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FROM THE IDEAL OF UNITY TO THE PRACTICE OF HETEROGENEITY: MODERNIZATION PROCESSES IN THE HUNGARIAN LANGUAGE COMMUNITY

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In recent years the history of language has meant the history of sounds, words and rules. We know that tremendous efforts, such as the concept of *Lautverschiebung*, have been made to interpret language as the history of regular changes. Meanwhile the grammar of language has meant the representation of language in timeless models of structures, *langue* or universal grammars. Both types create special scientific frames, or I could say narratives intentionally independent of individual speakers and communities. This independence was meant to be the basis of the objectivistic standpoint necessary to describe language *an sich*. But in this long process language has been deprived of something essential, of speaking and understanding man and community. Beginning in the 1970s and with growing influence, the necessary balance has started to be restored in the works of sociolinguistics (Labov 1972, Hymes 1974, Romaine 1982), functional linguistics (Halliday 1985, Givón 1984), and in the cognitive approaches (e.g. Schwarz 1992). This change has made clear the distinction between grammatics and linguistics as formulated by Ralph Fasold (Fasold 1992).

The information system, which is the basis of this latter view, not in a mechanistic manner but rather in a communication system where representation and cognitive processes of text creating and text understanding are the central factors always within a setting and a situation, makes evident the fact that language can be interpreted as a functional entity in an ecosystem (Strohner 1990). This theoretical trend, which has its origin in the views of Humboldt, Peirce and Eco, was elaborated by Halliday and Givón in grammar, by Hymes, Labov and others in the concepts of language variety and variable, speech community, domain, network, and by cognitive scientists (McClelland–Rumelhart [editors], 1986, Strohner 1995, Taylor 1995) particularly in the ideas of representation and connectionism.

In this respect the self-referential and the self-reflexive nature of language and semiosis in general is uncovered, however not entirely as in the frame of

autopoetics elaborated by Valera and Maturana. Thus, the delicate balance between the community and the individual, between convention and creation, or self-creation, can be experienced.

The ideas mentioned here have their historical character and significance as well. These primarily descriptive theories have dynamic aspects making it possible to see language as a historical phenomenon connected to setting, situation, general interaction, and consequently to community. When investigating the relation between the Hungarian language and language community on the one hand, and social, economic and cultural modernization on the other hand, we have to take these ideas into consideration.

In the present frame by modernization I mean the metamorphosis slowly advancing from the middle of the eighteenth century in which feudal features in the economy, society and culture were changed into new ones. In this process of integration every man and woman as members of the people were declared to be free from all kinds of authority, to form a national society, to have a political state on a given territory with economic and cultural traditions (Szűcs 1974: 205). Here, in connection with language I would like to concentrate mainly on social mobility, social contacts, literacy, *Bildung*, publicity of everyday life. Language community means the community of those people who speak one and the same language. (I do not want to discuss the questions concerning the marginal cases of such a simple definition, since these problems do not influence the theme presented here.) In the case of a concept with historical character the history of the concept itself gives the interpretative definition.

Perhaps one of the main features of the history of Hungary's civilization (*Kulturgeschichte*) is that language did not become a simple means of communication in most of the influential interpretations during the last thirty years of the eighteenth century and the first half of the nineteenth century. The era of the Reformation was the first crucial period when Hungarian as a language was considered to be a substantial part of culture; and knowledge, both secular and religious, and identity, as well as this early interpretation of vernacular language were linked with the beginnings of a kind of modernization (cf. Bárczi 1963). Nevertheless, another 250 years passed before language, the Hungarian language, was again approached as something substantial (cf. Benkő 1960).

This attention to the Hungarian language had two sources in the second half of the eighteenth century. The first was political: among middle and lesser nobility the demand was growing to declare Hungarian as the official language of Hungary. At that time the official language was Latin, which was still spoken by many people, had lingered as a relic of late medieval traditions, and stood as a symbol of the independence of Hungarian nobility. For nearly one hundred years this demand to make Hungarian the official language of the kingdom was repeatedly rejected by the court in Vienna. Finally in 1844 after numerous stormy debates and controversies at the diet Hungarian was declared to be the

official language. This act in itself had an important effect on the Hungarian language community, society, culture, and of course on the Hungarian language itself. Law and jurisdiction, public administration, secondary and higher education, science and other domains were converted from a classical, not vernacular, privileged sphere into an everyday, vernacular and democratic sphere. Certainly this change was not completed in the legal act itself but came about gradually during the decades that both preceded and followed 1844. Nevertheless, the act had its significance, since the official language came to be used as a part of public symbolism.

Central to this process appears to be its inner structure, which reveals several no uncertain paradoxes. Latin was an inalienable part of the traditional constitution and the sociocultural system of Hungary. Nevertheless, Latin came into conflict with the national awakening, which arose within the same social strata and cultural circles that had themselves cultivated the use of Latin. At the same time, the Austrian Empire had maintained Latin as the official language in Hungary, albeit German might have fit its goals much better. Joseph II had wanted to germanize the empire in the 1780s, but he failed. Thus, the situation in Hungary departed from the typical pattern where a political and linguistic minority fought against the majority and against the official language of the majority. Instead, the Latin–Hungarian conflict depended partly on a third, external group: the Germans in Vienna.

The other main source of the attention to the Hungarian vernacular was the process of standardizing the Hungarian language, which began in the 1770s. The claim to establish a standard version of Hungarian originated partly from the political background. It had to be demonstrated that Hungarian was good enough to be an official language, that it had all the features necessary to satisfy the different demands, especially the multifunctionality required of an official language (cf. Milroy and Milroy 1985, Garvin 1993). After 1790 this complex process embodied two main trends. The first trend included writing. Between 1790 and 1846 more grammars of Hungarian were written than in the previous one to two hundred years. The grammars had a double aim. First, they sought to describe Hungarian to the extent that it was possible; and this included the formation of modern linguistic methodology and terminology. Second, the grammars described Hungarian in ideal terms and provided the norms, as well as the correct patterns, to be used. Seeking to find the proper basis for evaluation the authors of these grammars united description and prescription, *ist* and *soll*, in the same sphere. But the theoretical limits that completed this unification were different. Sámuel Gyarmathi held that there were only slight differences among Hungarian dialects; and thus with only a few modifications the desired unity could easily be achieved. The authors of the *Debreceni Grammatika* asserted that the pure grammar of the people, the vernacular, constituted the only valuable pattern. Elaborating a very abstract ideal, they specifically favored those

varieties that had not had any contact with foreign languages or with the varieties of Hungarian that had been influenced by foreign patterns. Ferenc Verseghy also relied on the vernacular; but he put custom, or convention, at the center of his explanation. On the other hand, Miklós Révai, perhaps the greatest linguist of the age, sought the orienting patterns in the past, in the historical forms of Hungarian.

Nevertheless, all grammarians tried on sociolinguistic grounds to formulate the basis of their judgments in the language shaping acts of selection, codification, and elaboration (Haugen 1966, Neustupny 1970, Fishman 1974). These grounds were formed by theoretical considerations that referred to a set of national features attributed to the Hungarian people as an ethnic and cultural entity and the Hungarian community as a society, which needed to be educated on a more demanding level.

Ferenc Kazinczy, the chief organizer of the movement to promote the Hungarian vernacular after 1805, came to elaborate the other, the aesthetical, trend. Although he himself contributed to their work, Kazinczy was not content with the efforts of the grammarians at better codification. Instead, he concentrated on the question of different styles and desired to create the new language of literature by following foreign, particularly German and French, patterns. Some of his works, primarily his translations, were rejected; but his views on taste and quality proved to be immensely influential. He concentrated on the language shaping problems of elaboration and differentiation.

This process, which has been briefly outlined, took place in a society not completely ready for the changes. The demand for the development of an official form of Hungarian came from and was well understood by relatively broad segments of the contemporary society and language community; but the need for standardization was recognized only in narrow circles of the middle nobility and *lateiners*. Nevertheless, the changes introduced from the top penetrated the society relatively quickly; and in about fifty years the new standards became well known. Standard Hungarian was codified on the basis of the northeastern dialect, but it was also based on earlier attempts at forming a written standard version, such as the Bible and psalm translations of the Reformation era. The codifiers used phonetic and grammatical forms from other dialects as well and created a balanced standard. Thus standard Hungarian is not a type of artificial language but the result of a partially self-reflexive process, which came to be accelerated during the first decades of the nineteenth century.

The Hungarian language community, or the society of the Hungarian kingdom, was both the object and the subject of the modernization processes beginning at this time. This community was certainly heterogeneous. The basic varieties were local dialects that formed dialect types. The dialects were the emblems of local identity; and they formed a coordinated system. But no variety achieved superior prestige, since public opinion was also being formed during that same

period. In everyday practice language appeared to be a completely natural phenomenon. Nevertheless, reflections had been made earlier, and the basic standard omitted the most prominent dialectal features in pronunciation, spelling, and especially written language. The most important characteristics were very closely related to the sociological structure of Hungarian society in which the vast majority of people worked in agriculture and maintained a rural culture. The system of settlement reinforced these features as well. The village was the typical settlement and the basic sociological, economical and cultural unit of dialect. Thus, the number of domains (typical situations of verbal interactions) were relatively low; the networks (the communication systems) of native speakers were transparent; a closed system of styles (formal and informal) was used; and since family and work were not separated, everyday activities formed one continuum. Mobility and migration were at a low level, and urbanization had just begun. However, the efforts at standardization were not clearly urban acts either. The intellectual and spiritual center of all these processes involving the development of the Hungarian language was in Széphalom, a small village near Sátoraljaújhely in northeastern Hungary, where Kazinczy organized the work through his correspondence during the two decades that followed 1805.

At this time standardization in the cultural sense spread from the top to the bottom and slowly put language at the center of political and cultural thought. But since the formal political decision remained blocked, it became a cultural movement to implement the standard variety of the Hungarian language particularly in law, public administration, commerce, science, and literature, and to raise the cultural *niveau* of the population. Due the demands of political life the ideal of "unity in unity" explicated in the works of the grammar writers became more influential. It emphasized the community as a whole, as a nation, as an ethnic entity with a homogeneous language, and not the ideal of Kazinczy, which was "diversity in unity" within a heterogeneous language and concentrated on the individual and his relation to the community. Thus, rationalist views, combined with the romantic awakening of historicity, became the basis of recognizing language as a force that formed community, and the orienting patterns were relatively closed to individual initiatives. Correct (i.e. standardized) language was becoming the indicator of being highly intellectual and of loyalty to the community, to the nation. Standard (reformed) Hungarian was becoming the prestigious variety primarily in formal situations, or domains, but later in informal ones, too. It was one way to start a modernization process in which members of the nobility or other social groups were able to become the members of the educated middle classes (*Bildungsbürgertum*) that were still to be created.

As far as we know the debates on the standard forms and the spread of the codified language were engaged mostly in written forms: in correspondence, periodicals, books, and later newspapers, as well as at the Hungarian theater in

Pest. Only later did they take a conversational form. The spoken mode demanded a new, public, urban way of life. Beginning with the 1820s this development came to be concentrated particularly at Pest and Pozsony, as well as some other towns such as Kassa. The cultural and free enterprise standardization changed into an academic one during the 1830s. The Hungarian Academy of Sciences was founded in order to maintain and cultivate the Hungarian language; and during the 1830s, the first decade of its history, the academy produced the most important handbooks, including a German–Hungarian dictionary employing the reformed lexicon, an orthography, and a descriptive grammar demonstrating the new standard Hungarian, in order to turn its ideals into practice. In short, from that time on there was a “single unquestioned source of authority, which was generally recognized and obeyed” by educated people (Garvin 1993), whose numbers steadily increased along with the expansion of education and literacy.

The appearance of a standard language created a new inner structure and introduced hierarchy into the Hungarian language community. As we have seen, dialect had been a natural phenomenon without much reflection. Standard language on the other hand has generally different features. It emerges as an entity with a minimal variety of form and with a maximal variety of function (Milroy and Milroy 1985). Garvin (1993) enumerates five main functions of a standard language. First, it has unifying function to serve as an integrating bond in spite of dialectal and other differences. Second, it exercises a separatist function to differentiate it from other language communities. Third, it enjoys a prestige function conferring a certain authority on a speech community that possesses the standard language and on the individuals who master it. Fourth, it provides a participatory function to allow a language community to use its own language in order to take part in the cultural, scientific, and other developments of the modern world. Fifth, it establishes a frame of reference function to clarify matters of language correctness.

After the great debates on correctness during the first two decades of the nineteenth century a growing illusion spread among Hungarian intellectuals, later among the members of the middle classes, and finally among other social strata that the standard variety could be, or already was, fully developed in grammars, dictionaries and the rules of orthography. In folk linguistic judgments even today this remains one of the most common opinions.

As a result of this change a clear, cultural and ethical institution established the foundation for all of the previously mentioned functions of the standard language. The whole system had a double structure. On the one hand, since no inherited privileges played a role in the hierarchy, it constituted a step toward modernization. On the other hand, the accessibility of education and culture (*Bildung*) of course remained limited. Albeit only in restricted form, these fea-

tures promoted social mobility and migration and helped to transform the closed communication system of settlements into more open ones.

Thus the hierarchy among the varieties included a standard language with high prestige, codified forms, and literature. The other varieties were characterized by lower prestige, uncodified forms and largely restricted to the oral medium. As we know from sociolinguistic investigations, which were first performed by Ferguson (1959) through the concept of *diglossia*, this hierarchy has several particular features. According to Haugen (1966) and Wardhaugh (1986: 33) the norm of the standard "is likely to be – or to become – an idealized norm, one that users of the language are asked to aspire to rather than one that actually accords with their observed behavior".

Since the standard language is usually used by the elite, Milroy (1985) as well as others have noted what Wardhaugh (1986: 34) described in the following manner, "the chosen norm inevitably becomes associated with 'power' and the rejected alternatives with the lack of 'power'". Also significant for the history of the Hungarian language and its language community was the circumstance that this elite was initially a cultural elite. During the 1830s the elite expanded to include parts of the political leadership. The economic elite on the other hand only came to be included about fifty years later. No less significant was the situation that this hierarchy was maintained by an attitude of solidarity and loyalty. Furthermore, it was also associated with a general ideal of teleological development in which the uneducated people could be improved without serious conflict through education and culture (*Bildung*). However, we ought to be aware that in the case of the Hungarian language this hierarchy did not develop into a clear system of *diglossia* in the same sense as Ferguson had outlined.

The political struggles before 1848 and the revolution of that year demonstrated the vast importance of these transformation processes and also made them more explicit and rapid, or more reflexive. However, the Austrian oppression after 1849 interrupted the developments and brought their first phase to an end. The modernization of the Hungarian language was suspended by a dictatorial political system, which employed German as its official language. On the whole language and its respective language community usually do not immediately follow political changes. Consequently the extensions of standard Hungarian throughout the entire society continued at a slower pace.

The next period began with the Compromise (*der Ausgleich*) of 1867 between the Austrian emperor and the Hungarian opposition. During this phase we can observe the acceleration of the modernization in the economy, politics, public administration, and culture. This constituted a period of extended social mobility, migration and urbanization. Although it still retained some significance, the local dialect was no longer basic. Other domains, larger networks in everyday speech, had sprung into existence. With the growing opportunity, indeed

necessity, to travel and study the communication system of the villages became more open. Education, newspapers, literature, theater, and everyday conversation in different domains all played a decisive role. Among the most important changes one can enumerate the emergence of new urban dialects, which totally reorganized the value system of the Hungarian language community. In terms of prestige they were situated, and remain even today, somewhere between the standard language and local dialects. The other change deserving of attention concerned the further elaboration of colloquial standard Hungarian, which was spoken typically in towns, particularly in Budapest, by the middle class. In this was the standard written language continued to extend from the top of the society to the bottom and received a certain amount of feedback.

The middle classes played a significant role in maintaining this new hierarchy, but the hierarchy was no longer embedded in an implicit as well as explicit political teleology, which aimed at national independence. Rather it came to be directed at achieving a state where a language community used its own language in order "to participate in the cultural, scientific, and other developments of the modern world". And although the standard language enjoyed very high prestige, there seemed to be a basic contradiction between the ideas of the earlier grammar writers. Unity in unity might have been achieved according to those of the cultural elite who dealt with language, but it could only be accomplished through diversity in unity. After a short period of extensive German interference the purity of the Hungarian language again became a central question during the 1870s, 1880s and 1890s. According to the views of the positivist linguists, purity could be found best in local dialects free from foreign influence. But these local dialects were not the same as the standard variety. Based on correctness, the positivist theory of rule, Zsigmond Simonyi, the most outstanding linguist of the age, attempted to resolve the dilemma through a theoretical unification of dialects (*Folksprache*) and the standard language (*Literatursprache*). But his efforts proved to be insufficient. At the beginning of World War I, the Hungarian language community still remained a very complicated structure with many varieties, many public and private domains, complex networks, as well as different but interconnected rural and urban styles.

This modernization process was once again interrupted by the peace settlements and the two revolutions following World War I. The Austro-Hungarian monarchy was dismembered, and Hungary lost seventy-five percent of its territory and sixty-six percent of its population. In respect to the Hungarian language community the most serious consequence was that more than thirty percent of native Hungarian speakers were forced to live as minorities in newly created states. Nevertheless they lived homogeneously in continuous Hungarian ethnic territories. The value system developed during the previous decades came to be replaced by the simple value of speaking Hungarian and maintaining Hungarian in an overtly hostile political environment. The structure of the Hungarian lan-

guage community changed in several ways. First, new defence strategies were developed to suit the new circumstances. Second, the hierarchy of prestige became more rigid, particularly in academic circles and in education. By the time the chaotic situation concerning the Hungarian language community was eased to some extent, and the value system created at the turn of the century was restored, the great depression struck and hindered further modernization.

The efforts at modernization had haltingly begun again during the 1930s but after World War II were interrupted once again in 1949. After the communist takeover the bolshevik ideology tried to homogenize Hungarian society in many ways. In respect to the Hungarian language community this attempt was motivated by the desire to extinguish all social strata along with the differences in property and education. The homogenization included the teaching of standard Hungarian to everybody, either through the school system or through the centrally directed adult education program. Furthermore, between 1949 and 1989 publishing houses operated only in Budapest, the capital. On the other hand, the language varieties of the middle classes and upper middle classes were condemned and stigmatized as bourgeois jargon. Interestingly, Hungarian academic linguistics assisted in this process by sanctioning the general belief in the extinction of local dialects and advocating the overall teleology of language development as a chain of changes approaching the perfect state of language, which would be available to every member of the language community. Language varieties different from the average standard were condemned in everyday interactions as well as in literature. Again unity in unity was propagated; and language was thought to be grammar. The primitively planned and rudely executed ideological transformation led in the cultural sense to the relative rise of the lowest social layers, but also to the lowering of upper classes. As is well known, this kind of modernization generally failed.

Nevertheless, the worst impact on the Hungarian language community was not this process in itself, which gradually turned slowly into its own opposite from the mid-sixties till the mid-eighties, but the fact that this ideologically based artificial transformation was limited to Hungarian speakers within Hungary's border. The Hungarian minorities, consisting of at least three million people living in neighboring countries, came to be "forgotten" and were deliberately not taken into consideration. According to bolshevik ideology, "socialism automatically solves the problem of minorities". In view of the language policy struggles of the last ten years, we now know that this is not the case. Even today Hungarian minorities have to fight for minimal language rights. Beginning with 1949 the Hungarian language community was physically divided by the borders of Hungary and its neighbours and also by the borders of the neighbouring countries with each other, as well as by the iron curtain. Villages were cut in half, and families separated. While in Hungary varieties of the language and styles were artificially decreased, at least in the public domains, in the neigh-

bouring countries Hungarian was forced completely back into the private sphere. In Czechoslovakia the use of the Hungarian language was banned in public places between 1945–1948. The same development could be observed in Rumania later (cf. Lanstyák 1991, Kiss 1995). These circumstances were slowly relaxed but have not been entirely eliminated even today.

Nevertheless, the Hungarian language community has survived. After 1990 it reorganized itself and has begun once again elaborating its inner structure and values. In this new period of modernization, the basic principle has once again become one of diversity in unity. When the process of self-creation and convention will possibly acquire a new balance without further interruption.

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THE DAWN OF POLITICAL CATHOLICISM IN HUNGARY, 1844–1848

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In Hungarian historiography the beginnings of modern political Catholicism are usually associated with the political party debates over religious policy during the second half of the nineteenth century. More precisely, political Catholicism is tied to the law resulting from these debates.¹ Signifying the growing influence of the middle class, the 1894–95 law on religion made civil marriage mandatory, established birth certificates issued by the state, gave equal rights to Jews, and provided guarantees for the free practice of religion in general. Although not without considerable political disagreement, these constituted the achievement of long standing liberal goals; and without any doubt the representatives of the Catholic church organized the staunchest resistance against them. Despite the Catholic protests, the majority of the public supported the law of 1894–1895, and the changes have stood the test of time.

Nevertheless, the problems of state-church relations did not appear in Hungary for the first time during the later decades of the nineteenth century. During the 1830s and 1840s, or the period historians usually call the Reform Era, the growing influence of middle class values experienced its first great test of strength, which touched not only on the suppression of feudal privileges, but also on exemptions from taxation, equality before the law, as well as the establishment of freedom of the press, freedom of speech, freedom of conscience and religion. The heated debates among well-known politicians over the changes remained constrained within the old framework of feudal politics, where the main public forums were the county assemblies of the nobility and the national diets. On the other hand, the content of the discussions was increasingly “new.” The opposition gradually stepped beyond the traditional grievance politics of the estates and, while not neglecting Hungary’s uniqueness, appropriated the program of Western liberalism. It is important to recognize that the general tendencies of modern Hungarian political life began to emerge publicly at this time. For example, the first political parties appeared: in 1846 the Conservative Party and in 1847 the Opposition Party; and the various movements based on ideological considerations became ever more clearly defined. The centralists

and the various young radical groups arising among Pest's intellectuals were also significant. The representatives of political Catholicism were present at this early date in the increasingly colorful tapestry of public life; and although they did not play any decisive role in the enactment of legislation, their appearance in Hungary's public life warrants attention and further consideration.

Most analysts have found the roots of the religious laws of the 1890s in the deliberations of the last estates' diet during 1847–48, or more exactly, arising from the deficiencies and consequences of that diet's twentieth article.² In agreement with the Benedictine historian Pongrác Sörös and others, I share the view formulated at the turn of the century, a view which has found few twentieth-century supporters, that disputes over religious policy emerging at the end of the nineteenth century, "even in the modern sense," arose from a much earlier period, at least as early as the twenty-sixth article of the diet of 1791.³ Namely, beginning at this time and throughout the century that followed, the essential issue in the various concrete questions affecting church–state relations remained basically the same: the difficulties arising from the emerging civil state's conflicts and attempts to find accommodations with a Roman Catholic church that remained wedded to feudal political structures. The ecclesiastical historian Gábor Salacz touched on the core of the matter when he noted,

A cultural conflict develops when those subject to the state, or at least a significant portion of them, find it impossible to obey the laws and directives of the church and state at the same time. In short, the citizens in submitting to the laws and regulations of one unavoidably come into conflict with the those of the other.⁴

This description is entirely appropriate for the situation of the Reform Era state and church.

We can briefly identify political Catholicism as a movement that began to organize when liberal political forces grew so greatly in strength that they succeeded in influencing legislative and executive policy; and, based on the principles of civil society, the liberals attempted to rearrange the relationship between church and state.⁵ In opposition to these liberal forces, or in order to reduce their influence, the church no longer employed merely its traditional instruments in the struggle. In order to achieve its aims the church also tried to adapt to the changing rules of public life and initiate movements, such as political parties or organizations associated with them, that were tailored to the norms of civil society. During the second half of the nineteenth century we can observe in opposition to liberal tendencies and the development of capitalist values the appearance of neo-conservatism and as a result of the "cultural struggles," above all in Bismarck's Germany, and political Catholicism. The most obvious manifestation of the latter phenomenon in Hungary before the turn of the cen-

tury was the formation and activity of the Catholic *Néppárt* [People's Party] as a force to counter the religious legislation of 1894–95.⁶ In other words we can concur with the frequently expressed opinion that in Hungary the problems created by the spread of middle class society were not solved in the middle of the nineteenth century by the Revolution of 1848, its failure and the subsequent dictatorial government. Consequently, according to the historian Jenő Gergely, political Catholicism could appear in Hungary only a few decades after its appearance in Western Europe as a “defensive reflex,”⁷ when the Catholic church felt that as a result of the legal equality created by the civil laws, it would be squeezed out of public life. At the same time, it is important to realize that the seeds of this had appeared during the 1840s, and the “defensive reflex” was already set in motion at that time.

We can also note that during the Reform Era not only the prelates, clinging to the status of Roman Catholicism as a state church and to their privileges and close connections with the Habsburg court, opposed the liberal political forces. During the 1840s a political tendency, similar in character the Catholic movement of the 1890s and even bearing the marks of forming a political party, began to emerge within the Catholic church. Its representatives had come to believe that under the new circumstances of public life the clergy alone was no longer able to defend effectively Catholic interests, and that new organizations needed to be formed in order to influence and gain the support of public opinion. The diet of 1843–44 played a key role in the formation of this concept. With the enactment of article three this diet brought to an end, at least temporarily, the increasingly passionate disputes over religious policy, which had been brewing since the 1830s, and gave a new direction to the subsequent debates.⁸ We have no desire here to examine in any detailed fashion the stormy and animated events arising from the problem of the obligations, or so-called “reservations” [reverzálisok], demanded from Protestants in the cases of mixed marriages or the raising of children born from these marriages. Nevertheless, it is important that beginning with 1839, when the Bishop of Nagyvárad Ferenc Lajcsák in a pastoral letter instructed his diocesan clergy not to give their blessing to mixed marriages – the Bishop of Rozsnyó had earlier taken a similar step – the overwhelming protest of the counties intensified Catholic-Protestant discord and drew the line of opposition permanently between the liberal camp favoring reforms and the leadership of the Roman Catholic church. Many of the reformers, including István Széchenyi, Ferenc Deák and Ödön Beöthy were themselves faithful Catholics. At the same time, the prelates of the Catholic church had no desire to yield their ecclesiastical privileges, including the ruler's position in the Catholic church and their rights in opposition to the Protestants, or their rank and properties as great feudal lords. Consequently, undertaking a political movement through which they hoped to represent their inter-

ests in the public life of the counties and at the upcoming diet constituted a logical step.

A few weeks after the conclusion of the diet of 1839–40 the Archbishop of Esztergom József Kopácsy directed the entire Catholic clergy in Hungary to practice *passiva assistentia*, in effect denying the church's blessing in cases of mixed marriages. The counties responded with a protest of previously unparalleled dimensions, which included newspaper articles and pamphlets. Appealing in part to the prestige of the clergy and in part playing for rime, the ecclesiastical leadership sent the Bishop of Csanád József Lonovics to Rome in order to obtain a papal decision for settling the dispute over the marriage policy.⁹ This step unfortunately became a source for further grief. From 1840 to 1843 the years leading to the next diet saw the debate over religion, which had begun primarily with the Protestant grievances at the diets between 1832 and 1836, expand beyond its previous framework and take on the possibility of a general rearrangement of religious issues based on middle-class values. The Catholic church was forced, however slowly, to respond to such a prospect. The depth and nature of the dilemma are appropriately illustrated by a comment made at the Diet of 1839–40 by one of the leading conservatives, Aurél Dessewffy. "Justice for the Protestants has reached the point beyond which injustice for the Catholic cause begins."¹⁰

Even if we cannot pinpoint the inception of political Catholicism to any single date, there can be no doubt that in the course of the discussions held by the episcopacy and other church leaders at the Diet of 1843–44, most especially at the meeting of 27 October 1844, one can discern distinctly the outlines of a Catholic political program. By taking into account the requirements of the age for the exercise of political influence, the ecclesiastical leadership attempted to promote the interests of the church. During the course of the debates over religious policy in the second half of the 1830s and the first half of the 1840s many individuals, especially among the representatives of the cathedral chapters in the lower house of the diet, became convinced that in order effectively to assert the interests of the Catholic church, the mere declaration of Catholic dogma was insufficient. One could no longer simply and ceremonially invoke the authority of the church and its apostolic origins in order to condemn liberal ideas in general,¹¹ as Pope Gregory XVI had done in the encyclicals *Mirari vos* of 1832 and *Singulari nos* of 1834 – in the latter declaring the views of the liberal Catholic Lamennais heretical. It is important to recognize that the clergy, who as politically active Catholics in Hungary during the second half of the 1840s desired to assert the interests of Catholicism in political and social life, differed neither in their understanding nor in the content of their arguments from the positions represented by Gregory XVI and his rather conservative secretary Lambruschini. They were in fundamental agreement on all the major points, and they accepted the authority of the ecclesiastical hierarchy. In other

words they consciously opposed Lamennais, Lacordaire, and József Eötvös – who in Hungary can most notably be included in this camp – as well as other representatives of liberal Catholicism, who by this time wanted to find an accommodation with the middle-class movements and to come to terms with the social and political changes that had followed the French and Industrial Revolutions. Although the differences of the political Catholics with the pope were very significant, they were primarily strategic. Clinging to their privileges, the representatives of political Catholicism during the Reform Era, just as the papacy, condemned the growth of middle-class culture in its entirety. At the same time (and in their own interest) the politically active Catholics did not object to employing the new instruments, modified to suit their “image and likeness” (Gen. 1:26), which had been offered by liberalism and were also employed by the liberals.

Without desiring to be comprehensive, we must attempt to characterize the nature of the Catholic political movement that arose during the Reform Era.¹² We can obtain our best overall view from articles appearing in the press, contemporary publications and the minutes of the meetings, which after 1844 became a regular feature of political Catholicism. Naturally, episcopal and other conferences had also been held earlier in the Catholic church, but after the Diet of 1843–1844 the proclamation and representation of the Catholic church’s interests in political life became the focal point of these peculiarly structured and designed councils. The items under discussion can be most easily divided into two groups. On the one hand, they involved purely theoretical discussions, such as the analysis of the nature of liberalism and conservatism; on the other hand they debated over the closely related concrete strategical problems and determined the practical steps to be utilized. Similarly to the liberals and conservatives, they usually held meetings every three months when the national fairs in Pest generally drew large crowds. As we shall soon see, the politically active Catholics served as a secure bastion of the conservative camp, and consequently adjusted their discussions to the meetings of the “thoughtful progressives.” By the last years of the Reform Era, Pest had become unambiguously the center of political life, and the Catholics also chose this major city for their organizational work. The selection of Pest as the center for Catholic politicking reveals a practical understanding of the emerging political realities. One of the leaders of the group, Mihály Fogarassy, Canon of Nagyvárad and from 1846 a titular bishop, became in practice the national coordinator of the group in Pest. Toward the end of the Diet of 1843–1844 the direction of Catholic politicking was entrusted to a clerical committee. In addition to Fogarassy, the members included the Canon of Veszprém Miklós Bezerédy, the director of a seminary András Liphay, and a Benedictine monk from Pannonhalma, who later became Abbot of Bakonybél, Miklós Sárkány, while the prelates were represented by the Bishop of Pécs János Scitovszky, who had been most active in issues of public

life. The committee held its first meeting after the conclusion of the diet in September 1845. Afterwards its meetings became more regular, and the number of participants also grew. The committee saw itself as a type of "leading organization" [csúciszervezet], and interestingly devoted most of its attention not to staged mass gatherings but to improved organization for the advancement of Catholicism.

One of the dominant characteristics of the meetings held during and immediately after the Diet of 1843–1844 was the negative evaluation of the events of the diet. Most significantly they interpreted Article Three as a serious defeat for the Catholic church. The participants found the causes of this defeat above all in the "spirit of the age," and identified with liberalism the struggle for religious liberty, which they deemed as anti-Catholic. It is interesting to note, for example, that the conference of bishops held on 21 October 1844, which preceded the previously mentioned gathering of the representatives of the cathedral chapters on 27 October 1844, ascribed the unfortunate atmosphere much more to the Protestants; and while analyzing the injuries suffered by their church, the bishops concentrated on driving back Protestantism. Apparently at the same time the representatives of the cathedral chapters no longer hoped to achieve a Catholic victory merely by opposing the rival denominations but also desired to defeat the influence of liberalism.¹³

The cathedral chapters sought from the beginning to avoid the charge that their actions constituted an effort to circumvent, or even oppose, the Catholic hierarchy and emphasized their indebtedness to the episcopate. At the same time, it appears that in disguised form desired to convince the bishops, most especially the Archbishop of Esztergom, to embrace and provide leadership for, or at least lend their names to the chapters' political movement. They desired to mobilize the entire Catholic public sphere; and the representatives wanted not only to win the entire clergy over to assume a role in their cause of public political action but also, however subtly, hoped to nudge their superiors in the same direction. The fact that during this early phase of political Catholicism the members of the cathedral chapters played the leading role is both interesting and significant. Relatively few bishops participated. The Bishop of Pécs, János Scitovszky, who became Archbishop of Esztergom in 1849, did, however, show interest and assumed a role. Unlike, the later Catholic social movements the lower clergy, the parish priests, also did not contribute to the same degree as the cathedral chapters. The representatives of the chapters sat in the lower house of the diet and as a result became particularly sensitive to the dangers liberalism posed to the privileged position of the Catholic church, which had been rooted in feudalism. As a result they probably also came to understand first that in order to resist liberalism they would have to develop a new strategy. Later during the 1860s and 1870s, that is during the period of the Compromise of 1867 and the First Vatican Council, the leading members of the Reform Era's political

Catholicism often rose to the top of the ecclesiastical hierarchy. For example, Mihály Fogarassy became Bishop of Transylvania, János Ranolder rose from Canon of Pécs to Bishop of Veszprém, István Lipovniczky was promoted from the Esztergom cathedral chapter to Bishop of Nagyvárád and János Perger moved up to become Bishop of Kassa.

In keeping with the basic stance of political Catholicism, the members of the movement in 1884 exaggerated the dangers posed to their church by the liberal proposals. They discovered the hand of devil in the demand for reciprocity by all the denominations in cases of mixed marriages and spoke of an effort to dismantle the rights of the Catholic church. The representatives of political Catholicism tended to judge any initiative directed against the Catholics as a first step designed ultimately to destroy the church. They spoke of frontal anticlerical assaults. At the same time, despite the most strident verbal exchanges, the majority of the lower house of the diet held moderate liberal views. This attitude was reflected by the response of the overwhelming majority of the county nobility at the diet and even earlier in 1841–42, when in the matter of the archbishop's encyclical on mixed marriages they deemed the behavior of the clergy as harmful and rose in clamorous protest against it. Yet, during the second phase of the dispute, when more radical ideas against the rights of the Catholic church began to circulate – Bereg county demanded civil marriage and a Hungarian Catholic church independent of Rome, while Borsod suggested the secularization of ecclesiastical lands – the overwhelming majority of the county nobility refused its support to these initiatives. It is also true, however, that during the Reform Era the church found itself under increasing attack from many more directions than earlier. This was so because Catholicism was coming into growing conflict in more and more areas with the reforms demanded by the spread of middle class values. The Catholic church suffered serious embarrassment when Károly Wurda, the representative of the Győr cathedral chapter, in unprecedented fashion at successive diocesan meetings during June of 1843 echoed the program of the opposition and proclaimed his allegiance to the concept of a "free church in a free state."¹⁴ Wurda was immediately recalled by his chapter, and his colleagues quickly distanced themselves from his views. The notebooks, letters and publications of the politically active Catholics, make clear that they did not reject just certain aspects of religious policy but repudiated the Reform Era in its entirety. They recognized in the Reform Era anti-church tendencies; and instead of seeking contacts with the opposition, they busied themselves with a complete renunciation of middle-class culture. They condemned the reform movement for its attack on feudalism and its assertion of middle-class freedoms.

In the interest of achieving concrete results, political Catholicism in general borrowed many of the seemingly successful instruments of liberalism. In other words political Catholicism seemed to recognize that in a changing world they

could employ new types of organization. One of their most important discoveries was that wooing the public and shaping public opinion in their favor had become a necessity. The political Catholics realized that their opponents, by enlivening the correspondence among the counties, by actively participating in the county assemblies, and by using the press had achieved a major advantage. In the opinion of the canons these instruments had to be appropriated, or at the very least counterbalanced.

But before taking up this matter, let us note briefly that the main goal of political Catholicism, the central aim of its organized activity, seems to have been somewhat anachronistic. Beginning with the Diet of 1825–27 the representatives of the cathedral chapters, just as the representatives of the royal free towns, retained only the right to offer advice and one collective vote for each group. The representatives of the cathedral chapters considered the loss of their individual votes a serious grievance and began striving for ever greater representation. In this undertaking they attempted to establish a common cause with the towns but with little success. Nevertheless, between 1844 and 1848 the efforts of political Catholicism were not entirely devoid of strength. They published a number of books and many newspaper articles in defense of their individual voting rights; and they also managed to win the support of some conservative minded county representatives. In 1846 they even produced a petition to the ruler. For example, the Catholic church financed conservative *Nemzeti Újság* [National Newspaper] published numerous lead articles during the diets in support of the representatives' voting rights; and prelates financed the publication of several pamphlets in the same cause. One need hardly mention that the institution of representation for the cathedral chapters at the diets was fundamentally opposed to the "spirit of the age" as well as the concepts of popular representation, modern parliamentarism, and equality before the law.¹⁵ In other words the organization of political Catholicism at this time was initiated by the desire to retain a former feudal privilege. The loss of this right was deemed a danger for the church. Just as later the loss of the tithe in 1848 and the establishment of civil marriage during the second half of the nineteenth century would be perceived as pointing toward the eventual destruction of the Catholic church.

Canon Fogarassy and his allies designated as their most important task the encouragement of activity in public life. In its characteristic fashion, political Catholicism urged the Catholic clergy not to be preoccupied exclusively with religious matters but to become engaged in the political life of the age, to let its voice be heard, and to defend its interests at the various forums of public life. At that time this meant above all encouragement for the participation of the lower Catholic clergy in the county assemblies, which were considered the most important stage for political activity, and the regular attendance of the prelates in the upper house of the national diets. The effort to urge the clergy to partici-

pate in the political life of the counties, not only in a direct manner, but also indirectly was not entirely new. What is significant, however, is that its form can be considered a new element. The political Catholics' goal was to influence the instructions to be given to the county representatives for the next diet. They could only hope to achieve this aim through actively building personal contacts. They considered the effort important, although they recognized that the majority of county representatives were liberal, and even the conservative ones were not particularly enthusiastic about the cause of the church. Often the political Catholics sought to win over the straddlers by spreading information that demonstrated the danger posed by their enemies to the public. The lower clergy were virtually directed to emphasize and, if necessary, to exaggerate the radicalism of the liberals. It is also noteworthy that in order to express effectively the Catholic point of view and successfully participate in public life, the political Catholics desired to study in depth the liberal arguments and publications.

At this time political Catholicism truly discovered one of the main sources of liberalism's Reform Era strength: the utility of a political power, which was based on the massive spread of information. One important source for the expansion of liberal views and their growing influence was the formation of public opinion through the institutional network of information exchanges among the counties. The political Catholics desired to transplant this form of interchange to the cathedral chapters. In short, through the exchange of information among various Catholic bodies, they sought to develop common positions, which would be included in the instructions for the representatives to the diets. The political Catholics wished to appropriate a mobilized public, which, although not institutionally a part of the diet, still at that time formed an increasingly important weapon in the arsenal of their opponents.

The attempt to form a Catholic public opinion was not entirely new but still significant. Above all they endeavored to establish a Catholic public opinion by financing publications. On the main issues the political Catholics wanted to influence the publications that more or less defended Catholic interests. These included: the *Religio* [sic!] *és Nevelés* [Religion and Education], which primarily attracted those interested in theology, the daily *Nemzeti Újság* [National Newspaper], and the *Budapesti Híradó* [Budapest Courier]. Nevertheless, the papers supported by the Catholic church could not compete effectively with the liberal press. The number of their subscribers did not increase, and even with the support of the clergy the publications barely continued to make ends meet. On the other hand, in 1845 the *Nemzeti Újság* acquired as editor the talented journalist Sándor Liphay, who helped make the paper a more effective mouthpiece for conservatism. In addition political Catholicism considered the improvement of religious life important. It assigned considerable significance to religious education, the acquisition and maintenance of intellectual influence over the schools, as well as the strict supervision of reading materials available

to the young. The council also first formulated the idea of an independent modern Catholic publishing house, which – the forerunner of today's Szent István Társulat [St. Stephen Society] – was formally established under the leadership of Fogarassy in 1848. The political Catholics also assigned a considerable role to the maintenance of successful boarding schools and the establishment of new ones. They also sought the clerical leadership of the Catholics who joined devotional groups and sodalities, which were intended to deepen not only the commitment to Catholicism but also to shape the political opinions of their members. Furthermore, the cathedral chapters desired to sustain good relations with not only the secular nobility and the prelates but also the lesser clergy. It was characteristic during the growth of urbanization that the Catholic church was able to react reasonably quickly and to employ to its own advantage other new developments in state and social relations. These included the laws on bills of exchange, the gradually expanding banking system, and the institutional engagement with the newly growing money economy.

