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*The New
Hungarian
Quarterly*

**THE THIRTIETH ANNIVERSARY
OF HUNGARY'S LIBERATION**

Members of the Presidential Council Remember — *Gyula Kállai,
Tibor Bartha, Anna Bodonyi, Gyula Ortutay, Gábor Petri,
István Sályi, József Somogyi, István Szabó, Rezső Trautmann,
Erzsébet Vass*

Memoirs — *Péter Veres, Gyula Illyés, Mihály Fekete*

The Worker-Peasant Alliance — *István Huszár*

Access to Culture — *György Aczél*

Ossa Sepia (a story) — *Lajos Mesterházi*

56

The New Hungarian Quarterly

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ANNIVERSARIES AND RECOLLECTIONS

This is the 56th issue of *The New Hungarian Quarterly*. With its appearance in the early winter of 1974 we will have completed our fifteenth year of publication. During these days of November and December people in Hungary will be reminiscing about the past. The not-so-young will often preface their conversations with "Do you remember?", a query which will, more frequently than not, draw a blank from the young. A new generation has grown up in Hungary to whom the Liberation is an historical event like the 1848-49 Revolution or the First World War. Yet their parents and their grandparents experienced the Second World War like so many Fabrices in the Battle of Waterloo, with the difference that older Hungarians—and English, Americans, French, Australians and many others—did not live through the home or battlefield events of the Second World War as irresolute, disoriented Stendhalian anti-heroes, but as both passive and active participants. It is one of the odd tricks of history that a man, a generation or a whole nation can be active and passive at the same time, yet this is what happened to all of us, to the age-group of this editor in Hungary, in the whole of Europe and, to some extent at least, in America as well.

The winter of '74 and the spring of '75 is a time for everyone to remember the fighting, humiliations, resistance, liberation and, for some nations, the victory of thirty years ago. For half of this period, our journal has tried to link the Hungarian past to the present and, in so doing, point the way to the future, a common European future, a future of coexistence. Now once again, for the thirtieth anniversary of the Liberation of Hungary, we shall try to recall the past in order that it not be severed from the present and in such a way as to serve as a guide for the future. This objective would strain the framework of one issue, hence the job has been divided in two. This Number 56 is largely devoted to retrospection while the Spring 1975 issue

will be a summing-up and a projection of future prospects. This division is especially apropos—and possibly of more interest to readers abroad—considering the fact that the 30th anniversary of the Liberation of Hungary, April 4, 1975, falls close in time to the 11th Congress of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party which will survey the work of the past five years and formulate the policy of coming years, an appropriate way to celebrate an important historical anniversary.

Travellers from abroad and those who use this journal to keep in touch with developments in Hungary may have noticed that here anniversaries are not celebrated with slogans, banners, portraits and processions but by the drawing up of balance sheets, by a general stock-taking. The 30th anniversary of the Liberation does not merely mean remembering conditions thirty years ago and appreciating what the liberating campaign of the Soviet Army meant to the Hungarian people: liberation from the past, from an obsolete and oppressive system of landed estates, the misery of centuries, stifling social injustice and inequalities—in other words from that false situation and tragic contradiction between social progress and the national interest (witness the alliance with Hitler) which was engineered by the pre-Liberation ruling class. Commemorating an anniversary does not only, nor primarily, mean remembrance; it is not simply a matter of a history lesson, but rather it is the thirty years that have passed that are important, the progress, struggles and achievements within them, the setbacks, sidetracks and mistakes as well, but above all a stock-taking of the most recent years, an analysis and evaluation of the economic upswing since the reform was introduced, and its prospects for the future. This is how Hungarian society commemorates its anniversaries and, as always, *The NHQ* will attempt to mirror that effort.

*

The section of memoirs consists of contributions from some members of a high and representative national body, the Presidential Council of the Hungarian People's Republic, who were invited by the editors to relate their experiences at the time of the Liberation, to tell of how they fought against feudal and fascist oppression and how their lives have since developed. The Presidential Council, all members of Parliament, includes people from every sector of Hungarian society: workers, peasants (including a presentday chairman of an agricultural cooperative), professional men and women, scholars, scientists, artists and clergymen. This section is headed by part of a documentary recording made by Gyula Kállai, who was one of the architects of the political rebirth which followed the Liberation and was

one of the three editors of *Szabadság*, the first daily to then appear in Budapest. He tells of the circumstances of the paper's foundation.

József Somogyi, the sculptor, is also a member of the Presidential Council; he sent us photographs of his works instead of a statement, saying that these were what the Liberation meant to him. György Horváth's short essay tells what Somogyi represents in Hungarian art.

The memoirs that deal with the Resistance have the force and authenticity of historical documents. Mihály Fekete was an ironworker back in the 1940s, employed at the Diósgyőr Works near Miskolc. His contribution "The Diósgyőr Resistance" relates the activities of an anti-Nazi organization which he headed. Gyula Illyés sketches a portrait of Endre Bajcsy-Zsilinszky, who was, in 1944, Chairman of the National Committee of the Hungarian Resistance. Bajcsy-Zsilinszky's life, career and death cover much of modern Hungarian history; dramatic conflicts and confrontations culminating in a tragic death offer a true catharsis to all observers and to the Hungarian nation as a whole. Bajcsy-Zsilinszky in his youth found himself on the political Right. In the twenties Horthy's and Gömbös's chauvinism and racism attracted him, and even before that, as a young officer of the Hussars, personal and family reasons prompted him to take part in the killing of András Áchim, a radical peasant politician. Later he adopted and further developed the radical views of his victim, becoming a leading figure in political resistance against the Nazi encroachment and also in a peasant emancipation movement. It was he whom the SS men first looked for on March 19th 1944 when Hitler's armies occupied Hungary and he was the only one to meet them with a drawn gun. Bajcsy-Zsilinszky was wounded when arrested, and later executed. Gyula Illyés refers to this event as well.

Péter Veres, the peasant writer who died a few years ago . . . describing him thus I have to stop short even after fifteen years and fifty-five issues of *The NHQ*, for the notion "peasant writer" itself sounds strange, even incomprehensible to Anglo-American ears. But this is precisely what the 30th anniversary is about: to call to remembrance the oppression of the peasantry and a social system that trod human dignity underfoot. Péter Veres was a landless peasant, an agricultural labourer. The trade union movement discovered his talents and he started to write when still young. He was self-educated, yet his knowledge was encyclopaedic, and he was a writer of stature as many a back issue of *The NHQ* bears out. But—and this monosyllable indicates the different nature of the Hungarian situation—but he remained a peasant all his life. Up to 1945 he worked his bit of rented land in Balmazújváros, his native village, and after the Liberation, though active in national politics and a recognized writer, his clothes, manners and

thinking were still those of a peasant. (A phenomenon that must be difficult to understand for a Cambridge reader, be he in East Anglia or Massachusetts, for whom the word peasant is merely a dictionary entry without substantive meaning.) "New Dispensation", a chapter from one of his many autobiographical writings, describes those first, and last days when life and the social order changed in Hungary, and, with traditional peasant constraint, he relates the death of his youngest son.

József Szekeres also deals with those first and last days when the municipal authorities themselves—including many who had until then served the gods of war—tried to save the six Danube bridges of Budapest from destruction. Their efforts were in vain; Hitler's retreating armies in desperation blew up the bridges before the advance of the liberating Soviet forces, though this was an act of no strategic or tactical significance. Szekeres's description is more than just the story of a frustrated resistance action; he outlines that political background which turned Hungary and its capital into a battlefield.

The literary pages of this issue act as a bridge between memoir and situation report, between the past and the present. Lajos Mesterházi was a young writer at the time of the War. Readers will remember "Sempiternin", his ironical piece of science fiction which appeared in No. 48. "Ossa Sepia" his new story, is about a man who, with memories of interwar years in the illegal Communist movement and fighting in Spain and of the enthusiasm and work-filled years after the Liberation, strives to find his place in contemporary Hungary. Gyula Illyés' "A Wreath" in William Jay Smith's brilliant translation is what could be called a rhapsody on the Hungarian language and is an apt contribution to the celebration of the national anniversary. István Vas's "The Grand Finale", a personal poetic account, a kind of modern *épopée* of the end of the war, was also translated by William Jay Smith.

*

The beginning section of this issue on contemporary Hungary is headed by István Huszár's article on one of the most important and discussed questions in Hungary, the worker-peasant alliance. István Huszár, a Deputy Prime Minister, was trained as a sociologist and statistician, and is himself of peasant origin. His observations bear in mind the social developments and changes of thirty years and contribute to the theory of the construction of socialism on a higher level.

Egon Szabady's "The Aims of Demographic Policy" touches on another highly important problem. In most parts of the world responsible authorities

are worried about over-population. The exact opposite is the source of national anxiety in Hungary, and this has led to legislation, passed this year, on population problems. This legislation is the starting point for Dr. Szabady's train of thought. In a wider sense of the term László Siklós's "Student Marriages" contributes to the same subject. Piroska Szemes deals with the protection of families.

György Aczél's "Access to and Participation in Culture in a Socialist Community" tells of the passing of a recent political resolution on Hungarian cultural policy, and goes on to evaluate its importance. All those who keep tabs on the meetings, conferences and round-tables of Unesco and other international organizations that deal with cultural or social questions, will be aware that, in recent years, the new dimensions of culture and the broadening of cultural activities have been major topics of discussion. György Aczél sums up the experience and achievements of a society progressing towards socialism, surveying the situation from a high vantage point in Hungarian cultural policy.

*

As for the remainder, titles and texts speak for themselves. I should like however, to draw attention to an innovation in format of increased illustrations (let me mention among them the "Hungarian Variations" by the photographer Károly Gink) and to one contribution which indicates the difficulties of today, thirty years after the Liberation, and the way in which the youngest member of the Hungarian Parliament, a factory girl, tries to master them. "Three Years as the Youngest Member of Parliament" is published as told to Éva Kocsis. There are more clouds than sunshine in this account, but I am convinced nevertheless that it is one of the most optimistic to have ever appeared in this journal.

THE EDITOR

THE WORKER-PEASANT ALLIANCE

by

ISTVÁN HUSZÁR

The working-class is the leading power of Hungarian society. The most important foundation of its political power is the alliance with the peasantry. Hungarian experience in its successes as well as its failures, supports and authenticates its importance and eternal timeliness. The interests of the two classes are basically identical, though there are certain differences.

When judging the worker-peasant alliance two factors must always, and now as well, be borne in mind, the fact that this is an alliance of a peculiar kind, the substance differs from that of every other alliance between classes, changing dialectically. The peculiarity of this alliance lies in the fact that work done to strengthen it, lessens and finally puts an end to the economic and political differences of the classes taking part, that is it liquidates the foundations of its coming into being.

The aim of this alliance, and at the same time the basically identical interest of the two classes, is the construction of socialism, more particularly the joint creation of a socialist system. It is essential to emphasize this basic identity of interests since it has a clear and far-reaching determining role as against those interests where there is opposition.

The socialist reorganization of agriculture deserves special attention from the aspect of this subject. Socialist large-scale agricultural plants came into being and were consolidated thanks to the direct and many-sided help offered by the working class, help that was primarily of a political nature. On the other hand the peasantry more directly participated in socialist construction after the coming into being of large agricultural plants, and even more so their consolidation and fast growth, than they did before, and their activity and economic and political weight increased within the alliance. I hope this does not sound paradoxical, but it particularly underlies the dialectical nature of this link and this alliance: the growth in the leading

role of the working class is the major precondition of the rise of the peasantry, the strengthening of the leading role of the working class is therefore in the interests of the peasantry as well, as it is in that of the Hungarian nation that is building socialism, so what has been said about the peasantry applies to the policy of alliances in the widest sense of the term.

There are of course differences in the interests of the two classes, these are however showing a declining trend and do not touch the essence of the alliance. Differences of interest derive in the first place from differences in types of property. To put it mildly however, the coming into being and consolidation of socialist large-scale enterprises in agriculture has changed the basis of this difference. For some time now the cooperative type of property has had a decisive role in Hungarian agriculture.

A difference in interests can arise from the fact as well that the two classes are consumers of each other's products. It is in their interests that the products of one other should improve in quality and decline in price. Central state measures restrict these differences to a relatively limited area, inhibiting their becoming acute, putting them in the service of social progress. In this way no damage is done to the basic identity of interests of the two classes.

Changes in the technological conditions of agricultural production meant the end of peasant work in the traditional sense of the term. Industrial and agricultural workers took shape as social categories, and this, given the division of labour, can only lead to "opposition" to each other inasmuch as the industrial worker expects cheap food and the agricultural workers cheap instruments of production and durable consumer goods from the other. Opposition is in quotes to bring out that cooperation of this sort mutually demands the development of production, and an increase in the social productivity of labour. This, given the soil of the strengthening of the socialist relations of production is a condition of a regular increase in the standard of living. In other words, the lasting and defining elements of the alliance can and must, in an odd sort of way, be recognized as part of these present differences of interests, that is the worker-peasant alliance was given a new substance and meaning by the socialist reorganization of agriculture. The conditions for the fast rise of the peasantry are variables dependent on the development of the forces and relations of production. Its basic political and economic objectives are identical with those of the working class, as a result its consciousness is getting closer and closer to that of the working class as well.

I certainly do not want to create the impression that existing differences of interest should be neglected. They exist and though they really and

significantly decline, they must be reckoned with, we must know them and be aware of them and keep an unceasing watch lest they turn into a source of tension. A policy that is properly and consciously applied can avoid this. The whole system of political, economic and legal measures must be applied to ensure in the first place that these differences be harnessed in the service of the general interests of socialist construction, and that they should not be allowed to create conflicts that may loosen the alliance of the two classes.

The 10th Congress of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party established that Hungary had become an industrial country that disposed over a developed agriculture. The ways in which this process is reflected in the contribution to national income of industry and agriculture is most interesting.

Industry and agriculture contribute roughly two thirds of national income between them. In 1973 industry, without the building industry, was responsible for 44 per cent and agriculture for 18 per cent. Their ratio indicates the structure as well as the level of development of the economy. These ratios are therefore usually mentioned as an index of economic advancement. In Hungary, before the Liberation, agriculture was the most important sector. Even in the fifties, using comparable prices, the weight of agriculture was almost twice that of industry, 35 : 65 in favour of agriculture in 1950, 28 : 72 if the number employed are considered.

The ratio, in Hungary as well, changed as a result of industrialization, and did so forcefully, so that the earlier position was reversed, and the contribution of industry took a leap forward while that of agriculture declined.

Following socialist industrialization the contribution to national income on the part of industry was ahead of that of agriculture by 1960, the level of production of the latter, around that time, still essentially stagnated close to that which prevailed before the Liberation. In the years following 1970 the ratios were 72 to 28 per cent in favour of industry. As regards the number of those employed the weight tipped somewhat later, the present proportion being 62 per cent for industry and 38 per cent for agriculture.

How is this process to be evaluated? The ratio of the two sectors to each other, and their contribution to national income, can change in many different ways. In Hungary industrial as well as agricultural production increased, that of industry more quickly, but growth in agriculture was significant as well. This is most important. The volume of agricultural production was 70 per cent higher in 1973 than in 1950, though the quantity of land used, and the number of those employed, declined significantly. A respectable proportion of those earlier employed in agriculture were

placed in other sectors, the bulk of them in industry, where per capita production, that is productivity, is higher. All this led to a more effective use of available work, in other words a process took place that is unambiguously sound from the point of view of society or the economy.

What we did therefore when we reorganized agriculture in a socialist way was not simply to ease the burden of peasants, what happened as well was that a considerable labour force was liberated for use in industry, the more productive and efficient sector. Looked at from than other angle, socialist industrialization created jobs for peasants. The importance of the latter process cannot be overestimated when things are examined from the point of view of the employment and economic security of the peasantry. The mutuality of interests was therefore present here as well, what is more on the higher level of the general social interest.

*The numbers, restratification and level of skills of the working class
and the peasantry*

Following the Liberation a far-reaching transformation took place in Hungarian social structure which, in differing ways and with varying intensity, affected every section of society. The land reform, the state ownership of the bulk of the means of production, and the cooperative type of ownership which gradually took shape in the course of development, as well as other factors were all reflected in the size of the membership of the working class and the peasantry, and in changes in their structure.

Before the Liberation the proletariat made up roughly half of Hungarian society. A large proportion of the working class, roughly 17 per cent of those employed, consisted of those whose work lay in agriculture, field hands, servants of all kinds and day labourers. Almost a third of Hungarian society was made up of peasants who owned land. This land-owning peasantry was highly differentiated and did not form a class. Close to half owned less than 5 *bold* (cca 7¹/₂ acres) and their position, in many respects, was close to that of workers, agricultural workers in the first place, since many of them felt forced to hire out their labour power in order to supplement the scant income derived from working their property.

After the Liberation, following the land reform, the number of land owning peasants significantly increased, this being particularly true of the small and middle peasantry. As a result, for a period of transition, the peasantry were the largest population group in Hungary, roughly 43 per cent, of those art work. At that time roughly a third of those employed were

members of the working class shaping up in new social conditions. When compared with the pre-Liberation situation, the number and proportion of agricultural labourers within the working class significantly declined.

By 1960 socialist industrialization made its effect felt, and as a result the working class, and particularly industrial workers, significantly grew in number. By that time more than half of those employed were members of the working class, the great majority of them being manual workers employed outside agriculture, a smaller proportion being workers and day-labourers in state farms and forests, or foremen or other kinds of charge hands.

By 1962 the socialist reorganization of industry was complete and peasants working on their own had become a small fragment; the cooperative peasantry had largely come into being, and this made up 24-25 per cent of those in employment in 1963.

The 1970 census and the 1973 microcensus showed that these trends continued. The working class now makes up almost 60 per cent of Hungarian society, roughly 50 per cent are manual workers outside agriculture, almost 5 per cent workers on state farms and somewhat more than 5 per cent charge hands, technicians, or others concerned with the direct supervision of production. At the same time roughly 17 per cent of those employed are cooperative peasants. Surviving individual peasants and auxiliary family members make up hardly more than 1 per cent of the employed population.

Before the Liberation few indeed of working class origin found themselves in professional or other clerical employment, afterwards however the majority of the new socialist professional men and women were of working class or peasant birth. At the same time, and in connection with socialist industrialization, the increased numbers of industrial and building workers were reinforced from the ranks of manual workers in agriculture. More than half of the members of the working class today are the descendants of agricultural workers or smallholding peasants. The proportion of those of peasant origin is particularly large amongst semi-skilled and unskilled workers as well as amongst those who commute from villages. These mobility processes helped to ensure that the links between the working class today and the peasantry are close indeed, they often being kith and kin sharing the same household. Their ways of life and the conditions under which they live are also much closer to each other than they were before the Liberation or in the first period that followed it.

By 1973 42 per cent of manual workers were skilled, their numbers being $2\frac{1}{2}$ fold what they were in 1949. The number of the semi-skilled increased four-fold in the same period, they made up 14 per cent in 1949

and 32 per cent in 1973. The number of jobs that required no training whatever declined by more than 120,000. In 1940 55 per cent of workers were still unskilled, by 1973 only barely more than a quarter belonged to that category. In spite of the decline, their number, more than 700,000, is still large.

There was no specialization to speak of in the work of small-holding peasants of old, and skills and know-how considerably differed from what was needed in industry. In the socialist agriculture of today however the number of those is increasing whose skills are close to those of skilled workers in industry, in both substance and standard. More than 120,000 skilled workers and close to 110,000 semi-skilled workers are amongst the 850,000 peasant members of agricultural cooperatives. Many of them are fitters, motors mechanics, truck drivers and bricklayers, in other words men skilled in trades found in industry, construction work and transport.

The meaning of changes in the worker-peasant ratio

In 1970, at the time of the census, there were almost 5,000,000 in employment, 3,000,000 were members of the working class and 850,000 belonged to the cooperative peasantry. Since then the numbers of the working class have grown and those of the peasantry have declined.

Changes in the worker-peasant ratio do not as such influence the substance of the class-alliance. The process of transformation in Hungarian conditions, accompanied socialist industrialization and the socialist reorganization of agriculture. All this meant significant changes which raised the worker-peasant alliance to new heights, and placed it on new foundations.

The worker-peasant alliance obtained a new meaning, dependent variable of the relations of production. The objectives and interests of the two classes approach ever closer to each other. The working and living conditions of the cooperative peasantry are getting closer and closer to those of the working class. What is of great importance there is increased security. The producers cooperatives record hours of work, social insurance applies to them as well, and the education and training of the peasantry are suffering revolutionary changes. The standard of living is growing parallel with that of the working class.

These circumstances, and many others, mean that differences between the working class and the peasantry are gradually becoming smaller and smaller, first of all because the occupational composition of families affects both classes and secondly because of the process of restratification which

meant that an increasing proportion of the working class feels emotionally attached to the peasantry. Changes in industrial location went hand in hand with the increase in the numbers of the working class and the restratification of the peasantry. This put an end to the earlier separation according to place of residence and workers and peasants now share living areas in the provinces. This also brought the two classes closer together, and they are coming closer together still. The influence of the workers on the peasantry has become more direct. All this has strengthened the alliance between these two friendly classes.

What has been said perhaps made it clear that major restratification processes have taken place in both classes, and they are continuing. Neither the working class nor the peasantry are entirely what they were say fifteen years ago. This is pretty obvious bearing in mind the major socio-economic changes that have taken place, since the two classes do not strive to preserve themselves unchanged, but undergo changes, and they have to change since we, in the last resort, wish to construct a classless communist society. In my view a thorough examination, going deep into politics and principles, of the changes that have occurred in the position of the classes, is an important and exciting duty for the social sciences and all those working in the ideological field. I would be inclined to reverse the proposition as well: social scientists and those doing ideological work owe us such an analysis.

Industrial type production in agriculture

As production of the industrial sort made headway and following on technological progress, agricultural labour became increasingly specialized and trained. Speedy development led to a radical change in the nature of peasant work where everyone used to cope with everything. Workers in cooperative farms found themselves in a situation that approached that of the working class as regards the organization of work, working conditions, know-how and skills, that is a new compound "peasant" worker or agricultural employé came into existence to replace the old. This restratification has nothing to do with property, it is a function of the division of labour and training. Machine minders, to take an example, look on themselves as workers rather than peasants. Modern agricultural production thus, through its effect on individuals, radically changes social relations in the village as well.

Fast changes in the forces of production also lead to a perfection of relations of production. Within the relations of production the political back-

ground of the developmental process or the relations of production is provided on the one hand by the fuller meaning of the worker-peasant alliance, on the other by the way the peasantry feels tied to property, as well as by the gradual loosening of these ties. They are getting looser but, for a number of reasons, these ties are still stronger than in the case of workers.

Production of the industrial type naturally transgresses the limits of earlier group property increasing the effectiveness of social requirements that are in the interests of the producers' cooperatives as well. The emphasis is therefore not on the confrontation of group property and the social interest but on creating the greatest possible harmony between them. The Hungarian political decision to create social property of uniform status had great fundamental importance. This is the basis of the present community of class interests as well. Within it however there is such a thing as group property and national property, but these have not existed since the beginning of time, nor are they eternal. As the forces of production develop so do property relations, and the direction is that of uniform socialist property. Property types must not, therefore, be absolutized. In this case, as almost everywhere else, two extreme positions must be avoided. One tries to change group-property as quickly as possible though the necessary conditions are not present, the other tries to preserve group-property as it is now, neglecting changes in the forces of production and what these changes require.

The spread of production of the industrial type in this way, both directly and indirectly, speeds up the approach to each other of the two classes, and this means the gradual fulfilment of the worker-peasant alliance as well. The technological progress made by agricultural enterprises, and the industrial methods applied in themselves change traditional peasant attitudes. This, combined with the labour absorptive power of industry relocated in the provinces, increased the intertwining of the working class and the peasantry, and their need of each other, going beyond earlier political, interest, and commodity relations. These days the great majority of peasant families have a direct, personal relationship with industrial production.

Large scale farming by the producers' cooperatives, and with it the income of those there employed, has become stabilized. This is particularly important for political reasons. A regular monthly income also means that, in a great many cooperatives, the way in which the income is obtained is identical with that of wages and salary earners. This fact that basically changes the way of life and thinking of peasants also expresses the fulfilment of the aims of the policy of alliance.

Commuting workers

Fifty-two per cent of the working class live in towns, 23 per cent in Budapest. 48 per cent live in villages.

Commuters make up a large proportion of the working class. Almost a million travel every day, the bulk of them are workers who live in villages, just about a third of the employed members of the working class. A further 300,000 work a long way from their homes, staying in temporary accommodation.

It affects the conditions of life of workers who live in villages that members of employes of producers' cooperatives often live in the same households, as a result household plots and auxiliary farms contribute to their family income. A far from negligible proportion of the personal income of workers who work a plot of land themselves, as much as 14 to 15 per cent, derives from direct agricultural production. It should be noted that workers with their roots in towns or cities—most of them at least—have no such opportunities.

One should say a few words about household plots and auxiliary farms in general. Most of them are pretty small, not even covering half a hectare (an acre), and fewer and fewer animals are kept there. And yet they still make a significant contribution not only to family income and subsistence but to the agricultural production of the country and thus to national income as well. In 1972, for example, roughly 10 per cent of agricultural commodities were produced by such auxiliary farms, the proportion of maize, grapes and fruit thus grown being particularly high, as were the number of pigs fattened and eggs produced. Their economic importance is thus far from small and having to do without what they produce would create noticeable shortages and supply bottle-necks, having to replace them on a large-scale production basis would place heavy labour and investment burdens on the economy. For that very reason household plots and auxiliary farms and their production will be needed in the future as well.

The 1972 general agricultural census in the course of which not only large-scale farming data were collected but also those relating to household plots and auxiliary farms larger than 640 sq. meters—320 in the case of vineyards or orchards—or those where one large animal—head of cattle or pig etc., or 50 fowls were kept, showed that there were almost 1,700,000 farms of this sort in the country, and that 5,200,000 people, that is roughly half the country's population, live as members of households which dispose over such farms. There are fewer cooperative peasants than members of the working class amongst these 5,200,000. Roughly 1,000,000 manual

workers employed in non-agricultural pursuits live as members of such households. If one adds charge hands and others directly in charge of production who are reckoned members of the working class one can say that more than 40 per cent of the working class dispose over small farms of this sort and share in their income.

A survey which was part of the 1972 general agricultural census and which extended over 1972 and 1973, was concerned with the amount of work done on auxiliary farms and household plots. Results showed that not only members of producers' cooperatives and adult dependents worked on them, but also workers and employés of state farms and non-agricultural large enterprises. In June 1972 for instance, the first month of the survey, non-agricultural workers (men) spent an average of three hours a day, including Sundays, working on their own farm. Women of similar occupation did somewhat less, an average of an hour and a half a day. These household auxiliary farms are thus to a large degree worked by members of the working class, after working hours or at the week-end.

The greater part of the value produced is of animal origin. One third of pigs killed at home are slaughtered in the households of workers, one eighth of cows in small farms are kept by them, and most of them keep fowls or rabbits as well. Fruit and vegetables grown in the auxiliary farms of urban workers are of some importance as well.

This also means that the auxiliary farms of workers have a far from negligible role in the agricultural production of the country as a whole.

The present scale of the workers' small farms is one of the consequences of the social restratification of recent years. A major proportion of workers living in villages used to be peasants. This restratification is still going on, it and the relocation of industry in the provinces, the growth in the proportion of workers who live in villages, as well as the role of auxiliary farms within working class incomes, are all factors that are likely to be far from negligible in the future as well.

Mistaken interpretations

There are some who identify industrial and agricultural policy with worker and peasant policies, that is they confuse terms that apply to sectors of the economy with political and class-categories. It is simple to see that there are connections, but there are workers outside industry as well, in trade for instance, and in agriculture. Or, to take another example, the terms village and agriculture are certainly not coextensive. I could mention,

repeating myself to some extent that, following socialist industrialization, and the connected social restratification the proportion of those employed in industry and agriculture is almost equal in the village population.

State subsidies for agricultural production also gives rise to misunderstandings. The economic meaning of these subsidies is that Hungary like the other socialist countries, tries to keep food prices low. This is part of the standards of living policy, and of vital interest to workers, particularly the lower income groups. In the interests of relatively low agricultural commodity prices, those of needed industrial instruments of production such as machines, component parts, chemical fertilizers and plant protection sprays are moderated with the help of state subsidies. Improvements needing considerable investment which do not offer quick returns, receive state support differentiated according to considerations dependent on product-policy. In addition one should not forget that the socialist state and the working class gave considerable and varied political and material help to the cooperative peasantry in the course of that great and important process, the socialist transformation of industry.

Another mistaken and oversimplified view is one which, basing itself on imagined class interests, wishes to use up national income in proportion to its production, what was produced in agriculture, in agriculture and what was produced in industry, in industry. This sort of attitude cannot be maintained either in principle or practice since it does not reckon with the fact that the socialist economy is an integrated whole, a growing organism. National income must be distributed in keeping with the demands of planned development, by making the best possible use of the available labour power, and this, just because of the new requirements of progress must needs lead to regroupment. The view mentioned cannot serve progress but only the conservation of the earlier situation. It is not only unsound economically but politically damaging as well since it would push the alliance into the area of friction at the expense of the common interests.

Standards of living

It is difficult to speak of the growth in the standard of living over the thirty years that have passed since the Liberation, treating the working class and the peasantry separately, since changes of such magnitude have occurred that it is difficult to define groups or categories that have kept their meaning or substance. It should suffice to draw attention to the fact that restratification between these two population groups was considerable. According to

the available approximations the real income of the population as a whole increased 2.8 fold between 1950 and 1973, and that of the two sections that make up the overwhelming majority of the population grew to much the same extent.

There were times and years when the standard of living of the working class and of the peasantry grew at different rates. The income of the peasantry showed somewhat less development in the early 1950s than that of the working class. It should be added that at the start of the period peasant per capita income was smaller than that of workers. The trend was reversed in the 1960s and peasant incomes grew faster than worker incomes in accord with centrally determined objectives. The total real income of the two classes essentially evened out in 1968/69 and with smaller swings of the pendulum, has stayed equal ever since. It should be pointed out however that the income of the cooperative peasantry shows greater swings than that of workers since it largely depends on the quality of the harvest.

The Government, in 1972, decided to raise the real income of workers. This had to be done since the income of workers in large scale industry fell behind at a time when the real income of every section of the population went up. Following on a series of good harvests however peasant incomes as well grew faster than in earlier years, as a result the proportional relationship of the income of the two sections stayed the same in 1973. In 1973 per capita annual income of peasants and workers alike was around 22,000 to 23,000 forints.

One ought not to forget of course that these are average figures. The scatter of incomes is pretty big within both classes, more obviously so in the peasantry. Essential differences exist within both classes dependent on the opportunities offered to families to earn an income, that is primarily on their demographic composition. The size of differences is often not identical, and these differences are not always determined by the same factors and to the same degree. It is precisely the differences and the factors that determine them which most frequently produce social tension.

Income is only one factor within the standard of living. Other important ones such as the level of employment, the quantity of work that has to be done to secure a given income, working conditions and the housing situation, the infrastructure and social services cannot be brought down to a common denominator. It is difficult to quantify them.

Progress in this field was so revolutionary, however, that it is quite obvious that the living conditions of the peasantry, that is those prevailing in villages, improved more than those of workers, that is the urban population. The difference between town and country became significantly smaller

both as regards the level of employment and social services. And yet it is still true of present standards that, in a number of fields, conditions in rural areas, that is the social services available to the agricultural population all fall behind those of towns, that is those that apply to men and women in other than agricultural employment.

Links in production between industry and agriculture

Production links between industry and agriculture are close and important to both sectors. Industry supplies up to date implements such as chemical fertilizers and plant-sprays, fuel, and machines and equipment needed by modern large-scale production. Hungarian industry has supplied goods worth 22,000,000,000 forints in 1971 to serve the needs of current production, and mechanical investments made were worth more than 2,000,000,000 forints. The share of imports allotted to agriculture further increased this.

Agriculture on the other hand supplied important raw materials. Industrial commodities made up 40 per cent of domestic products used up by agriculture in 1971, and 22 per cent of goods used up by industry derived from agriculture.

It is part of the nature of things that the links of agriculture are closest with the food-processing industry. Of a total of 42,000,000,000 forints worth of goods supplied by agriculture to industry, 38,000,000,000 forints worth went to the food-processing industry. But reverse traffic, in fodder mixes of various sorts, was also most important, making up half of the goods supplied by industry.

The links of the 1970s are the result of the speedy development of the past ten years. Industrial goods bought by agriculture increased a round fourfold in quantity since 1960, and the volume of those supplied by agriculture was 65 per cent higher in 1971 than in 1960, but let me add, the volume of goods supplied to industry grew faster than total agricultural production.

The figures provided perhaps make it clear that links between the two sectors of the economy are mutually close and important and that they are developing fast. The way we look at them is however important as well. The only proper way is to approach this question from the angle of the economy as a whole; interdependence and the dynamism of development must be recognized in the process, things must not be weighed up from the angle of either industry or agriculture, exaggerating real achievements,

deriving extreme and mistaken conclusions of the sort that argue that agriculture pays the way of industry, or vice versa. Need I add that these views lack a basis and are mistaken, and that they do not help a better understanding of the problems of either industry or agriculture, and are even less of a help when there is a need to draw important conclusions of an economic kind.

Economic growth is a precondition of the rise in the standard of living. For that very reason it will remain a central subject of Hungarian economic policy as it will in the other socialist countries as well. A great deal remains to be done in this field. Economic growth is only accompanied by a rise in the standard of living if the effectiveness of social investments is increased, if the exploitation of capacities is improved, the productivity of labour is increased in industry as well as agriculture. There is much that can be done in this way both in industry and in agriculture, and there are major achievements to be called our own both here and there.

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ACCESS TO AND PARTICIPATION IN CULTURE IN A SOCIALIST COMMUNITY

by

GYÖRGY ACZÉL

I

Institutionalized and organized action designed to ensure easier access to and greater participation in culture has recently been much discussed in Hungary. It was an important subject at the March 1974 session of the Central Committee of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party which passed an appropriate resolution.

It is part of the "prehistory" of this resolution that, soon after the defeat of the counter-revolution, to assist consolidation, in the course of formulating fundamental ideas in 1958, the Central Committee adopted directives for the cultural policy of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party, laying down the long-term principles of party and state guidance of the whole of Hungarian cultural life. In 1969 the Central Committee elaborated and adopted directives for science policy, and in 1972 it determined the duties of educational development. It was these preliminaries that made an analysis of the present subject possible.

However, these ideological and cultural statements and directives are not the only, or the most important, antecedents of this proposal. Indispensable preconditions were above all the progress of socialist reality, the modernization of economic guidance, the further development of socialist democracy in state administration, an examination of the situation of the working class, the resolutions on the position of women and young people, and the work done to implement them; all that was done, allowing one to maintain that Hungary has reached a higher stage in the construction of socialism, when the importance of the further development of socialist consciousness, mode and way of life impresses itself with even more imperative necessity than before.

Carrying out objectives demands a higher general level of culture, the

situation does not only allow but demands that social change should—through the mediation of larger and smaller communities—produce a socialist outlook and socialist ways of living at the family and personal level. This is, of course, not primarily or exclusively the task of institutionalized activity within cultural policy, though this has an important role, since with its own special means, which cannot be replaced, it helps to shape socialist consciousness.

It is therefore unnecessary to stress that reexamining this question was prompted neither by a bottleneck, nor a crisis. Results of far-reaching importance were achieved in the implementation and fulfilment of the Leninist cultural revolution. It is this that prompts the question: what must be done now

—with the difficulties which are the left-over of the “legacy” history bequeathed on the country;

—with the tensions, contradictions and duties which are the side-effects of what has already been achieved;

—with the demands of the future;

—and with the problems caused by shortcomings in our own work.

What Lenin had to say about the two cultures naturally applies to the present subject as well. The socialist point of view on the education and culture of the masses has always been in sharp conflict with the bourgeois one. The fundamental question is—besides the ideological content of culture—the relationship of politics and power to the education of the masses.

To give an example, in 1919–20, at the height of the White Terror, the ideologists of those in power argued: “It has become clear that the slogan ‘science belongs to everybody’ may lead to extraordinarily dangerous demagogy, and we have reached a stage where it may become necessary to put a brake on the popularization of the sciences for the sake of the morals of the masses.”¹

Kunó Klebelsberg, for many years Minister of Education and Church Affairs in the Horthy regime, wrote: “The foundation of my cultural policy is the thought that in small and large nations three or four thousand people stand for culture.”² The advocate of “cultural superiority”, Gyula Kornis, wrote: “The intensity of culture is in almost inverse proportion to its extensiveness, the wider and more quickly it is spread the shallower it becomes, like a flood that is reduced in power as the waters cover a larger

¹ *Új Idők*, No. 13, 1920, p. 264.

² Kunó Klebelsberg: “On the Development of Hungarian Culture.” *Dunántúl*, May 28, 1925. (In Hungarian)

area."³ This was the way in which this cultural policy expressed the aims of the Hungarian ruling class as it was progressing towards open fascism.

Progressive forces, on the other hand, considered the positive link between people and culture to be a fundamental issue. As the late nineteenth-century poet János Vajda put it: "A more educated people is more sensitive to the material and moral suffering engendered by its oppression; it feels it as more unbearable and it finds the ways to express its dissatisfaction."⁴ What the progressive intelligentsia, the Social Science Society, the periodical *Huszadik Század* (Twentieth Century) and the Galileo Circle did for culture and education early this century can only be briefly mentioned here. This applies also to the educational plans by the movement of populist writers which, in addition to some utopian features, contained much that was inspiring and valuable but—as the 1958 declaration on populist writers rightly pointed out—these good intentions and beautiful ideas and reform plans, which wanted to change the cultural situation of the people not through the class struggle but by avoiding it, proved to be mere illusions.

The cultural history of the communist, that is the left wing working-class movement, stands for the most valuable traditions of cultural work. The first workers' clubs already were founded for the "intellectual training of members, as well as the defence and promotion of their moral and material interests."⁵ Ervin Szabó explained in 1907 that libraries were needed in which "an industrial worker, who seeks the fermenting elements and justification of his struggle for economic and political progress in the new results of technology and the natural sciences, but mainly of the social sciences and social policy finds the books he wants".⁶ The Constitution of the Hungarian Republic of Councils stated that "an end is put to the cultural privileges of the bourgeoisie opening up to the opportunity for actually acquiring culture to those who work".⁷ The underground Hungarian Communist Party, together with the Social Democratic Left, and organized workers, continued, even in circumstances of inhuman persecution, and during the war, with its work of cultural enlightenment; this was an important instrument in its political fight, particularly in maintaining contact with the masses. It endeavoured to make sure that the best members of the proletariat acquired, at worker-seminars, which entailed great risks,

³ Gyula Kornis: *Culture and Politics*. Franklin Publishing House, 1928, p. 69. (In Hungarian)

⁴ János Vajda: "On the Situation of the Working Class." In: *Politikai Újdonságok*, May 16, 1883. (in Hungarian)

⁵ Selected Documents of the History of the Hungarian Labour Movement. Vol. 1, Szikra Publishing House, 1951, p. 256. (in Hungarian)

⁶ *Fővárosi Könyvtár Értesítője*, 1907. p. 1.

⁷ Selected Documents of the History of the Hungarian Labour Movement. Vol. 6/B, Kossuth Publishing House, 1960, p. 215. (in Hungarian)

fundamental ideological and cultural knowledge, that choirs be formed, including such as recited prose and verse, since the communists well knew that cultural work was a community-creating force, such communities being indispensable in helping the political struggle, preparing the intellectual advancement of the people about to be liberated.

Liberation produced a fundamental change in the relationship between the working masses and education too. Between 1945 and 1948 the Hungarian Communist Party—while fighting for political power and the reconstruction of the economy—consistently represented the cause of the democratization of education as well; it intensified educational activity within the movement, and opened breaches in the walls of the educational system through which tens and hundreds of thousands of gifted young workers and peasants passed. One was able to witness the accumulation of communal experience covering hundreds of thousands; new, socialist community movements were formed with a newly liberated vigour. Under the leadership of the Party and party organizations, the youth movement, and in another sense, the colleges of young workers and peasants and the hostels for apprentices were turned into communities not merely by the educational intention of those in charge but first of all through their actively taking part in the shaping of history.

The socialist cultural revolution got under way after 1948—in the wake of the conquest of political and economic power by the working class. An end was put to the cultural monopolies of the erstwhile ruling classes, an integrated state system of general schools was created, and cultural institutions, such as publishers, theatres, cinemas and film studios, came under state ownership, but it was a revolutionary feat of no lesser significance that large numbers of adults—workers and peasants, the veterans of underground work, war and privations—covered the syllabus of secondary schools in abridged courses, entered universities and studied economics, the social sciences and history, law, administration and politics. Within a very short time a new socialist intelligentsia, that is a new leadership, was born.

The “leftist” and rightist political distortions of the first half of the fifties were present, or reflected, in the cultural life of that period as well. Nevertheless, important results were achieved at that time, the number of educational institutions was considerably increased, the basis of culture widened, hitherto unimaginable opportunities were opened up for the working class, for the masses.

After the defeat of the Counter-Revolution and the stabilization of socialist power and in harmony with socio-economic evolution, the process that had begun in 1945 was accelerated.

The entire structure of cultural activity was transformed largely due to the effect of the rapid spread of television, radio and the press.

Radio and television already play a leading role in educational work as a whole, that is the spreading of culture. They not only spread and mediate culture, but organize as well. Various nationwide competitions and quizzes ought to be mentioned there, particularly Fly Peacock, the folk-song competition that grew into a movement. The work of television and radio is especially important in those villages and settlements whose size does not permit a sufficiency of locally based cultural institutions.

In recent years dailies and weeklies, county newspapers and periodicals have done more than ever before to spread culture and knowledge, and shape public taste. This is shown by a large and growing circulation, and by the greater space taken up by art and literature. Hungary's cultural map is still far from uniform, there are blank spots, but the meaning of the latter term has changed and is changing. The term blank spots is used to refer to homestead-clusters and villages far from urban areas where the number of newspaper and book readers, cinema-goers, library subscribers, of people interested in and receptive to culture is below the national average. Today it means that television has not reached every home yet and that there are still people about who do not make a habit of reading; thirty to forty years ago it meant massive illiteracy. "Not reading" is also relative. We are well aware that there are still quite a number of people in Hungary—and unfortunately not only the elderly—who, for subjective or objective reasons, have so far been left out of cultural advancement. This is a warning that ways of coping with this must be found—and in a good many places these have already been discovered—which do not lay primary emphasis on the school, that put the stress not on some certificate or diploma but on fundamental education and the awakening of interest in culture. The primary aim must now be to make sure that as few as possible of the younger and future generations be left out, that they not only be given the opportunity but a basic education as well. As regards the majority of the people, attention has to be concentrated on the extension of culture, the raising of standards, the intensification of cultural educational work and first of all on the spreading of the socialist consciousness, of education suffused by Marxist ideology.

Taking into account all the anxieties and difficulties it can still be said that in the past thirty years the Hungarian nation has become more educated, more enlightened, more broad-minded and incomparably richer in knowledge and better informed than at any time in the past. And what is no less important, men and women have become educated and conscious in their

actions in the socialist sense of the term, they know that they have a right to live in a human way, a right to justice, that they have a part to play in public affairs; they make their calculations and plan ahead, they live in awareness of their future.

The culture of every class and section of society has increased, to a differing degree, and in various forms.

The largest increase has occurred in the case of workers, both as regards their acquired skills and general level of education. The most highly skilled workers show themselves most receptive to culture. The relationship of the socialist brigades to culture is especially noteworthy. The socialist brigades were originally formed to increase production, improve quality, or reduce costs, but the workers soon discovered that they could meet these requirements only if they read, became informed in the world of culture, went to the theatre and watched good films. An interesting aspect in the cultural activity of socialist brigades is that they often discuss what they have read or seen, and so lead to a new, spontaneous form of community life. The number of skilled workers who are in possession of the secondary school leaving certificate is also increasing. The rise in cultural standards has a beneficial influence on the development of living conditions. In socialist brigades the demand "work, live and study in a socialist way" is ever present and to a growing extent. The trend is basically sound but there are many shortcomings. Approximately one and a half million of those in employment have not completed the general school course; only one-fifth of manual workers use libraries, and much of what is read is of the best-seller type and much that is done by the socialist brigades in a cultural way has a merely formal character.

The socialist reorganization of agriculture and the technological progress that accompanied it radically changed the nature of agricultural work, transforming working conditions, village customs and traditional culture. Socialist large-scale farming does not only make the acquisition of higher skills and a higher general level of education possible, but even demands them. Nevertheless, the cultural standards of the peasantry, and of villagers in general, and their educational opportunities, lag behind those of other sections of society and the urban population for historic and objective reasons.

The majority of professional people can be said to be highly trained and well-educated. Their role and responsibility in the spreading of culture—especially at their places of employment—is most important; but they do not do as much as is desirable.

Reciprocal contact between the classes and sections of society is much

livelier, the earlier rigid barriers are disappearing; this too has an influence on culture, on changes in ways of living. Most families number manual workers, peasants as well as professional people among their members. The marks of earlier class culture are disappearing, and in the way of life, in culture (home, language, reading matter) the strengthening of socialist national unity has helped a new socialist culture to come into being and grow which includes not only national and internationalist values but the progressive traditions of mankind as well.

Young people ask for an active community culture. Two-thirds of those making use of the facilities of houses of culture and libraries are young people. This is promising for the future, since those under twenty-four make up 38 per cent of the total population, and those under twenty-nine 45 per cent.

II

There must be mutual trust between the masses and the party. All citizens who honestly do their daily work, serve the cause of the people and of the working class, even if they hold views regarding one or the other aspect of socialism, the past, the present or the future, that differ from those of communists. What did and what does this mean for ideology? Patience must be exercised but there must be no acceptance of erroneous views, continuous efforts using education and explanation as its main tools must be made to shape the thinking of the backward. It has to be taken into account that in Hungary there are still a fair few who keep up customary habits and folkways, still believing in unscientific superstitions. Although they will have no part of the old socio-economic system, they still enjoy its cultural left-overs. In this respect, communal education, and the understanding and patient transformation of public opinion, are of great importance.

Requirements are increasing all the time. As progress is made, society needs people who consciously accept the struggle for socialism. As a result, not only socialist relations of ownership but socialist thinking on public questions and socialist culture and morality are becoming more general.

Influencing the minds of men and deliberate action has always been important to progressives, socialists and communists, to all those who desired and did continue to shape the future together with the millions. To those—to us—the cause of educational action in culture is important for this very reason. Communists have always opposed rightist and “leftist” views which mechanically differentiate between or confront economic and cultural

construction, Leninist principles do not allow one to forget that these two are inseparable and dialectically related. The firmer the material base of socialist society is, the higher the standard of living rises, the more necessary it becomes and the less possible it is to postpone the answer to the question "how shall we live?"; in the Marxist sense of the term this does not come about by itself but must be built up in a planned and systematic way.

Socialism is being realized consciously, and this is the only effective antidote to "consumer-mindedness". What people attend to all over the world when observing socialist cultural progress is whether we are able to develop—and in what way—the socialist alternative of human and cultural progress. Take literature and art, they do not only exist in a socialist society. The essential difference between the two systems consists exactly in that the other social system may exist without literature and art, but these are organic attributes of socialism, and parts of its essence. Socialism cannot exist without art and literature of a high and continuously progressing standard, it cannot be constructed without this, just as many-sided, advanced socialist man cannot be imagined without literature and art, without socialist culture.

It is an achievement of cultural policy that 20 to 25 per cent of the listeners and viewers of valuable, high-standard art may be considered a more or less permanent public. The audience which is receptive to high-standard works as well, e.g. the ratio of those listening to serious music (5 to 10 per cent), is increasing slowly but all the time. Light music is favoured by a larger camp, though it must be said that what different age-groups are interested in is not identical.

The cinema still satisfies the requirements of the masses for culture and entertainment. Films are not only an important instrument of education in art, but also a guide to ideology and politics; the policy of distributors does not always however satisfy requirements that derive from this.

Theatre attendance dropped somewhat as television became more widespread, but numbers have picked up since.

Interest in and demand for the contemporary fine arts as well as for industrial art is on the increase. The progress of visual culture has been furthered and speeded up by the increasing number and improved standard of art works erected in public places, the progress of artistic life in the country, developments in the provinces and greater liveliness in the field of exhibitions.

Valuable work today already reaches a major part of the population; television and radio help a great deal. There is however a large section who have remained impermeable to the masterpieces of culture. It is they who

are most exposed to shallow works, to the second-rate and trash, all of which can have a damaging effect. It has to be taken into consideration here that society in Hungary is in constant transition, and this often involves mobility in the literal sense. A large number of people are, so to speak, permanently on the move, those who work in the construction industry or who, while working in cities, maintain their homes in distant villages. This way of life places a heavy burden on those concerned and they have less time left for cultural interests. The interest in literature and the arts of the older generations who grew up at the time of the previous social system, is more difficult to rouse.

These days when the international class struggle is continued under the conditions of *détente*, that is the peaceful coexistence of the two systems, the capitalist powers keep on intensifying their ideological manoeuvres directed against the socialist world.

Culture is not a commodity: that is one of the basic tenets of Hungarian policy. This means that the state supports, not sparing the cash, every valuable cultural work, book, play, film, exhibition hall, concert, the radio and television. In Hungary the state subsidizes every theatre ticket by approximately the same amount as the client pays at the box-office. This principle also results in higher prices for products that are light entertainment, such as thrillers, or musical comedies, than those of good books or serious drama. The former are barely subsidized or not at all. A sense of responsibility towards need to increase culture and to bear in mind the sound needs of society is still insufficiently in evidence in artistic and scientific activity, in those who transmit the achievements, and some of the leaders as well.

In spite of these manoeuvres, Hungarian cultural policy does not reduce but increases and intensifies the cultural contacts with nations living in a different economic and social order, since it looks on cultural coexistence as part and parcel of political and economic coexistence.

The consistent policy of the Soviet Union and of the Soviet Communist Party, and the growing strength and authority of the community of the socialist countries have produced new conditions in the international class struggle, in the domains of ideology and culture as well, including access to and participation in the latter. At the Moscow Conference, last December, of the Central Committee Secretaries of the fraternal parties responsible for ideology and foreign relations great attention was necessarily devoted to the realization, development and active propagation of the socialist way of life as an important part of the struggle against capitalism. If we put our own ideas and ideals into practice we shall be able to stand up most effectively

to the old and new weapons of subversion. Here as well the best form of "defence" is a sound example, that is persuasive achievements. Bourgeois society is unable to create—though the material welfare of part of society may be ensured—what we call the good life; it is not able to solve fundamental human problems, nor to offer men and women a real purpose in life. The everyday practice of socialist society as well proves what has been undeniable in theory from the very beginning, that it is socialist society alone that can satisfy these needs. The more obvious this becomes the smaller the chances of enemy propaganda are at home, and the more attractive we make socialism—not only in principle, but as realized practice as well—to the workers living in capitalist countries.

Quantitative indices without qualitative co-ordinates have less and less to say in cultural life. The comparison is invalid that, for instance, both there and here six and a half "publications of a book nature" per capita are produced, if one does not add that in Hungary the decisive majority derive from the humanist, noble and valuable part of world and Hungarian culture. This goes for music as well, and the production of films, and is even—to a very important extent!—also valid for television programmes.

Bourgeois ideologists and politicians still frequently talk about the irreconcilable contradiction between "élite" and "mass culture". This shows they sense danger, a fear weighs heavily on the politicians of the oppressing classes, the leaders and spokesmen of monopoly capital, when the genuine desire for knowledge and demand for culture of the masses surfaces. It is then that they pour forth a spurious culture, cultural trash designed to disarm under the heading of "mass culture". This manipulative differentiation which is sometimes expressed in a hidden way in this part of the world as well, is rejected outright by us. It has been demonstrated, day after day, that the people, acting in a deliberate manner, are not only able to make use of cultural products of a high standard, they in fact demand them.

Making cultural products of great worth available is, of course, not a way of providing "alms", or "gifts" to the people, but a duty—it is a mandatory part of socialist evolution. At the time of the scientific and technological revolution, both up to the minute production techniques and the modes of civilization require to be met by permanent study and autodidactic activity. This is a clear condition of progress, but even more is involved. Socialist society needs skilled workers and cooperative farmers who are able to see their work in a wider context, who know where their place of employment and their industry are located within the economic system; who then can voice their views with self-assurance in the arena of socialist democracy—democracy at the bench and at the plough. It must become part of the normal

situation that the majority of workers should be men and women who are lent courage to participate in political life by their familiarity with the questions at issue, men and women who are liberate and articulate in the common idiom, able to express the wealth of their ideas with precision. It largely depends on active education that more advanced production techniques and a higher standard of living should also result in a rational, free and harmonious life and a way of living in which the community is involved.

What must the socialist alternative rely on in practice? What is the new "prescription for life"? Let it be said right at the start that this pharmacopoea does not include any panacea. The major elements are well enough known: work, the community, culture—and the organic, socialist unity of these three. As Marx and Engels put it in the *German Ideology*: "Only in community with others has each individual the means of cultivating his gifts in all directions; only in the community, therefore, is personal freedom possible."⁷ Socialist educational communities of a new substance and with a new meaning which permit a full unfolding of the personality and of individual abilities, can only be organized autonomously and not autocratically. Life brings forth numerous community forms, but we are already well aware that the place of employment, the production organization, offers the primary opportunities. Integration with the community, with the other people is realized primarily in productive work, and that not only and not even always as concerns place, but internally and in its content. Identical goals and problems, the common tasks that have to be solved, to which a genuine community is dedicated, are present here to the highest degree.

Brigades in plants and cooperatives, as examples of the socialist communities, are at the same time indispensable bases for cultural and educational activity. Much that is worth emulating in the cultural activity of the socialist brigades bears out the Leninist truth: "The workers will not forget for a moment that they need the power of knowledge."⁸ The time approaches when there is little justification for a brigade calling itself socialist if it does nothing or hardly anything for the development of socialist culture and thought.

Communal forms of education must at the same time be given an impetus where people have their homes. It is necessary to fight the spirit of isolation that tries to introduce, even to modern housing estates, the obsolete view: "my home is my castle". It is true that the housing question still causes great anxieties, but it is becoming increasingly important that those who

⁷ Karl Marx and Frederick Engels: *The German Ideology*. I. Feuerbach. In: *Selected Works in three volumes*. Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1969. Vol. 1, pp. 65-66.

⁸ V. I. Lenin: *How to organise Competition?* In: *Selected Works in three volumes*. Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1970. Vol. 2, p. 519.

have already moved into new homes should learn how one must live there in a socialist way.

The proper and worthwhile use of a rising standard of living, in other words, of a socialist way of life, cannot be passed on as instructions for use when housing and other goods and commodities are handed over to those who will utilize them.

Socialism is a movement which today feels responsibility for the tomorrow, a movement which faces the future. This makes the education of youth particularly important. One of the characteristics of youth is activity, the desire for action which, if it is not provided with the right goals or given the proper help, will in the case of some, and not always the least valuable, find itself in a blind alley, even seeking satisfaction in a destructive community. Let it never be forgotten, closer acquaintance with members of beat clubs or with the most enthusiastic groupies often leads to the discovery that they were assembled by an elementary but insufficiently guided need for communal ways. Many of the young leave the parental family but, not yet having founded a family of their own, seek communal forms elsewhere. Community creating forces must therefore be promoted in a professionally and politically sound manner, the desire for communal forms that is alive in the young must be given socialist forms and substance, and attractive and bright opportunities must be provided. More clubs, groups giving free play to initiative, literary stages, choirs, amateur theatrical societies and similar opportunities must be created and the good example of the existing ones must be publicized in full awareness of this.

III

One of the most important present objectives is to develop and continue to develop an integrated attitude to educational activity of a cultural sort, improving its social status. An integral dialectic view must be in evidence all along the line from productive work to a proper use of time off, from science and art to the operation of voluntary bodies. Such an integral attitude is built on the foundations of Marxism-Leninism, and its principal political objective is the full realization of that Leninist cultural revolution whose requirements keep on growing all the time. In Lenin's words: "Far from extinguishing competition, socialism, on the contrary, for the first time creates the opportunity for employing it on a really *wide* and on a really *mass* scale, for actually drawing the majority of working people into a field of labour in which they can display their abilities, develop the capacities, and

reveal those talents, so abundant among the people whom capitalism crushed, suppressed and strangled in thousands and millions."⁹ It is this political and social aim and creative intent that establishes the high status of education for culture in a socialist society; it is the integrity of ideology, morality, culture, the arts, ways of life which must be brought to cognitive awareness in all its aspects. To this end, intellectual and material energies must be rationally developed, concentrated and made use of.

The connecting link is the requirement that all questions should be dealt with from the angle of the recipient millions. More intensive attention must be paid to ensure that the values of art really reach the masses, that works that show understanding for the future of socialism, that shape socialist ideology and morality should become part of the general awareness. Never in the course of Hungarian history has there been an opportunity for the meeting on such a massive scale of art and the public, of creative work and those for whom it is meant that equals what socialism provides today. The people's power creates the conditions which inspire genuine and rational creative work, but it also imposes great responsibilities on creative artists: a responsibility towards truth, that is the historic truth of socialist reality, aims and ideas. Making works of art available to millions—and only socialism produces the right conditions for this—does not mean a mere quantitative change, but a qualitative one in the first place, a new era in the history of culture. The achievements of education for and in culture react productively on creative artistic activity, the improvements in the taste and the growing demands of millions offer encouragement to artists, in whose interests it is that the public should receive their work with understanding. Society therefore has every right to demand in return that artists do all they can to help an understanding reception of their works.

Hungarian culture has room not only for art but also for entertainment, as long as it is in good taste and does not make use of cultural refuse. Let me add to this that though no regulations are made on questions of taste, the taste of millions is a matter of public concern in a socialist society. Works called "entertaining" may, of course, also offer and do offer artistic experience of a high order and lasting effect. The opposite of "entertaining" is not "valuable" but "boring"; and if a piece of work is complicated, abstract and difficult to follow, it is by no means certain to be "valuable". There is, of course, room not only for the spreading of meaningful and practical knowledge, but also for collective and individual pastimes that are rich in content and are agreeable.

⁹ V. I. Lenin: *How to organise Competition?* In: *Selected Works* in three volumes. Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1970. Vol. 2., p. 517.

The rapidly rising mass demand for literature and art is also borne out by the figures. More than 60 million books were sold in Hungary in 1973, the turnover in books is rising, and the fear of those who predicted that the spreading of television would atrophy reading, has been shown to be baseless. On the contrary, instead of "competition" between the various forms of education in and for culture the number of examples that are evidence of good cooperation and a wholesome reciprocal influence is on the increase; successful television programmes recruit readers, and the readers take a different view of the television programmes. Things have to be done in the further development of reading as well; the results so far achieved in the "For a Reading People" movement must be developed further in such a way that the selection of the quality of the reading matter should increasingly be decisive. What might be called basic books must be placed into the hands of the hundreds of thousands who still do not read. These "basic books" are the classics of Hungarian literature and that in other languages, poems, novels, plays, some important modern works, not only Hungarian, which on the one hand reflect and on the other develop thinking in this age of transition. It should be obvious that these basic books include the classics of socialism, since it is exactly through these that one can size up and properly appreciate the most valuable creations of the human mind. One must also make sure that school-leavers who are critical readers indeed remain readers for life. Not only new beautiful library palaces satisfy the needs of the present although one will, of course, wish for as many as possible of them! It must be understood that until we are able to build such libraries everywhere, it is possible and necessary to serve the cause of culture and of reading also by modest, small libraries.

Television is in our time the most important way in which culture is brought to the people. But its effect goes beyond this: it may play an important role directly and indirectly in the formation of the socialist way of life, doing so if it shows a positive example. Television is not only an instrument for the satisfaction of demands but also for the rousing of new sound ones. It has a complex educational purpose, to an increasing extent it is turning into an artistic workshop and institution seeking its own ways. It has been shown that the "age of television" does not lead to a withering of traditional educational institutions and forms, but on the contrary helps them to flourish while modernizing. It may well accelerate the process which transforms the public into a community.

In the development and rejuvenation of adult education—lectures, series, free universities, language courses—professional men and women may find a major opportunity for selfless social work. It does not reduce the authority

and importance of museums and their staff either, but on the contrary increases them if the latter undertake more consistently to fulfil their educational calling and do more in the spreading and popularization of scientific knowledge.

Encyclopaedic knowledge is not the equivalent of education, an educated man is one in whom an interest in culture and knowledge lives permanently and recurringly, someone who asserts acquired knowledge in everyday life, enriching through it community contacts with friends and at the place of work.

It is part of an integrated approach to the subject that we argue against views and attitudes which, even if they are not general, are nevertheless frequent enough to cause trouble.

It happens even within social and political organizations that culture and education are "handled separately". It is lost from sight that this work, from central directives to local practical implementation requiring great independence and responsibility, must be in harmony with the general party programme.

In some factories and agricultural cooperatives economic interests, are used as an excuse, and there is a failure to recognize that it is not only in the interests of socialism in general but in a narrower sense also of the enterprise in question that there should be money and energy left for the library, for the further training of workers and for the club of the socialist brigades. The time has come where it is possible to call to account a manager who neglects the mental "development" of people just as if he left the valuable machines of his firm to "rust". It is a part of the personal example that the chairman or manager, the Party secretary, and Communist leaders in general are required to give that they attend theatrical performances, that they read and buy books. Luckily there is hardly anybody today who is proud of being uneducated, but there still are some who say: "A proletarian does not need culture or the arts." They affirm this without really knowing that, by this, they come close in their thinking to the bourgeois who says that the worker does not require culture.

In the age of socialism it is also a manifestation of lack of belief in the people and in the cause of socialism if some who work in this field declare that there are places and sections of society where and among whom it is impossible to create and spread culture. This view hides complacency and laziness.

An attitude is, of course, also unacceptable which refuses to undertake mental effort in order to receive culture. Medical practitioners warn against inactivity, mental sloth should be included in this warning.

Progressive bourgeois ideas of adult education generally projected the teacher-pupil relationship within the schools to extra-curricular education. The role of schools in Hungary is of increasing importance. But the methods of the schools—which incidentally are also being developed in the direction of initiative and activity—cannot be copied mechanically outside the school, in adult education. The submitted resolution must be implemented in practice: “active, voluntary, independent and organized education outside the schools must become more efficient, it must be raised to a higher level and become more widespread through the cooperation and assistance of various institutions, voluntary organizations and movements, serving a useful and valuable way of spending one’s time off.”

Although this is an important question, I can only briefly touch on the frequent misunderstandings concerning the interpretation of folk traditions in culture. Two false extremes must be rejected. One considers folk culture in the narrow sense of peasant culture, wishing to conserve the old peasant culture creating a myth around it. The other wishes to differentiate between working-class culture, that is socialist culture, and traditional folk culture, and does not take into account that a healthy socialist culture can only grow in the soil of the earlier worker and peasant traditions, by further developing their most valuable features.

In Hungary the number of members of national minorities is not large, their percentage of the population is not very significant. It is nevertheless necessary to speak of them in connection with this subject since in a socialist country the equality of the national minorities, the care and esteem of their culture, native idiom and traditions cannot be determined by numbers. However small the community may be, we consider it a moral duty to satisfy and support their national and language need in all the details of everyday life and of culture and education, be it street names in their own language, right to a thorough knowledge of their own literature and the cherishing of their ancient, traditional culture. It is our firm resolution to give the cultural needs of the national minorities who live in Hungary the same care and attention as that accorded to those whose native language is Hungarian. It is therefore not only the business of the associations of the minorities themselves but a public matter, a social and political question, in which we follow the principles of socialist internationalism and of Leninist national minority policy.

