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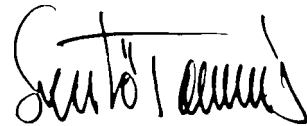
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# Foreword

The volume you have in your hand is the fourth one in the series of English special editions of *Jel-Kép*. (Previous volumes are still available free of charge at request at the Editorial Office: Budapest, P. O. B. 587. H—1373 Hungary.)

*Jel-Kép* is the quarterly of the Budapest-based Mass Communication Research Centre. It is the only periodical in Hungary focussing on the theoretical problems of mass communication. It addresses questions like the sociology and social psychology of mass communication as well as the theoretical issues of information policy. The present volume includes a selection of writings originally published in Hungarian in the years 1984 through 1986 — with the interests of our readers abroad kept in mind.

The editors hope this volume will offer, for lack of a complete overview, at least an idea about the dimensions of work done in the theoretical workshops of mass communication in Hungary.



Editor-in-Chief

*Sándor Fekete*

## The Press and Its Freedom

### About the genre

When I write about Petőfi, I can say with a clear conscience that I endeavour to listen without any bias merely to the historic and philological facts. However, now that I am again struggling with the mysterious tangle of freedom of the press, I am not so sure of my objectivity, and have to admit that I am interested from two sides.

First of all, as an author. It was exactly 40 years ago that I started to write poems with the immodest intention to renew Hungarian lyrics and I soon had to experience that one could not outwit the spirit of the era even in a little printed grammar school publication: my sonnet about the poverty of the workers or my anger about the war could be published under the covering wings of a courageous teacher, but a poetic opus questioning religion had to wait until the end of the war, and with it the end of the regime.

Then for a time I lived in the illusion of accomplished freedom of the press, only to hit my head into sobering walls on increasing occasions. Not to speak about the unpublished and by now partly outdated articles in the file I call the "home for the incurable". I wrote books that had to wait three years for the nihil obstat (which then I did not make use of—being too proud). There was a drama the premiere of which was cancelled two weeks earlier because of "technical reasons" and it is still in the drawer. The other was not staged, because I was not in the mood to present the "negative" character in a positive manner. Why should I conceal that I even experimented with the

light-headed intolerant genre of the samizdat when I was younger. This sin of mine could only be eased by the fact that at that time hot-headedness was not treated with a passport authorizing a lengthy Paris sojourn, but was judged with more severity, thus by undertaking risks I could perhaps justify how serious my inclination was to utter my opinion. I do not heap the examples, perhaps this is already sufficient to indicate that I acquired various experiences as an author.

On the other hand, as a young man I was an editor, and unfortunately I am an editor again. In this position I myself have set up and I am still setting up barriers in front of others, and it happened that my heart ached, because I had very little doubt about the truth of the returned manuscript, as well as about the impossibility of its publication. On other occasions, although I did not agree with the refused author, I would have given him an opportunity for the sake of free opinion if my hands had not been tied by recent and weighty instructions. For as an editor, I always worked in a journal operating in the system of state dependence, and if I concluded the contract for this, I had to adhere to the conditions of the contract.

There was a time when I wanted to write a book about my experiences as an author and editor, or at least a thorough study, perhaps full of modern sociological and mass psychological concepts, so that I should even attract the attention of the generation of forty year old youngsters. But is it possible or is it worth writing this book or study? Well, if either this or that could

appear, the mere fact would indicate that the problem has been solved, it is not a living issue, then why should one take the trouble, after all I am initially not a researcher of museum topics and I am only interested in the past for the sake of the present. On the other hand, if such an opus cannot be published, why write it? For posterity? Not at all, I am not deluding myself, our successors will know everything even without my enlightening observations. Shall I write my work in the form of samizdat? It is risky, because the message of a book or study launched on an illegal course immediately changes: it becomes free propaganda ammunition in the arsenal of the other camp.

So I am left the opportunity I try to make use of in these notes: to give a report on my experiences of almost four decades as an author and editor, and formulate the personal lesson which can be submitted to others for practical consideration. This is why I will avoid theoretizing trimmings and even the fashionable terminology.

I do not want to hide behind the Bengal light of coded intellectual games either: a professional periodical is a rather narrow framework in which I do not want to further reduce the sphere of eventual readers with esoteric exposition.

### Without extremes

Perhaps it would be better to discover it at the end, but let me make it clear right at the beginning: this article will avoid extreme formulations. Extremes, even the fiercest ones can be useful in certain cases. For example, in the sharp periods of social struggle usually unambiguous extremes clash, blues with whites, or reds with whites, and the stronger and juster injustice defeats the outdated and weaker injustice. On such occasions, any type of benevolent intermediation is bound to fail—in the savage struggle between the Pope and Luther, both parties must have looked with suspicion at Erasmus.

When I write these words, I take into consideration that today here we do not live in the age of such extremes. “The cause” is yet (still?) consolidated, therefore, there is a chance that he who is not satisfied with today will also be listened to, although he does not believe either that illegal ideological ventures will lead to results.

With regard to freedom for the press, two extreme standpoints can be observed. One is naturally that of those who are satisfied. At the initial phase of the evolution of the system, this concept was characterized by a militant, moreover, attacking basic standpoint: the freedom of capitalist democracies is only “formal”, “pseudo-freedom”, and the press is the instrument of a monopoly. On the other hand, in our case, the press belongs to the people, consequently, “we can say that Hungarian democracy undertook and materialized” the legacy of Kossuth and Petőfi, including freedom of the press. Révai, for I quoted him, later went so far that he described as revisionists all those who doubted the “materialization” of the legacy, moreover, festively raised the pre-1956 system into the “genuine order of freedom”.

What shall we say to that? If the country of illegal trials, clean swept lofts, and depressingly declining, but according to the central paper of the party, constantly increasing living standards is the “genuine order of freedom”, then naturally there is no use discussing the issue of the freedom of the press. But 1956 broke into pieces this self- and public-deluding argumentation (although Révai still advocated it in 1958).

Although the article in the central party paper in 1969—exactly in its March 15 edition!—again revived Révai’s spirit saying that “Not only that became realized which the March youth dreamt about, but much more” I had to ask in the literary journal *Kortárs* what is that “much more”? In fact I would be fully satisfied if all that the leader of the March youth “dreamt about” had come true.

But I have no reason for such satisfaction. We are as far from the age "When all men lift the horn of plenty in one happy equality", as from the case when "the spiritual light breaks shining through the windows of every house".

If we descend from the elevated region of poetry to the earthly, everyday programme of Radio Petőfi and Radio Kossuth, and want to contribute to the matter of the freedom of the press, we have to recall this programme in such a way as it was not usually mentioned in the past 30 odd years in its full consistency.

In one of his first political speeches, at an assembly meeting in Zemplén County at the end of the summer of 1832, Kossuth announced: "Take everything from us, only give us the freedom of the press, and I will not despair about the freedom of my nation and the happiness of my nation." And at the end of his speech, quoting the words of a hero of the French Revolution, he repeated: "... either the freedom of printing or the oppression of freedom. There is no middle way and I vote for the freedom of the press."

I could quote very few theses from the political programme of Kossuth which could be signed without reservation by the poet, Petőfi, but the above confession undoubtedly belongs among these few. Somewhat more than 15 years after the Zemplén speech, in his poem addressed to the National Assembly, the poet formulated the significance of the freedom of the press in the spirit of Kossuth's above quoted words:

Acquire freedom for the press.  
Let us have freedom for the press!

And because he was a man whose words were not wandering far from intentions, when history offered the opportunity of deeds, he first led the youth of Pest to take over the Landerer printing shop, because logically "the first step of revolution and at the same

time, its main duty is to free the press..."

The quotations roughly characterize the thinking of Kossuth and Petőfi about the freedom of the press. A lot can be said about these views, perhaps we can even smile at these bourgeois revolutionary illusions, but we cannot say one thing: namely, that we have "materialized" these ideals.

Among others, this was part of my argumentation in that *Kortárs* article.

It is painful to speak about the "echo" of my article, but as it has been neglected by others, I am compelled to remind people of it: as far as I know that was the first time (in an article on a socialist basis and legally published) when the bourgeois democratic legacy was confronted with socialist practice of critical intentions. This is not boasting, I only mention it because the article turned into a "case": those who were busy and felt offended on behalf of the system, immediately tried to get me thrown out of the party of which I had not been a member for a long time. A disciplinary investigation was prepared and one of my bosses warned me that he could not "protect" me. However, on the other side, Gyula Illyés took a stand in favour of my article in a television interview. Nevertheless, my situation seemed to be rather unpleasant, when from an authentic place the campaign launched to discipline me was suddenly dropped and a speech was delivered which naturally did not mention this dispute, but pointed out in a decisive manner that we had not yet accomplished all the dreams of the March youth...

Roughly this was the time since when it became rather difficult to use the Révai-like argumentation in the disputes about freedom rights. Some glossing-over declarations were made, but less and less, and those according to whom there was amidst us absolutely no problem around the freedom of speech appeared in less serious fields than the theoretical venue.

The new wave of boasting reached its peak during the intellectual preparation



of the 1979 humour festival. Otherwise worthy humorists made political declarations, one after the other, according to which the question of "this is not allowed" no longer emerged: "there are no such aspects". We could also read that there were no longer any taboo topics, and we had no secrets and problems that could not be openly discussed and so on.

At the Vác conference devoted to political humour, I was compelled to remind the participants that there were taboo topics. Moreover, our cultural policy does not state that the aspect of "this is not allowed" no longer exists, but follows the triple principle of "support—endurance—prohibition". So we should not say that everything is allowed. Let us be pleased that in keeping pace with the development of society, there are always more things we can criticize, and not simply in a way that somebody up on the top allows us more, but scientists, writers, artists and politicians responsibly paying attention to the most urgent problems of Hungarian reality reveal new and more hunting areas not only for political humour, but in general for social criticism.

The essence of my contribution was then repeated in a relevant article, but the radio coverage that gave a detailed report on my contribution omitted my criticism about the public deluding slogan of "there are no longer any taboos here". From this, I could draw the conclusion that the old inner-ventions still existed, and some people were as cautious as they had been 10 years ago to openly debate the freedom of speech.

### And the other extreme

If the above criticized notion is characterized by announcing something as completely accomplished, while it has only been partly accomplished, the representatives of the other extreme ask for the destination of a process of which we only have reached the

middle (?). Namely, while the former view is empty from a theoretical point of view, and is merely propagandistic, the latter concept is the product of an unhistoric approach: it confronts the abstract demand for the freedom of the press with the extremely changing concrete relationships of historic reality.

It is the consequence of the nature of the case, and of our situation that this extreme can rarely be sounded in the Hungarian press, only allusional hints indicate the concerned nostalgias. These indicate an ethic-political system of requirements which on the one hand categorically refutes the practice and controlling principles of the present Hungarian press, and on the other hand, does not leave any doubt that it regards the press relations of the Western bourgeois democracy as ideal. (The only substantial relevant study of the last years which spoke in an esoteric language, but in a decisive manner about the principle problems of the freedom of the press, although refuting the bourgeois illusions, avoided a historic analysis, and judged and criticized the press policy of the socialist countries from the side of the abstract categories.)

As the articles of the past 30 odd years have only expounded how formal the freedom of the press is in the Western states and what crude pressure the ruling economic forces exercise in this respect, I can presume that we are appropriately enlightened that the relationships of the developed capitalist democracies are not perfect. Nevertheless, just as a reminder, let me indicate a few facts.

Everybody knows that for example the otherwise liberated British press must not mock the Queen and that even though the French left could sharply criticize President Giscard d'Estaing, certain cases could only be published after his replacement, such as the political intricacies around the killing of de Broglie or the news according to which the ex-president allegedly had known about the plan of

the secret police to kill Kaddafi. Even if the head of the American air traffic controllers' trade union—who were on strike—could debate with President Reagan on NBC television, which is not a fact to be underestimated, it was not doubted for a second that the television station followed the President's policy in this feud.

It is similarly known what power those few people hold who are sitting on the peaks of capitalist monopolies over the entire press—with merely economic means, they can considerably govern the entire system of mass communication. In the past century, Kossuth earned his livelihood from the 5,000 subscribers of *Pesti Hírlap*, and the publisher, Landerer, prospered from the paper. Today, such miracles are unimaginable—without the financial assistance of large companies or parties (or the state) the press cannot exist. Up-to-date technical equipment, extremely large editions, the expenses of paper and print place such burdens on the publishers that without direct subsidy or without income from advertisements, no paper of major effect can be published in the West.

This is why even the major left-wing parties are ceaselessly struggling with their difficulties in publishing, this is why the *Lettres francaises* with a worthy past was closed down, and several communist parties are unable to publish a daily. Even the largest communist party of the capitalist world cannot bear the economic pressure; now when I am formulating these notes, I read in *L'Europeo* that the *Paese sera*, which counts as the second daily of the Italian Communist Party, is taken over by a limited company, not only because as a consequence of certain in-party disputes no unified support was given to the paper on behalf of the leadership, but primarily because of the 25,000 million deficit, which could not be further increased by the party.

But this pressure is not only felt by the communist press. One of the most famous journals of American press

history, the *Washington Star*, also died because of economic bankruptcy in the summer of 1981, after several large companies had expressed their displeasure by withdrawing their advertising. President Reagan wrote a moving obituary in the final edition, emphasizing the merits of the 128-year-old journal, describing the sorrow of the readers, and festively declaring that freedom of the press has been a first principle in America since the Republic was set up, only he forgot to put the question: how is it that this "first principle" can be so much prone to the aggression of economic forces?

If I am in America (and if I chose the genre of reporting on experiences) let me recall a dispute of one of my respected North American colleagues, a former compatriot of ours, with Dezső Sulyok. My colleague, as he explained it, became cross with Sulyok who had recently emigrated to the States, because he attacked a senator, who happened to be one of the financiers of the paper. For some time, Sulyok endured the reprimand and then said in indignation: „Excuse me, how do you speak to the future prime minister of Hungary...?” As this personal argumentation did not have the necessary effect, the self-appointed premier referred to the elevated principles of the freedom of the press, parried by my colleague in the following way: “The press is free, but I am an editor and I must not be a fool to cut off the branch of the tree under myself.”

The conclusion is obvious: the journalist in the West is only independent as long as he is not crossing the interests of the owner of the paper. For example, a French communist journalist can boldly criticize bourgeois politicians and even the government, particularly if it is also bourgeois, but he cannot do it, let us say, in the dispute of Ellenstein contra Marchais, inciting the party paper against the latter. And vice versa: a journalist of a bourgeois paper can freely mock Marchais, but when he produced a not

very complimentary cover about Giscard d'Estaing during the presidential election, the owners of the *Express* did not hesitate for a second to dismiss their undisciplined editor.

With a little satirical exaggeration it could be said that occasionally there is less hope in the West to expound one's independent opinion than anywhere else in the world. When a few years ago, after an interval of a quarter of a century, I again visited Paris, I had to laugh at the statue of Voltaire, because a police notice was stuck up forbidding the display of posters and graffiti, and an unknown contestor drew up the following dramatic exclamation: "Dirty buggers: we're not even allowed to express our opinion on the wall!"

This exclamation sounded quite comical, because if anywhere, then in Paris the press offers a colourful palette for the opinions of the various political parties. Thinking it over more thoroughly, I had to agree that this graffiti philosopher may have been correct, because strongly bound opinions are expressed in the ruling journals of the press and those who do not agree with any of them are compelled to keep silent or save the world in ephemeral tabloids appearing in small numbers, therefore, remaining ineffective. Or if they do not satisfy themselves with this, then they can complain on the forbidden forums of walls and pavements, cautiously keeping the necessary distance from the next *flic*.

During the intoxicating days of "the people's spring", Petöfi may have believed that the nation that has a free press owns the future. But we already know countries in which the system of free information is not used to ensure the future of the nation, but to make the present rigid, where information is not the wonderful implementation of human rights, only a means of control in the system, moreover, the mechanism through which the masses are manipulated. Historic dreams frequently materialize as the caricature of themselves—the Western peak of free information today is the television in

America, which on the one hand provides an enormous amount of information about the world, and on the other hand, does its utmost to demote the viewers into infantile puppets, who are unable to independently elaborate the received information.

If Vasvári was correct that no "perfect republic" had existed up to his time, we can also say that we have not yet seen perfect freedom of the press either.

I believe if the reader—interested in the freedom of the press—reached this point, he/she has become suitably irritated: "but there is a difference, namely, that even the ministers can be criticized there, while here they are untouchable as long as they are fulfilling their post!" I must admit that there is a difference. I can say point blank, that our assignment is not to keep quiet about this particularity (which would be unsuccessful anyway) and not the overexplanation (which is even less effective), but its gradual elimination. For this we need to think in history, instead of abstract categories, and to comprehend: if today in France the press can reflect the diversity of contrasting opinions, this is not the accomplishment of some eternal ethic order, but the historic result of class struggles.

### A bit of history

It is time to ask the reader to participate in the evocation of the past.

As it is known, the press has not always existed, therefore, it can be said that both the press and its freedom are "historic" categories. For the sake of simplicity, let us stop at the "*ancien régime*", swept away by the great revolution. This royal absolutism, observed from our 20th century experiences, was not such a terrible regime as regarded by the enlighteners. The compulsory excursions of Didero, Voltaire and other authors to various prison fortresses lasted only a short

time, and did not recall the treatment of the inquisition, during which the appropriate notion of the religion of love had been promoted with burning tongs by qualified paters. However, according to human nature, you feel that suffering unbearable which concerns you, therefore, the enlighteners desperately struggled for the freedom of thought, against censorship.

Not much later, after the rebels seized the Bastille, which was also a symbol of the oppression of the freedom of speech, the Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen defined the "free communication of thoughts and opinions as one of the most valuable rights of man": "every citizen is free to speak, write and print!" Even if not without antecedences, the victorious French bourgeois declared the principle of the free press more effectively than any earlier revolution had done. This was a major deed, even if referring to the internal contradictions of the principle, the paragraph also warns that everybody is responsible "for the abuse of freedom in cases defined by law."

Initially the importance of this closing warning was not clear. On the contrary, everything seemed to be so natural and simple: the press and its freedom were bound in wedlock, and it was sufficient to declare this marriage and everything developed in the finest manner; the cause of the king is also protected by the newspapers, one is edited by the highly talented Rivarol, and the various democratic trends also publish newspapers and from Brissot to Desmoulins, moreover to Marat, people earlier unknown developed their papers into major powers. The large pictorial revolution history by Furet and Richet contains an etching depicting bright newspaper vendors and shiny eyed newspaper buyers, the whole scene reflects God's peace. It could have been said, if the concept was already known at that time, that the peaceful co-existence of opinions had been accomplished.

It seems as if the multitude of trends presuggested the press of present-day France—a hundred different voices and trends here and there. But the idyll did not last long. Because nothing had yet been decided since the siege of the Bastille, only the letters fought, the main forces boiling at the depth of society had not yet clashed. As the court, the aristocracy and the clergy could not put up with the loss of their privileges and as the bourgeoisie and the people had no reason to satisfy themselves with semisolutions, the real struggle started. The more sharp the struggle of the classes, the more the revolutionary power limited freedom in general and within this the freedom of the press in particular. It had good reasons for this: inside the country—civil war, outside the country—the attacking foreign enemy. The revolution could not permit itself the luxury that its enemies should turn the weapon of the press against it.

In 1793, the Convention approved the first constitution of history, which was fully democratic and ensured rights for the people they had never possessed before, but only to immediately suspend its validity for the duration of the struggle. The Committee of Public Safety did not have enough experience in governing, its apparatus occasionally broke down, but its intentions with regard to the press were unambiguous: instead of the free clashing of opinions, it strived to limit and control the publication of opinions.

Part of the truth is that the revolutionary masses did not wish to maintain the freedom of the press either. The Committee of Public Safety was not yet set up when two days after the overthrow of the king, the constitutional monarchist *Journal de Paris*, the paper which published the articles by the poet Chénier, was suspended and in the evening was already burnt in the streets. Two weeks later, a counter-revolutionary journalist was placed under the guillotine and Chénier, who in contrast to our knowledge was not a man of the republican Gironde, but



was a constitutional monarchist, had to flee. He was hiding for a long time, but did not escape his fate—a few days before the downfall of Robespierre, he ended under the guillotine: he paid for his articles with his life. According to György Lukács, the great revolution was “justified” to execute Chénier. I am not an expert on law, but politically I cannot accept that in any situation, newspaper articles should be answered with the guillotine.

However, once this method was introduced, its implementation was difficult to be limited: after the royalists, the deviating revolutionaries followed. The greatest journalist of the revolution, the “Voltaire of the street”, Camille Desmoulins also ended on the scaffold.

A reason for his death was the struggle that he launched in his paper for the restoration of the freedom of the press. Here is one of his arguments: “A year ago, we were justified in mocking the alleged freedom of the English, because they still have no full freedom of the press; but today where is a benevolent man who would dare to compare France to England with regard to freedom of the press? Just look how boldly the *Morning Chronicle* attacks Pitt and the war manoeuvres! Who is the journalist in France who would dare to reveal the blunders of our committees, generals, Jacobins, ministers and councils, similarly to the opposition airing the blunders of the British government? And I, who am a Frenchman, I—Camille Desmoulins—should not be as free as an English journalist?”

By the end of 1793, Desmoulins launched the *Vieux Cordelier*. Before printing it—it is worth emphasizing this—he showed the first number of the journal not only to his comrade Danton but to his former soul-mate, Robespierre, the “The Incorruptible” who did not protest against it. Moreover, when on the left-wing of the revolution, voices were raised against the conciliatory tone of the paper, Robespierre protected his former friend for some

time: “. . . he is a child who demix with bad company. His papers have to be liquidated . . . and his person has to be retained. I suggest that his papers should be burnt.”

“*Brûler n’est pas répondre . . .*” Burning is no answer—Desmoulins sharply responded, and Robespierre, who was used to being praised, became grim upon the immortal words of Voltaire. He was no longer the man who tolerated such a tone. Desmoulins’ guilt—if there existed any, it could be regarded today as incitement or a press offence—was blown up into a conspiracy during the Danton trial. The trial became a cause of Robespierre’s downfall: “Danton’s blood is choking you” — he was told, when during Thermidor he tried to defend himself in a hoarse voice.

Of course, this was not the main cause of Robespierre’s downfall. The conspirators of the Convention believed that Robespierre’s terror government was no longer necessary—after the victory at Fleurus, time had seemed to come to lead the revolution back to the main road of the bourgeoisie. The bourgeoisie again discovered the slogan of the freedom of the press: “*Liberté illimitée de la presse*”—in this way Fréron demanded an unlimited freedom of the press.

And it was not only the bourgeois politician who thought in this way, but Babeuf the communist also set up a newspaper under this title: *Journal de la Liberté de la Presse*. Soon he found out that the battle had not yet come to an end, consequently, the day of freedom had not yet arrived. When in his paper, renamed as *Tribun du Peuple* he started to attack the Thermidorian bourgeoisie, he was arrested. Although he was soon freed, he continued his struggle and after so many alleged conspiracies, he really got into a conspiracy for the victory of the Equals, and he was again arrested and tried by a tribunal.

For a long time, nothing was left from the freedom of the press, because to escape from the crisis, the bourgeois-

sie escaped to a "sword" and Bonaparte did not fuss around with writers and journalists—he did not like and did not endure criticism. Shall I continue the lesson? More and more rebellions—including the 1830 revolution, which broke out because of the strict press law of Charles X—and then, since the 1870s the bourgeois democracy started to be consolidated, with minor relapses, but finally produced the present press relations. Perhaps it is unnecessary to draw the conclusion: the freedom of the press is not a matter of a single declaration, but can only be the achievement of a lengthy historic struggle fought for the enfolding and consolidation of a social system.

In the meantime, as long as this target is not firmly captured, the freedom of the press only appears as a Chimera in historic moments, only to disappear again: the dreams of the enlighteners came true, but only for months and with the help of this freedom, Robespierre seized power, but was immediately compelled to give it up, then the Thermidorians again put limitless freedom of the press on their banner, but it soon became clear that they did not regard it as being valid for Babeuf—and so on. The whole thing weirdly resembles a humoresque by Frigyes Karinty: the person who tries to push up the tram speaks in a completely different tone from the one who is already up on the tram, and wishes to keep the other pushers back with all his force . . .

### The dilemma of the "perfect"

The revolutionaries only "made" the revolution, which finally demolished the best of them, so that they had no time to think about the lesson of their own deeds. Robespierre's successors and followers, the revolutionaries of the 19th century believed with few exceptions that absolutism could be overthrown with a single blow and the freedom rights, including that of the press, could be "declared".

It would be difficult to even indicate what sources nourished Petőfi's belief in freedom, but a mention should be made about his poem *Az országgyűléshez* (To the National Assembly), which echoed the illegally printed book by Mihály Táncsics: "The views of a prisoner about the freedom of the press" in 1844 and 1846, similarly to the Petőfi poem, expected the law about the freedom of the press from the National Assembly and both works expected this as the "first" (!) task of the National Assembly. "Hungarians! If your souls are not moved by fashion—this is how Táncsics argued—pass only one or two laws at an assembly session and at the present session the first should be: 'In our Hungarian homeland, the press should be perfectly free for ever, for every citizen of Hungarian tongue'."

Thus, Táncsics knew only one limitation of the "perfect" freedom: he excluded the non-Hungarian tongued citizens of the Hungarian homeland from the eternal human right which in fact he deduced directly from God: „This is not a deprivation of right concerning the foreign tongued citizens; they do not lose what they do not now possess.” (In fact they did not possess any rights.) The argument is a bit pharisaical, but for us it is interesting that this is the only momentum which reveals that Táncsics fears for the freedom of the press and for the social transformation which originates from it. The history of the great French revolution is behind him and he does not think that it is not only the foreign nationalities that can misuse the freedom of the press, but also, for example, the monarchy, the party of the aristocracy . . .

Táncsics was an original, but very naive thinker, and Petőfi was not a theoretician, even if occasionally some people try to depict him as such. Their illusion cannot be explained with the weakness of their understanding of the situation—the recognition of the complicated contradictions of the freedom of the press was not in their

interest, because they required the illusion to fight and to sacrifice themselves for the cause. A sensible creature cannot risk its life for a relative value, only for something "perfect"—for heavenly or earthly paradise. The experiences of others are in vain, it seems that one can only learn from one's own lesson.

Another source of the illusion of the freedom of the press was an even more powerful illusion—the deep belief of the great enlighteners that man is a sensible creature and once he recognizes the truth, he accepts it as his own. And then from ruler to the simplest peasant, everybody will happily live on in the most sensible social order. Man, however, does not primarily act according to his intellectual considerations, but according to interests defined by his social existence and according to the instructions of mythologies taught by the ruling institutions of society. One or two aristocrats can be persuaded to distribute their estates, but not even the combined logic of a thousand Voltaires and Tánscsics can turn the entire class of the aristocracy against themselves. If the revolution attacks them, they will defend themselves, they will launch a counter-attack and will also use the "perfect" freedom of the press as their weapon. Similarly to how it happened in the French revolutions.

In his booklet, Tánscsics wanted to make it believed that the free word would always maintain faith and through this, "legal order". This argumentation is also illusory, because it presumes that the power can be convinced about something which is not in its interest; and it is also propagandistic: it wishes to convince the rulers not to be afraid of the freedom of the press, for not this, but much rather, the opposite will lead to revolution.

Whether Tánscsics took his argument from Voltaire's philosophy lexicon or from other sources, the idea undoubtedly originates from the enlightenment. In his excellent little dialogue

about "The Freedom of Thinking", Voltaire's spokesman answered the objection that the free expounding of opinions would lead to an "extreme chaos" in the following manner: „On the contrary. When one participates in a lecture, everybody can freely express their opinions, and peace will not be disturbed; if, however, an unashamed advocate of a bad poet tries to compel everybody to approve of something they regard to be bad, then whistling will be heard and the two parties will call each other names. It is the intellectual tyrants who cause part of the world's misfortunes."

The parable is attractive, but history shows that there are situations when the mere permission of a different opinion "disturbs peace". The stormy periods of revolutions, counter-revolutions and civil wars demonstrate this with plenty of examples.

The enlighteners who faced absolutism could not foresee what would happen after victory; and most of the revolutionaries did not live long enough to draw the conclusions of the struggles—with the innocence of good faith, they stuck to their illusions, even when under the pressure of the circumstances, their deeds refuted their principles.

The dilemma of the freedom of the press in the bourgeois revolutions was expressed with a symbolic force by the fate of Albert Pálffy. In 1849, in the last period of the Hungarian War of Independence, the government launched a case against the publication *Marczius Tizenötödike* (Fifteenth of March): the revolution ended in a way that the editor of the newspaper whose title recalled the first day of the revolution, the declaration of the freedom of the press, had to follow the fleeing revolutionary government as a prisoner let free on his word of honour . . .

It is not only impossible to rule innocently, as it was said by Saint-Just—the revolutionary loses the innocence of illusions when he achieves the freedom of the press only to immediately limit it.

### The loss of innocence

The first exception among the holy revolutionaries of the past century, who could give up his illusions in at least one or two things with merciless consistency was an Italian—French pre-communist, a direct descendant of the great Michelangelo, named Philippe Buonarroti. His mysterious figure was always kept in mind by scholars, but among the researchers of the history of socialism (because of varied reasons which cannot be analyzed here) distinguished attention has been paid to him only since the mid—20th century.

In his main work *Conspiration* dated 1828, he recalled the story of the Babeuf conspiracy in a way that in the meantime he commented on the great revolution and expounded why he regarded communism as necessary, as a system which would finally eliminate the contradictions of society. From the point of view of our theme, it is important that among the revolutionaries he was the first who dared to express a determinative lesson of the class struggles: in the interest of victory “the natural enemies of equality have to be deprived of the means of misleading, terror, and pressure” because “extraordinary and compulsory regulations are indispensable” to introduce the great change.<sup>1</sup> All this obviously includes the principle to limit the right of publication, but what is more interesting, Buonarroti also comprehended the press of the post-victorious new social order with considerable strictness. In his opinion, the principles submitted to the revolutionary committee with regard to the “freedom of the press” emphasized how important printing was in the education of the people and in the gradual improvement of public order, etc., and on the other hand, they wanted to ensure the services of the press in such a way that “the justice of equality and the people’s rights should not again be risked . . .” saving the republic from “endless and mournful disputes”.

Therefore, already the first paragraph formulated in the following manner: “Nobody should express an opinion which is contradictory to the holy principles of equality and the sovereignty of the people.”<sup>2</sup>

This means that everybody is free to accord with the ruling principles, but nobody is allowed to dispute them. In fact, the law about the freedom of the press puts an end to the freedom of the press in its first paragraph. The other points are not interesting, but perhaps it is worth quoting the fourth paragraph: “Every document can be printed and distributed if according to the protectors of the national will, their publication can be useful for the republic.”<sup>3</sup>

Such a concept of the freedom of the press would have been perfectly unacceptable for Petőfi if he had known it. (This also indicates how the alleged buonarrotism of the poet, a theory born in our country, is unfounded—but this is now unimportant.) However, it may have made those revolutionaries think who tried to move away from romantic illusions towards the realistic necessities of social action. Unfortunately Marx (who it can be proved knew Buonarroti’s basic book) only dealt in detail with the freedom of the press at an early age—he was an unwavering supporter of it—and in his later works, not wanting to provide a recipe for future revolutions, he did not analyze the role the press could play during the transitory form of state he described as the dictatorship of the proletariat, or later, after the accomplishment of communism. (One can draw the conclusion how irresponsibly those argue who wave the views of young Marx against the present press practice, generously omitting the examination whether they can be in accordance with the later theory of the dictatorship of the proletariat.)

Buonarroti was sincere, which cannot be said in every case about later revolutionaries. For example, Auguste Blanqui whose courage and unwaver-



ing consistency of principle can only be admired, sent a message on March 2, 1848 on behalf of the Central Republican Society to the new revolutionary government, and in the first of his 9 points he demanded "full and limitless freedom for the press". The second point demanded the completely free distribution of the works of thought "without any restriction" etc.<sup>4</sup> The spirit of the fierce revolutionary message can be appreciated, however, some facts have a disturbing effect: it is known that Blanqui was well aware of the history of the great revolution, it was not a secret for him that "limitless" freedom of the press was the slogan of the Thermidorian Fréron, while the pre-communist Buonarroti was of a completely different opinion, and at the depth of his soul he went along with Buonarroti, after all, the fact he became a communist was mostly due to Buonarroti's book . . . It can be said that a new chapter started with Blanqui in the history of the freedom of the press: opposite the ruling order, the removal of the barriers are openly demanded, but there is not a momentary doubt that after the victory, the winners will not hesitate to erect new barriers.

Making a longer jump in history, I cannot resist quoting an old dispute between Révai and Illyés. "In one of his articles—Révai said in 1938—Gyula Illyés wrote in connection with a measure of the Hungarian government directed against the freedom of the press that he protected the freedom of the press, but only with great disgust. As if the protection of the freedom of the press had meant the protection of the bourgeois press and not the protection of people's rights! One cannot protect common law with disgust, only with enthusiasm. Should we explain to the biographer of Petőfi that it is worth being enthusiastic about the freedom of the press?"<sup>5</sup>

The above quotation that appeared as a footnote was left in later editions of the book, and it can be read in the 1949 collected works of Révai. The

question is what would the author have done if at that time somebody in fact had become enthusiastic by his encouragement and let us say had raised his voice for the enforcement of the rights of the innocently persecuted. It is not difficult to find out, for we can remember what the answer was to those who—in much slighter affairs—dared to raise their mild voice.

Although for a time I could keep a close eye on Révai, I could not say how much of his anti-Illyés polemy was mere tactics or how sincerely he believed that after the overthrow of Horthy, the enthusiastic era of the freedom of the press would follow. The fact is that he promised it. And not only him, but the leader of the party, Rákosi did the same, when in 1943 he sent a message home through the *Igaz Szó* with the title "What is Hungarian democracy?", and defined its first criterion as follows: „The indispensable condition of democracy is that every stratum of the Hungarian people be able to freely speak and freely utter their opinion. There is no democracy without a completely free press, free of all censorship and the intervention of the attorney and police.”<sup>6</sup>

Did Rákosi know that he was repeating the principle of Petőfi and Tánácsics, when he defined the first criterion of democracy as the complete freedom of the press? Possibly. Most certainly he had to know that the history of socialism had not provided evidence about the complete freedom of opinion for "every stratum". He had to be well aware of this, since during the few months of the "year of the turn" he was able to transform the free press relations, so impressive during the first years of the people's democracy, according to his instructions, to befit the requirements of a model precisely known by him . . . After this transformation, even the weather forecast for May Day had to be adjusted to the interests of the organizers of this red-letter day, "more colourful than anything before it",

and this was the most modest shortcoming of the mass media in the first half of the 1950s.

### Ars publicistica

That press could not be different from what it was, because its issues of principle were never discussed in a theoretical, only in a propagandistic manner, and the historic conditions did not favour the clarification of principles, and even less the actually free information.

Since that time many things have happened and undoubtedly a development has taken place in this respect, at least the older generation can list firm examples. Such example is the fact that recently we have been debating mass communication not only with an agitative and propagandistic purpose, but more and more frequently with the aim of theoretical clarification. We can now draw from our own historic experiences that the freedom of the press is not a matter of festive declaration or paragraphs of law, but a historic process in which every interested party has to do its own task every day. If Lenin defined cognizance as an infinite approach to reality, let us comprehend the freedom of the press as a process of development during which we approach to an increasingly free and true formulation of reality we get to know better and better.

As these expoundings strived to formulate individual experiences (as history is an experience for me in which I am interested as much as in my own past), let me summarize my personal conclusions in a few points. Although Stalin's and Mao's works indicate that reality is too complex and cannot be summarized in points, nevertheless, let me point out at least some of the principles I follow in my press work.

1. As all the newspapers and periodicals (excluding the church publica-

tions, which from my point of view can be neglected) in Hungary are in the possession of the party, the state, or enterprises representing the interests of the state, to take employment in these organs (also) means to agree to represent these interests.

In such a situation, a literate can behave decently in two different ways: if he sees that there is a possibility for complete harmony or at least for an honest compromise between his own conviction and the interests he has to undertake, then he can participate "in the mass media". If these "mass media" are strictly in contrast to his views, then he can either keep quiet, or express his resistance in the form of samizdat literature, undertaking the risk. If he does the latter, I may not feel solidarity with his principles, but I am ready to appreciate his logical or moral courage. However, I will regard it as immoral if somebody undertakes a state service and has not the slightest intention to fulfil his obligations.

Of course, this not only refers to editors. It would be a self-delusion to believe that it is moral if somebody for "principled reasons" or "moral intransigence" rejects the available system of information, but as an author he allows himself to support this press with his participation; ethically it is even more contradictory if somebody takes steps against the interests of the state in a state organ for state remuneration. Such interpretation of morals is too loose for me, because under the title of autonomy they preach the most subjective moral relativism.

2. The representation of the state's interests cannot lead to the accomplishment of mere propaganda tasks. It is not my business to be the PR boss of the existing, but to support everything which leads from the present towards the future. In the given case, the best form of support is if I criticize that which obstructs this progress.

Many years ago, Lenin compared the workers of the party press and

party literature to wheels and cogs. But this concept reflected the cruel relationships of illegal times, and simply it cannot be applied to the period when, after the overthrow of absolutism, the new order had to be set up or further constructed. Mihály Farkas and company tried to make cogs of us, but they soon failed, for they tried to keep an anachronistic principle alive.

In a similar manner, it is not up-to-date if we reduce the activity of the press into the triple principle of propaganda, agitation and organization. We know from our own bitter experiences that objective information and social criticism are indispensable, their lack can cause damage to such an extent that both have to be placed among the main assignments of the press.

As an editor I feel happy if I am attacked simultaneously from two sides: from the right by the supporters of the "autonomous" intellectuals, and from the left by those who would like to degrade the press into a common means of propaganda, because they are afraid of democratic development. I listen to Attila József, who could proudly say: "My leader leads me from my inside". However, he also said: "We stand up for it, like a chimney, to be seen . . ." Those who only demand internal lead would turn the press and literature into an army of thousands and thousands of irresponsible individualists. Those who only demand standing up, unintentionally reveal that they consider journalists to be servants or mercenaries.

3. Criticism is indispensable, but it cannot be separated from the entirety of press tasks. It is worth speaking about this, because recently it seemed as if some of our colleagues had invented a particular division of labour between the press and the state power: they believe that their only task is to reveal mistakes. They imagine themselves to be paid whippers, who ironically smile when the complete truth is asked from them. (Recently, we have

received some theoretical instruction declaring that the demonstration of "positive" phenomena may decrease the effect, therefore, it can be omitted.)

The idea of the division of work according to which the state and party commit the mistakes and we the press (or literature or art) chastise, thus taking the pose of courageous heroes is mistaken from many aspects. First of all, from the philosophical point of view, because notwithstanding a few rare cases, the "mistakes" are parts of an organic reality and cannot be separated from the "positive" features of existence. Occasionally, they can be emphasized for the sake of sharper analysis, but a *l'art pour l'art* discussion of reprehensible phenomena cannot be made into a system. Morally this is not an attractive process either (see my above expounding about the agreement), but its weakest point is that politically it is not realistic: the resulting practice can only have a bad end and only promotes the cause of those who merely expect the press to constantly advertise "positive features" and at the maximum expect alibi criticism from the press.

4. But is there any fixed point among all these aspects for the newspaper maker (writer, and editor) to morally protect himself? I do not believe this is so difficult as it seems, only the main rule has to be adhered to: who is proud of himself, must not consciously lie. He may make a mistake, which he is compelled to remedy. One must not be afraid of this, for in our countries it is not the journalist who commits the gravest and most dangerous mistakes. I must admit there are certain issues I cannot discuss here in merit and do not wish to deal with them by principle.

But is it not a lie to keep quiet about certain things, and only speak about those which we can discuss according to our conviction? As a moral maximalist, one could define such an attitude as a lie. Nevertheless, on my part I accept the principle of the

greatest Hungarian editor. According to Kossuth: "I understand if my pen cannot write about everything I think, but it cannot write anything else than what I feel and think."

**The case of the outspoken poet  
with the rude general**

Is there a compromise in the moral of the above slogan? It can hardly be denied. For example, Petőfi's ethics were much more rigorous when he thundered in the following way:

If you are a man, be a man,  
Have principle and belief,  
And give sound to it, even  
If you pay with your blood for it.

There is no one in world literature who would have strived more desperately for the unity of word and deed than Petőfi, but fortunately he did not conceive his own guiding principle as an amok runner. This is indicated by his affair with the military leadership, which was also connected with the question of the freedom of the press. He translated into Hungarian and published a letter upon the instruction of Bem, in which the Polish leader criticized General Vécsey, not without reason, but in a very hard manner.

Naturally, the leaders of the army and the government recognized Petőfi's style, and immediately thought that the poet had not only translated, but had also formulated the accusing report, and naturally without any investigation started to believe their own suspicion. György Klapka, the newly appointed deputy minister of defence, questioned Petőfi in Debrecen because of the "misuse of the press", and accompanied by rough gestures, doubted the true explanation of the poet. So Petőfi resigned.

For two days he fumed alone, then he added a second, more detailed letter to his resignation, intending it as an

ultimatum. In this, he cryptically reminded Klapka not to imagine that he was the "absolute ruler of Petőfi as the Habsburgs of the Nation, who exercised pre-censorship over it", then he expressed his demand: "... in order to verify myself I have to write about my meeting and discussion with you, and when I write it I will write it very sharply, because my pen is as sharp as any sword in the army..." Appropriately describing what results such a Petőfi opus could have on Klapka, he continued: „Do you want this? If yes, then I agree, if you don't want it, there is a possibility to prevent the publication of these sad affairs..." He demanded the publication of his promotion as a colonel and the official permit of his leave.

Of course, Klapka did not feel like agreeing to the ultimatum, and hurried to complain about the poet to Görgey. Moreover, with not so rare obtuseness of the military he also listed among Petőfi's crimes that he had "twice offended the respect towards his superiors in public papers and was not ashamed of himself to publish a satire about our highly respected grey haired minister of defence".

After this, Petőfi—as the captive of his own words—should have published the whole incident. Particularly because he read the letter he had written to Klapka to several officers, who urged the poet to enter into a duel or demand a public apology. But Petőfi did not write about his meeting with Klapka and did not publish his cruel poem entitled *Egy goromba tábornokhoz* (To a rude general). Why did not he fulfil his threat? According to the textologists, "we do not know". Neither do I, and I do not want to be wiser than the wise, but in my opinion, there must have been a simple reason: the poet was aware of the fact — as he wrote to Klapka—that they should not fight each other "but with the enemy" and this is why he decided to remain quiet. He meant it when he said that the sounding of his principle and belief was worth more than his



life, but he could not regard it as higher than the interest of the country.

Above the title of the manuscript "To a rude general" another title can be seen—deleted: Extreme peril to the homeland. Whether this was meant to start the poem about Klapka, or was the title of another planned poem cannot be known, but it makes it clear how the awareness of national peril captivated Petőfi already in May 1849. And therefore he—the hero of the freedom of the press, the example of the consistency of principle—regarded a higher interest to be more important than his pledge in the ultimatum, than his persecuted honour and the right of free speech.

Of course, we should not mix this giant of character into our petty-compelled compromises. I do not recall this famous event to provide an absolute for anybody for his own compromises. This case indicates, with the example of the most authentic man,

that the freedom of opinion cannot be regarded as the non plus ultra of human values, not to be restricted by anything.

In everyday life, and particularly in our present peaceful world, when we do not have to face life and death risks, we can consider Kossuth's above quoted slogan as a moral hand-rail, if we do not put up with the situation that we cannot write everything we think, and if we ceaselessly strive to push the walls further and further, and extend the frontiers of the word with the overthrow of a taboo from time to time.

The publicist or editor who only follows the trodden paths may carry out socially useful work, but we can only find the final moral confirmation of our profession if we participate in the many-century-long struggle — as far as our talent and relations allow it— which takes man nearer to the sensible and possible freedom.

#### Notes

- <sup>1</sup> BUONARROTI, Ph.: *La conspiration pour l'égalité dite de Babeuf*. Paris, 1957, Vol. I, p. 45.  
 Op. cit. Vol. I. p. 290.  
 Ibid, p. 210.  
 BLANQUI, L. A.: *Ecrits sur la Révolution*. Oeuvres complètes I. Paris, 1977. p. 161.  
 RÉVAI, József: *Válogatott történelmi írások*. (Selected historical writings). Budapest, 1966, Vol. II. p. 140.  
 RAKOSI, Mátyás: *A magyar jövőért* (For the future of Hungary). Budapest, p. 213.

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*Géza Páskándi*

# The Free Press and Synonyms of Freedom

## 1.

We would only be groping in darkness if we separated the issue of free press from the matter of other constitutionalized rights such as the freedom of speech, of conscience, of religion and the freedom of thought.

Moreover, we must make a distinction between the concept of what is called constitutional freedoms and the notion of freedom in a philosophical and psychological sense.

Third, but not least, we should examine the very term "freedom" in its historico-philosophical context.

Of course, we have to confine ourselves to a general and simplified discussion of the subjects mentioned above, even at the inevitable risk of ignoring certain important, perhaps even crucial nuances.

## 2.

In its constitutional formulation, freedom of the press means that the views of the people, of groups, of whole social strata and classes, are given expression in print, on the radio and on television. Publicity means a space for publication as well as an opportunity for views to spread and to influence people. The freedom of the press is the written form of the freedom of assembly, i.e. the right of free assembly for pieces of writing. Or, in another way, it is the freedom of as-

sembly in writing, in print, in pictures, on tape etc. For it is views that gather here freely, and express themselves freely, rallying friends or foes.

A spoken opinion (expressed within a small group) can thus take a more permanent form (while words, which are only uttered, and not recorded, "fly away" as the Latin saw has it). And in a more preservable form, it is easier for words to become part of history, since they can become a fixed tradition, a document and thus a catalyst for public life and public opinion in the future.