Finally, the most interesting question could perhaps be the delineation of the place of political Catholicism in the development of ideology.¹⁶ We can only touch on this issue here, and can provide no definitive answers. During the debates that engulfed ecclesiastical politics in the 1830s and 1840s only a handful of conservative magnates participated, and only a few secular nobles were willing to take up the defense of the interests of the Catholic church. Although some laymen wished to portray themselves as the defenders of a “tormented church,” this stance was not typical, even of conservatives. Perhaps János Majláth's lead articles in *Nemzeti Újság* represented these defences of Catholicism best. It is also true that after 1844 the nascent conservative camp, led by Emil Dessewffy, Antal Szécsen and Sándor Liphay among others, expected the assistance of the Catholic clergy in the formation of their party. On the other hand, we ought to keep in mind that although Hungarian conservatism of later eras considers itself above all Christian and likes to portray itself as a defender of the church, this was not a general characteristic of the conservatives of the Reform Era, especially not during its formative years. Although a few signs of a link between Christianity and conservatism were apparent in 1847, these were not characteristic of the conservative camp as a whole. It would appear that the Catholic church was a necessary but somewhat uncomfortable ally. The conservatives appeared to need the support of Catholicism: the backing of the responsive prelates and lower clergy as well as the national organization of the network of parishes. At the same time, the conservatives did not automatically wish to represent the interests of the Catholic church. The reason for this was most probably connected to the situation that during the 1840s the Catholic church was at a low point in Hungary; and the “thoughtful progressives” did not want Catholic support to result in the loss of the vacillating nobility in the county assemblies.

The following episode provides a good example of the problem. The day after the official formation of the Conservative Party and the proclamation of its program on 12 November 1846, the council of the political Catholics met and expressed its dismay at the party's extensive program by protesting the complete omission of the cathedral chapter representatives' voting rights at the diet. The Catholic agitation did not remain ineffectual. In 1847 and in somewhat veiled terms Apponyi yielded to the Catholic request and expanded the program of the party to include the restoration of the cathedral chapter representatives' votes. (The events of the spring of 1848, however, probably prevented any further advance in this area.) In 1847 political Catholicism also succeeded in achieving one of its characteristic goals: it gained influence over several secular nobles, and gained their support for the interests of the church. A good example of this can be found in the lead article, "The Clergy: One of the Founders of the Conservative Party" [A clerus, mint a conservatív párt alkotó eleme] written by a layman and published by the *Nemzeti Újság* in the spring of that year.¹⁷ Although the constraints of time prevented the creation of an independent Catholic group in order to counterbalance the efforts of liberalism to legally separate church and state, the political Catholics represented a faction allied with the Conservative Party, but clearly differentiated from it. This is hardly surprising; since the opposition party, which had been working together for far longer, only organized itself during the spring of 1847 and only published a formal program in June of the same year. On the other hand, the political Catholics could point to some serious accomplishments in the field of propaganda. In 1847, of the 600 members of the conservative minded club of Pest, *Gyűlde*, one fourth were Catholic ecclesiastics; and we can find these same clerical club members working not only in the national conservative party but also in its local organizations.

In summary, despite many peculiarities, political Catholicism appeared on the stage of Hungarian political life during the Reform Era and attempted to counterbalance the growing forces of middle-class transformation.

Notes

1. József Galántai, *Egyház és politika. Katolikus egyházi körök politikai szervezkedése Magyarországon, 1890–1918* [Church and Policy: Political Organizations of Catholic Church Circles in Hungary, 1890–1918] (Budapest, 1960); Jenő Gergely, *A politikai katolicizmus Magyarországon (1890–1950)* [Political Catholicism in Hungary (1890–1950)] (Budapest, 1977).
2. Gábor Salacz, *Egyház és állam Magyarországon a dualizmus korában, 1867–1918* [Church and State in Hungary during the Age of Dualism, 1867–1918], *Dissertationes Hungaricae ex historia Ecclesiae*, no. 2 (München, 1974), 83; Mihály Futó, "Az

- 1843/44-ik évi vallástügyi tárgyalások” [The Religious Debates of 1843–1844] *Protestáns Egyházi és Iskolai Lap* (1894): nos 14–18, 212; on this concept see, among others, in detail Árpád Zeller, *A magyar egyházpolitika, 1848–1894* [Hungarian Church Policy, 1848–1894], 2 vols. (Budapest, 1894); and Mihály Miklós K. Török, *A magyar egyházpolitikai harc története, az 1847–48. évi pozsonyi országgyűléstől 1895-ig* [A History of the Conflicts over Church Policy from the Pozsony Diet of 1847–1848 to 1895], Szent István könyvek, no. 108 (Budapest, 1933).
3. Pongrác Sörös, “A kath. klérus törekvései az 1843/44. országgyűlés egyházi ügyeinek tárgyalása alatt” [The Efforts of the Catholic Clergy during the Religious Debates of the Diet of 1843–1844] *Katholikus Szemle* (1901): 865–890; Mórítz Csáky, *Der Kulturkampf in Ungarn. Die kirchenpolitische Gesetzgebung der Jahre 1894/95* [The Cultural Struggle in Hungary: The Religious Laws of 1894–1895], Studien zur Geschichte der Österreichisch–Ungarischen Monarchie, Bd. VI (Wien–Köln, 1967).
 4. Gábor Salacz, *A magyar kultúrharc története, 1890–1895* [The History of the Hungarian Cultural Struggle, 1890–1895] (Pécs, 1938), 6.
 5. Jenő Gergely, op. cit. (1977), 6.
 6. See, among others, Gábor Salacz, op. cit. (1938); and Dániel Szabó, A Néppárt megalakulása [The Formation of the People’s Party], *Történelmi Szemle* (1977): no. 2, 169–208.
 7. Jenő Gergely, “Szabad egyház a szabad államban? A politikai katolicizmusról” [A Free Church in a Free State? On Political Catholicism], *Népszabadság*, 14 August 1993, 19.
 8. *Corpus Juris Hungarici. Magyar Törvénytár, 1836–1868. évi törvénycikkek* [Corpus Juris Hungarici. Hungarian Law Code, the Laws of 1839–1868] (Budapest, 1896), 199.
 9. The secondary literature on the questions of ecclesiastical politics during the Reform Era is considerable. Among others, see Mihály Horváth, *Huszonöt év Magyarország történetéből* [Twenty-Five Years from the History of Hungary], vol. 2, (Budapest, 1886), 105–109, 169–287; Antal Meszlényi, *A jozefinizmus kora Magyarországon (1780–1846)* [The Era of Josephism in Hungary, 1780–1846] (Budapest, 1934); Egyed Hermann, *A katolikus egyház története Magyarországon 1914-ig* [A History of the Roman Catholic Church in Hungary to 1914], *Dissertationes Hungaricae ex Historia Ecclesiae*, no. 1, 2nd ed. (München, 1974); János Varga, “Megye és haladás a reformkor hajnalán (1840–1843)” [County and Progress at the Dawn of the Reform Era, 1840–1843] *Somogy Megye Múltjából* 11 (1980): 177–243, and 12(1981): 155–294.
 10. Pongrác Sörös, op. cit. (1901), 867.
 11. See e.g. Jenő Gergely, *A pápaság története* [A History of the Papacy] (Budapest, 1982), 282–284; and Béla Menczer, ed., *Catholic Political Thought, 1789–1848* (London, 1962).
 12. The following parts of this paper are basically the first treatment of this theme. My work is based primarily on Latin and Hungarian archival sources, as well as on the press (*Nemzeti Újság, Pesti Hírlap, Budapesti Híradó*). The main archival sources were: Főegyházmegyei Levéltár, Eger [Roman Catholic Archdiocesan Archive,

- Eger, Hungary] Archivum Novum 2730 (Dietalia); Püspöki és Székeskáptalani Levéltár, Székesfehérvár [Episcopal and Cathedral Chapter Archives, Székesfehérvár, Hungary] 109, no. 391 (Dietalia, 1839–1925); Pannonhalmi Főapátsági Könyvtár, Kézirattár [Library of the Archabbey, Pannonhalma, Hungary, Manuscripts] BK. 182/XI., 146/4–9; Magyar Országos Levéltár, Magyar Kancellária Levéltára, A 45 [Hungarian National Archives, Archive of the Hungarian Chancellery] Acta Praesidialia 1844–1847; Országos Széchényi Könyvtár, Budapest, Levelestár [National Széchényi Library, Budapest, Letter Collection. For a more detailed account of these sources and problems see Csaba Fazekas, “‘Az idő ránk is terhesedett.’ Adalék a politikai katolicizmus reformkori történetéhez” [‘Time has Come to Weigh Heavily on Us.’ A Contribution to the History of Political Catholicism during the Reform Era] in *A Herman Ottó Múzeum Évkönyve* [Yearbook of the Otto Herman Museum], László Veres and Gyula Viga, eds., 35/36 (1997): 255–272; Csaba Fazekas, “Katolikus egyháziak ‘platformja’ a Konzervatív Pártban. Adalékok a pártalakulás kezdetéhez a reformkori Magyarországon [The ‘Platform of the Catholics in the Conservative Party: A Contribution to the Beginnings of Party Formation in Hungary during the Reform Era] in *Az Ellenzéki Nyilatkozat és a kortársak*, András Molnár, ed. (Zalaegerszeg 1998), 73–112; Csaba Fazekas, “Katolikus politikai nyilatkozat 1846-ban” [Catholic Political Declaration in 1846] to be published at Szeged in 1998.
13. See Pongrácz Sörös, op. cit. (1901), 885–888; Ferencz Kovács, *Az 1844-ik évi országgyűlési tárgyalások naplói a papi javokról* [The Records of the Debates at the Diet of 1844 on Ecclesiastical Property] (Budapest, 1893); György Bárány, “A liberalizmus perspektívái és korlátai az 1843/44-es országgyűlés vallásügyi vitáinak tükrében” [The Perspectives and Limits of Liberalism as a Reflection of the Debates on Religion at the Diet of 1843–1844], *Századok* (1990): no. 2, 183–218.
 14. Mihály Horváth, op. cit. (1886), vol., 2, 393–403; Ferencz Kovács, *Az 1843/44-ik évi magyar országgyűlés alsó tábla kerületi üléseinek naplója* [The Records of the Lower House of the Hungarian Diet of 1843–1844], vol. 1 (Budapest, 1894), 100–314.
 15. László Révész, *Die Anfänge des ungarischen Parlamentarismus*, Südosteuropäische Arbeiten, no. 68 (München, 1968); Sebestyén Szöcs, *A városi kérdés az 1832–36. évi országgyűlésen* [The Urban Question at the Diets, 1832–1836] (Budapest, 1996); József Podhradzky, *Magyarország karainak ’s rendjeinek szavazati joga a közgyűléseken, különös figyelemmel az egyházi rendére és a királyi városokéra* [The Voting Rights of Hungary’s Estates and Orders, with Particular Attention to those of the Ecclesiastical Estates and the Royal Free Towns] (Buda, 1847); István Mester, *Nézetek a káptalanok, apátok és prépostok országgyűlési szavazatjogáról* [Perspectives on the Voting Rights of the Cathedral Chapters, Abbots, and Provoests] (Pest, 1847).
 16. On these problems see Iván Zoltán Dénes, “The Hungarian Conservatives and how They Saw Themselves,” *Journal of Hungarian Studies* (1983); in considerably greater detail Iván Zoltán Dénes, *Közügyé emelt kiváltságörzés. A magyar konzervatívok szerepe és értékvilága az 1840-es években* [The Defense of Privileges in the Public Sphere: The Role and Values of Hungarian Conservatives in the 1840s]

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17. J[ózsef] A[ndrássy], “A clerus, mint a conservatív párt alkotó eleme” [The Clergy as Founding Members of the Conservative Party], *Nemzeti Újság* 12–13 March 1847.

ADLIGE MENTALITÄT – BÜRGERLICHE MENTALITÄT (ALLTAGSLEBEN IN UNGARN, 19. JH.)

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In den späten Ständegesellschaft haben sich der rechtliche Zustand, die soziale und Vermögenssituation sowie der Beruf fallweise sehr unterschieden. Unmittelbar vor der Revolution von 1848 gehörten annähernd 5% der Bevölkerung Ungarns zum privilegierten Adel, zu ihm aber zählten die einigen hundert Aristokratenfamilien ebenso wie die große Masse der Unterschicht jener mit geringem oder ganz ohne Vermögen, die im damaligen Sprachgebrauch einfach Kleinadlige hießen. Die große Mehrheit der letzteren bebaute das eigene Feld selbst und befand sich auf dem Lebensniveau der Leibeigenen, zum kleineren Teil waren sie Handwerker oder Händler. Betrachten wir allerdings den Beruf näher, so stellt sich heraus, daß etwa 85% der Bevölkerung Landwirte waren und dieser Anteil außer der Unterschicht des Adels auch die Leibeigenen und die freien Bauern ohne Leibeigenbindung umfaßte. Im ständischen Sinne Bürger waren nur die Bewohner der kleinen Zahl von privilegierten königlichen Freistädten, doch lebten außer ihnen viele Adlige und Nichtadlige ebenfalls von bürgerlichen Berufen, nicht nur von Gewerbe und Handel, sondern auch in Intellektuellenberufen. Als 1848 die feudalen Privilegien beseitigt wurden, hätte der bürgerliche Rechtszustand die soziale und Vermögenssituation auf einheitlicher Basis umgestalten müssen. Dieser Prozeß ging in Ungarn aber nur sehr langsam vor sich, die bestimmende Kraft der untergegangenen Ständegesellschaft war sehr viel zäher, als die meisten Zeitgenossen ursprünglich angenommen hatten.

In der Ständegesellschaft Adliger zu sein, bedeutete genau umschriebene Privilegien, ungeachtet dessen gab es aber zwischen einzelnen Gruppen des Adels erhebliche Vermögensunterschiede. Am Beginn des 19. Jahrhunderts konnte man in Ungarn wahrscheinlich auf einen Blick den Adligen von gleich vermögenden Bürgen unterscheiden, weil sie sich verschieden benahmen und andere Kleidung trugen. In dieser Zeit vermischen sich aber schon ihre äußeren Merkmale. Ein Graf schrieb 1816 aus einem oberungarischen Modebad an seinen Freund, daß die das Bad besuchenden Bürgerfrauen aus der nahen Stadt trügen oftmals viel feinere und schönere Kleider als die Adligen. Zu seinem Glück – so berichtete er

weiter – unterschieden sie sich durch ungeschickte Bewegung und ungeschliffenes Verhalten bzw. durch die Eleganz der höheren Geburt.

In der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft verschwanden die Adelsvorrechte, jeder war Bürger (citoyen), doch wer im soziologischen Sinne tatsächlich ein Bürger war, ließ sich sehr schwer genau bestimmen. Unter den möglichen Gesichtspunkten treten gemischt das Vermögen, der Beruf und der Wohnort auf. In meinem Vortrag näherte ich mich der Frage von der das Alltagsleben formenden Mentalität her an. Dieser Gesichtspunkt wurde in der ungarischen Historiographie im allgemeinen stiefmütterlich behandelt, er wurde von den Ereignissen der Politik-, Wirtschafts- und Rechtsgeschichte in den Hintergrund verdrängt. Dabei wußten die Zeitgenossen, die die bürgerliche Umgestaltung betrieben, sehr wohl und betonten es, daß um das Ziel zu erreichen, auch die Umgestaltung der Mentalität und der Alltagskultur nötig sei. Oder von anderer Seite her betrachtet: Die bürgerliche Umgestaltung wird durch die Verbürgerlichung von Mentalität und Alltagskultur vollständig. Ich möchte nur auf das bekannteste Beispiel verweisen: Die Führungsgestalt des ungarischen Vormärz, Graf István Széchenyi, der die Ungehobeltheit der Ungarn so sehr geißelte, schrieb unter anderem Abhandlungen über hygienische und ästhetische Fragen der modernen Wohnung sowie über die Sauberkeit auf den Pester Straßen und ergriff die Initiative für die Gestaltung der ersten Pester Promenade.

Bezeichnend für die Kraft der Adelstraditionen ist, daß als im Juli 1848 das erste Abgeordnetenparlament zusammentrat, hatte man es versäumt, die einheitliche bürgerliche Anrede einzuführen. Die aristokratischen, (früheren) adligen und bürgerlichen Regierungsmitglieder und Abgeordneten behielten sämtlich ihre gewohnten, die Unterschiede der untergegangenen Gesellschaftsordnung widerspiegelnden Anreden bei. Dabei hätte man sehr wohl deklarieren können, daß von nun an alle feudalen Titel- und Rangbezeichnungen weggelassen werden, weil sie keinen realen Inhalt mehr haben und jedermann einfach nur ein bürgerlicher „Herr“ ist. Das wäre nicht gänzlich überraschend gewesen, denn in den vorangegangenen Jahrzehnten hatte man in der Presse mehrfach Meinungen über die moderne Sprache des Gemeinschaftslebens und die bürgerliche Anrede ausgetauscht. Statt einer Vereinheitlichung begannen jedoch die Titel und Ränge, die jede Geltung verloren hatten, wie Schlingpflanzen zu wuchern, einander übertreffend entstanden immer wieder neue und bildeten eine fast nicht mehr zu überblickende Hierarchie. Es vergingen fast hundert Jahre, bis sie gesetzlich abgeschafft wurden.

Die tief in der Ständegesellschaft wurzelnde Autoritätsverehrung und die Aufgliederung in Gruppen beeinflussten fast alle wichtigen Bereiche des Gesellschaftslebens im Adel. Ehe und Familiengründung waren nicht einfach eine Institution zur Erhaltung der menschlichen Gattung, sondern dienten auch der Erhaltung des Namens der Familie und des Wachstum ihres Vermögens. In der ersten Hälfte des 19. Jahrhunderts erblickte der ungarische verarmte Adel eine

Verbesserung seiner Lage oftmals in einer „guten Ehe“, das heißt, in einer großen Mitgift der Braut. Man schätzte eine ausgedehnte Verwandtschaft sehr und hielt nicht selten sogar die Verwandten fünften bis sechsten Grades in Evidenz, was eine genaue Kenntnis der vorangegangenen Generationen voraussetzte. Die Blutsverwandtschaft hatte einen höheren Wert als die angeheiratete. Diese Denkweise beruhte auf zwei praktischen Gründen. Nach dem Feudalrecht konnte das Adelsgut auch der entferntesten Erbe in der verwandtschaftlichen Hierarchie erben, ansonsten fiel es wieder an den prinzipiellen Erstverleiher, den König. Der andere Grund hing damit zusammen, daß es die Mitglieder der Verwandtschaft für ihre moralische Pflicht hielten, ihre gegenseitige Verwirklichung zu unterstützen. Dies bedeutete vor allem, daß sie einander halfen, zu Würden, Ämtern und sonstigen Vorteilen zu gelangen, die Studierten gaben Rat in Rechtssachen oder erledigten diese sogar, und halfen beim Zustandekommen von Eheschließungen, doch kam es seltener zur Geldleihe oder zu Schenkungen. Je größer die Verwandtschaft war, desto größer war auch ihre gesellschaftliche Kraft und Autorität. Es ist bezeichnend, daß dieses Beziehungssystem auch noch durch die Einbeziehung der „künstlichen Verwandtschaft“ erweitert wurde. Am verbreitetsten war es so bei Protestanten wie auch bei Katholiken, nicht die Bluts- oder angeheirateten Verwandten als Taufpaten zu bestimmen, sondern Personen aus dem Freundeskreis oder der Nachbarschaft, und dann auch nicht nur ein Ehepaar, sondern gleich 6 bis 8. Diese Beziehung begann mit kleineren oder größeren Taufgeschenken und sicherte später im Notfalle gegenseitige Unterstützung.

Die privilegierten Gruppen waren um Endogamie bemüht, und deshalb kann man den ungarischen Adel auch als eine einzige riesige Verwandtschaft betrachten. In Wirklichkeit war er eher das Gespinnst großer Verwandtschaftsgruppen, und oft verbanden dieselben Gruppen mehrere Eheschließungen. Anschaulich spiegelt diese Lage, daß im archaischen Ungarisch einander völlig unbekannte Menschen, die aber zur gleichen Gesellschaftsschicht gehörten, sich bei ihrer ersten Begegnung unter Berücksichtigung des Alters als älterer oder jüngerer Bruder, ältere oder jüngere Schwester anredeten. Dies war vor allem beim Adel üblich, als Ausdruck der Quasi-Verwandtschaft.

Zur Pflege des Verwandtschaftsgefühls standen eine ganze Reihe gesellschaftlicher Einrichtungen zur Verfügung. Geringfügig übertrieben kann man sagen, daß keine Gelegenheit ausgelassen wurde. Die kritischen Zeitgenossen und die Nachwelt warfen gleicherweise dem Adel seinen verschwenderischen Lebensstil, seine mangelnde Sparsamkeit vor. In Wirklichkeit waren die Adligen in ihrer großen Mehrheit geizig, sie schätzten es gar nicht, Geld auszugeben, von dem sie im allgemeinen wenig hatten. Eine Ausnahme bildeten Gastlichkeit und Repräsentierung gesellschaftlicher Autorität, bei denen die keine Ausgaben scheuten. Beide fielen oft zusammen. In der ersten Hälfte des 19. Jahrhunderts gab es in Ungarn noch keinen einheitlichen nationalen Markt. Die

Adelsgüter wirtschafteten zum großen Teil selbständig. Da es keine Transportinfrastruktur, keine verarbeitende Industrie und letztlich keine Investitionsmöglichkeiten gab, ließ sich mit einem großen Teil des Ernteüberschusses nichts anderes anfangen, als ihn aufzuessen, wozu die häufigen Einladungen von Gästen gute Gelegenheit boten. Das war tatsächlich Verschwendung. Die Gastfreundschaft wurde als Prestigewert behandelt und gehörte zu einem Bestandteil der romantischen Nationalcharakterologie, ja, sie hat diese überlebt, da sie bis heute andauert. Allerdings darf auch nicht verschwiegen werden, daß die Verschwendung bis zur Mitte des 19. Jahrhunderts ein Grund der Verschuldung der Adligen geworden war und später dann, als ihre Nachkommen im bürgerlichen Staat nicht mehr durch Privilegien geschützt waren, sehr zu ihrer Existenzkrise und ihrem gesellschaftlichen Abstieg beigetragen hat.

Die allgemeinsten Anlässe für Verwandtschaftstreffen waren die großen Lebenswenden, die zwar abhängig von der materiellen Situation, aber immer festlich gefeiert wurden. Der Geburt folgte in der ersten Hälfte des 19. Jahrhunderts auch bei den Protestanten die Taufe noch fast sofort, aber am festlichen Mittagessen nahmen nur die engste Familie und die Taufpaten teil. Um so weiter war der Kreis, der für das Hochzeitsabendessen offiziell eingeladen wurde. Die Hochzeit diente den betreffenden Familien auch als öffentliche Repräsentation ihres Vermögens und Prestiges und kostete in manchen Fällen Anstrengungen, die ihre materielle Situation ins Wanken brachte. Diesen Brauch ahmten vor allem die Bauern nach. Später wurde es unter den Dorfbewohnern allgemein modisch und ist es bis heute geblieben. Schließlich war es eine moralische Pflicht, bei Beerdigungen zu erscheinen, um dem Verstorbenen die letzte Ehre zu geben. Dies galt als breiteste Gelegenheit, sich im Verwandtschafts-, Freundes- und Bekanntenkreis zu treffen. Die den Beginn des Erwachsenwerdens bedeutende Konfirmation verbreitete sich bei den Protestanten Ungarns erst zu Beginn des 19. Jahrhunderts, weshalb sie nicht *den* Charakter eines Familientreffens hat wie im deutschen Sprachraum und in den Ländern Nordeuropas. Ähnliches gilt für die Erstkommunion und die Firmung bei den Katholiken.

Herausragende Zeitpunkte für Verwandtenbesuche waren der zweite Tag der drei hohen Kirchenfeste (Weihnachten, Ostern, Pfingsten), die übrigens keinerlei sakralen Bezug hatten. Ebenfalls Gelegenheiten für Verwandtschaftstreffen waren die mehrtägigen Landesmärkte in jeder Jahreszeit, die damals jährlich 3–4mal in einer Siedlung abgehalten und ohne sozialen Unterschied von allen besucht wurden. Dabei fanden Versammlungen in den größeren Gutsbesitzerfamilien statt, an denen jedes männliche Mitglied erscheinen und an der Behandlung und Entscheidung der gemeinsamen Familienangelegenheiten teilnehmen mußte. Der Hausherr bewirtete die zu Besuch kommenden Verwandten und sorgte für ihre Unterbringung. Unabhängig von den hervorgehobenen Verwandtenbesuchstagen galt es als größte Beleidigung, das Haus eines bekannten oder verwandten Adligen zu übergehen, wenn man gerade auf der Durchreise

war. Ohne jede Anmeldung konnte man wann auch immer eintreffen, das adlige Wohnhaus stand prinzipiell immer offen und für den Empfang von Gästen und den oftmals mehrere Tage dauernden Gästeaufenthalt bereit. Mit diesem Brauch wehrte man sich auch gegen die Langeweile und Abgeschlossenheit des Provinzlebens.

Dieser wichtige Gesichtspunkt hielt den Kult der Namenstage am Leben, der ganz ruhig eine ungarische Spezialität genannt werden kann. Am Namenstag lud man keine Gäste ein, doch gehörte es sich für Verwandte, Freunde und Bekannte, hinzugehen und eine Gratulation, ein Gedicht und gute Wünsche anzubringen, wofür zum Dank Essen und Trinken aufgetragen wurden. Anders als in den westlichen und nördlichen Regionen Europas mit protestantischer Kulturtradition hielten in Ungarn auch die Protestanten an den in den südeuropäischen katholischen Regionen allgemeinen, ursprünglich mit den Heiligenfesten verbundenen Namenstagen fest, ja gerade der ärmere protestantische Adel am stärksten. Vielleicht befriedigte dieser damit sein Bedürfnis auf Festlichkeiten, das die Katholiken weniger nötig hatten, wegen der von ihrer Kirche vorgeschriebenen Marienfeste und Heiligengedenktage. Das Feiern des Geburtstages verbreitete sich in Ungarn erst seit Anfang des 20. Jahrhunderts in breiteren Kreisen als typisch bürgerlicher Brauch ohne konfessionellen Unterschied. Die Namenstagsgratulation hat sich so zäh erhalten, daß sie auch heute als einer der häufigsten gesellschaftlichen Bräuche in fast allen Schichten gepflegt wird. Nebenbei sei bemerkt, daß in kommunistischer Zeit auch die am staatlichen Arbeitsplatz während der Arbeitszeit gefeierten Namenstage in Mode kamen und als Folge einer lockeren Arbeitsmoral auch durch strenge Verfügungen nicht zurückgedrängt werden konnten.

Auf zwei mit der Einbringung der landwirtschaftlichen Produkte zusammenhängende Gelegenheiten muß noch eingegangen werden, weil sie beide sehr populär waren. Die eine war die Weinlese in den Weinbieten im September und Oktober, die andere das häusliche Schweineschlachten von November bis Februar zur Sicherung des Fleisch- und Fettbedarfs für den eigenen Haushalt. Alle beide fanden von reichlichem Essen und Trinken, Musik, Tanz und gemeinsamem Singen begleitet, statt.

Die bürgerliche Mentalität wurde im Alltagsleben fast niemals scharf mit der des Adels konfrontiert. Einige Andeutungen haben schon darauf hingewiesen, daß der Bürger dazu neigte, die adlige Mentalität in irgendwelcher Form zu akzeptieren. Tat er dies nicht, so erschien eher ein Mangel als ein gegensätzlicher anderer Brauch. So geschah es mit der Praxis der Gastfreundschaft, die als nationaler Charakterzug auch das Bürgertum übernahm, nicht aber ihre an des Provinzleben gebundenen und verschwenderischen Formen. Heute, in der Zeit des weltweit zum Geschäft gewordenen Fremdenverkehr, hält sie die öffentliche Meinung nach wie vor für eine ungarische Eigenart, und sie ist hoffentlich auch nicht aus der internationalen Meinung über uns Ungarn verschwunden, auch

wenn wahrscheinlich kein einziges Volk in Europa von sich sagen wird, es sei *nicht* gastfreundlich, und der Fremdenverkehr ganz sicher überall Reklame mit der Gastfreundschaft des betreffenden Landes macht. Der Bürger verhält sich weniger oder anderswie zeremoniell als der Adlige. Zur adligen Bewirtung gehörte häufiges und zuweilen aggressives Anbieten von Essen und Trinken. Dennoch verlangte es die adlige Etikette des 19. Jahrhunderts, daß der Gast zuerst selbst dann die Speise ablehnte, wenn er sehr hungrig war. Versäumte er dies, machte er auf den Gastgeber den Eindruck eines unziemlich gierigen Gastes. Beim zweiten Anbieten gehörte es sich, die Speisen anzunehmen, ja man faßte es als Beleidigung auf, wenn der Gast nicht so oft erneut zulange, wie ihm angeboten wurde, ob er wollte oder nicht. In jedem Fall mußte aber auf das Anbieten gewartet werden – von sich aus Speisen auf den Teller zu nehmen, galt gleichfalls als unziemlich, ebenso wie das Austrinken des ersten Glas Weines, bevor der Hausherr mit seinerseitigem Zutrinken das Zeichen dafür gegeben hatte. Diese Bräuche sind alle aus der adligen Tradition mehr oder weniger auch in die heutige allgemeine Praxis eingegangen.

Zum Aufhören der prinzipiell uneingeschränkten Gastlichkeit hat auch der Charakter der Bürgerwohnung beigetragen. Das Tor der Adelskurie stand symbolisch immer offen, in der Küche brannte das Feuer, ein Weinflaß im Keller war angestochen. Die bürgerliche Lebensordnung dagegen beschnitt die Zeit und Art des Gästeempfangs. In der Bürgerfamilie wurde eine feste Zeit für Visiten eingeführt, zum Essen, Abendbrot und zu gesellschaftlichen Anlässen wurden die Gäste extra eingeladen. Die Zimmer in der adligen Wohnung hatten Mischcharakter, sie waren dem Gast prinzipiell nicht verschlossen. In der Bürgerwohnung war das Schlafzimmer, das nur die Mitglieder der engeren Familie und der Hausdiener betreten durften und wo die wichtigsten Wertstücke und persönlichen Gegenstände aufbewahrt wurden, ein völlig verschlossener, intimer Raum. Gegen Ende des 19. Jahrhunderts entstand in den Großstädten der Österreichisch-Ungarischen Monarchie ein Idealtyp der Wohnung der bürgerlichen Mittelschicht, außer den Nebenräumen bestehend aus einem Vorzimmer (der Halle) und drei, sich ineinander öffnenden Wohnräumen. Einer von diesen war das erwähnte Schlafzimmer, das andere das Eßzimmer, wo die Familie dreimal täglich die Mahlzeiten einnahm, und das dritte das Wohnzimmer, in dem man die meiste Zeit des Tages verbrachte; hier empfing man die Besucher, hier spielten und lernten die Kinder, ruhten und unterhielten sich die Eltern, eventuell wurde es auch als Arbeitszimmer des geistesberuflichen Familienvorstandes benutzt. Dies war die kleinste Wohnung, für die aus gesellschaftlichem Zwang und praktischen Gründen schon ein Hausdiener angestellt werden mußte.

Natürlich gab es Bürgerwohnungen mit ganz verschiedenem Grundriß, kleinere und größere. Der Bürger des 19. Jahrhunderts ergänzte die Geschlossenheit und Introvertiertheit des Familienlebens durch einen Ausgleich schaffende äußere Gemeinschaftseinrichtungen. Der Brauch des Kaffeetrinkens war in

Ungarn seit dem 17. Jahrhundert bekannt und wurde außer dem öffentlichen Kaffeeausschank in einigen bedeutenderen Städten im 18. Jahrhundert im familiären Kreis gepflegt. Seit dem Ende des 18. Jahrhunderts öffneten parallel mit dem Erstarken des Bürgertums immer mehr Kaffeehäuser, welche die Männergesellschaft zum Zwecke des Kaffee- und Alkoholtrinkens besuchte. Das Speiseangebot war zumeist bescheiden. Baron Podmaniczky hat im Herbst 1847 in einer Kleinstadt nahe Pests mit großem Erfolg in der Weise um Stimmen für die Wahlen zum letzten Ständelandtag geworben, daß er eine Kneipe am Donauufer zum Kaffeehaus umbaute, wo die armen Provinzadligen auf seine Kosten Kaffee trinken und Zigarren rauchen konnten. In der zweiten Jahrhunderthälfte nahm die ungarische Karriere des Kaffeehauses einen starken Aufstieg. Mit dem städtischen Rang konnte nur eine Siedlung rechnen, auf deren Marktplatz zumindest ein Café öffnete. Im ersten Jahrzehnt des 20. Jahrhunderts gab es nach verschiedenen Schätzungen in Budapest 500 bis 700 Cafés. Das Kaffeehaus wurde zu einer der wichtigsten Institutionen der Sozialisierung des Bürgers, die sogenannte „Kaffeehaus-Kultur“ zum typischsten Ausdruck seines Lebensgefühls. Ähnlich verlief die Geschichte der jüngeren Schwester des Cafés, der Konditorei, dem typischen Kind des sich in der nachnapoleonischen Periode von Wien ausbreitenden Biedermeier. In diesem Zeitraum erhöhte sich in Mitteleuropa der Zuckerverbrauch erheblich. Früher wurden besondere Süßigkeiten vor allem in den Küchen der Aristokraten hergestellt, im Biedermeier wurde ihr Verzehr zum Bürgerbrauch. Die Konditorei besuchte die ganze Familie besonders am Sonntagnachmittag, aber es widersprach der Sitte auch nicht, wenn dort Damen ohne Begleiter saßen, und die Familienmutter konnte ihre Kinder mitbringen. Es gab süßes Gebäck, Erfrischungsgetränke, Tee, Kaffee und leichte süße Spirituosen, es spielte keine Musik, und es war verboten zu rauchen.

Auf adlige Initiativen hin entstand eine der charakteristischen Institutionen des bürgerlichen Gesellschaftslebens im 19. Jahrhundert, die ersten geschlossenen Klubs. Das ungarische Urmuster schuf im Jahre 1827 aufgrund seiner englischen Reiseerlebnisse Graf István Széchenyi gemeinsam mit Aristokraten, in der Absicht, eine „Werkstätte“ für den geistig-gesellschaftlichen Aufstieg des Landes einzurichten. Dies wurde sehr schnell und an vielen Orten nachgeahmt. Aber diese Klubs und Vereine waren und blieben zumindest ebenso gegliedert wie in England. Sie entstanden getrennt nach Gesellschaftsschichten, Vermögens- und Berufsgruppen, ja sogar nach der Herkunft der Mitglieder.

Hinter den unterschiedlichen Formen verbarg sich die Verschiedenheit der adligen und bürgerlichen Auffassung von Arbeit und Ausruhen. Der Adlige kannte den Begriff der Freizeit nicht; sie ist eine Erfindung des Bürgers, die für uns heutige einer der größten Schätze ist. Auch der Adlige hatte freie Zeit, aber wurde ihm nicht so bewußt wie in unserer heutigen Auffassung. Vor dem 18. Jahrhundert hatte den Lebensrhythmus des europäischen Menschen der sich von Jahr zu Jahr genau wiederholende Wechsel von Wochentagen und Festen

bestimmt. Die Feste – einschließlich selbstverständlich der Sonntage – waren ausnahmslos an die Kirchen gebunden, wir wissen, daß auch die Familienfeste eine unzweideutige sakrale Bindung hatten. Die National- und staatlichen Feiertage wurden erst später üblich und haben größtenteils bürgerlichen Charakter. Die Festentweihung galt im Mittelalter als schwere Sünde, auf wen sich aber das Arbeitsverbot bezog, wurde bereits unterschiedlich gedeutet.

In der Neuzeit hielt der wohlhabendere Adlige die Arbeit für seiner unwürdig; unter dieser verstand er vor allem die physische Arbeit, weshalb er die sich mit ihm in gleicher Rechtsstellung befindlichen armen Adligen verachtete, die sich mit Ackerbau oder Handwerken beschäftigten. Als niedrigerrangig galten ihm auch jene Adelsgenossen, die in einem Vertragsverhältnis arbeiteten, etwa als Verwalter von Großgütern, und die Priester, weil er sie wegen ihrer Anstellung für Knechte hielt, welcher Stand nicht zum Adelsethos paßte. Falls er ein Landes-, Komitats- oder städtisches, eventuell auch ein kirchliches Amt übernahm, bewog ihn moralisch dazu die Amtsfähigkeit aufgrund der Abstammung, für die er einen Ehrensold oder Spesen empfing. Der Adlige war also nicht untätig, er erledigte nur fast alle Dinge als freiwillige Pflicht- und Aufgabenerfüllung, nicht nur die Amtsführung, sondern auch die Teilnahme an den Anlässen des Gesellschaftslebens und den Festen, die Pflege der Verwandtschafts- und Freundschaftsbeziehungen, die Jagd, die Wirtschaftsleitung, die Beschäftigung als Lokalpolitiker und vieles andere. Für uns ist hier wichtig, daß er keinen wesentlichen Unterschied zwischen der in den Augen der Nachwelt amtlichen oder nicht amtlichen Beschäftigung und der Ruhe bzw. dem Ausspannen machte.

Völlig anders denkt der Bürger, der erkannte, daß gesteigerte Mehrarbeit das bewußte Ausruhen und Ausspannen verlangt. Hier sollen nicht die Methoden der Jagd nach Profit im modernen Kapitalismus und die Ausbeutung weder der eigenen noch fremder Arbeitskraft behandelt werden. Es geht um den Bürger, der Arbeitszeit und Freizeit voneinander trennt. Er verwendet die Freizeit im Tages-, Wochen oder Jahreszyklus auf das Kräftesammeln, die Ruhe und Lockerung, beispielsweise für den Familienkreis, das Gesellschafts- oder öffentliche Leben, später für Touristik, Sport, Reisen und unter vielem anderen vielleicht für das typischste, den Urlaub. Selbstverständlich war für den Urlaub materielle Sicherheit und eine entwickeltere Arbeitsteilung nötig, man mußte also sein Geschäft, seine Werkstatt oder Unternehmung für gewisse Zeit einem Vertreter oder Mitarbeiter überlassen können. In Ungarn begannen nach österreichischem Vorbild in der ersten Hälfte des 19. Jahrhunderts Badeorte in größerer Zahl zu entstehen. Diese besuchte auch der Besitzadel auf der Suche nach Gesellschaft und weil es gesellschaftlich Mode war, aber ganz typischerweise reiste er heim, wenn im Juli die Ernte und der Drusch begannen, um bei diesen wichtigen Wirtschaftsarbeiten anwesend zu sein, selbst wenn die persönliche Lenkung nicht nötig war, weil diese der Gutsverwalter inne hatte.

Der Bürger beschäftigte eingearbeitete Fachleute. Das brauchte nicht betont zu werden, wenn dies ebenso unbedingt auch der Adlige getan hätte. Die Adelsmentalität mit ihrer hohen Bewertung von Familie und Verwandtschaft neigte dazu, von Sachverstand und Eignung abzusehen, wenn ein Familienglied zu unterstützen war, denn man meinte – etwas zugespitzt formuliert –, der Betreffende sei genügend qualifiziert, wenn er zum Verwandtschafts- oder Freundeskreis gehörte. Das Weiterexistieren der Protektion hat besonders viele Konflikte im bürgerlichen Staat verursacht, als sich die Nachkommen der früheren Adligen bewogen von der Familientradition um die Übernahme von Ämtern bemühten. Einer Anekdote nach wurde ein sich um ein Amt bewerbender junger Mann gefragt, was er für einen Beruf habe. Seine selbstsichere Antwort lautete: „Daß ich der Sohn meines Vaters bin“.

Wir würden uns gegen die Wahrheit vergehen, wenn wir ausschließlich diese Feststellungen verallgemeinern würden. Es wäre ein schwerer Irrtum zu meinen, die Adligen seien keine professionellen Fachleute gewesen. Es genügt, darauf zu verweisen, daß die moderne öffentliche und Fachverwaltung im bürgerlichen Staat gerade von den Nachkommen des seiner Privilegien verlustig gegangenen Adels organisiert wurde, der Generationen hindurch die Ämter besetzt hatte. Andererseits gab es offensichtlich ebenso auch Bürger, die sich entweder nach dem Adelsmodell richtend oder einfach aus menschlicher Schwäche die Protektion unterstützten. Auch der Bürger liebte seine Familie und hielt die Verwandtschaft in Ehren. Den Kreis seiner Gefühle engte aber auf der einen Seite ein, daß er sein mit eigener Arbeit erworbenes Vermögen höher achtete als die einfach ererbten Güter und mit der Geburt verbundenen Vorteile, und auf der anderen bedeutete die Verwandtschaftsgröße kein Ansehen für ihn. Deshalb hielt er nicht über viele Generationen zurück seine Vorfahren und demzufolge auch nicht seine entfernteren lebenden Verwandten in Evidenz.

Bei den politischen Reformprogrammen fiel das Hauptgewicht auf die gesellschaftliche und wirtschaftliche Umgestaltung, und dem liberalen Denken der Zeit war es fremd, direkt auf das den Alltag der Menschen gestaltende Denken Einfluß zu nehmen. Vielleicht ist dies auch die Erklärung für die gewisse Gleichgültigkeit der Historiographie für diese Fragen. Im ersten Jahrzehnt des 20. Jahrhunderts kommt es in Ungarn erstmals zu so bedeutenden Reformen der Lebensweise, die wichtige Bereiche des Alltagslebens durch zentrale Lenkung mit Hilfe von Presse und schulischem Unterricht umgestalten wollen, die als Bestandteil internationaler Tendenzen die gesunde Ernährung und Bekleidungsmode verkünden. Diese gehören jedoch nicht in unseren momentanen Interessenkreis.