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The document submitted to the Central Committee does not only formulate immediate practical aims but has the character and importance

of principles. It speaks both to the leaders and to the people who long for education. But it determines only the directions of what has to be done so that, in its wake, the elaboration of the measures, plans and long-term programmes should be possible in accordance with local conditions, and the concrete areas of activity. This demands protracted, tenacious and persevering work. It is necessary to bear in mind Lenin's idea that, in this domain, it is not possible to win battles by cavalry charges. But this does not mean either that immediate great efforts and perseverance are not necessary. Lenin was not lenient in this question affecting revolution either, but keeping the particularities of this area in mind, he declared war on spurious and apparent solutions, which always chose the easier way.

The essence of the question is the appreciation of the content of socialist culture, the interpretation of what is meant by culture. If somebody means by culture that the people should get by heart numerous quotations from the works of Chairman Mao, then he can carry out the cultural revolution in one go; but if he sets out with the demand that everybody should be literate, then much more time is needed. And how much more still if one counts with all that which must be demanded in the interests of the people!

We wish to make all human values of every age accessible to educated socialist men and women. The anarchists and those associated with the Proletcult movement as well as the contemporary ultra-left and Maoists argue that, with the proletarian revolution, the "old" culture loses its validity; it must not be learned, it must even be annihilated. This view, if it becomes a policy, endangers—as experience has shown—not only culture but socialism itself, that is why we reject it. Lenin's starting-point in his teaching on the cultural revolution was: "Marxism has won its historic significance as the ideology of the revolutionary proletariat because, far from rejecting the most valuable achievements of the bourgeois epoch, it has, on the contrary, assimilated and refashioned everything of value in thought and culture. Only further work on this basis and in this direction, inspired by the practical experience of the proletarian dictatorship as the final stage in the struggle against every form of exploitation, can be recognised as the development of a genuine proletarian culture."¹⁰

A substantial part of the difficulties with our school system and our educational activities derives from this broad interpretation—which we avow as our own. We must, for instance, face the overburdening of students in our school system, and we are trying to mitigate this, not in order to give up knowledge, but on the contrary: for the sake of the bringing up of

¹⁰ V. I. Lenin: On Proletarian Culture. In: Selected Works in three volumes. Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1971. Vol. 3, p. 485.

more educated, more receptive and more intelligent young people we try to liberate tuition from the burdens of superfluous encyclopaedic knowledge.

We face similar, and still different, if possible even more complicated, difficulties in adult education. But if we ask ourselves whether we should continue to undertake this broad range or limit our efforts—the answer is obvious. We shall undertake it. It is true that the tension—as reflected also by the report—between the requirements and the financial resources is very great. Cultural demands grow, and hopefully ever faster, and possibilities, especially financial resources, are limited. It is therefore important to mark out a realistic path. If too little is undertaken, and no efforts are made, the negative consequences can be foreseen as clearly as those of the other extreme: if the plans are unrealistic and failure is discouraging.

Our Marxist order of values functions well, and I believe that in general we select more or less appropriately, we broadly know what forms part of our values and what does not. The question is what values shall reach—in respect of their substance and standard—increasing numbers of the people, and at what pace. What we have achieved so far is certainly not little. Let me mention one figure only: twenty years ago people bought books worth 70 million forints in Hungary. Now, in the last year, books worth 1,400 million forints were sold, at roughly comparative prices. I believe that reading was the first step of the cultural rise, and will continue to remain the most important. The first step was that as broad masses as possible should read. But today the qualitative requirement becomes more important. Of course there is no mechanical, rigid sequence. It was never unimportant for socialist cultural policy what people should read, and the Marxist order of values was not unimportant either. We have always tried to influence the internal structure of the demand for reading with the instruments at our disposal: the assertion of the principles of our cultural policy, e.g. size of editions, criticism, publicity, etc. Even though there were distortions, the total process is healthy and serves our goals well. It is a matter of course that the more we progress, the more the people rises culturally, the higher the ideological, aesthetic and taste standards must be.

We are sometimes inclined to underestimate our achievements, but life refutes our faint-heartedness. It may seem a trifle, but allow me to give an example. A weekly publishing nothing but serializations of novels of literary merit has been started. It has turned out that 100,000 copies, which everybody considered too much, were sold out within two hours, and at the railway stations, commuting workers who do not buy books for 40 forints, buy this periodical. In the second week no less than 160,000 copies were sold.

With the progress made by our society, the evolution of socialist public thinking and public morality, of socialist consciousness, the requirement becomes more and more emphatic that every person should have a socialist future recognized by himself. All that is decisive in the great transformation of society as a whole, must also be created in man as he is becoming a community being.

We have to reckon with progress in this domain not being spectacular, an extraordinary number of larger and smaller difficulties in the implementation of the educational work programme will be encountered with, but in the long run it will be proved that in the wake of the resolutions of the Central Committee, concrete new and important results will have been achieved, which will basically accelerate progress, and shape the cultural image of the entire working people. A people hungry for culture will turn into one living with culture. Both the demand and the opportunity are present. Our task is to realize them.

THE THIRTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF HUNGARY'S LIBERATION

ISTVÁN VAS

THE GRAND FINALE

Translated by William Jay Smith

February dawn spread across the sky.
Today at last we can cross over to Pest!
We cannot, though,
If the ice on the Danube won't let us go,
I thought, and just as the thought took
Hold of me, the neighbourhood shook.
I was about to doze off again
When I began to hear
The sound of gunfire and rockets
Mounting, drawing near.
No, that cannot be—
The siege of Buda starting once more?
And then a bang from the second floor—
The Russians are packing:
The half-light and the cold are hard—
And everything on the move—
Horses, carts, automobiles.
Like children we plead: "Please don't go!"
"But we've got to go!
The Germans are breaking out of the Castle,
They're almost here!
We're leaving but not for long,
We'll be back—do not fear!"

The bang, the rattle increased outside;
Within us silence opened wide;
In our hearts, our room, the cold spread.
A scene bordering on madness:

Listening, the huge Academy courtyard
 Across the way
 Yawns wide.
 Panic grows inside
 Us: silence,
 Mounting fear.
 And what if the Germans come back here,
 And Mrs. Leitgeb reports us again.

Lucky T.,
 Who has not yet shed the disguise of his Premonstratensian
 Garb; he
 Walks around day and night
 In violet cincture and white
 Cassock!

Confusion is rife.
 What will each do to save his life?
 "It's crazy just to wait, that much is clear.
 Even if they come for only an hour they'll kill us for sure.
 Let's go where the Russians are going."
 "Between the lines? This is the front line now.
 You want to explain to their bullets, fool,
 That you are a friend, not an enemy?"

O. cleans his pistol.
 While another packs his bag,
 And another stares vacantly into the yard,
 Scanning the empty neighbourhood.
 And would prefer to read
 Some leatherbound History of Fascism.

While we still can,
 We munch some bread,
 Sit in a circle; the women smile,
 The men stare glumly all the while.
 The window rattles, the sun shines:
 Across the room a bullet whines,
 Until, weary of its flight,
 It zings into the stove, whizzing right

Between Géza and me,
Between Mari and Gyöngyi.

We jump to our feet: the shadows
Of helmets in the distant courtyard move over the snow;
Then opposite—in a gate
A green soldier looms.
Beside him a small, stocky
Sweat-covered square face pops up,
Made monstrous by hunger and fury;
They've managed to break through;
The taller one flings a grenade,
His muscles strain
As he heaves it, leaning to the right
In an eternal movement,
An athlete,
A Borghese Fencer,
But his face is hollow, pale—
How he must have starved
In the cellars of the Castle
But still he would not cave
In; he has survived to carry out his orders,
He has lived to kill and make others kill.
His ammunition gone, he carries no
Weapon any more;
He lost his battle a while ago
And is ready to kill even now.
A symbol of stubborn resistance, he watches there,
Ready to hurl his grenade through the air,
His body a perfect arc, but
How long will he wait? He hurls it,
But the old grenade fizzles out;
The third one, though,
Hits below our window.

From behind a nearby villa
Three Russian soldiers appear.
They approach, jumping, ducking,
Cold afternoon sun flashing on their colourful persons—
Not on their helmets but on

The fur above
 The green, yellow, and red
 Of the caps on their heads.

These are the Sons of the Wondrous East,
 Embodiment of a folktale past
 And a dream
 Future, and nearer they come.
 One crawls below the window
 And their Tommy guns rattle
 Toward the place where moments ago
 The messenger of doom stared up from the snow.

The man at the window can feel,
 Through the winter landscape, the smell
 Of smoke.
 Heavy steps on the wooden stair;
 We listen in fear,
 Hoping. Three flamelike figures
 Burst through the door.
 Love, bravery, victory
 Flash from each eye
 The light of the lovely war.

No time to stare
 At them for long; we could not stay there.
 We had to go down; they set up machine gun
 Emplacements in the windows of our room.
 And that night all
 Crammed into the small
 Downstairs kitchen, the stamping, the shouts,
 The candle stump, flickering out!
 Listening for steps, watching the dark—
 Is it a friend arriving now,
 Whose hand we can grasp,
 Asking: how long will this go on?
 Or a gun-barrel thrust among us,
 The enemy sweeping wildly in,
 A flashlight casting its enquiring beams
 On the women sitting on the bench.

The slow night, dawn breaking through
 The snow-covered scene, waking to
 The noise of machine guns.
 We soothed our hearts, our nerves by means
 Of books instead of medicines.
 T. read "Toldi,"* Irén the Bible,
 And O. buried himself in a history of
 Cabaret. In my hands, *The World*
As Will and Idea.

The sun is out, life is easy
 Again; the rattle of arms dies down;
 The Russians upstairs say goodbye;
 We may return now; the apartment is empty.
 The Academy is empty; light engulfs it from above. A few shots
 Are heard, then dead silence.
 While O. patches the pane,
 Outside we hear the cawing of a crow.
 And then we shave. The melted snow
 Hurts our tired skin. Our teeth chatter:
 When the room warms up at last,
 Prisoners file past,
 The grenade-thrower among them,
 Without his helmet, wearing spectacles
 Through which focusses
 A cold, death-dealing mind.
 What would he be in civilian life? Chemist, teacher,
 An example of the "rational cognition"
 I read about last night?
 Satellite, guide of decay,
 Stumbling block of wisdom,
 The bloodless one, intoxicated by the smell of blood.

Next to him the short fellow who yesterday
 Was planted there in such fury
 Now trudges along resigned
 Limping dumbly, half asleep;
 We run down. The rest
 Are not better as they file past,

* A nineteenth-century Hungarian epic poem.—Ed.

The ruins of a world-conquering
 Army. That's how the fiend
 Europe produced
 Came to its end.
 It sinks now
 Like a tired dirty crowd
 No more elegant
 Than the unarmed crowd they used to herd around
 For more than a decade.
 On the Hidegkúti Road one sees
 Tank-flattened, green-uniformed corpses
 Thrown against the trees
 In the eccentric arrangement of
 Terminal terror. And yet
 Slowly in my heart the place of hate
 Is taken by a sense
 Of detachment and indifference.

Major Grigory comes back. Tonight
 We'll shoot dice with him again,
 A Viennese waltz on the gramophone;
 Then we'll eat and drink some wine.
 The Tokay shines in the glass. We rise to toast
 The one-eyed young Russian soldier lost
 In action. Ah, if he could only drink with us tonight!
 But before the joy could go completely sour
 Alexandr lifts his glass again,
 His black eyes twinkling, and
 Proposes a toast to the silly war:
 "Voina prima, voina gut!"

Midnight. Tomorrow we may cross to Pest.
 Can't sleep. My mind won't rest—
 It pictures the city and the years to come.
 And the history of this day sparkles clear
 And the whole thing takes on meaning
 And we believe that horror—
 And all its causes—
 Have been blotted out forever.

How many years has it been since then? What keeps me going still
Is having witnessed this grand finale.
Having seen how the big lie ended,
Having seen men
Take the mechanized monster
And tear it to shreds—
Having seen the infection-spreading flag
Sink into the mud,
Having seen what seemed iron and steel
Crumble like clay.

I saw all this and it was enough to remind
Me forever that what takes its place
Will in the end be likewise overthrown,
The stronger force will conquer
Fickle luck.
There is, after all, a difference
Between arms—
And although lies may go on blaring for years,
They can never win out, they will go down;
And into the old pits
New terrorists be thrown.

(1951)

MEMBERS OF THE PRESIDENTIAL COUNCIL REMEMBER

GYULA KÁLLAI

FIRST POLITICAL ACTIVITIES AFTER LIBERATION

Part of a recording made by the Audio-Documentary Section of Hungarian Radio on Feb. 8, 1965, based on questions put by the historian Dr. Elek Karsai.

The leaders of the Hungarian Communist Party already met while Budapest was still in process of being liberated. I could not tell you the precise date, as far as I remember it must have been on January 8th or 9th 1944. The first meeting was on the Hungária körút. As far as I remember János Kádár, István Kovács and Ferenc Donáth were amongst the leaders of the Party at home who were present, and Zoltán Vas of those who had returned from Moscow. This first meeting of just these men happened that way since a number of Party leaders lived their underground lives on Hungária körút during the siege. That is where they were liberated. When the Hungária körút was liberated, they tried to collect all comrades who lived underground in that part of Pest. They knew where to find me. I was in Újvidék utca, in a part of the Zugló district a bit further away from town, and when that was liberated Ferenc Donáth came and fetched me and took me to the Hungária körút where we held our meeting.

The idea was to decide how to get to work. Zoltán Vas brought us up-to-date with the political plans of the Moscow leadership, that is those Party leaders who had stayed in Moscow and who were returning home around that time. Let me say right at the start: the basis of their policy was entirely identical with that of the Party at home.

The essence of this policy was that, following the Liberation, we would continue with an extended democratic united-front policy, gathering all the democratic forces, a policy that is which we had already stood for before and during the Second World War, in the interests of securing the national independence of the country and its democratization as well. This remained

Gyula Kállai, Member of the Political Committee of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party, Chairman of the National Council of the Patriotic People's Front.



Photo MTI

The surviving parts of the Szabadság (Freedom) Bridge (then Francis Joseph Bridge), 1946

Building a pontoon behind the blown-up Erzsébet (Elizabeth) Bridge, 1945

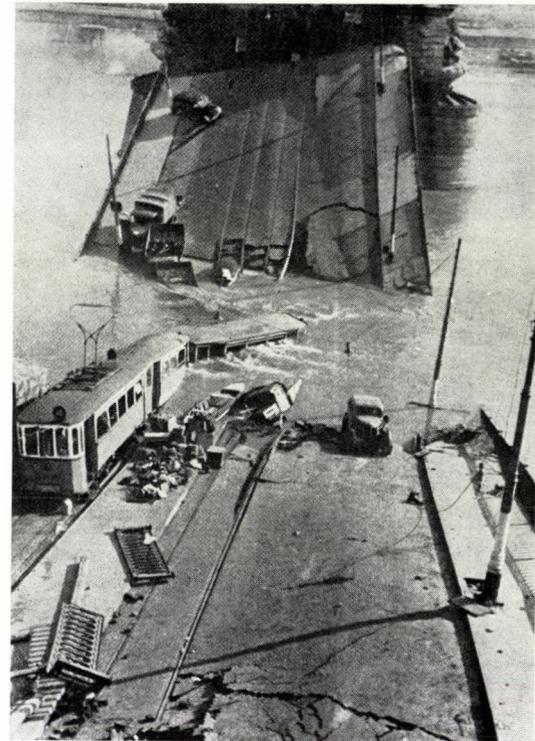




Photo MTI

*Reconstruction work on the Lánchíd (Chain Bridge), 1946
From the Archives of the Budapest Historical Museum*

*Soviet soldiers in the Pest Inner City with the surviving pier
of Erzsébet (Elizabeth) Bridge and the Petőfi statue in the background*

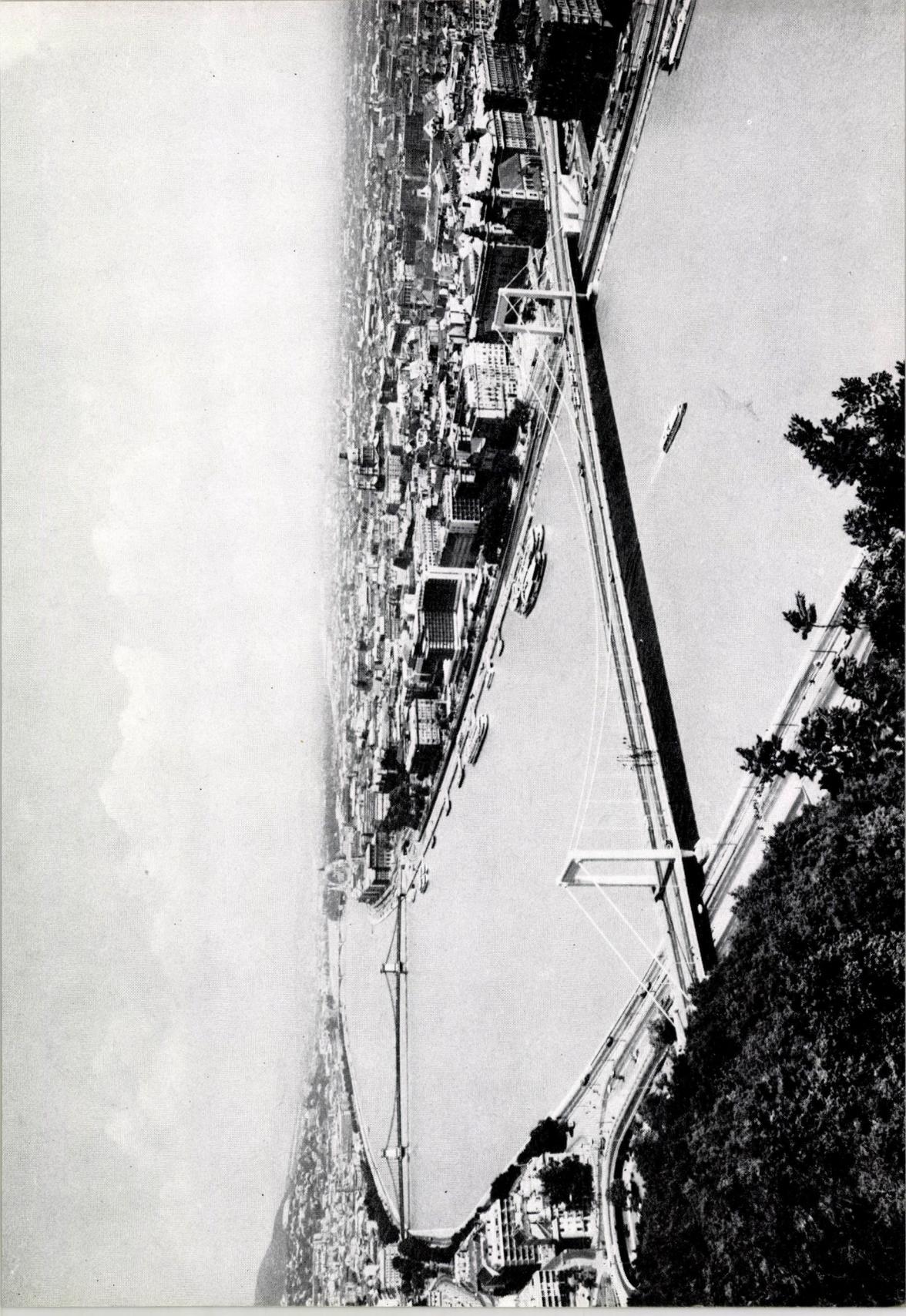


*The blown-up section
of Margit (Margaret) Bridge, Summer 1944*



A view of the Danube in Budapest with the reconstructed bridges

Photo: János Reisman

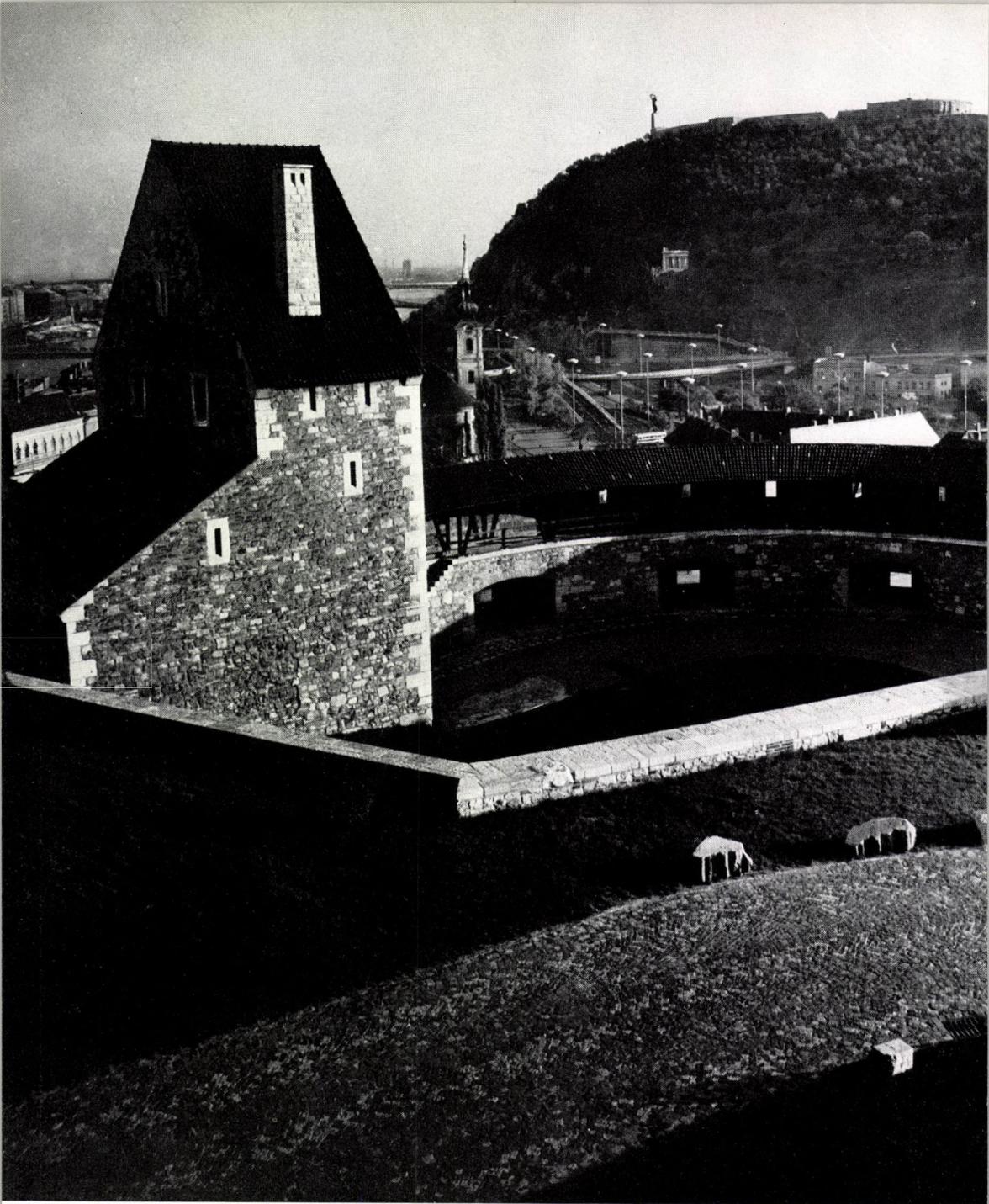




HONGKAIAN VARIATIONS SIX PHOTOS BY KAKOLY GINK



A group of angels by an unknown 15th-century master (Esztergom Christian Museum)



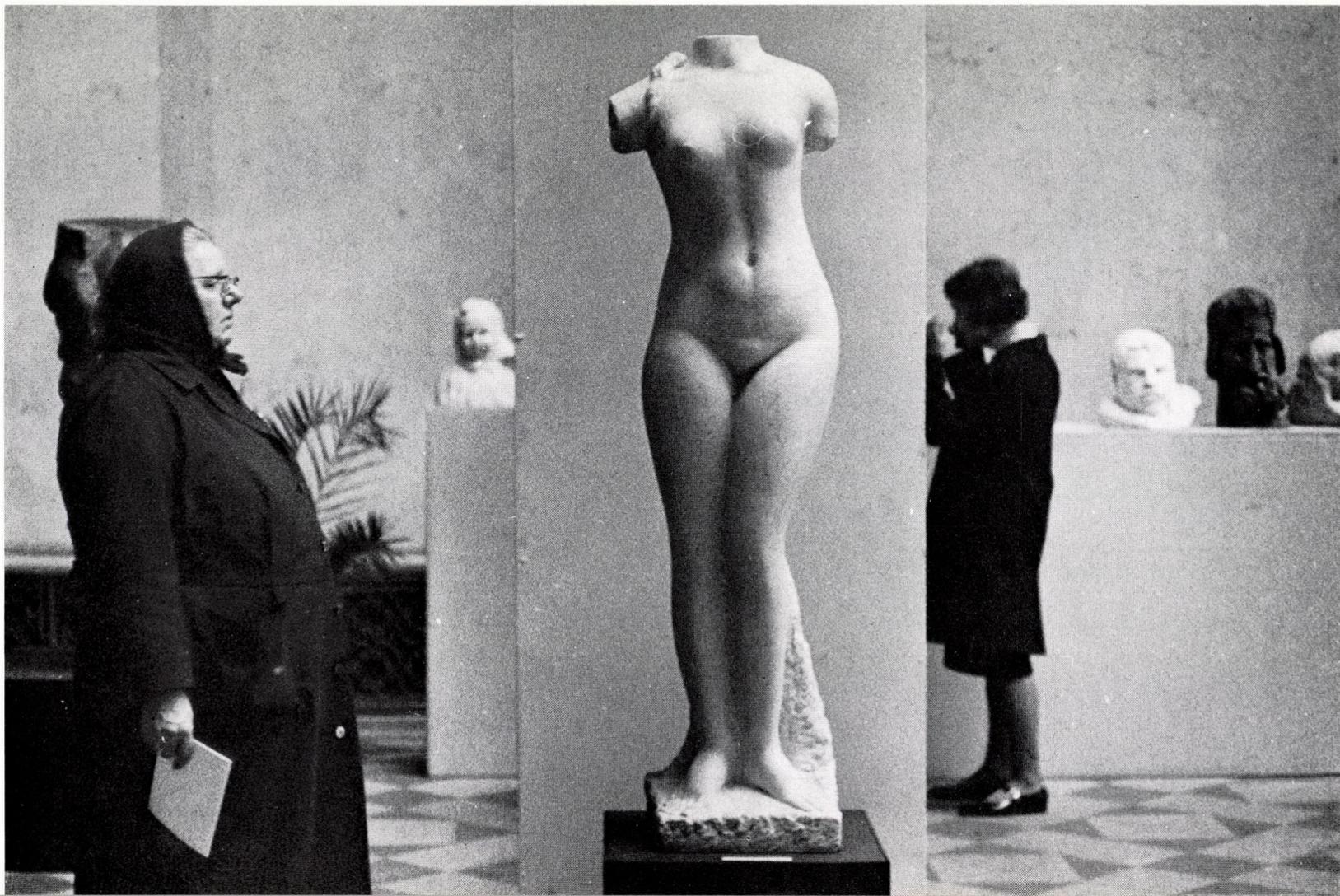
The reconstructed Buda Castle: the Sigismund tower

Blocks of flats in the Lágymányos housing estate ►





Street book-stall in Budapest in Book-Week





JÓZSEF SOMOGYI: MARTIN FURNACE OPERATOR



JÓZSEF SOMOGYI: PETŐFI (PÁPA, BRONZE) 1973



Photo: MTI, Géza Székellődy

◀ JÓZSEF SOMOGYI: NAVVY

(PRELIMINARY STUDY FOR THE SZÁNTÓ-KOVÁCS MEMORIAL, BRONZE), 1963

▼ JÓZSEF SOMOGYI: THE SZÁNTÓ-KOVÁCS MEMORIAL

(HÓDMEZŐVÁSÁRHELY, BRONZE, 1965)



Photo: MTI, Béla Tóth

valid after the liberation. We continued to think of it as correct as well as necessary, and we began to work in that direction.

Around that time we everywhere made a start on founding National Committees. We decided to address a proclamation to the population to start work, to put towns into a proper shape again, to go back to their jobs, to put the factories in working order; this proclamation to be issued not in the name of the Party but of the National Committees. Our first activity of this sort was therefore directed towards shaking up and mobilizing the people who had sunk into a sort of stupor at the time of the siege, and even before then, under the fascist terror, getting them ready for the work of reconstruction.

As the enemy was rolled back, we followed the movements of the front line, and moved our H.Q. to more central districts. The Soviet forces had not even liberated the Nagykörút yet when we shifted Party H.Q. to what is Köztársaság tér now, which at the time was still called Tisza Kálmán tér. The Party Central Committee operated from there for a time. Tisza Kálmán tér in those days was the place where all those assembled who mattered in politics and public life. It is self-evident that members of the Communist Party, as soon as they found out where Party H.Q. were, turned up and reported for work. That is where they were given directives and instructions. But not only Communists turned up. All our political friends and allies, with whom we had cooperated in the independence movement, came straightaway, as soon they found themselves on the right-side of the front line, leaving their basements and shelters.

The left Social-Democrats turned up, Árpád Szakasits was one of them, the Peasant Party people, József Darvas the writer amongst them, and also politicians on the left of the Smallholders Party, Gyula Ortutay, Ernő Mihályfi, and Sándor Barcs. That is where we first met those writers and artists who had fought in the independence movement at our side, including the actors Tamás Major, Zoltán Várkonyi and Hilda Gobbi. Lajos Zilahy went there as well. The H.Q. of the Communist Party was the only political centre in Budapest at the time.

The leaders of the democratic parties came primarily to get information, and to talk things over on ways of starting work, that is carrying on with it.

By then the programme of the Hungarian National Independence Front which was accepted in Szeged following the proposal of the Communist Party, was becoming known in Budapest as well. We in Budapest began to cooperate with the leaders of the coalition parties on the basis of this programme. We made it clear to them that there was still need for unity and collaboration among the democratic parties, and that joint work would

have to be continued on the basis of this programme. What I should like to add is that at this time the organs of the people's power took shape before the central and local organizations of the coalition parties.

An important thing about them derived precisely from the fact that these organs of the people's power took shape before the central and local organizations of the coalition parties. This was understandable and necessary. At the time when national committees were formed in various parts of Budapest, neither the Social-Democratic Party, nor the Independent Smallholders' Party, nor the National Peasant Party, nor the Citizens' Democratic Party had either central or district organizations. The representatives of these parties, and non-party patriots, who had already collaborated during the war, went to work with joint strength at the moment of Liberation. That was a most interesting aspect of developments. The political organization of the people's democracy started from the bottom up. The Soviet army had swept away the old state apparatus of the Horthy regime. There were no central state authorities in Budapest yet when the people took its fate into its own hands through shop-committees in the factories and production and land-claim committees in the villages. This shows as well that a widely based revolution of the people's democracy kind started in the country and the present state apparatus grew out of that later.

The people itself created its own organs of authority in the course of the fight. You can't get a more democratic form of organization than that. The political organization was built up from below, at the grassroots, starting with the masses, and progressing to the top.

The first Budapest daily was conceived in the spirit of the policy of a national united front. It was this which guided us when we decided that in Budapest, the heart of the country, where most of the working class had their homes, the first to appear should be a democratic daily, and not a Party paper, a paper that is in the editing of which all the democratic parties would be represented. We already talked about the nature of the paper, and its name, at that very first meeting of the leadership, on *Hungária körút*, we talked about right at the start of this recording. We there weighed up the pros and cons of the Communist Party making use of its own resources, that is the fact that we were there on our feet at the moment of Liberation, able to appear as an organized force. Should we start our own press-organ rightaway? We made up our minds not to make use of this advantage. We said that the Party's paper would have to be started at a time when the other parties as well had their own organizations, and were in a position to start their own papers. Until that time we would resign ourselves to being without a Party paper of our own.

At the same time it was obvious that there was great need for a democratic paper to be started immediately, as quickly as possible, in Budapest. There is no need to stress the importance of this, I am sure. The radio was not operating, there were no media of any kind in the capital of the country. As I said, the parties themselves had not yet started regular operations. When *Szabadság* (Freedom) got under way, there weren't any central authorities even in Budapest. The national committees were already at work in the various districts, but there was no such thing yet as a central Budapest national committee.

In those days the press was the only medium through which contact could be maintained with the masses. *Szabadság* did the job, it appeared on the streets of Budapest two to three days after the *Nagykörút* was liberated. The paper called on the population to clear up the rubble, start life afresh, work for reconstruction and maintain national unity. At that time therefore the paper had particularly important central duties to get things going and to point out the right way. It became an important organizer and factor in national rebirth.

The starting point in deciding the name of the paper was that later, when the Communist Party's own paper was started, it could not be called anything other than *Szabad Nép* (Free People), the name of the paper of the illegal Party, which appeared in the spring of 1942. We reserved that name for the Party paper to be started later.

Most of the parties had papers earlier and we thought they would like to use the same names again, *Népszava* (The People's Word) was that of the Social-Democrats for instance. The Independent Smallholders' Party owned weeklies and other papers, and it seemed self-evident that they would chose the name of one of those for their daily. *Magyar Nemzet* (Hungarian Nation) was also due to appear once again. The National Peasant Party had its own paper, *Szabad Szó* (Free Word) which they later turned into a daily.

Bearing all this in mind we thought *Szabadság* would best suit the activities and duties of the paper. It followed from our policy that everyone whose ideas were democratic could work on bringing out the paper. In fact not only friends participated, with whom we had already cooperated in 1944, during the war, men whom we considered old political allies, but others as well who joined us at that very moment, whose sentiments we knew to be antifascist, but who had not worked intensively in a political way earlier, now however, they wanted to work, and they felt their place was in the office of *Szabadság*. One of those was Lajos Zilahy, the writer, who had not taken part in politics earlier. We knew him to be a writer with antifascist

sentiments, and when he as well turned up on Köztársaság tér, at Party H.Q., and we had a talk to him, he showed himself ready to do his share of the editorial work.

József Darvas, Zilahy, and I were the first editors of the paper. The three of us did the editorial work, but a great many old friends helped as well. Sándor Barcs worked there, for example, he had been one of the partisans of the idea of national independence during the war. Many friends we had amongst newspapermen, young and old, turned up, and they were all welcome. We should not forget that *Szabadság* started at a time when they were still fighting in Budapest.

Few know why we started on József körút, using these offices and presses. *Új Magyarország* (The New Hungarian) and *Függetlenség* (Independence) were produced there, up to the last moment before Liberation, in a Budapest that was surrounded and being liberated. A big part of the city was already liberated and they still edited and printed these papers, that is they didn't do much editing, they just took the Agency reports and passed them straight on to the shop-floor, to be set up in type. The last issues consisted of a single sheet *Új Magyarország* on one side and *Függetlenség* on the other. All they reported was news of the German V2—"miracle weapons": there was hope still that the fascists would get back into Budapest. When the Nagykörút was liberated we went straight to those printers' since the fascists had accumulated pretty big stocks of paper. They had arranged everything for their press to be produced there as long as possible. The printers were in as well.

There was no other daily, only *Szabadság*, in Budapest right up to the end of March. The daily of the Hungarian Communist Party itself first appeared on March 25th. This meant that, for approximately two and a half months, *Szabadság* alone was that press organ which addressed the public day after day.

It is easy to imagine how important the paper was in such a serious situation. Copies sold like hot cakes, we simply couldn't print enough. After newsboys left the printer's they could not even go a hundred or two hundred meters, passers-by grabbed the papers from them. Everybody wanted one. It was the only contact people had with the outside world. Each copy was read by hundreds and thousands, it was passed on as soon as read. It proved impossible to print sufficient copies to satisfy demand.

TIBOR BARTHA

CHRISTIANITY AND THE LIBERATION

In my case, it is not simple to relate my personal recollections of the Liberation. Nineteen forty-four was the most critical year of my life up to that time. I still wish to forget the memories of the bodily and spiritual agony which I underwent in that year. However, I am ready to tell of my experiences because of the obligation given in the Holy Scripture: "Thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee. . ." And the trials which I then felt would lead to annihilation later brought freedom and deliverance from oppression.

In addition, what I consider as my most personal memories may in fact be typical of the outlook of my contemporaries of similar education and persuasion. Hence I agree with the Editor that the following recollections of my personal memories are not without use and may contribute to the completeness of the portrayal of that period.

Some of my difficulties thirty years ago were of a purely personal nature and were related to serious health problems. My physicians recommended a major operation on the chest cavity as the only possible solution. Medicine in general and surgery in particular have made gigantic strides since that time, and today an operation of this kind entails less risks. At that time, however, it seemed to me a ruthless treatment and was performed in two stages, without an anaesthetic. It was only later that I perceived the grace of God in this experience: it was through these fears and sufferings that he restored my health and strength.

My country underwent a similar experience. At that time many of us could not yet see that, in the midst of the unspeakable sufferings caused by a lost and senseless war, a process of healing had begun in Hungarian society as the result of major "surgery", the radical transformation of our social system. Today it is obvious to all of us that the end of the war not only delivered the Hungarian people from the fascist reign of terror, but it also freed Hungarian society from the lethal disease of poverty and backwardness.

But to return to my personal experiences. As the front line advanced towards the frontiers of Hungary, I began to feel that my health problems were only a small fraction of my misery. Fears began to grow in my mind, along with many of my contemporaries, for the future of myself and my family and the destiny of my nation. If the Soviet troops reach Hungarian

Tibor Bartha, Bishop, President of the Synod of the Calvinist Church in Hungary.

soil, if they invade the territory of the last and only remaining satellite of Hitler, then how would this nation pay for the insanity of the country's leaders who had led it into the war on the side of fascism? Such fears and anxieties existed not only in me but also in the minds of many believing Christians in my churches, combined with an increasingly excruciating crisis of conscience. Along with many Christian brothers and sisters I also felt that the Hungarian churches of Christ had not fulfilled their mission in the period between the two world wars. They had done nothing to restrain the government from entering a senseless war. In the face of grave problems in Hungarian society, they had failed to champion, in an unequivocal manner, the cause of the hungry. Understandably I was prepared for the Judgement Day and I was afraid. My trepidation was intensified by the painful realization that when the judgement fell upon me, my family, my church and my people, it would be one which we deserved. Clearly I would not be truthful if I claimed that I awaited the coming of the Soviet troops with unmixed joy and hope. On the contrary; I felt that they would be the agents of God's just judgement.

The generation of Calvinist Reformed ministers to which I belong had been taught hatred of communism and of the Soviet Union. Nevertheless, in actual fact, my political views had not been formed by this propaganda. In the middle thirties I had come in contact with a number of members of the "Confessional Church" in Germany who then resolutely resisted Hitler's fascism. It is mainly under their influence that I turned against fascism. I also belonged to a group of young ministers who decidedly condemned the semifeudal social system which then existed in our country. But how was it that I and other Calvinist pastors of the same persuasion failed to find our way into the Hungarian workers' movement? Why did I experience such contradictory emotions when contemplating the coming of the Soviet forces? Certainly not because I had favoured fascism, nor because I had taken a moral stand for a social order based on the privilege of birth. The real reason was that I saw a threat to my church and to the freedom of the Christian faith and religion in view of the fact that the Soviet system of society was ideologically based on Marxism. Propaganda had repeatedly called our attention to this fact, and I believe that this was the source of the conflict in my conscience which caused me to despair for our future. Though it was not clear to me what fate the Soviet power might have in store for Hungary, some hopes were also raised in my mind by reports that it was not against the people but against the government that the Soviet army was fighting. But, with regards to ideology, I felt the situation was hopeless. I considered it tragic that the social system which

implemented social justice and bore the greatest burdens of the war against Nazism was separated from and even pitted against us by the atheism of Marxism.

That was my state of mind when I looked into the eyes of the first Soviet soldier. We conversed through an interpreter. He asked me about my profession, and I felt my end had come. When I told him I was a Christian minister, his unexpected reply was: "You are lying". A long exchange with the interpreter ensued and I was told that priests had beards and wore special robes in his country, both of which were lacking in my case. Finally he accepted that religious servants in this country looked different. And then, to my great surprise, he did not kill me. He patted my shoulder in a friendly manner and asked me where my church was stating that he would come in order to check whether I was really a minister. He also asked me to conduct church services diligently and pray that the war may end soon. I was quite surprised and subsequently amazed that behind the cruel battle front my profession as Christian minister, instead of being a disadvantage, actually protected me. It was then for the first time that it began to dawn upon me what later, through the experiences of many years, has become a firm certainty: my Christian faith does not separate me from socialism which fights against nazism for a just social order. The socialist order of our society, the liberated new Hungary, does not demand of believing Christians that they give up their faith. The Christian churches may live and serve freely in the new environment if it is really Christ's mission that they want to fulfill. Slowly, it became clear to me that the way in which World War II ended not only liberated my country from the shackles of a backward social order, but it also delivered me and my Christian brothers and sisters from a crisis of conscience. Thus the time of fear and pain became for me also a source of blessings, as the Bible says: "Behold for peace I had great bitterness; but thou hast in love to my soul delivered it from the pit of corruption..." (Isaiah 38:17).

ANNA BODONYI

WOMEN IN PUBLIC LIFE

Újpest, where I grew up, was a smoky factory town; at the time it was an autonomous administrative unit though today it is the fourth district of Budapest. The tenement house where I lived was quite literally sur-

Mrs. Anna Bodonyi, Secretary to the Budapest Committee of the Patriotic People's Front

rounded by factories; it consisted of 52 one-room flats crowded with an unbelievably great number of people living in extreme poverty. I knew of almost no family where T.B. had not claimed victims, and our family was no exception. Out of my seven brothers and sisters, three were stricken by the "*morbis Hungaricus*". In 1936 when my 22 year old sister died of it, my other sister, then 20, had already developed a pulmonary cavity; and when she died in 1945, it was discovered that at the age of 20 I had T.B. too.

If I think back, my most vivid memories are of Saturdays, pay days, and Sundays because these were the times when "something happened". Our regular "visitors", the police, came to see us either because of a row in the house, or to fetch the young boys who tried to avoid the compulsory Sunday paramilitary training. From time to time the ambulance would come to take the knived party of a quarrel or the victim of an abortionist to the hospital; and the nuns would also call on us to preach endurance.

When three of my sisters were gainfully employed, we moved to a one-room-and-kitchen flat on Király street: we considered it an elegant place compared to our original quarters. My poor mother often told me that I would be lucky because I was the seventh child. I was in fact "lucky": I had perhaps more to eat than my peers in similar circumstances. The tenants invited me to lick the greasy platter or the jam pot clean, to eat titbits and drink the cream off the milk; at Christmas time or during the Feast of Tabernacles I was a guest of neighbouring families, and both the butcher's wife and the landlord of the next tenement house wished to adopt me.

I got to know the neighbourhood quickly. I had a lot of time for roaming about because, although I completed five and half grades of school, I studied only while in the classroom and never did any homework. I learned other things instead which in today's terms would be called "studies in environmental and family sociology."

At work

I was happy to leave school and earn money at last. In 1937 at the age of 12 I got a job as an errand-girl with social security benefits. We needed money badly because as the youngest child I remained alone with my mother who was too old and, above all, too worn-out for work. She had brought up her children alone: my father had left the village to come to Budapest where he never felt at home; he took to drinking and finally left us.

I was 15 when I started to work in the Standard Telephone Factory. Here it seemed that my luck left me. I was afraid of the shop foreman and had

to work with such highly inflammable material that I got burnt twice, once the entire length of my body—I still remember the panic and how they even stopped the conveyor. Another time I was locked up under military orders for three days in the air raid shelter as punishment for having given one of two obligatory identification cards to a friend who otherwise could not have come from Újpest into Budapest.

Things then went from bad to worse. Together with a number of other women from Újpest I was branded as a “striker” because in the autumn of 1944 after the Hungarian nazis took over we did not go to work. I never wanted to strike: I was simply afraid that Buda and Pest would be divided, that, after the blasting of the Margaret Bridge, the Germans would blow up the other bridges and I would be stranded in Buda. But, fear or no fear, I had to go to work until the end of December 1944 at a time when already “you were one tram transfer ticket away from the front”.

The Liberation

Early in the morning of January 9th 1945 my sister died. When they took her away they told us to go to the cemetery between two and three in the afternoon and perhaps it would still be possible to bury her. “Make it snappy”—they warned—“the Russians are already here”.

Early in the afternoon we started out for the cemetery on the outskirts of the city. We experienced a strange feeling. The streets were silent with an air of tension and expectation, but in the cemetery, the realm of the dead, we heard unintelligible appeals and speeches over a loudspeaker. Then came music and a few bars of the popular hit: “In vain you flee, in vain you run away...” From this we learned that the Russian troops were nearing our neighbourhood. We bade a hasty farewell to my poor sister and quickly buried her as shots struck at the cemetery’s stone wall. On our way home we kept looking back; at night we could not sleep and kept watch, tense with excitement. Why don’t they enter the town, they must be here already?... At dawn I went down to the front gate and there I first set eyes on a Soviet soldier, walking by himself in the road. It was the 10th of January and in Újpest the war was over.

There had been food rationing for years and poor families like ours had no reserves at all. For several days we had been chewing on poppy seeds and bread crumbs with a bit of water; we could not even remember the taste of bread. It was said that the Russians gave you flour and even lard. So I snatched my brother’s piano accordion to go play for them. I returned home happily

with two kilos of lard and about 5-6 kilos of flour. We baked bread and could hardly wait until it was ready. When we cut it at last, it reeked so of kerosene we very nearly started to cry. In order to prevent anyone else from using the food, the Germans had soaked in petroleum or gasoline all supplies which they dared not burn. But we didn't mind much about the smell; we were used to eating even the carcasses of horses which we dug out from under the snow. And anyway what did a little taste of kerosene matter when the Soviet soldier who had been made so happy with the accordion was maybe bound to die in action the next day since the troops stationed in Újpest went daily to the front in Budapest which was liberated only on February 13th. . .

Among Communists—without a Membership Card

The Hungarian Communist Party hoisted its flag on the only elegant coffeehouse in Újpest. In my childhood I had been often at the back entrance of this luxurious building: I used to carry supper to our neighbour who worked as a waiter there.

The coffeehouse had long ceased to exist, but I did not cross the threshold of the main entrance for another couple of years; on the other hand, I used the back entrance as unceremoniously as in the past. Nobody asked me what I wanted, whom I was looking for, nobody even told me to sit down. Now and then people looked at me for a moment and remarked: "So you're alive? Good!" and went on their way. They disappeared behind the door or sat in a corner and debated with each other. They did not mind if I listened, from time to time one or the other looked at me and asked: "Do you understand?" "Not quite," said I, but the dispute went on. Although I was twenty and earned my own living, in their eyes I remained a little girl whose questions nobody had time to answer.

This is how I became member of the "communist family"; I had to prove myself often outside the coffeehouse with actions and not with a membership card which I didn't even have at the time.

Women in Public Life

The slogan of the Communist Party "Make room for women in public life!" met my approval not only because I painted it beautifully on walls but also because I now understood it. In late 1945 I started to attend the

Workers' School and continued my studies after work. Very soon I found myself in public life.

I became secretary to the Communist branch organization of the Selmeczi Shotgun Ammunition Factory: this was a small enterprise with 350 workers, and had no special significance in Újpest but when, after the nationalization of enterprises, all Party secretaries were invited to a conference in the biggest hall of Újpest, I was also invited. Before the Conference a leader of the district Party committee asked me whether I could tell him anything about the production process in our factory. "Of course", I replied offhand.

When during the conference I heard with surprise that the next speaker would be the party secretary of the Selmeczi Shotgun Ammunition Factory, I had to suffer the consequences of my misunderstanding: I never thought that I would have to speak before hundreds of people. I don't know to this day what I said and how I managed to speak, but my speech was well-received and from that day on I had to speak in meetings and conferences almost every week.

Later I went away to study at the Party School and had to leave the community where I had been known and loved since my early childhood. When I had to take leave of my colleagues in Újpest I felt as a soldier joining the army and told them, "I must go now but I'll come back soon."

I was never able to keep this promise. The slogan "Make room for women in public life!" determined my own life too. After graduation from the Party School I received an appointment in the women's movement where I worked for 15 years. In 1958 I was elected MP, then member of the Presidential Council. But I shall never forget the Liberation and the years immediately after it, the time when everything began.

GYULA ORTUTAY

NEL MEZZO DEL CAMMIN

I experienced the decisive event of liberation in the middle of January 1945—in a twofold sense of the word. In fact, the Hungarian word for *liberation* has two meanings: it signifies deliverance from captivity or oppression, and it also designates the period when a journeyman passes his master's examination and is admitted to a higher grade. In the time of guilds it meant finishing your apprenticeship. I encountered liberation in its double

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sense in the thirty-fifth year of my life: "*Nel mezzo del cammin di nostra vita. . .*" True, that period of time was a dark forest; we did not even hope to get out of it. And I think of my friends; how many could not get out of that wild, tangled forest, how many have remained 'unburied dead' to quote another great poet, Miklós Radnóti, who was shot in the back of the neck in November 1944.

In January 1945, however, the day was already dawning, a ray of hope kept glimmering. Half the country had already been liberated by the Red Army, and the siege of Budapest was well underway. By that time we had not lived at home for months—my wife, our four-month old daughter Mary, and myself. I had to live underground: Sándor Barcs sent me a warning note from Nazi-prison that he was being plied with questions about me. My wife and the baby took shelter with my dear old professor of Latin, József Huszti, and I also stayed with friends. Finally, from December 1944, I lived in the basement of the Pál Teleki Research Institute with historian friends of mine, who stayed there legally, and an escaped French prisoner-of-war. It was a good company of friends, we shared food and shelter and made plans for the future amidst the roar of air raids and mine explosions. But when the next door radio station was hit by bombs during the succeeding raids, the basement of the Institute began to seem less and less safe. In early January we gained admission to the vaults of the nearby National Museum. Some hundred people were already assembled there: my colleagues, archaeologists, natural scientists, librarians, some of them with their wives and small children. The immense building had a large network of cellars; there was room for many of us in its secure massiveness where not even the roar of bombings was audible in the deep vaults. There I lived, making daily visits to the convent around the corner: with the help of my excellent former professor of literature, the poet and priest Sándor Sík, I had managed to move my little family from Buda to this place in Pest, while our own apartment was occupied by relatives. It was absurd, a cruel way of life, but we lived.

If my memory serves me well, it was in the early morning of January 16, 1945 that we heard heavy knocking at the door of the National Museum. One of the directors of the Museum, the prominent archeologist Nándor Fettich, and the head of the natural science collection, András Tasnádi Kubacska, went to answer, taking with them the official papers which they always had at hand. This immunity warrant, signed by the then commandant of the city, an arrow-cross officer by the name of Hindy, and his German counterpart, stated that the house should not accommodate any armed group and that it should be spared the dangers of fighting as

a Museum harbouring the principal relics of the national culture of Hungary and the holdings of its largest library. It was a German military unit pounding at the door. Fettich and his colleague handed the enframed document to the commander of the Hitlerite platoon and began to explain their rights. The German officer brushed the warrant aside and told them that the paper put him under no obligation; he was a defender of European culture, and "Hungarian culture is not worth a damn". What the Hitlerites understood by European culture was already much too well-known to all of us—by the atrocities committed in battle, the burning down of defenceless towns, and the millions killed in gas chambers.

This German unit did not come to negotiate. They ordered everybody to stay in their basement cells, saying that whoever came into the passages would be shot immediately. They set to work at once; it must have been urgent indeed. In the morning we discovered what it was all about. They had placed mines all over the building, from the top floor down to the cellars. Their plan was to spring the mines causing the immense centrally-located museum to crash down upon the Soviet soldiers who might try to force entry. And the ruins would create a good battle position for a few days. That the ruins would bury the cherished cultural relics of a nation, and with them a multitude of old people and children, gave them no compunction of conscience. The possibility of a few days' respite was more important to them. But they miscalculated. The complete network of mines was still far from being connected up when Soviet soldiers broke in by a side door: a white-uniformed Siberian unit did away with the "mine-layers" in a short time. They examined the cellars and gave us permission to move freely about. We could only stare in amazement as soldiers searched the passages with mine detectors and trained dogs sniffed out mines. Basketfuls of mines and other devices were collected—our would-be death warrant. Outside in the streets we could hear reports of submachine-guns and rifles; our side of the street was still being shot at from across the boulevard, but the glittering January light raised our spirits—it brought freedom.

My daughter and wife were already at home in our apartment a few blocks away.

This is the story of *one* of my liberations.

As to my second liberation, my "master's" examination, I should not really dwell on details. Already between 1942 and 1944 some of us in the Smallholders' Party had founded the Citizen's Section which would become the left wing of the party. I myself presided over the committee on cultural policy and, together with my friends, had worked out the guidelines and principles of a hoped-for new cultural policy. Endre Bajcsy-Zsilinszky

was so pleased with the results that according to those who remember, of all the political questions of liberation, it was the one which preoccupied him most during his imprisonment. He even decided, and so informed me on October 16 the day after his temporary release, that I should take over either the management of the radio or the ministry of public education. He also drafted the first sentence to be broadcast by the Hungarian Radio after liberation ("The Hungarian Radio is free at last"), and this was the first announcement made on May 1st, 1945 over our then still primitive radio station. For nearly three years I headed the enterprises of the Magyar Központi Híradó Rt. which incorporated, besides the Radio, the Hungarian News Agency and the Motion Picture Agency; as early as 1946 I attended the OIRT conference in Brussels, was a guest of the BBC, and in general got down to the work I had been orally commissioned to take up on January 18, 1945 and then formally appointed to a few days later by the newly-established Budapest National Committee. And it has been nonstop since then as head of the Ministry of Religion and Education and a great many other assignments, worries, achievements and mistakes. But that is another story.

GÁBOR PETRI

A SURGEON—IN WAR AND PEACE

In January 1945 I still ambled along, putting on a bit of speed from time to time, as the Medical Officer wearing mufti of a "national minorities battalion", part of the retreating army, all the way from Eperjes to Rózsahegy in what was once the Up-Country, then on through Moravia. I looked after the men in this multilingual unit. By then eighteen months had passed since I had been moved to a theatre of war, in White Russia, and I knew little of the troubles and horrors at home. One could not get to the bottom of the truth, either reading letters, or the papers that reached us. True enough what did get through was pretty alarming. Being perhaps the only undesirable element in that part of the army which was stuck outside the country, a well-wisher let me know that my worthy C.O. wished to fix me up "on higher orders". After writing a sonnet on the occasion, and a letter to my parents — a soldier managed to get it home, together with a tactful description of my death — I tried to take my leave but failed. Nothing much happened to me except that I was taken back to Hungary,

Gábor Petri is Professor of Surgery and Head of the Surgical Clinic of the University of Szeged.

to Sopron, early in March, under a reliable escort. After a night at Kőhida I was entrusted to the SA managed *lager* at Fertőrákos, and at Easter we were all evacuated to Mauthausen and from there walked to Günskirchen, 70 kms this side of Salzburg. I was liberated on May 5th, spent some time looking after the medical side of the men there who were in a really bad state, meanwhile surviving a bout of typhoid with dysentery attached. When I recovered, I and a few mates took our leave and I reached home in Budapest on September 1st 1945.

It follows from all this that I did not personally experience the liberation of the country. After an absence of twenty-five months all I met was a nation divided against itself, sections full of rancour for each other, that is other than the frightening destruction, the poverty, my parents who were in a terrible state and starving, and news of friends who had perished in one way or another. Perhaps there is no need to explain that as one who after a lengthy absence, first being swept along by that tide which carried the insulted and injured and the scum of their persecutors as so much flotsam and jetsam, then finding myself plunged into the mess enchanted the idea of liberation and with a messianic faith in the improvement of human nature, but with no other preparation, no other sympathies, or living, continuous contacts with the movement, I felt nauseated in the first place. I did not even get an honest job, and those who had stayed behind edged me out of the old one. After a month I joined Szeged University which was depopulated and in tatters and set to work. That is where I began reconstruction, right at the beginning and at the very bottom. I have carried on as best I could for twenty-nine years. I have stayed true to what they taught me, and I have served humanity with all the tools at my disposal, that is all. I often think what I have achieved has been appreciated beyond my deserts, since all I have ever done was what I have felt committed to since I was a boy.

ISTVÁN SÁLYI

SETTING UP A NEW UNIVERSITY

I was born in Budapest in 1901. My father was Dr. Ferenc Springer, a lawyer, who was, for many years, a member of the Budapest Municipal Council and from 1913 a member of Parliament for the 9th District of the City. Our family's name has since been magyarized to Sályi.

István Sályi, mechanical engineer. Rector (ret.) of the Miskolc University of Heavy Industry.

As a schoolboy I made up my mind that I would follow in my father's footsteps, but only in part: I would become a lawyer, that offered prospects of a good career, but I would not be a politician, politicians have to talk too much.

Things happened differently. After leaving school I studied mechanical engineering at the University of Technology in Budapest. I obtained my diploma in 1923. Since that time I have held a variety of positions, in keeping with my qualifications, most of them in the public service.

I intend these introductory lines to make it clear that in 1945, the year of the Liberation, I was already a mature man who had to admit the greater part of his life, which he had lived under the social conditions of bourgeois Hungary, was behind him.

Those conditions favoured me when I was a child. At that time I considered them to be natural and right. During the revolution that flared up for a short time in 1919 it first dawned on me, as a secondary school pupil, that the social conditions under which I was growing up might possibly be good for those who lived on the sunny side but could be cruel indeed for those who were born where the sun did not shine.

I am still grateful to my teachers who already in secondary school tried to open our eyes and bring home to us the historic significance of the 1917 Russian revolution. I have ever since lived in the awareness that the bourgeois social order must sooner or later give place to another, a better, more perfect, more humane system.

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Upon completion of my studies at the University of Technology I spent five years working in the Ganz Rolling Stock Works. For nine years afterwards I was a teaching assistant in the faculty of mechanical engineering of the University. Meanwhile I had a part-time job as a teacher in secondary technical schools.

In 1937 I was appointed to the Patent Tribunal as a judge with technical qualifications. I occupied that post until a few years after the Liberation.

During the best part of the twenty-five years just described I was working for the government. Consequently my social position was determined by the office I held in the complicated hierarchy of governmental service. There were always fewer jobs than men. It was not to be wondered at if a chance of promotion could stir up a hard, bitter fight among the competing applicants. I for one feel that the rules of this—quite natural—competition were never fair.

*

I left the Patent Tribunal as late as 1949. A decisive event in my life after the Liberation was when, in 1948, the directorate of the State College of Technology established at the time honoured me with the request that I should lecture on technological mechanics at the College.

The majority of the class were well over the age of 18 to 21 that is usual with college students. They were all skilled workers who earlier had no possibility of acquiring higher qualifications, but when they enrolled at the college they already held executive posts in one or another of the enterprises nationalized at the time.

The forty to fifty members of the class had entered college to acquire not diplomas but knowledge. The curriculum seemed crowded compared with the length of the course. Competition started among them as well. What counted was that they wanted to demonstrate—which they eventually did—that, by uniting for the common goal, they would all be able to comply with requirements. In bourgeois society each competitor fought for himself, against all the others. These college students all fought for the common goal, for the country. Their zealous, tireless exertions fascinated even their teachers.

Later I also gave a course at the mining section of the State College of Technology. The situation there was essentially the same.

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Something important happened to me in September 1949. At that time the University of Heavy Industry was opened in Miskolc, and I became a member of the teaching staff. The University began to function with three faculties: mining, metallurgical and mechanical engineering. The first two had the task of gradually taking over the training of mining and metallurgical engineers from the Sopron faculty of mining, metallurgical and forest engineering of the Budapest University of Technology and of easing the duties of the faculty of mechanical engineering of the Budapest University by training mechanical engineers for mining, silicate metallurgy and the heavy machine industry.

This structure of the University of Heavy Industry seemed unusual, or even strange to many specialists. The professors of mining and metallurgy who over the years had put down roots in Sopron were sorry to move to Miskolc. The difficulties were increased by the fact that, in the early years, the University only had temporary premises in Miskolc. Since then a new university district has been built in the town.

A special feature of 1949 was the way of selecting the students. The

greater part of the students left school in 1949. There were many well qualified ones among them. But a good number only had special trade school leaving certificates (*szakérttségi*). These had attended a one-year special abridged course covering selected subjects.

In addition, we had students there who had no secondary school leaving certificate (*érettségi*) and who had attended only a preparatory course of a few weeks to fill the gap, one which in many cases, was not particularly successful.

The tasks of the teaching staff were not easy. It was not possible to teach on the basis of a uniform curriculum at the faculties of mining, metallurgical and mechanical engineering. Such was the position at the University of Heavy Industry in September 1949.

Because of the different composition of the student body there was a great difference between the State College of Technology and the University of Heavy Industry. The students of the College got down to work, they were toughened by the battles of life, and their socialist consciousness helped them. The same could be said only of those University students who came up with the *szakérttségi* or who attended the preparatory course, and only of a few of those in possession of a normal *érettségi* certificate.

Another, not unessential, difference was that for many years there was serious disagreement amongst students on whether the territorially divided training of mining and metallurgical engineers should be merged in Sopron or in Miskolc.

But there was a way out of this extremely difficult situation as well. At each of the three faculties of the University a strong collective of students came into being during the early years, favouring the joining of forces, and a strict discipline in study.

The University of Heavy Industry gained in strength in those early years. The vigour of the student body stimulated the teaching staff of the University as well. These young people established the nationwide reputation of the University, and by their work done during their studies at the Miskolc University, and later in their jobs, they showed that Hungary can count on them in the building of socialism.

THE SCULPTURAL ART OF JÓZSEF SOMOGYI

József Somogyi holds a particular place in Hungarian plastic art. He is a controversial artist whose activity and practically all sculptures erected in public squares have for decades been followed by bitter polemics. Make no mistakes: it is not his talent which is in dispute. No one would attempt to do so, for—if “agreement” in such matters exists at all—everyone, even the most vehement critic, agrees on one point: József Somogyi is one of the best Hungarian sculptors, an artist who has perfected his skills with steady and uncompromising work. These conflicts are settled in a manner which is unusual but characteristic of Somogyi controversies as well as of other Hungarian cultural affairs: in the course of the dispute the community or town, which initially regarded the new statue placed at the centre of its life with definite and undeniable aversion, would gradually become accustomed, and then take a liking, to Somogyi’s work. His *Martin-steel Furnace Operator* has become a symbol of Dunaújváros and has been inserted in the town’s coat-of-arms with the consent, and even at the request, of its inhabitants. The *Szántó Kovács Memorial* has fared similarly. When it was erected, all Hódmezővásárhely quarrelled about it: they faulted it for not resembling the cherished idealized image of the navy leader of the town’s poor; for unworthily being shown in rags instead of holiday best; for altogether being what it was. . . . And today? If anyone tried to repudiate it or take it away from the people of Vásárhely, they would defend it tooth and nail—it has already become “their statue”. The disputes surrounding Somogyi’s sculptures concern not only his works but another field of activity which might be called popular education; they have taught not hundreds but thousands of people that a statue’s worth does not depend on the authenticity of the cut of the hero’s jacket, and that an ideal, an embellished remembered image, can never produce a work of art—only an idea can; and it is an idea which Somogyi “contracts” to fashion out of clay when he forms his compositions.