In the criminal code, words spoken in groups of people can be grounds for charges of conspiracy, subversive activity, incitement to disaffection etc. But it is more difficult to prove someone guilty of such things when the words occur in a (licensed) newspaper, for such a publication lacks, for example, a fundamental trait of conspiracy, namely, secrecy. Words that are not preserved in the press or other media, can easily be manipulated through eyewitnesses or eavesdroppers, in a way that whoever utters the views gets the worst of it. In turn, written and recorded words can be more deliberate, so there may be no mitigating circumstances. Moreover, publishers also attest to such words, since publication means at least partial agreement.

It is precisely this state of things that gives rise to censorship. If something is to be preserved, it should be controlled in advance. For that which is spoken can be controlled

only afterwards (through witnesses). In this case, listening to the suitable witnesses is a kind of control post factum, while in press censorship, preventive witnesses are employed. (Censorship is prohibitive, while the freedom of the press is repressive, to wit it threatens to retaliate afterwards for any offences against the press law.)

From this apparently not-quite-negative characteristic of censorship results the fact that certain people almost idealize this institution, and look upon it as something that is not very desirable, but good in an unpleasant way (like a medicine). Or they term it "a necessary evil" . . . and this is not necessarily meant ironically or cynically. Can it be said, however, that the abolition of censorship can do more harm than good? What is made up for on the rounds, is lost on the swings? Definitely not. This would mean the acceptance of an overinsured existence instead of a venturesome, creative (and hence, somewhat more dangerous) way of life.

The idealization of censorship, which is serious to a certain degree, also means the reversion of creative responsibility. It only reinforces the old image, long ago fixed in the public mind by which the artist, the writer, the journalist, and even the scientist is depicted as Bohemian, capricious, "an eternal dissident", unaccountable, mad, scarcely responsible for his or her own deeds—and consequently, as someone in need of censorship. So the abolition of censorship eventually (and in our country, certainly) involves the appreciation of creativity and of human opinion. It involves a mature mentality, personal freedom and also the fact that creative intellectuals are considered "accountable" — only too accountable. Our opponents could argue that the abolition of censorship may just as well be interpreted in a quite different way. For example: it is the occasion for some people to create the illusion that there is no intellectual opposition at all; that any creative intellectual views things exclusively

in his or her society's general perspective. In other words, the abolition of censorship can somehow compromise the creative intellectual. That is to say, he or she is "so harmless", "acquiescent", so "devoid of opinions" that there is no need for censorship. In many people's eyes, that which is prohibited is not only of higher value, but also something synonymous with truth.

Now this is to say: that the mere existence of censorship can bring intellectual opposition (or someone's being different, at least in nuances) into the sharp light of evidence. On the other hand, those people who want to exhibit oppositionary behaviour at any cost may eventually arouse suspicion, if no harm befalls them. However, it is also true that within the same range of ideas and ideals, there may be a real multiplicity of ways of thinking. The perception of God in the Reformed Churches is as monotheistic as that of other Christian confessions, or that of Judaism earlier. Similarly, within capitalist society, there is room for many views which may differ not only in nuances, but may even be quite contradictory; yet all agree upon the defense of major private property, capital. Now what conclusion can be drawn from all this? A major idea can become permanent only in its variant. The world is seldom ripe for radical changes; revolution is a fairly rare point in existence. While it is running its course, society, among other things, loses energy. The victims of a revolution survive long in people's memory. So the emergence of new generations, the forgetting of past victims, an extremely bad internal situation, and good external conditions are all necessary for the majority to decide again upon such a fundamental change. This is one of the reasons why periods of reform are much more frequent. Yet even within these, there may be many shades: minute, limited, narrow modifications are marked, extensive renewals which cut to the quick or again slow, measured revolutions.

This difference between reform and

revolution lies not only in the fact that the former aims at a fundamental, radical, and structural change, which the latter does not. Let us list at least some of the essential similarities and differences: 1. In most cases, reform is initiated by the leaders of society, or people who, in certain ways, take part in this leadership (of course, the reform spirit is also a response to signals coming "from below"). 2. Revolution itself does not come entirely "from below", since people who are active in certain spheres of power also take part in it (they can be found chiefly among the leaders of the revolution). 3. We should not forget that the ideological foundation of a revolution is laid by (mostly) the prominent intellectuals of the age, and not by those who are called the ordinary people, who also participate in the fight.

What conclusion is to be drawn from this? More than one. If the serious reform spirit comes "from above", but after many warning signals, the leadership is tardy but fairly receptive. If a wide-spread reform spirit originates from above, and precedes serious warnings like revolts, mass strikes etc. the leadership is politically well-educated, attentive to any faint signals and is honest enough to hold the public good as its purpose, within which everyone can find his or her deserved account. A reform can be beneficial to various groups; the more dynamic and the larger these are, the more lasting the ensuing balance will be. Here and now, our starting point should be this latter formulation, for two reasons: firstly that in some places, it is quite topical and secondly, this is the best way to describe recent policy in our country. (Although it should be said that the most serious mistakes are scarcely ever corrected by those who have made them.)

Let us consider censorship in this context. It would certainly put an end to those distant and sometimes only faint (or isolated) pre-warning signals which are indispensable to a fair leadership. It would insert a mediatory group

(or several strata) between the leadership and public opinion. It would act as a sort of heat insulator for society. All this would result in over-bureaucratization. An open, direct and rapid confrontation of views is by all means in the interest of an honest leadership.

So the abolition of censorship would mean creating a "hot line" between the leadership and public opinion (or the people in general). In our country, this is clearly one of the gains socialist democracy has consolidated. The more direct, vocal, and personal this intellectual confrontation is, the less chance there is to mythify certain people in the role of enemies. If the mediators are fewer in number, different in quality, more objective etc. there can be really productive encounters between the leaders and the public opinion (or those who represent it) and between their views, too. Here is a banal example of the inflation (or the crisis) of interpretation: A manager has four secretaries instead of one. A visitor arrives in the office. He says to the secretary in the first room: I want to see your boss about my flat. The secretary reports his words, to the next secretary, with an opinion and an interpretation attached; and so on. By the time the visitor gets to the boss, the latter has a pre-formed opinion on him. Sometimes leaders themselves do not recognize when and where they have been influenced by others. (The comic version of this story could include a simple "mishearing": the last secretary would announce the visitor's request as "He wants you to see about his flat" which the manager would interpret as a discreet offer of a bribe and refuse to see him altogether.)

The fewer and the better the secretaries, the less the opportunity for error or for misinterpretation. Only those who are afraid to meet the people they represent would employ too many pre-interpreters.

A society with too much mediation is a hot-bed of pomposity and zealotism, quite apart from its propagation

of hollow dignitaries. The reverential bureaucratization of power elevates lucid and rational practice to the heights of sacred rites (of secrets, of "you-cannot-understand-it-anyway"), so the citizen becomes uncertain of his opinions; the result is angst since all measures come from one person or are too impersonal. Both the personality cult and excessive depersonalization favour bureaucracy and the pathological proliferation of mediation. Ultimately both are oppressive, though the cult of personality is more frightening in most cases. This cult is all the more dangerous because it creates an apparent directness ("he is omnipresent") and real indirectness (for in fact, "he" is seen seldom and by a few, apart from public celebrations). Otherwise, he is made "a member of the family" by means of pictures and busts at homes, which is also a deliberate evocation of patriarchal times.

The essence of the freedom of the press is that the leaders of the people receive the necessary preliminary information from untainted, trustworthy sources. Paradoxically though it may sound, the freedom of the press is at least as much in the interest of those in power as in the interest of those who are not directly connected with power. This is especially true of a society like ours, which is intent on removing the last vestiges of exclusion from power.

In this context, it is clear that any idealization of censorship is harmful, because censorship mediates "pre-digested" information.

Here we should mention disguised censorship and self-censorship. In good faith we assume that, at least in our country, there are no censors who are disguised as writers, editors, or critics. This may be proved by the fact that in the press we can find pieces of writing which are just as hard-edged as most pieces published in *samizdat*. (We shall return to this later.) Self-censorship is another matter. It is a result of social conditioning, a psychic residue of past or half-past ages within

almost everybody. Meanwhile, the more responsibility one must take, the more circumspect one will be. This is all very well, if in a responsible position one has more opportunity to spot the outer limits of private and public courage, and thus, to achieve the maximum. So if a responsible leader wants to notice only that his position demands more caution, and disregards the creative freedom of decision, he is unworthy of public trust.

The freedom of the press also means that we feel strong enough to endure the (non-poisoned) arrows of criticism. We should presume that we are strengthened even by sharp criticism, for it renders our intellectual influence more flexible and more stable. Thus democracy (particularly socialist democracy) becomes everyone's best interest on all levels of society. It guarantees the proper distribution of responsibility.

Another kind of free press could grow out of the multiplicity of opinions in such a way that eventually no-one would take those opinions seriously. This (pseudo) freedom of press resembles the psychiatrist who merely lets the patient ramble on, which may bring about some temporary improvement in the patient's condition, but in the end his condition will grow even more serious. In an *embarras de richesse*, it is the really important views and information that get lost.

In short, the freedom of the press can be complete only if it is consistent with giving an ample (and not excessively polarized) space to the freedom of thought, of conscience, of religion, of speech.

There is no doubt that the meaning of "freedom" as a constitutionalized term highly depends on who formulates it. For every society constitutionalizes its own concept of the freedom of the press, and, as a matter of course, not the concept shaped by another society, with its own communal aims. This is the way it always happens, even if the formulation is not very precise. Thus, the term "freedom of

press" has become a kind of historical pot, in which every cook prepares a disk to his own taste.

We must make an important distinction here. Constitutional rights are not all alike, as far as tradition, degree of realization or security is concerned. The "defence of the homeland" has been included in every constitution for a long time now. It cannot be compared with more recent articles such as, for example, the one on exploitation. The former has become self-evident over the course of time; the latter cannot easily be "brought to a full stop" in reality. The need for an army, and the need for defence cannot be denied by anyone who is rational or not a member of certain religious sects. (The number of troops or quantities of weaponry can be queried.) As for private property, opinions differ. The more recent a constitutional article is, the more it is "yet-to-be-realized" (and to be defended). It is the anticipation of a goal and not the formulation of a solid, now indisputable gain. It is important to keep this in mind when we read in some constitutions that all nationalities, religions etc. have equal rights. The constitution asserts this as an accomplished fact, although it may be, at best, at the stage of public intention (and not all citizens may agree with it). So it is harmful and false to refer to these points as historically accomplished facts, or as solid and sanctioned gains which have long passed the stage of being a goal yet to be reached.

Many consider the free press an accomplished and solid institution, and forget that we have to fight for its constitutional freedom in each and every case (even though it has been provided for by the constitution). Indeed such a view is harmful because it holds the concept of freedom in *general* as something that is ready, something to be taken for granted, which scarcely changes, and is immovable. Freedom is within us, too: in the recognition of possibilities. This also means that instead of looking out for

historical occasions, we should recognize durable opportunities, usable routes for ourselves and for our people. All occasions are ephemeral. Instead, it is advisable to recognize what is necessary, and according to the laws (as Hegel and others have more recently stated it). This rule is remarkable even if we can always contest the essence of *concrete* freedom at a particular time and place.

### 3.

There is no point in telling a fish that has just been landed that it too is free. Or, if it has been thrown into a bathtub: to swim wherever it likes. The freedom to swim is limited for someone who only has a tub or a trough. If I have no sea, I must measure the freedom to swim to the river, the lake, or the pond. This must be emphasized because there have always been demagogic pronouncements about the concept of freedom. It is demagogic not to reckon with the real opportunities, to present as an unlimited opportunity that which is merely hopeful, and, for selfish ends, to arouse urgent hopes in a community, hopes for things which cannot be realized (or which can be realized only much later), with the sole purpose of gathering a following. Yet there is also a counter-demagogy which is no less dangerous. This says: you think your freedom is a sea and you do not recognize it is only the river Tisza. Well, we may answer, you may have forgotten about the Danube! So this attitude idealizes and praises half-heartedness and the lack of ambition. If demagogy "arms" you without foundation, counter-demagogy disarms you. Eventually, in excessive prudence, or in its own interest, it conceals the prospects for improvement. So, if I am viewing it realistically: the freedom to swim (and the permitting of swimming) must always be defined in relation to the widest, longest water within

your domain. We should proceed similarly with the freedom of spirit, with the "unlimited nature" of our activities. After all, those things are unlimited which are so far from us that we can see neither the thing itself nor the limits it conceals. In everyday language it is said that a bird can fly in the sky unhindered. ("Free as a bird".) However, this is only a metaphor, as the bird has to overcome the resistance of the air and its own inner weaknesses. (For example, if it is not in good health or weak from hunger when it flies, the effort relies on inner resources of strength, and the consciousness of purpose provokes the bird to a self-surpassing achievement.)

So this is the nature of freedom. Now let us examine the concept of purpose or destination.

We may ask, for example: is the button free on a coat? How could it be; it has been sewn there, and would only be free if it were able to roll. Well, let us say that the purpose (in this case, the fate destination) of the button, given to it by man, is to be sewn to the coat. A child, who is playing with the button, could well say: all right, but this is not quite true, for what about button games? Thus here we have two valid views of the same thing. If all buttons were sewn to coats, we should deprive children of the pleasure which is nothing else than self-forgetting (a naive, spontaneous experience or form of freedom). But if all buttons were used for games, we should be deprived of the opportunity to button our coats when it is cold.

Freedom is like most other universal values. While I am healthy, I am not conscious of health as a value, at least if there is no sick person around me. This is plainly true too if I am not sick myself. So a value and its appreciation is recognized or becomes increasingly recognized through its absence. If there are buttons on my coat, but I do not button it, I do not feel hindered. But if the button is missing or I am not allowed to button my coat,

this most banal fact can appear as a limitation on opportunity. If I can use my mother tongue anywhere, it never occurs to me that it is an enormous value. If I am forbidden to use it, I realize how great this value is.

Clearly, only in metaphoric consciousness can I credit a button with freedom or unfreedom; for here it is an instrument marked out to a destination or a "calling". Otherwise, all means are strictly subordinated to, and therefore prisoners of, the ends. So only where human beings are their own ends (and not means), can the question of freedom or unfreedom be asked. If I *can* be my own end, I am free. If I cannot, I am not free. But being my own end is not such a simple matter. It does not derive from an egoism that raises me above the world. On the contrary, it proceeds from an egoism which keeps us going and keeps us here in this world. I want my children to be ends for themselves, and also my people to be an end for my children and for itself. Thus freedom becomes a kind of individual and communal (simultaneous) self-centredness, without any pejorative overtones. Rousseau's thesis that "all men are born free and born to be free" is beautiful but questionable. In which way is man born free, and born to be free? Is he totally free when he is born, without inherited unfreedom, or is he born *to* freedom (that is, to achieve freedom as an end)? And are there any real adults who envy the infants' freedom?

A released prisoner does not feel free for a long time because his reflexes of fear are still at work although he is free in everybody else's eyes. Furthermore, those around him make him conscious of where he has come from. So now we can see external intervention again.

Correcting one of Rousseau's maxims, Fichte rightly remarks that only those people can be free who want to liberate the people around them, too. (And consequently, the Marxist dictum is quite relevant: a people which

oppresses other people cannot itself be free.)

So freedom cannot be separated from the psyche, although almost every philosopher has tried to do that in one way or another. The effort is in vain. For the members of a family nurtured on guilt, it is futile to read in the Constitution that they are free. A jailer who has a new or dangerous prisoner, concentrates all his energy on that man. He has no time for anything else whether it be for reading, social intercourse or whatever. Even in his leisure time he is pre-occupied with the question: what is that prisoner doing right now. If this jailer likes routine (as a *form* of freedom), he himself feels unfree, for this case is far from being routine. If he is more "venture-some", then he has an aversion to depressingly dull "ordinary prisoners". For the routine-loving guard, benevolent boredom (routine) is (the feeling of) freedom, because it allows him to be occupied with other things. So in all probability, he does not like his profession, or does not like it very much. Our venturesome jailer, on the other hand, loves his profession and thus wants to escape tedium: he likes only the difficult, risky cases. In both of them we can discern freedom as man's self-centredness. One finds freedom in his work when it has "no problems" so that he can pursue other ends (education or entertainment and so forth); the other wants to gain distinction in his profession (which is also a concrete goal). Thus, if external opportunity and internal will move in one direction, the result is by and large, freedom.

An apparently sophistic question arises at this point. Is the freedom fighter free? Hiding and being persecuted is in contradiction with the concept of freedom even if it means open choice, struggle, and the recognition of necessity. Are these too similar—"I am brave, therefore I am free" or "I am free, therefore I am brave"? Biological faculties, physical force and so on can contribute to our physical freedom,

but lack of culture may add to our intellectual unfreedom. But excessive, paralyzing erudition is also a confinement; sometimes ignorance can set us free. In the above example, courage and freedom can be both cause and effect. (Courage is sometimes only innocence.)

In this matter, we could often find ourselves in vicious circles if we had not introduced the term 'synonyms of freedom'. There are people who feel they are personally free and would like to share it with others, with society. In fact, we always possess a kind of freedom when we struggle for a more intensive, wider and more variegated freedom. Freedom has its own dynamism: after the first step of self-liberation it is impossible not to take the next. Moreover, we must realize and understand that every act of self-liberation is really the liberation of somebody else and the same is true vice versa. If I give freedom to others, I gain for myself that time which hitherto has been spent on observing, watching and guarding other people. If I give myself a free evening, it is clear that my maid also gets one, even if I tell her what her job will be when I am out. She will do the job more quickly than she usually does, for the sake of more free time. Here, absence of control seems to be a synonym for freedom.

Accepting an over-generalized concept of freedom, disregarding human personality, social connections, and history only conceals the existence and possibility of various concrete synonyms of freedom.

Philosophies which study a simon-pure freedom fail in their search for the definition itself, because this search itself reveals the lack of complete and undivided freedom. If freedom were natural, why should I define its norms? Who could argue that water and some other liquids are the best means of quenching thirst? This is evidence. Freedom is not. The reason why it has so many definitions is precisely because there is no single kind of



freedom; similarly infreedom is also multifarious. Not all freedoms are alike. For someone who can choose only from a miserable assortment of goods, a few new goods might mean the experience of freedom. For the opulently rich, ten times as much would mean nothing. Or maybe, as it often happens, they would find ease in a little self-restraint. Turning inwards, they can be their own ends again, no longer dominated by the terror of variety. The sensitivity to freedom is also variable. Some people feel "unfree" if they are not able to make a phone call from their offices to wherever they want. For them, the smallest constraint is oppression. Other people feel free under even the strictest discipline. Still others simply "do not understand" their freedom, and hence, their options. But the freedom of the beginning also differs from the freedom of continuation or the freedom of the conclusion. History shows us that some rights granted at the outset may be gradually withdrawn. So freedom can be modelled as the unity of the funnel and the bottle. In the beginning, freedom doubtless means spaciousness; for man in history, it means the diversity of options, a kind of divergent "fan of lines", which later becomes convergent. This multiplicity of directions may provide us with a sense of endless possibilities; it is like the frenzy and the promiscuous spirit of youth.

Multiplicity and a single direction. Mobility and slowing down or coming to a halt. Settlement after migration. Man does not, and cannot choose the majority of the multitude of freedoms with as many directions. Nor, of course, can he choose all. The initial sense of infinite prospects turns into a sense of finite prospects for man and communities in history. For we have "no time".

So there the relative nature of the synonyms of freedom is not in doubt.

What is the consequence of this high degree of relativity? Should we discard the concept of freedom, or free press, or free thought? Not at all.

Freedom as a concept is another intellectual ready-to-wear article. Although my neck size is 42 centimetres, my shirt can still be tight at the waist if I am more corpulent than the average. The trousers may be long enough, but again, too tight at the hips, although the size is the same. These clothes do not fit anybody "absolutely", but everybody can put them on. With ready-to-wear concepts, we have to find a general definition, which everybody can accept, but we also have to reserve the right of exceptions.

Freedom appears, and can be grasped always in its concrete, historical, social, and existential-psychological synonyms. On the other hand, as every other antinomy, it dwells in our consciousness together with its extreme opposite, even while the latter remains silent. When we talk of beauty, we do not have to mention ugliness, but "invisibly" it is still there as an opposite point of orientation.

Freedom may be roughly measured, but it may also be a receptive freedom, full of shades. Among the surest practical tests of freedom are whether the views of it in a given society can be different, or at least well-shaded, whether such a diversity is permitted, or at least tolerated.

Another possible definition of freedom is the balanced conciliation and security of various claims to freedom in a given society. (This does not mean that an inferior claim to intellectual freedom should not be raised to a higher level. On the contrary! Freedom also means setting up claims to a greater and wider freedom with more shades.) What kind of freedom could a Chinese of Confucius' time claim? Certainly the smallest possible, even from a modern Chinese point of view. People need not only space: they need intellectual space, a space of freedom as well. A person who lives in a far-away country may think of individual freedom in a quite un-European way. And claims for freedom vary even within Europe.

It is also clear that, if the majority happens to have modest claims to freedom, society must not make ill use of this, causing the rest of its members to conform. The freedom of the majority and of the minority is fundamental for the evaluation of any democracy. A majority which oppresses minorities cannot be a real majority, nor can it be essentially free; equally, no minority can be free if it does not strive to liberate the majority. So the maxims of Fichte and Marx can be applied to the minority—majority relationship as well. (It does not matter what kind of majority or minority is in question, since in a society there can be several kinds, according to religion, nationality, political views, taste, sexual abilities and so forth.)

The metaphor of the sea used at the beginning of this chapter is true only with a reservation: if we have no sea, let us invent the sea of intellect in which, in compensation, for the sake of intellectual rehabilitation, among other reasons, man can swim infinitely free. As we have infinite spaces (in a geographical sense), let us invent, for ourselves and for others, the limitless empire of the intellect, where science and arts can develop freely, in endless directions. Let us not dampen our own claims in the whole; but just as we must save some energy in this field, let us use them to ignite an intellectual flame where we can, the way we can and whenever we can.

If I said: "I am free because my truth has won, and now I can dictate to you what should be true and what should not", my concept of freedom would mean the dictatorship of the intellect, the freedom of the individual or collective winner. However, in reality freedom means that everyone has the right to be wrong, and the right, as well as the duty, to admit a mistake without risking capital punishment. (N.B. I am speaking of mistakes, not murder!)

How could we be free if we lingered miserably among infallible gods? How could the likes of Aristophanes have

been free without picking holes at the gods' reputation? Or Galileo and his fellow thinkers, without calling sacred Dogma into question? Or Socrates and his disciples, without the free exchange of opinions, without alarming the groves of silence like so many noisy personifications of Pan?

Conversely, what kind of freedom could we have if nothing were majestic, dignified, or imposing? If everything we saw were simply petty? Another concept of freedom: the simultaneous, balanced, and complementary presence of the euphemistic and blunt spirit. Where social and historical euphemisms proliferate, the spirit of mockery, of scourge, of reduction, and of laying bare (in short, bluntness) must be released; it can be more dangerous if it has to force its way out. Otherwise each minute of our lives might become a temple—or an office. In the opposite case, the most beautiful palaces would look like mud huts to us.

The recognition of the law and the necessity of retaining a balance and letting it prevail is one kind of practical freedom.

#### 4.

After this generalizing digression, let us return to the issue of the free press, casting a glance at history (and on historical promises). Long ago, somewhere else, after a quarrel in an editorial office, I called out in temper: "God, for every paper and editor there seems to be a different freedom of press!" (That is, each individual has his or her own secure background of capabilities or former credit.) As a young man I did not know how right I was. Now that I am sober, I could even extend this pronouncement to writers, journalists, critics, editors, all artists and scientists. For I can remain true to my concept of the synonyms of freedom only if I suppose that to each person belongs a different shade (con-

cept, sense, experience) of freedom. So freedom is also a function of the feeling of danger; it depends on the proximity or distance from danger. Otherwise, for example, we could not talk of humour as liberation and superiority. Everyone has to find freedom within him or herself, too, of course, in accord with the outside world, with events, with situations, with the historical age and its potentialities. As we have already said, freedom is not so much something which has been realized, but rather a relation to opportunity. A community is free if each member is at an equal distance (measured to his or her own capabilities) from the chances for self-accomplishment. Therefore freedom is also a synonym of equality and democracy, while historic freedom is a relation to the promise of new prospects. Someone who is granted everything but does not perceive prospects for renewal, for improvement within and without him or herself, can by no means be called free. He or she cannot feel free either, as the future does not hold any promise for such a person. The same goes for the freedom of smaller or larger communities. Promise, one of the greatest forces of history, stands before all our acts and projects. Thus freedom is only partly a matter of *will*, as promise is always exterior to us.

Now what is this promise, the promise of history and time? First, it is purpose-like, but in a special way: it is an end with guarantees. So freedom is an end and a promise, a mixture of guarantees and risk, in short, a promising end. Through it, we not only promise a purpose to ourselves, and to others, but also give a promise of end which can be achieved at some risk and at the cost of some sacrifices. The relation of the end to chance (to probability) is also the degree of promise. The promise of acts with a purpose grows with the probability of the achievement. As the leaves of a tree contain chlorophyll, and foods contain vitamins, all our purposes, our histori-

cally directed activities (directed to something) contain a degree of promise. This content of promise defines the intensity, the rhythm of our activities. If it is small, only those aim at it who are exceptionally brave or have plenty of time. If there is no promise content, we will not move towards the aims which have been set by ourselves, or by others, unless we are endowed with the stubbornness of those geniuses who want to capture the castles of the impossible. So one feels free because one has an aim and it has a promise; a promise of being able to find the means (which fit the ends) as well as the way which demands the least sacrifice. It depends on the historical situation which way is the most secure: the shortest, or that which is longer, and more complicated. Sacrifice increases the value of the purpose if you achieve it; but only for you, who make the sacrifice. Because someone may just as well criticize you for sacrificing too much for too little. Only in mathematics can I put down the same formula in a shorter or a longer version without being confronted by an immediate moral choice.

This is also true of the rhythm of development, and of improvement and of their perspective detours. Sometimes the shorter way is the path to freedom, sometimes it is the longer one. For an excess of sacrifice diminishes my experience of freedom. Indeed it may even terminate it (especially if the sacrifice seems to be involuntary.) Similarly, I am deprived of the experience of freedom (the experience of acting freely here and now) if I feel that I am not an "end-person", but a "means-person", that I live a "means-existence" and not an "end-existence". The recurring question is to what extent is freedom defined by internal, and external conditions.

Here the interpretation of freedom in (modern) existentialism is somewhat manifoldly, and even contradictory. This derives somewhat naturally from the multiplicity of experiences and synonyms of freedom. According to

Sartre, Dostoevsky's hero Rogozhin is alive and interesting because we do not know whether he will kill his beloved or not, nor can we even make a guess at this because Rogozhin is free. There is no doubt that in this form free action (and before that, choice and decision) is concealed, and enigmatic. But what kind of mystery is this, we may ask, when we know that X is going to choose either solution *a* or solution *b* (he either will or will not kill her). Is an alternative choice properly a secret? And, in particular, what kind of freedom is it? In these cases, probability (as between this or that choice) is simplified to the *extremes*. Heads or tails. (Compare antinomical thinking.)

But how is a man to know whether that which appears to be alternative (or an even wider choice) is not in fact a pseudo-alternative? That the apparent dilemma covers a single option? What is more important, are there no further options?

However, in our lives, the relatively unobstructed choice between two adjacent perils is also perceived as freedom. (This may also be related to what we have said about the evolutionary reformist, and the revolutionary moments of history.) Of course, nobody can deny the presence and the inevitable concept of the degree of freedom. We also know very well that somehow we always choose something. Action and inactivity are both the results of a choice. We choose not only between a vague "good" and "evil", but from several kinds of good and several kinds of evil.

Now let us consider another existentialist view of freedom. In his interpretation of the Sisyphus myth, Albert Camus provides a fine description of the futility of the hero's act, but the problem is not that simple. Sisyphus has a goal (of rolling the rock up the top), but he lacks the promise of being able to do it. There is not external promise for him, nor can he find it within himself either. (For the rock always rolls back). There are no

prospects for him. He is not his own end, simply a tool for a task. The end-person has become a means-person; from end-existence he has been forced into a means-existence. Moreover, he knows that this task is a punishment, inflicted on him by the gods as a sort of mythical hard labour. Camus "imagines" that Sisyphus is "happy". However, happiness is not a conscious freedom, it is only self-oblivion: the temporary forgetting of crime, of guilt, and of indebtedness. Nobody can be free whose basic feeling can be expressed as "I am indebted; I am seriously indebted to someone". Sisyphus is the tool of enforcement. Therefore he cannot be either free or happy, as each of his movements remind him of his crime and of the task imposed on him (by the gods). He can scarcely be concerned with himself, with his own soul, which is bound by the task, by "serving his sentence". (He is not marked however, by that submission to the will of the gods which Endre Ady expresses as "It's all right, Lord".) The guilty man could be free if he saw the promise: "soon I shall repair my fault, and I can start in another direction, towards new aims and new promises". But the promise is not granted to him. Thus, for man, freedom is also promise-like. Furthermore Sisyphus does not know guilt in a modern (or Christian) sense. From what could he be liberated?

What has all this to do with the freedom of the press?

A lot.

The two main judgments on it that have existed are those of overestimation and of underestimation. Lajos Kossuth's words are well-known in Hungary: everything can be taken away except for the free press; and if the press is free, I do not worry about the nation. Before him, Milton said: "Give me the liberty to know, to utter, and to argue freely according to conscience, above all liberties." There is much truth in both (analogous) statements; they sound beautiful, but they are exaggerated. Would there be any

possibility of a free press without other forms and synonyms of freedom? For we often do not know whether our opinions are free or not. And this state of not knowing (if one is conscious of it) may cause *angst*. Moreover, if I express myself freely but in platitudes, then my personality is oppressed by the platitudes I proclaim. I may gabble "freely", and even the feeling I have would be one of freedom. Alternatively, I may proclaim other people's views "freely". Or again, I may assert prejudices "freely". (There is an inevitable unfreedom in prejudices; through them and because of them I am no longer in control of my own mind and my own experiences.) Or I may loudly proclaim dogma "freely", without any restrictions. There is unfreedom in dogma, it restrains the better parts of the human mind. It makes intellect unidirectional. The fanatic also feels free—but is he really? To sum up: in most cases, I do not even notice that my arguments, my mind, and my way of thinking are not free. But can a press be free if it is full of these things even if its freedom is provided for by the constitution? It can publish "risky" articles one after another which would not be permitted "elsewhere"; but all this is to no avail if the press is full of shallow thinking, inherited and concealed slogans, platitudes, and guilt. It might give an illusion of freedom. This is another aspect of the freedom of the press. Another one is that the press may be free and courageous when it deals with the surface, while it may ignore the truth in the depths. Or it may exist under the spell of a spurious modernity. People may be given plenty of freedom but they may not know how to make use of their abundant rights.

I have used the attribute "risky". Yet I do not like this word, even though it is often considered to be synonymous with "brave" and thus of "free"). But freedom should not necessarily be measured against permission. Anything but! If I admit that there is risk in a pronouncement, I also

admit that this kind of freedom has its own drawbacks. In this way, I assert and deny the free press at one and the same time. As a matter of course, freedom must (and can) never be "perfect", for perfection is completeness, while freedom desires to enlarge, to enrich, and to modulate itself, and eventually it is dependent on the character, capabilities and talent of the individual.

For a child, and even for some artists, there is doubtless a freedom in the opportunity to imitate something, or to become assimilated to somebody else (to the behaviour of an adult, or to a great and distant artist, or theory, or trend, for example). For some other people, freedom is the opportunity to differ. Can it be denied that both are synonyms of freedom? The former (imitation and assimilation), and the latter (the desire to differ "from the average") both derive from human ambition. So freedom will always be the freedom of striving after something better, even if the aim is simply that of personal or private security (insofar as it is lacking).

The press creates a need for the power of public opinion. This is a noble duty. But could we accept a public opinion which is so powerful that it is able to judge our private acts, to interfere in our imagination, or to control our sexual tastes? A public opinion that could vote for or turn down someone's genius? These examples may be exaggerated, but what I want to emphasize is that public opinion may not only express and exercise freedom, but is quite capable of limiting it seriously. A small town, or a philistine crowd can also be public opinion; they can oppress people with hypocrisy or with prudishness. All the same, public opinion plays an enormous role in a democracy. It must be so. The same must also hold for the free speech of the individual.

I once wrote that if a mother had complained to Semmelweiss, "the savour of mothers" could not have doubted that the woman felt ill, with

an argument like "you are not an expert, you do not know how you feel". But the woman could not have said either: "I am a physician in my own way, so I am fully entitled to state that my condition is growing worse." The sick woman holds a powerful trump in this game of competence; it is incontrovertible that she feels ill. Democracy is not a matter of competence or authority. In a democracy, unauthorized authorities can intervene in issues which affect the community to the greatest extent and in the most general way. We should explain the term "unauthorized authority". Everyone is authorized to act in some matters, and unauthorized in others. However, in the matter of democracy everyone is authorized to act. (This applies even more to the most humane form of democracy, the socialist one.)

But this does not mean that anyone is qualified to tell a painter that the paint here is too thin. Likewise, intervention in science, or other strictly professional issues must not be a concern of public opinion. The best brains have always sensed that two extremes—both dangerous to democracy—must be avoided: one deprives the citizen of civic authority and hence security. The other reduces the rightful dignity (authority) of expertise. It is clear that as a doctor I cannot make patients vote on which treatment others should undergo. So the other task of real democracy is to train people for a sound evaluation of their own capabilities and knowledge. Real democracy does not create an illusion of false equality and false competence—that is only a tool of demagoguery. It is not my duty to judge what our press has or has not done in this field. In other words, to what degree it has allowed *unmerited dignity* (or, to use Péter Veres's term, "who-are-you-ness") to proliferate.

The criticism of false dignity is also an ingredient of a free press. Our press has the workers' interest and freedom in sight; but it should be emphasized that *all* workers are meant here.

The great men of letters in history have incurred the wrath of the powerful with their criticism of false dignity and empty majesty.

This kind of criticism has very often come about in the form of an integration of external and internal points of view. Those theologians who have attacked a concept of God (i.e. an idea, or an ideal) have doubtless also believed in a God, and what is more, in the same God (for example, the God of Christianity); they have also believed in a role for the Church. Their criticism therefore comes from the inside and is reformist. But we cannot criticize anything deeply and effectively enough if we do not try, at least for a few moments, to assume the position of "the other". Xenophanes said that if animals had hands and ability they would shape their gods in their own image. It has been frequently pointed out that he was thus mocking the ancient Greeks' faith in anthropomorphic gods. This seems to be true; but he also said that Homer, who was idolized by the Greeks, had made a mistake when he credited the gods with acts that would make even a mortal ashamed. In the construction of this *aperçu* we can observe both the external and the internal position, attack and self-defence. These are the loopholes of interpretation. Xenophanes makes his criticism from the inside, for he does not deny the existence of gods, only the belief that they are such-and-such. Viewing from the inside, he believes (or wants to believe) that they are more majestic, more remote from human frailty. But, from an outside view, he does not accept the way the Greeks conceive and believe in these gods. He questions tradition and that means again assuming an outside position. This is the result of "pure" reason, of logic; for how could someone still be a god and commit the wretched acts that a human beings would, acts which even the gods consider ugly? How could such a god rise above mortals? Of course, this is the logic of ethics. Only he (or that) can

be above us, who (or which) is stronger, purer and more worthy than we are. Only such a being can give a moral example. This is also the logic of nature. So it is rather difficult to decide whether the criticism is "for" or "against" an idea or a person. It takes a great deal of responsibility to say whether any criticism is honest or *mala fide*, friendly or hostile. This in turn brings to mind some serious problems of ideological interpretation? What are his limits? Who is to control him? And who is to control the controller? Is interpretation a privilege or a natural right? Can the state be the superior interpreter without the danger of its power being mystified? Here we should mention the right to criticize and to criticize the critic. For the freedom of the press includes not only the right of reply but the right of criticism as well. And who, and in which case, has the right to produce the final answer (in discussions, for example)?

The famous saying of Tiberius goes "If the gods feel insulted, let them redress the insult themselves." This is one of the earliest signs of religious tolerance in Europe. It means that we should trust the gods with the right of interpretation, let them decide what does them good or wrong. Of course, Tiberius reserved his due rights for himself (just as the gods do). He and his inner circle administered justice in human affairs. Yet his dictum was simply an overture as the persecution of Christian sects had already begun. Tolerance was far from all-embracing—and not only in the age of Tiberius. During the French Revolution, when freedom of religion was finally proclaimed, Protestants could hold office but Jews could not. Catholicism was declared a "dominant" religion, while atheism was a crime. (It has been pointed out that "everyone who did not think like Robespierre was an atheist".) The bourgeois concept of tolerance has often been criticized by the bourgeoisie as well (in a manner we have just analyzed; from a simultaneous "in-

side-outside" view.) Mirabeau, Paine, and others were of the opinion that the very fact of proclaiming tolerance towards something reveals that one could also be intolerant. And, coming to the core, only the tolerance of the strong had been put into words until then—tolerance as a kind of favour. This type of tolerance is only tactical, and not principled; it is not prompted by wisdom and cannot last for long. Tolerance which is inspired by consideration, by wisdom, by fairness, means the following: however strong and mighty I may be, I must know that I need the small and the weak. Any majority should know that they cannot live without minorities for the majority also consists of minorities. And the presence of the latter is the motor of development.

No great majorities have ever discovered any ideas; it is always their constituent minorities or even individuals who transform the majority's inertia into a dynamic force. Sometimes it is genius—the absolute minority. (Of course, in describing the mechanism of intellectual initiative, I am not denying the historical importance of the strength of the masses.) If this is conceded, the tolerance towards a minority will be the tolerance of those who are dependent on, and complement each other. It is not the tolerance of waiting out such as the tolerance towards a national minority or a dispersion which would die out or be sooner or later assimilated.

We and our press must set the new principle of socialist tolerance against non-principled, and non-ideological tolerance. Of course, the new principle has its own tradition. (Thus in Hungary, reformers such as Ferenc Dávid, Gábor Bethlen, and István Széchenyi and abroad people like Locke, Sozinus and Voltaire, apart from those already mentioned). There is also the other, less remote tradition of socialist tolerance in, for example, the work of Lenin himself and, apart from him, Lunacharsky and others.

Let us examine another interesting aspect of the history of tolerance. Why do those who were formerly champions of tolerance become more and more intolerant when they take over the helm? One example from another age would be that of the English Puritans who escaped from religious persecution to America, and there, becoming masters themselves, they showed little tolerance towards the Anglicans, the Catholics, and even the Baptists who had never done them any harm.

Intolerance can be deduced from a sense of lack of time, so can binary thinking (viewing things in two extremes, declaring "he who is not with us, is against us", dividing everything in two, instead of a multiplicity of intermediary shades). The intolerance of human generations is linked to their impatience to see their aims realized as soon as possible. In the meantime they neglect other people's aims, and the fact that this impatience will rebound somewhere, some time. If nobody else, their descendants will certainly be afflicted. So we do not inherit only history's gifts, but also its debts, everything that has been postponed by our forebears, including "adjourned" renewals or reforms.

Our reservations about the history of tolerance must not make us forget that any kind of tolerance is essentially good, insofar as it hinders hasty and ill-considered action. For hastiness always makes probabilities more vague. Only in a final situation should speed and fast rhythm be idealized, or in situations with no historical stake.

Dutch or Transylvanian tolerance was largely a result of the Reformation. France was mainly Catholic, practically had an established religion, and religious tolerance there (though only partial) could only be brought about by the Revolution. So the Revolution had to fulfil what could not be achieved in the Huguenot wars. Everywhere in the process of history, we see debts and postponements, inherited delays and lags. However, no one can live continuously on debts in the econ-

omy, or in political life, or in other intellectual domains. As a consequence, we ought not to accumulate historic debts. This is one of the basic conditions for free action. If we cannot pay back the whole sum, we must achieve payment by instalments; instead of a revolution, we must make reforms and smaller changes. Instead of fighting the fire, we should prevent it. The freedom of the press is one of the best ways of preventing the accumulation of historic debts, so that we could avoid living on postponements, and historical "adjourned games". This is one of the most important functions of a free press in history.

## 5.

What is the relation of free press to "secrets"? What is the relation of free press to the multiplicity of directions, to the variety of shades and to style?

Another aspect of the inside-outside duality of criticism is whether the part is judged within the whole: or the whole is criticized, apparently through the part. (The critic may also pass judgement on the whole without making any pretences.)

We must start from the general rule that in a suspicious society, even honest "inside-view" criticisms, that with the aim of fostering improvement, can be the object of accusation (as often happened during the era of the personality cult). Hence, the reinforcement of public trust is a primary duty. Moreover, public trust, and the right to interpret must not be monopolized by a person, a group or even a social stratum. We must have the right to discuss and to question anyone's mandate. (Except, of course, in the case of poets or artists, whose mandate is conventional: Petófi could speak in the name of the people, or of all men who were in love, without having a seat in parliament or any other kind of political mandate. This is what we call poetic or artistic freedom in a



wider sense, which is not identical with the narrower concept of poetic licence. The latter only relates to a certain freedom in grammar and style. (A similar freedom is that of poetic justice, which cannot be brought to account for not coinciding with court decisions.)

Public trust is a common good out of which no one can take more than the individually deserved quantity. Only those who repay it with interest have the right to take more. The same is true of the decisions made by elected or commissioned representatives in the name of the public. A decision is good if it includes, visibly or invisibly, the views of the greatest number of people, and also the minorities' positive or negative judgements. In this way public trust cannot be monopolized, and nobody can say or think *l'état, c'est moi*. So when a critic judges a theatrical performance in the name of general taste, and thinks he possesses the "mandate" of the whole audience, he is seriously wrong. On the one hand, he sees the performance together with an incidental (heterogeneous) audience; on the other hand, it may happen that all who would like, or who would dislike the performance, are excluded from the theatre for some reason. (They lack time, or money, or the production had no promotion etc.) This argument holds particularly if the critic's pronouncements are only half-true or unfounded. Such a critic should be condemned for "moral" or political discredit, or "private advertisement at public expense", if he overrates an average or bad performance.

Still, in spite of all this, no one can be justified in denying the infinite importance, and the right of criticism. To follow the above line of thought, the origin of the criticism of art makes a difference (i. e. whether the judgement comes from the inside or from the outside). The purpose may be discrediting art in general, or an artist in society's eyes; or it may be amelioration from the inside, exalting art and its status to a higher level. This is as

much a matter of responsibility in arts and sciences as it is in other fields.

History has often proved that the steady repression of all "inside", "bettering" criticism that does not happen to come "from above", can result in a widespread questioning of not only the parts but the whole as well. Of course, we must ask the crucial question: Who decides whether a piece of criticism concerns the part or the whole?

A free press must endorse a certain degree of intellectual promiscuity (that is, a lack of imposed sameness in taste). Similarly, it must not refrain from exposing certain things that are not real secrets. The aversion to what is too often called "personalities" reminds us of the proverbial baby who is thrown out with the bathwater. No one can deny us the right to temper.

However, a free press has also the right to euphemism, to secrecy, to vagueness and to allusion—even in its style. In the end, it is a matter of ethical judgement what the press considers a secret. (Apart from genuine state secrets, of course.)

Discussing the art of writing, Lenin mentions the "damned Aesopian language" that crops up every now and then. His observation is proper and exact, but we must tackle the issue in its complexity. If we doubted that generalization is the merit and the duty of art, we could just as well query the particularizing function of scientific analysis. Excess is the essence of generalization, be it extreme reduction or magnification. Any kind of figurative language, parable, or the "obscurity of ballads" is suitable for this function. The obscurity of some works of art does not derive necessarily from the fear of naming, but from the vagueness, or the indiscernible nature of what is depicted. Then again, for example in parables, the artist wants to grasp a model, something that has settled, that is clearly arranged, and valid for more than the present moment. Allusion is an essential instrument: time, situation and our chosen

subject decides to what degree we should use it in a given case. An epistemological caution may work here; since the depicted thing is vague for even the artist, providing it with marked outlines, and suggesting (or worse, stating) clear conclusions would be fraudulent. On the other hand, the occasional aversion of art for didacticism also prevents the artist from doing so. To sum up, one aspect of the problem is whether one should let some things remain in obscurity, or contrarily, simplify or sharpen the contours.

The other aspect of the problem is that society itself, and public life is ridden with euphemisms. (And thus, with "Aesopian language".) A communiqué may go as the following: "X's troops withdraw according to plan" (although in reality they leave rather hastily after a defeat). Or, "the issues were discussed in a sincere, friendly atmosphere", though this evidently means polemics. Or a glance at "simple" official letters reveals so much complication, caution and euphemism disguised as objectivity and concision! So why should art renounce these essential tools?

Talleyrand said once: "Language is there to conceal our thoughts". Obviously, he was thinking of diplomatic language. But his dictum can be extended; the language of art is expression and self-expression: information on the subject, and, through style, on the artist. But psychologically, it is even more: the language of concealment in expression and expression in concealment, of secrecy and self-revelation.

Let us consider the modes of statement and concealment. The illegal Communist press is a good historical example. On the one hand, it was not free because it could not be printed and circulated legally. But this "unfreedom" (being outside the existing law) also gave it an enormous freedom. We can say without exaggeration that it was this kind of press which

articulated the most vital social problems of the age. The voice was sincere and passionate. But, with all its plain truth-telling, was there nothing that the illegal Communist press concealed? We do not think only of matters of conspiracy and tactical deliberations, which naturally involve concealment. There were positive things in that society, too, such as a noble gesture made by a rich patron of art, or the building of a school by donation from an aristocrat and so on. This kind of press either did not mention such events or exposed them as hollow. Some morsels from the big table. Nevertheless, the two above examples are positive from a rather limited point of view since then and there they provided solutions for the needy artist and the children who could not go to school. This solution was not historical, not radical, and not general; but nobody can state seriously that it would have been better for the children to remain without any education for years, or for the artist to starve to death, or to put down the paintbrush, or to waste his talent in a routine job for a livelihood, just because the radical solution lay still in the future. So it is proper to describe such acts as giving alms to the nation from out of its own resources. Any exaggeration would come close to the nihilist mentality, "the worse, the better". Such a sado-masochistic line of thought is without any edifying goal. It disregards the fact that freedom is polemical but also an order since it keeps the balance through debates. Therein lies its dialectic. But it is also true that in such circumstances, the press cannot afford the luxury of objectivity.

