless, and often self-generated energy, the zeal for activity of the young. Though it is most improbable that this success will induce him to switch over to the stage, yet his bold experiment has unquestionably succeeded: he has found the appropriate stage form for his film methods. The young company of a few theatre school graduates and the rest amateurs trained by this theatre, use every foot of the stage, foyer, and auditorium. Such was the imperative, overwhelming force of their presence, the audience forgot the small size of the stage. Not for a moment did they stop marching, dancing, clapping, singing, shouting slogans, chanting in an almost choreographic design, often when it was justified, delightful and natural. But equally they do so when they wanted to silence the arguments of their own conscience or their rivals in the interests of their own monolithic brand of truth, the cracks in it becoming increasingly evident in the course of the play. This was undoubtedly deliberate. The complex, conscious and undoubtedly genuine ambivalence of the film was equally forcibly preserved in the stage production. But as a result of the arguments caused by the film, the theatrical version became enriched by a further element. While the film faithfully represented the period of the action with all the necessary trappings and backgrounds, here in the theatre the young actors played in modern clothes, in all their modern appearance; and in the last big scene of great dramatic power they gave the after-picture of what happened to the characters. Some of the young people, who had been urged on by their own impulsive enthusiasm for the community, became Ministers, university professors or immigrant housewives in Canada. This paradox is symbolic; there were many roads leading many ways from the common starting point, and it is for the young of these days to select what was good and honest of those days and reject what was unjust and inhuman.

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In this production the director totally or partly took on the writer's duties as well, but naturally not of course to write any sort of traditional play. The most successful plays based on traditional or literary models in the first quarter of the theatre season were always those where the director played a more important part than usual in that type of play. This was the case in the National Theatre's "Csák végnapjai" (Csák's Last

Days). It is an early juvenile effort of Imre Madách, author of "Az ember tragédiája" (The Tragedy of Man, 1860) whose play theoretically seemed to be even shakier than those of Beaumarchais, Garcia Lorca or Ugo Betti, works which had mediore productions this season. By emphasizing its merits and disguising its failings a scholarly adaptation with a sense of the theatre was made by Dezső Keresztury, and by the new head, formerly chief director, of the National Theatre, Endre Marton, who insists on a high literary standard in his plays, but who is not afraid to tackle them as the representative of an art of equal status.

Máté Csák of the title-role—a Hungarian equivalent to the oligarchs of the War of the Roses—is well-known to every school child as a typical representative of the backward feudalism of the 14th century, and the king, Caroberto, in destroying him did no more than execute the dictates of history. Because Caroberto was a member of a foreign dynasty, the Anjous of Naples, who was offered the Hungarian crown after the Árpád dynasty had died out, and because Máté Csák posed as a defender of Hungarian interests, the author, Madách, saw an analogy between the mediaeval conflict and the situation of the nineteenth century Hungarians fighting for life against the Habsburg dynasty. Careful analysis of the text long ago demonstrated that this conception was difficult to realize, it could only be felt in the contemplative, contradictory tone of the drama and in the more mature second version written in 1861. Using this second version Keresztury made the conflict of Csák and the king quite clear, without simplifying it. He maintained the figure of Csák on the one hand as an anachronistic but monumental, lonely figure who makes of his just grievances an absolute affront and who allows his understandable dreams to degenerate into a policy of evil; and the king on the other, as a wise, flexible but dryly rational politician. With great independence of judgement and authority Marton has interpreted this complicated historical situation—with its very modern overtones—as one in which truth is nor always unequivocally attractive, and misconceptions can occasionally more effectively influence the heart and the imagination than indisputable reasons. Csák and his supporters had their moments of truth, and the king, the sophisticated Italian, Caroberto, was hardly admirable, at times almost inhuman, but the historical truth and the ultimate point of the argument was never in dispute.

JUDITH SZÁNTÓ

SINDBAD'S HUNGARIAN VOYAGE

A film by Zoltán Huszárik

Under the surface the roots of the various arts intertwine and mingle, the delicate capillary hairs absorbing themes and techniques from one another. It cannot always be proved, but there are examples to show that a given work by some artist sometimes comes into being inspired by another art, as a painting may set a writer off mouthing silent words. At the beginning of this century the vigorous use of colour and the light bold brushwork of Impressionism and its free association of ideas—part reality part enchantment—stimulated writers to achieve the same effect by the use of words. This desire to interpret experiences through impressionist means was widespread, and it transformed some writers into masters and created new trends in literature.