Certainly, this is not just a matter of stubborn tenacity. It is more, it is a life’s programme. Moreover, it is the total individuality of József Somogyi as a sculptor which, obviously, is not so abstract since it is continually realized in the process of the creation of his works.

The conversion of his programme into reality, Somogyi’s sculpture-producing activity, is a peculiar process. He forms his works by pugging and plastering—not only in the narrow sense, but also in the broader sense

József Somogyi, Rector of the College of Fine Arts.

of these words. That is to say, not merely technically but intellectually when Somogyi takes off a bit from a work in progress to put it on another spot; when with his hand—he almost always works bare-handed—he grips the moist clay or the waxy plastiline, gives it form and puts it in place, his act is not only physical. He transfers to the body of his work the motion of the changing, developing features of the statue which take place within himself; or conversely, under the impact of the modeling act itself his emerging work is further developed within him and on his platform. This kind of modeling, a closely interrelated synthesis of creative thinking and working, is the secret and essence of Somogyi's style.

Of course, this does not necessarily mean that while modeling Somogyi relies only on his impressions, a practice which is, in any case, ruled out by the bidirectional nature of the process. And it is contradicted also by another characteristic of his working method: he makes many sketches, both small and large, exploring parallel ways and testing opposing possibilities. To "develop" the composition by stepping from model to model is not his way of producing sculptures; he does not "magnify" his statues. His first-made sketches are in most cases diametrically opposed solutions, and the possible final form emerges only slowly. But in every phase it is a possible though not the "only choice". Somogyi is not obstinate. He relives his work in every form and every phase, starting all over again. He keeps moulding not the "model" but the experiences he owes to it until his thought—and his statues with them—have assumed their definitive form.

This creative method of faithfully preserving his freedom of thought has eventually made József Somogyi's career what it is like: conscious and humble, and almost ecstatically explosive, constructive and expressive at the same time and in a mutually exclusive manner as required by the task and its conceptual and modeling realization process.

This multi-faceted, multi-oriented sculptor's attitude which embraces practically all of Hungarian and European sculptural arts, making them part of his inheritance, is to be found at the very beginning of Somogyi's lifework. Actually he did not really inherit it, he forged it for himself. From his college masters (three painters—István Réti, Vilmos Aba Novák and Béla Kontuly—and one sculptor—Zsigmond Kisfaludi Strobl) he received stimulation of differing orientation: Réti was a depository of the special painter's attitude, leaning towards post-impressionism, of the Nagy-bánya School; Aba Novák and Kontuly embody in their paintings the Hungarian variants of the neo-classicism of the 'thirties; and Kisfaludi Strobl, who is now 90, is the master in Hungarian plastic art of a "smooth" sculpture-construction of classic style. Somogyi deviated from all of them. It may be

that fate led him to seek new ways, for his career—as with many of his contemporaries—actually began with a sharp caesura: in 1941, when he finished his studies, he had already made his *début* as an exhibiting artist; but continuation was denied him by the war's intervention. Therefore he had to start again from scratch; and it is understandable, that in the new era of peace, with four bloody years behind his own and his nation's back, he was really unable simply to continue where he had left off.

It is a different matter—and by no means a usual occurrence—that as a first step of this change József Somogyi modeled mostly animals, as if he virtually wanted “to flex his artistic muscles” in this uncommon, but not extraordinary, range of subjects. True, the results of his activity contradict the supposition of this limited programme: his first large work, the lions' statues in front of the Parliament, still may be conceived of as a school exercise (though it is not, and anyone can verify it for themselves as it still stands in place today). But he soon went further: his small sculptures of lion cubs and other young animals, then a stone bear cub erected at Dunaújváros in 1950 reveal hints not only of his emancipation and searching but anticipate—in embryo, in his method of thinking and modeling—the Somogyi of today.

This Somogyi was soon to take the first step towards displaying his accomplished self with his modeling of the *Martin Furnace Operator* mentioned above. The creation of this statue was not only a change of subject; the sculptor's insight of seeking and always discovering man, which is today practically synonymous with József Somogyi's lifework, was first launched on its way by this very statue.

When examining the *Martin Furnace Operator* from a non-formal point of view, we can speak of a summation: by this time Somogyi had summarized for himself all the sculptural lessons accumulated during a millennia of plastic art. The *Martin Furnace Operator* stands in an apron leaning on a ladle with a calm, simple gesture. His limbs seem to build up his body, with the assurance of predestination, and his brawny stout figure is not stationary after all: its tension excites our imagination and its lines structure and dominate the space around it.

However, such a *chef-d'oeuvre* when an artist is young and which proves a success at first try is not just useful; it involves dangers as well and may easily crush its creator, stifling endeavours to deviate from its course. If we view the matter this way, the *Martin Furnace Operator* was not only the first important stage of Somogyi's lifework but was at the same time his first victory for he was able to extricate himself from the spell of his creation—although for a few years following the *Martin Furnace Operator* he was unable

to mould a sculpture equal to it in exemplary significance, such as the memorial to János Szántó Kovács would later be. Somogyi did not fall silent, he did not freeze up after the *Martin Furnace Operator*. His works came one after another: the compositions now decorating the facade of the Madách Theatre in Budapest and the *Navy* in front of the headquarters of the World Federation of Hungarians. The *Dancers* exhibited at the World's Fair in Brussels—and modeled together with Jenő Kerényi—earned for Somogyi a Grand Prix and not without merit. This list could be extended right up to the composition entitled *Girl with a Foal* set up in the Jubilee Park on Gellért Hill. These works are also important in Somogyi's sculptural art: they are all without exception stages of progress, of experimentation and self-development. Through them Somogyi continued to develop his method of modeling—which with the *Martin Furnace Operator* was still part of the classical heritage, a method by which he strove to "smooth off" and carefully shape the surface of the statue—to his freer system of today which levels the explosive execution of the surface with the bodily dynamism of the statue.

From a formal aspect the *Szántó Kovács Memorial* is the product of this regained balance. As to its content, its complex significance goes beyond its formalism since moulding is a precondition, and not a result, of the creation of a statue. The memorial statue of János Szántó Kovács is a *type* in the modern and complex sense of the word. Compared with the *Navy* sculpted ten years earlier, it is the result of immense changes of content within the same subject. For, in spite of the omission of attributes utilized in the former, it reflects a more active, more orderly and yet more complex depiction of that class, of that stratum, to which József Somogyi erected a monument in memory of its leader—evoking, simultaneously and with equal force, its destitution, desperation, and the defiance with which it was able to rise not only in spontaneous revolt but in revolutionary organization.

With this work József Somogyi no longer matured; he had become a master. Continuation was not and could not have even be a problem to him: his sculptures after *Szántó Kovács* are not stages of an exploratory search but part and parcel of a new, now definitively discovered synthesis, the steps in its continued development. His liberation memorial designed for the town of Salgótarján, his sepulchral monument to Mednyánszky in Budapest, his statue of *Zrínyi* erected at Szigetvár, his *Dózsa* composition at Cegléd, and his *Petőfi* at Pápa—as well as the collection of his small bronzes and large-size sculptures exhibited in the Hungarian pavilion at the Venice Biennial of 1970 which included such outstanding works as the figure of a *Woman with Cello* and his dramatic *Corpus* which embodies the

fullness of human suffering by the purest means of the sculptural arts—have year after year justified and fulfilled the increasingly optimistic expectations of him. And the free sculptural conceptualization of their creator József Somogyi, promises to continue.

GYÖRGY HORVÁTH

ISTVÁN SZABÓ

BORN IN 1924

I was born in 1924, you could say then that I lived through the Second World War as a lad. I was spared the horrors that struck those a few years older in my village as well, all that army service in a theatre of war means. Many from my own native village, as from every other village and town in Hungary lost their lives a long way from home in a senseless and unjust war.

Why did they go to war? What did those living in my neck of the woods, the people of Hortobágy, get from the régime that drove the best part of those a few years older than myself to their deaths? Even now, looking back, I can do no better than repeat what a great Hungarian peasant writer, Péter Veres, a faithful chronicler of his times, said, and we kept on saying for many long years: what villagers, most of whom had nothing, got was poverty and misery, endless anxiety for a bare living, and work of some kind.

For this very reason everyone, the whole village, expected Liberation to produce a change for the better. They hoped to be saved from further suffering. We thought that salvation for us have-not peasants, migratory workers and field hands lay in the distribution of land. I cannot describe the feeling which the few acres of land parcelled out in 1945 meant to us, or the defiant eagerness with which we immediately buckled down to tilling our own soil.

Like every new farmer, I also had grand plans for my nearly three hectares. Their realisation was interrupted for a time by my enlistment in the Hungarian People's Army that was then being recruited. After my return following two years military service I worked hard to carry out my earlier plans. It took me a certain time as well as a lot of trouble, work and effort to raise my small-holding to a pretty good standard. It was therefore not easy for me to decide in 1951 to join the Red Star Producers' Cooperative that was founded in January 1950.

In those days ten times as many of us worked one tenth of the land we

István Szabó, Chairman of the National Council of Agricultural Cooperatives, President of an Agricultural Producers' Cooperative at Nádudvar.

have today and, to be sure, we did so in pretty miserable conditions. Nevertheless that time together with its difficulties, with its manmaking and community-making trials and tribulations, did a great deal to change the way of thinking of all of us.

It proved decisive for my own life that barely one year after my joining I was elected chairman by the cooperative membership. This happened without me being nominated. When my name came up at the general meeting, the nominators—older leading members—rightly argued that a young private soldier should not be promoted general rightaway, let's wait with that chairmanship for a while, let him be deputy for a time, then we shall see. By then the members already wanted me to be the chairman of the cooperative and so they elected me, while the original nominee became my deputy.

Owing to the repeatedly strengthened trust of the members I have, for twenty-three years now, been chairman of the Red Star Producers' Cooperative of Nádudvar, which has meanwhile grown into the largest, and one of the most efficiently functioning, collective farm in the country.

Our 2,000 hectares of land were extended to cover 18,400 hectares; the number of members has risen from 400 to 3,000; in 1951 our joint assets amounted to 1.5 million Forints, today the total is 700 million. Similar indices tell of results in growing crops and raising animals. In the meantime the village has assumed new features: the people's living and working conditions have changed, the standard of living of the population has greatly improved, and differences amongst us have been by and large eliminated.

Maybe our greatest strength still lies today, as always, in the fact that in the cooperative community we have been able to create gradually the conditions for personal growth for more and more people; that is individual desires and ambitions were directed increasingly towards the common objective, which at the same time we endeavoured to shape in accordance with national economic interests. A team of sound specialists took shape, a strong collective which, making the best of cooperative democracy, can adopt things new, and adjust them to our specific circumstances.

In farming and the distribution of income, we used a production and incentives system which, paying proper attention to both collective and individual interests, promoted production to the most effective level, and greatly helped us to attain the results we did, and to create an optimum operating and work organisation. In the beginning other cooperatives were reluctant to agree, but later—when our results became evident to all—our production system, having won recognition, had a fruitful effect on the

evolution of the entire Hungarian cooperative movement, becoming known in specialist literature as the "Nádudvar method". Now we are developing various production systems and thereby we achieve results remarkable by any standards.

"No man is a prophet in his own country," it is said. I am not a prophet, but socialist society has allowed me to grow into a political leader while staying in my native village. For twenty-three years I have been chairman of my producers' cooperative and have in the meanwhile been elected a member of Parliament, a member of the Central Committee of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party, a member of the Presidential Council of the Hungarian People's Republic, and President of the National Council of Agricultural Cooperatives. It is not easy to carry out my duties from as far away as Nádudvar, at a distance of two hundred kilometres from Budapest, but I gladly undertook them. I do what I have to do in the interests of the country and the cooperative movement, all that is within my powers and abilities, for I am convinced that the trust and respect of his community is the highest asset a man can acquire in his lifetime. That I have enjoyed. The cooperative membership helped me through the trials and tribulations and great historic turning points.

To me, and to millions of us who used to be landless agricultural proletarians, Liberation meant salvation from poverty, from the lot of field-hands, but much more as well: full civic rights, the possibility for human progress, the building of socialism and the hope of a happier future for man.

REZSÓ TRAUTMANN

THE BIGGEST EXPERIENCE OF MY LIFE

With the exception of the most personal events in my life—which are therefore of no interest to the outsider—I can safely state that for practically all my lasting, joyful and meaningful experiences I am indebted to my country, to its past and present, to its natural and man-made sites, to all the peoples who have ever lived in this small area of land, who settled here or passed through, and to their descendants, our forefathers and their contemporaries—in short, to my homeland.

My interest in the technical and natural sciences, in both animate and inanimate nature, my familiarity with the arts, literature and music, my

Rezsó Trautmann, architect, formerly Minister for Building and Urban Development, now retired.

engineering career of several decades—all have helped me get to know my homeland and to share in the experiences it has offered me. When speaking about my fatherland, therefore, I speak about my own experiences.

I include among my hereditary experiences, together with the moment of my discovery of them: the *Vértesszőlős* find of the remains of a primitive man half a million years old, the objects unearthed in Hungary of successive prehistoric periods, of organised communities and flourishing cultures—jewelry and coins, primitive tools and unwieldy weapons, sculpture fragments and ruins of buildings, rich tombs and pauper graveyards; the whole history of my people who conquered this country and founded this nation, and who for a thousand years shed their blood in revolts, peasant risings and wars of independence, who rarely knew what a peaceful life was in their struggle for their country's survival and the right to a better human life; the ruins of palaces and castles, towns and villages several times destroyed and as many times rebuilt; Latin codices, the first Bible printed in Hungarian; the memory of wise rulers and valiant generals, the example of a great many popular national heroes and martyrs; the lifeworks of scholars and writers, János Bolyai's non-Euclidean geometry, Sándor Petőfi's poetry and his chosen fate, or the music of Ferenc Liszt.

From the year seven of this century I have been a witness to, and even participated in, my country's history, so my experiences have been direct and shared. I have lived through the First World War, the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, the crushing of the proletarian revolution and of the short-lived, illustrious Republic of Councils, the quarter century of a counter-revolutionary era, the greatest world cataclysm ever, and the decline and appalling devastation of my fatherland. Thinking of the senseless death of hundreds of thousands of my compatriots, I owe it only to chance that I have survived to see the liberation of my country, its rebirth and development. It may seem pretentious, yet I venture to say that the last three decades of my country's history I regard as a single and coherent experience, the biggest experience of my life. In it is concentrated a period of self-examination, an initial seeking of new ways, and my own work experience in our newly-established social system for the attainment of our goals, for the building up of the country. I have worked at the drawing-board and the writing-desk; I have taken part in the work of government, and I still participate in the work of the legislature. I feel I am in a position to take stock of past events and to consider what remains to be done; to see that we still have to clear away a lot of rubble reminiscent of the worst moments of our past, but that we are no longer a pitiable ravaged land; that we still have to rescue much of value from destruction, without turning our country

into a museum; that we are still far from general affluence, but we live better and lead a more wholesome life, and have more access to culture than even before.

ERZSÉBET VASS

THE "HOUSEWIFE" OF PARLIAMENT

I was born poor as many others in Horthy's Hungary. Still a very young girl I fell in love with a man who was a driver, a very modern profession at the time. I was working in the Felt Factory and we thought we might be able to make ends meet with our two wages. We married, but soon there were three of us, then four, crowded together in the tiny one-room flat.

These were difficult, instructive and forever memorable years. The world had just recovered from the depression but in industrially backward, feudal Hungary recovery came much later than in the more advanced capitalist countries. I had just turned 19 when the strike in the Felt Factory broke out.

At that time I had heard about strikes only from my husband and father-in-law, both organized workers and much respected by their colleagues. I respected them too but only irresolutely in compliance with family tradition. I first learned the real meaning of workers' solidarity, the wonderful feeling of fraternity when, with my two tiny daughters—one and two years old—I went every day to the factory strike headquarters. The strikers had taken up quarters in Buda by the railway bridge at the foot of which puffed the steam engines on their way from Kelenföld railway station to Vienna. One of the largest residential quarters of Budapest has since been built in this area, but whenever I walk there I think of my one-time fellow workers who gave both food and money to help me through the hard days of the strike.

I learned from them that workers were not defenceless pariahs if they joined forces and recognized the inherent strength of union. These were my years of apprenticeship when I first realized that the world was divided between two sorts of people, the poor and the rich. I saw very soon that the society of the rich covered many kinds of complex injustices, and that poverty was not an unalterable decree of God to which we must resign ourselves for life: we could and should do something about it. It was not long before I became known as "outspoken Betty" in the factory. I did not mince words even when speaking to an engineer or a foreman. To this day

Mrs. Erzsébet Vass, Vice-President of the National Peace Council, formerly President of Parliament.

I recognize only one kind of prestige: a person's value depends on the amount and quality of his work. It does not matter what his job is, as long as it is done well and honestly.

I do not deny that I sometimes talked too much, even when it came to political topics; however at the time I knew very little about the danger of fascism threatening the world. But there were always people who watched others like a lynx; who talks to whom about what, who are your friends, who are your family's friends, whom do you like, whom do you dislike. They had no difficulty in judging me; I never concealed my feelings.

I followed in the footsteps of my husband and father-in-law in 1939 when I became a Communist; but legally I could join only the Social Democrat Party, which I did and very soon I found myself on the black list. I don't know whether black lists have the same significance elsewhere, but at that time in Hungary it meant that nobody wanted anything to do with you if you asked for work. I was fired from the Felt Factory and my attempts to go to another textile factory failed: when I produced my papers, they immediately showed me the door.

At the time it was impossible to live on one wage with two children. I tried again and again until finally the Budafok Enamel-ware Factory took me on: they badly needed workers and maybe this made them more tolerant than others. I became a welder. I liked to work and learned the new craft soon.

The years went by; these were the horrible years of the bombings, food rationing and longer and longer lists of the missing and dead, victims of the senseless war. Then came October 1944 and the last hope vanished. Horthy's proclamation was answered by the Nazis; Szálasi and the Hungarian nazis took over. My husband and father-in-law were arrested.

I shall never forget that morning. At dawn about half past four a group of young Hungarian nazis with hand-grenades in their belts and tommy-guns on their shoulders surrounded our little house. Only a policeman among them showed some human compassion when the henchmen assailed me and demanded my husband. They carried him straight to the Majestic Hotel. Those who are familiar with the short but bloody history of the Gestapo and Nazi reign of terror in Hungary know that the Nazi secret police had its headquarters in this luxury hotel and that they cooperated closely with their Hungarian counterparts.

I met my husband only once before they took him to the concentration camp in Dachau. This is also a memorable event: it is deeply engraven in my memory like so many other sad and gay episodes of my life. I obtained permission to talk to him for a few minutes in the transit prison. Many of us were thronging around the prison entrance when the air raid sirens started

to whail. I cannot deny that I was stiff with fear during bombings but I pressed myself against the wall and was determined to wait there whatever happened. The others ran to the nearest shelter. At last the air alarm was over, the gates of the prison were opened and I was among the lucky few who could at least say farewell. Many people never saw their loved ones again and remembered them only as they stood behind the bars bidding farewell with faltering hope.

We were looking forward to an unhappy Christmas in 1944. My husband was in a concentration camp and the war raged around us. We spent most of our time in the shelter. Then suddenly, on the eve of Christmas, the din of arms ceased. Some speculated that it was a truce for the few hours of Christmas. A handful of men ventured out to look around; when they returned, Soviet soldiers came with them. The soldiers were young, probably from the advance guard. We were free.

*

And how were the first weeks of 1945? Budapest was a frontline. The sounds of cannons in Buda only subsided on February 13th 1945. It was a difficult but exhilarating experience to prepare for the first spring, to remove the ruins of a war and of a bygone world.

"Mummy" was my nickname in the factory where there was important work to be done. As in many other large European cities food was not abundant in Budapest and often people went hungry. Since our factory produced kitchenware and we knew that in the provinces many households needed pots and pans due to war damage, we decided to exchange our products for flour, potatoes, lard and meat. I was appointed leader of the bartering team which had to sleep in stables and barns and undergo other discomforts until a truck load of food was collected. But we were rewarded for our efforts by the gratitude and warm welcome of our workers in the factory. There were a thousand of us and whenever we unloaded our truck I felt that we could never bring enough.

I remember another important day in 1945, the day I joined the Hungarian Communist Party. Soon after I headed a workers' delegation to the Discount Bank, the owners of our factory with whom we had to wage long, sharp and difficult disputes.

I did political work also in the provinces; at the time it was called village propaganda. It consisted of calling together the members of a community and talking to them about our problems in the factory, about their future in the village with the newly distributed land, and discussing what we could do for each other.

In 1947 I became active in the Hungarian women's movement. I continued my tours on foot or by cart from one town to another, from one village to the next. Later I received more responsibilities and a higher post in the Hungarian Women's Democratic Union; in 1950 I was elected its Secretary General. In another three years I was elected member of the Hungarian Parliament.

I had never been in the monumental building of the Hungarian Parliament before. It was a festive occasion if on Sundays I could come to town and admire its cupola and towers. I was terror-stricken when in 1953 I first took my seat in the awe-inspiring Session Hall as an M.P. of Tolna county. Two years later I became Vice-President of the Parliament; between 1963 and 1967 I was its President. I retired from this function but later took over the Vice-Presidency again. I remained the M.P. for Tolna county until 1971 when I had to exchange my district for another one in Budapest because of health reasons.

It is both beautiful and difficult to be an M.P. I have always been of the opinion that a representative should make contacts with everybody because human relations are of the utmost importance. The following incident is an example of my belief in practice.

Tolna county is known for its agriculture, animal husbandry and handicrafts, but there are also a few mines in the region, most of which have since been closed down because they are so depleted that it no longer pays to maintain them. One day a venerable old miner asked me: "Have you ever been in a mine, my dear?" To tell the truth, I had only read about tunnels and shafts in books or saw them in films. But an M.P. cannot retreat, so I responded at once; "If you invite me, I go with pleasure."

I was given big boots, a vest and a head-piece and I descended into the depths of the shaft. Sometimes I had to crawl on all fours, sometimes the enormous boots dragged in water, but I dared not utter a word. Two weeks later I spoke at a peace meeting in the miners' village. The old charginer who had invited me into the mine recognized me. "Were you afraid or not?" —he asked me. "Weren't you afraid when you first climbed into a lift?" I retorted. "Of course as a woman I felt strange in the boots and the head-piece and what's more I was afraid!"

This answer brought me such prestige that at the solemn dinner they elected me a honorary miner giving the justification: "We knew that you were afraid but we did not believe that you would admit it. Now we are sure that as a member of parliament you will always represent us faithfully because you are a straightforward woman!"

I still hear the words of the old miner: to be a trustworthy representative,

to tell the truth. I have thought of it very often when we received foreign delegations or when I went abroad with ours. There have been times—after 1956—when we had to struggle for our credibility. Often people were even reluctant to accept what they themselves had experienced. When this happened I always remembered the old miner: straightforwardness and honesty are the best choice. The truth should always be told, without hedging or embellishing, even if things are not as rosy as we would wish them to be.

I still work a lot but this is not a complaint: my position involves many rewarding tasks and I am used to regular work. I spend a lot of time with my constituents; I do work for the Presidential Council of which I am a member, and I am pleased to do community work as a member of the People's Patriotic Front National Council or as Vice-President of the National Peace Council. I have remained faithful to the National Council of Hungarian Women which counts me among its members, and I work often with the Woman's Section of the National Council of Trade Unions.

From a simple, working woman I have risen to be—figuratively speaking—the housewife of the Hungarian Parliament. I started out worrying about how to economize a few pennies for our small household, and I continued this worry with millions, since a member of parliament should do as the housewife: carefully evaluate expenditures while always taking into consideration the income. For a former working class woman this comes naturally, just as it is still natural that I often meet my former work colleagues to talk of the past and of the years when we were young.

THE DIÓSGYŐR RESISTANCE

by

MIHÁLY FEKETE

An armed resistance group was organized in the industrial area of Northern Hungary in the concluding months of the Second World War. This was known as the Magyarországi Kommunista Anti-Náci Komité, commonly called MOKAN. Members included Diósgyőr ironworkers, Miskolc professional men and military officers, both professional soldiers and members of the reserve. They engaged in sabotage and clashed with German and Hungarian Nazi armed forces, they arranged for hiding places for many who were in peril of their lives. Mihály Fekete, an ironworker of Diósgyőr, was one of the organizers of this movement; after the Liberation he became First Secretary of the Miskolc Committee of the Hungarian Communist Party, then sub-prefect of Borsod County and later chairman of the County Council. He retired some time ago.

In the recently published second version of his memoirs he describes in a suggestive, almost dramatic way the story of the resistance movement, its organization and its struggles. He tells the life of the workers in prewar Hungary, writes about the growing anti-war attitude among the workmen of the Miskolc-Diósgyőr area, then about the growing underground movement, aimed at first at the sabotage of Nazi war production in the Iron Works and then, as the Red Army advanced, at the organization of armed resistance.

A section of the memoirs is printed below.

Next-door to the Gestapo

The first job to be done was finding a safe spot for our "headquarters", a place where we could conveniently meet the leaders of the different groups. The best seemed to be the flat of László Pődör, who taught French at the local *gimnázium* (today a senior member of the editorial staff of the publishing house Corvina). It was located in the town centre, on the second floor of Görgey Artúr utca 12. Members of the Gestapo occupied the flat next door, giving us a fair chance of not being disturbed in such distinguished company.

The trouble was we could not find Pődör. He was in hiding from the *nyilas* (the arrow-cross men of the Hungarian Nazi party who came to power on October 16, 1944 after an abortive attempt by Admiral Horthy to obtain an armistice). The date was October 25 or a day or two earlier or

later. One day Sándor (the author's son) appeared unexpectedly in Anci's home, he said there was no scope for agitation and that everyone was convinced anyway that the Germans had lost the war. I would soonest have given him a good telling off for not doing as he was told, but he had really arrived just in time. If anyone could find Pődör it was Sándor, I had got to know in the first place as one of Sándor's teachers, his favourite.

He found him all right. Pődör's wife told him where he had gone and Sándor pedalled over to Nyékládháza where Pődör was well-hidden on a *tanya*, a lonely farm-house, and fetched our friend.

Pődör behaved with real guts. He was pleased to allow the "general staff" of the committee to meet in his home. He was asked to be present on a number of occasions, for instance, when we compiled the list of wealthy and respectable citizens whom we were going to solicit for money or other financial support. We talked over most of our problems concerning the army officers with him as well.

For a time, three of us generally attended the meetings: Béla Tóth,¹ László Pődör and myself. To our great joy, Ferenc Barbai² got out on November 10 and soon turned up when our lot met.

Barbai got away in the company of some other political prisoners. It would be useless now to list the many plans we concocted to get them out. In our judgement our forces were too small for a direct attack on the prison. If we had already established contact with Lajos Szabó, and his National Guards, we might have made up our minds to attack, but we contacted them only on November 8, and an action like that required some time to organize. Fortunately the *nyilas* were scared by the Soviet army that was getting nearer and fled leaving their prisoners behind. That way Barbai and his friends got out.

After November 10 we carried on reinforced by Barbai. Our movement got some sort of organizational structure. Independent fighting detachments were made up consisting of A/1 category men, and their leaders were as a rule invited to committee meetings.

New organizational directives were issued to consolidate the fighting groups. It was laid down that existing groups had to be reorganized in such a way that four fighters were attached to each A/1 comrade, larger units had to be broken up. The A/1 comrades had to see to the quarters and victualling of their members themselves. At that time we began using the password "I'm looking for Mister MOKAN!" when making contact with an unknown comrade.

¹ Béla Tóth: Tailor from Budapest; it was he who was responsible for setting up the MOKAN Committee.

² Ferenc Barbai: Communist ironworker in Diósgyőr, outstanding member of the resistance movement in Miskolc and Diósgyőr.

The directive was discussed with the leaders of the more important groups, and organizational work progressed at a steady rate. Our movement, in broad outline, shaped as follows at the time:

Headquarters were in Miskolc, in the flat of László Pődör. Béla Tóth and I kept control of general organization, and Barbai was in charge of agit-prop. In Újgyőr Anna Barla³ coordinated the groups. A number of relatively large groups operated in Diósgyőr, headed by Sándor Nyíró and Imre Kovács, including tough and brave comrades in its ranks. József Kopácsi and his friends worked in Diósgyőr-Hermantelep, and a number of Jewish comrades organized by Miklós Világ, who had deserted from the Labour Services, cooperated with them. In Hejőcsaba we leaned for support on Gyula Túró, and János Tirpák distributed hand-bills and appeals in Görömböly. We also had groups in Pereces and in some of the quarters of the city of Miskolc.

The German high command assisted by the Hungarian general staff planned to dismantle or destroy the factories of Miskolc and Diósgyőr. It was vital for the workers and for the country as a whole that they should not succeed.

Stopping the Dismantling of the Factories

While organizing fighting units our lot tried, wherever they could, to stop the evacuation of the works. The manager and engineering executives had issued orders: "Pack up everything and off to the West!"

A mass movement got going in the works to sabotage the evacuation. The factory guard organized with help of Colonel Ginzery⁴ was a great help. The machines proved "difficult" to dismount, the ropes often "broke", the crane "broke down", etc. Huge quantities of tools and raw material were hidden in various parts of the factory, especially below ground. A turner, János Kocsis, was given the job of organizing the evacuation of the high-speed steel stuff; what he did instead was to hide quantities in the changing-rooms. So did János Oberlender and János Vaskó who found a safe place for the high-speed lathe steel blades and the grinding stones. Ferenc Schön, a turner, took the micrometer series and the optical viewer of his lathe to his home and returned them after the Liberation; who knows, they may be in use even yet. József Rároha and his friends hid many different types of cables, and so our factory was able to produce later, and pretty quickly, im-

³ Anna Barla: Hairdresser, sister of Mihály Fekete's wife, member of the women's movement within the Ironworkers Union; carried out many bold actions in the resistance movement. Anci.

⁴ Sándor Ginzery: Colonel, rendered great services by saving the power station, the gas works and the flour-mill of Miskolc. He was arrested by the Gestapo and taken to Mauthausen, from where he returned in 1945.

portant components for the Red Army. Elemér Vizsloszky and János Szabári took part in the hiding of electromotors.

Béla Lengyel, an engineer, and two foremen, Ferenc Fehér and Henrik Lakatos, stopped the evacuation of machines from the machining shop. Béla Lenkei, János Brecska and Ferenc Cserhalmi, all turners, did more than their share of sabotage. Lajos Libertényi and Lajos Udvardi, both from the milling shop, had to desert their place at the bench, it was the only way they could get out of carrying out orders.

Some did the opposite, instead of going home, they secretly got in the workshops at night and inconspicuously camouflaged irreplaceable equipment; the Hajas brothers, Ferenc Szaladnya jun., Béla Bánhegyi and other members of the factory guard were amongst them.

Pál Kosztka Szirtes and his comrades displayed much courage and ingenuity in saving the cold-treatment machines. They pieced together wooden huts and tents which they allowed to collapse over the machines. The whole workshop looked a shambles, but underneath the machines survived safely and could be used a few days after the Liberation.

The Germans intended to take the heavy forges with them or to blow them up. Henrik Ciffló, János Russz and József Kriston and their mates, who were working in the forge, talked them out of the latter.

"Don't blow them up, *Kamerad*", they told the Germans, "they will be very useful to you yet. . ."

So the Nazis gave orders to send the packing-cases to Fülek. János Russz and his mates didn't need more. They dismantled the control mechanism and the engines and hid them among the scrap iron. The forge could be put into running order straight after Liberation.

László Pekárovics, a fitter, and some of his mates in the repair shop hid forty electromotors, welding torches and transformers, together with quantities of driving belts irreplaceable at that time. Led by János Nagy and Ernő Mihályfi, the workers of the heat-treatment shop saved 85 pyro-instruments and thermocouple wire enough for five years. Without this material our heat-treatment shop would have been entirely unusable after the Liberation.

These were only a few examples of the ingenuity and the courage displayed by many a Diósgyőr worker. By that time, they considered the factory to be their own, and they saved the property of the working people.

*

In those days, when the evacuation of the works was supposedly taking place I got a message from Pődör, asking me to go to see him at once.

"I have big news for you, Mihály", he said. "Béla Kilczer, a lieutenant

of the reserve, was sent from Budapest by the General Staff of the Honvéd, the Hungarian army, with orders to blow up the works."

"Could you ask him home for an evening meal?"

"Let's ask the other officers as well, then it can be done."

The next evening—it was towards the end of October—we got together at the Pődör's flat: Colonel Ginzery, Lieutenant-Colonel Szalay, Captain Petrássy of the Medical Services, Captain Fodor, Pődör, Béla Tóth and myself. The lieutenant of the reserve the General Staff was received by a company that was pretty unusual for those days.

Tóth and I muttered something instead of our names and preferred not to mention that I was an ironworker and he a journeyman tailor. The young lieutenant felt at ease with all that wine there and spoke frankly. He told us that he had orders from the Szálasi government as well as from the German and the Hungarian high command to prepare the blowing up of the Diósgyőr ironworks.

We'd agreed that the officers would start the softening up work. At last Kilczer gave in.

"I see, I'm in a den of vice," he said laughing, "so let your will be done . . ."

With help of Lieutenant Kilczer and Colonel Ginzery we succeeded in having the factory only "paralysed" instead of being blown up as planned.

Lieutenant of the Reserve Béla Kilczer was a civil engineer and architect from Salgótarján, doing construction work in the army; this was why he was sent to destroy the factory buildings. Like every true member of his profession he would sooner build than demolish and was not at all happy about his "high" commission. He disliked the German occupiers as well as their *nyilas* accomplices. Of course he knew that he was risking his life, but he took the risk. No doubt the officers of the resistance influenced him, what mattered was that he did not carry out his orders.

When he did his job according to our wishes and his own inclination, he had to get away. It was obvious that sooner or later the Germans or Szálasi's General Staff would discover the swindle. And so they did. Béla Tóth found a hiding place for Kilczer in Budapest, as far as I know, it was with the mother of Éva Nemes.

Early in 1945 Mihály Farkas and Béla Tóth went to Salgótarján where a mayor had to be elected. Tóth recognized Kilczer, told the people about the great risk the latter had taken in Miskolc and proposed him as mayor. Farkas agreed. So Kilczer—the lieutenant in the den of vice—was unanimously elected mayor of Salgótarján!

There is another reason for not forgetting the meeting in Pődör's home.

The Gestapo officers next door thought it suspicious that so many people assembled there and towards ten o'clock they came over "for a chat". I don't know what they had in mind, but they looked surprised when they found well-dressed gentlemen and high-ranking army officers, drinking and having a good time. Mrs. Pődör, who spoke perfect German, opened a fresh bottle of wine and offered a drink to the Gestapo. That was the first and last time I drank with Nazi officers.

"Let's drink to our victory!"—Uncle Béla proposed and stood up. We all got up and merrily clinked glasses . . .

The most important feat of arms of the resistance was helping the advance of the Red Army thus preventing the destruction of Miskolc and Diósgyőr. The anti-fascist attitude of the population manifested itself in many remarkable events, some of which are related by Mihály Fekete in an authentic way.

Hard Days at Diósgyőr

When I went to the Soviet headquarters in Diósgyőr, I wanted to go and see my wife and son in the Tapolca mountains. Captain Ustinov ordered a young Soviet soldier to escort me, but the road leading through the Tapolca meadows was under heavy German mortar fire, and we had to return.

Back to Miskolc, anxiety kept nagging at me and I made up my mind to take the next lot of reconnaissance material to the Soviets myself and to try once again to get across to Tapolca. Uncle Béla was also eager to introduce himself to the Soviet HQ, and so we went off together; I think it was November 21. Captain Petrássy gave us armbands and papers identifying Uncle Béla as C.M.O. and myself as his assistant. We had bandages in our doctor's bags, and handgrenades and recent reconnaissance material hidden underneath. On the way we looked at patients, but luckily no one noticed what kind of doctors we were; the patients were satisfied with a few reassuring words.

Everything was all right as far as the northern limits of Diósgyőr. Here we had to turn back, since the concrete road was crowded with German infantrymen.

We soon found out what has happened. German patrols discovered how small the Soviet forces in Diósgyőr were. They also found out that the Soviet infantry was backed only by two anti-tank guns, one at the Tókert, the other near the bridge over the Szinva at the end of Erzsébet királyné utca.

When the German tanks broke through the next day, one of the Tigers was shot out by the gun at Tókert, but then both guns were put out of action by three other tanks. Then came the infantry assault. The Soviet

soldiers withdrew house by house, they could not hold up the larger numbers of Germans.

Károly Baganich and Laci Sztaskó, who was only seventeen, were doing reconnaissance work when the Germans broke into the village. They spent the night in a goat-shed, then passed through the German lines at dawn and went as far as Újhuta, till they caught up with Captain Ustinov's men. Here they also met some of the Diósgyőr MOKAN lot, Laci Sztaskó's dad, József Malinovszky and János Endrész. They carried out the orders received from the committee: they retired in action, together with the Soviet soldiers.

Károly Baganich, János Endrész, József Malinovszky, János Sztaskó and his son László (Laci) did valuable reconnaissance work for the Soviet units. They discovered the retreat of the Germans towards Parasznya and their deployment at Hegyeskút and Fehérkőllápa; they showed daring in getting near to the German artillery and infantry units at Lillafüred, taking stock of them.

Baganich, Endrész, Sztaskó and Malinovszky were told at the Soviet HQ to go and fetch the Jewish forced labourers—120 men, with 6 horses and carts—from the Majláth sawmill still held by the Germans. The order was carried out, the rescued men were handed over to the Soviet soldiers. Then they retired together with the Soviets and scouted the German positions between Ládi and Vaskapu. There was a skirmish, a Soviet soldier was killed in action. The Soviet commander later divided the Hungarians into two groups: József Malinovszky, János and László Sztaskó, and a man named Szusztig did reconnaissance work on the Csengő Mountain, while Baganich and Endrész were employed in other areas. László Sztaskó still has a scout certificate he then received from Captain Ustinov.

For a fortnight the six Hungarians lived among the Soviet soldiers, and when the counter-offensive was launched at the beginning of December, they returned to Diósgyőr together. . . .

I must here mention another unit commanded by Péter Grósz, of the National Guard. These National Guards-men did not retire to the West but influenced by MOKAN propaganda, they reported to Nyírő and his comrades and joined the resistance. They entrenched themselves in the region called Pecérvölgy and carried out a number of armed actions against the Nazis. . . .

After this small detour let us return to Diósgyőr, where hard days were due after the return of the Germans. Béla Bánhegyi, who had been severely wounded, was carried at night by Kovács, his wife and two sons to the flat of Imre Kovács, then transported with an armed escort to the surgery for

first aid. Then he was hidden for two weeks in the Kovács home, who nursed him; Dr. Mihály Gyarmati, a child specialist, was in attendance.

Doctor Gyarmati belonged to the Kopácsi group and was hiding from the Nazis in Hermantelep. Even under mortar-fire he courageously did his duty both as a doctor and as a member of MOKAN. For six months Bánhegyi was more dead than alive. Dr. József Földes, a surgeon for many years, a most responsible and competent medical practitioner of the Diósgyőr workers, got him back on his feet after various operations and lengthy nursing.

Many arms and thirteen red banners were hidden in the attic of the Kovács home. After a time they were carried away, but Bánhegyi remained there until the return of the Soviet forces.

The whole village knew Imre Kovács to be a leading member of MOKAN, people had seen him often enough with his red-ribboned gun. It was suspected that a wounded man was hidden in the house, but nobody betrayed him.

The attitude of the majority of the population filled us with joy. The patriotism of the workers, their decided anti-German attitude and their fighting spirit were in full flower. If we could have better organized and lead this force and if the Party had started earlier to organize the armed resistance, the massive resistance of the whole people could not have been broken either by terror or by treason.

The returning Germans were received with hatred. The Nazis had to move in groups, they were obliged to get food by force of arms, their telephone wires were frequently cut. Unfortunately the sudden return of the Germans separated the local resistance group and the Miskolc centre, and so these isolated groups were unable to carry out co-ordinated actions.

We learned only after the fight was over that the Kopácsi group saved a Soviet soldier from the Nazis. The Soviets held a defensive position next to Diósgyőr Castle. This was completely destroyed by the Germans. A single Soviet soldier remained alive, he managed to hide in a bunker. Here he was found by a MOKAN member who took him home and told the Kopácsis. József Kopácsi, who has died since, immediately organized the rescue action. Young Sándor Kopácsi brought working-clothes and managed to get in the house where a German medical unit was already quartered. The Soviet soldier was given civilian clothes and led to a hiding-place at Hermantelep after many an adventure.

So Piotr Anikievich, a kolkhoz peasant from the Kiev region, was saved from the Germans. Kopácsi received a letter of thanks from the Soviet commander.

Meanwhile another Hungarian scout reported himself to the Soviet forces who attacked from Görömböly.

The ground was pretty hot under the feet of János Tírpák, our friend in Görömböly. The *nyilas* looked high and low for him when old Pista Koncz called in whose wine cellar we had held our meeting on October 15. The old man was forced underground since the gendarmes looked for him after the attack on the Csekős. After some days in hiding he called on Tírpák and told him that he was going to cross through the front-line to the Soviet forces.

"I'll go meet them", he said, "for I have not much time left, and I would like to live as long as possible in freedom."

The old boy did cross near the village of Szentistván and went with the Red Army as far as Miskolc.

Following his example, Tírpák started off as well. In the last days of October he met Soviet soldiers between Vatta and Harsány, and it was pretty dangerous. This Soviet unit belonged to the same regiment, No. 101, which was reached by Baganich.

"*Kaputt*", the Soviet soldiers said, "if you try to mislead us!"

That was only on the first day, very soon they got so fond of him that after the liberation of Miskolc the Soviet commanders expressed their appreciation for his courageous conduct.

Tírpák led the Soviet soldiers through Harsány to the hill called Pingyomtető without encountering a single German soldier. This Soviet unit managed thus to advance far into the German lines. They then descended to the forest of Jánosdebrő. When Tírpák's friends—all MOKAN members—saw the Soviet soldiers led by their friend, they ran out of their cellars to welcome them. But suddenly the Germans opened fire and two friends of Tírpák, both members of the Görömböly MOKAN organization, were severely wounded. János Soltész soon recovered, but Petrovics died.

In Görömböly the Soviet HQ was quartered in Tírpák's house. Every day Tírpák went from there in a cart pulled by a small highland horse to the "Bulgarian gardens" in the outskirts of Miskolc, to the position of the Soviet outposts. One day, when Tírpák led a cart full with ammunition, the Soviet soldier who went with him was hit by a bullet. János Tírpák took the wounded man and the ammunition to the front-line, and then back home again.

By that time the end of November came.

The Miskolc centre had lost all the contacts with the Soviet forces. I did not know that Tírpák turned up every day a few kilometres from me on the Soviet front-line between Miskolc and Hejőcsaba, nor did I know whether

the Baganich group was alive or not. It was impossible to establish contact with the Soviet forces in the direction of Hejőcsaba, Tapolca, Újgyőr, and Diósgyőr, since the Germans had a defensive system and firing positions there. By early December the front was stabilized, the German defence system became so strong that I tried three times to pass through, but failed.

What should we do now? Our members continued to do reconnaissance work, but there was nobody to whom we could hand the valuable information we obtained. There some movement in the line, in the east only, here the Red Army was advancing from Zsolca. Operations took place over a rather large area and so we saw a chance of getting through. The commander of the National Guard, Lajos Szabó, was sent to establish contact with the advancing Soviet forces. He set off on a bike, but was wounded on the way by a mine; with a last effort he managed to get home, but was unfortunately unfit to fight on.

Members of our movement then established contact with the approaching Soviet forces at a number of points. Tirpák came from Harsány and Görömböly, while the men of the Miskolc centre and the Diósgyőr people came through Tapolca and Diósgyőr.

We were actually unable to do as much to help drive out the Nazi occupiers and their *nyilas* accomplices as we would have liked to do. But it can be said with legitimate pride that we contributed to the defence of our town. With help of the informations we supplied the Soviet artillery was able to fire precisely on the German positions, and our town was able to tide over the siege without suffering major destruction.

FIRST DAYS OF THE NEW DISPENSATION

by

PÉTER VERES

After the arrival of the Russians—they reached our house in Budapest on January 13th—Imre Somogyi was the first to come to see me. Then, knowing that our good hosts, the Károly Doboss's, had run short of food, even plain dried peas, he came and took me across the City Park, wrecked and devastated like a battlefield, to what was then Nuremberg Street, near Thököly Street, in a comparatively little damaged quarter, where he had quite a large sculptor's studio in the basement. We were less tightly crammed in there among the plaster figures and unfinished experiments, for Imre, who had contributed to Garden-Hungary (the phrase was invented by László Németh) had first become a practising prophet of gardening and was now an armed revolutionary, and during those years could not find time for modelling. As a matter of fact, he considered his lodging safer than the presbytery in Bajza Street, since everybody knew that the Russian soldiers, even the so-called common man, had a great respect for writers and artists. And indeed, they never requisitioned the spacious studio although, with the sculptures stacked up in one of the corners, it could have accommodated half a platoon.

It was not only less crammed there, but, compared to the swarming cellar-life in Bajza Street, also quieter, as quiet as it could only be in a besieged city, that is, when the foundations were not shaken by the boom of guns and "Stalin-organs" dug in behind the house, at the far end of the old race course. One can get used, however, to the roar of guns, unless they are directed to where you happen to be.

Nor was it cold—though while I was sheltering in the cellar a thick covering of snow had enveloped the city in ruins, and the thermometer shifted between minus ten and twenty plus—because the basement

windows were protected against air-raids by wooden boards on the outside, so they had not shattered. And the Somogyis still had some firewood.

They gave me a sort of bed or chaise-longue and fed me (Imre Somogyi lived there with his landlady, later his wife, and her little daughter, Erzsike) to help me recover as soon as possible. The sooner the better, for I was badly needed.

Somogyi went out every day, sometimes twice, and brought back the news: Russians have advanced from the direction of Újpest as well, they have occupied Óbuda on the opposite bank of the Danube, the noose is drawing tighter. The Communist Party is already at work on the outskirts, instructions and directions are coming in from Debrecen, from the new Government and the party leaders there. The first names we learnt of were Mátyás Rákosi, József Révai, Ernő Gerő and Zoltán Vas. But to me then, in January, 1945, it was not yet clear whether Imre Somogyi, József Darvas, Ferenc Erdei and I, leftist populist writers grouped around the paper *Szabad Szó*, would join the Communist Party, or would in fact make a peasant party. It was only when the first reliable news arrived from Szeged, and later from Debrecen, that I realized the form of Government here would be a coalition too—obviously as a result of an agreement with the Western powers—in which the National Peasants' Party, founded earlier, but with only a nominal existence, would also participate, and that at Christmas, the Ministry of the Interior had been entrusted by the Debrecen Provisional National Assembly to Ferenc Erdei who, as a lawyer and one well versed in Marxism, was just the person for the job.

So it was essential I recover as soon as possible, and, may be just for that reason, at first we failed. It occurred neither to me, nor to the Somogyis (there was no doctor on the horizon) that the diet to feed me up should be begun cautiously, with tea, light soups, and at best bits of toast. If I remember correctly that very first day I was given, on top of the dried peas ruling every household at that time, a small piece of genuine smoked bacon, no larger than the tips of two fingers, and I was daring enough not to content myself with its odour alone. That amount could not possibly do me any harm.

It did. After a while I began to feel sick and had to go out at night. Out of the house, through the backyard door, into the biting cold of the garden, beyond which stretched the old ruined race-course surrounded by "Stalin-organs". A row of temporary lavatories also lurked there in the heaped snow, located outdoors, because of the frozen pipes and complete lack of water.

But oh, the peasant's bashfulness! Don't make a nuisance of yourself, if there is any way of avoiding it! I did not want to rouse the Somogyis, and silently felt my way out in the darkness.

At the first try, however, I only reached the outer door. Before I got to the last step down—there were three or four altogether—I collapsed, and there I remained for some time. I have no idea how long, because—for the first time in my life—I lost consciousness and slumped over the threshold. I think this is what you call fainting, but I had never experienced it before. Luckily I collapsed as soon as the door opened, for I was not seriously injured by the concrete step, and the piercing cold air streaming in from the outside helped me to come round.

Nevertheless I made no noise. When I came to I went on my way, and again felt my way back to my bed as though nothing had happened. I did not know that the sensation of time is suspended in a swoon, so that when coming round one believes one is continuing where one broke off. I discovered that much later by the smart little bump protruding on my forehead, although I had not felt the blow or the pain at the critical moment. I must have hit my head against the edge of a step, because the shape of the little bump was oblong.

From that moment on, however, we were more careful with the course of my recovery. Tea, light soups and bits of toast—these made up my diet for a couple of days.

Anyway, I went on improving. For if it is true that “the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak”, if the spirit wills it strongly, the flesh will also try. So when I felt strong enough to get about again, I could not overcome my restlessness—“I must be where history is on the boil”—and supported by a crooked stick—Imre’s acquisition—I set out toward the city centre. For the moment, to look round, and call on acquaintances, to see who had survived and who had not. By then the siege had almost reached the Danube bank, as Imre had announced. On the Pest side the only fighting was round the Houses of Parliament and for the Inner City.

When I was able to venture upon longer distances, helped by Imre Somogyi I went to the Communist Party headquarters in Tisza Kálmán tér, where he had already announced that Péter Veres was also alive, and was staying with him.

The entrance hall and the passages of the Party headquarters were teeming with people. Not only with those who were really involved in the work of re-organization—and they were many—but with anti-Nazi public figures, labour leaders, trade unionists, writers, artists, journalists, politicians, spilling out from the quarters of the city now being liberated. People cast ashore by the waves of history went then first of all to Tisza Kálmán tér. Not only Communists and Social Democrats, but those of the bourgeois Left who had survived.

Imre, of course, vanished from my side as soon as we found ourselves immersed in the swarming crowd, to announce to the leaders, I imagine, that Péter Veres was there, for before long a large, well-built fellow broke his way through to embrace me in the Russian manner. He was Béla Illés.

I had never kissed a man before, neither my closest relatives, nor my own sons, nor had I ever been drunk, but I knew that the exchange of kisses between men was quite common with the Russians, with politicians, and with certain members of the higher clergy. And as a result of the emotion the Liberation and the onset of a new period of history had evoked in me this greeting (we had never seen, only heard of each other before) did not strike me as strange. Then, in the feverish joy at escaping from the cellars and being alive, this form of greeting also became quite common among the cynical city-dwellers and my kinsmen, the unemotional farmers. Simple handshaking, even with both hands, was felt as not enough. And in fact exultation over our own survival was also present in all this embracing and kissing, to make it the more real!

And I am not even suggesting that the politician's kiss is not sincere. It is, as long as its sincerity is not overlaid by another kind of sincerity, more important, more topical, more expedient. This is the law by which the politician kisses, who is not acting on his own inclination, but for the people who see him. In olden times kings offered their daughters to strengthen or preserve a needed alliance; nowadays they only offer their kisses. The world has also developed in this respect. It is better and simpler this way, because the kiss is blown away by the wind of history, and does not complicate the question of succession. Something at least which doesn't.

Later I went to Tisza Kálmán tér again a couple of times. And it was there that I first heard, may be not from an immediate source, but through a chain of hearsay evidence, and then directly from a party messenger, called István Kovács, who had just arrived by car from Debrecen, that my people at home in Balmazújváros were well, except that one of my sons had had a small accident.

I accepted it then, as I was told it. But later, returning from a visit to acquaintances (I don't remember whom I had found and whom not), somehow that news rose up within me again. "One of my sons, the smallest, was injured, had had an accident" . . . that is what he said. What accident—what had happened to him? In the first moment of joy I had not enquired any further, and István Kovács went off on his own business, quite understandably, but now I appreciated that there was something of an escape in it. Off he hurried before further inquiries. And now, there, crossing Tisza Kálmán tér toward the Communist Party headquarters, picking my

way between the mutilated bodies of dead horses and wrecked machines, in a state of mind that obliterated horror and disgust—the recognition rushed upon me: My son Sándor was dead! He was dead; now I knew. The phrase about his injury, his having had an accident, was mere tactfulness and forbearance due to the father. And I had not noticed it in the first minute, because this kind of tactfulness was unknown to me in our world of farmers. With us such news would be imparted so: “Our Pista, come home, my mother has died!” When a little bastard of eight I had announced a death, on one such occasion I had also brought the tidings to the farm where my parents lived: “Dear mother, my grandmother sends word come home, because my uncle Sós had died. . . .” He had been shot. . . .

Yes, my dearest son had died, in whom I had divined something, somebody in the Endre Ady sense: “Each man is a lofty serenity, a north cape, a strangeness, a secret” . . . Of course, every János Hunyadi wants his son to become a Mátyás Hunyadi and not a plain János Corvin!

I may have been wrong, he might have just turned out to be a decent, resourceful, simple fellow, as so many of the promising young men whom, at the beginning of the 'forties we expected to become the men of action in the revolution, and the great men of a hopeful future. It is also possible that, with that naiveté of outlook which has not the slightest touch of cynicism in it, he would have been in dead earnest about all the business of socialism, and would have fallen victim to the mean-minded machiavellism which squandered the revolutionary zest of that young generation. But one cannot know, one will never know, and I who had always talked the paths destined by fate—deliberately chosen, and or those that befell me by chance—walked them with clenched teeth, and with a watchful spirit and a carefully vigilant, sober mind now, there, among the ruined and decimated trees of Tisza Kálmán tér, simply broke down. I sobbed for several minutes, and then left the familiar paths that nobody should notice.

Fortunately, being alone, I slowed my pace towards the Party headquarters so that by the time I got there, I was able to control my feelings. Why sentimentalize, when history is here right in our hands and we have got so much to do? And why impose one's own grief on others, when, anyhow, is there anybody who is not bereaved one way or the other?

Later, when I became calmer, I tried to find out what had happened, and how, from people who had been to Debrecen. But I was only to learn the complete truth at home, when Mother gave her account with a bitter undertone of self-reproach, as though she were to blame for having failed to keep the whole family secure before I got home. One person is missing who had his place in the world and the family. The handle of a German anti-tank

weapon, called Panzer Faust, exploded in his hand when he picked it up from the ground to see what the pretty iron tube contained and what he could use it for. It ripped his stomach open and because all our horses, mine and my son-in-law's as well, had been taken away, he suffered agonies at home for a few days. The physician, a certain Dr. László Tóth, who had arrived in our village in those days, perhaps as a refugee, and remained there, referred him to the university hospital in Debrecen, where he could still be saved; but there was no carter available to drive him in. In the end, my son Pista borrowed two worn-out horses from a Jehovah's Witness, called András Kertész Tar, and on a terrible tank-shattered macadam road he was bumped in to Debrecen (25 kilometres). The journey took a whole day and half a night, because their horse was confiscated meanwhile, and they had to get hold of another, one of the lame horses abandoned on the road. Sepsis: he could not be saved.

And that had happened in the first days of November, when I had been repeatedly dreaming of them at Siófok. Before that during the day and on going to bed I had vainly longed to see them, if only in dreams. I never succeeded. I am a great dreamer, more things happen to me in my dreams, perhaps, than in real life, sometimes I feel the night to be twice as long because of the many and diverse dreams, but at that time my nights were completely blank. And then, all of a sudden, for two or three nights I was at home, I saw Mother among the children, and among her perpetual cares, but in the daytime I could not remember whether Sanyi was there amongst them. I was least anxious for him, since he was only a child, on this side of military service.

And there, now, in the apocalyptic wreck-world of Tisza Kálmán tér, it occurred to me: was it possible? Was it possible that they appeared in my dream just when they were in a state of despair, when Sanyi boy's agony and his mother's was breathed into space? For this boy—I felt—had thought as highly of me, as perhaps nobody else in the world had done. Why, when the waves of thousands of radio and television transmitters and other radiation instruments penetrate distant and almost immeasurable space and interact with one another, wasn't it possible for a human soul, a human nervous system, to transmit "emanations" his agonies, his sighs and longings across space? And wasn't it possible for a ray or two, here and there, to reach their destination, the addressee? From Balmazújváros, from Debrecen to Siófok or elsewhere? I do not know. My realistic mind protests: chance! Chance is the main breeder of metaphysical beliefs, because it justifies the incomprehensible and the mysterious, and associates what is not to be associated.

All the same: facts remain facts. I have simply described them.

BAJCSY-ZSILINSZKY

by

GYULA ILLYÉS

Almost a quarter century ago, having reached the peak of his career, he changed course—deliberately—taking the road to martyrdom.* The final was a real step leading up to the scaffold where he stood between the hangmen at Sopronkőhida. A few minutes earlier—just as symbolically—a soldier, member of the escort, had quickly kissed his hand in the corridors.

I

He has become a part of Hungarian national history but, as we all feel, he has not taken his proper place yet. He is truly moving about in it, now with one group, now another. Will he settle with the statesmen, one wonders, or the wielders of the spoken and written word? Or will he join those whom a people simply remembers as its heroes? Such a search for a proper place, a probing of the soil one might call it, is not rare among those destined for immortality in Hungarian history.

It is not up to us, his contemporaries, to firmly place his figure in a niche in the ideal Sacred Halls. What can be done and the place we find ourselves in devolves other duties onto us in the service of his memory. In the first place, that is my judgment, his real personality, the live man he once was, must be described as authentically as possible. Of course not by merely passing on the sensations of the retina and the eardrum to those who did not know the flesh-and-blood man, or not as well as we did, but that aspect of his spirituality which proximity made visible. Let time sort out his

* Endre Bajcsy-Zsilinszky (1886–1944), Chairman of the National Committee of the Hungarian Resistance, was executed in the prison of Sopronkőhida on December 24, 1944, the day the seven-week siege of Budapest began. This short memoir was first published in 1970.

aims and ideals, his plans and beliefs. Let us provide a picture of the inner structure of the man as he showed himself to us.

He was embarrassingly many-sided. There were a multitude of facets polished for refraction; while the whole precious stone kept rotating, moreover in ever-changing light—equally clear on the right and left.

2

Others found a flat for me—I lived in the Krisztinaváros section of Budapest at the end of the 'thirties. I passed the immense plate-window of the Philadelphia café and the tables on the pavement of the Zöldfa—but at six in the morning. Dezső Szabó* was still asleep, and so were the whole local colony of writers, Schöpflin**, Pethő***, and Márai**** the chiefs of that generation; and Kosztolányi, already lying in eternal slumber. I knew that Zsilinszky lived there, although I did not meet him there either, nor as a neighbour.

One spring evening, however, I hoped to cheer up a beautiful and sad young woman; away with the evening mug of milk, let's get dressed up and have a 5 pengő May meal in the Zöldfa.

I nodded to this person or that, and as was only proper I leant over the plates to briefly explain who they were to my companion, in such a way that I almost palpated them with my eyes, to see if they really were like the persons I kneaded out of words.

Zsilinszky sat three or four tables away offering a free and full surface as a model of models, in his full banquet-style elegance. The traces left by the comb still shone wet in his thick hair, which was then turning from fair to white; the rosy, close shaven cheeks flushed his manly sabre-scarred face; a well-tailored jacket showed off splendid shoulders; perfectly tied bow-tie around his muscular neck, and a snow-white shirt with snow-white cuffs covered his broad chest. Everything was strong on him, and clean, one could feel that even his nails were that on fingers steeled by sword and bridle.

He bowed his head with unsmiling reserve to greet me, as one has to greet a man in the company of an unknown lady, doing so first. As one had to early this century. He was the sort of man who behaved *comme il faut*.

I had done a great favour to him just the week before. I had come across sharply critical lines about him—that were almost defamatory—shocking

* Dezső Szabó (1879–1945) influential radical right-wing novelist of the 'twenties and 'thirties.

** Aladár Schöpflin (1872–1950), leading literary critic of the *Nyugat* generation.

*** Sándor Pethő (1885–1940), founder of *Magyar Nemzet*, a liberal anti-fascist daily.

**** Sándor Márai (b. 1900) well-known novelist of the 'thirties, now living in the United States.

me especially as I had found them in a periodical for which I worked myself, as senior editor. That is not my opinion I had written to him in a few brief sentences.

I received a long and inflamed confession in acknowledgement of my letter; a prairie fire of emotions which ran on endlessly from past to future. This was followed by another, sober one. It told me man to man: I had stopped him from taking an irrevocable step: he had wanted to break with our lot as a whole, break even with the daily which also published our writings. We had not met since.

3

I remember what I said about him there at the set table while I was able to study him in his living reality unsmiling myself as well.

One of the most interesting, most valuable—certainly most remarkable—creatures born of the coupling of Hungarian literature and appreciation of literature was there placing the napkin on his lap, leaving room for the waiter's plate-laying activities with a courtesy just as authentic as the way he might have treated a lady at a ballroom door. That life imitates literature is a platitude. Nor does the train's wheel need to turn more to establish that literature creates public life. If literature indeed creates characters, has to be closely investigated. The picture is simpler when it produces types, not to mention the epigones. But it does create or develop some completely unique flesh-and-blood persons as well.

Excess, this symptom of immaturity stunted development, was retouched in Hungary in Jókai's romantic novels to appear as a mark of eternal youth. In contrast with the Spaniards and the Poles who treated it as the acne of puberty, in Hungary it marked the man, even early this century, it was the sign of the hero. Or he was distinguished by holding his head as he looked down from the bridge into the abyss where the vortex of national death eddied. No one can have a psychological insight into Hungarian history whose nerves fail to conduct this double current. A deadly fate which can only be encountered by a grand heroic deed.

This was not Endre Bajcsy-Zsilinszky's character constitution, except that he was formed under the impact of this excess—through several transmitting links. He was one of those who had wanted to discipline this immoderation, in fact to harness it, as a torrent is used by the dynamo. He wanted to go on from this tragic understanding of literature, but not in literature. In other words he had no wish to intensify and analyse this

feeling of national catastrophe, but he wanted to reduce it in the only way possible, outside of the bonds of literature. Endre Bajcsy-Zsilinszky could not become a writer perhaps because he reacted too directly to the radiation of post-World-War-One literature.

Here action was needed. That was why he met the very writers who, already gasping from the tragic tone thrusting itself continually into one's throat, a tone which it proved impossible for him not to pick up, themselves wanted to act as well—even instead of writing lest they need to continue in the same tone. It would be a mistake to suppose that this meeting of views had precipitated a personal meeting between Endre Bajcsy-Zsilinszky only with the young, or only with the populist writers. To mention only his most astounding contact, in order to suggest how far the desire for action extended in those days, he was able to share ideals and emotions even with Miksa Fenyő*.

4

That year when I saw him on the evening described, in his physical reality, he was a model of a mature man who could have appeared in a fashion magazine for men, and not only in his appearance. Inwardly, as well, he had arrived at the zenith of his power. By that time he was progressing straight as an arrow, his head raised, and with such resolution which still suggested something of the military, on his individual—but, as we have seen, community-cut course, which until then many people had considered a winding path indeed. He launched his attacks like a cavalry charge—for instance, in the way he rejected the title *vitéz*** there, in front of the whole country provocatively knocking back the hand offered by the Gömbös clique as a gesture of chumminess—but his progress toward the goal was always straight and sure as a march, as the progress of someone who walks line, gaining strength from this though marching alone, or, as we saw, in a spiritual army, but—as an advance guard should—more and more circumspectly, his eyes searching the ground way ahead. That was the time when he, who had been an irredentist, was beginning to analyse the historic inevitability of Yugoslav-Hungarian relations, and to explore the economic ties between the two countries. He learnt the most when his hair was turning grey, even languages. And now, so to say, he was becoming the wiser for all the lessons his own fate had taught him.

