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The Hungarian Folk Ballad

Marianna D. Birnbaum discusses the rights and restrictions of women as recorded in the 'Classical' Hungarian ballad. Marlene Kadar examines the tragic motif in the ballad of 'Kata Kádár.'

Film Studies

Graham Petrie analyzes the Hungarian documentary and 'Pseudo-Documentary' film. George Bisztray provides a report on the activities of the Hungarian Film Institute and Archives. Students of Hungarian Cinema Studies at the University of Toronto write about trends in Hungarian cinema.

Document: Mark Twain and Hungary

Anna Katona describes an interview given by Mark Twain at the time of his visit to Budapest in 1899.

Review Articles

Hungarian Studies Review

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Hungarian Studies Review, Vol. IX, No. 1 (Spring 1982)

Contents

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Hungarian Studies Review, Vol. IX, No. 1 (Spring 1982)

Rights and Restrictions of Women As Recorded in the "Classical" Hungarian Ballad

Marianna D. Birnbaum

It is not the intention of this paper to render an exhaustive historical treatment of the very complex issue of women's rights in the Hungarian tradition. There is no room within the scope of this study even to establish tentative dates for the particular ballads on the basis of prevailing laws. Although occasional reference will be made to them, I shall not attempt to identify the exact foreign sources of the individual pieces, even if they were rooted in countries in which similar laws have governed the lives of women. It is assumed here that regardless of their actual place of origin, the longevity and continued popularity of the "classical" ballads are proof of their "being Hungarian," and have reflected the social norms valid for Hungarian society for many centuries.

The number of local variants (in some cases several hundreds) testifies to the same, as do the many stubbornly held conventions in Hungarian peasant culture. My intention is to register some phenomena regarding the position of Hungarian women as revealed by the close reading of printed ballad texts.[1] Although many legal and social changes affected Hungarian folkways during the past century, some of the basic principles that dominate the man / woman relationship have not undergone a corresponding transformation.

Old as they may be, the ballads therefore express an unwritten standard, a social code against which the younger generation of Hungarian peasantry has started its revolt only in the last half-century.

As can be expected, ballads, as well as tales, will more frequently have heroes than heroines. Men traditionally led a more active life, and just by seeking employment, making war, or travelling assumed a life-style that took them out of their homes and on the road of potential danger, but also

of adventure. Therefore, the fact that in the classical ballad heroes are more numerous is merely a validation of its historical reality. The focus of the paper is not on numerical representation; its purpose is rather to investigate and display the accepted social norms and biases regarding women when they *are* featured.

After the abolition of the recognition of descent on the maternal line it became legal that property could be inherited only by the husband's child, primarily his male offspring. Jhering postulates that one may discuss family relationships only from this period on.[2] In Hungary, subsequent to the disintegration of the clan system, the large patriarchal family became the basis of social structure, with personal property inherited by the descendants in the agnate line. Later this socioeconomic unit was transformed to the small family, yet the concept of the large family survived among the agricultural population, primarily among the small-holders and the medium landowners. Nizsalovsky points out that spouses were accepted in the large family even after the death of their marital partners, although a widower's position in such a situation was considered weak and "unmanly."[3]

According to medieval Hungarian law, a woman did not reach maturity until she married (although otherwise she was considered adult at the age of sixteen and legally adult at twelve), at which time her guardianship was removed but authority over her passed into the hands of her husband.[4] If her husband was a minor, he remained under the tutelage of his father, and his wife came automatically under the guardianship of her father-in-law.[5] Thus, though a self-contained unit, the small family did not supersede but, at least in the countryside, supplemented the large family. Consequently, there were immediate and obvious limitations to any woman's legal status before her marriage and during it, unless, owing to her husband's prolonged absence or death, she was able to secure authority in her own hands.

Naturally, sixteenth-century law applied only to the nobles and the free peasants; the daughters of the serfs had no rights whatsoever. Their parents, they themselves, and their husbands were conceived as the legal property of the landlords, whose will replaced the laws and statutes that otherwise governed free men. Serfs could seek justice against their land-

lords only on the second level (and then in the presence of the bishops or the *szolgabírák*),[6] while on the first level their case was judged by their respective lords. Female serfs who had no rights vis-à-vis their husbands or parents, had even less chance to find justice in the face of the *barons*. Regarding the rights of free women, a document from the fifteenth century illustrates the general attitude; the judge at Buda was obliged to hold court for men three times a week, on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, while he was ordered to hear women on Saturdays only.[7] This restriction not only reflects the desire to keep women from the courts, but also mirrors their true social situation. Women's cases were handled by parents, spouses, or guardians; only in special instances were they permitted to represent themselves legally. This legal climate reinforced the tradition expressed in the ballads.

Hungarian ballads are usually grouped according to approximated dates. To the first large group belong the so-called "classical" ballads flowering from the mid-fifteenth century until the end of the seventeenth century. Their roots, naturally, belong to a much earlier period. These ballads, in turn, have affected the composition of much later ballads, serving as structural as well as role models. Best known among them are "Clement the Mason" (Kőműves Kelemen), "Kata Kádár," "The Cruel Mother," and "The Wife Who Was Lured Away"; but others quoted in this paper are also known in most Hungarian communities in one or another variant.[8] For the purpose of this investigation, however, I propose a different grouping: ballads will be classified according to the *status* of their heroine.

The unwed mother

Since for centuries marriage was the only socially accepted way of cohabitation, and since women were not capable of pursuing their own careers, it is only natural that most ballads that treat the problem of women deal with marriage. Exceptions are those devoted to the unwed mother, a social outcast whose fall, usually accompanied by the murder of her infant, is considered a justified punishment for her crime. It is interesting, however, that in many of the hundreds of variants the seducer decides to die with his lover. This turn of events is

possibly due to the traditional West European handling of the topic. It mirrors the spirit of the Renaissance *Romance*. Even some formulaic segments of the Hungarian pieces are identical to the best known French, Italian, and German ballads of this type. A number of them could be considered variants of "Kata Kádár," or rather variants in which love between Kata and Gyula is also consummated. The fate of the *fallen girl* and her lover, or their punishment ordered by the mother (here the girl's) also follows the "Kata Kádár" pattern. [9]

Victim of forbidden marriage

The largest cluster of ballads relate tragedies when marriages are either forced or forbidden. It has often been suggested that a number of Hungarian ballads, among them some apparently based on social conflict, are concerned with offending the established rules of family structure (blood relationship). The *forbidden marriage*, one of the most frequent motifs in folk literature, especially in the ballad, would therefore concentrate on *disobedience* and its punishment rather than on the tragedy caused by the different social standing of the hero and the heroine.

In one of the most popular ballads, "Kata Kádár," the plot indeed allows both interpretations.[10] Although the son's actions were in opposition to his mother's wishes, it is clear from the ballad that her objections centre on the girl's social status. When the son wants to marry the "fair daughter of our serf," the mother answers, "marry a landowner's daughter." The human rights of the two women are clearly different. Kata, the daughter of the serf, has no right even to protect her own life. The noblewoman is allowed to have her killed. Her antagonism is not personal, she simply acts as a representative of her class, and moves within the power allotted to her as head of her household. She eliminates Kata in order to remove any obstacle to her plans for her son. It has been proposed that a possible historical source of "Kata Kádár" is the Agnes Bernauer legend, which deals with the tragic love of the daughter of an Augsburg barber and Prince Albert III of Bavaria. According to that story, the Duke, infuriated by his son's choice, had Agnes drowned in the Danube.[11] In another Hungarian version, "Fair Julia, Daughter of the Pagan King,"[12] it is the father who says "do not love your serf," and has the lovers killed. Also,

in "Little Lilia" a pagan father objects to his daughter's marriage for no reason at all. He kicks his daughter to death, and her lover choses to die along with her.[13]

How the treatment of women may reflect the social origin of a particular ballad can also be shown in the *two variants* of the "Daughter of the Pagan King."[14] In variant *A*, the king forbids his daughter to love a serf. When she disobeys, the father has the young man tied to the top of the tower. Infuriated by his daughter's pleas to free her lover, the king orders him killed and has his liver and heart served to his daughter, who dies instantly. The plot, clearly influenced by the Italian "novella," reveals an upper-class origin, in terms of power as well as norms. In variant *B*, the social background of the lover is omitted, and when Lilia appears to beg for his freedom,

> The pagan king turned around,
> And kicked his daughter with such force,
> That her scarlet skirt got torn
> That her scarlet blood ran out
> And she died there on the ground.

Although both heroines die, "her" death in *B* has elements found even in the *Old Testament*.

In a large number of ballads the girl is of elevated status. Nonetheless, she cannot marry her beloved. If she continues to disobey her father or mother, she will, without fail, cause the destruction of her sweetheart and often of herself as well.[15]

One thing which should be pointed out here is the obvious *interchangeability* of the sex of the parent involved. It is quite remarkable how sharply the mother figures in the ballads differ from the other roles folk literature assigns to women. The representation of authority through the mother alone mirrors historical reality. Estates of the nobility were frequently run for long periods by wives while the heads of the families were away. Thus wives, especially widows of noblemen, frequently assumed the rights and privileges of their absent or deceased spouses. In the ballads such mothers manifest the kind of authority generally granted to the father. If both parents are present, the hero or heroine has only one authority figure to fight, *either* the mother *or* the father. Their sexual identity has no function in the ballad, thus their roles become interchangeable, showing their function merely as a narrative de-

vice by which power is depicted. Ballads, in which mothers are demanding certain behaviour from their children therefore are to be viewed as non-deviant from the general submissive roles of women found in the genre.

Victim of a forced marriage.

"Forced marriage" is primarily the other side of the same coin. It illustrates from another angle the lack of choice available to the girl. The sex of the decision-making authority is again secondary. More often than not the girl is forced to marry against her will by a male member of the family. In "István Fogarasi" and in "Bátori Gábor" the brothers sell their sisters, in both cases to marry in foreign lands.[16] The same motif appears in a number of "forced marriage" ballads in which the girl unwillingly has to leave her home and village for a strange place. Beyond the obvious xenophobia displayed in the ballads, the true situation of the girl is also mirrored. "Pretty Rosy-Cheeked Erzsébet" is married off to a German, "Pretty Ilona Horváth" is tortured to death by her frustrated husband.[17] A poor mother "sells" her daughter to a murderer, and the girl returns home to die rather than live with her husband.[18] The mother is allowed to arrange for the marriage only when there are no males in the family. In the ballad "A Woman's Nine Sons" each son expresses his views about his sister's marriage. Only after their statements does the mother give the girl away to a foreign groom.[19] Even if in a number of ballads it is the father who forces the daughter to marry (as in "Barbara Seprődi," or in "Anna," who was sold before her birth), only in those where the mother is responsible for the marriage is the parent criticized.[20] The mother is held responsible in cases when the daughter is leading an immoral life; according to the *Ofner Stadtrecht,* a mother who has "ire chinder gewenen zu Vnkeuschait" (brought up her children to be promiscuous) should be drowned in the Danube. There is no corresponding law for a father guilty of the same deed.[21]

Even without the presence of parental authority, girls in the "classical" Hungarian ballads are not allowed to make their own choice regarding a husband. A typical case in point is "Szilágyi and Hajmási," where the girl's role is altogether passive.[22] Although the prisoners were able to escape only with

her help, she is considered by them merely a "loot"; the decision over her fate is made by the two men.

Thus the accepted social norms regarding proper behaviour for girls that can be gleaned from the ballads are as follows. *They do not and should not have any right to decide whom they marry. They should obey their parents, even if it means pining away in a bad marriage or in an alien land.* The mothers have decision-making powers over their children, primarily in situations where there are no male members of the family present. Any males have a more powerful place in the family hierarchy than the mother. Thus brothers may assume the same role of authority over girls as their parents (fathers) have. Since traditionally noble and peasant families made the same distinction between their male and female issue in terms of dower and *dos*,[23] the attitude displayed in the ballads accurately represents both strata.[24]

The heroine's social role as mother

Since the married woman's role in society was primarily conceived as that of a mother, it is only natural that a plethora of literary pieces deals with women who have fallen short of the standards expected of them in their function. Among them, a number of ballads relate the story of the "cruel mother" who leaves her children in the forest. Even if the woman is given a name, as in "Ilona Budai," or is simply called "The Poor Orphaned Woman," it remains clear that the ballad is just a variant of "the cruel mother."[25]

The cause for the mother's behaviour varies. In many cases her failings are juxtaposed with the ideal maternal attitude, as exemplified by the animal world (doe, cow, etc., who tends her young). Although mitigating factors such as poverty and danger are presented in the ballads, her behaviour is condemned by the community. In each variant she will have to suffer the consequences of her misguided action, even in those where the children are ultimately saved. It is noteworthy that although more fathers than mothers abandoned their children owing to historical development, there are no ballads devoted to that subject.

The "cruel mother" motif often governs ballads that tell the story of forced marriages (discussed above). It is frequently

the merciless mother who compels her daughter to marry the "Great Mountain Thief,"[26] or she is the one who obliges her Catholic daughter to wed a Protestant German.[27] In the Hungarian ballads of this type, the women will be solely responsible for the action of child abandonment, as opposed to a number of foreign pieces, in which the parents mutually decide to leave their children (e.g., "Hansel und Gretel"). Depending on which of her negative qualities are stressed in the ballad, the individual variant will belong either to the "wife who was lured away" or to the "cruel mother" group.

The heroine's social role as wife

Next in importance to motherhood, the woman's duty is to be a faithful wife. The hierarchy might seem arbitrarily set, yet it can be shown that, reinforced by the Judeo-Christian tradition (especially with a view to the mother-child image in the Catholic faith), women are more often depicted as mothers than as wives. Since folk literature prefers a single-plot basic structure, most often the woman will be conceived in her role either as mother *or* as wife. Even in ballads in which she leaves husband and child behind, the stress will be on one aspect of her offense, making her deviant behaviour simpler to judge. Reducing her guilt to a single offense makes the casual relationship between "crime and punishment" as obvious as possible. This point can be illustrated by examining a large group of ballads dealing with women lured away by strangers. The woman will desire to return either to her husband or, and more often so, to her child.[28]

Ballads about wives who have been enticed to leave their homes and are later murdered by their seducers are universally popular and appear in many variants throughout the world. In the "classical" Hungarian ballad the woman follows a stranger and abandons her husband and child. She is taken to a forest, under the murderer's tree on which the bodies of his previous victims hang. Aware of what is in store for her, the woman kills her seducer, dons his clothing, and returns to her family. Her identity is revealed. In some, upon her return she is rejected by her mother, who refuses to acknowledge her, emphasizing that is was in her role as a mother that she had failed. In those variants where the abandoned husband is the

focus of the ballad, he is the first person to whom the woman reveals why she wished to return (c.f. "Anna Molnár," no. 14). In these versions she regrets her actions only when, having looked up at the murderer's tree, she faces her own death. Although she nurses her child upon return, this element serves as a function of identification rather than as an expression of maternal love, a point substantiated by one variant in which she first unbottons her dolman and nurses her infant and later repeats the action for the purpose of being recognized by her husband.

Although this ballad, too, is of didactic and corrective nature, it is important to note that the woman is able to escape her murderer. This is a unique Hungarian feature; in the European and, for that matter, in the Asian variants, the woman always falls victim to her seducer. The wife's "Hungarian" role, in general, is worthy of more detailed investigation, since she seems to be much more active in this type of ballad than in others.

Even if the heroine is lured away, she ultimately makes her own choice; she is not kidnapped but is persuaded. She makes her decision to leave her family and also to return to it. She returns, however, by assuming the role of a man. She kills her seducer with a *sword*, changes into *man's clothing*, and appears at her home as a *travelling stranger* — in short, as a *man*. In most ballads the "adulterous" wife is killed by her husband (although in "Anna Molnár" the heroine is not caught in the act of infidelity, thus her guilt is not proved, only surmised).

One is tempted to consider that her unusual and daring behaviour commanded a certain degree of respect in her husband. The unfaithful wife of *this* group is treated as an equal upon her return. Yet the reason for it lies probably not in her aggressive, masculine behaviour, but in the existing laws that dictated this particular solution. Reconciliation between husband and wife suggests that this subtype is of peasant origin and, again, reflects historical realities. Since the serf or the peasant had no jurisdiction over his wife, such a conflict was generally either resolved by reconciliation, or "literary tradition" would mete out a "supra-social" punishment to the unfaithful wife in the form of unexpected death by drowning, or the like. The same historical prohibitions dictate the endings of the ballad in which the husband beats up his misbehaving wife instead of killing her.[29] (The comic figure of the cuckolded

husband is a later, and quite possibly, anti-feudal development. Alongside the clever servant who ridicules his master and thus expresses the aspirations of his class against the feudal lord, stands the deceiving wife who also ridicules *her* "master," including the same comic relief into which social protest was channeled.) Ever since St Ladislas (1077-1095), the Hungarian baron had the *legal* right to kill his unfaithful wife. This privilege was reconfirmed in Werbőczi's *Tripartitum*, stipulating that if a nobleman forgives his wife her first unfaithfulness, he must not resort to capital punishment at a repetition of the same offense.[30]

According to the testimony of the ballads, few wives were given a second chance. One group of poems in which the unfaithful wife is punished by death, the "Barcsai" ballad and its variants, colourfully illustrates how the enraged husband takes his revenge.[31] The ballad's merciless ending is not unique to Transylvania, where it was collected. A woman forced to die for her adultery is, of course, a popular motif, primarily in the *Old Testament*, but also in more recent traditions such as Slavic, Italian, and French. The element of burning a wife alive appears in another set of ballads, the so-called "cruel mother-in-law" type. Although the western origin is beyond doubt, two features from the Hungarian tradition seem present: (1) the killing of the beloved girl by the man's mother (Kata Kádár type of ballad) and (2) the "making a candle" of the girl (the "Barcsai" type of ballad).[32] The earlier variants are rather simple; the mother hated her son's choice and that alone was a sufficient cause. More recent collecting shows that reasons were added to justify the hatred and thus the mother-in-law's action. Some versions introduce the element of intermarriage between Hungarians and Rumanians; in others the young wife is haughty.[33] In none of the versions does the returning son revolt against his mother. In one his heart breaks; in another he laments; in a third he kills himself. No attempt is made to challenge maternal authority, which dates this ballad to the oldest stratum.[34] In some variants, however, a concluding statement expressing the community's judgment curses the parents who separate lovers. Thus in the ballads that are possibly of aristocratic origin, the wife pays with her life for her transgressions. Also in Werbőczi's *Tripartitum*, the law against adultery applies only to women, making it clear that no hus-

band was held guilty of the same misconduct.[35]

There is a cluster of ballads in which the husband leaves his sick wife alone and visits his lover. He gets killed at the place of his mistress because *her husband* returns. Thus his punishment is due to his challenging the rights of a husband, and he dies not for cruelty committed against his own wife but because of his disturbing another man's life. In some variants his own wife dies in childbirth.[36] Other "bad" husbands appear in the ballads, for example, the man who does not believe that his wife is ill and tries to force her to cook and clean. Only when she lies on the bier does he finally accept that it was not laziness but sickness that made his wife incapable of fulfilling her marital duties.[37]

The role model for the submissive wife

The wife's duty is to serve her husband and bear his children. Thus the archetype in which the perfectly submissive wife is depicted is at the same time the role model, its function being the justification and reinforcement of conventions and standards of social behaviour. An illustration par excellence incorporating almost the total convention is the ballad "Clement the Mason." In the ballad twelve masons decide to sacrifice the wife of one of them in order to stabilize the walls of a fort, and the wife accepts their decision. It is assumed that the events related are based on ancient foundation rites. Human skeletons found under structures in the pre-Christian period in Europe as well as in South and Central America and the Far East bear witness to this assumption.[38] Yet one cannot overlook the fact that the masons did not choose *one among themselves* (there could have been thirteen, and one would have had to be chosen), but they had picked a woman. This ballad type does not follow the medieval model in which the knight saves the virgin from the dragon, since in the Hungarian variants the choice falls always on a woman who is a wife and a mother. Thus the purity function is absent in the recorded versions in several variants of which she begs the masons to leave a hole in the wall through which she can nurse her son. (This detail again stresses her role as a mother.)[39]

If one disregards the oldest layer (of ritual function) of the ballad and follows the story only at a superficial level, the reason for the wife's sacrifice is greed. The masons kill her to get the

silver and gold they were promised. The behaviour of the masons is not dictated by abject poverty, as some Hungarian scholars have claimed, but a desire for additional wealth.[40] Clement is devastated when his own wife is to be sacrificed; nonetheless, he makes no attempt to save her.

All basic members of the small family unit are represented in the solution. The woman accepts her destiny; *a formalization of her actual status, manifested in its logical conclusion.* The husband functions within the framework of accepted standards of the past, which were possibly up for scrutiny by the end of the sixteenth century. The tentative punishment he receives (himself surviving but losing his son) mirrors a crisis in the values of the collective. Yet the many potent versions, lively enough to influence the creation of a number of prose variants, show that the moral of the ballad has by no means become obsolete in the succeeding centuries. The basic tenor of the ballad is retained even in a popular prose version (recently collected in Ajnád, Csík county.) Here the woman is walled in alive and gives birth to her son while immured. For seven years she nurses her son but finally sends him to his father, who is about to celebrate his new wedding. The child identifies himself with their old engagement ring. The husband runs to meet his wife who stands outside in the nude. He then tears off the clothes of his new bride and puts them on his wife, and while he carries her back in the house through one door, the new bride and her guests are forced to leave through the other door. Thus the husband is entitled to reject one wife and reinstate the other. While the injured wife gets satisfaction, the husband is not punished. In fact, it is the entirely innocent "future" wife who suffers degradation and unjust treatment, owing to the man's change of mind.

In his introduction to *Magyar népballadák,* Ortutay stresses the restrictive nature of feudal society, and emphasizes the virtual impossibility of breaking out from the closed system that determined the place and role for each person within it. He claims that the conflicts are primarily based on the individual aspirations of the heroes versus the irreconcilable family and social structures governing their lives.[41] Ortutay's claim is borne out by the unbending collective judgment of the "classical" ballads. Individual lives are determined by social convention. Property is protected, dictating decisions both in the family and vis-à-vis the community. Those who have less

of it have fewer rights, and those who have fewer property rights have less freedom.[42] In feudal society, women by the fact of their restricted property rights, have been forced into a position of limited freedom. Therefore, in a highly stratified society, within the same stratum, women are shown to be less equal than men. Unofficial as they are, the "classical" Hungarian ballads record the woman's status as clearly and convincingly as the law books that have codified it.

NOTES

1. I am using *Magyar népballadák*, (Hungarian folk ballads) Gy. Ortutay, ed. (Budapest: Szépirodalmi Könyvkiadó, 1968) henceforth *MN*; any further numbering of page references are to this edition. The quotes in English are my translations or are from *An Anthology of Ugric Folk Literature*, M.D. Birnbaum, ed. (München: Finnisch-Ugrisches Seminar an der Universität München, 1977) (henceforth *AUF*); translations from the latter are by M. Heim and Ch. Rogger.

2. R. Jhering, *Vorgeschichte der Indoeuropäer* (Leipzig: Breitkopf und Hartel, 1864): 61.

3. E. Nizsalovszky, *Order of the Family: Legal Analysis of Basic Concepts* (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1968): 20.

4. I. Werbőczi, *Tripartitum* (Vienna: Singrenius, 1517) I, 111/2-4. The *Tripartitum*, a collection of basic laws and statutes, served as legal source-book during the sixteenth century. Its legality was fully established when in 1628 it was incorporated into the *Corpus Juris Hungarici*, the Hungarian Civil Code. Henceforth *Werbőczi*.

5. Cognate tutelage for girls was allowed only when the agnate line of the family had died out (*Werbőczi*, I, 112, 116/1). Tutelage of spouses was reinforced in *Magyar törvénytár* (Budapest: Franklin Társulat, 1874) II, no. 23 (henceforth *MT*).

6. District administrators whose position remained powerful in Hungary until 1945.

7. K. Mollay, *Das Ofner Stadtrecht: eine deutschsprachige Rechtsammlung des 15. Jahrhunderts aus Ungarn* (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1959): 120 (henceforth *Mollay*).

8. Comparative researchers have shown for a long time that the so-called "classical" Hungarian ballads are only Hungarian variants of a chain of international motifs. There is a plethora of publications dealing with them. For the purpose of simplicity I am referring to a very limited number of works by author and page, while I have many of the ideas and new notions on the subject incorporated in my paper. Reference will be made to Ninon Leader, *Hungarian Classical Ballads and Their Folklore* (Cambridge: At the University Press, 1967); Mircea Eliade, *Zalmoxis* ... (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1972), and Lajos Vargyas, *A magyar népballada és Európa* (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1976) (henceforth *MNE*). (An English translation of Vargyas's work is forthcoming.)

9. Vargyas lists the type as No. 10 in *MNE*, and calls attention to the French, Spanish, and Portuguese variants. He also points out similarities between the Hungarian and the *Ritter und Magd* type from the Rhineland.

10. *MN*, 6, 7, 8, 9. "Kata Kádár" has over sixty recorded variants. Its main motif is widely used in western Europe and the Balkans (cf. "The Ring and the Veil" in the Rumanian tradition), and it also appears in Renaissance prose (cf. Boccaccio's "The Tale of Salvestra") and in numerous Italian ballads. The element of "love surviving death" is the central message of "Tristan and Isolde." For further discussion of the ballad's international ties see Gy. Király, "Kádár Kata balladája," *Nyugat* I (1924): 48-64.

11. Treated in detail by N. Leader, *Hungarian Classical Ballads*, 125-41. Vargyas postulates that the original piece was a French ballad.

12. *MN*, 20.

13. *MN*, 21, 25. A similar governing motif appears in "The Captive Soldier" in

which the Turkish "emperor's" daughter falls in love with a Székely soldier. She is burned to death and her lover is thrown into the sea. In "Erzsébet Lázár" the Hungarian "emperor" forbids his son to marry the daughter of a mason (*MNG*). The ballad was collected in Moldavia; the mason is called *Manole*. It also mirrors the Rumanian-Hungarian conflict. The mason's name is a possible transmission from the Rumanian variant of "Clement the Mason."

14. Version *A*, "Fair Julia...," *B* is "Little Lilia." The word "pagan" is used in all probability to emphasize the cruelty of the father. Some of these motifs might belong to an even earlier stratum in which gods and godesses were killed for their deviant behaviour.

15. In "The Baron's Daughter" (*MN*, 223-26), where the shepherd is hanged, it is the mother who orders the hanging. The social reason for murder however, is obscured in those variants of "Kata Kádár" that include the mother's tearing off the sympathetic flowers and the lover's casting a curse upon her.

16. *MN*, 42, 44.

17. *MN*, 40, 41, and 39, respectively.

18. *MN*, 38.

19. *MN*, 50.

20. In "Fair Maiden Julia" (a ballad I have omitted, since I am convinced that is originally is of learned authorship, symbolizing a young girl's becoming a nun), the mother also has no decision-making power. (The hierarchy established in mundane society is acknowledged in the mystical ballad as well.)

21. Mollay, 158.

22. *MN*, 24. The plot, of course, dates the ballad after 1526, and is in any case probably of south Slavic origin. The princess' desire to move to Hungary expresses the spirit of Magyarizing foreigners, a Hungarian element in the nineteenth-century patriotic literature. This kind of patriotic stance is of learned origin in Hungarian folk literature. Its most extreme form is found in M. Jókai's *Az új földesúr* (The new landlord), in which Ritter Ankerschmidt settles in Hungary and 'Magyarizes' his name to Vasmacskakovácsy. Jókai's tongue-in-cheek episode nonetheless mirrored a considered policy of 'Magyarization' on the side of the Hungarian ruling class.

23. *Dower* is a portion or interest in the wealth of a deceased husband that is given by law to the widow during her lifetime. *Dos* is a portion of the former which could be reclaimed by other heirs under certain specified conditions.

24. Werbőczi suggests having the female issue referred to as *remainder* rather than heir, since she will not equally inherit (I, 17/2). Even if the prevailing laws cannot be claimed to have "caused" the formation of such ballads, their existence reinforced the tradition and contributed to their "power of realism."

25. *MN*, 10-12. In some variants the mother first leaves the daughter behind, and the son only thereafter, again expressing the historically developed preference for the male offspring.

26. *MN*, 27.

27. "The Daughter Who Was Sold," *MN*, 37.

28. "Anna Molnár" and its variants (*MN*, 14-16). It is generally known as the "Bluebeard" motif.

29. The seducer is almost always a stranger; thus his person does not malign the community. He dies for his misconduct, punished for having disrupted the family unit. It is not implied or ever expressed that the heroine kills in defense of her honour.

30. Werbőczi, I, 105/1. (Only confirming St Ladislas, I, 13 and Vladislas, IV, 7/14). There are, of course, numerous international parallels in contemporary penal codes.

31. *MN*, 66, 67, 68. According to Vargyas, "The Wife Who Was Overheard" is an original Hungarian ballad, based on fourteenth-century western models (*MNE*, 247).

32. *MN*, 34, 35, 36.

33. *MNE*, 307.

34. A further affinity with "Kata Kádár." The final curse also shows its influence.

35. I, 105/1-2.

36. "Imre Dániel," *MN*, 256. It does not belong to the 'classical' ballads, but being used here to illustrate that even in the more modern ballads the attitudinal content is the same.

37. *MN*, 257, 258. More "modern" versions dealing with the "bad wife," are about women who stay out dancing while their husbands are dying (*MN*, 140, 141) or wives who look down on their husbands (*MN*, 142).

38. For further reference see *MNE*, 13-43. Regarding the best known and most often quoted Rumanian parallel see "Master Manole and the Monastery of Arges," in M. Eliade's *Zalmoxis, The Vanishing God: Comparative Studies in the Religions and Folklore of Dacia and Eastern Europe* (Chicago, 1972), 164-90. Eliade also discusses cosmogonic myths in which immolation leads to creation (first of the universe, in later layers of buildings, bridges, etc.). Yet it cannot be overlooked that in the versions recorded to date the human sacrifice is always a woman.

39. Cf. "Anna Molnár," "The Cruel Mother," etc., where nursing identifies the woman as the mother.

40. Ortutay's claim in the "Introduction" to *MN*, 80-1.

41. *MN*, 85.

42. It is outside the scope of this study to determine the degree by which society's views of women have brought about the restrictions discussed in this section.

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The Tragic Motif in the Ballad of "Kata Kádár"

Marlene Kadar

> *"We must not forget ... that the ballads of all countries and in all languages also deal to a considerable extent with subjects and topics, tragic and otherwise, that have always been the very stuff of life in society and the family and thus simply cry out for poetic treatment..." (Seeman et al., eds, European Folk Ballads, xxii).*

The Hungarian folk ballad "Kata Kádár" is one of the oldest recorded ballads in Hungary.[1] It belongs to the group of "old style ballads" which have certain discernible characteristics. Hungarian ballad collectors and folklorists separate these older, more "classical" ballads from newer types (új stílusú népballadák), such as the "betyár" or outlaw ballads, and local ballads of questionable literary merit. It is generally assumed that the older ballads are connected to heroic epic poetry and medieval romance and are, hence, more sophisticated works of art than the newer ballads.

At the time of publication of the only English language collection of Hungarian ballads with commentary, Ninon Leader's *Hungarian Classical Ballads*, there existed at least fifteen versions of "Kata Kádár," all of which came from Transylvania, Bukovina, and Moldavia. Most were sung by the Székely people and some by the Bukovinian and Moldavian Csángós. According to Leader, the Székelys are a Hungarian clan of "uncertain origin" who have preserved archaic traditions. The Csángós are descendants of Székely emigrants to Moldavia and Bukovina. The important point is that the Székelys and Csángós have preserved most purely the oldest type of Hungarian folk ballad and music traditions. The ballad metre and music are marked by unique Ugrian and Asian features — most notably the pentatonic scale, on which Kodály and Bartók based many of their compositions. The oldest ballads are characterized by frequent alliteration, parallelism, the repe-

tition of half-lines and international ballad devices (incremental repetition, formulas, epithets), all of which are evident in "Kata Kádár."

Until recently the Székely regions, Moldavia and Bukovina have been largely untouched by western European urban culture. These groups retain remnants of what must have once been an incredibly rich treasury of ballads. We must remember that Hungarians got off to a late start at collecting: when most nations were recording the poetry of their people, Hungary was involved in protracted struggles against Turkish and Habsburg forces of occupation. The first collectors did not print their findings until the mid-nineteenth century, after the War of Independence of 1848-49, and at least a century after Bishop Thomas Percy, for example, had published his *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* (1765) at the other end of Europe. Hungarian patriotism grew steadily in the latter half of the nineteenth century, and this patriotism fostered wide-scale interest in Hungarian culture. The Hungarian peasantry and its oral traditions represented a stabilizing force in a nation whose identity was unclear because of prolonged occupations. Some of the pioneers in folk ballad collecting in Hungary are János Erdélyi, *Népdalok és mondák* (Folksongs and Tales), 1846-48; János Kriza, *Vadrózsák* (Wild Roses), 1863 (probably the first printing of "Kata Kádár" is in this book); and Lajos Kálmány, *Koszorúk az Alföld vadvirágaiból* (Garlands from the wild flowers of the Lowland), 1877-78.

Hungarian scholars have speculated on the exact age and origin of "Kata Kádár." Sándor Solymossy, one of Hungary's first folk literature theorists, states that there have been three waves of ballad production in the Hungarian ballad province; that is, in those part of Central and Eastern Europe where the Hungarian language is spoken. Solymossy places "Kata Kádár" in the first wave of ballad production, which took place in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Contemporary ballad experts concur with this view. Ninon Leader calls the ballad that originated in this period the "classical ballad," and "Kata Kádár" is in her opinion one of the most popular of the classical ballads. Lajos Vargyas is even more specific. He maintains that classical ballads are really "medieval" ballads, and "Kata Kádár" is one of the earliest of the medieval ballads in Hungary.[2]

Old style ballads are characterized by the important fact

that they have international counterparts or at least that they share motifs from the international ballad tree. "Kata Kádár" does not have an exact ballad counterpart in Europe or Asia, but it does have typological affinities with other ballads, or has borrowed motifs and episodes from other European ballads and medieval romances, namely, English and Scottish ballads, and the romance of Tristan and Iseut, or Isolt.[3] "Kata Kádár" derives much of its force and its tragic meaning, from its borrowing of the motif of "The Twining Branches," listed in the *Aarne-Thompson Motif Index* as number 631.O.1: "twining branches grow from graves of lovers."[4] This motif is called alternately the motif of "The Two Chapel Flowers" by Vargyas, and "the sympathetic plants" by Leader. Whatever it is called, however, it refers to a symbol and an idea that together constitute "one of the most favourite motifs in romances and ballads."[5]

In order to see where and how the twining branches come into play in the ballad, a breakdown of the plot of "Kata Kádár" is needed. The following plot description is based on Version *A* (translated by N. Leader):

Verse — Description of plot segments

1. Martin Gyulai asks his mother's permission to marry their serf's daughter, Kate Kadar.
2. The mother refuses to give permission and orders him to marry a lord's daughter.
3. Martin proclaims his love for Kate.
4. Martin's mother disowns him.
5. Martin orders his footman to prepare his horses.
6. He bids farewell to Kate. She gives him a life token, a scarf that will change its colour should any harm come to her.
7. During his travels the scarf turns red.
8. Martin orders his footman to turn back to the village.
9. At the edge of the village Martin meets a swineherd. He asks him what is new in the village (in Versions *B* and *C* Martin meets a miller, and in Version *D*, a "Wallach dandy").
10. The swineherd informs Martin that his mother has thrown Kate into "a bottomless lake."
11. Martin makes a deal with the swineherd. If he will lead him to the place where Kate was drowned, Martin will give him his gold, his house, and his coach.

12. Kate speaks to Martin from the lake. Martin jumps into the lake.
13. Lady Gyulai has divers pull Martin and Kate out of the lake. She has one of the two buried in front of the altar and the other behind.
14. Two chapel flowers grow from the graves of the lovers and embrace each other above the altar. Lady Gyulai plucks the flowers.
15. One of the chapel flowers speaks and casts a curse on her.

Although there are at least two other international motifs in the "Kata Kádár" ballad,[6] we are here concerned with the motif of the twining branches, or the two chapel flowers, which appears in verses 13 to 15. Each flower represents the soul of a lover, so that the intertwining of the flowers is the bringing together of their souls after life. Only in death are the lovers united. They are prevented from loving each other on earth by social conventions that prohibit the marriage of serfs with lords. These conventions are represented by the person of Lady Gyulai, who also happens to be the mother of Martin. In this context the two chapel flowers are structurally and thematically very important. Structurally, the motif rounds off the plot. Thematically, the motif gives the ballad its tragic force and meaning. Even though the ballad is a genre transmitted orally among illiterate or semi-literate peoples, Francis Utley is right when he says that "some of the great ballads are worthy of the name of tragedy."[7] "Kata Kádár" comes close to being worthy of the name, and as such, its relationship to some of the great literature of our epoch comes as no surprise.

Aspects of form and structure have a lot to do with generating tragic effect in "Kata Kádár." A closer look at metre and the arrangement of stanzas will reveal how form informs tragic meaning. It is not always easy to talk about the formal aspects of oral literature, because for obvious reasons oral literature does not adhere as regularly to literary devices and conventions as written literature does. But certain formal aspects of "Kata Kádár" are significant in the ballad traditions, either because they tend to conserve the norm, or because they diverge from it and in so doing emphasize important features of the poetry. The singer of Version *A* of "Kata Kádár" for example, has modified a conventional stichic metric scheme in order to achieve a certain building-and-relaxing effect. Stichic metre typifies old-style

ballads in which the pace never lets up, whereas strophic metre is employed in the newer, less "tragic" ballads, the "betyár" ballads, for example. Stichic verse ballads are marked by a definite number of syllables per line, but newer versions of "classical" ballads may well mirror both stichic verse qualities, and strophic. This might be the case with Version *A* of "Kata Kádár", because it is by no means as metrically and structurally regular as, say, the English ballad "A Maid Freed from the Gallows" (Child, no. 95), and yet it does make use of elements we find in the English ballad. What, then, is the difference? The English ballad is more orderly, structurally more sophisticated, and metrically more uniform. "A Maid Freed from the Gallows" is, in the abstract, a "chain of skeleton stanzas."[8] and each stanza repeats refrains, questions-in-answers — the likes of which we encounter only in the introductory stanzas of "Kata Kádár" (see stanzas 1 to 4). The metre employed in "Kata Kádár" then, gives it a more contemplative tone; action is followed by a pause, or a caesura.

A closer look at the metric scheme of "Kata Kádár" reveals a pattern that focuses the listener's attention on the tragic motifs in the ballad, especially on the central tragic motif. Most of the lines in Version *A* have eight syllables. This is not uncommon in Hungarian ballad metres, but it is more the norm in Rumania and Bulgaria. What is interesting about the way in which our particular ballad employs this metric measure, however, is that whenever there is a shift in viewpoint, motif, or style (e.g., from dialogue to description), the metre undergoes a change. In stanzas 5, 7, 9, and 11 there are only six syllables per line, and although the listener notices this change in measure, he is not shocked by it; unity of thought and action is maintained because the metre is stable within each of the digressing stanzas, and each stanza-type is repeated at regular intervals (every second stanza) in the ballad. The important transitional stanzas, however, those that either end or begin an episode in the action, employ the unique *Deseterac* (the ten-syllable line), which, according to Erich Seemann,[9] is the most notable feature of the oldest Serbocroatian ballads. Because the *Deseterac* stands out in "Kata Kádár" so too does the stanza in which it is used. It is no wonder then that the *Deseterac* is used to sing the most important motifs in the ballad: the life-token motif in stanza 6, the burial motif in stanza 12, and, finally the twining chapel

flowers motif in stanza 14. These three stanzas are also the most descriptive in the ballad — the others are filled up with dialogue — and they are laden with symbolic meaning. Stanza 14, especially, is full of emotional significance. It frames the "selected incident" in the narrative: the climax and the dénouement. Not infrequently the central motif (the "selected incident") is withheld until the end of the ballad. As Walter Morris Hart has said, the ballad seems perfectly intelligible without the central motif, but it has none of its tragic specialness. "At the close a significant fact is revealed, and the hearer is compelled to re-interpret the whole story."[10]

"Kata Kádár" is, essentially, a tragic tale. The same thing may be stated about "Kata Kádár" as Eugene Vinaver has said about "Tristan and Isolt": "it is a tale of a disaster caused by the clash of irreconcilable forces."[11] "Kata Kádár" may be compared to Romeo and Juliet; as the chorus states in the prologue to Shakespeare's play: *Romeo and Juliet* is a tale of "a pair of star-crossed lovers" and "the fearful passage of their death-marked love."[12] Like Tristan and Isolt and Romeo and Juliet, Kate and Martin are prevented from loving each other. What is tragic about this situation, however, is that we feel from the beginning of the ballad that this is their fate. Their choices are limited, and they act according to what is necessary. Kate and Martin are wronged; we feel that their love is sanctioned by the singer and everyone who listens to his song. The audience is bound to experience a certain kind of "tragic" relief when this love story, like all the others, ends in a death that finally and ironically brings the lovers together. It is the tragic motif of the twining branches that does this work for the ballad, as it does for "Tristan and Isolt."