The press of the outlawed and persecuted radical opposition, though free in a certain respect, does not wish to (and in most cases, cannot) arrive at a subtle judgement on those in power (except in times of common, external danger). This one-sidedness is a kind of unfreedom, sealing off the press from the opportunity of complex criticism. However, this press is free

to enounce countless times the truly major problems of the age. (The question however does remain: how many people can receive the message, and through which channels?)

Today's press (our press) works in quite different historical circumstances. It is the press of the whole nation since ours is a workers' nation. This also implies that our press is not "ashamed" of the wide (progressive) spectrum of its own national traditions. It takes over every important experience of a thousand years of development; not only our humiliations but our glory as well, for a press which trains the public for guilt cannot be free. (Hypocrisy and partial interests have often caused the press to do so.) Neither can a press be free if it arouses national vanity, for, as we have seen, prejudice or bias restricts the mind. A free press fosters and awakens popular and national traditions, a concern for the Hungarian mind within and outside our borders; it must not fear misinterpretation, of some people calling these activities "the fomenting of national hatred". If it is afraid, how can it call itself free? And it must not be afraid of being labelled anti-national, merely because it is concerned with the future of our neighbours (with the prospects for harmonious coexistence and the common ethical or political norms, and here not simply with a protocol-like mutual appreciation and equity). In consequence, a free press is interested in the plight of minorities (all kinds of them, including ethnic groups) within and outside our borders. It is free, so it has a right to denounce "petty monarchs" in intellectual life and elsewhere, to denounce the snobish overestimation of Budapest and the superficial dismissal of the rest of the country as provincial. It equally condemns cynical, utilitarian supra-nationalism and historical provincialism. It condemns those who make narrow group interests appear as wide communal interests. So too does it condemn all forms of intellectual monopolization. It protests against everything

which insults our self-esteem and public tact. All this makes our press free and may increase its freedom further.

At the beginning of my essay I mentioned the problem of *samizdat*. I do not think it is too significant (considering the significance of the free press). So it must not be turned into a really grave problem by assigning too much importance to it. I think that in one million years' time, if mankind still exists, and if it lives under (let us say) *almost* total freedom, there will still be people who will daub on graffiti, and publish papers which are "unregistered" or "registered" in another place). Such issues should be treated in the spirit of "responsive largeness" as it is mainly customary to do so in our own days. For if we suppose (knowing history) that even the freest of presses will not write about everything (usually because it has to select and to present the most important facts), then we may be sure that there will always be someone who raises his finger and says: "look, nothing has been said of this or that". Some issues are doubtless omitted from all media. Of course, it does not mean that these are the ones that concern the *samizdat* press. And here again, onesidedness or binary thinking is a kind of unfreedom of the mind. From another point of view, it is a synonym for freedom that can be experienced.

All types of one-way intellectual traffic only make it clear how complicated this freedom is; it is a freedom which the press receives from the outside, from the society, the state, the constitution, and eventually, the people; at the same time, it is a gift given by the press to the press. For the outside can do nothing without the inside. In days gone by, one could give a seminarist a book by Giordano Bruno to read. Either he threw it away at once or he read it. But if he did read it, could he be liberated by the experience, or did he refuse it in deep indignation, using what he had read as an argument for his own faith?

And could he read it freely? Without the filter of all the dogmas in his mind and soul? Can a man be liberated by a hundred or a thousand books, and all the papers in the world if he lacks the yearning for freedom? The need? The sensibility? The desire? And if he does not sense the promise of freedom? Or if he is deaf to the promise of history? This is the point where we can say that man is not born to be free but rather to liberate himself. For everybody is born into something; into a genetic chain, a family, a fortune, an education, a society, all of which are burdened with unfreedom. First, one has to think about freedom and then act accordingly.

Another element in the freedom of the press is not forgetting, while we write, edit, and interpret texts, that the prophets who cursed their people, the writers, artists, priests, aristocrats, and others who scourged their nation, were the same who invented expressions like "sweet homeland" and "vox populi vox dei", who invented the benediction that is also a curse. So, for the last time, let us return to our leitmotiv: there is no freedom for a press which does not

want freedom of thought for its own and for others' sake; which does not want the freedom of the people, of all peoples, of national and other minorities and which does not further the growth of freedom for the people, for all peoples. The contrary is also true: a people without a free press cannot be free, it cannot liberate itself from the terror of banalities, prejudices, dogmas, superstition, everyday superficiality and hack journalism.

Let me conclude with Milton's thoughts (from 1664!) on the freedom of the press, or its absence (censorship): it will be primely to the discouragement of all learning and the stop of truth, not only by disexercising and blunting our abilities in what we know already, but by hindering and cropping the discovery that might be yet further made, both in religious and civil wisdom. So even the great polemicist and pamphleteer speaks to the Church from the "inside", for betterment, in the tone which is "for you and not againts you". As so often is the case, he was not needed. It is not difficult to decide how much the situation in our world has changed since 1644. Everyone can ponder it and the modern experiences will help.

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Mihály Bihari

# Freedom of the Press and Socialist Democracy

The development of socialist democracy is a measure of the socialist society's "maturity" and a perspective assignment of a significance that determines its historic development in many respects. It is an assignment of historic extent and significance, and at the same time of historic concreteness.

As the development and institutionalization of socialist democracy is an assignment of historic significance and concreteness, it is *again* a vital issue of Hungarian society, an issue which emerges on the level of socio-historic alternatives that have to be answered. I emphasize that the development of the democracy of power and political system is *again* a vital issue of Hungarian society, because in 1945, a year which opened up perspectives, permitted a free breath and allowed thinking about historic alternatives, various parties and political movements, scientists and politicians un-animously held the opinion that "democracy: everything which is included in this word, after the catastrophe is a vital issue of Hungarian society."<sup>1</sup> The concrete guarantees, content and forms of democracy have been debated at length. But nobody disputed what writer Péter Veres said at a series of lectures convened on democracy: "The institutionalization of democracy is the first to be accomplished in human and civil rights." And Péter Veres continued: "Democracy has to be institutionalized. This is the first step to ensure that it should not become an ugly slogan or just a fraternizing democracy of the former middle

class."<sup>2</sup> The appropriate building of democracy's objective techniques, institutional system and guarantees was unsuccessful, and what was actually built during that period was soon pushed aside by the „incorrect answer" to this vital issue of Hungarian society that was given by the political dictatorship at the beginning of the 1950s.

The fact that today the development of democracy in the power and political system is again a vital issue of Hungarian and socialist society does not mean that we are in a situation similar to that in 1945. The situation is much better, incomparably better, but the responsibility is much greater, because we have much more to lose and there is no guarantee that the possibility of "an incorrect answer" is excluded. Today, we do not face the alternative of capitalism or socialism, but the alternatives concerning the quality of socialism—and incorrect answers unworthy of socialism can also be sensed and recognized. In my opinion, this is also a reason why it is worth discussing the institutional system and components of socialist democracy, arguing in favour of them and drawing attention to their significance.

The provision of political publicity is one of the most important assignments in the institutional system of socialist democracy. Today, political publicity has to be "made", does not simply "exist"—as it was written by J. Habermas who can be fully agreed with.<sup>3</sup> Press publicity has not simply

a role, but a distinguished role in shaping, creating and operating political publicity, and in its broader interpretation (besides the written and printed thoughts, also including the publicity of the television, radio and films, namely, the mass communication system of society) it is a *conditio sine qua non* of political publicity, which accomplishes a social integrational and politological function. Of course, this is not a new inference—except perhaps the extension of press publicity onto the entire system of mass communication—because both authors, Sándor Fekete and Géza Páskándi, who wrote about the freedom of the press in this publication, quoted Kossuth's statement—in agreement and emphasizing its significance—about the freedom of the press as an elementary component of political democracy, the most important one, which is the most effective political, organizing factor through the free communication of thoughts.<sup>4</sup> Although since then, the right of establishing an organization, the free use of the “organizational weapon” has preceded it among the political freedom rights, the “organizational weapon” is a blunt weapon which without its own press (party press, movement paper, possibility to print and distribute) is forced to move towards the illegal press.

Naturally, the theme of freedom of the press can be analyzed from various aspects, and each is justified, each enriches our knowledge about this topic. On my part, as a possible approach, I select a start and observation from the aspect of the entire political system and the democratic nature of power, briefly: the politological analysis of the freedom of the press. The fact that the freedom of the press and press publicity—or as it was very expressively formulated by Géza Páskándi: the written right of assembly of thoughts—and the democratic nature of the political system are connected needs no confirmation. But perhaps it is not indifferent to briefly survey what role and place the

freedom of the press and political publicity take in the comprehensive institutional system of democracy.

### **Democracy of the political system, freedom of the press and freedom of opinion**

Naturally, the democratic content of the political power's nature cannot be conceived as a total of abstract slogans, requirements and institutional systems, and obviously it cannot be linked with the concrete solutions of a concrete organizational-institutional, and operational mechanism either. In the case of making the first mistake, democracy becomes an abstract model, departing from space, time and concrete social aims and system, which because of its lack of accomplishment, brings about frustration and a standpoint on behalf of the political leadership which intolerantly and rigidly refuses the nucleus of truth and the justification of partial elements. But perhaps the second mistake is even more dangerous, namely, the identification and mechanic linking of democracy with the currently developed institutional system and modes of exercising power. In fact in this case, each requirement for change, every reform thought or effort is conceived as an attack against the power order and the political system with democratic partial elements, as an attempt to weaken democracy and unfortunately exactly by those who hold a controlling position in the political mechanism.

It is difficult to avoid these two mistakes. It is difficult to elaborate the so-called objective techniques (István Bibó) of democracy and freedom, the institutional guarantees of democratic social and community organization, and the institutions, organizational and legal-normative solutions that prevent the concentration of power, and strong and unidirectional hierarchic dependencies. It is difficult to make the solutions permanent, safeguard the systems of democratic

means and mechanisms, which are also operable under changed social circumstances, to build them above each other and at the same time place them in the service of completely changed social aims, confirming the historically and regionally concrete compulsions and their effect.

I try to briefly summarize my opinion in the abstract field of "medium level theories" about the essence, guarantees, and means of socialist democracy, and a part of them, about the freedom of the press.

1. According to the standpoint of Marxism, democracy has no general concept. Democracy has a class content and is historically concrete. Therefore, in the present phase of our development I would summarize the historically concrete content of democracy as follows: we can speak about the enforcement of democracy if the differences of interest emerging from the socialist social relations—namely, of socialist content—can be expressed as political differences in opinion in the political system of society and these interest determined political wishes—through the transmission of political communities and bodies—can participate in the preparation, formulation and accomplishment of decisions as well as in the supervision of these three phases.

In order to ensure that democracy as the positive value content of the political exercise of power can be accomplished, closely connected conditions and guarantees have to be provided, and organizational means have to be ensured. As long as the system of conditions and means in socialist democracy is incomplete, the perfection of the democratic power practice is not possible and the provision of these conditions and means comes into the foreground as the content requirement of democracy.

2. The conditions of socialist democracy include the following institutions:

a) The political security and freedom of individuals and communities have to be guaranteed in their relationship to other individuals and communities, as well as in their relationship to the organizations of political power. This political security and freedom is guaranteed by the system of civil rights. The development of the civil rights' guarantee system is a constant assignment, a precondition in the accomplishment of democracy, but as long as this guarantee system is not relatively completely built, it waits for accomplishment as the content requirement of democracy.

b) The other precondition of democracy's accomplishment is the provision of political equality for individuals and communities. Political—i. e. not social—equality, meaning that every individual and community can adhere to its political opinion without any disadvantage, can freely strive for the enforcement of its political wish guided by its own interests.

The guarantees of political equality include the protection of the rights of the majority and minority. These rights and obligations have to be defined in such a way that the minority can turn into a majority and the majority into a minority in the democratic process of enforcing political wishes. The protection of the rights of the majority is indispensable in the enforcement of the majority wish, and in the efficient and unified accomplishment of the approved decision. The protection of minority rights (the recognition of the right to adhere to a minority opinion and to argue in its favour apart from the unified accomplishment of the majority wish reached in a democratic manner) is indispensable for corrections, for a reform-like development, for the up-to-date criticism of earlier correct majority standpoints, for the enfolding of political creative abilities, and for the enhancement of political activity. The exaggeration or absolutization of the right of any side—either the majority or the minority—

leads to the same undesirable result: to the dictatorship of a minority. The sweeping accomplishment of majority power—without the protection of the minority opinion—gradually oppresses every minority opinion and makes the rule of a minority appearing in the name of a conformist, “organized” majority permanent. The absolutization of the majority opinion directly leads to the rule of a minority behind the “fig leaf” of the organized majority opinion. When the right of the majority absolutely oppresses the minority, everybody will be afraid of remaining in minority, particularly if it is accompanied by denouncing, perhaps excommunication, by a humiliating abandonment of one’s earlier opinion, and the loss of positions. In such a case, most people look for the “expected” majority standpoint—the standpoint of the currently ruling minority expressed as a majority opinion—and already adjust themselves to it, fearing that they remain in a minority. The right to adhere to the minority opinion cannot extend to questioning or sabotaging the unified accomplishment and to participating in a perfunctory way in decided political actions.

This would make the efficient action of every political organization and community impossible, together with the unity of the accomplishment and in fact would mean the abandonment of the most efficient political weapon, the “organization” of the modern era. This too strong position of the minority gradually increases the requirement to obtain an absolutely unified opinion at any expense, which can only be accomplished with anti-democratic means. The absolutized protection of the right of the minority necessarily leads to the fact that the “organized” monolithic unit, the order of power and its unquestionable unambiguity will become a more desired form by the majority because of the fear of anarchy and inefficiency, and ultimately this leads to the impossibility of expressing the opinion of the minority.

The relationship between the majority and minority (or perhaps different minorities) and its mutual guarantee system contains the most important components of democracy in a condensed form: autonomy of the soil of political equality and freedom, power exercised through debate and argumentation, and a power mechanism preserving diversity and continuously integrating a new unity from it. The democratic system of power ensures the involvement of the minorities in power—even if they are obliged to materialize a majority wish that does not tally with their own opinion—through the obligation of democratic order and discipline. At the same time, the “organized” majority—behind which the power of a minority gains validity—excludes the majority from the exercise of power. The involving policy, the power mechanism which ensures participation in the practice of power, strives for legitimation and requires loyalty has to confirm the democratic rights of the minorities. In a certain sense, the best measure of democracy in the practice of power is the democratic power relationship of the majority and minority, the linking and mutually counterbalancing system of their rights and obligations.

In order to enforce the content of democracy, the two basic conditions (the two major pillars of democracy: political security and freedom as well as political equality) are indispensably necessary, but not sufficient. In addition to the preconditions of democracy, it is necessary to build up the appropriate system of the organizational means of democratic interest enforcement and power practice.

3. The system of democratic means is basically different from the conditions of democracy. While the conditions of democracy primarily become expressed in the normative-legal institutions which after their evolution are relatively stable and historically less exposed to change, the natural state of the means system of democracy



is regularly changing, with adjustment to the changing social and political conditions.

a) Within the means system of democracy, I would first emphasize the organizational system which brings the actually existing interests of society determining political opinions and wishes to the surface, and ensures their political articulation. This organizational system has to dynamically adjust itself to the actually existing value-system of society which is of different significance, different content and historically constantly changing. This includes the right to set up new and compared to the earlier, different political organizations under changing social circumstances. I regard it as essential that the organizational system of democracy should ensure the emergence of the socially most important class, stratum and group interests, it should not only favour the emergence of insignificant interest conflicts, because in this case the most important interest efforts will be shifted into the nonformalized sphere, following the interest enforcement courses that are confusing for both the political leadership and society, and will become politically unmanageable.

b) Another indispensable and important means of democracy is the appropriate system of political control. Political control has to basically extend to three phases in the practice of power: 1. the preparation of political decisions; 2. decision making—namely, the role of individuals, groups and institutions participating in these processes, in influencing the decisions and 3. the accomplishment of the decisions.

Without political publicity and control, political responsibility relations and power relations are confused and uncontrollable for society. In the case of a strong deficiency in the system of democratic means, the content of the democratic power practice becomes unenforceable.

c) The third component in the means system of democracy is the equality

and completeness of access to politically relevant information, the operation of political publicity organized through the mass communicational system.

Briefly: a mass communicational system responsible to the democratic public and a democratically organized political publicity are necessary.

Similarly to the conditions of democracy, the evolution of the means system of democracy is a practical political assignment and remains a requirement of democracy of contextual significance as long as the institutions are not built and consolidated. After that, they continue to exist as formal guarantees of democracy.

The free operation of the press or broadly the mass communication system is the most important means and guarantee of creating political publicity. Without political publicity, the above described content and conditions of democracy cannot be built and cannot unfold. The politization of interests, their political articulation, the co-ordination of interest efforts, compromises and political consensus are impossible without the press and the mass media. Freedom of the press and political publicity are the most important conditions of the practice of political power. Their absence is the main obstacle in the democratic transformation of power, therefore, the very first demand in the process of democratic development is: freedom for the press, democratic political publicity, and an efficient mass communication system responsible to society.

### The essence of the freedom of the press

The freedom of the press can be examined from various aspects: from a legal-normative point of view, from the aspect of printing, printing capacity, distribution, publishing, and the forbidding mechanism of publishing, from the point of view of the journalists or the protection of copyright, etc.

Starting out from the aspect of power and the political system, I believe that two interconnected elements provide the essence of freedom of the press and political publicity. The first component: assuring the "assembly" and clashing of written thoughts (compare the quoted expression of Géza Páskándi). In this sense, freedom of the press is the new quality and highest ranking version of freedom of speech, conscience and opinion. The second component: the enforcement of the historically evolved functions of the press and political publicity.

Several authors discussed the significance and content of the first momentum, including Sándor Fekete and Géza Páskándi in their quoted studies. In the following, I attempt to analyze the second component.

### The political functions of press publicity

As a political institution and part of the political publicity of society, press publicity avails itself of relatively separable functions. These functions evolved in a historic process and obviously the appearance of new functions is to be expected on the one hand, and these functions, their content and character will change on the other.

The political functions of press publicity can be analyzed in their relationship to the entire political system and society. When examining the functions of press publicity from the viewpoint of the political system and the democracy of power, the following relatively separable functions can be distinguished:

1. The historically first evolving function of the press and press publicity is undoubtedly *information*, and *the transmission of information*.

The informative function of the press was and is one of the conditions of political publicity and community participation in politics.

The accomplishment of this function, its limitation and selective mechanism basically determine the role the press plays through the provision of information in the creation of political publicity. If the informative function is overselective and narrow, the press loses the opportunity to become the publicity organizing power. It is the press which makes it possible for broad masses to become participants of publicity, consumers of news and later from individual news consumers to become citizens and public individuals who are thinking in community, people, nation, and generally in a broader sense.

If because of the distorted and rather selective information, the press loses its credibility, it reduces the readers into individual news consumers of nonpolitical news.

2. The *agitative and propaganda function* of the press and press publicity. The press not only provides news and information, but argues with direct or indirect means, interprets, comments and wishes to convince its readers to a mass extent. This is a natural, moreover, basic press function, which was also expressed by Lenin when he described the press—among others—as a "collective agitator and propagandist".

The agitative and propaganda function may be detrimental to the authentic information about facts, the fact press and fact news may become a propaganda press. "Propaganda—as it was mentioned—in our interpretation is a basic process of mass influencing: the other is agitation. While the latter primarily manifests itself in the system of text in the situation of public opinion shaping, propaganda—either simultaneously or alternately—can also be present in the system of the text, the background text and the context. Their structural difference naturally involves functional differences."<sup>5</sup> The success and effect of the propaganda function rely on the trust in the informative function. The press

that distorts or misinterprets the facts or publishes only half of them is not able to exercise an effective propaganda function. Therefore, it is no exaggeration to say that the propaganda function is: authentic information.

3. *Manipulative function*, which is a type of special influencing and a distinguished phenomenon of political life. The manipulative function is not simply convincing, but is connected with the character of secondary teleological theorem (György Lukács) of political actions. During manipulation, the aim formulated by the secondary aim theorem becomes the primary aim of the individuals. Following their individual aims, they also accomplish the secondary aim, which in fact is contrary to their own interests. Therefore, this difference is ignored by the perfect maintainers and stabilizers of the manipulative mechanism.

4. *Rivalry and corrective function*. Owing to this function it can be ensured that the information block about a certain fact should be as objective as possible. As the press and the media do not simply communicate news, but communicate them from a particular aspect (often consciously combining fact and interpretation), the alternativity of information sources is indispensable and the civil right of selecting among the rivalling news sources is of basic importance. Naturally, every press and every medium is aligned, it is not able and must not give up its alignment, moreover, should make it unambiguous for the reader.

The main guarantee for the individual to acquire objective and overall information about the given topic is being able to utilize the rivalry of the aligned information sources for the development of his own conviction. According to J. St. Mill, the great danger lies not in the aggressive clashing of several parts of the truth, but the quiet oppression of half of the truth; if people are obliged to listen to both—perhaps several—sides, there

is always hope; mistakes harden into prejudices and the truth ceases to be truth because its exaggeration turns into a mistake if people only listen to one side.

5. *Critical function*. In fact multidirectional critical function. It cannot be narrowed down to the criticism of the official standpoint, or to a constant criticism of society, driven by some nation or public educating attitude. This function has to be omnidirectional, it has to be ensured that any social phenomenon, worthy because of its weight and character, become the subject of press criticism, and the theme of the critical press.

6. *Political community organizational and social integrational function*. The most effective present means in the organization of political communities is the launching of the "organizational weapon", the establishment of an organization. This basic civil right is linked with the integrational function of the press that belongs to the given organization/s. The political communities are interest communities and separated ones in society integrated by *interests*. Press publicity has a considerable role in interest compromises based on the identity of interests, in accomplishing political consensus, in making groups and strata aware of their interests, in giving precise interpretation to contradictory interests, in the elimination of phantom interests, and so on. This function of press publicity to organize communities, to promote and integrate group consciousness is the most fundamental organizing and mobilizing factor of political life, and a basic instrument from the viewpoint of reaching, dissolving and reconcluding interest compromises and political consensus. "In fact the publicity of interests belongs to the consistent institutionalization of interests."<sup>6</sup>

7. *Decision influencing function*. The press has a distinguished role in giving publicity to the political decision making processes. Not only by introducing

the elaborated decision alternatives, and by publishing the standpoints of different organizations, persons and decision makers, but also by making the relations concerning responsibility for the decisions controllable, tangible and accomplishable. Naturally, the elaboration and submission of decision alternatives also take place in the framework of press publicity, but primarily in the concerned professional press.

8. *Legitimational function.* Again it has to be said that the press and press publicity have a distinguished role in the confirmation of the given political system and power mechanism, in making it accepted and developing a political trust in the existing system. Of course, it also has an outstanding role in the developing of the legitimational disorders of the given political system, in increasing tensions and undermining political credibility and trust. This is unambiguously indicated by the concrete analysis of the political life of various countries. Even the opposition press can play a legitimational role in a given political system, notwithstanding mercilessly criticizing a concrete or essential element of the political mechanism. A sharp criticism about the government programme, the activity of a leading statesman, or about an international agreement, if it is not directed against the system as a whole, can extremely convincingly strengthen the legitimational of the system, exactly with the fact of becoming public—although in an indirect manner. The best legitimizing mechanism is not a forced propaganda function. The two functions cannot be replaced by each other, they have to take effect alongside each other.

9. *The control of political power.* The press or press publicity as a political factor can only fulfil this function if it is a relatively sovereign power factor itself, an accepted component in the institutionalized system of the political power. The power controlling function

of press publicity cannot be reduced to the control of the central leading-guiding power spheres. The local, self-administrative, functional, branch, structural and nonformalized power mechanisms also have to be subject to press publicity, in a similar manner to the central power bodies and their activity.

10. *Commercial or profit-centric function.* While the commercial function in the case of the bourgeois press is not only fundamental, but in many cases is prior to other functions, the socialist press—as a consequence of the state monopoly of the press—pays hardly any attention to this basic function. The monopoly situation of the—primarily political—press organs, central state subsidy and compulsory subscription to the central political papers pushed the profit-centric function of the press into the background, reducing primarily its competency. This special situation—supplemented with the requirement of political reliability which pushes professional competency into the background—makes it possible that many professionally less qualified journalists and editors can stay in journalism. Unfortunately, because of the background situation of this function, the credibility of excellently qualified journalists, editors and mass communicators is also harmed by newspaper makers left in their job because of the lack of selection. In addition, the basic functions of press publicity—whether the agitational and propaganda function, the critical, community organizational and integrational function, the decision influencing or the legitimational function is meant—cannot be satisfactorily carried out by such a strongly contraselected team of specialists.

11. *Intermediary function* between society and the institutionalized power. This function can only be fulfilled by the press and press publicity if the situation of the press is relatively sovereign, and press publicity is of a plural structure. In fact, if each press

organ is the agitator and propagandist of the central power, or if the controlling role of the central power is too strong (openly institutionalized or enforces a censorship mechanism built in consciousness through appointment, promotion or calling to account) then the intermediary function will only be unidirectional: from the central power towards society. In such a case, the agitational and propaganda function will come too much into the foreground, the border between the informative and interpreting activity will fade out, because the function to criticize and the wish to improve the central power will cease to exist, while the society-improving and enlightening-criticizing function will prevail. The decision influencing function will practically cease to exist as well as the political community organizing, integrating and legitimating functions. The efficiency of press publicity is not measured through the fulfilment of all its functions, but on the basis of its reduced assignment system, with contraselection as its necessary consequence.

The intermediating function of press publicity in another direction, namely, from society towards the central power is at least as important as the previous one. This is very precisely expressed by Géza Páskándi: "The essence of the freedom of the press is that the leaders of the people receive the necessary preliminary information from untainted, trustworthy sources. Paradoxically though it may sound, the freedom of the press is at least as much in the interest of those in power as in the interest of those who are not directly connected with power. This is especially true of a society like ours, which is intent on removing the last vestiges of exclusion from power." I would only add that it is not only in the interest of those in power to get information about social mobility, tensions, requirements and demands from "pure sources", but to be informed about them in general. Knowledge gained from "impure sources", over-beautified, selectively blocked and manipu-

latively "organized" information causes damage not only by distorting, but by increasing the redundance of the heap of information necessary for decisions and for the appropriate evaluation of the facts, in a particular manner compels those in power to make a priori incorrect decisions and judgments, and in addition, creates the feeling of satisfaction in the receptor of information—until the catastrophe occurs.

Unidirectional mediation is a compelled and not voluntarily undertaken function of the press. This depends on the structure of power, and on the development of its democracy as well as on the relative sovereignty ensured for the press. The mechanism in information blocking and beautifying is in close connection with the nature of power, and it is not a question of personal mentality or courage.

12. *Political socialization function:* fulfilled through the shaping of public opinion and political culture. Press publicity is able to fulfil this very complex function by its almost unique opportunity to link the political and moral value system of society. Through the comparison of these two social value systems, through publicizing the collisions and revealing disharmonies, press publicity enhances the positive values, is able to set an example society, to strengthen and influence the political culture of public opinion and society (the grade of tolerance, debating culture, efforts for integration, requirements of democratic morals and the sense of duty, etc.). Press publicity has a particularly big role in the avoidance of two main dangers: one is moralizing policy and the other is policy without moral attitude and alignment. The coherent system of moral and political values, norms, requirements and ideals is not simply an affair of those who personify and practice power, but is a component in the strengthening of the democratic political culture of society and is of determinative significance in political attitudes.

Press and press publicity belong to the most important agents and instruments of political socialization. The political and moral value-system transmitted and received within the framework of political socialization processes, the content, character, and socialization efficiency of political culture do not exclusively depend on press publicity, but its distinguished role can hardly be ignored.

Summarizing the above, my opinion is that examining freedom of the press and press publicity from the politico-logical aspect, it can be said that it is nothing else but the materialization of the listed functions of the press with the necessary organizational, legal and political guarantees, which make it possible to ensure the "written assembly" of thoughts and opinions, the creation of political publicity.

In the case of power mechanisms that obstruct this materialization, we can only speak about a limited, deficient, "bureaucratic press publicity" Democratic press publicity is partly the instrument and condition of the political power's democracy, and partly its content momentum and component. Its significance, importance and its role from the aspect of the democratic operation of power is indicated by the fact that each political movement and political programme struggling for a democratic transformation demands freedom of the press and through this, democratic press and political publicity, with its guarantees in a foremost place—if not in the first place.

### **The social restriction of the democracy of freedom of the press and press publicity**

It is perhaps not indifferent to continue the topic of the democracy of freedom of the press and press publicity by clarifying some perhaps seemingly trivial questions: whose freedom is the freedom of the press, against whom is it enforced and what is its content ?

In my opinion, freedom of the press means the freedom of the members of society, of the citizens. It is not the press that has to be liberated against society (compare to Marx and Engels in connection with the criticism of the Gotha programme, namely, that the term "free folk state" is unacceptable, because it is not the state that has to be liberated against the people, against society, much rather it has to be subordinated to the people), but it has to be ensured that the citizens freely utilize the press for the publication and distribution of their thoughts and opinions. Our first press law already expressed this thought. According to the 1848 Law XVIII paragraph 1: "Everybody can freely declare and distribute his thoughts by way of the press." Our second press law, the 1914 Law XIV paragraph 1 repeated this almost word by word: "By way of the press everybody can freely express and distribute his thoughts."

Obviously it is the right of citizens, the members of society to freely communicate thoughts and opinions (naturally with the exception of thoughts violating the rights and interests of the citizens and the constitutional order).

The enforcement of this right was and is ensured by the elimination of all types of "previous examination" (censorship). These are achievements of the past century, similarly to the press regulations aimed at reducing abuse by the way of the press.

However, press censorship not only takes the form of previous prohibition of publication, but also appears in post actions taken because of the publication. I do not mean the right of the offended or accused person to gain an apology in the press or launch a libel action, but the system of subsequent accounting on behalf of the editor, political controller, the publisher or the institution operating the press. If the sovereignty of the press founder, maintainer and operator, or the person writing in the press (journalist or citizen) is not ensured in this mecha-

nism, obviously a well operating informal censorship develops, based on the divided and further shifted responsibility, starting out from the political controlling bodies of the press through the producer and the editor-in-chief to the author.

It may happen that this system of responsibilities and obligations liberates the press against the citizens, operating it as a bureaucratic power-factor, providing a type of "bureaucratic publicity", and institutionalizing it as the most efficient means of preventing the evolution of democratic political publicity.

Thus, freedom of the press has to be legally declared with a very concrete content, and institutionalized with political power means in order to ensure that its genuine content can take effect. This is the point where we reach the question against whom and in what relations the sovereignty of the press has to be ensured, what guarantees that the freedom of the press should not only be the freedom of the central power, but also freedom of the citizens to utilize the press. In my opinion, the system of ensuring the sovereignty of rights and obligations can be examined in three relationships: the first one is the relationship to the bodies of the institutionalized power. Every press law settles the rights and obligations in this relationship among its first stipulations. Permission for the foundation, publication and distribution of the press belongs to the rights of the state bodies in every country. It is desirable that the conditions for the permission should be extremely easily fulfilled, no discrimination should occur, thus any citizen can launch a press organ. I do not want to go into details about the legal solutions (granting permission, obligation of application, legal and political conditions, and right of re-appeal if the permit is refused, etc.), rather I would like to emphasize the power and political content of freedom of the press, namely, that if after having granted the permission in

the framework and on the basis of legal conditions, the power mechanism cannot ensure the sovereignty and freedom of the press, then the too strong bonds of the power and political accountability and control make the enforcement of freedom of the press as a civil right questionable. Naturally, I do not wish to praise non-aligned press with this, because it is evident for me that every press is aligned.

The second relationship in which freedom of the press can be analyzed and surrounded by guarantees: the freedom of one press compared to the other. The desired content of this relationship is mostly ensured by the elimination of monopoly press power situations bound to monopolize the power positions, and by the provision of political equality and democracy of press publicity.

Finally, the third relationship in which freedom of the press and the sovereign positions serving as its basis can ensure the freedom of the press: freedom of the press against the citizens and their organizations. The community dictatorship and the terrorism of public opinion are serious threats against the enforcement of the freedom of the press, therefore—in addition to the protection of the personal rights of the citizens—the sovereign operation of the freedom of the press to be guaranteed in this relationship has as well.

The guarantees of freedom of the press in these three relationships can be ensured by a complex and differentiated system of rights and obligations. A distortion in any of these relationships can lead to the reduction of press publicity, to its distortion and through this to disorders in the operation of political publicity in the broader sense.

In my opinion, the content of the freedom of the press can be summarized as the freedom of creating and operating broadly interpreted political publicity for the citizens. The freedom of speech and opinion is the most valuable and most efficient means by which it can be ensured that with the operation of

the political institutions of the freedom of the press the members of society, its communities and organizations become power factors in the democratic transformation and operation of political power. I consider that the democratic transformation of our political institutional sys-

tem and the spectacular development of the past 25 years provide an appropriate sphere of movement and possibility to bring about a considerable development in the until now lesser analyzed sphere of socialist democracy, namely, in the sphere of democratic political publicity and the freedom of the press.

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#### Notes

- <sup>1</sup> *Demokrácia* (Democracy). Pázmány Péter University, Faculty of Arts, Budapest, 1945, p. 3.
- <sup>2</sup> VERES, Péter: *Parasztág és demokrácia* (Peasantry and democracy). In: *Demokrácia*, pp. 202—204.
- <sup>3</sup> HABERMAS, Jürgen: *A társadalmi nyilvánosság szerkezetváltozása* (Changes in the structure of social publicity) Gondolat, Budapest, 1971.
- <sup>4</sup> FEKETE, Sándor: *The Press and Its Freedom*. p. 4. PÁSKÁNDI, Géza: *The Free Press and Synonyms of Freedom*. p. 20.
- <sup>5</sup> SZECSKÓ, Tamás: *Kommunikációs rendszer — köznapi kommunikáció*. (Communication system — everyday communication). Akadémiai Kiadó, Budapest, 1971, p. 163.
- <sup>6</sup> FODOR, Gábor: *Nyilvánosság, közvélemény, tömegkommunikáció* (Publicity, public opinion, mass communication) Institute for Social Sciences of the Central Committee of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party. Budapest, 1976, p. 85.
- <sup>7</sup> PÁSKÁNDI, Géza: *Op. cit.* p. 23.



# Is Newspaper Making a Lucrative Business?

The April 21, 1985 programme of the series *Jelenidőben* (In Present Tense) of the Hungarian Radio focused on how and to what degree business considerations shaped the activities of two publishing companies, a daily and a weekly paper and the newspapers' distributors (a branch of the Hungarian Postal Service Company). The programme was edited and anchored by Mr. Ferenc Vicsek. What follows is the tapescript of the programme with the addition of some other opinions aimed at widening the scope of the debate.

**Question:** Is it a good business making a business weekly in Hungary nowadays?

**Mr. Mátyás Vince**, Editor-in-Chief of "Heti Világgazdaság" (World Economy Weekly): The way I see it, newspaper making is not a business activity in Hungary. The reasons are manifold. As everyone is aware, newspapers play a very serious political role at the current developmental level of mass communication. As a result, making newspapers on a purely business basis is out of question in Hungary. The problem is much rather that business considerations are disregarded in all or almost all aspects and elements of newspaper publishing.

**Question:** Would you like your weekly transformed into a business venture?

**Vince:** Yes, I would prefer *Heti Világgazdaság* as a business enterprise. Our weekly seems to offer a great business opportunity — a contrast to the current system of regulations. On the one hand, enormous amounts of money are centrally withdrawn or withheld from the papers while, on the other, the subsidies produce a situation which is pretty difficult to take stock of. It is hard to see into all the cards in the game of withdrawals and subsidies but one gets the feeling that this type of environment stimulates neither parsimonious management nor the increase of the circulation. To stick with our own example: *Heti Világgazdaság*

began as a limited edition weekly distributed in a relatively narrow circle of readers in the summer of 1979. Notwithstanding having our circulation increased several times and having become a pretty widely read paper, the increase in the staff's income has not been sufficient. Not only its growth was not commensurate with the increase in the circulation but it actually hardly kept up with that at the other papers managed by publishing houses. Let me put it this way: our impression is that our economic environment incites neither more nor better work.

**Question:** Would *Heti Világgazdaság* be able to survive as an independent small enterprise?

**Vince:** I estimate our paper would be amply profitable in a purely business environment, due to its ratings as well as the large number of ads published in it.

**Question:** Has *Heti Világgazdaság* repaid the subsidies it had received since the beginnings?

**Vince:** I have made some calculations. I figure that, all things considered, we would have made a nice profit during the six years of our presence on the market. Rather than tapping the state budget, we made profits. My experience at *Heti Világgazdaság* shows that we are somewhere around the late or even early sixties in the process of the development of internal in-

centives. What I am saying is not that Hungarian journalism or newspaper making should completely be on a business basis: what I am saying is just that it is not quite OK the way it is right now. It should be examined how the internal incentive/accounting system of the press (including the publishing houses as well as the editorial staffs) could be streamlined and adjusted more to the entrepreneurial, business-minded spirit of the eighties.

**Question:** Is it foreseeable for newspapers to start becoming more business-oriented by the nineties than they had been in the sixties or the seventies? To me it seems press lags behind the continuous reforms of the economic system.

**Vince:** That is correct. I often say that we have fallen behind. I am convinced that economic considerations may in fact be reconciled with those of politics or propaganda, even in such a politically sensitive and important profession as ours. From the fact that journalism is the blend of the above two aspects it does not follow that its business aspects may only be taken care of in an absolutely coercive and administrative way, under some sort of a direct plan-command system. Many people might would like it that way but it is not a necessity "per se".

**Question:** I wonder if those fears are substantiated which suggest that with business becoming the organizing force of newspaper making — perhaps at the politically less exposed papers—, the performance of political tasks would suffer?

**Vince:** Not necessarily. It would create a new kind of situation that the political leadership of the press would also have to adapt to. Should this adaptation be done properly, it is not to be feared that the political tasks of the press would be pushed aside or damaged.

**Question:** Your company puts out some four hundred different papers. As the managing director, you are one of those most qualified to answer the question whether or not newspaper making is a

lucrative business in Hungary today. **Mr. Norbert Siklósi**, Managing Director of *Lapkiadó Vállalat* (Paper Publishing Company): I regard newspaper publishing as a mission. I maintain, no matter how strange it may sound to some other business executives: putting out even a losing paper is a "good business" for us. Newspaper publishing is a very special economic activity.

**Question:** Who foots the bill for this mission? Your company makes profits with some of the papers you publish and you support the net losers from those incomes or you are subsidized from the outside?

**Siklósi:** *Lapkiadó Vállalat* is a profit-oriented company. As a result, we cannot put out an endless series of publications making deficit. Whenever a new publication is under preparation, we must survey the situation with all the other publications of ours and find new ways and means to raise the amount we need for the new paper predicted to be a loser.

**Question:** Did your company make a profit in the year 1984?

**Siklósi:** In 1984 we made a profit of 73 million forints, which is 23 million more than the previous year's figure.

**Question:** Do you receive any subsidy from the state budget?

**Siklósi:** There has been no state subsidy for the press since 1968. For quite a while, the state subsidized the printing companies and the postal service. This practice is discontinued — very rightly, I may add. Since then, newspaper making has received no support from the government.

**Question:** Are we to understand that none of the political dailies is subsidized — that is, none of those published by your company, for instance?

**Siklósi:** We are the publishers of *Magyar Nemzet* (Hungarian Nation), the daily of the Patriotic People's Front and *Magyar Hírlap* (Hungarian News Daily), the government's semi-official daily. Should these dailies make deficits, that must be covered from our publishing company's own funds. It is the company's profit that

the two dailies either increase or decrease.

**Question:** Here is my question: do they increase or decrease it?

**Siklósi:** One of them makes profit, the other makes deficit.

**Question:** Do the members of the editorial staffs sense that the company's profits depend on their work?

**Siklósi:** This is a fuzzy question. Take a paper that is making deficit. If its editors try to increase demand for their paper, they should be, by definition, prevented from doing so by the publishing bureau. We do not curb it, though, because we regard shaping the society's consciousness as our highest priority. Consequently, an increase in the circulation of deficit-making papers is a net gain in terms of the formation of social consciousness, even if it leads to deficits in material terms. We have many publications which we advertise in order to increase their ratings, notwithstanding the net loss in our budget that is caused by their larger circulation. But from the viewpoint of the shaping of the consciousness of people — which one must also take into consideration at a company in a cultural field like ours — all this is a net gain.

**Question:** *Magyar Nemzet* is being published in an average of 110,000 copies a day. This circulation is large enough for a paper to support itself. Does the fact that your paper is making profits influence your editorial staff's work in any way?

**Mr. István Soltész,** Editor-in-Chief of the daily *Magyar Nemzet* (Hungarian Nation): It makes a considerable impact on the activity of the makers of any newspaper if they realize that the product is widely read, popular and even makes business profit. Because of the characteristics of their job, journalists tend to be humanities-oriented, rather than being businessmen- or tradesmen-type. We are also pretty conceited so once we hear about a paper being "economical", what first comes into our minds is how many people read our work or know our

name or what sort of response the paper makes in the public. In other words, it is our interest that many people read the paper we make. This is how humanistic values, information values and economic values are interconnected.

**Question:** Let me ask you now as a former Deputy-President of the Government's Office of Information: do papers support themselves in Hungary?

**Soltész:** The way I understood then, and I don't think the situation has changed since, newspaper making does not make a deficit in Hungary. It does not have to rely on governmental support, which may have to do with the success of the government's information policy. The supply of papers is very colourful: you find whatever you are able to think of, from hobby-papers through political publications. This is one of the sources of self-support. The other one is the Hungarian society's hunger for information about everything. Not even price increases have lessened this demand.

**Question:** Thus, satisfying the people's curiosity is a good business?

**Soltész:** I do not hesitate to use the word "business", even though the interests we are talking about are primarily of information-political and cultural nature. These aspects closely intermingle. When admitting the importance of business considerations, one must also admit, though, that very much has been done for the satisfaction of the demand in the information political and cultural sense of the word. This is how newspaper publishing companies are able to support themselves and even make profits.

**Question:** Well, if any one of our listeners feels like founding a newspaper, he may want to know that special permissions are required for the establishment of any weekly, daily or monthly paper in Hungary. These permissions are issued by the Government's Office of Information. In them, the papers' structure, mode of pub-

lication and price must be specified in full detail. And now let us focus on *Lapkiadó Vállalat* (Paper Publishing Company) again.

It would be possible to require from weeklies, for instance, that they be independent in their business activity. Mátyás Vince would be happy to face that challenge. Is it conceivable, do you think, that in a few year's time the frames of economic activity at *Lapkiadó Vállalat* be similar to those at other units of the economy like factories and plants?

**Siklósi:** This is also possible in the long run. Within a few years certain editorial offices may become independent economic units.

**Vicssek:** Who decides on the allocation of subsidies, let's say for a literary journal, and on the amount to be withdrawn from a profitable paper?

**Siklósi:** To tell you the truth, our company follows the Party's and the Government's intentions. We do create, establish new publications as results of the society's development. The decisions about their finances are made on the basis of who their owner is. It has happened not once that the burdens of a new publication were incurred by the company's Party or Trade Union Commission and the company leadership with the assumption that it was possible to cover the expenses from profits on other publications. The very popular weekly, *Film, Színház, Muzsika* (Film, Theatre, Music) is one of the deficit-makers at the company. Its deficit amounted to twelve million forints in 1984. Conversely, *Fürge Ujjak* (Nimble Fingers), our popular monthly focusing on knitting and crocheting makes an annual profit of fifteen million forints. The publication of *Édes Anyanyelvünk* (Our Mother Tongue), initiated by the great composer Zoltán Kodály, makes a loss of more than a million forints. The paper *Fotó* (Photography) loses about 1.7 million forints a year. On the other hand, *Sportfogadás* (Sports Pools) produces an annual profit of 21 million forints or so for our company.

**Question:** Is it a good business for the National Postal Service to distribute newspapers? The Postal Service receives 31 percent of the price of newspapers for the distribution. Does this sum cover the expenses involved?

**Mrs. Rudolf Reich,** Head of the Newspaper Department of the Hungarian Postal Service: In 1984, more than 1.3 billion copies of newspapers were distributed by the Hungarian Postal Service. Considering only the economic results, we have lost very serious amounts of money on the distribution of newspapers. We lost about 250 million forints in 1984. 68 percent of all the copies of newspapers are distributed through subscription and we lose about .40 forints per copy delivered.

**Question:** How do you make up for the losses?

**Reich:** Up to 1977, we had received governmental subsidies. Then, as a result of a 40 percent price increase, the Hungarian Postal Service had made profits for some years on distributing newspapers. Meanwhile, the Government declared the five-day working week which pushed up our labour costs. Again, the distribution of newspapers began showing a deficit. Currently our losses are covered from the profits the Hungarian Postal Service makes on other branches of its activity, like telephones.

**Question:** How much should subscribers pay for a daily so that prices completely include the distribution costs?

**Reich:** As I have already mentioned, we lose about .47 forints per copy. A daily costs 1.80 forints so that is what almost .50 forints should be added to.