* A critic who was at the time the chairman of the National Alliance of Industrialists, that is of the central organization of big business.

** The title *vitéz* was accorded to those who had been highly decorated in the First World War and who agreed with Horthy's and Gömbös's racist and revanchist ideas.

True, few people had the chance to draw so many conclusions as he. The chance? Rather the strength, and the eyes and brains, or fundamental honour and integrity.

The century provided a great many motives to encourage ideological opponents to categorize each other morally and not, at least, sociologically. In this way all newcomers were allowed to approach "our position which-is-of-course-the-only-tenable-one" only as a penitent confessing his guilt, or, to put it more clearly, only through steps marking an exit from the cave of villany.

Zsilinszky had still been a "racist" when—obviously with the force of his personality and not of his words—he managed to attract Attila József*, Féja**, and even Hatvany*** to write for his paper, and even earlier the men who were to become the populist writers later.

I still do not know what was the reliable story behind the tragic death of András Áchim. Whether Zsilinszky had had a direct or an indirect role in it, anyone who thinks his tragic death, and tragic career, springs from this event would be looking at the wrong source, however obvious it seems. A hot-headed youth of the ruling class shoots down the leader of the tormented people and then, driven by a sense of guilt, changes his course to follow in the wake of his victim, living and then dying instead of him as it were—the drama is too spectacular in that way of putting things. Zsilinszky's development was more complex and clearer at the same time. An end like his casts its light on the beginnings as well. A character of transparent purity was fighting for perfection in himself even if this meant brushing against the filth of evil in a society replete with it. He was blatantly a personality, and yet what was typical of him was what was communal, what made him represent and carry out a command. Yes, the command of a spiritual army, on behalf of a nation according to his creed. There were moments when Zsilinszky on his own was the Hungarian nation symbolically yet really. When on March 19, 1944, at his door, which suddenly became the door of the country, he gave the master's answer as he fired his pistol to the SS-men who banged with the butt of their guns—basely and uselessly even for themselves—and when villains accursed in their very graves knotted the rope under his chin. For those were not only on the other side in ideology, they were outside the limits of any kind of morality.

* Attila József (1905–1937). See his verses in Nos. 2, 14, 17 and 26 of *The New Hungarian Quarterly*.

** Géza Féja (b. 1900) one of the populist writers. *Viharsarok* (Storm Belt), a piece of descriptive sociology is his best known work (1937).

*** Lajos Hatvany (1880–1961). Author, critic, literary historian, an extremely wealthy man who gave financial support to writers and poets in need.

Could he have avoided death?

When he was taken from Budapest to Sopronkőhida, Endre Bajcsy-Zsilinszky could have jumped from the bus and disappeared in the cane brake.

So his death was a chosen death. But this is not suicide. A man who commits suicide no longer considers life as something of value; it is nothing to him. How far had Zsilinszky been able to look ahead in those days—how far did he sense the future, even instinctively? He—I believe—gave his life for something, and therefore to someone. Certainly not as a kind of penitence, but for the earthly salvation of a community—in other words, he gave it to us, for us to pass it on, giving an account of it to the future if we can. Whether we can, or cannot, this gives a picture of us as well. Any kind of possession is at the same time an obligation. This kind of possession—for it is our common wealth—is doubtly that.

First I wanted to choose him as the hero of my play *Malom a Séden* (Mill on the River Séd). Then I thought it was too early to do so; this is not the place to tell why. According to the classic rule, any drama is a conflict, a struggle in dead earnest, to obtain or protect something of value. This is how he became the hero, the dramatic value, the protagonist for whom the struggle is waged, in dead earnest but by now—or as yet—unsuccessfully.

A conflict tragic from the start.

FROM OUR NEXT NUMBERS

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OSSA SEPIA

A story

by

LAJOS MESTERHÁZI

I

Ossa sepia, or else "sepia bone": that's how canary fanciers call the squid's (the *sepia officinalis*)—not its bone of course for it hasn't any, but, it's skeleton; according to the New Hungarian Encyclopedia they prepare canary food from this. It's superfluous to say that this is not its only, or even its most gross mistake. The Petit Larousse, to be sure, knows that "sepia bone, which is given to young birds for the whetting of their beaks, is the inner shell of the squid." (See "Seiche", in fact in another section, it is also under the heading of "Os"!) From this we can see that when preparing an encyclopedia, one should consult the Petit Larousse. (At least.)

Ossa sepia, incidentally, is said to be a Latin term. I'm not researching what kind of bastardized Latin or canary Latin. Because it should be *os sepiae* in Latin. In fact, a real or pure Latin would even avoid the word *sepia*. Why the affected, Greek snobbishness, when there exists our ancient, noble, and besides lovely word for the squid: *lolligo*?! *Os lolliginis*—fine! But what can we do? *Ossa sepia*: this is what we have.

Or namely, what we don't have. Canary fanciers have gone out of fashion. One needs children along with a canary. The parrot, however, makes enough noise by itself. An aging childless couple can come to resemble a parrot easier than a whistling, dopey canary. The parrot sharpens its own hooked beak on the wires of its cage. The wire suits its beak better than a swinging, brittle, fragile *ossa sepia*. However, the *ossa sepia* is unavailable. This will play some part in what's to follow.

As much part as does the *ossa sepia*. Anyhow, although I cleverly entitled it that, to arouse (possibly) the reader's curiosity, it turns up just accidentally in the story. Stupidly and awkwardly incidental, in this tragical, comical,

tragi-comical, I don't know myself, perhaps the word should be grotesque story. Yes, grotesque. Which is a little malice mixed with absurdity. And you'll see at the end: if I called this story tragic, I would divest myself of the detachment a writer needs. If I called it tragic, I wouldn't even write it, but I'd sit down and bawl, and moan, and at the very least, complain. And "tragi-comical" would simply be an expedient evasion of the problem, really!

By the way—and I'm not giving away here the end of the story, I'm going past that, for this applies to after the end—my hero neither sat and bawled or moaned and especially didn't complain. And he was right!

2

My hero was a canary fancier by chance. I say "by chance", for he was lonely and had the right to a parrot. His wife and two girls, really little girls, were gassed. This sounds so incredible, but even now I can prove with witnesses, that such things did happen. Well, they were gassed and he was lonely, yet he still stuck to his canaries.

His outward appearance? You know the type, the kind whose flesh starts to shrivel on his bones after he's fifty, and then keeps withering every year, until he's nothing but leather, sinew and bones in his seventies. His head's bald, framed by two snow-white fringes. The hair on his chest too (it's not sparse) is snow-white. Most striking because every summer his skin's burnt a nut-brown. Then he goes around in thong sandals, shorts, bright sport shirts. And he uses a shoulder bag, because he always lugs around so much: a six-barrelled pocket knife, keys, foreign and domestic newspapers, identification, book to read, eye glasses, two short stemmed pipes, a black briar and a light meerschaum (the last a gift of his graduating seminar students), tin tobacco box (once for Dutch tobacco), a bunch of pipe tools, some chicken feathers to clean out the pipe stems, notebook, paper, ball pen, coin purse of course, and what he had just purchased (butter, fruit, liver paste, bread). All this now doesn't fit in the pockets of his shorts. And he might need all of it at any time. Without the shoulder bag, my hero would feel helpless, practically naked.

An important note, the night before the story began, my hero retired his bag that had served him fourteen years. It was suede, quite handsome, once. Well, what can we say about it after fourteen years. That it was like bacon rind? If that was all! But it had gaps, every stitch had been tied with string many times, and still it kept continually tearing. The strap was

patched together. One couldn't "pass it on" anymore—there isn't a man around so poor that he'd take it. So, lets drop sentimentality, it should be thrown in the garbage, and the new one brought out. New?, oh well! It collected dust for five years in my hero's bureau. He had gotten it from an Italian senator on the thirtieth anniversary of the shattering of the Bilbao encirclement. The senator had been wounded there and till today my hero hadn't been able to discourage the senator from thinking that his life had been saved by him. The gift was gauged to this. Fantastically soft Moroccan leather, pigeon grey, pure silver buckles with delicate enamel scroll. But don't think it was feminine. First of all, its size—like a bungalow, then such a definite masculine touch, for in the side-pocket was a "pipe mart" (so he shouldn't smell up the bread and grapes with his pipes). And besides this, the whole thing was featherweight. And even politically conscious, for the silver buckles were in the shape of the one-time three-branched anti-fascist star.

And my hero hid this bag away in his bureau drawer for five years! That it was too pretty, in fact it was too "gaudy". Maybe because leather tassles dangled from its flap? This was the style! No. My hero liked his old belongings. Some kind of quirk. His new shoes too, as his friends teased him had been "squashed" in his closet for years, before he could make up his mind to use them. The same with the senator's present. He used the old, shabby, greasy, tied-together, frayed thing as long as he could, and then some. Up till today. More accurately till yesterday, a day before the start of the story. Then he shifted the things from his bag, into his new possession (meanwhile with a little sorting out, but not much!) and now he could enjoy it, for in fact, the new wasn't so new anymore. Actually it was old. He had gotten used to it while it lay in the drawer. And really it wasn't so gaudy. Really it was an elegant, fine thing. The senator had taste. More exactly, his wife, or his secretary, his girl friend, his daughter, somebody to whom he entrusts such unmanly shopping. My hero overcame a sense of guilt that he had been ungrateful to his old bag.

3

It doesn't directly fit in here, but still, it's suitable that I should reveal some biographical data.

He was born in 1904 in Szólát. When he was fifteen during the recess between the second and third year of high school, he set out on foot to the Tisza front after his older brother. He was tall for his age, and if he

lied and added on two years, he thought they might take him on as a volunteer in the Red Army. He wore a battle-worn, old uniform of his brother's. The Rumanians captured him at Jászapáti (namely the Rumanian Royal Boyar mercenaries), and locked him in the parish hall pantry. He shared the only straw pallet with a Russian prisoner of war trying to get home, and a Hungarian Red courier. The lice bit them to death. Ten days later, they tied them up and took them out to be executed. Six soldiers kneeled in the first row, six stood in the second row: they each got four soldiers. Every kind of straggler and "authority" was there. In the distance even an officer. He had been courting the town clerk's wife. They had already blindfolded them when the officer—one can't know whether he or the clerk's wife noticed—called out that "hey, that's just a kid, get him the hell out!" He said it in Rumanian, but it was obvious from his gestures and from what was happening that that's what he said. They yanked and spun him away from the wall and gave him a good hard boot in the behind. It hurt. They shot down the Red courier and the Russian immediately, and he saw them collapse and jerk up on their quivering legs. He was dazed he didn't even know where he was going, later he even fainted. A Rumanian ambulance picked him up on the highway, took him to Szolnok, to the typhoid barrack. His body burned, he was delirious. Somehow or other, he recovered and there wouldn't have been any trouble: he was in Eger at the start of school. But the news of his adventure ran among his classmates. They threw him out of all the secondary schools in Hungary. Other than that, one can't say that he had a martyr's lot. He'd laughingly object if someone wanted to honour him with the halo of a "long suffering hero". At that time, he was in jail altogether for six years. First he was nabbed as a Youth Movement leader, then during the time of the Rákosi trial, because of a protest demonstration and passing out handbills. The rest censorship violations. Every time he got a few months and of that half on behalf of a tubercular comrade with a large family. It was nothing for him, it would have killed the other. He always had work, they knew him as one of the best roll fluters, and that's something. He came out of jail, rested a few days, then—as if the bosses were waiting for him—they grabbed him up. A brief warning, out of which both of them just took two words seriously—each accordingly—that "watch out"! A great hiker (department head), bookworm (trade union librarian), besides which he was really resourceful. He always dressed well, went out with the most attractive girls on the assembly line. Drank his beer and wine, and even danced. They never really knew whether he was a communist. In 1937 in due form, he went to Spain.

I met him in Paris, after the Civil War. He held a lecture at the International Student's Club, about the coming society's morality. He mixed Spanish words with French, but spoke fluently, and I can say that till this day that talk affects my thinking. If I freed myself from that profound pessimism of those times, in which I viewed man as a "negative primate mutation" and if today I still unshakably believe that man is naturally good, that his Christs did not die in vain for him, because in truth he climbs a continually more and more perfect, but steep and glorious road, and if, moreover, I believe that this faith isn't due to aging or its sad debilities, then I can thank my hero to a very great extent and that evening of debate in Paris and not some sudden Pauline kind of conversion, but to something set off inside me.

He made us aware of an obvious but for most an unconscious fact, that the great part of man's life is not directed by some sort of dogmatic laws, legal codices, or penal codes. Just the opposite, someone whose life is directed by the penal code has already clashed with it, as someone who's governed by the ten commandments already is a poor sinner. An uncodified convention governs our lives, attitudes, behaviour: our habits, decorum, tastes; that certain "tone" which quite simply and to the point can be attributed to the dictates of the prevailing dominant class. So we can see, for example, that millions of men live with each other in this enormous city of Paris in a marvellously oiled reciprocity. They are jammed in theaters and still don't bite each other. (Animals packed together do, even the gentle deer.) And it's not because they're afraid of the police; nothing like this would occur to us in our "right mind".

"This is it isn't it: right mind, and why right and why mind and why do we call it just that? And not, for example, prescribed attitudes? Because no one prescribes such situations. There isn't even a modest poster hanging in the theatre lobbies, "We ask patrons to kindly not bite each other"! It doesn't occur to anyone to go out on the street in pyjamas. Yet there's no law forbidding that. Just habit and the tact that we don't disturb each other because it's embarrassing, yes embarrassing!—to create a stir. If someone, let's suppose, would dump the ashes from a furnace onto the sidewalk, what would the pedestrians say? That 'you're a criminal'? Hardly. They would ask, 'Are you crazy?' They'd wonder if he was in his right mind. Because he doesn't adhere to a—to what?—to a law? or to an agreement? No. To habit. What mankind's preservation instinct in part dictates and what in part the dominant class dictates in the interest of the existing social order. And we experience all this even in an atrocious, unjust, torment-wracked, rotten inhuman society. Let's imagine the humanity of

a righteous society, where the working class dictates the tone. The natural communal class, supporting the adventure of solidarity. Some asses imagine that socialism is all prohibitions and orders. "What is not compulsory is forbidden." This is fascism. Socialism, if forced in the beginning to overthrow bourgeois laws and administration with its own laws and decrees, will as soon as the power of the working class becomes consolidated, maintain its own social natural order with an essentially smaller administration and practically without police and bureaucracy. In socialism there won't be stealing, fraud, extortion, corruption, intrigue, pulling strings, prostitution, not because the law forbids it, not because the cop arrests you, the judge locks you up. No! The cop won't arrest the prostitute. Nor the law forbid intrigue, nor the judge convict the thief, because none of this will exist: it won't be allowed, the tone or what we could call the sensitivity of the working class will make it impossible."

A great argument followed the lecture, not as if anyone would have the least doubted that under socialism there wouldn't be stealing, fraud, extortion, corruption, intrigue, pulling strings, prostitution. Far from it. We weren't idiots. We knew something by now about socialism. But the problem of the "born criminal" cropped up. We weren't acquainted at that time with the irregularity of chromosomes, but with some of Lombroso's modified doctrines, yes. Finally, my hero solved this problem to the general satisfaction: the "born criminal" is not criminal but sick. In a society in which there are no privileged ones, in which power isn't used to oppress, in which man is respected solely because of his work, let's say—if someone intrigues, he's obviously mentally ill. Let's separate them and cure them! Even capitalism is past the time when it imprisons and beats the insane.

My hero got married at that time. He took as a wife an escaped German comrade's daughter. Now, it's really of minor importance, but at that time, it was of great consequence: a Jewish girl. After the occupation of Paris they were deported to Hungary, questionings, a little police harassment, but (the Hungarians fighting in Spain used aliases) because of lack of evidence, they let them go. Work, politics, a few months internment, the punitive regiment, the Don Bend, short freedom again, then capture with the leaders of the Hungarian Front, Mauthausen. When he was liberated, he weighed ninety-one pounds. Not much for a man five foot ten.

Then: national propaganda, inter-party liaison committee, county secretary; disciplinary action, because he behaved disrespectfully with comrade R. in jail. (At most he had just argued. But he understood the disciplinary action. He had unavoidably witnessed Comrade R's human frailty, and it was feared that the former cellmate wouldn't believe in his infallibility. . .)

Decree: He couldn't be a party functionary anymore: true that he didn't have any need of it anymore. The time of coalition reached an end. In his inactive years, high school matriculation. He enrolled as an evening academic student. Printing manager, publishing department head, district council boss; disciplinary action because he sought popularity. Later he watched out for this. Got his master's in ethics with honours. Meanwhile editorial assistant, newspaper writer. No further problem being with the Loyalists, but in fifty-five because of his rightist leanings, they "found reasons" to let him go. In fifty-six because of his leftist leanings he worked in a cliché workshop. He was an ambassador (to a sister country), head secretary of mass organization, university professor. Of secondary importance, member of parliament, sometimes elected for a term, sometimes not, times when he received prizes and honours, times when he didn't. He has always had some party study group. He looked on this as his real work.

He went into retirement from the university, five years ago, is working on his memoirs, doing voluntary work, whatever happens to be assigned to him.

He didn't remarry. If he has time, he still is a hiker, summer and winter. Often alone.

Finally, and this is really of minor importance: his name is Szilárd Kovács. Since the banal family name is coupled with a rare first name, this proves that our hero's father, although a Catholic village elementary school teacher and church organist—why hedge: a choir master—he was urbane, an aesthete, who in a better world would have had a better calling, perhaps.

4

From time immemorial, Szilárd Kovács used to spend his vacation in the widely known (both home and abroad) village of N. There he was the boarder of the widow Mrs. Sándor Adamecz, or Aunt Juliska. Once long ago, still in his Young Men's Worker League days, the memory stuck in his mind, of the stately Kossuth Street row of maples, and the Strasszer Restaurant's sidewalk café, where they had waited so cordially on his gang, although they had picnicked out of a communal satchel, and only spent a few cents a piece on raspberry drink. When he wrote his master's his living conditions were more or less chaotic. It's a long story, I'll try to be brief. After the liberation he repaired a four-room garden apartment that was in ruins. At that time this kind of flat stood empty by the thousands in Buda. He still was hopeful that his wife and little girls were alive. Later he became more and more ashamed that as a single man he occupied such

a huge living space, in the midst of the increasingly difficult Budapest housing conditions. No one bothered him about it, made any remarks. He even had a right to it seeing that he himself had put it into shape out of ruins. Just at an opportune time, a comrade, transferred from the country up to Pest, was looking for an apartment. Kovács didn't know the person in question, but heard of him by chance from one of his seminar students. Well seeing the man was a state security agent, he couldn't help but be a good comrade. He sent him a message, let him have two rooms. Granted, one can't say that they would have intentionally and systematically plagued him out of the apartment. The three children were ghastly pests, putting it mildly. (Sad justice: two of them defected, one was a party to some murder of a taxi chauffeur, and is still in jail. Unfortunates!) Szilárd Kovács was a fastidiously clean man, and they took it out on him. They weren't disposed to flushing the toilet. Whenever he used the W. C. he found the large family's turds, and even the front room stank. They also kept potatoes in the bathtub, and he was forced to shower every morning at the Lukács Baths. Later they sold their house in the village for a good price, and even grandma moved in, a large-mouthed, slightly cracked old lady. By then he lived in the maid's room, but really that should have been grandma's. They could never close the door, only slam it. Their radio howled all day. In the hall right in front of his glass window, they hung up a 250 watt light bulb. It burned all night. "A state security agent has to be on the alert night and day". No matter how he pulled down the shade, it glared into his room, he couldn't sleep. (They never paid the gas and light bill: it was in Szilárd Kovács's name). "We'll pay it, we're not taking off!" They took off. The Comrade nowadays is a gas station attendant and is waiting for the Chinese. Then his second disciplinary correction occurred (seeking popularity). Even the party daily, *Szabad Nép*, wrote about him. Grandma screamed in the hall: "My son-in-law" is the fist of the working people! No one can force him to live under the same roof with an enemy." He got three months academic leave, so they could arrange a change of employment. Now, should he sit at home and write his master's under these circumstances?!

In the Lukács baths he became acquainted with a writer, who recommended the village of N. to him. He also went there whenever he wanted some peace. The Strasszer Restaurant and the row of maples came to his mind. The writer gave him Aunt Juliska's address. He got an answer by return mail. The freshly whitewashed little room, the window looking onto the garden, the border of petunias beside the edge of the flower bed, the lilac and jasmine bushes, the roses, the dark dahlias, the spring mattress bed,

the crisp white sheets, the Jesus on the Mount of Olives, the smiling wedding picture, around it mustached soldiers of long ago, bustled women; and even a rocking chair; and, though he never was fond of his stomach he knew real cooking, and just as a good poem out of all the hundreds of good poems our magazines publish, strikes a reader as the real thing—so did Aunt Juliska's cooking overtake him. When Szilárd Kovács woke up the first morning, there, he knew he had made a real find, something he would hold on to if it depended on him. (For the first time in two years, he slept without sleeping-pills, and ear-plugs.) During the first years, he spent a few weeks in N., as much as time allowed. Ever since his retirement, the room was his from June 15th to September 15th. Just for the sake of order he exchanged letters with Aunt Juliska. Aunt Juliska too, could appreciate the quiet, decent boarder, who was not particular, and thanked her kindly even for a glass of water.

By now everyone knows that the village of N. has become a summer resort in recent years. The neo-classic house was at one time among the most lovely on Kossuth Street, Aunt Juliska's great-grandfather had built it. He was the village notary, and he also planted the line of maples, corresponded with Pestalozzi in Latin, studied to set up a county boarding school for talented sons of serfs. Such passions and the continuous superfluous girl children ate up his possessions, wealth. Aunt Juliska was born into respectable poverty by the time she came along. Perhaps her veterinarian husband could have filled up anew the old chest of drawers, but he had died in the First World War. Aunt Juliska was a school teacher in the village primary school, later in the elementary. She had been ekeing her retirement pay for fifteen years, with the forints from her paying guests. She could hardly build a new house with it. Yet the former pretty mansion felt a little ashamed to be sitting in the splendour of the updated Kossuth Street.

For right away there, the third house down was the "import villa". They called it that in the village because the owner, or more accurately the owner's wife, mentioned at the hairdresser's that they had even brought back from Sweden the architectural plans for hard currency, and they hadn't used one domestic article in furnishing the villa, it was all, all, foreign or rather, Western. It cost three and a half million forints (according to backbiters, it's not true, just two million nine hundred thousand). Down the street row, even the most modest villa wasn't some sort of hut. Then came the Hungarian style "Piroska Drink Bar"—they had to cut down just one maple because of the neon light. Then the "Casino Hotel" that chiefly catered to the Italian clientele; although "casino" in Italian doesn't mean casino, but something completely different. Till now every

Italian stated with satisfaction that "this was our kind of place". They had to cut down seven maples in front of the gate for the convenience of the driveway. The maple, under favourable conditions, lives to two thousand years. In the rising prosperity of N. village, the fore-mentioned eight maples can't be said to exist under favourable conditions. And neither is the future brighter for really—we know that progress doesn't stand still.

Nevertheless, may my good luck save me from becoming an environmental control fanatic. I merely wanted to briefly comment on the grandiose changes in N.'s main street, and to point out the important community buildings that have been erected like the Finnish-style wooden sauna, and private constructions of such public interest like the combined pancake-meat-ready-to-eat-stand, or the splendid Irish setter, boxer, clipped poodle, Doggie Beauty Parlour.

Yet, in the midst of all this glitter and advancement, Szilárd Kovács's heart remained wed to the pleasant little cubby hole of a room in the neo-classical house. On June 15th of this year, he arrived promptly on the three o'clock bus. He brought his big trunk, his suits, linen, books, notes, toilet necessities, he brought his own self-made alarm clock; a pocket radio combined with an alarm, which promptly at seven o'clock automatically came on with the Kossuth Station's news. And, of course, in the other hand, the bird cage. He never left his canary "Mandi" at home. There wasn't anyone to whom he could entrust him and he didn't want to burden anyone. Canary lovers are few and growing fewer.

He brought besides, wonder of wonder, wrapped up, twelve pieces of ossa sepiia. Yes, the unavailable item. Just one day before his departure, what luck! the owner of a bird store in Blaha Lujza Square had whispered "it's arrived". And he gave him, since he was an old customer, under the counter, a dozen. A whole dozen.

5

On the night before the story began, Szilárd Kovács went late to bed. The writer acquaintance of his, whom we've already mentioned, dropped in after dinner, with a bottle of N. wine and thirsty for talk. This writer was considered, as writers generally are, to have rightist leanings. The critics in every case blamed him for deviating away from the reality of life, and then went on to praise the high artistic quality of his work. Those who knew him more intimately, like Szilárd Kovács, knew that the "reality of life" also interested him (unbelievable, but that is why he wrote), and if he

deviated he deviated in every direction, perhaps even forward. At other times too they used to argue a lot and the writer liked to provoke Kovács. He really delighted in his theoretical certainty, his ardent revolutionary faith, or merely that worthwhile and rare quality, his talent for debating combined with frankness. Well they had argued at other times, but this night somehow everything spilled out. Perhaps the wine. But no. The writer spent some years of his youth on the fringe of the revolution and that kind of thing doesn't come out in the wash. Now, too, an *ad hoc* topic ensued. The writer brought an article of Régis Debray's about Salvador Allende, the murdered Chilean President. Then generally about South America, then Indonesia, then the starving two-thirds of mankind. And whether peaceful coexistence, from a historical perspective, denied a revolutionary programme. And whether we should allow our tastes to be manipulated by a planned consumer market. Then China. The permanency of revolution. The writer proposed that up till now every revolution had proclaimed that its battle would be the last. Szilárd Kovács would start proving for the hundredth time that the proletarian revolution really, with scientific certainty, was the last. Whereupon the writer hashed over completely puerile questions, long solved by the great. "Whether it is truly possible to direct a conscious history on the basis of recognized inevitable laws (are there in fact inevitable laws), or in effect do we just give a somewhere, somehow, sometype of name to expedient manoeuvres?" And I won't add what additional arguments he came up with. Not only because I don't want to give the editor a headache when my small piece will appear, really not, but many are disposed to think of Szilárd Kovács's writer friend as a ferocious reactionary. I'm not among those, who want to look pure white while they're painting others black. I know well that in the eyes of public opinion I'm one among many of my trade, we all cry, we all laugh together.

And then this is just of minor importance. I want to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, if I'm under oath. That well, what Szilárd Kovács saw immediately and clearly was that the writer suffered for humanity and this was such a writer's obsession that he couldn't view the problems matter-of-factly, with a light shrug. He wasn't so young, that a woman could make him forget, even for a night, that he wasn't just a man but a human being. And wine didn't dissolve the worry, in fact it intensified it. Or I should say, but it's all the same, false sense of worry. Whatever kind of rashness or rubbish he said, whatever, it had just one meaning, this: can you communists give hope and consolation or not? Szilárd Kovács saw it this way. And we're not bringing up now whether it was proper to

ask a retired man, and to boot, one in the middle of a summer vacation, no matter what his obligation is according to some creed, to redeem the world. Or if anyone has to, or even should be allowed at all, without conceit, without damned officiousness, to redeem the world. Unless he wants to grill his own little steak on the crucifix of world redemption, or unless he is a medically certified lunatic. That's different! But again this is one of those things that doesn't come out in the wash. No matter how many times the television advertises more and more fabulous detergents.

Well it was three o'clock in the morning, when they said good-bye. Half past three when Szilárd Kovács fell asleep. Not as if they would have cleared up everything by three o'clock, hardly. The writer could hold up just till then.

At seven in the morning, however, the news automatically turned on from his marvellous ingenious machine. And certainly no one's going to wonder why a strapping man, tanned to the bone, nut-brown, who was after all seventy years, didn't wake up (after a tiring night and three and a half hours of sleep) at the first sound of the news. In a half sleep he sensed that the news had been on a while, and the first communiqué that finally struck his consciousness came practically at the end of the programme. It sounded this way:

"The Ministry of Health's request to the population... (a few words drift into his sleep)... it is possibly import goods that foreign tourists have dragged into our country... (Sleep)... It has been stated that it is caused by the virus named Baxis Trimalchio. For the preparation of the vaccine we need the inner calcified shell of the squid (*sepia officinalis*) or as it is known among bird fanciers, ossa sepia. Seeing that the epidemic has also appeared in other parts of Europe, they have frozen the stock everywhere. (There is a complete alert here.) The ministry therefore requests those persons who have ossa sepia in their possession to deliver it to the nearest pharmacy, public health centre, Red Cross organization, health clinic, or city hall. One single ossa sepia can save thousands of lives. Who helps quickly, helps twice! Dear listeners! We repeat the request of the Ministry of Health to the population..."

He didn't pay attention to the rest. He had popped out of bed, had showered, with one hand he ran the electric shaver up and down his face and with the other he rifled through the desk for paper suitable for wrapping the eleven pieces of ossa sepia. In shorts, sport shirt, he slipped into his thong sandals... The twelfth ossa sepia, already pecked at, hung in Mandi's cage. Not from selfishness projected onto the bird, but merely from hygienic consideration, he left it there. Then it occurred to him that it was asininess.

For in the course of things, the material collected from all over would be sterilized many times over. "One single ossa sepiá can save thousands of lives." He unhooked it and wrapped it too up. "You'll live without it Mandi." The wrapped package went into his shoulder bag! And for a second it flashed on him that he already loved his "gaudy" new belonging, that now was carrying out its first official life-saving public service.

On the porch he met Aunt Juliska coming from the other direction, breakfast on the tray.

"When I come back, Aunt Juliska, I've got official business, I'm in a hurry."

The old woman was dumbfounded, "It's 0730, sir," . . . (She stuck to the "Sir", no use that he asked her please, he was "Comrade Kovács".) "You won't find anyone in before eight. Please just eat, I'll put it here on the garden table, don't go back it's bad luck." (Aunt Juliska always pretended as if she was joking this way for fun, but it's a fact that she knew suspiciously well every superstition.) Standing, he bolted the soft boiled eggs, buttered bread, gulped down the milk coffee. It was a quarter to eight when he stepped out of the gate of the neo-classic house.

6

Szilárd Kovács walked along the fragrant Kossuth Street, in the early summer green shimmer, under the maples. Nut-brown, gleaming bald, snow-white fuzz above his ears, a snow-white bushy chest sticking out of the opening in his sport shirt, his thin stringy legs in the wide shorts, carried him along. At his side the new bag, the present of the senator, his fellow soldier: soft grey Moroccan leather, with the anti-fascist star forming the silver buckle with the delicate blue enamel, and in a separate pocket, the pipes.

They were sprinkling the sidewalk in front of the "Piroska Drink Bar". Or else they were dumping the slop water. He passed by the import villa. They were still working on it, plastering up iridescent mosaics (from Japan). The last finishing touches. Clouds of odours: in the combined 2-in-1 they were frying pancakes, but just barely managing for the waiting line was so long. In the "Casino Hotel" driveway a small group, one didn't know if they were coming or going, finishing or starting the day. Two long-haired young men, in jeans, half nude, were busy tinkering under the hood of a sports car. Three little girls, hint of skirts, tight-fitting neon-coloured pullovers, circled the car, teasing the boys. They were Jr. High School

girls from K. that he had met coming in on the bus. "Cinquecento," they said, "cinquecento," repeating the only Italian word they probably knew. It didn't seem likely that it had anything to do with Michelangelo's Moses. The word stuck in one of them: they had noticed his new bag. "Now wild". "I'd go off with the old prick for that purse!" What is many times insolence and furthermore stupidity, I can say is complete ignorance. Women "went off" with Szilárd Kovács, and how, and how many! and not even so long ago, and not because of some shoulder bag or something, not kids like this but women. But who cares, one shouldn't even listen to them.

Opposite the Finnish sauna beside the Doggie Beauty Parlour was the local pharmacy. It had just opened. He found three young girls in short, white smocks. They were chatting in the backroom near the open laboratory door. But they quickly stopped when Szilárd Kovács came in: so they could get through with the customer faster. A little brunette, her hair in a bun, yelled back "with ruffles, you know?" They knew. One of them went back into the lab. The other leaned at the end of the counter over a magazine. The little brunette came up to Szilárd Kovács. A pattern of tiny flowers on her panties showed through her white smock.

"Can I help you?"

"I brought the ossa sepia, twelve pieces."

"Ossa sepia, ossa sepia. . . offhand. . . What is it about?"

"The Ministry of Health's request. The radio announced it this morning."

She turned around. "Juci! You know anything about it?"

Juci didn't look up from her magazine. "I heard something."

"A virus named Baxis Trimalchio" . . . explained Szilárd Kovács. "They need ossa sepia for the vaccine." And by now he had opened his lovely new bag. Her eyes lit up.

"Wow, what an adorable bag! Where's it from?"

"Italy. . . Please, here are the twelve."

"Did you get it there?"

"No, they brought it. . . In short, my bird's pecked at one of them. . ."

"Did the gent's daughter or granddaughter get it?"

"No, I got it."

Her eyes grew wider. "You never know nowadays!" Szilárd Kovács didn't let her change the subject. He handed her the wrapped package. She got frightened.

"What should I do with it? . . . Juci, hey, what did you hear?"

"Something, I think. But, I've forgotten now."

She left the counter. "Where's the purse?"

"But please little comrades, it's a matter of thousands of lives. It's the ministry's word not mine."

"What's this?"

"Ossa sepiá. I told you."

"And we should take it? We didn't get any notice about it. I don't know what to pay your for it."

"I don't need any payment. I'm giving it free."

"Hey, look Margit! The shoulder strap is removable. And then it's a handbag!"

"Look at the shape. If we could only once get something like that here."

"Please, little comrades!"

I told you, that there wasn't a notice or official call."

"But the epidemic!"

"Oh, epidemic? Why didn't you say so? Then that's a matter for the Public Health Epidemic Centre. At number four Vargánya Street. Could I look at how the buckle opens up?"

"Vargánya Street?"

"You wouldn't want to sell it? I'd pay you for it!"

"Where's Vargánya Street?"

"Up the road. Anyone will show you... I know it's not cheap, but I'd pay you. You can use it as a women's purse too."

"That's it. Unisex. Typical unisex."

"Thank you little comrades. Good-bye, I'm in a hurry."

"Please think it over. Really I'd give you what it's worth."

Of course, the girl in the lab come out. She had to see the purse, too. Dizzy little dames, he could hardly get rid of them.

7

Vargánya Street took up enough time. In part, because the girls at the pharmacy forgot to mention that the street was enormously long. It's true that there was no lack of direction givers, but the bread, naturally, fell on the buttered side! While tracking down the directions he found himself at No. 134. He filled his briar pipe. He could trudge on to where the street began! And if we think about it, it's not a short walk, when you consider that almost every house number also had an A, B, C. A few years ago, there wasn't even streets, just a row at the edge of the village, and even that, snaggle-toothed. And now: bright new wooden houses, modern

little bungalows, square peasant houses with showy enclosures (fake flagstones drawn in cement), here and there a flock of old Gypsy hovels. And everywhere one had to walk around the piled up building material. And the puddles: new lots, they can't put the road in order while the construction is in process. Well, the beginning of the street was in somewhat better shape, even if it had become a little seedy: there was the Public Health Centre and as a matter of fact a two-story house. Szilárd Kovács knocked out his pipe, stamped on the remaining embers.

A young man, overweight, mustached, received him in a deep voice. He asked who he was looking for, and immediately announced that the head doctor was not in, nor anyone else, that just he's in the house, but "would the citizen, lodging the complaint, please have a seat". He sat him down in front of the battered writing table, and handed over a folded questionnaire. "Please fill it out!" They hadn't aired the room for ages, the stale, salty air didn't stir.

"Please, I've brought the ossa sepia."

"Don't worry, please just fill it out. May I see your identity book?"

He didn't understand why but he took it out of his bag, and gave it to him. The young man, slowly, thoughtfully, leafed through it completely, from beginning to end. He even examined some sides twice.

"Your name?"... Birth place?... Year, month, day?... Mother's maiden name?"

He answered mechanically, taking deep breaths meanwhile, trying to get in his say, but the young man didn't let up.

"You're not a local inhabitant."

"No, if you please, I just summer here."

"In other words a resort guest."

"Yes, if you please, this morning I heard on the radio that the Ministry of Health has requested the public because of Baxis Trimalchio..."

"We know, and we also know that it's useless. We can talk ourselves blue in the face, wear out our lungs, the good it does! They don't obey the rules and regulations. Yet these rules and regulations protect them, not us. We don't need them, but the public does. But it's useless! Please, your book. You've got a nice bag. Where's it from?"

"From Italy."

"Cleared through customs?"

"I got it as a gift from a friend."

"They all say that. Please fill out the questionnaire, exactly according to your identity book."

"But I just brought the ossa sepia."

"You still have to fill it out. There's a survey and for every report or complaint a questionnaire has to be filled out."

"I don't have either a complaint or a report. . ."

"Then too! How can we make a survey?"

"I'd just like to hand over. . ."

"First the questionnaire, then maybe we'll talk. We'll listen, that's why we're here."

No excuses! He tackled the questionnaire. That's not a laughing matter for a seventy-year-old man. For example, let's just take: "previous and present residence", "present and past places of employment", "have you been abroad, where and when", "what illnesses do you suffer from", "what social function do you occupy and have occupied in society"—by now the overweight young man also was getting tired. Yet it was fortunate that the questions for the most part, for example—"dress: good, acceptable, deficient, bad"—just required crossing out or rather underlining.

"And now, let's hear from our good citizen!"

"On the basis of the Ministry of Health's request. . ."

"We know the directive. We ask for the essentials."

"By chance I have twelve *ossa sepias*. . ."

"Twelve? How did the citizen acquire them?"

"I bought it for my canary, but you can't get it often."

"In other words, canary! Just say that, then! Why didn't you bring it?"

"But look, I brought it. . ." and he had already taken out of his bag the wrapped package.

"Why didn't you bring the canary?"

"The canary? What for?"

"You think that the head doctor will go out because of a canary?! Next week he has to do three hundred inoculations."

"But why should the head doctor come out?"

"Does it shit?"

"I beg your pardon?"

"Shit?"

"Who?"

"Who! Well the canary!"

"No. But the *ossa sepias*. . ."

"The feathers dishevelled and damp?"

"Please, my canary hasn't any problems."

"No problems? "We'll just see about that!"

"I tell you I didn't come because of my canary. . ."

"Then why did you come here?"

Now that the young man began yelling Szilárd Kovács also started to lose his patience.

"Because of the epidemic. Listen, you say that you got the ministry's notice. It's a matter of thousands of lives."

"What kind of thousands?"

"Men."

"And this too! Why didn't you start with this? This is the Animal Health Centre! You understand?! Animal Health Protection Centre! You let me go to all this trouble! You filled out a questionnaire, and you tell me of a canary! Why don't you go to the Public Health Epidemic Centre on the first floor?!"

And he became furious! Well . . . yes, Szilárd Kovács sensed that he had blundered. Just "Public Health Centre" was written on the gate. He could have asked. And he had noticed the stale salty smell of hair, the distinctive stamp of the vet.

"Excuse me. So in other words the PHEC is upstairs?"

"Yes. Where are you going?"

"Thank you for the information. Upstairs."

"No one's there."

"No one? When will they be in?"

"We'd like to know that too. We haven't had an epidemiologist for two years."

"Two years . . ."

"Sir, if it doesn't bother you, may I look at your bag?" He looked at it, opened and closed it, investigated the side-pocket and the pipes. It really appealed to him.

"You know how it is, sir, a guy with the help of a lot of pull gets admitted to the university, then grinds away six years, then hardly rushes off to tart at the epidemic center . . . to delouse Gypsies and other similar appetizing things, and as for side money, none . . . I'd give six hundred for it. Well? We cover a lot of territory here, and look at the junk they give out officially. The stitching fall apart, the buckle doesn't close, even empty it weighs a ton: Made in Hungary."

"It's a present and a keepsake. It's not for sale."

"You got it without paying duty. No? Whoever brought it can bring another one next time, you pay him in forints, you'll make money on it. I'll give you eight hundred for it. Eight red bills, on the spot! Sir."

Szilárd Kovács was livid. The Ministry of Health is combing the whole country for ossa sepiá, a matter of thousands of lives, and he wastes precious time with yards and yards of questionnaires, and now with haggling. He

stood firm at twelve hundred forints. When the young man finally noted that the bag really wasn't for sale, Szilárd Kovács stopped being "Sir" and became "citizen" again, but all the same he found out the address of the Red Cross.

8

The building behind the church could have been some minor aristocrat's house in its time, with certain exaggeration: a castle. Consisting of a garden with pines, two wings in the back. Anyway single-storied, simple enough with green and black patches of moss on the grey slate roof. "Federation of Group Organizations": around the Red Cross plaque about a dozen others: Popular Front, Pensioners' Club, Women's Council, Youth League, and even the community music school.

In the midst of posters offering, forbidding, advising, blood donations, spitting, handwashing, flies, cancer checkups, was arranged new attractive furniture. On the table were little stands of prize flags, red and red, white and green; on the wall behind the desk, framed diplomas. In the chair was a plump, fortyish and still attractive lady. Szilárd Kovács got as far as saying that "the Ministry of Health" when the lady jumped up and started to flit around.

"We've been expecting the comrade. I'll immediately bring the Accounts. Freedom!"

In the heyday of this salutation, he used to, to the shock of many people, answer with "Love". But now this anachronistic greeting of the movement, touched him. "A '45 patina" still some of them around? This plump lady could have been a pretty young girl at that time, a zealous, active youth movement member. The warmth of the memory softened his hostile mood, flowed past it: and like it or not this swirling current of a fluttering female had caught him up, he could well wait till he reached the shore or at least the island.

"... We have one hundred and sixty four members... The ratio of women... of manual labourers, of young people... The member's dues... Courses offered... Honorary diploma from the voluntary blood donor movement... Red Cross Saturdays: self-organized... we are supporting production... Socialist brigades... Three lectures on sex with slides, many participants, even pensioners, controversy... Travelling exhibition in the factories... Infant care classes for pregnant mothers... Hygiene packets for schools... Environmental control brochures in every plant, office... District environmental controls... Seminar on the propaganda

camouflaging the efforts of capitalist welfare policies... "Is there a possibility for a social-political convergence?"... Unfortunately, the cleanliness of grocery stores... Unfortunately the garden restaurant's kitchen... Unfortunately venereal disease... For certain abortions and suicides... For certain, the Finnish sauna, like a co-educational establishment, its aim not so much public health... Community excursion to the Szotyola Cave... Our compliments to old members..."

Added to all these tables, pictures, diagrams, enthusiastic red-green and black jagged lines. Out of courtesy and amazement Szilárd Kovács held back a long time before he stuck his foot into the quick opening of the door:

"Please, comrade, I'm not from the Ministry of Health." And the "ossa sepia" came up in such a strange bizarre way, like an artificial feeding device on a beautifully set ornate, opulent, holiday table. The plump, though still attractive lady stopped dead. A glimmer of life appeared again in her eyes, only when Szilárd Kovács tilted his lovely Moroccan leather bag toward her. But that too faded away when he took out the wrapped package.

"Comrade, I know of it, yes. And truly this would be our concern. But you see, we just give a fundamental and labour background to matters. The truth is that we don't deal with things that belong to the District Public Health section. There they handle finances and the suitable procedures."

"But there's no need for payment. I'm offering this free. According to the request, it's a matter of thousands of lives, since the virus has been introduced and the epidemic is spreading."

"We thank you very much, this is a true Red Cross deed. But the truth is that I wouldn't be able to do anything but take it across to the town hall. Perhaps it would be best and faster if you went directly..."

In other words, it was a case for the town hall. Finally!

He stood up, said good-bye and would have taken off, but the woman, blushing to her ear tips, called him back.

"Would you mind very much if I asked to copy the shape of the bag? I wanted to sew one like it for myself out of hand-woven linen. I really love the pattern. It'll just take a minute."

Not exactly a minute, but at least she didn't want to buy it. She just dumped everything out of it and slowly and leisurely traced. Then she even stuffed it all back, and thanked him kindly.

The town hall: outside blatant paprika flowers, inside blatant piss. The Public Health assistant is on vacation, the department is out in the field. "Perhaps the President of the Council. . ." Under a great spreading philodendrum in the President's office, a plaster copy of the Liberation Monument was collecting dust and a curvaceous girl around twenty was embroidering a hookskin rug. Lost in her work, she didn't return the greeting. Szilárd Kovács once more greeted her and then waited patiently. Not even for very long. Her head bent, she first saw his flapping shorts, then the sinewy shanks and the thong sandals. Then somehow she glanced up and saw the lovely Moroccan leather bag. "Can I help you?"

"I'm looking for the president, please."

"He's out of the office."

"Is everyone out of the office here?" . . . His patience was running out a little.

"Why? Maybe it's their work to just be at the disposal of whoever comes in?!"

"Yes."

"I beg your pardon?"

"Yes, that's their work."

"Great joke. . . Besides there aren't any consultation hours today."

"I don't need to consult, I came at the request of the Ministry of Health."

She acted as if she were meditating which degree of condescension was appropriate for the newcomer. Then—the bag, true, but still he was in shorts, barefooted, in thong sandals: "He'll be here soon, you can wait for him."

'He could wait,' but she didn't ask him to please have a seat, and she continued poking at the hook-rug. Szilárd Kovács, however, remained standing in place. The silence stretched out.

"You've got a nice bag."

"It's not for sale."

"I wouldn't even have the money for it. . . Where's it from?"

"Italy."

"Yep."

"I beg your pardon?"

"I knew it wasn't Hungarian right away."

Once more silence. Szilárd Kovács started to feel just like a Kafka hero. The girls' indifference in the pharmacy (the flowered panties and transparent smock of the little brunette—for heaven's sake why does one have to

grow old! And once old why so laughably nostalgic?). The tramp along the endless mud-born road. The mustached, fat-necked "Citizen, fill it out", the over-eager buxom Red Cross lady—though she was still attractive—but unfortunately "didn't deal with these things". And now this. This stupid hanging around. When he didn't even want to ask for anything. To ask for nothing, but to give! And they're announcing on the radio that thousands of lives depend on ossa sepia! . . . And everywhere just his shoulder bag was of interest.

"Can I light my pipe?"

"Oh, not here! At the most a cigarette."

The President was a plucky little man around forty. He arrived breezily, walking as if he wore boots, when he stopped, he posed sprawl-legged. First he went over to the girl, simpering like a wild boar playing a violin.

"Well, how's your lovely hook-rug going, Alizka? Are we poking away, poking away?"

"You won't even get a smell out of it! Someone's waiting for you, President."

"Waiting? I'm not seeing anyone today."

But finally he was willing to notice Szilárd Kovács. He sized him up from head to toe, and got back his confidence.

"Quickly, I have a lot of work."

"I won't hold you up long. . . You have certainly heard the news this morning on the radio."

"We're kept posted about everything in the administrative line."

"Then you know of the Ministry of Health's request in the matter of the epidemic caused by Baxis Trimalchio. And how they're asking the people who have ossa sepia in their possession. . ."

The President listened, listened with the characteristic way bosses listen: the eye focuses behind the speaker and looks vacantly into nothingness, and the ear in all probability is tuned to a much further off sound, of much more import. So, Szilárd Kovács waited a bit after saying his piece, and then was forced to repeat, that he had brought twelve pieces of ossa sepia, ready to hand over for the good of thousands and since the President still didn't react, he opened the bag and took out the wrapped package.

"I could use a purse like that for hunting," the President said at last.

Szilárd Kovács however held out the ossa sepia. He reached so that the President had to see that too.

"The comrades have too much time on their hands! Incidentally they think a President has time for everything. We do all the necessary operations

in our territory, literally, and the long run and projected ones too. We can't engage in piecemeal assignments and have scope. Now, I don't want to offend, but the older age-group too has to know, that generation that was raised in the good old world when one just went into the parish hall and a little back scratching, dear sir, and you could arrange everything."

"But please, the Ministry of Health. . ."

"Don't tell me about it! I know it approximately. And I know too, since I have a global view of things, that on the anniversary of our country's liberation, we dedicated a remodelled, seven-department National Health clinic, build with eight million forints of investment, and three hundred thousand forints of volunteer work—a community public health complex. I know that literally we have to finalize this kind of public health function. Everybody runs with everything right to the President. When we have on our necks the harvest, the meat programme, the vegetable and fruit programme?! Plus the tourism and the international thaw! What's a President, a doormat?! I'm lucky I don't get the blood donors too! Alizka, as I perceive it, you could have told the comrade all this."

"I told him, sir, but he. . ."

"There's no 'but he', the national health profile, and that's that! . . . Well, there won't be any complications because of this, best of luck, I've got work to do. . . However, I'd buy the purse. For hunting."

Without boots, he stepped, however, martially into his room. And Szilárd Kovács asked: "Where is the National Health building?"

But, then she asked: "Didn't you hear what he said?"

"I'm sorry. He didn't say where it was, just that they dedicated it on April fourth. . ."

"What he said about the bag!"

"It's not for sale."

"Now now! I'd sell it. Big pig, he'll offer one hundred, at most one hundred fifty, but I'd sell it to him!"

"What do you mean? I don't understand."

"You might have the need for a building permit, no?"

"Why should I?"

"There just might be something you'll need from the local board!"

The blood ran to Szilárd Kovács's head.

"Say, young lady! How are you talking about your superior?"

"My superior. . . I got the notification that they accepted me at the university. My superior can do you know what! And the whole world too!"

"Even so: he's an older man in an important position!"

"Come on! Everybody knows you have to grease his palm!"

"Everybody knows? Then why did you elect him?"

A manneristic swaying of the torso, a manneristic climbing falsetto:

"We e-lec-ted?!"

10

On the way he smoked a half-filled pipe. From the small bowl meerschaum.

In front the eight million plus volunteer renovation was the creation of an outstanding sculptor, his widely known "Seated Woman". This truly befitted the completion of a public health station and provision of a modern outpatient ward. (Provided that the ambulatory patients could really ambulate: the steps were many and the elevator was chronically out of order.) A lot of people were waiting around on both the ground and first floor; some came for treatment, and the majority, as Szilárd Kovács was informed by a dispute in the hall, for the usual extension of sick leave. Because they wanted leave from the state farms to work their own private plots, not mentioning the mushrooming of villa construction. In connection with this the five hundred forint "donation" really was a profitable investment. According to some, even for the general public. At best, and this came up in that dispute in the hall, there wasn't a blanket fee for treatment, because the sick-leave compensation was different in each case.

Szilárd Kovács went upstairs: after his past experiences he wasn't going to experiment; he looked for the head doctor straight off. He didn't even have to wait long.

The head doctor was a genial, very blonde man, his skin like a Yorkshire pig: rosiness even seeped through his hair. Somehow his smile was rosy too. A willowy dark-haired nurse was assisting him, coming and going quietly, a nod was enough: evidently they were acclimated to each other.

"Please have a seat, and tell us your complaint!" He pointed to a swivel chair in front of the desk.

"I didn't come with a complaint, doctor, I've brought the ossa sepia."

"What did you bring?"

"Surely you know of the announcement on the radio this morning by the Ministry of Health concerning the Baxis Trimalchio virus that's causing the epidemic. And how they're asking the public for ossa sepia, for the manufacture of the vaccine." He put the bag on his lap, opened it. "By chance, I've a whole dozen of them, I got it at Blaha Lujza Square, at the bird supplier's, because I'm an old customer. Surely you know, doctor, what ossa sepia actually is. . ."

"Naturally. It's the squid's inner shell. *Sepia officinalis*. Four-gilled, cephalopod, mollusc. Have I answered well?" he laughed. He looked hard at Szilárd Kovács's face.

"I'm not that expert in zoology."

"They also prepare ink from its secretion."

"That I know."

"From its skeleton, however, a whetstone for birds. Way back, toothpowder too, nowadays, of course, it's made from calcium carbon precipitate." Meanwhile he had given the nurse a look. She reached for the phone, spoke softly.

"I see doctor you're really amazingly informed. Then, maybe I'll just hand it over and I won't detain you longer."

"Thank you very much, uncle, in the name of the Ministry of Health. But you needn't hurry off!"

"I can't tell you what an Odyssey I've had to go through. Either the radio request was pointless, or else they didn't inform the proper authorities adequately. I tried in four places, with no result."

"That's just why it wouldn't hurt if you caught your breath. I see you're past your high-school days, uncle."

"I'll be seventy in the winter."

"Many happy returns! Besides, I know about the squid because I've eaten it. Really good."

"In Spain?"

"Oh, please. You know we countryfolk," his eyes sported with the nurse, "are always a few steps behind the chic Budapesters. I haven't been to Spain or Greece yet, I've just eaten squid in Italy. I'm sorry to say, nowhere else. Well... That's a nice bag you have!"

"Yes."

"Terribly nice!" The conversation almost bogged down here, and Szilárd Kovács was ready to pack up, when a young man in a doctor's smock stepped into the room. He wanted to say something but the head doctor silenced him with a wave of his hand. He sat down in a chair that the willowy nurse had pulled up for him, facing Szilárd Kovács on an angle. After a short pause, the head doctor cleared his throat.

"Well now, uncle! If you wouldn't mind, could you repeat for my colleague what you told me before. Anyhow, he deals in the clinic with that... oh come on... Baxis... what's its name?"

"Baxis Trimalchio."

"That's it. Please."

Szilárd Kovács turned toward the young man and repeated the reason

for his coming, the preceding events, circumstances. The colleague was a thin young man with an interesting face, who shuddered from time to time as if he were cold. The nurse also stopped her activity, they all held their breath, listening. So much so that Szilárd Kovács almost became rattled.

The head doctor looked expectantly at the young man. He nodded "yes, yes" and shuddered again. After a little fumbling silence, the head doctor spoke up.

"Excuse me, uncle. I'd like to ask if you could answer some of our questions."

"Go ahead, please."

"Your name. I didn't catch it before."

"Szilárd Kovács. If you like, Dr. Szilárd Kovács."

"You're not perhaps a colleague?"

"No, doctor, I got my degree in philosophy, ethics to be exact."

The young man nodded, "Uhhh philosophy."

"And may I ask where you live?"

"Here? On Kossuth Street with Mrs. Adamecz, the widow."

"And otherwise?"

"In Budapest, on Szamuely Street. Why?"

The young man took over.

"Could you tell us how you get home to Pest from Kossuth Street?"

"But why?"

"Because... because a relative of mine lives there, whom I'd like to visit and I haven't the least idea how to get there."

Odd. Was there never going to be an end to the Kafkaesque experiences?

"Well, I get on a bus to K. in front of the Casino, let's say the 10.30 one. In K. I catch a 12.21 fast express. By 3.10 I'm at the Keleti Station. I used to take a taxi there because of all the packages, but let's say there isn't a taxi. Then the easiest thing to do is to take the subway to the Astoria stop, then any streetcar to Calvin Square, from there by foot, it's just a few houses away to my place."

The two doctors looked at one another. The young one shuddered and then said: "Amazing"! But immediately went back to questioning.

"Do you like music?"

"Yes, quite a bit."

"Can you name some composers?"

"I don't understand, but alright, Bach, Bartók, Beethoven, Borodin, Brahms... Oh I shouldn't leave out Bellini, Berg... Then Casals, Corelli, Chopin... Debussy, De Falla..."

"You're saying them alphabetically?"

"I have to say them in some order!"

"This is for-for-formidable! . . . Your favourite books?"

"That would take too long, doctor. How about what I've brought with me?" He suspected by now the lay of the game. It irritated him, yet he was enjoying it somewhat. Well, the shivering doctor would be taken aback more than this and sometime there'd have to be an end to the tunnel! "A Cervantes in Spanish, a Rabelais, but in modern French, Saint Augustine in Latin. And Plutarch. In Hungarian. Oh, an Althusser treatise too, but that's not reading matter. I have to write about it."

"Vous parlez français?"

"Forcément! J'ai passé pas mal de temps à Paris."

The young man gulped.

"If I may, I'd like to quote a proverb." "A rolling stone gathers no moss'. Would you interpret the meaning of the proverb."

Szilárd Kovács almost burst out laughing. "Of course, doctor, but then I'd have to cite long passages out of my life history."

The young man gulped again and shuddered.

"Can you tell me how much is seven times thirteen?"

"Ninety-one."

"Oops! Not quite. It's eighty-one . . . that's . . . wait! it is ninety-one."

The head doctor yelled out, "Jánoska, leave out the arithmetic. You'll be in trouble!"

"Doctor, please, I don't understand this." And it seemed as if he was close to tears. Especially since he shuddered again.

The head doctor stood up, walked around the desk, asked for a chair, sat opposite Szilárd Kovács. "I think I've got a hunch about something."

"I think it's nothing."

"Boy, how it's nothing! Uncle can you recollect when you went to bed last night?"

"Unfortunately. Yes. At 3.30. I was up late talking with a friend."

"Excuse me, did you also drink?"

"Wine. Together we finished almost two bottles."

"Now, that's something!"

"From nine at night till three in the morning? We didn't even feel it."

"Did you take any sleeping pills?"

"Half a phenobarb. We had argued. I got worked up at times like that, it's hard to fall asleep."

The doctor was thinking it over. "Now this news . . . the Baxis Trimalchio and the Ministry of Health . . . well, in fact did your friend, with whom you argued last night, wake you up with this news?"

Szilárd Kovács was astonished. "Why, I should say not. I heard it myself. I woke up just as they were announcing it on the radio."

Now the doctor was astonished. "With your own ears?"

"Yes."

"Somebody in the neighbourhood had their radio on?"

"No. It's right beside me, on the night table."

"I don't understand. You went to sleep at half past three, with a phenobarb. . ."

"I'll explain, doctor, I have an uh. . . an automatic alarm. I put it together myself from a pocket radio and an ordinary alarm. At seven every morning I wake up to the news."

"Then today too."

"Almost. At other times, I'm up already when it turns on. To tell the truth, I would have gone on sleeping, today. I didn't even hear the beginning of the news, just the request from the Ministry of Health. . ."

The young doctor wanted to interrupt, but he was warned off "wait!" He took a few steps in the narrow room, suddenly turned around. "Just tell me, sir, how does your alarm clock work? Do you have to set it at night?"

Szilárd Kovács suddenly was hit by uncomfortable feeling.

"Yes."

"And you wound it up last night too. You went to bed at 3.30 last night, took a sleeping pill and you wanted to get up at 7?"

"Damn!" Szilárd Kovács all at once lost his assurance. He himself began to wonder if he was in his right mind. . . "Of course I didn't wind it up, I even thought about it, that I'd sleep more today, interesting. . . But the clock still didn't stop running. The spring holds more than twenty four hours."

The doctor nodded. "Of course it stopped, sir. Sure. But because of habit, the alarm began to ring inside you exactly at 7. And—naturally with the sound of a radio. And the kind of news that woke you up. . . Thank you, János", he turned to the young man, "I won't keep you any longer, I'll take care of it."

When the young man had left, the doctor sat down again on the little chair, and faced Szilárd Kovács.

"A very common thing happened to you, sir. An ordinary thing, but it's produced on occasion, gods, prophecies, mythologies. Almost like today, here. You were dreaming, my dear sir, well the wine, the phenobarb, the lack of sleep, certainly also last night's argument. . . I just happened this morning to hear the 7 o'clock news too. There wasn't a word about an

epidemic, a request. You dreamt it. Please put away the *ossa sepia*, dear sir, it'll be good for the bird. You have to face the fact. You were dreaming."

And meanwhile, Szilárd Kovács, once more pulled the grey, Moroccan leather shoulder bag onto his lap, to pack away, good and deep the wrapped package; he even had started to face the fact. He just couldn't say anything. Because what could he say?

"You've got a beautiful bag, sir. I could use one exactly like that. The élite comrades of the hunting club are already hooting me out, with 'hey Chief, when you're rolling in dough, why do you use such a scroungy feedback!' You wouldn't sell it would you?"

"I'm sorry but it's a fond memento."

"From a lady! That's different."

"From a former fellow soldier in Spain."

The doctor nodded, "You're Szilárd Kovács, who fought in Spain."

"That's me."

"I sensed it. As soon as you stepped in. What kept cropping into my head was: where did I know you from?"

"Have we met?"

"In forty. . . six—or seven? You lectured to us at the Medical College on the communist morality. Hah! you still had hair then Comrade Kovács, and on the other hand I didn't have a pot belly."

Szilárd Kovács was getting ready to stand up, but the doctor gently pushed him down. "If you don't mind, when did you last see a doctor, Comrade Kovács?"

"When? Well, it's been three years. . . thank god!"

"At your age, that's an immense rashness! Well, would you please undress. Quick. You can't get out of here. If you're ashamed in front of Marika, you can go there behind the screen. But it's really unnecessary. She's seen such things before, quite enough. In fact recently she got such use out of one every night that her fiancé, who's a frontier officer, is now on vacation. Beats our pecker, Comrade Kovács!"

"Hell, doctor!" the nurse was half crying, half laughing. "Stop wagging your tongue!"

"Pretty soon, that's the only thing that'll wag."

"But in front of a patient!"

All the while he was examining Szilárd Kovács.

"A patient, but what a patient! A lot of forty-year-olds would be delighted if their heart sounded like that, and how many! . . . This age-group, the 1900ers, are the kind that can teach medicine what constitutes a healthy man."

He examined him thoroughly, listened carefully to his heart, tapped it, jostled his liver and spleen, flashed a light in his eyes, lifted his arms, looked at the veins on the back of his hand, then checked all the reflexes, measured his blood pressure, and even put him through a little gymnastics.

Meanwhile, one question kept running through Szilárd Kovács's mind; whether he had an envelope in his bag.

"Please get dressed."

He immediately looked when he was behind the screen. He was lucky to find some name-card envelopes, a little wrinkled though. He dropped a one hundred forint note—then "still the head doctor"—, he stuck in quickly another hundred. And as always, he didn't know and he didn't have the faintest notion, if it was a chivalrous or tight-fisted gesture, ridiculously lavish or ridiculously stingy.

"I'd change with you, Comrade Kovács." The doctor yelled from the other side of the screen (because one usually yells when he can't see whom he's talking to). I'd exchange with you, as is, your physique too. And if I'd exchange our life spans I'd come out ahead."

"You're still a young man, doctor."

"Young?! . . . Last night I also had some guests, the kind that can sleep late mornings. When I heard the 7 o'clock news, I had already seen one patient. But this isn't the interesting thing. Among doctors a forty-seven-year-old man is already old, because I for one have almost been screwed out of my job at least five times. You know, Comrade Kovács, you're not just any kind of man."

"What makes you say that?"

"Look, your alarming dream wasn't that the house was burning. Your dream radio didn't say that the Public Housing Authority issued a new property ordinance. No, but that you had to help thousands of people. That's why it's interesting. I have a psychologist friend, could you tell him this whole ossa sepia thing, but from the beginning? Including, say last night's argument."

Szilárd Kovács came from behind the screen. Blushing and nervous, like a gauche teenager, he handed him the envelope.

"I'm sorry that it's a little wrinkled. . . Thank you very much."

The doctor made a parrying motion with his left hand. That characteristic doctor's gesture, which even though his arm happened to be grotesquely short, looked quite graceful. It was such a nice movement among movements, as for example, 'super-solvency' is among words. As he executed the move with his left hand, he pocketed the envelope with his right. This time with text.