The mystical union of the twining branches calls into question the reliability of the human order of things. In all of the tragic love stories mentioned above, it is always the supernatural (i.e., the other-than-human) order that resolves the conflict, passes judgment by implication on the human order, and thereby exposes human fallibility. From the moment the supernatural element enters "Kata Kádár" in verses 6 and 7 (the life-token motif), we become aware of two things: (1) despite the courage and integrity of the lovers, doom is impending, and (2) despite the fact that their humanness makes them fallible and their lot seems unmerited, the final destiny of Kate and

Martin is determined by forces that are greater than human. We are allowed to hope that there will be compensation for their suffering. When the two lovers are pulled from the "bottomless lake" in each other's arms (verse 13), we have reason to believe that their death is not entirely meaningless. Inasmuch as death can have meaning, the motif of the twining branches is "tragic," because it embodies this contradiction in one pregnant symbol: two branches, or flowers, spring from the graves of the wronged, unfortunate lovers only to unite, intertwine above the earth, over the church, impervious to the will of Lady Gyulai and the conditions of life in the village. As R.J. Dorius states in the *Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*, "courage and inevitable defeat" signal the tragic in "great literature." This is also true for folk literature and for the ballad. He further states that these two qualities affect us above all others because

> the first in any society is rare and the second is a prospect most men find intolerable. Without courage or endurance, the exceptional action or *commitment* (my emphasis) which characterizes tragedy would not be undertaken or sustained; without defeat, it would not be placed in the perspective of the ordinary world. For the tragic gesture or thrust is on too grand a scale to conform to the ways of the world or to find means to alter them ... Tragedy stops history, it is a summit or end stage, always concerned with problems of value; it is human life seen in an ultimate perspective. The tragic protagonist's courage must seem possible...(but) it must also be doomed.[13]

Although the motif of the two chapel flowers is found throughout Europe and even Asia in both literary and folklore sources, Lajos Vargyas claims that the "earliest occurence of the complete picture is in the French Tristan legend, before the appearance of the ballad genre.[14] Although Vargyas also sees obvious borrowings from and connections with the "Agnes Bernauerin" legend-ballad, he downplays this influence in favour of the Tristan influence. He notes that the "most characteristic motif of our ballad, the grave flower(s), is unknown in German territory." He states that the exact and intense image of the intertwining chapel flowers rising from the graves of the dead lovers is missing. This motif is truly visible only in Hungarian, English, and Scottish ballads, and it has been

diffused through its rendering in the Tristan romance. Vargyas hypothesizes that the tragic motif travelled from France in the fifteenth century south and east to Yugoslavia and then north to the Hungarian ballad zone. (This theory would make sense in the light of the connections between the Croatian, Serbian, and Hungarian courts as early as the thirteenth century, and the links between them and the French nobility, especially with the court of Anjou.) At the same time, however, it travelled west into Portugal and Spain and finally on to England and Scotland, where it is most popular in the European ballad tradition, most derivative of the Tristan romance, and most like its Central, or Eastern European counterpart in "Kata Kádár."[15] Although Vargyas is unable to document any version of a French ballad that might have evolved from the Tristan romance, he feels justified in hypothesizing that:

> There must, therefore, have been a French ballad which passed on to the southern and western neighbours, and to us (the Hungarians), the various elements, and in which social distinction, the obstacle to the lovers, as in the Hungarian and the Portuguese; the young man's enquiry on his return and his giving away (or exchange) of clothes, as in the English and Hungarian; the grave flowers with the birds and the vengeful mother (father's wife), which were preserved by the Portuguese, English and Breton with varying element.[16]

There are several versions of the motif in the Portuguese ballad tradition, but unfortunately we cannot cover them here. If, however, we isolate the motif in the texts relevant to our comparison, Vargyas' theory does seem reasonable. In Bédier's edition of *Le Roman de Tristan* by Thomas, the "miracle des arbres entrelacés" bears remarkable similarity to "the two chapel flowers" of "Kata Kádár":

> Puis les deux amants furent mis au tombeau, et l'on raconte qu'Isolt, la femme de Tristan, fit enterrer Tristan et Isolt en deux tombes, des deux côtés de l'église, afin que même après leur mort ils fussent séparés. Mais il arriva qu'un chêne ou telle autre espèce d'arbre germa de chaque côté du tombeau, et les deux arbres crurent si haut qu'ils entrelacèrent leurs ramures au-dessus du toit: par là l'on peut voir quelle fut la grandeur de leur amour. Et c'est ainsi que finit ce conte.[17]

In this text the two lovers are buried on either side of the church, as though the author wants us to think for one split second that after their death they will be eternally separated. But out of their two graves two trees grow,[18] and their boughs intertwine above the roof of the church. The author then comments on the significance of this miracle: the branches intertwine in order to reveal the magnitude of the love between Tristan and Isolt, a love that cannot be fulfilled in their lifetime. Their love is now immortalized. On this tragic note the story will end. The motif of the twining branches is used in a similar way in "Kata Kádár," but in some versions — the best versions — the ballad goes one step further thematically. When they embrace each other, the sympathetic plants reveal the power of love and the power of love then enables the plants to speak. They speak a crowning curse, the implications of which will be discussed in more detail later.

The curse is a particularly interesting element in "Kata Kádár" and in the Hungarian love-ballad tradition in general.[19] In other European ballad traditions that employ the twining branches motif, the curse is rarely, if ever, a part of the motif. According to Leader the curse, "cast upon the cruel mother by the flowers, seems to be a genuine Hungarian addition to the ballad and it does not seem to exist in the English and Scottish ballad tradition.[20] The tragic motif without this final element is very prominent. Take for example "Earl Brand, B" (Child, no. 7), verses 18 and 19:

> Lord William was buried in St Mary's kirk,
> Lady Margret in Mary's quire;
> Out o the lady's grave grew a bonny red rose,
> And out o the knight's a briar.
>
> And they twa met, and they twa plat,
> And fain they was be near;
> And a the warld might ken right weel
> They were twa lovers dear.

Much like "Earl Brand" is "Lord Thomas and Fair Annet, A" (Child, no. 73):

> Lord Thomas was buried without kirk-wa,
> Fair Annet within the quiere,
> And o the tane thair grew a birk,
> The other a bonny briere.
> And ay they grew, and ay they threw,

As they was faine be neare;
And by this ye may ken right weil
They were twa luvers deare.

A more dramatic version of the motif occurs in "Lord Lovel, A" (Child, no. 15). Out of Lady Ouncebell's breast grew a "sweet rose," and out of Lord Lovell's "a bunch of sweet briar:"

They grew till they grew to the top of the church,
And then they could grow no higher;
They grew till they grew to a true lover's knot,
And then they tyed both together.

In "Fair Margaret and Sweet William," (Child, no. 74), verses 18 and 19, the rose and the briar...

grew as high as the Church-top,
Till they could grow no higher,
And then they grew in a true lover's knot,
Which made all people admire.

The English and Scottish ballads seem to consistently comment on the importance of the twining branches as a public symbol of true love. This is not a feature of the Hungarian ballads, and it does not occur at all in "Kata Kádár."

In his remarks on "Earl Brand," Child comments extensively on the popularity of the motif "the beautiful fancy of plants springing from the graves of star-crossed lovers, ... signifying ... that an earthly passion has not been extinguished by death."[21] He cites ballads from all over the world that exhibit a version of the motif and includes in his discussion references to written literature that use the motif. He even mentions a "Magyar" version, as he knows it from a German text of the ballad. It is clear, however, that he did not have any of the more reliable Hungarian ballad texts at his disposal.[22]

Thus it would seem that what most clearly distinguishes "Kata Kádár" from, on the one hand, the Tristan romance, and on the other, the English and Scottish ballads cited above, is the curse. The most dramatic versions of "Kata Kádár" do not end with the simple description of the intertwining "chapel-flowers" (*A*), the "white marble lily" and the "red marble lily" (*B*), the violet and the rosemary (*C* and *D*), or any other kind of flower or branch that might be part of some other Hungarian versions. Three of the four versions included here end with a curse directed at the mother, spoken by the flowers (see Versions *A*, *B* and *D*). Verses 18 and 19 of Version *B* stand

out in this regard. When Lady Gyulai plucks the flowers, a thorn pricks her finger, and Kate Kádár curses the mother of Miklós (her lover's name in this version).

> "May your wheat produce just one grain,
> And may that one grain be empty.
> May you go without bread,
> For nobody will be sorry.
>
> "May your wash water turn to blood,
> May your towels catch on fire,
> For when this curse falls on your head,
> I surely know how you will fare."

There are many more of these curses in the Hungarian ballad tradition, all of them equally venomous: "May the footbridge you want to cross go up in flames"; "May the road slope upwards in front of you"; "May mud spring behind you"; "May you be given a spouse who does not love you"; "May your bread turn to stone."[23]

Leader argues that the addition of the curse to the ballad and the motif is valuable for three reasons. [24]

1. It is a good piece of ethnographical information, since it preserves ancient incantation formulas and folk beliefs.

2. It lends a special structural importance to the twining branches; they are, of course, in all ballad sources a vehicle for communicating the magnitude of the love, but they are also a vehicle for delivering an effective curse;

3. It neatly closes the ballad, a ballad type that we have established as tragic, from the ethical point of view. I would like to add here that instead of enhancing the tragic thrust of the ballad, it detracts from it. The curse reduces the tragic vision of the ballad, bringing the action back down to earth, dispelling tragic emotion, pity, and fear, and instituting revenge in their place.

We must conclude, then, that the speaking plants change the finer tragic emotions in the ballad to the crude, less cultivated emotions of anger, revenge, and hatred. Furthermore, the struggle that was at one time resolved by supernatural forces, is re-established and left open-ended. The curse insinuates an ongoing battle on earth and a will to enforce retribution on earth. The ballad of "Kata Kádár" could easily turn into a

continuing saga in which the curse is actually carried out against Lady Gyulai.

Through the example of "Kata Kádár" we can see that thematically balladry and great tragic literature overlap; both "Kata Kádár" and the Tristan romance use the tragic motif effectively to elicit tragic emotion and contribute to a tragic vision of the world in the poem. But the finer points of the ballad, not included in *Tristan* — especially the curse endings — make Kata Kádár's folk heritage obvious. Great tragic literature, such as the Tristan legend ends peacefully with perhaps, the twining branches. "Kata Kádár" belongs most certainly to the tradition of the ballad, an oral tradition with its own culturally determined repertoire of dénouements and one rooted very much in an agrarian peasant culture and its everyday concerns, fears, and hopes. Although the balladry has freely borrowed elements from the great literary traditions, especially from tragic literature, one can never wholly define "Kata Kádár" in the tragic mode, as perhaps Francis Utley is wont to do. It is a genuine ballad that steals from the tragic mode but makes something quite new and special.

APPENDIX: VERSIONS A, B, C, AND D OF "KATA KÁDÁR"

VERSION A

KATE KÁDÁR

(The Two Chapel Flowers)

1. 'Mother, mother, my mother!
   Lady Gyulai, my mother!
   I shall marry Kate Kádár,
   The fair daughter of our serf.'

2. 'I will not let you, my son
   Martin Gyulai,
   Marry instead a lord's
   fair daughter!'

3. 'I do not want a lord's
   fair daughter,
   I only want Kate Kádár,
   The fair daughter of our serf.'

4. 'Then away with you, my son
   Martin Gyulai;
   I disown you, you are no son of mine.
   Not now, nor ever.'

5. 'My footman, my footman,
the one I hold more dear,
Drag forth my coach,
Place the horses between the shafts!'

6. The horses were placed between the shafts
They took the road.
Kate Kádár gave him a scarf:
'When its colour will turn to red
then my life too (take note of this)
will be changing.'

7. Martin Gyulai goes
Over hill and dale,
All at once he sees a change
on the embroidered scarf.

8. 'My footman, my footman, the one I hold more dear,
The land is God's and the horse is for the dogs,
Let us turn back, for the scarf has turned to red,
So Kate Kádár too has long met her end.'

9. The swineherd was at the end of the village.
'Hi, good swineherd, what is the news with you?'

10. 'Our news is good, but there is ill news for you,
For Kate Kádár has met her end.
Your mother has had her taken away,
She has had her thrown into a bottomless lake.'

11. 'Good swineherd, show me where is that lake,
And all my gold, my horse, my coach are yours!'

12. So they went to the shore of the Lake.
'Kate Kádár, my soul, speak one word, are you there?'
Kate Kádár spoke to him from the lake,
Quickly Martin Gyula jumped after her.

13. His mother sent divers,
They took them out dead, the girl in his arms,
One of them was buried in front of the altar,
The other was buried behind the altar.

14. Two chapel-flowers sprang up out of the two,
The intertwined on the top of the altar.
Their mother went there, she tore them off,
The chapel flower spoke to her thus:

15. 'May you be cursed, may you be cursed,
My mother, Lady Gyulai,
You have been cruel when I was alive,
And even now you have murdered me!'

Hungarian original published in Gy. Ortutay, ed., *Magyar népballadák* (Budapest: Szépirodalmi Könyvkiadó, 1976): 23-4. English translation from N. Leader, ed., *Hungarian Classical Ballads and Their Folklore* (Cambridge: University Press, 1967): 125-6.

VERSION B

KATA KÁDÁR
(The Two Chapel Flowers)

1. "My dear sweet mother, allow me
To take Kata Kádár for my wife,
Kata Kádár,
The fair daughter of my serf!"

2. "Dear sweet son, I will not allow it,
I will throw her into the bottomless lake.
The village lords have many fair daughters:
Why not marry one of them?"

3. "My servant, my servant, my humble servant!
Saddle my chestnut steed.
We must set out on the long road,
The long road to wander."

4. Master Miklós set out
On the long road to wander.
Kata Kádár caught sight of him,
And opened the door for her Miklós.

5. "Do not open the door Kata Kádár!
For I cannot come in.
Now I must take to the long road,
The long road to wander."

6. "Master Miklós, spare me a few words!
I will bring my white gown,
I will bring you a bouquet of flowers.
When the white gown has turned bloody
And the flowers have wilted,
Then Kata Kádár has come to her end.

7. Master Miklós set out on the long road,
The long road to wander.
He came upon a miller.
"Master miller, Master miller!
What is new in the village?"

8. "Certainly nothing is new
But that Kata Kádár has come to her end.
She has been thrown into the bottomless lake."

9. "Master miller, Master miller!
Take me there to that very place,
The very place, that spot where she has been drowned,
The edge of the bottomless lake.
My chestnut steed,
All my riches, my fancy raiments are yours."

10. The miller did as he was beckoned;
He led Miklós to the edge of the lake,
To that very place, that spot,
The edge of the bottomless lake.

11. Master Miklós took off his clothes
And leapt into the bottomless lake.

12. Out of one spot grew a stalk of white lily,
Out of another grew a stalk of red lily.
The two grew out of the lake
Until they intertwined.

13. Miklós' mother went for a walk
And saw the two flowers.
She sent for a sea diver,
She plucked the two flowers.

14. For the one child she had made
A white marble coffin,
And for the other she had made
A red marble coffin.

15. The one child was buried
In front of the altar,
And the other was buried
Behind the altar.

16. Out of the one coffin grew
A stalk of white marble lily,
Out of the other grew
A stalk of red marble lily.
There the two grew
Until they intertwined (embraced one another).

17. Miklós' mother went for a walk,
Found the two flowers and looked at them.
She then plucked them both,
But a thorn pricked her finger.

Kata Kádár cursed Miklós' mother:

18. "May your wheat produce just one grain,
And may that one grain be empty.
May you go without bread,
For nobody will be sorry."

19. "May your wash water turn to blood,
May your towels catch on fire,
For when this curse falls on your head,
I surely know how you will fare."

Hungarian original published in *Magyar népballadák*, 25-7. English translation by Marlene Kádár with Victoria Tóth.

VERSION C

KATA KÁDÁR

(Two Chapel Flowers)

1. Wife of Gyula, my sweet mother,
Allow me just this one thing:
To ask for the hand of Kata Kádár,
The beautiful daughter of our serf.

2. I can not allow you, dear son,
to take the hand of Kata Kádár.
Here in the village live
The king's daughter, the baron's daughter.

3. But I do not want the king's daughter,
I do not want the baron's daughter,
I would rather go into exile,
Into exile, on the long road.

4. He set out on the long road,
The long road, into exile.
He wandered and wandered
Until he came upon a millhouse.

5. Heh there! Master miller,
What is new in the village?
Bad news I have not heard:
But Kata Kádár has been kidnapped.

6. Kata Kádár has been kidnapped,
And thrown into the bottomless lake.
Kata Kádár has been kidnapped,
And thrown into the bottomless lake.

7. Márton Gyula heard this,
And went to the shore of the lake:
Are you alive, my sweet rose, or are you dead,
Or do you think of me?

8. I cannot live, I cannot die,
I only think of you.
He blessed himself,
And threw himself into the deep lake.

9. From one spot on the lake grew a stalk of violet,
From another grew rosemary.
They grew so high
Till they intertwined.

10. Mother Gyula heard about this,
She went to the shore of the lake,
She went to the shore of the lake,
And plucked both the flowers.

11. You have not left me alone during my lifetime,
And I am not left alone after death.
The Lord in Heaven punishes
He who forbids love!

Hungarian original published in: Lajos Vargyas, *A magyar népballada és Európa*, Vol. 2 (Budapest: Zeneműkiadó, 1976): 112-3. English translation by Marlene Kádár.

VERSION D

KÁDÁR KATA

(Transylvanian Ballad)

1. "Dame Gyulai, my good mother!
Allow me just one thing,
To ask for the hand of Kata Kádár,
The fair daughter of our serf."
"Rather than to permit you my son
I would have her into a bottomless lake!"

2 ."My servant, my servant, my dear servant,
Bring forth my horse,
Because I would go out into the world,
From one country into another."
He set out on his long journey,
A long journey into exile.
As he wandered, as he wandered, in the forest
He met a Wallach dandy.
"Listen, you Wallach dandy,
What news of my village?"

3. I have heard nothing else
Than that Kata Kádár has been destroyed,
Kata Kádár has been destroyed
Flung into a bottomless lake."
He went there to that place
Set on the shore of the lake:
"Are you alive, my rose, or are you dead
Did you think of me?"

4. "I am neither live nor dead,
I think only of you!"
His heart was gripped with sorrow,
And he leaped into the vast lake.
From one grew a violet,
From the other a rosemary,
They grew and grew until
They embraced.
Dame Gyulai upon this sight
Torn them under her feet.
Thereupon the flower spoke,
"May the Lord in Heaven punish you
Who are destroying love.
You have not left me in peace when I lived,
I cannot rest even after death."

Hungarian original recorded in: *Kodály Orchestral Songs*, Hungaroton. English translation by László Eősze.

NOTES

1. "Kata Kádár" is the name of the heroine in the ballad, and the name of the ballad itself. Four versions of the ballad are included here; unless otherwise stated, comments in this paper will be made in reference to Version *A*, since it is the most popular version among scholars, and since it is the only version that has been published in an English critical edition. However, Versions *B*, *C*, and *D* have their qualities: although it is not well known, Version *C* is tidy and simple, and Version *D* is interesting because it is a recomposition of Kodály. It must be remembered that the effect of each version is heightened when set to music. I have heard only Versions *A*, and *D*, and *D* is a modern orchestral song. Hereafter "Kata Kádár" will be used to refer to the title of the ballad, and "Kate Kádár" to the heroine of the ballad. All four versions of "Kata Kádár" are included in the appendix.

2. Solymossy, Leader, and Vargyas represent the main trends in Hungarian folk ballad scholarship. Their work includes commentaries on "Kata Kádár." See Solymossy's essay on "Ballada" in *A magyarság néprajza* (Hungarian Ethnography), 4 vols. (Budapest: Királyi Magyar Egyetemi Nyomda, 1872-1924) vol. 3, 98-9; Ninon A.M. Leader, *Hungarian Classical Ballads and their Folklore* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1967): 125-41; Lajos Vargyas, *A magyar népballada és Európa* (Budapest: Zeneműkiadó, 1976) Vol. 2, 111-21; Vargyas, *Researches into the Mediaeval History of Folk Ballad* (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1967): 112-27. Although structuralism is starting to play a role in Hungarian folklore scholarship, nothing definitive has yet been written about "Kata Kádár" in this mode.

3. The ballad and literary sources that are generally cited in relation to "Kata Kádár" are as follows:

a) the medieval French romance of Tristan and Iseut;

b) Italian Renaissance short tales, such as those found in Boccaccio's *Decameron*, 1348-53; Bandello's *Tragical Tales*, 1567; and Giovanfrancesco Straparola's *Nights*, 1557;

c) A clumsy Hungarian romance based on the legend of Telamon, written in Kolozsvár in 1578;

d) the popular Bavarian legend "Agnes Bernauerin" based on the "Bernauer tragedy," which was a real event in Germany in 1435 (parallels are drawn by Leader and Vargyas); see the ballad in Konrad Nussbacher, *Deutsche Balladen* (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1967):52-4.

e) other European ballads, especially English and Scottish, collected by Sir Francis James Child in *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads,* 5 vols. (1882; rpt. New York: Folklore Press and Pageant Books, 1956); see especially "Earl Brand" (no. 7), "Lord Thomas and Fair Annet" (no. 73), "Lord Lovel" (no. 75). Hereafter, Child ballads are referred to within the text; György Király links them in "Kádár Kata balladája," *Nyugat* (1917): 48-60.

4. Stith Thompson, *Motif-Index of Folk Literature,* 6 vols., Indiana Univ. Series 19-23, FFC 106-109 (Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 1957), Vol. 4, 411-13. This is part of the wider motif E630, "Reincarnation in Object," 411.

5. Leader, 134-5.

6. The two other important international motifs in "Kata Kádár" are:

a) The motif of the life-token, Stith Thompson's motif no. E761, wherein "an object has mystic connection with the life of a person, so that changes in the life-token indicate changes in the person, usually disaster or death." This motif is missing in Versions *C* and *D* of "Kata Kádár." In Version *A* the life-token is a scarf; in *B* it is a white gown. In the international ballad motif tree, however, rings are the most common life-tokens. They change colour or burst in order to reveal a change of some sort. See also George Laurence Gomme's *The Handbook of Folklore* (London: Published for the Folklore Society by D. Nutt, 1890), type no. 24.

b) The curse motif, which in the case of "Kata Kádár," is really part of the central motif of "the twining branches." The curse motif does generally appear, however, in other European ballads on its own. Leader refers us to Child, no. 10, "The Two Sisters," in which the harp that had been strung with the hair of the victim speaks against her murderers.

7. Francis Lee Utley, "Oral Genres as Bridge to Written Literature," *Acta Ethnographica* 19 (1970): 389-99.

8. See chapter 10, "The Rescued Maiden," in Erich Seemann, Dag Strömbäck, Bengt R. Jonsson, eds., *European Folk Ballads,* European Folklore Series (Copenhagen: Rosenkilde and Bagger, 1967): 162-3.

9. See Seemann's introduction to *European Folk Ballads,* xxii-xxiii.

10. *Ballad and Epic: A Study in the Development of the Narrative Art* (New York: Russel and Russel, 1907 and 1967): 63. For a more detailed discussion of metric pattern and "meaning" see Alvert B. Lord's chapter on "The Formula" in *The Singer of Tales* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1960): 30-67.

11. Eugene Vinaver, Foreword to *The Romance of Tristan and Isolt (version commune),* trans. Norman B. Spector (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1973): p. xv.

12. William Shakespeare, *The Complete Works,* Alfred Harbage, ed.; *Romeo and Juliet,* The Complete Pelican Shakespeare (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1969): 859.

13. Alex Preminger, ed., *Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics,* enlarged ed. (Princeton University Press, 1974): 860.

14. Lajos Vargyas, "The Two Chapel Flowers," in *Researches into the Mediaeval History of the Folk Ballad* (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1967): 115.

15. *Ibid.,* 115-20.

16. *Ibid.,* 119.

17. Thomas, Le Roman de Tristan, 2 vols. (Paris: Didot, 1902), vol. 1, 46. This motif is not included in the body of the text but is in a footnote. In an appendix Bedier has documented a fragment that includes a different version of the motif in the French romance. See vol. 2, 394. In this version a green briar descends from Tristan's grave into Yseult's and it will not be plucked: "De dedens la tombe Tristan yssoit une ronche belle et verte et foillue qui aloit par dessus la chappelle, et descendoit le bout de la ronche sur la tombe Yseult et entroit dedens. Ce virent le gens du pais et le compterent au roy. Le roy a fit par trois fois coupper: a l'andemain restoit aussi belle et en autel estat comme elle avoit este autrefois. C'est miracle estoit sur Tristan es sur Yseult."

18. It is not always trees that spring from the graves of lovers. In the Hungarian ballads we have everything from plants to marble lilies to tulips. In the Tristan legend we seen to have oaken branches and green briar. In the English and Scottish ballads, however, the plants always seem to be a briar and a rose, or a briar and a birk.

19. See Leader for other Hungarian ballads that employ the curse, especially "The

Maid Who Was Cursed," 259, and "The Dishonoured Maiden," 180-3.

20. *Ibid.*, 135.

21. Child, vol. 1, 96.

22. He refers to an atypical German translation of the ballad, "Schön Kätchen," in which the motif of the twining plants appears twice, as in Version *B*.

23. Leader lists a variety of curses and incantations (129).

24. *Ibid.*, 140-1.

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Reconstructing Reality: The Hungarian Documentary and "Pseudo-Documentary" Film

Graham Petrie

The sporadic and arbitrary interest of North American film-goers in Eastern European cinema has shifted its focus from country to country and from director to director over the past two decades. After the brief flurry of interest between 1960 and 1964 in Andrzej Wajda's and Roman Polanski's early films, Polish films were virtually ignored until three or four years ago, when the work of Krzysztof Zanussi and the newest generation of film-makers began to receive some attention. Czech cinema took the limelight in the mid-1960s, but interest fell almost to nil after 1968. In the late 1960s and early 1970s Miklós Jancsó enjoyed the status of a minor cult figure, although his films never achieved popularity. His recent work has been largely denigrated, however, in favour of the films of his ex-wife, Márta Mészáros. [1]

Film in Eastern Europe cannot, of course, avoid being inextricably entwined with the politics of both the present and the past, and major political changes have often been heralded and accompanied by a particularly creative outburst of film-making energies. The obvious examples are the Prague Spring of 1968 and the way in which the often banned films of Zanussi and his slightly younger disciples like Feliks Falk, Janus Kijowski, and Krzysztof Kieslowski pinpointed the exact grievances that led to the formation of Solidarity and the still (at the time of writing) unresolved upheavals in the Polish political system. It is worth noting too that the first major creative period of Hungarian cinema after the Second World War came in 1955-56, with films like Zoltán Fábri's *Merry-Go-Round* (Körhinta) and Imre Fehér's *A Sunday Romance* (Bakaruhában).

A recent article in *Sight and Sound* quotes a Polish film critic on the moral and political responsibilities of an Eastern European film director:

> The cinema ought to ... indicate the things that disturb, discern among what is the expected outcome of our action that which is incidental and unwelcome, and point to what may, if not seen in time or discounted, be sources of our weakness. The list will include, as well as familiar and diagnosed ailments which social policy is attacking, ones which are still embryonic and only glimpsed or sensed by literature and the cinema: examples are loss of moral sensibilities and bearings, of consumer attitudes developing into acquisitiveness, self-seeking and careerism, of instrumental and manipulative treatment of people, of inability to adjust to advances in the democratisation of our lives, of the emergence of pseudo-elites arrogating to themselves special privileges, of hypocrisy, cynicism and opportunism. [2]

Such a specific program necessarily involves a more direct confrontation with contemporary realities than has normally been the case in Polish and Hungarian cinema, where the present situation has traditionally been mirrored in films set in the historic past, rather than being tackled directly. In both countries, however, dissatisfaction with this approach seems to have become widespread in the past decade, and interesting divergent solutions have been devised in each in an attempt to find an alternative. The Polish method of fiction films directly dealing with examples of corruption, intimidation, cynicism, egoism, and opportunism has virtually no parallel within Hungary. Films that resemble this method include Pál Gábor's *Angi Vera* (1978) and Ferenc Kósa's *The Match* (Mérkőzés, 1980), both of which seek to find the roots of contemporary problems in the traumatic events of 1949-56. Instead, the youngest generation of film-makers has chosen to try to find a new film language, mixing elements of both traditional documentary and fiction techniques, in order to examine the nature of contemporary realities.

The new approach, signalled most clearly by István Dárday's *Holiday in Britain* (Jutalomutazás, 1974) and Judit Elek's two-part *A Commonplace Story* (Egyszerű történet, 1971-75) has been given several names, none of which is totally satisfactory, such as "pseudo-documentary," "quasi-documentary," "documentary feature," "fictionalized documentary," and even "film-fact novel." All the names attempt to describe the unique mixture of fictional and documentary elements that charac-

terize the films to varying degrees. The intention is to produce something that is neither conventional documentary (i.e., recording a situation as it happens as accurately as possible and with, ideally, the minimum of interference and manipulation by the film-maker) nor conventional fiction (i.e., using professional actors and an invented plot). The method most commonly chosen is to take a situation based on an actual incident and recreate it in as realistic a manner as possible, using non-actors whose own lives and careers parallel those of the screen characters as closely as possible.

Some of the directors most deeply involved in this approach have explained their reasons for adopting it. According to Béla Tarr, still in his twenties, with two feature-length films behind him:

> ... the documentary-feature film may be made in the most intensive and quickest way if I organize the real situations of conflict selected by myself, supplemented by situations created out of reality which I came to know, into a story. For this story, *which is fiction*, I select the interpreters who are in an identical situation of life, and thus carry the conflicts within themselves. *But as the conflicts do not happen with them, they are also able to keep a distance.* [3]

Ideally, then, these films take as their subject some particularly acute social problem or conflict (e.g., housing shortages, the backwardness of village life, bureaucratic rivalries and incompetence) to which a purely documentary film-maker would not normally be given privileged access. The essence of the conflict is recreated in dramatic form, but a sense of immediacy is retained by using non-actors whose own experiences allow them to understand and identify with the problems of the characters they are portraying. If it succeeds, the method should combine the rawness and intimacy of a true documentary with a sense of dramatic shape and purpose, thus avoiding the extremes of formlessness and unwarranted manipulation that often characterize a purely documentary structure. Judit Elek has emphasized this element of structural control by the film-maker: "fiction may slip into the clothes of the documentary; may employ non-professional interpreters, may use improvised dialogues, but only within a structure constructed in ad-

vance."[4] Or in the words of Györgyi Szalai, who has been involved as scriptwriter or co-director in almost all the most significant films of this type, "'shapeless' everyday reality ... never appears in the documentary-feature films as direct reality, but as film-reality reorganized in the sign of a certain observation."[5]

Sceptics, however, have not been slow to point out some of the obvious disadvantages of the style. The choice of non-professional actors was influenced partly by the fact that in a small country like Hungary the best professional actors are liable to suffer from overexposure, while there is also the problem (related to me by the director István Gaál on my recent visit to Budapest) that it is becoming increasingly difficult for film-makers to lure actors away from the more lucrative field of television. The unknown faces in the "pseudo-documentaries" may offer freshness and a kind of realism, but by definition they lack the particular technical skills that allow a professional to repeat, vary, and develop a performance. As a result, most scenes can be shot only once; to compensate for this restriction and allow some degree of choice in the editing directors usually employ two cameras operating from different angles. In such situations it is also safer to concentrate on faces rather than on often awkward body movements and postures. Most of these films present a montage of "talking heads" and are thus more suited to television than to magnification on a large screen, and they can easily become stylistically monotonous.

Furthermore, it is almost impossible for a non-actor (unless controlled by a director of genius like Robert Bresson) to create a sense of change and development in a character. The figures in the "pseudo-documentaries" are almost always static; they reveal their essence at the start of the film and merely continue to illustrate it as the film proceeds. In most cases, where the situation rather than the personalities is central, this drawback is not severe. But it adds yet another limiting factor to the whole technique. A final disadvantage, linked both to the use of non-actors and to the desire to recreate the overall rhythm of the real-life situation presented, is the often inordinate length of many of the films; several last well over two hours, while Dárday's *Film Novel* (Filmregény, 1977) is over four hours in length. Not surprisingly then, the style has roused more enthusiasm among intellectuals than among the general public,

with a few exceptions, such as *Holiday in Britain* and Ferenc Kósa's *The Portrait of a Champion* (Küldetés, 1977).

Yet the "pseudo-documentaries" do include many works of real significance and have contributed to a renewal of some aspects of film language that should certainly be recognized outside Hungary. The film-makers involved are not always from the younger generation. Some, like Elek and Kósa, made their reputation with fiction films, while others, like the team of Imre Gyöngyössy and Barna Kabay who made *A Quite Ordinary Life* (Két elhatározás, 1977), one of the most highly acclaimed of these films, operate on the basis of completely different philosophical and social assumptions from people like Dárday and Tarr. The title "Budapest School," which is currently used freely in Hungary, is thus somewhat misleading and refers to an overall similarity of technique rather than to a shared political or social vision. It is no coincidence, however, that most of the films have come from a group of younger film-makers, who often collaborate with each other and interchange roles from one film to the next. All were trained at the Béla Balázs Film Studio, which is specifically designed to allow film students to experiment in every possible way, both stylistically and thematically.

One major theme of the "pseudo-documentaries" has been the crucial conflict within Hungarian society between the values of the village and those of the city and the dangerous tensions that result when an attempt is made to impose modern technological values on an archaic social structure. The result is all too often a rootless and alienated younger generation immersed in pop culture and seduced by the glamour of the big city, yet tied to a traditional family structure that they resent but from which they cannot easily escape. At the same time, the assembly-line jobs available to them from the attempts to establish new industries in the countryside offer little real satisfaction, and night life is a pale copy of the city scene that they witness on television.

Judit Elek's *A Commonplace Story*, the first film to attempt to examine these discrepancies in detail, is more traditional in its style than are some of its successors, but it exposes the problems in exemplary fashion. The film follows four years in the lives of two village girls, from the time they leave school to the point where they seem to have reached a decision about the direction their lives are to take. In this film the actual

unpredictable events in the lives of the real characters are recorded as they take place. The camera is allowed privileged access to intimate family situations (some of which, for obvious technical reasons, must have been especially staged or restaged for it); and occasionally the characters are interviewed about their problems and feelings, and they respond directly to the camera.

One of the young women, Ilonka, is totally enmeshed in the traditional village family structure and has few ambitions beyond perpetuating this pattern through her own early marriage. Her choice of partner — an impecunious young miner — rouses her family's disapproval, however, and only after a series of family quarrels, an attempted suicide, and Ilonka's pregnancy is the couple allowed to marry and move into her parents' home. The other woman, Marika, comes from the poorest section of the village, but has ambitions to escape by becoming a teacher. She is hindered by family commitments and by hostility and inertia within the village. She drifts into a series of dead-end jobs, is nearly raped by two young men and is forced by her mother to give evidence against them in court. After much discouragement she is able to enrol in a nearby training college. Her mother is prompted by this action to change her own pattern of life and moves to the town with her two younger children.

The strongest impression left by the film is of the despair and lack of purpose of life in such a village. The younger generation appears to be offered no meaningful choice between mindless acceptance of an outworn traditional pattern and escape to a more expansive environment.

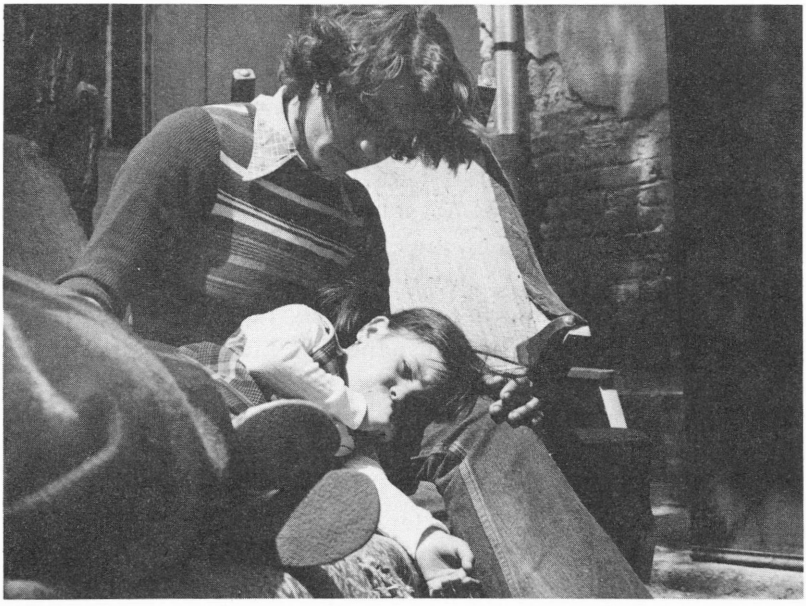
A more recent film, *Peacetime* (Békeidő, 1979), directed by László Vitézy, examines a possible solution to the problem through the renewal and revitalization of village life. Here the method is more truly that of the "pseudo-documentary," with a fictionalized structure that parallels an actual occurrence and a cast of non-actors who play parts closely linked to their own real-life roles (the co-operative chairman, for example, is played by someone who is in fact the chairman of a co-operative). The film opens in a dying village whose remaining inhabitants are on the point of leaving. Bencsik, the chairman of the local co-operative farm, is determined to keep the region economically viable and advertises jobs and free houses for families with large

IN A TIME OF PEACE – TEMPS DE PAIX
FRIENDSZEIT (Békeidő)
by László Vitézy

HUNGAROFILM
Budapest

From "Peacetime" (Békeidő); debates and discussions characterise these films, usually with food and drink in hand.

From "Holiday in Britain" (Jutalomutazás); UPPER: the boy's parents are depicted, showing their suspicious and hostile attitude. LOWER: depicting a bureaucrat and his (allegorical?) puppets.



From "Family Nest" (Családi tűzfészek); UPPER: the patriarch (on left) plans his moves, and LOWER: those whom the patriarch 'outmanoeuvres'.

numbers of children who are willing to settle in the village. The response is enthusiastic, and Bencsik pushes ahead with modernization, installing electricity and water supplies and initiating a modest local industry by building a slaughterhouse. Tensions arise between the newcomers and the local people, however, and Bencsik's somewhat high-handed methods of getting his way rouse considerable opposition, especially from the local party secretary, who feels he has been pushed aside. When Bencsik tries to build a new road to open up communications with the nearest large town, he is subjected to a disciplinary inquiry and reprimanded, although he retains his job. Because of local rivalries and jealousies the road remains unfinished, and the last shot of the film, from a helicopter overhead, shows it trailing away into dust in the middle of nowhere. The main problem with the film, for an outsider, is to decide on the attitude it takes towards Bencsik himself; his energy and enterprise are admirable, and his opponents generally petty and self-seeking, but he certainly is ruthless and arbitrary, trampling not only over privileged bureaucrats but over the rights of quite ordinary people in order to achieve his aims.