In Hungarian literature Gyula Krúdy (1878–1933), a recently rediscovered novelist, was a case in point. In his youth, like most of his contemporaries, he came under the influence of Jókai and Mikszáth—mainly Mikszáth—the two "sacred old men" of literature at the time. He spent an eventful youth wandering from town to town throughout Northern Hungary, where the population is mixed and where the blend of peasant and petty bourgeois culture had given rise to a peculiar traditional life of its own. The half-provincial, half-sophisticated mentality of the country "gentry"—the lesser nobility—socially disintegrating at the time, left in young Krúdy a strong sense of its strange atmosphere and memories of strange experiences.

Krúdy was first a Mikszáth epigone, later—liberated by the influence of impressionism—he succeeded in discovering the appropriate style and tone for this atmosphere and these experiences, a style somewhere between poetry and prose. It is brilliantly exemplified through one of his characters—invented in a moment of genius—Sindbad, or in Hungarian, Szindbád, the hero of various stories which strangely meet and intermingle; they are embedded in some dream of time, their plot is often no more than a far-off memory, an unfinished gesture, a breath of nostalgia dissolving in cigar-smoke. The connecting link between them is Szindbád, the author himself—recognizable in many incarnations—and the overall dream quality of the memories.

In the course of the last ten years the art of the Hungarian film, allied with the development of an adult audience, has reached a point where an attempt could be made to translate Krúdy's poetic impressionism and the blend of memory, dream and reality which was peculiarly his, on to the screen. Zoltán Huszárik, director of the first Krúdy film, is well-known in international circles, after the success of his poetic short film: *Elégia* in a number of film festivals. There are several impressionist elements in this short film which connect with Krúdy's lightly floating style, twisting from one scene to another. Huszárik is gifted in a number of directions: he is an excellent graphic artist, his work in this medium revealing even closer links with Krdúy's world in the same impressionist atmosphere, revealed again in his film on Krúdy's Sindbad.

Szindbád is, however, not merely a beautiful colour film. Its sparkling form and lacy grace do indeed run the risk of distracting the spectator from the essential reality, the more significant dephts of the Sindbad stories. It dazzles the spectator too soon. Not that this danger was not inherent in Krúdy's writing as well. Both the readers and the spectators have to get accustomed to this particular grace and beauty, to an atmosphere like a curious verbal tense of the past and the present at the same time, something always vanishing, something always present in the memory.

This is the strange time-relation in which Sindbad the Sailor travels; he appears among humans, but the usual human laws do not hold good for him. He walks around in a past especially discovered for him, as people walk in a park of falling autumn leaves; long-forgotten, faded loves spring up at his knock in all the fresh beauty of those once lovely women. What the film had to do was not only to make the audience believe its truth, but also to make it perceptible that life is more than what happens; that life, for those who love it, as Sindbad, includes all that might have happened, events that everyone knows deep in his heart should have happened under some higher dispensation. Man is always the millionaire of possibilities and the beggar of reality. But only Sindbad the Sailor has the courage to break through the mystical frontier between poetry and reality.

No matter how distant the shores of time to which Sindbad sails, he always remains inside a peculiarly Hungarian world. Behind his amorous adventures lives the Hungarian country society of little archaic towns, a society already far-sunk in the past with all

its customs, habitudes, modes of thinking. The style Huszárik employs to recreate this world—and above all, the unusual character of Sindbad—is very much akin to Krúdy's. Which was his basic aim; not just to make a film out of the Sindbad stories, or some sort of symbolic Krúdy biography. Zoltán Huszárik's film is rather a poem and elegy on celluloid made up of the mosaic of romantic Don Juan gestures, true memories and generously untrue dreams. It expresses the sensuous joy of the beauties of life, the pain of their ephemeral passing, and the mixed joy and pain of the half-victory of memory over passing time. In Krúdy they are more tragic and bitter, especially in the Sindbad stories written in his older years; Huszárik's version is younger, more ingenuous, more romantic, like the Sindbad adventures in the early short stories, from which this quiet film poem is mostly drawn.