NINETEENTH-CENTURY HUNGARIAN PIONEERS OF HIGHER EDUCATION

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Hungarians are proud of their educational system which, as various surveys proved time after time, has been among the best – at least until recently. In the light of this justified pride, it is amazing how little is known about the history of Hungarian education. I leave aside the valuable former publications gathering dust on library shelves, or university notes of the boring “History of Pedagogy” courses which were compulsory parts of the curriculum during the past decades. More regrettable is the lack of information on education in volumes that claim to survey Hungarian culture, past and present. *Information Hungary* a thoroughly communist propaganda volume (1967), nominally edited by Ferenc Erdei, printed a few pages about the history of education, and many more about the institutional structure of education after World War II. Other pre- and post-war publications in which education would have had a logical place, such as *Mi a magyar?* (1939) and, recently, the *Pannon enciklopédia* (1993), have no chapters about this subject. The most interesting and timely ideas of our educators are hard to find in concise summaries, even harder to locate in the original texts.

While education is admittedly an important social issue that almost everybody has some opinion about, it is also conceived as a field of practical activity. It shares an assumed historical irrelevance with the advancement of technology. While hundreds of millions of people around the world have computers, it is doubtful that many would be interested in the evolution of the computer, from the room-size monsters of the nineteen-fifties to today’s laptops. This pragmatic outlook hardly explains, however, why so many outstanding educators are better known for other abilities. Baron Loránd Eötvös lives in our memory as a scientist, Countess Blanka Teleki a patriot, Count Kunó Klebelsberg a member of István Bethlen’s government. Very few Hungarians would know anything about the pedagogical ideas of these three, not to mention many other educators who have enriched Hungary’s culture.

The goal of this paper is to survey the contribution of some educators of the previous century to Hungarian and world civilization. There was no shortage of great pedagogues: this was the age of Herbart, Humboldt, and Spencer, the old

Pestalozzi and the young Montessori. Our Hungarian educators have not been recognized as equals of these world-famous men and women. It is time to settle this debt.

By 1887 Loránd Eötvös had been professor of natural sciences for fifteen years, which had given him ample opportunity to gather observations about higher education. In that year, the need to share these observations and find allies for an educational reform led Eötvös to address Ágoston Trefort, the minister of religion and education, in an "open letter," which was printed in the April issue of the monthly journal *Budapesti Szemle* (Budapest Observer). Four years later, Eötvös became president of the university and his inaugural speech, printed in *Természettudományi Közlöny* (Journal of Natural Sciences) continued the quest for new ideals.¹ Interestingly, he did not continue publishing about this subject in subsequent years, although pertinent remarks can be found also in his later writings. Probably the seven short months of his ministership of religion and education, a position from which he resigned early in 1895, made him realize how enormously difficult it would be to put his ideas into practice. Nevertheless, some of these ideas are even more timely now than were a century ago.

First, the dream. What does Eötvös have to say about the goals of an ideal university education? The double goal is: to develop leaders of society and the church, and, to educate scholars in different sciences (to which, according to Hungarian and German terminology, also the study of the arts and literature belong; p. 173). Long ago, the prestige of knowledge made young people follow scholars of intellectual eminence in order to learn from them. Thus, universities were formed by a spontaneous search for knowledge, not by administrative decrees (as Eötvös adds sarcastically). Society appreciated learning and made practical use of it, while the leaders of society – such as popes, emperors, and kings – appointed scholars to high positions by making them bishops, counselors, and so on. "This relationship between university and society has guaranteed the prestige and freedom of this institution from the beginning until our times" (195-7). Thus, the duties of the university include conveying not only knowledge but also values. "A nation entrusts us with the best of its sons," who can be impressed and guided only by the eminence and good personal example of their teachers (206).

At this point Eötvös makes a not entirely novel distinction which, however, cannot be emphasized enough. What are the criteria of true scholarship as opposed to bookish knowledge?

We can call one a true scholar only if he has acquired a general ability of reasoning by the thorough study of one discipline. In addition, he should have acquired a wide range of knowledge, so that he can solve problems of both scientific and practical nature, albeit perhaps only af-

ter a long deliberation and much research. A good judge or lawyer is not one who can immediately quote some article pertinent to the case on hand. Likewise, the good physician is not one who just casts a glance at the patient and immediately decides which fashionable treatment to use.

To solve the many complicated cases in any social activity or scholarly discipline, "one has to possess an integrity of thinking which cannot be replaced by already existing rules" (175). Elsewhere, Eötvös continues the argument. The independence of thought can be taught only by educators who think independently. Therefore, the standard of any university depends primarily on the personality of its professors. A university course cannot offer as complete knowledge as a handbook, yet the teacher can arrive at a synthesis, and can focus on the essence of a subject, more successfully than any book (202–4). As a matter of fact, university teachers should not be expected to enhance their lectures by writing textbooks, argues Eötvös (179).

Next comes reality. Eötvös finds much to criticize about the Hungarian university system of his time, that is, universities before the turn of the century. In the first place, he ostracizes the increasing priority of administration and bureaucracy. "Bad regulations can cripple the activity of the most outstanding teachers," he wrote in 1887. He blames the slavish application of foreign rules which were borrowed from universities of other countries without regard to the Hungarian conditions (173). In Germany, for instance, the freedom of choosing one's courses makes students elect fewer courses which they take seriously, while their colleagues in Hungary take a large number of courses which they never attend (176–7). The tradition in Hungary is not knowledge-oriented but performance-oriented: students register for less demanding courses, or those taught by lenient professors (181).

A Hungarian student is happy to enter the university. [...] He is enthusiastic about everything that is beautiful and good, he loves freedom and nation, and aspires to become a famous person due to his service performed for his country. There is one thing that he is not enthusiastic about: scholarship. Should we blame him? We Hungarians have had brave soldiers, great statesmen, famous orators, but who can mention one Hungarian who became famous and great purely as a scholar? (180)

Eötvös establishes four types of Hungarian university students. The first one despises knowledge since his family is prestigious and so will he be, by virtue of his inherited name. The second group's aim is not knowledge but to get a diploma. The third type will eventually choose a practical field such as law or medicine, and criticizes both theoretical studies and anything else that does not serve his narrow career purpose. Only a small group of idealists study for the sake of knowledge, without considering how it may further their career (181–2).

The result of the heterogeneous motivations and expectations is a frustrated teacher who realizes that his knowledge and synthesizing mind don't appeal to most students. Instead of visiting his lectures, absentee students use notes from the past, or some convenient summarizing booklet, to prepare for their examinations. Eötvös writes: "... after his carefully structured, intelligent and scholarly series of lecture, [the professor] has to ask questions at the high-school level, unless he decides to be absurdly consistent and flunks ninety-nine percent of his students" (172). After a while professors become cynical: realizing that they cannot influence the development of their students, they either lower their standards or lecture at such level that their students don't understand half of it (183).²

In order to remedy the bitter realities of Hungarian universities, Eötvös proposed far-reaching reforms. Two of these targeted the traditional attitudes of Hungarian students. In the first place, Eötvös wanted to make course attendance compulsory (176). Next, in order to counter the pragmatic nonchalance toward scholarly theory, he suggested that those intending to pursue a professional career should be required to take theoretical courses pertinent to their field in the first two years of their studies. Furthermore, Eötvös planned to introduce regular examinations in all such courses, which remind the North American reader of the tests and quizzes that are given here (184–5). Naturally, this new system would put an increased work load on the professors, which should be alleviated by hiring "*repetitors*" – that is, in "our" language, teaching assistants (187). (As Eötvös informs us, compulsory exams and the *repetitor*-system were already in effect at the technical university of Budapest at that time; 188.)

There are also other aspects of what we know as a North American university tradition that Loránd Eötvös liked. He spoke with appreciation about people of good fortune who, whether scientists or at one time humble craftsmen, have offered millions to establish new universities or support existing ones (205). This system of endowments may have appealed to him as a sign of the social appreciation of knowledge.

At the same time, Eötvös also professed other ideas which are entirely contrary to the American and, by now, also the European concept of a socially open university system. He brazenly attacked the sacred cow of our times: that everybody has the "right" to higher education. He praised in German universities the fact that students represented overwhelmingly the educated and well-heeled upper middle class, consequently they did not have to worry about high tuition fees and other study expenses. He found many more people from the lower social strata at Hungarian universities: young men whose families knew little about scholarship, and themselves had to live in crowded, unheated rooms, worry about fees and textbooks, and spend much of their valuable time tutoring for meager compensation (178, 181). In order to demonstrate the controversial character of Baron Eötvös, we have to add that he also founded an elite college in 1894, named after his father, to help talented lower-class students to worry-

free university studies. Of course, this was not the only goal of the renowned Eötvös College. It is typical, however, that the college admitted only young men. We learn from Klebelsberg that as late as 1928 there was no comparable college for women.³

If university studies were a matter of luxury, the same held for university teaching. Eötvös refuted the arguments of critics – arguments that sound familiar to us once again – that professorial salaries should not come shamefully close to those of high-ranking statesmen (190). If the comfortable life of professors is not secured, how can they devote all their time and energy to their scholarship? (191) Should they perhaps quit teaching and practice their knowledge in various professions for more lucrative compensation? (193) All this sounds as if we were listening to a public debate of our time. Also, Eötvös suggests that for every outstanding young scholar a university chair (“*cathedra*”) should be created so that they don’t have to wait disappointingly long till professors already occupying the few existing chairs retire or die (203–5). In other words, he regarded individual excellence as a quality more important than the balance among the disciplines.

At first impression, the upbringing of young women seems to be a matter entirely different from university education. Not so! What Countess Blanka Teleki and Mrs. Pál Veres strove for, was actually the establishment of a women’s college to educate Hungarian girls to be mothers and wives knowledgeable about culture, good patriots, and, if they so chose, prepared for university studies. It is worth noting that the first European university that admitted women was the university of Zurich in 1869–70. In Hungary, the faculties of art, medicine, and pharmacy opened up for women in 1895–96 – as the *Révai Lexikon* modestly adds, “with some restrictions.” In fact, Count Klebelsberg reported that as late as the 1920s the medical school of the university of Budapest still managed to avoid admitting women.⁴

Countess Teleki, Mrs. Veres, and other pioneers of the liberation of women (such as Countess Teréz Brunszvik, or Teréz Karacs, daughter of an engraver) did not make much secret of the fact that the access of women to higher education was part of the general struggle for emancipation. Their goals went beyond those set by eminent men of the reform era, notably András Fáy,⁵ whose program consisted only of educating girls to become mothers and wives of refined culture. The emancipators admitted the crucial role of women in the family, but regarded education as something that also opened various fields of social activity and provided options for women – options comparable to those available for men.⁶ In 1848 Teleki’s students compiled their own proclamation of what Hungarian women expected from the revolution. Two of their demands were: unconditional equality with men, and, in particular, availability of university education for women.⁷ When the Austrian administration tried Teleki in 1853 and sentenced her to ten years in prison, the indictment mentioned in three instances

her struggle for emancipation as a crime just as severe as her activity in favor of the revolution.⁸ In a more permissive period, between 1865–71, Mrs. Veres stated the same need for emancipation, at the same time reminding women also of their duty as human beings to aspire for self-perfection through education.⁹ In short, rights also mean responsibilities.

Blanka Teleki's and Mrs. Veres's activities centered around the establishment of a women's college. Teleki's was a short-lived enterprise, operating only for two years (1846–48). Mrs. Veres had more success: after years of preparation her institution opened in 1869 and, having survived numerous twists of educational policy, it still exists as a Budapest high school named after its founder.

Countess Teleki's educational principle was mainly patriotic. She wanted to bring up young women well-versed in Hungarian history and literature. She recognized that due to a lack of qualified teachers, mainly foreign tutoresses were hired by well-to-do families to teach their female offspring. The result was an entirely cosmopolitan upper-class youth that usually didn't speak Hungarian.¹⁰ Ironically, to this youth belonged also Hermina Beniczky, young wife of deputy lord lieutenant Pál Veres, who still spoke German better than Hungarian in the early 1840s.

Mrs. Veres blamed the conventional division of labor for the intellectual backwardness of women. Unlike men, girls were deprived from education after the age of sixteen, were expected to get married by eighteen, and the only expectation they were facing for the rest of their life was to be mothers and housewives. Without intellectual stimulus and enlightening company, women could not be expected to show any spiritual advancement (131–5). At the same time, technology gradually rendered void such arguments as those referring to women's more delicate physical makeup. Mrs. Veres listed the fields of finance and commerce, education, pharmacy, and medicine as naturally suited ones for women (158), emphasizing especially the importance of training woman physicians, "since it is embarrassing to consult a man in the matters of our ailments." (182). She also thought that the list of occupations available for women would grow in the future (206). As for the past, she pointed out the vicious circle that the division of labor created: legislation was in the hands of men who could thus keep women away from education and legal reforms (180).

With the division of labor there came a division of values. Preceding Lev Tolstoy and August Strindberg by at least two decades, Mrs. Veres condemned the tradition of assigning only external values to girls to be married (137). Less attractive girls brought up with such values would always feel unwanted and unhappy (140). On the other hand, educated women found value and strength in their intellectual interest and were less inclined to think of their appearance only (137).

With all her zeal to open up the horizon of employment for women, Mrs. Veres knew well that the basis of society was the family. The special role of women is to conduct the education of their children from the day of their birth. Women are the most influential teachers. Mrs. Veres did not want to see all women undertaking various jobs, but regarded a knowledgeable mother, who could teach her children and be intellectual partner of her husband, as the ideal.¹¹ She commented on what a pitiful sight it was to see young mothers who had no information about the physical and mental needs of their children (179). Echoing Countess Teleki, she too pointed out that, since uneducated women soon recognize their inability to raise children, they find tutoresses abroad who know nothing about Hungarian customs and values (162). She also believed that guarded from the vanities of social life young women should continue their education until the age of eighteen (138). Generally, however, she recognized as early as 1867 that women had to solve the problem of their own higher education themselves, since there was no indication that the existing political and social establishment would be willing to further this cause (141, also 159).

As already noted, Mrs. Veres (like earlier Countess Teleki) campaigned for the establishment of a model college for young women, which was also intended to educate teachers for the future. In 1869 the college was inaugurated with one class of fourteen students. Excellent teachers, all of them men, were hired to teach the different subjects – among them the famous Pál Gyulai, who had always supported the cause of women's education (191). A great boost to the prestige of the school occurred in 1871 when Queen Elizabeth visited the college and addressed teachers and students in Hungarian (200).

The scope of the studies was ambitious. Already Blanka Teleki's program included the teaching of history, geography, the abstract and empirical sciences, Hungarian language and literature, French, German, religious studies, dance, music, feminine handcraft, and physical education.¹² Most of the above became part of Mrs. Veres's educational plan, with some additions such as aesthetics, logic, psychology, hygiene, and certain practical skills such as the basics of business and bookkeeping (143, 163, 173, 190). One notices, however, the absence of social skills such as dance, music, handcraft, and physical education. Mrs. Veres despised the first three subjects as the only skills traditionally taught to young girls (172), while one may question her indifference toward the physical development of young women (save hygiene). It is also worth noting that she must have understood by literary education something different from the romantic and sentimental novels that further separated young girls from the realities of their life (139–40). Everything considered, it was a comprehensive and practical curriculum that entirely ignored such traditional fields as philosophy, theology, and the classical languages.

All great ideas of the past are parts of our own time in one way or another. Elite education may not sound attractive nowadays, yet, should we not recon-

sider the present trend of the open university by weighing its shrinking advantages against its growing disadvantages? Asserting the personality and central role of the teacher is another timely idea today, when education via internet, and a parasitic claim to make university professorship more or less dispensable in the sense as we have known it, are in vogue. Among the comments of woman educators we should notice the absence of a call for coeducation. Equal access to education; yes, but through the establishment of colleges for girls. Leaving the highest stage: university education aside, one may ask: can adolescents be taught their sex roles together? Are they educated for sex roles at all? This was, namely, one goal of our contemporary feminists.

While only individuals or a small group of educators have been scrutinized, we can derive some observations from our study. Striking is the pragmatic character of the stated pedagogical ideas, not with regard to their goals but due to their connection to the operation of institutions. While the social function of education is never left out of focus, it is not exaggerated either. Nevertheless, Eötvös was more of an idealist than Mrs. Veres. As has been mentioned, one may hypothesize that it would not be easy to find consistent writings about higher education in the Western tradition that keep a precious balance between lofty philosophy and a narrow administrative perspective as successfully as some of the modern classics of Hungarian education. Indeed, the nineteenth century also brought other extremes, such as Herbart's assumption of a meticulously planned education, which was supposed to work as a clock, and Spencer's liberalism that calls into question the possibility of setting uniform goals. Obviously, perennial ideas both supersede such dogmatism and find a balance between extremes. Above all, they still can be appreciated and enjoyed. Such are the ideas of the Hungarian educators whom we have scrutinized.

Notes

1. Cf. pages 171–211 in *Eötvös Loránd tudományos és művelődéspolitikai írásaiból*, ed. Barna Bodó (Bukarest: Kriterion, 1980). All page references to this source will appear in the text. Bodó mentions another, similar collection by Elek Környei: *Eötvös Loránd a tudós és művelődéspolitikus írásaiból* (Budapest, 1964). It seems that these are the two basic, but probably overlapping, sources to study Eötvös's cultural theoretical writings.
2. Count Kunó Klebelsberg, minister of religion and education 1922–1932, corroborated Eötvös's critique of the university of Budapest before World War I, calling it a diploma factory and a "mammoth university" whose professors lecture from their long published books and only 10% of the students attend lectures. (*Tudomány, kultúra, politika: gróf Klebelsberg Kunó válogatott beszédei és írásai 1917–1932*, (Budapest: Európa Könyvkiadó, 1990), 480–881, 495.)
3. Klebelsberg, 477.

4. *Ibid.*, 473.
5. Author of *Nőnevelés és nőnevelő intézetek hazánkban* (1841).
6. Cf. Györgyi Sáfrán's introduction to the collection *Teleki Blanka és köre*, ed. Gy. Sáfrán (Bukarest: Kriterion, 1979), 12. A more thorough survey of nineteenth century women's education, whose ideological focus is slightly different, is the chapter "A magyar nemzeti nőnevelés," in Gyula Kornis, *A magyar művelődés eszményei, 1777–1848* (Budapest: Kir. Magy. Egyetemi Nyomda, 1927), II. 453–578. The sheer number of the pioneers of women's education that Kornis mentions proves the immense debt of post-war Hungarian scholarship to this aspect of national history.
7. Sáfrán, 19.
8. *Teleki Blanka és köre*, 50, 53, 56.
9. *Veres Pálné Beniczky Hermin élete és működése*, comp. Rudnay Józsefné and Szigethy Gyuláné (Budapest: Athenaeum, 1902). The idea of responsibility occurs on page 154; cf. also pages 156, 179, 262, 302–3. Subsequent references to this edition will appear in the text.
10. Sáfrán, 13–14, 25, 31; *Teleki Blanka és köre*, 49.
11. This is not an entirely original idea, and Mrs. Veres quotes several related views on page 221 of the above noted collection. She fails to mention Erasmus of Rotterdam who had also stated the same idea.
12. *Teleki Blanka és köre*, 26–27.

HUNGARIAN SOCIETY AND SOCIAL CONFLICTS BEFORE AND AFTER TRIANON

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The two or three decades preceding the First World War are often referred to as “the happy times of peace” in Hungary. This label is not entirely unjustified. No wars took place on Hungarian soil between 1867 and 1914, even though armed uprisings engulfed the Balkans during the same period. Economic growth in the era was also impressive. The per capita GDMP tripled between 1867 and 1913, which meant, in other terms, an annual increase of 2.5 percent. In spite of this, it would be a mistake to overemphasize the importance of what had been accomplished. The rapid development notwithstanding, on the eve of the Great War Hungary still belonged to the group of relatively underdeveloped countries. Its per capita national product was only 69 percent of the European average, or 37–38 percent of the English, 48–51 percent of the German and 72 percent of the corresponding Finnish figures. The process of *embourgeoisement* in society had not been completed either. The relative number of those employed in agriculture did decrease gradually, but it still stood at 62 percent in 1910. Also, parts of the old, quasi-medieval social structure persisted. Many of the conditions and norms characteristic of a traditional society survived and existed side by side with emerging social groups and their new outlook on the world. This duality, coupled with the scarcity of national wealth, a multinational population and the precarious position of the country within the Habsburg monarchy gave rise to a host of problems. Some of these grew to proportions and represented dangers great enough to justify calling the *fin de siècle* the “unhappy times of animosity,” rather than the happy times of peace. In the first part of my paper I propose briefly to discuss these problems, while in the second part I would like to examine their legacy following the war.

1. The Antinomies of the Pre-War Years

At the dawn of the twentieth century five great questions antagonized Hungarian society, political parties and Parliament. The first one of these was the legal debate between the supporters of the 1867 compromise and its opponents who adhered to the traditions of 1848. The second conflict arose out of the dif-

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ferences of values and interests of the Christian and Jewish middle classes, usually called the gentry and the Jewish question. The third antinomy pitted the poor peasantry and the owners of large estates against each other. This social struggle is usually referred to as the agrarian question. Opinions were also divided over the possible reform of the political system, especially that of suffrage. This fourth area served as the battleground for conservatives wishing to uphold the status quo and their reformist opponents, the radicals. The final, fifth great antinomy pertained to the conflicts between Hungarians and non-Hungarians, usually called the nationality question.

The first controversy, which divided those in support of and those in opposition to the Compromise of 1867, manifested itself primarily in matters concerning military affairs and the economy. The pro-Compromise groups supported Viennese plans of developing the common army, accepted the division of labour between the two parts of the Empire, and argued for developing home industries by relying on internal resources. These policies represented the interests of the great estate owners and of the great bourgeoisie, which was continually gaining in influence during the era. Their opponents, who stood for the principles of the 1848 revolution, criticized the economic policy of the government, labelling it disadvantageous for Hungary. They also opposed the customs union with Austria and the community of financial institutions such as the unified currency and banking system. As far as the military was concerned, the so-called "48-ers" were either opposed to generous funding of the common army or made their support dependent on the fulfillment of certain national demands. Such conditions were for instance the use of Hungarian flags and national symbols in the military, and the use of Magyar as the language of command in Hungarian units.

Viewed in a wide historic perspective it can hardly be doubted that the interests of the country were better served by the pro-Compromise camp. Some national and nationalistic slogans, however, had such a popular influence, that, by the eve of the Great War, the 48-ers had managed to effectively paralyse the government and political life in general. These opposition groups hoped that an eventual victory in the war would move the emperor-king to recognize the valiant efforts of the Hungarian nation by granting her further attributes of independence. Meanwhile, some personalities in support of the compromise, such as Gyula Szekfű, were predicting Hungary's final and complete integration into "Christian-German civilisation," or, in plainer terms, were mapping out the country's place in the German-dominated Mitteleuropa of the future. None of the parties, however, made preparations for a possible defeat.

The second conflict, which antagonized the Christian and the Jewish middle-class, arose out of a gradual social change that involved the slow decline of the gentry and the rise of the Jewry who made up five percent of the population. Previously there existed an informal understanding between the liberals of the Hungarian nobility and the Jews who were emancipated in 1848. This *entente* in

effect recognized the nobility's dominant position in running the state and controlling the political life, while guaranteeing legal equality and virtual freedom of action for all non-nobles, including Jews, in realizing the program of economic modernization. The gentry, however, when faced with the prospects of its relative downfall interpreted the situation not as a sensible division of social tasks, but rather as the aggressive expansionism of the Jewry, which offended national interests. This conflict of power was further aggravated by the different cultural backgrounds of the two sides. The outlook of the Christian middle classes was dominated by a romantic view of the past, and sometimes by stubborn nationalism. Parts of the gentry even seemed to live up to the old saying according to which a Hungarian nobleman need neither write nor read too much. The attitudes of the Jewish bourgeoisie and intelligentsia were radically disparate. They were more rationalistic, material and more open to the world, sometimes to the point of being truly cosmopolitan. Much like in Austria, Germany or France these incompatibilities led to the appearance of political anti-semitism in Hungary during the 1870s. The trend temporarily seemed to lose momentum in the 1890s, but regained its strength after the turn of the century, and especially during the First World War. The controversy prompted Oszkár Jászi, one of the most prominent figures of the radical wing of Jewish Hungarians, to devote a whole issue of his periodical, *The Twentieth Century* to an in depth discussion of it. In answering his query, thirty-seven of fifty contributors recognized the so-called Jewish question as an acute problem of Hungarian society. As far as the possible solutions were concerned, the majority of those asked still voiced their optimism with regards to the conflict-solving potential inherent in assimilation and democratization. The number of anti-assimilationist and anti-liberal anti-semites nonetheless rose considerably, as did that of Jewish nationalists who, as a reaction to attacks against them, started to promote a separate Jewish consciousness, with the claim to nationhood as the final, though distant, goal.¹

The unhealthy distribution of arable land lay at the core of the third antinomy, the agrarian question. This meant that a small minority held disproportionately great estates, while the number of landless or sub-landed peasants who neither benefited from modernization nor could produce for the market amounted to several hundred thousand. The only country in Europe where a comparable anomaly in the distribution of land could be found was Romania. As a result of this, a process of *embourgeoisment* was observable only among the minority of peasants who held a considerable area of land. The lower strata of the peasantry, especially the day-labourers, had to face poverty and often even severe deprivation. As a consequence, certain socially deviant tendencies appeared among the peasants, such as adherence to religious sects and having only one child per family. The spread of strictly evangelical Christianity and egalitarian, revolutionary socialism also had their roots in the feeling of hopelessness over the pet-

rified structural anomalies of Hungarian agriculture. The ever more frequent strikes, demands for wage raises, and political demonstrations were inspired by these ideas. Unrest was usually met violently by the police or the military. Repeated clashes and the use of arms by the authorities resulted in several dozens of demonstrators being killed, and hundreds of them wounded or imprisoned.

At the same time, it cannot be said that the conservative-liberal government and the ruling elite in general remained completely insensitive to the social troubles of the lower strata and the peasantry. Some restricted attempts were made to raise the standard of living for the urban working classes, but in the countryside their extent remained even more limited than it had been in the cities. Resettlement or the division of land on a larger scale was out of question. István Tisza, the most influential politician of the era, held views that rested on the ideology of classical liberalism in unambiguous terms. He declared that

one cannot be firm and unyielding enough in asserting that the question of the working classes shall never be remedied by putting theories about resettlement and the division of lands into effect. [...] We cannot change the order of the world, an order according to which not every man can possess capital, financial or landed.²

During the war this typical orthodox approach changed only negligibly. Socially more sensitive conservative politicians such as Ottokár Prohászka, a Christian-Socialist bishop, proposed rewarding service on the front by small plots of land, but no serious reform plan could be conceived.

The stipulations of the 1874 electoral law meant that about 25 percent of adult men, or 6–7 percent of the total population had the right to vote. This reflected the nineteenth-century liberal notion that believed in legal, but not political equality. Opposing all privileges by birth, it proposed instead the principle of political equality only for the wealthier or learned groups of society. Until the turn of the century not even the total exclusion of women was perceived as unusual, as they were considered to be subject to the influence of their husbands. Neither these restrictions, nor open balloting, however, were compatible with the more democratic notions of the 1900s, and this anomaly became the fourth area of tension in Hungarian society.

Members of the conservative camp did not substantially revise their position during the first years of the century, and contemplated insignificant changes at most. Opposed to them stood those emerging social groups that were looking to increase their influence in the country's life: the bourgeois middle classes, the workers and the peasantry. Their main demand was universal and secret suffrage. The unresolved conflict grew into a long-lasting and intense political strife, which culminated in a 1912 street battle between the police, the military and the demonstrating masses. Nevertheless, in spite of popular activism, the conservatives managed to uphold their privileges and made only minimal con-

cessions. The new electoral bill, which was passed in 1913 but never enacted, raised the number of voters from 1,162,000 to 1,838,000 a 74 percent increase. In addition, it introduced secret balloting in the municipalities. In 1918 the heated political situation induced a second reform aimed at reducing tensions. With it the number of eligible voters rose to two million sevenhundred thousand, or 15 percent of the total population. At the same time, in Great Britain, Norway and Denmark about 40, in France 30 and in Spain and Greece approximately 25 percent of the population had the right to vote.

While the four above-mentioned antinomies (the Austro-Hungarian relations; the gentry- and Jewish-question; the plight of the peasantry; and the question of democratic suffrage) were grave problems, their solution by no means represented a challenge to historic Hungary. The political aspirations of the non-Hungarian peoples, however, grew to endanger the continued existence of the millenary state. These nationalities made up almost half of the country's population, excluding Croatia. If one considered Croatia too, their share actually rose to above 50 percent. The Hungarian elite, which had negotiated the terms of the Compromise of 1867, attempted to defend itself by granting equal citizenship and legal status to every individual without any regard to race, language or religion, and by offering limited cultural autonomy on the one hand, while on the other refusing to acquiesce to the Romanian, Serbian and Slovak claims for recognition as political nations and equal partners within the state. This also meant rejecting the propositions of the nationalities for instituting territorial autonomy, and a determination to make Hungarian the official language in accordance with the West-European and North-American concept of the nation state. This view was reflected in the nationalities law of 1868 which declared that "politically, all citizens of Hungary form a single nation, the indivisible and unified Hungarian nation, of which every citizen is an equal member regardless of his nationality."

The leaders of the nationalities refuted this argument claiming that one cannot attribute to Hungary the characteristics of a national state, for Hungary's character is exactly the aggregate of the peoples which make up the state. The nature of the Hungarian state does not allow that a single people, which does not represent even half of the total population, assert itself as constituting the state. It is only together that the peoples of Hungary can identify themselves as the state.³

Based on this argument they requested in their 1895 assembly that "non-Magyar peoples in Hungary be given full liberty, according to language boundaries. The national character of a given region should be reflected in the administrative language of autonomous districts, be it a county, a town or a village."⁴

The two positions were never to be even partially reconciled. In fact, despite of the efforts of mediators on both sides the gap only grew wider. The leaders of the nationalities demanding territorial autonomy pinned their hopes on the

eventual election victory of the democratic Hungarian opposition, which appeared more flexible on the issue, and the enthronement of archduke Franz Ferdinand. Sympathies for their ethnic brethren or relative, however, strengthened during these years, and with them grew separatist sentiment, which was partly fuelled by propaganda from Bucharest, Belgrade and Prague. When Hungary entered the war in 1914, the nationalities made up approximately half of the population. Their loyalty, or at least that of their intellectual elites, was highly questionable.

2. Attempts at Conflict Management during the Revolutions of 1918–1919

The tensions that arose around the turn of the century and were aggravated during the harsh years of the war represented a problem both for the liberal democratic régime of 1918–1919 and for the short-lived Soviet Republic. With the *de facto* dissolution of the monarchy and the abdication of Charles IV on 18 November 1918, the conflict between the pro-compromise and pro-1848 parties seemed to have been solved. It soon became apparent, however, that Charles' stepping down from "interfering in matters of the state" could be understood in different ways, and that the country's public was still divided by pro- and anti-Hapsburg sentiment. To make matters worse, even the anti-Hapsburg groups were divided into royalists and republicans. The act of the National Council which proclaimed the People's Republic of Hungary on 13 November 1918 was supported neither by a referendum nor by the decision of a regularly elected legislative body, and so its legitimacy could easily be questioned.

The revolution did not directly address the conflict between the gentry and the Jews. Both members of the National Council and later those of the government, however, belonged to the opposition of the *ancien régime* and were mostly bourgeois radicals or social democrats. The changes in personnel at all levels of government indicated that the aristocracy and the gentry were losing most of their influence, as they were being replaced by representatives of the bourgeoisie, the intelligentsia, the working classes, and the peasantry. This transformation had been heralded by the membership of the National Council. Nearly one half of which was made up of Jewish Hungarians. In provincial towns, too, intellectuals hitherto excluded from power mobilized politically, and came into the forefront.

The leaders of the October revolution wished to solve the agrarian question by expropriating all estates over 500 yokes (705 acres) and all Church holdings over 200 yokes (280 acres). These estates were to be turned into farming plots of 5–20 yokes (7 to 28 acres), which were thought sufficient to ensure the livelihood of a peasant family. Similarly radical changes were planned in the question

of suffrage. The decree of 3 March 1919 gave every literate man above the age of twenty-one and every woman above the age of twenty-four right to vote. The share of voters within the total population rose to 50 percent, a figure similar to that of the Scandinavian democracies. The implementation of these two acts would have meant the end of the economic and political privileges held by the prewar elite.

In the handling of the nationality question the government's position rested on the doctrine of preserving the territorial integrity of Hungary. At the same time, the nationalities were offered territorial and political autonomy, which would have included local governments and assemblies, as well as the right to delegate a minister to the central government. These concessions exceeded those demanded by the leaders of non-Hungarians before 1914. Among the latter, however, secessionism had become a dominant force by the autumn of 1918, and the majority of them were hoping for unification with their co-nationals. They found additional support in the program of the victorious powers, which, by 1918, had agreed upon dissolving the monarchy and forming nation-states in its wake. By the end of 1918 or early 1919 historic Hungary – even without the sanctioning of a peace treaty – had *de facto* disintegrated.

Summing up the program of the 1918 revolution, one could observe in it an attempt to put the democratic reform agenda of the prewar years into practice. This transformation, had it been accomplished, would have meant a change of the elites and – as a result of the redistribution of land – a radical restructuring of the society and the economy. The liberal principles of private property and political pluralism were nevertheless to be honoured and fully developed. In this sense, the revolution stood for continuity and for change at the same time.

The socialist programme followed by the Hungarian Soviet Republic too had certain roots in the not very distant past. It resembled the conceptions of a society without exploitation and private property, which were inherent both in the radical social democratic vision of the future and in the messianistic egalitarianism of some agrarian socialists. However, these utopias which had sprung from the same sources did not merge into a consistent political agenda before the end of 1918, and their influence was very limited. All in all, 21 March 1919 represented a much greater break in the continuity of Hungarian history than 31 October 1918 had.

Following the Soviet-Russian example, the old administrative system was replaced by a network of workers', soldiers' and peasants' councils, while a body dubbed the Revolutionary Governing Council fulfilled the functions of the government. The traditional elites had no representation in these councils, and even the bourgeoisie and the bourgeois intelligentsia were all but excluded. Sixty-five to seventy percent of the posts of people's commissars and deputy-commissars were held by men of Jewish origin, while in the country-side young workers and peasants often assumed important administrative positions. To en-

sure that these trends would not change, the “capitalists” – meaning estate owners, industrialists and the greater part of the upper classes – were denied the right to vote, and all candidates for the April elections had to be nominated by the Socialist Party.

The radicalism and the lack of an organic approach which characterized the attitude of the Soviet Republic became most apparent in its handling of the agrarian question. The fact that the size of the estates that were to be expropriated was reduced to 75 yokes (105 acres) caused distress among wealthier peasants, as well. But the greatest miscalculation and political error turned out to be the attempt at establishing cooperatives and state-owned farms, rather than distributing the expropriated lands. While this corresponded to socialist doctrines, together with other similarly radical measures, such as alcohol prohibition and anti-religious decrees, it alienated even the initial supporters of the Soviet Republic.

The nationality question was not even considered by the bolshevik leadership, as their ideology recognized only the common interests of the international proletariat, regardless of race, colour and language. They believed instead in a brotherly alliance of soviets uniting the whole of Europe. The naivity and unfounded optimism of the concept needed no theoretical proof after fighting with Czech and Romanian troops broke out, forcing the more realistic leaders of the Soviet Republic to face their initial delusion.

3. Policies of the Horthy-Regime

The fall of the Soviet Republic on 1 August, 1919 was followed by a few chaotic months. In the end it was the conservatives who emerged triumphant from the feuding political factions. They held on to power from 1920–21 to 1944, while trying to address the inherited social troubles in a manner very different from that of the preceding two years.

The conflict of the pro-Compromise and pro-1848 parties lived on in that of pro-Hapsburg legitimists and those favouring the election of a new ruler. Some aristocrats regarded the return of Charles as a guarantee of the full restoration of their prewar power and influence. Parts of the officer corps and the Christian middle classes hoped that his ascension might lead to the resurrection of historic Hungary and of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. Legitimism on the part of some liberals expressed, more than anything else, their reservations vis-à-vis Miklós Horthy, who had been elected temporary head of state in 1920 by the Parliament. Their opponents, the free electors, were composed of the Protestant members of the aristocracy who had never favoured Vienna, as well as the larger part of the officer corps under the influence of Horthy and, perhaps most importantly, of members of the Smallholders Party who sympathized with the 1848 revolutionary tradition.

The struggle of the two camps was decided by the determined anti-Hapsburg stance both of the neighbouring countries and the Great Powers. The international opposition thus rendered restoration impossible. Hungary remained a kingdom, though, until 1945, but was not allowed to invite either Charles or Otto, his son, to the throne. In the 1930s, when both the Anglo-Saxon powers and France were inclined to lend support to Otto in an attempt to set up some framework of regional cooperation, the declared interests of Nazi Germany still prevented a return of the Hapsburgs. With no pretender able to realize his claim to the throne, Horthy could stay in power as regent for a quarter of a century, and no referendum on his primacy or the general question of the form of state was held.

The antinomy between gentry and Jewry further escalated during the inter-war years, with anti-semitic tendencies sometimes receding, but never disappearing from government politics. The first official act was the law of *numerus clausus* passed in 1920. It decreed that among university students the "racial groups" of Hungary had to be represented according to their share in the population. Jewish students who had made up 34 percent of the student body before the war were limited to 5 percent by the law. In reality, they continued to make up about 8 to 12 percent. This policy was coupled with conscious support for the university education of children of public and state officials. This course too was codified by a 1927 law. As a result of such concentrated efforts, children of industrialists, estate owners and intellectuals made up 65 percent of all university and college students around the middle of the 1930s. This even surpassed the already high prewar figure of 57–58 percent. At the same time the children of small tradesmen and businessmen, fifty percent of whom were Jewish, accounted for only 6 percent, as opposed to 12 percent before the war. The very low representation of the other categories, including the urban working classes and the peasantry, did not change considerably.

The relative economic and social boom of the second half of the 1920s led to a loss of momentum in Hungarian anti-Semitism. The trend was reversed, however, by the Great Depression, which coincided with radical changes in the international environment. Before the depression, Hungarian anti-Semitism was held at bay partly by international factors. This changed radically when Nazi Germany started to lend overt support to it, using its prestige as Hungary's most important diplomatic partner. The coincidence of internal and foreign events eventually led to the enactment of a series of heavily discriminatory bills against Jewish citizens between 1938 and 1941. These imposed drastic control on their representation in the intellectual life of the country, as well as in trade and industry, and in the end virtually excluded them from the body of the Hungarian nation. The 1941 law forbade marriage between Jews and non-Jewish Hungarians and declaimed extramarital relationships as "debasement of the race," making them criminal acts. In spite of such discriminatory legislation, the lives of Hungarian Jews were not endangered until 1944. This changed, however, after

the German occupation of the country in March 1944. During the following months, almost half a million Jews and, after the Arrowcross putsch in October, further tens of thousands were deported, facing almost certain death. More than two-thirds of Hungarian Jews perished, with hardly more than one hundred thousand surviving the Holocaust. The strife between the two great social groups of the middle classes in Hungary continued after the second World War, although under radically different circumstances, and many observers of contemporary Hungary claim that it is in fact still going on today.

In the handling of the agrarian question, the conservative regime had two main priorities: protecting large and middle-sized estates to the greatest possible extent, and peacefully containing the agrarian proletariat, which was always prone to unrest. To reconcile these two policies, the 1920 land reform law distributed about one million yokes (one million and five hundred thousand acres) of arable land in the form of extremely small plots, with the average size of the new parcels around 1.7 yokes (2.5 acres). The share of estates over 100 yokes (140 acres) thus decreased only minimally, from 53.5 to 48 percent, with half a million landless or sublanded peasants receiving acreage. Including family members, the law touched the lives of approximately two million people. The moderate land reform did reduce the number of peasants without property by over two hundred thousand, but the small size of the plots also meant that the new landowners could still not live off their land, and the one-sidedness of the distribution of the land was not corrected.

The unaltered situation and continuing agony of the agrarian proletariat provided a fertile soil for the different sects which experienced an upsurge during and after the Great Depression, as their message of otherworldly happiness appealed to those in need and suffering in their lives. Radical egalitarianism reappeared too, although this time in a form closer to national socialism than to communism. In the thirties, the members of the "scythe-cross movement," as they called themselves, were preparing to move against Budapest and other cities and do justice by distributing the wealth of the rich. These apparent signs of a nearing social cataclism prompted the enactment of two further reform bills after 1935, which promised to provide land for the poorest stratum of the peasantry. Their scope, however, was even more limited than that of the 1920 law, and until 1941 only 230,000 yokes (325,000 acres) were distributed, partly as private property and partly as lease. In addition, many of the estates that were divided up had been owned by Jews. As a result of such half-hearted actions, the agrarian question emerged immediately after the Second World War as a problem that was no less acute than it had been after the First World War.

In terms of political rights, the fourth great antinomy, the conservative leadership of the interwar years held fast to its antidemocratic, elitist principles. Their policy rested on the thesis that a country's natural leaders were the social groups which possessed a "well-developed and strong sense of national identity

and sentiment.” They claimed that the political alternative, the rule of “the masses smelling of beer and onions” would bring about the end of the country.⁵ The secret and quasi-universal suffrage of 1919 which gave 40 percent of the total population the right to vote, was limited by a government decree of 1922. As a result of the restrictions, the share of voters fell to 28 percent, and open balloting was reintroduced everywhere but in large municipalities. The percentage of the population possessing the right to vote still conformed to European standards, as it was similar to the situation in France and Switzerland, but the practice of open ballot was unprecedented in other parliamentary systems. The effects of the restrictions soon became visible. The proportion of middle-sized and large estate owners rose from 15 to 20 percent after the 1922 elections, and peaked at 23 percent in 1927. The share of peasant representatives decreased from 15 to 7 percent, and in 1927 to 3 percent, resembling prewar conditions. At the same time, aristocrats, who had made up 15 percent of the assembly before the war, but only 5 percent in 1920, reclaimed a good part of their influence and occupied 10 percent of the seats after 1922. The gentry gained in strength too, as their ranks climbed from 25 percent in 1920/21 to no less than 34 percent in 1927. These numbers are proof of the effectiveness of the suffrage system, which served the purpose of ensuring the position of those in power and stabilizing the existing social order. The only significant change affected was the return to secret balloting in 1938. But in the given situation this reform was exploited most by the fascist extreme right, whose radicalism and demagoguery could not be matched by the democratic parties.