Stratagem (Harcmodor, 1979) directed by István Dárday, tackles a somewhat related theme, again in the manner of the "pseudo-documentary." Dr. Tóth, the head of a regional medical council, is shocked by revelations on a television program of the deplorable plight of old people in her district, and becomes determined to have a home built for them. Realizing that operating through conventional channels will take years, she decides to circumvent the normal bureaucratic system and obtain backing in various unorthodox ways. By pulling strings of all kinds, making use of her husband's influential connections, flattering, threatening, and cajoling, she finally gets the project underway and even persuades a few local functionaries to lend a hand with physical labour on the site. Like Bencsik, however, she tramples on too many toes in the process and threatens entrenched power structures. Her main (and initially reluctant) ally in the bureaucracy seizes a chance to wriggle out of the project and the regional council, with much fanfare in the media, announces its own rival old folks' home. At the last moment it runs into problems and is unable to make the widely publicized opening date. The only remaining alternative is to ensure the completion of Dr. Tóth's scheme and then claim credit

for it. At an elaborate opening ceremony, presentations are made to every bureaucrat in the area, including those who had opposed the plan throughout and had done their best to destroy it; the only exception is the one local functionary who had supported it from the beginning but ran foul of his colleagues for doing so.

All three of these films seem to agree that some degree of modernization is desirable to bring the villages into the mainstream of contemporary life. Their scepticism is directed against the bureaucratic system that is normally entrusted with this job, because it is riddled with inertia, entrenched privilege, and moral cowardice. For Imre Gyöngyössy and Barna Kabay in *A Quite Ordinary Life*, on the other hand, the traditional patterns and beliefs of village life are too valuable to be jettisoned overnight. They provide a link with the historic past and a sense of stability and belonging, and it is perhaps the loss of these that causes the rootlessness and aimlessness that other film-makers have chronicled. As in Elek's films, the method employed is that of traditional documentary, and the film follows some weeks in the life of an old peasant woman, listening to her as she talks about her life and her family and performs the routine tasks of her daily existence. The seventy-four-year old woman is indeed a "discovery"; she is articulate, energetic, humourous, and lively, despite the fact that her life has been full of tragedy. She has suffered the loss of her father, brother, husband, and four sons, almost all victims of the various wars and political upheavals in which Hungary has been involved this century. She has two ambitions that she is determined to fulfill before she dies: to visit her son, who had left Hungary in 1956 and now lives in Britain, and to clear and replant a section of the family vineyard. The film records the achievement of the first of these tasks, as she takes the unprecedented step of visiting Budapest and travelling on a plane.[6] Her preparations are shown, including the ceremonial baking of a batch of loaves. The underlying spirit of the film is not calculated to arouse sympathy in a society that is officially committed to modernization and the elimination of superstitious and backward relics of the past, and it has in fact been most warmly received outside Hungary. In their own way, however, Gyöngyössy and Kabay provide a necessary perspective on these aims and warn that much that is valuable and essential might be swept away along with the dross.

Another group of films deal with the interrelated problems of the erosion of the traditional family structure, the conflict between generations, and the rootlessness and alienation of large numbers of young people. The gentlest and most light-hearted (though nevertheless penetrating) of these works is *Holiday in Britain*, while the most savage and disorienting is *Family Nest* (Családi tűzfészek, 1978), directed by Béla Tarr. *Holiday in Britain* deals with the search to select a group of talented youngsters who are to make a visit to Britain. One of them, a young boy from the countryside with some musical ability, finds his mother suspicious of the whole project and unwilling to allow him to go. The mother is presented, not as an ogre, but as bland, homely, and immovably narrow-minded; she just knows that it is not good for her boy to go so far from home and mix with foreigners. The organizers of the trip plead and argue with her, but to no avail; for her stubborn intractability wears them down in the end. The boy himself is allowed little say in the matter, and the bureaucrats in charge of the project themselves are quietly mocked for their total lack of understanding of the people they are dealing with and their own single-minded certainty that they know exactly what is best for the ignorant masses. Finally the mother wins; the boy is replaced at the last moment by a singularly untalented young girl and is left to wile away the summer in the company of his friends.

In essence the conflict is similar to that of Dárday's later *Stratagem*; namely, that it is vital to change the mentality and attitudes of the rural population if progress is to be made, but attempts to do so by force, brow-beating, and intimidation will quickly prove self-defeating. And when decisions are made by an entrenched bureaucracy and passed down dogmatically without any consultation with the people whose lives are to be affected, they are liable (and justifiably so) to be sabotaged through passive or active resistance.

Family Nest is very different in both tone and mood and is one of the most memorable of recent Hungarian films and also one of the most exhausting and painful. More than any other of the "pseudo-documentaries" it has the raw immediacy of real life, even if that life is somewhat one-sided in its relentless harshness, abrasiveness, and permanent conflict. The film is set in an overcrowded, one-room flat occupied by three generations of the same family and dominated by a repulsively authoritarian

patriarch who spends all his time sitting, dressed only in his undershirt and trousers, directing a constant stream of orders, criticism, and abuse at his unlucky relatives. The main target of his attack is his daughter-in-law, who is forced by the housing shortage to live in his flat and whose efforts to find a home of her own are met by the official response that her situation is not nearly critical enough to give her any priority in the allocation of flats. The father succeeds in turning his easily manipulated son against the hated daughter-in-law, and in desperation the young woman leaves with her child and becomes a squatter in an abandoned house, in the (probably vain) hope that her plight will at last force the housing officials to act.

The style of the film is intensely claustrophobic. The portrayal of the confined space of the overcrowded flat is intensified by the huge close-ups of the characters, especially the flabby, overweight patriarch. It is a film of this type that fully justifies the "pseudo-documentary" method, for one cannot imagine any family allowing a film crew to witness and record scenes as harrowing, intimate, and unflattering as these. Yet the fact that the characters themselves are linked by family ties in real life must have given them a genuine insight into the feelings of the figures they portrayed.[7]

Béla Tarr's most recent film, *The Outsider* (Földfolt, 1980), also deals with a group of basically unsympathetic characters, although behind them one glimpses a society that has failed to live up to its stated obligation to provide the opportunity for a decent life for all its citizens. The central figure is a young "village Beethoven," a man of considerable musical talent who has been unable, partly through his background as an orphan and partly through his own vacillating character, to establish or stick to any goals in his life. He drifts from one temporary job and from one sordid lodging to another, drinks heavily, indulges in occasional sexual orgies with prostitutes, and mingles with alcoholics, drug-addicts, and other frustrated and embittered failures like himself. He is unable to accept any kind of authority, discipline, or restraint; for example, although he has fathered an illegitimate child and is prepared to acknowledge it, he will do nothing to support it. He finally meets and marries another woman, but again he cannot accept boundaries, and the marriage quickly disintegrates as he seeks brief satisfactions elsewhere. Although the focus is on the central character and

he is held fully accountable for his own inadequacies, it is made quite clear that he is far from unique and that he typifies a social malaise that has ramifications in a whole underworld of derelicts and petty criminals. This underworld is growing rather than diminishing, and it includes on its fringes people who have deliberately chosen to abandon a society that they feel has nothing meaningful to offer them.

Gyuri (Cséplő Gyuri, 1978), directed by Pál Schiffer, also examines a character on the margins of orthodox society, but in this case a member of a social group that has traditionally resisted or been refused full assimilation into a respectable environment. In another variation on documentary technique, here we have neither the recording of a life as it happens nor a "factual" presentation of a "fictional" event. The central figure of the film is a young gipsy whose history is reconstructed and relived for the camera; we first see the young man in his rural gipsy community, part of a close-knit and independent yet backward and poverty-stricken world. He decides to leave for Budapest with two friends to acquire an education and a job. His two companions are quickly discouraged by initial set-backs and return home. Gyuri remains, finding work on a construction site and later enrolling in evening classes. He becomes outwardly assimilated to urban society, but he is lonely and disoriented and is finally driven to return home in an attempt to re-establish contact with his roots. He has changed too much, however, and realizes that he can no longer be contented with the old way of life. At the close of the film he returns to Budapest.

Gipsies were at the centre of two important earlier Hungarian films: Sándor Sára's *Gipsies* (Cigányok, 1962) and Imre Gyöngyössy's *Legend about the Death and Resurrection of Two Young Men* (Meztelen vagy, 1972), each chronicling, though in completely different styles, the misery and frustration of their existence. Although Schiffer's film is partly in this tradition, it is not so much an indictment of official neglect and prejudice toward a particular segment of society as an examination of the kinds of problems dealt with in *The Outsider*. Unlike Tarr's hero, Gyuri is industrious, sober, and reliable; but his dilemma is very similar, in that there is nowhere in the social framework where he can feel he belongs and where his abilities will be fully utilized. He is caught between the urban and gipsy worlds in much the same way that the "village

Beethoven" straddles both the underworld and respectable society without being at home in either. Despite his return to the city, it seems probable that he will never be able to adapt completely to urban existence.

A final thread in the pattern of contemporary Hungarian documentaries is represented by films such as *The Portrait of a Champion* directed by Ferenc Kósa, and *The Valley of Blows* (Pofonok völgye, 1980). Both are essentially interview films, although, unlike *A Commonplace Story* and *Gyuri*, their characters are not anonymous, commonplace figures but persons well-known in Hungarian society — namely, a former Olympic pentathlon medalist and a boxing champion. They talk about their past lives and present situations, and newsreel footage of their sporting triumphs are intercut with their account.

Kósa's film is more interesting, and it caused a scandal when it appeared because of the protagonist's frank and often bitter comments on the way he had been treated by the sporting authorities after his retirement. Most unusually for a sporting hero in Eastern European society, he had refused to exploit his fame and spend the rest of his life in comfort, living on the various sinecures and financial perquisites readily available to him. To the amazement and disgust of officials, he actually preferred to continue with his modest way of life and to find a job where he could be of some use to the new generation of athletes. Even worse in official eyes, he openly condemned the system of privilege and corruption that he was rejecting. As a result, he suffered from increasing hostility and ostracism and finally found it impossible to obtain any kind of employment where his knowledge of sport could be fruitfully exploited.

Although allowances probably must be made for exaggeration and (doubtless justified) resentment, his story fits in well with the analysis presented by the other films discussed. A society is depicted where individual talent is stifled or frustrated by a system geared to conformism, self-interest, and the scramble for privilege and security. All kinds of people fall by the wayside, from those who, like the "village Beethoven," might well be misfits in any society, to others who look no further than attaining a moderate degree of justice and happiness, a decent job, and a home, and who find that bureaucratic inefficiency and inertia deny them even those goals.

One can find in these Hungarian films all the ingredients

of the new Polish cinema mentioned earlier: "loss of moral sensibilities and bearings," "acquisitiveness," "self-seeking philosophy and careerism," "instrumental and manipulative treatment of people," "authoritarianism, elitism, and opportunism. They are generally presented within the framework of specifically Hungarian realities, most notably the problems of village life and of urban development; or of a bureaucratic system that has crystallized around the defence of its own privileges and has lost touch with the people whose interests it ought to be serving. The essential conflicts are the same as those of any advanced or developing society, whether socialist or capitalist, and the method chosen to depict them, particularly that of the "pseudo-documentary," allows them to be perceived with an unusual degree of freshness and spontaneity. It is perhaps too early to say whether the technique is capable of being extended further, or whether a certain degree of monotony and repetition will ultimately become evident. Films such as *Holiday in Britain, Family Nest,* and *Peacetime,* however, already represent a solid achievement on which to build.

NOTES

1. Lengthy defences of two of his latest films, *Hungarian Rhapsody* and *Allegro Barbaro*, however, appear in a recent issue of *Film Quarterly* (Fall 1980), together with reviews of several other Hungarian films.

2. Jacek Fuksiewicz, quoted in David Robinson, "Gdansk 1980," *Sight and Sound* (Winter 1980-81): 38.

3. Quoted in a pamphlet, *Budapest Film School,* made available by Hungarofilm to visitors to the 1981 Filmweek in Budapest. This extract is taken from an article, "Precise Facts in Dramatic Structure" by László Zöldi (9). These articles, together with some additional interviews and filmographies, have since been published by Hungarofilm in Budapest as *The Budapest Film School* (1981).

4. Quoted by László Zöldi in *Budapest Film School,* 8.

5. *Ibid.*

6. Much has been made by some Hungarian critics of the alleged fact that the old woman was not permitted to visit Britain and that the scenes supposedly filmed at London airport were actually shot in Prague. If this is true, it would not necessarily destroy the meaning of the film and would simply place it even more firmly in the "romanticized documentary" tradition of Robert Flaherty.

7. Something of the same kind has been attempted, using traditional documentary methods, by film-makers like Allan King and television series such as *An American Family.* It would take an extraordinary combination of exhibitionism, lack of perception, and masochism, however, for any real-life person to approve of the portrait of the father that emerges from Tarr's film.

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Activities of the Hungarian Film Institute and Archives*

The founding charter of the Institute (Magyar Filmtudományi Intézet és Filmarchivum) defines its goals as follows: "to promote the publication of scholarly literature, periodicals, other printed materials and film criticism in order to make results of research available to the interested public, and to increase the standards of Hungarian film culture and the sophistication of its reception by our society." During its two decades of activity, the Institute has met these goals with a number of publications. These publications are co-ordinated with the general research schedule of the Institute and observe the needs of scholarship, the importance of public information, and the emerging current tasks in the field of the Hungarian film.

The volumes of the *Library of Film Art* have been appearing since the founding of the Institute and may be considered its most ambitious undertaking. The volumes are internationally renown theoretical and historical works (by Arnheim, Bazin, Mitry, Metz, Vertov, and others), as well as significant studies by Hungarian film scholars, such as Ferenc Lohr's study of film sound, or István Karcsai Kulcsár's, István Nemeskürty's and Károly Nemes's monographs on different periods of the Hungarian cinema. To date, sixty-one volumes have appeared, with average printings of 300 copies each.

The *Pocket Library of the Friends of the Cinema* series appears in the edition of the Institute, while its printing and distribution come under the auspices of the Bureau for the Promotion of Mass Education (Népmüvelési Propaganda Iroda). The series presents short, popularized monographs on Hungarian and foreign directors (such as Jancsó and Pasolini) and actors or actresses (such as Klári Tolnai, Liv Ullman or Zbigniew Cybulski). Occasionally as many as 15,000 copies are printed per

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**Compiled by George Bisztray, based on information provided by the Hungarian Film Institute and Archives in August, 1980.*

volume, which demonstrates the widespread popularity of the series. Some of the most popular monographs have been reprinted several times. Twenty-two volumes are in print, an additional four are in production.

The *Film and Public* series is edited by the research group for film sociology at the Institute and is published jointly with the Corporation for Film Distribution (Mozgóképüzemi Vállalat /MOKÉP). Its volumes present results of research on public film reception (e.g., Zoltán Fábri's film "The Fifth Seal," published by László Halász), viewers' opinions, as well as statistics of distribution and ticket sales (e.g., János Tárnok on the audience of urban cinema theatres in 1972). To date, five volumes have been published.

The *Review of Film Research* is an occasional publication, appearing four or five times a year in order to provide the personnel of the Institute an opportunity to publish the results of their research. The issues also contain collections of essays about such topics as Béla Balázs or the modern West German cinema, and, occasionally, more important studies by foreign theorists and critics (J.C. Jarvie, A. Sarris, and others). So far, thirty volumes of treatises and anthologies have gone into print.

The *International Film Information* series has been published for the past ten years, in print runs of 400 copies per issue. The contents cover recent important studies and criticism from the international film press, as well as documents concerning the reception of Hungarian films abroad. The issues are sent free of charge to Hungarian producers, distributors and film press critics.

Researchers of the Archives and Collections Group of the Institute prepare for publication series such as the *Filmographic Studies*, which contain annual statistical data about film production, distribution, and festivals. Another kind of publication are the filmographies, of which three volumes have been published to date; they offer data on Hungarian feature films made between 1945-69 and 1970-74, respectively, as well as data on Hungarian short films made between 1945-60.

The Institute is responsible for the program of a Budapest cinema called the Film Museum. The film series and individual movies featured in this special cinema are accompanied by informative brochures published by the Institute and sold in the theatre.

For certain occasions, such as film festivals and symposia, the Institute publishes materials outside the framework of its scheduled series. Other publications are produced in co-operation with different branches of the film industry. A result of the successful co-operation between the Institute and MOKÉP is the publications for the general public of volumes about the development of the Hungarian cinema since 1945 and the Russian cinema since 1919.

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Hungarian Cinema Studies at the University of Toronto

Introduction

The Cinema Studies Program at the University of Toronto offers some thirty courses, several of which survey different national cinemas. In the 1981-82 academic year, a Hungarian Cinema course was offered — for the first time not only in the history of the program but also in North American university education.

Such a course could not have been offered without the availability of basic surveys, specialized monographs, bibliographies as well as filmographies.* The two textbooks used in the course were István Nemeskürty's *Word and Image: History of the Hungarian Cinema* (Budapest: Corvina, 1968), and Graham Petrie's *History Must Answer to Man: The Contemporary Hungarian Cinema* (Budapest: Corvina, 1979). While the former is the best history of Hungarian film-making, the latter is an inspiring interpretation by a Canadian scholar of the "golden" decades of the Hungarian cinema: the 1960s and 1970s. A useful bibliography of relevant publications available in the University of Toronto's Robarts Library is I.L. Halász de Béky's *The Hungarian Cinema*, I-III, containing 313 entries. An additional thirty-one publications not available in the Robarts Library are in the collection of the Chair of Hungarian Studies. Among these are indispensable filmographies issued by the Hungarian Film Institute and Archives and by Hungarofilm.

The Hungarian film course scrutinized both the content and the artistic aspects of modern Hungarian cinema, following certain guidelines developed to encourage individual research in and interpretation of, a limited number of topics. The eight films screened constituted practically all the Hungarian films available for university distribution in Canada. The only film which may be classified as a historical piece was Frigyes Bán's *Soil Under Your Feet* (Talpalatnyi föld, 1948). Otherwise the

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**Lists of the production data of various films.*

discussion focused on the films of the last fifteen years, starting with Jancsó's *The Red and The White* (Csillagosok, katonák, 1967). The research papers developed in the course bear witness to the fact that modern Hungarian cinema is a highly effective medium of artistic communication and a source of inspiration even for students of non-Hungarian background.

As the availability of Hungarian film studies in the English language is still regrettably limited, we decided to print abridged versions of the most interesting papers.* Our hope is to encourage younger scholars to direct their attention to Hungarian studies, especially in fields in which little has been published. A less direct but educationally very important goal of the course was to point out the value of visual communication in the teaching of Hungarian culture. In this regard a deeply rooted but unfortunately not quite correct educational belief dominates: that a prerequisite to learning about Hungary is learning the Hungarian language. This concept disregards the potential offered by the other forms of communication such as the arts, cinema, dance or music, all of which provide learning opportunities to individuals who have a serious interest in cultural studies but are reluctant to devote a great deal of time to the study of Hungarian.

The following excerpts by three students are centred around one thematic motif and discuss the role of women in the Hungarian cinema. Silvia Miles chose a sociological approach by describing the emancipation process of women figures in selected films. Her findings are perhaps closest to the "classical" feminist theses. Sophie Maruszak took a more ethical view on the issue and found that the modern Hungarian cinema represented problematic human relations which have global relevance. Natalie Pawlenko went into an even more philosophical direction when stating that the films reflected on human conditions such as loneliness and the individual's coming to terms with him or herself. Therefore, it was just coincidental and of little consequence that the films were made of (and occasionally by) women.

**In the editing of these essays, some passages were omitted, others were summarized. Explanatory notes were added where deemed necessary, while some footnotes were left out.*

A brief filmography of the films mentioned in the papers is as follows, listing the director, the title of the film in English and Hungarian, and the year of production:

Frigyes Bán: *Soil Under Your Feet* (Talpalatnyi föld), 1948.

Miklós Jancsó: *Red Psalm* (Még kér a nép/Vörös rekviem), 1971.

Zsolt Kézdi Kovács: *When Joseph Returns* (Ha megjön József), 1975.

Márta Mészáros: *Nine Months* (Kilenc hónap), 1976.

Pál Gábor: *Angi Vera*, 1978.

George Bisztray

Silvia Miles:

In his book, *Present Hungarian Society on the Screen: 1957-1972,* Gábor Szilágyi published the results of a detailed study on behavioural patterns and conflicts in the Hungarian cinema.[1] In a chapter devoted to the subject of women and feminist themes, Szilágyi observes some interesting changes in the portrayal of women in Hungarian film and reflects upon their underlying causes. He notes, for example, that contemporary women have attained in general a higher level of education than those depicted in the films of the 'fifties; they are not merely housewives and "professional" mothers, but become increasingly goal-directed career-women who like their work and for whom professions have an important role in the search for personal fulfillment. As for their emotional world, such women tend to be more self-reliant, more independent than their counterparts of the 'fifties. According to Szilágyi, "there are still some women who are exploited in their emotions by the opposite sex, but they are aware of this fact and strive against it." It naturally becomes a priority for such women to eliminate sexual discrimination and to achieve equality both in the material and the emotional sense with the male members of society. Szilágyi believes that in this struggle, those women who are willing to compromise rarely achieve their objective; and those who do not accomplish what they desire tend to withdraw from society into some form of private seclusion. An extensive developmental process took place before the "new" emancipated woman emerged as a theme in its own right during the 1970s.

Nonetheless, there is a clear progression toward this end.

One of the first products of Hungary's new socialist film industry, *Soil Under Your Feet*, presents an example of a non-liberated woman in the character of Marika. Made in 1948, this film is set in pre-World War II Hungarian society and depicts a young peasant woman who lives in a strongly male-dominated society. Marika's lack of freedom is depicted at the beginning of the film; she is forced to enter into a marriage by her parents who owe money to her future spouse and his father, the richest peasant in the village. This film portrays a situation which is familiar to the reader of East European literature. A new twist occurs soon after the opening sequence, however, in that Marika is abducted during the wedding by Jancsi, her former lover, who is of the same economic and social status as she. Significantly, Marika plays no active role in the plan to thwart the marriage. The viewer is led to believe that if she had not been carried off unnoticed during the whirlwind of the wedding dance, she would have submitted and allowed herself to be married to a rich man whom she did not love, as is typically the fate of the heroine in this genre of story. Thus even though she ultimately escapes the prospect of a loveless marriage, it is not due to her own will and decisions. On the contrary, it is perhaps not exaggerated to say that even in this she is manipulated by her lover.

As Marika and the wealthy peasant's son were already wed in church, she and Jancsi cohabit in an untraditional common-law marriage. Jancsi works as a navvy. A scene which further illustrates the passive and submissive role of a woman in a male-dominated society is that in which her husband's employer, the steward of the local estate, attempts to rape Marika. Again she is helpless without the aid of Jancsi and other men. Moreover, where it comes to "settling accounts" between the attacker and his victim, it is again a matter between the boss and the common-law husband whose "proprietary" rights have been infringed upon.

Even Marika's occupations serve to underscore the subordinate role assigned to women in the society in which she lives. Marika is no more than a housewife who looks after the household, tends to the elderly parents and, later, to her child, and works in the garden or on the piece of land her husband buys, almost as though she were a serf. Jancsi, on the other hand, is

the breadwinner. Several sequences capture the hardship of woman's life in the lower classes in the midst of which there is not even time to think or rebel against one's condition. Unquestioning submission seems to be the only course open to her, whereas men like Jancsi come upon the idea of "class struggle" and retain it for what they envision as a better future. The women, however, are not partners in this struggle.

Red Psalm by Miklós Jancsó, is another highly symbolic film dealing with a clash between peasants and landowners in rural Hungary in the imagery of class struggle and revolution. Significantly, men and women play equally important roles in the conflict depicted by the film. In his book, *History Must Answer to Man*, Graham Petrie documents this and writes of Jancsó's work: "there is no one leader among the peasants: several of them, both men and women, take turns to exhort and inspire them, but decisions are reached and acted upon by common consent." [2]

Though they share common objectives with the men, the women, in those incidents where they are the initiators of the action, employ weapons which might be thought typical of their sex. When the authorities send soldiers to quell the rebellious agricultural workers, the women undress before the troops. Their nudity figures first of all as a weapon against the threat presented by the soldiers, who are now reminded of their wives, lovers or female relatives; while on another level it underlines the courage of these women as they march defenselessly toward the armed troops. In this scene, where the women are shown to be more than the equals of the men, they do not have to give up any of their femininity in order to be so, but achieve their end *through* their femininity.

In Jancsó's film various cinematic devices are employed to reinforce the significance of the female role. On the simplest level, it is noticeable that women, whether seen at a distance or in close-ups, singly or in groups, have an equal share in the screen-time and -space with the men. The very first frames of the film, which serve as a kind of leitmotif, show a woman holding a dove, the symbol of peace; and the last sequence shows the *same* woman dressed in a red gown, holding a gun and firing on the soldiers. Thus the symbolic range of the female figure is extended to encompass the causes of peace on the one hand and social revolution on the other.

Though in *Red Psalm* women are depicted in a central role in the class struggle, nothing is shown of the changing role of women within the smaller element of society, namely in the family. In fact, not much is done with this theme until the films of the 'seventies. In that decade for instance, Márta Mészáros' film, *Nine Months* presents the viewer with a fully rounded and thoroughly contemporary portrait of a woman and the conflicts arising out of differing perceptions of her role within the family.

The film is the story of Juli, a young woman who works in a brick factory and, at the same time, is trying to finish her university studies by correspondence. She has a son from a previous affair with a married man, and when the film opens she is becoming involved in a relationship with Jancsi, a foreman at the factory where she works. Juli's love affair with Jancsi is complicated, however, by the differing conceptions of marriage held by each of them. Jancsi cannot understand, for example, why Juli should want to finish her university degree, since she does not need an education in order to perform the functions of a wife. He thinks it is enough if she knows how to run a household and raise children. But Juli is no more willing to give up her studies than she can agree to give up her son whom Jancsi encourages her not to see, as though he wanted to wipe out her past and all traces of attachments other than to him. Jancsi, in short, is unable to realize that Juli is not his possession, an object which he can manipulate at will.

This claim to subjugate the woman physically is depicted in its most brutal form when Jancsi literally rapes Juli. Her reaction describes his behaviour for what it is: "You use me, like an animal." Juli becomes pregnant with Jancsi's child and after much agonizing soul-searching asserts her dignity and personal independence by deciding to face life on her own, together with her son and the baby which is to be born to her.

Throughout the film the viewer can scarcely fail to be conscious of the fact that Juli and her plight are the centre of the director's attention, since close-ups of her occur in the footage with great regularity. Juli's superiority, even when her social role placed her in a position of subordination, finds graphic expression through the composition of some individual frames.

Other frames represent the irreconcilable polarity and contradiction of the two main characters. The director shoots

the couple separated by a fence, for example. The fence is like the barrier between the lovers. Juli is situated in an open space in which she moves freely, suggesting her inner freedom and self-reliance. Jancsi, on the other hand, is portrayed as a person boxed in within the confines of the conservative and outmoded attitudes which he tries to impose on Juli.

The three films reflect the respective periods in which they were made with regards to the position of women within Hungarian society. Through these films, the viewer gained insight into important developments within Hungarian social life, both within the family and society. More importantly, the films provide the audience with an intimate portrayal of the difficult struggle for social equality on the part of women, which has been ongoing in the Eastern bloc countries as well as in the West.

NOTES

1. G. Szilágyi, *A mai magyar társadalom filmen, 1957-1972* (Present Hungarian society in film, 1957-1972) (Budapest: Magyar Filmtudományi Intézet és Filmarchivum, 1972).
2. G. Petrie, *History Must Answer to Man* (Budapest: Corvina, 1979): 59.

Sophie Maruszak:

Pál Gábor in *Angi Vera* presents the woman as a responsible individual without an emphasis on her being in fact, a woman. The film is set in 1948: the Hungarian communist party is consolidating its power and is looking for careerists and opportunistic individuals to expand the ranks of the party elite. Governed by a strong sense of justice, Vera, a young war orphan, exposes unhygienic practises at the hospital where she is employed as a nurse. As a result of this action, she is sent to a party school in order to become "a better citizen" and, ultimately, to be granted a higher position in "the new society." [1]

In the beginning of the film, a series a static portraits of Vera are shown. The series refers to her intellectual profile as it was developed in the party school: that is, in her compliance with the rules and regulations of a new order, she has become little more than a pawn and has given up all sense of individuality and dynamism. This becomes most evident towards the end of the film in her denunciation of her teacher and lover, István

André, who made her question the dehumanizing political system in the first place. Whether photographed against the background of the cavernous gymnasium of the school or amidst a group of people during recess, Vera remains alone. The dilemma results: "in her tragic betrayal of herself and her lover. Her choice ... provides an illustration of the fact that it is possible to manipulate society only if there are individuals who are willing ... to be manipulated. Vera is such a person." [2]

It is not Vera who forms the primary focus in this film, for as Gábor states, she allows herself to be manipulated; nor is it István André whose motivations remain undelineated. Instead, it is Mária Muskát, a good-natured peasant girl who leads shower room sing-a-longs and discussions about sex. Although she is ethically bound to the party, Mária is also morally bound to a spirit of humanity. When Vera has second thoughts about her denounciation of István André and stands out on a cold balcony in her night clothes as though waiting for an outside force (perhaps sickness and/or death) to save her from living with the consequences of her act, Mária Muskát convinces her to go back into the dormitory and face the responsibility of her decision. In the final sequence, the image of Vera in the comfort of the car which takes her to a "deserved" career in the capital remains a static portrait. It is Mária Muskát who is seen in the midst of a dialectical struggle. She was not a "success" in the party school and did not obtain a good position; she is depicted pedalling her bicycle against the wind.

While *Angi Vera*'s primary concern lies with the responsibility of the individual set in a historical perspective, *When Joseph Returns* presents a concern with current social issues. Recently married to a seaman who is gone ten months of the year, Marika is employed at an unfulfilling job in a Budapest factory and writes meaningless letters to a husband who insists on continuing his career. Trapped in a claustrophobic apartment with her mother-in-law Ágnes, Marika is reduced to watching the love affairs of others which only increases her loneliness and alienation. She begins a temperamental love affair with a chauffeur, and succeeds only in getting pregnant and gaining the disapproval of her mother-in-law. The primary concern seems to be what Joseph will be told when he returns.

Ironically, Ágnes is not much happier than Marika, and she engages in casual love affairs as well. Nevertheless, she re-

proaches Marika saying that she was never unfaithful to her husband while she had been married to him. Significantly, as a member of an older generation, she maintains some adherence to a morality which demands that a woman stifle her own 'illicit' sexual urges in support of a social code that is rapidly changing. But one cannot divorce the social from the psychological element. Domestic circumstances, the banality of everyday life, and her own personal character lead to a deterioration in Marika's life and the miscarriage of the child. Each alone in their plight, the two women join forces against the alienating elements of a new society; their roles within this society remaining ambiguous.

A number of similarities and differences exist between *When Joseph Returns* and *Nine Months*, which is Márta Mészáros' "development of her thoughts and ideas about the complex set of problems that the issue of a status of genuine equality for women presents." [3] Unlike Marika, Juli is a determined woman who fights to gain her own independence. Set in a working class environment, *Nine Months* captures a certain realism in its portrayal of the relationship between men and women in socialist society. It is certainly a far different society than that portrayed in *The Soil Under Your Feet*.

Mészáros has maintained, from her very first film, that with the obstinacy of a mule she has pursued her attempt to study the character of types of women with a strong personality capable of forming decisions for themselves." [4] *Nine Months* portrays just such a character in the form of Juli Kovács, who is anything but the "soft-spoken, passive, obedient, acquiescent sort" which Hungary and Europe have known for centuries. [5] *Nine Months* is not a woman's film but a reevaluation of current social issues. In an era where divorce rates are ever increasing, the examination of marriage and the relationship between men and women, not as foes but as people, is especially relevant.

The role of women has evolved tremendously since *The Soil Under Your Feet*. In films such az *Angi Vera, When Joseph Returns* and *Nine Months*, she is no longer simply a wife and mother, nor an instrument of a socialist movement;she is first and foremost a responsible human being. As such, these Hungarian films of the 1970s do not belong to a separate category of art. They present the view that women's concerns and the films that

depict them are similarly those of Hungary and in a larger sphere, the world.

NOTES

1. Edwin Kephart, "Angi Vera," *Films in Review* (March 1980): 180.
2. "Angi Vera," *Hungarofilm Bulletin* 79/4, p. 23.
3. "Nine Months," *Hungarofilm Bulletin* 76/4, p. 13.
4. *Ibid.*
5. *Ibid.*

Natalie Pawlenko:

The most important quality inherent in *When Joseph Returns, Nine Months,* and *Angi Vera,* is perhaps the concept which Lina Wertmüller writes of in the following quotation: "My characters are symbols for me of certain things having to do with human beings, quite independently of their sex." [1] Molly Haskell places emphasis on the characterization of men and women in films as above all, human beings. In her book, *From Reverence to Rape*: *The Treatment of Women in the Movies,* Haskell states that "The concept of a 'woman's film' and 'women's fiction' as a separate category of art, implying a generically shared world of misery and masochism the individual work is designed to indulge, does not exist in Europe. There, affairs of the heart are of importance to both men and women and are the stuff of literature." [2] Haskell's observations may be supported by an examination of the role of women in modern Hungarian cinema.

"As a term of critical opprobium, 'woman's film' carries the implication that women, and therefore women's emotional problems, are of minor significance." [3] The three Hungarian films examined in this essay are not "women's films," and this may be verified by noting the chief characteristics of each. First of all, a woman is the central character in a woman's film. Central to these films is the notion that "the circumscribed world of the housewife corresponds to the state of woman in general, confronted by a range of options so limited she might as well inhabit a cell. The persistent irony is that she is dependent for her well-being and 'fulfillment' on institutions — marriage, motherhood — that by translating the word 'woman' into 'wife' and 'mother,' end her independent identity." [4] The main characters of *When Joseph Returns, Nine Months,* and *Angi*

Vera — Mária, Juli and Vera, respectively, do not, in any way way fall into any of the above categories.

Zsolt Kézdi Kovács' film of 1975, *When Joseph Returns*, is not so much a film about an abandoned wife, as it is a film about a human condition — loneliness. That the central character of this film is a woman, played by Lili Monori, is merely representative of a wider, more universal situation. Where human relationships are concerned, the film could just as well be about a man, so that Joseph's absence throughout most of the film can represent the absence of the basic necessities in life, namely love and understanding.

The central theme of the film is that if love is not nurtured, it will result in isolation, loneliness and fleshy, false love affairs, that both men and women are prone to. Thus, what seems to be pure and honest love between Mária and Joseph at the beginning of the film, proves to be nevertheless, a love that does not yet have strong roots, or firm support. Kézdi Kovács' refusal to romanticize the film is central to the film's theme, for there is nothing romantic about loneliness and casual affairs. As viewers, we feel more angry than sympathetic with Mária; "Kézdi Kovács never makes excuses for the girl, merely showing how her character and domestic circumstances lead to the deterioration in her life."[5]

An outdated, unyielding "woman's film" might show the problems that a young bride encounters as a housewife, while *When Joseph Returns* reveals the story of a newly-married woman's predicament of having to live with her mother-in-law in a three-room flat, and work in a factory, while her seaman husband travels the world. Kézdi Kovács emphasizes the initial strain in Mária's and Ágnes' relationship by the almost wordless scenes in their dreary apartment. The two characters become inhuman to a certain degree, living their lives selfishly and thoughtlessly.

The title of the film, *When Joseph Returns*, refers to the future, and therefore illuminates the temporary nature of loneliness; not that the return of Joseph, in Mária's case, can or will change what Mária has undone, but that the possibility or hope remains. The most important relationship in the film becomes not one between a man and a woman, as in a traditional "woman's film," or even between the two women, but rather, the relationship with oneself, where it all begins.

Márta Mészáros, the director of *Nine Months*, has been placed side by side with Lina Wertmüller for the reason that they are the only women "working regularly today who have directed more than three widely-released feature films in the past decade; who are, in other words, comparable to reputable men in the field such as Scorcese or Coppola, Tanner, Saura, Jancsó, Olmi, Truffaut, Ray, comparable in the sense that their names are valid currency in their own production milieu, that they can count on being able to get their next script produced, or if not that, then another."[6]

Concerning the role of women in her films, Mészáros states:

> In my films, as a matter of fact, I tell banal, commonplace stories, and in them the leads are invariably women--I portray things from a woman's angle. Male directors are never questioned to tell why it is that, in their films, they concern themselves with men. If Andrzej Wajda chooses to make a works manager the centre of his film's story, why, that's only natural that it is his problem, that's what interests him. Yet it is always asked of me why I choose women for my films.[7]

Where Lina Wertmüller has been accused of "using women as traditional objects, receptacles, even dumping grounds for male hostility and ridicule,"[8] Márta Mészáros has been heralded as a "prolific feminist/socialist filmmaker,"[9] who has not yet had her films widely distributed in North America, as Wertmüller has. The practise of labelling people often results in evaluations which are constricting and inaccurate, as wider examinations of Mészáros' and Wertmüller's respective careers and philosophies reveal.

Mészáros' *Nine Months* demonstrates that, like Zsolt Kézdi Kovács, Márta Mészáros is concerned with both men and women, and especially in the context of the world's constantly changing social mores.

The film's main character, Juli, is a lonely, somewhat independent iron foundry worker at the beginning of the film. Again, as in *When Joseph Returns*, it is the desolation and the need to be loved that unites Juli and János in a relationship that is fleeting and shallow. Regarding the role of women, Mészáros reveals not only the problems of "a determined modern young woman who braves all odds to go her own independent

way,"[10] but also, how this emancipation affects the role of men. Thus, the film becomes a reflection of a modern human relationship and not a one-sided exposition of a modern woman.

Central to *Nine Months* is the theme of entrapment, for not only is it reflective of the modern woman's dilemma that concerns Mészáros but it also represents the pitfalls that men can be subject to. János's pride in his newly-built house represents, in actual fact, a self-imposed entrapment. Juli clearly assumes the more mature role of the two, however, her seeming independence at the end of the film does not ensure her happiness. She is faced with raising two children on her own, one from a previous affair and another from János. What seems to be the central message in *Nine Months* is not only Mészáros' concern for the role of women in modern society, but a greater philosophy that is found in Mészáros' attitude toward love and relationships: "Love involves a responsible activity: a process of getting to know each other. It is not all burning passion; it is also an alliance."[11]

In discussing his film, *Angi Vera*, Pál Gábor states, "The message is that, in the last analysis, we are responsible for all our actions, and that you cannot shift the onus of your errors to society so you may get yourself exonerated."[12] Such statements, and more importantly, the viewing of the film itself, may lead one to deduce that *Angi Vera*, *When Joseph Returns*, and *Nine Months* cover much more than what may be defined as simply a "woman's film," according to Molly Haskell's definition.

Angi Vera is more than a film about a woman who lives in turbulent times, it is, in the words of Gábor "about the responsibility of the individual and the individual quality of responsibility. It is about ill-advised choices made and the consequences stemming from such misguided moves, consequences that affect the whole society."[13] Though sincere at the start, Vera becomes a Party opportunist, who, as Gábor states, "belongs to a class of people of the type of Julien Sorel. The course of events lead her to the realization that there is in existence a 'cassock' — which, if donned and worn in the proper manner, will sweep the person who is wearing it higher and higher."[14] The fact that Endre Vészi, whose work Gábor based the screenplay on, uses a woman to represent such a person, is not condescending on this part, nor has it any effect on the role of women in the film, for Gábor's sympathies clearly lie with

Mária Muskát in the film — the "courageous defender of those attacked at the self-criticism session, champion of a hearty humanness." [15]

The fact that two of the three films examined in this essay were directed by men proves to be significant, for if an audience was to view all three films, without knowing by whom they were directed, the viewers would have a difficult task of guessing which, if any of the films, were directed by a man. When women are portrayed realistically, and in the context of larger, universal social and cultural situations, as they are in *When Joseph Returns*, *Nine Months* and *Angi Vera* then it is clear that the films are concerned with revealing the role of women and the role of men, honestly and without bias.