Sindbad starts out in search of the past, but he can never go back far enough, he is invariably lured on by recollections sparkling upwards from a still deeper past. The time-travels and adventures—in the books—add up in a series of flashes in the form of short stories and fables; the film can make only succinct references to them in concentrated episodes, can do no more than present an atmosphere, a taste, an evanescent beauty. The fleeting nature of these incidents can hardly add up to a plot. The film can only express the essence of Krúdy's world in the beauty and atmosphere of these vignettes as they flash by. As a consequence every detail is important, the gestures, the faces and voices of actors, a ruffled skirt, the eyes of a woman, landscapes, the pictures of the archaic little towns. The fact that all these did not take precedence and artificially become an end in themselves, is partly due to the firm artistic control exercised by the director, partly to the bitterly ironical colours he has picked from Krúdy's subtle palette. As a result his film is an original work of art and at the same time remains faithful to this great writer, creating in the hopelessly adolescent figure of Sindbad an intimate portrait of the sick writer whom life has robbed of everything. He has been more than ably seconded by some of his co-artists. In the first place by Zoltán Latinovits, who played the part of Sindbad, and Margit Dayka, one of the best Hungarian actresses, who slip with great and concealed art into the curious world of Krúdy, and so establish the atmosphere necessary to achieve the director's idea. Without them the film would very likely have been no more than a series of *tableaux vivants*; it is their acting which gives it the excitement of a deeper meaning. Latinovits never acts from the outside but from deep within himself, and suggests, by some exceptional power of concentration, through a gesture, an intonation, whole untold stories behind the character of Sindbad.

The centre of Sindbad's world is women. We see them dressed in graceful *fin-de-siècle* elegance, perhaps in lacy underwear or nude, in many seductive characters, longing for love. Huszárik, as in his drawings, creates a whole series of these alluring, sad and beautiful women. In our time, which is fascinated by the Art Nouveau period, there is a special attraction in the "old-fashioned" character of these women and their environment that reveals Krúdy's rich and colourful Hungarian world, something the actors and actresses never ignored, and the film draws on the writer's exceptional cultural knowledge: the style of contemporary love letters, food, the sights of the little country towns, the pleasures of noisy brothels. The cameraman, Sándor Sára, has made the most of them, playing with a painter's vision on a marrow-bone or of the golden fat-rings of a soup at one of Sindbad's famous dinners, producing remarkably beautiful scenes of his rendezvous in the little towns, or the glowing candle-light scenes of the religious pilgrimage of peasant women with wrinkled faces and hands, which, with production and acting of such a high standards, makes up a rare artistic unity in the whole.

ZOLTÁN HEGEDŰS

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Sir,

Thank you for many a fine number of your *N.H.Q.*, especially for the articles on Britain and the U.S. Let us have more of the same kind from other countries!

Erik Blomberg
Helsinki, Finnland

Sir,

The *Quarterly* is impressive—with some pieces that match first rate pieces of the kind I might hope to see in the magazines I ordinarily see, and with some pieces that are unusual or even completely outside what I normally encounter. I am thinking of how in the *Quarterly* the spread of concern is wider than would happen in a literary quarterly over here—for instance the social mobility article in No. 43, and some other parts of the magazine that reflect a deliberate attempt toward finding ways for a society to change in a chosen direction.

William E. Stafford
Lewis and Clark College,
Portland, Oregon
USA

Sir,

I want you to know how much I appreciate receiving *The New Hungarian Quarterly*. It provides people such as me with an insight into your country that we could get in no other way.

In recent issues I have found the following to be especially illuminating: "A Sex Questionnaire for the Young," "Social Mobility and the 'Openness' of Society", and the short story "Falcons." Not only are these pieces scholarly and provocative, but the use of the English language is impeccable.

Thank you again for your fine work.

Willard Van Dyke
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OUR CONTRIBUTORS

ACZÉL, György (b. 1917). Member of the Political Committee, and Secretary of the Central Committee of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party, with special responsibility for cultural and scientific matters. See also his contributions in Nos. 36, 37, and 42 of *The N.H.Q.*

BOGNÁR, József (b. 1917). Economist, M.P., Professor at Karl Marx University of Economics in Budapest. Heads the Council on World Economy and the Center for Afro-Asian Research of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. Member of the Editorial Board of, as well as a frequent contributor to, *The N.H.Q.* See Nos. 37, 38, and 42.