"I accept it Comrade Kovács, because otherwise, they could screw me for this. I accept it because otherwise the patients would never believe I can cure them. And I accept it from you because otherwise you too would question whether you really just dreamed the whole thing. . . . But, you know. . . . It's fantastic! This uhh. . . . Baxis Trimalchio! No? Where does a man find such words in his dream!" he laughed. "Baxis Trimalchio!"

He saw Szilárd Kovács to the door, shook his hand.

"That night at the Medical College was a long time ago! Do you remember, afterwards we argued till dawn? That was long ago. . . . but, beautiful."

II

It was past noon. The towers of N. chimed.

Szilárd Kovács went home along Kossuth Street. His old legs, brown as a nut, shrivelled dry, sticking out of his wide pants, carried him. Those faithful old legs, that had taken young communist hiking trips, had marched in loyal Basque countries, Ukrainian snow fields, Mauthausen sludge.

The local gardeners were resting in the shade of the Finnish sauna. They weren't frying pancakes, or fish, but meat at the combination stand; and a line stood waiting. Something had happened in front of the Casino. Two girls in black pullovers were screaming furiously: "Dirty bastards! You let us struggle away in Italian! What do you take us for?! Dirty bastards! Hungarians!" Two teenage kids, convulsed with laughter, were tearing off. Miniature drama. The setter, the boxer and the poodle, stared with glassy eyes from the beauty shop wall. They were plastering the Japanese mosaics on the import villa, on contract work, there wasn't any slacking. At this time of day, the shadow and crowns of the maples were the same, but that was enough. Wherever they had left them standing, the one hundred-and-fifty-year-old leaves, shielded Kossuth Street from the unbearable summer noon. But, no one was out walking much. And even the "Piroska Drink Bar" was dark and empty. It was noon. Lunchtime. Aunt Juliska, too, had prepared lunch.

"You took a long time, sir, was there so much to do? At least it's all settled?"

"Oh Aunt Juliska!" He shrugged, and didn't even look up. "I dreamt the whole thing. Imagine, I dreamt the whole thing!"

And he went into his room.

Aunt Juliska, however, as the reader might well guess, was a little deaf.

More than a little. That's why her face generally had that typical half-helpless expression that could mean both 'what did you say?' or 'I understand'. She stood there like that, then went off to fix the tray.

Our hero, as we pointed out in the introduction, didn't sit down to bawl, or moan, least of all complain. He had already thrown away the scrap of paper on which the doctor had written his friend's address. It was in the trash can by the "Seated Woman".

He put the eleven pieces of ossa sepia away in the drawer, the twelfth he hung back up for Mandi.

And Aunt Juliska brought in the lunch.

Translated by Laura Schiff

GYULA ILLYÉS

A WREATH

Translated by William Jay Smith

You can no longer
soar. And yet you blaze,
wind-slit Hungarian tongue, sending
your snakelike flames along the ground, hissing
at times with pain,
more often with the helpless rage of the humiliated,
your guardian angels forsaking you.

Again in grass,
in weeds, in slime.
As through all those centuries, among
the stooped peasants. Among
the tight-lipped old, keeping their counsel. Among
girls trembling under coned reeds as
the Tartar hordes swept past. Among
children lashed together
while mute lips shaped their words,
for the Turks, if they heard a sound,
would bring whips down in their faces.
Now you show forth
truly—and to me as well—your use,
your pedigree, your coat-of-arms, the stone-biting
strength in your veins.

Language of furtive smiles,
of bright tears shared in secret, language
of loyalty, lingo
of never-surrendered faith, password of hope, language

of freedom, briefly-snatched freedom, behind-the-prison-guard's-
back-freedom,
language of master-mocked schoolboy, sergeant-abused rookie,
dressed-down plaintiff, of little old ladies boring clerks,
language of porters, odd-job hired men, being a language
of the no-good-for-the-factory, no-good-for-test-passing proletariat,
language of the veteran stammering before his
young boss; testimony—
rising from depths even greater
than Luther's—of the suspect
beaten up on arrival at the station;
language of the Kassa black marketeer, the Bucharest servant girl,
the Beirut whore, all calling
for mother, behold your son, spittle
on his rage-reddened face,
master of many tongues,
held worthy of attention by other nations
for what, as a loyal European,
he has to say:
he cannot mount any festive platform,
cannot accept any wreath,
however glorious, which he would not, stepping quickly down,
carry over to lay at your feet, and with his smile draw forth,
on your agonizing lips,
your smile, my beloved, ever-nurturing mother.

THE OBJECTIVES OF DEMOGRAPHIC POLICY

by

EGON SZABADY

The demographic situation in Hungary has so far been fundamentally determined by the number of births, and future population will also depend primarily on the way fertility shapes. It is therefore understandable and reasonable that in analysing the demographic situation and discussing questions of demographic policy the subject of fertility was always given emphasis.

The birth-rate in Hungary began to drop steadily toward the close of the nineteenth century, and—apart from the fluctuation following the First World War—this decrease continued without interruption until the Liberation in 1945. Not even in the years preceding the Second World War did the number of live births—because of the unfavourable trend of mortality at that time—ensure the reproduction of population in the long run.

After Liberation the live-birth rate increased a little, temporarily, and then grew yet higher as a short-lived consequence of the prohibition of the interruption of pregnancies between 1953 and 1955 (it culminated at 23 per thousand in 1954). It came essentially as a reaction that, after the introduction of induced (legal) abortion, the birth rate declined rapidly and in 1962 reached its lowest level ever (12.9 per thousand). At the time this was, by international standards the lowest live-birth rate, but in the 1970's it was similarly low or even lower in a number of Western European and socialist countries.

In the mid-1960's, owing to changes in the age structure, the rate of mortality per 1,000 population also began to rise in spite of the slow improvement or stagnation of mortality by age group. This tendency must be reckoned with in the future. Thus given the low level of fertility established in the early 1960's, the population of Hungary would have decreased from the 1980's on.

Awareness of these facts led, in the 1960's, to the adoption of measures to boost the number of births. The government decreed a number of increases in family allowances and then introduced a child-care allowance. These measures probably contributed to the substantial rise in the live-birth rate in 1966 and 1967. This rate has since then been between 14.5 and 15.1 per thousand (in 1973 it was 15.0 per thousand). But even this level is insufficient to ensure the reproduction of the population.

This state of affairs has made the question of demographic policy a cardinal question in Hungary.

In order to find the proper means for a demographic policy free from coercive measures and effective in the long run, the factors acting on demographic behaviour have to be known, including the causes which were responsible for the downward trend of the birth rate. On the basis of a systematic study of vital statistics, census data, and special studies of fertility, it is possible to disclose the intricate, complex processes which had a noticeable effect. These can be outlined as follows.

Causes and motives

Social restratification related to economic development and to changes in structure considerably decreased the ratio of the agricultural population, whose fertility in the past had been some 50 per cent higher than that of the non-agricultural population. The growth of the ratio of the low-fertility sections (non-agricultural workers, professional people), who had become more numerous as a result of restratification, reduced the national birth rate in itself. Add that, just because of the factors of restratification (migration, education, higher qualifications, etc.), the fertility of mobile sections was temporarily lower than that of stable ones. Fertility was reduced by an increased marriage mobility; the fertility of the partners in marriage who came from different social strata was in general lower than that of families where husband and wife belonged to the same one.

Another projection of the restratification process was the numerical growth of the urban, low-fertility population over rural families having a larger number of children. Here also it could be observed that the fertility of those changing their place of residence (those moving from rural to urban areas, those migrating from country towns to Budapest, etc.) was lower than that of the permanent population of either their original or their new place of residence. This was due to their special, transitional situation, the change of jobs and residences, as well as to the housing shortage.

A contributing factor in the decline of fertility was the increase in the number of women going into employment. As a practical consequence of women enjoying equal rights, their duties which had so far been confined mostly to the family broadened considerably as they sought and obtained employment in industry etc. The demographic effects of this process, which is right and desirable in itself, must of necessity be taken into consideration in the formulation of Hungarian demographic policy. Related problems will be discussed below.

To all these processes was added the unfavourable effect of the higher number of children upon the living standard of the family. As a consequence of incomes being levelled off and family burdens being insufficiently balanced, the living standard of a family is largely determined by the ratio between earners and dependants. Consequently, the stimulating effect exerted upon the quality of work by the differentiation of wages paid according to the social usefulness of the work done was weaker than necessary.

Demographic policy must therefore face the contingency that certain—actually sound and desirable—factors of socio-economic development might temporarily reduce fertility. It is evident, for example, that even though, after socialist industrialization and the establishment of large-scale farming, a certain degree of slackening is to be expected in occupational-social mobility, it is desirable—in the interest of preserving and heightening the open character of Hungarian society—to make sure that both intra-generational mobility (changes in jobs and social status in a person's lifetime) and especially inter-generational mobility (changes in the children's social status in relation to that of the parents) are kept on a high level. The reduction of differences in the way of life and cultural standard of social strata will probably also influence the choice of the marriage partner, which again may result in an increase in marriage mobility. It is beyond question though that in recent years a slight increase has been observed in the proportion of marriages between partners belonging to identical social strata.

Social mobility, however, does not necessarily, and not in every case, reduce fertility. Ch. F. Westoff has pointed out, for example, that in the United States there is no close connection between social mobility and fertility. This is indicative of the fact that the regularities observed in several countries in a given period of time are not absolute in character and prevail only under specific conditions. The same can be said of the correlation traditionally described as negative between income level and fertility, which was regarded as a basic principle of demography in the interwar years. There is no doubt that this negative correlation is perceivable at certain stages of economic development, but it disappears above a certain income level and

even assumes a positive character; higher fertility appearing at a higher level. Similar phenomena have been revealed by the investigation of the interrelation between cultural standards and fertility. We know from the 1965 symposium on demography held in Budapest, for example, that Yugoslav research found a definite and strong negative correlation between educational level and fertility, while at the same time Swedish studies led to the contrary conclusion, demonstrating that college-educated women had a higher than average fertility. All this leads to the conclusion that the demographic correlations prevailing on a specific level of economic and social development cannot be considered as permanent, they become ineffective in subsequent periods of development and in a given situation; what is more, regularities of an opposite character may also occur. All this is due to the fact that every single factor exerts its influence not in isolation but in conjunction with all other factors within the framework of a complex and intricate action mechanism.

Income level and the family

As is well known, the past fifteen odd years have shown a continual, steady growth of incomes which, however, has been attended by a sudden increase in consumer opportunities. The rapid spread of durable consumer goods, motorcars, private home-building, trips abroad, and weekend camps has given rise to new demands, bringing with it new motivations in economic behaviour. This style of life influenced by new consumer attitudes obviously acted toward the reduction of family size, since the attainment of new goals was made difficult by a higher number of children. It may easily happen, however, that this behaviour influenced by fashion and prestige will when consumption reaches a certain stage of saturation or even becomes common and uninteresting, sooner or later change, and married couples who have so far concentrated on prestige and success and consumption will again develop stronger family-mindedness.

The cohesion of the family was doubtless weakened by the modification and narrowing of its functions of a primarily economic character. In the peasants' and artisans' manner of living the family is still a productive community. The establishment of large-scale production in towns has almost entirely eliminated this function, whose importance has been considerably reduced also in the countryside, where it has been confined to household farming. Moreover, the increasing use of canteens, restaurants, and other services, as well as forms of entertainment, and the cultural needs which are differentiated by age group, also modified somewhat the role of

the family as a consumer or leisure community. The community of dwelling and housekeeping, however, has survived unchanged, and its importance is again enhanced by the common use of consumer goods produced at the latest stage of economic and cultural development (television, motoring, weekend recreation, etc.).

All these economically relevant facts of family sociology are essential from the demographic point of view since the definite correlation between family cohesion and the number of children has been demonstrated positively by the related studies of fertility and family sociology.

It can be supposed that the further rise in income levels in Hungary will not have the negative demographic effects experienced before. The negative correlation will become definitely weaker, and a certain positive correlation will presumably take shape before long; that is, when the rise in living standards will favourably influence the birth rate. But this requires also that an end be put to the present strong and inequitable backwardness in the living standards of large families. One of the primary means to this end is a further considerable increase in family allowances.

In addition to cash benefits it is expedient to maintain an appropriate network of institutions for children, which make a considerable contribution toward easing the material burdens of families, and especially the chores of family households. It seems particularly necessary to develop the network of day-nurseries and kindergartens, bearing in mind educational needs as well.

Women in employment and in the family

The question of children's institutions points to a subject which in the recent past has been of fundamental importance from both the economic and the demographic point of view, nor will this importance diminish in the foreseeable future. This is the employment of women.

The increasing employment of women has been a major factor in Hungarian socio-economic life, exercising perhaps the greatest influence on the family mode of life and fertility. Male employment, or at least the demand for it among adults in Hungary in the past twenty years has been close to 100 per cent. Changes in this respect were the elimination of unemployment and the employment of a numerically insignificant number who had lived on unearned income. On the other hand, there has been a significant change in the proportion of employed women. In 1949 roughly one-third of the female population of the appropriate age was employed, today nearly one half are. The ratio of women in the gainfully employed population has thus

risen from 30 to 40 per cent. It is important from the demographic point of view that, while the majority of the employed women in the interwar years were unmarried, widowed or divorced, today the majority are married women and women with children.

The duality of the family and employment function of women implies the possibility of certain conflicts, especially as regards women with small children. Depending on which kind of female behaviour is the more general with respect to the conflict of the two functions, three types of female employment have evolved in industrialized countries. In type 1 the ratio of gainfully occupied women is almost equally high throughout the entire active period (from 20 to 55 years of age): 60 to 70 per cent (e.g. in Bulgaria, Poland, Rumania, where the majority of women resume their work shortly after childbirth). Type 2 covers countries where the ratio of those in employment is highest among young and childless women; after giving birth, however, the majority of mothers give up their jobs, so the ratio of gainfully employed women decreases parallel with age (e.g. Belgium, Netherlands, Italy, Sweden). Finally type 3 applies to countries in which the employment ratio of the youngest women is high, declining for 5 to 10 years, rising again near the age of forty, thus reaching a second peak. This double-peaked female employment is typical of countries where mothers have to look after their children at home and after the child has reached a certain age, usually when they start school, they again engage in some gainful occupation. This sort of thing can be observed in France, Great Britain and the United States.

In Hungary there were indications of a tendency toward type 1 in the late 1950's. Recently, however, in connection with the introduction of the child-care allowance, we can see signs pointing in the direction of type 3.

The child-care allowance introduced in 1967*—which has proved to be an internationally unique measure commanding wide interest—has far-reaching financial, socio-political, and economic implications. More than two-thirds of those entitled to this benefit take advantage of it, and at present the number of mothers looking after a child under three is close to 200,000 or 10 per cent of the gainfully occupied female population. This ratio may reach even 20 to 25 per cent for women between 20 and 29. Allocations for the payment of this allowance exceed Ft 1,500 million a year.

* Mothers in employment are entitled, in addition to six months' paid maternity leave, to a child-care allowance of Ft 800 a month for another two years and six months after childbirth. The mother retains her job, her employment does not terminate, and after three years she may take up her post; she will automatically be entitled to receive any pay raise that was due to her during her absence.

(The Editor)

The child-care allowance has been a subject of lively discussion since its introduction. Its beneficial effect upon the health of infants and children is beyond doubt. The fears that the child-care allowance would possibly withdraw labour trained at high cost have also proved groundless. The fact is that the three years following the introduction of the allowance have demonstrated that demand for the benefit is inversely proportional to the standard of qualifications, level of education, and income of the women. The labour-draining effect of the allowance is thus felt in the less qualified, routine jobs where it is relatively easier to find replacements. In practice, however, there is no doubt that in some areas the child-care allowance has increased the labour shortage in less attractive, ill-paid jobs.

Opinions differ also as to the extent to which the introduction of this benefit fits in with the economic system that provides equal chances to men and women. I am of the opinion that, in professional and executive or managerial posts where an absence of 2-3 years from economic activity may lead to considerable drawbacks regarding promotion or a professional career, the demand for the child-care allowance is not significant. In view of this I think that the general effect of the child-care allowance scheme is extremely useful, considering also the paramount role it has played in the increase of the birth rate after 1967. It is due to the introduction of the child-care allowance that, since 1967, the fertility of employed women in the under-30 age group has been steadily higher than that of dependent women. This is all the more remarkable since the higher fertility of dependent women, even if viewed from a broader perspective, has been an internationally observed regularity in demography. In violation of this the higher fertility observed in recent years among employed women in Hungary finds its explanation in the fact that, for the duration of the 2-3-year period of staying home on a child-care allowance, the mode of life of the women concerned has become in many respects similar to that of dependent women.

The increased employment of women has, as an economic consequence, that a considerable change has occurred in the ratio between manual and clerical labour. The proportion of clerical workers estimated at 13 per cent in the late 1940's has more than doubled since. Women are attracted to clerical or professional work, primarily in administration and the education and health services. This is why women make up the majority of clerical workers, and only one-third of all manual workers; women constitute 70 per cent of office workers and over 60 per cent of those in the educational and health services. One must not disregard these interrelations either when analysing the influence of the child-care allowance on the labour supply.

Housing

Housing programmes and housing policies evidently play an important part in demographic trends governing family founding and family planning. The desired and the actual number of children are basically dependent on when and how the newly married couple can move into an apartment of their choice, and on how they can satisfy their needs as modified by demographic changes. All this, as reflected in public opinion, substantially influences family decisions on the future number of children. It is hoped that the new housing policy will be more favourable also from the demographic point of view, provided that its formulation allows adequate play to the viewpoints of demographic policy. This is made even more significant by the fact that the tensions related to socio-economic factors of demographic consequence are already today, and will be still more in the future, orientated to the housing policy.

Despite efforts being made since the early 1960's, a housing shortage still prevails in Hungary, especially in towns. This causes increased tensions particularly in the case of young married couples and families with a number of children. In the present socio-economic conditions, a satisfactory number of dwellings of proper quality is a prime requisite of family founding and family planning. According to the estimates of long-term development in the supply of housing, this balanced situation cannot be expected to develop before the second half of the 1980's.

Until this balanced situation is reached, it is particularly important to promote demographic objectives also by appropriately regulating the construction and distribution of dwellings. It is necessary in the first place to increase the proportion of state-owned rented apartments and to enlarge their size. The role of demographic and social factors must continue to be strengthened when determining the way in which state support to the building of privately financed dwellings—including the construction of family homes is offered.

Short-range forecasts

An analysis of the demographic situation in Hungary and the forecasts based upon it allows one to draw the conclusion that demographic policy in Hungary today should aim at an increasing birth rate or more precisely, fertility rate. The requirement that at least the simple reproduction of population be ensured is clear and is recognized as legitimate by every known demographic theory. Any population increase lower than simple reproduc-

tion is insufficient to help an economically favourable age structure to come into being. Since it would perpetuate an unsound ratio between earners and elderly dependants and would be conducive to an economic and social structure unfavourable from other points of view as well.

This conception of demographic policy underlay the initiation of a series of new measures one of the important features of which was the October 1973 decision on demographic policy of the Council of Ministers. The public showed considerable interest, and this justifies taking stock of the results achieved in this field during the past six months.

The first effect of the new measures has been the large-scale propagation and extensive use of modern and efficient contraceptives. As a result of the directive of the Minister of Health, which took effect from October 1973, regulating the prescription and dispensation of medicated (hormonally active) contraceptives and facilitating their availability, there has been a considerable increase in the number of women using them. In the first four months of 1974 the number of women who bought the monthly dose averaged 363,000. This corresponds to a 54 per cent yearly increase and allows 14 per cent of women of reproductive age to avoid pregnancy.

The considerable decrease in the number of legal abortions is probably due in part to the wider use of contraceptive methods and to new measures which took effect at the beginning of this year. From January to April 1974 the number of pregnancy interruptions totalled 34,900, that is 41 per cent fewer than in the corresponding period of the preceding year.

This trend of legal abortions is not a consequence of massive refusals by the committees permitting terminations of pregnancies. These considered requests from far fewer women than earlier: in these four months 38,300 women applied to the committees for pregnancy interruptions. In the corresponding period of 1973 similar applications had been presented by 54 per cent more women than a year later.

The abortion committees, after thorough consideration, granted 94 per cent of the requests. There is provision for appeals and two-thirds of the appeals were allowed. Consequently, in the first four months following the coming into force of the new decree only 1,900 pregnancy interruptions "did not take place"; close to 1,000 applicants failed to appeal, and only 410 appeals were rejected.

The most interesting question relating to a measure of demographic policy is naturally the examination of its effect on the number of births. It is evident, on the other hand, that the six months that have elapsed since the adoption of the measure could not be sufficient for such examinations. The 10 per cent increase in the number of births during the first four months

of 1974 is attributable exclusively to the fact that a greater number of women are now entering the child-bearing age. They were born at the time of the 1953-55 births boom.

It is worthy of note, however, that from January to April 1974, the number of pregnant women who first appeared for pregnancy counselling went up 42 per cent. Thus about 180 to 190 thousand live births can be expected in 1974 (which is 30 to 35 thousand more than in 1973). The conditional character of this estimate must be stressed and its uncertainty factors; on the one hand, there is a considerable month-by-month fluctuation even in the figures for the first quarter of 1974 and, on the other, there is no information as yet about the number of births expected in the last quarter of this year.

It is hoped that the number of live births in the next two to three years will not diminish considerably, as the more numerous age groups will at that time, be at their peak fertility period. Afterwards, on the other hand, less numerous female age groups will reach the child-bearing age, and so the automatism of demography—without being influenced by measures of demographic policy—would again result in very low figures for the birth rate by the late 1970's and the early 1980's.

Long-term objectives

This—and the irregular age composition that accompanies it—can be avoided only if by that time the ideal and practice of families with 2-3 children will have gained ground against the present general type of one-child or two-child family. Preliminary data sampled from a forthcoming public opinion poll on demographic problems show that this is not an unattainable objective. Although, in view of the small number of those answering the questionnaire, experience so far cannot of course be generalized, it seems that three children in a family are increasingly regarded as an ideal pattern. It is true, on the other hand, that this theoretically ideal figure is higher than the planned number of children, which already takes into account the financial circumstances of married couples, in particular their housing situation. Opinions on this subject indicate that the best incentives to childbirth are adequate housing conditions. This factor holds first place among the answers given. Of course, other factors have a part to play as well. Child-care establishments, financial provisions for improving the situation of families with children (family allowances, child-care allowances), the working conditions of pregnant women and young mothers, etc. The diversity

of factors mentioned is at the same time a reminder that demographic policy is an inseparable part of economic and social policies. A progressive correction of the deformities of the age composition in Hungary can therefore be attained only by applying a long-range strategy which enforces the demographic point of view in all fields of the standard-of-living policy.

In the light of the above considerations, the working group on demography of the Committee for the Long-term Planning of Manpower and Living Standards has formulated a 15-year conception for demographic policy (1976-1990). This stresses that demographic processes substantially influence the financial situation of families. Differences in income are determined for the most part by the demographic composition of families, by the proportion of dependants, the number of children in the first place. This of course reacts on the demographic behaviour of married couples. At the same time every change in the situation of families, including family-planning policy programmes, exerts an influence on demographic processes.

The Committee has worked out proposals for further measures in social policy, public health and education, and for influencing social thinking to ensure the family size required for simple reproduction. In this connection it should be pointed out that in Hungary today the proportion of childless couples is very insignificant when compared with other countries. The main cause of the low number of births is therefore, on the one hand, the high proportion of one-child families and, on the other hand, the relative rarity of families with more than two children. Consequently, the most important task of Hungary's demographic policy is to strengthen the willingness of one-child and two-child families to undertake to raise more children. In this a considerable role may be played, in addition to a series of economic and socio-political measures, by the creation of an appropriate social atmosphere regarding the family and children.

SURVEYS

JÓZSEF SZEKERES

HOW THE BUDAPEST BRIDGES WERE NOT SAVED

It would be a fatal self-delusion to believe that we can save ourselves and our miserable lives by a cowardly running away from danger.

(Pester Lloyd, December 7, 1944)

The above sentence is open to different interpretations. It was set in bold type framed and placed by an anonymous printer in the story of the official version of the news about the premature blowing up of Margaret-bridge—as a memento of his anguish not only for the universally admired Budapest Danube-bridges but for the fate of the city. Unfortunately the course of history justified the realism of his warning: in spite of undoubted efforts not a single Danube bridge could be saved from destruction during the military operations connected with the city's siege. All the responsibility for Hungary's tragedy in the Second World War, and for the ruins of Budapest, rests with the Hungarian historical ruling class who—in the service of aggressive German power politics—had twice involved the country in horrible slaughter and brought immeasurable suffering to hundreds of thousands of families. This basic fact should never be lost from sight when we look back on the tragic series of events thirty years ago when certain prominent representatives of that Hungarian ruling class, those in charge of the capital sensed the horrible consequences of their policy, felt their own

responsibility and perhaps a fear of being held responsible and, although half-heartedly and weakly, they tried to do something towards rescuing the bridges and public utilities of Budapest.

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When, in September 1944 Miklós Horthy, Regent of Hungary since 1920, head of the counter-revolutionary fascist regime which followed the Hungarian Republic of Councils in 1919, became aware that Nazi Germany was losing the war he asked the Allied Powers for an armistice. It was signed by his representatives in Moscow on October 10th 1944. On October 15th Horthy arranged for an announcement to be made on the radio giving news of the negotiations. He declared Hungary's withdrawal from the war but Horthy's impotence, the treachery of high-ranking army people and the fact that those who supported him were outnumbered by the Germans, proved decisive. The extreme right-wing of the Hungarian ruling class, that is the Arrow Cross Fascists, generally known as *nyilas*, who blindly served their Nazi master, took over. Their coup was supported by German panzer divisions, the Gestapo and SS units. Major Ferenc Szálasi, an ex-staff officer and head of the *nyilas*, took over as leader of the nation and other leading Hungarian Nazis assumed office in his government. The turn of events after October 15th 1944 left no doubt

that the country's still existing material and human resources would be deployed in the already lost war, and that the German army would only retreat from the towns and villages of Hungary step by step as forced by the fortunes of war. This obviously meant great damage and destruction and loss of life.

The Hungarian Communist Party—although forced underground after the 1919 Counter-Revolution—had managed to maintain its influence among the masses of workers: in September 1944 it reorganized its ranks and dropped the name Peace Party adopted in 1943. The Party realized the dangers which the last months of 1944 would bring the country, and in its illegal paper *Szabad Nép* and in leaflets produced on illegal printing presses it spoke to the Hungarian nation: "...the policy of the Hungarian reactionaries has left in its wake burnt-out villages, ruined towns, the dead bodies of thousands of soldiers, women and children and a stream of homeless refugees. In Budapest, as in other cities, orders have been issued to mine major works, public utilities, public buildings, bridges and railway stations. The Germans want to cover their withdrawal by defending every house, blocking the advance of the Red Army by blowing things up. They want to condemn Budapest to the fate of Warsaw!"

This appeal of the Communist Party reached only small numbers of the city's population. The most class-conscious workers formed military units and carried out armed resistance, as well as engaging in strike action and sabotage after October 15th. The Hungarian Front, founded in April 1944 at the initiative of the Peace Party which included Social-Democrats, Smallholders and Peasant Party members, worked to that effect as well. Many more resistance groups with bourgeois and left-wing intellectual members operated under the aegis of anti-fascist national unity.

The calls for mass resistance and armed action, however, did not produce the desired

results. The Counter-Revolutionary regime had, for a quarter of a century, persecuted all progressives, Communists, Socialists and other members of the left-wing opposition. The regime's adversaries had been imprisoned and interned, they had been deported and sent to the front in penal battalions. In addition twenty-five years of nationalist and chauvinist propaganda against neighbouring countries based on certain unsound aspects of the 1920 Trianon imperialist peace treaty had an effect as well. This imperialist peace on the one hand guaranteed self-determination to the non-Hungarian nationalities living on what had been Hungarian territory, but it also handed over large areas with an overwhelmingly Hungarian population to the new states created after the First World War. The Trianon Peace Treaty concluded with Hungary and the entire Versailles peace system did not solve the problem of national minorities in Central Europe, what it did was to shift the emphasis, that was all. Lenin had pointed this out at the time. The Hungarian ruling classes exploited the wounding measures taken under the Trianon Treaty and spread irredentist, nationalist and chauvinist propaganda with the intent of influencing the working masses, isolating them from progressive leftist ideas. They claimed that the grave situation resulting from the regime's counter-revolutionary policy was due solely to the country's mutilation. This policy showed initial successes though Horthy's desire for territorial revision and the regime's anti-communist and aggressive nature inevitably led Hungary to join the belligerent block of the fascist countries that aimed to redraw the frontiers of the world.

The regime's anti-semitic propaganda was also responsible for the passivity of the masses. This propaganda exploited a peculiar feature of historical development in Hungary. The capitalists in towns were mostly of Jewish origin. Right wing propaganda fully identified capitalist exploitation with Jews and on this basis it could for some time

exert an influence on politically inexperienced "first generation" workers and professional men.

At this stage of the war the majority of the inhabitants of Budapest were opposed to Nazism, they were fed up with the government and the Nazi terror and longed for as early a peace as possible. But this opposition, for the reasons mentioned above, appeared in an ambiguous form. Very few turned up to work on the trenches and dug-outs intended to defend Budapest, they paid scant respect to the fascist government's orders to enlist or evacuate; many thousands deserted from the armed forces and others assumed false identities and carried counterfeit papers. There was a feeling of unrest among serving soldiers as well.

Such were the conditions when, in the first days of November 1944, the Red Army arrived at the outskirts of Budapest. The units of the Red Army first crossed the temporarily war-inflated borders of Hungary in the Carpathians during the summer of 1944, but the line there held and stiffened. On August 23rd 1944, after Rumania capitulated, it proved possible to deploy Soviet armoured units in a way that outflanked the natural, and further reinforced, obstacles of the Carpathians and crossed the country's frontiers from the south. They occupied Battyony, the first village of any size, on September 24th 1944. They advanced at speed in a north-westerly direction and the German command had to make desperate efforts to extricate the several hundred thousand strong German-Hungarian forces. The battle of Debrecen made it possible to regroup forces in Transylvania and Sub-Carpathia, turning them against the Soviet armies moving towards Budapest. The battle for Budapest started in November and its outcome was a foregone conclusion both for the masses and for objective observers. In those days the opposition to the senseless fight, further destruction and Nazi violence increased. The inhabitants of the Budapest suburbs Kispest, Pesterzsébet,

Soroksár and Csepel showed their anti-war feelings openly and the German military commander asked the commissioner of the Hungarian government to take the appropriate measures. The inhabitants refused to build defences, they protested against the construction of tanktraps and preparations for blowing up bridges and other public buildings. Trains that were meant to take away those evacuated remained empty for days, and in Csepel workers, soldiers and young members of the auxiliary police offered armed resistance on December 4th 1944. As a result the order to evacuate was countermanded.

The growing anti-German and anti-war feelings of the inhabitants of Budapest and the outskirts, the failure of evacuation, and the prospect of Budapest becoming the scene of military operations in which the 2 million inhabitants inflated with refugees would have to undergo great ordeals forced those in charge to discuss measures to be taken. On October 25th 1944 the possibility of evacuating Budapest was discussed in the Ministry of the Interior. Those taking part had to admit that even in the case of forced evacuation, regardless of the shortage of transport and areas where the evacuated could be housed, at least one and a half million would remain *in situ* and provision would have to be made for them. The Minister of the Interior who chaired the meeting observed that measures should be taken to prevent the blowing up of public buildings in Budapest. He informed the others that German and Hungarian military headquarters were negotiating on the subject of the objects which were to be blown up.

There was a second conference on the chances of evacuation on November 2nd. The Government Commissioner for Evacuation declared that the two-million population of Budapest and the suburbs would have to walk if evacuation were to be decided on. To point out the absurdity of the idea he added that given the few roads available, this march would last two years, not to

mention that it would not prove possible to find room for them all, either in Transdanubia or in Germany.

Major-General Ferenc Farkas de Kisbarnak was the Government Commissioner for Evacuation. Horthy had charged him with the execution of the October 15th proclamation as regards the military viewpoint: two of his colleagues, Major-General Béla Miklós, commander of the 1st Army and Major-General Lajos Veress, commander of the 2nd Army had been appointed to help him. Béla Miklós and some of his field-officers were threatened with arrest by the Germans; they were compelled to take refuge with the Soviet forces. Lajos Veress was detained by the Germans while Major-General Farkas, and the 10th division which was considered reliable, were stuck in Hatvan since the Germans smelt a rat and did not allow them to move to Budapest. This impotence on the part of the general staff and the government were characteristic of their attitude, not to mention open treason. Major-General Ferenc Farkas de Kisbarnak did not hesitate for long. Soon after the *nyilas* coup he took the oath of allegiance to the fascist government and as a reward was appointed Commissioner for Evacuation. He did not, however, exert himself much to execute the government's orders to evacuate and depopulate.

A future pregnant with danger prompted some of the Church leaders as well to take action. On October 27th the Prince-Primate Archbishop Serédi, as the bishop in whose diocese Budapest was situated, called on Ferenc Szálasi, the Prime-Minister and Leader of the Nation and on Edmund Veesenmayer, the German plenipotentiary in Hungary. Serédi's letter to Ákos Farkas, the Mayor of Budapest, indicated that he had asked them "... should Budapest become the scene of military operations, something that could be expected beyond reasonable doubt, the capital ought to be proclaimed an open city, so that the civilian population should not be forced to move, nor should there be

military action in the town. Thus, with the help of God, almost two million inhabitants of Budapest and suburbs would be saved and the capital itself with its art monuments, beautiful churches, public and private buildings, bridges and magnificent industrial equipment would remain undamaged". Around that time the representatives of other Churches took similar steps to save the capital.

In the meantime preparations for blowing up Margaret Bridge were completed. On the 4th of November the crowded Pest wing exploded before its time because of a chance technical fault. Several hundred perished along with the German engineers in charge of the explosives. The accident was explained as due to trouble with the gas-pipe that lead across the bridge. This disaster proved that the German fascists and their Hungarian *nyilas* accomplices had consciously and coolly reckoned with the destruction of Budapest.

*

Ákos Farkas de Dorogh had been Mayor of Budapest since April 14th 1944. He belonged to the extreme right-wing of the Christian Municipal Party, and as a low-ranking municipal clerk the coming into power of the Gömbös government had opened perspectives of promotion to him.

Gyula Gömbös, a former staff officer, and later Minister of Defence, a leader of the Hungarian Race-Defence Party and of other semi-fascist military and civilian organizations, became Prime Minister on October 1st 1932, when the economic depression of 1929-32 reached its greatest crisis in Hungary. As part of his foreign policy Hungary came closer to fascist Italy and Hitlerite Germany. He tried to create conditions at home that were not unlike those under the Italian and German fascist dictatorship. He was responsible for a changing of the guard right along the line, his friends and supporters were given all the important offices. His attempts to establish an open fascist

dictatorship were stopped in part by influential sections of the "establishment" what used to be called the historical ruling classes in Hungary, and in part by the growing resistance of the masses. His unexpected death put an end to all these.

Farkas, his protégé, an insignificant official, rose, in 1934, to the post of councillor in the presidential department whose decisions influenced the fate of tens of thousands of Town Hall officials. After the death of Gömbös he lost this office and remained only councillor in the department which controlled public utility companies and other municipal enterprises. In the late 1930s and the early 1940s he had tried several times to become deputy-mayor but under Mayor Károly Szendy, who had been a Freemason and who belonged to the liberal section of the ruling class, Farkas, known for his extreme right-wing sympathies, had no hope of getting closer to the top. When the Germans occupied the country on March 19th 1944, and the right-wing came to power, the way to the mayor's office was open. Farkas clung to his position at all costs, and showed equal zeal in the execution of the orders of the Sztójay-government (Sztójay, a former colonel and ambassador in Berlin was a faithful servant of the Germans) and those of the Lakatos-government (appointed by Horthy on August 29th 1944 amidst the confusion created by Rumania's withdrawal from the war), regardless of the fact that the orders of the two governments stood for two opposed policies. The *nyilas* coup left him in office, and enjoying the confidence of Szálasi, he and Gyula Mohai (Mohaupt), the newly appointed *nyilas* Senior Mayor whose political career had also started in the right-wing fraction of the Christian Party, together zealously served a policy that prepared the ruin of the nation.

The other leading Town Hall officials shared the political attitudes of their Mayor. In the course of the years the opposition had been successively got rid off and after the German occupation the new leaders wanted

to eliminate even those faithful servants of the "Christian course" who had reservations regarding extreme *nyilas* terror. After the occupation of the country these officials were pensioned off or dismissed.

However, even this "purified" Town Hall leading body had to do something. They feared the consequences of destruction, they felt the moral pressure of Church leaders and, last but not least, they were afraid that the fascist destruction would drive the people "into the arms of the Bolshevik enemy". They therefore tried to lessen the expected sufferings of the capital.

The Margaret Bridge disaster happened early Saturday afternoon. The following Monday, on November 6th, it was decided to issue a confidential Mayor's decree addressed to those in charge of the city-controlled public utility companies and arms factories, and a memorandum to the government, "on the bridges and public utilities being left intact by the Minister of Defence". The idea was to prohibit their blowing up.

This confidential decree was found in the Budapest Archives among the confidential documents of the Mayor's office (No. 245/1944). A few remarks may be relevant in this connection:

Firstly, on November 2nd 1944 the Minister for Industry issued a secret order stipulating that in the course of evacuation, buildings, equipment, etc. were not to be demolished or blown up. Spare parts in short supply should be hidden thus paralysing activities, and no more. Mines, power stations and public utilities should be partly paralysed. This order got to the Town Hall around November 6th, where senior officials welcomed it as a godsend, adjusting its text to the requirements of the municipal administration. On the basis of the stand taken earlier by the Minister of the Interior, in connection with an earlier Hungarian demand made in the course of Hungarian-German military negotiations on limiting the blowing up of bridges etc. they drafted the order on "keeping intact... etc." with

some modifications in the text adjusted to the specific conditions prevailing in Budapest. They considered that by sending the memorandum and issuing the order against destruction they had done what could be expected of them.

Although the issuing of this order involved a certain risk, and although it is true that some of the public utilities in Budapest were saved at least in part, this action cannot be considered as "resistance". It is obvious that the fate of Budapest was not decided at the Town Hall but these people had some authority. These two hastily drafted documents cannot be compared to the multitude of their fascism-backing measures and the innumerable opportunities to do something which they missed.

The government which made the decisions published a declaration in Berlin, on that same November 6th, concerning the armed defence of Budapest. This was probably a covert reaction to Archbishop Serédi's intervention and seemed to answer the Town Hall's memorandum in advance. According to the government's official spokesman "The German supreme command did everything for the evacuation of Paris and Rome but the enemy disregarded German good-will. In view of the fact, that on the territory of the German Reich, every town and village will be defended to the last brick, there is no reason to do otherwise in Hungary." This was not, of course, printed in the Hungarian *nyilas* press. They did not want to increase the existing tension and further incite the people against the German "allies".

The only way out were the measures advocated in an appeal issued by the Communist Party:

"The inhabitants of Budapest are in great danger because of their passive response to an increasingly desperate situation. . . . Rome and Paris were declared open cities not due to the good-will of the Germans: in Rome pressure by the people in Paris their armed rising, forced the Germans to accept this

way out. They believe that in Budapest, as in German towns, there will be no resistance on the part of the inhabitants and that they will fight to the last brick here as well. Budapest will not be declared an open city as a gift to us, we must wage an armed struggle for such a declaration."

Unfortunately this appeal, for reasons discussed earlier, could not be effective. The forces of the resistance were not sufficient to prevent the city's destruction.

The fascist war machine had decided already in the middle of November 1944 to make Budapest a theatre of operations, that is not to surrender in its hopeless position. The bridges were going to be blown up and the city would be cut in two while the battle lasted, the Town Hall officials therefore had to work out measures for governing the divided city in advance. Regarding the orders to blow up the bridges the National Mobilization Department of the Town Hall reported to the City's leading body on November 15th:

"Strictly confidential!

In case of military necessity the bridges will be blown up. Orders will be issued by General Breit, commander of the German armoured division stationed at the Budapest bridge-head through Major Geit who is at Bellevue Hotel. The blowing up will be carried out by German pioneers commanded by Captain Meyer. According to Captain Meyer the necessary technical work to blow up the bridges requires two hours following the order but this time can be shortened if needed. Captain Meyer is at the Gellért Hotel.

After 8 a.m. this November 17th the military governor of the city police headquarters and the air defence command will each attach a liaison officer to Captain Meyer. The liaison officers are to be relieved every 24 hours, all three dispose of a car.

If Captain Meyer receives the order to blow up the bridges the liaison officers are to take their cars at once and proceed to their respective commands and report.

The fire-brigade and the municipal enter-

prizes (Electricity, Gas Transport) will send a messenger each to the Ministry for Industry starting with 2 p.m. on November 16th, who, when told that the bridges are being blown up, will at once report to their superiors. These messengers should have a bicycle at their disposal since, at the time of the blowing up of the bridges the telephone cannot be counted on to function. The fire brigade and the municipal enterprises will learn of the blowing up of the bridges through two channels: through the air defence command and the officer sent by the police and through the messengers in the Ministry for Industry. The city authorities will receive the information from two sides, through the air-defence command and the 14th Department and through the fire-brigade messenger in the Ministry for Industry and the fire chief, as well as the 14th Department.

If the First Mayor and the Mayor are in their office they will get the report from the 14th Department, if they are at home reports will reach them through the nearest fire-station in the 1st, or 2nd district.

The police, together with the Hungarian and German officials in charge at the bridge-head, will direct the traffic, and inform those who still live in houses within 200 metres of the explosion. As the blowing up of the bridges does not endanger near-by buildings, inhabitants only have to open their windows and proceed to air raid shelters. It may well happen that smaller fragments will fall on roofs.

The blowing up of the bridges is closely related to evacuation since in all probability bridges will be blown up only when there is street fighting in the Budapest area. In view of the fact that this will involve artillery fire it is very likely that the overwhelming majority of the population which will at present want to remain in Budapest under all circumstances, will decide at the last moment to leave the city when within range of enemy guns. This means that the police will have increased responsibility for main-

taining order since during street fighting facilities for moving up reserves to the bridges must be kept open.

If all bridges are not to be blown up at the same time but only some of them, the liaison officers and messengers will report accordingly and then return to their posts.

In view of the fact that the time between receipt of the information and the actual blowing up is too short to enable the concerned bodies and authorities to carry out the necessary measures, Captain Meyer promised that—if possible—he will warn liaison officers when the order to blow up the bridges is expected."

The chronology of the destruction of bridges:

—1944: late October—early November: all Danube-bridges in Budapest were mined.

—November 4th: the Pest-section of the Margaret bridge was blown up inadvertently and prematurely, in consequence of a technical break-down.

—November 15th: orders were issued to blow up the bridges

—November 17th: the building of anti-tank traps at the bridges was started, stairs on the Buda embankment were demolished, trenches were dug—the latter were concealed by a fence of corn-cobs.

—November 30th: the houses near the bridges were evacuated

—December 24th: the Soviet forces completed the encirclement of Budapest

—December 31st: the Railway Bridge at Újpest was blown up

1945.

—January 14th: the Boráros tér Bridge was blown up.

—January 16th: the Francis-Joseph-Bridge was blown up.

—January 18th: the Chain Bridge, the Elizabeth Bridge and the remaining sections of the Margaret Bridge were blown up.

In 1944-45 the armed defence of Budapest meant that the Nazi-German general staff sacrificed, for their momentary military advantage, the capital city of their last

"faithful" ally, regardless of the sufferings and losses of the two million inhabitants, the destruction of public buildings, monuments, bridges, public utilities—the embodiment of an entire country's economic and spiritual efforts over many centuries. Budapest became part of the front line, and street fighting took place. In the last days of November 1944 the Southern and Eastern fringes of Budapest had already turned into theatres of war but, after the encirclement on December 24th, fighting extended to the whole area. Going on did not make sense. The Nazi command rejected the ultimatum in spite of its humane conditions for surrender and the emissary were treacherously murdered. Hitler's personal order was to continue senseless resistance. The siege lasted six weeks. In bitter house-to-house fighting Pest was liberated first. After unsuccessful attempts to break out the survivors who defended the Buda Castle finally surrendered on February 13th to the great relief of the sorely tried population.

The terrible street fighting, moving from house to house, which lasted for almost two months turned Budapest into a city of ruins. The census of March 1945 listed a population of 832,800. In 1944 Budapest had 1,379,562 inhabitants. This incomplete sur-

vey reported appr. 100,000 military casualties and over 75,000 civilian deaths in 1944-45; this is four times higher than the death rate of earlier years. No data are available on the number of wounded but estimates are not too far out if their number is put at about half a million (civilians and serving soldiers taken together). Of the 39,643 buildings in Budapest only 10,323 (26 per cent) remained undamaged; 1,494 (4 per cent) were completely destroyed, 9,140 (23 per cent) gravely damaged and 18,686 (47 per cent) damaged. Whole streets, and whole quarters in Buda, were destroyed, as were all the bridges. The city was covered by one and half million cubic meters of rubble, traffic was paralyzed, public services were almost nil. The population suffered cold, hunger and epidemics. Many factories, public works and institutions were either destroyed or evacuated. The material losses were many times higher than the country's annual national income in pre-war years.

Reconstruction started and revival became a reality thanks to the hard work of subsequent years. The first rebuilt bridge was the Liberty (formerly Francis Joseph) Bridge in 1946, the last the Elizabeth Bridge which appeared in its new and beautiful shape in 1964.

ZOLTÁN KERÉKES

THE HISTORY OF THE HUNGARIAN FLAG

It is over a hundred years ago that red, white and green became the Hungarian national colours. These colours and the national coat of arms are, however, taken from the traditional forms and colours of flags and coats of arms of many long centuries.

Although the progressive forces of the country only began to fight for the legal recognition of the national colours and the national flag in the years following the French Revolution of 1789, the origin of these colours goes back to the early centuries which followed the foundation of the state in the

11th century. The evolution of the flag can be traced by examining and comparing old Hungarian and foreign chronicles—especially the *Illuminated Chronicle* in Vienna—as well as old documents, contemporary seals and coins.

Red and white

It is clear from several sources that the Hungarian tribes at the time of the conquest of the country in the 9th Century were already using flags, and the forces of the first kings of the Árpád dynasty probably marched under red and purple flags. (Red meant something different in those days; like purple, it expressed dignity and was called the "royal colour".) The double-cross in silver (or white) both on coat of arms and flags with a red background first came into use at the end of the twelfth century under the rule of Béla III. Not much later, at the beginning of the thirteenth century, red and silver appeared again both in coat of arms and in flags, in a pattern in which the two colours alternated in eight stripes. From this time on, approximately until the end of the fifteenth century, both versions of royal flags and coats of arms were in use. Soon after the appearance of the red and silver (or white) these colours came to be generally regarded as the Hungarian ones.

As a result of the Hapsburg domination, beginning in the sixteenth century, the Hungarian flag and coat of arms were rarely used, and the flags in use, including battle standards, were increasingly those of the Hapsburgs. The ancient colours of red and white, however, managed to survive in certain forms. During the sixteenth century, for instance, the round shields of the Hungarian infantry were decorated in red and white. The colours on the small pennants fluttering on the lances of the Hungarian cavalry were also red and white. And in the eighteenth century the fighters for independence in Prince Rákóczi's revolution fought under red and white regimental flags.

The Third Colour

The third colour was first added in the fourteenth century. Green first appeared under the silver double cross in a new motif, the three hills included in the coat of arms. But green only first appeared in the company of the other two colours in the second half of the sixteenth century. The first evidence of the three colours together is to be found in the illustration of a knightly tournament in 1557, with the Hungarian hussar sporting an ostrich-feather and drum cover in these three colours. Another source reveals that the wooden bridge over which King Matthias II passed to his coronation ceremony at Pozsony in 1608 was covered with a red, white and green carpet. A fresco painted in 1653 by a master known only by his initials (H.R.M.) in the castle of the Nádasdy family at Sárvár, depicts the recapture of the city of Pápa from the Turks. In this fresco one of the battle flags is red, white and green. The fact that we do not know of any red, white and green flags from the Rákóczi era indicates that the use of the three colours only gained ground slowly. Queen Maria Theresa issued a royal decree through the Military Council in 1743 ordering the introduction of white regimental and green squadron flags, bordered with flames in red, white and green. Even experts in heraldry give contradictory explanations of this decree. Some claim that this royal decree meant the acceptance of the Hungarian colours, others maintain that the colours in the flags of 1743 are a mere coincidence in heraldry. It is, in any case, a matter of fact that, when Francis of Lotharingia was elected Holy Roman Emperor in 1745 and became the co-ruler of the Hapsburg Dominions, the decree of 1743 was promptly withdrawn. But it is also a historical fact that in her grant of a coat of arms to Szörény County the Queen called the red-white-green (no final sequence of these colours had developed as yet) the Hungarian colours.

Greatly influenced by the French tricolor, the symbol of the French Revolution, from the end of the eighteenth century the most radical fighters for the bourgeois revolution and for national independence regarded the red, white and green colours as the emblem of the bourgeois revolution and the national state. Ignác Martinovics, the leader of the Hungarian Jacobin movement, admitted after his arrest in August 1794 that he wanted to introduce the red, white and green colours as the national colours. From 1840 on the use of these colours as a revolutionary symbol spread rapidly. And also under the influence of the French Revolution people began to wear red ribbons and feathers to demonstrate their radical and republican sentiments.

Law 21 of 1848

The opposition in Parliament during the Reform Age frequently called attention to the neglect of the national flag and the state coat of arms, and was especially critical of the practice of Hungarian soldiers fighting under colours and symbols other than their own. But their resolutions were always defeated. The revolution of March 15, 1848, introduced the free right to wear the national colours and use the national coat of arms.

The temporary success of the revolution in 1848 led to the drafting of an Act, on the use of the national colours and the state coat of arms. The 21st Act of 1848 declared that:

1. § The national colours and the coat of

arms of the state shall be re-instated in their ancient position.

2. § The tricolor rosette shall therefore be accepted as the national symbol and it is hereby decreed that the national flag with the State coat of arms on it shall appear on every public building and institution, as well as on all Hungarian ships, on public holidays.

Although Law 21 did not mention the flags of the Hungarian soldiers, it is quite evident that the National Guard, set up after the success of the March revolution, and later the army, organized in May 1848, were equipped with flags bearing the national colours. For the first time in long centuries, in the War of Independence of 1848-49, the Hungarian soldiers were fighting under national flags. In 1848-49 the national flag of red, white and green became the symbol of progress, freedom, and national independence. In the years following the War of Independence of 1848-49 the Hungarian workers regarded the flag as embodying this spirit. But the Hungarian ruling classes, especially after the fall of the Hungarian Republic of Councils of 1919, used the national flag as a device to inflame nationalistic and chauvinist sentiments. No true patriot, however, was misled, and in the years of the Second World War, when the traditions of the 1848 revolution came to life again, the Hungarian anti-fascist movement also fought under the national flag of red, white and green. The Constitution of the Hungarian People's Republic states that the Hungarian state flag is red, white and green.

ÉVA KOCSIS

THREE YEARS AS THE YOUNGEST MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT

Ildikó Milován tells of her experiences

"Well, I'll tell you everything I know about my three years as a member of Parliament, and then you'll see... The car of a private entrepreneur may well run me down here along Illatos Street, and perhaps a lot of people are going to be angry with me. But just as I have been quite prepared to shoulder my responsibilities in the past, I'm prepared to do the same in the future. Let me put in front of you these three thick files which contain my correspondence. I have written some five hundred letters and received about as many.

"But before we look at them, let me tell you something about myself. I was twenty-one years old when on April 25, 1970, 27,000 people chose me to be the Parliamentary deputy for the 27th electoral district of Ferencváros. By the way, I was born here, on the outskirts of the Ferencváros district at No. 7 Kisduna utca. I also went to school here and in fact I've never lived anywhere else. The flat we used to have was flooded in 1956, and since then we have been living at 5 Soroksári út, again in a one-room flat. Together with my two younger sisters, I was brought up by my mother, without a father. She was on shift-work as a textile dyer in the Woollen Mill in Soroksári út. She is still working there, it will soon be twenty-five years. Not so long ago she re-married. My step-father is a mason, working with the Communal Management Enterprise, and a very nice man. My two sisters don't live at home any more. Éva did a course at the catering trades vocational secondary school

and then married. Helen is working at the same place as my mother as a machine operator in the laundry. She is married too. So there are now the three of us, stepfather, mother and me, living together. So much for my family... The wedding ring on my finger? Don't let's talk about my private life, I want that to be my own... So let's go on.

"Well, you were there three years ago when my name figured on the ballot papers. You remember how terribly embarrassed I was, and that I had no idea where to find the district town hall. I was quite at home at the Young Communist League and the Party Committee, but I didn't even know the town hall from the outside. And it was not very easy to walk up the stairs of Parliament, as I knew that the time had now arrived when I had to prove that the confidence of those who voted for me was not misplaced. I had finished the course at the chemical industry vocational secondary school three years previously, with a scholarship subsidized by the Budapest Chemical Works. When I finished I started there as a skilled worker in the department producing detergents and then I was on shift-work in the salt workshop. When I first began my work as a deputy, for some eighteen months, I often went straight to a Parliamentary session from night shift. I lost weight, I only weighed 42 kilos. But as you can see for yourself, my health is pretty well all right again, I now weigh 48 kilos, simply because I am only working one shift now. Also my pay here in the laboratory is better, in these two years I've had a rise of 500 forints, and I now earn 2,500 forints a

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as recorded by Éva Kocsis.

month. My boss was very decent. I asked him to allow me to work from 5.30 a.m. to 2, and he agreed on the spot, so now I can spend my afternoons looking after the affairs of my constituents. But do believe me, I am conscientious over my work. I get up every morning at 4.30. I simply could not bear someone else doing my work for me."

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"If I hadn't experienced it for myself, I would never have believed how much one has to fight to arrange anything. The bread arrived late in the shops. Women complained. I telephoned and wrote to the baking industry. The answer? 'Comrade, you don't realize the traffic difficulties.' Well, I hadn't the slightest intention of accepting these difficulties! Half of a baker's daily output has to be in the shops by 7 o'clock in the morning at the latest. And this law applies to Ferencváros just as much as to the Inner City.

"You know, the neighbourhood where I live is still called 'the jungle' by a lot of people. Not to one's face, perhaps, but if one brings up a problem, it's left till the last. Quite simply, people have no intention of recognizing that working people live here, that not everybody is a drunkard. They believe that anything is good enough for this part of the town. Well, it isn't! When I hear it said that one ought to stimulate people to take more interest in public life I always think it's not stimulation that's needed, but action, and then the people here would stop being indifferent and finding consolation in pub-crawling. I do hope you understand what I'm trying to tell you. This neighbourhood has remained pretty well unchanged since 1945. Factory after factory, the same old flats, women going to work and bearing children... Talking about everything belonging to the workers, or writing it, is all very well, but there's still a lot to be done. These people must feel that what they are told doesn't contra-

dict what they see around them every day. Families with a lot of children have a lot of worries as well, they have no energy left to fight for truth.

"A little while ago a new butcher's shop was opened at 89 Illatos út. The old one was often flooded with sewage water, and its cold storage room was too small. The work began in May 1973 and advanced very slowly, but finally the shop-window and the doors were in place and then the new refrigerator arrived. And what d'you think happened? The shop-door was too small. The new walls had to be pulled down to get the refrigerator in. Those who saw it happen were just as angry as I was.

"Shops in general are rather scarce round here; I wish I could say the same about the wineshops. The building housing the Gubacsi út barber shop, laundry and other services was started in 1963, together with an ABC food shop. It was 1972 when the work was finished, and that very same year all the faults in the building were shown on TV. For all the fourteen million forints spent on it, the artificial slabs making up the floor in the sales department are shifting and buckling; one can hardly walk on it. I knew something had to be done because as long as people simply talked among themselves about it nothing would happen of course... So I called a meeting where delegates from the construction industry, the No. 4 Budapest Construction Enterprise, the Józsefváros State Food Shop Enterprise, an expert from the Commercial Department of our district and another one from the planning Department were all present. The meeting took place, of course, in the ABC shop itself. 'The floor covering is not being used properly.' 'Chemicals have affected the floor.' 'The foundation of the floor has not been properly laid, and that's what has caused the slabs to shift.' But somebody also added that 'an asphalt covering is good enough for here.'

"For a time I just listened to these 'arguments'. And then I asked the technical

inspector of my own district council: 'What do you mean by a chemical effect?' Well, he was thinking of cooking oil, which must have dripped on to the floor and dissolved the cement. . . . That was a bit too much for me. I bent down and tore up a slab of the floor surface which, of course, had not been cemented properly. 'Will you tell me where the chemicals have affected the flooring? I'll show you what a chemical effect is. Just come and pay me a visit at the factory any day.' The 'expert' stammered something about floor slabs that had buckled in his apartment, under the centrifugal drainer, due to dripping machine oil. I couldn't do anything but laugh. It is really quite awful how everybody here tries to be a 'nice chap' who does not want to gloss over problems, of course, but is quite sure that 'something' can be arranged. That man from the Council, whom I asked to the meeting as an ally, I now suddenly discovered in the enemy camp. . . . But, as the first-born says in the fairy stories 'May my name not be Ildikó Milován, if I do not succeed in this'.

"A few years ago, on the corner of Gubacsi út and Illatos út, the enterprise Hermes opened a shop for cheap goods. Everyone was delighted, but last year there were new employees in the shop, as far as I could see the smart shifty type from Garai market. And since then the women of the district cannot get anything they need, as the cars of people belonging to the private sector of business draw up here, one after the other, and depart with carloads of cheap goods. At one time a kilo of waste synthetic fur could be had here for 46 forints. It was useful for a number of purposes, for the children, and in the flat. But now it all disappears into the private cars. . . . We are left to buy sweaters costing 460 forints. And there were no price tags in the shop. I called somebody from the Commercial Department of the District Council and together we went to the shop to have the price tags put on the goods. Believe it or not, they hunted for those bills from ten to

one without finding them! In the beginning I tried to treat the shop assistants as friends, to explain to them how intolerable it was that the private sector should be enriched at the expense of those living in the district, but in vain. So I have called a public meeting with all the managers involved present. And the subject of the meeting will be the provisioning of our district. Smart, aren't I? If things can't be arranged straightforwardly, then a more complicated way has to be tried.

"And that's what happens every day. Running around, writing letters, fighting. But what else can I do? I don't need synthetic fur myself, nor do I need cheap children's clothes. And that is what makes people a bit afraid of me, the fact that I never ask anything for myself. How often have I been asked 'Why do you spend so much time on the problems of people who will never show any gratitude?' To such questions I always reply that it means much more to me to be able to give a person something than be given a hundred things myself. You won't stick to your guns quite so vehemently, I was told, when you find out how ungrateful people are. And each time I assure these solicitous friends that I can't change myself. . . . I was also told I was stupid, not even asking for another flat for ourselves, when besides my work, I have enrolled at the University of Technology and study at night at the kitchen table. A member of Parliament! And again I replied I would not ask as I knew that one day I would be given one without asking when there were enough flats to spare. The kitchen table does not worry me a bit, but people are worried by the fact that I am not afraid to look them in the face. They oughtn't to be sorry for me, but for people who have the opportunity, even a mandate, to get things changed, and do nothing!"

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"I was once asked by a fellow deputy in the lobby of Parliament whether I had any pensioners' problems in my district. Of

course, I replied. And what did I do about them? Well, I study each problem thoroughly and if I find the complaint justified, I write a letter to the Director of the National Pensions Office. Has such a letter any effect? Certainly, I said. Up to the present in all eight cases my application was accepted and the pensions in question were raised. He had never even thought of the possibility, said my fellow deputy. . . . Eighty-four-year-old Mrs. Hegedüs was living on a pension of 140 forints when her rent was raised to 180 forints, because the lavatory was in the flat itself. She came to me, weeping bitterly, wanting to know what would become of her. Well, her small pension was raised to 530 forints. . . .

"In the last few months one dairy shop after the other has disappeared from the district. The one in Hámán Kató út was closed, then another on Gubacsi út, and the old people are most bitter about it. And then there is the Zóna Bistro on Gubacsi út. It was set up by the South Pest Catering Enterprise and it was promised that cheap dishes would be served there. The cheap dishes have disappeared. But the hard drinks, and with them a yearly four million forints income, have remained. 'People do not ask for food here,' I was told. Of course they don't, they don't even dare enter the place as it reeks of beer and wine and brandy. . . . At 6 Kén utca the Pálya "restaurant" consists of a single room, and has a yearly turnover of 2 million forints! I was promised that it would be closed as soon as the building supplying the various services was finished, to lessen the drunkenness round here. Whenever I ask when this event is going finally to take place I am told: 'The orders have been given, and action can be expected within a short time. And to help things till then, we have asked for policemen to be on duty here on pay day.' But the shutters are not put up and no policemen are visible except one or two when I am receiving my constituents.

"I have not yet mentioned our new

chemist's shop and post office. You must see them. At last the women do not have to take the tram all the way to Boráros tér if a child is ill. Up to now I've been talking mostly about our troubles, though I know very well that there are more decent people than not. But the few who do not work properly manage to upset all the others. And it is fantastic to see how immensely conceited people in authority are! Whenever I drop a few lines to some manager, he regards it as a personal affront, because he is not proud of his job—I wish he were—but of his authority. I have been told a number of times not to busy myself so much with people's individual problems, with housing questions and so forth. This kind of good advice turns my stomach, even if only for a short while. In my first anger I replied that though, thank you, I was grateful for such well-meaning hints, whether they liked it or not, I would never send people away who need my help. And as long as there is a single straw to clutch, I shall go on doing my utmost to straighten out any lawful claim.

"This one here happened in January, as you can see by the date of these letters. On January 21, I went home late in the evening after receiving my constituents and at the door of our apartment I found Bertalan Jaskó, a one-legged invalid, his wife and five of their children, holding in his hand an eviction notice. I took them into the kitchen, asking them to speak quietly as my parents were asleep and I did not want to disturb them. The Jaskó family has ten children, not one of them in State care, the one-legged father puts together the wooden cases for vegetables and his wife is a charwoman working at the Communal Management Enterprise. I have been at their place: the walls are covered with mildew, it was more than time that this one-room and kitchen flat at No. 74 Soroksári út was demolished. The family would not accept the flat offered them instead of the present one, and that is why they were to be evicted.

The one offered to them was a two-room apartment in Sobieski János utca, without a toilette or a bathroom on the second floor. 'In the present situation, even though temporarily, they must accept the flat assigned them. Later they will have an opportunity of exchanging it, but they have got to leave their present one, as it is dangerous,' I was told when I had stopped the enforcement of the eviction order. I was also asked to 'accept the District Council's point of view and help them'. You ask what I was thinking? Simply that here, in the year 1974, is a family who work as well as they can, where I never noticed drunkenness, where ten children have to be washed and cared for and that it is utterly impossible that there is not a single ground-floor flat for them in the capital. And find one I did, within six days, with the help of the Budapest Town Council, in Zugl6. Far from here, but the only district where I was given help, as in my own district I was a prophet without honour...