NOTES

1. Ernest Ferlita and John R. May, *The Parables of Lina Wertmüller* (New York, Ramsey, Toronto: Paulist Press, 1977): 81.
2. Molly Haskell, "From Reverence to Rape: the Woman's Film," *Film Theory and Criticism*, Gerald Mast and Marshall Cohen, Editors. (New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979): 505.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 506.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 510.
5. Tom Milne, "When Joseph Returns," *Monthly Film Bulletin* 44 (June 1977) No. 521, p. 123.
6. Barbara Halpern Martineau, "The Films of Márta Mészáros or, The Importance of Being Banal," *Film Quarterly* XXXIV (Fall 1980) No. 1, p. 22.
7. *Ibid.*
8. *Ibid.*
9. *Ibid.*
10. Philip Strick, "Nine Months," *Monthly Film Bulletin* 46 (August 1979) No. 547, p. 227.
11. *Hungarofilm Bulletin*, 76/2, p. 16.
12. *Hungarofilm Bulletin*, 78/4, p. 23.
13. *Ibid.*
14. *Ibid.*, p. 23.
15. Martineau, "The Films of Márta Mészáros," p. 47.

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An Interview with Mark Twain

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In early spring, 1899, Mark Twain visited Budapest for one week on the invitation of the Hungarian Journalists' Association to deliver a lecture during the Jubilee Celebration of the Freedom of the Hungarian Press. Accompanied by his wife and two daughters, he arrived on March 23, and departed on March 30. Lionized in Vienna and well-known in Hungary, the American writer was given much attention in the Budapest press even before his arrival.

The first interview appeared in the most widely circulating daily *Pesti Napló* (Journal of Pest) on Friday, March 24, 1899; the article was entitled "Mark Twainnel Galántától Budapestig" (With Mark Twain from Galánta to Budapest). An enterprising young reporter boarded the train in Galánta on March 23rd, and interviewed the American humorist. Mark Twain answered his questions in broken German; evidently, like most Hungarian intellectuals of his time, the journalist was unfamiliar with English.

As the reporter did not sign the article and his identity has not been established, there is no way to check on his background knowledge of Mark Twain. Consequently, there is no way to determine with any certainty how much of his impressions were genuine, and how much he was influenced by popular opinion. Because of the great publicity about the distinguished visitor in the Habsburg capital, however, it is fair to guess that the reporter must have had substantial information about him. As he was the first Hungarian journalist to meet Twain in person on Hungarian soil, the interviewer started his article with a description of the visitor's outward appearance.

> A snow-white-haired old man, his back bent, his moustache brimstone-colored from smoking the pipe, a kind of meticulous white-collar worker, who keeps on looking at you from behind his glasses, his brows bushy and severe, becoming a general; this is Mr. Samuel Clemens, *alias* Mark Twain, the great American poet (sic!) and world famous master of jokes.

The adjective "snow-white-haired" was to stay with the visitor in all subsequent Hungarian reportage. The anonymous reporter's presentation of Mark Twain corresponds with authentic sources that describe his "bushy white hair, brows ... shaggy and thick" and his "eyes ... piercing, look(ing) out ... from a furrowed face." [1] The reference to Mark Twain's heavy smoking is also sustained by ample evidence about this "inveterate smoker." [2]

The description of Mark Twain's outward appearance is followed in the report by a character-sketch.

> As I entered the compartment in Galánta, I noticed a morose old man sitting on the ticket-inspector's narrow seat reading furiously from under his eye-glasses the *Neue Freie Presse* (New Free Press); as a matter of fact, he rather deciphered it out loud as heavy-headed children would do. I would have thought him to be anybody else rather than an American and a humorist for that matter. My guess would have been that he was Mr. Giesecke from Berlin: a character in Blumenthal's and Kadelburg's plays, a German expert on bacilli, or a Hungarian governmental official. He much more resembled any of these than the author of wall-shaking jokes, of many hellish satires, of thousand humorous details. When somebody assured me on his word of honor that this man was really Mark Twain, I introduced myself with the respect due to a genius. Very soon I had to find out that the Gáspár-Kovácsi school text-book [3] is right: the outward appearance is, indeed, misleading. This seemingly angry old man would frequently burst into hearty laughter: on such occasions he would look on the brighter side of things without any severity, with so much serenity and joy as if he were a student on vacation. Once he realized that I was a scribbling young man, he shook hands with youthful vehemence, let his glasses slide to the end of his nose in a patriarchal manner, and started to chat about everything that came to his mind with immense good will but in terrible German.

The young journalist was either well-read about Mark Twain or he was extremely perceptive; in either case he did a very good job in presenting the American writer's character in all its complexity. In the anonymous article, we are first introduced to Mark Twain reading a newspaper, and resembling a grim

scientist or government official: a reminder of the writer's "occasional attitude(s) of pessimism and bitterness." [4] Then the journalist successfully points out the American's susceptibility to sudden changes of mood in his description of the jovial greeting he received from Mark Twain.

The conversation seems to have started with a discussion of the German language, with Mark Twain's confessions about his deficient German.

> "To tell the truth, my German is rather poor. I would not know tomorrow what I had perfectly mastered yesterday. All the same I picked up a few phrases in Vienna. Back home, fifteen years would go by before you would find the knowledge of German of any use. As far as I am concerned, in all my life I only spoke German once in America; a poor German woman accidentally missed the railroad station, and there was not a single soul who could understand what her problem was. I was the only one capable of giving her some directions, but neither before this incident nor since have I found any use of my German."

This little anecdote conveniently demonstrates Mark Twain's story-telling vein, his well-known ability to come up with a suitable story on any topic and in any situation. More important than that, his difficulties with the German language must have endeared him to the reporter and to most Hungarians who even decades after the 1867 Compromise harbored unfriendly feelings towards the Habsburgs. The reportage then continues with the journalist's question: "Does Mrs. Clemens not speak German either?" Twain replied: "On the contrary, she speaks well. Even my daughters have mastered the German tongue perfectly."

In 1878 Mark Twain wrote from Heidelberg, Germany to William Dean Howells: "Drat this German tongue, I never shall be able to learn it ... Mrs. Clemens is getting along fast." [5] Since Mark Twain mentioned his daughters while discussing the German language, it was appropriate that the reporter introduced them to his readers.

> "*My daughters*" refers to two very good-looking young persons; one of the two Miss Mark Twains (sic!) is a slender girl, with a Romantic face, a little pale; she looks tense, wears a blue dress buttoned to the neck and a small golden chain; the other, the younger,

> is much more naughty and more lively; she is plump, snub-nosed and wears on her short light coat a dark blue bouquet of violets from Parma. While their world-famous father escapes to the ticket-inspector's leather-seat, they make themselves comfortable in the compartment playing cards; those tiny cards with orange-colored backs are unknown to us; the young ladies triumphantly acknowledge the hits with hearty laughter. A still good-looking woman dressed in all black is enjoying the country-side around the river Vág through the compartment window: this is Mrs. Clemens, Mark Twain's earthly providence.

The reader cannot help detect a subtle touch of misgiving in the journalist's comment on the two daughters. There is a slight indication that their cheerfulness may have forced their grumpy father out of the compartment. As far as the author's wife is concerned, the reporter must have done his homework well. The statement about Mrs. Clemens as her husband's "earthly providence" testifies to his knowledge about the beneficial role Livy was supposed to have played in Mark Twain's life. Indeed, this remark strongly suggests that the interviewer prepared himself thoroughly for the encounter.

The conversation turned to the inevitable topics. The reporter wrote: "I asked the author of *The Prince and the Pauper*, Is it true that you got the name 'Mark Twain' by accident?" The reporter mentioning this particular book was by no means accidental. First published in Hungarian in 1880, it was one of the three so-called "children's classics" (*The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* and *The Adventure of Huckleberry Finn* being the other two) which were accepted as good literature even by Hungary's sophisticated intellectuals who objected to the lack of refinement in the other American works.

Mark Twain kindly gave a detailed answer about his penname.

> "Indeed, it was quite by accident. It happened back in 1857, more than forty years ago; I was going down the river.[6] The sailors there speak a very special language, harder than the usual speech in order to make the command come through louder. When they measure the water's depth, they would say to each other: *mark twain!* This would mean something like this: the water is two fathoms deep. The term hit my fancy so much that one day I said to myself: *Mark*

> *Twain* would not be a bad penname. I have tried it and it worked. Of course, that was forty years ago."

Without any break, the report then proceeds to Mark Twain's statements about his working habits.

> Then he turned to his career as a writer; he told me that he would work six full hours every day, from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. without interruption. At home he would get up at 9, but in Vienna it is usually noon or 1 p.m. by the time he finishes dressing. And yet the old man does not look like a dandy of fashion; at the inside of his narrow black bouquet, at the margin of his golden shirt-button the unruly buttonhole seems frazzled, indeed.[7] Here, of course, he is a guest, lives a leisurely life and has more time for laziness than at home. Back home in America, he would still relentlessly work six hours a day though work does not come easily to him; he proceeds slowly, hesitantly, deleting a considerable amount of passages.

This is reminiscent of a letter Twain wrote about a year earlier, January 22, 1898, to William Dean Howells: "I couldn't get along without work now. I bury myself in it up to the ears. Long hours — 8 and 9 on a stretch, sometimes. And all days, Sundays included." Equally relevant are the comments in an unmailed letter of May 14, 1887 to Jeannette Gilder: "It is my habit to keep four or five books in process of erection all the time and every summer add a few bricks to two or three of them."[8]

Any Hungarian reporter interviewing a foreign celebrity would eventually ask the inevitable question about the visitor's knowledge of Hungary. So did the anonymous young journalist.

> "During our conversation I asked him to tell me sincerely whether he had heard about us at home; whether he had known before coming here that some place there were Magyars living, and if so, what kind of notion did he have about the Hungarian people."

Mark Twain's answer must have been gratifying for the reporter and even more so for the newspaper readers the following day.

> "Had I heard of them? Very much so! In America people would still talk about the Hungarian emigrants who had come after 1849, esp. about Lajos Kossuth! I am truly sorry that I learnt too late about last year's national celebration: the fiftieth anniversary of the Hungarian freedom fight. Had I heard about it in

time, I would have come by all means in order to celebrate with you."

Unquestionably, this passage contained the most important message of the interview for the readers. The reasons for inviting Mark Twain to Budapest are not quite clear. Since sophisticated intellectuals objected to this "vulgar, rough style," he could not have been invited for literary reasons, nor was the occasion a literary one. On the other hand, Mark Twain, the self-appointed ambassador-at-large of the United States in Vienna, may have been regarded by Hungarian journalists as a symbol of freedom, and since he was already a Viennese celebrity, a safe choice at the same time. During the Jubilee Celebration, many a speaker's reference, to the United States as the fatherland of European liberty bears out this suggestion. Mark Twain's own remarks about Kossuth's popularity in America and about the Hungarian War of Independence of 1848/49 are extremely significant in this context.

The conversation on the train then turned to small talk. He lit a cigar, it was Viennese; he delighted in smoking and evidently liked the Austrian brand. He observed it almost tenderly, lovingly.

"It is a good kind of cigar, if only we had one like this! But the American cigar is bad and the tariff on the Havana cigar is so high that the poor citizen of the Union cannot pay the price. And yet the tobacco is of great importance to the addicted smoker who would smoke without a break from morning to evening. Ten-fifteen cigars, twenty-five to thirty pipes daily, isn't that something?"

"Doesn't that much smoking make you nervous?"

"Nervous? I have known this term so far only from the dictionary."

"How come that people in America find the tobacco-tariff high? Here in Europe we believe that everybody who lives in the Union is a millionaire."

Heartily laughing he made a joking gesture with his hand.

"Well, well. There are more poor people over there than in these regions here. But, of course, you hear only about the railroad magnates and the oil kings."

"With some poetic imagination we would even call any unexpected, or any very much hoped for, good luck an *American uncle.*"

"You better do not find out that the American

uncle carries sacks or paints bridges for his living..."

What started as small talk about smoking touched on a significant issue. The discussion about the legendary American millionnaire lends insight into European folklore about America, in particular, the reference to the American uncle, sheds light on the Hungarian variation of that folklore. Mark Twain's sobering answer also reveals the truth about the hard way some of those American "uncles" earned the money part of which they sent back home to help the folks in the old country.

Now it was Mark Twain's turn to ask and he came up with every writer's inevitable problem:

> He was curious whether his books sold well, whether they were translated into Hungarian, and was extremely pleased to learn that our critics would call the more talented humorists "Hungarian Mark Twains." He was roaring with laughter and repeated cheerfully: That's a real compliment!

Indeed, on his subsequent visit to the famous *Otthon* (the Journalists' Club, called "Home"), Viktor Rákosi was introduced to the American as the Hungarian Mark Twain.

The interview covered one more significant topic.

> He was about to talk about the Viennese Reichsrat's sessions where he spent the most enjoyable moments of his life, when the train stopped at *Érsekújvár** station, and the American humorist came face to face with one interesting specialty of Hungary: the gipsy. When he found out that at this station all passanger trains were received with music, he applauded cheerfully:
>
> "This must be a happy country, where people live in permanent cheerfulness..."
>
> At the sound of the music the Mark Twain misses (sic!) rushed to the window to watch the gipsy-band with their lorgnettes.
>
> The band was playing the Rákóczi-march in a melodious waltz beat. In this dubious moment they must have received a most exotic impression of the unknown country...

**At that time trains between Vienna and Budapest passed through Érsekújvár (Nové Zámky)*, which is presently Czechoslovakian territory.

For lack of any other convincing evidence we must presume that Mark Twain undertook this trip out of curiosity. Hungary has maintained, even in the twentieth century, a kind of exotic appeal for visitors from the English-speaking world. The gipsy-music played at the Érsekújvár station was one of the many unfortunate features that promoted an entirely false image of Hungary to visitors from the West.

From the concluding part of the report it becomes evident that the beauty of the *Duna-kanyar* (the bend of the Danube), the view of Visegrád, the Danube, and the mountains of Buda, as they unfold before travelers approaching the Hungarian capital from the West, did not fail to impress Mark Twain, though the young journalist evidently exaggerated the grandiousness of the scenery.

> And I must confess that after Dunakeszi the old man became more and more uncommunicative, and in an appropriate moment escaped with American phlegm (sic!) into the neighboring coach. I was not hurt by his behavior since it made me feel good to see the great American humorist watch with curious eyes as Budapest unfolded itself to our view. Already around Visegrád he burst into enthusiastic exclamations and looked with amazement at the immense Danube winding its way into the picturesque mountains with majestic quietness.[9] He became speechless; excited as a child, he gazed through the window. After this he spoke only once, when the train turned into the railroad station, and all he said was this:
>
> "You see, as soon as we got to the frontier I knew I was on Hungarian soil."
>
> The express stopped. An enthusiastic crowd was cheering outside. His hat in hand, the snow-white-haired Mark Twain descended the steps of the train.

In conclusion, we can assume that without displaying any brilliancy or an unusually imaginative approach, the young reporter demonstrated initiative and ability. He must have been overwhelmed with the occasion and with Mark Twain's fame and personality. Obviously, it was the famous visitor who guided the conversation all the time after graciously letting himself be interviewed by "a scribbling young man." That young scribbler, though, was quite well prepared. He did not ask any surprising questions; on the other hand, he asked all the obvious ones. He was also tactful and avoided possibly painful topics like the

author's recent bankruptcy or his beloved Susy's death. On the whole, he should be commended for his insight into a complex character. The Mark Twain that emerged from his report was a friendly, generous man liking companionship but who in his gloomier moods preferred solitude. The unknown young Hungarian journalist's Mark Twain was "an utterly winsome sort of teddy bear in need of all the love he could get," as characterized by Kurt Vonnegut.[10]

NOTES

1. Fred. W. Lorch, *The Trouble Begins at Eight* (Ames, Iowa: Iowa State University Press, 1966): 199.
2. Fred W. Lorch, *The Trouble Begins*, p. 133.
3. It must have been a well-known school book at that time. I was unable to identify it.
4. Albert Bigelow Paine, *A Short Life of Mark Twain* (Garden City: Garden City Publishing Company, 1925): 247.
5. Bernard De Voto, ed., *The Portable Mark Twain* (New York: The Viking Press, 1968): 754-5.
6. In this passage, Mark Twain is referring to the Mississippi.
7. Mark Twain's slovenly habits were common knowledge.
8. De Voto, ed., *The Portable Mark Twain*, pp. 764, 778.
9. Mark Twain must have enjoyed the view, but the adjectives "immense," and "majestic" were certainly not his. "Picturesque" describes the scenery more adequately, especially for a man who grew up on the Mississippi.
10. Kurt Vonnegut, Jr., "Opening Remarks," *The Unabridged Mark Twain*, Lawrence Teacher, ed., (Philadelphia: Running Press, 1976) p. XV.

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Review Article
A New Literary Monograph Series

George Bisztray

Steven C. Scheer, *Kálmán Mikszáth* (1977), 161 pp.
Clara Györgyey, *Ferenc Molnár* (1980), 195 pp.
Anna B. Katona, *Mihály Vitéz Csokonai* (1980), 170 pp.
(All published by Twayne Publishers: Boston, MA)

Twayne Publishers have produced hundreds of monographs about major writers from virtually all parts of the world. A few years ago, Twayne initiated a Hungarian Series as part of its major World Authors Series. For a number of reasons this event should be considered important by everyone involved in the study of Hungarian literature. First, this series is unique in the English-speaking world, where publishers have never attached particular priority to monograph series that introduce individual authors. Secondly, the volumes reviewed here are the first and thus far the only full-length books written in English about the whole oeuvre of Mikszáth, Molnár and Csokonai. By the time one finishes reading the volumes a third point emerges which demonstrates their importance. I shall return to this in the conclusion.

The monographs follow the standardized formula of the Twayne series. Written with the intention to introduce Mikszáth, Molnár, and Csokonai to readers who know little or nothing about Hungary, all three authors provide useful historical and cultural background information.

The first in the series is the book on Kálmán Mikszáth by Professor Scheer, whose judgments are convincing in many crucial aspects. Scheer outlines for the English-speaking reader the difference between Mór Jókai, the first great Hungarian prosaist, and Mikszáth, who belongs to a younger generation, by detailing Jókai's fixation with the War of Independence (1848-9), which no longer motivated Mikszáth's artistic aspirations. Scheer presents a well-proposed, extended argument for the permanence of irony in Mikszáth's oeuvre, which challenges

the shaky but surprisingly uniform attempts of recent Hungarian literary scholarship to establish three developmental stages in this oeuvre. Especially fortunate are the comparisons between certain artistic characteristics of Mikszáth's prose and achievements of writers well known from world literature, such as the juxtaposition of the structural unity in *A tót atyafiak* and *A jó palócok* with Joyce's *Dubliners* and Sherwood Anderson's *Winesburg, Ohio*.

Despite the assets of the first Twayne monograph on a Hungarian writer, I cannot conceal numerous critical points which surfaced while reading this volume. Professor Scheer deliberately adopts structuralistic methods and some terminology in presenting Mikszáth. In this sense, the intention of making "the reading of this book worth the while of the advanced Mikszáth scholar as well" (p.7) was perhaps realized. It is rewarding to find that modern critical approaches can be successfully applied in the analysis of classical Hungarian literature. One questions, however, whether catering to academic scholarship and adopting its fashionable terms and methods should be the aim of a popularizing monograph series, especially in the case of less-widely known literature such as Hungarian. Professor Scheer also demonstrates how historical, social and formal methods can be utilized simultaneously with rewarding results. In my opinion, however, his structuralistic zeal is misplaced.

Since the author of the volume points out the significance of irony in Mikszáth's prose, the reader may not understand why Scheer is indifferent to Count István Pongrácz's "madness" (Mikszáth himself repeatedly asked in *Beszterce ostroma* whether the Count was really mad) or why he insists that Mikszáth never identified with his characters. In fact, Mikszáth had a romantic leaning to the cult of young innocence, especially virginity; he hardly ever described young lovers in ironic terms. Despite this, the evaluation of Mikszáth in the concluding chapter as a romantic and visionary rather than a realist leaves a feeling of dissatisfaction in the reader. This interpretation is not implausible, but the author defines realism as if it was identical with naturalism. Perhaps a more discriminating discussion, comparable to György Lukács' argument on realism and naturalism, would have resulted in a more complete description of Mikszáth's place in Hungarian literature.

The principles serving as a basis for the critical apparatus were, in my opinion, unsatisfactory. Scheer uses a double set of references, citing quotations from the fifteen volume collection *Mikszáth Kálmán Művei,* (which is incorrectly listed as *Mikszáth Kálmán Munkái* in the Notes, p. 151) and employing other references from *Mikszáth Kálmán Összes Művei* (whose publication did not conclude in 1973 as listed in the Bibliography).[1] The reason for this confusing practice is not explained to the reader. Moreover, critiques of Mikszáth reviewed by the author are haphazardly selected. Fine critical evaluations, such as those of Négyesy, Gyöngyösy and Rejtő are missing; whereas Béla Illés, the notorious political opportunist and literary nonentity, is referred to as "a more recent critic" of Mikszáth. North American scholars of Hungarian literature and culture could surely afford to be more selective in choosing their references, especially from post World War II Hungary.

In comparing the volume on Mikszáth with the second in the series, Clara Györgyey's monograph on Molnár, the following question is raised in the reader's mind: what separates greatness from skillfulness? Probably the fact that greatness yields to a wide variety of interpretations and approaches, whereas skillfulness does not. It would be impossible to apply Professor Scheer's structuralist method to scrutinize Molnár's dramas. This method surely never occurred to Györgyey either. In this respect, her monograph is a lucid, straightforward, easy-to-read account of Molnár's works. If anything, the monograph is slightly "positivistic" with its numerous plot summaries, careful chronologies and personal background information.

Why is Mikszáth a great writer? If there are those who dislike him it is not because of the quality of his work. In Molnár's case, those who dislike him also question his place in Hungarian literature. One may question if there is anything genuine about his works at all. Györgyey is fair in pointing out Molnár's weaknesses, that is: narcissism, snobbishness, repetitiveness, eclecticism, and a lack of genuine human depth beyond technical sophistication. It is undeniable, however, that Molnár's plays have been among Hungary's best known cultural export items. Györgyey emphasizes Molnár's "Hungarian-ness," perhaps in order to down-play the often heard charge of rootless cosmopolitanism. Still, any theatre or TV audience, whether North American or Hungarian, will find *Olympia* or *The Play's the*

Thing equally entertaining. In Molnár, we admire the skill, the genuine craftsmanship of knowing how to use each word and each second on stage to attain a maximal effect; which is, of course, no small accomplishment. Because such skill is easier to appreciate than genius, Molnár will be with us for a long time. It is almost unbelievable that no single monograph before Györgyey's has attempted to summarize Molnár's artistic achievements in English.

There are certain sections, especially with regards to the background information, which may raise questions in the reader's mind. An example of this is the statement that the turn-of-the century urban middle class which made Budapest an economically advanced, politically progressive and culturally brilliant metropolis, consisted virtually of Jews. This is "substantiated" by a single, fairly biased quote from Ignotus. Györgyey occasionally leaves the otherwise wisely followed golden middle road in her use of idioms as well. Perhaps inspired by Molnár's style, she describes episodes from the author's life in language which is hardly suitable for a literary monograph, even if it aspires to reach a wider reading public. The following quote is such an example:

> Molnár admired his boss, József Vészi, perhaps the most influential editor in the country. Vészi liked to invite handsome, brilliant young intellectuals to his frequent parties. He had four highly cultured daughters. It did not take Molnár too long to select sixteen-year-old Margit, who had a devilish, challenging look in her eyes. (p. 35)

The semantic exaltation of the adjectives lends a gossipy character to the style which the bulk of the monograph does not warrant.

In order to follow the sequence of the series, we go backwards in chronology to Anna Katona's volume on Mihály Vitéz Csokonai (no. 579) which was actually published in the same year as Györgyey's monograph on Molnár (no. 574).

Csokonai was born in the Hungarian university and peasant-merchant town Debrecen, a centre of advanced European knowledge, yet also of extreme conservatism. Coincidentally, Professor Katona is also a native of Debrecen; her sensitive interpretation of Csokonai's background, schooling and attachment to his native town, are, in particular, assets to her work.

Katona also succeeds in convincing the reader that a poet as heterogeneous as Csokonai may be represented in his multi-faceted totality.

To accomplish this was no easy task. Csokonai was, in one person, a classicist, a mannerist, an early naturalist, the first to introduce folk elements in modern Hungarian poetry and, concurrently, the most refined rococo poet of his nation. Finally, he was also a versemaker of incredible vulgarities, banalities, and hardly appreciable folksy "humor." The explanation of why so few book-length studies have been written about Csokonai for almost two centuries may be in the variety and unevenness of his oeuvre. Katona surveys all the paradoxical tendencies in Csokonai's works, (tendencies which are dominant in certain periods of his activity) and makes repeated cross-references to them, while also tying them in with similar trends in world literature. The result is a successfully integrated Csokonai monograph in which the artistic genius of the author serves as a unifying focus for the kaleidoscope of writings produced during a tragically shortened life.

The art-centred analysis of Csokonai's oeuvre, characteristic of pre-World War II interpretations, is a welcome change from the nonsensical ideological speculations which have characterized critiques of Csokonai during the past decades. It has become customary to write about Csokonai's "balking" after the Jacobin dictatorship in France and the execution of Martinovics and his comrades in Hungary. Moreover, his work was characterized with labels such as "dark pessimism" and "submission to the reaction." Fortunately, however, the generosity of Hungarian party critics proved victorious. The following quote is particularly illustrative of this type of Csokonai "criticism": "Nevertheless, we cannot let the enemies of the revolution, the reactionary nobility, claim Csokonai's post-1795 writing for themselves." [2]

Katona neatly disregards these irrelevant ideological interpretations by stating that Csokonai's "business was not politics but poetry," (p.101) and that he never wavered in his ideals of patriotism and enlightened humanism. As for the reactionary nobility, Katona retorts that "a nobility that also produced a Festetich and a Széchenyi (*sic*, referring to Ferenc Széchényi) cannot be dismissed as reactionary as a whole" (p.100).

The volumes contain many technical errors. In particular,

the indexes share serious shortcomings which would be relatively simple to correct, that is: poor Hungarian orthography (e.g. mennyegző); the lack of proper diacritical marks ("Locse" instead of Lőcse); incorrect word division ("Hus-zár"); and misspelling of not commonly used but historically important names ("Ráckoczy," "Ropespierre," "Noble Prize").Such glaring errors and misspellings, some of which are detectable by non-Hungarians as well, may considerably damage the prestige of the series.

The notes and bibliography sections of the Mikszáth and Molnár volumes share many of the same annoying problems found in the indexes. These sections in the Csokonai monograph are in correct form, however, the index in this volume is similar to the other two in the frequency of errors. Concepts such as "Calvinistic," "citizen," "existentialist" and "modern" are also listed in the index; such listings are too general to be useful. Moreover, it is highly unusual to include adjectives as main entries in an index.

It would be unfair to dwell only on these aspects of the three monographs. Overall, they are proof of the existence and necessity of autonomous North American Hungarian scholarship. Moreover, these authors provide alternatives to the biases of recent Hungarian criticism. In contrast to thirty-five years of predominantly one-dimensional interpretations, Scheer demonstrates that it is futile to insist on an ill-defined Mikszáthian realism, since Mikszáth was at least as much of a Romantic as he was a "realist." Györgyey illustrates that technique cannot be discarded for ideological reasons; the expectations of the audience are more important in the theatre than historical materialism. Finally, Katona argues for a poetry-centred Csokonai interpretation in the spirit of the great pre-World War II tradition of János Horváth and Antal Szerb.

It is refreshing and rewarding to learn from these monographs that ideology may have a place in literary evaluation, but that its place is fairly marginal and is actually filled by different, even contradictory ideologies which nevertheless do not diminish poetic greatness. It is equally rewarding to realize that these are the kind of volumes which, although they may never find the way to ten million Hungarians, will still primarily inform a potential reading public of millions of

English speakers about Hungarian literature. The greater and the more urgent need is to correct the formal shortcomings of the series.

NOTES

1. *Mikszáth Kálmán Művei* (Writings of Kálmán Mikszáth) (Budapest: Magyar Helikon, 1965-1970), 15 volumes.

Mikszáth Kálmán Összes Művei (The Complete Works of Kálmán Mikszáth) (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1956-).

2. *A magyar irodalom története* (The History of Hungarian Literature) (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1965), Vol. 3, p. 236.

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Book Reviews

Albert Tezla, ed., *Ocean at the Window: Hungarian Prose and Poetry Since 1945* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1980) XVII, 481 pp.

In the preface to 44 *Hungarian Short Stories*, C.P. Snow wrote, "...the anthology will teach us something, and something very important, about a remarkable country, and a remarkable literature." When a new anthology appears, each student of Hungarian literature expects an ultimate collection which will demonstrate to the western world the true quality of Hungary's contribution to modern literature. Irrespective of how ambitious the collection is, no anthology can meet such maximalist expectations. This attractive volume under review is a labor of love, and of sweat and tears, I'm sure. It will have to share the fate of earlier anthologies, however, if scrutinized from the same perspective.

While no editorial policy can please every reader, it is the type and quality of selection which nonetheless determines the overall value of a collection. In the preface, Professor Tezla explains the principles which have governed his selection:

> I did not consider authors whose lifework could not be represented adequately by their short writings. More important, those chosen had to be among the writers who are widely read by intellectuals in Hungary, who exert considerable influence on current literary developments, and who measure up to the critical standards of world literature...

There are two ways to approach this statement. The reviewer may disagree with the policy but believe that he can do justice to the work by addressing himself to whether the aims expressed by the editor have been achieved in the volume. Or, he may state that such editorial principles *a priori* jeopardize the success of the volume, because no anthology can legitimately represent modern Hungarian writing, especially one in which names such as Füst, Déry, Németh, Weöres, Konrád, Esterházy — to mention only a few — are missing.

A compromise is necessary, and this is what Professor Tezla

must have felt when he was faced with the problem of compressing *The Ocean* into one volume. Concentrating on what is there, rather than on what is missing, one can state that Professor Tezla has brought together a vast, and at least *topically* representative collection which provides enjoyable reading. It is unfortunate that he did not use the excellent translations available for Pilinsky, or the expertise of Clara Györgyey who first introduced Örkény to the American public. This is just an arbitrary sampling; there would have been many other translators who could have contributed to the volume, including J. Kessler and the excellent W.J. Smith. But among those participating, a number of them, especially G. Gömöri, E. Morgan, and K. McRobbie have, as usual, completed outstanding work.

Following the editorial statement, a short introductory essay informs the reader, in broad terms, of the major trends in Hungarian belles lettres since 1945. This is followed by a brief explanation, by Professor Országh, on how to pronounce Hungarian words. While this renown scholar adds prestige to the volume, one cannot help but think of the Hungarian saying "*ágyúval lõ verebet*" (shooting sparrows with a cannon). Professor Tezla could have provided explanations to pronunciation, as well as the accompanying key.

The total impact of the anthology, however, does not depend on such trivial points but on its general effect on the reader. I made use of the volume last year in a course designed to familiarize students with postwar Hungarian literature. While there were several who expressed reservation regarding the quality of some translations (especially in comparison with pieces published in *Modern Hungarian Poetry*), all in all, I found it to be a helpful, although expensive, teaching tool. There are, however, a number of bibliographical inexactitudes and some unfortunate omissions which, I hope the editor, who is famous for his reference publications, will correct for the next (paperback?) edition.

Marianna D. Birnbaum

Ferenc Fabricius-Kovács, *Kommunikáció és anyanyelvi nevelés* (Budapest: Országos Pedagógiai Intézet, 1980) 96 pp.

The tragically early death of Ferenc Fabricius-Kovács (1919-1977) deprived Hungarian linguistics of one of its most versatile scholars. Through his leading position at the Országos Peda-

gógiai Intézet (National Pedagogical Institute), Fabricius-Kovács earned a reputation as an outstanding practicing teacher who recognized no sharp boundary between research and teaching. Against current orthodoxy, Fabricius-Kovács considered psycholinguistics and sociolinguistics as the fundamental matrix from which linguistics emerges. In addition to sterling service to Slavonic, Uralic and general lexicographic studies in Hungary, his distinctive and unique contribution to Hungarian linguistics was probably his championship of the unfashionable and almost entirely forgotten Sándor Karácsony and the linguistic theory embedded in the latter's work.[1] While one of these works, *Magyar nyelvtan társaslélektani alapon*, has now attracted the attention of a young Hungarian linguist Péter Simoncsics,[2] not only is Fabricius-Kovács's role as the first to rediscover Karácsony's work nowhere acknowledged, but Simoncsics also fails to make many of the wider connections that Fabricius-Kovács has made. Karácsony, following Wilhelm Wundt, argued that language, by which he meant speech, comes into being through the social interaction of two people, the speaker and "the other person." Moreover, he developed some of the consequences of this fundamental insight for linguistics, psychology, teaching and general social theory. His work went unrecognized, however, by many of his mainstream contemporaries in these fields of study in Hungary.

Compiled in Fabricius-Kovács's memory by his family and colleagues, the first three papers in this small collection of seven are devoted to the elucidation of Karácsony's views in the light of developments in contemporary theories of communication and of semantics. The other four, (one is, in fact, a long review rather than an article) though informed by the same spirit, focus on the utilization of the insights gained in the theory and practice of teaching. Readers without access to Hungarian may find it useful to know that the first two papers have appeared in English translation.[3]

It is gratifying to see that Fabricius-Kovács has not been forgotten by his friends and colleagues in Hungary. It is unfortunate, however, that in a country famous for the high quality of its printing and book-production, this little book is so poorly printed and bound that it literally falls apart in the reader's hands. The subject deserves better.

Peter Sherwood

NOTES

1. Sándor Karácsony, *A neveléstudomány társas-lélektani alapjai*, I: *Magyar nyelvtan társas-lélektani alapon* (Budapest: Exodus, 1938), and IV: *A társas-lélek alsó határa és a jogi nevelés* (Budapest: Exodus, 1947).

2. Péter Simoncsics, "Egy magyar nyelvtan a 30-as évekből," Samu Imre, István Szathmári, László Szűts, eds., *A magyar nyelv grammatikája. A magyar nyelvészek III. nemzetközi kongresszusának előadásai.* (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1980): 695-705.

3. "Linguistics, Communication Theory, and Social Interaction Psychology," Ádám Makkai, ed., *Toward a Theory of Context in Linguistics and Literature* (The Hague-Paris: Mouton, 1976): 51-80. See also "On the Social Character of Language," *Acta Linguistica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* (1975) 25, nos. 1-26, 31-8.

Walter W. Kolar and Ágnes H. Várdy, eds., *The Folk Arts of Hungary* (Pittsburgh: Tamburitza Press, 1981).

The Folk Arts of Hungary is a collection of papers originally delivered to the Pittsburgh Symposium on Hungarian Folk Art in April 1980. The Symposium was sponsored by the Duquesne University Tamburitzans Institute of Folk Arts (DUTIFA), and featured scholars from both Hungary and North America.

Ten papers are included in the collection. Although the papers are haphazardly arranged in the book, the careful reader can discern four thematic areas: folklore and folk literature; anthropology; Hungarian (folk) music and dance; and, bibliography and research. The papers are uneven in quality; some are more academic than others, and some are better written and/or edited than others. The volume must be taken seriously by those of us who are interested in the broader field of Hungarian Studies, especially since it is not often that such materials are available in English. What follows is a brief survey of the papers according to the above thematic areas.

Folklore

Though poorly edited, the first three papers in *The Folk Arts of Hungary* cover three different aspects of the folklorists' concerns. Tekla Dömötör surveys "Hungarian Folk Customs," concentrating on "certain festive customs," such are wassailing and log-pulling. She explains that unlike the rest of Central European customs, Hungary's uniqueness lies in her "life-cycle" celebrations and not in her "calendar customs." Calendar customs would include those customs which are associated with religious holidays, though not exclusively with the church. Though not always presented with clarity, she describes some

festive occasions more thoroughly than others and is careful to point out the non-Christian origins of celebrations such as St. Lucy's Day (December 13), St. George's Day (April 24), and Easter and Christmas. Though the facts are interesting, there is no overall theme in the paper, and the reader is caught in what appears to be a list of life-cycle celebrations — everything from grave-posts to initiation practices (the whipping of young boys). It becomes difficult for the reader to process otherwise valuable information, including translated songs and rhymes.

Linda Dégh's knowledge of the Hungarian village, through work in the field, is revealed in "The Magic World of Hungarian Storytellers." Dégh begins her paper by introducing the reader to the popular storyteller, Mrs. Susan Palkó, who lends the structure of the ancient magic tales to the modern urban experience. Though Dégh does not always explain what certain terms mean, she talks about the magic tale in conjunction with the larger genre called *Märchen*. She analyses the magic tale in terms of a repeated metaphor: its hero wanders between two worlds — the village and the city, the world of hopelessness and the world of hope.

Dégh identifies tale types in order that the reader may see common structural traits and she points to hierarchical and patriarchical social norms which regulate the action. She concludes that the overall structure of the magic tale is determined by "tale-justice," a system in which "rich and poor, peasant and master are fundamental opponents." Dégh concludes by hypothesizing that "dime novels, cartoons" and television have replaced the magic tale in the modern world.

Unlike Dégh, Ildikó Kriza Horváth's method is historical, and to a lesser extent, archetypal. Poorly edited and awkwardly titled, "Historical Strata of Hungarian Folk Art," the paper describes different national and historical influences from the mediaeval period to the modern. Kriza Horváth occasionally documents her presentation with examples of foreign influence in, say, furniture decoration and costume design. She explains, for example, that fifteenth century Hungary could not avoid the influence of the Italian Renaissance, if only because so many Italian craftsmen had settled in Hungary to work. Much of the paper simply describes traditional village costume, but is, for the uninitiated, hard to follow without simultaneous illustrations and photographs of such items as different head-dresses (*párta*)

or coats (*szűr* and *suba*). (Actually, there are a few illustrations, but they are printed at the end of the article, without captions). Kriza Horváth's study is an example of what Béla Maday later describes az *néprajz*, or Hungarian ethnography, a largerly descriptive discipline.

Anthropology

The papers on anthropology are the best written and most theoretical in the collection. Marida Hollós and Michael Sozán have both been involved in extensive anthropological research in different villages in Hungary. They both rely on their knowledge of Hungary's political and economic life to make certain conclusions about trends in the social values that correspond to the successful building of a collective farm (Hollós), and the relationship between community and family life (Sozán). They use similar methods of inquiry, and both are critical of existing village institutions. In his essay, "Social Transformation of Hungarian Rural Society," Sozán is particularly sensitive to village relationships after what he calls "the peasant renaissance" of 1956 to 1959. He claims that this "renaissance" was set off by the Hungarian Revolution of 1956, and marked by a decrease in taxes and a relaxation of certain laws governing the cooperatives. The sub-theme of women in folk life emerges late in his paper. He correlates what he calls an increase in the woman's household power with the "peasantness" of the "rural" family. Though a potentially interesting idea, once again we find certain terms not clarified — it is difficult to know exactly what this peasantness refers to — and errors which could have been corrected by careful editing.

Hollós begins her study, "The Effect of Collectivization on Village Social Organization," by asking the question: have Hungary's economic and agrarian reforms allowed for the kind of social transformation envisioned by Marx and Lenin? By virtue of painstaking comparisons, sometimes supported by statistics, Hollós concludes that the collective farm arrangement in the community of Tiszakécske is more successful than its counterpart in Nagykőrös (which is twice as large) because a new "system of stratification based on new criteria, occupation and income, is developing." She explains those criteria, which often match Sozán's findings, in terms of "new elite groups." In the less successful Nagykőrös, Hollós maintains that social power is still

based, in part, on "pre-war ownership."