After 1945 the Horthy-regime was routinely described in Hungarian historiography as fascism. Later it was referred to as semi-fascism or fascistoid dictatorship. These labels are obviously unfounded. Horthyist Hungary exhibited none of the most important characteristics of national socialist totalitarianism. But it is no less obvious that it cannot be termed a parliamentary democracy either, as it excluded large segments of the population from effective participation in the political life of the country. In general, the interwar Hungarian state and government is probably best described as a subtype of authoritarian political regimes.

The fifth great antinomy of prewar Hungary was addressed radically in the Treaty of Trianon signed in 1920. The peace agreement fundamentally changed the character of the previously multi-ethnic country, turning it into a virtual nation-state. The share of non-Hungarian speakers decreased from 46 to 10 percent. The trend, although much slowed down, continued during the interwar years, and by 1930 non-Hungarians made up only 8 percent of the population. The greatest ethnic group were the Germans who accounted for 7 and 5 percent of the populace respectively, but lived dispersed all over Hungary. The number of Romanians, Slovaks, Serbs, Croats and Ruthenes became insignificant. In general, it can be safely said that the nationality question ceased to be one of the principal and acute problems of Hungarian society. It was, however, replaced by

a diplomatic dilemma, which assumed equally great dimensions. It centred around the fate and future of the three million Hungarians who found themselves in a minority and separated from their mother country after 1920. The dismemberment of the nation, as it was perceived by the political elite, the society, and the minorities themselves, was looked upon as a temporary situation, which could and had to be remedied.

The considerable success of Hungarian revisionism between 1938 and 1941 led to four consecutive border changes. Not counting Croatia, more than half of the territories lost in 1920 were reclaimed in the process. The country grew from 93,000 square kilometers to 172,000. Its population increased from 9 to 14.6 million. Approximately half of the five million new citizens were ethnic Hungarians, while Romanians made up 20, Ruthenes 10 and South Slavs 8 or 9 percent. The rest were composed of Germans and Slovaks. The reacquisition of minorities along with the territories raised the nationality question anew. The alternative remained the same, and the central question was whether the Hungarian majority should pursue a policy of assimilation or taken a more conciliatory course by either recognizing the other ethnic groups as state-forming nations or at least offering them territorial autonomy. The ruling elite was divided over the question, and no substantial steps were made before the end of the Second World War. No steps were necessary after the war, as the 1947 peace treaty restored the borders of 1920. With this, the nationality question was once again turned into a diplomatic affair.

Evaluating the series of attempts at conflict management in the first half of the twentieth century, we have to conclude that only one of the five great social or sociopolitical problems of pre-Trianon Hungary – the antagonism between the pro-compromise and the pro-1848 parties – had been solved by the end of Second World War. The rest survived – either in its old or in a new form – and were still awaiting answer.

Notes

1. *Huszdik Század* [Twentieth Century] 1917 Vol. I. – The most relevant contributions have been republished in Péter Hanák, ed., *Zsidókérdés, asszimiláció, antiszemitizmus* [Jewish Question, Assimilation, Antisemitism] (Budapest: Gondolat, 1984), 15–114.
2. József Barabási Kun, ed., *Gróf Tisza István képviselőházi beszédei* [Speeches of Count István Tisza in the Parliament] Vol. I. (Budapest: Magyar Tudományos Akadémia, 1930), 401.
3. Quoted in Gábor G. Kemény, *A magyar nemzetiségi kérdés története* [History of the Nationality Question in Hungary] Vol. I. (Budapest: Gergely R. R.-T., 1946), 107.
4. *Ibid.*, 145.
5. *Bethlen István gróf beszédei és írásai* [Speeches and Writings of Count István Bethlen] Vol. I. (Budapest: Genius Könyvkiadó R.-T.), 228.

JONAS SELON BABITS OU LA TRAHISON DES CLERCS

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Je commencerais par l'explication du titre qui peut paraître, à première vue, énigmatique. Mon titre fait simplement allusion à deux textes de l'écrivain Mihály Babits: à un texte poétique, *Le livre de Jonas*¹, en hongrois *Jónás könyve*, poème épique de 1938, poème qui est une paraphrase d'un livre de l'Ancien Testament portant le même titre; et deuxièmement à un essai, *Írástudók árulása* (en français *La trahison de scribes*), datant de 1928, essai qui peut être considéré également comme une paraphrase: celui du célèbre livre de Julien Benda, *La trahison des clercs*, paru en 1927 et dont Babits a repris le titre en traduction hongroise.²

J'ajouterai aussi, en guise d'introduction, que le personnage du prophète Jonas est curieusement très présent dans la poésie hongroise contemporaine, et je pense que ce n'est point dû au hasard, ainsi, par exemple, chez l'excellente poétesse Magda Székely dont l'oeuvre, extrêmement bref et concentré, est une tentative désespérée pour trouver une explication, avec l'aide justement de l'Ancien Testament, au phénomène de l'Holocauste; ou alors, tout récemment, dans l'importante oeuvre de György Rába (grand spécialiste d'ailleurs de Babits auquel il avait consacré deux monographies) qui a donné comme titre à un récent recueil, *A vonakodó cethal*, c'est-à-dire *La baleine récalcitrante*, faisant parler pour une fois non pas Jonas, prisonnier de la baleine, mais le grand poisson lui-même.³

Le choix de ma part de ses deux textes n'est point innocent. Non pas seulement à cause des accointances françaises de Babits⁴ qui – quoiqu'il ne soit jamais venu en France, a publié dans son premier recueil un magnifique poème intitulé *Paris*; qui était l'un des artisans du Baudelaire hongrois de 1923; qui était un fervent, dans sa jeunesse, de Henri Bergson, puis plus tard, un admirateur inconditionnel de Marcel Proust⁵. J'ai fait ce choix plutôt parce que le cheminement de Babits caractérise merveilleusement le dilemme des écrivains de l'Europe centrale, écartelés entre deux exigences, également puissantes: celle de la littérature, cela va de soi, et celle de la prophétie, ce qui ne va pas de soi, deux exigences dont témoignent justement les deux textes en question.

Le cas de Babits est d'autant plus curieux et saisissant qu'il n'est point de la race des hommes publiques, comme il y en a eu plusieurs, à l'instar des Lamartine, des Chateaubriand, des Constant, dans la Hongrie du XIX^e siècle où les penseurs politiques les plus importants sont deux romanciers, József Eötvös et Zsigmond Kemény, et le premier, en plus, est un grand ministre de l'Éducation nationale! où le grand poète Ferenc Kölcsey est député de la Diète et y tient en plus des discours politiques d'une très grande importance. Non, Babits, timide dans sa vie privée, commence une carrière poétique qu'on pourrait presque qualifier de parnassienne. Ainsi, se plaint-il, dans un de ses premiers poèmes, un sonnet qui porte le titre de *A lírikus epilógja* (*Épilogue* dans la traduction de Jean Rousselot): *Je suis mon seul héros, de poème en poème, / Sur moi de clôt mon chant ainsi qu'il s'est ouvert. / Je voudrais enfermer le monde dans mes vers, / Mais ne parviens pas à sortir de mon thème.*⁶ Un des vers du même poème – *Noix aveugle en sa coque recluse / J'attends qu'on me le casse* / est la reprise d'un des mots les plus énigmatiques de Hamlet: *O, God, I could be bounded in a nutshell and count myself King at infinite space.*⁷ Hamlet est-il fou quand il prononce ces mots? Ou exprime-t-il le désir de tout créateur, c'est-à-dire le désir de posséder dans son petit royaume le Tout, l'Immensité? Cette deuxième interprétation qui est aussi celle de Jorge Luis Borges,⁸ était certainement celle de Babits qui se considère comme incapable d'atteindre le grand but: poète, il ne réussit que parler de soi-même, au lieu de pouvoir parler, tout en parlant de soi-même, de *l'espace infinie*.

Ecrivain raffiné et sophistiqué, Babits est pourtant touché dès 1912, lors d'une grande manifestation durement réprimée par la police, puis vers 1916, au beau milieu de la Grande Guerre, par l'actualité du moment.⁹ Des poèmes, parfois par trop déclamatoires, et didactiques en portent témoignage. Et quoiqu'il reste un féru de la Forme, dans tous les sens de ce terme, il cèdera de nouveau à la tentation à partir de 1920; il chante alors dans plusieurs poésies son désespoir de Hongrois après le traité de Trianon qu'il considère, lui, l'occidentaliste, l'amoureux des formes classiques et des vertus classiques dont surtout de la mesure, comme une calamité, comme un acte honteux de la part de ceux qui l'ont conçu.¹⁰

Mais ces rencontres avec l'actualité ne forment qu'une petite clairière dans l'immense paysage que réussit à créer Babits, un domaine en contradiction totale avec la philosophie qui se dégage de ses écrits. Cette philosophie va être explicitée de la façon la plus articulée dans son très beau livre, *Histoire de la littérature européenne*¹¹. Babits y esquisse une Europe idéale dont la littérature, justement, est un des plus beaux fleurons, une Europe fondée sur les idées de l'exigence, de la justice, de la personne, de la révolte, une Europe dont les traits unificateurs dominent les particularités. Les grands de cette histoire de la littérature européenne, les vrais grands de l'Europe devraient être donc ces *kings of infinite space* dont parle l'Hamlet de Shakespeare.

Mais quand Babits écrit ces textes dont je parle, en 1928, en 1939, le paysage européen qui l'entoure est un paysage tourmenté, le poète se sent très loin de l'idéal, de l'Europe qui est la sienne. L'écrivain qu'il est se sent responsable et cherche à se positionner, à trouver le juste mot car il croit toujours fermement à la devise qui est à la source de notre civilisation: *Au commencement était le Verbe*.

Le dilemme est cruelle car Babits est un poète dans le sens classique. "Or la poésie – comme le dit Paul Ricœur ne veut rien prouver de tout; son projet est mimétique – sa visée est de composer une représentation essentielle des actions humaines; son mode propre est de dire la vérité par le moyen de la fiction, de la fable, du *mythos* tragique. La triade *poiesis–mimesis–catharsis* dépeint de manière exclusive le monde de la poésie, sans confusion possible avec la triade *rhétorique–preuve–persuasion*."¹²

Évidemment le poète peut changer parfois de registre, et remplacer le discours du *mythos* par celui de la *rhétorique*, d'autres, pour ne citer qu'un contemporain qui est de la même mouture que Babits, T. S. Eliot, ou alors le polonais Czeslaw Milosz, l'ont fait également. Pour Babits le détonateur est donc Julien Benda dont *la Trahison des clercs* est un immense pavé dans la vie intellectuelle à la fin des années 1920. Le livre de Benda, ce pamphlet de haut vol, pose avec acuité la problématique toujours d'actualité, des rapports entre pensée et action. Le verdict de Julien Benda, concernant ses contemporains, est sévère: il considère que le savant, le poète, le philosophe trahissent leur fonction s'ils prétendent jouer un rôle dans la vie de la cité. Ils la trahissent car au lieu de proclamer que leur royaume n'est pas de ce monde, ils laissent entrer ainsi dans leur monde des passions destructrices: la race, la classe, la nation. Ils détruisent ainsi l'image de l'ordre des clercs, et laissent champ libre aux réalistes, aux pragmatiques qui libèrent, à leur tour, les forces destructrices.

Dans l'optique de Babits le grand mérite de Benda est d'avoir ramené la discussion qui s'éternisait sur le terrain de la pratique, de l'économique, de la philosophie, de l'histoire, d'avoir ramener donc la discussion sur le terrain de la morale. "On a toujours connu le Verbe qui allume des actions. Oui, mais celui qui allume la Lumière!"¹³ Et Babits retourne, comme il l'a déjà fait en 1918 quand il a traduit en hongrois le petit opuscule de Kant sur *La Paix éternelle*, vers la morale kantienne.¹⁴ La Morale et la Justice, dit-il, doivent être au-dessus de tout. "Nous ne devons pas aimer notre communauté davantage que la Morale et la Justice."¹⁵ Et il reprend la célèbre image kantienne de la préface de *La critique de la Raison pratique*, la métaphore de l'astre, en la croisant avec une autre image, non moins célèbre, celle de Dante tout au début de la *Commedia*. Babits parle d'abord de l'homme ordinaire. "Il est comme un pauvre marcheur au milieu de la forêt vierge: il tombe, se relève, essaie passer d'abord à gauche, puis à droite, comme il peut, essaie de survivre; mais jamais d'après l'astre inaccessible, et tant mieux pour lui car il se casserait la figure."

“Mais le clerc – continue-t-il – a par définition le devoir de suivre l’Astre. Il sait que l’astre est inaccessible. Pourtant sur les chemins terrestres il n’y a que l’astre qui puisse montrer la direction à suivre. Celui qui le suit directement, se casse la figure et meurt. Celui qui ne le regarde jamais, se perd et se noie définitivement dans la masse sans but.” Et en conclusion: “*Le pied non, mais le doigt oui.*”¹⁶

Tout en fustigeant, à l’image de Julien Benda, les scribes de son époque qui sont obnubilés par *l’utile*, et par conséquent ont renoncé à l’essentiel, Babits évoque le rôle des prêtres et des prophètes qui avaient, autrefois pour devoir de veiller à ce que la Justice et la Morale soient toujours visibles pour la multitude, de rappeler la Vérité lorsqu’elle était cachée par le quotidien. Comme s’il avait la nostalgie du Moyen-âge du XI^e siècle, de ce geste de Canossa où en 1077 l’empereur Henri IV s’est senti obligé de se prosterner devant le pape Grégoire VII, où donc le pouvoir spirituel s’est montré, au moins provisoirement, plus fort que le pouvoir des armes.

Mais comment concilier ce devoir dont il parle – là c’est moi qui pose la question – le devoir lié autrefois à la révélation divine, avec les temps modernes qui sont dominé par l’adoration des faits, par un discours plat et ultralogique? Dans l’essai en question nous percevons bien les hésitations de Babits. D’un côté il est fortement attiré par le discours kantien, terriblement rationnel et prêchant en même temps l’exigeance morale. Dès 1918, au moment de la publication de sa traduction de l’opuscule de Kant, Babits déclare qu’il a fait ce travail “difficile et ingrat” car il est complètement d’accord avec l’affirmation du philosophe allemand selon laquelle, “*la notion de la morale est incontournable en politique*”.¹⁷

D’un autre côté il a tendance à accepter l’idée qu’il y a de la place pour des prophètes, modernes et que ces prophètes sont justement les scribes, les écrivains. Le prophète (du grec *prophétés*, et du latin ecclésiastique *propheta*) est bien celui qui parle au nom de Dieu, “prétend révéler des vérités au nom d’un dieu dont il se dit inspiré”.¹⁸ Historiquement le temps des prophètes est bien défini. Northrop Frye dans son livre *The Great Code* affirme que la prophétie est un des sept grans thèmes de la Bible, après la Genèse, la Révolution, la Loi, la Sagesse, et avant l’élan révolutionnaire, et il souligne, ce qui est bien connu par tous, que *le message prophétique est toujours impopulaire, que les prophètes représentent un pouvoir que la plupart des sociétés ont beaucoup de difficultés à accepter.*¹⁹

Au Moyen-âge il n’y en a pas. Mais les temps modernes inventent le prophète laïque, le prophète de l’époque démotique. Pour Frye c’est John Milton lui-même qui invente ce rôle en 1644 dans son célèbre *Areopagitica (oratio)* adressée au Parlement pour “la liberté d’imprimer sans autorisation ni censure.” Ce texte est la défense passionnée de la liberté d’impression et de la liberté

d'expression, d'une *fundamental liberty* qui est due, affirme-t-il, au scribe qui est désormais le détenteur de la Vérité.²⁰

Où, mais si l'on ne croit pas à la révélation divine, comment accéder à cette Vérité? Et si l'on y accède quand même, de quelle façon, à l'aide de quel discours l'exprimer? Ce sont les questions qui vont se poser à Babits. A peu près au même moment, en décembre 1930, Ludwig Wittgenstein – qui avait déjà posé dans son *Tractatus* que “il ne peut y avoir de propositions éthiques car dans le monde toutes choses sont comme elle sont et se produisent comme elles se produisent; il n'y a pas en lui de valeur et s'il y en avait une, elle n'aurait pas de valeur (en soi)”²¹ – déclare à Cambridge à ses élèves que “l'essence du Bien n'a rien à voir avec les faits, et que par conséquent aucune proposition ne peut l'expliquer.” Et à l'agnostique et pessimiste philosophe critique du langage à ajouter: “Bien est ce que Dieu ordonne.”²²

Mais revenons à *La trahison des scribes* de Babits. Avec du recul, et non seulement vu d'aujourd'hui, mais aussi vu par Babits lui-même, à quelques années de distance, cet essai ne peut paraître qu'essentiellement incantatoire. Déjà le mode de discours de cet essai est le mode que Paul Ricœur appelle le *discours prescriptif*²³, mode qui peut paraître totalement déplacé en notre siècle, époque complètement dominé par le discours utile, le discours descriptif ou démotique. D'un autre côté est-ce à Babits, écrivain, certes, respecté dans le cercle des littérateurs, mais frileusement cantonné dans son domaine privé, à jouer le rôle du prophète moderne?

Il y répond donc bien des années plus tard, en 1938, avec un court poème épique en quatre parties, *Livre de Jonas*. Babits y reprend la structure du récit biblique du prophète Jonas, rédigé également en quatre parties, en suivant fidèlement la structure de la narration.

Pourquoi avoir choisi justement le récit de Jonas? Probablement parce que cette histoire qui a, évidemment, plusieurs lectures possible, a certainement un côté franchement comique. Jonas, messenger de la Vérité, se montre lâche au début de l'histoire, vindicatif et colérique à la fin, en contradiction totale avec le rôle qu'il doit assumer auprès des habitants de Ninivé. On voit donc déjà là cette disharmonie qui est, selon Henri Bergson à l'origine du rire.²⁴ Autre disharmonie entre l'importance et la solennité de la mission de Jonas, et les situations humiliantes où il se retrouve, d'abord dans le ventre du poisson, puis sous les feuilles complètement desséchées du ricin, exposé au cruel soleil.

Babits, dans son poème reprend et grossit même ces traits, en y ajoutant d'autres. Il évoque l'intérieur, visqueux, puant, dégoûtant de l'estomac de la baleine; en plus, contrairement au récit biblique, le Jonas du poème de Babits n'est point bien reçu et entendu par les habitants de Ninivé qui se moquent de lui, l'humilient et n'ont aucune intention de changer leurs habitudes. Point de repentance, point de *metanoia* dans le poème de 1938 dont le Jonas a quelques raisons d'être furieux car la parole de Dieu ou ce qu'il croyait être la parole de

Dieu, la prophétie qu'il proclamait de jour en jour: *Encore quarante jours et Ninive est détruite*, ne s'accomplit point.

Ainsi la puissante symbolique de l'histoire originale disparaît complètement. En effet la baleine, chez Babits prison visqueuse et puante de Jonas, est dans plusieurs grandes traditions, ainsi premièrement dans la tradition chrétienne et dans la tradition islamique, le lieu où va s'accomplir la deuxième naissance, la résurrection. Jonas vomit par la baleine préfigure, il en est fait expressément mention chez Mathieu, la descente et la résurrection du Christ; tandis que pour l'islam la baleine est également un symbole de première importance: la lettre nūn signifie gros poisson, en plus, par sa forme, évoque l'Arche de Noé, arche équivalant ici baleine, donc le lieu mouvant dans lequel l'espèce humaine se conserve, prête à une nouvelle naissance, à une nouvelle vie.²⁵ Étape intermédiaire, cerceuil, si l'on veut, mais cercueil qui a une ouverture et qui rendra possible la transformation de l'ancien en nouveau.

Babits choisit donc un mode de discours ironique qui annihile l'effet, ou les effets, de l'histoire originale. Ce mode utilisé par le poète est d'ailleurs assez curieux car si d'un côté les vers rimés donnent un certain sérieux au texte, les traits humoristiques répétés contrebalancent constamment ce sérieux. On pourrait penser à Baudelaire pour qui "le rire est lié à l'accident d'une chute ancienne, une dégradation physique et morale".²⁶

Fidèle aux règles du genre du poème épique, Babits va donner la conclusion dans le texte même. Mais fidèle aussi à l'approche ironique, il en donnera deux qui sont, à première vue, plutôt contradictoires. Dans un vers célèbre, très souvent cité, Jonas déclare: "Celui qui parmi les criminels, reste muet, devient leur complice." Mais dans un deuxième temps, Dieu, en faisant leçon à Jonas, le récalcitrant, dit ceci: "*Le verbe est à toi, l'arme est à moi. / Toi, Jonas, prêche, moi, j'agis.*"²⁷

Jonas, dans le poème, ne réplique point. On dirait que le prophète accepte le verdict, il n'y a plus de corrélation entre sa parole et l'acte, le Verbe, au moins celui du prophète n'a plus de prise sur l'acte. Néanmoins son affirmation précédente reste valable: il ne doit pas rester muet.

Dans un court poème qui est une espèce d'épilogue à *Livre de Jonas* et qui porte le titre de *Jónás imája (La Prière de Jonas)*, Babits confirme, je pense, cette interprétation. "*Les mots me seraient-ils devenus infidèles*" – commence-t-il, pour ajouter un peu plus tard: "*O, Maître, je voudrais que tu creuse le lit / de ma rivière, afin que je fusse conduit / Par des sentiers certains vers la mer. Si les rimes / Sans faille étaient issus de ton coeur magnanime.*"²⁸

Le poète, l'écrivain des temps moderne est-il, peut-il être prophète? Il est tenté de le devenir, on voudrait qu'il le devienne. J'ai indiqué trois étapes dans la carrière du poète: dans *Epilogue*, il confesse son désir et en même temps son incapacité de résumer, de concentrer tout l'univers dans le Livre, son Livre. Une vingtaine d'années plus tard, il s'insurge contre les scribes qui se font chantres

des intérêts particuliers et désigne le devoir du prophète moderne: indiquer non pas le chemin, mais l'astre, c'est-à-dire des systèmes de valeur à suivre. Encore dix ans, et Babits nous montre l'inefficacité des efforts du prophète moderne qui doit, pourtant, continuer à parler.

Nous voilà donc de retour à la pensée de Paul Ricœur qui fait, d'après Aristote, une distinction nette entre littérature et rhétorique. Si l'écrivain, le prophète moderne selon Milton, n'arrive pas à la persuasion, ce n'est pas de sa faute, simplement, ce n'est pas sa mission. Il en a une autre.

Quant au problème moral, dire et comment dire la Justice ou la Vérité, je pense que Babits arrive à la même conclusion que Wittgenstein. Wittgenstein dit, lors d'une entretien, en parlant de Platon que le grand philosophe grec pensait qu'il fallait éviter le relatif à tout prix, étant donné qu'il détruirait ce qu'il y a d'impératif dans la moralité. Pour éviter le relatif, il y a plusieurs façons, ainsi Wittgenstein commente le mot de Goering qui disait: "*Recht ist das, was uns gefällt*"²⁹, mot qui a l'avantage de la clarté, tout comme le mot de Lénine pour qui "*moral est ce qui est utile à la lutte des classes*".

On est donc à l'utile, mot qui faisait justement horreur à Babits. Mais pour dépasser l'alternative utile-relatif, il lui faut choisir entre les deux fondements possibles d'une morale de la Justice. Une première fois il opte pour l'impératif catégorique d'Immanuel Kant. La deuxième fois il est plus incertain, il fait intervenir le rire, puis implore l'aide du Maître. "Le Bien est ce que Dieu ordonne" dit Ludwig Wittgenstein. Mais il ne croit guère qu'il y a quelqu'un pour l'ordonner, le Bien pour lui disparaît donc derrière les faits.

Le poète, par contre, ne veut pas se dispenser du Bien. Il ne lui reste donc d'autre solution que d'essayer de croire en ce qui ferait son fondement. Y arrive-t-il? *Le Livre de Jonas* et *La prière de Jonas*, justement parce que ce n'est pas de rhétorique, mais de la poésie, laissent la question ouverte.

Notes

1. La traduction française, oeuvre de N. Abraham est publiée sous le titre de *Jonas* (Paris: Flammarion, 1981).
2. BENDA, Julien, *La trahison des clercs* (Paris: Grasset, 1927).
3. RÁBA, György, *A vonakodó cethal* (Budapest: Nagyvilág, 1998).
4. Les oeuvres de Babits traduits en français sont deux romans: *Le fils de Virgile Timar* (Paris: Stock, 1932), adapté et préfacé par A. Sauvageot; et *Calife-Cigogne* (Paris: In Fine, 1992), traduit par L. Leuilly et T. Szende; en plus plusieurs récits et de nombreuses poésies dans de différentes anthologies.
5. Il s'agit de *Bergson filozófiája* et de *Magyar Proust*, In: *Esszék, tanulmányok I-II.*, (Budapest: Szépirodalmi, 1978), 136-157 et 550-553.
6. Paru in *Anthologie de la poésie hongroise*, L. Gara dir. (Paris: Seuil, 1962), 231.
7. Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, acte II, scène 2.

8. Je pense à la nouvelle intitulée *El Aleph (L'Aleph)*, parue pour la première fois en 1949.
9. Le poèmes en question sont: *Május huszonhárom Rákospalotán* et *Húsvét előtt*.
10. Il s'agit des poèmes: *Csonka Magyarország* et *Erdély*.
11. *Az európai irodalom története*, paru pour la première fois en 1934. Il en existe une traduction allemande.
12. RICŒUR, Paul, *La métaphore vive* (Paris: Seuil, 1975), 18.
13. *Az írástudók árulása*, paru pour la première fois dans la revue *Nyugat* en 1928. 355–376.
14. KANT, Immanuel, *Az örök béke* (Budapest: Officina, 1918).
15. Cité d'après *Esszék, tanulmányok II.*, 215.
16. *Op. cité*, 217–218.
17. In: *Esszék, tanulmányok I.*, 532.
18. Définition du *Petit Robert*, éd. de 1992.
19. FRYE, Northrop, *The Great Code* (San Diego, New York, London: Harcourt Brace, 1981). Je le cite d'après l'édition hongroise *Kettős tükör* (Budapest: Európa, 1996), 219.
20. Voir FRYE *op. cité*, 221–223.
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27. Pour des raisons de meilleur compréhension je donne ces vers dans une traduction littérale.
28. Adaptation de Michel Manoll In *Anthologie de la poésie hongroise*, 243.
29. WITTGENSTEIN *op. cité*, 171–173.

DENIS DE ROUGEMONT ET LA HONGRIE

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I. Introduction

En guise d'introduction, je propose quelques réflexions sur la littérature européenne en générale, puis je parlerai de la relation amicale de deux intellectuels "européens", en m'appuyant sur des textes publiés en partie pendant des années 1930, en partie au cours des années 1970. Les premiers ont été rédigés "sur le vif", par deux jeunes gens, au début de leur carrière d'écrivain et d'essayiste. Le dernier texte, paru dans un volume regroupant les études et les témoignages, date de plus de cinquante années plus tard, raconte des souvenirs, évoque l'histoire de leur relation amicale. Cette histoire – de nature personnelle d'abord – rejoint celle de l'Europe, en illustre les destins sinon typiques du moins possibles, des citoyens de la "république des lettres". Les deux parcours sont différents mais en même temps, ils ont quelques points communs, ce qui me permettra de tirer quelques conclusions non seulement sur la nature de cette relation, mais aussi sur le sujet du colloque: La Hongrie, l'Europe Centrale et l'Europe.

Pour mon premier point, j'ai pris comme point de départ un volume paru en 1992, intitulé "Histoire de la littérature européenne",¹ réalisé à l'aide d'un assez grand nombre de collaborateurs. Paru à la maison d'édition Hachette Éducation, il est donc destiné principalement aux étudiants, aux futures enseignants et par conséquence à ceux qui vivront dans quelques dizaines d'années dans un contexte européen dont nous sommes, maintenant, en train de construire les fondements plus ou moins solides, théoriques et réels.

Or, pour les collaborateurs de ce volume, la notion même de la littérature européenne semble aller de soi, concept dont les racines remontent à une époque lointaine. Mais dans la préface, les auteurs soulèvent quand-même quelques problèmes qui montrent bien la complexité de la question:

"Qu'en est-il aujourd'hui de l'identité européenne? Fragmentée par les nationalismes du XIX^e siècle issus de la Révolution française, elle est toujours de plus en plus mondialisée depuis le début du XX^e siècle. La cohérence culturelle de l'Europe se donne pourtant à entendre, à toucher, à voir dans les domaines de la musique, des arts plastiques, de la peinture (...) Le catalogue de tous les musées des Beaux-Arts est international. Mais – et c'est la question qui

nous préoccupe aujourd'hui davantage – est celle des “lettres européennes”. “Comment sont ces catalogues de la littérature que sont les histoires littéraires? Nationaux, surtout nationaux, hélas!” – constatent les rédacteurs de ce volume,² en souhaitant donc de traiter les histoires littéraires des différents pays non pas juxtaposées mais ensemble. Leur ambition est faire apparaître les convergences existant entre les littératures au fil de quatorze chapitres qui font la synthèse de la production littéraire d'une époque dans toute l'Europe.

Or, l'Europe sera définie, au départ, par ce qui n'y appartient pas. Avant d'aborder la genèse des lettres européennes, quelques chapitres traitent les “héritages”, notamment l'héritage extra-européen, l'héritage gréco-latin, l'héritage judéo-chrétien et l'héritage byzantin. La question n'étant pas alors très simple, la définition de la littérature européenne commence par l'énumération des éléments qui n'en font pas forcément partie, ou qui n'y appartiennent pas d'une façon précise. Mais ce sont peut-être justement ces éléments d'un héritage commun qui permettent de saisir l'essentiel et qui pourront être illustrés par des exemples singuliers.

Car, au-delà des réflexions abstraites, la littérature existe, et au-delà des théories parfois très bien construites, il y a des personnes réelles, des hommes de lettres qui mènent leur vie et leurs activités dans un contexte parfois plus ou moins différent, parfois plus ou moins similaires. Souvent, ce sont des rencontres mémorables, “des moments privilégiés” qui leur permettent de passer du niveau individuel au niveau collectif, de dépasser le singulier pour arriver à l'universel, ce qui sera – dans ce cas-là – l'universel européen, par rapport au singulier national.

II. Deux intellectuels européens

1. *Le Paysan du Danube*

Pour illustrer par un exemple ces “rencontres mémorables” et ces “moments privilégiés”, j'ai choisi celle d'un Hongrois, Albert Gyergyai et d'un écrivain français, plus précisément d'un écrivain originaire de la Suisse romande, Denis de Rougemont. Le premier, Albert Gyergyai, né en 1893 et mort en 1981, était un excellent traducteur d'un nombre remarquable d'écrivains français de toutes les époques, auteur de nombreuses études et de livres savants, professeur de la littérature française, titulaire de la Chaire de français de l'Université de Budapest pendant plus de vingt ans. Denis de Rougemont, né en 1906 et mort en 1985, est devenu célèbre surtout grâce à son livre intitulé *L'Amour et l'Occident*, mais aussi grâce à ces nombreux écrits consacrés à la cause européenne. Il était sans doute un des meilleurs propagateurs de l'idée de l'Europe fédéraliste, surtout à partir des années 1950.

Les souvenirs de leurs rencontres sont évoqués dans quelques textes qui seront présentés brièvement par ce qui suit. Pour commencer, voici donc quelques passages parus dans le journal de voyage de Denis de Rougemont, "Le Paysan du Danube".³ Ce livre, dont le titre rappelle une fable de La Fontaine, n'a rien de grotesque ou d'une morale facile. L'ouvrage, d'une soixantaine de pages, a été rédigé en 1929, puis repris en 1931. Il comprend une introduction, sous le titre "Le sentiment de l'Europe centrale", une première partie, intitulée "L Paysan du Danube" – avec les chapitres suivants: Une tasse de thé au palais C, Voyage en Hongrie et Le balcon sur l'eau, puis une deuxième partie sous le titre "La lenteur des choses", comprenant également trois chapitres: Château en Prusse, La Tour de Hölderlin et Petit journal de Souabe.

Le récit de son voyage effectué en Hongrie ne comprend donc pas plus d'une trentaine de pages. Il est dédié à Albert Gyergyai qui lui a servi de guide et qui était certainement parmi les premiers à évoquer sa curiosité pour entreprendre cette visite à partir de Vienne, où il était étudiant à cette époque-là. Toutes ses impressions sont donc condensées en un texte relativement court, mais qui est beaucoup plus qu'un simple journal de bord.

Les premières pages sont l'évocation de son arrivée à Budapest, par le bateau et sa première nuit à "un Collège célèbre". Puis, il parle de ses visites – aujourd'hui on dirait "touristiques" – au tombeau de Gül-Baba, d'un défilé des membres de la Chambre des Magnats, lors de l'élection d'un des quatre gardiens de la couronne de Saint-Étienne, de sa visite à plusieurs villes, Esztergom et Debrecen, des „eaux fades du Balaton", de la chanson et de la danse hongroises, etc. Le genre adopté par le jeune Rougemont est un genre mixte, récit de voyage et journal intime, fragmentaire, mais donnant quand-même l'impression d'un volume composé.

Dans cet ensemble d'évocation de souvenirs divers, le récit de sa visite chez Mihály Babits, poète éminent de l'époque de l'entre-deux-guerres, prend une place considérable. La description de cette visite sera précédée par quelques réflexions concernant la littérature hongroise – sa source d'information étant de toute certitude Albert Gyergyai. Voici donc, ce que le jeune Denis de Rougemont dit à propos de la littérature hongroise de l'époque: "...l'expression la plus libre et la plus vivante du génie littéraire de cette race me paraît bien avoir été donnée par le groupe important du Nyugat (l'Occident), revue fondée par ces deux grands poètes: André Ady et Michel Babits. Ady, le sombre et pathétique est mort à trente cinq ans, mais sa ferveur anime encore des écrivains profondément magyars de sensibilité, bien que souvent européens de goûts et de curiosités, et dont Michel Babits est aujourd'hui le chef de file."⁴

"Des amis m'emmenent le voir à Esztergom, où il passe ses étés. Esztergom est la plus vieille capitale de la Hongrie. Attila, me dit-on, y régna. Au-dessus du palais de l'archevêché, sur une colline que le Danube contourne, la Basilique élève une coupole d'ocre éclatant, immense et froide, dominant cette plaine

onduleuse dont les vagues se perdent dans une poussière violacée à l'horizon – chez les Tchèques déjà.”⁵

“Nous allons aux bains, car c'est dans la piscine que nous devons rencontrer le poète. Cheveux noirs d'aigle collés sur un large front, belle carrure ruisselante, il nous sourit, dans l'eau jusqu'à mi-corps, mythologique. Nous sortons ensemble de la petite ville aux rues de terre brûlante, aux maisons jaunes basses, ville sans ombre, sans arbres, et nous montons vers la maison du poète, sur un coteau de vignes.”⁶

Ce qui nous frappe dans cette description, c'est – outre le ton poétique que l'auteur abandonnera plus tard au profit d'une clarté et d'une précision de l'argumentation – la façon exacte dont il parle de notre littérature, de nos poètes. C'est la grande curiosité intellectuelle du jeune Rougemont qui se manifeste ici, une curiosité sincère et pleine de bonne volonté, l'expression d'une sympathie qui semble s'installer d'emblée dans son âme, au moment où il entreprend le voyage en Hongrie.

Denis de Rougemont ce fils de pasteur, né près de Neuchâtel n'a que 23 ans quand il écrit ces lignes. Il fait ses études d'abord à Neuchâtel,⁷ puis à l'université de Vienne, avant d'être reçu à la licence ès lettres. Il a une formation très variée, français, allemand, latin, histoire, psychologie et philosophie, ce qui lui permettra de devenir un des essayistes le plus célèbre et le plus grand propagateur de l'idée européenne. Mais avant d'y arriver il devra encore parcourir un long chemin. D'abord directeur de la revue au titre significatif “Je sers”, puis “intellectuel en chômage”, vivant avec sa femme à l'île de Ré, il finira par s'installer à Paris, où il sera condamné à quinze jours de prison pour avoir dénigré Hitler dans un de ses articles. Parmi les jalons de sa vie, il faut encore mentionner son départ pour les États-Unis, d'où il ne reviendra qu'en 1947, son installation à Ferney-Voltaire, où il restera jusqu'à la fin de sa vie. C'est à ce moment-là qu'il commence à militer pour une Europe fédéraliste, non seulement sur le plan économique, mais aussi et surtout, sur le plan culturel.

Cet intellectuel “engagé” qui ne pense qu'à servir une cause, celle de l'Europe fédéraliste, parcourt donc une partie de ses contrées pour s'informer, pour rencontrer des gens célèbres, mais aussi des gens tout à fait ordinaires, pour voir de ses propres yeux le paysages et les habitats, mais aussi pour “vivre des moments privilégiés”, pour effectuer une véritable quête spirituelle, philosophique et métaphysique, à la recherche de l'Objet – comme il dira dans la conclusion du livre.

Mais retenons d'abord surtout sa première impression, lors de sa rencontre avec Babits. Notre poète et homme littéraire, lui donne l'impression d'un dieu païen, dans l'eau jusqu'à mi-corps, ruisselant, beau et souriant. Or, Babits venait de franchir une étape difficile de sa vie, et commence juste à avoir un peu de tranquillité après être sinon persécuté, du moins mis à l'écart du à sa participation indirecte de la direction culturelle de l'éphémère république des conseils.

Il commence à avoir la possibilité de déployer son immense talent et d'avoir autour de lui un cercle important d'amis, surtout de jeunes poètes et écrivains, hommes de lettres étrangers et hongrois. Parmi ces derniers il faut compter Albert Gyergyai, qui évoquera aussi, de son côté, les souvenirs de Babits, entre autres dans son article intitulé "À l'ombre de la revue Nyugat".⁸

Mais voici la suite des souvenirs de voyage de Rougemont. Il donne une description vivante et pittoresque de la maison du poète hongrois: "Trois chambres boisées entourées d'une large galerie d'où l'on voit le Danube gris-jaune, brillant, sans rides, la petite ville juste au-dessous de soi, et la Basilique sur son rocher. Fraîches, sentant bon, avec des livres sur des divans aux riches couleurs, des boissons préparées, l'ombre dormante, – trois petites chambres et un pan de toit par-dessus, cela fait une baraque à peine visible dans les vignes, à peine détachée du flanc de la colline pour que les vents ne l'emportent pas, un beau nid de poète: car demeurer ici, c'est demeurer vraiment en "pleine nature", un peu au-dessus de la plaine, pas tout à fait dans le ciel, là où doivent vivre ceux qui "chantent".⁹

Dans cet environnement idyllique l'après-midi se passe agréablement. "Nous buvons des vins dorés et doux que nous verse Ilonka Babits (elle est aussi poète et très belle), nous inscrivons nos noms au charbon sur le mur chaulé, Gachot prend des photos, Gyergyai fouille la plaine à la longue-vue et rêve qu'il y est, je grimpe au cerisier sauvage, derrière la maison, un peintre tout en blanc arrive par les vignes, ah! qu'il fait beau temps, l'horizon est aussi lointain qu'on imagine, tout a de belles couleurs, le poète sourit en lui-même, il y a une enfance dans l'air."¹⁰

Les sujets de conversation ne sont pas mentionnés. Pourtant, Denis de Rougemont est très sensible, malgré son jeune âge, aux grands problèmes de son époque. Il sait très bien qu'il se trouve dans un pays "multilé", ayant subi un énorme choc après le traité de Trianon. Il sait aussi combien les relations avec les habitants des pays successeurs sont devenues difficiles et délicates. La deuxième partie de son récit de voyage est non moins chargé d'ailleurs de réflexions sur les problèmes pressentis plus que constatés à propos de la Prusse orientale.

Après le chapitre consacré à sa visite chez Babits, il suit encore quelques souvenirs non moins enthousiastes de son voyage en Hongrie. En dehors des sujets déjà mentionnés, il évoque les soirées d'ivresse – ce qui aboutit à la composition de toute une théorie sur l'ivresse – à l'énumération de celles qui ne sont pas forcément provoquées par le vin: "Toute l'échelle des ivresses – comme il précisera – ivresses de la faim, de l'alcool, de la foule, de la solitude, de l'extase".¹¹ Parfois il s'attardera sur la beauté des femmes, sur l'étrangeté de quelques paysages et de quelques villes, etc.

Parfois, il fait allusion aux artistes contemporains, à Richard Strauss, à Hugo von Hoffmannsthal, le train lui rappelle la musique de Stravinsky, etc. Parfois il

évoque ses écrivains-prédécesseurs, voyageurs érudits, tel Goethe, voyageurs en Orient, tel Nerval, ou voyageurs cosmopolites, par exemple sous le fameux nom de Barnabooth, etc.

Mais le voyage, c'est surtout et avant tout "un état d'âme (...) On ne voyage jamais que dans son propre sens. Mais il faut voyager pour découvrir ce sens!"¹²

Ce texte est à lire donc à deux niveaux: à un niveau superficiel, concret, c'est l'évocation de quelques sites et rencontres mémorables, mais à un niveau plus profond, métaphysique, c'est l'expression de sa quête, personnelle et spirituelle, dont le passage qui clot la partie sur la Hongrie donne la quintessence.