DERCSÉNYI, Dezső (b. 1910). Art historian, Director of the National Inspectorate of Historical Monuments in Budapest. Has published numerous works on medieval Hungarian art. See his "Hungarian Art in the Age of St. Stephen," in No. 39 of *The N.H.Q.*

EÖRSI, István (b. 1931). Poet, playwright, critic and translator, a disciple of György Lukács, and translator of some of Lukács's late works from the original German into Hungarian. See his poems in No. 36, his book review in No. 39, and "György Lukács, Fanatic of Reality" in No. 44 of *The N.H.Q.*

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HORVÁTH, György (b. 1941). Art critic on the staff of *Magyar Nemzet*, a Budapest daily.

ILLYÉS, Gyula (b. 1902). Poet, playwright, essayist, Vice President of International P.E.N., an outstanding personality among generations of Hungarian poets. His by now classic "The People of the Puszta" (1937; also available in English), a powerful sociological description of living conditions at his birthplace, as well as an outstanding work of Hungarian non-fiction, exerted great influence on the writers' sociological movement before the war. A volume of his selected poems was published by Editions du Seuil, (Paris) another by Chatto & Windus (London). See his poems in Nos. 33, 35, and his tragedy, "The Favourite", in Nos. 12, 13 of *The N.H.Q.*

JÁNOSSY, Lajos (b. 1912). Physicist, Professor of Theoretical Physics at Eötvös University in Budapest, Vice President of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, member of the Editorial Board of this review. Before 1950 taught physics at Dublin and Manchester. Has published a number of works on the Quantum and Relativity Theories; his experiment in photon-interference (1957) made him widely known. See his contributions in Nos. 35, and 38 of *The N.H.Q.*

KÁLLAI, Gyula (b. 1910). Member of the Political Committee of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party, President of the National Council of the Patriotic People's Front, Chairman of the Hungarian National Commission on European Security and Cooperation. Organized left-wing student movements in the 30s, imprisoned in 1939. The illegal Communist Party asked him, as part

of its Popular Front policy, to work for *Népszava* the Social-Democratic daily, and he was a member of its staff between 1939–44. He helped organize the anti-German anti-fascist Hungarian Front during the Second World War and represented the Communist Party on its Executive Committee in German occupied Hungary. Following the Liberation, in 1945, he was a member of the Central Committee of the Hungarian Communist Party and an Undersecretary in the Prime-Minister's Department, later editor of *Szabadság*, a daily, and *Szabad Föld*, a weekly for the rural population. Minister of Foreign Affairs 1949–1951. Arrested and convicted in 1951, in the course of the frame-ups of the time, rehabilitated in 1954. In charge of the Directorate of Publications 1954–55. Deputy Minister of Education and Culture 1955–56, later head of the Cultural Section of the Central Committee of the Hungarian Workers' Party. Took a leading role in the reorganization of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party in 1956. Minister of Education and Culture 1956–58, Minister of State 1958–59, First Deputy Prime Minister 1961–65, Prime-Minister 1966–67. Chairman of the National Assembly 1967–71.

LANTZ, R. Herman (b. 1919). Sociologist, Ph.D., Professor of Sociology at Southern Illinois University, Carbondale; author or co-author of "People of Coal Town", "Marriage: An Examination of the Man-Woman Relationship," "Workbook in Marriage and the Family," "Universities and Research," "Resource Allocation Among Academic Departments," "The Sociology of the Chivalrous Orders", "Research and Career," and "A Community in Search of Itself," all published between 1958 and 1971. Also General Editor of "Perspectives in Sociology," a series to be published by Southern Illinois University Press. In June 1971 spent a month in Hungary as visiting scholar on the invitation of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences.

McROBBIE, Kenneth (b. 1929). Poet, Professor of French History at the University of Manitoba in Winnipeg, Canada. Editor of *Mosaic*, published by the university. Has been active in translating verse from the Hungarian for a number of years. His translations from Ferenc Juhász, "The Boy Changed into a Stag," were published by Oxford University Press, Canada, in 1970. See his review "The Poems of Endre Ady," in No. 42 of *The N.H.Q.*

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MESTERHÁZI, Lajos (b. 1916). Novelist, playwright, author of screenplays and radio plays. Editor of *Budapest*, an illustrated monthly. Studied at Pázmány University and Eötvös College in Budapest. Held various editorial posts; has since published novels, volumes of short stories, plays and journalism. See "The Prime of Life", parts of a play in No. 30 of *The N.H.Q.*

NÉMETH, Lajos (b. 1929). Art historian, a frequent contributor to *The N.H.Q.*

ORBÁN, Ottó (b. 1936). Poet. Has published three volumes of poetry and a great number of translations, including a volume of Robert Lowell's selected poems, as well as English, Spanish, Russian and other poets. See poems in Nos. 33 and 37, and a chapter from his travel diary on India, in No. 39 of *The N.H.Q.*

PÁLOS, Miklós (b. 1927). Journalist, on the staff of *Hétfői Hírek*, a Budapest paper. A language and history teacher by training, he taught general and secondary school for a number of years before turning to journalism. Author of radio plays and tv shows.