Béla Maday's study is of use to all students of anthropology and/or ethnography. He compares the two disciplines, for although North American and European scholars work together and exchange information, their assumptions and their goals are quite different. Maday explores the origins of "ethnography" and accordingly prefers to call it *néprajz*, a word which has implicit "folk" overtones. *Néprajz* is largely a "descriptive" discipline, whereas, according to the author, anthropology is "holistic and global" in its focus, synthesizing "cultural, linguistic, archaeological, and somatological dimensions of man as he is, not as he ought to be." *Néprajz* assumes that the peasantry has preserved "the true cultural heritage of the society better and more authentically than either the rural middle and upper strata of the urban population." Unfortunately, Maday's paper appears at the end of the book between the essays on folk music and folk dance, and as a result, may be overlooked by the reader whose first interest is anthropology. This paper would have been a good introduction to Sozán and Hollós, if not to the entire collection.

Folk Music and Dance

Two of the papers in this book address themselves to Hungarian music and dance. Benjamin Suchoff has detailed the relationship between Béla Bartók and Hungarian folk song in a way that illuminates both. Indeed he clarifies the relationship between what he calls authentic German language *Volkslieder* and the "urban, Gypsy-disseminated pseudo-folk songs." The quality of the research is good, although the English is occasionally awkward. Suchoff argues that Gypsy music is in fact not Hungarian folk music, and illustrates how Bartók came to this conclusion himself while collecting folk songs in Transylvania. He surveys a number of composers in order to demonstrate how they used, or misused, Hungarian folk song in their compositions.

Judith and Kálmán Magyar insist that our understanding of folk dance depends on our "practice" of it, and illustrate their point in "Hungarian Folk Dances — in Hungary and America." They offer a synopsis of dances, from girls' round dances and shepherds' dances to *csárdás* and *verbunk*. They organize different dances according to type, New Style and Old Style, as folklorists have done with ballads. They also divide dances

into three major "Hungarian dance dialects," namely: Western or Danube region, Central or Tisza region, and Eastern or Transylvanian region. They dispel the popular belief that the *csárdás* is Hungary's national dance.

Bibliography

There are two bibliographical essays in this collection. The first, "Research in Hungarian American History and Culture: Achievements and Prospects," by Steven Béla Várdy and Ágnes H. Várdy, is a thorough synopsis of a century of "research and writing on Hungarian-American history and immigration." The authors include in their study a useful twenty-six page bibliography of Hungarian and English language sources (with the emphasis on the United States, rather than Canada). Their work is complemented by August J. Molnár's shorter paper, a survey of "Hungarian American Archives and Other Research Sources."

The potential merit of a collection such as *The Folk Arts of Hungary* cannot be overlooked. The volume provides an opportunity for both Hungarian and North American scholars to publish and share their research in a field, which is thus far young, and too rarely accessible to a non-Hungarian academic audience. In order to continue to foster international scholarly relations, however, and establish a reputation in wider academic circles, we must be responsible for the way in which the research is presented. Better planning, more diligent and competent editing, as well as copy editing, would have made this volume more acceptable to the world of scholarship, and especially to an English-speaking readership, who may be insulted by the sloppy style and the errors in composition and grammar. In considering the lack of precision in the papers and the lack of editorial discretion (the papers vary too much in length and composition), we are forced to evaluate the ability of such a volume to have a lasting influence. The original purpose, namely to foster international scholarly relations, may be threatened. The *Folk Arts of Hungary* might have fulfilled this purpose, but in its present format, we cannot be sure.

Marlene Kadar

Articles to be published in forthcoming issues of the *Hungarian Studies Review*

Rights and Restrictions of Women as Recorded in the "Classical" Hungarian Ballad *Marianna D. Birnbaum*

The Tragic Motif in the Ballad of "Kádár Kata" *Marlene Kádár*

Reconstructing Reality: The Hungarian Documentary and "Pseudo-Documentary" Film *Graham Petrie*

A Report on the Activities of the Hungarian Film Institute and Archives

Early Hungarian Printing, 1473-1480 *Iván Halász de Béky*

Matthias Corvinus and his Library *Rose (Rózsi) Stein*

Tax Union Aspects of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy *Scott Eddie*

Interview with Mark Twain on the Train Between Vienna and Budapest *Anna Katona*

Béla Kun: a Fateful Life *Péter Gosztonyi*

Géza de Kresz, 1882-1959 *Maria Kresz*

HSR

Hungarian Studies Review

Vol. IX, No. 2 Fall 1982

Hungary's Economy

Scott Eddie discusses "Tax Union" aspects of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy. John Komlos presents a critical analysis of a recently-published volume on Hungarian economic history, followed by an interview with one of Hungary's leading economic planners.

Noteworthy Immigrants

Katherine Gyékényesi Gatto writes about the literary contribution of Hungarian-American poet György Gyékényesi. Mária Kresz presents the work of Géza de Kresz, Hungarian-Canadian musician.

Review Articles

Hungarian Studies Review

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Hungarian Studies Review, Vol. IX, No. 2 (Fall 1982)

Contents

Part I: Hungary's Economy

Part II: Noteworthy Immigrants from Hungary

Books

Hungarian Studies Review, Vol. IX, No. 2 (Fall 1982)

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Hungarian Studies Review, Vol. IX, No. 2 (Fall 1982)

Part I
Hungary's Economy

Introduction

An observer surveying the North American media today will undoubtedly come across references to the "Hungarian economic miracle." While some economists might question the appropriateness of this label, few will deny that, compared to the state of the economy in many East European countries today, Hungary enjoys remarkable prosperity. Moreover, such contrast between the economies of Hungary and her neighbors is not new. Toward the end of the last century for example, Hungary experienced a period of rapid economic development which prompted some Western observers to refer to Hungarians as the "Yankees" of the Habsburg Empire. Due to the vicissitudes of her history, Hungary has not enjoyed these periods of prosperity often, or for long periods of time, as indeed the country's economy suffered greatly in the wake of both world wars of our century. Despite the many ups and downs, or possibly because of them, Hungary's economic development in modern times is a subject of considerable controversy among historians, political scientists and economists today. It is our good fortune to present in this issue three studies which offer new insights and new information both on Hungary's economic development and on the controversies that surround it.

The three works presented here belong to different genre of scholarly publishing. Professor Scott Eddie's piece is a full-fledged article, the kind of study which is usually featured in learned journals devoted to reporting the results of original research. Professor Komlos' essay can be best classified as scholarly criticism, usually found in book reviews or review articles. It takes issue with the findings of an established Hungarian historian, György Szabad. The editors hope that the dialogue initiated by this review will be followed by a detailed and constructive exchange of opinions between Professors Komlos and Szabad in a future issue of the *Review*.

The last item in this section on Hungary's economy is an interview with Rezső Nyers, one of Hungary's leading economic planners. Though such interviews are not commonly featured in academic periodicals, this one offers much that might be of interest to students of Hungary's economic development, and we felt that its inclusion was justified. A further reason for its publication was the fact that it seemed remarkably candid for an official of a Communist state. Nyers' outspokenness is illustrative of the state of affairs in Hungary today: namely, that opinions can be voiced, often quite freely, as long as they do not reflect unfavourably upon Marxist doctrines, the Soviet Union, and/or the international Communist movement.

In presenting the second and third items of this section alongside a traditional piece of scholarship, we may appear to have acted contrary to time-honoured academic conventions. In reality our decision is in conformity with our policy of favouring the occasional use of unconventional means of publishing information of interest to students of Hungary and Hungarian affairs.

N.F.D.

Hungarian Studies Review, Vol. IX, No. 2 (Fall 1982)

Limits on the Fiscal Independence of Sovereign States in Customs Union: "Tax Union" Aspects of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, 1868-1911*

Scott M. Eddie

Introduction

Economic historians, insofar as they have attempted to deal with Austria-Hungary as a unit, have focussed almost exclusively on the customs union and its ramifications.[1] Economic theorists, following the path blazed by Viner, have analyzed the welfare gains and losses from the formation of a customs union in terms of "trade diversion" or "trade creation" effects.[2] They have modified Viner's original formulation to take into account consumption as well as production effects, to consider economies of scale and terms-of-trade repercussions, and to deal with distortions in internal price levels away from competitive equilibrium ("shadow") prices.[3] Still, this entire body of theoretical literature remains in one fundamental way cast firmly in the Vinerian mold: it all proceeds from the basic assumption, implicit or explicit, that factors of production are immobile between the partners in the customs union.

Austria-Hungary was much more than a simple customs union: it was a genuine common market, with full monetary

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integration and a partial tax union. Moreover, the "economic compromise" between the two partners in the Dual Monarchy also provided for full and free mobility of factors of production, both labour and capital.[4] Therefore analyses of Austro-Hungarian economic performance based directly on theoretical models of customs union risk giving a distorted or at least incomplete picture. When factors are mobile, it becomes necessary to draw on the theory of tax and expenditure unions, as well to face the issues raised in the literature of "fiscal harmonization." [5]

In one way, the situation in Austria-Hungary makes it "easy" for the economic historian: a common currency from a single bank of issue obviates the potentially thorny problems of analysis arising from fluctuations in the exchange rate or from restrictions on currency transactions between the two partners. The common currency amounted, at least, to a virtual economic guarantee of full mobility of capital, and vastly facilitated the mobility of labour as well. While on the monetary side Austria-Hungary was a fully-integrated single-currency area, on the fiscal side it became only a partial tax union and there was no attempt whatever, to my knowledge, toward expenditure harmonization.

To prevent distortions in commodity flows for pure tax-avoidance reasons (a form of "trade deflection"), the two sides to the partnership agreement recognized the need to coordinate taxation, beyond merely having a common external tariff. The result was the placing of the so-called "consumption taxes," the major excise taxes on meat, sugar, alcoholic beverages, and (later) petroleum, in the category of "dualistic affairs" which were to be regulated by identical laws passed in each country.[6] There was more, however, to the partial tax union than the requirement of identical excise taxes. In each country there were state monopolies of salt, tobacco, and the lottery, which played a major role in the indirect taxation system. Since, at the advent of Dualism, Hungary took over the Austrian system virtually intact, these monopolies of identical items operated nearly identically and were an important extension of the tax union.[7] The third major component of indirect taxes in both Austria and Hungary were the stamps and fees for documentation, certifications, and other services that were part and parcel of the bureaucratic state. These levies were essentially similar —

even identical at first — so that it is reasonable to conclude that the tax union aspects of the Austro-Hungarian alliance included all of the important elements of indirect taxation.[8]

Again, because the fledgling Finance Ministry of Hungary took over the Austrian system of taxation *in toto* with only minor modifications in 1867, the Dual Monarchy was nearly a complete tax union at first. There was no requirement, however, that any but the major consumption taxes remain identical, and both countries immediately began to make use of the wide latitude in taxation, particularly direct taxation, offered by the "Compromise of 1867." Both were engaged in a protracted — one is tempted to say nearly continuous — process of "tax reform."[9] The result was not only considerable divergence in the system of direct taxes (particularly after 1873, of which I will write more later), but also the periodic recognition that this divergence could not be allowed to exceed certain limits. The partners concluded supplementary tax agreements, in addition to the provisions of the "economic compromise," which represented a further, if incomplete, measure of tax harmonization.[10] The extent of tax union between Austria and Hungary was then, to a first approximation, nearly complete for indirect taxation but very loose and partial with respect to direct taxes.

On the expenditure side, beyond the required contribution toward the cost of "common affairs" (about 95 per cent of which was the cost of the Imperial Army and Navy), the "Compromise" left both governments with a free hand. Expenditure patterns differed widely, and the complaints about the adverse effects on one partner resulting from the fiscal actions of the other (especially in respect to Hungary's program of subsidizing industrial development) bear witness to the lack of any measures of expenditure harmonization.[11] Since neither government had anything resembling a modern and extensive social welfare program, we can safely conclude that the failure to engage in expenditure harmonization, insofar as it affected the movement of factors, was most likely felt in the sphere of capital.[12]

That the fiscal harmonization, or public finance aspects of the Austro-Hungarian alliance deserve more attention than they have received is, evident I think from the above introduction. This paper, being a preliminary and very incomplete exploration of the issues involved, cannot pretend to offer any definitive answers. I would hope, however, that it might

elicit interest in the study of Austro-Hungarian fiscal policy. One of the legacies of the bureaucratic state that was Austria-Hungary is a rich lode of statistics, perhaps nowhere so rich as in the area of public finance. This body of economic ore lies almost completely unexploited.[13]

1. Background, structure, and aims of the fiscal systems

While this paper abstracts from developments in the monetary system of Austria-Hungary, it cannot ignore money altogether, since money creation had been the most frequently used method of covering deficits in the unstable, crisis-ridden financial affairs of the government of *Vormärz* Austria.[14] In the two decades before the signing of the Compromise of 1867, the financial crisis reached such proportions that the Habsburg government was forced to sell off the State railways to raise revenue.[15] This measure nearly succeeded in restoring — perhaps "introducing" is a more accurate term — some order in Imperial finances, but war in the Italian provinces once more drove the budget into deficit and the government to the Central Bank. Specie payment had long since been discontinued, and the *Agio* — the premium in paper currency one had to pay for the silver florin — fluctuated widely. Further budgetary strains were caused by: the Seven Weeks' War with Prussia, in which defeat at Königgrätz signaled the end of Habsburg strivings for hegemony in "greater Germany"; and the fundamental reorientation of foreign policy which necessitated internal political stability and led directly to the "Compromise of 1867." These actions meant that the Dual Monarchy began with a weak and precarious system of public finance.

Taking into account that the debt of the Empire had been largely the result of wars which could not be said to have commanded widespread support in Hungary, and the historical record of indiscipline in managing the public accounts, it is not surprising that the issues of the sharing of the outstanding public debt and of the ratio in which the two states were to contribute to the costs of "common affairs" (the so-called *Quota* ratio) were two of the most contentious items at the negotiations which led to the "economic compromise," the trade and tariff alliance which defined the economic relationships of the two partners in the Austro-Hungarian Dual Monarchy. This economic alliance also included a provision expressly limiting the amount

that could be borrowed from the Austrian National Bank, and set a ceiling on money creation. Both governments — Austria's and Hungary's — were thereby subjected to the discipline of the capital market, and could run deficits only to the extent of the public's willingness to lend to them.

Direct taxes, indirect taxes, stamp and documentation fees, and income from state monopolies and enterprises were the components of the revenue systems of both governments at the outset, and remained so — with of course changes in relative importance, as we shall see — throughout the Dual Monarchy's existence. Direct taxes included the land tax, the house and buildings tax, taxes on personal and interest income, and an "earnings tax" (*Erwerbsteuer, keresetadó*). This last was an attempt to tax earning capacity, rather than actual earnings, of professionals and of both incorporated and unincorporated businesses.

Indirect taxation included more than just the taxes so names: the consumption taxes on alcoholic beverages, sugar, meat, and (after 1882) petroleum. Stamp and documentation fees, and the income of the state monopolies, also had the character of indirect taxes, and indeed were included in the category of "indirect imposts" (*Indirekte Abgaben*) in the Austrian statistics. The income from State enterprises, while large in gross terms, was on a net basis a relatively small and fluctuating source of public revenue in both states.[16]

With the advent of Dualism, the Hungarian government embarked immediately upon a program of economic development, in which every effort was made to change the perceived backwardness which they blamed upon a lack of autonomy in government.[17] The situation of the capital market was quite propitious, considering the dismal record of Habsburg finances before the Compromise, and Hungary began to accumulate a large debt in the furtherance of these aims, which at first focussed on provision of infrastructure. The centrepoint was the interest guarantees for the construction of private railways (a policy borrowed from the Austrians), which soon gave way to a policy of nationalization and a massive building program for the state rail network. In the first two decades of Dualism, "one third of the loans actually taken up were turned to economic development investments."[18] The Hungarian government was thus relieved of the necessity to resort to crushing taxation; it could "pursue an

active fiscal policy without stifling the private sector" because of the capital inflow which resulted from the sale of government bonds to foreigners, mostly Austrians.[19] The Hungarian government continued an active development-promoting policy, albeit perhaps less successfully after the inflow began to be much reduced in the 1890s.

The Austrian central government, on the other hand, carried on a much less aggressive fiscal policy. Its history had been one of promotion of domestic industry via development mostly of the domestic market, and that via protection or prohibition, at least since the reign of Maria Theresa. The Austrian government also had to give far greater weight to the "nationality question" in its fiscal affairs than did Hungary. As the franchise widened, eventually to universal male suffrage in 1907, the nationality considerations assumed ever greater importance. Even the construction of railway lines often was dictated by nationality considerations: they became the price paid for political support — most often of the "Polish club" from Galicia — in the *Reichsrat*.[20] The ill-fated "Koerber Plan" sought to reduce disparities in standards of living among various peoples of Austria through the vehicle of a massive public-works program to build canals and other transportation facilities.[21] Official statistics of tax collections and government expenditures show that the state budget had an important regional redistributional effect: tax collections considerably exceeded expenditures in the richer provinces (the German, Czech, and Italian areas); the difference flowed to the eastern and southern Slavic lands, most markedly to Galicia. It thus seems fair to say that considerations of growth gave the Hungarian budget its essential character, while equity measures dominated the Austrian budget.

There also existed, of course, the common budget — this covered essentially the external affairs in which the Monarchy faced the outside world as a unit: the military, the diplomatic service, and the common finance ministry set up to handle their finances. The military accounted for about 95 per cent of the common budget. A peculiarity of the Austro-Hungarian system was that tariff revenue was earmarked to cover common expenses, but it always fell far short, and the shortfall was covered in the *Quota* ratio. In Austria-Hungary, then, tariff revenue does not figure into the yield of indirect taxes in either of the sepa-

rate state budgets. The discussion which follows, which does not consider the common budget, does not, in consequence, deal explicitly with tariff revenues.

2. *The pattern of development of public revenues*

Many discussions of public revenue are distorted, in my opinion, because they fail to distinguish between sources which are essentially taxes and those which are merely the ordinary business income of enterprises which happen, for one reason or another, to belong to the state. To deal with both the income and the outlays of these enterprises in gross terms, when comparing them to other revenues, only compounds the distortion.[22] Even the governments' own publications typically include only the net income of the tax-like business operations, the salt, tobacco, and lottery monopolies, as revenues; it is therefore inconsistent to deal with gross receipts and expenditures when considering other enterprises. Accordingly, the main tables which summarize the development of both income and outgo (Tables 1 and 2) include net monopoly income as an indirect tax, and if the other government enterprises show a profit, it is entered as revenue, whereas a net loss then is counted among the expenditures.

The early Hungarian data in these tables are placed in brackets to show that they are not comparable with the later Hungarian data because of changes in the method of reporting used in the source. Until more detailed sources can be consulted, it should also be assumed that the Hungarian and Austrian data are not strictly comparable either. *In particular, the use of ordinary expenditure and revenue since "ordinary" is an arbitrary definition used to suit the budget-makers of the time; means we are dealing only with a part of government revenue and outlays,*[23] moreover, what is "ordinary" in one jurisdiction may be "extraordinary" in the other, and *vice-versa*. The data which follow, it must be emphasized, *represent only a guide for further investigation, and not a definitive treatment of the question.*

Examining the period in which the data are presumed to be comparable over time, if not across space (1879-1913), the total revenues of the Austrian government — as defined in the Tables — grew at a 3.2 per cent annual average rate, compared to a 2.7 per cent yearly average for Hungary. The "gross" receipts —

including the gross income before deduction of operating expenses for the state enterprises, but excluding borrowed funds — show less divergent growth rates: 3.5 per cent per year for Austria, 3.3 per cent for Hungary. The Austrian net revenues, since they can be compared over the entire period, exhibit relatively slower growth, an average of 2.2 per cent annum (comparing the 1869-1873 average to that of 1909-1913).

The Austrian Empire of the *Vormärz* had collected about 31.5 per cent of its total revenue from direct taxes in 1847, and Table One indicates that this proportion had not materially changed by the early years of the Dual Monarchy, at least in Austria itself.[24] Despite the introduction of the income tax into Imperial Austria in 1849 and the reforms of direct taxes in Hungary in 1875 and in Austria in the 1890s, the share of direct taxes in the state revenues of both partner countries declined gradually but steadily during the course of the Dualist era. The increase in the income of the consumption taxes and other indirect imposts reflected increasing incomes and higher standards of living, as well as increases in the rate of tax on these items. The failure of direct taxes to keep pace, whether by accident or design, is a first indicator of the regressive nature of the tax system in both countries (or at least that they did not become more progressive as time passed).[25] The differences in the observed shares of the indirect revenue sources in Austria and in Hungary were primarily accounted for by the vastly greater income which Austria enjoyed from the beer and sugar taxes: in the mid-nineties, for example, while the spirits and wine taxes brought in very similar sums in the two countries, beer-tax receipts in Austria were about twelve times what they were in Hungary, and sugar-tax receipts about six times. The beer tax alone accounted for about eight per cent of total Austrian government revenue at this time (down from 12 per cent around 1870). The differences were reflections both of dissimilar consumption preferences and of different levels of per capita income.

During the Dual Monarchy period, unlike in the 1850s, the sale of state properties was a negligible source of revenue; indeed, both central governments of Austria-Hungary added mightily to the amount of property which they owned. The net income of state enterprises appears to have been of greater importance in Hungarian than in Austrian revenues for most periods, but

TABLE 1

Distribution of Central Government Income by Source

(Per Cent of Total Ordinary Income)

A - Austria
H - Hungary

Five-year Average	Direct Taxes		Indirect taxes, fees and monopolies		Net income of state enterprises		Sale of state property		Other		Total A : H per cent
	A	H	A	H	A	H	A	H	A	H	
1869-73[a]	32.2	[42.4]	58.0	[53.8]	1.6	[2.8]	2.5	n.a.	5.8	[0.9]	[193]
1874-78	31.9	[43.8]	58.2	[45.5]	_ b	[9.5]	0.4	n.a.	9.5	[1.3]	[166]
1879-83	30.7	37.1	63.3	42.2	_ b	1.0	0.1	1.5	5.9	18.2	130
1884-88	31.8	33.5	63.8	41.3	_ b	2.2	0.1	2.1	4.2	20.9	111
1889-93	29.8	31.1	64.5	50.3	2.2	8.0	0.2	1.0	3.4	9.6	112
1894-98	28.1	29.1	63.9	52.0	4.6	8.4	0.0	0.6	3.3	10.0	114
1899-1903	29.1	27.9	64.8	52.1	4.2	10.1	0.1	0.1	1.8	9.9	125
1904-08	27.5	28.1	66.6	54.3	4.4	7.5	0.1	0.3	1.4	9.8	129
1909-13	24.8	28.5	70.4	61.1	3.5	1.5	0.1	0.1	1.2	8.8	151

a. 1871-73 for Hungary

b. Loss; entered in Table 8, Central Government Expenditure

Sources: Austria: Zentralrechnungsabschluss über den Staatshaushalt der im Reichsrate vertretenen Königreiche und Länder für das Jahr... Der österreichische Staatsshaushalt in dem Jahrzehnt 1903 bis 1912 ("Österreichische Statistik," N.F. 12. Band, 1. Heft, (Vienna: 1915) Hereafter cited as Zentralrechnungsabschluss and Staatshaushalt, resp.

Hungary: Magyar Statisztikai Évkönyv [Hungarian Statistical Yearbook]

since so much of outlays on railway acquisition, construction, equipping, and the like was included in 'extraordinary expenditure', we cannot make any meaningful comparisons in this area. Finally, if most of the unidentified 'other income' for Hungary came from indirect tax-like sources, any differences from the Austrian revenue pattern would disappear almost completely.

Within the general similarity of patterns, however, the two governments met their growing revenue needs in somewhat different ways. Over the period in Austria, the income from state monopolies and from the stamp and documentation fees increased more rapidly than the other income here considered, so that while together they had supplied under 40 per cent of tax revenue (exclusive of tariffs) in 1868, they accounted for almost half in 1913. Meanwhile, consumption taxes became relatively less important as a revenue source, while the indirect imposts in total were increasing. In Hungary, however, the increase in the relative share of total revenue collected from those indirect levies grew because the share of consumption taxes trebled (from less than nine per cent in 1868/70 to over 26 per cent in 1911/13), while that of stamp and documentation fees nearly doubled (8.6 per cent to over 15 per cent). The state monopolies, on the other hand, declined in relative importance, as their share in total revenue collections fell from more than 27 per cent to less than 21 per cent.

Both Austria and Hungary were involved in a protracted process of 'tax reform' throughout nearly the entire Dual Monarchy epoch. The indirect taxes underwent considerable modification in both countries throughout the 1880s. One of the most important of these modifications was a great increase in the tax on alcoholic spirits (the 'brandy tax'): in Austria its revenue tripled from 6.7 million florins in 1887 to 29.2 millions in 1889; in Hungary the increase in the spirits tax served as the very cornerstone of Premier Kálmán Tisza's three-year plan (introduced 1887) to bring balance to the Hungarian budget. Changing the sugar tax from a tax on input (beets) to output (sugar produced) proved a particular boon to the Hungarian sugar industry, which processed beets of lower sugar content than did the Bohemian mills. Along with a boom in production came, of course, a flood of revenue: the Hungarian government's income from this source multiplied tenfold by 1913,

compared to the levels of the middle 1880s. At the same time, the much larger Austrian sugar tax revenues became relatively less important. The third principal change in the indirect taxes, the introduction of the petroleum tax in 1882, has already been mentioned.

The reforms of the 1880s meant more to Hungary than to Austria, as the following figures clearly demonstrate:

Revenues from Consumption Taxes (1887 = 100)

Year	Austria	Hungary
1889	114	127
1890	121	138
1891	120	147
1892	129	159
1893	133	188

Hungarian revenues from the consumption taxes, were only 45 per cent of Austrian revenues in 1887, 63 per cent in 1893, and increased to fully 80 per cent of the Austrian total in 1913. We may note additionally that after 1888, the rebate of consumption taxes on exports was paid from consumption tax revenue, rather than from tariff revenue. Since 80 per cent or more of these rebates went to Austrian producers, but common expenditures not covered by tariff revenue were shared roughly 70:30 between Austria and Hungary, this change in the source of rebates was to Hungary's advantage. Finally, the 1899 renewal of the 'Economic Compromise' contained a provision long sought by the Hungarians: that consumption taxes, collected at point of production, would henceforth flow into the Treasury of the country in which the items were consumed.

The direct taxes, which has already assumed their essential form in the 1820s, continued nearly unchanged — except for the introduction of the income tax in 1849 — until the 'reforms' which began in 1896. These reforms, still incomplete when the War broke out, were designed to reduce the taxes on real property and to compensate for this reduction by increasing the income tax. The earnings tax already discriminated very strongly against limited corporations (with rates two to four times as high as those for unincorporated businesses). This discrimination was further intensified in the tax reform by the addition of a transitional surcharge on the earnings tax for joint-stock companies. In all, the 1896 reform in Austria has been labelled

'a signal triumph for the agrarian interests' and a manifestation of 'the prevailing bitterness against large-scale enterprise'. [26]

As a result both of the reforms and of growing incomes, income tax receipts in Austria increased from about 35 million crowns (roughly £ 1¼ million) in 1898 to 101 millions (about £4.2 million) in 1913, but even the latter figure represented less than 5 per cent of total ordinary revenue for the Austrian government. The Hungarian income tax, despite its nominally wider range and somewhat more progressive structure, was an even less important revenue source than its Austrian counterpart. A further reform to add both more 'bite' and more progressivity to the Hungarian income tax was introduced in 1909, but implementation was postponed, and then the First World War intervened.

While the sums collected from the direct taxes increased steadily, the indirect forms of extracting revenue from the public gained in relative importance as the period progressed. Given the structure of the increase, it is likely that both countries' taxation systems became more regressive in the process. This would seem to be particularly true for Hungary: total revenue from the consumption excises expanded to more than eleven times its initial level and the stamps and fees income more than sextupled (this latter is probably an index of increased bureaucratisation as well). Income from direct tax collections, on the other hand, grew at a slower-than-average rate, so that these revenues reached only 2-2/3 times their 1868-70 levels by 1911-13, whereas the total non-tariff, non-enterprise revenue expanded to 3-2/3 times its initial level over the same period. Since customs revenues nearly sextupled, i.e., increased more rapidly than total internal tax collections in either Austria or Hungary, we can conclude that the consumers of the Habsburg Empire were in this fashion yet further burdened by the weight of indirect taxation.

3. The pattern of development of public expenditures

While the structure of revenues for Austria and Hungary appeared very similar, more divergence can be noted in their patterns of expenditure (see Table 2). Because the *Quota* ratio (63.6 : 36.4 in the 1907 agreement) was much larger than the ratio of the two governments' expenditures, 'common affairs' account for a significantly larger share of Austrian than of

TABLE 2

Distribution of Central Government Expenditure

(Per Cent of Total Ordinary Expenditure)

A - Austria

H - Hungary

Five-year Average	Common Affairs		Home Defence Corps		Debt Service		Parliament		Internal Governments; Subsidies		Net Loss on State Enterprises		Pensions		Other		Total A - H per cent
	A	H	A	H	A	H	A	H	A	H	A	H	A	H	A	H	
1869-73[a]	27.5	[16.4]	2.6	[2.8]	36.5	[29.1]	0.2	[0.6]	27.7	[45.3]	_b	_b	4.5	[1.2]	1.0	[4.6]	[128]
1874-78	28.9	[18.6]	2.7	[2.7]	33.0	[33.9]	0.4	[0.5]	30.5	[38.9]	0.1	_b	4.1	[1.4]	0.2	[3.9]	[135]
1879-83	27.4	15.8	2.6	2.5	36.4	49.4	0.5	0.5	27.6	18.9	1.3	_b	4.3	1.5	-	11.5	123
1884-88	25.5	15.0	3.4	3.1	36.7	46.1	0.3	0.4	25.7	21.2	3.6	_b	4.7	1.8	-	12.4	121
1889-93	20.4	11.8	4.8	5.1	41.9	46.0	0.3	0.5	27.4	24.4	_b	_b	5.0	2.3	0.3	9.9	118
1894-98	19.6	10.5	5.3	5.1	40.9	40.7	0.3	0.5	28.7	27.5	_b	_b	5.2	2.2	-	13.4	110
1899-1903	17.2	11.9	5.9	5.1	36.4	36.7[c]	0.3	0.5	34.2	34.1	_b	_b	6.0	2.5	-	9.3	120
1904-08	17.4	12.2	6.3	4.6	33.8	31.5	0.3	0.4	35.5	46.0	_b	_b	6.7	2.8	-	2.5	118
1909-13	19.7	14.3	7.5	5.9	32.5	26.0[c]	0.3	0.3	32.7	41.0	_b	_b	7.2	2.8	-	9.6	119

a. 1871-73 or Hungary

b. Net income; entered in Table 1, Central Government Income

c. Four-year average

Sources: See Table 1.

Hungarian outlays. Relatively small, and essentially similar shares of total expenditure were devoted to the home defence corps and the parliaments of the two states; and while pensions absorbed a considerably larger share of the Austrian budget, they were growing more rapidly as a proportion of Hungarian government outlays. *The principal differences emerge in the two largest expenditure categories, namely: debt service and the cost of internal government.*

Nearly half of Hungary's budget in the early 1880s was spent on servicing her accumulated debt, and it still claimed over 40 per cent in the late 90s. The reduction in this share began in the 1890s and continued until only a little over one quarter of the total budget had to be set aside for debt service by the end of the period. Over the same time span Table 2 reveals some slight reduction in the proportion of debt service in the Austrian budget; the change is not nearly so dramatic, however, and the debt service component is virtually the same size relative to the total budget as it was in the late 1870s. The explanation for these dissimilar trends is to be found primarily in the Hungarian government's greater involvement in infrastructure investment, in the different timing of railway nationalization in the two countries, and in the phasing of capital flow between Austria and Hungary.

The costs of internal government included the outlays of the various ministries of the two states (except that the railway department, elevated to ministry status in Austria in 1890, was included with state enterprises) and such subsidies (other than to state-owned enterprises) as were specifically reported in the accounting summaries. Once the critical first needs were met, and Hungarian finances achieved a certain order, the activities of the government in this 'internal' sphere began to quickly grow. While the counterpart share in the Austrian government's outlays grew as well, the more rapid increase in this category of expenditure for Hungary is explained mainly by the faster growth of the interior and finance ministries in Hungary, and the even more rapid increase in expenditures on education (from less than 3 per cent of the budget in the late 1880s and early 1890s, to just over 9 per cent by 1913). The 'other expenditures,' substantial in most periods for Hungary, are not further identified, but there is some likelihood that they might fall under the 'internal government and subsidies' rubric, further sharpen-

ing the contrast between the Hungarian and Austrian patterns.

Using the same periods of comparison as earlier for revenues, we find that the net ordinary expenditure of the Hungarian government increased at an average annual rate slightly in excess of 2.7 per cent, while in Austria the growth rate was just over 2.6 per cent (2.1 per cent 1869/73 to 1909/13). In gross terms, i.e., including the gross outlays reported for all state enterprises, the rates of increase for Austria and Hungary in the 1881/81 - 1911/13 period were 3.2 per cent and 3.7 per cent, respectively.

The simple comparison of revenue and expenditure growth of the two central governments can be very misleading, however, since the importance of lower levels of government could have been considerable. There was no direct equivalent in Hungary of the *Länder* (provincial) governments in Austria. The next level below the central government in Hungary was the county (*megye*); below that came the municipal, or community (*község*) governments. The study of these lower levels of government is a statistical *terra incognita*, but it is known that in both Austria and Hungary the outlays of these lesser governments grew more rapidly than those of the central governments. Austrian *Länder* were spending about 200 million crowns a year by the outbreak of the war, and the Hungarian counties and towns about 150 million.[27] These sums amount in each case to roughly one-eighth to one-seventh of the outlays of the central government. Were all revenues and expenditures — extraordinary as well as ordinary — included in our analysis, these fractions would shrink dramatically. Continuing our exclusive concern with the central governments does not vitiate any conclusions we might be able to draw concerning the impact of government fiscal operations on the economies of Austria and Hungary.

If we were able to include these lower governments in our fiscal considerations, they would likely only reinforce, rather than alter the patterns observed. In Austria's case for example, the likely effect would have been to increase the share of "internal government" on the expenditure side, and to reduce all others (except perhaps "debt service," but since there are no data whatever on debts of the *Länder*, it is impossible to tell). In Hungary, the same should have been the case. Since in both countries the revenues of the lower governments came from surtaxes on the direct and indirect taxes, and since the 1896 tax reform in Austria increasingly turned over the real estate taxes

to provincial jurisdiction, inclusion of these governments' tax receipts on the revenue side might slightly increase the share of taxation in total revenue, but no significant change is to be expected.

4. Governments in the capital market: the financing of deficits

In the preceding section, treating as it does only ordinary income and outlay, a discussion of government surplus or deficit was not appropriate. For this, total expenditure and total revenue must be considered. Alas, sources differ on the course of deficits or surpluses for the two governments.[28] The most reliable secondary source for Hungary shows a deficit every year from 1869 through 1889,[29] while the State Accounting Office, in its report to Parliament in February of 1900, indicated deficits only in the years 1873-1882.[30] Reforms by two successive Finance Ministers succeeded in raising the gross revenues of the Hungarian central government by 60 per cent, (1886-1893) which produced an essential balance in its finances until 1900. From the turn of the century to the end of the period under review, growing deficits characterized Hungarian government finance.[31]

The difficulty of financing her deficits weighed rather heavily on Hungary during the early years of the Monarchy, producing the threat of state bankruptcy and a touch-and-go situation in the Summer of 1873. The crisis was overcome with the placing of a long-term issue of 153 million florins, and the situation was further, if rather paradoxically, ameliorated by the consequences of the Crash of 1873. The excesses of the pre-1873 boom in Austria produced both a private and an official reaction; the former manifested itself in a general reluctance to invest in private bonds and shares, the latter in legislation more strictly regulating and circumscribing such investment. A large pool of savings sought other, safer outlets, and Hungarian government securities appealed to an increasing number of Austrian investors.[32]

Capital market conditions all over Europe became very favourable in the 1880s, and the flow of foreign savings into Hungarian government securities became a veritable flood. By 1878, more than one-seventh of all outstanding Hungarian government debt was held by Austrians, and in 1893 in excess of three-fifths was in Austrian hands. Of the balance, about even

shares were owned by Hungarians and by the aggregate of all other foreigners except Austrians. The Hungarian government was able to push forward with its infrastructure program, including the nationalization of the railways, without being forced to raise taxes to the point where it would have severely hindered private investment.[33] By permitting the Hungarian government to avoid drastic tax reform, the inflow of Austrian and other foreign capital also helped to prevent major divergence in the two countries' tax systems, preserving the essential character of the tax union between them. Economic growth had proceeded relatively rapidly in Hungary under government tutelage, so that when Austrian investors began to withdraw their savings from Hungarian government securities in 1894, tax revenues were sufficiently large to absorb much of the pressure.[34]

Far less can be said at this point about the financing of Austrian government deficits (see footnote 28). If the pattern of deficits and surpluses in ordinary expenditure roughly reproduces that for all expenditure, then the Austrian sequence resembles very much the situation in Hungary: a few surplus years at the beginning, deficits beginning in the 1870s and continuing throughout the 1880s, then nearly continuous surpluses after the tax reform of the late 1880s until at least the first few years after the turn of the century. This accords roughly with the pattern of growth (and occasional shrinkage) of Austrian state debt, which increased about thirtyfold during the years of the Dual Monarchy, and on which the interest payments at the end of the period exceeded the principal at the beginning of the years under review.[35] The debt grew, the currency remained stable, and Austria herself was a net importer of capital. She, like Hungary, appears to have been able to take advantage of the favorable capital-market conditions to tap both the savings of her own citizens and those of foreigners. The period of the Dual Monarchy appears to have been one of very favourable fiscal conditions, especially when compared to the chaos of the earlier time.

5. Developments of significance for the tax union: some speculations

For a brief time, Austria-Hungary was a nearly complete tax union. Independent developments in both countries, mainly in the sphere of direct taxation, then took the Dual Monarchy

away from this position, so that soon the tax union was concentrated only in the area of indirect taxes, with but a loose and partial harmonization in direct taxation. As time passed, the increasing share of indirect taxes in the revenue of both countries implies that after the early moves away from tax harmonization, the tax union became closer again simply because the part of the system in which union was very close increased in relative importance as a revenue source.

With respect to the financing of "common affairs," there were two changes with minor, and probably nearly exactly offsetting effects on the closeness of tax union. First, the increases in Hungary's *Quota* share, since Hungary relied more heavily on direct taxes than did Austria, would — *ceteris paribus* — marginally decrease that closeness. On the other hand, a change in the rebate system on goods exported outside the Monarchy operated in the opposite direction: consumption taxes on these exports were rebated out of tariff revenue before that revenue was applied to common affairs, reducing net tariff receipts (they actually became negative in 1881). After 1888, these rebates were given from the revenue of consumption taxes themselves. Since about 80 per cent of the rebates went to Austria, whose *Quota* share never exceeded 70 per cent, the change in the rebate system reduced the effective burden of common affairs for Hungary, and increased it for Austria. By the same reasoning as used for the *Quota* change above, this change would — *ceteris paribus* — marginally increase the closeness of tax union.

Any improvement in the degree of "closeness" of the tax union during the latter part of the Dualist era should, then, have come about almost entirely through the mere fact of increase in the share of indirect taxation in the revenue systems of both countries, and not as the result of any concerted effort at tax harmonization between Austria and Hungary. Closer tax union, *ceteris paribus*, should imply a reduction in distortions in factor movements. The dramatic movements of capital between the two partners and the striking changes in their magnitudes are not by themselves, of course, evidence of any distortions whatsoever. Such distortions in the flows as might have been induced by the taxation systems of the two countries seem likely to have favored capital inflow into Hungary, since in particular the Hungarian system did not discriminate against corporations and large enterprises, as did the Austrian system.[36]

Although there were Austrian complaints that the Hungarian government program of industrial promotion, which included tax holidays as an incentive, siphoned away capital which otherwise would have been invested in Austria, there were equally vociferous complaints from the Hungarian side that the program was ineffective, and that Hungarian firms could not get a foothold because of the competition of established Austrian enterprise.[37] Since there is little evidence in the data that the Hungarian industrial promotion program succeeded either in promoting exports or replacing imports, it does not seem likely that differences in the tax systems had anything more than a marginal impact on the flow of capital between the two partners. If this be the case, then reduction of distortions through a somewhat greater degree of closeness of tax union must have been very small indeed.