"Ainsi je quitte la Hongrie. Serait-ce là tout ce quelle m'a donné? Cette notion plus vive de l'univers, où la présence de l'Objet deviendrait plus probable? Ou bien n'ai-je su voir autre chose que la Hongrie de mes rêves, ma Hongrie intérieure? Il est vrai que l'on connaît depuis toujours ce qu'une fois on l'aimera. Et les uns disent qu'il faut connaître pour aimer; les autres: aimer pour connaître. Débat qui se résout dans une synthèse, comme toujours: au point de perfection aimer et connaître sont un seul et même acte."¹³

2. À l'ombre de l'Occident: le pendant et la suite de l'histoire d'une amitié littéraire

Albert Gyergyai, dont le nom se trouve évoqué à plusieurs reprises dans le récit de voyage de Denis de Rougemont rédige, en 1933, un compte rendu sur le Paysan du Danube. Ce texte sera repris plus tard, dans son volume d'essais paru en 1979, sous le titre "Plaidoyer pour les essais".¹⁴ Il est évident que Gyergyai connaît bien le jeune Suisse, par conséquence, il est un peu étonnant qu'il l'appelle "jeune écrivain français". Rougemont est présenté d'ailleurs comme collaborateur de la revue *Nyugat*, où il venait de publier un article sur Ramuz. Gyergyai le présente comme un poète, en train de devenir peut-être un grand romancier. Mais nous savons aujourd'hui que par la suite Denis de Rougemont choisira une autre forme d'expression, celle de l'essai et du pamphlet. Néanmoins, Gyergyai est déjà frappé par le ton de ses écrits, dans lesquels il "détruit les superstitions tenaces de l'âme contemporaine". L'auteur hongrois décrit avec une sensibilité et une précision extraordinaires ce récit de voyage, en insistant sur le mélange des genres qui y est pratiqué par l'auteur: poésie, théorie, souvenir personnel, évocation de paysage et sociologie, rêve et réalité, etc. Mais il constate avant tout la nouveauté des idées formulées, les efforts de ce jeune écrivain européen pour pouvoir "briser les vieux carcans, pour se libérer des contraintes sentimentales et spirituelles („kitörni az érzelmi és szellemi vámfalak közül"). Gyergyai comprend parfaitement que les souvenirs de voyages ne servent que de prétextes pour parler d'autres choses, de tout ce qui le préoccupent pour le moment et qui sont les manifestations d'un grand talent et des signes précurseurs d'une grande carrière d'écrivain.

Or, il ne s'agit pas du tout d'un éloge touchant aux registres personnels ou d'un hommage quasi obligatoire rendu par un ami intime. Gyergyai se présente comme un critique sérieux et la lecture de son texte superposé aujourd'hui à celui de Rougemont – dont j'ai évoqué quelques passages pour en illustrer le style et la facture – peut nous convaincre de l'importance de cette relation, de la nature mémorable d'un recontre et de l'existence d'un "moment privilégié", sous le signe du bonheur, et en dépassant le niveau individuel, pour accéder à un niveau plus général, celui de la jeune génération européenne de l'époque d'entre deux guerres.

Il n'y a pas lieu ici de tracer des biographies parallèles de ces deux intellectuels à travers les années qui suivent ces premiers moments de "bonheur". Chacun des deux connaîtra aussi des moments difficiles. Le titre de l'essai de Gyergyai, "À l'ombre de l'Occident" servira de métaphore de la traversée du désert qui était le sort de maints intellectuelles avant les mêmes origines et les mêmes prétentions que Gyergyai. Il réussira quand-même de rester en contact avec les milieux littéraires et de "survivre" en tant que porte-parole et médiateur, professeur et traducteur.

Quarante ans plus tard, une rencontre spirituelle marque encore cette amitié, à travers l'évocation des souvenirs, avec la participation de Gyergyai au volume édité pour le soixante-dixième anniversaire de Denis de Rougemont, à Neuchâtel en 1976.¹⁵ Parmi les collaborateurs du volume nous trouvons beaucoup de noms illustres: Lawrence Durrell, Eugène Ionesco, Michel Tournier, etc. qui ont composé des essais, des témoignages, des messages. Les noms de Yves Bonnefoy, de Pierre Emmanuel et de Jean Starobinski figurent parmi ceux qui ont offert des essais littéraires et historiques. Plusieurs autres auteurs parlent de l'Europe et de questions de l'actualité politiques et culturelles.

Albert Gyergyai et le seul Hongrois qui figure parmi les auteurs. Il évoque en quelques pages la figure de Denis de Rougemont et il retrace l'histoire de leurs amitié, qui romonte – comme il le dit à cette époque-là – à plus de cinquante ans. „...depuis notre première rencontre à la Bibliothèque de Neuchâtel jusqu'à notre dernière entrevie à Genève" (...). "Je peux donc constater avec un certain droit que, chez lui, cette évolution s'est faite en double sens: d'une part, dans sa jeunesse d'étudiant, il voulait embrasser l'univers, il pensait "Planétairement", (...) D'autre part, surtout dans les dernières décades, il s'occupe de plus en plus intensément de ce petit monde intime, de cette Europe en miniature qu'est à ses yeux son pays natal, la Suisse..."¹⁶

Il est évident que l'évocation de son voyage ou plutôt de ces deux voyages, d'après le témoignage de Gyergyai, appartient à la première période. Rougemont veut connaître le monde entier, non seulement penser "planétairement", mais aussi voyager "planétairement". Gyergyai: "Il se déplaçait souvent, pour m'écrire une fois des confins de l'Europe (...) et une autre fois de l'Amérique, du Nord ou du Sud. (...) toujours et partout en touriste d'idées, non seulement pour

voir et se distraire des différences des peuples et des pays, du fameux “exotisme” si cher aux romantiques, mais surtout pour réfléchir à l’homme, à la personne et à son destin”.

Puis il évoque le jeune Denis de Rougemont qui “paraissait irrésistible, à cause de son génie qui rayonnait dans ses yeux, sa parole claire, bien articulé, son air souriant et qui respirait la joie de vivre et de penser et une certaine générosité confiante qui se répandait sur ses amis, sur ses environs, sur le monde entier. Nous parlions naturellement de littérature...” (N. B. Ils partagent le même enthousiasme pour Marcel Proust et André Gide.)

En chroniqueur fidèle, Gyergyai se souvient de tout. “A Paris où, quelques années plus tard, je l’ai revu, M. de Rougemont était déjà un jeune écrivain brillant et célèbre. (...) En Suisse, je l’ai vu même chez ses parents, au presbytère du village d’Areuse où il me montrait les sources de leur “rivière”, vive et disciplinée à la fois” (...)

Il suivent les années difficiles, mais ils se retrouvent quand-même: “Après la Seconde Guerre mondiale, après un long séjour en Amérique, je l’ai revu plusieurs fois à Genève, à propos des Rencontres à Ferney, dans l’ancienne grange de Voltaire, où sa carrière semblait s’arrêter pour quelque temps mais bien loin de finir.”

“La dernière fois que je l’ai revu c’était en l’été 1972, au bord du lac, dans un restaurant, où avec lui et sa femme nous avons parlé de nos souvenirs et de nos espoirs et j’admirais, comme toujours, son esprit jeune et toujours en travail, ses yeux brûlants et scrutateurs en même temps, (...) Son compatriote Rousseau et notre contemporain Proust, parlent des moments privilégiés de l’existence: c’est un de ces rares moments que je croyais vivre alors dans l’un des plus beaux paysages du monde, en sirotant un cru de la côte, en conversation animée avec les Rougemont, et j’étais heureux...”¹⁷

III. Conclusion

Les “moments privilégiés de l’existence”, le bonheur, “l’enfance dans l’air”, ce sont les jalons d’une relation amicale dont les étapes géographiques sont Lausanne et Neuchâtel, puis Budapest et Esztergom, finalement Genève. Le boucle est bouclé, l’Europe des intellectuels – réalisée au moins dans l’imagination, dans le domaine de l’esprit – assure cet état d’âme, elle en est le grant. Tout ceci se passe au delà des frontières, au-delà de la réalité et du parcours individuel de ces deux hommes exceptionnels, parcours qui était d’ailleurs jalonné d’épreuves et non pas des moindres, dans les deux cas.

Au début, j’ai mentionné quelques similitudes de ces deux parcours. Elles se trouvent dans le même enthousiasme qu’ils partagent pour les choses de l’esprit, de l’art, de la littérature avant tout. En ême temps, ils renoncent aux carrières de

poète voire de romancier, afin de se consacrer à un rôle de propagateur, de porte-parole. Gyergyai conservera jusqu'à la fin de sa vie une véritable passion pour la littérature française. Rougemont se consacrera à l'élaboration et à la propagation d'un système de pensées autour de la construction de l'Europe fédéraliste. Passion et obsession, dans les deux cas, sentiment d'un besoin d'accomplir une mission, de servir une cause, de s'engager pour quelque chose – et ceci non pas dans le sens sartrien du mot, mais plutôt dans le sens de "servir".

Puis, il y a encore quelque chose de commun dans l'itinéraire de ces deux intellectuels. Leur parcours suit la même formule: au début, départ et sensibilité planétaire, pour revenir enfin vers son propre pays, vers le lieu intime de ses proches. Rougemont finit par reconnaître l'importance de son histoire familiale, "sa lignée" et il choisit comme son lieu privilégié la Suisse, petit pays modèle du fédéralisme. Gyergyai, après avoir parcouru mentalement tous les paysages de la littérature française, après avoir effectué des voyages imaginaires dans l'espace et dans le temps, retrouve, vers la fin de sa vie, son village natal et sa mère, dont il évoquera le souvenir dans une oeuvre autobiographique.

C'est le moment de revenir au début, au problème soulevé par l'Histoire de la littérature européenne: est-ce vraiment dommage d'arriver au nationalisme des catalogues littéraires? Or, serait-il possible de trouver une solution dans le dilemme posé par la tendance de la mondialisation, ressentie aujourd'hui un peu partout dans le monde et celui du pays, de sa région natal, du petit monde d'où on est sorti et dont chacun de nous porte en soi-même les souvenirs et les traditions? Je pense que la possibilité d'une telle relation, comme celle qui existait et survivait entre Denis de Rougemont et Albert Gyergyai – malgré toutes les vicissitudes de notre histoire européenne en est la preuve et l'illustration convainquante.

Notes

1. *Histoire de la Littérature Européenne*, sous la direction d'Annick Benoit-Dusasoy et de Guy Fontaine (Paris: Hachette, Éducation, 1992).
2. *Op. cit.*, 13.
3. Denis de Rougemont, *Le Paysan du Danube et autres textes*, Éd. l'Âge de l'homme, 1982.
4. *Op. cit.*, 45–46.
5. *Ibid.*
6. *Ibid.*
7. Pour la biographie de Denis de Rougemont cf. J. P. Beumarchais – P. Couty – A. Rey, *Dictionnaire des Littératures de Langue française* (Paris: Bordas, 1994).
8. Gyergyai, Albert: *A Nyugat Árnnyékában* (À l'ombre de l'Occident), Budapest.
9. D. de Rougemont, *op. cit.*, 45–46.
10. D. de Rougemont, *op. cit.*, 46.

11. D. de Rougemont, *op. cit.*, 49.
12. D. de Rougemont, *op. cit.*, 57.
13. D. de Rougemont, *op. cit.*, 59.
14. Gyergyai, Albert, *Védelem az esszé ügyében* (Plaidoyer pour les essais) (Budapest: Szépirodalmi Kiadó, 1984).
15. Denis de Rougemont, *Études et témoignages*. L'Écrivain, l'Européen, Langages, à la Baconnière (Neuchâtel, 1976).
16. Gyergyai, Albert *Mes rencontres avec Denis de Rougemont, Études et témoignages* (...), *op. cit.*, 35–38.
17. *Ibid.*

KOSZTOLÁNYI ET LA TRADITION STOÏQUE

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Dezsó Kosztolányi (1885–1936), romancier, nouvelliste, poète, traducteur et essayiste, est apprécié aujourd'hui comme l'écrivain hongrois le plus éminent du début du vingtième siècle. Dans les années 1920 il publie *Néron, le poète sanglant* (1920), roman historique influencé par les oeuvres de Sénèque, et *Marc-Aurèle* (1929), poème écrit à l'occasion d'un voyage à Rome.

Traduit en allemand et préfacé par Thomas Mann, *Néron* inspirera en 1936 son *Falsche Nero* à Lion Feuchtwanger, livre stigmatisant Hitler. Le roman hongrois est un bon exemple de ce que Gérard Genette nomme hypertextualité, entendant par là une relation unissant un texte à des textes antérieurs sur lesquels "il se greffe d'une manière qui n'est pas celle du commentaire". Dans ce cas les textes préexistants sont les *Annales* de Tacite, la biographie de Néron dans le recueil de Suétone, intitulé *De vita duodecim caesarum* et les *Consolations* de Sénèque. C'est effectivement en se souvenant très consciemment de ces textes que Kosztolányi a écrit son livre. Néanmoins, il y a un clivage presque total entre le roman et les oeuvres de Tacite et Suétone: le Néron de l'écrivain hongrois n'est pas l'Antéchrist, accusé d'avoir incendié Rome, mais la victime d'une situation démoniaque. Il n'y a que Britannicus, l'artiste intègre qui refuse l'action, pour adopter les valeurs transcendantes qui peuvent être détruites par un système totalitaire. Lorsque Kosztolányi commença à réfléchir à ce livre, il hésita longuement, partagé entre plusieurs tentations. Pourquoi ne pas confronter systématiquement ses prises de position au cours des années 1914–1920 avec ses jugements sur la première guerre mondiale et les révolutions? Selon l'auteur du roman *Néron, le poète sanglant* il y eut d'incroyables retournements de veste, en Hongrie par exemple, au point qu'il n'est peut-être pas illégitime de se demander si, ici et là, le mensonge ne continuait pas à sévir, sous la forme de la dénonciation du mensonge, qui était la dernière ruse du mal.

Dans *Néron* le dictateur veut prendre naturellement la place des écrivains et des artistes. L'écrivain s'efforce de montrer que les valeurs esthétiques sont plus fondamentales que valeurs éthiques, mais le passage à la morale reste indispensable. La question serait plutôt de savoir si la construction d'un système politique inspiré par une idéologie messianique n'est pas un cul-de-sac.

Le destin de Sénèque suggère qu'un vrai artiste ne connaît que la motivation propre à son art et ne cède point à des impératifs extérieurs à son art: plaire au

tyran, illustrer la révolution. Avant de mourir, Sénèque livre dans un long monologue son testament spirituel: "J'étais poète et philosophe. Indifférent comme la nature. Je n'avais d'opinion que sur les choses éternelles. (...) Dans l'âme du poète tout a place côte à côte, le bien et le mal, l'or et la fange. Malheureusement, je dus prendre parti. Ce ne fut guère difficile. Toute vérité a deux aspects que je voyais simultanément. (...) Mon tort ne fut pas d'avoir changé d'avis et d'avoir été plein de contradictions, mais d'avoir pris parti en général. Les sages doivent s'abstenir de parler et d'agir."

Ce testament, fait dans une situation cruelle, est plein d'âme et d'éloquence: le beau génie du philosophe s'y montre tout entier, et, sans le souvenir importun de quelques traits de la vie de Sénèque, on pourrait croire que le coeur le plus tendre et le plus sensible a conduit ses phrases; mais le lecteur du roman sait trop sur le précepteur de Néron, pour se laisser surprendre à l'expansion factice d'une sensibilité qu'on chercherait vainement dans sa conduite. Qui pourrait, en effet, se persuader que celui qui, sous Néron, trempa dans le meurtre d'Agripine, qui ensuite en fit l'apologie officielle, fut un bon fils? Ce sont, dans une vie, des tâches indélébiles.

Dans son monologue Sénèque souligne la nécessité d'allonger la traversée entre métaphysique et morale. Son but est d'accomplir un pas décisif en direction de l'éthique à l'occasion des réflexions sur la promesse comme modèle du maintien de soi. Il ne cache pas qu'il est bien difficile de distinguer entre la promesse et l'obligation morale de tenir ses promesses. Il veut croire qu'il ne paraît pas exact de dire que la signification de la promesse, en tant qu'elle lie celui qui la prononce, implique en tant que telle, l'obligation de la tenir. Sénèque constate qu'une promesse non tenue reste une promesse. La possibilité de trahir sa propre parole implique un acte supplémentaire qui s'exprime dans l'obligation de tenir parole. Il faut alors faire intervenir l'injonction qui combine le respect de soi, le respect de l'autre qui compte sur moi, enfin le respect de l'institution même du langage. Selon le poète-philosophe, c'est finalement l'acte de tenir effectivement parole qui constitue l'opérateur actuel de la transition entre le versant métaphysique et le versant moral du maintien de soi.

Sénèque n'a jamais fait consister le vrai bien dans les objets auxquels tous les mortels aspirent; au contraire, il n'y a trouvé que du vide, que des dehors spéciaux, qu'un vernis séduisant. Le monologue de Sénèque s'inspire du texte de l'écrivain stoïque connu sous le titre *Consolation à Helvie*. Helvie, mère de Sénèque, avait été frappée de tous les coups qui peuvent briser le coeur d'une femme sensible et tendre. Dans l'espace de quelques mois, elle avait perdu un ocle qu'elle chérissait, puis son mari, puis trois de ses petits-fils; enfin, vingt jours s'étaient écoulés depuis les funérailles du fils de Sénèque, lorsque le philosophe, mêlé dans une intrigue de cour au commencement du règne de Claude, fut séparé d'elle par exil. Sénèque, apprenant, du fond de la Corse, que sa mère était inconsolable de sa disgrâce, lui écrivit une consolation, dans laquelle il a

rassemblé tout ce que les raisonnements stoïques ont de plus fort contre la douleur. "Tel est l'arrêt du destin, dit-il, il n'est rien dont la fortune soit irrévocablement fixée."

Le dernier roman de Kosztolányi, *Anna Édes* (1926, paru en français sous le titre *Absolve Domine*) est le récit de la Commune en Hongrie. Ce livre parle du désespoir des Hongrois qui assistent impuissants à l'envahissement progressif des marches millénaires de leurs pays et des méthodes tyranniques des bolcheviks arrivés au pouvoir. L'influence de la tradition stoïque continue dans les nouvelles écrites dans les dernières années de la vie de Kosztolányi. Dans son recueil, *L'oeil-de-mer*, paru en 1936, il a regroupé quatre nouvelles: *Pauline* et *Silus*, écrites en 1929, *Aurelius* et *Caligula*, composées respectivement en 1931 et 1934. Ces quatre "Profils latins" sont des oeuvres paraboliques. Pauline et Silus, la servante injustement accusée de vol et l'esclave qui subit en quelques heures une accumulation de coups du destin, sont des personnages victimes, tandis que Marc-Aurèle, le penseur stoïque, et Caligula, le tyran obsédé de sa volonté subjective, sont des empereurs dont le pouvoir sur leur environnement est illimité. Dans le poème *Marc-Aurèle* (1929), l'empereur incarne l'union impossible des valeurs éthiques et esthétiques, dans la nouvelle *Aurelius*, il est confronté à une bavure policière qui aboutit à la mort d'un enfant. Au lieu de châtier le coupable, il fait preuve de clémence.

La nature des relations entre les valeurs éthiques et esthétiques chez Kosztolányi est un thème aujourd'hui trop bien établi dans l'histoire littéraire pour qu'il soit nécessaire de s'y attarder. La seule originalité qui pourrait être proposée serait de mettre en couple la problématique du soi avec l'analyse de la promesse comme performatif d'un certain type, susceptible de description dans une théorie des actes de discours. L'auto-critique de Sénèque est le point de départ de l'argument de Marc-Aurèle. L'examen de conscience, héritage stoïque, a pour premier seuil la reconnaissance de la ligne de partage entre les choses qui dépendent de nous et celles qui ne dépendent pas de nous. Des premières seules nous sommes responsables. Mise en examen, dit l'empereur, ne veut pas encore dire inculpation. C'est sur ce fond relativement neutre que se détache la bonne et la mauvaise conscience. La question posée par Marc-Aurèle est la suivante: Qu'y a-t-il, qui ne puisse être acheté ou vendu? Entre autres, le talent artistique, la santé, le pouvoir. C'est dans cette perspective qu'il convient de critiquer les valeurs liées à l'économie de marché. Selon la thèse de l'empereur les événements esthétiques diffèrent radicalement des événements éthiques. Apprendre, conclure, reconnaître la forme: voilà la source du plaisir esthétique. Et pourtant, l'homme esthétique ne saurait rompre tout lien avec l'homme moral.

Les stoïciens définissent la tradition par un accord de nous-mêmes à nous-mêmes, un accord entre les esprits plutôt que par un accord de notre discours avec ce que les penseurs dogmatiques appellent la réalité. Dans les oeuvres de Kosztolányi, sous l'influence des stoïciens s'est affirmé une tendance à refouler

la notion d'événements, à laquelle l'auteur de *Néron* a préféré celle de conjoncture, de structure, à savoir des composantes beaucoup plus lentes, plus stables et plus durables que celle de la révolution. Cela marque un effacement du politique au bénéfice de l'esthétique. Ce qui se passe sous nos yeux dans les romans et les nouvelles de Kosztolányi révèle un véritable renversement de priorité: c'est l'échec des systèmes politiques qui conduit au bouleversement. Dans le dernier chapitre d'*Anna Édes* un des personnages s'appelle Kosztolányi. L'historien fait partie de l'histoire. Selon l'écrivain hongrois l'histoire est fidèle à son étymologie: c'est une "recherche". Divisé en fragments, le cycle *Kornél Esti* affirme que le sens même de la causalité dont use le romancier reste naïf, précritique, oscillant entre le déterminisme et la probabilité. Se dire qu'on peut considérer l'histoire comme un progrès à travers recommencements et ruptures, c'est là, selon Esti, l'illusion des romanciers. Il considère la conception linéaire du progrès comme bête et méchante. C'est pourquoi la rencontre en histoire est un dialogue, car la condition première du dialogue c'est que l'autre réponde.

Dans ma contribution au colloque franco-hongrois "Regards sur Kosztolányi", organisé en 1985, j'ai cité quelques phrases du premier chapitre de *Kornél Esti*. Au cours de leur dialogue, le narrateur anonyme propose une collaboration à son ami de jeunesse Kornél, qui formule une conception de l'antiroman qui rappelle la critique des conventions romanesques formulée par Valéry et citée par Breton: "Tu ne vas pas me conglutiner ça avec une intrigue idiote. Que tout reste digne d'un poète: fragmentaire." Selon Esti la composition de l'intrigue est enracinée dans une fausse pré-compréhension de l'existence, de ses structures et de son caractère temporel. Cette illusion réduit le monde aux dimensions d'une préoccupation logocentrique.

Esti introduit l'idée que les récits téléologiques peuvent viser non à éclaircir mais à obscurcir et à dissimuler. Pour lui, le monde est l'ensemble des références ouvertes. Sa thèse repose sur l'assertion d'un lien de dérivation par lequel le savoir procède de la compréhension des discontinuités de la vie. Cette critique de la narration objective est opposée au préjugé du passé en soi. L'histoire sociale, celles des classes, c'est l'histoire la plus superficielle. L'histoire profonde, c'est l'histoire de la dimension de l'individu, à oscillations brèves, rapides, nerveuses et inattendues. Marc-Aurèle se heurte au côté insensé de l'histoire, à savoir que les actions explicables en termes de raisons produisent des effets non voulus, non souhaités, voire des effets adverses. Sous l'influence des stoïciens, Kosztolányi procède d'une analyse causale et sélective vers l'éclipse du récit. La différence avec la conception aristotélicienne serait certainement à chercher du côté du facteur subjectif. Dans ses essais sur la littérature Kosztolányi souligne l'importance de la réception.

La grandeur des stoïciens, selon Esti, c'est d'avoir refusé la pensée systématique. Il y a *une* humanité sous l'angle du progrès; il y a *des* humanités sous l'angle de la tradition stoïque. Le philosophe, c'est celui qui ouvre la voie à de

nouveaux questionnements. Chaque philosophie est légitime en tant qu'elle répond à la constellation des problèmes qu'elle a posés. L'erreur des penseurs systématiques consiste à faire paraître concordante la discordance de la vie. Ainsi une doctrine universaliste, à travers le prisme de l'autorité et du pouvoir, peut être aussi tyrannique qu'une doctrine raciste, si elle comprend comme son devoir d'unifier. Ce n'est pas le mensonge, mais la vérité qui est légion, c'est l'idée de l'unité du vrai qui nous déçoit. Une culture avance par pluralisation et complications des tâches plutôt que par approche d'une unité organique. La fonction de l'art, c'est d'être en débat avec d'autres manières d'exister et ainsi d'être limité par elles, et la fonction de la parole est de contester la validité d'autres manières de parler.

Dans la nouvelle intitulée "Le pharmacien et lui", Esti fait la déclaration suivante: "Puisque aussi bien je ne saurais plus me consoler moi-même, autant maintenant que j'en console d'autres." Ce qui caractérise Esti, c'est une critique du messianisme. "Ne te méprends pas sur mes paroles. Je n'éprouvais pas de haine personnellement envers les gens. Je les considérais seulement avec tristesse et résignation, je sentais et je sens toujours l'inutilité de la vie, et le statut relatif de toute chose. (...) Camarade, je ne suis pas né pour sauver cette humanité qui, quand les incendies, les inondations et les épidémies ne l'accablent pas, organise des guerres et provoque artificiellement des incendies, des inondations et des épidémies."

L'ironie, le scepticisme et la contemplation sont autant de façons pour Esti de maintenir ouverte l'interprétation de ses histoires, lesquelles proclament la relativité des valeurs. "L'autre jour, nous étions entre amis, quelqu'un a déclaré que jamais il ne voyagerait dans un pays dont il ne parle pas la langue. Et je lui ai donné raison. (...) Ce développement à peine achevé, il m'est venu à l'esprit que le contraire était tout aussi valable, comme pour toute chose en ce monde."

Marquant les distances à l'égard du messianisme, Esti n'en reste pas moins attaché à une certaine figure de dépassement, qui espère trouver à *la fin*, grâce au travail de la médiation (qui est épreuve et mort), ce qui fut perdu ou quitté *au commencement*. Le regard en arrière, certes, n'est pas récusé: œuvres littéraires, musicales ou picturales, ainsi que langues appellent la médiation et l'écoute, mais pour orienter l'esprit vers ce qui est encore inconnu. La proche attente de la mort est devenue, dans la réflexion de Kornél Esti, un motif constant. Son ambition est de suivre le conseil de Sénèque: "Regarder votre dernier jour, non comme un châtement, mais comme une loi de nature; et nulle terreur n'osera s'introduire dans un coeur dont vous aurez banni la crainte de la mort." L'attente est l'analogie de la mémoire, comme chez Saint Augustin. Dans les romans et les nouvelles de Kosztolányi il y a une hiérarchie de niveaux de temporalisation: il faut penser l'antécédence comme supériorité.

Sénèque sut supporter l'exil, qui ne changea rien à son caractère. Dans ses écrits il considère la mort comme un autre changement de lieu. Il ne s'aperçoit

de la perte de ses richesses que par l'absence des embarras. À son avis c'est l'âme qui fait la richesse. *Vertige de l'aube*, poème de Kosztolányi composé en 1933, est un commentaire sur la neuvième section de la *Consolation à Helvie*: "Parcourons tous les pays; en est-il un seul dans l'univers entier qui soit étranger à l'homme? Sur tous les points de la terre c'est de la même distance que nos regards se dirigent vers les cieux; partout le séjour des humains est séparé par le même intervalle de la demeure des immortels." Uniquement avide de comprendre l'existence, en s'élevant à la contemplation de lui-même et des astres, le poète jouit du spectacle des sphères, et, se rappelant la trivialité de sa vie par rapport à celle des étoiles, il conclut par une suggestion d'une essence supérieure.

"Le seul thème que j'ai depuis toujours, c'est la mort", écrit Kosztolányi en 1933 dans son journal. Le cycle de poèmes *Plaintes d'un pauvre petit enfant* (1910) et *Chant sur le Néant* (1933) suggèrent que le non-vivant est antérieur au vivant. Ce que l'on mesure, ce ne sont pas les choses futures ou passées, mais leur attente et leur souvenir:

"Le Néant est plus archaïque que ce qui est,
Il m'est plus familier, même à moi."

DAS FOTOGRAMM – MOHOLY-NAGYS SCHLÜSSEL ZUR FOTOGRAFIE

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Bis zum heutigen Datum dauert die Diskussion an, ob Fotografie nun Kunst sei oder nicht. Es ist eine Diskussion, die László Moholy-Nagy nur wenig interessiert hätte, ging es ihm doch darum, die spezifischen Eigenarten traditioneller Gestaltungsmittel (Malerei, Bildhauerei) und neuer Medien (Fotografie, Film) sowohl zu bestimmen als auch kreativ zu nutzen und nicht ihren Anspruch auf das Prädikat „Kunst“ zu untersuchen. Für ihn war jedes Medium ein künstlerisches, solange es auf seine besondere Weise dazu beitrug, das Leben in einer von Technik und Wissenschaft geprägten Welt sinnvoll und menschengerecht zu gestalten. Auch die Fotografie konnte seiner Ansicht nach ihren Beitrag zur Verbesserung der Lebensumstände leisten, vorausgesetzt sie würde ihren spezifischen Gesetzmäßigkeiten entsprechend eingesetzt. Der Weg zum Verständnis der medienspezifischen Eigenschaften der Fotografie verlief für Moholy-Nagy über das Fotogramm, d.h. die Fotografie ohne Kamera, die in der Abgeschiedenheit des Labors entsteht, für Moholy-Nagy jedoch wesentliche Aspekte der modernen Wirklichkeit in sich vereinigte.

Auf welche Weise sowohl das Fotogramm als auch alle anderen künstlerische Medien positiv auf die Gestaltung des Lebens einwirken konnten, läßt sich kaum verstehen, ist man nicht mit Moholy-Nagys Konzept des „Biologischen“ vertraut. Für dieses lieferte er zwar nie eine genaue Definition, aus seinen verschiedenen Äußerungen läßt sich jedoch schließen, daß er damit die biologische Grundkonstellation des Menschen meinte, d.h. seine physiologischen Anlagen und Bedürfnisse, die wiederum Einfluß auf sein psychologischen Befinden haben. So schreibt er schon 1922 in seinem Artikel „Produktion – Reproduktion“.

Der Aufbau des Menschen ist die Synthese aller seiner Funktionsapparate, d.h. daß der Mensch in seiner Periode dann der vollkommenste ist, wenn die ihn ausmachenden Funktionsapparate – die Zellen ebenso wie die kompliziertesten Organe – bis zur Grenze ihrer Leistungsfähigkeit bewußt bzw. ausgebildet sind.¹

Mit Funktionsapparaten meinte Moholy-Nagy vor allem die Sinnesorgane, deren Weiterentwicklung er als Voraussetzung für die Erlebnis- und Überlebensfähigkeit des Menschen sah. Die Stärkung und Verbesserung der Sinnesorgane sah er jedoch innerhalb der modernen Umwelt, besonders innerhalb der zunehmend spezialisierten und technisierten Arbeitswelt gefährdet. So beklagte er die Entwicklung des Individuums zum „sektorenhafte[n] menschen“,² der „Unter der verflachung seiner instinkte, unter der nivellierung seiner biologischen spannungen leidet“.³ Ähnlich wie Marx machte er die fabrikmäßige Produktion mitverantwortlich für diesen Prozeß der Abstumpfung, in dem „der mensch zur maschine umgewandelt wird“.⁴ Hier nun waren seiner Ansicht nach die verschiedenen künstlerischen Gestaltungsmittel herausgefordert, der fortschreitenden Verkümmern der Sinne entgegenzuwirken und diese zu aktivieren, damit sich das Individuum vor der Überwältigung durch die Vielfalt der Umweltreize schützen und sogar die Fähigkeit entwickelt könnte, diese Stimuli als reizvoll und bereichernd zu erleben. Diese Funktion konnte die Kunst jedoch nur erfüllen, wenn „sie zwischen den bekannten und den noch unbekannt[en] optischen, akustischen und anderen funktionellen Erscheinungen weitgehendste neue Beziehungen herzustellen versucht und deren Aufnahme von den Funktionsapparaten erzingt.“⁵ Die Herstellung „neuer Beziehungen“ ist, was für Moholy-Nagy den „produktiven“ Aspekt der künstlerischer Gestaltungsmittel ausmachte. Ihn galt es seiner Ansicht nach gegenüber der rein „reproduktiven“ Funktion von Kunst („Wiederholung bereits existierender Relationen“)⁶ zu fördern. Damit erteilte Moholy-Nagy der reinen Realitätsnachbildung eine deutliche Absage und lenkte die Aufmerksamkeit auf die Auseinandersetzung mit den besonderen Qualitäten der verschiedenen Gestaltungsmittel.

Für die Fototheorie war Moholy-Nagys Grenzziehungen zwischen den verschiedenen Medien ein Glücksfall, trieb sie doch die bis dahin nur ansatzweise vollzogene Loslösung der Fotografie vom Vorbild der Malerei ein ganzes Stück voran, was nicht zuletzt seinem uneingeschränkten Enthusiasmus für dieses Medium zuzuschreiben ist, der sich in der großen Anzahl von Aufsätzen zu diesem Thema widerspiegelt. Dabei ist jedoch nicht zu vergessen, daß die Besinnung auf das Spezifische des Mediums eine typische Forderung des Modernismus war. Auf dem Gebiet der Fotografie hatten sich zudem schon vor Moholy-Nagy verschiedene Fotografen Gedanken über die Besonderheiten ihres Mediums gemacht. Dies geschah vor allem als Reaktion auf die Kunstfotografie, die zum Ende des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts in Europa und in den USA immer stärkere Verbreitung fand. Entstanden war sie aus dem Bestreben, der Fotografie Anerkennung als künstlerisches Ausdrucksmittel zu verschaffen und sie von dem Vorwurf zu befreien, sie sei nur ein mechanisches Abbildungsverfahren bar jeglichen kreativen Potentials. Um ihren künstlerischen Anspruch geltend zu machen, übernahm sie sowohl Motive als auch Kompositionsschemata der Malerei. Schließlich imitierte sie sogar die Qualität von Zeichenstift und Pinsel-

faktur, was durch die Anwendung verschiedener Edeldruckverfahren möglich wurde.⁷ Diese erlaubten dem Fotografen, auch am Positiv Veränderungen vorzunehmen und es so mit dem Qualitätssiegel individueller Gestaltung zu versehen.

Neben dem dominanten Trend der Kunstfotografie konnten jedoch auch einige Fotografen bestehen, die die Verwendung von Edeldruckverfahren ablehnten. So verfaßte schon 1900 der Engländer Frederick Evans (1853–1943) eine „Apologie der reinen Fotografie“, in der es als sein wesentliches Interesse beschreibt: „ehrliche, einfache, unverfälschte Fotografien zu machen und, so gut und so leicht es geht, die Helldunkel-Effekte wiederzugeben, die mich so sehr fesseln.“⁸ Die Gleichgültigkeit anderer Fotografen gegenüber den „Helldunkel-Effekten“ bedauerte er: „Obwohl die Monochromie derzeit unser einziges Ausdrucksmittel ist, erstaunt es einen doch, wie wenig wirkliches, instinktives Gefühl für die Werte und Qualitäten des Schwarz-Weißen der normale Fotograf hat.“⁹ Die besondere Bedeutung, die er der genauen Kontrastwiedergabe beimaß, ergab sich aus seiner Vorliebe für das Fotografieren von Kathedralen, wobei es ihm darauf ankam, das Zusammenwirken von Licht und Raum einzufangen. Die Fotografie mit ihrer Möglichkeit, Helligkeitswerte in eine kontinuierliche Skala von Grauwerten umzusetzen war für ihn daher das ideale Medium. Diese Qualität der Fotografie war es auch, die 1917 der amerikanische Fotograf Paul Strand (1890–1976), in seinem Aufsatz „Fotografie“ herausstrich.¹⁰ Wirklich medienspezifisch war für Strand jedoch vor allem die Objektivität, d.h. Abbildungstreue der Fotografie, die „über das Nachahmungsvermögen der menschlichen Hand hinausgeht.“¹¹ Bei Moholy-Nagy wurde aus der objektiven Abbildung ein „objektives Sehen“ mittels der Kamera.¹² Wenn es um „Reproduktion“ ging, hielt auch er die Fotografie für das überlegene Medium. Im Gegensatz zu Evans und Strand, versuchte er jedoch auf die „produktiven“ Möglichkeiten der Fotografie auszuloten, wofür die „Helldunkelwerte“, wie Evans sie nannte, von größerer Relevanz waren.

Diese „Helldunkelwerte“ waren entscheidend für das „abstrakte Sehen“, eine von 8 Arten des Sehens, die Moholy-Nagy in dem 1933 veröffentlichten Artikel „A fotografia: napjaink objektív látási formája“ (A New Instrument of Vision) definiert. Seine Typologie der Seharten umfaßt z.B. das „schnelle Sehen“, das den die Bewegung stoppenden Schnappschuß ermöglicht, oder das „durchdringende Sehen“, zu dem die Röntgenfotografie Gelegenheit bietet. Das „verzerrte Sehen“ erlaubt die neue Wahrnehmung bekannter Dinge, die mittels eines Spiegels, eines Prismas oder chemischer Manipulationen verfremdet wurden. Hier ließen sich auch die für Moholy-Nagys Kamerafotografie und das „Neue Sehen“ der 20iger Jahre typischen Frosch- und Vogelperspektiven einordnen, was Moholy-Nagy jedoch selbst nicht tut. Alle Arten des Sehens sind auf verschiedenen kameraverwandte Apparate angewiesen, mit einer Aus-

nahme, der des „abstrakten Sehens“, das allein durch das Fotogramm ermöglicht wird:

Abstract seeing by means of direct records of forms produced by light: the photogramme which captures the most delicate gradations of light values, both chiaroscuro and coloured.¹³

Indem das Fotogramm von der Abbildung der Wirklichkeit befreit war, konnte es Moholy-Nagy zufolge ganz und gar der Aufzeichnung von Helligkeitswerten dienen und somit das Spezifische der Fotografie, das schon Evans und Strand erkannt hatten, am unmittelbarsten zum Ausdruck bringen:

The photogramme, or camera-less record of forms produced by light, which embodies the unique nature of the photographic process, is the real key to photography. It allows us to capture the patterned interplay of light on a sheet of sensitised paper without recourse to any apparatus.¹⁴

Mit der Hervorhebung des Fotogramms als Schlüssel zur Fotografie verlagerte er die Aufmerksamkeit von der Kameraoptik und -mechanik auf die lichtempfindliche Schicht, auf den Anteil der Chemie am fotografischen Prozeß, Darin liegt Moholy-Nagys besonderer Beitrag zur Reflektion über das Medium. Er war jedoch nicht der erste, der Fotogramme herstellte. Die Ursprünge des Fotogramms liegen noch vor der eigentlichen Erfindung der Fotografie,¹⁵ ihre konsequente künstlerische Anwendung erfahren hat es aber erst bei dem deutschen Maler und Graphiker Christian Schad und besonders bei dem amerikanischen Künstler Man Ray.

Schon 1918 legte Schad, damals Mitglied der Züricher Dada-Gruppe, flache Materialien wie Stoff, Papier und Federn auf Fotopapier, belichtete es und bezeichnete die so entstandenen Arbeiten in Anlehnung an seinen eigenen Namen und an das englische Wort „shadowgraphs“ als „Schadographien“.¹⁶ Drei Jahre später, jedoch unabhängig von Schad, schuf Man Ray seine „Rayographien“, die sich von Schads Arbeiten durch die Platzierung dreidimensionaler Gegenstände auf das Fotopapier unterschieden.¹⁷ Die Bezeichnungen, die Schad und Ray für ihre Entdeckungen wählten, verweisen auf Qualitäten des Fotogramms, die für Moholy-Nagy von besonderer Bedeutung waren. So spielt der Begriff „Schadographien“ auf die Immaterialität und die gegenseitigen Überlagerungen von Helligkeitswerten an, während der Name „Rayograph“ die Einwirkung von „rays“, von Lichtstrahlen, und damit den „Lichtspielcharakter“ von Fotogrammen aufgreift.

Neben Man Ray und Christian Schad war es jedoch vor allem der aus Boston stammende Maler und Fotograf Alvin Langdon Coburn (1882–1966), der

mit dem „patterned interplay of light on a sheet of paper“ experimentierte und von den Effekten ebenso fasziniert war wie Moholy-Nagy:

Pause for a moment and consider the mysterious quality of light registering itself in sensitized gelatine – all the scientific poetry in the words „latent image“.¹⁸

Seine Begeisterung für die Wirkung des Lichts auf die lichtempfindliche Schicht inspirierte Coburn allerdings zu einem Verfahren, das anders als das Fotogramm nicht auf Apparate verzichten konnte. Das Ergebnis dieses von Coburn entwickelten Prozesses waren die 1917 zum ersten Mal ausgestellten „Vortographs“, die Moholy-Nagy Forderung nach einer abstrakten Komposition von sich gegenseitig durchdringenden Helligkeitswerten auf ihre sehr eigene Art schon erfüllten. Hervorgerufen wurden diese oftmals kristallin wirkenden Lichterscheinungen durch das Fotografieren von vorwiegend gläsernen Gegenständen durch das „Vortoskop“, wie Ezra Pound, damals Mitglied der englischen Vortizismus-Gruppe, diesen kaleidoskopartigen Apparat nannte.¹⁹ Er bestand aus drei Spiegeln, die so miteinander verbunden wurden, daß sie ein Dreieck bildeten, das auf eine Glasplatte gestellt wurde, auf dem die zu fotografierenden Gegenstände lagen. Durch dieses Spiegeldreieck wurden die Gegenstände fotografiert, die auf Grund der vielfachen Spiegelungen, der so entstehenden Lichtreflexe und deren gegenseitigen Durchdringungen kaum oder gar nicht mehr erkennbar sind. Coburn setzte seine Experimente mit den „Vortographs“ nicht langfristig fort, so daß Moholy-Nagy vorbehalten blieb, mit äußerster Konsequenz sowohl die Bedeutung der lichtempfindlichen Schicht als auch die Gestaltung des Lichts immer wieder zu betonen und zu analysieren.