**Question:** Has the difference between urban and rural distribution costs ever been calculated?

**Reich:** Delivery costs are greatly determined by the length of the route covered among the dispersed subscribers and communities. When we last began losing money on the distribution of newspapers, we figured the distribution would cost about 7—8

forints per copy on weekends in some areas of the country where scattered farms are typical.

**Question:** Is distribution a profitable business in other parts of the world?

**Reich:** Last year I took a trip to Sweden. It was a great surprise for me to learn that there, too, subscriptions are handled by the postal service and it makes as great loss as here. They hope to get out of the red by 1990.

**Question:** Is it the state budget that supports people reading newspapers there, too?

**Reich:** I know for fact about the French and Swedish Postal Service that they receive subsidies. I have no other international experience.

**Question:** How many tons of paper do distributors carry to the newsstands and the apartments?

**Reich:** We deliver about 85—86 thousand metric tons of paper per annum. More than three million copies of dailies are published in Budapest and the country while the total of weeklies delivered is over six million. In sum, we are connected with about four million readers.

**Question:** *Hírlapkiadó Vállalat* (Newspaper Publishing Company) is the largest newspaper publisher in Hungary: it puts out dailies in two million copies a day and weeklies in a total circulation of three million copies. Is it a profitable enterprise?

**Mr. József Horátski**, Business Deputy Managing Director of *Hírlapkiadó Vállalat*: Newspaper publishing is able to support itself in the long run. The self-support stems from the fact that, independent of price increases, the readers stick with their favourite papers. The total circulation of dailies and weeklies has increased more than twenty percent in the last ten years in Hungary. The county dailies' circulation has grown fifty percent in that period.

**Question:** In an earlier interview Mátyás Vince, Editor-in-Chief of *Heti Világgazdaság* compared the internal regulation of the Hungarian press to

the state of affairs in the early sixties in the whole economy. In other words, press seems to have lagged behind the modernization of the economy as a whole.

**Horátski:** It is true that the regulation of the press is dissimilar to that of the units of the other branches of the economy. What this actually means, however, is more favourable treatment. I would like to underscore that this is the case not only for newspaper making but also for book and music publishing, film making, etc. Let me give you some examples: both publishers' assets and accumulation and the wages they pay their employees are tax-exempt. These are just the three most important kinds of tax-exemption they receive. All the other production units of the economy must pay these taxes while publishers don't.

**Question:** What percentage of your profits would it take if you did not receive the above allowances? Maybe you would have to double your profits?

**Horátski:** Maybe.

**Question:** I would like to revert to the case of *Heti Világgazdaság*. Why do you think it is unthinkable for the profitable papers to work independently with the losers raising money to cover their losses the way they have done it so far?

**Horátski:** Please specify: what exactly do you mean by the editorial staff working independently?

**Question:** Very simple things like assigning a certain gross sum for wages at a paper in such a way that if they are successful in doing the job with a staff of twenty rather than the initial thirty, the twenty could divide the gross sum. This is just an example but there are plenty of examples of this kind.

**Horátski:** The proposition you are citing would require an overall decision on the top. Let me point out that it would make the management of the papers more flexible and easier if just the current coercive system of maximized wages could be freed. At

present, the amount of wages per staff size is meticulously maximized while the budget for fees paid to non-staff writers is a completely different game. There is no way to mix the two even though they both respond to solvent demand.

**Question:** The issue of circulation has come up several times as one related to economical management. I would think, thus, that the daily *Népszabadság* (People's Liberty), which has by far the largest circulation, must be a very profitable venture. Am I right?

**Horácsi:** With a circulation of 700 to 750 thousand copies a day, *Népszabadság* had been amply profitable until the installment of a new and big printery by *Szikra Lapnyomda* (Szikra Printing House). *Népszabadság* is not profitable any more because operation, maintenance and amortization costs have increased tremendously. It involves *Népszabadság* as well as *Népszava* (People's Voice). The extra expenses are being covered from the publishing company's own sources.

Tamás Szecskő

## Encounters with the New Media\*

*Perspectives from a Socialist Country*

My friend and colleague, Yassen Zasursky, the dean of the Faculty of Journalism in Moscow (and according to rumours, one of the "grey eminences" behind the McBride Report) not so long ago formulated a rather spectacular paradox, while speaking about the policy considerations related to the new communication technologies. In Balatonszéplak, Hungary, he said the following: "We must draw conclusions from our backwardness not only in the sense that we should be in a hurry to catch up, but we should also make haste slowly and carefully."<sup>1</sup>

Hungarian politicians and political theorists as far as 150 years ago used a very similar expression: "considered progress" (*fontolva haladás*) while thinking in the frame of reference of a reform from above. So, on the one hand, this attitude seems to be rather Central-European, and, on the other, characterizes rather well the policy-making philosophy of the East European socialist countries facing the challenges of the new communication technologies. "Make haste slowly and carefully!"—this paradoxical, but very meaningful statement seems to me such a basic principle in handling the various new phenomena of the communication system in our societies that in the following I will try to outline just those social, cultural and tech-

nological conditions under which this principle is put into operation, in an implicit or explicit way, in more rudimentary or more articulated forms, with a defensive or an offensive flavour—depending on the general historical, political—and geopolitical!—conditions of the given country. And although there are analysts who—like those of *Le Monde*—contrast "le scénario de développement contrôlé" with that of a "d'ouverture de type hongrois"<sup>2</sup>, in my opinion the common characteristics prevail in the development of political thinking regarding new communication technologies in this region of Europe.

My argumentation, however, will be built upon my Hungarian experiences and the studies made in my Institute during the last 3—4 years, i. e. since the advent of the new communication technologies into Central-East Europe. First I will briefly describe the characteristics of the Hungarian communication scene, then I turn my attention towards some value-aspects of the development and focus for a while on the crucial issue of stratification. In the third part of my essay I will deal with one or two aspects of policy-making and conclude, in the last part, with different kinds of problems facing communication research.

\* Based on a paper presented at the UNESCO Consultation on Research in Communication Technology, Göteborgs Universitet, January 27—30, 1986

### The communication scene in Hungary

The current state of the communication system in Hungary is rather contradictory. On one side there are favourable conditions for the development of social communication. The dynamic development of the electronic media, which started in the sixties, continued. Altogether, 99 percent of the population possesses radio sets and a quarter of these are suitable for stereo reception. Families with several radio sets have become typical: in 7 percent of the families all four types of sets (table, portable, pocket and car radios) are operating, functionally supplementing each other. The ratio of adults without a television set decreased over the first half of the decade from 8 to 4 percent, while the ratio of those who have at least two sets doubled, to more than 20 percent. Despite the absurdly high prices of colour sets, the ratio of those in possession of such sets increased from 7 to 18 percent, so it seems a genuine upswing has started in this field as well. More than half of the families own a tape-recorder, almost 40 percent a record player, and in both cases the ratio of stereo sets moves around 23 percent.

Hungary is even more open to culture and information than before. The ratio of those adults who are completely isolated from information about public life, from the consumption of media news, shrank from 5 to 1 percent during the first half of the eighties. The share of those who watch foreign TV programmes increased from 19 to 31 percent and—within this—the ratio of those who frequently (several times a week) watch foreign stations, trebled.

This openness is becoming more emphatic through the spread of new communications techniques. At the end of 1983 a political document estimated there were already 300,000 homes linked to the cable and nationally reckoned with more than 120 of those CATV systems which served more than 1,000

homes each. According to a survey taken in 1984 by the Mass Communication Research Centre, 5—600,000 people can watch video programmes, either on their own sets or—and these are in the majority—in the homes of their friends or relatives.<sup>3</sup>

On the other side, in the modernization of the information household of the Hungarian society, there are lags as well.

At the beginning of the eighties the use of electronic devices (including everything from national television transmitters to pocket calculators) amounted only to US\$50 per capita in Hungary, when the world average was US\$90.<sup>4</sup> The most pressing bottleneck is, undoubtedly, the outdatedness of the telephone network. Nothing is more characteristic of the ambivalence of the Hungarian communication infrastructure's situation than the rapidly advancing cable systems, on the one side, together with the fact that Hungary was the first among the socialist countries to start regular teletext transmissions; while on the other side, the indices of the telephone supply are much lower than in countries of economic standards similar to those of Hungary: the rate of penetration of home telephone sets is only about 15 percent. According to various estimations, the outdatedness of the telephone network caused the economy an annual loss of 2 billion forints (\$40 million) at the beginning of the seventies, but by 1985 the estimations already mention a loss of 6 billions.<sup>5</sup>

So, the advent of well advanced technologies on one side, and inadequate supply even in some traditional fields of social communications on the other: this is the Janus-face of today's communication system in Hungary. A foreign observer of these contradictions, however, judged that "in spite of all technological difficulties also Hungary is moving towards an »information economy«", i.e. an increasing part of economic activities includes the collection, processing and distribution of information. Infor-



mation activities now contribute about one third of the value added Gross Domestic Product; half of this part stems from services in non-information organizations. This development leads to increasingly problematic contradictions between the needs and demands of the sphere of production on the one hand and the abilities of the information sector on the other. The result is a "structural underdevelopment" which can only be solved through increased investments.<sup>6</sup> The statement is clear and—unfortunately—valid: without reallocating the sums to be invested in the Hungarian national economy it seems to be rather difficult to overcome these structural problems. There are economists who even cry out for a paradigmatic change in this respect. Let me quote one of them just to demonstrate the heat of the debates around our information economy:

"While we come under the shadow of a new revolution of information and communication—consequently of production and of social relations—, here, in Hungary, we are still struggling with the problems of an earlier industrial revolution. Outrageous contrast: in our homes—without sewage and telephone—we can play our desires on the video set. Broadcasting floods our workplaces or homes with messages about innovations, but the fora for public life on a local level have no physical or organizational infrastructure. We live in the age of a cultural lag which earlier laconically manifested itself in the contrast of narrow streets and a dense automobile traffic. We have to change our entire economic outlook in order to be able to handle these tensions. A paradigmatic change is necessary."<sup>7</sup>

### Some value considerations

It seems to me that the Final Report of the Florida Consultation formulated the principle on which common thinking about the new technologies is

based also in the socialist countries, namely that "it is crucial for countries to identify their cultural and developmental priorities, and then to find ways in which the new technologies could help meet them."<sup>8</sup> The Mass Communication Research Center in Budapest, in its long-range research plan elaborated in 1980, exposed the role of research in this process of identification: "The first task of research is, after having perceived the novelties emerging, to deliberate: where development of these new media is probable and where it is advisable; which technology answers to widely felt needs and which is that one which, most probably, will result in new needs and demands, corresponding with the basic goal-values of our society; which medium could become a threat, conveying alien values; on which fields there is a danger that without energetic development we shall soon lag behind."<sup>9</sup> The document also stressed that high level, democratically prepared political decisions and interventions would be necessary regarding the penetration of the new communication technologies into the Hungarian society. It also outlined the most important dimensions of studying this penetration. These are: the production and/or the importation of the new media; the production, import or inflow of communication contents; the spontaneous or oriented learning processes of using the new technologies on individual, community, institutional and societal levels; the build-up of the necessary new institutions and their integration into the communication system of the nation.

It is remarkable to see that at that time—more than five years ago—it was the spectre of "consumer society" what worried most researchers but they tried, at the same time, to outline some countervailing social values and norms for the use of new technologies. "It is to be recommended that routines of the consumer society for using the new media should not be automatically adopted. This is why it is necessary

to study the development of positive routines. The responsibility of the mass communication institutions should be stressed here, their sphere of interests and their field of operation should also be scrutinized. Beyond the spontaneous use of the new media, research should also embrace those initiatives, those social experiments where new forms corresponding to our society's value system are in the formation (involving community, emancipatory and cultural elements).<sup>10</sup>

Since that time, with the deployment of the new technologies some of the worries became more articulated and, on the other hand, new, hitherto unforeseen positive aspects also came into the forefront. The prospects of the citizens' active involvement in cable communication, for example, became "a yet untapped reservoir of civil activity in Hungary's media system."<sup>11</sup> Appreciating these faculties of this new technology, however, researchers realize that the conflict between professionalism and—sometimes rather low-grade—amateurism could increase, confronting sometimes community life and cultural values. The socialist character of the new media (or, rather, that of their use) came also under a closer scrutiny. While earlier it was almost exclusively the content aspect which was referred to while deliberating on the value-affiliation of the media, lately—due to thinking about the social and cultural consequences of the new technologies—it became explicit in the public debates that "the socialist character of a medium or a communication system—beyond being reflected in the content mediated (i. e. the programme policy)—is also fundamentally incumbent upon its concrete relations (in its technology, in its institutional organization) with the masses and with the political power. Namely, that in these three aspects how far can it realize such basic socialist ideals like autonomy, cooperation and equality, the freedom of opinions, the representation of

interests, the quality of high standards combined with a variegated cultural supply."<sup>12</sup>

### Stratification

The traditionally existing differences between the communication "core" and the "peripheries" will further grow during the present day transformation of the mass communication system. The media and the technologies newly installed into the system are very expensive and this excludes a considerable portion of the population from their—at least initial—use.

This phenomenon can be recognized very clearly in the use of teletext in Hungary. While 18 percent of the population has two and only 2 percent three or more television sets, of those who possess a suitable set for the reception of teletext, 52 percent have two and 18 percent three or more television receivers.<sup>13</sup> The same bearing is indicated by a study which deals with the social consequences of the spreading of cable television: "Expectedly, cable television will increase to a larger extent and in a larger sphere the opportunities of information about local events and processes as well as the opportunities to express interests for those who already have better chances in this respect. Simply because those who objectively may have a greater need for them will mostly not be linked in and switched to the system for sober technical and economic reasons."<sup>14</sup>

The case is similar with the home-computers. According to the estimates of a study<sup>15</sup>, approximately 20—22,000 home computers were in individual use in Hungary at the end of 1984. (The types and brands used are of a rather limited scope: 90 percent of them consist of three types—Sinclair ZX—81, Spectrum and Commodore 64.) Considering that their price is illogically high—as the author of the study analyzes—it necessarily follows that

they are exclusively owned by individuals of the highest income groups.

For a transitory period, this is the case in every country of the world. Afterwards, due to the development of microelectronics which sharply reduces the prices, these media become accessible also for mass consumption. The situation is slightly different in Hungary, however, where with high duties on imported electronic goods (which may perhaps be justified in a narrow economic consideration, but are absurd in their societal outcome) the soaring prices of the household/entertainment electronics prolong this "transitory period".

Of course, even if this economic Gordian knot could be solved with one cut (and it is hoped that the modernization of the Hungarian economy, sooner or later, will make this trick!) the sociological dilemma would continue to exist. The video, the teletext-adaptor, the high-fidelity stereos and the PC can only be bought in the first period by a small income-elite group even in the socialist societies. However, it is in the well-conceived long term interest of Hungary to integrate these elements of hardware into the communication system and to assist their nation-wide penetration with national resources. In the meantime, however, it maintains the state of structural deprivation.

The researcher's task in this respect—while assisting the policy-maker—is not only to discover and reveal these discrepancies and their relation to the social and cultural stratification of the society, but also to find how far these disadvantages are of a cumulative character. The uneven spread of the new technologies cannot be avoided, but with far-sighted communication and social policies at least the detrimental accumulation of communication disadvantages could and should be curtailed in a socialist society.

## Policies

At the Rome meeting which started this series of UNESCO consultations on new communication technologies two and a half years ago I assentingly quoted an Italian communication scholar who wrote that "decisions on the introduction of new communication technologies are made by politicians in accord with the army and corporate leaders. Researchers may investigate the social, political and economic impacts of the new technologies—but only after they have been introduced. Rarely have researchers been given the opportunity to explore the potential consequences of various alternative policy measures before the decision is made."<sup>16</sup>

Well, since that time the development furnished me with a handful of proofs showing that in our region—or, at least, in Hungary—the case is different. Research here also lags behind the spread of new technologies—but not because prior policy decisions have been made. The policy decisions themselves lag behind. If there were any decisions in the first phases of the deployment at all, they were outside of the political or social sphere: they were merely of a technical character. The "midwives" of cable in Hungary, for example, were a municipal agency, taking care of the apartment buildings, and a nationwide firm dealing with the maintenance of electronic goods. Or, the first series of measures affecting the development of video was taken by the customs, reflecting almost exclusively economic considerations. Communication policy decisions, in their stricter sense, were made only later, when the development was already in its full swing—and when some research projects had already been in the making too. So the sequence of events was different in Hungary as compared to what the quoted statement suggests and this had a bearing on research itself, because, under these circumstances, it had to show more initiatives.

As for the policy-formulation process itself, I think, it is just here that the exact meaning of the paradox "haste slowly" could be understood. To cope with the exigencies of modernization, these societies have to develop also their communication systems, the information household of the society as a whole. So they assist new technical elements being integrated into the existing structures. But the content or the end-product of these new elements is, in most cases, linked to values (commercialism, consumerism, etc.) which are alien to the basic value-system of these societies. Consequently a conflict between technical-economic rationality and political-ideological rationality appears, holding up policy-formulating processes and making them hesitant. Hence the paradox quoted but this also explains why aspects of the content, of software come so much into the forefront of political considerations.

### Issues of research

Although in my rather mosaic-like exposé I already tried to make references to the tasks of communication research, for conclusion let me add some summarizing remarks. Naturally, only some of them are specific for that region which I dealt with because technological development also produces challenges which are of a general character, independent of the social system. (I think Europe is an ideal terrain for studying the socio-cultural impacts of the new communication technologies, just for this reason. Both uniformities and differences in the models of communication development are rather spectacular here, between countries, on the one hand, and between the two social systems on the other. So the factors of comparative and [I hope] collaborative research are given!)

The variegatedness of the different social communication models emerging is in itself a rather complex problem for study. In earlier phases of commu-

nication development the quantitative aspects of the technical infrastructure were more decisive: there were countries where the penetration of television was broader, in other countries more narrow. Nowadays it is the structure and the interrelation of the new elements in the communication system which have more relevance: why is it, that in country "A" the cable industry is the driving force in the transformation of the communication structures, while in country "B"—having otherwise very similar socio-political conditions—it is the penetration of the PC which is a point of crystallization? Which sociological, political and economic forces motivate these qualitative differences, this divergence in the formation of constellations?

In my opinion the time has come for the revitalization of the political economy of communications. Following the development of the different models of communication it is unavoidable to ask some fundamental questions of an economic nature: Which kind of capital is operating in the field of the new media? What is the role of the multinationals and of small, private capital? In a historical perspective, who is financing the whole development: the State, the society as a whole, the capital or the consumer? How far do the family budgets undergo a transformation due to the use of the new media? . . . And other relevant questions could be added for challenging researchers using the analytical frames of the political economy.

The other approach which should be emphasized more than earlier is probably the organizational one. From the large, traditional public service broadcasting organizations down to grassroot-level cooperatives operating small-scale communication systems, the whole set-up of institutional structures is on the move. The researcher working in this field should not only assist policy-makers in the preparatory and follow-up phases of their decisions, but also should help the public, the citizen and the consumer in finding hitherto

unknown organizational forms for his/her communication activity of a new quality.

Underlying these research and policy-making efforts, I think, some pioneering work is necessitated also in the methodologies. It partly follows from the fact that basic methodologies of mass communication research elaborated in the age of the printed press, radio and television are not applicable any more for the majority of communication phenomena. The other reason for this challenge in methodology—partly related to the earlier one—is the gradual integration of the three traditionally independent subsystems of social communication: mass communication, telecommunication and informatics. How could the “nose-counting” type methods of traditional audience research, for example, be applied for studying the communicative behaviour of families where—beside the “old media”—one finds video, teletext and personal computer?

Fresh ideas are needed, anyhow, in the broadest sense: “*des pensées sauvages*”—as the French would say. Mesmerized by the wonders of the “Brave New World” of the media, we are usually inclined to forget that while studying these we are mostly dealing with the system of distributing the messages. But what kind of transformations are going on in the processes of production? Several international and national political bodies have already raised the issue: facing the exponentially growing demand for audio-visual

contents of all kinds, an accelerated development of the production capacities is required to strengthen the positions of endogenous, quality productions. Research also should put more emphasis on the analysis of the different aspects of production.

For conclusion, just another “wild” idea. Why not study the socio-cultural impacts of non-existent technologies? It is not a joke if one realizes that there are places, social groups or societies where—due mostly to inadequate financial resources—in order to meet some genuine communication needs, one introduces substitutes, “proxies” into the system. The reason for the spectacular development of the CB-radios in Hungary, for example,<sup>17</sup> could be explained by the above mentioned underdevelopment of the telephone system. The Commodore 64 in Hungary and the Sinclair PC in Poland is used in many places as a substitute for professional PCs. Partly because the reason given, partly because PCs in the professional category used to be embargoed. But what kind of losses these substitutions result in? And by which combination of factors could one minimize these social losses?

With evoking this last problem I was trying to suggest that most of what we are talking here in Göteborg have—should have—relevance for the developing world as well. Not only because this is one of UNESCO’s assignments but also because for this country which offered us her hospitality, this issue has traditionally had a high priority.

#### Notes

<sup>1</sup> ZASURSKY, Y.: *Prospects of Journalism in the Light of New Technologies in Mass Media*. Dossier. No. 6/1984. IOJ. Prague, p. 167

<sup>2</sup> Le DIBERDER, A. and WASSERMAN, F.: *Les technologies de la communication en URSS*, Le Monde, 6 Sept., 1984., p. 20

<sup>3</sup> All the data quoted here are from SZECSKÓ, T.: *Öt évről öt évre* (From five years—to five years). Jel-Kép, 1985. No. 2. pp. 3—4.

- <sup>4</sup> SZECSKÓ, T.: *A jövőről — középtávon. A tömegkommunikáció fejlesztésének új követelményei* (About the future—in the medium term. New requirements in the development of mass communications.) Jel-Kép, 1983. No. 1, p. 11
- <sup>5</sup> VAMOS, T.: *About the shortage of the telephone network*. Heti Világgazdaság, 14 May, 1983
- <sup>6</sup> CHEESMAN, R.: *Hungary: Communication and access*. Manuscript, Rotskilde, Denmark, Dec. 1985. pp. 44—45
- <sup>7</sup> KONCZ, G.: Current issues of cultural economics in Hungary and the necessity to elaborate information economics. Manuscript. Budapest, Sept. 1985, p. 13
- <sup>8</sup> Consultation on Collaborative Research into the New Communication Technologies: Final Report, Tallahassee, Florida, Febr. 1985. p. 34
- <sup>9</sup> *A társadalmi kommunikáció kutatása Magyarországon. A tömegkommunikációs és közvéleménykutatások stratégiai terve.* (The study of social communication in Hungary: A strategic plan of communication and opinion research.) Tanulmányok, beszámolók, jelentések. Mass Communication Research Center. Budapest, 1982. p. 49
- <sup>10</sup> Ibid p. 51.
- <sup>11</sup> SZEKFŰ, A.: *The First Experiment in Community Cable TV in a Socialist Country*. Paper presented at the XIVth Conference and General Assembly of IAMCR, Prague, 27th August—1 September, p. 9
- <sup>12</sup> SZEKFŰ, A.: *A tömegkommunikáció új útjai* (New roads of mass communications). Budapest, 1984. p. 84
- <sup>13</sup> VÁSÁRHELYI, M.: *A New Source of Information: Teletext*, p. 65.
- <sup>14</sup> JAKAB, Z.: *Szkeptikus gondolatok a magyar kábeltévéőről.* (Sceptic thoughts about Hungarian cable television.) In: Kálmán A. and Nagypál E. (eds.): *Kábel, kommunikáció, közösség* (Cable, communication, community) Budapest, 1984, p. 109
- <sup>15</sup> RÉVÉSZ, S.: *A háztartási elektronika magyarországi piacának sajátosságai* (The particularities of the market of household electronics in Hungary). Tanulmányok, beszámolók, jelentések. Mass Communication Research Centre, Budapest, 1985. p. 15.
- <sup>16</sup> GRANDI, R.: The Limitations of the Sociological Approach: Alternatives from Italian Communications Research. *Journal of Communication*, Summer 1983. p. 57
- <sup>17</sup> At the beginning of 1985 there were approximately 20,000 CB-radio owners, operating on 40 channels. As for comparison, in Great Britain, where citizen's band broadcasting started more than 15 years ago, in a much larger population there are 60,000 CB-radio owners, broadcasting on 9 channels. (Palik, L.: The factual history and development of the private cab-industry. Dissertation manuscript, Budapest, 1985, p. 30)

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*Mária Vásárhelyi*

## A New Source of Information: Teletext

### Who have decoder sets?

The social-demographic characteristics of those who possess TV sets provided with decoder highly differ from the indices characteristic of the average Hungarian adult population. The sharpest difference can be found in school qualifications, consequently in occupation and per capita income.

Altogether 44 percent of decoder set owners are university graduates (the national average is 8 percent), and 36 percent of them completed their secondary school studies (nationally 21 percent). At the same time, the ratio of those who completed 8 grades or less is only 18 percent (nationally 71 percent). Our survey has unambiguously showed that the ownership of such sets today is the privilege of the financially best situated stratum in Hungary; this TV set is regarded as a luxury and its mass spread cannot be expected in the near future. Those who possess such sets today are supplied with each of the electronic mass media to a much higher extent and standard than the national average. The majority are highly qualified, middle-aged urban dwellers with high income.

At the same time those who are included in our sample do not excel with more active media use or information consumption than the average in their own socio-demographic group. The latter fact justifies us to deal in more detail with the question of what factors motivate the decision of buying.

### Motivation of buying

First we asked whether the interviewee could remember where he had first seen such a set in operation. Most people mentioned the Budapest International Fair, which also illustrates that this event is a suitable venue to introduce and popularize new products and services. The other source from which people received information was the retail shop network. Out of those who saw such sets before buying it and knew the additional service it provides, 30 percent answered that their attention had been attracted at the BIF and 22 percent said they had seen it in the shops. Another 14 percent met this facility abroad, others saw it in homes of friends or acquaintances or at some other places.

It is surprising and calls the attention to a specific aspects of buyers' and consumers' habits that 56 percent of our interviewees bought the set without ever seeing it in operation. Taking into consideration that the considerably higher price of the sets provided with decoder exclusively covers the additional service of the Teletext, it is a noteworthy fact that more than half of the decoder set owners decided to pay an additional 10,000 forints or even more not being aware of what it involved. This is in sharp contrast to the present general consumer attitude in Hungary: the purchase of a durable consumer product or its replacement is usually preceded by lengthy saving.

Most of the families—taking into consideration prices, incomes and their compared ratio—even have to save money to buy a large screen b/w television set, although in this case we cannot even speak about the increase of the standards of consumption.

The above described fact indicates the tendency that the consumption and buying customs of this stratum with much higher income than the average differ from the generally characteristic situation. Its decisions are made less circumspectly when investing in such expense, and it does not have to prepare for it for a long period, because no lengthy saving is necessary. The purchase—as it will be seen in detail—is not determined by a previously emerged need—the need only develops after buying the set. Our survey has revealed that later a strong attachment develops to this service, thus the artificially created need becomes natural, and becomes organically integrated into the sources of information.

It is worth seeing whether our sample includes socio-demographic groups which are more or less characterized by such a buying decision. It is conspicuous at first glance that although certain objective variables slightly differentiate the preambles of the sale, namely, whether the buyer was pre-informed, we cannot speak about basic differences. Only a slight tendency suggests that higher age and lower education together make this type of sale more probable, primarily among women. However, as this is the stratum most powerfully underrepresented in our sample compared to its ratio among the adult population, this tendency cannot be considered as general.

Before analyzing the concrete motivations of the buying decision, it has to be remarked that the reason and the positive feature found in the use of Teletext most probably intermingle, namely, people express a post-ideology about their decision to buy the set.

There were more interviewees who mentioned aspects of content that presume a knowledge of the set than those who had already seen a set in operation before buying it. There are extensive similarities of content between the motivation of the purchase and what the interviewee regards as the greatest benefit obtained from Teletext. The decision to buy the set can be separated into two basic categories: one part of the answers covers functional, content reasons (emphasizing the positive features of Teletext as a source of information), and the other large group covers various considerations suggesting technical advantages. From among the functional reasons, it was most frequently answered that Teletext provided more rapid and more up-to-date information than any other media; 16 percent mentioned this and one quarter of the interviewees emphasized this positive feature as the reason for buying. In this category, the second most frequently mentioned motivation was the fact that Teletext provided more colourful and more interesting information than the other media: this was the case with 10 percent of the answers and 14 percent of the interviewees mentioned it. 6 percent were motivated by the opportunity to gain information at any time within a certain period, and another 6 percent considered the information provided by Teletext to be better than that of other media.

As to the motivations of technical content, 14 percent answered that at present the decoder set is the most up-to-date type in the domestic supply. The second most frequently mentioned technical consideration is much lower: 8 percent of the interviewees bought the set because of its Japanese tube, and 5 percent of all comments hinted at this. Subjective elements and technical considerations are mixed in the answer occurring with a 10 percent frequency that pointed out as a motivating factor the interest in novelties or in technology in general.



Altogether 55 percent of decoder owners reads the Teletext several times a day, 22 percent once a day, 15 percent several times a week, 5 percent once or twice a week, and 1 percent less frequently. Comparing the use of Teletext with that of other mass media we find that in the national representative sample as well as in ours, the ratio of those who use the radio everyday is 10 percent higher than that of those who read the pages of Teletext. The ratio of those who use the press and the television every day is almost exactly the same in the present sample as the ratio of those who read the Teletext every day when it is transmitted, while on a national scale, the figure relevant to daily viewing and reading is somewhat lower.

### User habits

The frequency of using Teletext does not show any noteworthy difference according to the socio-demographic variables involved in the survey.

After the general reading frequency, we asked how frequently and at what time the interviewees read the Teletext on weekdays and on weekends.

On weekdays the peak is in the early evening, between 6 and 8. The next period when Teletext is most frequently read is the period after 8 on weekdays. In the former interval, 71 percent of the interviewees and in the latter 56 percent read the Teletext with regularity (daily or several times a week). The least utilized period is in the forenoon. An average of 19 percent of the interviewees read the Teletext in that period.

The readers in the morning are recruited from the socially inactive strata, primarily from among old age pensioners and to a much lower ratio from among housewives and young mothers at home with their children. At the same time, it is somewhat surprising how relatively few of the retired people switch on their decoder set for the sake of Teletext. No other

explanation can be found, but that the use of Teletext among retired people is closely linked with television viewing habits, therefore, most of them switch on at times when they would watch the television anyway. The breakdown by age of the viewers in the early afternoon hours is conspicuously even, and is not even considerably differentiated by social activity. It seems that viewers consider the period between 6 and 8 as the most favourable for acquiring information, because in addition to having the opportunity to see the Television Newsreel during this period, they can also listen to the Evening Chronicle on the radio, and most of the viewers read the Teletext at the same time. The fact that less of those over 50 read the Teletext in the later periods than the younger age group most probably can be explained with the different rhythm of life.

On weekends, as it could be expected, the viewers are divided more evenly between the different periods. Between 6 and 8, 57 percent of the interviewees read the Teletext and the ratio of those who read it in the morning, early afternoon and in the evening, also amounts to 50 percent, thus prime time hardly differs from the average of other periods. Before speaking about the reading habits on weekends, it should be remarked that although one third of the interviewees own a weekend chalet, where they most probably spend most of their leisure time, only 3 percent answered that they usually did not read Teletext on weekends. The conclusion should be that before starting out and after returning home, they regularly switch on the Teletext, which again suggests that this medium has become integrated into the information habit system of its users.

The readers over the weekend are also only differentiated to some extent by their age, but the direction is the opposite to that experienced on weekdays. During the daytime periods, the ratio of those in different age groups who read the Teletext decreases parallel with the increase in age.

## Information

Listing the Teletext columns, we asked the interviewees to define how frequently they read the different topics. The following Table illustrates the answers given to the question.

The data of the Table reveal that the most frequently read Teletext pages are weather reports. These are followed by domestic and foreign political news, information about the television programme and daily information. Users primarily discovered in Teletext

the possibility of event oriented information and during their everyday use, look for the easily accessible latest information in fields where the content of the news frequently changes.

The experienced preference of reading almost fully tallies with the experiences gained in other countries. The only difference worth mentioning is that the Press Review in the western countries usually comes after the foreign political and domestic news with regard to the frequency of reading, while in Hungary this page is less frequently read.

**The frequency of reading the different Teletext pages**  
N = 772

	Daily	Several times a week	Once or twice a week	Rarely	Never
Foreign political news	46	20	16	11	3
Domestic news	44	23	16	9	3
Economic news	23	25	22	19	4
Traffic news	28	25	16	20	4
Calendar, name days	21	14	16	29	8
Market, recipes	23	19	19	24	6
Daily information	44	22	12	11	2
TV programme	40	15	9	17	10
Recommendations	16	20	20	25	7
Concerts, theatres	3	5	17	41	21
Museums, films	4	7	19	40	17
Next day TV programme	24	19	9	23	15
Weather	66	20	7	3	1
Medical meteorology	37	18	13	19	7
County reports	7	8	15	30	26
From the dailies and weeklies	14	17	16	26	16
Information for the deaf	1	1	2	18	62
Football-pool and lottery	6	5	34	21	24
Hobbies	24	21	20	22	5
Hit list	8	12	16	29	23
Chess, bridge, cards	6	7	10	26	39
Puzzles	23	14	15	27	11
Medical advice	27	20	17	21	8
Legal information	15	14	21	29	12
Reader's page	10	11	17	29	16
Miscellaneous	13	15	20	25	11
Manager service	17	17	19	24	14
Where to turn?	7	8	15	42	17
Remote instruction	13	8	13	33	23

### Alternative or complementary use?

The question whether the mass spread of Teletext could mean a challenge for the traditional mass media or only provides a comparative possibility in acquiring information cannot be answered by our survey in a generalizing and reassuring way. The complementary use may mean, on the one hand, that readers primarily turn to Teletext for supplementary information with regard to topics and themes about which they were already informed by other media, or on the other hand, they primarily acquire certain pieces of information from this channel, however, this does not change the frequency of utilizing other media. The latter version may become characteristic in those themes in which the content of the information can change hour by hour, for example, in the case of weather or road conditions.

There are several reasons why we cannot safely ascertain the domination of either form of use based on the results of the survey. One reason is the very low number of decoder sets together with the fact that up till now the users have been recruited from a very narrow stratum of society. Another reason may be the novelty value of this service, which presumably influences the frequency of use. In order to be able to forecast the dominant function of Teletext in the acquisition of information, we should have broad scale knowledge about the comprehensive customs of acquiring information by individuals or different social groups.

In the present survey, we tried to approach the problem with several questions.

### Advantages of Teletext

The interviewees were asked to define the most important positive features of this new medium in comparison to newspapers, radio and television. With

regard to all the three media, the answers were concentrated around 2—3 positive features. This suggests that the users quickly discover those advantages that cannot be provided by the other media. This is also indicated by the fact that the mentioned advantages do not show any significant connection with the time factor how long the interviewee owns the TV set.

Figuratively, when comparing Teletext and the dailies, most advantages were mentioned in favour of the former. Every third answer referred to at least two positive features compared to the dailies. In this comparison, the most frequently mentioned positive features of Teletext are its rapidity and up-to-dateness; 42 percent of the remarks refer to this, i.e. 58 percent of those who answered the question mentioned it. The next positive aspect was much less frequently mentioned. In the second place, concise, essential information was emphasized (15 percent of the remarks, i.e. one fifth of the interviewees emphasized it) and almost the same number opined that Teletext provided more colourful and more versatile information than the dailies. With an 11 percent frequency, it was remarked that using Teletext was more comfortable than reading the newspapers. The interviewees meant that it was easier to find the necessary information and one did not have to go down the steps or into the street for a newspaper. Most probably there is an overlapping between this category and the possibility of acquiring concise and essential information.

Analyzing the list of advantages according to socio-demographic groups, we find the same breakdown by all the variables, which suggests that the advantages of Teletext compared to those of the dailies are unambiguous and obvious. The possibility of getting rapid and up-to-date information was mostly mentioned by the highest qualified younger strata. The frequency of such statements decreased parallel with the increase in age and

the decrease of education, but it is almost double the next positive feature even in the socio-demographic groups that show the least mentioning: the opportunity of concise and essential information. The second advantage of Teletext is most frequently mentioned by those over 50 with primary education and the middle-aged university graduates. The opinion that the information supplied by Teletext is more colourful and varied than that in the dailies is mentioned mostly by people under 29 with secondary education. Comfort as a positive feature is mentioned with the same frequency by the different strata.

Compared to the other two electronic media, the most frequently mentioned and most highly appreciated positive feature of Teletext is its independence of time and content. Independence of time means that the opportunity to acquire information is not linked with a schedule, i.e. one can read information not only when the programme structure determines it, while independence of content means that the user can receive information he selects from the Content and is not compelled to listen or watch the entire news programme.

From among these two dimensions, the readers of Teletext primarily appreciate independence of time, both compared to the radio and television. Almost 50 percent of the interviewees mentioned this positive feature. In order of frequency, independence of content was mentioned in the second place: compared with the radio 14 percent and compared with television 16 percent opined in this way. In the third place, we already experienced a difference with regard to radio and television. Compared to the radio, the third frequently mentioned advantage was the opportunity of repeat, namely that this or that information in Teletext can be turned on and read repeatedly. The fact that this is most frequently mentioned in comparison with the radio can partly be explained

with the particularities of the radio as an information medium: communication can be fixed only by hearing, while in the television it is also transmitted visually—thus effecting more than one sense it becomes deeper fixed. Radio listening habits play an even more important role. Today we can mainly speak about background listening. This divided attention results in an only partial or belated attention to news and information. The third advantage compared to the television consists in more colourful and varied information provided by Teletext. It is difficult to precisely describe this category, because interest—and ultimately this is what it is meant—conceals varied expectations and almost everyone expects something else from the information. One thing is certain: mostly the “miscellaneous” and “from here and there” type of information is meant. 15 percent of the interviewees gave voice to this opinion. Independence of time and content was mentioned frequently parallel with the increase of schooling level within each stratum. Examining the case according to age: independence of time is less frequently mentioned—in an understandable way—as the age grows. Frequency is the lowest among those over 50 and the highest among the 30 to 39 age group. This tendency is explained by the differing duration of leisure time in the different age groups and perhaps this is also the reason why independence of content, and the possibility of selection are also most frequently mentioned by the younger interviewees. The third most frequently mentioned positive feature of Teletext, namely the opportunity of repeat is more highly appreciated than the average by those who have a secondary school qualification: according to age no differences are worth mentioning. Mostly the lower qualified younger strata consider Teletext to carry more colourful and interesting information than that offered by television.

## Changing media use

After the above, it seems evident to ask: have the habits of acquiring information changed since Teletext extended the range of information sources for the interviewees? Naturally, the fact that the interviewee describes the positive features of the new medium does not guarantee in itself that he has changed his habits of acquiring information. This can be influenced by many other factors, such as the flexibility of the person in question, his inclination towards a change in this field, his time-budget etc.

The interviewees primarily observed changes in their habit of reading newspapers: 41 percent announced that they seemed to be reading the newspapers with less regularity since information was available from Teletext. Mostly the lowest qualified members of the youngest and the oldest age groups changed their habits. While 55 percent of those who completed 8 grades, only 36 percent of the university graduates answered that they had read newspapers more regularly prior to their use of Teletext. The combined effect of education and age made a further differentiation among the interviewees: 62 percent of the youngest of those who completed 8 grades answered that they had changed their newspaper reading habits since they could receive information from Teletext and almost the same ratio of the lowest educated members of the oldest age groups were of the same opinion. (The change here referred to the reduced frequency of reading newspapers.)

The change in habits of use affected the radio to the least extent. Only 31 percent of the interviewees said that owing to Teletext they listened less regularly to the informative radio programmes. At first sight, this tendency is surprising, because one would believe that the quick and up-to-date information of Teletext

primarily constitutes a challenge to the radio. (According to earlier surveys by the Mass Communication Research Centre, intended to reveal the evaluation of the mass media, the most important positive feature of the radio was its provision of quick and up-to-date information.) The fact that this rivalry, at least for the time being, hardly has any effect on the radio, can again be explained by the habits of radio listening. Namely, by the domination of background listening, which in our case may mean that for some information earlier acquired from the radio the interviewees are now turning to Teletext, but this does not change the duration while their radio sets are switched on. Another explanation for the phenomenon may be that the peaks of radio listening—in the morning and at midday—are in those periods when Teletext is not transmitted.

The change of radio listening habits in breakdown by socio-demographic variables shows a similar tendency to that experienced regarding newspaper reading habits. Namely, access to Teletext has primarily changed the conventional viewing habits in the older strata with lower education. The difference is that the same cannot be said about those who belong to the younger strata, on the contrary, young people have changed their habits of listening to the radio to the least extent—independently of their schooling level.

To summarize: the dominant tendency shows that the reduction in schooling level and the increase in age result in more powerful changes in listening habits.

Altogether 37 percent of the interviewees observed a change in their habits of watching television, or the same amount of people said that since Teletext was available they had watched the television newsreel less frequently. The differentiated effect of schooling is more powerful here than in the case of the other two media: twice as many (60 percent) said among

those who completed the 8 grades of primary education that their television viewing habits had changed as among those with university degree. The combined effect of age and schooling is similarly manifested to the previous two cases.

Finally, an attempt was made to find out whether the advantages mentioned in the comparison influence, and if they do to what extent, the change in the habits of media use. However, no significant relations were found so it cannot be said that the mentioning of certain advantages makes it more probable to find a change in media use.

Summarizing the above it can be said that the change of use among those who at present possess a decoder

TV set primarily concerns the frequency of reading newspapers, but Teletext also has an effect on the use of other media. The decline in regular newspaper reading, television viewing and radio listening is rendered probable by higher age and lower education to a greater extent.

This conclusion takes us nearer to answering the question whether Teletext is an alternative or a complementary medium. Consequently the role Teletext can play in the future in the acquisition of information differs according to social strata. Among the lower qualified older population, the alternative use can become characteristic, while the complementary use may spread among the higher qualified younger strata.

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## **Burgenland from Sopron — and the Other Way Round**

*Experiences of an Austrian-Hungarian Joint Project*

Two towns were selected as the venues of the survey intended to explore the image of Hungarians in Austria and the image of Austrians in Hungary. They are geographically situated in close proximity and their historic-cultural traditions also have mutual roots—the Trianon Peace Treaty drew an artificial border between them. The field work was centred around Eisenstadt (Burgenland)—in Hungarian: Kismarton—in Austria, and around the town of Sopron in Hungary.

Sopron proved to be an excellent terrain for research: the personal presence of Austrian tourists—and of Austrian economists in recent years—as well as the media messages of Austria—in fact almost everybody watches the Austrian Television with more or less regularity—made the news connected with Austria an everyday topic. In order to precisely trace the effect of the personal and mass communicational presence of the Austrians and of the geographical proximity of Austria, a control sample was also used, the town of Eger, which from the aspect of national minority and media effects can be described as indifferent.

Eisenstadt has been the seat of Burgenland province since 1924. The atmosphere of the town carries the strong imprint of the several-century-long influence of the Esterházy dukes.

The inhabitants of the town primarily earn their income from administrative activity connected with the role of provincial seat. As a consequence of the political changes after the First World War, a considerably sized Hungarian minority can be found in Burgenland: according to some estimations the number of Hungarians was about 25,000 in 1921. Because of the political storms and rapid migration, this number was reduced to 5–6,000 by the beginning of the 1970s, which is roughly 10 percent of all the Hungarians living in Austria. These few thousand Hungarians mainly live in three to four villages of Burgenland: Unterwart (Alsóőr), Oberwart (Felsőőr) and Oberpullendorf (Felsőpulya). This particular subculture—partly Hungarian and partly Austrian—, on the way to assimilation, was the further venue of the survey in Austria.

We co-ordinated our experiences and finalized the methods used in studying the image about the Austrians and the Hungarians, and the influencing factors. In order to make the survey comparative, the items of the questionnaire were also co-ordinated. We also agreed that we should carry out a content analysis of the daily press, examining how it presented Austrian—Hungarian relations and what image unfolded about the everyday life of the Hungarians and Austrians.

### The significance of personal relations in gaining an image

In the 1950s, Sopron was in the so-called border zone. This had thorough consequences for the town, both from the viewpoint of the distribution of the development resources and the mobility opportunities of the inhabitants. The border zone decree was rescinded in 1963. From that time on, relatives had the opportunity to meet, the museums were opened and hotels modernized: a considerable development started. One of its motivating forces was tourism, which endeavoured to utilize the natural beauties of the western border area as well as the neighbouring thermal springs, and the specific historic and cultural atmosphere of the town of Sopron. Since economic relations were enlivened between Hungary and Austria, and since the obligatory visa system was cancelled, Austrian shopping tourism has become the main factor of this prospering tourism.

The natural approach of the two peoples resulted in the enrichment of human relations: former family relations were renewed, and new ones were established through marriage (about one third of the surveyed population have relatives living in the other country); tourism started to flourish. While in the 1960s, the number of Austrian tourists visiting Hungary increased by an annual 8—9,000, this average increase was 116,000 at the beginning of the 1980s; at the same time, the number of Hungarian tourists visiting Austria increased by an average annual 8—9,000 during these two decades; the exchange visits of various local organizations became livelier (orchestras, folk dance ensembles and sports clubs, etc.); the significance of Austrian shopping tourism increased; a bilateral exchange of specialists takes place in an ever broader sphere, and Austrian workers are regularly employed in Austrian—Hungarian joint ventures. These relationships are based on mutual

economic interests and the pleasant political-cultural atmosphere between the two countries promotes their prosperity and constant renewal.

Personal experience, which is the most important influencing factor of the established opinions and attitudes, is nurtured by this broad scale of relations.

### Shopping tourism—through the eyes of the people of Sopron and Burgenland

There is a joke going around in Sopron: When can the Hungarians do their shopping in the Sopron supermarket? When the Austrian national anthem is played, because then the Austrians stand at attention!