"I have another flat problem in 15 Illatos út where Sándor Fekecs lives with his family. He is lame, and gets round in an invalid chair. Ten years ago he was employed here in the district at the No. 21 Volán Enterprise as a janitor and given a six square metre room on the premises. The man and his wife came from the country as there was no work there for an invalid, and at that time these six square metres seemed heaven. Since then, however, two children have been born. Their misfortune is that in 1967 they put in a request for a flat, but in 1971, when according to a new order they ought to have renewed their request, they failed to do so, and so do not qualify for any waiting list. The man is a total invalid, he can only use his left hand. How could he push himself in his chair from Illatos út to Bakács tér? I knew perfectly well there was a solution to their difficulty; that's perhaps what's wrong. I am too well informed. In Illatos út there are six one-room flats which have been standing empty for months.

Six hundred and ten people signed a petition to have them allocated to people in the district. After rows and hostility all round I at last got them opened and allocated, but since then, as you can well imagine, they hate my guts at the Housing Department. But to continue, a one room and kitchen flat in my district could be allotted to the Fekecs family—as I found out from the District Council... if... if the enterprise where he is working was ready to pay double of the normal sum demanded by the Council for allocating a flat, that is 12,000 forints in all. This is what I was told on January 3. And now have a look at my diary on the Fekecs question. January 12, January 25, February 19, March 1, March 25, April 2. Letters were written, phone-calls were made and always the same answer: it is being arranged, all is going well, it will be settled... Why do I have to write one letter after another, make innumerable phone-calls, be nice to officials and be satisfied with half-solutions for weeks and weeks on end? Why do I have to fight like the devil? Why is a deputy's help needed in order to see that officials do their work as it ought to be done?

"And then there's the question of milk for school children. Again I begin by gently trying to feel my way with the officials, asking for information on the number of children, the number of families with many children in the seven elementary schools of my district before I start anything. I have heard that the council of Vas County arranged that in three towns in the county the children would get free milk at school... That I know. And at the same time I also know perfectly well that a number of children in Ferencváros get very little milk to drink. I shall never forget the school excursion which I went on at the invitation of a teacher from the school on Illatos út, where I was at school myself, where I saw that a number of the children brought nothing but bread for the whole day. For the time being I am concentrating on the

small children who are too young to manage money, who cannot look after themselves, whose mother leaves for work early in the morning. At least the elementary school children should be given free milk here. . . ."

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"But let's have a look at another file. Here it's the question of the public baths in Dandár Street. Here, in a district like ours, where a mere ten per cent of the flats have a bathroom, the only public baths were shut down in September 1971 with the promise of renovating and transforming them into a 'hydropathic establishment' within eighteen months. No need to tell you that the promise wasn't kept. And this is not only a problem for the people of this district, because people from Kispest, Erzsébet and Józsefváros used to come here for baths as well. Dandár Street was a heaven sent gift to the old, it was near and cheap. Here is a letter from the Budapest City Baths Establishment Administration, signed by Dr. András Vitéz and written on an electric typewriter. 'Dear Comrade! I have to inform you that in the course of the demolition work we discovered certain unforeseen structural problems which made it imperative to redesign the building, to avoid potential dangers.' What am I to do? Call my constituents together and tell them: 'My dear constituents, please wait a few years and until the public baths are ready, wash any way you can. In hand-basins, under taps, in the open air! Nothing can be done, as the officials have just discovered that the supporting structure has to be renewed, that new designs will be needed, and costs are rocketing sky high. It is already a question of 18 million forints, and up to now not even the bank credit has been granted. . .'. And am I to be expected to persuade the people to be satisfied with two butcher's shops, five grocer's shops and three green-grocer's shops all the way from Határ út to Hámán Kató út, an area where

factories and crowded tenement houses are thick on the ground? There are seven wine-shops in this neighbourhood; in vain we say we need more cultural places of amusement and not disreputable wineshops, wine-shops is what we get.

"Three years is not a long time. It has been barely enough to find out what ought to be done and what has to be changed. And I lug all this knowledge round with me wherever I go. It is with me when new laws are discussed in Parliament, when we are opening up new ways. . . .

"Twice a year I receive the fifty sheets of official paper and envelopes allowed by Parliament, and on each of them, in the upper right corner, you can read that the letter comes from a member of Parliament. Well from the beginning of the year I am constantly worrying that they will not be enough. . . . I shall have to ask to have this allowance increased, in order to have sufficient stationery for my correspondence, to write to the competent authorities about lack of supervision and inspection, about the use of influence, the little kings all round that rule the roost. And also to arrange that we do not have the old-type tramways along Angyal út, with high steps that are unmanageable for old people, or that the Meat Industry Enterprise finally builds a cleansing plant to prevent pig's tails and fat from flooding Földvári utca. And I also need official stationery to ask the police authorities to send policemen to our parks more often, to keep the light bulbs unbroken longer than a day. . . .

"Yes, I am tired, I get so angry. But I don't care, I shall never write off anything as hopeless. It is most probable that the first time the inhabitants of Ferencváros saw my name was when they went to the polling booth, and yet they had faith in me. And this gives me the strength to continue tomorrow where I left off today. But also because I am convinced that every question and every answer is closely connected with the lives of the workers here."

FAMILY LEGISLATION AND WOMEN

In Hungary, the legal arrangements that govern marriage, family life and adoption were first codified in the family law of 1952. Although the basic law has not changed since 1952, the evolution of Hungarian society made it imperative to alter certain portions of that law in order to harmonize legal relations with the new demands of the life of the present Hungarian society. Consequently, in the spring 1974 session of the Parliament, the Hungarian family law was modified to some extent. This modification is viewed by Hungarian public opinion to a great extent as a certain victory for women, or at least a modification that serves *only* the interests of women and assures certain prerogatives *only* for them. Although it cannot be debated that the adaptation does serve the interests of Hungarian women, it must be emphasized that these changes did not serve the interests of the women *only* or even *primarily*. The interests of women are improved by this adaptation only in so far as the interest of the family and society demanded it. Therefore, it must be emphasized that the altered family law protects the family in which the woman, aside from her traditional functions, also serves new tasks: she participates in the production of societal goods by acting as not merely a woman but also as a mother.

Twenty-two years ago, when the foundations of the Hungarian family law were laid, only a minority of women worked. The network of various children's institutions, such as, for example, nurseries, kindergartens and day-care centres connected with the schools had not yet been built up. Following the war, in spite of the great labour requirements of industrial productivity, for a major portion of public opinion the demand that women also accept work seemed to be strange and foreign. At that time, as a young journalist I, too, was an enthusiastic pro-

ponent of women becoming a part of the labour force. My various notes and reports that remain from those times indicate that aside from those girls and young women who testified to the liberating role of labour, there were many people who saw a decrease of social prestige resulting for their participation in work. Not infrequently, the decision whether the woman should accept employment outside the family was preceded by lengthy family councils. There were people who phrased this question in this manner: "Can the husband allow his wife to go to work?" In my old notes, I find such frequent comments as, for example, "I got married. My husband is responsible for me!" "He who is not able to support a woman is not really a man."*

I recall that in one of our big industrial cities it was questionable in the post-war period whether a brand new kindergarten could be opened, for there was no certainty that there will be enough children to be cared for! Unlike today many of the women at that time seemed to be reluctant to place their children in these institutions, while even the girls who were children in those days *today* consider it natural that they should go to work. Consequently, for a long time now, it has not been a necessity to convince the women to place their children in the kindergarten; they know today that children receive better care given to them in the kindergarten than at neighbours or at grandmother's. Aside from this value judgement, today even the neighbour and grandmother are still active workers. Even the young mother today relies only in their

* In Hungarian there are two designations for the word "husband": *férj* and *úr*, or, as it is most frequently used in the first person possessive, *férjem* and *uram*. While the first denotes a non value-loaded equivalent of my husband, *uram* denotes a subservient role of the woman.

assistance until there is a place available for her baby.

Today out of 10 million Hungarian citizens, slightly over 5 million people are employed. Of these 5 million people, on December 31, 1972, 2,891,000 were men and 2,170,200 were women. Consequently, 43 per cent of workers are women.* These numbers also reflect a new social outlook that is prevalent in our society.

Returning to the family law of 1952, it is undebatable that it had been a modern and progressive law from the very moment of its creation. In spite of the fact that, at that time, public opinion had accepted the role of the man as the "head of the family," the law no longer recognized this concept as it clothed each partner in the mantle of equal responsibility and equal rights.

"The purpose of this law to regulate the institutions of family and marriage on the bases of the Constitution and in accordance with the social order of the people's democracy and on the moral bases of socialism, in order to insure the equality of women in marriage and within the family, to protect the interests of the child and to promote the development and education of the youth."**

According to Jenő Bacsó, one of the leading officials of the Ministry of Justice, who himself had participated in the alteration of the family law, the correction of the law was intended to serve various purposes:

"The greater defence of the institution of a marriage; the increasing responsibility of those who are to be married toward one another as partners in marriage and toward the society as a whole; the strengthening of family ties, the enhancing of a good family community in accordance with the development of society; the defence of women within the family; the greater de-

fence of the interests of children; the insurance of the child's continuous education within the family setting; the continued growth of the child in the correct direction and the satisfaction of his possible support needs outside the regular channels..."***

In practice the propagandizing of every law and its observance means a many-faceted activity aimed at accepted concept formations. In reference to the family law, I would merely like to mention the concept of the "head of family." Even though the concept no longer exists in law, for a large segment of society this concept still exists and it is identified with the person of the husband or the father. Especially strongly recognized is this concept among the older generation; interestingly enough, this concept is also held today by a large part of the middle-aged portion of society, in spite of the fact that a significant majority of the women have been partners in wage earning of their husbands for one or two decades. The younger generation seems to be an exception to this rule, for their concept formation has taken place under more consolidated social circumstances. This generation is forced by their circumstances of life and by their economic activities to divide family responsibilities and rights more evenly, although equality of these roles has not yet been achieved in every case.

According to previous laws, until the 1952 Family Act, Hungarian married women officially had to use their husband's entire name and were not allowed to keep their maiden names. Although there were women—mostly artists, actresses, doctors and women in public life—who did use their maiden name, for official purposes a woman had to abandon her maiden name, even her Christian forename, and become, let us say, from Éva Boldog overnight Mrs. János Kovács. Even during the debates that preceded the preparation of the 1952 family law, sharp contrary opinions were expressed

*** Amendment to the Family Act of 1952, *Magyar Közlöny*, No. 31. 1974.

* *Statistikai Zsebkönyv* (Pocket Book of Statistics). 1973.

** § 1 of the Family Act of 1952. *A családjogi törvény* (Family Law). Közgazdasági és Jogi Könyvkiadó, Budapest.

concerning the use of the family name. There were those who have considered the mandatory resignation from one's maiden name to be a detraction from the concept of equality. There were those who recommended, in accordance with accepted practice of various states, that the woman keep her Christian surname and adopt the husband's last name. The formulators of the law, very correctly, felt that no single solution to this problem would be acceptable, and therefore allowed, within the framework of the law, various alternatives to both husband and wife in regard to the use of the family name. It was up to the woman whether traditionally she adopted her husband's family name, kept her own Christian name, tagged her husband's last name to that of her own, or kept her entire maiden name throughout her marriage. Similarly, the husband was also given the possibility of adopting his wife's family name in place of his own.

At first sight, it seems silly on the part of Hungarian women to attribute such importance to such a trivial question as the use of a name. Had the state at the end of the last century, when it took over the task of registering of marriages from the churches, demanded merely that the last name of the wife be changed to that of the newly married husband, perhaps the use of the family name would have been less of an issue. But the result of the archaic law was that one could immediately recognize from the form of the name whether its bearer was a single girl or a married woman. Since the social status of women in capitalist societies increases with marriage, for many women—and for many men as well—for reasons of vanity it seemed natural to stick to this custom and, consequently, to retain the habit of wearing the husband's name thereby expressing the expected increase in social status.

As a result of the adopting the provisions of the 1952 family law relating to the use of the family name, today everyone can

determine according to his or her intellectual, psychological, or social needs, what action he or she may decide to take. The altered legal regulations today prescribe that the registrar of marriages is obliged to inform the bride-to-be of the various forms in which the family name may be used. The bride-to-be must state her preference; without these two actions the marriage cannot take place. It is interesting to note that the old custom of adopting the entire name of the family is still prevalent practice, although among those women having a separate profession, and specifically among those possessing a higher degree, it is not unusual that even after marriage, they retain the use of their maiden names.

In the updated family law, a new possibility occurs in reference to the use of one's name following a divorce and the divorced woman now may decide which name she wishes to use following the divorce. Until now, according to the previous provisions, the women had to be entitled to use her former husband's name. And the husband *had* to give permission to his former wife to continue this practice. According to the new law, only those women may be deprived of using their former husband's name who have been legally sentenced to deprivation of freedom for the commission of a premeditated crime. Even in these instances, however, the court may still allow the woman to use her former husband's name and may deny the former husband's application for name deprivation if it chooses to do so.

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From nearly every point of the family law, it becomes clear that it intends to protect the institution of marriage that is based on equality. Thus, certain rights can be exercised only through the institution of a legal marriage such as, for example, the disposition of common property, the provision of mandatory support and the right of inheritance.

In a marriage everything that the couple acquired either independently or together during the term of marriage is considered common property. Property that is considered to be separate includes those items that have been acquired prior to the marriage by one party, those that one party had inherited, received as gifts, are used as personal property, or are acquired from separate previously existing financial sources during the term of the marriage. If, however, the separate source of financial wealth exists in lieu of common life activities and is supported in place of usual household properties, following fifteen years of marriage it is considered to become common property. Neither before nor during the marriage can either of the parties to a marriage be excluded from ownership of common property. The paragraph that makes it possible to terminate common ownership as a result of certain harmful actions intends to protect the family and, in the greatest number of instances, primarily the mother and child. Thus, for example, the husband—in some instance the wife—causes such an accident for which very high payment is extracted. Neither party wants to be divorced, but the innocent party refuses to pay for the negligence of the other with his or her income or separate source of wealth. In another instance, the husband—or in some cases the wife—may be an alcoholic, drinks up a significant portion of his or her income and in such cases, the other party to the marriage may request the termination of common property status in the interest of the innocent party and of the children.

According to law, legitimate household expenses should come out of the income of the *couple*, rather than the income of either member of the family. In case the common income does not cover the expenses for the maintenance of the household, the members of the family are required to contribute in equal proportion from their separate sources of wealth. If, however, only one party possesses a separate source of

wealth, that party is responsible for adding the amount required for the maintenance of the household from that party's separate source of wealth.

More than ten years ago, the Supreme Court had established the principle according to which the children above six years of age should be placed in case of separating parents. In the beginning it seemed very just that all children below 6 years should be placed primarily with the mother. Above 6 years of age, generally speaking, the children should be placed in accordance with their sex. Thus, a girl is placed with her mother, a boy with his father. In court practice, however, the application of this principle had caused a great deal of problems, for a portion of the judges made their decision on an automatic basis. This practice had terrorized a great many mothers with male children and there were those who tolerated a bad marriage rather than to be deprived of their boys. There were also those who had given up their right to child support rather than to face the possibility of the father demanding custody of the boy.

At the request of the Legal Committee of the National Council of Hungarian Women, the Ministry of Justice had conducted an investigation of this judicial practice and more recently established new principles. According to the new principles, the children are placed not in accordance with their sex, but in accordance with their interests. Consequently, the altered family law codifies this principle and intends to insure the placing of the child in accordance with his continuous intellectual and emotional development.

The updated family law had strengthened several previously existing guiding principles that have been proven correct in practice. Such a principle, for example, allows the dissolution of a marriage provided serious and fundamental causes for such dissolution seem to be present. Should parties to a marriage mutually arrive at a conclusion of desiring to divorce, such a conclusion can

be considered a fundamental cause for the dissolution of marriage. The court, however, will not accept such an agreement unless the parties agree to *all* questions relating to the placement of children, to the continued civil relationship of the children and parents, to the disposition of the commonly utilized apartment and to the disposal of common property.

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In the statistics relating to divorce, Hungary occupies an unfortunately high position. Divorces in Hungary account for approximately 25 per cent of all marriages. Table 1 indicates the number of marriages and divorces for the period 1971-73.*

NUMBER OF MARRIAGES
AND DIVORCES
1971-1973

Year	Marriage	Divorce
1971	94,202	23,560
1972	94,710	24,190
1973	101,559	25,300

The very high number of divorces may mean that the individual more easily is able to require his or her own freedom, and in the case of a bad marriage, he or she may leave the bad marriage with less social prejudice than that which exists in bourgeois society toward a divorced person. A working woman depends less on her husband than a housewife who possesses no separate income. Moreover, if the woman desires to dissolve the bonds of a bad marriage in the interests of her child or children, or if the husband no longer desires to live married life with her, the wife receives the material and moral support of society.

* Statistical Pocket Book of Hungary, *Közgazdasági és Jogi Könyvtadó*, Budapest, 1974. See on p. 57.

The Family Act is accompanied by a host of various other regulations that follow the spirit of the family law. Thus, for example, the industrial, agrarian and other branch Labour Codes contain provisions relating to the protection of the family and provide assistance, among other provisions for example, to the mothers and fathers who rear their children alone.

Marriages that are contracted without enough preparation at too young an age play an important role in the rising percentage of divorces. These are the marriages that a few months or years later would never be contracted by the parties. The fact that previously there was no required waiting period prior to marriage seemed to have been an enticement for the young people to get married without giving much thought to this act. If they possessed valid documents, they had every possibility of getting married at a moment's notice following their decision. Marriages that were born under these circumstances often could not withstand the first serious hurdle posed by life. The tragedies resulting from these doomed marriages were generally felt mostly by the child and by the young mother who generally was prepared neither for motherhood nor for serious work.

According to the experience of other socialist states where the waiting period prior to marriage is mandatory, of those who apply to get married, 15-20 per cent do not show up before the registrar of marriages. Such experience was made use of in Hungary when, as of June 1, 1974, the new law began to prescribe a mandatory 30-day waiting period prior to marriage that is intended to help in the recognition of the importance of marriage as much as the other new administrative requirement: the mandatory medical examination. From now on, those intending to get married must pass a medical examination, the negative result of which, however, does not exclude the possibility of marriage. The purpose of this medical examination is to give an exact accounting of

the health status of the parties in order to insure that possible illnesses do not become a contributory cause to the worsening of the marriage at a later date.

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There are 111 paragraphs of the Family Act. Although it does offer greater benefits, assurances and support to women in certain respects, that state of affairs exists only as a corrective measure to the inheritance from the previously male-oriented society and as a result of the necessity to equalize the two sexes in the interest of present-day society. In regard to its substance, the socialist family serves the interests of the husband and children as much as the interest of the woman without giving undue benefits to either party. In the socialist family the relationship of the marriage partners is expressed by their equality. They are both responsible for the fulfilling of obligations toward one another, toward the children and toward society. The socialist family reflects the changes that occurred in our society during the last generation and reflects the fact that masses of women had been enrolled in work and have become the partners of men in wage earning. Needless to say, the family law cannot contain all the laws referring to the family and there will be other rules and regulations as well as laws which will serve the interests of the smallest unit of society. Rules and regulations today protect the working mother and her family in a variety of spheres including the prohibition for their employment in areas that may be harmful to their health (certain spheres of chemical industry, work on heavy machinery, etc.). There are regulations relating to pregnant women that ensure that she may be occupied only in areas that are not harmful to her or to her unborn child's health. In larger factories, for example, special brigades are designated for pregnant women

that do light work only. It is an important regulation that the salary of pregnant women cannot be less than their earning in their previous positions. A pregnant woman or a young mother may not be fired from her job. A woman giving birth must be given six months of paid vacation and financial assistance. The Hungarian child support system that allows the mother to remain at home until the third birthday of her child and to receive significant child-care allowance for this period is unique in the world.* If, during this period, in her place of work the salaries are raised, her salary must also be raised upon her return to work. A mother who has children of kindergarten age can only be compelled to work overtime with her own voluntary agreement even under exceptional circumstances. If the child is sick, until the child's third birthday, the working mother must be given sixty days of fully paid sick leave per child and per annum. Between three and six years of age, a child's illness entitles the mother to 30 days sick leave with full pay per annum.

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With the confines of this article it is impossible to list all the regulations protecting the family, the children and the women. From its beginning, Hungarian society kept pace with the fulfilment of those demands that were aimed at equalizing the role of women; the various laws, rules and regulations and in parallel with them the awarded material benefits also emphasized the importance of the family. Especially the last years have been characterized by the many and efficient regulations protecting the family and promoting family life. These new regulations and their positive effects can be clearly seen in the number of new marriages and in the recent rise in the number of births.

* See also Egon Szabady's article on p. 136 in this issue.

STUDENT MARRIAGES

There were 2,308 registered students in 1972 in the five-year course of the School of Electrical Engineering of the Budapest University of Technology, and of these 2,064 were male and 244 female.

126 of these students were married, and they were asked by the Communist youth organization of the university to fill up a questionnaire designed to provide information on the conditions of their life, including housing, which would be helpful when the distribution of grants was decided. Having worked on the questionnaires I tried to find answers to unanswered questions through personal interviews.

The number of marriages at the School, according to years, was as follows: First year, 3; second year, 6; third year, 13; fourth year, 31; fifth year, 73. The great majority of marriages take place from the third year on, that is most of these students get married after finishing the third or fourth year, usually in the summer vacation, although some of the present fifth-year students had already married in the first or second year.

Out of the 126 married students 38 couples are both studying—man and wife—at the School of Electrical Engineering. 19 students are married to women registered at some other educational institution, 59 married students have a wife who works and 10 have a husband who works.

The working wives of these university students are employed as follows: 3 scientific workers, 1 production engineer, 1 chemist, 1 economist, 1 biologist, 1 architect, 1 pediatrician, 1 business agent, 1 designer, 6 technicians, 1 teacher, 1 college counsellor, 1 assistant in a cultural centre, 1 transport agent, 1 commercial traveller, 1 engineer, 1 administrator, 1 window-dresser, 1 sign painter, 2 drivers, 2 caretakers, 1 hair-dresser, 1 secretary, 2 typists, 2 accountants,

2 price analysts, 9 office clerks, 5 medical assistants, 1 shop assistant. Five returned no answers.

The working husbands of students are employed as technicians, university assistant professor, radio technician, serviceman, design engineer, electrical engineer.

In our days it is not unusual to find married couples with different levels of education. Demographic data show that there are a great many marriages where the husband graduated from a college or university and the wife only completed her elementary studies, or secondary school. We have many examples to the contrary as well, with the wife having a much higher educational standard than her husband.

There is one striking difference observable when comparing the professions of working husbands and working wives: with one exception the husbands of university students were graduates of universities or similar institutions.

Housing

Of these 126 couples, 97 live together and 29 live separately. 51 of these couples live with parents, 21 live in rented rooms, 18 are in university hostels and 7 have a home of their own. This clearly indicates that in many cases the parents help and house their married child. Most of the students living in rented rooms come from the country.

12 couples were living in college hostels, and six of these couples were housed in the Electrical Engineers' Hostel, the spouse being admitted to the hostel where their wife or husband had lived before marriage.

It is only in the last two or three years that married couples have been allowed to

share a room in the Electrical Engineers' Hostel. This is something new and is far from being general. I saw some hostels in the country where there is a separate section for married couples, but in most of them they are discouraged or prevented from moving in together. This is especially true of the single-sex hostels where young men and girls from 19 to 23 years of age live strictly segregated lives—at least officially—on principles resembling those of medieval monasteries.

Considering the housing situation in Hungary the number of couples with a home of their own is surprisingly high. I succeeded in discovering how some of them manage it. One couple, as is sometimes done, signed a contract with an old relative to take care of her, and when she died they got her flat in return. Another couple—the husband is still studying, the wife is a hairdresser—inherited the flat from a grandmother. In a third case the well-to-do parents of the wife bought a flat for the couple.

The 29 couples living separately live in 29 different ways, as, for instance, the wife at home with her parents—the husband in a hostel; the wife in a rented room in Budapest or in the country, the wife with the husband's parents—the husband in a hostel; the husband living with his parents—the wife with her parents, the husband in a rented room—the wife in a hostel or with her parents. . .

Living together or separately changes from day to day. A fourth-year student, for instance, married a girl studying medicine. They will be together for one more year, and then the husband will go and work in the country while his wife finishes the course living in a hostel. Another fifth-year student is living separately, because his wife works in the country, although they used to live together. Such continual movings and separations impart a degree of uncertainty to their lives; it may take some time before they can settle down comfortably with each other.

Why Marriage?

Said a classmate of one couple: "They are very much in love. They have been going together ever since they started college, they never went to parties without each other, and they always danced together. Really, it's a very romantic love, they even go to the student's canteen hand in hand. It's interesting that nobody laughs at them, people rather envy them instead being so much in love."

There are others who simply do not want to be left out.

"When I went to my secondary school class-reunion party," said one, "all my old schoolfriends brought their wives with them, and they showed pictures of their children, and their houses. And I was living in a rented room trying to make a name for myself in science! I got mad! I went back to my home town and married the girl I was going with in secondary school."

One fifth-year student who is at present living separately from his wife said it had been very important for him to marry. He had only got into the university after his third try, and he did his military service in the meantime. So it was quite a while ago that he wanted to marry in a hurry, because he was scared he would never get married. Now he is twenty-eight, on the point of getting his degree, and they will be able to get together.

Said the working wife of another student. "I was frightened about Pista. If I had waited for him to finish he might have picked someone else. He proposed to me in his first year, but he was already hesitating by the next. I wasn't prepared to wait. We got married very quickly and then we could wait until we could move in. Now we can make it. . ."

Many students said it was not very sensible to go on dating each other for years. The relationship was quite likely to become dull and boring, and as a rule both the girl and the young man wanted to know what they could expect from each other. Many of

them realized that to wait until they got their degree and only marry then, did not really help. In fact those who decide to wait seem to have greater difficulties, because the temporary security afforded by the university, their grants and the help given by the parents no longer exists and they are then faced at the same time with the business of getting a job, adapting to the new conditions of work, and acquiring a certain position.

Many students get married because organizing meetings and dates becomes a hectic rush and takes up too much time and energy and money, especially towards finals. And if the girl gets pregnant, they get married.

Some people are of the opinion that marriage between university students is undesirable. A leader of the youth organization, for instance, believes that those who cannot wait to get their degree before getting married lack self-discipline. Family life presents problems, the difficulties impede study. There are, however, some lucky students whose parents take care of them. They have found a quiet place to live, they live a cushioned life, they have no need to struggle. Those who do their military service before going to college are less likely to jump into marriage. They seem to be more disciplined, and do not rush into marriage because they happen to be going out with some particular girl.

The Attitude of the Parents

The main difference between a university student wanting to get married and other young people is that the student is not independent. So when they get married without an independent income, they—supposedly—need the consent of those who support them—their parents.

"My wife's parents," said a young student husband, "were worried about her when she left the country to go to the university in Budapest. She was the youngest

and they liked her around. I met her in her own town, and I often visited her at home, so they could see perfectly well that we loved each other. But nonetheless they seemed relieved when we announced we wanted to marry." Another student who has been married for over two years now described how opposed his parents were to their marriage. "The parents on both sides objected to our marriage, although they had no good arguments to back them up. We know that we are a good match for each other. My wife is a technician and I shall soon be an electrical engineer. My wife has already got a job and is working, and I support myself with a scholarship. So since we do not depend on our parents, we did not let them interfere with our lives."

Another couple said that their parents did not mind. "My husband's father is seventy-five and is happy to live to see his son a married man, and my parents were happy to have one child less to worry about. I still have two sisters living at home." The parents of another couple only asked them to wait until they had established a proper family life before having a child, while the parents of another couple can hardly wait for their first grandchild. They regard the young people as an independent, adult couple.

I met a young student husband who was disowned. At the beginning everything went well, the father of the boy only laughed and did not take it very seriously. He just said, "All right, go ahead, get married. But I'm not going to help you, I shall leave you alone, and you must manage the best you can." The boy did get married, and then had to leave home, because his parents would not accept his wife in their house. Then they had their first child. The university helped them and they lived in the university hostel. But life remained difficult on a meagre income and without help from their parents. The wife has had to abandon her studies for a while and get herself a job. They are hoping that she can continue her course when they are better off. But the

husband will only get his degree in two years, their child is growing, and they cannot stay in the hostel for ever. The father of the husband sounds triumphant in saying there you are, he was right, his son just cannot support a family.

Some parents are not only against the marriage of their son or daughter because they want to avoid such complications. The manner of pairing off has changed very much—explained a leader in the youth organization. Most young people today do not bother to introduce the boy or girl they plan to marry to their parents, and often the parents do not even know the young man or woman to whom they are engaged. Many of them quite unexpectedly bring a stranger to the house and simply announce: "He's going to be my husband" or "I'm going to marry her". The parents are just left out, excluded from all decision-making, and their ideas about money or financial possibilities simply ignored. There is so much bitterness and disappointment left in them that at that point a number of them turn away from their children.

Children

Out of 126 marriages in existence in 1973 21 had children. 19 couples had one child, one couple had two, and another had three. In 3 families both parents were students, 2 families were supported by a working husband with a student wife, 16 families had student husbands and working wives. The distribution according to university years was as follows: family in the first year, 1; in the second, 2; in the third, 2; in the fourth, 4; and 12 in the fifth year.

Out of the 21 families 15 couples were living together, although only twelve of them had the child with them. The children of three of the couples were in the care of their grandparents. Altogether there were 9 children living apart from their parents.

Why don't these three young couples

keep their children with them? One of the couples lives in a hostel, another rents a furnished room in which children are not allowed. The third couple lives in a home of its own, and the husband is already working, but the wife is still at university. She thought the child would impede her studies, which is why they asked the grandparents to look after the child.

Six young fathers live in student hostels, while their wives take care of the children in her—and in a few strange cases—in his parents' home. One of the most interesting questions was whether family planning played any role in the birth of their children, and whether the young couples took any contraceptive precautions or just let it happen.

A fifth-year student had this to say. "My wife wanted the child. She is working. We used to live at my mother-in-law's and we were quite comfortable there. But when the baby was six months old, my mother-in-law exchanged flats and put us out on the street, and we rather regretted having had a child."

A second-year woman student had her child early because her husband was already in his late thirties and did not want to wait until she had started her career.

One couple had a premature child. He did not realize that she was pregnant for quite a long while, and even then she couldn't have cared less and went on living exactly as before. Their child became a burden to them.

In addition to the 24 children already in the world, there are a number of pregnant mothers. I talked to some of the fathers-to-be about the changes it would probably make in their lives. Said one young man: "We have a room in the house of my wife's parents in a small country town. We plan to make use of the child-care allowance. (A young mother in work can remain at home looking after her child for three years and will receive 800 forints a month for this period.) The only trouble is that there are no jobs for men with my qualification

in a small town like this. Should I rent a room here and commute there and back all the time I don't know yet what I'm going to do."

Most of these young people are not really in a position—at least not in their parents' eyes—to have a child. Still, many students do not want to wait for the first child, because they know they will be studying until they are 24 or even more, and are afraid that then they would be less willing to start a family.

How Does Marriage Change Them?

Marriage seems to give university students a more balanced relationship from the day they move in together and can forget about meeting each other in cheap restaurants because they haven't much money, or worry about trying to borrow a room from a friend for a few hours. Wasted energies are saved and can be used for study.

But those who remain separated even after their marriage feel even more insecure, since the girl realizes she is no longer only a girl-friend but his wife, and he no more a boy-friend but her husband.

But their values, their attitudes to each other, to their lives and their general situation seem to change in both cases. Different things become more important for a married student. The importance of studying and preparing for exams remains, but the family becomes an equally important factor. Most of these young people have a strong feeling of responsibility toward each other as a couple.

A youth leader at the School of Electrical Engineering told me his experience went to show that the academic results of young married couples remain at the pre-marriage level, or even improve, "but their achievements are seldom spectacular. These marriages seem to balance out in their results, gauged by the fact that their grades are no worse than others, since we have had several

cases where students fail to maintain their levels because their emotional life is unsettled." The outlook of the married students frequently changes as well. "Going to parties, fooling around," they say, "belongs to the first two years. Making friends is also over by the third year. From this time on you begin to think about your future. When you are a fifth-year student you have calmed down. You get married because you have changed; it is not marriage that changes you."

As a couple living in a rented room pointed out: "She is taking an evening course and has a job at the same time. She is never finished before eleven in the evening, so we can only relax on Sundays, when we do the washing, a bit of cooking and maybe go to a cinema. This pattern of living simply developed from our daily life."

"Our life is shaped round the needs of the child," said another. "When I bring him home from the day-nursery I've got to bathe him, feed him and put him to bed, and that's the end of the day. If we want to go out we need a baby-sitter, and we had a bad experience of that when we asked a friend; the baby cried and she beat the poor ten-month-old little creature. So we do not go anywhere, and few people visit us because of the baby."

There are instances to the contrary as well. "My husband invites a lot of friends home, he makes friends *like a student*. But as I work I am quite tired by the time I get home from the office, and I still have a good deal to do around the house. I don't know those chaps myself, but they sit round with their airy-fairy talk till early in the morning..."

Many friendships break up because of the marriage, since a lot of students believe that they no longer need them, or that marriage and friendship don't mix. The following is a particularly extreme case, and fortunately not characteristic. There were two couples living next door to each other in the hostel. I asked one of them the name

of the other couple. "I don't know," the young wife answered, "they haven't put their name on the door." "You don't even talk to each other?" I asked. "They blew a fuse once and our lights went out too," she explained, "and it was just when there was a very good Gérard Philippe film on TV. So we ran out to the corridor to find out who the b— was. We had quite a row and since then we haven't spoken to each other."

Commuting

Couples living far from each other naturally want to see each other as often as possible. But travelling costs money and time, and this is a distinct disadvantage of such marriages, since it takes up time that should be devoted to work and preparing for exams. A hostel warden told me that they have a young husband living there who spends practically all his time ninety miles from the university in the country town of Győr. "He spends far too much time on commuting and often goes to lectures only twice a week because he says he does not like to leave his wife alone."

The husband of a second-year student lives in a flat belonging to the firm sixty miles from the university. When she has a little bit of free time, even on week-days, she is off to see him, sometimes dropping in on him unexpectedly. She says he's a very good husband and she doesn't have to worry about surprising him. A fifth-year student husband visits his family every Friday and only comes back to the university on Monday afternoon. I went hunting for a student in his hostel for quite a long time and simply could not find him. "He's at home, will be back tomorrow," his room mates told me. They scarcely knew him.

"My whole way of living is determined by commuting," said a student very near his finals. "I often go to Szombathely, which is about 170 miles away, and I commute daily to my wife, who lives 40 miles from

here. My parents are in ill-health and my wife is expecting a child."

"I go to Pécs every week which is about 140 miles from here. It's lovely to see my son growing, I can be with him then and look after him while my wife, who is with him the whole week, has a little bit of free time to go to the hairdresser, do the shopping or see some friends."

Money

It is very difficult to discover the financial position of these young couples—at least for an outsider. It is hard to get much out of them. A few are prepared to tell you something, but most of them simply change the subject.

One reason for this may be the official financial categories for university grants. The students are classified into six groups according to the per capita income of their family. The first category means the poorest, the sixth group includes the most well-to-do students.

Most of the married students, it is interesting to note, fall into the second and third categories, and very few are in the first or sixth group. These categories only apparently represent the income-group of these students. According to the instructions of the Minister of Education the classification of married students is on the following basis: "(A) If the wife or husband of the student possesses an independent income the classification should be based on this amount. (B) If the student's wife or husband has no independent income, or if he or she does but they do not live together, the income of those supporting the student should be the basis."

A student's income may originate from several sources.

(a) *Scholarships and Grants.* The scholarship and grant given by the university depends on the academic results and social circumstance of the student. So it is made up of two

amounts, an academic bonus or scholarship and a social grant. Some students are given scholarships by a firm or enterprise in exchange for a promise to work there for a certain period of time, but in such cases the students are not eligible for a university grant. So the students choose whichever is more profitable for them. The best students may be given a Hungarian People's Republic Scholarship.

(b) *Support by parents.* Some students get an allowance from home, perhaps a round 1,000 forints a month, and nothing else. Others might get only 400 or so from home, but will be supplied with shoes and clothes and things they need for their studies. Some live with their parents and have their regular meals there, often with some sort of an allowance as well, and some working wives hand over their earnings to their mother or mother-in-law to go into the family income. "When we are desperate, we ask them for some money," one student told me. "We do not give or ask for any thing," many others said. "Our parents take care of our child; we really cannot ask for more."

(c) *Special Assistance.* The youth organization (KISZ) of the university is in receipt of a considerable sum of money each term from the State. This money is allocated by the KISZ committees. It is designed to help students in temporary financial difficulties and those living under unusually difficult conditions, and this, of course, includes helping young married couples and those having a baby. Young couples are given special assistance when they get married, when the child is born or if finding themselves in unexpected difficulties. The assistance is distributed by the Welfare Council of every class, and is based on careful investigation and selection.

(d) *Taking a job.* Some married students take odd jobs to supplement their income. In many cases the allowance from their parents is irregular or stops for a time, or is simply not enough, and they do not want to ask for more. So many wives and husbands

take up coaching or teaching languages. They do a bit of translation, or part-time work at their future place of work, or try to get an odd job at the students' canteen, the post office, or the railway stations, or shovelling snow in winter.

The standard of living is not always dependent on the amount of their incomes. I met some married couples who ate simple food, spent little on clothes and seldom went out. But they had two saving accounts and paid in 400 forints every month. Others blow their money on luxurious living for a few days after they have received their allowance or scholarships or grants. Others complain all the time that they are living a wretched life, although the truth is that they cannot manage their money properly. I met one husband who protested against the others feeling sorry for him because he got married.

Because of their varying ways of living there are many differences in their values and standards, compared to young non-student couples. They are worried, for instance, when they cannot afford to buy an expensive book they need. A tape-recorder is often a work-tool for them, besides the pleasure of listening to music. They consider it quite natural to buy a record-player when an outsider would have thought they needed an overcoat more. This attitude is often the source of disagreements and quarrels with older people and their parents.

Difficulties of Recognition

Many students do not think of themselves as married in the full sense of the word, and the feeling is not simply subjective, it has its roots in the attitude authorities often adopt towards them. Many universities fail to take student marriages seriously, largely because the number of student marriages only began to increase in the early sixties, and it is only in the last ten years that the existence of these mar-

riages, and the problems they entail, began to be recognized.

Student marriages were never officially discouraged, but at the same time they received no help. With the university administration in most institutions tacitly ignoring their existence, it was the youth organization that fought for the right of married students to share a room, for changes in the financial categories, for special assistance, for finding places for their children, and consequently much depended on how much the local youth leaders understood their particular problems.

Some universities and colleges still ask whether they are educational or child-welfare institutions, and are undecided whether to support student marriages or not. But this uncertainty has at last been dissipated by a decision of the Council of Ministers. On the 28th of February 1947 the Council of Ministers, basing themselves on the report of the National Council of Education and Youth Policy, discussed the position of young married couples studying at universities or colleges. The Council of Ministers declared that although certain steps had already been taken to help these student couples it was a well-known fact that they were in a disadvantageous position in many respects, including social security, benefits,

financial support, hostel housing and travel allowances. For these reasons the Council of Ministers decided that student couples were also eligible for family allowances, which up to that time had only been given to working fathers and mothers with children. In future they will also be entitled to the same sickness benefits as employed workers and will get a special travel allowance as well. Single students are entitled to five half-price train tickets every year to their permanent place of residence. Young couples were deprived of this right as soon as they married, so travelling back from the wedding, for instance, they had to pay the full fare. The Railway Company has now changed this policy and gives the half-fare right to young student couples, since they need it more than single students.

Some people still say that students should be grateful they simply have a chance to study, and all the troubles of family life, independence and adult responsibilities can wait. But in fact the age-level of students in Hungary is becoming increasingly higher, especially in the case of mature students admitted to the university after some years in employment. Some of them are willing to face the difficulties and only ask for more understanding. As far as possible they now get help and support.

BOOKS AND AUTHORS

BASIC PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICE OF SOCIALIST FOREIGN POLICIES

FRIGYES PUJA: *Szocialista külpolitika* (Socialist Foreign Policies). Kossuth Publishing House, Budapest, 1973. 236 pp.

What factors determine the foreign policy of a country? What is the role of personalities in the making of foreign policies today? What is meant and what is implied by the coordination of the foreign policies of socialist countries? Can the assumed or real national interest of a socialist country conflict with the international interest?

These few questions give an idea of the topics covered by Frigyes Puja's book: socialist foreign policies. The volume treats this complex and wide-ranging subject in a concise, direct and clear-cut manner. The author does not confine himself to expounding and summarizing the precepts of Marxism-Leninism on foreign policy, but supplies precise answers to questions, some very recent, concerning the conduct of foreign affairs in the nineteen-seventies. In doing so, he not only does not evade the thorny problems but, by putting them in focus, he tries to give reasonable and, at the same time, comprehensive answers.

It is, incidentally, worth noting that the author does not deal with socialist foreign policies in the strict sense of the term; he examines them in their effects and interconnections. This explains why the volume contains more than its title would suggest. In fact he devotes a special chapter to the

factors influencing national foreign policies and in this context also describes the features which distinguish the diplomacy of the non-socialist world. The essence of his argument is that the foreign policies of capitalist countries, especially since the end of the Second World War, have exhibited two tendencies running parallel with each other: the priority given to particular interests and the priority given to the common interest. These two currents have not only run side by side but also against each other in the complicated system of the various monopolist tendencies. The most characteristic feature of recent times is that although the differences between imperialist powers become increasingly sharper, the factors conducive to international political integration—at least in regional terms, for example in Western Europe—also make themselves more strongly felt.

This development has a number of underlying causes. In the first place is the objective fact that the development of the forces of production has reached a stage where national territories, single nations, are seen to be too small, and in the interests of that development the national economies reach beyond the national frontiers and become increasingly international. This is what forms the basis of the various efforts at economic integration in the capitalist countries.

The author deals comprehensively with

the basic foreign policy principles of the socialist countries. The West is still often undecided whether the socialist states now favour peaceful co-existence for merely tactical reasons, and may drop it later if different tactics demand it. Frigyes Puja's analysis not only stresses that the peace policy of the socialist countries follows from the nature of their system, but also points out that the socialist world can only progress in conditions of lasting peace. It is in conditions of peace that the socialist countries can best meet the demand that their own achievements should exert an influence on the course of international development.

Frigyes Puja, moreover, unmistakably approves the idea and practice of peaceful coexistence in general and in the context of the external relations of the Hungarian People's Republic in particular. "The relations of the Hungarian People's Republic with the advanced capitalist countries have developed considerably in recent years. Clear indications of this are the exchange of visits to each other's countries by Hungarian statesmen and the statesmen of a few advanced capitalist nations as well as a number of agreements concluded with the governments of capitalist countries... The foreign policy of the Hungarian People's Republic lays great stress on the steady development of its relations with the neutral capitalist countries, Austria and Finland in the first place. Relations with the United States, France and Italy," he adds, "have also improved." This incidentally is the proper place to mention that one of Frigyes Puja's earlier books is entirely devoted to this subject (*Problems of Peaceful Co-existence*. Kossuth Publishing House 1967.)*

To secure peaceful international conditions does not only mean to wage a struggle to eliminate the danger of world war. The author considers it very important to prevent local wars and local aggressions as well.

* For a review of this book, see *The N.H.Q.*, No. 31.

The international climate, the suitable atmosphere for initiating new steps towards the consolidation of peace and international security and the promotion of international co-operation cannot in truth be a matter of indifference to the socialist countries.

The desire to lessen international tension and the struggle waged for this objective cannot as yet prevent war by themselves, but they can create favourable conditions for it, inspire mutual confidence and increase the possibilities of closer cooperation between countries with different social systems. The proposal of the socialist countries for the consolidation of peace and security in Europe, their diplomatic moves with a view to disarmament, the economic, cultural and other agreements concluded with capitalist countries, all serve to further precisely this important objective.

Frigyes Puja replies quite candidly in his book to the often repeated question: how can it happen that the international activities of some Communist parties and socialist countries do not express the generally recognized rules of Communist thought? Without claiming to give a comprehensive answer, he points out that in the socialist countries vestiges of the old society still remain. Petty-bourgeois strata still exist which continue to generate nationalist and opportunist views.

The members of the working class, he explains, live in close contact with what remains of the former non-worker strata of the capitalist system, members of the former ruling classes and the former petty-bourgeois stratum of society. The working class itself embraces a flow of people coming in large numbers from the déclassé strata of the population, members of the petty-bourgeoisie, bankrupt former independent artisans, and peasants unable to find jobs in rural areas. There is consequently nothing unusual in the fact that the outlook of the déclassé and petty-bourgeois elements penetrates the working class. The Communist party, which lives in close contact with the working class,

is also to some extent infiltrated with notions hostile to Communist thought. This cannot be prevented. It does not really matter, but the trouble occurs when the leadership of a Communist party is unwilling or unable to stand up to those petty-bourgeois concepts.

The ideas of nationalism make their way into the socialist countries, into the working class and the party, as "imports" from abroad. Certain Western propaganda headquarters, as well as the Chinese and Albanian leaders, consider it their principal task to propagate nationalist, anti-Soviet views in order to damage relations between socialist countries and poison the socialist mentality of the public.

In this connection Frigyes Puja emphasizes that an objective cause of the symptoms of nationalism noticeable in the international activity of socialist countries and Communist parties can be found in the overvaluation of national characteristics, in the violation of the generally recognized rules of Communist thought, and in the undervaluation of what is common to all socialist countries. A fundamental teaching of Marxism-Leninism is that allowance should be made for national characteristics in the struggle for the socialist revolution and the building of socialism. In an earlier period the international Communist movement and the world socialist system were involved in many serious difficulties owing to their failure to give national characteristics their due place. "Precisely this," writes the author, "was one of the most serious mistakes made by the leaders of the Hungarian Working People's Party. At the present time, however, the mistakes we encounter are rather the opposite: the overvaluation of national characteristics and the undervaluation of what is common to all socialist countries."

An indication of the scholarly value of Frigyes Puja's book and its careful approach to different problems is the discussion of the elements involved in international power

relations. For it is indisputable that international power relations, no matter from which angle we look at them, are decisive in terms of the movements and trends governing international development, and must be considered in formulating estimates of the future. Unlike several Hungarian and foreign authors, Puja investigates this range of problems in the broadest possible context. He believes a great many facts and interrelations have to be examined in order to get an approximately complete picture of real international power relations. All the material power factors which can be measured statistically, for instance, must be taken into account: the output of industry and agriculture, the state of communications, the figures of economic growth, raw materials, reserves, military strength, national income, gold and foreign exchange reserves, as well as the less easily measurable intellectual, moral and political factors, such as the stability of the "hinterland", the domestic situation, the reliability of internal and external allies, the standard of scientific and technological achievement, the cultural level and activity of the masses, etc. In terms of international power relations the author considers that the assets of socialism include the very existence and development of the socialist countries, their military and political strength, their influence in the international arena, the existence, development and influence of the international Communist movement, the national liberation movements and other forces in favour of peace and international security. In examining power relations the strength of the capitalist countries and the potential of their allies have to be taken into account, as well as the internal problems of the capitalist system, the disintegration of colonial empires, the differences between certain powers, the sharpening of the class struggle in the capitalist countries, the intensification of the general crisis, the periodical crises of overproduction, monetary crises, etc.

Again, in examining power relations, fac-

tors such as the fractured unity of the world Communist movement, the internal political and economic difficulties of the socialist countries, the problems of the national liberation movements, the difficulties of the developing countries, etc., all of them diminishing the strength of socialism, must be taken into consideration.

But the factors of the greatest consequence, in Frigyes Puja's view, are those of an economic nature. Military factors are not of primary importance, because they are themselves functions of the economic potential. The author gives a survey of the present situation by evaluating the historical antecedents of economic competition between the two systems. Socialist revolution has up to the present prevailed in countries with relatively underdeveloped economies. There are only one or two countries where industrial production was at a reasonably satisfactory level before the victory of the socialist revolution. From the economic point of view Czarist Russia was some fifty to a hundred years behind the advanced capitalist countries. Most of the people's democracies of East Europe were agrarian or agricultural-industrial countries. Czechoslovakia was the only one among them industrially developed; or more precisely, only that part of it called Bohemia, for the other half of the country, Slovakia, was in an extremely backward condition. The part of Germany where the German Democratic Republic was later to emerge had been industrially more developed than most of the people's democracies, but its industry was weak by the standards of the western part of Germany, and even that was devastated during the war. Hungary before liberation was an agricultural-industrial country with an industry several decades behind the advanced Western countries. Hardly any industry at all existed in the socialist countries of the Far East: Mongolia, China, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Democratic Republic of Vietnam were predominantly agricultural countries.

Nor was the situation much better in pre-revolutionary Cuba. And, in addition, even the development of agricultural production in the socialist countries started from the bottom, with the exception of Czechoslovakia and the German Democratic Republic.

In the eyes of the socialist countries their most important task in the economic field was to close this immense historical gap, to reach the level of developed capitalist countries and catch up with them in both industrial and agricultural production. The socialist countries gave first preference to heavy industry, for only the establishment and development of an engineering industry could provide the technological basis for the socialist reorganization of agriculture and the expansion of the light industry, only on this basis could other branches of the national economy, communications, the building industry and commerce be developed, and only an engineering industry could provide the foundation for the country's military potential.

Frigyes Puja also believes that we will eventually be able to draw a very accurate comparison between the capacities of socialist and capitalist countries if, in the first place, we concentrate on the most general economic indices, the trends of industrial production and productivity as well as the increase in agricultural production, and, in the second place, we appraise the road traversed in the last fifty years.

Taking this as his starting-point, the author shows that despite the drawbacks of the past the socialist countries have achieved impressive results in economic development in a relatively short period of time. This is thrown into relief particularly if we examine the long-term development of the socialist countries: it has been considerably faster than in the capitalist countries.

The rate of growth of the national income in the Soviet Union is particularly marked, far surpassing the corresponding rate in the United States. Between 1950 and

1971 the national income of the Soviet Union increased five to six-fold, while national income rose roughly twofold in the United States, 1.7 times in Great Britain, 2.8 in France, and 2.9 (between 1950 and 1968) in the Federal Republic of Germany. In the same period there was a substantial decrease in the difference between the national income of the United States and that of the Soviet Union. While in 1950 the total national income of the Soviet Union was only 31 per cent of that of the United States, in 1968 it was already as much as 64 per cent.

If we compare the rate of growth of the national income in the socialist countries with the figures of their national income before the revolution (and even this is a telling comparison), the immense rate of development is still more marked. National income per head of the population in the Soviet Union is twenty-seven times as much as it was in Czarist Russia. During the twenty-five years of Horthy's Hungary the national income of the country rose 2 per cent a year on the average, and in the twenty-five years of the people's democratic regime in Hungary it went up an average of 6 per cent a year.

Characteristic of the book is the active and lively discussion of the issues involved in the subject. Chapters like "the theory of limited sovereignty", "the principle of self-reliance", and so forth reflect the consciousness that ideological disputes can only be settled reassuringly if we counter certain widespread, unfounded beliefs by force of argument. In defending the validity of the generally regularities recognized rules of Communist thought for example, and marshalling his arguments against the symptoms of nationalism, the author points out that Communists have never denied that countries can reach socialism by different

ways, consistent with their history and their own national characteristics. "In some countries, for example, the socialist revolution has triumphed by force of arms. It is probable that this will also be a practicable way in the future for many countries. It would be a mistake, however, to generalize this method and regard it as a general guiding principle for every Communist party. Most of the Communist parties in advanced capitalist countries imagine that the socialist revolution will triumph through peaceful means. It would be equally wrong to generalize here again. The problem, therefore, is not that socialist countries and Communist parties, starting from specific circumstances, influenced by national characteristics, make use of different methods in the struggle for the victory of socialist revolution. The trouble arises when people try to make a law of the specific circumstances under which they work, as well as the conclusions they draw from the work done under these specific circumstances..."

In a separate chapter the author deals with the characteristics distinguishing the position of the Soviet Union from that of the United States, and explains the essential, radical difference between the policies of these two powers. A peculiar aspect of the situation is that these two world powers—exclusively—dispose of the economic and military power which exercises a decisive influence upon the whole development of the world. But their policies represent diametrically opposed class interests, which is why those who—like the Chinese leaders—preach a crusade "against the superpowers" knowingly falsify the facts.

This work of Frigyes Puja, which is characterized by boldly posing the problems and treating them with originality, is at present a political best-seller in Hungary.

PÉTER VAJDA

HUNGARIAN ECONOMIC POLICY — AN ANALYSIS

MÁTYÁS TÍMÁR, *Gazdaságpolitika Magyarországon, 1967–1973* (Economic Policy in Hungary 1967–1973), Közgazdasági és Jogi Könyvkiadó, Budapest, 1973. (357 pp.)

This new volume of Mátyás Tímár discusses the period of Hungarian economic policy that can expect to find interested reception among those international specialists who are involved in the study of applied economics and economic policy. The reason for this interest is that the period discussed in the book is that between 1967–1973, a period of economic development that contains many elements that are not unknown in states with other economic systems located in different geographical latitudes or those that possess different dimensions of direction. For the problems with which the volume deals—the drying up of the sources of extensive growth and among them primarily the labour reserves, the exchange of export oriented policies for external policies that were developed to minimize imports, the consequent necessity of altering the economic structure, and the balancing of the demands made by the growth and equilibrium policies—these problems occupy the attention of economists and economic specialist decision-makers in every state of the world.

The author of the volume is as important as the content of the book. Mátyás Tímár plays an important role in Hungarian scientific life as the Chairman of the Committee on Economic Sciences of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. At the same time, he also takes part in the practical application of economic policies; Tímár is a former Minister of Finance and presently he is a member of the Hungarian government fulfilling the function of Vice-President of the Council of Ministers.

In several parts of the book there is a special mention of the role of science in

the application of economic policies. Already in the foreword the author makes it clear that the correct economic policy ever increasingly must utilize the sciences for its own purposes and that it must develop its aims and the methods of utilization on a proper basis. Elsewhere he discusses in detail the 15-year long-term scientific development plan accepted by the government, that also became the framework of economic research in Hungary and that attempts to make organic connection between the results of economic researches and the placing of economic policies on a sound basis.

In the first part of the book the author surveys the events preceding the 1968 reform, the successes of the reform and the experiences of the first five years of the reform. The second part of the volume deals with the future: the author summarizes the goals of Hungarian economic and societal development and deals with such topics as the problems of Hungary's economic structure, the policies concerning development, and the question of the standard of living and the goals and problems of the further development of the system of Hungary's economic organization and direction. According to the present given circumstances of Hungary's economic life, throughout the book the author discusses in great detail the relationship of each topic to Hungary's external economic policies.

Mátyás Tímár at first details the historical roots of the reform and then discusses the various ideas concerning economic reforms that have been articulated in other CMEA countries, including the Soviet Union. A special reason for this treatment is that the demand for economic reforms developed nearly simultaneously in all Comecon states, even though the factors that caused the intensive developments did not occur similarly and with the same demand in the various states.

Summarizing the experiences of the first five years of the new system of economic direction, Mátyás Tímár concludes that not only the tempo of development increased significantly under the new system but the ratio of prime economic indicators also could be better adjusted to the planned ratio of development. From the detailed analysis of each part of economic life, mention here will be made only of the increase in industrial productivity and the increase in higher product yields in agriculture. From the perspective of adequately supplying the population, at the same time the beginning of real competition for the consumer's financial sources should also be mentioned.

The overall exports of Hungary in 1972 totalled 3,300 million dollars, consequently the per capita volume of export was 317 US dollars. This sum is significant even when compared to other international statistics. Even in the period following the reform, Hungarian external trade continued to develop significantly. The increase in exports exceeded the increase in internal production by a great deal and this is a sign that Hungarian products are increasingly competitive on an international level. In discussing the new, post-1968 system controlling foreign trade and analysing its operation. Mátyás Tímár examines Hungary's relations with the Western states and with Western institutions (such as for example GATT). At the same time, he also analyses the problems that can be posed for the Hungarian economic policy by the chronic hard currency crisis and inflation of the capitalist world.

The author begins the second part of his volume by summarizing the goals of Hungary's economic-social development. He emphasizes that the goal of the economic policy of the state cannot be expressed alone by the rate of growth or by the prevailing economic balance within the system. Rather the most important goal is the creation of a socialist society and that means that the economic policy determines as its prime goal

the satisfaction of the growing demand of the population on increasingly higher levels. In this respect, the rate of growth and the economic balance while important goals in themselves, in reference to the final goal of creating a socialist society, they remain merely means to that end.

The per capita national income is an important indicator of Hungary's development toward these goals and shows Hungary's ability to close the gap between its per capita national income and those of the more developed capitalist states. Compared to other CMEA states, Hungary now stands behind the Soviet Union, the GDR and Czechoslovakia. As far as the rate of development is concerned, Hungary also stands in the middle of these states.

If the data is compared with several Western European states it can be discerned that the per capita domestic product in Italy was 6 per cent higher, in Austria 57 per cent higher and in the Federal Republic of Germany 98 per cent higher than in Hungary. As far as the rate of growth is concerned, however, that shows a more favourable balance for Hungary, although the differences are not significantly great: the general rate of annual growth in per capita income was 5.6 per cent in Hungary between 1965 and 1971, while in the capitalist states previously mentioned it ranged between 4.5-4.9 per cent.

In the following section the author summarizes the most important social and political demands of the next 15-20 years, singling out the following points:

(a) the assuring of dynamic economic development based on the continued growth of labour productivity and efficiency;

(b) based on the continued and organized raising of the standard of living, the development of such life-styles and life circumstances that are in accordance with the socialist relation of the society and with the actual level of economic life;

(c) the harmonizing of domestic economic development with the strengthening of

the economic community of the socialist states;

(d) the efficient and speedy development of the economy, through the strengthening of the socialist relations of production and social conditions, and through the further development of socialist democracy.

These demands also set the long-range goals of Hungarian economic policies.

Following this section, Mátyás Tímár analyses in three detailed chapters the problems of continued Hungarian economic development. He describes the structure of the economy and the development policies of the state and in this connection he discusses the problems of Hungarian energy policies. Following this description he analyses, on the basis of international comparisons, the productivity of the Hungarian machine industry that had grown by 900 per cent between 1950 and 1972. The proportion of machine industry productivity to the total industrial production and to the total export of Hungary is quite significant (30 and 38 per cent respectively), but the construction of several products, the industrial technology and the labour organization of several products, the industrial technology and the labour organization of several branches, fall below the international level of demand. Development is most significantly needed in the fields of autobus production, computer, communication and instrument (tool and dye) industries.

The Hungarian chemical industry developed dynamically during the last two decades and within it the drug industry became one of the most productive industrial branches. The chemical industry has an extremely important role in the development of agriculture: according to plans, between 1970 and 1985, artificial fertilizer production will be increased by three and a half times.

Hungarian agrarian exports are significant and even in the future, this fact is likely to remain the same. The best export opportunities are given, aside from those that are continually being exploited, by the

continued development of cattle breeding and by beef production as well as by the preparation of finished goods in the food industry on a qualitatively higher level.

The development policy must answer the question, "What should we *rather* develop?" When selecting an answer to this question, attention should be paid to the international division of labour as well. There must be such an economic development policy which assures Hungary to maintain its present place in the world by providing a satisfactory tempo of growth. A forced tempo of development will lead to external deficits, because, in the case of Hungary, the correlation between investments and the balance of payments is very tight and even within a short period of time it becomes affected.

The problems of structural alterations appear specifically strongly when predicting Hungary's external trade. Between 1960 and 1970 in Hungary, for each one per cent of Hungary's growth in national income, the growth of external trade yielded 1.8 per cent. Therefore, for Hungary, the growth of the national income also means an increase in the intensity of involving Hungary in the international division of labour. The specialization on an international level demands stable ties of the division of labour and tight cooperation; the best form for that is the cooperation in industrial production.

In reference to the income policy of the state, during the last ten years the ratio of wages and earnings were altered in a positive direction although this development was not free of contradictions. The material rewards are especially unsatisfactory in those fields of industrial labour that demand high levels of trade qualifications and that are continued in several shifts. In some branches there developed certain tensions between those workers who are occupied in the state sector as versus those who work in the co-operative sector. According to the long-range development of the conception concerning the ratio of earnings, more than the average rate of

growth in salaries is demanded for the following groups of people: those who are employed in heavy physical labour and amidst unfavourable working conditions, those skilled labourers who possess high technical qualifications, those employees with university or college education, those who directly guide the production (the shop foremen), and those whose earnings are presently on a minimum level.

Mátyás Tímár mentions, as one of the problems of the continued development of the system of economic direction, that the productive system of prices does not have enough of a selective effect and that the ratio of consumer prices even today is vastly different from the ratio of normal production prices. Furthermore, even today the dispersal of enterprise profit expresses only within certain limits the differences in production efficiency. At the same time the unpredicted rapid growth of the prices in the world market had to be neutralized frequently by financial intervention that placed severe strains on the state budget.

In the future the mathematical models should be utilized to a greater extent in order to enhance the efficiency of the system

of economic direction. It will be defined more clearly which groups of products are those that are able to develop best with greater competition. It is imperative to improve the ratio of productive prices so that they reflect clearly the differences in efficiency.

Within the system controlling foreign trade the desire to achieve convertibility will be increasingly strongly felt. The closer contact that now exists between firms located in different states demand a better price system, a more flexible credit system and a sufficiently utilizable product and financial system.

At the end of his book, Mátyás Tímár points out that the development of a society cannot occur without contradictions, however, even in the further development of the control mechanism a great deal of attention is to be paid to the various incentives that develop the unity of the entire society, of the enterprise and of individual interests. The author accompanies his book with a rich bibliography that consists of a list of those books and articles that the author utilized in the examination of this period and of the economic problems with which he dealt.

EGON KEMENES

MARXISM AND THE NEW LEFT

BÉLA KÖPECZI: *Az "új baloldal" ideológiája* (The Ideology of the "New Left") Kossuth, Budapest, 1974. 260 pp.

The New Left, an ideological and political trend which appeared in the late 1950s added a new hue to the palette of petty-bourgeois and middle-class ideas; looked at from a different angle, it is seen as the re-appearance of old behaviour patterns—

anarchism, utopianism, escapism—in new forms, with new meanings as well.

This latter aspect, however, offers no excuse for Marxist scholars not to analyse and criticise. The peculiar features, concrete ideological message and social basis of the New Left still have to be analyzed. Marxist ideologues and politologues in socialist and capitalist countries alike consider it an important task—in the interest of a theoretically

substantiated political appraisal of the student riots of some years back and of the present polarisation observed in the ranks of the trend—to probe into the New Left, and discover its essential motive forces.

There is much in Hungarian on the subject. There are numerous articles published in periodicals. Géza Ripp's *Politikai gazdaságtan és ideológia* (Political Economy and Ideology) is concerned mainly with economics, Tamás Tóth's *Útkeresés és útvesztés* (Looking for the Way and Getting Lost) deals with the student movements on a theoretical plane. They were followed in 1974 by a general work *Az "új baloldal" ideológiája* (The Ideology of the "New Left") by Béla Köpeczi, Secretary General of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences.

Béla Köpeczi, in his comprehensive short monograph, underlines the amorphous character of the New Left. As he puts it: "Different, often opposed groups, use this term to describe themselves with a view to dissociating themselves from the bourgeois Left, but also from the Communists." (p. 7)

The ambivalent link with theory is a general dilemma for the ideology of the New Left. Most of its members claim to have done something to aid the theoretical interpretation of contemporary capitalism and of our times as such, but they all fail, and their movement shows itself unable to act as a political force. Köpeczi convincingly shows, citing their own words in support, that the New Left has no ideology of its own, it only repeats ideological platitudes.