Besides the change in the rebate system for consumption taxes mentioned above, the Hungarians also sought and secured a change in the tax system itself in 1899, when taxes collected at point of production now nevertheless were to accrue to the Treasury of the country where the goods were consumed. This change from the "origin principle" to the "destination principle" should have had no production impact whatever, since producers in both countries were still equally burdened by the tax, and outside producers still had the same common tariff to contend with. The revenue impact could have been considerable, however, and the Hungarians clearly thought it would be to their advantage. The only consumption tax in which the data reveal a sustained increase after 1900 over the levels of 1899 and previous years is, unfortunately for this hypothesis, the sugar tax. Because the sugar cartel had divided the market so effectively by 1900 that sugar exports from one partner to the other had virtually ceased, the explanation for the enhanced sugar tax receipts must be sought in changes in the tax itself.[38] Indeed, since sugar tax revenue increased markedly in Austria as well, we cannot find any evidence for a "tax diversion effect" of any significant size.

Within this restricted framework of tax union analysis, it is obvious that a great deal of work needs to be done before anything very concrete might be said about the impact of the differences in Austrian and Hungarian fiscal systems on output or factor allocation in their common market. What I have

tried to demonstrate is what could be done if more resources were applied to these questions. In the area of public finance more broadly conceived, other important questions have also been highlighted. One that seems particularly important to a more rational and less emotional analysis of the *Quota* question is the question of tax effort. The *Quota* was supposed to be determined by a formula based on taxpaying capacity, but the two sides could never agree on a single formula. Now that estimates of national income and income per capita, at least for the final years of the Dual Monarchy, are beginning to become available, perhaps it is time to turn to the question of whether or not the *Quota* shares were in accord with, or diverged significantly from, the ability of the two partners to pay. Other interesting and important questions will no doubt occur to members of this readership. It is a safe bet that the existing scholarly literature will give no satisfactory answers to those questions, since the entire area of public finance, as the introduction tries to point out, is virtually *tabula rasa* for Austria-Hungary.

NOTES

1. An easily-accessible account in English of the Hungarian literature can be found in Péter Hanák, "Hungary in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy: Preponderancy or Dependency?" *Austrian History Yearbook*, Vol. III, part 1 (1967), pp. 260-302. Two recent dissertations at the University of Chicago have taken up the economic issues of customs union directly: Thomas Huertas, "Economic Growth and Economic Policy in a Multinational Setting: The Habsburg Monarchy, 1841-1865," Department of Economics, 1977, esp. ch. 2; and John Komlos, "The Habsburg Monarchy as a Customs Union: Economic Development in Austria-Hungary in the Nineteenth Century," Department of History, 1978, esp. ch. 1. A less sophisticated and much more openly Hungarophobe work is that of Krisztina Maria Fink, *Die österreichisch-ungarische Monarchie als Wirtschaftsgemeinschaft: ein historischer Beitrag zu aktuellen Integrationsproblemen* ("Südosteuropaschriften," vol. 9, Munich: Rudolf Trofenik, 1968.

2. Jacob Viner, *The Customs Union Issue* (New York: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1950).

3. Surveys of this literature may be found in Richard G. Lipsey, "The Theory of Customs Unions: A General Survey," *Economic Journal* 70: 496-513 (September 1960) and Melvyn B. Krauss, "Recent Developments in Customs Union Theory: An Interpretive Survey," *Journal of Economic Literature* 10: 413-436 (June, 1972).

4. Ákos Paulinyi, "Die sogenannte gemeinsame Wirtschaftspolitik Österreich-Ungarns," in Adam Wandruszka and Peter Urbanitsch (eds.), *Die Habsburgermonarchie 1848-1918, Band I: Die Wirtschaftliche Entwicklung* (Vienna: Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1975), p. 585.

5. See for example Carl S. Shoup (ed.), *Fiscal Harmonization in Common Markets* (2 vols., New York: Columbia University Press, 1967).

6. Paulinyi, p. 568.

7. László Katus, "A tőkés gazdaság fejlődése a kiegyezés után" (The development of the capitalist economy after the Compromise) in *Magyarország Története*

(History of Hungary), vol. VI (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1979), p. 945.

8. The distinction between indirect and direct taxation is not a precise one in economics. The ultimate effect of any tax depends on its *actual* incidence (to what degree it is shifted forward onto buyers or backwards onto suppliers of inputs), rather than on what lawmakers *intended* its incidence should be. See Richard A. Musgrave, *Theory of Public Finance* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1959), p. 227.

9. See my "Economic Policy and Economic Development in Austria-Hungary, 1867-1913," *Cambridge Economic History of Europe*, vol. VIII (forthcoming).

10. Josef Wysocki, "Die österreichische Finanzpolitik," in Wandruszka and Urbanitsch, p. 73.

11. Eddie, "Economic Policy...."

12. Even these effects may have been rather small and insignificant. See the discussion in my "The Terms and Patterns of Hungarian Foreign Trade, 1882-1913," *Journal of Economic History* 37 (June, 1977), pp. 352-353.

13. An example of the richness of this data source can be found in the massive study of Harm-Hinrich Brandt, *Der österreichische Neoabsolutismus: Staatzfinanzen und Politik 1848-1860* (2 vols., "Schriftenreihe der historischen Kommission bei der bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften," Schrift 15; Göttingen: Vandenhoek Ruprecht, 1978). A far less successful attempt to mine these data from the Dualist period is that of Josef Wysocki, *Infrastruktur und wachsende Staatsausgaben: Das Fallbeispiel Österreichs, 1868-1913* ("Forschungen zur Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte," Band 20; Stuttgart: Gustav Fischer, 1975).

14. Alois Gratz, "Die österreichische Finanzpolitik von 1848 bis 1948," in Hans Mayer (ed.), *Hundert Jahre österreichischer Wirtschaftsentwicklung 1848-1948* (Vienna: Springer, 1949), p. 224.

15. *Ibid.*

16. While both Wysocki (*Infrastruktur...*) and Katus ("Magyarország gazdasági fejlődése, 1890-1914" /Hungary's Economic Development, 1890-1914/, *Magyarország Története* /History of Hungary/, vol. VII, Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1978) point out that state enterprises, most important of which were the railways, accounted for about 40 per cent of gross state outlays, the *net* income (or loss) was a very much smaller fraction of net revenue or expenditure (see Tables 1 and 2).

17. "The establishment of the constitution found the country in such a condition, that in every direction, in every branch of the life of the state, there was an immeasurable need which demanded satisfaction in the area of investments. The country so deeply felt her need that it is necessary to begin with the realization of these investments without delay, since only with their help will she be able to make up the neglect of centuries and secure the prerequisites of material development." Az állandó pénzügyi bizottság általános jelentése az 1873-ik évi államköltségvetés tárgyában /General Report of the Standing Finance Committee in the Matter of the 1873 State Budget/, *Országgyűlés képviselőházának irományai* /Parliament. House of Representatives Documents/ 1873, no. 175, vol. II. My translation.

18. Katus, "Capitalist Economy," p. 951. My translation.

19. Komlos, p. 172.

20. Wysocki, *Infrastruktur...*, pp. 168-172.

21. An account of this plan and its tribulations can be found in Alexander Gerschenkron, *An Economic Spurt that Failed: Four Lectures in Austrian History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977).

22. This is one of the most frequently-mentioned (but unlikely the most serious) of the flaws in Wysocki's *Infrastruktur*, for example. While such a viewpoint may be justified when considering the growth in state employment, it is not, in my view, when one is considering the burdens of the revenue system on the populace.

23. By combining some available figures for the 1903-1912 period (from *Zentralrechnungsabschluss* and *Staatshaushalt* — see source notes, Table 1), we can obtain some idea of the magnitude of error which is likely because of considerations of ordinary rather than total, or net rather than gross, revenue and expenditure for Austria. During the years 1903-1912, extraordinary outlays made up between 6 and 13 per cent of total outlays, and extraordinary income accounted for from 0 to 13 per cent of total revenue. The difference between net and gross revenue ranged from 38 to 46

per cent, while that for expenditure ran from 40 to 45 per cent. Moreover, the inclusion of extraordinary revenue and expenditure would change deficit to surplus, or vice versa, in *six* of the ten years.

24. Mihály Szepessy, *Ausztria birodalmi adórendszere* /Austria's Imperial Tax System/ (Pest: Pfeifer, 1867), p. 5.

25. Even contemporary observers saw the tax system as regressive. "Under our present tax system, the burden of the lower class of the people is much greater than that of the well-to-do." Sándor Milhoffer, *Magyarország közgazdasága* /The Economy of Hungary/ (Budapest: 1904), as quoted in Katus, "Capitalist Economy," p. 950. My translation.

26. John V. Van Sickle, *Direct Taxation in Austria* ("Harvard Economic Studies," vol. XXXV, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1931), pp. 28, 34.

27. Wysocki, "Finanzpolitik," p. 74. Katus, "Economic Development," p. 276.

28. Wysocki (*Infrastruktur*, p. 136) presents a table which allegedly shows total outlays and revenues for 1868, with the implied deficits and surpluses. Unfortunately, the deficit or surplus shown in his table is — except for two years — exactly equal to that reported for *ordinary* income and expenditure in the *Zentralrechnungsabschluss*, up through 1899. For the rest of the period it differs markedly, but it agrees neither with the *Zentralrechnungsabschluss* data (as before) nor with the official accounts including extraordinary items, as given in *Staatshaushalt* for the years 1903-1912. Until further research has been done, we remain in the dark about this elementary fact of government finance.

29. Katus, "Capitalist Economy," p. 945.

30. A magyar királyi állami számvevőszék jelentése /Report of the Royal Hungarian State Accounting Office/, *Országgyűlés képviselőházának irományai* /Parliament. House of Representatives Documents/, 1896-1901 no. 802, vol. XXVIII.

31. Katus, "Capitalist Economy," p. 946; *idem*, "Economic Development," p. 274.

32. Komlos, pp. 182-184.

33. *Ibid*, p. 172.

34. Komlos (pp. 150-153) attributes the slowdown in Hungarian industrial growth between 1896 and 1907 to this withdrawal.

35. Josef Püregger, *50 Jahre österreichische Staatsschuld 1862-1912* (Vienna: 1912), as quoted in Wysocki, *Infrastruktur*, p. 140. According to Szepessy, however, the debt of the Empire was 3144 million florin in 1865 (p. 12), which is nearly the level of 3456 million reported by Püregger for 1910. Since Hungary took over only a small fraction of the Imperial debt something is obviously wrong here, and it is most likely that Püregger's early figures are vast understatements of the true position. The amount Hungary agreed to pay yearly as *interest* in 1867 was about one-quarter of the amount which Wysocki draws from Püregger as the *principal* of Austria's share in 1869. With contemporary interest rates on Austro-Hungarian government securities in the 5-7 per cent range, there is a blatant inconsistency here.

36. Herbert Matis, in *Österreichs Wirtschaft 1848-1913: Konjunkturelle Dynamik und gesellschaftlicher Wandel im Zeitalter Franz Josephs I.* (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1972), attributes the "petrification" of Austrian industry to the bias in the tax system against corporations and other measures to protect small business (p. 328).

37. See for example Iván Berend and Miklós Szuhay, *A tőkés gazdaság története Magyarországon 1848-1944* /The History of the Capitalist Economy in Hungary 1848-1944/ (Budapest: Kossuth, 1973), p. 96.

38. Eddie, "Terms and Patterns," p. 345.

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Hungary's Economy, 1849-1867: A Critique of a Recent Hungarian Assessment

John Komlos

György Szabad, "Az önkényuralom kora (1849-1867)," /The Age of Neoabsolutism, 1849-1867/ *Magyarország Története* /History of Hungary/ (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1979) VI, part I: 525-608.

Reviewing part of a volume of a larger series is an unusual undertaking for a scholar. Szabad's essay is merely part of a book; the book itself is, in turn, part of a multivolume history of Hungary. It is incumbent on historians to review at least parts of this work. Since it is difficult for one person to review the entire volume, I have decided to review the section which deals with economic history, my field of expertise.

In the past, Hungarian historians have often referred to pre-1867 Austria as Hungary's oppressor. Since the mid-1960s, they have gradually revised this view and have evinced much more intellectual maturity about the relationship between Hungary and Austria under the Habsburg scepter. Although a negative tone can still be found in the analysis of that relationship, only in the recounting of the history of the 1850s does the old vocabulary of exploitation still dominate the narrative.

During the years of Absolutism that span the period from the end of the Hungarian War of Independence in 1849 to the Compromise of 1867, Hungary was an integral part of the Habsburg Monarchy, and hence was administered as any of the Empire's other political units: not even a modicum of representative government existed. This authoritarian arrangement need not have had an adverse effect, however, on Hungary's economic development. The issue of the economic consequences of the Absolutist government's policies is likely to be a controversial one for some time. The study under review does

not contribute to the resolution of the crucial questions confronting the student of the period.

Professor Szabad argues, for instance, that the Austrian government decided to spur capitalist development in Hungary, but at the same time subordinated this development to its own needs. The major problem with this assertion is that several elements of it remain unexplored. How did Austria coerce Hungary into serving its needs? What were those needs? What kind of distortions did this coercion cause in the Hungarian economic fabric?

The implication of his suggestion is that, freed from the shackles imposed by Austria, Hungary could have fared much better economically on her own. It seems, however, that a relatively backward country, such as Hungary during the mid-nineteenth century, would have been without the financial and the real infrastructure necessary for an effective economic mobilization and would have probably had great difficulties relying exclusively on its own pool of skilled labor and accumulated domestic capital.

Szabad also implies that the Austrian government consciously decided on the path of capitalist development for Hungary, actively directing her on this path. Once again, however, no examples are cited to support this claim. As far as can be discerned, the government in power in Vienna at this time was not a more activist regime than its pre-March predecessor; instead a continuity in development was apparent. The economic development that did occur in the 1850s was primarily an outgrowth of market forces at work rather than some manifestation of government omnipotence, as implied by the author.

Austrian capitalists were supposed to have monopolized the Hungarian market. It is true that Austrian entrepreneurs dominated certain branches of the economy, and that they played a significant role in others. They did not collude, however, nor did they act as a monolith. There was no means available for them, either legally sanctioned or illicit, to exact exorbitant prices and thereby, hurt the Hungarians. The Austrian entrepreneurs acted in an atomistic fashion; by competing among themselves, they prevented any monopoly from being formed.

Nor is there any evidence that these capitalists sought to control certain branches of the economy for ulterior motives,

that is, to be able to command key positions of the economy in order to wield power over it. Austrian investments in Hungary were heavily concentrated in transport, the extractive sector, and in the financial sector. Yet were not these industries precisely those that were expanding quickly and hence, provide a lucrative return on investment? In other words, there seems to be no reason to impute sinister motives to Austrian investors.

According to the author, the Hungarians refused, "at times with apparent unanimity," to pay taxes.[1] Their refusal to do so, it is asserted, continually threatened to upset the government budget. This alleged statement is used to indicate unified Hungarian resistance to Austrian oppression. Again the data point to a different conclusion. It is true the Hungarians were the worst taxpayers in the Monarchy. Out of 12.5 million gulden total arrears to the central government, 7.0 million gulden were due from Hungary.[2] This was not a substantial change, however, from the 1840s. In 1846, for instance, out of 15.9 million gulden total arrears, Hungary had owed 8.9 million gulden.[3] In other words, when compared with the figures for 1846, Hungary's tax debt had, by 1857, actually decreased, although it was to increase in the 1860s.

Szabad's assertions about tax delinquency in Hungary may be interpreted in a completely different way from that which he intends. The failure of many Hungarians to pay the taxes on land may indicate not widespread rebelliousness, but simply a shortage of money in Hungary due to the limitations of an underdeveloped market economy. Furthermore, the very fact that back taxes on land were tolerated without foreclosing on the properties in question, testifies to the limits of enforcement of government policies. If, as the author suggests, the Austrian authorities had been as oppressive and the Hungarians' failure to pay such taxes been as damaging to government revenues, why were not the properties of such delinquent taxpayers confiscated?

Although the problem of tax delinquency was indeed an irksome one, it was by no means debilitating to the Austrian government. In 1857, the Hungarian land tax was 18 million gulden, of which 91 per cent was actually paid that same year. In addition, enough of the back taxes were paid in that year to decrease the total outstanding arrears of Hungary from 8.3

to 7.0 million gulden. Incidentally, the total tax arrears in 1857 of 12.5 million gulden do not appear significant when compared with the government revenues of 420 million gulden. A slippage of 3 per cent is hardly likely to have threatened the Monarchy's stability.[4] In sum, the whole problem of taxation is oversimplified in this essay.

The state finances are also misrepresented. The reader is told, for example, that the service on the peasant-emancipation bonds alone accounted for 1/4 to 1/2 of direct taxes. This statement is implausible. In fact, about 7.8 million gulden in interest and 6.8 million gulden in principal were redeemed in 1864. These amounts do not loom significantly large when compared with the 122.7 million gulden taxes collected directly. In any case, it is not reasonable to compare an expenditure item with direct taxes alone; instead, it should be compared with the total tax revenues, which were in the order of 450 million gulden.[5] The author also asserts that revenues were "squandered" by the government, but, without some indication of what expenditures the author considers superfluous, such a statement cannot be given much credence.

The aforementioned is not to be construed to suggest that the Austrian government was on sound financial footing. Deficits were no doubt large, but they did not threaten the government with bankruptcy. The economy did not teeter on the verge of collapse, and there is no point in presenting the reader with that impression.

The entire discussion of taxation is misinformed and one can only conclude that it is a misrepresentation of reality. The fact that taxes were increasing in nominal terms does not, by itself, prove that they were also increasing in real terms, or that such taxes were either burdensome or exploitative. Was the price level constant? Did not incomes also increase? Should not one also be aware of the fact that the tax burden previously accruing to the Church and to the landlord had now been eliminated? Thus the existence of "taxploitation," a word coined by the author, does not follow from the mere fact of an increase in taxes.

Szabad would like to demonstrate the repressive nature of Austrian tax policy by pointing to the high proportion of taxes (26 per cent) collected from the sale of tobacco and salt. To put things in proper perspective, however, one must keep in

mind that the expenses incurred by the government in manufacturing and marketing both products were considerable: the net revenue from their sale as a share of the total revenues collected by the state, net of the expenses incurred in generating these revenues, was 17 per cent in 1857.[6] Even this figure makes the tax seem more burdensome than it really was. Some of the tobacco products were sold to foreigners as an ordinary business transaction; in that case, the tax did not burden the domestic population. Furthermore, only the difference between the price that prevailed as a consequence of the monopoly position of the government and the price that would have prevailed had these products been deregulated can be considered a tax, and not the price itself.

Another erroneous argument is the author's claim that Hungary paid more taxes than the value of the services the Austrian government returned to Hungary. In support of this thesis, Szabad makes an accounting of actual income and expenditures of the Austrian government in Hungary, which indeed shows a deficit. He fails to mention, however, the fact that the same accounting shows a deficit for all the provinces of the Austrian Empire, for the simple reason that those expenditures of the central government that could not be allocated to any single province were left out of the calculations. The armed forces, the Court, and the diplomatic corps all absorbed revenues that could not be allocated to any one province. The author also fails to mention that this deficit was, for Hungary, among the smallest in the Monarchy, on both a per capita basis and a per square mile basis: only Tirol, Vorarlberg, Salzburg, Dalmatia, and Bukowina had a smaller deficit than Hungary.[7] In fact, the Hungarian "deficit" was, on a per capita basis, less than half the deficit of the rest of the provinces, and less than one-third on an acreage basis.

The relative smallness of this deficit cannot be accounted for entirely by the income side of the ledger, but must be ascribed in large measure to the fact that certain government expenditures were disproportionately large in Hungary. On various water works, one million gulden were spent in Hungary in 1857, while only 300,000 gulden were spent in Bohemia, and only a half million in Lower Austria. In the same year (1857), 4.3 million gulden were spent on building roads in Hungary. The provinces with the nearest amount to that spent

on building roads were Galicia, with 1.4 million gulden, and Bohemia, with one million gulden. Another such expenditure, one not mentioned by the author, was a benevolent action of the Austrian government: the 14.5 million gulden welfare payment made in 1864 to help needy Hungarians who had been badly hurt by the harvest failure of the preceding year. [8]

It is also necessary to refute Szabad's assertion that Hungarians paid more than their fair share of taxes. In support of this contention, he states that "in the early 1860s, the per capita land tax was 4 per cent higher in Hungary than the average for the Empire." Is such a small difference really significant? In 1864 this tax, which no doubt fluctuated from year to year, was 1.77 gulden per capita in Hungary (excluding Transylvania and Croatia), while the Empire-wide average was 1.76 gulden. [9] This is a negligible difference. The author likewise overlooks the fact that the tax was not evenly distributed within Hungary. In 1857, the land tax for Hungary proper, as well as for Croatia and Transylvania, was considerably less than the average for the Empire as a whole. The Bánát was the only region where the tax per capita was above the average. [10]

The example of the Bánát brings us to the main reason why the comparison of the land tax per capita across the various provinces is extremely misleading: the higher the productivity of the land, and the lower the population density, the higher this indicator will be, even if the tax burden is distributed equitably. That was precisely the situation in the Bánát: low population density was coupled with what was probably the best land in the Empire. The tax per acreage, therefore, is a better indicator of the burden of the land tax than the one used by the author. In 1864, Hungarians paid 5.06 gulden per Austrian square mile, the average for the Empire as a whole was 5.6 gulden per Austrian square mile.

The land tax by itself, however, is not a good measure of the distribution of the tax burden. In 1857, Hungarians paid only 60 per cent of the total taxes (direct and indirect) that were paid per capita by their Austrian counterparts; on an acreage basis, the balance was even more in Hungary's favor. Yet this measure is imprecise as well. Since Hungarians clearly had a lower per capita income, the incidence of the indirect taxes would not have fallen on them with as much force. The proper measure is the amount of taxes as a percentage of national

income. On this basis, the indication is that Hungary was paying, if anything, less than its fair share. Although slightly more than 30 per cent of the Monarchy's GNP originated in Hungary,[11] the sum of the direct taxes and the consumption tax paid by Hungary was less than 30 per cent.[12] Thus, there is no evidence that Austrian tax policy discriminated against Hungary.

The above analysis is, of course, not meant as a substitute for a systematic evaluation of Austrian tax policy during the years between 1849 and 1867. The main purpose of this critique is to point out the degree to which the issues involved have, up to now, been obfuscated.

Professor Szabad's essay contains yet another misconception: the notion that the 1850s in Hungary were characterized by an agricultural boom. He implies that the dynamics of this decade differed significantly from the preceding ones in both exports and production. The whole notion of a "boom," however, is contradicted by the data on internal transportation and foreign trade in the Monarchy. The growth rate in grain exports between 1833 and 1843 was 5.3 per cent; in succeeding decades, up to the eight year average centering on 1871, the average was only slightly higher, at 5.9 per cent.[13] In fact, the first half of the 1850s was marked by adverse weather conditions and harvest failures. The temporary dislocation of the labour market caused by the peasant emancipation exacerbated conditions, and there were severe sporadic famines. As a consequence, the Monarchy's foreign balance in the grain trade was negative in the first half of the 1850s; only in the second half of the 1950s did production reach trend values.

The reader can see the lack of validity in the author's argument when one examines the reason he gives for increased production, namely the increased demand caused by the Crimean War, the Italian War, the American Civil War and Indian Mutiny of 1857. There is no evidence, however, that any of these conflicts increased the demand for Hungarian grain.

During the Crimean War, there was no adequate transportation system that would have enabled Hungarian producers to export grain to the Crimea. Furthermore, the shift of less than a hundred thousand men from Western Europe to the Balkans could have hardly had a significant effect on the trade of a Monarchy with an internal market of 30 million. Although

war was declared in September, 1853, the Russian government did not close the port of Odessa to grain exports immediately; it offered an inventory of 5.5 million hektoliter for sale as late as November of that year.[14] When Russia did prohibit the export of grain,[15] this was as much the result of the bad harvest as it was of the needs of the war effort.[16] Although Wallachia also prohibited the export of grain for a while, it lifted this ban in the fall of 1854.[17]

Some trade diversion could have taken place because of the closing of the port of Odessa, but the Austrian Empire had no surplus grain to take advantage of this development in any event. Hence, even if the Monarchy had been in a position to respond, the trade diversion induced by the war would have been short-lived, and could not have significantly influenced production. The only effect of the Crimean War on Austria's grain trade was to cause her to import somewhat more grain than she would have otherwise. Troops were stationed in grain-deficit areas, where it was cheaper to import the grain from abroad than to procure it from the center of the Monarchy.

It is misleading to argue, as the author does, that the Indian Mutiny of 1857 hindered the export of grain from India. As the table below indicates, the data show quite the contrary, that exports were not affected by the mutiny.

EXPORTS OF GRAIN
from British India by sea to foreign countries
Thousand of Pound sterling (£)

	Wheat	Other grain	Rice
1855	-*	180	1,562
1856	174	124	2,598
1857	138	148	2,301
1858	143	198	3,449
1859	117	251	2,433

*included in other grain

Source: Statistical Abstract Relating to British India, 1840-1865. Compiled from Official Records and Papers presented to Parliament.

It is suggested that the Second War of Italian Independence of 1859 also contributed to the "grain boom" of the period. Yet, would the Austrian soldiers and horses deployed on the

battlefield not have had to eat had they stayed at home? The *Creditanstalt* was able, in 1859, to purchase 2.5 million hektoliters of grain for the military, a transaction amounting to about 1.5 per cent of the Monarchy's output, without affecting the price of grain.[18] This fact suggests that the army purchases for the Italian War did not increase the demand for grain within the Monarchy, and that they were insignificant compared with total grain consumption.

The author further suggests that the American Civil War brought prosperity to Hungarian grain producers, by causing a decrease in grain exports from the United States. This argument is also erroneous. While the Southern market for grain was cut off by the Northern blockade, the North diverted its exports to Europe, with a more than fourfold increase in quantities shipped abroad. Prior to the war, the average annual exports of grain from the United States had been about 5 million bushels. In 1861 exports increased to 31 million bushels, and stayed around that level throughout the conflict.[19] In short, the political events which Szabad supposes to have contributed to the Hungarian export boom turn out to have had quite different implications.

Another difficulty with Szabad's thesis is the fact that, at the same time that the author emphasizes the severity of the exploitation of Hungary by Austria, he also argues that something just short of an economic miracle took place in the former country during the very years in which it was being exploited. This position is difficult to maintain, for the effects of the economic reforms that had taken place in the 1850s were not likely to have had an appreciable impact immediately on economic development. It is repeatedly suggested, however, that the economic regime of the 1850s differed fundamentally from that of the 1840s. The fact is that the 1850s did not witness an increase in economic well-being of unusual proportions, and that at the same time, the exploitation of Hungary by the Austrians was either non-existent or small. One cannot rule out, on the basis of evidence thus far presented, that a careful accounting might even show the balance to have been in Hungary's favour.

The author also advances the argument that the railroads, built in this period primarily with foreign capital, served the interests of foreigners. As evidence for this contention, he points

out that the railroad connections were not built to reach the iron-producing regions of the country. Szabad has misunderstood the motivations of these capitalist-entrepreneurs: their purpose was not to serve anyone's interests, but to make profits. For that end, they needed to extend the railroad lines to places that had bulky goods to send over long distances in large quantities. The logic of their endeavour was to connect the grain-producing and coal-producing centres with the Imperial capital of Vienna, and thus with the European rail network. The Austrians were not alone in benefiting from this endeavour; in this case, the Austrian and Hungarian spheres of interest merged. Did not the coal miners gain from the increased sales of coal? Did not the Hungarian agricultural interests benefit from the lower costs of transportation to Vienna?

In conclusion, Szabad's essay contains numerous assertions of dubious validity. I believe that this segment of the huge volume is not an effective aid for the serious student of this period.

NOTES

1. Szabad, *Az önkényuralom kora*, p. 543.
2. Direction der administrativen Statistik, *Tafeln zur Statistik der Österreichischen Monarchie*, New Series, III, 1855-1857, Part I, Section B/III, Table 7, pp. 16, 23-4.
3. *Tafeln*, 1845-1846, Part I/B, Table 9.
4. *Tafeln*, New Series, III, 1855-1857, Part I, Section B/IV, Table 24, p. 24.
5. Austria. Statistische Central-Commission, *Statistisches Jahrbuch der österreichischen Monarchie für das Jahr 1865*, pp. 407, 457, 459, 464.
6. *Tafeln* 1855-1857, Part I, Section B/IV, Table 24, p. 52.
7. *Ibid*, p. 48.
8. *Statistisches Jahrbuch*, 1865, p. 478.
9. *Ibid*, p. 406.
10. *Tafeln*, 1855-1857, Part I, Section B/III, Table 7, p. 24.
11. Péter Hanák, "Magyarország az Osztrák-Magyar Monarchiában, túlsúly vagy függőség," /Hungary in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, preponderancy or dependency/ Péter Hanák, ed., *Magyarország a Monarchiában* /Hungary in the Monarchy/ (Budapest: Gondolat, 1975): 300.
12. This was 50 million gulden out of 170.9. The incidence of indirect taxes, other than the consumption tax, is difficult to ascertain. *Statistisches Jahrbuch 1866*, pp. 343, 351.
13. *Ausweise über den Handel von Österreich, 1831-1847. Hivatalos Statisztikai Közlemények, 1867-1875* /Official Statistical Communications./ Both cited in John H. Komlos, "Austro-Hungarian Agricultural Development, 1827-1877," *The Journal of European Economic History* VIII (Spring 1979) 1, p. 49.
14. *Gazdasági Lapok* (Economic Journal) (November 20, 1853) p. 570.
15. *Ausweise über den Handel von Österreich* (1855) p. 570.
16. The harvest of 1855 yielded about two-thirds of the usual amount.
17. *Gazdasági Lapok* (Economic Journal) (November 23, 1854) pp. 583-4.
18. *Geschäftsbericht .... Creditanstalt* (1859) p. 3.
19. U.S. Department of Commerce, *Historical Statistics of the United States, Colonial Times to 1970* (Washington, D.C.: Bureau of the Census, 1975) Part 2, p. 899.

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A Conversation with a Communist Economic Reformer

John Komlos interviews Rezső Nyers

In 1968, when Hungary diverged from the main road of Socialism to find its own particular pathway, with a decentralized economic policy, Rezső Nyers was the secretary of the Central Committee of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party (prior to which, he had been Finance Minister). Hungary's economic reforms are due to him, perhaps more than to anyone else. He comes from a working-class background — his father was a printer. Prior to the Second World War, he had been a Social Democrat — not exactly the most advantageous political background for a Communist to have.

This interview was held in 1982, on occasion of his first visit to the United States. Nyers appears impressed by what he finds, but does not seem to be particularly well-informed about our system. He is not overpowering: although small in stature, he appears full of strength and vitality. Our conversation is not animated, but he smiles frequently.

NYERS: At the end of 1963 I initiated an informal regular gathering among friends to discuss the future of our economic policy. There were a dozen of us.

KOMLOS: Twelve angry men?

NYERS: No, not exactly. We were merely dissatisfied with our economic policy. The truth is that most of us, economists as well as politicians, had been somewhat intent on reform ever since 1953; so the roots of the 1968 reform can actually be traced back to 1953. Only at the end of 1963, however, did we begin those discussions about reform that finally led to 1968. It took perhaps two years to prepare the main outline of the program, and then another year and a half to work out, with the aid of about two hundred experts, the specifics of the program. But initially our group was merely an unofficial gathering of friends.

KOMLOS: A Sunday Circle?

NYERS: Perhaps it was, but we met in party headquarters, not in our own residences. Non-Communists also participated.

KOMLOS: With the knowledge and approval of the party?

NYERS: I was the secretary of the Central Committee at the time.

KOMLOS: What was your aim in 1963?

NYERS: We wanted to acknowledge the views of elements of society outside of our party that were not inimical to our aims. We wanted to bring various groups of society into alliance with us; we call this "the politics of alliance." Socialist policy, we believed, ought to be in harmony with the population, at least with its progressive elements.

The truth of the matter is that we were dissatisfied with the direction of our political life and with the productivity of our society's wealth. We wanted a certain democratization of our economic life, and we also wanted equality of opportunity. We were dissatisfied with the Stalinist model of a planned economy: we found it to be over-centralized and too cumbersome for the Hungarian case. We came to realize that there were several roads to socialism, and decided that we wanted to find the road that was suitable to Hungarian circumstances.

KOMLOS: Were workers drawn into the process?

NYERS: The reform came from above: our policy was to do everything for the workers' benefit, but without them. The leaders of the trade unions were, however, consulted.

Our aim was to make our economy both more productive and more socialist. Internal and external forces made it suitable for us to experiment. By 1962 our capacity to effect further economic gains was exhausted. The formation of cooperatives, which we had just concluded, had taken an immense amount of capital investment: they were very costly. We came to realize that without economic reforms we would stagnate: this realization obviously worked in favour of proposals for reform.

At this time, other Communist parties in Eastern Europe began to consider reform as well. The Czechoslovak experiment is, of course, well known. The Communist Party of the Soviet Union also began to undertake circumspect deliberations about economic reform at this time; these, however, were ultimately abandoned.

At the same time, the Hungarian Communist Party took

the conscious step of opening up possibilities for tourism. This, however, entailed the exchange of ideas as well as experiences of material life. Our citizens traveled abroad and saw that not only Austria, but also Yugoslavia and even Czechoslovakia were better supplied with consumer goods than Hungary was. Our people wanted refrigerators, washing machines, vacuum cleaners, and television sets. Private automobiles were not yet feasible: there was, however, a wish to increase consumption, and perhaps even a demand to do so.

KOMLOS: In other words, there was a shift toward the consumer society?

NYERS: That expression has absolutely no meaning to workers. Among intellectuals, however, the problem did crop up. Some cynically called our policy first "refrigerator communism" and then "goulash communism."

The fundamental consideration, however, is that even members of the party at the firm level wanted some kind of decentralization. Since until then the central directives had outlined quite specifically what was expected of them, they had not been left any room for local initiative.

KOMLOS: What was the position of the Soviet Union with regard to your efforts?

NYERS: I travelled frequently to Moscow at that time. They did not pressure us one way or another.

KOMLOS: What about internal political opposition?

NYERS: Our proposal was accepted by the Central Committee unanimously.

KOMLOS: But from the discussions you must have had some notion of the strength of the opposition, didn't you?

NYERS: Ten, perhaps twenty per cent of the ninety members of the Central Committee were against us in that sense. To work out the proposal, two hundred experts had been called together; in some of the committees, perhaps as many as one-third of the experts wanted to continue the Soviet model.

KOMLOS: Did the Czech events influence your course?

NYERS: I am a firm believer in *Realpolitik*, and we were more realistic all along than the Czechs. I am convinced that the mechanism of our political processes can surely evolve over time, but that these changes ought not to be sought in solutions that threaten the leading position of the Communist Party. That hegemony ought not even to be made uncertain, not only

because of the concern of the Soviet Union but also because of internal political considerations.

KOMLOS: Can you imagine two Communist parties in your country?

NYERS: No, I cannot.... Perhaps in the very distant future. Our aim is to surround the mother party with allied political formations.

KOMLOS: Why are you afraid of the people?

NYERS: We are not afraid of the people by any means.

KOMLOS: Why then do you disassociate yourself from the people to this extent?

NYERS: We are aware of the fact that one cannot speak of a homogeneous working class. It has quite backward elements; we cannot risk these elements' gaining ascendancy.

Our pattern of social revolution is temporary, to be sure. One must be careful that the dictatorship of the proletariat doesn't remain a permanent feature of socialism. We should become a "public state;" this is Khrushchev's concept. In the future our goal is to embrace the whole population.

This by the way, brings us to the biggest difference between reformers and conservatives. We wanted then, and still want now, to continue democratization. The conservatives, on the other hand, are intent on defending the dictatorship of the proletariat; they claim that we are not yet in a position to relax our controls.

The conservatives could have blocked our reform but chose not to do so. We, in turn, supported them subsequently, in 1972, when a certain reversal of our policies was initiated. There must be give and take.

KOMLOS: What does Marxism mean to you today?

NYERS: A collection of the theses of Marxism-Leninism.

KOMLOS: How are your aims different from ours? Don't we both want to increase the standard of living?

NYERS: Capitalism aims to better the life of the middle class, but not of its workers. Unemployment is endemic with you, and you have plenty of broken individuals. While you insure the standard of living of the middle class, our aim is to provide for the workers and peasants.

KOMLOS: Didn't workers benefit the least from your reforms?

NYERS: It is true that the salaries of managers increased

more between 1968 and 1970. We did this consciously in order to spur development. Between 1970 and 1979 this pattern was mitigated; thereafter, it surfaced once again. Nonetheless, the standard of living of the poorest segments of the peasantry increased the most, that of the middle peasants less so; the worker benefited more than did the intellectual.

KOMLOS: What about the benefits and privileges of party members?

NYERS: There are some who enter the party because they believe that it will lead to social mobility. We have declared, however, that no benefits shall accrue to them, and that we will begin giving some responsible positions to non-party members. This declaration still needs to be implemented fully.

KOMLOS: How effective was your reform?

NYERS: I think it was worthwhile. Initially great productivity gains were obtained. Until 1972 we exploited the opportunities of decentralization well; then, however, we halted.* In the long run our policy ran into obstacles: it was especially difficult to alter the structure of our economy.

KOMLOS: What are some of the problems?

NYERS: We produce myriad goods that are too costly for us to produce, we should import these instead. We were unable to restructure our textile industry, because we could not import the most up-to-date technology. We could not get it from the West because of our lack of foreign exchange; even from our Comecon partners, Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union, we failed to get the best machinery, because they needed the best for themselves. We made some progress in this regard, but it was insufficient. I could multiply such examples from the machine engineering industry and elsewhere.

KOMLOS: Where does the reform stand now?

NYERS: A movement toward reform started again in 1978. In my private opinion, we made, between 1974 and 1978, some critical mistakes. The party wanted to induce too much economic growth without also reducing structural imbalances. In addition, the terms-of-trade turned against us; as a consequence, we are now forced to increase our exports greatly. Our balance of payments is a fundamental problem. Perhaps

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*Nyers was made to "step aside" in 1972.

we ought not to be so concerned with it as we have been. We could allow a balance of trade deficit to exist for a while in order to be able to import needed technology and intermediate products.

I am hopeful that the reform that I initiated will be pursued with full vigor in the 1980s.

KOMLOS: Has the reform enabled you to match the standard of living of your western neighbor?

NYERS: I think that we are now closer to the Austrian standard of living than we ever were before. In judging this problem, one ought to consider that we underwent a social revolution that was costly in terms of human and physical resources; in addition, in the 1950s we made plenty of mistakes in our socialist investment policy. The record shows that between 1965 and 1973 we were among the fastest-growing countries of the world, surpassed only by such countries as Japan and South Korea.** This economic progress, I believe, can be ascribed to the beneficial effects of our reforms.

KOMLOS: What are some of your feelings toward your society?

NYERS: Our society is anxious. It feels the difficulties that stem from the geopolitical turn of events; it senses that the road may become rocky. But if we continue to pursue the political course on which we have embarked, and if we do not reverse ourselves, we shall overcome our difficulties. This requires that the political leadership be resolute enough to dare to pursue the reforms in the future.

I am not sure that this is the way it will be: I am a realistic politician. If détente continues to deteriorate, we will hardly be able to pursue our reform.