Like most of the jokes about public life, this is also an apt irony with which the situation in Sopron is described: the venue of most conflicts between the Austrians from Burgenland and the Hungarians of Sopron is the supermarket, the stores. This is understandably a consequence of the Hungarian price structure and exchange rate, which is very favourable for the Austrians and the people from Burgenland living along the border do their weekly shopping in Sopron—including the utilization of various services too. This is not greeted with unanimous enthusiasm by the locals, because near the weekends or approaching national holidays they have to endure not only the effect of crowdedness, but also have to overcome their local patriotism, national pride and natural envy.

However, it is obvious to the people in Sopron that the presence of Austrians is very favourable from an economic and financial aspect—even if not directly for Sopron, but for the entire country. The schillings spent in their town enrich the whole country. The strata of Sopron in various economic and social situations opine in a different manner about this well conceived economic interest.



No wonder that the basically positive attitudes towards the Austrians are burdened by the above listed phenomena as a ballast, and provide the highest, most apparent layer of opinions. Everyday experience, at first approach, conceals the deeper lying layer based on a joint geopolitical, social, historic and cultural community providing the foundation of the two people's relationship.

This phenomenon comes to the surface when the people in Sopron are asked about foreigners in general. The concept of "foreigner" is identified almost unnoticed with Austrians—with people from Burgenland—by many. This attitude, observed in everyday, mostly rivalizing situations, is projected onto foreigners and frequently they only add that this refers to the Austrians when they are particularly asked, and are shocked to realize that the concept of foreigner is much broader.

During our survey we were in the rare and fortunate situation that we could interview both "participants" of the observed phenomenon, namely, the people of Sopron and Burgenland. In a strange manner, the negative effects of Austrian shopping tourism do not avoid the attention of the visitors from Burgenland. Most of those interviewed realized that their presence was not unambiguously approved of in Sopron. 40 percent of them believed that their shopping spree was not advantageous for the people of Sopron in the economic sense. Another 44 percent of the Burgenlanders' answers showed that they believed they were not welcome as shoppers in Sopron. At the same time, they saw the factors in the other basket of the scale quite clearly: according to 55 percent their shopping was advantageous for the Hungarian economy and was supported by the Hungarian government.

However, all this does not influence their attitude, they do not think they have to change their behaviour or habits.

The daily rivalization situations in Sopron are most probably not favourable in the long run for the image developing about the two peoples on one and on the other side. However, by increasing the traffic handling and accommodation capacity of Sopron, by minimizing the rivalizational situations, and by overcoming the language barrier, the situation could be considerably improved.

### Stereotypes—here and there

According to the thorough statistical analysis of the data gathered from the surveyed areas, a basically positive image lives in both the people of Burgenland and of Sopron about their neighbours, and on both sides lively interest is shown in the happenings on the other side of the border. Altogether 28 percent in Burgenland mentioned Hungary in the first place, when in the questionnaire they were asked to list some of the socialist countries. The Soviet Union occurred first to 19 percent and Poland to 16 percent. The openness towards the neighbouring country was also indicated by the thinking of the Sopron interviewees. In line with our expectations, they mentioned Austria more frequently when listing West European countries than the people in Eger did and 28 percent of the people in Sopron (9 percent of the interviewees in Eger) mentioned Austria on the first place among the West European countries. The Sopron inhabitants were much better informed than those in Eger with regard to the political system of Austria, the issues concerning the joint Austro-Hungarian historic past and Austrian arts: in Sopron on an average 6 appropriate answers, in Eger only 4 were received from among the 10 questions on the questionnaire. The people of Sopron were better informed in each group according to school qualification than the interviewees in Eger.

In order to more precisely see the attitude towards the Austrians the sphere of surveyed peoples was extended: the interviewees in both towns were asked to tell which from the coupled peoples they found more congenial. 5 nations were involved: Austrians, Poles, Germans, Romanians and Turks. The 5 nations could be coupled in 15 versions—based on the selection of congeniality, an index could be found which expressed how many times a given nation was found to be more congenial than the other (the value of the index moved between 0 and 4). The following list developed:

	In Sopron	In Eger
1. Austrians	3.3	2.9
2. Poles	2.7	2.9
3. Germans	2.4	2.5
4. Romanians	1.6	1.7
5. Turks	1.6	1.5

Based on the selection, the attitudes towards the Austrians were basically positive both in Sopron and in Eger, but the intensity of positive attitudes was stronger in Sopron than in Eger. In fact many more people in Sopron than in Eger considered the Austrians to be more congenial than the other nations.

The place of Hungary in the relative congeniality list in Burgenland can be estimated on the basis of in depth interviews: opinions primarily moved in the political sphere. Most of the interviewees mentioned Hungary first among the socialist countries, in some cases attributes of somewhat negative value also came to the surface, such as "bureaucratic centralism" and "goulash communism", although there was an almost unanimous opinion that "Kádár had succeeded in exploiting the possibilities of the present situation to their maximum". The opinion of the interviewed Hungarian minority in Burgenland was slightly more negative, according to which "Hun-

gary's policy is controlled by Moscow"—although based on these few answers no general conclusion can be drawn. Older people think with a type of nostalgia about Hungary, because this recalls the "fine old peace times" of the monarchy—namely, their youth. The present relations between Hungary and Austria are regarded as positive on both sides of the frontier, as the example of "fruitful cooperation of different socio-economic systems" and good neighbourly relations worth following.

Nevertheless, the intensity of personal relations and experiences influences the opinions with a contrary sign in both surveyed subcultures: in Burgenland the bonds of relatives and acquaintances shift the opinions in a positive direction, while people in Sopron almost unanimously disapprove of the everywhere appearing Austrian shopping tourism—their opinion is rather negative, particularly compared to the Eger interviewees who only observed the Austrian tourists "from a distance".

People in Burgenland primarily mentioned positive features about the Hungarians: most find the Hungarians friendly (88 percent), congenial (85 percent), helpful (78 percent) honest (71 percent), hot tempered (68 percent), and diligent (61 percent). Those in Burgenland who have personal Hungarian acquaintances, who speak Hungarian or frequently visit Hungary (every third person in Burgenland visits Hungary at least four times a year) have a more positive opinion than those who have fewer personal contacts. Some critical observations were also mentioned, usually suggesting that Hungarians "are too proud of their country" and "reckless spenders", but they also mentioned the life style of putting things off and the passive life strategy of the Hungarians, which recalls a famous frequently quoted line by the poet *Sándor Petőfi*: "There is plenty of time for that!" Based on the experiences of the in depth interviews and the

questionnaires, it can be said that an ambivalent image emerged about the Hungarians in Burgenland, because the latent negative opinions peacefully co-exist with the declared positive attitudes. This is partly explained by their different relations to the various strata of the Hungarians: they have a positive opinion about members of the Hungarian ethnic minority in Burgenland, with whom they managed to reach a "problem-free cohabitation" and who appropriately adjusted themselves to the social life of this easternmost province of Austria. Many people spoke badly about the isolational attempts of the immigrants of the past two or three decades, particularly because the locals despised their way of life (throwing their money around and frequent alcoholism). At the same time, tourists from Hungary are welcome guests, and considered good shoppers by the Burgenland shopkeepers, although their greedy admiration of the Western world frequently provokes regret and pity.

The image developed in Sopron about the Austrians shows several particularities: 1. the people of Sopron mostly observe the Austrians while shopping, in restaurants or in traffic. In their opinion, there is no cool and moderate elegance in the behaviour of the Austrians, which is how the people of Eger described West European tourists. 2. Austrian shopping tourism is concentrated on a well defined area—the inner-city of Sopron—thus, day after day rivalization situations develop between the Austrian tourists and the Sopron locals: rivalry in the supermarket for the goods and for the "grace" of the shop assistants, in the restaurants for a table and for the "grace" of the waiters, and in the streets for the scarce parking space. In such rivalizational situations, the Austrian tourists have an advantage the people of Sopron cannot compete with. This influences the image about the Austrians in Sopron in a negative direction. In Eger, the primary aim

of the Austrian tourists is not to exploit the favourable opportunities of the Hungarian price system and currency exchange rate. Here in Eger shopping by people from other countries irritates the mood: the other foreigners are simply tourists from abroad—in the traditional sense of the word.

According to interviewees in Sopron, the Austrians are primarily jovial, loud and elegant. People in Eger look upon the Austrian tourists in a somewhat different manner: they are primarily elegant, then rich and finally jovial.

The opinion was less favourable when people in Sopron were asked about the destination and behaviour of Austrian tourists. One quarter of the interviewees gave a positive answer and 37 percent characterized Austrian tourists in a negative manner, while the ratio of those who listed both positive and negative characteristics was 28 percent. Only 1 percent answered in a manner that it could not be decided what it meant. Here are a few examples from among the answer.

"They behave as if they were the rich ones, nevertheless, they come here behind the »iron curtain« to buy things on the cheap. One can feel this from their entire attitude. They are careful when giving tips."

(A 53 year old university graduate male.)

"They are aggressive. They don't want to queue in the shop, they are pushy, they have no patience to wait at the hairdresser's. They are aggressive in traffic and in parking, and they violate road regulations. In the restaurants, they acquire a table in some way, if necessary then with tips. There are two types of Austrians here, the people from Burgenland seem less educated. The people from Vienna are more cultured, those from Burgenland are noisy and loud in the street."

(A 37 year old woman with secondary education.)

“They are easy going, free as if they were at home. They bring their dogs and cats. They are looking for contacts, they want to acquire friends, they do favours. They don’t dare to sell anything in the street, but they provide shopkeepers with goods. They are not our enemies.”

(A 47 year old woman with secondary education.)

“I have no prejudice against them, I have very many friends—but there is a stratum which has a lot of money, but no mind, and they are loud in the street and in the restaurant.”

(A 56 year old woman with secondary education.)

### Media use

As illustrated, personal relations and experiences are the most important factors in the image developing about the two peoples in each other. Nevertheless, the surveyed areas are situated in the borderland, thus it is worth examining the use of the mass media of the neighbouring country. The image reflected by the media about the country and about the nation may influence the image others have formed about them. This problem is particularly interesting when the representatives of the surveyed peoples meet day after day and have the opportunity to compare the “model” with the original.

Only the image reflected by the press was analyzed in detail, but even the extent of media use may indicate certain tendencies.

Watching the Austrian Television is a more or less everyday activity in Sopron. The Monday “holiday” of the Hungarian Television automatically takes the people in Sopron to the programmes of the Austrian Television: 77 percent regard themselves as regular viewers of the Austrian Television. The situation is similar with regard to the Austrian Radio: the light music programme of “Ö—3”

operates as a 4th Hungarian channel, and even in public places the radios are frequently tuned to the Austrian Radio programme.

This strong use of the foreign media is not similarly characteristic in Burgenland: 20 percent of the interviewees said they watched the Hungarian Television with more or less regularity. This difference originates from the language barrier, the differing programme structure and standards, but to the same extent, it is also the consequence of the differing technical systems used.

When the people in Sopron were asked whether they saw any difference between the Austrians depicted on the television and those appearing in the streets of Sopron, one out of three gave an affirmative answer. This indicates that the Sopron viewers of the Austrian Television are confronted with the problem that Austrians on the television differ from those appearing in Sopron as “Austrians”—mostly people from Burgenland—thus: the two images differ notwithstanding that the same nation is concerned. They must decide “which eye” they should believe—the eye which watches the television or the eye which sees Austrians on the Sopron streets? (Of course, in practice they do not want to decide on this question and perhaps they cannot make a decision, because the experiences gathered from the two sources are blending.)

“They are completely different (namely, the ones on the television). They are not loud on the screen, they are not aggressive, they are not pushing themselves forward—what they all do here.”

(A 33 year old male with secondary education.)

Another side also appears according to which, those who appear on the screen cannot represent the real profile:

“They want to appear in a better presentation on the screen. Here in reality they are different.”

(A 44 year old woman with less than 8 grades of elementary school.)

Therefore the image gained from the media evidently influences the image developed about the Austrians. At least so far that in contrast to the exaggerated concept which directly generalizes everyday experiences, it provides an opportunity for clashing with or reflecting a different type of image. This undoubtedly counter-effects the polarization impact of the negative conclusions originating from everyday phenomena.

### The image of the two countries in the press

The Hungarian project analyzed the 1962, 1972 and 1982 issues of *Népszabadság* (central daily) and *Kisalföld* (county daily). The Austrian analysis was based on the 1982 edition of the weekly "BF—Die Zeitung für das Burgenland" of the Socialist Party and the weekly "bvz"—*Wochenzeitung für alle Burgenlander*—, a conservative publication. (No local dailies are published in this part of Austria.)

Altogether 71 articles of Hungarian reference were published in the surveyed Austrian weeklies. Most of them were of medium length, articles of more than half a page only scarcely appeared. The majority of the surveyed articles (91 percent) contained news or reports. Interestingly enough, not one commentary or editorial dealt with a Hungarian topic. More than half the articles were illustrated by photographs.

The most frequent topic of the articles was provided by some cultural event, concert, performance or sports event. Coverage of politicians' meetings came into the second place.

It was a common characteristic of the surveyed newspaper articles that the event, news, or anything covered was always connected with Burgenland. Hungary itself was not worth being mentioned in the press, only in connection with Burgenland.

The tone and attitude of the articles were positive, similarly to the image of the two nations developed about each other. Hungary and her relations with Austria were mentioned almost exclusively with positive attributes. The content analysis also discovered that there were absolutely no stereotypes in the newspapers, no "csi-kós-goulash" *Magyar* image appeared in them. (With the exception of a few advertisements in which occasionally revelling *Magyars* appear with a Gipsy band—as an attractive ad gag.)

There were very rare hints at the joint history and interwovenness of the two nations. However, good neighbourly relations and cooperation were frequently used concepts. The difference in the social system of the two peoples is not mentioned in the surveyed articles and the East—West conflict does not appear either in this local plane. According to an editor, the emphasis on the good neighbourly relations is the result of a conscious editorial policy. Accordingly, the value of the news is basically rooted in the present, and is linked with current events.

Altogether 1,283 articles from the 3 years editions of the 2 Hungarian dailies were content analyzed. The ratio of the articles in *Kisalföld* and *Népszabadság* was 1:3. The number of articles on an Austrian topic increased over the years.

More than half of the surveyed articles were short, one quarter of medium length, and 20 percent were long. From this point of view, the two newspapers showed a differing tendency: as time passed, *Kisalföld* published longer articles, while *Népszabadság* seemed to reduce the space.

The most frequent genres—similarly to Austria—were news and reports. Editorials rarely dealt with Austria, only in exceptional cases (e.g. visits of heads of state). The two newspapers were not identical from this point of view either: the ratio of genres with a more personal tone

(e. g. reports) increased in *Kisalföld*, while the formal and impersonal genres predominated in *Népszabadság*.

The themes of the articles unambiguously illustrated the characteristics with which Austria is depicted in the press:

	%	N = 1,283
Politics, diplomacy	42	
Sports	23	
Culture	15	
Economy	12	
Sensation, rumours, accidents	6	
Everyday life	1	

There was no considerable difference in the ratio and order of themes in the two dailies, with the exception of sports, which appeared with double weight in the national daily. It was conspicuous that despite the reasonable presumption that the economy should appear in an elite place in the presentation of the relations between the two countries, it lagged very much in the back as a main topic. However, examining the secondary themes of the articles, it turns out that the weight of economic themes was in fact large, but they appeared wrapped in the political-diplomatic relations. When examining the themes, it soon

became clear that the plane of everyday life hardly ever appeared in the newspapers.

The style of the articles can be mostly described as objective, correct and dry. More personal and more life-like depiction only had a role in covering sports events and sensations—perhaps rumours. The phenomenon experienced in the Austrian survey, namely, that Austria as a theme in itself did not appear, only in her relationship with Hungary, also characterized our survey.

Half of the articles were missing evaluation and qualification. Only 3 percent contained negative value judgements. The articles which contained any evaluation momentum were decisively positive.

Thus, Austria in the press appeared in the bird's-eye view of political-diplomatic life, and the tone was mostly objective and factual. The articles rarely descended to the plane of everyday life. As it was formulated by an editor of *Kisalföld*: "I think the question of Austria requires a very sober, middle-of-the-road handling. It must not be overemphasized and one has to be very careful, Lord save us from offending anybody! Because if we deal with the issue too much, somebody will certainly protest against it."

As it was illustrated, the judgement of Austria and the Austrians is entirely positive in the press. The phenomena found in Sopron do not rise to the surface in any of the dailies.

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*Magdolna Barcy — Katalin Hanák*

## Television and the Family

Prix Jeunesse, the international research series organized by Bayerischer Rundfunk dealt on this occasion with the television image of the family. The pilot study was carried out by researchers in Australia, Denmark, Hungary and Britain.

In addition to the first attempt, the "pilot" attribute is justified by the fact that the observation only covered one programme week. The main method of the survey—in addition to fundamental statistical observations—was the thorough analysis of the content. The programmes of the entire week were videotaped, then those linked with the family by closer or looser threads were selected. Obviously, only tendencies can be revealed from one programme week. But if we take into consideration the studies already published on this topic, we can discover certain similarities and differences in the television programmes of countries with a differing social system.

### The family on the American screen

In 1980, a research group of the University of Pennsylvania—headed by G. Gerbner—prepared a survey for the conference on family issues, organized by the White House in Washington. The American mass media (television, magazines, comics and films, etc.) were studied from the viewpoint of what they transmitted about the family. From among their findings, we shall only—briefly—report on those concerning the television.

The American television developed a special "branch of industry" to depict the contemporary American family. Most of the soap operas screened before

prime time usually deal with love, and in close connection with this, the American family life. They are aimed at housewives and children who are at home.

But 43 percent of the evening prime time programmes also depict the family. (As a comparison: work is the topic of only 14 percent of the programmes.),

Despite the fact that these programmes were mainly intended for women, the image they convey reflects a masculine world. Three quarters of the cast were male, and the male actors (in fiction programmes) also dominated the screen in terms of their sphere of life and movement, which was much broader than that of the women. While the latter mainly appear in conventional roles (mother, lover, and housewife), the world of men is extended with extramural relations, with the venues of work, profession, and self-accomplishment.

The majority of the women only appear on the American screen in close connection with marriage (as a future spouse or living in marriage). The female cast of the programmes seemed to be characterized by the family status. While only one tenth of all the female cast did not reveal whether they were married or not, concerning the males the corresponding ratio is one quarter. With regard to the representatives of both sexes, the programmes depicted them more frequently to be facing marriage than it happens in



reality. In real life 26 percent of men were unmarried, in the films 45 percent. Only 21 percent of women live without families, but their ratio in the films was 45 percent. This primarily referred to young people, while the programmes suggested that old people were not involved in love (and loneliness), their natural substance was marriage.

Three types of women were depicted in fictions about the American family. The woman in love who finally gets married, creates a home for herself, and with this the complications are solved, and life comes virtually to an end: she has reached the goal. The other type is the working woman who—as a punishment—is unsuccessful at home. The third one is the career women, who suffers a lot, but wins. Nevertheless, she has to pay for her success: because of her lesser feminine qualities, she remains lonely.

As a contrast, men are equally successful at home and in work. In their case, marriage does not mean the peak of life, much rather, opens up a path for them towards a career and towards the accomplishment of their individual aims. Women become grey, while men will be colourful personalities in marriage.

We know from other surveys that the cast in the American television does not depict a genuine society. With regard to their age and social status, the picture is particularly asymmetric. Almost everyone in the cast belongs to the middle class, only 6 percent to the working class. But even if a manual worker appears on the screen, we soon find out that his children are upgoing mobile heroes, just preparing to break out from their father's class. The age of the cast is also similarly distorted: the young middle aged ones (30—40) appear most frequently on the screen.

The values connected with the family mostly reflect a traditional and conservative world. Befitting middle class heroes, the highest value is security (as a positive symbol), and the loss of security means frustration (as a

negative symbol). Success, the acquisition of a social position and its maintenance becomes the main problem of these family-centric programmes moving in this narrow world.

No matter how many programmes deal with the family, they say very little about contemporary, real American families. They not only narrow down social reality, but even ignore family problems that occupy society (divorce, birth control and so on). They belittle intrafamily generational contradictions, we find out very little about single parents, and the reason why families are splitting up, etc. A desperate struggle is carried out to oust newly developed phenomena connected with the family (for example, the general use of anti-baby pills, and the increasing employment of women), in order to try to restore the illusion of happy old times, and depict the traditions of the past as if they still existed.

Most probably, this conventional value-order also explains why the screen is dominated by men in such large numbers. Men represent domination, they lead, judge and instruct, while women at most dominate the home. About one third of the interactions of the cast take place between the two sexes, and two thirds between men and men. Only 3 percent of women chat (or act) in feminine company. Thus, a considerable part of men's attention is paid to each other.

### The family image in Hungarian television

A large amount of literature deals with the differences which separate Hungarian television from the Western or American type. Only a few will be mentioned here. Primarily Hungarian television transmits many more documentaries (or in professional terminology: non-fiction) than Western television. These types of programmes



(news, dissemination of knowledge, reports, and magazines, etc.) comprise 70 percent of the schedule, fiction only participates with 30 percent. The latter group contains little humour, and few dramas for children.

The majority of those appearing on television are men. In non-fiction programmes, the ratio of men is 70 percent. In fiction (due to the "linking" genre of commercials, which favour pretty women) it is lower, only (!) 66 percent. Even 80 percent of the animals or fairy tale figures (in children's tales) are males!

The age of the cast is also asymmetric in Hungarian television. We see 12 percent children in nonfiction programmes and 8 percent elderly people. Their ratio in fiction is even lower. 40 percent of all people appearing on the screen are between 20—35. Thus Hungarian television also gives preference to young adults.

It is an interesting result that the social background of the cast tallies with the American data. A few comparisons:

- in Hungary, television presents middle class intellectual people in non-fiction programmes in 18 percent and in fiction in 23 percent, the American television presents 33 percent (in fiction);
- In Hungary, the ratio of workers is 9 percent in nonfiction and 11 percent in fiction, while the American percentage is 6;
- peasants or agricultural manual workers are presented by Hungarian television in 4 percent in nonfiction, and in 3 percent in fiction programmes, while the corresponding percentage in America is 4.

The television programmes in Hungary reflect a world in which men are in the majority, they are young or middle aged and belong to the middle class or the intellectuals.

## Drama

The one week television schedule included 16 productions with the family in the centre. Seven of these were domestic productions, but only two depicted Hungarian society (one of them presented the period before the Second World War). The problems of the present Hungarian family were fully absent from the surveyed seven drama productions.

The majority of the films depicted the life of one or more families; three films spoke about the desire for a family. The number of single parent families was conspicuously high. Most probably it was a coincidence that on this occasion, fathers and not mothers brought up their children on their own. However, the message of all these films was that the mother's role was irreplaceable. In fact, when the father abandons his family, the mother can carry on. On the other hand, if the mother leaves the family or dies, the father is unable to fulfil the role of both parents, and needs someone who replaces the mother.

In films on the family, most of the characters are married. Marriage is more important for women than for men. In fact, if a woman is left alone, she always strives to enter into a new marital bond. Half of the men—it seems—enjoy their wifeless status.

The child, as one of the most important cohesive forces of the family, receives a much smaller role in these dramas than in reality. It is interesting that the few children in the cast are almost always adolescents.

The social status of the cast is rather varied (due to the fairy tales in which kings and princes are natural figures). But the general tendency is also valid with regard to programmes dealing with the family: manual workers or poor people only occasionally appear and only in stories set in the past. With regard to the occupation of the cast, we found that men had an occupation in every historic age, while women were only employed in stories about the

present ("naturally" mainly as professionals). Children in stories set in the past are simply children, in stories about the present they all have learnt some skills or strive to acquire some qualification.

The financial situation of the characters follows their social status. The tales present two extremes: very poor and very rich people. Only stories about the past speak about prospering, ordinary and poor families. In the present, a decent mediocrity dominates: everybody lives under acceptable financial conditions. Productions about the present do not deal with finances, difficulties, or problems of livelihood or existence (let alone deviation!).

The topics of the programmes indicate the first genuine differences compared to the American and Western television programmes. While the latter mainly speak about moral questions and love, in Hungary war, social struggles (in the past), or loneliness (in the present) are also important topics. Fictions illustrate the family in a realistic manner, as a form of cohabitation burdened with conflicts. The family—if it exists—is one of the main fields of conflicts and human difficulties. Its value is clear-cut if it does not exist. In fact the sincerest desire of people who live without a family is to live in a family which means peace and warmth. In this sense, the family is the explicit symbol of normal life. Thus according to the indirect message of Hungarian television programmes, the family is an extraordinary value in human cohabitation.

The most and gravest conflicts in the family are carried by the relationship of the married couples. It is always the man who has the right of decision. It is characteristic that in productions in which the woman makes the decision, the story ends in tragedy, thus the masculine behaviour of the woman seems to carry the punishment in itself. Approaching the present, the economic dependence of women causes an

increasing number of problems: while this was natural in the past, today women strive for equality. However, none of the films illustrated that women still earned essentially less than men did.

The productions provide very few examples of how to solve the conflicts of marriage: in fact they only become solved where the rules of the genre requires a happy end (comedies, juvenile films and children's tales). In half of the films, justice is done by the fate. Such productions end in tragedy.

It seems that the screen abhors sexuality. We are not missing the visual depiction of sex, but the presentation of this main motivation of human emotions in an authentic manner, in its own complexity. On the contrary, we saw physical aggression on several occasions (although as an exception there was no crime story during the surveyed week). This was partly due to the theme of the productions (for example, war stories) and to the genre of tragedy. However, the murders shown differed from the usual murders of crime stories, because these were almost without exception life tragedies. Psychic aggression particularly affects the world of families. The productions observed showed with nuances how psychic aggression lead to physical aggression: the black-mailed victim pushed into a detrimental position rebels and kills the dominating one.

After marriage, the relationship between generations was the second most frequent family problem. Although (according to the depiction) this is less important than marital relations, the contradiction between parents and children could be observed in almost every work. The generational conflicts centred almost without exception around the autonomy of the parties. This problem was particularly stressed in single parent families. However, the generational issues—contrary to those of marriage—were sooner or later solved, overcoming the contradictions.

## Nonfiction

Despite the fact that the ratio of documentaries on the Hungarian television is 70 percent compared to fiction, we found only 7 programmes during the surveyed week which dealt with the family. These programmes were all domestic productions and covered Hungarian conditions. Almost each programme was explicitly of an instructive character, and the productions of pedagogic intention dominated.

The main theme connected with the family—according to these nonfictions—concerned child care and the education of children. The following problems emerged only as secondary issues:

- the socializational role of the family;
- old people (the absence of a family or the role of the grandparents);
- the traditional large family (in the past); and
- family life and profession (characteristically not with regard to women, but with regard to men).

Five of the nonfictions about the family were set in the present time. The breakdown of the characters by sex was more favourable than in fiction programmes: women were depicted somewhat more often than men. Naturally, one cannot draw the conclusion that male dominance has ceased in the documentaries (for we have already indicated some data), much rather that child care and the education of children are the tasks of women, thus women were interviewed here more frequently. However, when somebody represents an institution, "naturally" it is man.

Social status also shows a more favourable image—closer to reality—than in the dramatic family programmes. Four working class, three peasant and only three intellectual families emerged. The financial situation of the family again looked more rosy than it is in reality: the majority

lived under good or mediocre financial conditions. We saw three poor families, but they lived before the war. Only one film about retired citizens hinted at financial problems.

In contrast to fiction programmes the family image in the documentaries emphasized the relationship between parents and children, while the relationship between the spouses only appeared as a secondary line. We did not hear anything about separated families, divorce, children living in an endangered milieu or in imperfect families—with the exception of a psychological socio-drama.

In contrast to our expectations, the family was depicted in a more favourable colour in nonfiction programmes, which transmit reality in a more direct manner. These programmes presented an explicitly conflict-free idyllic picture. Only two of the seven programmes presented family conflicts, but the recipe for the solution—as the consequence of the pedagogic tone and intention—was immediately enclosed by the producers. Thus, the main aim of these programmes was prevention, the prevention of conflicts, with appropriate education. No examples of solutions, no ideas were provided for other problems. Particularly because these programmes hardly mentioned the problems.

According to this presentation, the function of the family is to care for the members of the family (old people and children). And perhaps to ensure that the older ones transmit family traditions to the younger generation. Nothing was mentioned about politics, power, career or money—at best in connection with the past in a negative manner. Deviation was not mentioned here either. The relationship of society and the family was only flashed up in programmes about the past. Instead, the documentaries focused on the internal microworld of the family. Similarly to the American fictions, the relationship of the generations and emotions dominated the social problems and conflicts of the external world.

Not only was the picture emerging from the themes absolutely free of problems, the family roles were also idealized: we saw an idyllic family status with a scent of a parable everywhere.

The problems—if they occurred at all—where situated in the past. And even if the story was set in the present, old people, namely the characters connected with the past carried the problems. Old people have problems (grandmother's role, finances, pension, and an inactive life, etc.), young people never do. They have a cloudless present without any financial and human problems. As living examples of the pedagogic spirit, they can spend all their energy on the happy future of their children.

The values illustrated by nonfictions: the responsibility of the members of the family for each other, the socializational role of the family, and emotional security. There is no room in these values for passions, minor or major tragedies, and occasionally strong conflicts between society and the individuals.

### Three worlds

At the beginning of the survey, we presumed that fiction, which depicts reality in a more indirect manner, will present the family in a less authentic way. Because of the overwhelming number of foreign productions, we thought they could say very little about Hungarian reality. In fact, these productions said very little about present Hungarian reality in particular, and about Hungarian reality in general, but said relatively much about the family, about human emotions and

life, thanks to the productions of artistic standards.

One could hardly expect that non-fiction should speak about eternal human issues with artistic means, abstraction, and in a compact manner. However, one can expect them to reflect the most important and topical questions of society. Where there are no fates, dramas, and critical situations, television can hardly provide any help in the life of the families with at least the illustration of the problems. The programmes suggest that rationality, sober discretion and the following of good advice will protect us from major failures. However, life's reality does not follow this idyll of pedagogic outlook which is of no use even to children.

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If we examine the television programmes presenting the family together with social reality, we discover—unfortunately—three different worlds.

First we can find a rather large gap between the internal world of the family, social reality and the world constructed by television. Although this is the root of the problems, it was also instructive to observe that the dramatic programmes and the documentaries depict the family in different ways. While in the former, genuine human and social conflicts appeared in a more powerful manner, the conflicts connected with the family and the individual as well as social problems become faded or disappear from the nonfictions of primarily pedagogic conception.

*Magdolna Barcy — Márta Hoffmann*

## Radio Programmes for Youth

In February 1984, an analysis was carried out on all nonfiction programmes on Radio Kossuth and Radio Petőfi which handled topics about youth or presuming the interest of youth. Altogether 2,705 minutes were recorded, i.e. 4 percent of the total transmission time of the two channels.

### Genres

The examined programmes were split sharply into two: programmes of "youth character", explicitly beamed to young people, were separated in a clear-cut manner from other programmes of miscellaneous genre. Out of the 2,705 minutes, altogether 1,100 were magazines produced by the Youth Department. Magazines are also produced by several other departments of the Radio, e.g. Evening Magazine, and Rainbow, etc., however, these do not possess those attributes which can be observed in the youth magazines. The Youth Department set up a programme structure in which it aims to transmit its message mainly with the genre of a youth magazine. As the magazines comprised almost half of the analyzed material, the approach, outlook and handling of problems carried by them brands the entirety of the youth programmes.

Evidently, the magazine format welds various genres. Reports, interviews, news, programme offers, short colourful flashes and music dominate. Characteristically it draws from life, full of information, and it applies music to ease it up. These genres are suitable

to produce a so-called youthful style, characterized by a rapid and pulsating rhythm, informal tone, briefness and occasionally cheekiness, presumed to be youthful. Reports and light music are short genres and extremely suitable to ease up the programme: both the music and the reports have the primary function to ease the depth, articulate and add colour. For example, in "Fifth Gear"—and also in other magazines—6 or a maximum of 10 minutes are considered a magic limit, and no programme unit block can be longer. Naturally, the result is that nothing can be fully completed, nothing can be expounded and multifariously introduced, and mostly all details are cut from the programmes.

As a consequence of drastic cuts, a type of concentration is obtained which reflects a youthful, come straight to the point type that does not permit any hesitation, wandering, groans or time for thinking. In addition to the magazines, the Youth Department also produces—as an extension of the assortment—one or two reports, serious music and servicing programmes, round-table conferences and notes specially for young people. These round-table conferences are either turned into magazines or become dry and boring, analyzing important topics in a serious form. It is also characteristic that while a type of ease dominates the magazines, the Youth Department reserves the darker sides of life for the reports. Serious music youth programmes also seem to be intended for another type of youth. This is reflected by the tone of "Singing

Youth”, in which young people speak in the manner and language of the era more than 20 years ago. It is unbelievable that they are the same young people who appear in the magazines and who have to be protected from “high culture”. This “division of work” also characterizes other genres: the problems they discuss seem to be disappearing under the flood of magazines. Thus all the genres are reflected by the statistics of the Youth Department—together with all types of views and handling of problems—however, this is only statistical appearance, because their proportion is slight and their effect low.

From among the programmes that are not produced by the Youth Department, light music fits into the youth programme concept represented by the magazines. (Which is not surprising, because the music producers of the youth programmes and the producers of light music programmes are usually the same.)

Practically, young people only receive messages that do not reflect the outlook of the Youth Department in the round-table genre. Although they are of differing standards, at least in their intentions and occasionally in their accomplishment, they try to seriously speak about youth questions.

If we observe all the genres, we are missing information and the dissemination of knowledge of scientific standards. Although the standards of dissemination of scientific knowledge is worthily renowned in the radio, this does not refer to the youth programmes. No special such programmes are made in the radio for young people. Instead, scientific prattle and short colourful materials represent the sciences in the magazines. In the round-table genre (psychological and sociological) discussions on a moral and philosophical plane endeavour to make up for the shortcoming.

The genre of communiqué, documentary and statement is also missing. Other political broadcasts of the Radio contain many such materials, but they

cannot even be traced in the special programmes broadcast for young people.

Journalism is little and of very bad quality in the surveyed programmes. Although this classic radio genre appears here and there, it does not fulfil its function.

The relationship to music is ambivalent in youth programmes. Partly it seems as if music were a secondary thing, and only functioned as a loosening-up and relaxing insert, on the other hand, (and it was not us who discovered it) it also increases the attraction of the programmes, and occasionally correctly chosen music rivals the role of the linking text. However, instead of attempting to satisfy the music needs of young people on a high standard—considering music equal to the text in the programmes—second-rate foreign—mainly disco and pop—music is inserted between the messages regarded as substantial.

Serious music forms a part of youth culture only as a school practice, and does not mix with the “other” culture. Such needs are satisfied with special programmes, although in a questionable form.

### The concerned strata

Following our selection viewpoints, young people over 15 were included in the programmes. Occasionally we also found messages addressed to small children about small children. However, the target was mostly the age group between 14 to 25. Older “youngsters” were primarily among the report subjects in topics “interesting” for young people: artists, pop musicians, sportsmen, intellectuals beginning their career, and young people getting married and acquiring homes for their family.

Most frequently (secondary school) students appeared, mainly grammar schools students, hardly ever those who attend vocational secondary schools or colleges and there might be only

one or two apprentices. The large number of students can most probably be explained by the fact that they are the most easily accessible.

We did not meet workers, co-op peasants or generally people engaged in manual work. Presumably they are also invited to speak, but it is known from other surveys that the media are inclined to invite and introduce more qualified subjects, thus we cannot find out the occupation of the less qualified ones. The intellectual stratum is definitely in the majority. Characteristically they are older (because of the university) and differ from the average.

Deviant young people are also introduced by the radio, even if not too frequently. However, in this case, not the stratum, but the background was searched for: instead of revealing the social roots, the illustration of the case and the fate was considered essential.

The specialists who participated in the programmes can be separated into three groups: professionally competent people, who are not so young any more (primarily psychologists and sociologists), or officials of political movements, who represent all the age groups. Most of them, however, were so-called "interesting" people, "young" artists, and famous personalities frequently over forty.

The programmes were Budapest-centric. Hardly anything could be heard about other towns, regions or villages. This also tallies with our earlier findings: the entire radio programme is Budapest-centric.

Interestingly enough, the family status is not an emphatic aspect. It was mostly mentioned in connection with two topics: setting up a family or deviation (divorce and state care). It was also interesting that the child-care allowance also became a marginal subject and families with a large number of children only appeared as a curiosity. Perhaps as a consequence of the earlier mentioned "youthful" style, the average, normal family life is not a topic for these programmes. The

presentation of the concerned strata is dominated by extremes: normality is missing. As if the established, static situations did not carry problems, instead of them, turning points (the beginning of a career, marriage, and divorce) or those who differ from the average (deviationists, curiosities and artists) appear.

### The themes of the programmes

From this point of view, the programmes have to be separated into two: magazines and non-magazines. Magazines cover many and non-magazines a maximum of one or two topics. Thus the topic-assortment of the non-magazines is incomplete (of course, the one month survey may involve many contingencies), and their number is also much lower than that of the magazines. The list of themes of the magazines is very impressive in itself but if we add the presentation, the method of depiction and the interference of the topics, we cannot be so satisfied.

#### *Themes of the non-magazines:*

- detrimental situation (state-cared-for children, handicapped people, broken families),
- abstract topics (morals, manners, values, taste, patriotism, and trade unions),
- culture I (choral music, opera quiz, and children's music),
- culture II (beat)
- reality (school enrollment system, marriage, family planning, military service, and beginning a career),
- sociology (family, peer groups, and intellectuals),
- others (protection of art monuments, etc.).

As far as one can draw conclusions, the non-magazine programmes reflect three aspirations: to deal with the situation of young people, their education and their entertainment.



The programmes about reality and a detrimental situation reflect the life of young people. They partly handle special youth problems (for example, marriage and a career), partly illustrate the extreme situation of those on the periphery and in a detrimental situation—in our case, concerning young people. In their approach, these programmes do not interpret the detrimental situation as a tendency, but as a particular case, requiring individual help. While the programmes dealing with the life of young people provide rich information and have pragmatic and advisory intensions, those illustrating the detrimental situation are only dominated by the provision of help and we find out very little about their social reasons.

According to the concept of the programmes that are intended to enhance the education of young people, they have to be educated and taught. This intention is of uniform appearance, despite the fact that they move around over very different fields. The abstract topics, the programmes in the categories culture I (high culture) and sociology resemble each other as far as they are far removed from life and mostly dry. It was not us who entitled the abstract category as such, in fact abstract concepts (such as morals, taste and so on) constituted the content of the programmes. One could speak about the family and peer groups in a realistic manner as well, nevertheless, these programmes spoke about the abstract family, and about the abstract peer group, on a definitive plane. High culture categorized as culture I seems to be an absurdity, but in fact, it reflects the same concept: this is also something that has to be provided for young people, no matter that in a rather outdated form and at impossible listening times. Exactly here, in the category of educational programmes, issues are discussed in a scientific or culture-transmissional tone that could also be addressed to older people, but in this particular case it is broadcast for young people.

Beat programmes categorized as culture II are intended to satisfy the entertainment needs of young people. Despite their title, they are by no means intended exclusively for young people, but for all who enjoy cheap and commercial dance music.

*Themes of the magazines:*

	Occurrence
— cultural events, interviews	31
incl. light music	10
programme offer	3
— life, occupation	25
incl. career amendment	6
— leisure time, hobby, self-education	16
— problems of youth (housing, job, marriage)	14
— other parts of the world	9
— competitions for young people	9
— science	9
incl. scientific rarities, trifles 8!	
— emotions, love	6
— school	6
— recent history	5
— conferences, celebrations	5
— sex	3
— detrimental situation	2
— health enlightenment	2
— crime	1
— bureaucracy	1
— economic life	1!

The topics were listed according to the frequency of their occurrence. It becomes immediately conspicuous that the magazines pay distinguished attention to more valuable cultural topics. While in the non-magazine programmes, only opera and choral music represented culture, here we met many genuine, valuable cultural messages. The word "valuable" only refers to the topic, for the approach and tone were generally more flimsy and insipid than what the topic would deserve. This primarily refers to "Fifth Gear" and "Answer", because the other magazines do not even have such values. It was already mentioned that



because of the abridging style (intellectual information with disco music), these topics only improve the "statistics".

Under the title light music, the topics connected with the pop world are separately indicated in the list. The frequency of occurrence shows that their ratio is not asymmetric. In contrast to the non-magazine programmes where the entertaining category culture II was intended to transmit commercial culture, here in the magazines it does not appear as a separate topic. Either they deal with pop stars or the numerous filling materials and the easing-up music serve this function.

The sphere of sciences also belongs to the category of culture. High ranking science does not seem to appear in the magazines, or only as scientific trivialities (e.g. a tooth-removing apparatus, or a shock-therapeutical gadget built into teeth). Comparing the magazines and non-magazines, it can be said that in the non-magazines, abstract moral and philosophical topics represent the sciences and culture is confined to choral music: however, in the magazines, the sciences can be put between apostrophes leaving room for arts. But because of the genre of the magazine, this is only a hint, a brief account. It has to be added that there are many high standard reports, coverages and offers which inspire self-education and are of a cultural character.

The emphasized youth topics such as marriage, housing, divorce and so on—similarly to the non-magazine programmes—are central topics, with the essential new element that the magazines deal with the schooling question upon its merits. In this sphere, the magazines really bring a plus: this is the only place where we hear about students' self-government, colleges, the relationship between the family and the school, etc.

The other plus in the magazines is proximity to man. The second most frequent topic on the list is life and

occupations. We consider this extremely important. Proximity means that the subjects of the reports do not serve merely as an illustration of a thesis, but the presentation of their life and career genuinely demonstrates the problems of youth. The intentions are praiseworthy, but the accomplishment somehow slips away because of the earlier mentioned "youthful" style, since the persons presented were either intellectuals or sportsmen. Only 8 of them were so-called ordinary intellectuals, while 17 were actors, sportsmen or artists, thus instead of thoroughness, curiosity and delicacy dominated. If we add that the pretext to present life is frequently the amendment of a career, in summary we can say that "man" is introduced in the programme if he is famous or has been put at a disadvantage (read: he or she!).

Another new element in the magazine is leisure time. We hear about hobby, self-education, club life, and drama groups here. This category is in close connection with culture. High standard campaigns and initiatives are reported on.

The appearance of information (conferences, and competitions) is not surprising, it is really an appropriate topic for magazines.

One would think that youth tourism, and the presentation of other countries receive greater emphasis in the programmes for young people. But such topics only occasionally appear. (America on four occasions, France twice, Britain, the G.D.R. and the Soviet Union once.) In addition, curiosities, and banal national stereotypes dominate (e.g. sex, crime, and region-specific snack-bars).

Although the ratio of historic topics is low, their elaboration is of a high standard, and they occasionally also speak about Hungary after 1945.

Finally, let us see which are the topics that do not occur either in the magazines or in any other youth programmes. These are: sciences (without a moral tone and any nonsense),

the economy (industry, agriculture, commerce, services and enterprise etc.), political public life and public movements (with the exception of YCL and trade union officials as declaration-makers), and sports (with the exception of centres of scandal or for some reason an outstanding performer).

The complete lack of sports is not understandable, obviously the rest are heavy and serious topics, the discussion of which in a "youthful" style with disco music under them would be a sacrilege.

### Summary

Within the framework of the survey, we cannot answer the question what type of image the radio broadcasts about youth, only what contents it transmits for young people as a target stratum and what type of "fishing net" youth programmes use.

Undoubtedly, most of the examined youth programmes illustrate reality. However, this reality is very broken up, mosaic-like, and missing the dimension of depth. Reality "hangs on top of the tales". It cannot be said that the value order aimed at in the broadcast is conservative, negativistic or intolerant. But the opposite cannot be stated either, because practically nothing becomes explicit and tangible. Conciseness, seriousness and particularly explicitness are put in brackets immediately at the moment of their birth. Even though these values and principles are expressed in the non-magazine programmes, it is emphatically only with a pedagogic

intention. This makes the message ineffective and obscures the content the programme intended to transmit.

Practically, such questions remained unemphasized in the surveyed programmes as generation gaps or the economic and political role of young people in society. The particularities of youth subculture only made their way to the surface through commercial contents, the world of stars and extremities.

Many programmes dealt with the socialization and adjustment of young people. However, the illustrated cases were not typical. This primarily refers to those young people who spoke as private individuals. It seemed as if the producers had been continuously afraid of becoming boring. They consider the interesting and extraordinary, namely, what differs from the average as the main value. This could equally be observed in the selection of the report subjects and in the manner of presentation.

The relationship of young people with various social institutions was rarely mentioned, the Young Communist League was exclusively represented by high ranking officials and leaders of the apparatus, and the listeners only gained some picture about the work of the YCL organizations if something "extreme" happened there.

Thus, the producers of the youth programmes constantly strived to keep tension on a high level. This obligatorily leads to the fact that everything has to be presented in a light and superficial form. Consequently, everything is played down and in a strange manner, becomes simple, plain and "youthful".

## Television Programmes about Youth and for Youth

Among the mass media—particularly in comparison to radio—television has fewer opportunities to transmit programmes primarily aimed at young people over 14. An increase in the number of youth programmes can hardly be expected within the present programme structure. Thus, the difficult time barriers could primarily be overcome by a qualitative improvement in youth programmes.

The separation of youth programmes is made particularly difficult by the fact that adult young people (over the age of 18) watch all the television programmes they like.

As it was revealed by the surveyed month (February 1984), many—mainly magazine—programmes contain messages about or for young people. Therefore, not only those programmes were surveyed that the Radio and Television Times had indicated were “for youth”, but as far as possible every news programme, political and cultural bulletin, report and documentary. Thus, practically all the factual (non-fiction) television programmes were observed.