The absence of any theoretical interpretation is shown by the fact that, as in Marcuse's case—many in of the New Left attribute the emergence of their movement to subjective and psychological circumstances. What Köpeczi is after is a description of the objective social causes. "The 'New Left'," he argues, "is a contradictory product of the emergence of contradictions characteristic of the whole of capitalist society and the struggle between the two systems, between the forces of the international working-class movement and

bourgeois conservatism. The causes which have brought into being the various groups and movements must be examined concretely from the point of view of the times and the circumstances." (p. 39)

None the less it is necessary to confront New Left platitudes with Marxism, "if only because many of these groups claim to draw upon Marxism, even to be the sole legitimate representatives of Marxism. The reason why we are obliged to carry out this confrontation is the typical anticommunism with which the 'New Left' turns against socialism as it exists and the Communist Parties, accusing them of having deserted the cause of the revolution and of having taken the road of reformism and bureaucratisation. In the developed capitalist countries this anticommunism causes splits on the Left, and the controversy which the Communist Parties engage in with the 'New Left' is not simply of an ideological character but concerns political practice." (pp. 9-10)

At the same time, however, one must not believe that the job is done once Marxism is confronted with pseudo-Marxism, since this is still only criticism on the ideological plane, and the Marxist criticism of ideology has to follow the method which Marx already proposed in his Theses on Feuerbach: behind the disruption in the ideological field one always has to seek and grasp the real contradictions of social existence. In the present case this means that this current must be traced back to those objective contradictions in contemporary capitalism from which it has sprung, notably to the fact that in capitalism today the intensifying socialisation of production and the human sphere produce sharpening conflicts, with capital as an aspect which has made this socialisation possible but which today curbs it.

The second circumstance very closely related to the above is the changed position of the middle classes as the social basis of the New Left in today's capitalism. To quote Béla Köpeczi: "...the members of the 'New Left' and the broader sections influenced by them first of all have their origin

in intellectual groups which hold particular non-governmental and leading economic posts, and especially among young people, mostly students." (p. 24) This gives rise to the peculiar political aspect of the New Left: "The 'New Left' represents that part of the petty-bourgeois intelligentsia which, though opposed to capitalism, is nevertheless anti-communist, and it regards this latter position as likewise revolutionary." (pp. 25-26)

Béla Köpeczi must be given special credit for the way he connects facts and data on the New Left, and its ideology, with an unambiguous ideological and political commitment, with a party-mindedness in the Leninist sense. The quotations, which are intended to present the New Left in its objective and subjective contradictions, in its inconsistencies, its positive and negative traits, demonstrate that this subject is not in the least considered taboo.

The proposition central to Béla Köpeczi's criticism of the New Left is that the point at issue here is a modern-looking variant of "middle-of-the-roadism". The socio-political basis of this middle course is that its advocates rely on an intellectual élite and not the working class; but this is not new, this is the bourgeois theory of an industrial society and that of convergence. It implies the rejection of socialism as it exists and the substitution of anarchism for revolution and of a utopia for socialism as the objective.

At the same time Köpeczi points out that the movement's anticapitalism is valuable. "The post-1968 development provides examples to show also that many members of the 'New Left'—precisely owing to their disappointment—have opted for Marxism, and the Communist Parties have either admitted them as members, or they cooperate with them. The confused ideas of the 'New Left' have drawn the attention of broad sections not only to the old and new anarchist, spontaneous, petty-bourgeois socialist trends opposed to Marxism but also to Marxism itself, thus unintentionally contributing to the propagation of Marxism." (p. 243)

Köpeczi deals also with the hippie movement as a peculiar outgrowth of the New Left, and with the counter-culture, as well as with several questions connected with the subculture of young people in the West. I am inclined to argue that, in addition to continuity, it should have been possible to give more emphasis to discontinuity between the political New Left and the apolitical counter-culture and perhaps to make a more emphatic distinction between a subculture as such, and the counterculture as an escapist movement and ideology.

Köpeczi makes a further most interesting point. "Characteristic of the great majority since 1968, in addition to the ultraradicalism or plain terrorism of a few small groups, is a sort of nonconformism which engenders neoromanticism in the life style, in literature, the arts and fashions alike." (p. 242)

It occurred to me, thinking along Köpeczi's line, whether it may not be imaginable that the neoromanticism, and claim to creativity that arises within the New Left and counterculture can in principle be stripped of its anarchist or escapist cover, leading in certain cases and under specific conditions, to a positive demand for socialist change. One may ask as well how, under socialist conditions, does one appraise and utilise romantic efforts demanding scope for action, and that claim to creativity, which is manifest in some young people. It is self-evident that an answer can be formulated in an abstract manner or at least in terms of principles but ways of implementation are far from being clear-cut and settled.

Béla Köpeczi refuted the ideological platitudes of the New Left, by confronting them with a creative Marxism-Leninism which is authentic and able to provide an answer to the problems of our days. The book, which—as the author modestly writes—"claims to be a popular outline", must be looked on as an important step towards a synthesis of Marxist criticism of New Left trends.

G. GYÖRGY MÁRKUS

ARTS AND ARCHAEOLOGY

RURAL GLASS PAINTINGS

When ethnographers set out to furnish the old peasant houses which are being opened to the public or set up an open-air folk museum, they have to deal with a variety of objects which, although commonly found in the region in question, have no organic links with the culture of the territory itself. These artefacts, such as the German hard pottery, the Black Forest clock or the Bohemian mirror, were imported into the area. Glass paintings in Hungary are also of foreign origin, although certain important manufacturing centres existed in parts of old Hungary, in the Northern region, in Transylvania and in the south in Syrmia (today in Slovakia, Rumania and Yugoslavia respectively). In view of the fact that they were on the whole manufactured by the national minorities living in Hungary, they have remained of rather marginal interest in Hungarian folk-art research. Apart from the interest shown in recent years,¹ glass paintings in any important quantity have only been exhibited at the great Millenary Exhibition in 1896, in the setting of the Rumanian peasant rooms of the Hunyad district (Transylvania), where they were appreciated as specimens of local folk art.

Today we attach more importance to the genre, which is something more than the popular art of certain ethnic groups. The processes of painting on the back of the glass were invented by the craftsmen of antiquity.² The technique survived into the Middle Ages, in the formulas and instructions handed down from Antioch and Byzantium, and was used on ecclesiastical objects during that period; towards the end of the fifteenth century glass-painted religious

pictures appeared in Italy and Germany as independent works of art. In the sixteenth century the glass industry of Venice and Murano produced them *en masse* in the form of reproductions of popular works of art.

The glass pictures of popular art were created to satisfy the increased demand for religious pictures after the Counter-Reformation. They were manufactured by the guilds or by the growing glass industry; hence painting on glass was at best a cottage industry, but never a genuine folk art created by the peasants themselves. The historical development and spread of this popular genre was typical of Central and Eastern Europe; it obviously represented popular taste and the people's religious sentiments, and was therefore indirectly a specific expression of the religious culture of the common folk.

The admixture of people in Hungary and its particular position favoured a rich diversity in all types of glass paintings. Eastern and Western cultural influences met here and the most divergent traditions coexisted in this form of art. Some specimens seem to be surprisingly early in date; they may perhaps assist our research into certain historical problems.

A few figures will convey an idea of the prevalence of glass paintings in Hungary. The Budapest Ethnographical Museum has a collection of almost 500, there are about 200 in provincial museums and roughly the same number in private collections. Together with the documentary information available and certain objects still in use in the provinces, we can assume that our knowledge of glass paintings in Hungary is based on approximately 1,000 specimens. Our

survey is still far from complete, and publications about well-known pieces are also scarce.

From the end of the eighteenth century glass pictures enjoyed widespread popularity among Catholics and Orthodox Christians, regardless of their nationality. The number of glass pictures of proven Hungarian origin is relatively small, but they were popular with the Hungarian *Palóc* groups in villages in the counties of Heves, Nógrád and Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén, in Northern Hungary.

The different periods of the genre can be distinguished according to the different categories. The first category consists of a handicraft³ painted in the style of the eighteenth century; and these were not produced exclusively for a rural clientele. The second consists of paintings produced in glass works to satisfy popular demand; their development led directly to a cottage industry. The third category is an intermediate type; we know of only one specimen of this type in Hungary but among the paintings popular among the common people of Central Europe there are countless works of this type. Drawings, paintings and calligraphical inscriptions were applied on glass; professional painters in the province used to earn good money through the demand for these objects. The fourth category consists of the objects produced in what are called secondary centres, which were generally established to supplement the imported goods produced in the glass works—which were the primary centres. This production was mainly local and typical of the nineteenth century. The classification of these four categories is based on the methods of manufacture, but the fifth category consisting of the icons of the Orthodox Church is different, because the origins of Serbian and Transylvanian glass painting are practically unknown.

Painted Handicraft Products

In the eighteenth century the glass guilds of Augsburg practised the popular genres of

fine art as a profession. They supplied almost the whole of Europe with reproductions of religious pictures. From the earliest seventeenth century they had been using painted glass inlay on their fine, world-famous cabinets. The glass picture as an independent piece of work—using secular subjects as well—had developed into a mass export product by the second half of the eighteenth century; by 1800 the genre had died out in Augsburg but by that time it had begun to be imitated and an evolution towards a style designed to please the common people took place.

The Ethnographical Museum possesses two pictures of this type. The paintings were probably made in Augsburg, dating from the end of the eighteenth century, with Baroque and Rococo designs. The favourite family saints of the time form the subject of these specimens. One is St. Anne, teaching the young Mary to read the Bible at a *prie-dieu*. (The painting in the Museum came from Veszprém County.) The composition is a mixture of Baroque emotionalism and symbolism (the snake coiling round the globe, the attribute of Immaculate Conception at the foot of the *prie-dieu*), together with homely narrative elements (the sewing-basket and scissors behind Anne). The other is the popular saint, St. Anthony of Padua. The background is the sky, but the saint represented three-quarters, sitting at a table, embraces the child Jesus descending from heaven with his draperies a-flutter. The dominant colours in the picture are the silvery pinks and browns which characterize the Rococo idylls of Augsburg.

The second source of these glass paintings for the Hungarians is Silesia. Although icon painting originated in the glass industry, the objects produced in the early years of the eighteenth century have many of the characteristics of the Augsburg and Bavarian style. But as there was no tradition of painting in this region, glass designed for the common people appeared very early. There is a group of Silesian painted pictures

in existence without any ornament in the glass itself; they can be regarded as an intermediate type between the first category of paintings and those emanating from glass works. The Museum possesses a St. Anthony of this type dating from the late eighteenth century, and a Holy Family which is a somewhat earlier.

Products of Glass Works

The Venetian mirrors and glass ornaments produced by the Bohemian glass industry in the eighteenth century proved a formidable rival to Northern Italy. The aristocrats and wealthy bourgeois of Hungary possessed pictures with glass frames as elaborate and splendid as Venetian mirrors. In one, for instance, still in existence, the glass framing the miniature religious picture is cut, gilded and painted and surrounds the picture like ornate *passé-partout*. The Ethnographical Museum possesses a specimen made in a convent; its frame is inlaid with mirrors decorated with cut and etched flowers. These glass works of Silesia and the Bohemian Forest produced a type of popular religious painting in which the glass itself was processed or backed with mercury after painting, or the artists simply procured the rolled glass from the glass works and then painted it. Mirror pictures are earlier in date than the coloured glass pictures made by the glass works although there had been an earlier craft of mirror painting in Southern Bohemia which flourished during the previous century and of which many specimens existed in Hungary as well. Between 1800 and 1820 the backs of some mirror-pictures were painted with soot—what were known as *Russbilder*—which were undoubtedly the last descendants of the ancient, cheap and popular technique for the making of mirrors.

The earliest Hungarian reference to glass paintings is to a mirror picture, or picture painted on a mirror, which at the same time provides valuable information about the ideas and superstitions connected with the

religious subjects painted on mirrors. A picture of the Madonna of Mariazell on mirror glass, dating from 1697, is in possession of the Church Treasury there. It is a votive picture donated by a Count Nádasdy who was in Mariazell when he learned that he had won a lawsuit.⁴ The mirror of truth—reason of our joy, is the translation of the Latin inscription on the picture. This witty metaphor must have been inspired by the Count himself. The representation of religious subjects and the attributes of Mary on mirrors, often seen in Italian pictures of the Immaculate Conception in the sixteenth century, and later consecrated by the Church in the Litany of Loreto, had a very complicated history. References to the tangle of superstitious beliefs which in a way constitute the background of mirror pictures can be found in several known examples of pictures from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries painted on glass or mirrors in Germany of a *memento mori* type. Some of these and other mirror pictures painted with purely religious subjects came from convents, or at least they were called nuns' mirrors.

The mirror showing the Devil in its depths and the magic force of the mirror were widespread popular subjects. The Church may have attempted to deal with them by re-interpreting and incorporating them in a Christian setting. A parable from the end of the fifteenth century (the book of Ritter von Turn, 1493)⁵ narrates the story of the vain woman who came to grief because she spent too much time looking in the mirror. Then one day she saw the Devil in it, and the fright caused a dangerous illness. She only recovered by praying to God. The story is illustrated with a woodcut. Whereas in popular belief the mystical force of the mirror makes it a source of evil influences and magic generally, the religious text claims that it is the punishment of God.

Earlier documents from the region of the Rhine and the Maas refer to the concentration of the magic power in famous relics by means of convex reflex lenses. Small reflex

lenses were manufactured in Aachen and Strasbourg for pilgrims who, a contemporary theologian indignantly claimed, wanted to take the healing force home to use for sorcery.⁶

Picture reflections in a mirror was connected with superstitious beliefs, hence for the ethnographer mirror pictures retain the memory of old traditions.⁷ In the regions where the glass works were situated the superstitions connected with glass and mirrors were probably more persistent than elsewhere. Many of our mirror pictures with sooted backs come from Northern Bohemia and Silesia. Several of them represent the Madonna of Mariazell, sometimes with the votive church in the background. The pilgrimage centres formed a commercial network where these products were sold. The Ethnographical Museum possesses a *Russbild* from Csatka, which was an important place of pilgrimage. It had been the property of a pedlar selling holy pictures. A St. Florian picture is a beautiful example of glass ornamentation. The figure is painted in an oval medallion, surrounded by cut and gilded garlands of leaves falling from a woven basket. The back of the glass is sooted. Many specimens of a series of pictures in Hungary, small in size, and with identical frames, prove that these pieces were mass-produced. The figure is always in a separate oval or cabin-shaped division of the picture surrounded by a delicate, neo-classical flower pattern painted white with a little colour. A composition from Switzerland is absolutely identical with the half-figure of the Holy Virgin in a picture from Northern Hungary now in the Ethnographical Museum. This can be explained by the working practice of the glass-work centres. The subjects were copied in great numbers on glass by means of paper transfer pictures; the colours of the body were painted by one master, other colours by a second, the background by a third, etc. Such transfer drawings have also survived from Buchers and Sandl, the main glass-work centres of South Bohemia and Austria.

These two communities were the exclusive sources of the works in a popular style exported to Hungary in the nineteenth century. By that time these industries had built up a well-organized foreign trade network of buying agencies, tradesmen and pedlars. They exported to the Bukovina, Italy and Luxemburg. It is calculated that the 20 glass-houses operating in the district produced approximately 382,000 pictures between 1852 and 1864.

The craft had been imported by North Bohemian emigrants. In Buchers they manufactured mirror pictures with sooted backs from 1770 onwards, in Sandl they began to operate in 1800. It is very difficult to distinguish the work of these two centres during a certain period; and similar glass paintings were also produced in other localities in the nineteenth century.

The main characteristic of the pictures produced in that region is their use of crude, unmixed colour. The background is mostly clear white, blue-white or a lively canary yellow. The outlines are red, and a great deal of vermilion, deep blue and green is used, with small flower bouquets filling the empty spaces in the upper corners of the picture. The subjects include the iconographic themes from the Middle Age, such as the *Gnadenstuhl*—a composition of the Holy Trinity—and in general the representation of a group of ministering saints. Of course the Baroque saints predominate, and the popular patron saints St. Wendelin, St. Leonard, St. Florian, etc. occur very often.

Drawings, Paintings and Inscriptions on Glass

The Ferenc Liszt Museum in Sopron possesses an interesting type of early glass painting which was not exclusively designed for a rural clientele. These pictures were inspired by the decorative wall inscriptions frequently found in Protestant homes. The plaques in Sopron are mostly commemorative marriage plaques; they are dated and sometimes bear the name of the maker. One

refers to a marriage contracted in Pozsony in 1713; it was found in a village in Sopron County. A similar version with gold letters and flower ornamentation dates from 1765. A plaque from the same year carries a religious inscription in Gothic letters on a green background. It is signed: "A. A. Scul. Nemes Csáni"—the name of the engraver who made the plate. This throws light on the manufacturing technique; the texts were printed in gold on the glass from plates and the coloured background was then painted in. A similar picture in gold represents the Last Supper. The backing of the picture reveals an inscription with the maker's name: "Ferdinand Osswald, der stumme Maler"⁹ (the dumb painter). There are a few of his glass paintings in the Burgenland. His portraits are considered to be of good likeness, but according to a contemporary source "his inscriptions, made on undercoated glass were most in demand". Further research will be needed to discover from which sectors of the population the demand came, but we know that the later, popular versions of these commemorative plaques were also widespread in Hungary.¹⁰ although different techniques were employed. Osswald's particular importance for us lies in the fact that he was an early glass painter in Hungary.

Secondary Centres

The long-lasting, flourishing export trade of Bohemian glass centres was finally replaced by local copies of these glass pictures. These imitations were produced in Slovenia, Yugoslavia, Slovakia and Poland; and the German settlers in the neighbourhood of the glass works of the Zselic region in Hungary also practised this craft for a short time around 1850. These later glass works fulfilled local demands, their work circulated in a narrower circle and the subject-matter sometimes included secular and national legends. The Ethnographical Museum possesses a fine collection of work from the centres of East, Middle, and Northern

Slovakia collected before the First World War. On the basis of this material, we can distinguish three different groups. The first group is distinguished by dark blue or green backgrounds, symmetrical flowers, like tulips in the upper corners, but if the object is a cross, at the bottom. The compositions are over-simplified and diagrammatic. The favourite subjects in this group are the Pietà of Sastin, a famous shrine in Nyitra County, St. John Nepomuk, and the Last Supper. The second group comes from East Slovakia; the backgrounds are white, the flower ornaments festooned and the characteristic colours are yellows and ultramarine blues, with pale reds. The work of both these groups is somewhat distorted and primitive in the painting, while those of the third group with black backgrounds and transparent paint, are of a high artistic quality.

Glass Icons

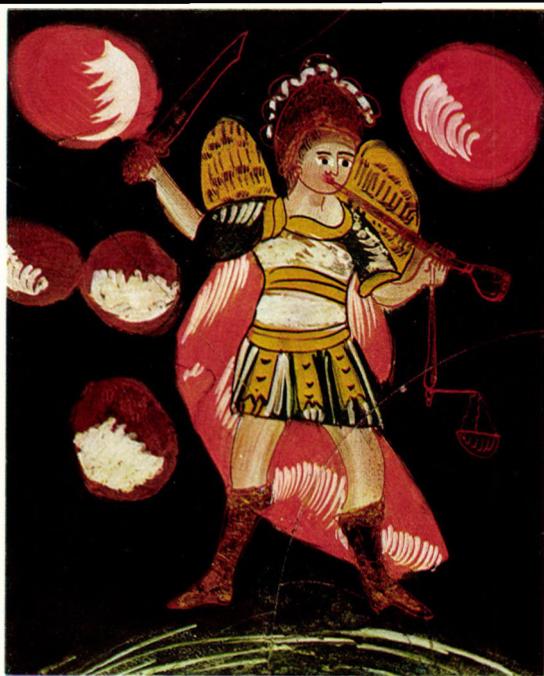
The glass pictures of the Transylvanian Orthodox and of the Serbs living in Hungary are very different in style, for they are specimens of an independent culture springing from the traditions and particular icon-worship of the Orthodox Church. Scholars have discovered the past history of glass paintings in Western Europe, but we know little of the origins of glass icons. At all events the glass work where these were produced were certainly not secondary because the dates of the earliest Transylvanian and Serbian specimens precede the beginning of Western exports.

Serbian glass icons

The existence of South Slav glass paintings of indigenous origin was only discovered in the course of the last twenty years. Attempts have been made to identify the local glass-houses. The material existing in Hungary is of an early date; we possess two icons which are still serving their original purpose in the provinces. One represents St. George,



SAINT GEORGE (GLASS ICON, 63 × 53,2 CM) FOGARAS, 2ND HALF
OF 19TH CENTURY: PROVENANCE ALSÓSZOMBAT



SAINT MICHAEL

(GLASS PAINTING, 45,5 × 35,5 CM)

19TH CENTURY; JABLONKA



DOMESTIC SAINTS

(GLASS PAINTING, 45,5 × 36 CM)

19TH CENTURY; TOLNAMÖZS

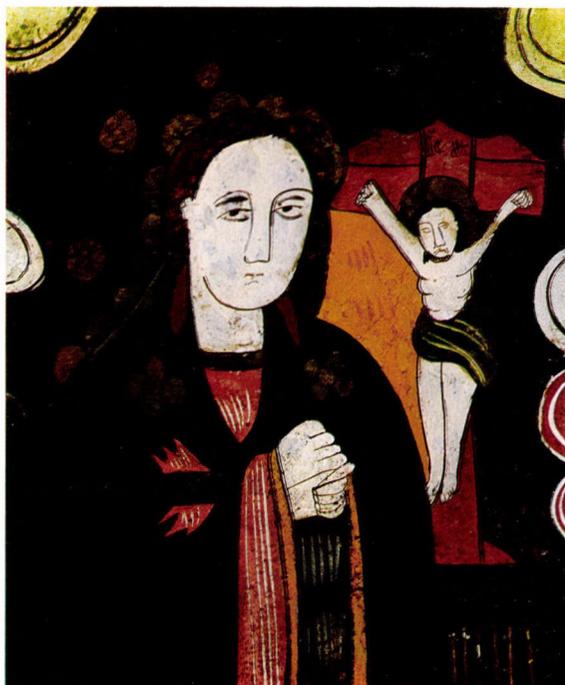
Photos: Károly Szelfnyi Courtesy Corvina Press



SAINT FLORIAN

(GLASS PAINTING, 35,4 × 25,4 CM)

18TH CENTURY; ESZTERGOM COUNTY



MATER DOLOROSA

(GLASS ICON, 34 × 28,5 CM)

FÜZESMIKOLA, 19TH CENTURY

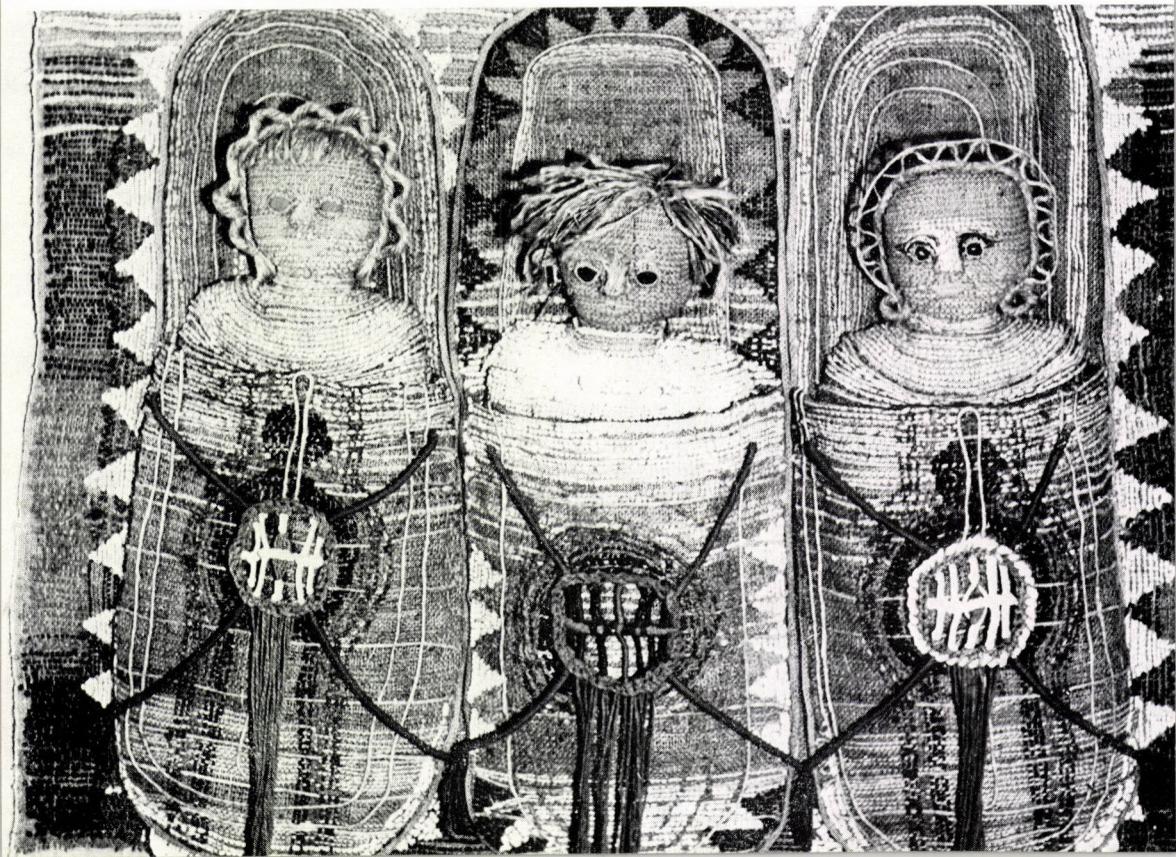


Photos: Karoly Székelyi

PRESENTATION OF THE VIRGIN
 (GLASS ICON, 27×22 CM)
 VOIVODINA, 19TH CENTURY;
 PROVENANCE VÉMIND



THE PROPHET ELIAS,
 SAINTS PETER AND PAUL
 (GLASS ICON 66×55 CM)
 VOIVODINA, 19TH CENTURY;
 PROVENANCE ILOCSKA,



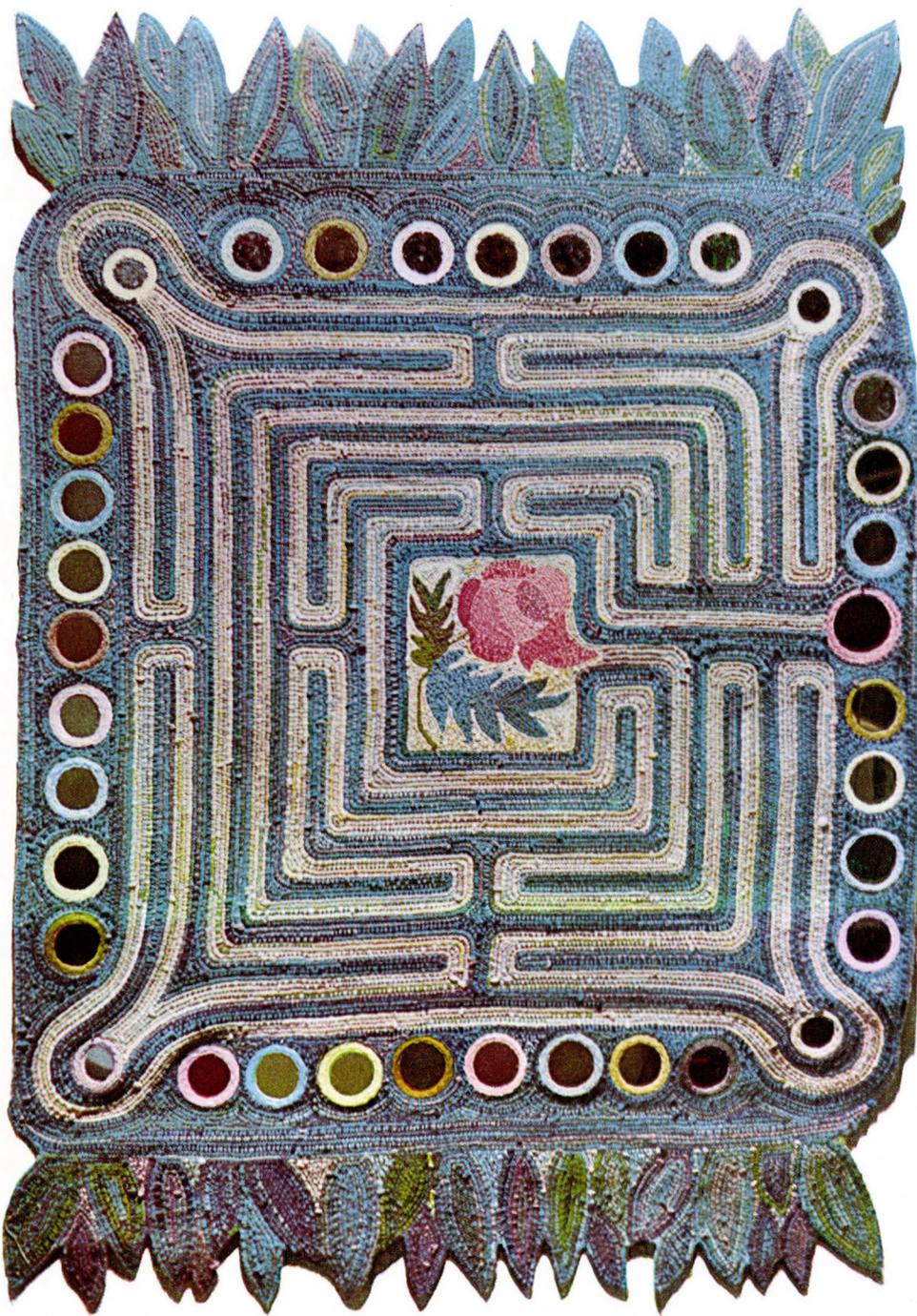
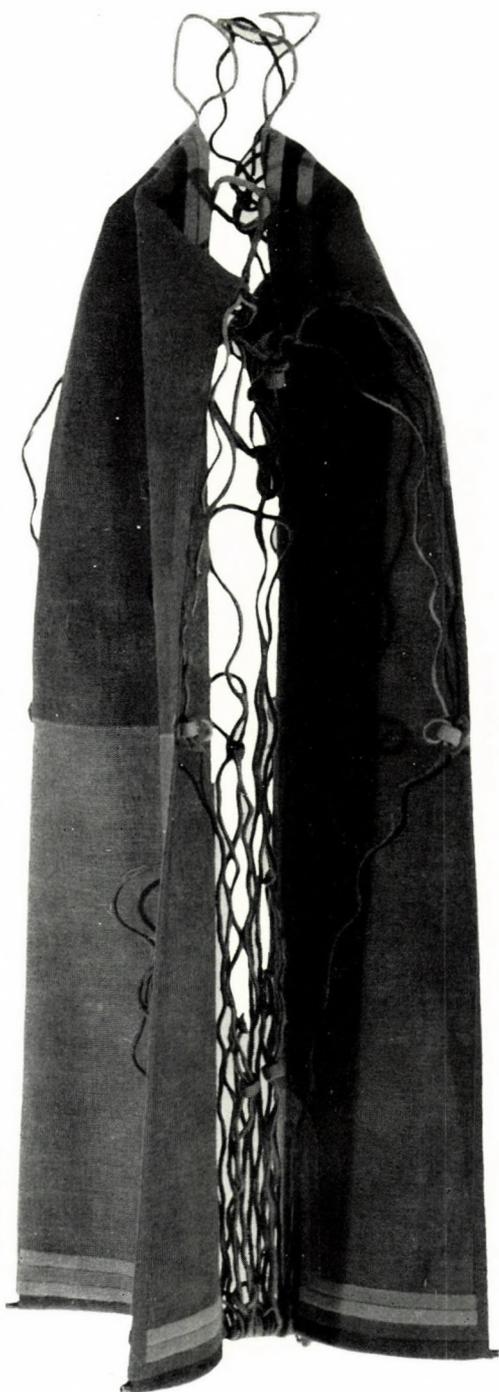


Photo: Ferenc Kovács

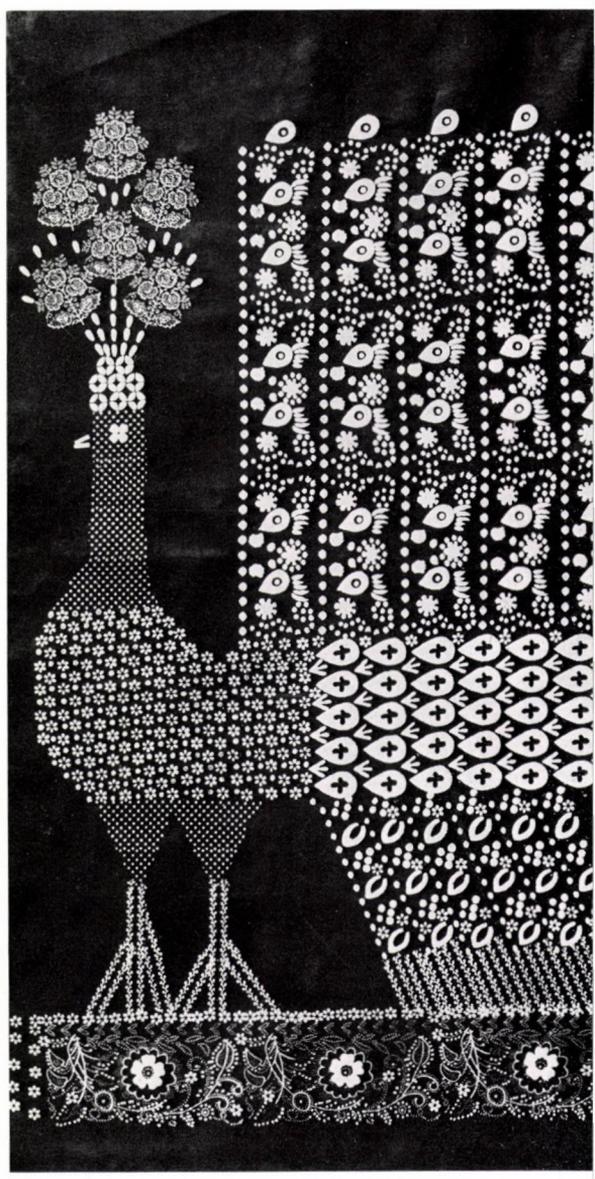
ZSUZSA SZENES: LABIRINTH WITH ROSE (WOOL EMBROIDERY)

Photo: Ferenc Kovács



MARGIT SZILVITZKY:
SCULPTURE IN SPACE (TEXTILE)

Photo: Kálmán Könyv



IRÉN BÓDY: PEACOCK (INDIGO HANDPRINT
WITH "RESERVA" TECHNIQUE)



PÉTER KORNISS: EASTER WATERING (ACSA, COUNTY PEST)



DÉTER KORNIS: THE HOUSE OF THE DEAD (SZŰK - SIO BIRÁNYA)



PÉTER KORNISS: SUNDAY AFTERNOON (SZÉK — SIC, RUMANIA)



THE SZÁRAZD—REGÖLY FIND

*The above and the following photographs illustrate:
"The Celts in Hungary" by Sándor Maller*

Photos: Kálmán Könyva

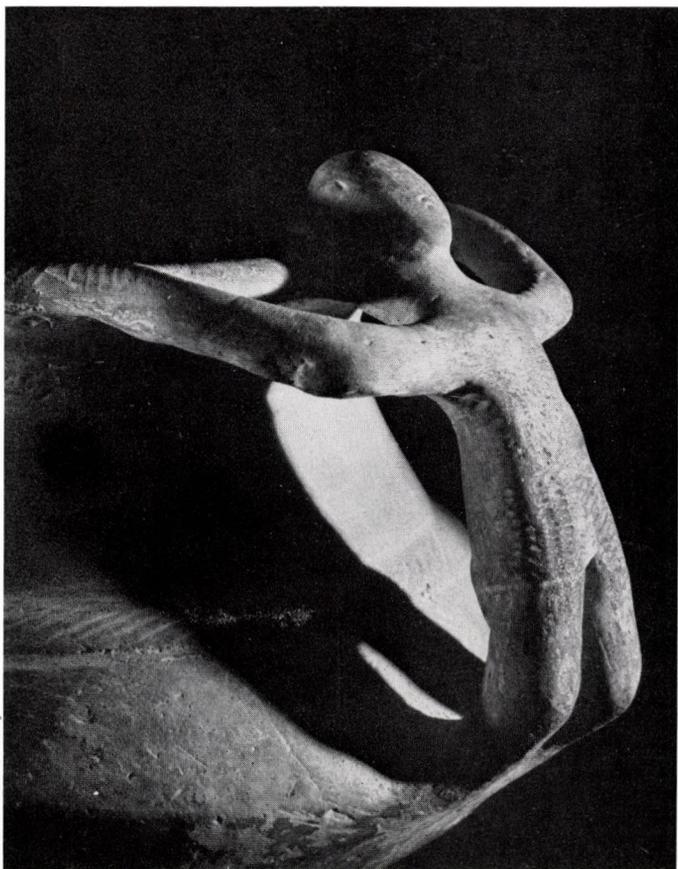


FIBULA FROM BÖLCSKE



VESSEL FROM KAKASD

ANTHROPOMORPHIC HANDLE
OF THE KAKASD VESSEL

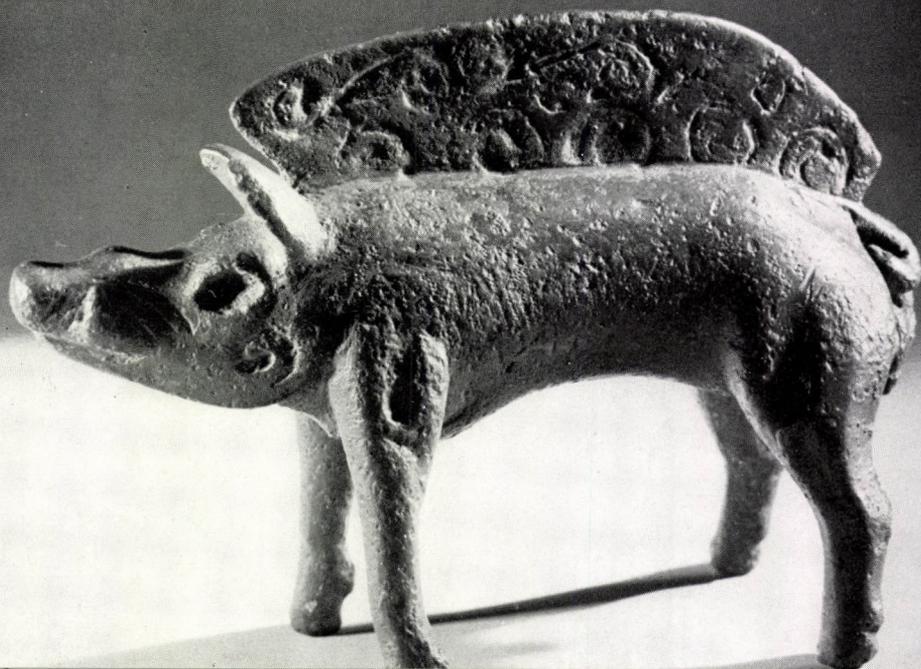


Photos: Kálmán Kőrösi



SIDE WALL OF A TOMB AEDICULA
FOUND AT BÖLCSKE — IT SHOWS
A WOMAN IN CELTIC DRESS
HOLDING A BOAR'S HEAD
IN A BOW

▼ BOAR STATUETTE FROM BÁTÁ



surrounded by fifteen small medallions illustrating events in his life. The drawing is delicate, the colours are soft, with reseda-greens and greys dominating. The lower part of the picture contains an inscription in Greek and the date 1750. The other icon, of the same era and style, represents a Madonna.

Documents from the 1730s mention glass icons in churches in Srem, Yugoslavia (Syrmia).¹¹ The pictures in Hungary may be related to them; the man who made them might have been a professional icon painter.

The collection in the Ethnographical Museum numbering approximately twenty pieces is, however, in no way related to these early works. The theme of St. George is repeated in distorted later versions—from which one may conclude the existence of a common pattern. We can also distinguish three groups in these nineteenth-century works, but certain common features indicate that they come from the same region. The scenes, one bordered with imitation Baroque frames with rosettes in the corners, and the backgrounds employ the same range of colours. The finest pictures in this first group are the "Festive cycle" from the iconostasis of a Serbian church in Baranya. A unique, picturesque effect is provided by the transparent, mellow colours. A number of icons from Baranya also belong to this group, such as the large typical composition from Lippó, the Madonna, or the composition from Ilocska on two levels, representing the prophet Elijah above with St. Peter and St. Pantaleon below (despite the inscription it is undoubtedly St. Peter).

The second group is later in date; the artist was by no means as good a draughtsman. The lines are angular, the colours colder; the primitive character of the round, staring eyes in the faces strikes the spectator immediately.

A third type of icon was found in the church of Véménd. Perhaps missing pieces in the original series had to be supplied—but in any case, the artist was a remarkable personality, almost a "primitive" painter.

His pictures are clearly outlined and are rich in colour. Although the traditional framing elements are still there, the background is often decorated with yellow stars. This type is probably from one of the centres in the Voivodina; the glass icons from the Bánát are somewhat similar.¹²

Transylvanian Glass Icons

It is known from the techniques practised in the western centres of the craft that the pictures were reproduced by graphic means, with the help of multiplying techniques, simplified or enriched with painted variations. In Transylvania the development of the genre was based on local popular pictures. There was a woodcut workshop at Hesdát, near the oldest glass works in Füzeshmíkola (Nicula), and some of the woodcuts from Hesdát and the glass pictures show a direct relationship. The situation must have been very similar in the south-eastern region, where a famous woodcut workshop was already in existence in the eighteenth century at Rázsnýó (Râsnov). The local style of icon painting for the people developed very early, in the seventeenth century, along with the religious art of the Transylvanian Orthodox Church; and this local tradition gives these glass paintings value in the study of folk art.

The small pictures surrounded by flower garlands produced by the Nicula artisans were popular all over Hungary; these glass works even supplied the eastern regions of our present borders. The glass paintings from Fogaras and Brassó were unlike the works emanating from the Nicula glass works, since these were monumental in size. A few large Last Judgement panels with numerous figures in them still exist in certain villages to this day. The Ethnographical Museum in Budapest possesses a new collection of decorative glass paintings distinguished by their richly ornamented surfaces. These pictures were painted in the second half of the

nineteenth century; the style is closely connected with the development of peasant-style painted furniture. One of the finest specimens of this group is a picture of St. George in which the figure, the background and the complementary motifs together form a luxuriant world of decorative patterns. Their colours show the impact of industrial paints or painted furniture. The dark-blues, greens, yellows, whites and blacks seem to fluctuate and flow together. Another type of glass paintings of the region is very different in its colours; orange-reds, mellow light-greens against a light background predominate as

in the picture of the Prophet Elijah now in the Museum.

By the end of last century the late pictures from the Fogaras workshop still maintained a high quality as works of popular art, whereas glass pictures from other sources showed signs of decline or were being imitated by craftsmen unconnected with the workshops and tended to develop into a kind of naive art. In the last forty years sporadic attempts have been made to revive the genre in Hungary, but they no longer have any organic links with popular culture.

ZSUZSA VARGA

¹ In 1970 the Ethnographical Museum organized an exhibition "Paintings and Sculptures" at the István Csók Gallery in Székesfehérvár where the various types of glass pictures were also shown. (See *The N.H.Q.*, No. 44, 1971)

² Short history of the genre: G. M. Ritz: *Hinterglasmalerei*. Munich, 1972.

³ These distinctions were defined by F. Knaipp in: *Volkstümliche Hinterglasbilder des 18. und 19. Jahrhunderts*. (An essay in *Österreichischer Volkskunde Atlas*, 1959. I. Lieferung and Kommentar.)

⁴ P. Rodler Gellért: *Description and History of the Basilica in Mariazell*. Graz, no date, p. 43.

⁵ Article by R. Wildhaber: "Spiegelbilder und Nonnenspiegel". *Schweizer Volkskunde*, 1954, 6. I.

⁶ Kurt Köster: "Mittelalterliche Pilgerzeichen und Wallfahrtsdevotionalen" *Rhein und Maas. Kunst und Kultur 800-1400*. Cologne, 1972, p. 148.

⁷ On the popular interpretation of mirror pictures. (See *The N.H.Q.* No. 44, p. 184)

⁸ For data see F. Knaipp as above Lieferung 2. I.

⁹ Csatkai, E.: "Popular Glass Painting." *Ethnography*, 1949, p. 90.

¹⁰ Csilléry, K.: "Hungarian Popular Graphics." *Néprajzi Értésítő*, 1971, p. 63.

¹¹ Filipovitch, M.: *Ikone na staklu kod vojvodanskih Muzeja*, 1952, p. 79.

¹² Cobelj, S.: Icons painted on glass. Lecture at the 9th International Congress of Anthropology and Ethnology. Chicago, 1973.

A REVIVAL IN TEXTILE ART

Irénn Balázs, Irén Bódy, Marianne Szabó, Zsuzsa Szenes, Margit Szilvitzky

I know no precedent for the sudden revival of a branch of art flowering into prolific creation as the result of a decision or a manifesto. Yet this is exactly what happened in Hungarian textile art six years ago, when Hungarian textile artists decided to abandon the custom of national exhibitions. From time to time previously there had been enormous exhibitions organized in the twelve large halls of the glass-domed Budapest Art Gallery which included all the various branches of industrial art; the final overall impression was of an amorphous

grey mass, one branch cancelling out the other, what was worthless overshadowing what was worthwhile. But though it was decided to allow the textile artists to exhibit separately, it was not the separation itself that produced the miracle, since ceramists and silversmiths had already exhibited separately, and their performance had been much inferior to that of the textile artists, who achieved their breakthrough in an exhibition called "Textile Frescoes, 68".

At this memorable exhibition the artists themselves chose the jury, and set much

higher standards for themselves than had formerly been required. Only new work was accepted, and the size of each exhibit was limited to two square metres. They also proclaimed the somewhat obvious truism that a textile creation is a work of art based on its own rules, not a woven painting, and that the task of the artist is to embody his choice of subject and ideas in the textile which will reflect them in the most appropriate way.

This new manifesto came opportunely, because textile artists were bored with traditional painting. But these industrial artists—with the exception of weavers—had only been taught to handpaint materials and design printed textiles at art school. Each of them found themselves forced to invent and work out new techniques, they had no predecessors to imitate or to follow, and it was this fact which gave them their originality. Most of these artists were women, skilled in needlework, but no more than many another woman. They found themselves competing with one another as they experimented with various methods, such as gobelin tapestry weaving, crocheting, appliqué work wool embroidery, printing, stump work, even textile sculptures. The previously dominant hand-painted textiles, formerly all in all, are now as rare as the number of genuine gobelin tapestries are abundant.

Although they may use different methods all these artists have something in common: they belong to the same generation, and are mostly around forty. They all share a keen interest in art, in the world around them, in things of the intellect, and they are all—almost without exception—very good graphic artists. These artists in textiles have an intimate knowledge of the material they work in, like the Renaissance masters or the men of the Bauhaus, and the revival of textile art in other countries in the course of these years has also been a factor in their success.

This first memorable exhibition was followed by a series of biennial exhibitions, in

1970, 1972 and 1974, in Szombathely, a town in Western Hungary. But some of the artists have shown individually as well in the exhibitions of the "Prizma 13" and "Kör" (Circle) group exhibitions of industrial artists. The great success of the exhibition in 1968 came as a surprise to the artists, as did the financial success and the commissions that followed.

The first impulse of these artists has by no means slackened, it has even quickened to new levels, stimulated by a lively artistic life and lively competition. Besides textile pictures for the wall other types of work have gained ground, such as textiles used to partition space, or three-dimensional pieces.

A list of names is useless. But it may be useful to pick out a few of the best, the most original, and describe their work.

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The great change in textile art is largely due to one person: Gábor Attalai. It was he who originally initiated the exhibition of textile pictures for the wall, and he is even today a source of stimulus and inspiration to his colleagues. It is not enough to call him versatile, one is more precise in calling him a complex artist. Principally he works in textiles, but he is also a graphic artist, and uses wood, metal, stone and paper as well as textile materials. For a relatively short period he experimented with a variety of schools and methods, and today the whole body of his work includes examples of Hard Edge, Land Art and Conceptual Art, as well as poetical abstracts. No matter what he has in mind, it is the material itself which guides his choice and manner of treatment, though he is always aware of the moment when the material in turn must be subjected to his will. With a single work he is capable of contradicting every former principle of art he has put forward, but in the end it does not annul them, it completes them. At one time, he was interested in gobelin tapestry, at another in the analysis of geometrical

folk patterns. At present he is working on a unique type of textile sculpture composed of hanging felt and straps.

After working for more than ten years as a painter and earning a name for herself, Irén Balázs decided her oil paintings lacked substance, and stopped. In her new field of work she often spends as many as twelve hours a day working on monumental textile compositions, for the most part three-dimensional pieces and textile sculptures, mainly decorative in character, reproducing figures and forms from nature. "There are what one might call artistic nodal points in textile materials, but after I have found these points the rest is only a question of self-discipline, since I have never much liked needlework." She makes full use of the bright, glancing, brittle character of the material in which she works, and calls on the traditional qualities associated with it, but turns them to her own purposes. Her work is not sweet, but astringent, ironical rather than serene, and essentially honest.

Irén Bódy possesses an unusual eye for future trends; she has frequently forestalled them and had to face considerable misunderstanding on that account. She was the first in the sixties to make use of the legacy of Art Nouveau in Hungary, and later, when it became fashionable, to abandon it, and she was also the first to use the method of indigo printing. At the beginning, she said, it was like fighting windmills, but later she was successful. The craft of indigo printing was introduced into Hungary from Bohemia in the eighteenth century. The textiles made up into dresses and aprons for peasant women were for long produced in these indigo printshops. Irén Bódy discovered the last surviving workshop where this vanishing craft is still practised, learned the craft there, and after making use of all the old patterns she could lay hands on, began to design others herself, and finally mixed the two, producing unique indigo textiles. The blue is a special blue from the indigo plant, and provides the background, the pattern is the

linen white of the material itself. The indigo prints of Irén Bódy recall blue and white china, the rippled lines of millefiori glass, and the complicated patterns of lace, whether figurative or decorated with vegetal designs. Folk art exercises an important but never dominant role in her work. She is temperate, almost prosaic, but a passionate integrity prevents her from producing work which could bring her easy popularity, but could only too easily degenerate into too facile and inferior work.

Aranka Hübner is one of the pioneers of Hungarian textile art, and one of the few to remain faithful to hand painting. Only now she produces almost everything differently. She prints on silk. "I want to express natural phenomena," she said, "the mood, or rather the attitude of water, fire, fog, mists and plants; I think it is not only vegetable life that can be experienced visually; so can birth and death, rocks crumbling into dust, these are all part of our life. My new attitude demands a new approach to beauty and new aesthetics. This is something more than painting flowers on textiles. I do not like ornaments, I think they are outdated." The silk pieces of Aranka Hübner are "descriptions" and "landscapes" of things that are not usually the subject of paintings. She generally attacks her subject—always invariably somewhat ambiguous—in terms of its surface structure. Her method of painting is often haphazard, something which is very characteristic of her, but her art as a whole is both disciplined and poetic.

Marianne Szabó does not produce much, but no matter what style or what method she uses, she is always original. She is interested in both painted and printed textiles, has worked on illustrations for children's books, is a careful and meticulous graphic artist, and has made textile decorations for the wall and for other purposes, both embroidered and crocheted. For a long time she was under the influence of Art Nouveau, because—as she herself said—she approaches everything with its irreverent directness. In

recent years she has been making sculpture pieces of coloured felt, something that began in Pop Art, but developing beyond its origins. Her basic attitude is ironical—a gentle irony for others, a strong self-irony for herself. Her relief figures in felt of sirens show this contrast as quite intentional; they are monumental not only in the sense of being large, monumental effects and masterly composition are in fact her strongest points. And yet her art is also very feminine, poetic and playful.

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The key figure and most outstanding representative in the revival of the new textile art is Zsuzsa Szenes. She uses raw wool twisted into rolls, sewing them on to jute, and improvises by embroidering them into various shapes for which she never makes "designs". "I work about a month on a wall-carpet of one or one and a half square metres. But then I work from morning to late night. I do not use patterns." The rustic wall-carpets of Zsuzsa Szenes are very much the opposite of her drawings in Indian ink with their hair-fine lines. Her work refutes the belief that textile art is drawing and painting in the form of textiles. Her pieces are made of parallel curves of wool similar to the shape of the annual rings on trees. Her subjects include non-figurative designs, folk-tales, geometrical forms, and genre pictures, but there is a

certain homogeneity about them all. She is usually restrained in her use of colour—though not always—and the textile lines are sometimes interrupted unexpectedly by a small mirror. Her technique is always strictly subordinated to her subject. The mazes she makes, packed with colour, are more than just optical games, more than a mixture of traditional and organic elements, for her work as a whole is held together by a consistent outlook.

Margit Szilvitzky is a newcomer among the textile artists. She is a fashion designer and teaches shoe, belt and hand-bag design at the Art School for Industrial Design. She became interested in textile design around 1965, especially in textiles for partitions and walls. She introduced a new school of thought in textile work with her methods of appliqué work, creating some sort of never-never folk-art native to no country, not even Hungary. She is ready to sacrifice an easy attractiveness and superficial appearance of skill. Her recent work has developed in the direction of something which is at once more rustic, simpler and more monumental. She is the most important representative of the plastic art of the textile for use as a decorative element in space. As she herself put it: "Textiles embody plant and animal substances, and the fruits of plants have all those seeds, fibres, lines and holes arranged very logically on a surface. And in a very beautiful way."

JÁNOS FRANK

A SUNKEN WORLD

The Photographs of Péter Korniss

There was a time when an exhibition of photographs would be opened with an embarrassed apology. The same question

Delivered at the opening of an exhibition of work by Péter Korniss held in the *Műcsarnok* Gallery, Budapest.

would be asked yet again: Is photography an art? Is it creative, or merely a mechanical act? Is it the tricky miracle of mechanical devices, or is it, independent of the devices, a human undertaking, like painting, poetry, music or dance?

Fortunately, the question has been answered by time, or more precisely by usage. Photographers are now found among the great innovators of the century, among painters, musicians, writers, film-makers and anthropologists. They are everywhere, as the main witnesses of events. They make the inventory of wars, demonstrations, smiles of sadness. The photo-journalist of Antonioni's *Blow Up*, in fact is not merely the hero of a curious story, he is the central figure of a twentieth-century mythos. In this our age murders are committed almost before our eyes, but it avails us nothing to know of them. The blow-up, the enlargement, does not help. There is no interest in tragedy, and the murderers everywhere gracefully destroy the evidence.

What is the connection between Péter Korniss and the hero of the Antonioni movie? What is the connection when the props are different, the lights, the motive, the backcloth in the studio are different, the models and the apathy subduing the models are different? Yet, despite the distance between them, is the similarity after all not greater than the difference?

For both of them lead to the conclusion that photography is as any human enterprise, a moral, sensual and aesthetic decision. Taking pictures means to love, to think, to initiate, to search, to blaze, to despair, to implicate oneself in the current of the world. It is to become the object of the photograph. Photography is momentary immortality.

How could an ever more creative and fecund photography, encompassing basic truth, be possible, if this were not so? But, as a friend, I must admit that it was not easy for Péter Korniss to reach this point of development. In the beginning of his career he photographed everything that satisfied curiosity and the common desire to see more

and more. He photographed city streets and Greek ruins, canned food and the sea, faces and the opaque shine of milk bottles. Then he photographed the dance: first ballet, which had a story to it, and later folk dancing, which no longer had a story, but which still belongs to the theatre. And from here he had only to return to the point where the dance meets the theatre. His intellectual curiosity led him to the essence of the dance, to its simmering source. From the folk-dance he reached out to the still living customs, usages and rituals of the people. This was in the early sixties, when such observations still seemed the affair of a few professionals and eccentric intellectuals.

Under the dictatorship of artistic innovation at all costs the lust for contemporary experimentation, it required tremendous self-confidence to delve into a sunken world. But perhaps he felt instinctively that this civilization-scarred world needed not only a new style, but also new, viable human relations, the power to preserve a genuine hinterland. His modernity consists of showing the world of communal singing and communal mourning, standing in contradistinction to the crumbling of the individual. The innovation lies in photographing not what he sees, but what he lacks, what in his opinions we all lack in this mechanized world.

Some of his pictures are reminiscent of the folk-songs and ballads collected in the first part of our century by Bartók, Kodály, Lajtha, or perhaps also by Zoltán Kallós in our days. An instinct to protect a people, the culture of a people in contact with the culture of all other peoples. Below the surface of the picture emerges the person, in whom kindness, mourning, joy, weariness and the feeling of community are eternal, all those things which makes us the source and continuance of life.

SÁNDOR CSÓÓRI

THE CELTS IN HUNGARY

Most of the Mediterranean cultures have been lucky insofar as they have perpetuated themselves. Their ways of life and social structures are known; a good part of their literature and art, though incomplete, does remain, and one can stroll through Roman cities as a contemporary might have. But this is not the case with the peoples to the north whom they called barbarians, peoples who played an important role in European prehistory. Even today the earth hides a great many of their relics, and archaeologists must subject the burial sites to an investigation which will force them to begin to yield their secrets.

This is also the case with the Celts who have recently become an object of popular interest, and not only in Hungary. Following the pioneering research of the relics of the Celtic realm in Hungary by Ferenc Pulszky a hundred years ago, and after the works of Lajos Marton and Irén Hunyady, it is especially in the wake of the findings of the last two decades that an extensive series of studies have appeared on the Celts.* And it was in May of this year that an international Unesco symposium was held in Székesfehérvár in which fifty-four scholars from fourteen countries participated in discussions on the history, the society and the art of the Celts' eastern dominions. A rich display of materials collected from ten countries demonstrated the far-reaching, comprehensive unity of the elements of Celtic art.

As with their Greek trading partners, we come across the first traces of the Celts in the sixth century: the Rhodians built an important road through Massilia (Marseilles) which led to the Celts in the north; a second route across the Alps above Northern Italy was used for the transportation of Etruscan goods. The territory where these "elusive people", the Celts, presumably emerged in-

cludes present-day Eastern France, Switzerland, Southern Germany and the area of the North-western Alps. It was at this time that the older geometric forms used in the art of the Hallstatt culture changed into the distinctive, decorative style designated by archaeologists as La Tène after the first discovered and largest depository site. From here the Celts scattered in northern and north-western directions towards present-



Painted vessel from the late La Tène and Roman period

day France; some tribes reached Britain, and others crossed Bavaria and settled in Austrian and Czechoslovak territory. Italy was their goal in the south, they defeated the Romans at Allia in 390 B.C. and they found their way as far as Sicily. They also swept the length of the Balkans, and their delegations even came into contact with Alexander the Great.

In the first wave of their eastward thrust, the Celts reached the vicinity of Sopron in the territory of modern Hungary. In the second wave of the fourth and the beginning

* Miklós Szabó: *The Celtic Heritage in Hungary*, Corvina Press, Budapest, 1971.

of the third centuries, they proceeded a good deal further. After the sacking of Delphi, the defeat suffered at the hands of the Greeks caused them to pull back to the southern part of Pannonia. (As yet there is only one relic of their Greek adventures, a bronze Greek cantharus which was found in a Celtic grave alongside the Danube at Szob.) The movement of Germanic peoples along the Rhine caused the third Celtic wave at the end of the second century which led to the settlement pattern attested both by classical historical sources and burial sites: the Scordisci in the Danube-Száva region, the Boii in the vicinity of the Little Plain and Transdanubia, the Eravisci along the Danube around Lake Velence and in the Budapest area; the Teuvisci in North-eastern Hungary; and a small number of Celtic settlements on the Great Plain, and even some in Transylvania.

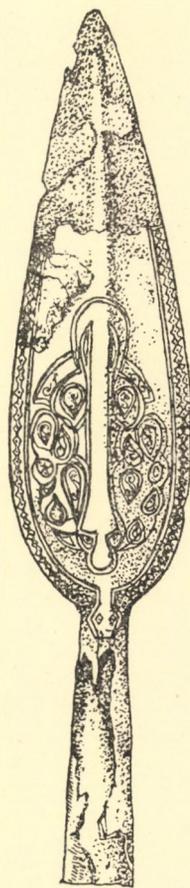
Rome, however, did not forget them, and several conquering expeditions ousted from Italian territory Celts who had also fought as mercenaries in Hannibal's army. It was not difficult for the Roman legions to suppress the Celtic tribes who were at that time already weakened by the Dacians, and later in A.D. 12 all of Pannonia was occupied. Thus the more than four century old Celtic dominion in Hungary gave way to the Roman Empire, which in turn would be expelled about four hundred years later by the waves of migrations from the East.

"Where are the Hellenes and where the Celts?" queried Petöfi in the poem "Homer and Ossian"; but how they lived, what their social structure was, and what their art consisted of—an art which contrasted greatly with that of the people who lived here before them and which influenced European culture for approximately five centuries—these are questions which can only be given by graves and settlement ruins, for there are no written records.

Warriors were separated from the common people in Hungarian Celtic society with a small priest class above them. To date,

one-fourth of the Celtic graves found are those of warriors, one-tenth those of rich women and the rest those of common people. Princely tombs characteristic of the Western Celts, have not yet been found in Hungary.

The Celts believed in an afterlife, and they placed beside the deceased all items



*Spearhead with incised decoration,
provenance Csabrendek*

which he used in life in order that they be available for use in the next world: these included personal objects, vessels and utensils, and food for the long journey, most often pork, more rarely mutton or deer meat,

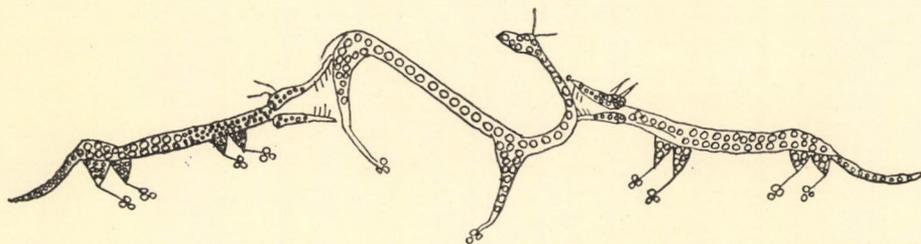
and very frequently dog meat—though this played a part in the death rituals as attested by a recently discovered sanctuary at Pákozd. Burial sites of both cremated remains and skeletons have been found in Hungary; scholars usually attribute the latter burial method to the time of Celtic expansion. The graves of warriors are found at separate sites or on the edge of burial grounds, but they are never mixed with those of the common people. The dead man's weapons are placed beside him: sword, knife, lance, more rarely a shield, but leather or iron armour has not yet been found, and as yet only one helmet has been unearthed. The sword is often bent, perhaps as a sign that the owner may no longer wear it, or to prevent the deceased from returning. A razor and whetstone were placed beside some corpses. Tombstones with a likeness of the deceased developed under Roman influence, but the chariots on tombstones derive from Celtic beliefs.