1922 beginnt Moholy-Nagy mit seinen eigenen Experimenten, die sich laut Lucia Moholy-Nagy direkt aus der Diskussion über das Themas Produktion-Reproduktion entwickelten,²⁰ aber auch auf die Beschäftigung mit dem Problem der Transparenz in seiner Malerei verweisen. Moholy-Nagy wählte den Begriff „Fotogramm“ für seine Arbeiten und übernahm damit einen Terminus aus der naturwissenschaftlichen Fachsprache, wo er ein kameraloses Projektionsverfahren bezeichnet.²¹ Diese wissenschaftliche Benennung entsprach seiner systematischen-experimentellen Vorgehensweise bei der Erfassung der Lichtphänomene.²² Moholy-Nagy verstand den Fotografen allerdings nicht als Wissenschaftler, sondern als „Lichtbildner“, der auf der „tabula rasa“ der lichtempfindlichen Schicht „mit licht so notieren kann, wie der maler mit seinen Werkzeugen: pinsel und pigment, auf seiner leinwand souverän arbeitet“.²³ Diese Beschreibung macht es notwendig, den Entstehungsprozeß einer solchen Fotoarbeit etwas näher zu betrachten und auf einen dem Fotogramm innewohnenden Widerspruch hinzuweisen.²⁴ Da Moholy-Nagy diesen Prozeß als Schreiben mit Licht bezeichnete, liegt die Vorstellung nahe, der vom Künstler geführte Licht-

strahl hinterließe helle Lichtspuren auf der schwarzen Fläche des Fotogramms (ähnlich dem Holzschneidemesser beim Holzschnitt). Tatsächlich treten die hellen Stellen des Fotogramms aber nur dort auf, wo besonders wenig Licht auf die fotosensitive Schicht fällt. Der Lichtstrahl schafft keine hellen Lichtspuren, sondern schluckt mit zunehmender Belichtung immer mehr von dem Weiß der anfangs unbelichteten Schicht und hinterläßt in Wirklichkeit graue bis schwarze Spuren. Trotzdem bleibt das Licht das aktiv gestaltende Element, da es erst durch die Schwärzung der Schicht die hellen Stellen formt und in Erscheinung treten läßt. So wird der Eindruck von Licht, wenn auch nur indirekt, durch Licht hervorgerufen. Für den Betrachter erscheinen die hellen Flächen jedoch als direkte Folgen der Lichteinwirkung, zumal gerade bei Moholy-Nagys, aber auch bei Man Rays Fotogrammen oftmals der größte Teil der Fläche schwarz ist, während die hellen Stellen tatsächlich wie in diese Fläche gesetzte Lichterscheinungen wirken.

Bei der Gestaltung der Fotogramme war für Moholy-Nagy die Wirkung auf den Betrachter ein wichtiges Kriterium, was auf seine Vertrautheit mit wahrnehmungspsychologischen Gesetzmäßigkeiten schließen läßt. So betonte er z.B. beim Verhältnis von Hell und Dunkel die aktive Wirkung des Weiß, das, auch wenn es nur auf kleine Flächen beschränkt ist, wesentlich größere schwarze und daher passivere Bereiche im Gleichgewicht halten kann, wobei „es weniger auf die Formbildung als auf die Menge, Richtung und Lagebeziehungen der einzelnen Lichterscheinungen“ ankäme.²⁵ Diese Beobachtung hat Moholy-Nagy wahrscheinlich erst bei seine etwas späteren Fotogrammen gemacht, denn die ersten Arbeiten auf diesem Gebiet von 1922 weisen fast gar kein tiefes Schwarz auf, das hellen Stellen zu einer richtigen Leuchtkraft verhelfen würde. Dagegen ist in einem Fotogramm, welches zwischen 1925 und 1927 entstanden ist, der größte Teil der Gesamtfläche tiefschwarz (Abb 14.) Von links unten nach rechts oben verläuft ein feines, graues zum Teil kaum erkennbares Liniengerüst. Während dieses Gerüst nach rechts oben tendiert, zieht die in ein Oval eingeschriebene Lichtform, welche vom Mittelpunkt fort nach links oben verlagert ist, in die linke obere Ecke. Unterstützt wird diese Bewegung von Lichtpunkten auf dem Gerüst, die zwei lückenhafte Linien andeuten, die liegen im rechten Winkel zur Hauptrichtung des Liniengerüsts und weisen ebenfalls in die obere linke Ecke. Die Lichtform wirkt strahlend, weil ihre Ränder nicht überall scharf sind und somit der Eindruck entsteht, das Licht reiche über die eigentliche Form hinaus. Durch ihre Helligkeit und Geschlossenheit zieht diese Lichtform immer wieder den Blick auf sich und dominiert die gesamte Komposition. Wie die Mehrzahl von Moholy-Nagys Fotogrammen weist auch dieses keine Beziehung zu realen Gegenständen auf, so daß dem Betrachter noch nicht einmal Spielraum für Assoziationen gegeben wird. Er muß sich ganz auf die Spannungen zwischen den Formen und Helligkeitswerten konzentrieren, zu deren Aufnahme sein „optischer Apparat“²⁶ in erster Linie befähigt ist:

Sie üben durch ihre Existenz auf einen jeden, in seinen optischen Organismus gesunden Menschen auch dann ihre im Biologischen begründete Wirkung aus, wenn sie nicht Abbilder von Personen, Gegenständen, Handlungen usw. sind.²⁷

Moholy-Nagys Wahrnehmungstheorie zufolge ist es durch den richtigen Einsatz der Hell-Dunkelwerte möglich, beim Betrachter ein „unmittelbares optisches Erlebnis auszulösen“.²⁸ Indem das Fotogramm dies leistet, erfüllt es die Aufgabe künstlerischer Gestaltungsmittel, zur Ausbildung der menschlichen Funktionsapparate und der Steigerung der Erlebnisfähigkeit beizutragen. Dies gilt für den Betrachter wie für den Schöpfer des Fotogramms selbst. Durch die experimentelle Erarbeitung der für das Fotogramm spezifischen Eigenarten gewinnt der Lichtbildner, so Moholy-Nagy „die Gefühlssicherheit gegenüber den Erscheinungen des Lichts.“²⁹ Es ist diese „Gefühlsicherheit“, die der Mensch braucht, um die Reizüberflutung in der modernen Großstadt auszuhalten.

Vor allem die nächtliche Großstadt mit ihrer sich rasch entwickelnden „Lichtkultur“, ist deren Wahrnehmung durch das Fotogramm vorbereitet und zugleich reflektiert. Für Moholy-Nagy scheint die nächtliche Stadt selbst zum Lichtgestalter geworden zu sein. So wie der Künstler bei der Erstellung des Fotogramms mit Licht schreibt, hat die nächtliche Großstadt auch ihre eigene Handschrift gefunden. Eine nächtliche Zeitaufnahme in einer Stadt bezeichnet er als „Diagramm der lichtbewegungen, herrührend von lichtreklamen, straßenlaternen und vorbeifahrenden wagen“. Darunter setzt er das Schlagwort „die neue schrift der großstadt“.³⁰ Diese Licht-Nacht-Aufnahme gehört zu einer ganzen Anzahl von Fotografien der urbanen Umwelt bei Nacht, die Moholy-Nagy in „Malerei Fotografie Film“ und vor allem in „Vom Material zur Architektur“ reproduziert, um das Vordringen der modernen Lichtkultur zu illustrieren.

doch ist das großstädtische nachtleben ohne das vielfältige spiel der lichtreklame, der nächtliche flugzeugverkehr ohne die scharfen lichtzeichen der funktüme nicht mehr vorsehbar. die reflektoren und neoneöhren der reklamebeleuchtungen, die sich drehenden leuchtbuchstaben der firmenschilder, die rotierenden mechanismen aus farbigen glühbirnen, das breite band der lichtwanderschrift sind elemente eines neuen ausdruckgebietes, das auf seinen gestalter wahrscheinlich nicht mehr lange zu warten braucht.³¹

Was Moholy-Nagy an der modernen Lichtkultur fasziniert, ist ihre entmaterialisierende Wirkung. „starkes licht zerstört das detail, zerfrißt unnötiges beibwerk und zeigt – wenn es mit dieser absicht, also richtig verwendet wird – nicht die fassade, sondern nur raumbeziehungen.“³² Gemeint ist hier die Auflösung der sich im Raum ausdehnender Materie in rein „virtuelle Volumen“, die allein

durch die Verteilung des Lichts im Raum definiert werden. Die Artikulation von Raum durch Licht ist eine Variation des durch Bewegung hervorgerufenen „virtuellen Volumens“, dessen Konzept Moholy-Nagy in „Vom Material zur Architektur“ entwickelt, um die Entwicklung der Skulptur vom geschlossenen Block zur kinetischen, d.h. bewegten Plastik zu beschreiben. Bei der kinetischen Plastik ist das Material auf ein Minimum reduziert. Indem es in Bewegung gesetzt wird, artikuliert es den Raum, ohne ihn als Masse auszufüllen. Es markiert nur noch räumliche Ausdehnung, ohne selbst im Raum ausgedehnt zu sein. Dieses Konzept geht auf das „Realistische Manifest“ der Brüder Naum Gabo und Antoine Pevsner aus dem Jahre 1920 zurück. In diesem Manifest, aus dem Moholy-Nagy in „Vom Material zur Architektur“ zitiert,³³ sprechen sich die Brüder gegen die Masse als plastisches Element aus, da es ihrer Ansicht nach die Ausdehnung des Raumes nicht veranschaulichen kann. Für die Brüder Pevsner ist „die tiefe die einzige ausdrucksform des raumes“. Indem die kinetische Plastik Raum markiert und sichtbar macht anstatt ihn auszufüllen, ist sie der geeignete Träger dieser „ausdrucksform“ Tiefe. Während die kinetische Plastik jedoch nicht völlig auf Materie verzichten kann, um eine räumliche Wirkung zu erzielen, schaffen die Lichterscheinungen der nächtlichen Großstadt Moholy-Nagys Vorstellung nach „raumbeziehungen“ auf einer rein immateriellen Basis. Dies veranschaulicht er z.B. anhand einer Zeitaufnahme von einem Karussell, auf der die über mehrere Sekunden festgehaltenen Spuren der Karussellbeleuchtung ein völlig immateriell wirkendes trichterförmiges Gebilde entstehen lassen, während das Karussell selbst sich aufgelöst zu haben scheint.

Diese Auflösung von Materie und ihre Umwandlung in „virtuelle“ bzw. nunmehr „visuelle“ Volumina sah Moholy-Nagy auch im Fotogramm verwirklicht. Die kompakten Dinge, die auf das Fotopapier gelegt werden, wandeln sich durch die Belichtung und anschließende Entwicklung in immaterielle Lichterscheinungen um, die nun jenseits der fotografischen Schicht neue räumliche Gebilde zu schaffen scheinen:

The photogram for the first time produces space without existing space structure only by articulation on the plane with advancing and with the radiating power of their contrasts and their sublime gradations.³⁴

Die hellen, strahlenden Partien treten in den Vordergrund, während sich die dunkleren Stellen zurückziehen. Die allmähliche Übergänge vom Hellen zum Dunkeln, „the sublime gradations“, schaffen, wie alle Beleuchtungsgefälle, eine räumliche Wirkung.³⁵ Erscheinen somit die Formlichtgebilde dreidimensional, wird das sie umgebende und durchdringende Schwarz zu einem unbestimmten, geheimnisvollen Raum, aus dem die Formen hinaus ins Licht zu treten scheinen, um an anderer Stelle von dunklen Raum wieder verschluckt zu werden. Dieser Eindruck ist besonders stark, wenn die Gebilde den Bildrand gar nicht berühren,

folglich keinerlei Verbindung zur Fläche herstellen. Sind diese Gebilde ganz vom Dunkel umschlossen, wirkt ein solches Fotogramm fast wie eine Foto von einer schwebenden Plastik (Abb. 226), von denen Moholy-Nagy schreibt, daß sie, im Gegensatz zu einer auf dem Boden stehenden und auf die Erde bezogenen Plastik, ihre „material-bzw. volumenbeziehungen und alle zugehörigen attribute nur in bezug auf das eigene system aufzeigt“.³⁶ So ist auch nicht vorgeschrieben, von welchem Standort man die Plastiken betrachten muß. Das gilt für die hermetisch in sich abgeschlossenen Gebilde in den Fotogrammen nur bedingt. Zwar kann man die Fotogramme drehen, da sie an keine Darstellung gebunden sind, aber das Gleichgewicht der Helligkeitswerte könnte beeinflußt werden.

Letztlich sind Fotogramme rein statische Gebilde, deren räumliche Wirkung auf einer Illusion beruht, womit es Moholy-Nagy als Ausdruck der modernen Umwelt und als Vorbereitung auf ihre Reizfülle nicht genügen konnte:

wechselnde Lichtintensitäten und Lichttempi, Bewegungsvariationen des Raumes durch Licht, Erlöschen und Aufblitzen des ganzen Bewegungsorganismen, Auslösen latenter Funktionsgeladenheit in uns, in unserem Gehirn. Hell-Dunkel. Lichtgreifbarkeit, Lichtbewegung. Lichtferne und Lichtnähe. Durchdringende und aufbauende Strahlung.³⁷

Beeinflußt wurde Moholy-Nagy in dieser Hinsicht von den „Reflektorischen Farbenlichtspielen“ von Hirschfeld-Mack und von anderen Filmexperimenten am Bauhaus. Ihn selbst veranlaßten diese Gedanken über das Licht und die Reaktionen, die es im Menschen auslöst, zu Projekten, die schließlich weit über das Fotogramm hinausgehen, es sozusagen in den Raum und in Bewegung setzen. 1930 stellte er bei der Werkbundausststellung in Paris zum ersten mal sein „Lichtrequisit für eine elektrische Bühne“ (Abb. 18) aus, eine kinetische Plastik aus Metalldraht, Plastik und Glas, mit deren Entwurf Moholy-Nagy sich schon seit 1922 beschäftigte. Er konnte sie jedoch erst nach seinem Weggang vom Bauhaus zusammen mit dem Techniker Stefan Sebök verwirklichen. Als kinetische Plastik ist sie eine späte Verwirklichung des Konzepts des „dynamisch konstruktiven Kraftsystems“, das Moholy-Nagy zusammen mit Alfred Kemény schon 1922 ganz im Geste des Konstruktivismus proklamiert hatte.³⁸

Die ursprünglich in einem kubischen Kasten eingebaute Plastik wurde von bunten Glühbirnen innerhalb des Kastens beleuchtet. Nicht nur die Bewegung der Plastik und ihr sich ständig wandelndes Aussehen im Licht machten die Wirkung aus, sondern auch die Schatten, die sie auf die Wände des Kastens oder nach Entfernung der Rückwand auf einen beliebig großen Projektionsschirm warf.³⁹

Moholy-Nagy hält sowohl die Plastik selber als auch ihre Projektionen in einem Film dem Titel „Lichtspiel Schwarz Weiß Grau“ von 1930 fest. Die

anfängliche Konzeption des Films war allerdings umfangreicher. Dem Skript zufolge sollten dem Erscheinen des Requisites drei andere Teile vorausgehen.⁴⁰ Im ersten Teil sollten wiederum künstlich hervorgerufene Lichterscheinungen vom Streichholz und der Kerze über die Gaslampe bis zum elektrischen Licht, repräsentiert durch Suchscheinwerfer, Flugzeug und Autolichter, gezeigt werden. Im zweiten Teil sollten ein Stahlwerk, glühendes Metall und Funken, aber auch ein erleuchtetes Karussell und bestrahlte Springbrunnen erscheinen. Nach dem dritten Teil, der Beleuchtungsapparaturen im Theater, das Kino, ein Filmstudio und das Fotogramm präsentieren sollte, war die Darstellung der allmählichen Entstehung des Lichtrequisites geplant. Darauf folgte die Vorbereitung des Zuschauers auf die Bewegung des Requisites durch das Filmen verschiedener beweglichen Elemente. Das Skript beschreibt somit nicht nur die Entstehung des Requisites quasi als Summe aller technischen Errungenschaften, die Licht und Bewegung hervorgebracht und die moderne Umwelt verändert haben. Es zeigt auch die Entwicklung von der rein reproduktiven Anwendung des Films zu einer produktiven, das Fotogramm noch übertreffenden Gestaltung der Hell-Dunkelwerte in ihrer, der Zeit entsprechenden Bewegtheit auf. Stärker noch als das Fotogramm kann der Film das abstrakte Sehen durch die Schaffung nun bewegter Beziehungen schulen.

Ammerkungen

1. L. Moholy-Nagy, „*Produktion-Reproduktion*“ (1922), in: Uwe M. Schneede (Hg.), *Die Zwanziger Jahre*, Köln 1979, S. 238.
2. 10 L. Moholy-Nagy, *Vom Material zur Architektur*, Mainz u. Berlin 1968 (1929), S. 10.
3. 11 L. Moholy-Nagy, *Vom Material zur Architektur*, Mainz u. Berlin 1968 (1929), S. 13.
4. 16 L. Moholy-Nagy, *Vom Material zur Architektur*, Mainz u. Berlin 1968 (1929), S. 12, Fußnote.
5. 33 L. Moholy-Nagy, „*Produktion-Reproduktion*“ (1922), in: Uwe M. Schneede (Hg.), *Die Zwanziger Jahre*, Köln 1979, S. 238.
6. 34 L. Moholy-Nagy, „*Produktion-Reproduktion*“ (1922), in: Uwe M. Schneede (Hg.), *Die Zwanziger Jahre*, Köln 1979, S. 238.
7. 89 vgl. Beaumont Newhall, *Geschichte der Fotografie*, München 1984, S. 152: „Das Gummi-Bichromat-Verfahren beruht darauf, daß sich die Wasserlöslichkeit von Gummiarabikum bei Lichteinwirkung verändert, wenn man es mit Kaliumbichromat mischt. Je stärker Licht auf das mit Bichromat versetzte Gummi einwirkt desto schwerer löslich wird es. Das präparierte Gummi wird mit einem Pigment, häufig mit einfacher Wasserfarbe, wie so auch bei Malern Anwendung findet, gemischt und auf ein Blatt Zeichenpapier aufgetragen. Nach dem Trocknen setzt man das Blatt unter einem Negative dem Sonnenlicht aus. Das Bild erscheint, wenn

man das Blatt in warmen Wasser wäscht. Dieses „Entwickeln“ geschieht mit einem Pinsel oder seltener nach einem von Victor Artigue 1892 erfundenen Verfahren, in dem man eine „Suppe“ aus Sägemehl und heißem Wasser mehrmals über das Blatt gießt.“

8. Frederick H. Evans, „*Apologie der reinen Fotografie*“, in: Wolfgang Kemp (Hg.), *Theorie der Fotografie*, Bd. 1, München 1979, S. 231.
9. 91 Frederick H. Evans, „*Apologie der reinen Fotografie*“, in: Wolfgang Kemp (Hg.), *Theorie der Fotografie*, Bd. 1, München 1979, S. 233.
10. Paul Strand, „*Fotografie*“, in: Wolfgang Kemp (Hg.), *Theorie der Fotografie*, Bd. 2, München 1980, S. 59.
11. Paul Strand, „*Fotografie*“, in: Wolfgang Kemp (Hg.), *Theorie der Fotografie*, Bd. 2, München 1980, S. 59.
12. Daher besitzen wir in dem fotografischen Apparat das verlässlichste Hilfsmittel zu den Anfängen eines objektiven Sehens. Ein jeder wird genötigt sein, das Optisch-Wahre, das aus sich Deutbare, Objektive zu sehen, bevor er überhaupt zu einer möglichen subjektiven Stellungnahme kommen kann. L. Moholy-Nagy, *Malerei, Fotografie, Film*, S. 26.
13. L. Moholy-Nagy, „*A New Instrument of Vision*“, in: Krisztina Passuth, *Moholy-Nagy*, London 1985, S. 327.
14. L. Moholy-Nagy, „*A New Instrument of Vision*“, in: Krisztina Passuth, *Moholy-Nagy*, London 1985, S. 327.
15. 97 siehe hierzu: Otto Stelzer, *Kunst und Fotografie*, München 1978, S. 70: Stelzer verweist auf die von Johann Schulze „gemachte Entdeckung, daß Licht Silbersalze schwärzt.“ Siehe auch. Walter Koschatzky, *Die Kunst der Fotografie, Technik, Geschichte, Meisterwerke*, München 1987, S. 46: Der britische Chemiker Thomas Wedgwood (1771–1805) legte schon 1800 transparent und undurchsichtige Gegenstände auf lichtempfindliches Papier. Er veredelte vor allem Blätter und Insektenflügel. Koschatzky, S. 62: Um 1834 machte der Brite William Henry Fox Talbot ähnliche Experimente und schrieb: „Nichts gibt schönere Kopien von Blättern, Blumen etc. als dieses Papier, besonders in der Sommersonne. Dieses Licht wirkt durch Blätter hindurch und kopiert selbst die zartesten Adern.“
16. 98 Andreas Haus, *Moholy-Nagy, Fotos und Fotogramme*, München 1978, S. 18.
17. 99 Andreas Haus, *Moholy-Nagy, Fotos und Fotogramme*, München 1978, S. 18.
18. 101 Andreas Haus, *Moholy-Nagy, Fotos und Fotogramme*, München 1978, S. 54.
19. 102 B. Newhall, *Geschichte der Fotografie*, München 1972, S. 205, siehe auch Otto Stelzer, S. 71.
20. 103 Lucia Moholy, *Marginalien zu Moholy-Nagy*, Krefeld 1972, S. 15, 16.
21. 104 Andreas Haus, *Moholy-Nagy, Fotos und Fotogramme*, München 1978, S. 18.
22. 105 vergl. Andreas Haus, *Moholy-Nagy* S. 18.
23. 106. L. Moholy-Nagy, „*Fotografie ist Lichtgestaltung*“, in: Andreas Haus, *Moholy-Nagy, Fotos und Fotogramme*, München 1978, S. 76.
24. 107 vergl. hierzu Andreas Haus, *Moholy-Nagy, Fotos und Fotogramme*, München 1978, S. 22, 23.
25. 108. L. Moholy-Nagy, „*Fotografie ist Lichtgestaltung*“, in: Andreas Haus, *Moholy-Nagy, Fotos und Fotogramme*, München 1978, S. 76.

26. 109 L. Moholy-Nagy, „Die Fotografie in der Reklame“, in: *Photographische Korrespondenzen*, Bd. 2, Darmstadt 1927, S. 258.
27. 110 L. Moholy-Nagy, „Die Fotografie in der Reklame“, in: *Photographische Korrespondenzen*, Bd. 2, Darmstadt 1927, S. 258.
28. 111 L. Moholy-Nagy, „Die Fotografie in der Reklame“, in: *Photographische Korrespondenzen*, Bd. 2, Darmstadt 1927, S. 259.
29. 112 L. Moholy-Nagy, „Fotografie ist Lichtgestaltung“, S. 76.
30. 114 L. Moholy-Nagy, *Vom Material zur Architektur*, Mainz u. Berlin 1968 (1929), S. 195.
31. 115 L. Moholy-Nagy, *Vom Material zur Architektur*, Mainz u. Berlin 1968 (1929), S. 166.
32. 116 L. Moholy-Nagy, *Vom Material zur Architektur*, Mainz u. Berlin 1968 (1929), S. 222.
33. 127 L. Moholy-Nagy, *Vom Material zur Architektur*, Mainz u. Berlin 1968 (1929), S. 162.
34. 130 L. Moholy-Nagy, „Space-Time and the Photographer“ (1943), in: Krisztina Passuth, *Moholy-Nagy*, London 1985, S. 350.
35. 131 Rudolf Arnheim, *Kunst und Sehen*, Berlin und New York 1978, S. 305.
36. 132 L. Moholy-Nagy, *Vom Material zur Architektur*, Mainz u. Berlin 1968 (1929), S. 152.
37. 120 L. Moholy-Nagy, „Die beispiellose Fotografie“ (1927), in: Wolfgang Kemp (Hg.), *Theorie der Fotografie* Bd. 2, München 1980, S. 73.
38. 122 L. Moholy-Nagy und Alfred Kemény, „dynamisch-konstruktives kraftsystem“, in: L. Moholy-Nagy, *Vom Material zur Architektur*, Mainz u. Berlin 1968 (1929), S. 162, 163.
39. 123 L. Moholy-Nagy, „Lichtrequisit einer elektrischen Bühne“, in: Uwe M. Schneede (Hg.), *Die Zwanziger Jahre*, Köln 1979, S. 216–218.
40. 124 L. Moholy-Nagy, „New Film Potentialities“, in: Krisztina Passuth, *Moholy-Nagy*, London 1985, S. 317, 318.

***THE HUNGARIAN QUARTERLY* 1936–1941. HUNGARIAN PROPAGANDA FOR GREAT BRITAIN BEFORE THE SECOND WORLD WAR**

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1. The Start of *The Hungarian Quarterly*

The Great Depression in the 1930s transformed the European power structure that had been arranged by the peace treaties after the First World War. Germany, which remained intact and potentially the strongest power of Europe both economically and militarily, started to catch up with France and Britain, threatening French continental hegemony and with this the entire post-war settlement. For France safety seemed to lie in the enforcement of the Treaty of Versailles while British policy tended to seek reconciliation with Germany through a mild application or a revision of the treaty.

The main object of Britain's and France's political activity in 1933 and 1934 was an agreement on disarmament. The impulse for this came from Britain, which was reluctant to participate in a renewed arms race, when the revival of militant German policy made this task urgent. Though disarmament negotiations had many disadvantages for France, the existing power structure could no longer be imposed on Germany except by force, which France could not use without British support.

The call for the revision of treaties meant, primarily, territorial readjustment of the Polish–German border and the frontiers of Hungary. The two victorious powers, which offered smaller or greater diplomatic support for Hungary during the interwar period, were Britain and Italy, and for fear of being isolated, France did not refuse to co-operate. Thus, in the spring of 1933 all three victors agreed that a certain improvement in the post-war settlement was desirable, and all were inclined to reconsider it.

Concerning the four power negotiations, Foreign Office documents show a surprising degree of British interest towards Hungary in 1933 and 1934; these sources help to explain the otherwise exaggerated Hungarian propaganda in Britain. At this time even Count István Bethlen himself paid a visit to Britain and gave lectures on the Hungarian question. His speeches were the first detailed, though unofficial, description of Hungarian territorial claims and Hun-

garian plans for the revision of the peace treaties. Bethlen and the Hungarian claims were refused; the Foreign Office did not find any changes to represent a better solution than the status quo established after the First World War.

There were also other reasons for Bethlen's failure. These primarily concerned the changes in international policy and fear of the events in Germany. The British government expected him to declare moderate claims in the question of frontier revision,¹ in accordance with "commonsense," by which they meant demands reflecting the real power conditions of the moment and in agreement with the sense of justice and fairness of the British public.

Aware of the expectations, the Hungarian politician tried to refer to the ethnic principle and the right of self-determination. But he always backed these accepted arguments with unaccepted ones by referring to the historic mission of Hungary in the region, justified by Magyar administrative and cultural superiority. Despite knowing perfectly well that the British would only affirm, a readjustment based on ethnic principle, Bethlen made claims for the restoration of Magyar supremacy, which implied the intention of an integral restoration of the borders of historic Hungary.

After brief hesitation, the Foreign Office decided not to receive Bethlen and not to deal with the question of frontier readjustment in the British Parliament. Austin Chamberlain, former foreign secretary, warned the government in a speech to be careful and not to support ambiguous aspirations.² The pro-Hungarian parliamentary deputies, supported by governmental policy, could not make a commitment to Bethlen's exaggerated claims and they proposed only to return those territories to the Hungarian Kingdom that had a definite Magyar majority.

Bethlen was well aware of the failure of his lecture tour. Despite the "great politeness in personal relations" and except for a few friends "willing to treat Hungary fairly," there were no signs that Britain wanted to pursue a strategic policy aimed at the revision of the treaties. He also affirmed after his return that there was no hope for territorial revision on the basis of the historic right to restore "natural borders."³ Two choices remained after the failure of the lecture tour: to reduce Hungarian claims according to the expectations of British and international policy, or to elaborate new propaganda and intensify its activity. Bethlen chose the latter, and this resulted logically from the political credo of the Magyar ruling elite.

If the neighbouring Czechoslovakia and Romania could gain the support of the victorious great powers for their ambitions within the framework of a non-functioning security structure that would soon collapse, the Magyar ruling elite, possessing a much better geopolitical position and representing 12 million people in the middle of the region, was supposed to have the same, or even better chances of being favoured in the next rearrangement. The claim for supremacy

and historic borders was not only a strategic aim of Hungarian foreign policy. As already mentioned, from tactical considerations it also demarcated itself from readjustment on ethnic principles in order to create a better ground for future negotiations.

Returning from London, Bethlen decided to organize a periodical that would deal constantly with questions of “Hungarian justice” and with the aim of preparing the English speaking public in case British and international policy would renew efforts for the revision of the peace treaties. Judging from the idea of establishing *The Hungarian Quarterly*, Bethlen was convinced that an intensified, better prepared and more widespread propaganda would create a more favourable image of Hungary and sufficiently strong support from public opinion to promote considerably the case of territorial revision in favour of Hungary against her neighbours. With a similar goal the bimonthly *Nouvelle Revue de Hongrie* had been already functioning since 1932; Bethlen was a co-chairman of the editorial board. The authors, who published in the periodical for French speaking readers and later in the new organ for the English speaking ones, were leading conservative intellectuals, centered around the Magyar Szemle Társaság (Hungarian Review Society). The editorial staff of that periodical had been established to a certain extent on the initiative of Bethlen in 1927, at a time when the prime minister was at the peak of his political career and success. *Magyar Szemle* was considered to be a semi-official organ of the Bethlen administration, representing in the spirit of Hungarian cultural superiority the values of the post-war conservative, rightwing and anti-revolutionary Magyar political elite.⁴

At a meeting organized for the establishment of *The Hungarian Quarterly* in July 1934 Bethlen explained that the new periodical would serve the same aim in the Anglo-Saxon world as the *Nouvelle Revue de Hongrie* in the Latin-French one: the introduction of Hungary and the questions of Hungarian policy. The other duties of the new organ were to win important figures in British public life by soliciting articles and studies (with handsome fees) and to provoke debates in the British press about problems concerning Hungary.⁵

The chairman was Count István Bethlen himself. While the editor and secretary general of The Society of the Hungarian Quarterly was József Balogh, a member of the Hungarian Review Society, acknowledged scholar, philologist and expert on patristic studies with excellent British and American connections. The joint chairmen were Prince György Festetics and Gyula Kornis, Tibor Eckhardt and György Ottlik. Bethlen ensured the financial support of the organ by using his connections with the economic elite and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He also instructed the editorial staff in political and financial questions.

Each number of the Quarterly opened with two or three studies on important questions of international policy. These were followed by articles on other, less urgent political or economic problems, and in every issue articles on living or

historic figures of public life. Then came items of more general interest, such as tourism, hunting adventures, music, art history and Hungarian literature. Without exception, each number closed with the column called Danubian Chronicle, a chronology of the political events of the last months. Although this produced rather dry reading with uncomfortably small print, it always contained more open and courageous statements, quoted from politicians, than the representative, carefully written studies on the first pages.

The first number appeared in spring 1936. The opening article was written by Bethlen who emphasized that *The Hungarian Quarterly* had "no intention of indulging in propaganda on behalf of anybody or anything; on the contrary, it was resolved to refrain from any activity of that kind, and its main purpose was to promote mutual acquaintance and mutual understanding."⁶ The editor also stressed and demonstrated the editorial independence of the Quarterly by printing a statement in each number that the editorial staff of *The Hungarian Quarterly* took "no responsibility for the views of the contributors" and did not agree with the opinions expressed in their articles.⁷ Anyone who knew Bethlen, the chairman of the editorial staff and the able coordinator of Magyar propaganda, naturally did not believe these declarations. They were no more than necessary gestures in the language of diplomacy and expressed the unofficial character of the periodical.

The Quarterly was an organic continuation of the unofficial propaganda activity of the late 1920s and early 1930s represented by Justice for Hungary and Bethlen's lectures in Britain.⁸ Its creators and directors were the best representatives of Hungarian political thought, who, playing by the rules of international politics, always controlled which aspects of their program to promote an official policy, and which to keep for unofficial publications, like *The Hungarian Quarterly*.

2. The Attempt to Keep British Interest Alive for "Hungarian Justice"

In the period from the Rheinland question to the Anschluss and the Munich Agreement in 1938, the British pursued a policy of appeasement towards Germany. Based on the German national minorities beyond Germany's Eastern borders, the British, with the aim of preserving European peace, acknowledged its just claims for rearmament and political influence.

During this time Hungarian propaganda in Britain tried to connect the Magyar endeavour with the precedents achieved by Germany in the revision of some important aspects of the post-war peace treaties. There was "really no reason why the Treaty of Trianon should be regarded as more sacrosanct than the Treaty of Versailles."⁹ By that time the general criticism of the post-war treaties

that "balkanized a great part of Europe"¹⁰ was also accepted in international diplomacy. There was "a general agreement that the peace settlement made at the close of the war was in many ways not only imperfect, but also unjust and vindictive,"¹¹ because the authors of the Treaty of Versailles had been "thinking not in terms of permanent peace, in economic cooperation, and social progress, but rather in war and its prevention."¹² The "Danubian Chronicle" quoted Bethlen on this question in the second number of the Quarterly, stating that the "removal of the injustices" of the Treaty of Versailles would "automatically involve the removal of similar injustices perpetrated by the other treaties."¹³

The most often discussed political subject in this first period of the Quarterly was the possible reformation and reorganization of the League of Nations. The Autumn 1936 issue of the Quarterly had already published replies and reactions to the articles of the previous two numbers on the topic.¹⁴ In the Winter issue three studies dealt with the reformation of the League.¹⁵ The behaviour of Italy in the Ethiopian crisis and particularly that of Germany during the Rhineland crisis demonstrated again the impotence of the international organization. Its failures worked in the interest of Hungary. As if it had been tacitly acknowledged that the post-war settlement was a false one, and the status quo should be changed to achieve greater political stability, and if it could not be rearranged with the help of the League of Nations. As Bethlen had already noted, new ways had to be found.¹⁶

The organization and functioning of the League of Nations were attacked even more harshly. During these three years more than a dozen studies on the League, mostly from British and American experts, enumerated all the arguments that could be listed in the interest of Hungary and were hostile to the League. "Nothing in the history of the previous fifteen years had justified the belief that the League could intervene with success in any matters in which the material interest of the great powers had been involved"; the League provided no protection for the small nations and "no redress for grievances"; it had brought "not collective security but collective insecurity."¹⁷ The openly pro-Hungarian Lord Newton voiced the strongest criticism against the League. He objected that although half of Europe was unsatisfied with the status quo, the articles seeking to promote the necessary changes designed to save the European peace were entirely ignored.¹⁸

By openly focusing on the interests behind the ideals, American professor of international law, Edwin Borchard specified in a comprehensive study the fundamental mistakes of the policy for the preservation of the status quo at any price. His views concerning the background to the conflicts, expressed on the surface in the name of one or another principle, are quite similar to mine. In his opinion the Covenant of the League "took no account of the fitness, propriety, desirability and practicability of the status quo, as a political redistribution of

power," nor of the fact that "it constituted a plan of reinsurance for the annexation and conquest achieved by certain powers."¹⁹ It also ignored the fact that "a political redistribution of territory in Europe, not corresponding to the natural strength of peoples, would cause economic dislocation which, with the political and psychological hostility engendered, would undermine and poison the social structure of all countries and necessarily lead to dangerous Psychosis."²⁰

After a careful, yearlong sampling of other studies on the question, István Bethlen himself published an article on the Hungarian grievances in the summer issue of 1937.²¹ In fact, after emphasizing at the start that the Quarterly was "free from any taint of propaganda," to appear in the same or next number with a study on changing the status quo would obviously have been a tactical error from the leading figure of Hungarian propaganda. In the previous number of the Quarterly, within the "Danubian Chronicle," this study had already been prepared by the publication of another article, written for Hungarian readers, where he expressed himself unambiguously in connection with the League's failures to protect Magyar minorities and the claim of Hungary for reasonable rearmament.²²

He again summarized the faults of the existing practice of the League of Nations, which could not even guarantee the fulfilment of the prescriptions of the peace treaties, since the situation of Hungary was much worse in many respects than the treaties had allowed. The former victors could force anything on the former losers, while the latter could not practise their fundamental rights.²³ Bethlen, sticking with admirable objectivity to the facts, enumerated the failure of all Hungarian claims addressed to the League during the previous eighteen years. In his article he accused the international organization of not only having "failed to serve the cause of healthy evolution, by eliminating the intolerable injustices of the peace treaties," but also of having contributed "passively and sometimes even actively to making these injustices more unbearable and burdensome for the defeated states," whereby it had "failed to defend the victims when the conquering small states perpetrated fait accomplis at the expense of the former."²⁴

Though he mentioned the injuries of Magyar minorities, the emphasis was rather on rearmament. His aim was primarily to convince his readers that under such conditions the League, unable to assist should at least not block Hungary's justified claims concerning a degree of rearmament necessary for her self-defence. Germany was strong enough to realize its will, but the small loser states remained the victims of the small victors. If Germany was allowed to develop its military strength, the same could not be denied Hungary. His argument was later supported by a quotation from the speech of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Kálmán Kánya in the next issue of the Quarterly.²⁵

György Ottlik, vice-president of the society of the Hungarian Quarterly, turned back to the League of Nations a year later in order to keep the interest in the Hungarian claims against the international organization alive.²⁶ Ottlik's study reflected the changes in international policy. Although he repeated the claim for rearmament, by that time the Sudeten-German question had become more important, further emphasizing the problems of national minorities. He argued that "even professor Seton-Watson freely admitted the League of Nations' mistakes" in connection with minority protection, the organization had "failed to make its minority guarantees a reality and to impose observance of their obligations upon the states which signed minority treaties."²⁷ Another study from a British author in the previous number called attention to the question by stating "the conditions of the larger minority groups [were] probably as bad as they had ever been since 1918."²⁸ To illustrate the dangers following from the unsolved minority problems, in the same issue of the Quarterly, the "Danubian Chronicle" quoted the speech of Tiso given on the twentieth anniversary of the Pittsburg Covenant and promising autonomy for the Slovaks demanding national independence,²⁹ while the next issue published Hennlein's claims for the German minority in Czechoslovakia.³⁰ Writing about all the negative features of the Czech minority policy and the possible solutions of the German-Czechoslovak question,³¹ the Hungarian propaganda was practically preparing the way for the expected dissolution of Czechoslovakia. This was also affirmed by a resolution of the Hungarian Frontier Readjustment League, stating that "the Magyar minority had as much right to self-determination as the Slovaks, Germans, Ruthenians and Poles."³²

Meanwhile the most important event influencing the immediate fate of the Danube Basin was the Anschluss, as a result of which Hungary became the neighbour of militant Germany. Bethlen again himself published a study on Hungary's position after the unification of Austria with Hitler's Germany. "The logic of history had to follow this course,"³³ wrote Bethlen, characterizing the natural process resulting from the fundamental desire of all Germans to unite within the framework of a nation state. Bethlen welcomed the changes and argued that "the history of the past twenty years in the Danube Basin" had been equivalent to the "dictatorship of the Little Entente based on French support," but the rise of German in the region and the union with Austria had "once and for all put an end to this state of affairs."³⁴

The Anschluss, and soon after it the deepening Sudeten-German crisis, offered a good opportunity to attract the attention of the guardians of European peace to the fact that the restoration of Hungarian domination in the region, by occupying territories in the Danube Basin before the Germans would annex them into their empire, would serve not only Magyar interests. As the multinational, neighbouring Czechoslovakia had to fail, Hungary's chances for suprem-

acy increased significantly. The new situation afforded "a great opportunity" for Hungary "to rise from the humiliation of Trianon, and once again to become an important factor in the Danubian Basin," if not "the most important" one.³⁵

Though Regent Horthy tried to calm everyone concerning the consequences of the union of the neighbouring Austria (and the *Quarterly* certainly published his speech for the English speaking pro-Hungarians),³⁶ it was difficult to hide the fact that German expansionism directly threatened Hungary and the desired Magyar supremacy. Though the Magyars had a strong position among the other smaller nations, the power of Germany could not be compared at all with that of Hungary, and any further German expansionism reduced the chances of Magyar supremacy in the Danube Basin. The question of rearrangement, possibly with the arbitration of all the Western powers, became an urging problem.

3. European Rearrangement at the Expense of Czechoslovakia

In order to preserve European peace, the Munich Agreement in September 1938 instructed Czechoslovakia to give its territories, where the Germans constituted the majority, to Germany. The great powers had decided to sacrifice a peaceful, democratic, Entente-associated country. Hungarian propaganda, deeply interested in the shaping and consolidation of the new settlement, thoroughly emphasized all the reasons that could justify this significant rearrangement.