In February 1984, altogether 15 percent of the programmes were beamed to young people about young people. Of course, this percentage can only be considered as an estimation, because the study could not examine every magazine (e.g. Studio '84) to precisely find out the duration of the inserts dealing with youth questions.

The ratio of transmissions explicitly for young people was 4.5 percent on the first and 1.6 percent on the second channel. One third of this was

popular scientific programme, approximately one third magazine, and about a similar ratio consisted of quiz, entertainment programmes (partly music) and reports.

The genre and the target stratum of youth considerably determined on which channel and which hour of the day a youth programme was screened.

The majority of educational programmes was produced by the TV School and most part of the others by the Youth Department. It seems that the latter prefers to produce colourful magazines.

Half of the explicitly youth programmes (educational productions and the “Who Knows Most?” quiz) were intended for students of 14 to 18. The rest was divided between the 18 to 24 age group or older target viewers. Frequently it cannot be defined to which social stratum the over 18 group belongs. But the overall picture suggests that a larger part of the target viewers are university students and intellectuals. This may be considered as an incidental phenomenon of the surveyed month. By all means, television should pay greater attention to dealing with the situation and special problems of young people belonging to all strata of the Hungarian society.

Naturally, the ratings of the various genres are different, which will be illustrated with a few examples and tendencies.

When the TV School programmes are linked to a school subject, ratings are generally below 3 percent. There is great interest in quiz programmes.

As an indication: already the semi-finals of the rather high standard mathematics competition attracted nearly one million viewers. The final—which was the peak of the programme—was watched by one and a half million people, and the appreciation index was very high (85 points).

Only as a brief remark: the ratings are strongly influenced by the channel and transmission time. For example, when the "Friday Night Rendezvous" was screened in prime time, but on the second channel, it was watched by only 3 percent, while on the first channel even after the main programme, it attracted 10 percent.

Entertainment (primarily music) programmes attract many viewers. For example, "Pulse" (pop music) early Tuesday evening was watched by almost 2 million and the repeat on Saturday morning by half a million.

Similarly to other departments of the Television, the producers of youth programmes (editor, anchorperson, and director) are mainly—to about two thirds—males.

### Youth programmes according to genre

We met the particular duality that while programmes not explicitly addressed to young people presented the living conditions and way of life of youth in a relatively more tinged manner, the youth programmes more thoroughly dealt with the dissemination of knowledge or with ethics and moral problems.

The educational programmes in the morning were linked with various subjects of the secondary school curricula. Three out of six were explicitly theoretical topics providing material for the "ideology" subject. The other three stood nearer to the everyday studies of 14 to 18 year old pupils. The hazards of smoking were discussed during a form-master's lesson. The introduction of the Győr

Rába Railway Carriage and Machine Factory enhanced knowledge about jobs. "A Piece of Advice" spoke in a playful manner about the mother tongue, the style of speech and reflected how the command of language could be discussed on a high standard also touching upon the elimination of speech defects (mumbling, stuttering and gabbling), so often characteristic of adolescents. All this was embedded in a search for identity and the self-acceptance of personality and individuality.

The tone and style of educational programmes—with the exception of "A Piece of Advice"—stood rather far from the target age group. The abstraction level and concept system of the lectures linked with the "ideology" subject were so complex and on such a high level that would have been understood by university students rather than secondary school pupils. Not to speak about the fact that the topic should not only be understood and remembered, but also verbally recalled. Regrettably, this would only be accomplished by exceptionally talented students. The form-master's lesson and the one connected with jobs were too didactic and over-explained—exactly what this age group can least endure.

Continuing the tradition interrupted ten years ago, the successful "Who Knows Most?" maths competition was revived and its jury included former winners, today maths teachers at universities.

Five magazines were screened, each for different age groups and produced on various standards. One of them was screened in prime time on the second channel, a "Friday Night Rendezvous" about who is considered as an example by young people and whether there are such at all. Very versatile answers were received.

Most of the contributing young people rejected schematic examples or choice of a model. They emphasized that primarily positive human and

social forms of behaviour and faculties were worth following. Some chose their father as their example. The socialization model-following ended in the problems of inter-generational differences and in the conclusion that different historic periods offer different spheres of action for youth. The absence of realistically operating small communities was also mentioned together with a strive for them, which often attracts part of our youth to join distorted and deviant youth groups (punks and gangs). Only one young person considered an outstanding artist as an example, primarily emphasizing his multifarious and alternative line of thought.

The discussion was centred on the question whether a prominent personality could be a fully acceptable example. Most of the participants only considered certain faculties worth following. One pointed out that a "sterile" example was frequently only a "phantom" for them. A girl brought up the recurring problem that one did not know oneself, only searched for one's own ego and in this relied on certain qualities and values.

The idea that the programme should step beyond the walls of the studio was correct, although on this occasion the outside report inserts were less successful. In these, it became really confused who considered whom as an example and why, since a general social, political, artistic or professional example cannot be captured from the not completely identical dimensions.

The picture was further tinted by the appearance of two outstanding television personalities. *Ádám Horváth*, director of well known historic telefilms, opined that in consolidated periods, in peace time, it was more difficult to find examples and heroes than in historically strained critical periods. One can find heroes from the past who are still up-to-date although their example cannot be followed in the same manner as they lived through it. The other television personality,

reporter *Tamás Vitray* explained that in his present occupation no positive paragon stood in front of him, much rather, negative models helped him to find his own individual outlook and style.

Writer *Gyula Fekete*, who participated in the discussion may have been right in saying that the concept of an example had been diluted. But that danger always exists in a programme striving to discuss a social problem simultaneously from so many aspects. One can also agree with the writer that the precondition of an example is the freedom of choice.

It was interesting that the participating young people did not mention any historic hero or politician as an example (older people only occasionally mentioned such names).

The topic of the other "Friday Night Rendezvous" was fidelity and infidelity. The studio discussion did not prove to be the most suitable form to deliberate on such an abstract, multi-dimensional pair of concepts. Young journalists gathered from every part of the country, accompanied by mainly intellectual report subjects and many clever thoughts—but even more empty clichés—were uttered.

The sphere of fidelity—infidelity was mostly linked with public and social activities (e.g. fidelity to work, to the settlement, to the given community, and to the nation etc.) and less with the ethical and emotional spheres of human life.

No genuine debate developed. The participants only reacted here or there to each others' opinion or prattle. (The latter included declarations such as: "One has to be born for fidelity"! Unfortunately, the programme was unable to capture what it intended to, namely to examine the internal structure of fidelity. Although Polonius' warning to his son was heard in the programme (somewhat inaccurately): "Be faithful to yourself"—it turned into a substantial and dialectic concept only in writer *Magda Szabó's*

interpretation. She explained that neither fidelity nor infidelity was a concept independent and abstract from history. We also have to be "unfaithful" if for some reason it is required.

From the abstract, moral plane, the programme consistently switched to the plane of everyday life. This, as a concept, can only be approved of if the differing dimensions are not completely separated from each other. The latter happened here, and almost no contact developed between the two planes. Thus, instead of a dialogue, the programme became a garland of solo numbers.

The target audience of the other magazine-like programmes were the teenagers.

The "Teenagers' Party" was aired in the afternoon on the first channel. It offered a rather rich menu, but the obvious effort to mainly provide inexpensive entertainment impoverished this programme.

The participants of the teenagers rendezvous called "We-You-They" were most probably gathered at random, rather than by a thorough conception. The concerned age group may really need this (as indicated by the relatively high ratings and appreciation indices), nevertheless, in our opinion, the standard of the programme could be raised even while catering for the taste of this age group. On the one hand, the programme expressed strict norms, while on the other hand, it relied on cheap humorous effects. This "cocktail" contributed to the production of artificial ideals (stars).

The first miscellaneous "coloured" block of "Outspoken" was anchored with charm by *Katalin Szegvári*. The second part of the programme focused on whether the life of the parents concerned the children, and whether the family conflicts, perhaps a divorce, should be discussed with the children or not. Not even the teenagers could decide what the best solution was in deteriorated parental relations:

divorce or the continuation of the bonds. Psychologist *Péter Popper* emphasized the importance of thinking about alternatives and of attitudes searching for solutions, not only verbally, but also in practice, when he placed the youngsters into various psycho-dramatic situations.

Two from among the entertainment programmes spoke to the broadest age group of youth ("The Circus of Tomorrow" and "Dolly Roll").

"Pulse" is a magazine and at the same time educational programme because it presents the youth subculture while also illustrating the European and American light music trends as well as the roots and contact points of Hungarian light music life.

"Music Boutique" is also a miscellaneous genre. It links the magazine character, dissemination of knowledge and advertisement in a good sense. First of all, it satisfies the taste of young people who already possess knowledge in the sphere of serious music. This is how the *R-go band*, *Judit Hernádi*, *Bernstein*, *Bizet* and others were pushed into the same programme. Its visual style is also attractive for young people.

The second half of "Portraits", a report with singer *László Tolcsvay* reflected nostalgia already in its title: "Summer Has Passed . . ."

The subtitle could have been: "From the radical renewal of society to settled consolidation". *László Tolcsvay*, a favourite of the not-so-young adults who recall the heroic era of polbeat with nostalgia, was interviewed about his career in his holiday villa at Szentendre. A few years ago, he wrote music for the National Song. Today, Tolcsvay explained, he wouldn't like to include the National Song among the hits on his new record, because he could not surpass its level. He explained this with a slang expression, not too appropriate in the case of the National Song, and one does not know whether it was a coincidence or an intentional con-

trast. Later both the tune and the text indicated lost values, a type of acquiescence and pseudo-“wisdom”.

To the question of the reporter whether he knows what young people need Tolcsvay answered with surprising sincerity, even admitting manipulation: “One doesn’t have to know exactly what young people need. They will like what they are given.”

### Young people in other programmes

Naturally, this brief report cannot deal with all the television programmes which included young people. Only a few examples can be mentioned.

Young people appear in almost every evening newsreel. In reports from abroad, mainly as active political participants, (demonstrations and meetings), in domestic coverages, primarily as participants of conferences, deliberations or peaceful building work. The duality which usually characterizes the foreign and domestic coverages of the newsreels also appears in the presentation of young people. If the foreign venue is not in a socialist country, it is full of sorrow, anxiety and aggression. What “happened at home”—with rare exception—reflects the images of peace, tranquility and development. Thus, young people are generally present in the television newsreel, at least as a spectacle. The same can be said about the political magazine “The Week”.

It is worth drawing attention to one of its reports, because it dealt with a topic—drug addiction—which until recent times was taboo in the Hungarian mass media. A medical professor from Pécs spoke about drug addiction in Hungary which is the highest among young people. The spreading drug consumption (primarily glue sniffing and the combined use of medicaments and spirits) is a price and secondary product of social development. The professor emphasized two endangered types. One which does not receive

affection, care and warmth in its environment, and the other is the opposite, who is over-cuddled, spoiled and protected from everything by the family, and by the environment. This fault in socialization leads to the stage in which the person cannot overcome difficulties and conflicts, and tries to find a way out through drugs. The efficiency of the report was increased by the fact that it tried to find a social explanation for drug addiction, and did not use stereotyped prejudices. However, it is questionable whether drug addiction is only a problem of those who are on the periphery.

In addition to programmes for youth, young people, particularly young women, mostly appeared in commercials. This is a well established old trick. Youth in itself is a value, which—coupled with an attractive appearance—increases the desirability and the magic of the advertised goods. Undressed beauty is more attractive than well dressed beauty. Thus, young women in the commercials frequently appear in scanty attire: even if they advertise detergent, if they clean windows, or if they advertise clothes.

If the young woman or the couple is well dressed, we can presume that an exclusive item (e.g. sauna card) is offered. If the person appears in overalls, then “paint”. Consequently, advertisements also express complex social contents: well dressed and well groomed appearance is frequently the privilege of the well-to-do, while the terrain of the less well dressed and groomed is mainly work. (However, this duality is not rigid and not consistent.)

### Reference frameworks, values and their transmission

Observing first the areas and reference frameworks in which young people—primarily young adults—appear most frequently, the following ranking develops: 1. work (studies); 2. their roles at the workplace; 3. family; 4. enter-

tainment; 5. love, relationship, community; 6. sports; 7. hygiene; 8. sciences and arts; and 9. deviation.

Most of the programmes suggest that young people find their appropriate place in work and studies. This follows from the fact that television usually presents positive examples.

Young people are usually open to the new economic measures, while the old, accustomed operational mechanisms frequently obstruct them. It is correct that television also presents these obstructing factors. However, it is less correct to suggest that if young people are perseverant they can put into practice all their ideas.

The values are linked with four main areas: work, family, entertainment and attitude.

It is undoubtedly an improvement of the youth programmes of television that they have made the earlier characteristic didactic "political character" more informal and introduced the social or political problems on the plane of human behaviour. Although they take into consideration the particularities of the age group concerned, they strive to handle young people as partners—and not as the subjects of instruction.

Frequently—at least verbally—tolerance, freedom of choice, independent thinking and self-accomplishment appear as the most important values. However, not even these tendencies can cover up the fact that many young people do not find a prop to develop their lives, they just live in the world ("something will happen"). We can also experience the weakness or absence of many important values, for example, alignment with the national or social community, a perspective social outlook, the responsibility and morals of the individual. Morals are frequently discussed in the programmes, but more often than not the sounded opinions seem to be empty (fashionable) words. It can also be said that in addition to

the search for values, the programmes also show the symptoms of the loss of value.

It is conspicuous how little young people can debate with each other. Or how little attention these programmes play to the culture of conversation and debate. This is how the originally debate programmes break into monologues: each recalls his own view, independently from what was said before.

It can be regarded as a general phenomenon that the world of teenagers and that of young adults rather differ from each other in the programmes. As a basic tendency, the presentation of teenagers is characterized by the simplification of problems, direct discussion of politics, and a superficial ideology, while the presentation of young adults is characterized by a more tinted handling of the problems, indirect discussion of politics and a strive to become acquainted with life. This duality also takes effect in the style of verbal and visual depiction.

There are many external elements, giggling, visual and lingual laxity in the programmes for teenagers. This seems to cover the idea that this is the way to approach the concerned age group, and make it accept the desired values. This is (also) why magazines beamed to teenagers frequently turn into shows in the worst sense, sparkling disco programmes which do not require attention. Compared to these, magazines for young adults are better and have more content. (Although the slipshod character is a frequent phenomenon here as well.)

Naturally, the programmes of one month cannot be expected to convey a complete and detailed picture of our youth. Nevertheless, it should be mentioned that the programmes ignore several genuine conflicts and young people seem to be missing a buoyant effort to develop their own world.



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Tamás Terestyéni

## Varied Images of Youth

*Young People in the Political Dailies*

Although in the Hungarian press structure, primarily the youth publications—*Magyar Ifjúság* (Hungarian Youth), *Ifjúsági Magazin* (Youth Magazine), *Világ Ifjúsága* (Youth of the World), *Ifjú Kommunista* (Young Communist), and *Ifjúsági Szemle* (Youth Review)—are called upon to keep questions connected with the life of the young generations on the agenda, the political dailies addressed to the broadest circle of readers also have a significant role in shaping the mass communication image of youth and through this the opinion about youth in public thinking. In order to contribute to revealing the characteristics of the image of youth reflected by the media, a content analysis was carried out concerning the information offered by the national political dailies about young people.

The analysis covered the articles in the February 1984 issues of the dailies *Népszabadság* (People's Liberty), *Népszava* (People's Voice), *Magyar Nemzet* (Hungarian Nation), *Magyar Hírlap* (Hungarian News Daily) and *Esti Hírlap* (Evening News) which in their entirety or in major parts, dealt with the situation and opportunities of young people. In order to avoid misunderstandings, it should be noted that the articles which had no particular youth reference, although one or the other person mentioned belonged to the young age groups, were ignored.

For example, sports news were not elaborated on even though—naturally—most of them were centred around young people.

### Attention paid to youth

Readers of the dailies regularly—although compared to other, more strongly cultivated media contents relatively rarely—find articles speaking about or perhaps to young people. This is indicated by the fact that less than 2 percent of the domestic themes excluding the special sport, art, popular, scientific etc., columns of the dailies contain information on some youth issue as the main topic.\*

When interpreting this data, it must be taken into consideration that a considerable part of the articles on public education, which comprised about 7 percent of all the themes, directly concerned the majority of the young age groups. Thus the ratio of information about youth would be higher if the articles of an educational content referring to youth were also be categorized as a youth topic. Short or long excerpts of writings which did not directly concentrate on youth may also have dealt with the life and situation of young people. However, despite these amending factors, it can be stated that youth contents, even if they cannot be described as neglected,

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\* The youth columns, if such existed during the period under survey (*Népszabadság*, *Népszava*) were naturally included in the sample of analysis.

get relatively little attention in the national dailies, and most probably do not seem particularly important or significant for readers.

Essentially the same conclusion can be drawn if the length of articles with a youth content is compared to the average domestic publication length in centimeters: the extent of articles exclusively on youth amounts to about 2 percent of the information of domestic concern.

### Who is young?

In the interpretation of the dailies, the concept of youth primarily covers those between 14 and 26 or 27, but mainly those in their twenties are in the focus of interest. The frequency of their mentioning is due to the fact that this is the youth age group in whose life the themes emphasized by the dailies such as entering the social division of work, adjustment to the work place, and economic productive activity play a determinative role. While with regard to those in their twenties, the characteristic context of mentioning is the starting of a career and work, with regard to the teenagers it is naturally learning, education and instruction. The epithet "young" is less frequently added to those who are nearing thirty or somewhat over it, although the terminology of some articles describe even those nearing forty as young.

The surveyed material mentioned intellectuals and young workers most frequently. Within the intellectual occupations, attention was primarily paid to engineers and economists, i. e. those engaged in the economic sphere, as well as to teachers, while in the case of the workers' category, almost exclusively young skilled workers appeared. Hardly any unskilled or semi-skilled workers were mentioned, at most in general. Similarly, young people engaged in manual agricultural work also belonged to the neglected categories.

The dailies dealt to a smaller extent with students than with those beginning their career or working in jobs for some time. Among the mentioned groups, there were approximately even numbers of grammar school, vocational secondary school and apprentice training school students. However, particularly compared with the frequent mentioning of young people engaged in intellectual jobs, very little was said about college and university students, although this group constitutes the main source of future intellectuals.

A strong Budapest-centric outlook could be felt in the youth issue: the surveyed material relatively rarely mentioned young people from the provincial towns and particularly few appeared from non-urban settlements. At the same time, it could be observed that in articles in which the type of domicile was given a sociological charge, the provinces were sharply in contrast to the towns, and foremost to Budapest: these articles emphatically pointed out the limited opportunities for further studies, qualified jobs, finding partners and getting married in the countryside. The attraction of urban living conditions and the repulsive effect of rural circumstances were reflected even in those articles that otherwise spoke in a positive manner about the adjustment and employment of young people in the countryside.

From a socio-cultural aspect, the dailies made little difference among the groups of youth. Only the youngsters in a (from several aspects) detrimental situation or occasionally state-cared-for youngsters attracted greater attention than groups of youngsters who would need increased social care.

All in all, it can be concluded that young people of low schooling, having a worse position in the division of work, living under non-metropolitan conditions and in a worse than average socio-cultural situation are underrepresented in the youth themes of the dailies. This impression is confirmed by the fact that the articles of the dailies usually present or give the

word to those youngsters who can be regarded as successful in their field and have relatively good opportunities to find—despite minor or major problems—their proper place in the world.

### Beginning a career, adjustment

Owing to their frequency, the articles dealing with the choice of career, taking up the first job and adjustment to the working place play an emphasized role in the youth theme. Although the dailies obviously seem to regard this sphere of topics as important, their articles with such a content are mostly schematic and cliché-like in their approach: a young person—leaving school for life—initially sees rigid institutions, alienated organizations and inflexible regulations, and within such frameworks he does not feel the possibility to enfold his abilities. But later he gradually recovers and occasionally supported by the social organizations and the helping hand of an understanding colleague or boss, he gets ahead. This “all is well that ends well” concept is naturally not suitable to spotlight the deeper problems concealed behind the tensions caused by the problem of adjustment. On the contrary: its superficial schematism suggest that even if there are minor or major obstacles, these are necessary concomitants of adjustment, and finally everything will be solved and the life of young people will be settled. Of course, this is true in general, but it is not mentioned how this settlement of the life of young people grinds up their abilities and ambitions, how it produces compromising conformist petty bourgeois or pushy careerists.

Although most of the articles about adjustment in employment agree that it is not always easy for young people to find their place in the organizations they are employed in, the reason for this is generally not considered in the rigidity and emptiness of the institutional-organizational frameworks, but

in the lack of activity, initiative and interest on the part of young people. The lack of activity is the most frequently mentioned (negative) quality the surveyed sources characterized young people with. It should be noted that condemnation connected with the strongly cultivated value of activity is a frequently appearing point in the youth themes of the dailies, not only referring to adjustment in employment, but participation in social and political public life. Despite the fact that activity appears as an important requirement in the dailies, there is little information about what actually it means and what the roots of its absence can be. In connection with the latter, only pale hints are made at the strongly hierarchic nature of the existing institutional frameworks and the frequently formal character of the activity carried out in them which do not provide much opportunity for genuine initiatives.

It is characteristic of many articles concerning the beginning of a career, adjustment and the role of work in the life of young people that the sense of vocation and fondness for work are frequently placed in contrast to efforts to acquire material assets. Slightly or more sharply, many articles carry condemnation, alleging that the choice of a career, work while studying, money earning beyond working hours, or the occasional change of jobs are mostly or explicitly guided by financial aspects. The refusal of a money-centric value orientation occasionally switches over into a particular confusion of values: diligent, perseverant and professionally conscious earning for decent living conditions (for example, for improving housing conditions) are also qualified as greediness. Perhaps it is superfluous to emphasize how repugnant this exaggerated struggle against a money-centric attitude can seem in the present phase of our economic development, when as a result of the stagnation or relapse of living standards, broad masses of young people have to make multiple

efforts to satisfy their elementary needs.

In addition to the sense of vocation and professional values, the requirement to participate in public life was also strongly emphasized, however, the articles examining what actual opportunities young people have to intervene in public affairs, express their opinion and represent their interests were completely missing. Although the political institutions of young people are frequently hinted at in the dailies, most of this information is of a protocol character (for example, news about the sessions of the Central Committee of the Young Communist League, the deliberations and decisions of the State Youth Commission, and the visit of delegations, etc.) and mainly illustrates the distance of the political sphere from everyday life. There is a rather small ratio of writings from which one can find out that the YCL, fulfilling the function of protecting interests, took steps to improve the living and working conditions of young people. The unrealistic depiction of the youth movement was strengthened by the fact that the mentioning of the YCL was frequently confined to formal labels without content that are usually hung on youth contents: if the article speaks about young people, it might or should say something about the YCL as well.

### Living conditions, way of life

Although wages and income were frequently mentioned in connection with the beginning of a career, only a few articles were found which dealt with the living conditions of young people as their main topic. These, however, reflected a greater than average sensitivity to the problem. When pointing out that the economic difficulties of the country have an adverse effect on the opportunities of young people, the concerned articles primarily emphasized the housing problem: the dailies agreed that the acquisition of

a flat represents a major problem in the life of young people, unsolvable from their own resources under the present conditions. The wage and income relations of young people seemed to be less disadvantageous, despite the fact that according to the authors of several writings, in certain occupations the remuneration of young employees is lagging far behind that which is necessary to create balanced financial circumstances. Some articles also mentioned employment problems, and some suggested that due to the stagnation of living standards, the narrowing opportunities of unskilled manual workers, starting under adverse conditions, could lead to social tensions.

Some journalistic articles of the dailies reflected a sharp contradiction with these writings of sociological outlook. They stated that our young people received everything ready-made from society, and did not need to make such efforts as the previous generation was compelled to make. Occasionally, the view emerged that young people had exaggerated their needs, and are unjustified in their claims against their social environment. Such and similar generalizations of pejorative content do not help the readers of the dailies to receive a unbiased image free of stereotypes about the younger generation.

The political dailies infrequently mention the elements of youth sub-culture (music, dancing, fashion and concerts, etc.) which play an important part in the way of life of young people, and the same refers to their leisure time and entertainment opportunities. Although such references usually reported on the expansion of supply, the final conclusion is that the available institutionalized leisure time opportunities (culture, entertainment, and holidays, etc.) can be considered limited. No article was found which would have criticized the pop music needs and fashion customs of young people, however, the shortcomings in the everyday behaviour culture of the

younger generation (indisciplined, impolite, aggressive and rough behaviour and speech, etc.) were mentioned on several occasions.

Several articles wrote about the effect of the patterns of way of life and value-orientations transmitted by the family environment to young people. The articles mentioning the socialization role of the family environment mostly spoke about parental motivations in connection with further studies and the choice of a career, and in fact usually in a negative light. The dailies primarily expressed their anxiety about the recently spreading phenomenon that in non-intellectual families parents frequently did not inspire their children to continue their studies, acquire higher level qualifications, and choose an intellectual career, consequently, many young talented people of good qualities missed the opportunity to participate in higher education.

### Deviation phenomena

Unfortunately, deviant behaviour experienced among young people takes an increasingly significant place among our social problems: aggression, drinking, the domestic forms of drug addiction, loitering, and crime etc. These phenomena do not avoid the attention of the dailies, nevertheless, it seems to be doubtful whether they succeed in contributing to form an unbiased public opinion understanding the problem with responsibility. The uncertainty can be basically explained by two factors. One is that the dailies handle this problem in a very shy manner: they hardly ever go beyond stating that deviant behaviour exists or spreads, and do not provide information about the nature of this behaviour, the extent of its spread and social substance, the most endangered youth groups, and the possible ways and means of struggling against its further spread. The dailies do not write about the social reasons of and the background

to deviation experienced among young people either. The few articles which mentioned this did not go further than hinting at the responsibility of the social environment as a platitude, and omitted the illustration of more concrete correlations.

The other factor that evokes uncertainty with regard to the effect of the information the dailies provide about juvenile deviation is a pessimistic, now self-reproaching, now accusing tone in some writings, ringing the alarm bell: what can be expected from young people when crime is spreading among them, together with drinking and drug addiction, etc? This tone, missing a sober evaluation—particularly if a pragmatic expert presentation of the problems without extremes is missing—may easily provoke anti-youth biases, according to which young people today are unmanageable and do not deserve any type of social care and understanding. This effect can be amplified by the crime and court news of the dailies, in which a considerable part of the criminals are under 30, or minors. In order that readers should be able to realistically interpret the received information, and not draw unfounded conclusions about the entirety of youth, more thorough, more open and sincere, objective information is needed on juvenile deviation phenomena.

### Three types of approach

Most probably all the above reflected the fact that more than one image of youth exist in the dailies, the features of which are occasionally merging into or are in sharp contrast to each other. Nevertheless, if we try to group the different characteristics, three approaches emerge from the youth theme of the dailies, which can be termed as propagandistic, sociological and pessimistic.

From the viewpoint of power and the existing institutions and organizations, naturally the ideal is the young

person who adjusts himself without conflicts, accepts the given frameworks and norms, identifies himself with the power, the institutions and organizations, and satisfies their requirements without fail. The propagandistic approach primarily emphasizes that the existing institutions and organizations, the given frameworks and norms of various social activities—despite the occasionally appearing minor or major mistakes and tensions—offer ample opportunities to youth, and it essentially depends on young people how they make use of them. Since in this approach, the basic function of communication consists in publicity for the opportunities or the ways of their use, the youth image conceived in this meaning is one-sidedly characterized by positive tendencies and favourable moments: despite minor problems, the perspectives are broad. On the one hand, there are institutions and organizations which help young people by numerous means, together with multifarious social support, while on the other hand, there are diligent young people ready to learn and work, who have a strong sense of vocation, undertake an active role in social-political public life, understand the problems, and search for their solution within the given frameworks with great tolerance. In addition to one-sidedly emphasizing positive features, the propagandistic character of this youth image is amplified by the circumstance that it is frequently parable-like and coupled with a lecture permeated with treasury optimism.

The sociological approach is characterized by a high problem sensitivity, the requirement to set aside propagandistic intentions and stereotyped

schemes, and present the opportunities and problems of young people embedded in actual social processes. It searches for the social reasons behind the tensions and avoids generalizations from singular negative or positive phenomena. It places a major emphasis on the stratification of our society and within this the stratification of young people, the differing opportunities resulting from the differences among the strata, the effect of the present economic difficulties on the opportunities of young people, the limitations of our institutional system and the analysis of the solution of problems.

The third approach is also sensitive to the problems, but while the previous one strives for an objective tone, this one reflects a type of sad, pessimistic outlook, which blows up the problematic features of young people (greed, lack of activity, and spread of deviation phenomena, etc.). The examination of social reasons behind the problems is frequently replaced by empty moralizing, which naturally does not help the realistic information of the general public. Some articles also showed an impatient lack of understanding, when the difference of the present youth compared to former generations was interpreted as some symptom of deviation.

The characteristics of these three approaches are usually not clear-cut but appear as tendencies: one group of the articles reflects one and another group the other outlook. In order to provide realistic information for readers and to develop a youth image free of clichés, stereotypes and extremes, it would be desirable that more of the articles of the political dailies dealing with young people be written with a sociological approach in the future.

*Guy Lázár*

## Foreign Policy and the Mass Media

As a consequence of the unfavourable changes in East—West relations, started at the end of the 1970s and described by newscasters as a “halt in the process of détente”, “the aggravation of international tension”, “the revival of cold war aspirations” or “the advent of the period of cold peace”, Hungarian information media are faced with greater dilemmas than before if they wish to serve the cause of a return to the policy of peaceful co-existence and education for peace.

### Conflict and cooperation

These dilemmas are primarily linked with the fact—as it is commonly known—that the international situation is decisively determined by the relationship between the leaders of the two world systems, the Soviet Union and the United States, and this has deteriorated in the past years to a larger extent than the relationship between the major powers and the smaller countries or those between the small countries. Consequently, information media in the small socialist countries—including those operating in Hungary—have to decide whether they serve the cause of peace better by emphasizing that the international situation is becoming more tense as a result of the foreign policy of the United States or emphasizing that cooperation is still accomplished in other fields of East—West relations. This decision may not only have foreign policy consequences, but also domestic ones, for the presentation

of the increase in tension upsets the mood of the population.

Theoretically, this dilemma can be solved by the media if they “separate” the small western countries from the United States, which means, on the one hand, that they overemphasize the differences in opinion and the conflict of interests between the United States and its allies. On the other hand, it means that they always and in every respect criticize the foreign policy of the United States and try to prove that “America is the gendarme of the world”, not only when it moves against the antiimperialist or revolutionary movements, but also when—together with other western countries—it simply protects the interests of the western world.

When the information media overemphasize the differences in opinion and the conflicts of interest between the United States and its allies, this may increase the value of the argumentation among the less informed strata (on the basis that “if their allies criticize them, then there must be something in it”). Among the more informed strata, however, this may cause an opposite effect: when unity may be restored among the western countries—either because of the political—military and economic prevalence of the United States or because of the fundamental identity of these countries’ interests. In addition, it may lead to the—not completely unfounded—conclusion that the western countries can indeed preserve their unity in basic issues even if in certain

questions there are sharp differences in opinion among them.

When the information media always and in all respects criticize the foreign policy of the United States, it may again have an effect: surveys undertaken by the Mass Communication Research Centre indicate that a considerable anti-United States feeling has developed among those who were not keenly following foreign policy affairs, and this feeling was motivated by fears of war. The leaders of Hungarian foreign policy are fully aware, however, that this is not unconditionally desirable. As Gyula Horn, head of the Foreign Affairs Department of the Central Committee of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party pointed out in his interview given to *Jel-Kép*:

„If we only present a negative picture about one of the significant powers, the conviction may take shape in public opinion that the leaders of that country are extremely dogged and we can do nothing with them.”<sup>1</sup>

At the same time, opinion polls reveal that a significant number of those who follow foreign policy events with more interest, blame not only the western but also the socialist countries for the deterioration of East—West relations. This is amply demonstrated by the results of a poll carried out in the autumn of 1983: 26 percent of those with secondary or college education opined that the relationship between the socialist and western countries had deteriorated in the preceding years. (The sample represented the adult population of Hungary.) It was a mere 46 percent of these respondents who believed that the West was primarily responsible for the deterioration. Thirty-seven percent of the interviewees blamed both sides. The shoreless criticism of the American foreign policy may also trigger a contrary effect among these people, and not only when the information media condemn the United States for its attitude concerning disarmament but also when they criticize the US for its policy with regard to the Third

World. In fact, a significant portion of these people evaluate US foreign policy mainly from the point of view of whether “it is or it is not favourable to us”. Namely, how far it threatens the preservation of peace in Europe. If in this field the role of the United States is not perceived too negative, then, most probably, the general public will not consider its role in other fields too unfavourable either. Thus, when foreign policy information becomes subordinated to the bargaining within the framework of East—West negotiations, the media may impede themselves to convince the public, when the necessity arises, that it was impossible to accept the western proposals. Consider, for example, the steps with which the western countries try to strengthen their negotiating positions: these are tackled by the media with “an annihilating theoretical criticism” as if these countries were unwilling to negotiate.

### Importance and interest

The solution of the dilemma whether the mass media should emphasize the aggravation of tension or the continuation of cooperation in the coverage of East—West relations is connected with the dilemma of *who the information should be aimed at*: primarily at the diplomatic partners—the country's allies and “enemies”—, or the domestic readers, listeners and viewers—the public? This dilemma has nothing to do with the fact that the mass media must not publish state secrets—this problem can be handled through legal regulation. Much rather if the coverage of foreign policy events is guided mainly by diplomatic considerations, then their ratings are not primarily determined by their *news value*, but by their *political value*. These are the same values as those guiding the country's foreign policy. These values are valid, independent of the topicality of the events. In this respect, these values themselves are



also topical. This topicality prompts the information media to develop the hegemony or autocracy of political values which may primarily be manifested in two things. On the one hand, the importance of various foreign policy events specifies how far they justify (1) the correctness of the foreign policy of the country or of the alliance system which includes the country, and (2) the image of the "hostile" country or alliance system.

Also, the change-over of news values and political values can be experienced when the events created to support the efforts to change the power relations acquire equal rank with those events which in fact change the balance of power. Actually, pseudo-events may acquire an identical rank to the genuine events. This may create a situation characterized by Róbert Angelusz as "*the separation of importance and interest*"<sup>2</sup>. It not only reduces the efficiency of foreign policy information (by making it boring) but also reduces political values which frequently appear separated from genuine foreign policy events and are imposed upon the actual foreign policy situation.

### Knowledge and beliefs

Meanwhile, the dilemma of who the recipient of foreign policy information should be is closely interwoven with the question of *what aims should be served by the information*: should it confirm *single foreign policy steps* as adjusted to the prevailing situation (namely, should it give the ideological explanation of the tactical steps), should it promote the *acceptance of the basic foreign policy line* which also makes its way independently from the momentary situation and emerges sooner or later from the multitude of single steps or should it help in acquiring the support necessary for the accomplishment of the strategic ideas? The solution of this dilemma does not so much influence the rating of various

foreign policy events or the "shaping of the realities of foreign policy", but, much rather, promotes the selection of information concerning different events and phenomena. When the information media strive to confirm single steps, they inevitably feel the necessity to filter out information which would necessitate other steps. This is how today's practice has emerged. It was characterized by György Lukács in the following manner:

... we appoint nations which sympathize with us to be progressive, while we do not regard the others as such, moreover, we regard them as reactionary.<sup>3</sup>

This practice may be harmful.

Part of the problem is that a considerable number of people acquire false ideas about the social system, the political and economic, etc. life of those countries which they mainly or exclusively gain information about from the mass media. The media present a favourable or unfavourable picture, whether we are on good terms with these countries or not. For instance, the results of a 1974 survey of those between 18 and 30 years illustrate this point: Egypt and Syria were much less considered capitalist than Israel (44, 62 and 93 percent, respectively). Also, many people thought there were legally operating communist parties in these countries. (70, 49 and 35 percent, respectively). In another survey in 1976, only 59 percent of young people described China as a socialist country and only 16—15 percent put Israel and South Africa among the industrially developed countries.<sup>4</sup> We acquired even worse experiences when using the adult sample: in 1973 altogether 32 percent of the interviewees regarded China as a socialist country, in 1977 this increased to 35 percent and in 1978 it was down to 31 percent.

A large part of these answers should not be interpreted with the assumption that the interviewees possessed *false* knowledge. Much rather, they tried to deduce their *missing* knowledge

from the official evaluation of the concerned countries, namely, they tried to reconstruct the unknown fact evaluation on the basis of the known value judgement. However, the fact that this reconstruction led to these results, shows that in such cases the media have not induced such a *system of knowledge* in people which would enable them to elaborate and store further, more detailed and shaded knowledge but have induced *systems of opinion and belief* which, on the contrary, hinder this. Thus, the mass media not only impede themselves in their efforts to continuously increase the sphere of foreign policy knowledge of the population but also hinder public opinion in reacting in a balanced manner to the changes in international life. For example—again citing György Lukács—it often happens that one of the “nations which sympathize with us” is as far from being socialist as the other.<sup>5</sup> The best example of this is again Egypt. It would be justified to presume that if the majority of people knew that Egypt was a capitalist country, they would have been less surprised when Egypt abrogated her agreement with the Soviet Union. And such surprises occur not only when we say good things about our “enemies” and then sit down with them to negotiate and, in addition, in the interest of the success of the negotiations, we only say nice things about them. Hungarian information media, for instance, had published exclusively unfavourable news about Margaret Thatcher for years. Then, during her visit to Budapest, they presented a very favourable image of her which may have had to do with the visit’s major response on the part of the general public. Six months later, after the visits of Sinowatz, Craxi and Kohl, people still regarded the visit

of the British Prime Minister to have been the most significant event of domestic policy in the past few months.<sup>6</sup> Naturally, these surprises cause a loss of prestige not only for foreign policy information but also for the foreign policy itself and strengthen the beliefs concerning the unclear nature of political events, and of politics in general.

### Two competences

The dilemmas which confront foreign policy information, aligned with the cause of peace, may primarily be attributed to the contradiction formulated by Tamás Szeeskó in the following manner:

... where the competence of the sphere of information clashes with another, usually the previous comes (is brought?) on the tapis.<sup>7</sup>

It may be added that if the competence of foreign policy information clashes with the competence of foreign policy (with the appropriate combination of strategic and tactical elements) and the former comes to the tapis, this not only reduces the efficiency of foreign policy information in the long run but also narrows down the sphere of movement of foreign policy, for two reasons. On the one hand, foreign policy, if it wants to acquire and preserve the support of public opinion, always has to consider whether or not the practical steps (or the strategic changes of orientation) with which it wishes to adapt itself to the new circumstances violate the beliefs which develop in people because of the “unclearness in the relationship between policy and information”.<sup>8</sup> On the other hand, foreign policy is unable to utilize the advantages that lie in the competence of foreign policy information.

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> *Külpolitika és tömegkommunikáció. Beszélgetés Horn Gyulával, az MSZMP KB Külsügyi Osztályának vezetőjével* (Foreign policy and mass communication. An inter-

- view with Gyula Horn, head of the Foreign Affairs Department of the CC of the HSWP) *Jel-Kép*, 1984, No. 2, p. 5.
- <sup>2</sup> ANGELUSZ, Róbert: *Kommunikáló társadalom* (Communicating society). Budapest, Gondolat, 1983, pp. 20—21.
- <sup>3</sup> *A békés egymás mellett élés néhány problémája*. Beszélgetés Lukács Györggyel (A few problems of peaceful coexistence. An interview with György Lukács). *Kortárs*, 1968, No. 5, p. 572.
- <sup>4</sup> HORVÁTH, Ágota and SÍK, Endre: „A második világháborút az NSZK robbantotta ki . . .” (The Second World War was launched by the FRG . . .). *Rádió és Televízió Szemle*, 1978, No. 1, pp. 93—100.
- <sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>6</sup> TÍMÁR, János: *Az euro-rakéták, a libanoni események, a Thatcher-látogatás és az ár-emelések. A lakosságot foglalkoztató események és problémák* (The Euro-rockets, the Lebanese events, the Thatcher visit, and the price rises. Events and problems occupying the population). *Jel-Kép*, 1984, No. 4, pp. 130—140.
- <sup>7</sup> SZECSKÓ, Tamás: *Jegyzetek az információ értékéről* (Notes on the value of information). *Valóság*, 1982, No. 12, p. 81.
- <sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

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Zoltán Jakab

# Consumer Investment in Mass Communication

*Some Long Term Trends*

A long way has been covered from Gutenberg's renowned Bible (1454) to the beginnings of mass communication. About 150 years had passed until the publication of the first proto-newspapers in the Netherlands and England.<sup>1</sup> It took another 230 years for the sun of cheap commercial press to rise (New York *Sun*, 1833). It is about this time that the acceleration of the processes may be counted from, manifesting itself in the stormy spread of newspapers and the subsequent appearance of the other media.

To stick to illustrative events, the sequence of occurrences was as follows: Edison's phonograph (1878), Lumiere's cinématographe (1895), radio (early 1920s), tape recorder (1935), television (mid-1930s) and consumer operated video recorder (the turn of the 1960s and 1970s). Since then, this tendency has continued as illustrated by the appearance of recent technologies like cable television, the video disk and direct satellite broadcasting.

Actually, the course of events was much more continuous than it is signified by the dates themselves. The continuousness was a consequence of a series of developments following the innovation of individual technologies. (Consider, for instance, the developmental chains leading from phonograph-cylinders to stereo records or from the electromechanical television systems of the thirties to high definition television being developed currently.)

*In the recent one hundred years, not*

*only the appearance of more and more novel consumer-used equipment has become, so to say, periodical, but also the spread and saturation of recent technologies seem to have taken a shorter period of time. This phenomenon may be amply illustrated by the example of newspapers, movie theaters, the radio and the television, in regards which data and research findings are available.<sup>2</sup>*

*In England, the demand curve of dailies reached the level of relative saturation in about 270 years. This period lasted about 35 years for cinemas and a mere 25 years for television. In the United States, these periods were 100, 30 and 10 years long, respectively. In current Hungary, one may hardly talk about the saturation of press products, more concretely, dailies, notwithstanding the tendencies of actual relative incomes and the price rises of press products. The peak of cinema admissions was recorded in 1960, the relative saturation of radio consumption was complete in the early seventies while television reached this point in the second half of the seventies. Thus, relative saturation took about 60 years for cinemas, 50 for the radio and 20 years for the television to be complete.*

*Essentially, all the above are well-known facts. They were cited here only in order to provide some background for the description of the economic behaviour of the users, the consumers of the mass media—the actual goal of this paper.*

**The structural transformation of investment in mass communication**

Posters, dailies and movie theaters as mass media are akin in many ways: their common characteristics differentiate them from the rest of the media, such as records, radio, television and the more recent technologies.<sup>3</sup>

On the one hand, the perception of information from newspapers and movies is tied to *cultural preconditions* (e.g.: knowledge of languages, education, etc.). On the other, it involves a certain amount of *continuous spendings*. Cultural preconditions are to be accounted for, to a degree, in the case of radio, television and other mass media but, in practice, the *technical preconditions* of access to information (receiving equipment) prove to be more important, as it requires *consumer investment*. This fact is just seemingly trivial.

In the case of posters, newspapers and movie theaters *the investments, on the level of the national economy, are charged on the account of the pro-*

*ducers and suppliers of information.* Now, with the advent of the phonograph and the radio, a radical change has occurred: *national investments are divided between the producers, suppliers and consumers of information.* It was not just a minor transformation: *consumer investments of this kind have been an order of magnitude greater than those by equipment and information producers combined.* Table 1 shows the proportions for the United States. For lack of comprehensive data on Hungary, proportions will be indicated only for television. From 1975 through 1984, Hungarian consumers had spent more than 15 times as much money on purchasing TV-sets as the Hungarian Television Company spent on investment. Through this ten-year period, the proportions of consumer vs. corporate investment ranged between 10 and 29 times preponderance of the former.<sup>4</sup>

Consumer investment into a single medium appears in the national economy as a process. This is so partly because the speed of the spread of a

Table 1

**Investment in certain production branches of mass communication and by consumers in the United States [million dollars]**

	Radio broadcasting	TV	Radio- + TV-set manufcr.	Record manufcr.	Total	Consumer investm.*	
	a	b	c	d	e	f	e/f
1958	22.6	55.0	13.3	4.0	94.9	3 100	33
1963	26.6	50.6	30.5	8.7	116.4	4 310	37
1972	57.6	73.8	58.6	16.9	206.9	10 964	53
1975	81.6	146.4	75.2	16.0	318.2	14 836	47
1979	145.2	427.3	165.2	52.3	790.0	20 860	26

\* Receivers, music instruments (including record players and tape recorders), records

Sources: Data on broadcasting organizations from the Annual Reports of the *Federal Communication Commission*. Other data from the appropriate yearbook of the Annual Survey of Manufacturers by the *Bureau of Census*.

medium varies according to social strata, partly as a consequence of the ever repeated investment impulses in the development of new products.

Now, observing the two tendencies cited in the introductory passages of this paper and remembering the periodicity of the appearance of the new media as well as the shortening of their saturation period, the following conclusion is in order:

*Consumer investment demand for those media which have entered the market recently is superimposed on the ever regenerating consumer investment demand for the previous mass media equipment. In other words—assuming all other factors invariant—historically and on the level of national economies, total consumer investment in the mass media shows a pattern of constant growth. Economic recessions and crises, wars and other disturbing circumstances may cause temporal modifications in this trend in single economies, in the long run, but still, logically, the persistence of this trend is to be expected.*

### Some trends in America, West Germany and Hungary

Several factors must be considered when studying the tendencies of consumer investment in mass media. On the one hand, it is obviously difficult to interpret investment figures over time, due to, for instance, changes in the relative values of currencies. On the other hand, consumers have considerable continuous expenses in regards mass communication (subscription and repair fees, spare parts, etc.). The size of these continuous expenses may well influence their investment spendings (on purchasing equipment, etc.) Third, the purchasing power of consumers must also be considered.