KOMLOS: If you can pursue your reforms, where will they lead?

NYERS: To a Socialist Democracy. To a Hungary that is socialist, and that can be a bridge between East and West. If the superpowers do not need such a bridge, then we are in difficulties. A favourable geopolitical climate is the *sine qua non* of our success.

Bloomington, Indiana, March 24, 1982.

**The speaker is referring to an International Comparison Project of the United Nations.

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Part II
Noteworthy Immigrants from Hungary

Introduction

Since the middle of the nineteenth century close to eight hundred thousand Hungarians have come to North America. Today, they and their descendants number over one million in the United States and about one hundred and forty thousand in Canada.* While the majority of this mass of Hungarian immigrants have been what might be called "ordinary people," a few were individuals with extraordinary gifts and uncommon personalities. Through their talents, dedication and perseverance, these outstanding immigrants have made lasting contributions not only to their own immigrant community, but to the cultural development of the whole of North American society. We are pleased to present studies on two such individuals: the Hungarian-American poet György Gyékényesi (1932-1973), and the Hungarian-Canadian musician Géza de Kresz (1882-1959).

Several interesting coincidents can be noted about the two essays. The first is that they both commemorate an anniversary, 1982 being the fiftieth anniversary of Gyékényesi's birth and the hundredth of Kresz'. The second coincidence is that each essay is written by a close relative of the individual discussed. The article on Gyékényesi is by his sister, Katherine Gyékényesi Gatto; while the essay on Kresz is by his daughter, Mária Kresz. It is also worthy of note that both authors are distinguished persons

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**Estimates of the numbers of Hungarians in North America differ. For a recently published discussion on this subject, see Professor Paul Bődy's study "Emigration in Hungary, 1880-1956," in N.F. Dreisziger* et al. Struggle and Hope: The Hungarian-Canadian Experience (*Toronto: McClelland Stewart, 1982; especially pp. 28 and 51-3.*

in their own right: Dr. Kresz is a noted writer and academic in Hungary, while Professor Gatto is a young scholar of comparative literature teaching at an American university. A further coincidence is the fact that the essays were submitted to the *Review* unsolicited, a circumstance which helps to explain the different approaches the two authors take to present and analyse the work and legacies of György Gyékényesi and Géza de Kresz.

It is hoped that these two studies will be a useful contribution to the understanding of the overall theme of immigrant, in particular, Hungarian immigrant contributions to the development of North American society. It is also hoped that they will inspire other writers to explore the work and accomplishment of other remarkable Hungarian immigrants and thereby help future social scientists and historians achieve a more complete and more penetrating synthesis of the role of immigrants in the growth and evolution of North American culture.

N.F.D.

GYÖRGY GYÉKÉNYESI, HUNGARIAN-AMERICAN POET (1932-1973)

György István Gyékényesi, Hungarian-American Poet, was born in Gyékényes, Hungary on October 20, 1932, and died in Cleveland, Ohio on May 25, 1973. From May 29, 1973 until December 17, 1974 his body lay in Calvary Cemetery, Cleveland, from where it was transported to Hungary and reburied in the town of Mohács.

The poet arrived in New York City with his parents, two brothers and a sister on August 17, 1951, as a Displaced Person and Permanent Resident. In 1952, he was drafted into the U.S. Air Force, spending his service time in Kansas, Texas, and Alaska. He attained the rank of Sergeant and was honorably discharged in 1956. In 1955 he became a naturalized citizen and in September of the following year he commenced studies in Mechanical Engineering at the University of Akron, receiving his degree in June, 1961. Initially hired by IBM as a mechanical engineer, Gyékényesi changed jobs in 1962 and went to work for NASA Lewis Research Center, where he remained until his death in 1973. In June, 1965, he received a Master's Degree from the Case Institute of Technology, Cleveland, and in June, 1972, the Ph.D.

degree from Michigan State University, both of them in Mechanical Engineering.

After graduating from the University of Akron, Gyékényesi established his residence in Cleveland's Buckeye neighborhood (a Hungarian ethnic community), where he lived with his wife and three children and spent his artistically most creative years. He founded and was director of the Hungarian Theater and Dance Association of Cleveland, and in the same capacity sponsored performances there by touring European actors. In December, 1972, the political and cultural monthly *Nemzetőr* (The Guardian), in Munich, West Germany, published his first volume of poetry *Karikázó*. A posthumous volume was published by the same press in 1975, entitled *Karámország*.

With the publication of the first anthology, reviews of the book appeared in many leading newspapers of the exiled Hungarian community both in Europe and America, all of them favorable. Gyékényesi's name as a poet already had been established through the publication of his poems in Hungarian journals and newspapers. Most recently, his poetry has appeared in Hungary in a textbook, *Beszéljünk magyarul* (Let's speak Hungarian) (Budapest: Tankönyvkiadó, 1979) and in an anthology of emigrant Hungarian poets *Vándorének* (Wanderer's song, the title of one of his poems as well) (Budapest: Szépirodalmi Könyvkiadó, 1981). In addition to his success as a poet, Gyékényesi was also the author of many papers and publications related to his work at the NASA Lewis Space Research Center.

The following quotations best characterize his personality and poetry:

"I grew to be a Hungarian in the emigration, after 1945. Instead of instinctively experienced Hungarianness, I learned to abstract and thus resolve my objective world in an abstract Hungarian concept.

I look for my personal humanness in universalities. I see the sense of human existence perhaps in solitude, in a praying Christ-like solitude which creates consciousness. I'm not a misanthrope, but I do assert that the final cause of lifeless massiness is the lack of personal consciousness. We talk in vain about such and such consciousness if we gibber like parrots the dogmas of the present juncture and encourage one another to accept personlessness.

In my personal humanness I am a cultural

emigrant. History can pass me by because I don't sit in its chariot. On the other hand, I see more than those who sit in it. I had and have the opportunity to plan and criticize at my own leisure. There isn't any responsibility on my shoulders, except the faithfulness to myself.

Verse isn't a revelation, or an instruction; it isn't even pure aesthetics and euphony. Verse is life itself, moreover, the plus of life.

Poetry doesn't have stabilized coordinates because human consciousness is more than stratified experiences.

So, verse is a dynamic wholeness and this wholeness is guaranteed by the coherence of form and content, which is independent of any fashion in every true verse. True verse, true poetry thus, will be timeless and eternal.

I have often asked myself the question, why do I write? I haven't found an answer to this yet. But it is more of a human thing to build sandcastles, than not to build at all."

(K.GY.G.)

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From Somogy to Cleveland: A Hungarian Emigrant's Heroic Odyssey

Katherine Gyékényesi Gatto

In late November of 1944, the Russian armies advanced northwestward towards southern Hungary precipitating the flight of many Hungarians living in the Transdanubian region. Among the refugees was György István Gyékényesi, the twelve year old son of the educator-cantor of the village of Gyékényes in the county of Somogy, who together with his family would embark on a journey that would sweep them westward through Austria and Germany, and across the ocean to America. Almost thirty years later the odyssey would come to a tragic end in Cleveland, Ohio with the untimely death of the poet-emigrant.

An almost historical as well as a mythical account of the happenings during the poet's short life are recorded in his first published poetic anthology *Karikázó*.[1] The word *karikázó* has several connotations in the Hungarian language, two of which can be loosely translated into English as the forward roll of a circular object such as a ring, and as a name given to a type of Hungarian folkdance. In either case, the emphasis in our interpretation of the concept should lie on Gyékényesi's utilization of the word to represent the ever mobile, the ever-changing aspects of human existence with something immutable and whole at the core represented by the ring itself. The metaphor of the rolling ring describes the contents of the poems where the always different historical and personal circumstances and surroundings mold and mesh with mental processes, reactions, and emotions to be transformed by a poet's consciousness into an abstracted, timeless, harmonious reality.

We have often heard that the modern poet is a myth maker. Gyékényesi's poetry is the dynamic interfacing of the individual consciousness with the panorama of the second half of the twentieth century, a vision that is both European and American, both scientific and humanistic. Gyékényesi's quest is to arrive at a synthesis, at an integrated concept that will elucidate his

transplanted and thus displaced Hungarian heritage, as well as explain the reasons for his country's turbulent historical past and present. His identity is that of an emigrant, a posture that, as he tells us in his prologue, plucked him from history's rumbling chariot and hurled him to the edge of the road, free of any allegiance except to himself and possessed of the gift to observe and peruse all that those remaining in the chariot cannot possibly see. "Emigráns az, aki kívülről szemléli saját magát" (an emigrant is one who views himself from the outside) he states stoically in one of the poems.[2] This attitude enables him to abstract and conceptualize his Hungarian cultural identity, rather than sense it instinctively or live it experientially. His deliberate Hungarianness that evolved from a rather long and arduous process of self-development, finds expression in the theme as well as in the Hungarian folkish tenor of his imagery. Although the language of the poems is Hungarian, there is a digression from Hungarian literary tradition whose sources of influence principally lay on the European continent. In direct contrast, Gyékényesi found his sources of inspiration in the poets Yeats, Eliot and Pound. Gyékényesi, like Yeats with Irish folklore, employs many folk motifs (song, dance, customs, sayings) in order to enrich, colour, deepen and diversify his presentation of eternal, universal, and modern concerns, at the same time, communicating his belief in and admiration for the spirituality of the Hungarian peasant culture. Those poems treating the ethnic questions that arose from his own displacement and that of other fellow Hungarians from their homeland, find voice in expression that bridges the cultural gap between Budapest, London and New York. His masterwork *Napnyugati kantáta* (Occidental Cantata) is poignant, sweeping, challenging verse with a philosophical basis, poured into the newly sculpted form of Hungarian-American poetry. As an emigrant, Gyékényesi also looks to his adopted country, sharply analyzing the present American reality and either accepting it or repudiating it. Most surprising of all however, is not Gyékényesi's Hungarianness, his pro or contra Americanness, but that his humanistic preoccupations arise from the completely scientific milieu of tha NASA space research laboratory, a fact that alone makes us sit up and listen, as we did to Wallace Stevens, who spoke to us from the plush offices of his insurance agency. [3]

In all great poetry things are happening on the surface and things are happening below the surface. Gyékényesi's travel is not merely physical displacement but multifaceted. Not only do we have the physical journey of the emigrant from Somogy to Cleveland and throughout Europe and America, not only do we have the explorations of the NASA scientist into the secrets of the universe but most complex and awesome of all, we have the ventures of the poet-traveler into the innermost recesses of the human consciousness.

The concept of parallel quest and sometimes discovery in Gyékényesi's poetry may be seen in the light of a series of spacial and chronological journeys. The former encompasses his movement from East to West, from Hungary to the United States, from the village (Gyékényes) to a metropolis (Cleveland), and finally within the confines of the NASA space laboratory, from the earth out into the universe. All of the journeys take the poet from the known into the unknown. Chronologically, Gyékényesi travels from the past through the present and into the future. On a personal level, the journey through time also touches upon the poet's own development from early childhood to maturity, and ultimately to the only known aspect of his future — his death. The inner journey for identity, integrity and truth is symbiotically dependent on the spacial and chronological journeys of the poet-emigrant. Both the departure and the arrival points are scrutinized, while each serpentine segment of the road tries to reconcile the world of science and the world of the humanities in a fiercely felt Christian humanism that emphasizes the whole, integrated, individual consciousness. The unifying element in all the peregrinations is the traveling, questing poet. Gyékényesi's universe is man-centered and it is neither the beginning nor the end that holds the greatest import but the effect of the quest upon the traveler.

Structurally, the anthology intentionally follows the unfolding of Gyékényesi's experiences in a circular fashion. Like Borges and other contemporary writers, Gyékényesi plays with the idea of chronology and rejects it in favor of a unified time. All moments within the individual are past, present and future. Thus, the first poem entitled *Vándorének* (Wanderer's Song) is a backward glance from the present at the origin of the exodus from Hungary. The last poem describes the flight from the perspective of that present. Entitled *Karikázó* (the rolling ring

metaphor), it recreates the atmosphere, the changing seasons, the uncertainty and loneliness of the homeless *kis katona* (little soldier) who fearfully questions his fate: "*Istenem, jó Istenem, hol lesz a halálom?*" (My God, good God, where will I die?). Both poems treat the same theme of exile in order to emphasize the permanence of that feeling in the poet.

Following the initial poem are several written in the imagist tradition that capture moments of time, impressions, along his jorney. Among these we can cite *Párvers* (Couplet) that through a series of simple descriptions capsulizes the trip from Hungary, through Austria, Italy, Germany, to New York. Each couplet of the five in the poem contains the one or two essential images that comprise the stages along the way. It is truly naked, exactly worded verse, free of adornment and in concentrated form embodies the spirit of each place: for Hungary, the whitewashed housefronts with horse chestnut trees, for Austria, the evergreens, the mountaintops, and church cemeteries, for Italy, the rapid chatter, the donkey, the fountain, for Germany, the steeple and horn blowing ships, and finally, New York, the ebullient port, the New World, the new challenge for trembling knees (p. 6). *Tirol* (p. 8), *Bresciai emlék* (Reminiscence of Brescia) (p. 9), *Zápor* (Shower) (p. 10), *Reggel Clevelandból Akron felé* (Morning Drive from Cleveland towards Akron) (p. 11), *Ének az úton* (Song of the Road) (p. 12), *Anchorage felé* (Towards Anchorage) (p. 13), *Tájék* (Landscape) (p. 14), are other poems that evoke memories and moments of his past life. In *Tirol* the young girls make the sign of the cross in front of the tin-bodied holy image, while the fir trees sun themselves and the snow sparkles. The grass is as tufted as the sheep that bleats near the forest as it drives away the flies. From Italy and his *Bresciai emlék* the troop of Magyar boys is awed on the one hand by the bare walled monasteries with hooded friars, on the other by the swaying, full-breasted signorinas. *Zápor* shifts the poet's perspective from the objective to the inner world, from the present to the past and back again to the present. In this interplay of moments and impressions the poet describes the thundering black steeds, the puddles, the fly on the mosquito net, the thundering bombs in Carinthia, his father's dogged search for bread, his mother's hair prematurely white from anxiety, and his little brother overjoyed by a homemade pair of wooden soled shoes. In the final

moment he asks rhetorically "*hát mire vársz még?*" (so for what are you waiting yet?) "*nézz ki ablakodon/zápor*" (look out your window/shower). In the poem *Reggel Clevelandból Akron felé*, Gyékényesi acknowledges his love and appreciation for Ohio, his adopted home. Just as time meshed in the poet's consciousness, spaces unify as well. Although living in the city, he is drawn to nature, the tame hills, the yellow earth, and the ragged mist, that he encounters during his drive. Subconsciously he becomes unified with the Hungarian land where he was born. The duality of the abstracted Hungarian landscape versus the real American landscape also appears in the poem *Tájék*. In this poem the writer equates Moose Creek and Gyékényes, which become one and same abstracted reality. Gyékényesi's love of the land stems from his youth in which he says that his mother breathed into him the soul of the Somogy landscape.[4] For him the land symbolizes the eternal, the traditional peasant spirituality, the Hungarian essence in its purest form. On another level we might say that the land, the earth of a particular region is the exteriorization of the poet's internal avowal of allegiance to himself and hearkening back to the ring metaphor, the representation of the changelessness, the wholeness of the ring itself.

Since all journeys are chronological as well as spacial, and even though all moments of time meet in the poet's abstracted chronology of events, the happenings themselves are accepted by the poet as occurring in some order and with some form. Thus time and metamorphosis are two interrelated ideas observed and analyzed in Gyékényesi's poetry. He told us initially in his prefacing notes that he does not sit in history's chariot, yet as a human he cannot liberate himself completely from his own temporality. In the poem *Ének az úton*, the poet explores the sweep of events and the quickness of his life through the utilization of both literal and figurative vehicles that carry him over glass meadows, cresty waves, bustling roads and tracks. They gallop with him as the horse in the Hungarian folktale to the ends of the earth where fate slides around on ice and the world has run out from under him. The only thing left to do he says is to wait and watch time, nineteen hundred and sixty years after the birth of Christ. The rush, the flight, the impetus have slowed for the moment and the poet pauses to reassess what he has undergone as man and what awaits him. Stasis is unusual in Gyékényesi's poetry since all the poems are

imbued with constant motion, with changing imagery, with the enumeration of verbs, embodying his inner restlessness, his inner quest. Here again we might pause and on another level interject the metaphor of the rolling ring, this time, with emphasis on the rolling.

The poems *Anchorage felé*, *Illusztráció* (p. 17), *Nanette* (p. 16) and *Idő* (Time) (p. 18) represent the more traditional themes associated with time — time as equalizer, fleeting time, and the *carpe diem* motif. Time as equalizer is seen in the poem *Anchorage felé*:

> de mért is játszanának a szelek
> mikor a meredek úgy is elsimul
> és a laposban mint a végítélet
> a hegy lábára kúszik a jég.

(But why should the winds whirl/ when the steep levels itself anyway/ and in the flatland as final judgement/ the ice creeps onto the foot of the mountain.) (p. 13)

In *Idő* life is but a moment, a tiny snail shell that gets lost while you are finding it: "*Szép volt — mondd — és menj tovább/ jön utánad az unokád.*" (It is pretty—say—and go on/ your grandchild follows you.) Journeying and time also mean changes as Gyékényesi points out in *Metamorfózis* (Metamorphosis) (p. 19). Experience humanizes man he believes, therefore change is creative. Fate is a series of alterations and like the autumn leaf, man is tossed about and whoever can, will withstand it and survive.

Gyékényesi's journey ended in America and the poems dealing with his adjustment to like in the New World form the central and most meaningful part of the anthology. The themes of East meeting West, materialism and spirituality, the individual versus the *hombre-masa* (mass-man) of Ortega y Gasset, love and alienation, past and present, tradition and cultural void, artificiality and authenticity, the aged and the new generations, dreams and disillusionment, reality versus illusion, abortion and birth, life and death, war and peace, technology and the humanities are all fitted together with amazing dexterity and beauty, like pieces of a puzzle, to form a great canvas of American civilization at a moment of cultural shift. Technical and scientific imagery stemming from the poet's educational formation and profession as a space research engineer pervades his intellectual and emotional response to

the technocratic fever to which America has succumbed. Yet the poet in Gyékényesi rejects the scientific simplicity of our age, for he knows that the pulse of the life force can be felt and measured but never fully and satisfactorily explained by scientific principles and methodical procedures. Our futile space explorations ultimately lead to more and greater unanswerable queries:

értsd meg tehát
valószínű világom templomai
a felül és aluljárók csarnokai
és kakasos tornyom
a Cape-en a fémrácsos obeliszk
ahonnan dübörögve küldjük a holdra
a kísérletező embert.

s itt megtorpanok
hogy aztán...

Understand then/ that my real world's temples/ are the overpasses and the underpasses/ and my crowned steeple/ is the metal- grated obelisk at the Cape/ from where we send to the moon with great rumbling/ man the experimenter. and here I rear/ then what...

(*Funkcionális torzó* p. 25)
(Functional Torso)

In order to emphasize the insignificance and ridiculousness of man's spacial toying, he employs the diminutive *emberkém* (little man), castigating him as if he were a child for his thoughtless and dangerous experimentations.

Emberkém megvillant agyad
s hopp az űr szélen kacarászol
aszteroiddal dobálóznál máris
míg hidegen csillog Szirius
küzdesz rendezel kutatsz
de miért — kérdőjel ténykedésed.

Little man your mind lit up/ and whoops you giggle at the edge of the universe/ you would even play ball with asteroids/ while Sirius still shines coldly/ you struggle, arrange, investigate/ but why — your activities are still a question mark.

(*Párvers mai témára, p. 27*)
(*Couplet for Today's Theme*)

Ironically, the poet-scientist views man's trial journeys into space as an endangerment of the real issues and as a detraction from the ultimate questions.

The artificiality, the plastic quality and loss of identity

characteristic of the American way of life are sharply criticized and repudiated in a series of poems beginning with *American Gothic*:

Nyelvünk hegyéről fröccsen felém
a lepárolt szó.
számok adatok
ó szénaforgató fakó gótika
Amerika
Amerika

From the tips of their tongues splatter toward me/ the distilled word/ numbers statistics/ oh hay throwing faded gothic/ America/ America

(*American Gothic,* p. 23)

Face, fate, and being are molded and faceless, naked and fateless, photographed and personless respectively. Gyékényesi's fear of man's total dehumanization, of his becoming a naked pattern, a non-person governed by the laws of probability, heralding the death of imagination, or as García Lorca so well described it-*angel,* is acutely felt in the poem *Immár eljött a Gyermek* (Behold the Child Has Come).

immár eljött a Gyermek
kit többé nem csap meg a lélek szele
a Senkifia
meztelen szabvány
törvénye a történés valószínűsége
s valósága a társadalom
mert nincs Ember
csak emberke
piciny szegecs
egy óriás izzó kazánon

Behold the Child has come/ whom the soul's wind will never stir/ the No-Man's Son the No'God's Son/ the Son of Nobody/ a naked pattern/ whose law is the law of probability/ and whose reality is society/ because Man does not exist/ only little man/ a tiny rivet/ on a gigantic red hot furnace/ (p. 60).

Karácsonyi történet helyett (Instead of the Christmas Legend) (p. 53) is a portrayal of the birth of a new paganism with the coming of a sulphur eyed, metal vertebrated, baby caesar, around whom stood wombless virgins and the soothsayers read the numberlessness of his years from plastic intestines. In brief, nothing that detracts and robs man of his humanness is left undetected and unanatomized.

As an ethnic poet, Gyékényesi possesses a great historical awareness, hence, the Hungarian homeland, the Hungarian-

Americans, their past, present and future are scrutinized, empathized with, and loved. The unique situation of being a poet/pariah affords him the luxury of standing on the bridge as an observer while the waters swirl and change course beneath him. In his masterwork *Napnyugati kantáta* (Occidental Cantata), Gyékényesi summons forth all his creative powers in handling a tremendous amount of historical and philosophical material with great beauty and dexterity. On the whole, the poem offers a panoramic as well as a sectionalized vision of the Hungarian historical process, transporting the reader into time and space, and into the most private enclosures of the Hungarian soul. In the tradition of Eliot's application of musical form to literature (*The Four Quartets*), the Cantata is divided into four parts with each segment founded upon an image that gives meaning and cohesiveness. Through contrapuntal allusions ranging from Thomas Aquinas, Augustine, Ignatius of Loyola, Rilke, Hesse, Lorca, Dvořak, Hunyadi, Bartók, to John Henry, the poet expands the scope of subject and leaves behind an endless series of interpretations and meaning, like the ripples in the water after a stone has been tossed into it. The thematic content of the first half encompasses the pagan and Christian Hungarian past, the role of Hungary in the defense and development of Western Civilization; the second half treats the godless Hungarian present and the future of the Hungarian emigrant in America. Throughout the poem the feeling of survival, the tenacious Hungarian's strong will to endure and overcome whatever fate casts his way is emphasized. History and governments may change, the Hungarian map may change, the Hungarians may be driven out of their homeland, they may be murdered, but the land remains, the Hungarian character, the Hungarian soul will overcome and surpass whatever challenges time and destiny may bring.

The American soil, the second home of the Hungarian immigrant is described by Gyékényesi in all its glory, through musical and geographical allusions — the Carolinas, New Orleans and "When the Saints Go Marchin' in," the "Yellow Rose of Texas," the steel mills of Pittsburgh, "John Henry," old Boston that sleeps in New England, and California, that world of the never has beens' tomorrow, when your past remains behind and the present offers its sweet delight (pp. 81, 82, 83 respectively).

The individual emigrant-questor-poet steeped in the traditions of his Hungarian inheritance struggles to find meaning in the transplantation of his self from European soil to America, from the Old World to the New. Who is he? What is he? Can he find meaning in that limbo of non-identity in which he finds himself as a "Hungarian-American?" For his generation and for himself as a poet-creator the answer becomes obvious. What appears as an irreconciliable antithesis has already been resolved within the framework of art, within the elements of his poetry, where the concerns and queries addressed, and the tools of expression are Hungarian-American. While Gyékényesi's Hungarianness as we have seen was deliberated, so was his Americanness. Thus the expression of man's creative spirit, his consciousness, is the mysterious process whereby the Hungarian self finds meaning with American culture to produce the new voice of Hungarian-American letters in the chorus of Western Literature.

The final message of the poem is of acceptance and resignation:

prések dohognak Detroitban
elrobogtak a busa bölények
a prairien hullámzik a búza
írhatsz száz éneket Európáról,
de a fiadban kísért ez az ország
mikor az első szó száján kiperdül
idegenül
ó Európa
otthagytunk a keleti parton
ott az óriás fáklyás asszony
kőtyúkszemes lábainál.

The presses rumble in Detroit/ the somber headed buffalo thundered away/ the wheat waves on the prairie/ you can write a hundred songs about Europe/ but this country tempts you in your son/ when he utters his first word/ in an alien tongue/ O Europe/ we left you on the eastern shore/ there by the gigantic torch-bearing woman's stone corned feet (p. 84).

All quest has a philosophical basis. Gyékényesi's turmoil of experiences had led him to interpret existence as a series of metamorphoses, the eternal and immutable element being the faithfulness to oneself. As a scientist, he rejects the fragmentation, stratification, and the anesthetization of the consciousness that the modern scientific world upholds and seeks to assert the integrity that the term humanistic offers. His odyssey as

we have witnessed through flashbacks and an interplay of spacial, chronological and metaphysical spheres was comprised of physical struggle and spiritual questioning. The former culminated in his death from cancer in Cleveland in 1973, but the latter will continue as long as there are men and women to read and co-create with him. His visions, sounds, and insights, as the ring in the *karikázó* metaphor will keep on rolling in the imaginative and mythos making faculty of the reader.

NOTES

1. All the poems mentioned in the text are taken from this edition. With the publication of the anthology, reviews of the book appeared in many leading newspapers of the exiled Hungarian community both in Europe and America, all of them favorable. The most important of them were: Kocsis Gábor, "De emberi a számadásom," *Nemzetőr* (Munich, West Germany) (1972). "Könyvismertetés," *Magyarság* (Pittsburgh, PA) (1973). Scheer István, "Gyékényesi György: *Karikázó*," *Itt-Ott* (Ada, Ohio) (1973). The outstanding Transylvanian writer and dramatist András Sütő, also reviewed this volume, under the title: "A kéklábú madár nyomában." Sütő personally met with Gyékényesi in Transylvania upon the poet's visit there in the summer of 1972, and was present at his funeral in Cleveland. In addition to these reviews, Gyékényesi's poetry had appeared previously in many journals and newspapers of the Hungarian diaspora in the West.

2. *Jegyzetek egy témakörre*, (Notes on a Group of Themes) p. 54. All the translations that appear in the text are my own.

3. Sütő András (See Note 1.) writes in his critique of Gyékényesi's poetry that as a poet he can be compared to James Cook, Columbus, and Kelemen Mikes, in that his poetic world is a new found land, so rich and unusual that it would be difficult for the European Hungarian to follow him there even in the imagination.

4. This is a figurative expression for the cultural heritage embodied in the language, folksongs, sayings, customs, rituals and dances that belong to Somogy county and were passed onto him by his mother. All the information pertaining to the poet's life and any insights into his creative personality were furnished by the parents of the deceased poet, Mr. & Mrs. Gy. László Gyékényesi in a personal interview (October, 1980, Cleveland, Ohio).

György Gyékényesi

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A Selection from the Poetry of György István Gyékényesi

OCCIDENTAL CANTATA

György Gyékényesi

I.

Rain drizzled on the rosetrees
white yellow
an abundance of colors springing into red
a tiny moment of life from fleeting time
the gooseberry flashed like veined pearls
the blue glass globe
and a chubby polka-dotted ball
a short toy gun hung on the tree
wet and cold like its owner
ten years later
in his soldier days

in what do you seek the soul
in colors like Augustine
in the form like Thomas
in the character like Ignatius the saint
who came from Loyola
in what do you seek the soul

by Gmunden [1]
mountains tramped in the lake
guardshelter chapel
thorn-crowned Christ
somewhere a jagged cliff
notched steeple
western tale
Sleeping Beauty
and I
and I was the king's son
the poor man's son
the poor woman's son
my wood-steepled village's globetrotter son
on hill's ridge or dale's bottom
at the foot of rocking firwoods

gentle Francesco saw soul
and thus he spoke to the birds
in doe-eyed frescoes frater Angelico
mixed an enchanting dream

rain sprinkled on the rosetrees
open
open wide the small gate
my grandfather whistling strolls
home from the Carpathians [2]
down on the Nagy Alföld [3]
in the Hortobágy [4]
and in his leather spats a bayonet
with a rosewood handle from the Piave [5]
heigh-ho we never die
only his gait is more measured
like the old parade horse
harnessed to a carriage

Margaret still guards the Nyulak Szigete [6]
but Elizabeth went to Thuringia [7]
hey, up, up, raise our May Queen
may your hemp grow this high [8]

and I still see them
the unbridled fiery-eyed lads
preening in gray uniforms
as they marched into the rising sun
arms
arms
arms
the wild pear trees bloomed
in the wake of our grim Hunyadi's troops [9]
and the highway carried them
roads of strange foreign lands
oh how the milestones fell away before them
oh how death clung to their fate

Trakl sang at the foot of haystacks
and Hesse the bookbinder journeyman
and Rilke
at the threshold of death being lies prone
Weinheber entreated with a crystalline voice

rain sprayed on the rosetrees
Pista Szemes [10] dug a trench
out there
by the steep bank of Zákány [11]
and look there is the cellar
green
green

green is the shutter
and red red red
wine pearled in my uncle's glass
but he drank from a pitcher
from a green glazed pitcher
for he'd been through Vásárhely[12]
he toasted
and in his roguish eyes
Transylvania gleamed brownly towards us

from Zágon to even Rodostó [13]
but I also understand Kőrösi already [14]
quaking sea and Csángó song[15]
flood the waters my Lord my God
let it carry me to my father's gate

spear-like poplars along the border ditch
a starling chatters in mulberry leafage
below the stone Christ's feet
always a bouquet of flowers
and today you see there
a rude barbarian soldier
with a machine gun
in a shirt jacket
as he stares out over the landscape
and watches
the forest
the field
and in the distance the whitely gleaming village

hey Federico García
this is not Andalusia
Castile lies far away
the plane trees and the Moorish minarets

rain trickles on the rosetrees
oh pearling old time
the hooves of Turkish Tartar horses
pounded here
after the clatter of eagled legions' sandals
Huns Avars and the rest[16]
but the earth remained
but the land remained
the church burned midst the flames of Bulgarian tanks
and they shot the priest through the nape
like a mad dog
but the earth remains
but the land remains
because the land is
eternal

and now say after me
Maikäfer flieg
Maikäfer flieg
dein Vater ist im Krieg
dein' Mutter ist im Ungarland
Ungarland ist abgebrannt
Maikäfer flieg [17]

II.

A procession of pilgrims reciting the litany
under the tents of unfurled holy flags
and behold I find you my beautiful Magyar land
bathed in celestial color my gentle Pannonia [18]
in Gyüd or in Segesd [19]
where the rustling mantles
of royal ladies
swished between nitrous walls
where the iron gloved weighty fists
of falconer lords
softened into child's palms
there in the hyacinth perfumed stillness
in the murmur of the rosary
in the pealing of the bells
in Segesd

a flowery garden was
famous Pannonia
this garden faithfully watered
by the Virgin Mary

initials in metal clasped books
sea blue sky
what do you make of the pious
bent monk
the nun transcribing unto the point of blindness
and MS the master
who up there in Selmec [20]
painted a picture
of the pregnant Mary
or Margaret the Virgin [21]
or Ladislaus Mary's Knight [22]
oh how Vásárhelyi entreated [23]
the Lady of the angels
the Mirror of women

gracious provider for orphans
patroness of widows
enricher of the poor
consoler of the banished

hey our Mother our sweet Virgin Mother
fate has turned against us
and destiny's hand plays
with our children's bones
with pink gristly fetus bones
while above our ancient lands
even the heavens weep
a steep grave pit that reaches the soul
is every abandoned village
every church nailed shut
every voiceless steeple
every
every
every
the whole everything

the angel of the Lord greeted
the Virgin Mary
who welcomed from the Holy Spirit
into her womb her Holy Son

hey our Mother our sweet Virgin Mother
the old king implored your patronage
neighing festive geldings
zig-zagged on bloody fields
throughout a thousand years
and the soldiers called to You
the tormented people
the defending shield
that they should survive and multiply
and cover your garden with flowers
the famous Pannonia

hail Mary
grace sheds to fill you
the Holy Spirit is with you
blessed are you amongst women
and blessed is the fruit of your womb
Jesus

hey our Mother our sweet Virgin Mother
repugnant is our crime
every Magyar is the murderer of his own blood[24]
in the perishing villages
in the childless towns
and out in the wide world
we all
who swaggeringly recite the rights of man
and build the new pyramids
murderers
murderers

murderers
oh our Mother our sweet Virgin Mother

blessed are you amongst women
Blissful Lady Virgin Mary
who embodied the Divine Spirit
pray for us fallibles
now
and at the hour of our death
amen

litany filled May evenings
in abundant lilac blooming season
and behold I find you my beautiful Magyar land
bathed in celestial color my gentle Pannonia
and behold I find you
in the old women's
rosemary scented prayerbooks
in the old men's
leisurely steps
in Gyüd or in Segesd
in Csurgó or in Atád[25]
in the pealing of the bells
in the murmur of the rosary
in a child's tranquility
in my soul

III.

For Csaba and Zsolt Veress

Child's fingers on the piano
one scale and soon
stork stork turtle dove
I can be a man only
if I am Magyar first
why is your leg bloody
I can be a Magyar only
if I see myself
the Turkish boy cut it
the Magyar boy is healing it
in the name of Jesus
because he brought faith
and love
simply
with a whistle
with a drum
with a cane fiddle[26]

chain chain ringing chain

to what does this chain bind
ringing chain's thread
the thread breaks
it would be thread it would be silk
Ariadne winds it
it would still wind its way out
on the starry way[27]
jump here my partner
in whomever broke out
the fires of Saint Ivan's night
he will not remain alone
never[28]

the Danube is wide
but wider is the windy sea
its banks are narrow
but narrower is old Europe
you would jump over it
over
follow Gyurka
because
Gyurka Géczi
jumped over it
your foot will hit Cologne's dome
you will knock your knees in the Alps
and in gondola filled Venice
you'll stumble over the tourists
the boots' heels
became muddied
he would scrape it out
but isn't able
yet this is a man

I don't feel any losses
in whomever the watchfires of fortresses' bastions
burn
he will not numb himself into fear
never

rise and shine sun
the moon has a sickle
the sun's edge forms a sickle
St. George's Day
let's drink on the years
my dear Father
below the gardens
the little lamb
my sons are hopping around
is almost freezing
and their mother

come in right away
because you'll catch cold[29]

roll ring roll
golden ring
magical ring
turn it once
and an old man
clings
to your neck[30]

child's fingers on the piano
one scale and soon
to where are you going little bunny
man
but after all in what is man a man
ingyom-bingyom táliber
tutáliber máliber[31]
I can be a man only
if I am Magyar first

IV

For Kinga Illyés

Along sheltered woodbridges
shrieks the pheasant heathcock
sleep old Boston
in New England
there's loud merrymaking
and an auction of the old colony
the silver pines nod
the bark is white on the trunks of birches
lawn-aproned little houses
peer out at the road
from behind the trees
as we rush against the setting sun
through towns and villages
and through time
oh Europe
we left you somewhere on the eastern shore
there by the gigantic torchbearing woman's
stone corned feet

and now read the lines of Dante
before me only such things were created
that were eternal and I endure forever
leave all hope behind you who enter here

how flutter-eyed was Dohnányi [32]
and Dvořak the Czech trumpeteer
I have seen Bartók
as he noted down the robin's song
in the Carolinas
hey robin don't fly up the tree [33]
and the hand swung in rhythm to the New Orleans' beat
hey
hey
the saints go marchin' in
hey
hey
the saints go marchin' out
while the Mississippi whirled
and the song stuck in the throat
of the nightingale from the Tisza's bank [34]

carried
carried
carried me the train
towards San Antonio
yellow blooms the Texan rose
but here cool Scandinavia
doesn't vibrate a Grieg melody
in place of haybarns
hot deserts
rolling succory
and dust
and buzzing causeways
eastward westward
northward southward

pound the stake John Henry
pound the damned stake
you have the devil in you John Henry
from Mother Poland Zelenski

pound the stake John Henry
pound the damned stake
pound the stake John Henry
your help will be Medgyesi

pound the stake John Henry
Lafko Kukta Zaremba
pound the stake John Henry
the bill will be paid by Ramsey

along sheltered woodbridges
shrieks the pheasant heathcock
in Pennsylvania
in creaking mine cars swung being

while in the smoggy factories
littered lap
the churches grew
the homes the taverns
the streets shone
the stores
and the children's hair glistened
like the fields
after a fresh May shower

swallows perched on the roof's edge
in Capistrano
go
go out to the western bank
to the smiling seashore
indeed Mignon
wo die Zitronen blühn
go
go out to the western bank
where brown skinned girls's water pearl covered bodies
crest in the whirling foam
go
go out to the western bank
where the rapid life
sweeps you away
and carries
carries you out into the world
of the never have beens' tomorrow
when your past remains behind
and the present offers its sweet delight

> so now you understand the banished Mikes'
> playful sigh
> I love Rodosto so much already
> that I couldn't forget Zágon

along sheltered woodbridges
shrieks the pheasant heathcock
sleep old Boston
in New England
there's loud merrymaking
and an auction of the old colony
the presses rumble in Detroit
the somber headed buffalo thundered away
the wheat waves on the prairie
you can write a hundred songs about Europe
but this country tempts you in your son
when he utters his first word
in an alien tongue
oh Europe

we left you on the eastern shore
there by the gigantic torchbearing woman's
stone corned feet.

Translators: Gy. László Gékényesi and
Katherine Gyékényesi Gatto

NOTES

1. An Austrian city on the Traun See (Lake).
2. Mountain range in central and eastern Europe.
3. The Great Hungarian Plain, covering the central and eastern parts of Hungary.
4. The most impressive and celebrated part of the Great Plain, covering some three hundred square miles east of the River Tisza.
5. A river in northeastern Italy. The Austro-Hungarian forces fought a major battle here during World War I.
6. St. Margaret of the Árpáds, youngest daughter of Béla IV (1235-1270). She lived her life out in a cloister on an island in the Danube River, voluntarily sacrificing herself to God for the liberation of Hungary from the Mongols.
7. St. Elizabeth of Hungary, daughter of Endre II (1205-1235), married the Prince of Thuringia. After her husband's death, she dedicated herself to the care of the poor and the sick.
8. This line of ritual poetry comes from the custom of electing a Whitsun Queen and accompanying her from house to house throughout the village. Upon arriving at the front door, two girls lift the Queen high into the air, snatching the veil from her head and shouting: "May your hemp grow this high," that is to say, may you have a fruitful and prosperous year.
9. János Hunyadi (1387-1456), Hungarian soldier and national hero. This brilliant general took part in the Hussite Wars and defeated the Turks in several battles. His greatest achievement was the defeat of the Turks at Belgrade in 1456.
10. A lad from the village of Zákány.
11. A village in southwestern Hungary.
12. A city in Transylvania, formerly a part of Hungary, now part of Rumania.
13. Zágon is a city in Transylvania, and the birthplace of Count Kelemen Mikes (1690-1761), chamberlain of Prince Ferenc Rákóczi II (1676-1735). Rodostó is a city in Turkey and provided a haven for the Hungarian freedom fighters in the 18th century, led by Prince Rákóczi.
14. Sándor Kőrösi Csoma (1784-1842), the brilliant Székely scholar, went to explore Central Asia in order to study the origins of the Hungarians.
15. The Csángós who live in seven villages in Rumanian Moldavia and Bukovina are Székelys who migrated there in the 18th century.
16. The Huns occupied the Carpathian Basin in the 4th century. The 6th century marks the arrival of the Avars from the Caucasus area into the Basin. Before that time, during the first centuries of the Christian era, semi-independent tribes lived under the erratic rule of the Romans (in certain areas) or of the Celts.
17. A children's song in Austria and Hungary.
18. Pannonia was once a province of the Roman Empire. Encompassing the area enclosed by the Danube and Dráva Rivers and the foothills of the Alps, today it is known as Transdanubia.
19. Two pilgrimage centers paying homage to Mary.
20. The greatest master-painter and wood carver of the Hungarian High Gothic period (late 14th, early 15th centuries), who only signed his name with "M.S."
21. See Note 6.
22. King Ladislaus (László) The Saint (1077-1095), son of Béla I, a heroic and popular figure, who represented the highest virtues of the medieval knight.
23. András Vásárhelyi, composer and author of a hymn to the Blessed Virgin, contained in the 15th century Peer Codex.