In addition, a month later in Vienna the German-Italian arbitration gave back to Hungary those Czechoslovakian territories that were inhabited by a Magyar majority. Following the important diplomatic meeting in Munich and Vienna, the *Quarterly* dealt exclusively with Czechoslovakia in the Winter issue.

The arguments in *The Hungarian Quarterly* started by arguing for the fairness of Germany's claims, which were designed to redress the completely unfair peace treaties. The joint editor of the *Quarterly* in Britain, Professor Gooch pointed out why it had been evident from the beginning that the post-war arrangement could not be lasting, as it deprived Germany of the whole of her colonial possessions, imposed a crushing burden of reparations, forbade her to rearm, and demilitarised the Rhineland without time limit.³⁷

In comparison with Germany, Hungary had lost even more owing to the unjust Peace treaties, and the "Englishmen fully understood the feelings of Hungarians" who, while admitting that in war the loser had always had to pay, they had to pay "more than was fair."³⁸ With the Munich Agreement and the Vienna Award "the errors of Trianon had been corrected and the Hungarian parts of Hungary had returned to the mother country."³⁹

A much better and convincing study on Czechoslovakia, written by László Ottlik, focused on the inner, structural deficiencies of the multinational small state, owing to which it was doomed to fail.⁴⁰ The basic idea of the article was that democracy could not be squared with the equal rights of national minorities, because democracy by its nature is the rule of majority. The Czechs could "easily oppress all their minorities without injuring democratic laws."⁴¹ He also compared the treatment of liberal pre-war Hungary with the Czech policy towards minorities and emphasized that despite the cultural oppression Magyar liberalism had not made impossible the economic existence of the national minorities, as the Czechs and the other neighbours had.⁴² In order to assure the readers about the Magyar's unquestionable fairness in the future towards minorities, two other articles dealt with the excellent mutual cooperation of different nationalities in Upper Hungary throughout Hungarian history.⁴³

Sharp criticism, openly hostile in spirit, was published against the Czechs by Sir Thomas Cunninghame,⁴⁴ a former British Military representative in Austria and Military Attaché in Prague who had been well acquainted with the conflicts of the successor states since the breakup of Austria-Hungary. He wrote a long essay on how evident the imperialistic motivation of the Czech emigration had been before and during the peace negotiations, and how contrary to common sense the exaggerated support of the Entente towards Czech ambitions was.⁴⁵ He condemned the territorial annexations that had been based on historic and ethnic principles at the same time, as even these two principles had proved to be insufficient to justify the annexations of Magyars and Ruthens. In the view of the author, the Czech policy therefore was guilty of its own failure.⁴⁶

The exclusive responsibility of the Czechs was further emphasized in a later study on Edward Benes, which considered all the misery of the Danube Basin to be the result of the lack of foresight in Czech policy.⁴⁷ Masaryk and Benes did not want "to accept the necessity of a strong Central European power against Germany," and "made all their neighbours enemies owing to conflicts on territory."⁴⁸

The dissolution of Czechoslovakia was the common decision of the British, French and Italian governments in order to appease Germany, and the Vienna Award was considered by them an additional agreement for the sake of greater political stability in the Danube Basin. The British government officially acknowledged the readjustment of the Hungarian border as valid. The Foreign Office was satisfied that the conflict was settled without the participation of Britain and on the basis of mutual agreement between Czechoslovakia and Hungary.⁴⁹ Therefore it was no longer necessary to continue justifying the fairness of the rearrangement concerning the Hungarian-Slovakian borders with the exception of some confederation plans referring to this country as well.⁵⁰

Few months later, while the Germans were creating the Czech-Moravian Protectorate in March 1939, another part of the former Czechoslovak state, Ruthenia, returned to Hungary. This event remained almost without echo in the subsequent issues of the *Quarterly*. It happened so quickly that preparation for reannexation by propaganda was not possible, and after the event it seemed to be more tactical not to mention it. Both the ethnic principle and the right of self-determination were rudely violated, because the annexation of the Sub-Carpathian territory was executed by military force.

Despite the fact that Hungarian policy ignored the basic rules of territorial readjustment prescribed by international law, Hungary's step was accepted after the event by the Western governments, who considered Magyar expansionism more favourably than German.⁵¹ They perceived quite clearly that if Hungary would not have occupied its former sphere of interests, Germany would have done so. Ruthenia therefore was shrouded in silence; it appeared in only two or three studies on economic questions⁵² and tourism,⁵³ and did not figure among the representative articles on important problems of international politics.

4. Territorial Readjustment after the Outbreak of the Second World War

After a significant part of Upper Hungary had been returned, and starting from the Summer issue of 1939, *The Hungarian Quarterly* concentrated on the Transylvanian question. The successful previous annexations increased the self-confidence of the Hungarian propagandists who sharply attacked the Romanians with a surprisingly hostile assault. The method and tactics of reasoning were the same. The violations of the ethnic principle, the right of self-determination, and injuries to minority rights, were supported by data, statistics, facts and maps. The idea of Magyar cultural and administrative superiority increasingly found a place in the articles. As a result the tone became more and more emotional, intolerant and aggressive.

An important endeavour of Magyar propaganda was the refutation of the Romanian theory of Daco-Romanian continuity, the myth of national origin that justified the firstcomers' right for the Romanians.⁵⁴ In order to convince the readers that the Daco-Romanian theory was untrue, the studies emphasized the evidence for later Romanian immigration by analyzing legal traditions, the urban structure created by other nationalities,⁵⁵ and also by stressing the Balkan mentality, culture and traditions, the orthodox religion and Greek writing of the Romanians.⁵⁶

The history of the Transylvanian Principality during the time of the Turkish occupation provided an excellent opportunity for the studies to demonstrate the

viability of the Hungarian state idea. Namely, that the Hungarian State that had been preserved during the partition primarily by the political culture of Transylvania.⁵⁷ A study was also dedicated to English–Transylvanian connections. These in fact had for religious reasons been far more important in the seventeenth century than English political relations with the Hungarian Kingdom.⁵⁸ Protestant Transylvania had not only significant cultural ties based on student peregrinations to English universities, but also diplomatic relations with the Stuarts and Cromwell.

The outbreak of the Second World War in September 1939 necessarily brought changes to British policy toward Hungarian territorial revision. After the First Vienna Award, the Foreign Office did not in theory oppose the return of Romanian territories inhabited by a Magyar majority and acknowledged Hungary's right to these lands. But all further claims were considered unjust territorial occupation.⁵⁹

The Second Vienna Award in August 1940, which with German–Italian agreement annexed Northern-Transylvania to Hungary, was not accepted by Britain after the start of the war. Although Romania was not an ally of the British, this readjustment was not recognized as valid, because it resulted of belligerent states, hostile to Great Britain, and “His Majesty's Government could not regard to be just any territorial changes executed after September 1939.”⁶⁰

Although the Hungarian government had been following a rather pro-German policy, Prime Minister Pál Teleki, a close friend of István Bethlen and a representative of the same political course, tried to do everything to preserve the good will of Britain. He emphasized geopolitical considerations, and until his death he remained respected as the defender and symbol of democratic values against the pressure of German dictatorship.⁶¹ The tacit understanding of Britain encouraged the Quarterly to intensify its propaganda for the justification of the frontier readjustment, even as official British declarations considered the annexations questionable.

Starting with the Autumn issue in 1940 *The Hungarian Quarterly* began to solicit readers in the United States. Instead of Széchenyi's journeys in England many studies dealt with the Hungarian officers of the American War of Independence, Hungarian travellers in the United States, and Kossuth's popularity with the American public.⁶² The articles about the Transylvanian question were increasingly being directed at American readers.

The Winter number of the periodical was dedicated completely to the reannexation of Northern-Transylvania. The enthusiastic atmosphere radiating from this issue was much stronger than after the first readjustment of the Czechoslovakian frontier. József Balogh, the editor, felt it necessary to write a foreword to the studies.⁶³ His essay, like other articles, ignored the ethnic principle and the right of self-determination, and in a surprisingly hostile spirit towards Romania strongly emphasized Magyar cultural and administrative superiority.⁶⁴ The

characteristic formulation of this idea could be found in a note by László Pas-suth, which declared "numbers and ethnographic considerations were not the only elements" in the Transylvanian problem. One also had to consider "the mysterious union of historic tradition" that had made Transylvania "the Eastern border stronghold of European civilisation."⁶⁵

An American priest examined the rights of the religious minorities. He surpassed even these emotional essays by stating that Romania, when it had taken over Transylvania, "lacked the solid, intelligent, informed middle class which she so needed," and the Romanians, who had "poured into the territory had the tradition of their own Turkish experiences."⁶⁶ The "great and most difficult task" of combining Western and Balkan cultures was not achieved by the Rumanians, who had had "neither education, nor the experience which the occasion demanded"; "as well might the state of California be given to Mexico!"⁶⁷

The longest article came from a leading expert on the subject, by Zsombor Szász, and dealt with the history of Transylvania in detail. It was filled with similar hostile emotions. The author refuted the theory of Daco-Romanian continuity, denied the latinity of Romanian culture, and criticised the policy of the Romanian national elite by constantly emphasizing the backwardness and Balkan mentality of the nomadic people.⁶⁸ Two other studies repeated the basic ideas of Szász; one by explaining the racial, religious, and linguistic aspects of Balkan Romanian culture,⁶⁹ the other by "tracing the origin and development of the Romanians."⁷⁰ The extraordinarily emotional approach of the Quarterly towards Romanian history was most characteristically expressed by László Pas-suth, who stated that the history of the Romanian Principalities had showed "no likeness to that of the Latin countries which from early medieval times onward had produced a whole array of Christian monarchies and civilisation." Unlike Hungary, "Balkan morals, hideous destitution among the lower classes, and perpetual compromises with the neighbouring Great Powers" had been the principal features in the evolution of Romania.⁷¹

In comparison with the relatively moderate start in 1936, the Quarterly, like the Hungarian press in general, lost its self-control under the influence of the quick successes by Hungarian foreign policy. Instead of facts, reasons and arguments, the greatest values of the Quarterly for British eyes at the start, emotions ruled its spirit. It published such opinions as: "Hungary did not have to demand Transylvania, as it had belonged to the Hungarians for a thousand years, and there was not a single Hungarian who did not know that one day it will return."⁷² This intolerant and aggressive tone was the worst type of propaganda, and could never be successful in Britain. The views expressed in the Quarterly were not only contrary to the intentions and interests of the British policy, and therefore contradictory to the fundamental rule of making propaganda, but also unacceptable to British taste.

5. Culture in Service of Political Propaganda

From 1936 to 1941, *The Hungarian Quarterly* increasingly became an instrument of political propaganda, and the studies on literature, music, art history, and tourism proved to be no more than an attractive wrapping to give a more acceptable form and outlook to the primarily political message.

However, these writings on geography, history, ethnography, or literature also contained, to varying degrees, ideas shared by the propagandist articles on international affairs. The mere intention of emphasizing culture fitted perfectly into the conception of Hungary's cultural superiority. Thus, the studies on Hungarian culture could neither hide, nor counterbalance the propagandistic impression which the Quarterly exercised on the readers. This proved to be especially true when its tone became more and more intolerant and aggressive after the Czechoslovakian crisis in 1938.

Most of the essays on culture were historic studies, focusing on those times and events of Hungarian history, that could contribute to the image of Hungary had enjoyed before the First World War.⁷³ Among the elements of this image most often were the striking similarity of British and Hungarian constitutional development, the traditional affinity to monarchic rule, and Hungary serving as the bulwark of Christianity against the invasions from the East, especially in the Turkish times.

Transylvania was a good example with which to demonstrate the tolerant character of the Magyars and the viability of Hungarian administrative traditions. Széchenyi, who considered the English state an ideal construction and travelled a good deal to learn and collect experiences, was a popular figure of the Quarterly. Kossuth and the 1848–49 Revolution and War of Independence were also commonly treated subjects. Széchenyi was a suitable hero for conservative readers, Kossuth for the liberals and radicals, and the events of 1848–49 fitted into the image of a liberty-loving nation fighting for its freedom against oppression. Like each topic, each study on history had its function in justifying Magyar claims for territorial revision.

One group of the studies on history tried to demonstrate the tradition of warm English–Hungarian relations and friendship.⁷⁴ The Quarterly's expert on the question was Alexander Fest, but some pro-Hungarian British aristocrats also published weak or mediocre essays on the subject.⁷⁵ This was not an easy enterprise at all, as the Magyars, quite naturally, had connections mostly with their neighbours: the Germans, Poles, or Italians.

Some articles on history dealt with the nationality problem. These argued that historic Hungary had been a peaceful place for all the nationalities for centuries,⁷⁶ and that the "harmonious fusion of so many peoples of distinctly different racial character" had been "disturbed by the French Revolution, which made

nationality the centre of community life, and identified it with language."⁷⁷ The Magyar nobility had contributed significantly to the development of Romanian literacy and alphabetization by having the Bible printed in Romanian and establishing Romanian printing presses. Tolerance, and later liberalism, had characterised the behaviour of Hungarians in Transylvania before the appearance of nationalism.⁷⁸

Together with the frequent declaration of Hungarian cultural and administrative superiority, the historic mission of Hungary was constantly emphasized. Some of these articles represented serious scholarly works,⁷⁹ others were written with a somewhat romantic approach.⁸⁰ A weak, rather low level study on Hungarian national character, focusing on the pride and liberty-loving nature of the Magyars, stated that a basic element of Hungarian mentality was "the conviction of being born to power," that the Magyar was "entitled to rule, and it was due because of the inherent values of his own personality."⁸¹

In 1938, the editor József Balogh introduced King Stephen's conception of state to the readers through a mystic and emotional interpretation in 1938.⁸² It was quite characteristic of the Quarterly when, despite a British warning that the Hungarians "read more into the foundation of their realm than was originally inherent in it," the editor declared an openly imperialistic endeavour: "St. Stephen's conception of state, the Pax Hungarica" was an "imperial idea," which envisaged a wider circle than that which the Treaty of Trianon had assigned to the Hungarian people.⁸³ The historic mission of Hungary was explained in a similar tone which tried to emphasize the traditional understanding and tolerance of the liberty-loving Magyars towards the neighbouring nations.⁸⁴

The claim for Magyar supremacy was formulated not only through the cultural and administrative superiority that unambiguously implied the leading role of Hungary, which possessed a historic mission, but also through some analyses written by the editorial staff of the Quarterly. In a study on the injustices of the post-war settlements, József Balogh had already declared openly in 1937 that the Hungarian Kingdom "had always been, either de facto or virtually, a Danubian Great Power, or at least a power that carried within itself a well-founded potentiality of greatness."⁸⁵ As for the reduced post-war Hungary he expressed his conviction that "mutilated by Trianon, a wreck and a wraith of its former self, ceaselessly clamouring, beggar-wise, for 'Justice', this little Danubian state is yet the kernel and promise of a regenerated Central Europe."⁸⁶

Not only historical but also literary topics were suitable for creating the necessary background for political propaganda. Numerous short stories and novel-extracts concentrated on the human tragedies resulting from Trianon, the Romanian occupation, the terror at the time of the Hungarian Soviet Republic, minority oppression, and nostalgia for the prewar peace.⁸⁷ In general, Hungarian literature was represented by competently translated publications not only from

popular and fashionable writers of that time, like Ferenc Herczeg, Lajos Zilahy and Zsolt Harsányi, but also from classic authors like Mór Jókai, Kálmán Mikszáth, Zsigmond Móricz, Mihály Babits, Frigyes Karinthy and Dezső Kosztolányi. Publishing the best of Hungarian literature in English, the Quarterly naturally did much in the interest of spreading and introducing the general values of Hungarian culture.⁸⁸ The studies on the history of old and modern Hungarian literature, written by Antal Szerb and Dezső Keresztury represented scholarship of the highest level.⁸⁹

A column called “Hungarian Bookshelf” was dedicated to the review of books in English related to Hungary and its culture. Part of the books dealt with political topics, like the Paris Peace Conference, the plebiscites for frontier readjustment, the foreign policy of Czechoslovakia, or racial and national minorities. Others concentrated on history, economics, geography, ethnography, the arts, and most especially on literature. Two publications were analyzed in longer reviews: C. A. Macartney’s work on *Hungary and her Successors* and the two volume edition of *Papers and Documents Relating to the Foreign Relations of Hungary*, published by the Royal Hungarian Ministry for Foreign Affairs.⁹⁰

Beginning with the Spring 1944 issue the latter had already advertised in the Quarterly. The analysis of the document collection by Lindsay Rogers, an American professor of law, together with a survey of the Treaty of Trianon, emphasized that Hungary was the first country to publish its secret diplomatic documents from the time of the peace negotiations.⁹¹ This meant creating a virtue from necessity, as decisions at the peace conference had been made in all cases to the Magyars’ disadvantage. Thus naturally Hungary was interested in the publication of the secret documents more than any other state.

The study by Sándor Körmeny-Ékes on C. A. Macartney’s monograph was far more important because it provided an outstanding opportunity to examine *The Hungarian Quarterly’s* views on territorial readjustment. Macartney, the pro-Hungarian British scholar and Fellow of All Souls College in Oxford at that time, also published articles in the Quarterly on Hungary’s history and economic life.⁹² Although the author of the review did not find Macartney’s criticism of the neighbouring states sufficiently vehement, he acknowledged and praised the British scholar’s objectivity and in general appreciated his knowledge and intentions, as Macartney had even learned the Hungarian language for the sake of his research.⁹³

According to Körmeny-Ékes’s interpretation the British monograph aimed “to draw up a balance sheet” on how far the Treaty of Trianon had “improved the cultural and economic situation and progress of the population living in the territories taken away from Hungary,” and tried to investigate “the justice of Hungary’s demands for revision.”⁹⁴ In the British scholar’s work Körmeny-

Ékes focused on affirming that only one part of the minorities had "really felt oppressed" in pre-war Hungary, while others, such as the Slovaks, the Ruthens, the Germans and the Jews had "assimilated themselves gladly and of their own free will."⁹⁵

It was stressed that according to the monograph "Hungary's economic policy had been in many respects Hungarian rather than Magyar," and there had been "no question of impoverishing the nationalities or of placing them at an economic disadvantage compared with the Magyars." The rehabilitation of the pre-war minority policy of Hungary by Macartney was strongly emphasized, especially because this opinion favourable to the Magyars was based on the one-sidedly anti-Hungarian data collected by Seton-Watson.⁹⁶

The review also focused on Macartney's opinion on the possible solution to the minority problems in the Danube Basin. The British expert did not believe in the defence of minorities by law,⁹⁷ because the Central Europeans disregarded these laws.⁹⁸ Macartney thought revision only necessary "insofar as it serves to unite the Hungarians living beyond the frontiers with the mother-country." Where the ethnic principle had to be modified, he suggested trying "to balance out the numbers of the two minorities both sides of the frontier."⁹⁹ The principle of "measure for measure, an eye for an eye" had already been proposed by Bethlen in 1933. He considered this idea the only effective instrument against the Balkan disrespect for law.

Although the British scholar acknowledged that the nationalities had "supplied a post-dated justification of the Treaty of Trianon" and the dismemberment of Hungary, he considered the ethnic principle as primary in frontier readjustment. Despite his favourable approach toward Hungary, Macartney obviously did not think in terms of the restoration of Hungarian supremacy, and most of Körmendy-Ékes's objections concern this "deficiency." The correspondent of the *Quarterly* criticized the book for omitting references to such advantages of pre-war historic Hungary as personal freedom in the liberal Hungarian state and free economic development of nationalities.¹⁰⁰ The reviewer also disapproved of the author's failure "to distinguish between Magyarization by force and becoming Magyar by free will." Macartney, he argued, had "not sufficiently acknowledged the aggravation in the position of nationalities as compared to pre-war circumstances, the increase of the means of oppression, and the degeneration of fight into brutality." The critic felt a "constant struggle" in the evaluation of the Hungarian past "between the comparatively favourable results of Macartney's own investigation, and the teachings of the school of Professor Seton-Watson."¹⁰¹

Based on the implicit message of the remarks, Körmendy-Ékes and the *Quarterly* would have preferred a version where historic Hungary had been declared the best possible solution among the imperfect solutions for the minority problems of the Danube Basin.

Epilogue

After Hungary's strong and apparently one-sided commitment to Germany (following the Second Vienna Award she had joined the Three Power pact in November 1940 and declared war on the Soviet Union in June 1941), the Hungarian political elite could not expect any further support from British policy. In 1941 the Quarterly could appear only twice, and these became the last two pre-war publications of the periodical.

Prime Minister Pál Teleki, who symbolized the reduced influence of the pro-Anglo-Saxon lobby of the Hungarian national elite, disappeared from the political scene. Unable to accept the declaration of war on Yugoslavia, the only friendly ally against German pressure, he committed suicide in April 1941. Joining the German invasion against Yugoslavia meant the loss of Hungarian supremacy once and for all, and also all hope of restoring it, because the price of territorial revision became unconditional subordination to Hitler's Germany. Regardless of its territorial aggrandisement, Hungary ceased to function as an independent power.

The Second World War did not significantly change those geographic, economic, cultural conditions on which interwar Hungarian propaganda had relied as fundamental arguments to justify its endeavour for supremacy in the Carpathian Basin, and possibly in the Danube Basin, as well. Defeated once more, Hungary could not make just claims against the neighbours, who could again be found on the victors' side at the end of the war.¹⁰²

However, a half century later, the dissolution of Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia has provided further evidence that the exaggerated support of the Czech, Serb, and Romanian elites by the victorious Western powers, at the expense of dismembering Austria-Hungary, was an irretrievable mistake in 1918. They had presented these small, peripheric political forces with disproportionately greater power than their real weight and influence would have justified. Thus they became inflated as political factors. Today, after their consolidation as independent units, the chance of a lasting agreement between the centrally-positioned, artificially reduced Hungary, and its small, but numerous rivals for primacy in East-Central Europe has only decreased.

Notes

1. Romsics, Ignác *Bethlen István* (Budapest 1991) 249.
2. Romsics, 249.
3. Romsics, 250.
4. Romsics, 251.
5. Némédi, Dénes "A Magyar Szemle revíziós nacionalizmusának szerkezetéről" *Történelmi Szemle* (1972/1–2) 75.

6. Romsics, 252.
7. Count István Bethlen "The Hungarian Quarterly. Its Aim and Scope" *The Hungarian Quarterly* (Spring 1936) 5.
8. Bethlen "The Hungarian Quarterly. Its Aim and Scope," 6.
9. "The Hungarian Quarterly sets itself the task of supplying the English speaking public with reliable information... This periodical will also attempt a faithful sketch of the Hungarians views regarding their own as well as their neighbours' duty, task, and the great international problems awaiting urgent solutions." Bethlen "*The Hungarian Quarterly*. Its Aim and Scope" 7.
10. Sir John Marriott "England and the Eastern Question" *The Hungarian Quarterly* (Winter 1936) 231.
11. Cecil Malone "The Outlook for Minorities" *The Hungarian Quarterly* (Winter 1937) 607.
12. Lord Davies "Hungary and the New Commonwealth" *The Hungarian Quarterly* (Spring 1938) 45.
13. Nicholas Murray Butler "The United States of Europe" *The Hungarian Quarterly* (Spring 1936) 15.
14. Andrew Frey "A Danubian Chronicle" *The Hungarian Quarterly* (Summer 1936) 375.
15. The Duchess of Atholl "British Opinion and the League" Harold J. Tobin "The Small States and the League" *The Hungarian Quarterly* (Autumn 1936) 26–27.
16. Sir John Fischer Williams "The Reform of the Covenant of the League," Charles Cheney Hyde "The Revision of Treaties and of Settlements Registered in Treaties," Without name "Justice, Security & the League of Nations" *The Hungarian Quarterly* (Winter 1936) 195–202
17. "The less Rumania respects the rights of the Hungarian minorites, guaranteed by the peace treaties, the more Hungary is entitled, both politically and legally, to assert its revisionist claims." Quoted from Bethlen by Andrew Frey "A Danubian Chronicle" *The Hungarian Quarterly* (Summer 1937) 377.
18. Sir Arthur Wilson "The Future of the Society of Nations" *The Hungarian Quarterly* (Spring 1936) 23–24, 31.
19. Newton, Lord "The Present European Situation" *The Hungarian Quarterly* (Summer 1936) 231.
20. Edwin Borchard, "Sanctions Versus Neutrality. The Psychology of Enforcing Peace" *The Hungarian Quarterly* (Summer 1936) 254.
21. Borchard "Sanction Versus Neutrality" 255.
22. Count István Bethlen "Hungary and the Reforms of the League of Nations" *The Hungarian Quarterly* (Summer 1937) 215–234.
23. "In a military way we are still utterly defenceless, our minorities living in the neighbouring countries has never before experienced such persecutions as in these days, and the Hungarian government has not been able to take any steps to remedy this state of affairs. Rearmament has become Hungary's task and duty towards its people and its future." ... "The Hungarian government ought to make a last trial of the league, and forget that the petitions of minorities have up till now been thrown into the waste paper basket. Should the League again fail to do its duty, we ought to re-

sign our membership and leave an institution which is unable to observe even the most solemnly undertaken obligations." Quoted from Bethlen by Frey "Danubian Chronicle" (Spring 1937) 182, 184.

24. Bethlen "Hungary and the Reforms of the League..." 218.
25. Bethlen "Hungary and the Reforms of the League..." 211.
26. "The prestige of the League of Nations is on decline. In the handling of the minority question it can hardly be said to have fulfilled the hopes placed in it" ... "Every country is rearming, even the neutral states. There is only one small country in the wide world whose rearming would, apparently, endanger the holy cause of peace, and that is Hungary." Quoted from Kánya by Andrew Frey "A Danubian Chronicle" *The Hungarian Quarterly* (Autumn 1937) 568.
27. György Ottlik "Hungary's Foreign Relations" *The Hungarian Quarterly* (Spring 1938) 18–32.
28. Ottlik "Hungary's Foreign Relations" 22.
29. Cecil Malone "The Outlook for Minorities" *The Hungarian Quarterly* (Winter 1937) 605.
30. "The Slovak Party definitely rejected the fiction of a Czechoslovak nation, history and racial lore knew only two separate nations, a Czech and a Slovak... Father Hlinka said, the Germans could be only the third nation in the state, for Czechs and Slovaks had never formed one nation." Frey "A Danubian Chronicle" *The Hungarian Quarterly* (Spring 1938) 191.
31. Frey "A Danubian Chronicle" *The Hungarian Quarterly* (Summer 1938) 374.
32. Frey "A Danubian Chronicle" The German–Czechoslovak Question *The Hungarian Quarterly* (Autumn 1938) 557.
33. Frey "A Danubian Chronicle" *The Hungarian Quarterly* (Summer 1938) 374.
34. Count István Bethlen "Hungary's Position after the Austrian Anschluss" *The Hungarian Quarterly* (Summer 1938) 201.
35. Bethlen "Hungary's Position..." 206.
36. Bethlen "Hungary's Position..." 205.
37. Frey "A Danubian Chronicle" *The Hungarian Quarterly* (Summer 1938) 380.
38. Gooch, G. P. "England and Europe: A Retrospect" *The Hungarian Quarterly* (Winter 1938) 577.
39. Gooch "England and Europe" 578.
40. Andrew Moravek "The Hungarian Minority in Czechoslovakia" *The Hungarian Quarterly* 722.
41. László Ottlik "Democracy and the Multi-National State" *The Hungarian Quarterly* (Winter 1938) 586–594.
42. Ottlik "Democracy..." 588.
43. Ottlik "Democracy..." 592.
44. Lajos Gogolák "The Hungarian Spirit in Northern Hungary" *The Hungarian Quarterly* (Winter 1938), Árpád Markó "Upper Hungary and Prince Francis Rákóczi" *The Hungarian Quarterly* (Winter 1938) 674, 689.
45. "The Czechs themselves had welcomed the principle of self-determination when first enunciated it by President Wilson, because they intended to benefit from it. They named a railway station in Prague after the coiner of this useful slogan... Had

- President Wilson gone a little deeper and said then, what Hitler says now, that the Germans within the new state of Czechoslovakia had the same right of self-determination that the Czech had had within the realm of Austria, the railway station would presumably have been hastily renamed." Sir Thomas Bart Cunninghame "Vain Triumph" *The Hungarian Quarterly* (Winter 1938) 59–611.
46. Cunninghame "Vain Triumph" 596.
 47. Cunninghame "Vain Triumph" 597.
 48. Lajos Gogolák "Edward Benes" *The Hungarian Quarterly* (Spring 1940) 24–35.
 49. Gogolák "Edward Benes" 27.
 50. "The Munich Agreement did not make any stipulations in regard of the settlement of problems of the Polish and Hungarian minorities in Czechoslovakia, and it was only in the event of these problems not being settled in agreement with the respective Governments within three months that they would have formed the subject of another meeting of the Munich powers. Agreement was in fact reached between the Czechoslovak and Hungarian Government when they agreed to accept as final the arbitral award of the German and Italian Governments and in consequence no question of action by His Majesty's Government arises." Barcza, György, *Diplomataemlékeim 1915–1945* (Memories of My Diplomatic Service 1915–1945), (Vol. 1, Budapest 1994) 405.
 51. István Borsody "The Slovaks in the Carpathian Basin" *The Hungarian Quarterly* (Autumn 1941) 215–227.
 52. Barcza *Diplomataemlékeim...* 407.
 53. László Tarnóy "The Economic Significance of Sub-Carpathia" *The Hungarian Quarterly* (Summer 1939) 339–343.
 54. Henry Albert Philips "Magyar Will to Survive" *The Hungarian Quarterly* (Spring 1940) 36–41.
 55. "It is no exaggeration to say that the Daco-Rumanian theory, still firmly held as a dogma by Transylvanian historians, is fundamentally nothing but a projection of eighteenth-century Hungarian humanism. It is not a scientifically proved fact, but a belief, a myth to which Chauvinist Rumanians cling obstinately, because in it they see historic motivation of Great-Rumania." László Gáldi "Two Minds in the Rumanian Past" *The Hungarian Quarterly* (Autumn 1939) 445.
 56. Andrew Rónai "The Peoples of Transylvania" *The Hungarian Quarterly* (Summer 1939) 229–242.
 57. Gáldi "Two Minds in the Rumanian Past" 439–440.
 58. Rónai "The Peoples of Transylvania" 233–235.
 59. István Gál "England and Transylvania" *The Hungarian Quarterly* (Summer 1939) 243–255.
 60. Barcza *Diplomataemlékeim...* 409.
 61. Barcza *Diplomataemlékeim...* 476.
 62. Barcza *Diplomataemlékeim...* 454–455.
 63. Lindsay Rogers "Papers and Documents. Comments by an American Professor" *The Hungarian Quarterly* (Autumn 1940), Caroline J. Porter "An American Appreciation. Hungary through the Ages" *The Hungarian Quarterly* (Autumn 1940) 385–409. Alexis Máthé "Impressions of the United States" *The Hungarian Quarterly*

- (Autumn 1940) 410–416, István Gál “Kossuth, America and the Danubian Confederation” *The Hungarian Quarterly* (Autumn 1940), András Rónai “Notes and Letters. America and the Transylvanian Question” *The Hungarian Quarterly* (Autumn 1940), Rev. L. C. Cornish “Part of Transylvania Comes Back” *The Hungarian Quarterly* (Winter 1940) 417, 577. Madden, Henry M. “Transylvania: a Sub-Nation” *The Hungarian Quarterly* (Winter 1940).
64. Joseph Balogh “Foreword” *The Hungarian Quarterly* (Winter 1940) 575–576.
 65. “The higher elements are sacrificed to the lower, and the whole country suffers by having those elements from which progress would proceed being subjected to an alien rule which is likely to leave them lower than they were under Hungarian rule.” Balogh “Foreword” 575.
 66. Passuth, László “Notes and Letters. Hungary and Rumania” *The Hungarian Quarterly* (Autumn 1940) 546.
 67. Rev. Louis C. Cornish, “A Part of Transylvania Comes Back” *The Hungarian Quarterly* (Winter 1940) 578.
 68. Cornish “A Part of Transylvania...” 579.
 69. Zsombor Szász “Hungarians–Rumanians” *The Hungarian Quarterly* (Winter 1940) 589–610.
 70. Ferenc Kászonyi “Racial Problems in Transylvania” *The Hungarian Quarterly* (Winter 1940) 619.
 71. Lajos Elekes “The Development of the Rumanian People” *The Hungarian Quarterly* (Winter 1940) 678–688.
 72. Passuth “Hungary and Rumania” 545.
 73. András Rónai “Notes and Letters. America and the Transylvanian Question” *The Hungarian Quarterly* (Autumn 1940) 549.
 74. Géza Jeszenszky *Az elveszett presztízs* (The Lost Prestige) (Budapest 1986) 23–26.
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82. György Trócsányi "The Hungarian National Character" *The Hungarian Quarterly* (Summer 1939) 197.
83. József Balogh "The Political Testament of St. Stephen, King of Hungary" *The Hungarian Quarterly* (Autumn 1938) 389–398.
84. Balogh "The Political Testament..." 396–397.
85. "Today, as then, the Hungarians profess that there is weakness in a kingdom that is uniform in language and customs; in accordance with this creed, Hungary has always been a land of many nations, a land of tolerance, where there was a liberty and independence for all who gave their allegiance to the Hungarian state. The Magyar people still feel themselves to be a bridge between East and West as in the days of St. Stephen; and they draw the strength for further struggles from that Christian humanism which the Admonitions derived from St. Augustine's state ideal through the medium of the Carolingian proto-renaissance; and have left as a legacy to the Hungarian nation." Balogh "The Political Testament..." 398.
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93. C. A. Macartney "Hungaria Aeterna" *The Hungarian Quarterly* (Spring 1936) 48–55., Macartney, C. A. "The First Historians of Hungary" *The Hungarian Quarterly* (Winter 1938) 630–641.

94. "Mr. Macartney's work gives an unparalleled, extensive and complete picture of the situation of Hungarian minorities in the succession states, a matter which hitherto has never been elaborated so objectively and with such thorough criticism."
"I would only emphasize that this book has enriched English literature on the Hungarian question by an objective, extensive and complete standard work, which, in the future must be read by everybody who wants to study the problems resulting from Hungary's dismemberment and the causes of the present Central European situation." Körmندی-Ékes "A Great Book on Hungary" 338., 341.
95. Körmندی-Ékes "A Great Book on Hungary" 332.
96. Körmندی-Ékes "A Great Book on Hungary" 333.
97. Körmندی-Ékes "A Great Book on Hungary" 334.
98. Körmندی-Ékes "A Great Book on Hungary" 339.
99. "While the Britons does not usually enact a law unless he means to keep it in the letter and in the spirit, and the Czechs unless, while evading its spirit he can yet prove that he has kept its letter, to the Rumanian the law and its execution stand in no discernible relationship." (Quoted from Macartney) Körmندی-Ékes "A Great Book on Hungary" 338.
100. Körmندی-Ékes "A Great Book on Hungary" 340.
101. Körmندی-Ékes "A Great Book on Hungary" 338–339.
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**THE FAILED HANDSHAKE ON THE DANUBE:
THE STORY OF ANGLO-AMERICAN PLANS
FOR THE LIBERATION OF CENTRAL EUROPE
AT THE END OF THE SECOND WORLD WAR**

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The exposition of the political and military aspects of this subject was fraught with difficulties during the years of the Cold War. It was likely to be frustrated by the mysticism in which it came to be shrouded on both sides of the political divide. In the West, the missed opportunities and possible errors of Allied strategy came to be regretted with hindsight. In the East, in countries where the degree of openness of the régime allowed it, the same sentiments were expressed with the added bitterness of those entombed behind the Iron Curtain. Both approaches were likely to misjudge the likelihood of success of plans which were thwarted at the end of the war.

The end of the Cold War has made a dispassionate approach more achievable. At the same time, no study has apparently been written with the aim of summing up the results of the related scholarship of the past decades, including those on strategic deception, and examining the options available for the West with the eyes of an Eastern inquirer. This short paper is an attempt to fill this gap.

I believe that, in the light of old debates and recently released material, two questions need to be addressed for an elucidation of the problem:

1. Was there genuine desire among British and American political and military leaders after 1942 to stage major campaigns in the Eastern Mediterranean, as a possible continuation of the Italian campaign, or were hints to this effect only part of a feint to divert German divisions from the vital battlegrounds of Normandy?

2. Was such a venture feasible considering the contemporary military and political situation?

These questions come naturally, and therefore, have to be formulated, at least initially, in this way. It will become apparent, however, that no clear-cut answer can be given to them, and a more thorough examination of the factors concerned will become necessary.

Operations code named TORCH (the Allied invasion of French North Africa) and HUSKY (the subsequent landings in Sicily) were implemented in 1942–43 as the only alternative to engage the Axis in active fighting. At the same time, they also served as the rehearsal for the decisive invasion in Normandy in mid-1944. The operations, however, evolved from an earlier British plan, conceived before the Soviet and American entry into the war, which would have accorded a more positive role to these manoeuvres, and, significantly, as the various strands of the North African and Italian campaign developed, a new, clandestine, function came to be associated with them as well. The latter aspect only came to light recently as documents relating to strategic deception have been partially released for public scrutiny, or published in the *British Intelligence in the Second World War* series.

Until the Soviet and American entry into the war British strategic thinking concentrated on survival, rather than the means of actually winning. As far as there was a strategy, it consisted of a somewhat farfetched, but not inconceivable, theory that the German Reich would eventually be brought down by mass uprisings in occupied Europe, instigated and assisted by the British. Such a plan required a prolonged war of attrition, resulting in the depletion of the enemy's resources, and a build-up of British resources, and those of the resistance in Europe. Large-scale bombing operations, and the creation of an ever tightening ring around the continent were envisaged. The centre of gravity of any military activity would also, by necessity, have to be the peripheries, rather than the hub, of the Nazi Empire. It was also essential to construct an elaborate and sophisticated intelligence gathering network, and a web of agents who would "set Europe ablaze," to compensate for the disadvantage in matériel. As one of his last acts in public office on 19 July 1940, Neville Chamberlain signed a secret paper authorising that "a new organization shall be established forthwith to co-ordinate all action, by way of subversion and sabotage, against the enemy overseas... This organization will be known as the Special Operations Executive."¹

A Mediterranean strategy, based on existing facilities in the Levant, and focusing on the Balkans, did not only emerge from the above stated principles by elimination. It made positive strategic sense as well. The loss of Romanian oil would have caused irreparable damage to the Germans; the Eastern Mediterranean, *en route* to the oil installations of the Persian Gulf, was a traditional British sphere of interest with many personal contacts, as well as equipment in the Middle East, already in place. The fact that the area was held down by Italy, the junior partner in the Axis, made operations seem all the more practicable. Finally, strong partisan activity, both in Greece and in Yugoslavia, no doubt due to the fact that these peoples had developed sophisticated guerrilla tactics during their long experience of submission under the Ottoman Empire, provided the British with some of their earliest continental allies. The fact, however, that

in May 1941, the British were ignominiously ejected from Crete by German intervention, was a portent of the considerable difficulties that lay ahead.

It is arguable that a strategy based on the Eastern Mediterranean alone could never have won the war against Germany, and that the German attack on Russia was inevitable, and consequently any Russian counter-offensive would have clashed with British activity also aimed at establishing, or maintaining, a sphere of influence there. However, these considerations did not arise in this manner at this stage of the conflict. With *Festung Europa* an accomplished fact, the future seemed inscrutable. For a considerable period following the German attack on the Soviet Union, the Russians did not appear to be able resist to the onslaught. At this time “[a victorious counter-attack] was not the rôle for which the Russian Army was cast in the calculations of the British Chiefs of Staff.”²

The distribution of power in the conflict changed significantly with the American entry into the war. A Joint Chiefs of Staff was established, and American strategic planning, commensurate with their input into the war effort in matériel, gradually began to carry more weight than that of the British. US agreement to the “Germany First” principle was achieved with the natural concomitant proviso that the war had to be brought to a conclusion in Europe as quickly as possible. From as early as December 1941, the time of the first Washington Conference, the plan of a North-Western assault on the heart of Europe enjoyed primacy among Allied strategies. BOLERO and ROUNDUP, as the build-up of troops and equipment in the UK and the planned landing operations were code named initially, had to take precedence over all other commitments, or had to benefit from them. If the Far East became temporarily a subsidiary theatre, the Balkans, with its frightening connotations for the Americans of a Byzantine quagmire, did all the more so. The principle was not an “un-European” one. Engaging the enemy at the decisive point with decisive force had been an old Clausewitzian approach to war. Gradually the British Chiefs of Staff and Churchill himself came round to accepting the idea, not least because it seemed to serve as a guarantee of US adherence to the “Germany First” principle. By the time of the Teheran Conference in December 1943 no-one openly dissented from this main thrust of the strategy. In addition, the fact that President Roosevelt, and George C. Marshall, Chief of Staff of the US Army, argued fervently for providing effective relief for the Russians in their fight against appalling odds on the Eastern Front as early as possible by opening a second front in Western Europe, and that they, among other American leaders, shared a propensity to suspect the British Mediterranean strategy of not being entirely disinterested, of being part of some kind of an imperial design, lay heavily in favour of an exclusively North-West European strategy. Resentment to the scheme was likewise flamed by the impression that, by clinging to it, Churchill hoped to put right, as it were, his failed policy at the Dardanelles during the First World War. In both cases he invoked the metaphor of attacking the “soft

underbelly” of a crocodile to propagate the plan. The early attachment of the British to action in the Eastern Mediterranean, however, died hard.