Given access to data, the following procedure was carried out: First, it was examined how consumer spendings on mass media related to total

consumer spendings. Then, a closer look was given to investment spendings as percentages of total spendings on mass media. (To rephrase the above conclusion: consumer investment spendings on mass media show an increasing pattern over time as proportions of total spendings.) Appropriate and sufficiently long time series could be put together from statistical publications on the United States, the FRG (the Federal Republic of Germany) and Hungary.<sup>5</sup>

One observation is that *spendings on mass communication as percentages of total consumer spendings display a surprisingly constant or just moderately increasing pattern.*

In the *United States*, this percentage was between 3.2 and 3.5 in the years 1929 through 1931. During the years of the Great Depression, 1932 through 1940, it varied between 2.6 and 2.9. From 1946 through 1968 it ranged between 2.8 and 3.2 without any interpretable trend, notwithstanding the massive spread of television.

We have data for the *FRG* for two family types. In the four-member, middle-income families' spendings on mass media constituted 2.6 through 3.9 percent of total consumer spendings between 1952 and 1982. The growth appears to be significant but one may not exclude the uncertainties of statistical measurement. The data for the 1965—1985 period are more comparable: this set of data shows percentages between 2.9 and 3.9, with a tendency of slight increase since the early seventies on. For the other type of four-member families—that of high-income clerical employees—the appropriate percentages ranged between 3.3 and 3.8 for the period of 1965 through 1985.

In *Hungary*, spendings on mass communication amounted to about 3.2 to 3.8 percent of the total monetary incomes of the population. (For more details see *Table 2.*)

Disregarding temporary fluctuations, *consumer investments in mass media amount to unambiguously in-*



## CONSUMER INVESTMENT IN MASS COMMUNICATION

Table 2

## Consumer spendings on mass communication in Hungary [1960—1984]

YEAR	Total spendings on mass comm.* (million forints)	Total spendings as compared to the population's monetary incomes [%]	Consumer investments as compared to total spendings [%]
1960	2490	3.0	26.6
1961	2812	3.3	30.1
1962	3035	3.4	31.5
1963	3374	3.5	34.4
1964	3964	3.8	38.4
1965	3755	3.5	30.5
1966	4106	3.6	33.6
1967	4409	3.5	32.1
1968	5736	4.3	39.7
1969	5583	3.8	33.9
1970	5984	3.7	37.2
1971	6322	3.6	26.7
1972	6378	3.4	33.2
1973	6614	3.2	31.5
1974	7412	3.3	33.0
1975	8217	3.3	34.2
1976	8799	3.4	35.0
1977	9717	3.4	36.0
1978	10351	3.3	37.0
1979	11943	3.5	36.7
1980	12674	3.4	36.6
1981	14519	3.6	38.4
1982	15121	3.5	37.6
1983	15503	3.3	37.7
1984	16564	n. a.	38.0

\* Excluding maintenance costs of equipment for cultural consumption (e. g. television sets). (Such data are available for the years following 1970 only.) From 1960 through 1972, it includes record purchases by institutions.

Sources: KSH Kultúrstatistikai osztály; A lakosság jövedelme és fogyasztása 1960—1980; Magyar Statisztikai Évkönyv 1965, 1983.

creasing percentages of total spendings on mass media.

In the USA, the proportion of consumer investments added up to 24.6 percent in 1946, raising to 51.6 percent by 1981. FRG data show a much more considerable fluctuation, signalling the differential effects of black-and-white and, subsequently, colour television sets by social strata as well as, most recently, the impact of differential access to home video.

The trend analysis has come up with a tendency of increase here, too. Hungary's case is similar.

No evaluative contents have been attributed to the observation that Hungarian trends have been largely similar to the American and West German ones. The extent of the coincidence of tendencies is thought-provoking but it should be regarded neither an achievement nor a sign of a social problem. It simply signifies

that *Hungarian processes are not specific*. Before going on with any general conclusion, some further remarks are in order to interpreting Hungarian data.

The stability of the percentages of total spendings on mass media is a very remarkable phenomenon. Consider that these data inform about a period when the housing construction and apartment purchase activities and burdens of the population have, as it is commonly known, grown tremendously. Motorization has spread rapidly and real estate purchases along with all the connected investments have also increased, etc. Meanwhile, the domestic supply of receiving and player sets had been rather modest in the period under study. (Significant market impulses may be accounted for only in the last four-five years, following the purchases of black-and-white television sets.—This analysis disregards for private imports which are not reflected in the data.)

The growth of the proportions of consumer investments must be also seen as an outcome of national price policies. (The domestic price of black-and-white television sets was relatively high in comparison to the other socialist countries even in the period of the late seventies.<sup>6</sup> Also, a quite substantial percentage of the price of colour sets has had to do with various taxes.) The state subsidies on numerous mass media products and services have also acted as inflatory factors of investment percentages. Due to these subsidies, consumers have purchased newspapers, movie tickets or (currently, notwithstanding price-rises) television subscription at non-market but, rather, so called political prices.

These brief remarks show that behind the trends of consumer investment in mass media there are underlying economic interrelations which would be worthy of a more thorough analysis since they would enlighten some of the more deeply embedded

aspects of the social complexities of mass communication. It is also obvious that the increase in consumer investment in mass media should be factually documented in much more detail than now, including, for instance, the countries' general economic development levels as well as the capacities of domestic consumer electronics industries, etc. For lack of such research findings, what follows is a mere attempt on hypothetical analysis aiming at showing some comprehensive interrelationships.

### The myth of cheap mass media

It is trivial that the unit prices to be paid *directly* for information in mass communication are either very low or else, such a thing as price may not even exist as with posters or commercial television. This argument has proven very useful in providing legitimacy for the functioning of a given mass media system (its political/ideological apparatus) in a substantially very wide range of social environments. In reality, the cheapness of mass media information is a mere illusion or, so much as it is a fact, it is unfounded to present it as a merit, an advantageous characteristic of mass media.

American commercial television broadcasting is, as they say, a "free lunch": something the viewers "pay for" with their attention to advertisements "only". As if TV-sets were also free, as if the viewers did not even have any other, related expenses<sup>7</sup> or as if advertising costs did not increase the price level of commodities obtained.

Similarly, it is a mere game of figures when Hungarian statisticians<sup>8</sup> list data to demonstrate how much the government budget subsidizes radio and television broadcasting, underlining how little the subscription fees of 60 or 80 forints are. Of course, subsidies are for real, especially in the case of radio broadcasting. Yet, the



Hungarian Television Company had been "profitable from the government budget's point of view"<sup>9</sup> in the period from 1962 through 1982. Truly low subscription fees mask the fact that there are other ways that viewers pay for programmes—when buying advertized goods or services, for instance. (It is quite hard to see the abolishment of radio subscription fees as the most typical example of social welfare measures either.<sup>10</sup>)

In 1983, Hungarian consumers spent a total of 16,300 million forints on mass media. (This figure includes maintenance costs too). This amounted to 884 to 2055 forints per family member thus constituting 2.5 to 4.2 percent of total personal spendings.<sup>11</sup> Now, is this amount much or little? Also, is this question reasonable at all?

One reasoning could argue that mass media spendings per capita are equivalent to 74—97 percent of gasoline expenses by wage earner households or 150 to 200 percent of the sum paid for detergents and personal hygiene. There is, however, a certain arbitrariness to these comparisons and they are not really informative.

On the other hand, it seems pretty unambiguous that *in the national economy, consumers pay for pieces of mass media information at least as much as the total costs of production, distribution and the maintenance and development of related institutions amount to*. In other words, if mass media information is cheap, then it is cheap not only for consumers but also for the broadly conceived productive system.

It is necessary to consider consumer investment in delineating the perspectives<sup>12</sup> of information economy and the comprehensive, global trends of mass media, too.

### **Transnational companies and mass communication**

It is a widely recognized but poorly documented fact that, following World

War II, the development of mass communication has been, to a very considerable degree, the product of research in military communication and information technologies. The adaptation of military research and development results into the civilian sector is a process much more complex than those research could have even attempted to delineate.<sup>13</sup> No matter how sporadic, the available bits of information give a clear indication of the crucial role transnational companies have played in the global transformation of mass communication. This relationship is amply illustrated by the following two examples.

The broadcasting rights of the 1960 Winter Olympic Games (Squaw Valley, California, USA) were obtained by CBS at a mere fifty *thousand* dollars. ABC will pay there hundred and nine *million* dollars for the 1988 Winter Games (Calgary, Canada).<sup>14</sup> ABC is a strong company all right but still, it is not going to be the single financier of the coverage, just like it is not exclusively the television companies' incomes that increase as a result of the revenues from commercials aired by American networks during sports events.

A great percentage of international advertising is handled by transnational advertising agencies. Out of the fifteen greatest firms of this kind, fourteen are American and one is Japanese.<sup>15</sup> There are no Olympic Games without them any more, even though negotiations are held in the name of single television companies and the national and international Olympic Committees. Also, it is these transnational advertising agencies which have made Soccer and Swimming World Championships, Formula One races, important tennis competitions, professional heavyweight boxing matches, etc. available for the television organizations of the world.

It is possible to bring factual evidence to show that massive interest in soccer had formed well before television. Still, the increase in admissions to soccer games as well as the transformation of

the Wimbledon tennis championship into mass entertainment has been, to a considerable degree, the outcome of television coverage. The demand for such pieces of information is determined not only by the offer—the availability of the programmes—but also by the wide scope of continuous consumer investments in mass communication. These investments keep growing, on the other hand, as a consequence of the research/development and marketing activities of transnational manufacturers of equipment as backed by government programmes in the most developed countries. As a matter of fact, this characterizes socialist and non-socialist countries as well.

The scope of equipment whose world market is (or, in the period of the boom, had been) controlled by widely recognized transnational giants ranges from transistor pocket receivers and portable tape recorders through colour television and consumer operated video. Predictions promise the continuation of these trends.

The total West-European market of direct broadcast satellites is estimated to reach about 26,000 million dollars by the turn of the century.<sup>16</sup> 85 percent of this is expected to be realized in consumer demand for receiving dishes. Predictions cite a 3,000 to 5,000 million dollar market for cable television in Western Europe from the year 1990 on.<sup>17</sup> Consumer spending is estimated at five times the costs of traditional television in England while consumer investment costs per family are calculated around 1350 DMarks in the FRG.<sup>18</sup>

It is neither the domestic markets of the countries involved nor the EEC market per se but, much rather, the whole capitalist world market that the joint industrial consortium for launching the French and West German direct broadcast satellite regards as its target territory. Neither do the projects aimed at providing cable service to a

good 50 percent of England's population consider only the domestic market of the Isles: it is the international market that these projects keep their eyes on. Now, how should the valid and relevant questions be phrased in this respect?

Obviously, the reliability of the actual figures of the estimates may be questioned and the sources of a future abundance in programmes are just as unknown. The consumers' *present* interest and willingness to invest is minute and, at the moment, financial circles tend to be reserved rather than enthusiastic. Still, the trend is firm. Development, investment and experimental programmes are more and more widespread, some of the pioneering entrepreneurs make even profits and the West-European governments strongly, at times aggressively, support the initial steps towards a future characterized by the cable and direct broadcast satellites.

Simultaneously, a shared network, a new infrastructure of economy and culture is being woven in the infinitely numerous consumption-acts related to mass communication. Visible and still unrecognized threads interconnect individual programme viewing decisions to the global economic strategies of transnational companies extending beyond the boundaries of nation-states. The careful plans of broadcasting organizations are—either conscious or unconscious—defensive reactions against some pretty directly coercing tendencies of the world market of culture. The survival and endogeneous development of national cultures seem unprotected against the invasion of manufactured signals, detached from any of its national—but not ideological—roots.

A thorough change of research and other paradigms seems necessary so that relevant and valid questions can be posed to the world in this situation.

## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Cf.: Kauko PIETILÄ: Formation of the newspaper: A theory—University of Tampere, 1980 and Joseph FRANK: The Beginnings of the English newspaper—1620—1660—Harvard University Press, 1961.
- <sup>2</sup> On the situation in America see Melvin DeFLEUR: Mass Communication and Social Change, In: J. Tunstall (ed.): Media Sociology, Constable, 1970. On the development in England see James CURRAN: The Impact of Television on the Audience for National Newspapers, In: Tunstall: op. cit. and Brian P. Emmett: The Television and Radio Audience in Britain, In: D. McQuail (ed.): Sociology of Mass Communications, Penguin, 1972.
- <sup>3</sup> There are problems in looking at books as mass media. In this author's opinion, books are in the process of becoming mass media but through the bulk of their history they could not be regarded as such. As a result, they are not considered in this paper's line of thought. A substantial argumentation for this point would be beyond the scope of this paper.
- <sup>4</sup> We are not authorized to publish the investment figures of the Hungarian Television Company so this analysis will be short of a more detailed treatment of annual percentages too.
- <sup>5</sup> Data source for America: *US Bureau of Census: Census of Manufactures, and Annual Survey of Manufactures*; Maxwell E. McCOMBS: *Mass Media in the Marketplace—Journalism Monographs*, August, 1972. Data sources for West Germany: *Statistisches Bundesamt Der Verbrauch in Arbeitnehmerhaushalten*, 1957, W. Kohlhammer, Stuttgart, n. d.; and *Media Perspektiven* 1976/3 and *Daten zur Mediensituation in der Bundesrepublik—1977, 1979, 1981 and 1983* (Appendices for Media Perspektiven).
- <sup>6</sup> Cf. BOKOR, Judit: *Tévé-árak és jövedelmek* (Prices of TV-sets and incomes). Mass Communication Research Centre, Budapest, Tanulmányok 1978.
- <sup>7</sup> Mass communication consumption statistics do not include many such items that consumers are actually charged for. The most obvious one of these is the price of electricity and the batteries, which not only amounts to a pretty nice sum annually but may also constitute a considerable item in the national economy. (Consider the occasional shortages.)
- <sup>8</sup> See for example VARGA, Lajosné: *A kulturális információs tevékenység fejlődése az elmúlt 25 évben Magyarországon, a számok tükrében* (The development of cultural information activities in Hungary in the last 25 years: The mirror of figures), the manuscript of a paper presented at the Seminar on Information Economy, 1985, pp. 21—22. See also: *Magyarország művelődési viszonyai 1960—1982* (Education in Hungary, 1960—1982) Kossuth, 1984, p. 275.
- <sup>9</sup> See KÖVESDI, László: *Mibe kerül a magyar televízió?* (How much does the Hungarian Television cost?) *Jel-Kép* 1985:3. p. 65.
- <sup>10</sup> Op. cit.
- <sup>11</sup> Cf. *KSH Háztartásstatistika 1983* (Household statistics 1983, Central Bureau of Statistics) The smallest sum (with the exclusion of record purchases) occurred in dual income families, the largest one in that of intellectuals. The extreme values of specific spendings were simillar.
- <sup>12</sup> See as a very preliminary attempt: JAKAB, Zoltán: *Tömegkommunikációs fogyasztói beruházások és az információgazdaság* (Investment in mass communication and the Information Economy) Manuscript of a paper presented at the Seminar on Information Economy, 1985.
- <sup>13</sup> On this issue the writings of the following authors are recommended: Herbert I. Schiller, Tapio Varis, Rita Cruise O'Brien, Armand Mattelart and Vincent Mosco. See *Media Perspektiven* 1985/9. p. 681.
- <sup>14</sup> Cf. *Transnational Corporations in Advertising—United Nations Centre on Transnational Corporations*, New York, 1979. See also Tapio Varis: *The Mass Media TNCs: An Overall Review of their Operations and of Control Options. Cooperation and Conflict* 1978/4.

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János Rudas

# T-groups in Mass Communication Organizations

## What is a T-group?

T stands for training, i.e. education, instruction, practice, exercise. A T-group is a specific framework of education, practical ability and self-cognizance development in which learning in the broader sense—i.e. emotional, intellectual and behaviour learning—takes places with the help of the group as a particular medium, relying on the experience and activity of the participants. The T-group differs both in its basic principles and methods from the public educational, professional educational, managerial instructive and course-like forms considered “traditional” in Hungary.

The latter are based on two axioms. On the one hand: learning is an individual process—even if occasionally the class community or the course group have some supporting role. On the other hand: the teacher (lecturer, tutor or instructor) provides knowledge and explains what is the correct attitude owing to his qualification and institutional authority; the pupil (student or participant of the course) pays attention, listens, apperceives and learns. The T-group has radically done away both with the basic principles of individual learning, and the unidirectional flow of information.

No matter how new the principles and methods of the T-group seem to be, certain elements can be discovered in the distant past.

From among the ancient preambles, the peripatetic school of *Aristotle* and

the dialogues of *Socrates* can be mentioned. In modern age, Rousseau placed the development of the individual's creative abilities and knowledge based on one's own experiences into the focus of his educational theory instead of the one-sided interference and pressure by the teacher.

The recognition of the personality developing role of the group appeared in a few initial solutions at the beginning of our century: *J. Pratt* treated tubercular patients with school class methods in the United States. *J. Moreno* set up children's drama groups in Vienna. In the 1920s, *A. S. Makarenko* in the Ukraine and *A. S. Neill* in Britain tried to revolutionize pedagogic practice. In the 1930s, group psychotherapy appeared in psychiatry in several European countries and in North America. Within this, *J. Moreno* set up the system of psychodrama. The “human relations” trend that started to unfold at that time in American industry also drew attention to the groups. The development of group psychotherapeutical methods gained a major impetus during the war.

However, the mass development of the actual T-groups can be traced back to the post-Second World War years. In 1946, the state of Connecticut, on the East Coast, entrusted *Kurt Lewin* and his group to elaborate an educational programme for leading officials to handle racial and ethnic problems. The company managers involved in the workshop activity met in the mornings and discussed their experiences

brought from home and their workplace in small groups, then every evening the team of social psychologists and pedagogues evaluated the experiences of the morning sessions. Soon the participants also joined the evening sessions, where they received a feed-back concerning their behaviour and its effect on their problems. Lewin and his team realized that an important educational method connected with human relations had evolved during the course.

This training group became the start of the T-groups formed in later decades. The National Training Laboratory set up in 1947 in Bethel, in the state of Maine, is a still operating organization of T-groups. It was under its guidance that the observation of group processes and group dynamics and later the application of the results in T-groups in order to develop personal and managerial abilities were started. This type of self-cognizance group grew to a mass extent in the United States, later in other countries as well, both in local communities and within company and organizational structures.

The T-groups enriched themselves with numerous older and newer thoughts, theories, scientific and practical knowledge. In the past two decades, two characteristic main lines could be traced:

- a) *encounter groups* usually operating outside the organizations or in local communities, serving the development of self-cognizance and interpersonal relations as well as the improvement of disposition and the reduction of alienation;
- b) *OD (Organizational Development) groups* operating in companies and other organizations aimed at the mobilization of human resources.

These forms of group training are known in Hungary from literature rather than from experience, although similar efforts can also be traced here. The beginning of the spread of T-

groups or similar ventures to an institutional and observable extent can be placed at the end of the 1970s and beginning of the 1980s.

### T-groups in the radio and television

Relying on the results and methods of the T-groups, encounter and OD groups, in 1982 and 1983, we started to organize training groups in Hungarian Radio and Hungarian television, with different aims, and different character, consequently with diversified programmes.

The following types of training were elaborated and accomplished:

- a) training to develop managerial knowledge and abilities (middle level executives);
- b) training aimed at improving cooperation among the different organizational units (production managers of major departments, leading personnel and staff of servicing units);
- c) training to solve the internal problems of a department concerning control and programme policy (leading executives and leading officials of the department);
- d) training to improve self-cognizance and inter-personal relations (optional for the staff);
- e) training to improve self-cognizance, communication and creativity within the framework of reporter instruction (reporters and trainee reporters).

For the types from *a* to *d* we elaborated a programme for 50 hours, accomplished from Monday to Friday in an intensive (marathon) form (the groups meeting from early morning until late at night). Type *e* had a 100 hour programme of extensive solution (3 hours once a week through the entire school year).

What takes place during such training? It is difficult to write about it—

not because any mysterious or puzzling things happen there, but because a dry conceptual description of emotionally strongly sensed events impoverish the rich and multicoloured process of a T-group, and makes it incomprehensible for an outsider. On the other hand, it is also difficult to describe it because a separate programme was elaborated for every group, which was even regularly amended en route—adjusting it to the actual changes of the group. Nevertheless, let us try to somehow describe the events of a training session. Let us take a training session for developing the executives' leading qualities; what happened from Monday to Friday?

On Monday morning a coach appeared at the holiday resort at Gárdony, with twelve medium-level executives of the television and with two trainers. These fourteen persons lived and worked together for five days, isolated from everyday life, work and family. This isolation is one of the most important means of learning: in this way, all of them had the opportunity to concentrate on themselves, on their companions and on the assignments without any interference, and could work more efficiently than in their usual milieu.

When the participants appeared in the room, which for five days provided the venue of their training, they noticed a few circumstances which were different from the usual courses:

- there was no platform for the lecturing teacher or desks for the pupils; the group sat in a circle, with the two trainers amidst;
- the group leaders did not teach in the conventional sense, but introduced and organized the exercises, occasionally embedding the events in a theoretical framework;
- the members of the group became active and the interactions that took place between them during the exercises helped them in learning;

- some of the exercises were video recorded, and the projection provided a mirror for each of them, an opportunity to analyze their behaviour;
- each group member could draw the conclusions and lessons on the basis of his experiences and participation.

These are new methods, lesser known in our tuition system. But what is the aim and content of applying them during the training sessions?

Naturally, the aim and content depend on the composition of the group, on the wish of the "client" and on other factors. Within this, we can stipulate as the most general aim that the T-group should provide an opportunity for the participants to become acquainted with their internal motivations, reveal their behaviour schemes, test new ways of behaviour, develop their relation-creative and relation-maintaining abilities, and make their interpersonal relations more balanced, more efficient in a *riskfree situation*.

Returning to the above mentioned executive developing training, let us illustrate it with a few examples.

One of the group leaders describes a simple mathematical problem, which by an unambiguous but superficial approach, has an easily mistakable solution. Group members reaching different solutions try to find the correct answer in pairs—this is video recorded. The discussion of the exercise and the subsequent analysis of the recording offer various lessons. A part of these are completely individual and concern the individual participants (the next training session is attended by others—the individual lesson in their case is different). However, another part is connected with more general human and managerial behaviour patterns: with the "one-sided" nature of our personal communication, not paying attention to each other, our problem solution strategies of extremely low efficiency, our rigid adherence to our decisions, and so on.

Pondering over the above, it is

perhaps obvious that it would be in vain to point out (and how many times we do point out!) in theoretical treatises, lectures, textbooks or articles that the above behaviour patterns are incorrect and it is desirable to change them. In the majority of cases, words sound empty, but if we personally experience or emotionally sense our behaviour which seems faulty or not efficient enough, if we face its consequences and realize its lessons, then at least there is a greater possibility to try to transform or amend it.

Another example. In group assignment situations, people behave in different ways. This statement does not take us far even if we present typical attitudes in a lecture. But if we create a genuine—yet owing to the character of the T-group not completely genuine—assignment situation for the participants, they experience and understand these attitudes. Consequently, we split the entire group of executives into smaller groups, assigning them the task of building jointly a pretty and stable tower with the help of paper, scissors, a ruler and glue. During the solution of this assignment and during the following discussion, the *group processes* as well as the *individual reactions* became visible. It became clear how the groups could organize their own work themselves, what roles had developed (leader, initiator, and executioner), what original and standard solutions had been born, what type of communication had taken place among the members, how they could influence each other, how they had made their decisions, and what emotional manifestations had taken place, etc.

A third example. Executives usually have their ideas about the particularities of the *leading role*, and about the qualities of a good and efficient manager. But as it is illustrated by numerous examples, they can only refer these ideas onto themselves with a strong distortion, their executive ego image is not completely realistic. During the training session—with var-

ious techniques which cannot be described in detail here—we can illustrate those courses in which the executives can analyze, survey and give a theoretical framework to their own activity and role solutions with the help of their group companions. Following this, they are able to control their leading behaviour and find the way to increase its efficiency.

These examples only serve to make the work process of our T-groups more understandable. We could have listed other examples from the T-groups of the reporter studio or the cooperating organizational units, as well as the self-cognizant training of the optional participants, or another managerial ability developing training session, since—as it was pointed out—an infinite number of programme versions exist.

### Further opportunities

Since it became independent on January 1, 1985, the Mass Communication Research Centre has wanted to participate more actively than before in satisfying the internal training and educational demands of the institutional system of mass communications and in mobilizing personnel resources not only in the radio and television, but also in the newspaper and magazine publishing companies. Let us list those important areas where we can utilize our knowledge gained from the several-decade-long international practice of T-groups and our several-year-long domestic experiences.

1. *Creativity development.* Today it is a scientifically confirmed thesis that the increase and renewal of the economy, culture and the whole of society require not so much people of exceptional intellect, high IQ or extraordinary abilities as creative minds. Unfortunately, our entire educational culture (including school and family education) does not assist the development of creative personalities. Therefore, special efforts have to be made in

adulthood for this end. The communication challenge and sharpening competition also increase the need for more creative executives, editors, reporters and other staff in the media. This justifies the organization of specialized creativity developing T-groups.

2. *Self-cognizance and communicational ability development.* We plan to organize T-groups particularly for communicators with this aim. Naturally, the ego image may be important in other jobs too, as well as the development of relations we maintain or wish to establish with others. It is worth becoming acquainted with the methods and channels which can make interpersonal communication as well as the communication necessary for the appropriate fulfilment of the communicator's role more efficient and smoother.

3. *Managerial training and further training.* Although it is the opinion of many that managers hold this post with the grace of God, therefore, they do not need to extend their knowledge and abilities in an organized manner, this is far from being evident for their subordinates. However, managers who are in possession of an appropriate self-criticism also know that they need to perfect and update their profession (for management becomes an increasingly complicated profession). It is a major advantage of the application of T-groups that they free the experienced managers from their justified scruples: namely, that clever or argumentative lecturers teach them life alien principles, or explain sterile rules. It cannot be a coincidence that all over the country, managers of various levels who had previously made justified reservations, later became enthusiastic supporters of the T-groups. Naturally, we cannot undertake all the assignments in the training of managers (the training of cadre replacements) ranging from narrow professional issues to the broadest philosophical problems. Nev-

ertheless, we can undertake to extend the knowledge, the abilities and personality features of practising or future managers—with the help of their individual experiences and group effect—which are indispensable for the guidance of people and for the efficient maintenance of relations with other people (staff, colleagues, bosses, clients and the public).

4. *Organization development.* It does not mean that the T-groups or the earlier mentioned OD groups should undertake organizational activities. But it means that with the specific system of the means, principles and methods described earlier, they can mobilize the energy of the leaders and other staff of organizations and organizational units to ensure more efficient, higher standard, and more resultful operation. Although certain problem solutions regarded as more simple also belong here (for example, the amendment of the incentive system and the settlement of the relationship between organizational units), the organization development is usually a longer process which starts with preparatory T-groups, and continues with problem solving and organization developing teams, i. e. with consultative activity.

\* \* \*

The T-group is one of the major "inventions" of the 20th century. It is not a panacea, not a remedy for every wound, and it cannot be expected to solve all the difficulties of mass communication. But in certain areas, it is excellent to carry out certain tasks, as it was indicated by the favourable experiences of numerous Hungarian industrial and commercial organizations. Thus, it is worth extending its sphere of activity in the domestic mass communication organizations.



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# Psychoanalysis and Mass Communication

*Conversation with Psychiatrist Dr. Béla Buda*

—*Electronic mass communication, namely the radio and the television are clear-cut figures in our everyday life. Has the modern science of psychoanalysis anything to say in connection with this?*

—Naturally, it has. The means revealed through psychoanalysis can increase, for example, the efficiency of programmes. Through their use, the influence over the listeners or viewers becomes even more powerful in the interest of some suggested target and the programmes become more convincing. In this way, both parties participating in communication can gain something. Viewers or listeners understand more from their own intellectual motivations and can more securely control their emotions evoked by the various programmes; on the other hand, the management of the mass communicational institutions is able to understand more from the thoughts of their public.

—*If we separate the traditional, the written mass media (e. g. journalism) from the electronic mass media (radio and television), where does psychoanalysis see the decisive difference between them?*

—In the fact that both in the radio and television communication is always depicted by persons. In the written and printed press, even if the author's name appears at the end of an article, these works always reflect institutional opinions and standpoints, in a well edited and purified form. However, in the electronic mass media everything is said by a genuine person, even the text

on the prompter. The "consumer" of the programme gains a lot of foothold from this. Already the emphasis and the text modulation reflect the internal relationship of the speaker to his own text. The listener can also recognize stumblings, hesitancy or concealed contradictions from the melody of the recital. The non-verbal concomitants of human speech—which we call meta-communication—, for example, the emphasis, the melody of speech or tiny gestures and movements—are extremely loquacious for the observing ears and eyes. It is particularly the varying colour of the human voice that makes a difference between the more objective tone of the commentaries and the elevated style of literary programmes in the broadcasts. Viewers or listeners observing it in an analytical manner can glance into the internal world of programmes to a greater depth and in a more critical manner, can judge the output in a more detailed way and the educated audience is made aware of the metacommunication always accompanying electronic communication by the analytical outlook.

—*Would you say that viewers or listeners familiar with psychoanalysis listen to the radio or watch the television in a more clever or critical manner, or could we say more intelligently?*

—In my opinion—certainly. By all means they understand more from the psychic and conscious event that occurs between them and mass communication. If one is only familiar with the psychoanalytical outlook as far as it

can be expected from our present educated public, one can already more consciously sense one's own reactions in connection with a programme. In fact the programmes are always reflected through the internal vibrations and emotional relations of the listeners or viewers. Those who are aware of this can formulate more unambiguously why they are captivated by a topic or why they refute another, why a reporter or presenter is attractive or antipathic. The person who is able to understand his own psychic reactions in the process of mass communication, simultaneously becomes more protected against the intentions of manipulations, because the effect elements of the programmes reach him as an independent and autonomous being.

*—What you have said is practically included in general psychology, which is in itself able to provide a type of psychological practice for viewers and listeners. I don't feel precisely where psychoanalysis and depth psychology have a role in this.*

—The trends of psychoanalysis put the emphasis on the aspect of "empathy". They believe that the viewers and listeners try to feel as if they were in the same situation and had the same problems as the mass communication participant and their thoughts and impulses emerge in this way. It is also known that psychoanalysis drew attention to the unconscious components of the human psyche. Both in the person appearing in the mass communication programme and in the viewers or listeners of the programme, unconscious momentums operate that at first glance seem to be irrational, and the operation of the unconscious strongly influences the output, and on the other hand, the receptivity and judgement of the audience. It was also revealed by psychoanalysis that illusions, desires and emotions do not operate isolated, but create systems of dynamic effect. This dynamics is also manifested in the concealed dia-

logue between the radio and the listeners or between the television and the viewers. It is undoubtedly true that modern general psychology already formulated a good deal of what is also part of analytical psychology. But at the same time, the achievements of psychoanalysis became organic parts of modern socio-psychology. Today, the borders between the various trends are no longer rigid. For example, every modern school of psychology recognized that the mass communicational programmes contain a type of imperative, influencing message. However, the character of the messages is mostly composed from concealed, namely, unconscious momentums. Therefore, only the analysis of the unconscious can untie their meaning. I have to add something to all this. Present literature, theatre or films do not consciously apply an analytical outlook in their productions. In fact the problems in the life of our era include those characteristic emotional contradictions, impulse transmissional relations and unconscious questions which analysis attempted for the first time and still in the most effective manner to make understandable. Only to list a few examples, the dramas of Arthur Miller, the films of Ingmar Bergman and Woody Allen's acting points could hardly be understood without analytical knowledge. Today, all this inseparably belongs to the psychology of the modern viewer and listener.

*—Perhaps the most important stage in the psychoanalytical notion is the discovery and interpretation of the unconscious in the human psyche. The unconscious is what we are not aware of, nevertheless, it influences us in our emotions and decisions, whether we are producers or programme "consumers". We consciously determine the production of a programme, or consciously pick out from the paper which programme we want to hear, nevertheless, it is possible that our action was motivated by the unconscious. Don't we clash with a wall, when we try to penetrate the unconscious?*

—There is no impermeable layer on the border of the conscious and the unconscious, such as clay in the earth. Between the two, there is a broad band of no-man's-land and traffic is very dense through it. Only the customary road regulations are no longer valid in this band. This border is not immobile, and several of the contents of the unconscious can be made conscious. Our everyday life is continuously full of a process of increasing awareness. At the same time, suppression starts operating in the emotionally delicate phases; psychic repelling mechanisms prevent the emergence of certain unconscious contents. Thus, a type of "frontier guards" are stationed at certain points.

—*You mentioned the existence of the suppressive and preventive mechanisms guarding the unconscious contents which are "delicate". It is also mentioned with regard to various mass communication institutions that an instinctive deterrent mechanism exists in them with regard to some delicate themes. Can we compare this institutional deterrent mechanism in a metaphoric sense with the similar mechanisms operating in the human psyche?*

—Scientific thinking is not happy about such analogical transmissions. Nevertheless, modestly and with the necessary caution, this translation can be carried out. After all, specialists who are researching the Freud oeuvre indicated that the original psycho-analytical contents emerged from metaphors relying on existing social phenomena. For example, the oppressive and suppressive state mechanism and method of operation of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy provided the complete sample of the first analytic personality image for Freud, this is why he called the suppressive mechanism of the psyche censor and formulated that arts, dreams and jokes outwitted the alertness of the censor with the use of symbolic forms.

With minor or major reservations, one obviously can translate these

terms and partly they are valid in describing the operation of certain institutions. Delicate themes which should take place in the foreground of the psyche emerge in any mass communicational institution of the world, but because they are accompanied by uncomfotableness, they are pushed back into the unconscious, notwithstanding how great an interest they could evoke otherwise. In this relationship, psychoanalysis again has something to say. We know that the real damage of suppression in the human psyche is not only that it does not permit certain unpleasant topics to become conscious, but it also oppresses the associative threads which lead to them. Most probably, the mass communicational institution policy operates in a similar manner. Returning to the previous question, I have mentioned that the border between the conscious and the unconscious is very "fluid", very mobile. The mass media are also able to influence this mobility. Examples, pictures, connections, and models flow in a dense current from various programmes, and if the individual looks into himself and observes the reflected events, then this leads to the understanding of numerous formerly unconscious psychic contents, and it may help him to become aware of them.

—*Psychoanalysis drew attention—exactly in connection with suppressions—to the psychological significance of sexuality.*

—Naturally, a lot of "sex" is contained in the different programmes, and even in the conscious arsenal of mass communicational techniques. The attraction of sexuality has been used for a long time to increase interest in the programmes and it became one of the most effective means in e.g. television advertisement techniques. The mass media almost automatically, unconsciously manipulate our instincts to attract people to the set and "sell" them certain programmes.

—*Undoubtedly, psychoanalysis and depth psychology can put effective means into the hands of programme producers. Does not this present the danger that in this way the opportunity of manipulation increases and the viewers or listeners become more defenseless against the effect of the mass media?*

—It is true that radio and television have a strong influence on social consciousness. It was already raised decades ago that if modern mass communication was armed with psychological weapons, it might become the producer, moreover the guarantee of an over-regulated "Orwellian" society. In the 1950s, Vance Packard indicated how frequently advertising drew from the arsenal of psychoanalysis in order to evoke a motivation and desire in the unconscious of the "consumer", because in such packaging anything could be more successfully sold, whether it was an idea or a commodity. One could list a lot of examples, when mass communication sells thoughts and ideas aimed at the unconscious ranging from the radio technique of the American war bonds sales campaigns, to TV programmes accompanying election campaigns.

I don't want to underestimate the dangers of manipulation, but in my opinion it would be incorrect to overestimate them. In reality, this type of direct manipulative intention can be enforced in very few types of programmes.

—*How far are programme producers, namely, radio and television reporters and editors interested in getting more thoroughly acquainted with the achievements of modern psychoanalysis?*

—If they can utilize the knowledge gained about it, they can simply make better programmes. They can more easily attract the viewers and listeners, because they can more consciously influence the interest stemming from the unconscious. We can observe this; we have the radio or the television on just as a background sound, when suddenly something catch-

es our attention. We have to stop what we are doing, and we have to pay more attention, switching into the circuit of the programme. Most of such "hooks" touch upon emotions in our unconscious. Nevertheless, this is useful to the viewers or listeners. Good programmes evoke emotions, and emotions strive to become conscious, even in those who do not possess considerable psychoanalytical knowledge. When you have emotions, you feel obliged to speak about them. This is the secret why next day people so eagerly discuss a well produced programme.

Mass communication is a two- or multistaged process, and if we cannot get rid of a thing, it again ripples through us, bringing a large amount of unnoticed knowledge to the surface. The more conscious stage protects us from manipulation. I believe that power relations are equalized here in the same form as in military technology. Offensive weapons develop the means of defense.

—*We have again come to the question of manipulation. Do you think that the mass media feel a great temptation to use manipulation?*

—No, I don't believe that. Not one of the mass communicational institutions of the world would undertake manipulation with a clear conscience. It follows from the structural particularities that they are unable to take a real risk, they do not dare to touch upon the slippery means necessary for manipulation. In fact if they wanted to use manipulation in a really effective way, they should also accept the aspects and thinking of the stratum they want to influence. However, in this way, the danger of misunderstanding increases; it may happen that people belonging to another social stratum say: the television and the radio also represent such misconceptions. In such a case, the credibility of the institution would suffer.

Despite all appearances, mass communication is necessarily conservative. We already spoke about suppression. Well, such fears operate suppression and prevention in the mass communication institutions. We are more or less all aware of what type of programmes would be effective for young people. They should go into the search of young people for sensation, into their deviations, and should accept their habits and rhythm of life. However, such programmes clash with moral barriers the adult society does not dare to undertake and they usually stumble at the end, even the preaching cannot be omitted. The mass communication forums have no genuine opportunity to undertake ventures of uncertain outcome. And this is not only so in Hungary, but—for other reasons—the situation is similar for example in the United States. In the US, the mechanism is halted by the interest of the advertisers. When their ratings increase, they proceed

for a time together with the mass communication institution. However, when parallel to the great interest, the aversion of the audience also increases, and the appreciation index drops, the advertisers immediately march out from the programme. This functions as the same means of regulation as administrative control in our case.

In every point of the world, mass communication is an extremely exciting community game, and in my opinion psychoanalysis and depth psychology are able to switch more playing aspects of a new type into this game. They can help both the opinion leaders and the broader audiences understand the programmes and ourselves in a better and more conscious way, and with this they can facilitate the intellectual clarification and the solution of mental hygiene problems of modern societies.

**Endre T. Rózsa**

## In Heaven as It Is on Earth

### *Opinions on the International Situation and Space Armaments\**

One or two months after the arms limitation talks, public opinion judged somewhat more favourably the chances of safeguarding peace than in previous years. The majority of the population were badly informed on the present state of space armaments, while their evaluation of space research had changed fundamentally as compared to opinions surveyed five years ago.

#### Tension did not grow

In spring 1985, the great majority of the Hungarian population, 81 percent considered that there were armed conflicts or clashes in the world which threatened world peace. Again, the opposition between the two social systems and the two superpowers and the behaviour of the United States and western countries were considered as the principle danger threatening war. At the same time, the majority estimated that international tension had not increased: from spring 1984 to early 1985 the ratio of those who said that the chances of the outbreak of a world war had grown declined from 55 to 38 percent, while the ratio of those who said that these chances had remained unchanged increased from 24 to 39 percent. The fact that East-West relations did not deteriorate last year was seen by some of those inter-

viewed as an improvement from the point of view of the situation of Hungary. In this same period, the ratio of those who thought there were certain countries which endangered peace and security in Hungary declined from 37 to 26 percent.

In early 1985, just as in the two previous years, the public considered that among the relationships between the Soviet Union, the United States and China, Soviet—American relations were the worst and Chinese—American the best. At the same time, the relationship between Moscow and Washington was thought to be somewhat better than in previous years, while judgement on the other two relationships did not change. The relationships between Eastern and Western European countries were found to be the same as Chinese—American connections, i.e. better than Soviet—American relations.\*\* In response to the

\* The poll was carried out in May 1985 on a sample of 1,000 representing the adult population of the country.

\*\* In spring 1985, the respondents assessed the mentioned relationships by marking them on a scale of 0 to 5. Soviet—American relationships received an average of 2.69, Soviet—Chinese relationships 2.97, Chinese—American relations 3.24 and East West relationships in Europe 3.26.

question as to how relationships between socialist and western countries had developed in recent years, half of the respondents answered that they had improved and only one-tenth spoke of a deterioration. Similarly to previous surveys, those who perceived improvement were thinking of the increase in political, economic and cultural contacts.

The somewhat more favourable evaluation of the international situation was also reflected by a more optimistic opinion on the prospects for disarmament: from the spring of 1984 to May 1985 the ratio of those who feared an accelerating arms race in the next five years declined from 30 to 26 percent, while the ratio of those who expected the present situation to be maintained increased from 43 to 48 percent. As to the following ten or twenty years, those interviewed had said in earlier surveys that in these periods partial disarmament would be reached and there was no change in the judgement here.

### **A nuclear war may break out more easily**

According to the majority, it is not too probable that in the next decades a war will break out between socialist and western countries. However, this general opinion covers considerable differences, depending on whether people were speaking of a conventional or a nuclear war: 65 percent said that a conventional war certainly would not break out, but only 43 percent held this opinion regarding nuclear war. Thus people are much more conscious of the danger of nuclear war, probably

thinking that an atomic war can more easily begin by accident.

The American and the Soviet governments were judged radically differently from the point view of doing everything possible in order to prevent nuclear war: the great majority said that the former did not do everything to prevent a nuclear disaster (70 percent) and the latter did everything possible in this respect (78 percent). However, the respondents with higher education judged both superpowers more unfavourably here than the less educated did: 88 percent of the interviewees with tertiary education considered American efforts insufficient and only 65 percent considered Soviet efforts sufficient. As to the Hungarian government, 92 percent said that it did everything in order to prevent a nuclear war, and there were no considerable differences between the answers of respondents of higher or lower education.\* It must be added, however, that most people (57 percent) thought that the world situation depended entirely on the politics of the superpowers, and only 34 percent believed that countries as small as Hungary could influence the political situation in the world.

The great majority of those interviewed said about people living in western and in socialist countries that they could do something for peace (75 and 73 percent). Among the opportunities in western countries participation in demonstrations was particularly stressed. In terms of the socialist countries, also participation in protest actions was mentioned—even if much less frequently—in the first place, work and the construction of socialism in the second.

\* A study carried out in 1980 in a Finnish industrial city has revealed that 14 percent of the interviewees said that the American government did everything it could in order to prevent a nuclear disaster; with respect to the Soviet administration 26 percent, and the Finnish government 64 percent had the same opinion.

**Space armaments already exist**

According to the findings of the study, the great majority, 83 percent of the people interviewed had heard of space armaments and most of them are convinced that these arms already exist; not only those belonging to the United States, but also in the Soviet Union. Of respondents, 70 percent (58 percent of the total sample) said that the Americans already had space weapons and 60 percent (50 percent of the total sample) believed that the Soviets possessed such weapons. These data show that in their perception of space research, a considerable proportion of the population considers launchers as space weapons, and consequently thinks that the countries engaged in space research already have space weapons. At the same time the fact that the United States was considered a space military power by more than those who saw the Soviet Union as such reflects the impact of the propaganda against the US star wars programme. The ratio of those who believed that the Americans had space weapons increased with education, reaching a peak with those with secondary education; the same could be observed among those who believed the same of the Soviets, the peak being among those who had completed elementary school studies.

The difference in assessments of American and the Soviet policy regarding space arms was also reflected by other data. 76 percent of those respondents who knew that the United States had no space weapons said that the Americans wanted to develop these and only 3 percent answered that the US would carry out the space arms programme only if it could not reach an agreement with the other party. In the case of the Soviet Union these ratios were 43 and 21 percent.

Of even greater importance is the fact that while 52 percent said that the American space arms—whether they believed these already existed or were only planned—were offensive and only

10 percent considered them to be defensive, Soviet space arms were considered offensive by 14 percent and defensive by 41 percent.

American plans for space weapons contributed to the change that took place in the evaluation of space research competition between the two super-powers over the last five years. In 1980, in a public opinion poll carried out on the occasion of the space flight of the Hungarian astronaut, 66 percent of the interviewees said that space research was more advanced in the Soviet Union; 12 percent had the opinion that the two countries were running level and only 5 percent believed that the United States had left the USSR behind. In the present survey, opinions were totally divided: 28 percent of those asked considered Soviet space research to be more developed, 25 percent held the American effort to be so and 30 percent thought that neither had got ahead of the other. The same changes can be observed in opinions on which country space research will be more developed in within 10 years.

The acceleration of the arms race, however, had the greatest impact on the evaluation of space research itself. In 1980 the majority of those interviewed accepted the statements stressing the usefulness of space research and rejected those which emphasized that it was dangerous or unnecessary. In 1985 people agreed with the favourable statements in a considerably smaller proportion, and—with one exception—accepted the unfavourable ones to a much greater extent. The most characteristic change took place in judging whether space research is peaceful or military in character: from 1980 to 1985 the ratio of those who accepted the statement that “space research contributed to the peaceful coexistence of nations” fell from 78 to 43 percent, while the ratio of those who agreed that “space research developed military technology and increased the danger of war” grew from 32 to 62 percent. Apart from this, it was mostly the beneficial



results of space research which the interviewees refused to believe: in the same period the ratio of those who thought that the results of space research contributed to the welfare of mankind declined from 69 to 42 percent while the ratio of those who considered that spending on space research should not be permitted as long as millions suffer from famine on Earth increased from 34 to 67 percent. Doubts regarding the usefulness of space experiments also

damaged the scientific reputation of space research: while in 1980, 88 percent of the population thought that space research had primarily a scientific value, in 1985 only 70 percent took this position, and a still smaller ratio (31 and 29 percent) agreed that space research did not produce results that could be used in everyday life.