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PÉTER, László (b. 1926). Literary historian. Graduated from Attila József University, Szeged. Was assistant professor at the University, later director of several provincial museums. At present research worker at the Somogyi Library, Szeged. Has published a number of works on the literary life of Szeged, edited the critical edition of Gyula Juhász's poetry. He also wrote a life of Juhász.

SMITH, William Jay (b. 1918). The well-known American poet, a former Consultant on Poetry at the Library of Congress in Washington, D. C., spent three weeks in Budapest with his wife on an invitation of Hungarian P.E.N. in December 1971. During his stay he worked on translations from Hungarian poets and subsequently sent his article printed here from Hollins College, Virginia, where he teaches English and Poetry. He has been translating Hungarian poets for more than a year for this magazine.

SZÁNTÓ, Judit. Our regular theatre critic.

SZÁNTÓ, Miklós (b. 1916). Fellow of the Sociological Research Institute of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. Member of the Presidium of the World Federation of Hungarians, editor of *Magyar Hírek*, a fortnightly published for Hungarians living abroad. Works: "Way of Life, Culture, Leisure" (1965), "Hungarians in the World." (1970).

THOMAS, B. Edit. Archeologist, department Head at the Hungarian National Museum. Her main field is Roman provincial architecture, art, applied art and the history of religion, on which she has published several works.

VARGA, Károly (b. 1930). Sociologist. Fellow of the Sociological Research Institute of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences where he lectures on the methodology of sociology. See "The View of Life of Hungarian Students" in No. 35, and "Leisure and Divorce" in No. 40 of *The N.H.Q.*

VARGA, László (b. 1939). Literary historian, our regular book reviewer.

VAS, István (b. 1910). Poet, author, translator, an eminent personality in contemporary Hungarian writing, a member of the Editorial Board of this review. His publications include many volumes of poems, an unfinished autobiographical sequence, volumes of essays, and a collection of translations from foreign poets. See his poems in Nos. 23, 29, and 38, as well as "The Changing Image of Apollinaire" in No. 34, and "The Unknown God" in No. 40 of *The N.H.Q.*

WEÖRES, Sándor (b. 1913). Poet and translator. Studied at the Universities of Pécs and Budapest, worked for a time as librarian and edited a literary journal. A selection of his poems, translated by Edwin Morgan, was published in the Penguin Modern Poets series in 1970. See his poems in Nos. 23, 32, and 41 of *The N.H.Q.*

ZÁKONYI, Ferenc (b. 1909). D.L. studied at the University of Pécs. Worked in local government, until his recent retirement was active in the organization of tourism in the Lake Balaton area. Published "Balaton Guide", 1970, (with Károly Sági).

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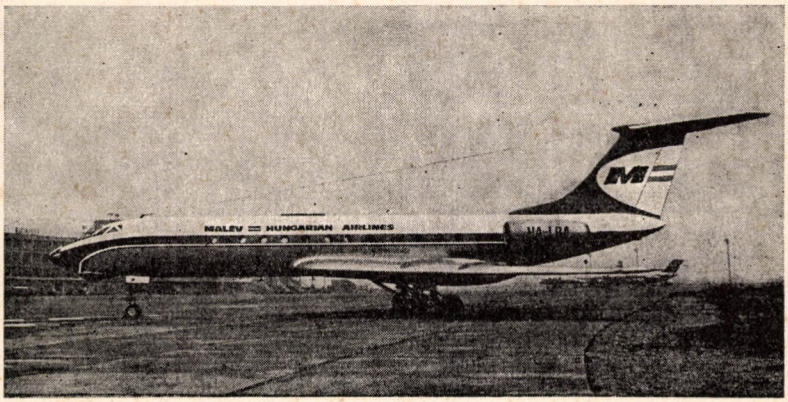

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