24. Hungary has one of the highest abortion rates in the world.

25. Towns in southwestern Hungary.

26. Hungarian childs's song, "Gólya, gólya, gilice." Throughout this part Gyékényesi utilizes lines from well known Hungarian children's songs.

27. "Lánc, lánc, eszterlánc." Children's song.

28. Here Gyékényesi is referring to the ancient ritual tradition of lighting fires usually held on the eve of June 24th, St. John the Baptist's feastday.

29. "Süss fel nap, Szent György nap." Children's song.

30. "Csön, csön, gyűrű, arany gyűrű." Children's song.

31. "Hová mész te kis nyulacska?" These two lines make up the refrain of a children's song.

32. Ernő Dohnányi (1877-1960), composer, piano virtuoso. Presents elegant, romantic themes in modern orchestration with a marked influence of Hungarian folk music. Emigrated to the U.S.

33. Line from a Hungarian folksong.

34. Next to the Danube, the most important river in Hungary.

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The Life and Work of My Father: Géza de Kresz (1882-1959)

Mária Kresz

Editor's note: One of the outstanding personalities of Hungarian-Canadian society in the interwar and post-World War II years was Géza de Kresz, the internationally known violinist and music teacher. In this essay Mária Kresz, his daughter, recalls the activities of Géza de Kresz in Canada and Hungary. This article is reprinted, with minor changes, from Géza de Kresz, *Thoughts on Violin Teaching* (Winnipeg, Manitoba: University of Manitoba, 1969) pp. 75-9. The editors intend to feature the lives of other outstanding Hungarian Canadian personalities in future issues of the *Review*.

The life and work of my father Géza de Kresz, the famous Hungarian violinist, spanned two continents, Europe and North America. He was born on June 11, 1882, in Budapest, the eldest son of Dr. Géza de Kresz, founder and first director of the Budapest Ambulance Association, who together with his wife, was responsible for creating a love of music and the arts within the family.

Géza de Kresz's masters were Károly Gobbi, Frigyes Arányi and Jenő Hubay, who taught at the National Conservatory where he received his diploma in 1900. He continued his studies in Prague with Otakar Ševčik, receiving a diploma there in 1902. From autumn 1902 to 1905 he studied in Belgium with the great violinist, Eugène Ysaÿe, both in Brussels and in Godinne-sur-Meuse. As he wrote later:

> Quartet playing was our evening recreation after the morning lessons and the tennis or rowing matches of the afternoon. (I still possess a snapshot of Ysaÿe and Kreisler handling the oars together with the same rhythmical energy with which they used their bows in the Bach Double Concerto).

During this period de Kresz also studied composition in Paris with Theo Ysaÿe (pupil of César Franck) and with Albert Lavignac at the Conservatoire, playing chamber music with Jacques Thibaud, Pugno and Gérardy. On the occasion of his debut in 1906 in Vienna in the Grosser Musikverein Sall, it was his master, Eugène Ysaÿe, who was the orchestra conductor. His initial success was followed by concert tours in many countries besides Hungary — Belgium, England, Germany and Austria. In the summer of 1907 he was soloist and first concertmaster of Ostende, Belgium. From 1907 to 1909 he was first concertmaster of the newly founded Tonkünstler Orchestra in Vienna, playing with such gifted musicians as Hans Pfitzner, Bernhard Stavenhagen and Oskar Nedbal. In 1909 he accepted a position in Bucharest, Roumania, as leader of the Carmen Sylva String Quartet at the Royal Court and as professor of violin at the Conservatory, posts which gave him sufficient freedom to continue his concert tours in various countries.

In 1915 de Kresz moved to Berlin where he became well-known as a concert artist. From 1917 he was first concertmaster and soloist of the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra at the invitation of Arthur Nikisch, who was also of Hungarian origin. In Berlin he played the great classic violin concertos a dozen times a year, and was invited to give similar concerts elsewhere in Germany, and also in Sweden, Poland, Belgium and England. Besides this, he was teaching at the Stern'sches Conservatory of Berlin and often played chamber music trios with Bronislaw Hubermann and Gregor Piatigorsky, also at times with Schnabel, Carl Flesch and Ernő Dohnányi. In 1918 he married the well-known English pianist Norah Drewett, with whom he was to give many recitals over the years.

In 1923 Géza de Kresz moved to Toronto with his wife and two daughters at the invitation of Boris Hambourg, a friend from his student days, to teach and play; "The new world, the old friend and our British sympathies were equally strong incentives." In 1924 he became leader of the Hart House String Quartet, founded under the auspices of the University of Toronto by Vincent Massey. With Harry Adaskin as second violin, Milton Blackstone viola, and Boris Hambourg cello, the Hart House Quartet developed into one of the leading string quartets on the American continent and contributed significantly to musical life across Canada. During the eleven years that Géza de Kresz

was leader, besides subscription concerts in Toronto, Montréal, New York and Buffalo, almost every year the Quartet made a transcontinental tour giving from 70 to 80 concerts as well as rehearsals in universities and colleges. In Toronto the Quartet gave some one hundred and twenty concerts; and in New York some thirty-two. The Quartet toured Europe and England. It was the Hart House Quartet that was chosen to introduce a new work by Ravel in New York.

During the first years spent in Canada, the Quartet spent the summers practising in the Masseys' lovely old country home near Newcastle, Ontario. Thereafter Géza de Kresz travelled to Europe every summer to visit his native country and to give concerts in England, France and Germany. In 1929 and 1930 he taught summer school in Vienna, and in 1932-33 in Salzburg at the Mozarteum.

The promotion of Hungarian music was always most important for Géza de Kresz. Many Hungarian composers — Béla Bartók, Zoltán Kodály, Leo Weiner, György Kósa, Ernő Dohnányi, Jenő Hubay, Miklós Radnai — had certain works first performed by the Hart House Quartet, such as Bartók's first quartet.

In 1935 de Kresz was invited by Dohnányi, the Director, to join the Music Academy of Budapest, as professor of violin, after having been away from his country for over three decades. In 1941 he was elected Director of the National Conservatory, his former school; and there, under its auspices, he organized a Musical High School. In a memorandum entitled *Bach and Horace* he explored the theoretical problems of a music school at such a level and the need to combine general classical education with musical tuition.

Géza de Kresz was also distinguished as a leader of chamber music orchestras. In Toronto during the 1930s he organized and conducted the so-called "Little Symphony," a series of concerts with a chamber-orchestra conducted by him in the Eaton Auditorium. This aspect of his activities was continued in Budapest, when from 1937 to 1943 he organized the "Museum Matinée" series, these being concerts held in the National Museum with the aim of popularizing forgotten pieces of baroque music and other musical rareties.

During these years the family spent the summers in our beautiful country house, in the village of Kápolnásnyék, (the

birthplace of the great Hungarian poet Mihály Vörösmarty) not far from Budapest. Here Géza de Kresz and his wife Norah Drewett played and taught pupils, some of whom came from Canada. Géza de Kresz liked practising early in the morning in his room looking south over a valley. And it was while practising here that he made the discovery which is formulated in this book: namely, that there is a contradiction between the natural ease with which the great masters play the violin and the rigid rules of pedagogy. This discovery came as a revelation to him and led to a new phase in his own art. He made use of it in his teaching, at the National Conservatory, where his course on violin-pedagogy first incorporated these ideas. In the Hungarian notes on violin-pedagogy he gives an account of his experiences.

> How did I make the discovery? In spite of a very minute position — today I know that it was partly in consequence of that — I was aware of a certain handicap in the movement of the fingers and in shifting. If however I let my fingers move playfully — as we violinists sometime do — on my other hand or my trousers, the handicapped courses rolled with greatest ease. This I found somewhat incomprehensible. First I thought that it is naturally easier to let the fingers move in the air without pressing the strings, without the responsibility of making sounds, than to play the instrument in reality. But what made me think more deeply about it was that I discovered that in certain seconds of organization, when the handicap of the left hand is reduced to the minimum and the looseness is almost as great as without the violin, then a certain difference can be noticed from the minute "position." This deduction and the observations of a few excellent violinists — Kreisler, and especially the Russians such as Heifetz — led me to the solution of the riddle.

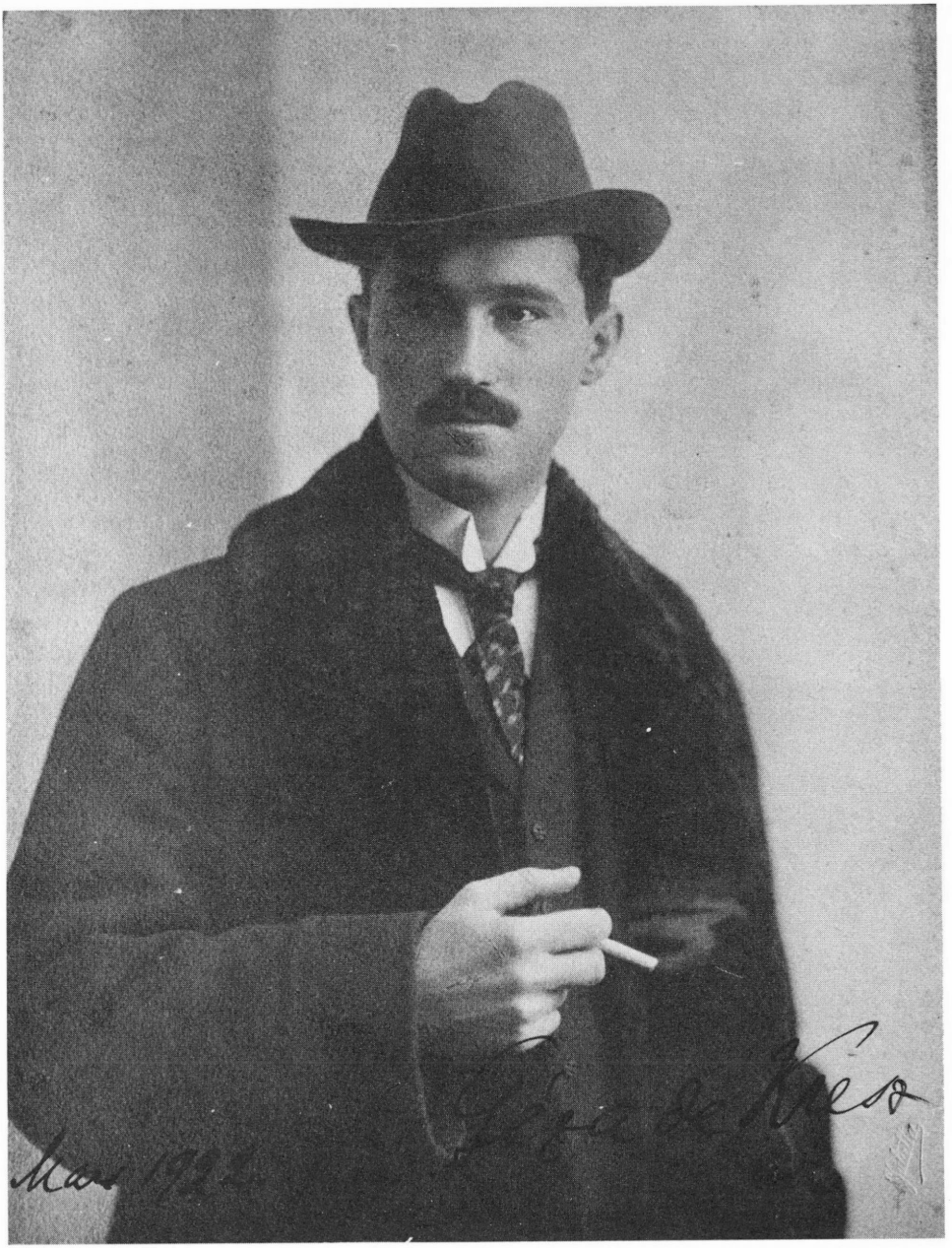
In 1947, after the end of the war, a new opportunity for concert tours was offered in Canada, his second home, where his music was well-known and appreciated. The sonata evenings given with his wife Nora Drewett brought such success that then, at the age of sixty, a new phase began in his life as an artist. At the same time his teaching resumed and he could incorporate his ideas on violin pedagogy; a course was announced at the Royal Conservatory of Music of Toronto and the first lecture was delivered on January 21st, 1948. The course con-

sisted of sixteen lectures, the first of which appeared in mimeograph form. He also taught summer sessions at Bloomington, Indiana, which imposed a strain on his health.

After a nine-year period of concerts and teaching, his last appearance was at a concert given in Toronto in 1956 in memory of Béla Bartók. Shortly after, Géza de Kresz was struck down by illness which lamed his body and deprived his hands of his beloved instrument, the violin made by Petrus Guarnerius in 1710 in honour of St. Theresa. Though he did not regain his physical strength, his strength of will conquered his illness as he then embarked upon literary work. He elaborated his lecture notes on violin pedagogy, which forms the book, *Thoughts on Violin Teaching* (University of Manitoba, 1969).

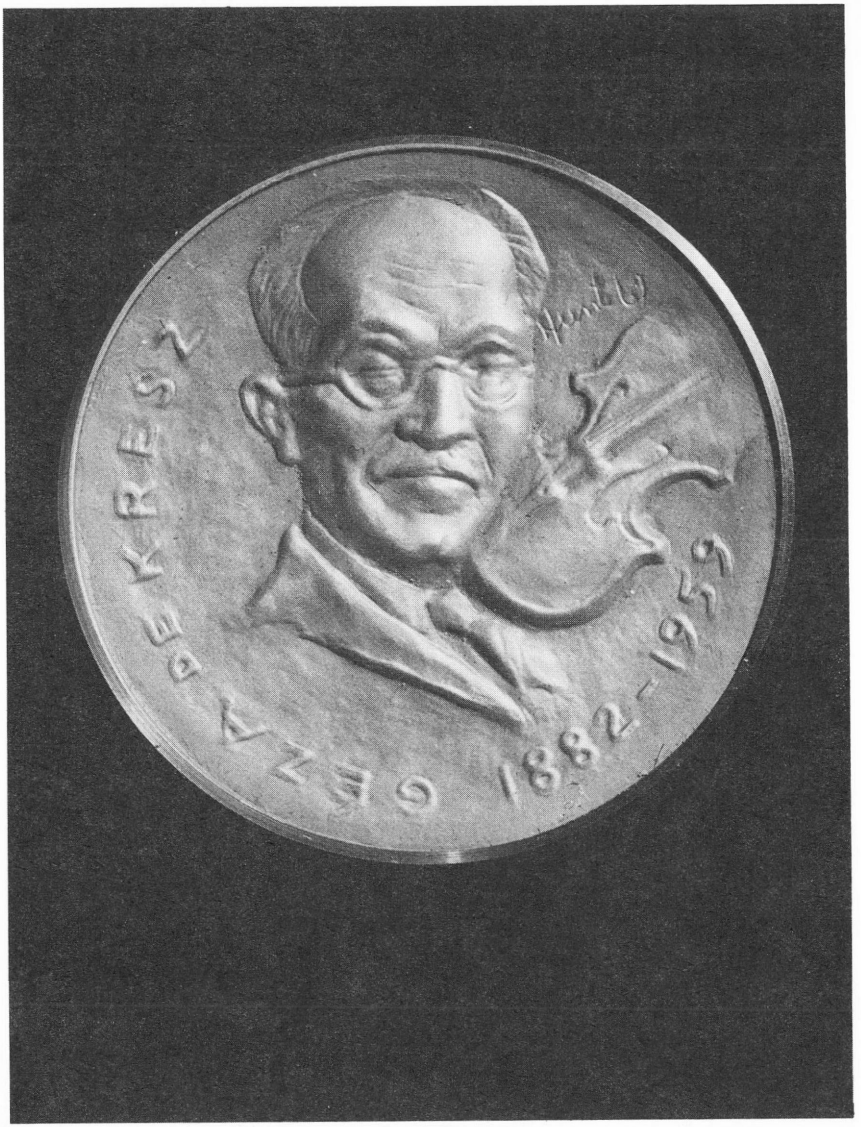
Géza de Kresz regarded himself as the continuer of the Joachim-Ysaÿe violin school and set down the theory of this school in his work, a theory of entirely novel ideas. The day he finished the manuscript he suffered a relapse and his health continued to worsen. On October 2nd, 1959, at the age of 77, after long and patiently endured sufferings — his substantial life ended. His last hours were spent at a Hungarian concert held in Massey Hall, Toronto, with Antal Doráti conducting the Philharmonica Hungarica Orchestra during which he was publicly commemorated by Hungarians and Canadians. It was a life during which he had educated thousands to love music and understand it more deeply.

His wife and musical partner Norah Drewett lived but a few months longer and passed away in Budapest on April 24, 1960. She is buried in Kápolnásnyék, close to the Vörösmarty House where so many happy times were spent.



Géza de Kresz

Géza de Kresz with his wife Norah Drewett



Commemorative medal by Dora Pedery-Hunt

The Hart House String Quartet (*L-R*): *Milton Blackstone* (*viola*), *Harry Adaskin* (*2nd violin*), *Boris Hambourg* (*violoncello*), *Géza de Kresz* (*1st violin*). (*1928*)

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REVIEW ARTICLE

Béla Kun: A Fateful Life

*Peter Gosztony**

György Borsányi, *Kun Béla, egy politikai életrajz.*
(Béla Kun: a political biography) Budapest:
Kossuth Kiadó, 1979. 450 pp.

The noted Swiss historian, Jakob Burckhardt remarked in one of his works that occasionally a person's life incorporates into it history itself. Béla Kun was such a person. He made a mark not only on the history of the communist party of Hungary, but also on the development of the whole communist movement. His life was full of dramatic turnarounds and was not free from contradiction.

Béla Kun was born in 1886 in a small town in Transyvania. His father was an assimilated Jewish notary. The First World War and Russian captivity catapulted him from the obscurity of the journalistic profession and provincial social democratic politics onto the national scene. He became the leader of the 1919 Hungarian Commune and later, a high-ranking official of the Comintern. He met his demise during Stalin's purges; he fell out of favour in 1936, was arrested the following year and died two years later under circumstances that remain unclear even today. Characteristically, members of his immediate family were also interned. For twenty years, party histories, both in the U.S.S.R. and in Hungary, denounced him or denied his role. It was only during the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union that he was posthumously rehabilitated. Another two decades had to pass before a detailed, scholary biography could appear about him in

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**Translated from the Hungarian by N.F. Dreisziger.*

Budapest. Not surprisingly, the book on Kun was a source of controversy from the very beginning.

The massive volume, subtitled "a political biography," is the result of ten years of research. Its author is a leading member of the Institute of Party History in Hungary. There can be little doubt that the author has undertaken a difficult task in trying to free the figure of Kun from the myths and accusations which have become attached to it through the years. It must be kept in mind that Kun, a quarrelsome, impatient and dogmatic man, had never been popular even among his associates, and had made many enemies for himself in his lifetime. The author's task was made more difficult by the fact that he could make only limited use of records pertaining to Kun's career in Russian exile, which are held in Soviet state or party archives. In fact he had access only to pre-selected documents or to those put at his disposal by individual Soviet historians. Borsányi several times refers to this fact and expresses regret that due to the lack of documentation he had to leave certain questions unanswered in connection with Kun's life or activities.

The seven chapters of this biography offer many exciting, hitherto little or hardly known details. The first chapters introduce Kun's youthful years, his work in the Social Democratic party, his military service in the war, and his capture by the Russians. In the spring of 1917 he greets The Russian Revolution in an article published in the *Népszava* (People's Voice) in Budapest. He hails Kerensky and the Provisional Government, in complete ignorance of Lenin's "April Theses" which called for the destruction of that government. Kun appeared in Petrograd in January of 1918 to work as a revolutionary functionary in the Bureau of Prisoners of War. It was here that he met Lenin, and became a "bolshevik," and "internationalist."

Borsányi outlines in detail Kun's journey from Russia to Hungary. He describes how in March of 1918 the Hungarian branch of the Russian Communist (Bolshevik) party was organized, with Kun as its leader. His return to Hungary in the fall of the same year served the purpose of spreading the world proletarian revolution to the banks of the Danube. After receiving their instructions and money, the communists destined for Hungary formally established the Communist party of Hungary, in Moscow's Drezda Hotel on November 4, 1918. The

party became a member of the newly-established Third International, the Comintern. Kun came to his homeland in secret. He had an important mission to accomplish on orders from Lenin. He was to convince the noted Austrian Social Democrat, Friedrich Adler, to join the ranks of the Communist International. Kun's mission failed. He was more successful in his next task however, which was the organization of a Communist party in Hungary, and the preparation of its bid for power.

Borsányi offers much interesting detail about the history of the Hungarian Communist party during 1918-19. The party's leading figures are described regardless of whether they remained loyal communists or became "renegades." We learn among other things that in 1919 the Communist Party of Hungary (CPH) was "great" in "words" only rather than in numbers. At best, the party had only 10,000 members in a country of twenty million! Accordingly, Kun could hardly have had any illusions about achieving power through parliamentary means. In fact, the CPH did not struggle for parliamentary democracy. It hoped to wrest power from the Károlyi government through the use of force, through a "people's uprising." Borsányi admits that in January and February of 1919 the party's demands had no real foundations and only served to whip-up popular sentiment against the government. Kun conducted a separate struggle against the social democrats as well. He considered them part of the ruling class, the enemies of the people whom he would continue to hate throughout most of his life. It was as a result of this struggle against the social democrats that bloody clashes occurred between the followers of the two late in February which resulted in popular opinion turning against Kun and governmental measures against his party. Borsányi outlines at length Kun's arrest and mistreatment, as well as the event which led to the collapse of Hungary's republican government on the 21st of March. Kun's rise to power in Hungary was occasioned by the well-known ultimatum which the Entente powers presented to the country's government*

**Editor's note*: On this subject see Peter Pastor's article in Vol. 1, No. 1, of this journal (1974).

Borsányi does not discuss the question of Károlyi's surrender of power, but correctly outlines Kun's doubts whether, under the circumstances, the compromise with the social democrats, did indeed represent a "socialist revolution" in Hungary. He had reported to Lenin his "victory" already on the afternoon of the 22nd. From Moscow he was warned about the influence of the social democrats. But four days later Kun declared: "My personal influence for the revolutionary council is such that it assures the proletarian dictatorship, the masses are behind me!" Was he overconfident? Did he really believe that he could deceive his socialist partners and impose Soviet-style government on Hungary? Borsányi does not avoid giving answers to questions. He outlines Kun's moves made in the interest of a "socialist" Hungary, as well as the "world" (i.e. European) revolution. Kun thus helped Soviet Russia, and sent his agitators to Vienna to promote revolution there too. By this time Bavaria was also communist, and Lenin could dream of a communist bridgehead into the heart of Europe.

But the setbacks came as early as April. In Vienna an "insurrection" (riots in front of the Parliament) was put down within hours by police acting in support of Austria's social democratic government. In Hungary, the majority of workers became disenchanted with the Commune by the end of the month. Borsányi writes that when Rumanian and Czech occupation forces began descending on Hungary, the country certainly did not defend itself like a lion its den. In fact, the Hungarian villages received the enemy with apathy rather than antagonism; and the Red Army had to resort to the most drastic disciplinary method — decimation — to prevent the disintegration of its units. By the end of the month Kun had to appeal to the Austrian government for refugee status for the "people's commissars" and their families. In other words, he was ready to give up.

But then he changed his mind. Emotional and intellectual vacillation was characteristic of him. Borsányi describes all this in a forthright manner. He outlines the remaining days of the Commune and strips it of much of its "official" and "heroic" image. He portrays Kun as the real leader of the Commune who did Sisyphean work to preserve his regime. He negotiated with the representatives of the Entente powers, looked after the organization of the army, the mobilization of the economy

and tried to take care of problems on the home front. In addition, he worked for the spreading of the revolutionary flame abroad, and tried to relieve pressure on Soviet Russia. Perhaps it is precisely because of these latter efforts that Kun was doubly grieved by the facts that the military help Lenin had promised to him never arrived, and that during the entire life span of the Commune, for what reason we do not know, the Soviets never established formal diplomatic ties with their Hungarian "brothers."

The reasons for the Hungarian Commune's demise are well known to us. Borsányi outlines in great detail and accuracy Kun's last hours in Hungary. It is probably for the first time that the contents of the minutes of the "Workers' Council" meeting of August 1, 1919 have been revealed in Budapest. Kun bitterly admitted that it would be proper to make a last stand on the barricades, but saw no meaning in this without mass support. He therefore concentrated on arranging the details of the flight to Austria, but not without taking time to inform Lenin of the developments in Hungary:

> August 1. Today in Budapest a right-wing socialist government was formed, consisting of the union leaders opposed to the (Communist) dictatorship. This turn of events was caused partly by the disintegration of our army, and partly by the anti-(Communist) behaviour of the workers themselves. With this the situation became such that all efforts to sustain the unadulterated but alas, sinking dictatorship would be useless.

The stay in Vienna was a watershed in the life of the Hungarian Communist emigration. Various factions emerged whose views differed both in judging the past and assessing the future. Kun's initial pessimism soon yielded to excessive optimism. Notwithstanding his comrades' opinions, already in December of 1919 he wrote to Lenin that the prospects of the revolution in the West were improving "hour-by-hour." He considered the "White terror" in Hungary "useful" (sic!). "The worse the fate of the working class, the sooner comes the Second Proletarian Dictatorship!" By now Kun was not willing to learn from past mistakes; he was blaming the social democrats and others for the demise of the Commune.

In August of 1920 Kun arrived in Soviet Russia. He was

received by Lenin, among others. According to Borsányi, no record was kept of their conversation (or so the author might have been told in Moscow). Accordingly, it is not possible to know to what extent Lenin reproached Kun for his actions in Hungary. Borsányi calls reports that the Soviet leader did reproach Kun, "emigré fabrications."

Kun remained in the Soviet Union. First Lenin sent him to Baku as a representative at the Congress of Eastern Peoples, and then made him a member of the Military Council of the Southern Front. Here he served as a kind of a political chief-commissar in the forces of Mikhail Frunze, which were engaged in liquidating the remnants of the White Army. His activities were many-sided and also misdirected. After the occupation of the Crimean Peninsula by the Reds, Lenin offered an amnesty to the enemy forces who had not left Russia and were hiding in the mountains. Kun ignored Lenin's orders. No doubt fuelled by a desire to avenge the defeat of his Commune, he staged a bloodbath among captured White officers. This deed, along with the Hungarian Commune, made Kun's name infamous in all of Europe. Even in international Communist circles, Kun's Crimean activities remained a subject of controversy for many years. Borsányi does not condemn Kun, voicing the need for "Red terror," and noting that Lenin did not reproach Kun for his acts but sent him on a mission to Germany. We know that Lenin disapproved of Kun's bloodthirsty acts, however, and sent him to do illegal work in Germany precisely to let him atone for his deeds.

Kun arrived in Saxony in the spring of 1921, where he was to prepare an uprising against the local government. Borsányi describes in detail the "March uprising" and blames Kun above all for its failure. His impatience, his disregard for the views of local communist leaders, led not only to the premature eruption of the revolution in Saxony, but also to a crisis in the German Communist party.

Next Borsányi outlines Kun's work in the Comintern, as well as the factional struggle among the exiled Hungarian communists. It is probably here that, for the first time, readers in Hungary can learn about the inside story of the Comintern and read about its leaders in some detail. The picture painted of Kun the Comintern official is not endearing either. He appears as an emotional, quarrelsome intriguer — he even quarreled

with Lenin. Borsányi emphasizes the anti-intellectual tendencies of Kun and his faction. He also describes the struggle that Kun conducted against the faction led by Jenő Landler in Vienna.

During the mid-1920s Kun became a director within the Comintern. For five years he was to head the division of agitation and propaganda. He became a friend of Zinoviev, the Comintern's Principal Secretary, a fact which would not prevent Kun from siding with Stalin against Zinoviev later, during the power struggles of the late 1920s. When Landler died in 1928, Kun received a free hand to direct the Hungarian communists. He wanted to revive the movement in Hungary and for this purpose he moved to Vienna. Although he arrived with false papers and disguised appearance, he was apprehended by the police. Although at his trial he was impetuous and arrogant, he received a three-month sentence only. He was allowed to return to Moscow after serving only a month in jail.

The chapters describing the affairs of Sixth Congress of the Comintern, are very interesting, along with the bitter struggle which the organization waged against the socialists. Kun was really in his element here as he had recognized the need for such struggle already in 1919 and had advocated it long before Stalin endorsed such policy. As the head of the Comintern's Balkan Secretariat, Kun could devote time to "Hungarian affairs" as well from 1929 on. Once again, Kun's quarrelsome character becomes evident. His vengefulness knew no limits. He did not like Hungarian "comrades" nor could he get along with them; he would denounce them to the Soviet secret police as "Trotskyists" or "agents of the (Hungarian) police." Writes Borsányi:

> It was obvious. Whoever opposed Kun was an agent of the Horthyite police. And police agents had to be disarmed. In the second half of 1932 Sándor Szerényi, József Bergmann, Hugó Kiss, Károly Házy, Márton Lovas, and János Krieszl were arrested and were convicted on trumped-up charges. Two of them became the victims of these illegal measures. Four survived...

Kun's demise was occasioned by a change in Comintern policy. The rise of Hitler and various fascist movements in Europe forced the Soviet Union to revise its strategy. The 7th Congress of the Comintern in July of 1935 announced the policy of the

"popular front" against fascism, and offered to cooperate with social democrats against the common enemy. Although Kun accepted the Congress' decision, he was not elected to the presidium of the organization. He was pushed out from the leading organ of the CPH as well. Borsányi has examined the causes of Kun's eclipse. He mentions the case of Lajos Magyar. He was a one-time teacher of the Soviet student who, in December of 1934, assassinated S.M. Kirov, the leading Communist official in Leningrad. In the course of the investigation, Magyar was expelled from the party and arrested. As Kun had vouched for Magyar's loyalty only half year earlier, he was accused of smuggling the "Trotskyist, imperialist" teacher into the party. But his fact was not the real reason for Kun's descent, according to Borsányi. Rather, it was the fact that higher-ups in the Comintern did not wish to keep him on. Another factor was that Kun became an embarrassment now that the Comintern wished to collaborate with social democrats. With Kun's demise from power, the whole of the CPH became suspect in Soviet eyes.

The year 1936 began ominously for Kun. On the occasion of his 50th birthday, not one Soviet newspaper greeted him. His friends began to stay away. In May, he was summoned before the Comintern's Control Commission. The minutes of the meeting are "unknown" according to Borsányi, but the text of the decision exists. Kun was accused of "sectarian deviation" among other things, and he was relieved of all his duties in connection with the Comintern and the CPH. When Kun left the discussion room, he must have known that his political career had come to an end. Although he was given the directorship of a publishing house, and was granted an audience with Stalin (at Kun's request), his days were numbered. He must have known it, after all, he had been familiar with life in the Comintern. In 1937, his one-time friend and boss, Zinoviev was executed. Kun's wife wrote in her recollections: "When (Kun) returned from work, he would neither talk nor read. He just sat on the couch for hours... When I asked anything, he did not reply." The police came for him on the 29th of June. "Don't worry. It is a misunderstanding. I'll be home soon!" he told his wife. He was not seen again. Borsányi knows nothing of his time in prison or his possible trial, as he had no access to reliable documents. He has only seen the official Soviet document rehabilitating

Kun, and on this only his name and date of death (30 November 1939) are given. Borsányi consoles his readers: "The details of Kun's death are in the last analysis unimportant. He had ceased to be a historic personality already in the fall of 1936..."

Borsányi's book is a dramatic biography. It is an objective portrayal of a controversial and complicated life. The book should have been a great success in Budapest. Alas, it was not released for sale to the public. The authorities, perhaps frightened by the negative image of Kun, or for another reason, vetoed the book's distribution. Consequently, Borsányi's biography of Kun, the result of ten years' work, appears only on the shelves of "specialized" libraries. Habent fata sua libelli...!

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Book Reviews

Joseph Széplaki, comp. and ed., *Louis Kossuth "The Nation's Guest."* Ligonier, PA: Bethlen Press, Inc., 1976.
John H. Komlos, *Kossuth in America 1851-1852.* Buffalo: East European Institute, 1973.

A panegyric in an American publication hailed Kossuth's visit to the United States as "one of the bright chapters in our history," and proclaimed that Kossuth's "eloquence, as described by those who heard him here in 1851, has not been surpassed by any political speaker in the century."* This extravagance was only one among many heaped upon Kossuth in the half century following his sojourn, when the exiled Hungarian leader had solicited American moral and political support, as well as funds for the restoration of freedom in his homeland.

Joseph Széplaki of the Wilson Library at the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis has assembled a "preliminary" bibliography of Kossuth's American travels. His work, which commemorates the bicentennial of the American Revolution and the 125th anniversary of the Kossuth tour, contains 1,632 non-annotated entries including books, pamphlets, documents, poems, manuscripts, and collections. The brief supplemental collection of essays, paeans, and poems dedicated to Kossuth by admiring Americans is typical 19th century adulatory literature. But in his anticipated enlarged edition Széplaki ought to augment these pro-Kossuth flatteries with examples of anti-Kossuth diatribes for the sake of realism and balance.

This book offers specialists a valuable bibliographic nucleus for the further study of Kossuth's visit in America. A map and a chronological itinerary chart, a number of contemporary illustrations, and other useful embellishments, are also included.

**The Review of Reviews* (April 1894) pp. 133-4.

In the Introduction to *Kossuth in America*, Komlos described Kossuth's personality as a synthesis of rationalism and romanticism. He was allegedly also naive, vain, lachrymose, sensitive, gave vent to uncontrollable passions, could not cope with life, and was constantly plagued by impulses to do away with himself. Yet "his full beard, his deep set eyes, his self-assured bearing, his mannerism, his ability to charm, and his attire..." awed Americans (p. 14). Not surprisingly, Kossuth rapidly captured the public's imagination. He was wined and dined, celebrated, toasted, acclaimed as an international hero, and huge crowds generally turned out to cheer him. This is the conventional view, and Komlos has done it justice. But he also wanted to show the hidden underside of the visit, the dark shadows beneath the bright images, not to debunk Kossuth, but to demystify him. Komlos complained that the only major Kossuth biography (by Dénes Jánossy, in Hungarian) was not sufficiently critical, whereas Marxist writers have tended to identify Kossuth with their own concepts, and English-speaking scholars have virtually ignored him. Komlos' book would benefit "...those who might want to continue the task of reinterpreting Kossuth the man, the statesman, and the revolutionary" (p. 28).

Whereas Széplaki's work offered no hint of darkling skies over the Kossuth mission, Komlos has related the seamier aspects of what has been universally hailed as a triumphal march. From the onset, the visit was fraught with controversy. In the American Congress some senators impugned Kossuth's credentials, especially scorning his ambiguous republicanism. Although hailed as a hero, Kossuth was denied an instantaneous official congressional reception. An embarrassing round of anti-Kossuth diatribes in Congress permanently marred Kossuth's image. Thereafter, undercurrents of hostility followed him wherever he travelled.

Komlos explained the reason for these fiascos and why Kossuth's American mission ultimately failed. Kossuth was a poor diplomat; he should not have demanded instant recognition of Hungary's revolutionary government, nor advocated an Anglo-American alliance "to counteract the alliance of despots," *i.e.*, Austria and Russia. Kossuth had promised not to meddle in American internal affairs; yet "he reserved the right for himself to decide what issues constituted matters of internal concern and what issues did not" (p. 79). He hectored

an American audience: "Should Russia not respect the declaration of your country (protesting Russian intervention in Hungary) then you are obliged — literally obliged — to go to war." The speech was generally condemned. This episode not only harmed Kossuth's cause, it polarized American public opinion. Kossuth antagonized Americans because he interpreted the intentions of the Founding Fathers regarding American foreign policy. His outbursts produced strong hostility and healthy skepticism. President Fillmore ventured that Kossuth's mission had "dangerous tendencies if encouraged beyond the limits of sympathy" (p. 101). Indeed, Komlos related an incident in which Kossuth tried to trick Fillmore into launching a more active foreign policy. Consequently, Kossuth's visit to the capital was disappointing. Congress would not rescind the 1818 neutrality statutes for the sake of intervening against Austria on Hungary's side, and Kossuth's contact with the President and Secretary of State Webster became chilly and produced no prospects of official succour. Kossuth thereupon sought out West what had eluded him in the East, again without success.

Komlos summarized the negative consequences of Kossuth's American journey. He failed to sway American foreign policy, secure Hungary's diplomatic recognition, or promote an Anglo-American alliance; and financial as well as political support from the public also failed to materialize. He alienated the abolitionists *and* the Southerners, and enraged the commercial interests, the Irish, and the Roman Catholic Church. Ultimately, however, his failure was caused by "the overwhelming propensity in America to continue the neutral foreign policy bequeathed to the nation by Washington" (p. 139). After this fiasco, Kossuth never again turned to the United States for aid in liberating Hungary.

This valuable work fills a gap on Kossuth; it is well researched and competently organized, though only tolerably written. The analysis is first-rate, however, thanks partly to the author's expertise in 19th century American regional and federal politics. Considered in tandem, these two publications are worthy companions among the growing numbers of English language books on East Central Europe, including Hungary.

University of Prince Edward Island *Thomas Spira*

Hungarian Studies Review, Vol. IX, No. 2 (Fall 1982)

From the Editor's Desk

Our journal has completed the most extensive promotion campaign in its history. In the course of the past eighteen months advertising flyers were sent out to nearly 6,000 addresses. The cost of the campaign, designed above all to promote our 1981 special issues, was deferred in part by a grant received from the Multiculturalism Directorate of Canada.

In accordance with plans announced earlier, we are re-vamping the *Review*'s editorial board. In the future editorial advisers will serve on a temporary basis. The editorial staff for the next few years is now being selected from among scholars in Canada and elsewhere who have been taking an active part in editorial work in recent years.

The transfer of the *Review*'s administrative and other work to the University of Toronto continues. During 1982 the editorial office took over the handling of financial administration for the journal, formerly handled jointly by Mr. M. Böröczki in Ottawa, and N.F. Dreisziger in Kingston. The concentration of all such functions in one office should further facilitate the efficiency of the *Review*'s operations.

After long preparations and a fund-raising campaign, the Hungarian Reader's Service Inc. of Ottawa has completed plans for the establishment of a prize in memory of the late Dr. Ferenc G. Harcsár, the organization's founder, and our journal's co-founder. The F.G. Harcsár Memorial Prize will be awarded to young scholars who publish outstanding work in the *Review*. Normally the award will be offered each year on the recommendation of the journal's co-editors or a committee chosen by them. The value of the prize at present is $100. Further donations to the prize-fund are welcome and should be directed to the Hungarian Readers' Service Inc., c/o Mr. M. Böröczki, 1730 Gage Crescent, Ottawa, Canada K2C 0Z9. The first of the memorial prizes (for 1981 and 1982) will be awarded at the forthcoming Hungarian Studies Conference at the University of Toronto in May 1983.

During 1983, the *Review* plans to publish a special volume

consisting of a collection of essays dealing with Hungary in the Second World War. The volume will deal mainly with the themes of involvement in the war and the search for a way out of the catastrophe. Contributions from nearly a dozen authors are now being examined and edited in preparation for the publication of this volume.