Imre Dobossy—Guy Lázár

## Which Is More Capable?

### *Public Opinion on the Situation of Socialist and Western Countries*

In recent years the Mass Communication Research Center has carried out various surveys on what public identifies as the problems socialist and western countries have had to face and to what extent they have been able to solve them. The most important findings of this research series are presented below.

At the beginning of the eighties Hungarian public opinion, which up to then had only heard of the economic crisis affecting western countries, was confronted with the fact that Poland was being shaken by a crisis more acute than ever before and which extended to all spheres of life. At the same time there were serious economic problems in other countries of Eastern Europe as well, reflected in difficulties of supply. This in itself may have caused an anxiety which may have been strengthened by the fact that by then certain measures limiting consumption had been taken in Hungary too.

In addition, since in Poland the economic crisis had shaken the political system, people might also believe that the socialist countries were less able to cope with their problems than western countries. This opinion might also have been promoted by the media in the fifties and sixties, i.e. during the great economic boom, since they had emphasized in their presentation of life in western countries those phenomena that illustrated the thesis on the general crisis of capitalism. Because of this it could well have happened that in the seventies, when the media provided information on a real economic crisis,

they did so ineffectively and people believed the situation in western countries to be better than it actually was.

In these circumstances four studies were carried out to discover the extent people were aware of the nature of the problems affecting socialist and western countries, and, what is perhaps even more important, how they judged the achievements of the two systems and their ability to cope with their problems. The first survey on the situation of socialist and western countries was taken among the adult population in the spring of 1982. Since then it has been repeated on three occasions: in spring and autumn 1983 and in autumn 1984.\* In the following the most important trends emerging from the four surveys are presented.

#### Which countries are affected?

The research series revealed that public opinion was less aware of the problems of western countries than of those in the socialist states; at least this is shown by the fact that during the surveys 67—75 percent of the interviewees said there were some western countries which had to face serious problems, while 82—84 percent said the same of socialist countries. These ratios also reveal that judgement on capitalist countries was less stable than that on socialist countries. In spring 1982, 67 percent of those interviewed said there were western countries which had to face serious problems. By 1983 this ratio had risen to 74—75 percent, and by 1984 it had declined to 70 percent. However, in the responses referring to socialist countries the difference was only 1—2 percent.

Respondents with a higher education said more frequently that of both western and socialist countries, some faced serious problems. The greatest

difference was observed between the answers of those who had not completed even elementary school and those with elementary education; this was mostly due to the fact that one-third to one-fourth of the former could take no position on the matter. Party members had a better knowledge of the situation in western and socialist countries— independently of their level of education—than non-party people did.

Answering the question which western countries have serious problems, four or five countries were generally listed, so that even the most frequently mentioned country was named by less than one-third of the respondents. The FRG was mentioned by 20—31 percent, the United States by 13—29 percent, Italy by 14—22 percent, Britain by 14—21 percent, and France by 11—19 percent. A further 5—8 percent referred to Spain, 1—3 percent to Portugal and 1—2 percent to Greece. Of the socialist countries, either only Poland or Poland and Rumania were mentioned, and thus their occurrence in lists was much higher than that of other countries. Poland was named by 68—76 percent of the interviewees and Rumania by 37—48 percent. These were followed by Yugoslavia with 6—16 percent, the Soviet Union with 3—7 percent and Hungary with 2—7 percent. The image emerging from the answers therefore shows that the crisis phenomena in the West affect more countries but to a lesser extent, which is just the opposite in responses on the socialist countries.

From spring 1982 to autumn 1983 the ratio of Poland within all mentions gradually decreased (from 76 to 68 percent), while that of Rumania constantly increased (from 37 to 48 percent) up to autumn 1984. There were strong fluctuations in the ratios of the FRG, the United States and Britain, while Italy, France and Yugoslavia were mentioned to the same proportions over a longer period.

\* The surveys were taken on national representative samples of 1,000.

### Economics and politics in the East and in the West

The differences in judging the situation of western and socialist countries proved even greater when the interviewees spoke of the problems each country had to face. Speaking about both western and socialist countries they mentioned two or three times as many economic as social or political problems; however, both the economic and the social or political problems were different in the case of the two groups of countries.

Of the economic problems of western countries, mostly unemployment and economic insecurity were mentioned (58—65 percent). In comparison, the economy itself and the economic crisis were referred to infrequently (13—21 percent) and other economic problems—inflation and high prices, the arms race, underdevelopment, poverty and energy shortages—even less frequently. The dominance of unemployment in the answers is probably due not only to the importance attached to full employment but also to the fact that the interviewees who had a lesser knowledge on the problems of capitalist countries selected that problem which the media had most emphasized in connection with these countries. As a consequence of the high rate of mentioning unemployment, the only difference in listing the problems of certain western countries was that the economic burdens concerning the arms race were mentioned more frequently with respect to the United States, the FRG and Britain (in the case of the US these even took precedence over the economic situation) while underdevelopment was referred to more often in the case of Italy and Spain.

Economic hardships in socialist countries were dominated by two problems: the economy itself (26—31 percent) and supply difficulties (30—39 percent). Underdevelopment or poverty (8—13 percent) as well as foreign debts (7—11 percent) were much smaller

while inflation and high prices, the low level of industrial and agricultural production, energy shortages, unemployment and economic insecurity, and the economic burden of the arms race were mentioned even less frequently. The predominance of supply difficulties and the economy was due to the fact that in relation to Poland and Rumania it was usually these problems that were mentioned. In the case of Poland the economy and supply had practically the same ratio of mentioning; in the case of Rumania supply stood first and the economic situation second. Similarly, these problems took the first two places in the case of Czechoslovakia but second and third place with respect to the USSR and Yugoslavia. In terms of Hungary only the economy appeared at the top of the list.

The mentioning of social and political problems also reflected that people's views on the problems of western countries were not as clear as they were on the hardships socialist countries had to face. Among the social/political problems affecting western countries, there was no single one which the interviewees mentioned in high proportions on every occasion. Depending on events in the various countries, different problems came into the foreground; hence only the average of the data received during the four surveys shows that among the social/political problems of the West terrorism took first place (9—38 percent), government crises the second (6—31 percent), strikes the third (3—40 percent), war the fourth (4—21 percent) and—with the same ratio of mentioning—crime and racial or minority problems the fifth and the sixth (6—10 percent in both cases). Terrorism was most frequently referred to in the case of Italy and Spain, government crises with respect to Italy, strikes and wars with respect to Britain. Crime was mentioned most frequently also in the case of Italy and racial/ethnic oppression with respect to the United States.

Among the social/political problems

of socialist countries the political situation and lack of social consensus appeared in outstanding proportions (37—48 percent). Strikes had a much less significant role (15—23 percent), and strikes, political oppression—personality cult and attempts to overthrow the regime were mentioned to an even less extent (8—12, 3—8 and 3—9 percent, respectively). The political situation was mentioned mostly in connection with Poland, but it was rather frequent as regards Rumania too. Strikes were only referred to in connection with the Polish events.

### Important and growing problems

In spite of a better knowledge of the difficulties of socialist countries as compared to those of western nations, the achievements of socialist countries were considered to be better in all the four surveys. However, this relative stability covers considerable changes which suggest that the growing awareness of the problems of socialist countries has an ever increasing impact on how the achievements of the two systems are evaluated.

The majority of the interviewees said on each occasion that in the previous years, life in western countries had been characterized by problems and only a minority considered achievements or the totality of problems and achievements as more characteristic. However, from spring 1982 until autumn 1984 the ratio of those who emphasized problems declined somewhat (from 62 to 56 percent) and parallel with this the ratio of those who mentioned the total of problems and achievements increased (from 12 to 18 percent). Therefore at the end of the period examined the achievements of capitalist countries were considered to be slightly better. This change was also reflected by the fact that while in the

first two surveys the more educated interviewees laid greater emphasis on the problems than the less educated did, the last two surveys did not show any difference between the answers of groups differing in their level of education.

Considerably greater changes took place in evaluating the achievements of socialist countries. At the time of the first survey opinions were totally divided on the question whether achievements or problems had been more characteristic of life in socialist countries in previous years: 34 percent of the interviewees mentioned achievements, 36 percent problems and 21 percent referred to both. In the following surveys, however, the ratio of those who stressed achievements gradually declined while the ratio of those who mentioned the totality of achievements and problems increased. Thus at the time of the fourth survey, the largest group was those who considered the problems more characteristic (43 percent) and the second largest group those who referred to the totality of achievements and problems (29 percent). Achievements were stressed by 19 percent of those asked. The more educated interviewees mentioned the problems in much higher proportions on each occasion than the less educated did; thus for example in autumn 1984, 37 percent of those who had not completed their elementary school studies, 40 percent of those with elementary education, 57 percent of those with secondary education and 66 percent of university or college graduates said that in previous years life in socialist countries had been characterized mostly by problems.

However, these findings do not change the fact that the achievements of socialist countries were still considered to be better than those of western countries. The same can be said of the ability of the socialist countries to solve

their problems: while 58—63 percent of the interviewees said that western countries could cope with their problems, 74—80 percent said the same with respect to socialist countries. (This was put only to respondents who considered the problems or the totality of problems and achievements as more characteristic of life in the countries in

question.) However, the ability of the socialist countries to solve their problems was considered less favourable by interviewees with higher education than by those on the lower education levels.

Imre Dobossy—Guy Lázár

## Eight Years Assessed

### *Public Opinion on the Economy and Living Standards*

**“The development of living standards has always interested the broad public and this is especially true now when the government can only defend the standard of living already reached. Of course, this does not mean levelling or stability. Families often find their own standard of living different from what the average data of statistics show . . .”**

The main objective of a thorough and continuous analysis of public feeling on the economy is to permit long-term dynamic analyses which clearly show the factors affecting public opinion both in the short and in the long term. Nor is it unimportant that the main trend of change in public feeling can only thus be perceived. Data registered between the spring of 1975 and that of 1983 show that the main trend in both national and individual judgements was negative, i.e. since 1975 the public feeling on the economy has deteriorated.

#### **The evolution of public opinion**

There are three clearly definable periods in the change of opinions.

1. The period preceding and follow-

ing the 1975 price rise, which lasted until the end of 1978. It was characterized by a pessimism caused by the rise in prices, then a relatively rapidly achieved optimism which had been characteristic before the rise in prices.

2. The period from the end of 1978 to the beginning of 1982. Opinions changed negatively well before the 1979 price adjustment. The adjustment meant the biggest change of the past, basically affecting the living standard of the people (this is why there was much and lively discussion based on information leaked out). This was the worst moment during the eight years in question. Negative opinions were predominant both in judging the country's economic situation and the individual position. By 1980 the public mood on the economy became again more optimistic and stable, but at a

lower level than in the period preceding the price adjustment.

3. The feature of the period since the beginning of 1982 is that opinions have grown considerably more pessimistic, the public feeling has again deteriorated.

The opinions of the present period have been affected by concrete facts like the new housing regulations (especially the rise in rents), the rise in long-distance tariffs, the decrease of the range and extent of travel concessions, and the disorder in supply due to import restrictions introduced in 1982.

### Factors affecting opinion

The feeling and thinking of the public on the economy is determined basically by two factors: by economic propaganda and information available on the one hand and by personal experiences on the other. Our analysis shows that these two factors have different effects on opinion. Propaganda becomes incorporated in the consciousness of people in the form of norms and demands which are often contrary to and even inconsistent with their personal experience and interest. It can also be seen that propaganda has a bigger role in the judgement of the country's economic situation. Individuals and families perceive and evaluate their own situation almost exclusively on the basis of their everyday experience.

In 1981, economic information in the media still centred mainly on the economic results achieved and even in 1982 economic propaganda was based mainly on the results. People considered their situation, however, worse than statistics indicated. While according to statistics, real income increased by about 3 percent even from 1980 to 1982, the population felt a decrease in real income. Consequently, in each period analyzed, people judged the country's and their own financial situation in a very different way. Opinions on the former as a whole were

positive and on the latter negative. (Pessimistic opinions on the country's situation were characteristic only in the period after the price rise in the summer of 1979.)

Opinions on the economic situation were considerably affected by price regulations. Accustomed over decades to stable prices, people have not adjusted themselves to continuous changes in price and very often they believe price movements to be even more considerable than they actually are. Opinions on the price level, changes in prices also have an effect on how other areas contributing to the standard of living are judged.

The earlier defined principles and norms of the social and economic development of socialism also have an effect on opinion. Some of these, however, have become illusory over the past years. The axioms that have become problematic are those according to which socialism automatically ensures the conditions necessary for the economic growth and the steady improvement of the living standard, the socialist economy is free of inflation and prices are stable. Several reflexes in public thinking have lost their validity, they have, however, an effect on opinions.

### On the standard of living

Public opinion polls of the mid-seventies show that a considerable section of the adult population identifies living standards merely with the possession of material goods. Relatively few people included in the concept social and cultural factors or/and the content leisure time.

The first to be mentioned among material goods is housing. This indicates that living standards depend mainly on whether one has a flat of one's own and on the quality of the flat. The majority are satisfied with the mere fact of having a flat and not with its quality. Housing is well known to be a crucial point in living standards;

the shortage of flats causes serious social and individual problems.

In the second half of the seventies and at the beginning of the eighties extra work was a considerable factor in the increase of income. The improvement of the living standard at national level was due in most cases to additional work done after the 8 working hours. International surveys, however, showed even in the seventies that in Hungary the number of hours spent in work was very high. Our analyses show that the reserves inherent in extra work are being exhausted and that probably the small private enterprises will not add to the number of those doing extra work (i.e. to increase the time spent in extra work) but simply restructure only the framework and forms of extra work. The survey made after the 1982 housing regulation gives grounds for similar assumptions. It shows that

the majority of those concerned do not cover their increased rent through additional work but through diminishing their consumption. Today additional work is engaged in more and more to maintain the level achieved.

The judgement of the financial situation of individuals and families shows a considerable synchrony with the real financial situation. Several data in different surveys prove that people judge their own situation, in which the living standard previously achieved and the needs based on this play a role, in a realistic way. This does not mean, however, that everybody having a high standard of living is satisfied or that all of those with a low standard of living are very dissatisfied. One thing can be stated, however, namely that a sense of lack is felt primarily by those living under difficult conditions.

**Katalin Farkas—Judit Pataki**

## **The Economic Situation in Hungary — As Reflected by the Media**

Public opinion along with the results of opinion polls on economic issues are greatly influenced by the way the mass media present economic phenomena. The following article summarizes the 1984 trends in economic reporting.

Continuing a trend that has developed over the past decade, the media paid particular attention to economic life in 1984 as well. The extent of the attention is marked by the fact that in the press and in the electronic media,

51 percent of domestic news and commentary focussed on economic issues, and 42 percent of the information on social issues also brought economic problems to the surface.

The most important change in the

coverage of the economy by the media in 1984 was that which took place after the April session of the Central Committee of the HSWP: the ratio of information on general issues of economic management almost doubled as compared to the previous years. In spite of this, the information on the modernization of economic management only amounted to 6 percent of all the information of economic relevance.

In 1984, as in previous years, the media mainly dealt with industrial and agricultural production (19 and 15 percent, respectively). Production by heavy industry and large industrial companies still received much less coverage than other branches of the economy such as medium or small-scale plants and industrial cooperatives. The computer industry and the use of computer technology came into the foreground both in the press and in the electronic media. Of the agricultural branches, animal husbandry was still underrepresented in comparison with plant production. Vegetable growing—probably owing to consumer price rises—received greater attention.

Foreign trade relations and exports were referred to in some form by 36 percent of the economic pieces. While the media kept stressing the importance of increasing exports in order to improve the balance of payments, they scarcely touched upon the input behind this.

As compared to previous years, the mass media showed less interest in services (8 percent), and much greater attention to the standard of living conditions (9 percent), and the housing problem (4 percent). Concerning this, the necessity for a unitary social policy received greater emphasis.

Small enterprises, although their role was considered favourably, were some-

what less frequently mentioned in 1984 (4 percent), while the development of tourism further increased its ratio (5 percent).

In 1984 as they had done earlier the media formed a favourable overall image about economic life in Hungary: more than twice as much information was published on economic success and achievements as on problems and difficulties, and positive messages predominated over negative ones (80 percent). Within the overall image suggesting economic growth, the mass media considered export achievements, efforts to increase efficiency and the quantitative development of production to be the most favourable. No considerable improvement was seen in the quality of products, and the technological and organizational standards pertaining to production were judged even more severely than in previous years. The pieces concerning living standard and the personal financial opportunities of the population in general also became more pessimistic.

The commentaries on our achievements—as a continuation of the trend emerged in previous years—were dominated by elements of economic efficiency which primarily required a more rational use of existing resources rather than extensive development: initiative, independent decision, competitive spirit, market orientation, good organization, thrift and labour discipline. Economic problems were traced back by the mass media more frequently than in previous years to the lack of capital and our structural deficiencies—apart from the unfavourable changes in world economy.

Tamás Terestyéni



# On the Election Reform

The population knows relatively little about the changes in the election system; most city voters do not know who their representatives are.\*

In May a minority, 46 percent of the population knew that a new law had been passed on the election of council members and representatives to the National Assembly. A considerable part, 38 percent, however, could not tell the difference between the old and the new procedures. For example 40 percent mentioned some of the changes with regard to multiple nominations, but only 7 percent referred to its being mandatory. One fifth formulated the changes only in general terms, claiming that the electoral system had developed and become more democratic. Very few of them volunteered the information that some representatives to the National Assembly would enter elections on a national nomination list (2 percent) and the ratio of those who heard of the national nomination list increased to 17 percent when answering further questions. Despite the low level of information, the majority, 61 percent of the interviewees, considered the changes in the electoral system important; 29 percent did not consider them significant and one tenth had no opinion.

Of respondents, 61 percent knew that the electors could also nominate candidates. In 1980 this ratio stood only at 42 percent. 17 percent mentioned the right of the Patriotic People's Front to nominate. 9 percent mentioned the right to nominate of the county authorities, 7 percent that of the

enterprises, 3 percent that of party committees and 1 percent that of party members.

The nature of the settlement had a considerable effect on the number of people knowing who their sitting council member was. In Budapest 15 percent of voters knew who their council member was; in the rural towns this ratio was 34, in the smaller communities 63 percent. (The national ratio stood at 44 percent.) The number of those having some knowledge of the work of council members was the smallest in the capital and the highest in the communities. The greater part of experience, 65 percent, was obviously positive and 29 percent varied. If elections took place now, 59 percent of the people would vote again for their council members; 12 percent would not do so, 3 percent would vote for them only under certain conditions; 6 percent of them are indifferent to the person of the council member, and 20 percent could not tell how they would act.

Only 11 percent of the population felt they could work as a council member and would accept being elected to that post. Those who would not accept this function referred mainly to their lack of time, to inexperience, to old age and their lack of personal qualities a council member needs in this work.

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\* The poll is based on a national representative sample of one thousand individuals.

73 percent of the voters had heard that people could withdraw their mandate from their council member. But only 2 percent knew that here the consent of one tenth of the voters was sufficient. Generally they thought that such a step could be initiated only by the majority of the voters.

At national level 26 percent of the people knew who their representative to

the National Assembly was. In Budapest this ratio stood at 12 percent, in the rural towns 28 and in the communities 28 percent. Again 39 percent of the voters had some knowledge about the work of the representative and, this knowledge was mainly (in three fourth of the cases) positive.

László Kulcsár—Mária Szurkos

## Are There Forums?

People consider it important that they can express opinions on the issues they are concerned in, but they think they have little opportunity to do so where they work or where they live.

The interviewees considered the free expression of their opinions almost as important as adequate living conditions and job opportunities and considered this even more important than the right to have a say in public affairs. It also shows that they considered the opportunity to express opinions important first of all from the point of view of the improvement of their living and working conditions and not from that of public affairs. At the same time they considered that the right to the free expression of opinion was guaranteed to a lesser extent than that to work, study, education, leisure time and adequate living conditions.

The interviewees engaged in work were more satisfied with the opportunity to express their opinions where they worked than they were with their salaries; they were less satisfied with these opportunities than with their work, the atmosphere in their working place and their managers. The majority,

81 percent of the workers, said that in their place of work there were open forums where they could express their opinions and problems; however only 55 percent considered that it was worth expressing their opinions in these forums. As to a further question, 43 percent answered that in their place of work there were some problems which it was better not to express opinions on. Among these they mentioned the payment and the behaviour of management.

Among the existing forums at places of work the interviewees mentioned the economic and political forums practically to the same extent. As regards the economic forums, they referred mainly to those at the enterprises, i.e. production conferences, etc., rather than those of the smaller units, such as brigades, groups, etc. Among the political forums they mentioned mostly the trade union forums (as expected) and they referred less

frequently to the party forums and even less frequently to the forums of the Young Communist League.

The majority, 72 percent of the workers, were of the opinion that the problems concerning people were dealt with in the workplace conferences; only 47 percent said that they were regularly discussed and according to 42 percent in these discussions there were wide differences in the opinions.

We received a similar picture when analyzing how members of the different social organizations conceived the functioning of their forums.\* The overwhelming majority of the interviewees said that these forums discussed questions concerning people (as to the trade union forums 81 percent, the forums of the YCL 72 percent and the party forums 87 percent were of this opinion). But considerably fewer said

that these questions were regularly discussed (50, 58 and 57 percent) and that in the discussions there were wide differences in the opinions (40, 38 and 57 percent).

People were less satisfied with the opportunity to express their opinions where they lived. In response 61 percent said that there were forums in their places of residence where they could express their opinions and problems. Only 34 percent said that it was worth expressing their opinions in these forums. Those questioned identified forums in their place of residence mainly with the meetings of the settlement, its council, council members with tenants; they mentioned incomparably less frequently the forums of the social organizations.

Guy Lázár—János Tímár

## On Population Growth

**Families with fewer children are considered ideal and the valuation of "large families" has altered, compared to ten years ago.**

The Mass Communication Research Centre and the Research Institute of Population Sciences of the Central Statistical Office have made several national and representative surveys on these topics since the 1974 decisions on population policy. In public opinion polls the question of how many children are considered ideal in a family is always repeated. While ten years ago, according to the poll the average for

the "ideal" number of children was 2.93—2.88 (i.e. close to there, then the official position) today this number stands at only 2.46. According to those questioned, however, young couples are planning to have fewer children. As main reasons they mentioned "low income", "the high cost of living" and the fact that "the accelerated pace of life is a serious obstacle to bringing up several children".

\* We put the questions related to the functioning of the trade union forums only to those trade union members who said that during the last year there had been a meeting of the trade union members at their place of work (71 percent).

The assessment of "large-families" with many children has also altered to a certain extent. The average number of children in large families, earlier at 4.87—4.96, has decreased to 4.76. Even ten years ago only one third, or one fifth of those questioned had a positive opinion of parents with several children (considering them to be fond of their families). Today this ratio stands at 31 percent. Many people think that families with many children are to be found mainly among gipsies (59 percent).

Since population statistics are not known, very few people consider it "very possible" that the population will decrease by the year 2000. This is considered "rather serious" by 39 percent and by 23 percent, "very serious". There are, however, social threats which people consider more imminent and serious, namely increase in delinquency, in alcoholism and in road accidents.

As to population policy, 83 percent

considered that the number of children in the family was a private matter and not the concern of the state; in the opinion of 53 percent, the state should be concerned about the living standard of the people and not the number of children born. Furthermore, 61 percent considered "that young people did not want several children because of financial problems and 39 percent said the allowances for large families were totally inadequate.

The efficacy of official population policy is affected by the force of certain prejudices in public opinion. It is thought-provoking that a rather broad sector, 41—46 percent of the population, considers that the state should not support those irresponsible enough to have many children and that against the "sexual revolution" among the young, stricter moral norms and against divorces stricter legal rules should be introduced.

Edit S. Molnár—Judit Pataki

## Acquiring a Flat

Since the beginning of the 1970s, the Mass Communication Research Center has been regularly surveying opinions on the housing situation. According to the findings of the latest survey, taken in 1984, it has become apparent in public opinion that acquiring a flat requires extremely good financial circumstances.

### Disadvantages and advantages

Only 3 percent of those interviewed said that there were no people who found the difficulties in acquiring a flat greater than the average.

According to the majority, the acquisition of a flat is difficult for financial reasons (50 percent). This is

especially true for people of low income and for those who do not receive any kind of help from their parents or relatives.

Almost the same percentage mentioned certain demographic groups (46 percent). Most often they mentioned young people starting their working and family life; they also

referred to all socially handicapped groups, such as the old, single parents, families with a large number of children, children under state care, the sick, those who live in the country, those immigrating from the countryside to towns, certain professions and gipsies.

A smaller number (18 percent) mentioned as a social disadvantage in acquiring a flat the lack of good relations and working in a place which cannot help its employees in this respect.

According to some, those who cannot acquire a flat have only themselves to blame because they "don't save money" "are not willing to build a house on their own", "are waiting for a flat to fall into their hands", "are too modest", "do not push and shove or cheat".

With the exception of only 2 percent of respondents there is a firm conviction that certain people can acquire a flat more easily.

In the view of 51 percent, factors such as cash in hand, wealth, being a self-employed, help from one's family or one's parents make things much easier. Much fewer people (23 percent) mentioned social status as a determining factor. They referred to certain professions (e.g. miners, doctors, teachers) and most of them included here families with many children. On the basis of their own experiences, they mentioned other groups as well. Some of them said that it was an advantage not to have children or to have only one child, to live in the countryside and to be gipsy.

Of the interviewees 38 percent held the opinion that certain social factors made it much easier to acquire a flat. They referred especially to "pull" as a "social advantage" and also to leading posts and positions, important from the point of view of the political system, such as council employees, members of the party and the Hungarian Young Communist League, em-

ployees of the Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of the Interior, etc.

In the view of 10 percent, personal qualities by which they meant thrift and industriousness on the one hand, and practicalness, aggression and corruption on the other, can also make things easier.

### The beneficiaries

Only a few spoke of the priorities the state has in allocating flats. In fact, 10 percent of the interviewees said that there were "no such priorities" and 14 percent did not know if there were any.

Only 9 percent thought that the state took into consideration the financial situation of those waiting for a flat; they had in mind various things, namely that the state assists those who have undergone some kind of calamity or loss or those who have some savings.

A large number (63 percent) of those interviewed stressed the demographic features of the beneficiaries. Within this group, 52 percent mentioned families with many children or the gipsies. Another 15 percent attributed benefits to social policy, e.g. the assistance to single people, certain professions, manual workers, single parents, children under state care.

Those who think that the state gives preference to people identified as loyal to the socialist system, such as managers, functionaries, employees of the Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of the Interior, those "enjoying protection", take a position from a social aspect. Places of employment which can assist their employees in acquiring a flat mean further social advantages. A considerable number, 46 percent of the interviewees took this position on the grants and benefits given by the state in this respect.

The smallest number of people mentioned "individual" cases such as the priority given to people living in condemned houses or to those who make a personal contribution to the building or renovating of a house, etc.

We can say that in general the interviewees see the difficulty in acquiring a flat as being financial. Although this is not in the least surprising, it deserves mentioning since it is a conviction that has strengthened to a great extent over the past few years. The ratio of those referring to the financial situation, i. e. "cash in hand", "wealth" or the lack of this was in the range of 20 to 30 percent five years ago. Today it is even more obvious that the precondition for acquiring a flat is one's good financial situation and those who are not in this (e.g. people living "only" on their salaries) are in difficulty.

People think that when granting benefits the state does not take into consideration the financial situation of those who need a flat, but simply their demographic and social status; even when the state does, it does not concentrate on the degrees of need, but in keeping with new regulations, on whether the applicant can guarantee the sum necessary for the application.

### Knowledge from here and there

Conclusions from the results can be drawn as to the influence of publicity. A considerable proportion of the answers reflects the fact that many are aware of the method of allocating state rented apartments and the criteria under which the applicant can be entered into the waiting list. It is here that the question of the "degree of need" and "merits" (position, history of the labour movement) arises in relation to the interviewees' opinion on the benefits granted by the state. It is due to the effect of the media that the

population is better informed on the aspects of the "degree of need" (e.g. the allocation of a flat to a family with many children).

It is striking at the same time that the structure of this knowledge has not changed over recent years although the chances of acquiring a flat have considerably changed. This means that social points of view have not been asserted (as against expectations) and several forms whereby private builders are assisted have appeared. These changes practically do not appear in the opinions expressed. Very few people mentioned the access of young people beginning their working lives and family lives to housing, although a considerable ratio of the documents on the problems of housing is devoted to this question. This may be reflected to a smaller extent in mass media. (Sketchy knowledge may also be due to the fact that young couples, starting their careers, can apply for a state-owned apartment only if their income is low or have already a child.)

It is also unfortunate that a large number of people think that most flats are built by the state, or that at least the ratio of flats built by the state and on private initiative is the same.

Of the interviewees 37 percent said that most flats built were rented out by the state, 39 percent said they were privately built and 16 percent considered that the ratios were the same. It was only a majority (62 percent) of graduates who had the opinion that the largest ratio of flats were built on private initiative; even here over one third of this group had only sketchy information on the question.

These results show that the mass media and publicity can only change very slowly the stereotype beliefs arrived at earlier when the positive facts of state housing construction were made the almost exclusive focus of publicity.

This is unfortunate because it causes criticism in some people who think that the state builds many houses and even so there are not enough. One of their ways of reacting to this is to find scapegoats who are responsible for the gap between supply and demand because they "have increasing de-

mands", "do not want to live together with their parents", "have too many children", "divorce", "being old occupy the flats alone", "move from the countryside to towns", etc.

Judit Pataki—Edit S. Molnár

## My Home Is My Castle

### *Opinions on the Role of the Family in Society*

A comparison made between the results of studies carried out in the last twelve years\* shows that people more and more would like to live in families in which the wife stays at home and brings up two children.

The findings of the 1984 survey show that the great majority of the population consider the family to be the centre of their lives. 79 percent of the adult population feel best if they can be with their family (those who feel better at other places, e.g. among friends, relatives, at some place of entertainment or other institutions, are almost without exception single persons, or young people starting to live on their own.) Two-thirds of the interviewees talk about the conflicts concerning their jobs or other problems at home. The rest keep the conflicts to themselves, and only 8 percent of the population have some confidential friend to share their troubles with.

The time-budget is also focussed on the family. One-third of the population considers that the principal value of

leisure time lies in the opportunity to be with their families; more than one-third think its main value is being able to do housework. Other aspects, such as extra work, entertainment or relaxation are less important from this point of view. This suggests that apart from the family, there is hardly any community, activity or objective that people could consider a determinant and acceptable framework of life.

The survey also covered opinions on the role the husband and wife have within the family. It shows traces of "male domination" that more than twice as many think it should be the husband who decides on "important matters" compared to those who believe it concerns the wife (23 and 9 percent, respectively.) Two-thirds emphasize equal rights of decision.

\* The surveys were taken between 1972 and 1984 on samples representing the adult population.

In the past ten years the ratio of those who think it is the wife who should "ensure the intimacy of family life" rose from 20 to 40 percent, approaching the ratio of those who consider it to be the task of both spouses (43 percent). In line with this, the employment of women is generally not seen as a consequence of equality and the accomplishment of personal efforts, but as an economic pressure. The majority are convinced that "most mothers would prefer to stay at home if they could afford to do so" (55 percent). Even more people think "if the husband can keep his family, the wife should stay at home" (60 percent), and the opinion that "mothers should stay at home in any case" has even more supporters (66 percent). Only one social group took a position in favour of the employment of women: women with a university or college degree. Mothers with several children would opt for staying at home. Two-thirds of the population consider that it is a common assignment of husband and wife to bring up their children, while one-third thinks it is the wife's duty.

Saving to educate the children and to help them found a family has become a social norm. The ratio of those who save for their children is almost 60 percent. About 20 years ago, 33 percent, 10 years ago 60 percent and nowadays 71 percent of the family founders received considerable help from their parents.

Nearly half (44 percent) of society think it probable that the financial position of old people will further worsen in the next ten years. 85 percent consider this a grave social problem. At the same time, the majority believes that the old should be kept by their families (82 percent). Evidently, the

population is not only worried by the situation of old people but also by the burden this means for the family.

All this is reflected by family planning and by ideas on the optimum size of the family. The number of children considered ideal—according to data on demographic issues—dropped from 2.88 to 2.46 between 1974—1983. The ratio of those who considered the ideal family had more than three children fell from 15 to 4 percent and the ratio of those who opted for the three child family as ideal also declined, from 54 to 39 percent. Accordingly, the concept of "large family" has also changed. Families with three or four children were considered as large by 38 percent in 1974, and by 48 percent in 1983. Families with more children are thought ideal or natural only by two social groups: religious people and those with lower education.

The place children hold today in the family is also reflected by ideas on education. Between 1974—1984, the ratio of those who wish to allow more freedom to adolescents increased considerably, from 60 to 69 percent in the case of boys, and from 49 to 59 in the case of girls, while the ratio of those who would "always keep an eye on the adolescent" or would veto their children's decisions declined. Thus public opinion has become more "permissive" with regard to young people. However, this change does not refer to the case when the parents think their child has chosen an unsuitable partner for marriage. In this case 55 percent would try to dissuade the child, and 12 percent would take stronger measures.

Miklós Tomka



## Again on Small Private Enterprises

This research (carried out late 1983) is based on the repetition of questions from a 1982 survey. The comparison showed that public opinion on small private enterprises had become more complex over a year and a half.

Knowledge on the authorization of the small private enterprises and the details of the new organizational forms has not increased even though its internal structure has gone through a considerable change. From spring, 1982 to autumn, 1983 the ratio of respondents who knew of the authorization of the creation of small private enterprises hardly increased (85, and 88 percent). In addition, only a small proportion referred to the new organizational forms and the main elements of the regulations. Fewer people identified the small private enterprise with the private taxi, sections of catering industry and small businesses with sub-contracts. The ratio of those giving an opinion (instead of knowledge) on the small private enterprises also decreased. At the same time, the ratio of those who could not say anything of merit about the small private enterprise fell from 17 to 26 percent. Thus in autumn 1983, 15 percent of the adult population knew practically nothing about this economic form; this ratio was higher by 9 percent than in spring 1983. Among those who had a minimum knowledge of the small private enterprises, the ratio of those who could say something concrete on the entrepreneurial opportunities open to enterprises and cooperatives, increased considerably.

Opinions on small private enterprises did not change considerably over the year and a half. The ratio of acceptance

and rejection of the arguments and counter-arguments concerning the enterprises and expressed in the form of statements hardly altered. Among the 19 declarations there were only four changes in opinion acceptable in statistics. The ratio of those believing that the small private enterprises will promote healthy competition in economic life decreased from 77 to 66 percent and that of those hoping that enterprises would promote a boom in the economy from 71 to 60 percent. The ratio of those believing that small private enterprises will promote higher efficiency in large industries also fell from 70 to 63 percent. In parallel, the ratio of those expecting an increase in difference between incomes rose from 65 to 72 percent.

Together with these changes in the perceived comparative advantages and disadvantages, it was advantages which again won. As in spring 1982, the majority, 89—83 percent of the people agreed that these enterprises opened the way to individual initiative, reacted more quickly to economic changes and made it possible for individuals to evolve the best of their abilities. Generally, counter-arguments against small private enterprises are rejected by the majority of people. Thus only 41 percent agreed that in these enterprises only those who wear themselves out can earn a large income and 30 percent said that the whole thing simply helped wheeler-dealers to be-

come rich! Similarly, 24 percent said that this system of enterprises was contrary to the principles of socialism. The majority of those questioned considered that the small private enterprises played only an auxiliary role in economic life and rejected both the extremist points of view, namely that in the future these enterprises should not play any role in the economy or that in the future the whole economy should be based on these enterprises.

People continue to be undecided

whether the small private enterprises will be a permanent or merely a temporary factor in the economy. In autumn 1983, 49 percent of those interviewed considered these enterprises permanent and 37 percent considered them temporary. There has been no change as to the entrepreneurial spirit and one fifth of the interviewees mentioned that they had already thought of joining such an enterprise.

**Katalin Farkas**

## Better Goods — at Higher Prices

### *Opinions on Private Retailers*

Most people take advantage of the services of private retailers, but they do not want their number to grow.

According to the findings of the study\*, 66 percent of the adult population regularly buy from private retailers. In particular they buy vegetables and fruits (two-thirds of the interviewees), in the second place, clothes (more than one-third); in third place were spare parts for cars and motorcycles (15 percent) followed by baker's products (10 percent). Other goods were mentioned less frequently.

Of those who buy vegetables and fruits 69 percent find the private retailer's goods better looking and fresher; 14 percent consider there is a greater choice in private shops; 12 percent can only buy here what they are looking for and 8 percent say that prices are lower. Nearly one-fifth of vegetable and fruit buyers said that the private retailer was closer to their homes.

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\* Carried out in autumn 1984 on a sample of 1,000 representing the adult population of the country.

Those who buy clothes mentioned quality, fashion and choice in equal proportions (around 30 percent). The retail shops were found by 18 percent to have goods not sold by state stores.

Nearly 90 percent of those buying spare parts for cars and motorcycles cannot find in state shops what they need. About 10 percent mentioned greater choice and proximity of the private retailer.

More than three-fourths of those who shop at a private bakery consider the products to be better looking and fresher; one-fourth refers to the proximity of the baker's. Some interviewees mention greater choice and polite service.

Of the adult population 34 percent do not buy anything in private shops: 12 percent do not need to at all either because they can get what they want in state shops or because they produce what they need. There are no private shops in the settlements where 10 percent of the interviewees live and 7 percent refuse to buy from private retailers because they consider their prices excessive.

Those who buy from private retailers think that they are more polite than shop-assistants in state stores are and work with greater skill. They say that

private shops are not as crowded, people are less irritable, there is no queuing and the shops are kept cleaner. Only low prices were mentioned in favour of state shops.

More private retailers would be welcome to 25 percent of the population—mostly in the hope of greater choice and less shortage of goods. But 47 percent consider it better if their number did not increase and 19 percent felt that it should be reduced. Those who do not want the number of private retailers to grow consider the ratio between the private and public sector adequate; either because they find the supply good or because they do not expect this to improve with a growing number of retailers. One-fourth mentioned the high prices in the private trade, also saying that this has an effect of forcing prices up.

Nevertheless 48 percent of those asked expect that within ten years a higher ratio of shops will belong to the private sector than today; 10 percent think the ratio of private outlets will not change and another 10 percent foresee a fall in their number; 32 percent could not guess what would happen.

Mária Szurkos

## How Much Do We Use the Telephone?

In 1984, members of a representative sample used in a public opinion poll also answered the question how many phone calls they had made during the week January 23—29.

53 percent of the interviewees did not use the telephone during the week examined. One-fifth made one or two calls (18 percent) and one-tenth one or two calls a day. 14 percent used their phones several times a day.

(Both business and private calls are included.)

The breakdown of the data by age reveals that most frequent users are those in the socially most active age group.

## HOW MUCH DO WE USE THE TELEPHONE?

(in percentages)

Number of telephone calls	Age		
	—29	30—49	50—
No calls	55	49	69
Once/twice a week	24	12	13
Once/twice a day	10	11	9
Several times a day	11	18	9

It is regrettable that elderly people are so isolated, since there are many of them whose social relationships are being reduced. On the other hand, they are less mobile, thus have a greater need for telephone contacts.

The greatest differences are to be

found according to education. Among those using the telephone daily, those with secondary and higher education made three times as many calls as those with elementary education and fifteen times as many as those who had not completed primary education.

(in percentages)

Number of calls	Education			
	Incomplete primary school	Primary school	Secondary school	College, university
No calls	85	60	29	22
Once/twice a week	10	22	22	23
Once/twice a day	3	8	20	26
Several times a day	2	10	29	29

(in percentages)

Number of calls	Residence		
	Budapest	Town	Village
No calls	33	59	71
Once/twice a week	19	17	19
Once/twice a day	24	11	3
Several times a day	24	13	7

There are considerable differences with regard to residence as well. The most striking fact is that in Budapest not even one third of the inhabitants used the telephone during the week in question.

In view of the fact that the data

cover a winter week when people prefer to stay in the warmth of the home or the office, the number of phone calls is probably lower in other parts of the year.

Tamás Szecskó

# I'm against It I Give It

## *Opinions on Tipping Doctors\**

The gratuities doctors are given are judged by the interviewees in different ways: in one way when they express their opinion on the phenomenon itself and in another, when they are in the position in which they have to decide whether to tip or not to tip a doctor.

Most people condemn the custom of giving doctors gratuities: 77 percent disapprove of people giving tips to the doctors, and 66 percent criticize doctors who accept the money. Consequently, this tip is considered as one of the most serious problems public health faces in Hungary, being mentioned in the third place, following crowded surgeries and overworked doctors.

In practice, however, many people forget their scruples concerning gratuities. During the survey, 58 percent said that in the previous year one of their relatives had received hospital treatment and this had involved expenditure for them or for the patient; 19 percent said they had been in hospital for some time in the previous year and had given money to the doctor or nurses. In connection with treatment in a local surgery, 12 percent, and medical care in a polyclinic, 9 percent spoke of having given a tip. According to the interviewees, the highest sums are received by obstetricians, surgeons, and specialists in internal diseases, and by nurses among other health workers.

Why do people give gratuities, if they do not agree with it? According to their answers mostly because they hope for better service (87 percent), they feel psychologically better (75 percent), and because this ensures that they are thoroughly examined and treated (64 percent). They also frequently pay in order to receive rare and very expensive treatments (54 percent) or because everyone is doing it (54 percent).

The ambiguity in the judgement is also reflected by opinions on the possibility of doing away with it. The majority, 60 percent, said it was impossible to put an end to it. A considerable number believe that if the patient does not tip he will receive inferior treatment: the doctors will not be caring but rather indifferent (57 percent), in hospital he will be neglected by the nurses (55 percent), will have to wait longer for examinations (52 percent), and doctors will not devote the necessary time to treatment (50 percent).

Many people also think—or rather hope—that the custom of giving gratuities could be put an end to by various means. They mentioned edu-

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\* The poll was carried out in the spring of 1985 on a sample of 1,000 representing the adult population.

cation (changing people's views and enhancing the doctors' sense of vocation), administrative measures (stricter control of doctors' work and more stringent punishment for accepting gratuities), and a change in the system of interests (abolishing free health service and increasing doctors' salaries).

A considerable proportion of the population would be willing to officially pay for certain advantages and

services in health care. Most people would pay for an operation if it is done by the best surgeon (67 percent), and many would give money for being able to choose their doctor (51 percent). Nearly half (48—48 percent) of the population would pay for scarce, rare foreign medicines and diagnostic using the most up-to-date equipment.

Imre Dobossy—László Kulcsár

## Tragedy Live

**How did viewers react to the live transmission of the bloody events that took place in the Heysel Stadium in Brussels? How do they see the relationship between sports and violence? A public opinion poll carried out five days after the event tried to answer these and related questions.**

Of those interviewed 73 percent saw a part or all of the transmission and the effect of the tragedy is shown by the fact that five days later only 5 percent had not heard at all of the acts of violence preceding the match. Even those not interested in sports knew about it. At the same time, 35 percent of the viewers did not watch the transmission to the end and one in three of these gave emotional reasons, i.e. they were shocked at, frightened and horrified by the sight of violence and they preferred to switch TV off. Sports followers were even more stirred up, twice as many of them said they had been unable to watch the transmission to the end as those who have only a passing interest or are not interested in sport at all.

The cup final aroused great interest. 80 percent of the people paid greater attention to reactions to the tragedy in the press, radio and TV than usual.

The media gave different opinions on whether it was right for Hungarian Television to broadcast the tragedy that preceded the match. (Some television stations abroad did not do so.) Three quarters of those interviewed considered, however, it right that the broadcast had not been interrupted. Some of those approving the transmission said in justification that there was a need for reliable information irrespective of all other considerations. Others argued that the tragedy could be a warning and an instructive example. Those who did not approve of

the broadcast of the violence argued mainly that people could easily follow this example, that this behaviour could spread to our country and television should not provide a model. Others said they would have preferred to watch some entertaining programme, providing relaxation.

The interviewees took a position also on the question whether it was right to broadcast the match itself after the tragedy. A majority, 68 percent, said "yes" and most of the majority argued that only thus could even more tragic acts be prevented. Some of them stressed the value of sport itself irrespective of the circumstances and also the pressures involved (institutional, financial and public demand). Those not approving the transmission of the match argued primarily that under these circumstances this match was unworthy of the spirit of sport.

The transmission of the acts of violence was approved of mainly by those who are not too interested in sport and that of the match by sport fans.

How could such tragic acts be prevented in the future? About half answered this question by saying that stricter policing was needed. One fifth of them considered the best solution to be sanctions against the clubs (prohibition on the use of their stadia, a ban on teams); 10 percent proposed security measures to be undertaken by the clubs and the football authorities;

10 percent considered education and conviction necessary; and another 10 percent urged the liquidation of the phenomenon's social roots.

The majority of those interviewed were optimistic. 74 percent were confident that such behaviour would be prevented in the future; 72 percent did not consider it possible that something similar to Brussels could take place in Hungary. The overall picture is optimistic despite the fact that 83 percent of the interviewees knew that there had already been disturbances during sports events in our country. (More than three quarters mentioned a serious incidence of vandalism on the Budapest Metro two days earlier and more than one third referred to earlier cases.)

The majority of those pessimistic felt, precisely because of the vandalism of the Metro, that "already anything could happen".

Most of those optimistic excluded the possibility of situation deteriorating in Hungary. In their view, our police were much more efficient and respected. (Many people mentioned in this context our sound public security.) Others based their optimism on the difference between the social systems. Far fewer people argued with human values, namely that Hungarian football followers are more civilized and disciplined.

**Éva Földvári—Endre Hamm**

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