The Celts lived independently from each other, and only in the face of common danger did they group together in tribes; their settlements could be called villages, or, better, simply farmsteads. Their houses were huts of wood or wattle and daub set in the ground at a depth of 6–10 metres; no remains of Celtic stone houses have yet been found in Hungary. Later development included fortified settlements on high ground called *oppida* by the Romans. These oppidum-like settlements most likely included those of Velemszentvid, Sopron-Bécsidomb, Balatonföldvár, Esztergom, Bükkzentlászló and Gellért Hill.

The settlements being agricultural in nature were usually located alongside rivers or on the fertile lowlands. Wheat, barley, rye and millet were stored in pits or in large, protruding-rimmed tankards. A developed form of ploughshare made cultivation possible, and the grain was reaped with a sickle or a large scythe; a tool resembling an encased axe might have been used for hoeing, and horses or other draught animals were used. The Celt's food consisted of milk products, bread from finely-ground flour and domestic and wild animal meat; the warriors drank wine and the common people brewed beer.

Celtic potters knew how to work the potter's wheel; moreover, it was they who introduced it into Hungary. Not only did they produce pottery for their own use, they also sold it. Larger pottery work sites could be those of the Budapest Gellért Hill and the Jutas region next to Veszprém from where several identically stamped, ornamental vessels have turned up. Earthenware handles fashioned in the shape of ram and sheep heads, found for example in Kósd and Aporliget-Bátorliget, bear witness to the Celt's developed skill and taste. A vessel from Kakasd with an anthropomorphic handle and a Lábatlan urn with its struggling animal scene are also excellent specimens.

The basic technical innovation of this period was ironwork, a skill in which the Celts excelled. They smelted pig iron in furnaces and forged slags, and would further mould the steel thus obtained. The Celts were responsible for establishing this process



Celtic version of the Cimmer—Scythian "struggling animal" scene on the urn found at Lábatlan

in Hungary, and it remained essentially unchanged until the fourteenth century. In the local workshops were produced 80-90 centimetres long, straight Celtic swords, with boar or man-shaped hilts—which perhaps served as charms—such as the blades of Felsőtöbörzsök and of Csákberény. Much care was also given to the ornamentation of the sword scabbard, very beautiful specimens of which have been found in the vicinity of Balassagyarmat.

What is known about the small art objects of the Hungarian Celts comes from enclosures in women's graves. The centuries have preserved the material, a coarsely-woven linen, if not the tailoring of the clothes. Bronze fibulae and fasteners were fashionable, two on the shoulder, and a third was probably worn on the breast. A highly developed craftsmanship is demonstrated by distinctively Celtic gold and bronze torques and necklaces, some inlaid with enamel or bone such as those found in Hercegmárok, or by the very beautiful women's bronze girdle and bracelet of Fiad, the hollow-cast spherical type anklet from Bábonny and the pendants of Szentes and Jászberény-Öregerdő. Other remarkable pieces include a bronze drinking horn with a dragon's head terminal from Jászberény-Cserőhalom, a wild boar from Bába and bronze deer statuettes found at Rákos. From the second century on, minting presses were in operation and the coins produced can in no wise be termed as the creation of barbarians.

The Celts believed in many different gods, and later they transferred many of the characteristics of the Roman gods to their own. As iconographic symbol as spoked wheel symbolizing the sun and s-shaped motifs were mainly used. Their perfect number was 3, and the wild boar symbolized

death as well as the transfiguration of the hero. Two stone-carved gods' heads, reminiscent of Janus, found at the foot of the Badacsony mountain next to the Lake Balaton can be traced back to the Celtic culture's iron age; they may symbolize the continuity of life, both in the present and afterlife.

The Celts were excellent and merciless warriors. They were not afraid of death and went into battle either with an amulet around their necks (including a raven figure) or with completely unprotected bodies. Their goal was the head of the enemy, which would later become the chief ornament of the house and served as tangible proof of manliness. The halved skull was also used as a drinking vessel. (Byron engaged in this custom at infamous Scottish revelries much to the consternation of his companions, and the origin of the Scandinavian "skol" drinking toast most likely goes back to the term "skull".)

Not much is known about the language of the Hungarian Celts; some fragments, principally proper names and tombstone epitaphs, preserve what is known along with some place names such as "bona" as a suffix in Arrabona (Győr) and also Vindobona (Vienna), and "briga" meaning a mountainous, wooded place in Brigetio (Ószöny).

Though continually becoming clearer, the total picture of the Hungarian Celts is still sketchy and wanting, especially as regards their beginnings. Under Hungarian ground much more may be hidden than we imagine, and we are still far from completing excavations, and still farther from a complete survey. Yet it appears that the time is ripe for deciphering and systematizing existing findings and for the formulation and publication of a comprehensive synthesis on the basis of known materials.

THEATRE AND FILM

CONTEMPORARIES AND A "CONTEMPORARY OF OLD"

István Örkény: *Kith and Kin* — Imre Sarkadi: *Clement the Mason*;
William Shakespeare: *The Taming of the Shrew* — *As You Like It* —
Comedy of Errors

There were many first nights in the three months discussed, the names of authors and plays that promised much figure on the play-bills. Enumerating all these is part of the job of yearbooks. Only a few, three to be precise, deserve to be mentioned. Two are modern Hungarian playwrights. One of them, István Örkény, lives and writes among us, the other, Imre Sarkadi, though dead these thirteen years is still with us in spirit. The third, Shakespeare, has been the constant contemporary of the Hungarian theatre since its birth almost two hundred years ago, just as he is a contemporary of any modern effort the world over. An unbroken resonance rules between these three names and the most noble—though not most numerous—endeavours of the contemporary Hungarian theatre. It is therefore no mere coincidence that these names are recalled when one tries to remember the most successful performances.

István Örkény's latest play, *Kith and Kin* (*Vérrokonok*), is quite a mouthful. It bears witness to the youthfulness of the 61 year old playwright, and the amazing freshness of his present creative period. Though this is to be welcomed, the play demands an elasticity, a readiness and ability to adapt much like his own from his public, from the very people who thought they knew him. His two earlier plays: *The Tót Family* and *Catsplay* were presented in many theatres the world over, and in Hungary they form part of basic education. And yet a theatregoer

who takes his place in the Pesti Színház having seen these plays and willy nilly adapts his expectations to former experiences, will be struck dumb by the production. Whether he will be disappointed or add previously unfamiliar aspects to his portrait of Örkény, depends on a number of factors. On the freshness of the public for instance, the elasticity of receptiveness shown but, to be fair, also on individual taste to which everybody and anybody has a right, especially those who move in those regions where Örkény's earlier plays could be understood and evaluated.

It is quite easy to write up the story of *The Tót Family* and *Catsplay* for a theatre programme or guide, but no synopsis can be provided of *Kith and Kin*, however hard one may try. *Kith and Kin* has no story, the actors do not live through any type of dramatic events, be they of the usual sort or not. The seven actors embody different projections of a parabola. Their main characteristic is that all of them are called Bokor (a fairly common Hungarian name). They are not members of one family, however, though there is some kind of relationship among them. There is a middle-aged couple with a daughter, a young couple as well, and two Bokors living on their own, a man getting on years and an aged widow. What holds them together are not family ties but a cause that provides an elective affinity. This is manifest in a thin symbolic thread of action. All of them

donate their blood to save the life of the lonely old Pál Bokor. The cause, the child of Örkény's will and power of invention, is the railway. Every Bokor is a railwayman and in their highly differentiated mode, summing up their basic and individual attitudes, they are all obsessed by the railway: they are its servants and masters, its bosses and pawns, its victims and reformers, all at the same time. The middleaged husband risked his life for it several times. Once, in connection with his duties he was charged, though innocent, taken to court and then rehabilitated. The young husband works day and night to modernize the railway, bringing to bear all the dry passion a technocrat is capable of though he never rode a railroad all his life. The aging ex-sleeping car attendant sacrificed so many dull years to the railway that he would really like to have a rest. The women's situation is much more contradictory. The young wife is desperate to bear the possessed husband's child, the middle aged woman is the broody hen type, whose best years were spent trying to save the family nest from the all-engulfing railway. The young girl, the Bokor without a past—or family ties—is getting ready to sacrifice her youthful enthusiasm on the altar of the railway. At the end of the play, she ecstatically paints the advantages offered by the new timetable and its precision and her ecstasy does not suffer when she explains that, of course, it may not prove itself in the first few days in which case the public had better walk for a while.

But what is the play about? Who are these Bokors and what are we to make of the railway? According to the tongue in cheek commentary of the author any cause that completely takes up the life of people: collecting stamps will do, or playing cards or even football. This is an ironic understatement. The grotesque but at the same time tragic obsession of the characters would be adequate only to some really great cause. The play thus becomes a kind of Hungarian allegory about all of us Bokors living in the

second half of the 20th century along the Danube or the Tisza who, as we shape our own lives also try to do something for a greater, all-embracing cause, according to our personal disposition: fanatically or half-heartedly, with devotion or some reservations, motivated by public spirit or only for our own benefit, the way we were born, good or bad, clever or stupid, emotional or intellectual, men or women, young and old, married or single. We travel by railway, anywhere it takes us, and at the same time we also direct it, though we do not always arrive where we meant to go.

This little summary perhaps indicates how fertile Örkény's allegory is. The concept of the railway is narrow enough to mean something specific but also broad enough to include the individual "railway" interpretation of any member of the public. The same applies to the seven characters: they are just individualized enough to mean all of us, to embrace all of us—at least in our relationship to the railway. This is an ambiguous work, optimistic and pessimistic, septic and believing, ironic but also emotional. It expresses an opinion about the railway which does not only demand sensible but also irrational sacrifices and it also passes judgement on the Bokors, who are the way they were made that is they are like us. But one thing is clear: the Bokors are unable to live without the railway. It is the meaning and content of their lives, inevitably and consciously, both at the level of their mind and their raw emotions.

Kith and Kin, in an outstanding production directed by Zoltán Várkonyi, was a hit in Budapest. As to whether it will find its way to the international stage, in the wake of *The Tot Family* and *Catsplay*, remains to be seen. One thing, however, is certain: if people outside Hungary wish to get a "digest" view of Hungarians of the past thirty years, and all that in two and a half hours, *Kith and Kin* may well be a basic source.

"Let's say it is the railway" was the title of a notice. How odd that, at the same time with *Kith and Kin*, a play was put on in Veszprém, and the title of its notice could easily be: "Let's say, it is a castle." That play was found among the papers of Imre Sarkadi (see No. 22) as a fragment and was completed with loving care and high intelligence by the dramaturge and director. In this way *Clement the Mason* (*Kőműves Kelemen*) evolved from a torso into a powerful and lasting work. Its characters are kith and kin to Örkény's Bokors, but the focus being on a castle, they are not railwaymen but masons, who in the ancient Székely ballad that provided the basic inspiration of the play built the castle of Déva, but all in vain. (The Székelys are Hungarians living in Transylvania.) What was built in the daytime, collapsed at night, stones put on stones, at night, were destroyed during the day. Only a human sacrifice could reconcile the evil spirit. And thus, the beautiful, young wife of Clement the Mason, was immured among the bricks—and the castle of Déva could be finished.

The story is archetypal; each age may see its own image reflected in it. The castle symbolizes work which demands a super-human price as, in a wider sense, any cause built not of raw material or technical processes but, first of all, based on human lives. Imre Sarkadi also wanted to know whether the much suffering creator finds justification and satisfaction in the finished work or whether the work, though in conformity with preliminary plans, is estranged from its builders and serves other purposes.

These are the demons Sarkadi's Clement the Mason has to fight, being not only impetuous but also a lucid and clear-headed maker who fully knows that the demons his fellow workers fear do not exist. The others take it for gospel truth that the walls of Déva, built with sweat and pain are destroyed by infuriated demons. Clement, however, realizes that the fortress crumbles to pieces quite simply because the bricks are not laid

well, to be more exact: because they are laid as a job done for the money received but not with faith and commitment. All in vain: he is unable to transmit his faith to simple people. And thus he, as well, accepts the pact: a human sacrifice, suggested by his antagonist, the cynic Boldizsár, a fellow mason, who also does not believe in the existence of demons. It is seemingly by accident that the beautiful and loving young wife of Clement is the first to visit the building site; in reality, this is the tragedy of the logic of events: Clement is the one who has to sacrifice most for the castle of Déva, for him it is not a baronial fortress but a cause. And lo and behold: the fortress stands, the happy masons go their own way having received their reward leaving Clement behind, who is not one of them. He has no wife anymore, his motherless baby died, his mother disowned him, the priest castigated him from the pulpit, the people of his village meant to stone him, suspecting him to have killed his wife for selfish reasons. To top it all: it is flung in his face that the castle is no concern of his, it was not built for him; the masters will never let him go inside it and in a short time the population of the neighbourhood will have forgotten that the proud building was finished thanks to his sacrifice.

The reluctantly defiant and deeply sincere answer of Clement: "What does it matter to me, to whom my work will belong when finished! What do I care what will be done with it!"—is a heart-rending cry coming from Sarkadi's soul which, at the same time, does not reflect his real attitude. The writer is plagued by the contradiction: the castle has to be built—but does every castle demand such an inhuman price? Could it not be otherwise, for once, done with the passionate faith of Clement the Mason, but without his terrible sacrifice? And in a manner allowing the castle to be a peaceful and happy home for Clement? These questions are shouted to the world hopefully and anxiously and the tragedy, could it have been

completed and given the finishing touch by Sarkadi himself, might well have become a masterpiece. Even in the form it was performed, sketchy in places as it was, with dialogue not quite perfect, it is one of the best Hungarian plays written since the war.

Clement the Mason was performed in a congenial way in Veszprém. The atmosphere was tense and secretive, but the message was clear. Péter Valló, one of the most talented young directors, was in charge. At the end of the year muster of the best provincial performances held in Budapest, audiences there were able to see it as well.

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Comedy of Errors performed by the Pécs National Theater Company, had the same opportunity of well deserved country-wide publicity. Ferenc Sik's direction created an event as the Kecskemét *Troilus and Cressida* had done (see No. 53), and the Kaposvár *As You Like It* directed by Gábor Zsámbéki as well as *The Taming of the Shrew* directed in Budapest by László Seregi. The four together promise a new style in Shakespearean performance one that is novel not only in the design of the sets, a few brilliant gags thought up by the director, and an unusual interpretation of a part or two, but in the fact that the director grasps the whole of the work in a sovereign way, in terms of here and now, carrying the whole team with him, those in the principal parts as well as those who merely walk on, and also designers of sets, costumes and lighting, forcing them into the service of a single idea.

I am in no position to know all the most modern Shakespeare interpretations abroad, I cannot therefore say whether or not the Hungarian ideas are completely new. I read about a production of *The Taming of the Shrew* much like the one at the József Attila Theatre in English reviews. In the age of Women's Lib interpreting the taming of Kate as a brutal subjugation of women is obviously in the air both in Britain and in Hungary. In 1974 this could not be other-

wise. Apart from the fact, however, as to how many new solutions and ideas László Seregi showed us it is certain that the Hungarian public was made to realize the tragic undercurrent of the comedy for the first time. This play had certain established conventions in Hungary. It was either put on as a joyful entertainment about the taming of a stubborn bride, viewed with pleasure by conservative husbands, and with malicious glee by wives, the companions in distress. The "more up to date" interpretation was to look on it as two splendid Renaissance beings finding each other, mitigating the operation of taming to a "period of adjustment." Seregi, on his part, showed us Kate as the potential tragic heroine and was even able to make felt that though Petruchio breaks her in for himself, he so to speak carries out a social commission. Kate not only has to fit into the framework of a marriage humiliating to herself but also into a strange social order, giving up her individualities, her values and even her proud and sincere independence.

Gábor Zsámbéki's in Kaposvár was a new reading as well. When *As You Like It* was last performed in Budapest, the fairy-tale realm of the exiled prince in the Forest of Arden was in unambiguous opposition to the court of the usurper. Zsámbéki did something quite different. The contrast is present here as well, but not in an idealized way: the elder prince and his followers take part in the idyll of egalitarianism under the compulsion of their exile only. For them all this is a temporary masquerade, court-life in a novel form, a big and several smaller stumps instead of a throne and armchairs. After the short, poetic excursion in the forest, they will have to return to reality. In the last scene—probably a brand new idea—the lovers dance the stiff steps of a monotonous and melancholically grotesque quadrille while the others wordlessly roll up the immense canvas symbolizing the forest. The idyll has come to an end: only Jaques stays there with the canvas that is now a bunch of rags, and

not a forest-symbol that had lost its validity. It is he who refuses to accept reality, which is far from enticing, but a doubtful and contradictory thing, and persists defiantly in the utopian stance of being outside society. This production was performed twice in Budapest.

The greatest success both with the specialist and the general public was the Pécs *Comedy of Errors* in the first place because of the audacious and well-realized interpretation by the director and secondly due to the evenly high standards of the cast. The *Comedy of Errors* has always been performed as a farce lacking complexity. The underlying tragic layer is obvious here as well. Beyond the comic element of mistaken identities it is impossible, in 1974, not to realize the insecurity of man's social position, the contradictions of illusion and reality, the looseness of apparently intimate human relationships, and the facts of alienation. Aegeon is obviously the character in the greatest peril, and Ferenc Sik turns him into a permanent figure in the comedy. In the hall already we see him begging for his ransom from the actors and then, from time to time, he moves slowly across the stage in the company of a gaoler and a blind violinist, asking for

help from actors who all know and pity him with all their heart but have absolutely no intention to practise charity. At the same time they use Aegeon's rope, the end of which is held by the gaoler, as a skipping rope. The citizens of Ephesus, as presented by Sik are wildly unrestrained. They not only turn somersaults and crawl about but also evidence an unbridled sensuousness never before seen on a Hungarian stage in any Shakespeare play, not even *Romeo and Juliet*. This unrestrained and very entertaining comedy tempo however conceals a deeper meaning. In a paradoxical way this lack of inhibition expresses the very same situation of danger so obviously revealed in the portrayal of Aegeon. The unbridled indulgence of outside energies is only a substitute for action; it conceals—but also lays bare in a tell-tale way—the fundamental inner insecurity and defencelessness of the actors and their situation.

The railway, the castle, the fairytale Forest of Arden, rag to be rolled up, the rope, that tie you and yet are a toy, are the great theatrical symbols of our present. These were the lasting events at the close of the 1973/74 theatre season.

JUDIT SZÁNTÓ

THE SUBJECT AND THE STYLE

Ferenc Kósa: Heavy Snowfall; Judit Elek: Istenmezeje 1973; Rezső Szörényi: Strange Faces; Károly Makk: Catsplay

Choices

In a recent issue (No. 54) the New Hungarian Quarterly reviewed Ferenc Kósa's film, *No Time* (Nincs idő). Let me now give my impressions of another film of his. I have seen a very beautiful and very strange film. Ferenc Kósa's *Heavy Snowfall* is indeed strange. It takes place during, or more pre-

cisely towards the end of the Second World War, somewhere near the Hungarian border, amid great mountains and forests. The director has chosen a landscape as background which has so far only been bettered in one or two Hungarian films at most. I must admit that at first the tranquillising beauty of this peculiar, peaceful, mountainous country even troubled me somewhat. I felt

that it was distracting my attention, so completely antithetical was it to the essentially sombre subject of war. Why didn't Ferenc Kósa, and the scenario writer, Sándor Csóóri, the poet, situate the story in some kind of barren, sandy wasteland, I muttered, where they could have better expressed what they had to say. A few days after the run-through, however, I found I understood the director's purpose more fully—the landscape, outmatching the human world, had its own important part to play.

A stocky young Hungarian soldier with a black moustache and an old peasant woman hurry up the endless ascent of the mountain-side, amidst dense forest. The old woman is his grandmother. On they go, on and on, for days on end, each with a bundle of bread in their hand, and the boy also carrying an axe in readiness. There is no other human being anywhere in all the wilderness. Once, indeed, they see a man with a bandaged head and torn shirt clattering by among the shrubs and trees. From then on they proceed more cautiously. For the boy has to meet his father on the mountain-top. The father has deserted from the front, and the boy was the first in manoeuvres and as a reward was allowed home to his village on leave. On they go, grandmother and grandson. The grandmother is kindness itself, with a natural love and wisdom; the grandson has knocked down and killed another soldier during the manoeuvres in order to take first place.

The grandmother is preparing herself for death, the boy to live at any price. And they are both caught by a Hungarian punishment squad, but not before the grandmother has revived a Polish partisan girl who parachuted down there in the wilderness. The boy has taken the girl's revolver, which is now hidden in his pocket as he is being questioned by a young lieutenant, the commanding officer of the punishment squad, that is, the military police. How dared they enter the mountain zone, when martial law had been proclaimed there, the region declared an

operational area, and everyone ordered to stay in his home surroundings? They were gathering mushrooms, claimed grandmother and grandson, from time immemorial this has always been the season for gathering mushrooms. And the axe? "We just found it"—is the reply. Then it is the matter of leave that comes under suspicion. If the boy was given leave because he came out first in the manoeuvres, it must mean that in fact he did not want to fight for his country, and obviously strained himself to his utmost during manoeuvres to escape going to the front.

The lieutenant knows that he is being told a lie, but does not know the whys and wherefores. He does not want to have the soldier shot until he is certain of his guilt. And as the questioning goes on day after day, the lieutenant slowly comes to the forefront of the picture alongside the boy. When it is discovered that the boy even has a gun, and to top it all, that, too is supposed to be something they have found, the lieutenant almost breaks down. Particularly when the boy admits the full truth, that they came to the mountain in order to meet his father, declared dead. The lieutenant no longer knows what to believe. His own doubts emerge: although a Horthyist officer, he does not believe that victory will be achieved. In the end he releases the boy, who manages to meet his father; but they are taken prisoner once again. They try to escape, the father is shot, and in revenge the boy snatches up a submachine gun and pumps round after round into the log cabin headquarters. By now, however, there is no one in it, since the punishment squad has been ordered to move on. It starts to snow, and the snow buries the grandmother, who waits there patiently for death.

It is not difficult to recognize the Hungarian version of Fukazava's short story—*Pilgrim's Song*—in this passage, in the voluntary death of the grandmother. In old Japan the aged were carried up by their relatives into the mountain snow to die; here the

grandmother herself chooses her grandson as her companion. Looked at from this angle, the ascent of the mountainside is made clear and is given an inner meaning. The sublimity of nature, the grandeur of the landscape also find an explanation: this film of past events moves into the present at the point where nature and natural human life are set against anti-natural war.

Kósa's film therefore is saying, not that war is the worst of all the evils that befall man, or that man may do, not even that war distorts human relations. What it is saying runs rather as follows. "Careful, men, there is still war; there will always be war somewhere, among people, because we do not live in harmony with the world, with nature, with the earth; we do not live the way our nature requires, because we are not free. We are not free because of our own external and inner violence".

There are five characters in *Heavy Snowfall* who are all, to a lesser or greater degree, "resisting evil". In the first place the father, who has deserted from the Soviet front, manages to get home, and is presumably politically Left, perhaps even a Communist, although the film is silent on that point. But the father resists, openly, unrelentingly. Then there is a former inmate of a forced labour detachment within the punishment camp, who has refused to collaborate at the front, and rather than put on any kind of uniform is prepared to die. He is not a militant, he is more the quiet intellectual. Through his wry, fantastic comments and his passion for truth, however, he becomes one of the most striking and meaningful characters in the film. Then there is a captain who is sentenced to be shot for not allowing his company to be massacred for the benefit of the Germans. He is permitted to carry out the sentence on himself, and turns on the brigadier-general leading the firing squad and shoots him, before dying from the bullets of the German officers present.

And finally, the two chief characters,

the lieutenant and the young soldier, always in the end deciding in favour of greater freedom. The lieutenant takes on greater importance than the rest of the characters because again and again, with each of the prisoners, he probes and probes, should he be executed or not. Here, therefore, the existentialism of the decision is absolutely concrete, clear, and, moreover, pointed. The series of challenges force the lieutenant to choose between humanity and inhumanity. The boy, on the other hand, dwells in the half-world between passivity and action, the contrast slowly developing in the course of the film. As long as he has only a private goal—meeting his father—he takes no action, and fails to respond to the challenge of fascism, which is not a private but a historical situation. When, however, this purpose no longer exists—his father is killed—all his energy is concentrated on his attempt to destroy violence and inhuman power—an object with a significance beyond himself. By then, however, it is too late: and his bullets as they lodge in the deserted building of the headquarters symbolize as much the time-lag in Central and East European history as the tragedy of the rebel who, due to his own impotence, has been left alone.

Eskimo customs in Hungary

Judit Elek, who began her career with documentaries (*Encounter*, 1963, *How Long Does Man Live?* 1969), and then in her first feature film, *Island on Land* 1969 blended the documentary and surrealism, has now reverted to the statement of facts. Watching her new film, *Istenmezeje*, one is inevitably tempted to argue with her. Does this form enable one to reach beyond the surface of things down to further depths? The film proves it does not. And yet, what Judit Elek has undertaken could be compared to an expedition. To seek out people in present-day Hungary who live under such rigid, traditional conditions and rules of

morality almost amounts to an expedition among the Indians of Venezuela in the Orinoco valley. I use the term "traditional", although the adjective "old-fashioned", or indeed "backward" would have been more appropriate.

Istenmezeje is a small mining village in the hills of northern Hungary. Both adults and children here refer to the Great Hungarian Plain as to some other globe. Things a woman or a girl is not allowed to do in Istenmezeje, she can safely do if she goes to work in one of the big agricultural co-operatives on the Plain. In the village the parents, grandparents and relatives still keep an eye on everything. And what an eye! I do not know if the Quakers or the Puritans in their day maintained more rigid moral norms than the inhabitants of this Hungarian mining village after nearly thirty years of socialism.

The director must have had some such question in mind when setting out, camera in hand, in the wake of the lives and fates of some of the girls and boys of Istenmezeje. One of the girls is called Ilona, the other Maria. We meet them when they are just bidding farewell to general school (and are consequently fourteen years old). They walk through the village, flowers in hand, singing, with their parents and grandparents carrying presents under their arms. Somehow the children receive them with a kind of distrust and embarrassment. Judit Elek's sequences clearly convey the impression that this celebration is in some sort insincere, since there is nothing here really for rejoicing. And later it also turns out that Ilona cannot continue her studies, although she would have dearly liked to do so. And why not? Because her parents do not allow it. They do not consider schooling is a good and desirable thing. Because then—as the toothless, although not really old mother and father claim—the child would finally leave the village, wouldn't she, since here there are no jobs for educated young people. Incidentally, there are many more men and

women with similar bad teeth in this village, even though poverty is not the prevailing difficulty in this region. But Judit Elek is making a sociological survey, and in that case the level of dental hygiene in Hungary is also an important factor. (Village people really grudge the money for dental treatment and false teeth.) Anyway, Ilonka cannot go on studying, as a result she works here and there during the first summer on co-operative farms, and later on stays at home. So what else could she do than the thing done by every somewhat bitter girl of sixteen, without work, the world over: she accepts the love and proposal of a twenty-year-old boy.

Then however, the moral machinery of the village gets going. The girl is not yet sixteen, and the boy is an orphan who has been brought up by a stepmother. And, believe it or not, in this Hungarian village of 1973 AD. you need a father and mother of means and importance in order to get married. Consequently the young people can therefore only make plans, no more, for their marriage, and go out together only by defying their relatives and the village. These are sad children, beaten down, as it were, even though they do not resign themselves to the inevitable, and the film leaves no doubt that they will finally get married. But how, one wonders, they will bring up their children? Will this village draw them back to it or not?

It was in this state of tension that I watched the film. The film itself, however, is not as tense as that. The camera moves slowly from face to face, with the reporter in the film putting occasional questions to the mother, the aunt, the stepmother and even to the girl and boy themselves. At times this becomes immensely boring. And I well remember the voice of my one-time art teacher thundering in our ears: "The artist can afford to do everything except bore people".

A love story in documentary form? I think it is precisely due to this form that

Judit Elek's film does not provide the viewer with even as much as could legitimately be found in the subject.

Young offenders, young director

I always watch the first film of a new director with a considerable amount of understanding. And in this case I badly needed all the understanding I'd got. Otherwise I'd have been annoyed all the way through, and indeed, been offended, why a director should invite me—after all, every new film amounts to a clear-cut invitation—to partake in his idea-feast (even if not his love-feast) if I have to wait and wait in vain for a single idea. All we, the poor viewer-victims, learn from Rezső Szörényi's film, *Strange Faces*, is that two university students of psychology help a juvenile delinquent after his release. They want to study the way in which such a queer fish returns to ordinary life. (Incidentally, the youth who takes the part of the "queer fish" is playing himself, being in actual fact an ex-prisoner, and only the other day I heard that he has again been arrested for disorderly conduct.) So everything that is done is done to acquire this professional knowledge, in the sacred name of scholarship. And yet the two budding psychologists—one an ugly, bespectacled boy, the other a handsome, darkhaired girl, are highly incompetent, and blunder about in their management of things, that is, the affairs of the released boy. Now they wheedle him, now they bully him; they want to befriend the guinea pig, even perhaps to the extent of the girl having an affair with the far from inexperienced boy. But one thing alone is never clear: what they actually had in mind, what they were planning when they decided to take on this extra work. Or was it perhaps the director who had not thought out what he actually wanted?

I think—at least this is how the film struck me—that the director is not even

trying to experiment. Perhaps he is just "mucking about" with an experiment. This conclusion is no more than pure malice on my part. But even if I turn to my better self, I cannot deny that aside from some specialist information—mainly relating to delinquency itself and not its psychological analysis—the film does not express any thought-out concept at all, that is, a director's concept, any purpose at the beginning of a road that should produce some result at the end. Because the attempt to reclaim the boy does not really succeed; and by the end of the film we see him being picked up once again: this time, true, for vagrancy, not for theft. That is what I call cautious optimism. Any young and consequently slightly cynical director of our age would have felt it a gross betrayal of reality to end a film with a completely reclaimed character. That would be ridiculously romantic and sentimental, wouldn't it? But on the other hand, in our society he could not presume to be pessimistic over the possibility of breaking free from the past, as Fellini in *Cabiria's Nights*. So he turned out a half-victory, a half-failure to compound with his conscience. The boy goes back to prison, but only as a vagrant, or for the reason subtly defined in the film, as "work-shy."

That is how young offenders live today, and this is how certain young directors do not think in Hungary. Because, after all, the subject was worth an effort; worth taking a more profound look at the affairs of youngsters still in their 'teens, if that was what interested him. The directors of detective films can conjure up "wondrous mysteries" from similar characters. So Rezső Szörényi should have produced a study à la Dostoevsky at least, or a wry, revealing documentary analysis of a human and social malady. He could have revealed the hard, dramatic struggle fought for a human being, and the grave, tragic failure, too, while he was about it.

As it is, it is only the undertaking itself

that is interesting. But one must remember, this is his first film. He may well do something fine with his second.

The Errors of Catsplay

I have never before seen such an ambitious film in which the subject and the expression form so great a contrast. *Catsplay* is quite simply, a mistake. Károly Makk, whose last film, *Love*, was a well-deserved international success, has this time been completely overriden by János Tóth, his cameraman. This cameraman, with his delicate, incredibly exquisite vision, has cut up an originally coherent story—more exactly: the lives of two sisters—into split images, inner visions, scraps of memories and elusive and vibrating colours. One of the two elderly Hungarian ladies lives in Western Europe, the other at home in Hungary. Giza, in Western Europe, is crippled and spends her memory-laden days in a wheelchair. Erzsi, who lives in Budapest, a former teacher, is a widow in love with Viktor, an old, once famous operatic singer. Then there is a certain Paula, Erzsi's friend, and a plain girl, a small seampstress living downstairs, whom Erzsi calls by the pet name of Mousie.

Actually the film consists of a series of letters and telephone calls between the two sisters. Giza is wise and prudent what else could she be in the captivity of her wheelchair? Erzsi, the younger of the two, is impulsive and engaging, liable to a host of extravagant acts and sentiments. The complications arise when the scheming Paula seduces fat, vain, wonderful Viktor from his allegiance to Erzsi. Whereupon Erzsi proceeds to smash things to smithereens, take the dining lovers by surprise, and pull the whole dinner before them from the table. Paula runs off screaming, and the old porky grandiloquent tenor begs on his bended knees for mercy. This scene demonstrates Károly Makk's basic error: from an unavoid-

ably comic, or at least grotesque scene he tries to wring a grim, dramatic clash. At such moments, and in fact throughout most of the film, the viewer in unpleasantly haunted by the thought that the director is trying to force him into a sense of tension and catharsis, when all that one sees provokes laughter and a certain quiet indulgence. Viktor, the operatic singer, is a figure designed for mockery with his huge, unappealing nose, and his unbearable and outdated gallantry, sentimentality and stupidity. In fact the whole love of this aging couple can only demand sympathetic humour because it develops in terms only suitable to the "*Schwärmeri*" of young schoolgirls. At fifty and sixty this may be humorous, pitiable or grotesque, but it is not dramatic. It could indeed have poetic, serious and gay undertones, but to perform the whole thing with the solemnity of a tragedy by Racine is plain nonsense. And this can be seen by a reference to the István Örkény play of the same name which has provided the text (see full text of the play in No. 44 of *The N.H.Q.*). In Hungary, *Catsplay* is played on the stage with gaiety, with candid humour, exploiting the fantastic situations in the plot—and with terrific success. You leave the theatre feeling good; it has been an honest and at the same time refreshing experience, recalling the comedies of the ancient world. And how do you feel leaving the cinema?

You feel annoyed; you feel antagonistic, and above all you feel at a loss. Why did the flavour, the incongruities, the wit of the original play have to be transformed into such a dark Victorian drama? It was this same annoyance which led a Hungarian critic to write, at the Cannes premiere of this film; "One has often heard of someone losing his sense of humour, but to lose someone else's —."

The film is however, as beautiful as it is bad. When for example, the enamoured Erzsi writes painfully about her emotional vicissitudes to her sister, the voice reading

the letter is accompanied by the picture of a peacock preening itself on the top of a big tree. At intervals, while the heroine drinks her coffee in the kitchen, a beautiful white-speckled dog gambols through the bushes. The visual effect are always as delicate, measured, self-contained and apposite as the perceptive vision of the cameraman and the director can make them. I, however, watching them, came increasingly to feel that neither of these women had ever seen the world, past and present, with such eyes. The system of images, the design of the film, the slow and measured pace given by the director to each figure and scene, are consequently divorced from the much realistic, protean and vivacious characters.

And finally, in flat defiance of Örkény's ending to the play, Erzsi, sitting in her wheel-chair, dies, and the younger sister attempts to commit suicide by dissolving

a boxful of sleeping pills in a glass of water and drinking it off. But she survives. I looked at it in complete incomprehension, and then I remembered that on the stage she only takes some quite innocuous tablets in her great crisis of love. A further example of the director forcing drama out of what was originally light humour. And after all this, the ethereal figures of two women float down towards the riverside in a landscape out of Poussin. They must be the delicate evocation of the two sisters in their far-off youth. Again a vision almost too beautiful to be true. Only, unfortunately, it would fit into any other film just as well.

So there remains the final, unanswerable question: how could a director with such a distinguished career behind him, and such an immense capacity for identification as Károly Makk, so utterly misunderstand *Catsplay*?

JÓZSEF TORNAI

MUSICAL LIFE

CONDUCTORS' COMPETITION ON TELEVISION

The International Competition for Conductors arranged in Hungary from April 24 to May 12, 1974 was, as far as I am aware, the first of its kind in the history of television. Evening after evening millions of music-lovers watched the conductors and listened to some of the world's finest music. It took this contest, indeed, to allow us an opportunity of hearing several excellent compositions in several successive interpretations. The response of the viewers showed that they considered the competition a wonderful idea, and thoroughly appreciated this initiative on the part of Hungarian TV.

Let us begin with facts and figures.

Forty-two young musicians, not more than thirty-five years old, entered the competition. Thirty-six of them—ten Hungarians—five Japanese and five Polish; four West German, three East Germans two Americans, two Dutch and two Austrian competitors, and one British, one Australian and one Czechoslovak contestant—conducted the orchestra during the first round. The set pieces were Beethoven's First Symphony, Schubert's B minor Symphony (The Unfinished) and the Overture to Rossini's "Barber of Seville"—seven movements in all. It was decided one day before each entrant's turn which two of the three he would be required to conduct. Each entrant had twenty minutes he could use as he pleased. Some of them used the whole time for rehearsing

with the orchestra, and only letting them actually play the exposition from Schubert's Unfinished Symphony, but about half of them conducted the entire two movements.

The second round consisted of eight works from the Romantic period: Tchaikovsky's Fifth, Dvořák's Ninth, Mendelssohn's Third Symphony, Liszt's "Mazeppa", Johann Strauss' "Emperor Waltz", the overture "Roman Carnival" by Berlioz, "Die Meistersinger" by Wagner, and Verdi's *La forza del destino*. The contestants on the whole followed the same procedure as before.

The third round consisted of two parts. In the first section the candidate had to accompany a singer singing one of twelve designated arias, in the second he had to conduct a work or two parts of a work by one of eight twentieth-century composers. (Bartók, Kodály, Debussy, Richard Strauss, Ravel and Stravinsky and works by two contemporary Hungarians, Rudolf Maros and István Sárközy.)

The fourth round, the finals, was also in two sections. The entrant was first required to conduct a new Hungarian composition he had only seen for the first time the day before the performance, and then two movements from Beethoven's Third, Fifth or Sixth Symphony. For the modern work the time of its actual duration was given, and for the Beethoven symphony twenty minutes. Here again it was decided who was to conduct what by the drawing of lots.

The eliminations took place in the main hall of the Hungarian Academy of Music. The whole proceedings were not, of course, transmitted on television, for they took in all some seventeen or eighteen hours, spread over four days. But beginning with the second round, the entire competition was televised: and the finals, lasting over three hours, were televised on the first channel. In addition a one-hour film of the elimination rounds was made and shown on the first channel.

So much for the procedure of the competition. Now I want to make a few brief comments on the idea of a competition itself.

People looked forward to the contest rather sceptically, and not unreasonably so, for the performance of a conductor is difficult to judge, and even more difficult to rate than that of a solo instrumentalist. Audiences, and even experts, feel that there is really no yardstick by which to gauge a conductor's excellence, especially as conducting an orchestra is really a composite thing: after all the great conductors who serve as our standard of comparison have usually spent several years, and often much more at the head of an orchestra, and in a number of cases conduct orchestras they organized and trained themselves, developing their own powers in the process. And here at the contest the entrants had to show their ability and aptitude in twenty short minutes. What can one do in twenty minutes—and, even more important, how much can one see and hear, to judge a musician's performance from twenty minutes conducting?

Everything—that was what in fact emerged. In most cases the talent and ability of the contestant showed clearly and nakedly as transmitted through his personality. Astonishingly enough, it soon became quite clear that a competition for conductors is more objective than any competition for instrumentalists, for in the latter case a virtuoso mastery of the instrument often con-

ceals their genuine musicianship (or more accurately their lack of musicianship) and diverts attention from the major question in the performing arts, namely, what is the performer himself really like?

For he has to have some kind of a personality, he has to have appeal, to hold the interest. Appeal in this case is to be interpreted freely and broadly, for his shock value, his ability to startle and overwhelm, may be just as much a part of his appeal as his imaginative capacity or power of commanding sympathy. When an artist appears on the concert platform something has to happen before he has even put a finger on the keys, before he has drawn his bow across the strings, before he has raised his baton. A performer who ambles in without making an entrance, who is only greeted by a muttered "Look, he's come in, hasn't he? That's him, isn't it?" has mistaken his vocation. The modest and the unassuming, the man who is still drab and ordinary under the limelight, will not excel in a calling which demands as a first requisite that he can catch and keep for hours the attention of a lot of people.

Yet things are not as simple as they seem.

A lot of people know this, and conductors know it too. Those who are drab and unassuming, know it, and burst in like a general riding at the head of a triumphant army, are immediately found out—whether instinctively or consciously—but found out. The comment—"Look how he's come in, just like a conductor!" can be just as fatal as the question "How did he get in? I didn't notice him coming." He can only enter as he is, and his mere appearance immediately reveals what he is like.

Let us go on.

Any orchestra can play by itself. This very simple fact is often ignored today. The romantic cult of the individual, interestingly enough, finds its culmination in the present day. Audiences which used to regard the contribution of the conductor rather scepti-

cally, claiming that the orchestra could get along quite well without him, now seem to go to the other extreme. They seem to be of the opinion that the conductor blows the flute and beats the drum and plays all the other instruments as well. When they talk about the recordings made by the great classic conductors they seem to forget that they had the foremost orchestras of the world at their disposal. When, for instance, they listen to the notoriously difficult flute and oboe solos in Toscanini's legendary recording of the Rossini overture, they are apt to forget that it was the world's best wind players who achieved that effect.

Both attitudes—the belief that the conductor is everything, the belief he is nothing—are right, and both are wrong.

An outstanding Hungarian flautist once told me:

"On a visit to Budapest—fortunately, there were several of them—Charles Münch once conducted Debussy's *L'Après-midi d'une Faune* I did everything just as he wanted me to and all through it I had the feeling that that was just exactly my idea of the flute solo as well. I greatly enjoyed playing under his baton. Then I went home, and it suddenly occurred to me that I would have liked to play it entirely differently, though probably he had been right. . . ."

The lesson of that story is that a great conductor changes the approach of the musicians playing under him from within, and manages to persuade them at that moment that this was exactly what they thought about the music too. To put it more precisely: a great conductor creates situations—by mysterious and inexplicable means—in which his interpretation is unhesitatingly accepted by the orchestra. He manages to alter the sound through the players: the excellent production is merely a result from his power of affecting and altering the musicians. He works something like the good physician who is immediately aware of the real and deep-seated causes of the rash on our skin, instead of simply dealing with

the outward rash itself by all kinds of ointments.

This kind of a conductor, of course, is a rare bird indeed.

A significant proportion of the young conductors, as I said, about half of them, rehearsed with the orchestra first. But how rarely did the sound improve in beauty, how rarely was its texture fuller and more alive! Some of them just said, "Repeat this part, please!" And that was less than nothing, for the orchestra had played the piece innumerable times, know it backwards, so why did these young men think that under their direction they would play it better the second time? Others resorted to literary language: "Heroically, please." "I want a subtle, lyrical intonation". "Look, this is like meeting your loved one." As a matter of fact they achieved nothing by it.

In point of fact there was only one entrant who could really work with the orchestra, really rehearse with it. He was Rolf Feichtinger of Austria, the man who only got as far as the exposition of Schubert's first movement in the twenty minutes. He is now thirty, but has already a career in conducting behind him. For some time he had been Karajan's assistant. (But please, believe me, dear reader, we listeners were not influenced by this bit of biographical information. . . .!) He gave excellent advice to his players, and in fact the details took on an added delicacy. The trouble was, however, that having got so far as the finals, he conducted the first movement of Beethoven's Third Symphony with a feeling of strain, intensively and without impact. . . . Feichtinger is an ideal rehearsing conductor, but after his work is done someone is needed to do the actual conducting. This rare and valuable type, by the way, is the most unfortunate representative of the conducting profession. (He resembles the pianist who practices all the time, but just when he thinks he is ready for a public performance, someone else is asked to play. The only difference is that the work of the rehearsing conductor is paid.)

What is most important: both the thorough preliminary preparation and the talent of a conductor can be gauged with relative accuracy, quite independently of the style and period of the music performed. Beethoven's First and Dvořák's Ninth are equally suitable for displaying the quality of a conductor, despite the fact that almost a century separates the two. The gifted conductor is gifted almost regardless of what he conducts: a man who can impart his sense of rhythm and inspire other with his understanding and concept of the music can express this through his own individual personality. Musical aptitude is not nearly so closely tied up with any one style or group of styles as many music critics think today.

One kind of limitation in the competition was, however, reasonable.

Those who chose the set pieces—and they deserve all possible praise for their labours—only included works written after 1800, that is, only material from a day and age in which the conductor had already acquired his present position. Much as one regrets the absence of works by Haydn, Mozart and J. S. Bach, compositions prior to the nineteenth century, or those written still earlier, their performance is not so dependent on the work of the conductor. This is even more obviously the case with Baroque music, which was roughly in vogue until 1750, spanning the lives of Bach, Handel, Vivaldi, Corelli and their contemporaries, where the conductor is always "primus inter pares". In Baroque music, and even more in the Renaissance period, the conductor's task was different, for he contributed to the shape of the final tone by playing some kind of an instrument himself (usually harpsichord) or by singing.

To return to this particular competition: it was a great success. With about fifty music competitions behind me, I feel myself qualified to remark that it takes the presence of at least one competitor who is a new discovery, a man of unquestionable talent in his field, or even a genius, to make a contest

of this kind really stimulating. Such a personality can resume in himself all the music played, can give sense to the entire contest. Unfortunately only about one in ten music competitions produce this kind of a personality. But this one did. His name is Ken Ichiro Kobayashi.

As his name indicates, he is Japanese. He is 34, and conducts the Tokyo Symphony Orchestra and the Tokyo Philharmonic. He had never been abroad before, and only speaks his mother tongue. German was the official language of the competition and Mr. Kobayashi did not speak this either. When here and there he stopped the orchestra, he used his hands, uttering only a few international phrases of instruction to indicate his intentions—and, to the great pleasure of orchestra, jury and audiences, he was able to get his meaning across. His victory was certain from the very first round. . . . But before continuing, I must make it clear that Ken Ichiro Kobayashi was not only the best among the given competitors, he would be splendid in any group of conductors. Take him out of the competition and imagine that he is conducting an important concert; he will still be admirable. Will the reader, please, remember his name, Ken Ichiro Kobayashi, for this is a name he is certain to meet again.

Kobayashi as we said, is 34, no longer very young. As a result he is not threatened with the fate of many young conductors, rocketing to fame and almost as quickly sinking again into anonymity, or, at best, living on their former glory as purely local figures.

The most striking quality about this Japanese artist is that he is inspiring and lovable. Everybody is delighted to make music under his baton, and the musicians find themselves doing their best to carry out his wishes. He is one of the few able to open up the sound of an orchestra. His rhythm is soft and flexible, yet severely accurate. He conducts with an upward lift of his arms, lifting the sound with it, and the sweep of

his horizontal gestures seems to give wings to the instrument, or group of instruments, to which they are addressed. He conducted Beethoven's Sixth much more slowly than usual, but he rounded out the tempo magnificently, bringing out a calm beauty of tone such as only the greatest conductors are capable of producing. He can judge to a hairsbreadth where to intervene in the flow of the music, sometimes with only the slightest flick of the baton (I saw something like this with Charles Münch), but when he is preparing for a musical climax his movements have a power that would move mountains. He could be better compared to some phenomenon of nature than to his colleagues, for most conductors prefer to conduct in the first person. "Look, this is me conducting!"—whereas Kobayashi's personality is so strong that he has no need to emphasize his ego, and can even give the impression that everything goes on its way as a matter of course, as the brook ripples and the breeze blows.

And yet his presence is felt in every second. It is presence in the highest sense of the performing arts. He knows the works he conducts as he know his mother tongue, though he probably knows little about European culture. At such times one finds oneself asking whether we do not attach too

great an importance to culture and education in matters of music. Perhaps we think too much and verbalize too much in all the arts. . . . But however that may be, one thing is certain: Ken Ichiro Kobayashi is an instinctive artist, blessed by God.

But even beside Kobayashi the Hungarian *Ádám Medveczky*, who finished second, displayed a distinguished talent. He won of course, the largest number of audience votes. We should here explain the system of voting. In the second and third rounds the international jury made its points-rating public, and the viewers were shown the scores. Voting was secret in the finals, and the audience was also given an opportunity of voting. Each competitor who reached the finals was covered by a telephone number, and the Viewers' Prize was awarded to the entrant whose number received the largest number of phone calls. (There was an automat for each number, registering the number of calls.) The judgement of the jury was only made public a day later, to avoid influencing the public.

All in all, I think that the International Competition for Conductors sponsored by Hungarian TV set an example that is worth following.

ANDRÁS PERNYE

NEW RECORDS

TWO RECORDS BY DEZSŐ RÁNKI

1. *Frédéric Chopin Etudes* Op. 10. (1-12) *Nocturne* in B major, Op. 9, No. 3 *Ballade* in G minor, Op. 23 *Ballade* in F major, Op. 38 Hungaroton, LPX 11555 (Stereo-Mono)

2. *Robert Schumann Fantasie* in C major, Op. 17 *Kinderszenen*, Op. 15 *Arabeske*, Op. 18 Hungaroton, LPX 11554 (Stereo-Mono)

The first disc was only recently released in Hungary—it was first issued in Paris where it immediately won the *Grand Prix du Disque*. And indeed, in France and in English-speaking countries—as well as in many other parts of the world—this outstanding 22-year-old pianist is already well-known in person. If I say that his Grand Prix winning record faithfully reflects his knowledge and skill then I have already summarized the fine impression this series of recordings make.

I had an opportunity over the past five years to observe Dezső Ránki's development, in other words, I attended nearly all his concerts in Hungary. I can claim on this basis that rarely in a lifetime does one encounter such born musical talent combined with intellectuality. Add to this a splendid physical endowment. He is the kind of man of whom it is said: "God meant him to be a pianist".

Ránki's record—and now I refer concretely to his first, his Chopin disc—wonderfully combines youthful vitality with the image the absorbed, mature artist has formed of music. It is characterized by a kind of splendid serenity nourished by unknown sources, at the same time his music, when there is need for it, sets fire to the imagination. I hardly need to add that both are needed when it comes to Chopin.

Take the series of *Etudes* Op. 10. One must know a thousand and one things in order to be able to traverse the realm of this series in all its aspects, he needs to be able

to transform figures and to renew in a manner that perhaps nobody is able. Yet if someone puts Ránki's disc on the record-player and listens to only the first *Etude* (C major), he will hardly be able to stop at that. Here Ránki grasps the essence at once: the sparkling, virtuoso right hand appears over a majestic, left hand theme proceeding in the manner of a chorale, thus the work unites absolute dynamism with unshakable serenity. This first *Etude* is one of the high points of the record. But even further pleasant surprises are in store for the listener. The annoyed, shaken tone of No. 4 (C Sharp minor), and then the irresistible, happy buoyancy of No. 5 (G Flat major) follow each other as if during the pause between the pieces the performer had been replaced by another. In the background of No. 9 (F minor) we may glimpse Polish ballad-remembrances and we find it almost unbelievable that the very same artist played the translucent, clear No. 8 (F major).

I can say the very same about the presentation of the *Nocturne* and the two *Ballades*: we hear mature, clarified, and at the same time—when necessary—passionate and free piano playing, everyone of them evidence that Ránki interprets every piece as his own.

Schumann's artistry is more complex, and a somewhat more transformed problem—but in the strictly pianistic aspect playing Schumann is perhaps easier. However, the previously mentioned requirement of transformation is topped here by the fact as well that, in a given instance, the performer has to change moods within the same movement. Schumann's world—as those who know him are aware—constantly moves between dream and sobriety, and in both conditions a whole series of evanescent images, almost intangible shadowy forms emerge, only to fade away again without consequences. Apart from this Schumann's artistry has two extremes. One a headlong rush as if in a chase,

which sometimes grows almost convulsed, the kind of struggle when someone makes an effort to free his neck from some kind of stranglehold. The other extreme is an awed, serene, poetic image which very often speaks of profound nostalgia. The *Fantasia* in C major comprises the essential elements of this artistry in one tremendous span lasting nearly half an hour.

Perhaps Dezső Ránki's recording does not always give back this first layer, one could conceive a few elements of the middle movement more feverishly and tumultuously played—but the first movement is brilliantly buoyant, at the *Im Legendenton* inscription he creates a new world, and the last section, in Ránki's hands, turns into an elevated revelation. Perhaps the famous *Kinderszenen* succeeded even more beautifully than this. Ránki is generally accepted as having a great perception for all poetic matters. He treats Schumann's "wonderful little trifles" with great tenderness, and he directly radiates their moving beauty to the listener.

SÁNDOR FALVAI'S TWO RECORDS

1. *Frédéric Chopin Piano Concerto* in E minor, Op. 11 Budapest Philharmonic Orchestra Conducted by András Kórodi *Mazurka* in A minor, Op. 17, No. 4 *Mazurka* in C major, Op. 24, No. 2 *Nocturne* in C Sharp minor, Op. posth. Hungaroton LPX 11654 (Stereo-Mono)

2. *W. A. Mozart Quintet* in E Flat major, K. 452 *L. van Beethoven Quintet* in E Flat major, Op. 16

Sándor Falvai (piano); Péter Pongrácz (oboe); Tibor Dittrich (clarinet); Ferenc Tárjáni (horn); Tibor Fülemlé (bassoon) Hungaroton LPX 11637 (Stereo-Mono)

Sándor Falvai also appeared on the musical scene together with Dezső Ránki and István Lantos. It happens so frequently that several players of an instrument crop up together at a given time. (The fourth is Zoltán Kocsis.) These four now stand at the forefront of Hungarian piano playing. At the time their records were cut they were 21-24

years old—and today all four are teachers of the Liszt Ferenc Academy of Music.

Falvai has a particular feeling for melody. Not even among players of unequivocally melodious instruments are there many who are capable of genuinely melodious playing!

Falvai's Chopin interpretation is above criticism. He strives throughout for an intelligible performance, which he achieves. Spectacular unplayable fast tempi, which often lead to "blurring" are not in Falvai's line. Every single note can be understood directly. At the same time there is a kind of loquacity, a lack of restraint, a healthy departure from the steady, mechanical tempi, which does not weaken, but on the contrary, strengthens the rhythmical pulsation and sweeping vitality of his playing.

The A minor *Mazurka*—a puzzling meditation with a bowed head, with its shadowy monologue character—is typical of Falvai's artistry. The dancing nature of the middle section could have been stronger, but the main section speaks to us with particular loquacity of Chopin's loneliness. The *Mazurka* in C major clearly sounds the chords of nostalgia, the basic mood that always emerges even in the lightest of Chopin's works. The C Sharp minor *Nocturne* is a fitting closing piece of the record.

It may well be that in the quintets of Mozart and Beethoven, written for an identical ensemble, the piano only has a chamber music part, but those who are familiar with the works are fully aware that here the instrument is given an emphasis that borders on that in piano concertos. This is the reason I call this a Sándor Falvai record also.

This recording was made at a concert. It made such a tremendous effect on the audience that the officials of the Hungarian Recording Company decided to release their recording of the performance.

Falvai's playing makes him eminently suited for chamber music. He is always present, in the musical performance sense of the term. And something more: it is just in chamber music that he is able of the

greatest self-release. In the last movement of Mozart's masterpiece he plays with an ease and joy such a man can only summon in exceptional moments.

Here as well he remains sensitive and responsive throughout. The way he accomplishes the minor episode in the closing movement with his companions, for example, then the way he again illuminates the musical fabric, betokens real craftsmanship. But it is also worth noting the way he continues, or starts off a melody in the slow movement, or the way he provides an accompaniment for the melodies of the solo instruments in the same movement.

The Beethoven work sounds with similar beauty. Here perhaps the piano should have been recorded a shade more softly at the time of the performance, as in a few places in the slow movement it stands out too strongly.

The Beethoven work shows up the woodwind players to advantage. Tarjáni's horn virtuosity has been admired by music lovers of many countries, both on records and at live concerts.

ISTVÁN LANTOS'S RECORD

Franz Schubert Sonata for Piano in D major, Op. 53. D. 850 Klavierstück in E Flat major, Op. posth., D 946/2 Hungaroton LPX 11634 (Stereo-Mono)

István Lantos is one of the most interesting of young pianists.

In this instance I use the adjective "interesting" both to praise and critically. He is an artist who always invents something extraordinary, who strives almost deliberately to make his production different from all others. This sometimes leads him astray, and he is not always able to convince his audiences of the soundness of his ideas. But when he succeeds he does indeed. The two works on the record reviewed here demonstrate this vividly. Perhaps many will argue against the somewhat fantastic performance of the D major Sonata, and perhaps some will take issue with the "Schumanesque", loquacious rubatos of the slow movement. But there is,

no doubt, an exceptionally interesting personality introduced with this record. It is as if the sovereignty of the great pianists of the past had returned in Lantos's playing, that sovereignty which disregards all metronome instructions in its interpretation but yet somehow belongs to the world of Schubert. I am perhaps prejudiced in favour of Lantos, I am not able to make a secret of the joy that he evokes. I should also like to say that the pedantry of music criticism experienced in our times well-nigh threatens to stifle precisely the most original conceptions. If someone takes the trouble to listen to the third movement of this sonata he will feel how freely Lantos separates the principal section from the trio. He reproduces the light, lilting principal theme of the last movement with tremendous atmosphere-creating force. It is one of my favourite records.

And yet I value that certain *Klavierstück* that is unfortunately still too little known even today even more. Otto Erich Deutsch, in his *Schubert, Thematic Catalogue of All His Works* (London, 1951) includes Schubert's three impressive, late *Klavierstücke* under number 946. The second of these is heard on this record.

I simply cannot have enough of this piece, particularly as performed by Lantos. The principal theme's unbelievably composite world evokes at one and the same time the sound of the most beautiful Schubert songs and the most intimate Schubert waltzes. In this masterpiece dating from the last years of his life the master uses the "sweet Viennese thirds" only as a start, from which he leads us into the blackest hell, but without forcing his dark visions on his listeners. The manner in which he introduces and conducts these episodes, the way he brings back the lilting principal theme again and again could almost be called an apology. When we last hear it we fully understand the real farewell significance of the principal theme, particularly when Lantos is at the piano.

A. P.

OUR CONTRIBUTORS

ACZÉL, György (b. 1917). Member of the Political Committee of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party, Deputy Prime Minister. See "The Political and Social Significance of Education" in No. 49, "Peaceful Coexistence and Ideological Struggle" in No. 51, "Cultural Policy and Social Progress" in No. 52, and "Peaceful Coexistence and Ideological Confrontation" in No. 54.

CSOÓRI, Sándor (b. 1930). Poet. A script reader for Hunnia Film Studios in Budapest. Has published several volumes of poetry, two collections of articles, and written film scripts which were directed by Sándor Kósa. See two poems in No. 27.

FEKETE, Mihály (b. 1906). A lathe operator at the Diósgyőr Iron Works before the Liberation. Held various political jobs after the war, including First Secretary of the City Committee of the Communist Party in Miskolc, Chairman of Borsod County Council, Chairman of Pest County Council. Published his memoirs of the resistance movement in Miskolc, Diósgyőr and environs, in which he was a leading figure, under the title, *Partizánok az Avas alján* ("Partisans at the Foot of the Avas.")

FRANK, János (b. 1925). Art historian and critic specializing in contemporary Hungarian art, on the staff of *Élet és Irodalom*, a Budapest literary weekly. See his "Béla Czóbel at Ninety" in No. 53, "Two Pottery" in No. 54, and "Young Graphic Artists" in No. 55.

G. MÁRKUS, György (b. 1938). Sociologist. Graduated from Eötvös University in English and Chinese. Works on the staff of the Institute for Economic Planning of the National Planning Office. Has published several studies in sociology. See "Galbraith's Industrial Society" in No. 43, and "The Challenge of the Counter Culture and the New Left" in No. 55 of *The N.H.Q.*

HORVÁTH, György (b. 1941). Journalist, art critic, on the staff of *Magyar Nemzet*, a Budapest daily. See contributions in Nos. 53, and 55.

HUSZÁR, István (b. 1927). Deputy Prime Minister. Graduated in economics, headed the Central Bureau of Statistics 1969-1973. Published numerous studies on statistics, economic policy and planning. See "The Scientific and Technological Revolution" in No. 55.

ILLYÉS, Gyula (b. 1912). Poet, playwright, essayist, Vice President of International PEN, an outstanding personality of considerable influence in contemporary literature. See his poems in Nos. 33, 35, 46 and 48, as well as his reminiscences of György Lukács, "On Charon's Ferry" in No. 47, and his essay "The Presence of Petőfi" in No. 50.

KEMENES, Egon (b. 1924). Economist, author of numerous essays and articles on economic policy and development. Member of the Council on World Economy, senior staff member of the Afro-Asian Research Centre of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. See "Three Years of the Economic Reform" in No. 42, "Hungary's Fourth Five Year Plan" in No. 45, and "Past and Future of Development Efforts" in No. 54.

KEREKES, Zoltán (b. 1927). Studied history at the University of Budapest. Appointed to the staff of the Museum of Military History where he is now a section-head. He specializes in heraldry, in particular the history of Hungarian military standards.

MALLER, Sándor (b. 1917). Educationalist. Graduated from Pázmány University and Eötvös College in Budapest, became headmaster of the English language college at Sárospatak, later lecturer in Hungarian at the University of Aberdeen, then lecturer in English at the University of Debrecen. In 1957 he became a staff

member of the Unesco Secretariat, Paris. At present he is Secretary General of the Hungarian National Commission for Unesco. See "The Hungarian National Commission for Unesco" in No. 25, and "Comenius and Sárospatak" in No. 39.

MESTERHÁZI, Lajos (b. 1916). Novelist, playwright, author of filmscripts and radio plays, editor of *Budapest*, an illustrated monthly. Studied at Pázmány University and Eötvös College in Budapest. Held various editorial posts and began publishing his writings in the early '50s. See "The Centenary of Budapest" in No. 46, and his short story "Sempiternin" in No. 48.

PERNYE, András (b. 1928). Professor of Musicology at the Hungarian Academy of Music, our regular music reviewer.

SIKLÓS, László (b. 1934). Free lance journalist and author. Has published a volume of reports: *A házasságok a földön kötődnek*, ("Marriages are made on earth.") See his "Children from the Tanya" in No. 38, "The Gypsies" in No. 40, and "The Rivers Rose" in No. 41.

SZABADY, Egon (b. 1917). Demographer, Vice President of the Hungarian Central Bureau of Statistics, head of the Demographic Research Institute of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Editor of *Demográfia*. See "Making a Living and Motherhood" in No. 34, "Social Mobility and the Openness of Society" in No. 43, and "Impact of the New Child Care Allowances" in No. 48.

SZÁNTÓ, Judit. Our regular theatre critic.

SZEKERES, József (b. 1929). Archivist. Graduated in History from Eötvös University, Budapest. Heads a department of the

Municipal Archives. His main interest is municipal and economic history. Has published numerous papers and articles as well as contributed to the four volume *Források Budapest múltjából* ("Sources of Budapest's Past," 1972) as well as to the *Budapest Lexikon* (1973).

SZEMES, Piroksa. Journalist, senior editor of *Nők Lapja*, an illustrated national weekly for women. Has published a volume of her investigative reports on women in 1974.

TORNAI, József (b. 1927). Poet, translator, our regular film reviewer. See his poems in No. 38.

VAJDA, Péter (b. 1931). Journalist, 1961-66 Moscow, 1968-1973 Washington correspondent of *Népszabadság*, the central daily of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party. Recent works include *Kik csinálják az amerikai politikát* ("The people who make American policy") and *Nixon*, a biography, Kossuth, 1973.

VARGA, Zsuzsa. Art historian, on the staff of the Hungarian Museum of Ethnography, Budapest. She has done much work on folklore objects related to religion, including paintings, sculpture and painted glass. See her "Painted Wooden Ceilings in Hungarian Churches" in No. 38, and "Pictures and Figures in Folk Culture" in No. 44.

VAS, István (b. 1910). Poet, essayist, critic, translator, member of the Editorial Board of this review. His publications include many volumes of verse, of essays, a collection of translations from foreign poets, as well as translations of novels, and plays. See poems in Nos. 23, 29, 38, 46, 50, as well as his autobiographical piece "The Unknown God," in No. 40.

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