An Allied amphibious attack on North-West Europe turned out to be logistically impossible in 1942. Ironically, it was American eagerness to engage the Axis in 1942 which gave the impetus to reviving the old British plans for landing in French North Africa, Operation GYMNAST, or TORCH as it was subsequently renamed. In December 1942 at Casablanca Churchill and Roosevelt worked out the logical continuation of the North African Allied advance, i.e. plans for landing on the island of Sicily. Beyond that, however, they did not attempt to formulate policy. Only after spectacular success in Sicily was it decided that the Allies should press on to knock Italy out of the Axis. It was in the course of the execution of this opportunistic strategy in late 1942 and in 1943 that the appetite of Churchill, Sir Alan Brooke, Chief of the Imperial General Staff, General Henry Maitland Wilson, Commander-in-Chief in the Middle East in 1943, Supreme Allied Commander in the Mediterranean in 1944, and of General Sir Harold Alexander, Commander-in-Chief of the 8th Army, Supreme Allied Commander in Italy, came, in Sir Michael Howard’s words, “*en mangeant*”, to shift the emphasis onto the Mediterranean theatre more than it had been agreed by the combined chiefs. Though very hard fought, the campaign in Italy bore fruit. Mussolini was dismissed by the King of Italy a fortnight after the landings in Sicily. Buoyed by the events, Churchill argued:

The flank attack may become the main attack, and the main attack a holding operation in the early stages. Our second front will, in fact, comprise both the Atlantic and Mediterranean coasts of Europe, and we can push either right-handed, left-handed, or both handed as our resources and circumstances permit.³

On 26 October, one month before the Teheran Conference, he wrote to President Roosevelt:

We must not let this great Italian battle degenerate into a deadlock. At all costs we must win Rome and the airfields to the north of it. ... I feel that Eisenhower and Alexander must have what they need to win the battle in Italy, no matter what effect is produced on subsequent operations.⁴

Churchill’s confidant, Field Marshal Smuts, and King George VI also joined in the enthusiasm for this strategy. Smuts hoped “to go on fighting” in the Mediterranean “and not switch over to a new front like ‘Overlord.’” The King wrote to Churchill in October 1943:

[...] I have always thought that your original idea of last year of attacking the “underbelly” of the Axis was the right one [...] The present

situation as we know has turned out even better than we could have ever hoped [...] we command the Mediterranean Sea [...] Italy is at war with our enemy Germany; Roumania & Hungary are trying to get in touch with us. [...] may be we shall see the 3 great powers, Great Britain, USA & USSR fighting together on the same front.⁵

As I have discussed earlier, keeping the Eastern Mediterranean operations as the single line of attack was not a realistic or expedient strategy. However, it later became clear that the resources for pursuing Churchill's vision of two second fronts would never be sufficient either, even though, through the activities of the secret deception unit, "A" Force (*see below*), the Germans were led to believe and fear the opposite. The two separate aspects of the strategy in the Mediterranean, ambitious plans for real strategy, and notional threats, may have become somewhat mixed up among the ambitions of those who wished for a greater emphasis on the Eastern Mediterranean.

At the third Washington Conference, held in May 1943, the British delegation proposed to press ahead to exploit the achievements of the Italian campaign by landings eastward on the Balkans, rather than transferring these troops to the UK. It was argued that from the newly occupied bases the Allies could reach previously inaccessible parts of Central and South-Eastern Europe. If the Germans reacted strongly, so much the better, as this would also keep large numbers of their forces pinned down, away from both North-Western Europe and the Russian front. In July 1943 Churchill spoke to the Chiefs of Staff Committee about a "post-HUSKY" strategy, which had the River Po, or Vienna, among its possible aims, even to the detriment of OVERLORD. The Americans were not impressed. Correctly they argued that the British proposals contradicted previous agreements. At Teheran, still wishing to retain the Balkans option, Churchill supported the primacy of the build-up for a North-Western attack, and accepted a definite plan for an invasion of Southern France in the wake of the advance in Italy, believing that landing craft would also become available for a move into the Balkans. The debate, however, never had the chance to become significantly more than theoretical as the operations bogged down on the Pisa-Rimini Line, and did not move much further north until the spring of 1945, by which time the Soviet forces came to dominate the Balkans and Central Europe, with the exception of Greece, in adherence to the terms of the Churchill-Stalin "percentage agreement" of October 1944.

From the summer of 1944, Churchill began to see the Soviet advance as a threat, rather than as a relief. Backed by General Alexander, he renewed his plea for a diversion to the east, especially as an alternative to ANVIL, landings in the south of France, originally planned to coincide with, and provide dynamic diversionary assistance to, the D-Day operations. Plans for an Adriatic alternative were put forward on 7 June 1944 by General Alexander. Describing his

plans to a meeting of the British War Cabinet on 7 July, he said they represented a chance for “the historical entry into Europe.”⁶ In his memoirs he wrote: “Once through the so-called Ljubljana Gap the way led to Vienna, an object of great political and psychological value.”⁷ This time, however, even the British chiefs were opposed to the idea. Even though ANVIL was not carried out, the operations through the Rhône Valley, renamed as DRAGOON, started in August 1944, and therefore late to assist in the initial days of OVERLORD, the Americans were adamant that their landing craft, essential for any amphibious operation across the Adriatic, could only be used in DRAGOON, and not in an, in their view, strategically and politically dubious diversion to the east. At the same time, the lateness of DRAGOON was partially compensated by the spreading of false rumours of an attack in the region to coincide with OVERLORD, known to its creator in “A” Force as Operation VENDETTA.

Churchill’s support for a move to the east stemmed from political considerations, which were no longer consistent with his pledges made in the percentage agreement. The Prime Minister and his general had to yield to the majority opinion, both American and British, arrayed against them.

The greatest drawback of the plan was that Alexander never really explored its logistic feasibility. It envisaged the crossing, in a short space of time, of very difficult and hostile terrain, much of which had proved to be killing fields in the First World War. The vistas opened up by the plan were enticing indeed. With the British and the Americans in Vienna, the Danube, rather than the Elbe, could have been the line on which the Western and Eastern Allies finally met. The Ljubljana Gap, the valley of the Save, and the Klagenfurt Valley, *en route* to Vienna, however, would have held unpleasant surprises in store for a war-weary British 8th Army. The “underbelly” may not have been so soft after all. Although the plans were never put to the test, it is highly doubtful that they could have been executed within the time frame available, given the fact that both the Yugoslav partisans and the Russian armies were progressing speedily in a similar direction. In any case, the opportunity was lost after DRAGOON had been staged and Soviet forces had advanced through Romania, Hungary, and parts of Yugoslavia from August 1944 to April 1945. At the same time, it is important to point out, especially in the context of the ensuing Cold War, that the original British pressure for a Mediterranean strategy was meant to counter American opinion opposed to the “Europe First” principle, and that its continued exploitation served to give immediate succour to the Soviet war effort, rather than to forestall it. Its last minute transformation to serve the latter purpose was not a viable alternative either strategically or politically at the time.

In the foregoing I have discussed the points raised in my original questions, except for the aspect of secret intelligence, which, I believe, needs to be discussed separately.

The hidden side of the Mediterranean strategy was strategic deception. In March 1941 "Advanced HQ 'A' Force" was established under a British officer, Lieut Col Dudley Clarke. As part of the "Double-Cross System" the British intelligence network of agents, double agents and their controllers, "A" Force was originally a "notional" Brigade of the Special Air Service, itself also initially a notional body. Having become the centre for strategic deception in the Middle East, and then in the whole Mediterranean area, its task was to create and keep in service notional, i.e. imaginary, agents, military formations, sometimes whole divisions, threats, intended to mislead and disadvantage the enemy in that theatre, especially in preparation for particular planned real operations. Though largely independent in choosing its methods, this "rumour factory," as Sir Michael Howard has called it, worked under the loose supervision of an organisation called the London Controlling Section. The main headquarters of "A" Force was in Cairo and served, for most of the story covered above, to provide camouflage for factual operations under the command of General Alexander.

The notional operation code named BARCLAY helped to secure the success of HUSKY by pinning down large numbers of German troops through implanting the idea of an impending Allied attack on the Balkans via Greece in the early summer of 1943. The most successful of all bogus operation, code named MINCEMEAT, designed to confuse the Germans about future Allied operations, resulted in the German penetration of the Balkans in March–July 1943. ZEPPELIN, among other objectives, carried a notional plan to attack Istria and the Dalmatian coast by a US contingent in early 1944. "The strategic task laid down for 'A' Force under the overall plan, *Zeppelin*, was to keep German reserves away from the Normandy battlefields until D+25; that is until the beginning of July."⁸ TURPITUDE comprised notional attacks on Salonica and Varna with Russian participation in June 1944. Another very successful bogus operation, FERDINAND, promoted in August 1944, at the time of real operation DRAGOON, practically concurred with the unrealistic strategy campaigned for by Churchill and Alexander at the time to concentrate on Italy and achieve an eastward diversion later. All these imaginary plans implied action in the Eastern Mediterranean, and were ultimately designed to assist OVERLORD. The Germans proved to be remarkably susceptible to them. By the spring of 1944 the impression was created in some German intelligence analysts that plans for an Allied North-Western attack were abandoned altogether for a Dalmatian or Southern French assault. Accurate reports of the unfeasibility of a Balkan strategy were drowned out by the "intelligence noise." By the time the credibility of any Eastern Mediterranean strategy to be pursued by the Western Allies diminished, the Soviets appeared on the horizon after a successful drive across the Ukraine, drawing ever more German formations away from the west. On 19 March 1944, in order to protect their lines of communication, the Germans occupied Hungary, their ally, and on 15 October, by staging a fascist coup, de-

stroyed the remnants of constitutional government there. By this time, with its aims accomplished, "A" Force began to close down. The illusions of an "Anglo-Saxon" landing also vanished, both amongst the retreating Germans, and the amongst the liberal opposition in Central and South-Eastern Europe.

Strategic deception is a cool and effective device. As the details of its role in the Mediterranean in 1942–44 began to emerge in the 1980s, at least one Central European historian, the Hungarian Gyula Juhász, expressed his bitterness about its cold logic. Hungary's precarious participation in the Hitler alliance was a disaster from the start. Soon after the very heavy losses sustained by the Hungarian 2nd Army at the southern Russian front in 1942, the Prime Minister, Miklós Kállay, supported by the more liberal elements of the political spectrum, introduced policies what were meant to steer the country out of the German clasp. Prominent among such policies were circumventing demands for the deportation of Hungary's Jews by assigning them to work units assisting the Hungarian army, and sending peace feelers to neutral capitals to negotiate terms for a possible surrender. The negotiators, and through them the government, were lulled into believing in an active Allied policy in South-Eastern Europe, and the misconception that they only needed to bide their time, and change sides when the Western Allies came near to Hungary's borders. For historical and political reasons, until the very last moment, the Hungarians, like the Polish but unlike the Czechoslovak governments-in-exile, were very reluctant to negotiate with the Russians. Therefore it is not an exaggeration to say that from early 1943 till October 1944, the whole of Hungarian policy hinged on the expectation that Western troops will appear near Hungary's borders, and the country may safely leave the war, or change sides. What happened instead was that Hungary was occupied by the Nazis, its "autocratic-liberal" leadership was removed, and 600,000 of its citizens were deported to face death or untold suffering. The validity of the policy to provide all possible buttress to OVERLORD cannot be questioned. It is evident that the victims of 1944–45 in Hungary were the victims of the Nazis, and not of the Allies. At the same time, acquaintance with local perspectives, such as the above, can only enrich the view on the workings of the global strategy and of deception as a part of it.

Having demonstrated that,

a) although there was a short-lived desire at the highest level among British leaders for military involvement in liberating parts of Central Europe and the Balkans, no agreement could be reached for its execution; and

b) that the above was partly the result of American reluctance to be associated with such a project, and the fact that the plans were most probably logistically unfeasible in the available time frame.

I would finally like to clarify a point concerning deception. When discussing this subject, many authors, in my view, fail to draw a firm line between deliberate deception by notional threats, and the fact that certain actors were deceived

as a result of receiving information on factual plans subsequently not carried out, or as a result of factual operations, some of which may in fact have been intended as ruses. The overall strategy benefited from all three. As I pointed out earlier, in this war of both nerves *and* matériel, these phenomena may have temporarily come very close, in the field, or in the minds of the authors of strategy. However, I believe that in resolving the questions I put at the beginning, it is important to keep them apart. By realising that the decisive majority of plans relating to the Eastern Mediterranean only existed in the realm of fantasy, i.e. as part of deception, one can understand how little chance they ever had of becoming an alternative to the strategy which was actually pursued by the Western Allies.

Notes

1. M.R.D. Foot, *SOE in France* (London, 1968), 8–9, as quoted in M.R.D. Foot, “Was SOE Any Good?”, *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 16 (1981), 167–81.
2. Michael Howard, *The Mediterranean Strategy in the Second World War* (London, 1968), 15–16.
3. J.M. Gwyer and J.R.M. Butler, *Grand Strategy* (London, 1964), 637–8, quoted in M. Howard, *The Mediterranean Strategy*, 34.
4. Winston S. Churchill, *The Second World War*, Vol. V. 220, quoted in M. Howard, *The Mediterranean Strategy*, 56.
5. Martin Gilbert, *Road to Victory, Winston Churchill 1941–45*, Vol. VII of *The Churchill Biography* (London, 1986), quoting Churchill Papers 20/92.
6. David Hunt, “British Military Planning and Aims in 1944”, in William Deakin, Elisabeth Barker, Jonathan Chadwick, eds, *British Political and Military Strategy in Central, Eastern, and Southern Europe in 1944* (London, 1988), 14, quoting from PRO CAB 65/47.
7. Field Marshal Earl Alexander of Tunis, *The Alexander Memoirs 1940–45* (London, 1962), 138, quoted in M. Howard, *The Mediterranean Strategy*, 62.
8. Michael Howard, *British Intelligence in the Second World War*, Vol. V, *Strategic Deception* (London, 1990), 148.

BRITISH POLITICAL ATTITUDES TOWARDS HUNGARY THROUGH THE WORKINGS OF THE BRITISH COMPONENT OF THE ALLIED CONTROL COMMISSION, 1945–1947

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In the aftermath of the Second World War relations between the United Kingdom and each of the smaller states of Central Europe were in varying degrees conditioned by British perceptions of Soviet power and intentions. There was already a tendency in the Foreign Office to regard much of the area as having fallen within the “Soviet sphere of influence” where local Communist parties could be used “as direct instruments of Soviet policy.”¹

Nevertheless, British officials did not exclude the possibility of continuing co-operation with Britain’s former wartime ally. One possibility for continued co-operation was within the Allied Control Commissions (ACC) to be established in the former German satellite countries such as Hungary.

The tri-partite Allied Control Commission was set up in accordance with the Hungarian Armistice terms² (signed on 20 January 1945) and was stationed in Hungary between January 1945 and September 1947. Its primary purpose was to supervise the enforcement of the armistice terms with Hungary until the conclusion of the peace treaty. As Hungary had been liberated by the Soviet forces, Russian leadership prevailed within the commission, which also implied the restricted scope of activity for the other two members, i.e., the British and the Americans.

In early 1945 the British were committed to sending their political and military representatives to Hungary, which had never been a British sphere of interest. However, the key geographical position that Hungary occupied in the context of the emerging bipolar division of Europe compelled the British to commit resources and attention to Hungary’s future. This paper examines the changing British attitude towards Hungary in the early stages of the Cold War through the workings of the British component of the Allied Control Commission. Naturally, the Hungarian context will be, from time to time, expanded to include great power relations in the European context. An understanding of the changes in British attitude towards Central Europe, and Hungary in particular, between

1945–47 is very relevant to pressing present day issues such as the enlargement of the European Union and Britain's relations with Central Europe.

Due to the partial inaccessibility of primary sources, the workings of the ACC in Hungary have not been uncovered completely. This paper is still a working document and forms part of a larger theme to be completed in the near future, which is mainly based on British archival material and discusses British foreign policy on Central Europe.

In late February 1945 the seventy-eight strong British Mission arrived in Hungary after having obtained permission from the Russians. According to the political directive³ issued to the members of the mission, their main task was to "ensure, in the closest collaboration with your Soviet and United States colleagues, that the terms of the armistice with Hungary are strictly carried out." It acknowledged the Soviet government's principal role in enforcing the armistice because Hungary was a Soviet theatre of war. However, any Soviet attempt to encroach on Hungarian sovereignty or independence, warned the directive, should be resisted by the British. Although the British accepted the effective Soviet domination in enforcing the armistice terms, there was "no question of abdicating our claim to have an equal share at the peace settlement and in the post-war period in all questions affecting Hungary."

Hostilities had not yet ceased in the country and there was no representative government either. Therefore the members of the mission could not be instructed as to which political party or personality they should support. "Much will clearly depend," continued the document, "upon the Soviet attitude towards the present Government and regime."

The first few meetings with the members of the Hungarian Government and the Russian representatives of the ACC convinced the British political representative that as long as the Hungarians obediently fulfilled Russian "wishes," "the Russian policy will be one of liberality towards them."⁴ One month had already passed, but no meeting of the ACC occurred, and any initiative on the Anglo-Americans' part was obstructed by the Russians, thus causing considerable frustration. Therefore the British were not surprised when it was deliberately and secretly leaked from Hungarian government circles that Hungarian officials had been warned indirectly not to have close relations with the British and the Americans.⁵ The first major conflict arose in connection with land reform, which was introduced by an executive decree without the consent of the Hungarian Provisional National Assembly. It was obvious that the reform was forced through by the Russians. The British argued that Marshal Voroshilov, the Russian Chairman of the ACC, was acting outside his remit as Chairman of the ACC because land reform was an internal affair for the Hungarian government.⁶ Further, both the British and the Americans should have been consulted in advance.⁷ The number of reports giving gloomy account as to the lack of foodstocks and projecting unusually low production that year increased. Be-

cause it was the Hungarian government's responsibility to feed the occupying Red Army, the Russian chairman often referred to Article 11 of the armistice and stated in no uncertain terms that the control of food supply and related matters no longer constituted an internal affair. The Foreign Office (FO) thought that the severe shortage of foodstuffs would provoke political disturbance in the country, which was a "breeding ground for Communism."⁸ They also suspected that the Hungarian situation would help intensify the impending famine in Europe.

Subsequent to the cessation of hostilities in Europe, the need arose to reorganize the control commissions in the ex-satellite countries. This second period was to last until the conclusion of the peace treaties. At the time of the Potsdam Conference there was a frequent exchange of letters concerning the matter. In his minute to Winston Churchill, Anthony Eden, the British Foreign Secretary, wrote the following: "We want nothing specific about Hungary at the present Conference, apart from the improvement of the status of our Control Commissions and the implementation of the Yalta Declaration on liberated areas."⁹ In other minutes exchanged between senior FO officials two underlying issues were exhaustively discussed. One was the conclusion of peace treaties with the defeated countries and the replacement of "the present puppet governments".¹⁰ By holding free and unrigged elections, the will of the majority of the people would inaugurate a democratic government and thereby the principles undertaken in the Yalta Declaration were to be fulfilled.

The Russians also called for the reorganization of the control commissions. Their proposal differed in the case of Hungary, where directives were to be issued after they had been agreed to by the British and the Americans. In Hungary the chairman of the commission had the right to decide on questions in connection with the entrance and exit of the members from the country. In other countries where control commissions operated, directives were to be issued after preliminary discussion with the British and the American representatives. After some deliberation, the British decided that the Hungarian position appeared to be most satisfactory. Eventually, the members of the wartime alliance agreed to the revision of the procedures of the Allied Control Commission in Finland, Bulgaria, Romania and Hungary and accepted the Soviet proposal for Hungary as a basis.¹¹

British diplomacy in Eastern Europe was usually more handicapped by a lack of material means and of a physical presence with which to achieve its objectives than by an absence of formal rights. This was particularly apparent in the case of the former German satellites, Bulgaria, Romania and Hungary, from whose Soviet-sponsored régimes the British Government continued to withhold diplomatic recognition as it was unable to consider them "as representative or democratic within the meaning of the Potsdam decisions." Nevertheless, Great Britain, like the United States, maintained political representatives in Sofia, Bu-

charest and Budapest, in each of which capitals was established an Allied Control Commission. The latter, whose primary purpose was to supervise the enforcement of the armistice terms, provided the two Western powers with additional opportunities for influencing internal developments, and Bevin thought it in Britain's interest to ensure that their functions were not restricted and that if possible their competence should be extended to cover such matters as public security, control of demonstrations and censorship. At the same time, he required all three posts to be kept informed of actions taken by the others.¹² Their reports left him under the impression that in Bulgaria, as also in Hungary, the Russians were set upon manipulating elections in order to ensure the continuation of a "government completely subservient to Moscow" and "to show the world that its government is representative."¹³ The Bulgarian elections in August 1945 were massively rigged by the Russians; a joint list was introduced in order to ensure Communist victory. Therefore the postponement of the Hungarian elections by two months was a much welcomed development. When in October municipal elections in Hungary resulted in a striking victory for the moderate Smallholders, the Foreign Office saw this as an encouraging sign with regard to the results of the general elections to be held in November 1945. This victory at the same time was found surprising because an obviously peasant dominated party could capture the majority of votes in Budapest, where the largest number of industrial workers and middle class population was concentrated. In a wider context, this was the first "encouraging sign" that the Russian Bear might not necessarily dig its claws into all countries it liberated, and thus new democracies could spring in the region. Gascoigne, the British political representative in Hungary, was less optimistic. Hungarian government officials unofficially informed him that the Russians were demanding that all parties should join in presenting a common electoral list. Gascoigne predicted that if the Smallholders refused, the Russians would "tighten the screw economically," that they might "possibly arrange for further widespread outbreaks of unrest," and that the Communist might try to stage an armed *coup*. He therefore cautioned Bevin against accepting an unofficial Hungarian representative in London as "it might be unwise to count our democratic chickens before they are hatched." In the event, however, elections held on 4 November appeared to conform with democratic principles, and the Smallholders won 57% of the votes polled.¹⁴

The Foreign Office welcomed this satisfactory development which they had not expected two or three months before. Hungary became the second country under occupation after Finland to hold fair elections.¹⁵ Now an unofficial Hungarian representative as Minister Delegate could be received in London. However, the distribution of government portfolios was a great surprise as it did not reflect the result of the elections. According to Sir Orme Sargent, Deputy Under-Secretary at the Foreign Office, the indirect Russian pressure nullified to a

large extent the result of the elections. The Communists were allotted the Ministry of the Interior with full control of the police and the Ministry of Agriculture.

Gascoigne was convinced that the Soviet authorities were seeking to use the Communist Party to impose their political will upon Hungary. They seemed equally determined to take advantage of their military occupation of the country in order to endure their economic pre-eminence there as elsewhere in Eastern Europe. A Soviet–Hungarian agreement of August 1945 had provided for Russian participation in almost every sphere of the Hungarian economy, and Stuart of the Foreign Office’s Southern Department was in little doubt that this would be “converted into domination.” Bevin was at first reluctant to accept Gascoigne’s similarly gloomy assessment of the implications of the agreement. He believed that Britain’s “strongest card to play with the Hungarians [was] the prospect of trade with the west,” and he wanted “to take no steps to make unnecessary difficulties with Russia.” But the Russians were unwilling to discuss the matter within the ACC, and the British eventually yielded to Soviet threats and ratified the agreement.¹⁶ By December it was only too apparent that in Hungary the meetings of the ACC did not match the requirements of the statutes agreed at Potsdam, and that, as Gascoigne noted, the Russians were formulating policy and carrying it out without any prior reference to the representatives of Britain and the United States.¹⁷

The Board of Trade’s interest in establishing relations with Hungary may have been due to the encouraging signs in Hungarian political life on the one hand, and the need to penetrate the East European market, which entailed mild political penetration, on the other hand. British views concerning possible trade with Hungary varied. Letters sent from the Board of Trade to the treasury emphasised the importance of establishing economic ties with Hungary mainly for two reasons. First, there were enormous stocks of British wool available for which they could not find a market. Second, this small amount of assistance would have helped Hungary to “keep a window open to the West”.¹⁸ The Foreign Office did not deny the political advantages in granting credit for purchase of wool. However, as a result of a tentative credit to Hungary, they expected similar requests from Yugoslavia, Greece and other countries, which “might be difficult to refuse.”¹⁹ Another view did not rule out the possibility of helping Hungary in a “modest way” through the ACC, but noted that any concrete proposal had so far met with frustration in every case. Hungary was not considered “as a suitable object for export drive.” Its public credit worthiness rated at zero and could not offer anything that the British might want in exchange for their products.

By the beginning of 1946 it was more than apparent to the Foreign Office that its ability to influence events in those areas of Central and South-Eastern Europe that were under Soviet occupation was strictly limited. This was just as

clear in the economic as it was in the political sphere. A paper of 12 March 1946, the final draft of which was prepared by the Economic Relations Department, drew attention to the way in which the Russians were seeking to exploit and remould the economies of the region. It was believed that the primary motive for this policy was the rapid reconstruction of the Soviet Union. They also thought that the Soviet Government might have a political goal in mind in so far as the integration of the economies of these smaller states with its own would reinforce its domination and make it more difficult for them to function separately from the Russian system. But harmful though Soviet policies might be to British economic interests, Britain's prewar investments in, and trade with, these countries were relatively small. There was in any case little that Britain could do to prevent the Russians from establishing an economic stranglehold over such countries as Bulgaria, Romania and Hungary, and at this stage it seemed impractical to think of trying to enlist the financial support of the United States. There was "no striking panacea" which could be applied to Eastern Europe. The Russians were too near and the memory of their overwhelming physical strength too recent. Governments of the area could not be expected to take any step that might displease Moscow, and this made it essential that any British counteraction be unobtrusive and of a rather generalised character. "The best we can do is to hold a door open – or hold enough doors open – for the Eastern Europeans to catch frequent glimpses of a more attractive and prosperous world in the West and be encouraged, when the occasion offers, to pass through."

In late March 1946 a British parliamentary delegation was sent on a study tour to Hungary with the explicit objective of discovering areas of co-operation between the two countries.²⁰ During the ten day visit their assessment of the political situation was as follows: there was a sense of purpose and political awareness shown by almost the entire population. This was undoubtedly due to the new democratic opportunities provided by the recent Electoral Law [...]. They were convinced that there was "now established in Hungary the seeds of a new democracy which, given encouragement and understanding to enable it to surmount present difficulties and evident 'growing pains' may finally establish itself along Western parliamentary lines." They believed that Britain can best show her sympathy by contributing in such tangible ways as are possible towards a just and lasting peace, not only in Hungary but in the Danubian Basin.

Based on a careful study of the prevailing situation in March 1946 the British Joint Intelligence Sub-Committee issued a revised report on *Russia's Strategic Interests and Intentions*.²¹ It concluded that the short-term aim of Russia was to avoid war against the western bloc. Meanwhile, if any dangerous attempts were made to undermine Russia's position in the countries that had been tacitly recognized as part of its sphere of influence, it would use any means to retaliate. In areas such as the Mediterranean, Turkey and Persia, where it was likely to

face a strong combined Anglo–American resistance, it would extend its “protective belt.” It would extend its political influence wherever it was possible, e.g., by promoting Communist parties in the West. Although Russia would try to avoid war in the near future, it was alarming that demobilisation was slow, and Russian forces and industry still operated on a wartime footing. “In brief,” the Joint Intelligence Sub-Committee reported, “although the intention may be defensive, the tactics will be offensive, and the danger always exists that Russian leaders may misjudge how far they can go without provoking war with America and ourselves.”²²

By early 1947 the so-called salami tactic by the Communists was in full swing. It entailed the gradual elimination of their political opponents. In mid-1947 the first democratically elected Prime Minister of Hungary, Ferenc Nagy, was forced not to return to Hungary after his holiday in Switzerland. The political police had been using methods similar to those employed in Russia during the purges in the 1930s. In this atmosphere of terror Denis Healey visited Hungary to attend the annual congress of the Social Democratic Party. He went as Labour representative with a view to helping the party to stay alive. He found that the “icy winter which gripped the country symbolised its politics.”²³ At a first glance the conference had a slight air of a Nazi rally given by the presence of attendants dressed sloppily in white shirts, red armbands and ties, and military hats. Otherwise it appeared orderly and democratic – more like an English conference than a French or Italian one.

He quickly perceived what the battle behind the scenes was:²⁴ questions of power and representation. On this issues the so-called Right wing failed to hold the extreme Left in check.

As regards relations with the Communist Party, he felt a considerable friction. (1) The workers disliked the agreement by which leading factory positions are shared equally irrespective of the strength of the two parties. [...] (2) Fusion was not even considered. Contrary to the general view of the British Legation, he thought that Russian influence did not depend mainly on the Control Commission and the Occupation troops, of whom there were only about 20,000 tucked away in a corner of Hungary. Consequently, it would not greatly diminish after the ratification of the peace treaty. Many Hungarians thought that the Russians might ratify and fulfil the conditions within six weeks of signing. According to Healey, Russian influence depended mainly on the Communist Party, the political and military policy, economic power, petty persecution and physical terror.

He concluded that the Social Democratic Party was a genuine and sincere party of old socialists. It was moreover the only tolerable alternative to Communism in Hungary. The present tension between socialists and communists would grow. When the crucial decision was to be made, the socialist leaders would be influenced by their estimate of the help which the Western parties

would give them morally as a party and economically as a government. Unless Hungary received considerable credits from the West, a Social Democratic domestic policy would become impossible.

Conclusions

In 1945 it was not obvious that the road to Communism was already being systematically built by the Russians and their Hungarian "stooges." The immediate pressure was mitigated by the fact that the Hungarian communists were eager to outdo Russian requests. They were a meticulous lot who, with a perfectly tailored demagoguery and timing, could win the support of large multitudes of people.

There was slight improvement as to the sharing of responsibility by the Russians for the work the control commission. Questions of policy remained in Russian hands. Both the British and the Americans hoped to conclude peace treaties fairly soon and therefore they lost interest in improving the status of their missions.

Documentary evidence seems to suggest that by early 1946 mutual hostility and mistrust prevailed in Anglo-Soviet relations. The British did not underestimate the possible threat that the Soviet Union posed. However, they were confident in believing that if they developed a firm political line, buttressed by American aid, an imminent war could be avoided and, at the cost of a lack of commitment to Eastern Europe, their traditional spheres of interest could be kept. With regard to Eastern and Central Europe, the British undertook the implementation of the Yalta Declaration, which in Hungary's case was fulfilled. The British political representative feared that Hungary would be Sovietised due to the extent of direct Russian intervention into internal Hungarian affairs. In the Foreign Office they doubted the Russian aspirations to Sovietise Hungary and found the gloomy reports from Budapest exaggerated and still emphasised the idea of collaboration with the Russians. They wanted to conclude peace treaties quickly, recognized the Soviet need to build up buffer states, and thus accepted that Hungary, together with the countries of the region, belonged to the Russian sphere of interest. This was the price the British had to pay for keeping their traditional spheres of interest and maintaining the leadership within the Italian commission. Also, the British attitude was that as long as Germany's position was not clarified everything else could wait.

Official FO thinking about the Soviet Union shifted substantially in 1946 towards the views long held by the Chiefs of Staff. The result was a new FO Russia Committee to monitor Soviet conduct and publicity. One of the shapers of this policy was the late Sir Frank Roberts, then Chargé d'Affairs at the Moscow Embassy. He stated that Soviet security had become hard to distinguish

from Soviet imperialism, and it was questionable whether there was a limit to Soviet expansionism. However, it was not until the creation of the Cominform in October 1947 that Bevin and the cabinet echoed the view of the Russia Committee. The aim of British policy should now be to "reinforce the physical barriers which still guard our Western civilisation of which we are the protagonists. This in my view can only be done by creating some form of union in Western Europe, whether of a formal or informal character, backed by America and the Dominions."²⁵

Reports from the British Legation in Budapest became gloomier by the day regarding the internal political situation. S.D. Stewart, a senior member of the British Mission, described it as follows. "I do not know whether there can be such a thing as a premeditated and planned chaos. There are some who say that here we have the proof that there can be. But it is difficult to imagine even the most prolonged premeditation and the most detailed planning proving so utterly successful."

Notes

1. M.E. Pelly, H.J. Yasamee, et al., eds, *Documents on British Policy Overseas*, Series I, Volume VI, Eastern Europe August 1945–April 1946 (London, 1991), 46–49.
2. *United Nations Treaty Series*, no. 471, 405–419.
3. PRO FO 371/48478.
4. PRO FO 371/48479.
5. PRO FO 371/48467.
6. The Land Reform was, no doubt, a corner-stone of the post-war period despite some of its weaknesses. It must be noted that there were self-appointed land committees, which started distributing land to the peasants. Therefore, with hindsight, it appears very likely that it would have been carried out without any outside pressure. On the other hand, both the Hungarian Communists, who had returned from their Moscow exile with the Soviet troops and the Russian representatives clearly saw the importance of land reform and the political advantages stemming from such measure. Thus they duly acted on it so that it could later be associated with the Communists in people's minds.
7. Cf. Article 18 of the Armistice.
8. A very interesting remark; the opposite view was held by the Hungarians.
9. R. Butler and M.E. Pelly eds, *Documents on British Policy Overseas*, Series I, Volume I, *The Conference at Potsdam* (London, 1984), 436.
10. *Ibid.* 762.
11. *Ibid.* 699–701.
12. M.E. Pelly, H.J. Yasamee, et al., eds, *Op. cit.*, 40–42.
13. PRO FO 371/48465.
14. M.E. Pelly, H.J. Yasamee, et al., eds, *Op. cit.*, 157–161, 199–201.
15. PRO FO 371/48477.

16. M.E. Pelly, H.J. Yasamee, et al., eds, *Op. cit.*, 170–177.
17. M.E. Pelly, H.J. Yasamee, et al., eds, *Op. cit.*, 220–225.
18. PRO FO 371/ 48520.
19. *Ibid.*
20. PRO FO 371/59050. The visit took place between 23 April and 5 May 1946. Members of the mission: Richard Adams, Stanley Evans, John Haire, David Jones, J.A. Lanford-Holt, Hugh Linstead, G. Wadsworth, F.T. Willey.
21. M. E. Pelly, H.J. Yasamee et al., eds, *Op. cit.*, pp. 297–301.
22. *Ibid.*
23. Denis Healy, *The Time of My Life* (London, 1990), 85.
24. PRO FO 371/67191. His report dated on 10 February 1947.
25. PRO CAB 129/23.

TOWARD THE MIDDLE CLASS – WITH DETOURS? (SOCIAL CHANGES IN HUNGARY 1945–1995)

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The history of Hungary in the last 150 years, and especially in the twentieth century, was rather stormy and fraught with seminal turning points. Looking at only the post-war period, we can identify at least four major landmarks, which fundamentally influenced social changes in Hungary: the end of World War II, the communist take-over in 1948–49, the 1956 revolution, and the change of regime between 1988 and 1990 that restored the bourgeois democratic state organization. The emergence of bourgeois society after the war was soon interrupted for several decades by the communist seizure of power. The expansion of a Stalinist social structure, however, was itself torpedoed by the 1956 revolution. Midway through the era of the Kádár regime, a precarious process of bourgeois development started, which then slowed and finally, prompted by the shift in political power, came to be rekindled at the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s. In this brief discussion I want to concentrate on exploring and analyzing the sociohistorical processes, the changes in the system of values and social psychology that reflected the social changes in Hungary during the last fifty years.

Hungary suffered severe losses in military, civilian and material resources during World War II. As a result of the war some 800,000 to 900,000 people were killed and forty percent of the national wealth of 1938 was destroyed. The extensive migration of some 450,000 to 550,000 people between 1945 and 1948 also greatly influenced the Hungarian population. The relocation of German minorities forced 170,000 to 180,000 thousand people to leave the country. At the same time, 60,000 to 80,000 people, who had fled from the atrocities of the war or were displaced by the constantly shifting boundaries, came to Hungary from the neighboring countries. Due to the Slovak–Hungarian exchange of citizens, 90,000 Slovak citizens of Hungarian origin entered the country and 60,000 thousand Slovaks left Hungary.

During the decades after the war the only instance of mass migration occurred as a result of the 1956 revolution. Not counting those who soon returned, 180,000 people left Hungary. Including the refugees of the 1956 revolution, a

total of 420,000 to 430,000 thousand people emigrated, legally or illegally, between 1945 and 1989.¹

The population of Hungary was 9.2 million in 1949, 9.96 million in 1960, 10.71 million in 1980, and 10.37 million according to the 1990 census. Natural increase started a slow decline from its maximum of 11–12 thousandth in 1953–1954, stabilized at 2–4 thousandth by the early seventies, then after the temporary baby boom of the seventies it slipped further down. Due to the decline of births and the increase of deaths, during the early 1980s the natural increase of the Hungarian population first stopped then reverted into a natural decrease, a process that still continues during the 1990s. The childbirth rate stabilized at the European average of 11–12 thousandths in 1989–1990, while the death rate at 13–15 thousands is on a steady rise. The mortality of middle-aged men has especially increased during the last two decades.

The ratio of the sexes has shown some fluctuation between 1949 and 1990 but there have always been more women than men. For every 1,000 men there were 1,081 women in 1949, 1,073 in 1960, 1,064 in 1980, and 1,081 in 1990. The age structure, however, has changed more dramatically. Those younger than nineteen years of age made up 31.7% of the population in 1949. This ration had fallen to 27.2% by 1990. Those aged twenty to fifty-nine years constituted 55.7% of the population in 1949, but only 51.3% by 1990. Those who were sixty years old, or older, formed only 12.6% of the whole population in 1949 but had increased to 21.5% by 1990.

The ratio of the economically active population gradually increased during the 1950s and 1960s by an average of 3% each decade. At the middle of the 1970s, however, this trend took a U-turn, and ever since then the percentage of economically active adults has been on a gradual decline. The main reason for this decline was the decrease of adults, who were able to work. The ratio of economically active adults within the whole Hungarian population fell by 4% and 7% during the 1980s and 1990s respectively. The latter figure can indisputably be attributed to the consequences of an emerging market economy. The number of economically active adults was 4.1 million in 1949, 5.1 million in 1970, 4.5 million in 1980, and 3.7 million in 1994. The employment of women has considerably increased in Hungary over the last fifty years. Women constituted 29% of the economically active population in 1949. This proportion had risen to 44% by 1975 and 46% by 1990. The ratio of dependents and economically inactive to the economically active indicates a noticeable change in social circumstances. Between 1949 and 1970 the ratio of the economically inactive population was gradually declining; then from the 1970s it began rising. In 1975 there were 107 inactive people for every 100 who were economically active, 117 in 1985, 129 in 1990, and not less than 174 in 1994. This dramatic increase was at least in part due to a never-before-seen surge in unemployment. The dynamic transformation of the social structure is indicated by the rise in the per-

centage of highly trained professionals and executives from 2% to 11%, and by the improvement in the ratio of plain white-collar workers from 5% to 22% between 1945 to 1990. During the same period the ratio of semi-skilled and skilled blue-collar workers increased from 32% to 50%. At the same time, the percentage of independent farmers plummeted from 32% to 1%, and the ratio of self-employed tradesmen and retailers shrivelled from 8% to 4%.

Directly after the war Hungary became a satellite state within the Soviet sphere. Consequently it could not escape the radical shift toward single-party dictatorship and the total subjugation of social, economic and political changes, which inflicted forced social mobility and considerably changed the status and environment of several social groups.

In the view of the relevant data and considering the political and ideological conditions of the era, we may label the social changes in Hungary for the decades after 1948 as “precarious modernization.” On the one hand living standards, the material and technological conditions of life, have continuously improved in Hungary; on the other hand modernization in Hungary has meant almost exclusively the development of heavy industry. Due to the autocratic and dictatorial political climate the social and economic flexibility of Hungarian society considerably worsened. Although the transformation of the social structure in many respects was similar to that of the Western European states during the era, there were striking differences as well. The existing socialist system was able to maintain a material increase in the 1960s and 1970s, but beginning in the early 1980s failed to deliver even that. All the same, general living standards were impossible to raise. Moreover, by its very nature, primarily through its refusal to tolerate community initiatives outside the sphere of the family, the system to a considerable extent contributed to the weakening of social interaction, to the abolition of “slight solidarity,” which is indispensable for the proper operation of a “normal” society. The serious problems in human relationships are clearly indicated by the fact that certain deviancies, such as suicide and alcoholism, showed most unfavorable tendencies in Hungary from the late 1950s and early 1960s. The modernization after 1948 was also precarious because for a long time it subdued genuine cultural trends that could have promoted progressive values; because it failed to bring about the society’s ability to handle and resolve conflicts; and also because it impeded the evolution of behavioral patterns in civil society.

Key data support, such as the radical transformation of the employment structure and the soaring level of education, indicate that a process of modernization took place. For instance, the ratio of the population engaged in agriculture decreased from 53.8% in 1949 to 15.4% in 1990. Yet, a 1988 survey showed that nearly 45% of the adult population were in one way or another involved in small-scale agricultural production. This unusually high ratio is the result of the social, political and economic conditions of a peculiar twofold

structure and reveals that the quality of the modernization process was markedly different from that of Western Europe.

If we examine education, we can see that from the end of the 1940s the restructuring of the educational system was accompanied by a steep rise in quantity. By reducing the number of illiterates and increasing the ratio of skilled labor and university graduates, education contributed to the lessening of the existing cultural inequalities in Hungary. This relative equalization is demonstrated by the fact that in 1949 roughly 80% of those over fifteen had not finished elementary school, while in 1994 some 80% of the population over fifteen had completed at least the eight-year elementary education. In 1949 only 5.5% of the population finished secondary school, but by 1960 their ratio was 16.5%, and in 1990 it stood at 23.6%. The post-war decades brought dynamic quantitative changes in Hungarian higher education as well. In comparison to 1938 the number of students in full-time higher education more than quadrupled by the end of the 1980s. Between 1950 and 1990, approximately 400,000 students had attended and graduated from full-time university programs, and an additional 300,000 got their university degrees through part-time and correspondence courses. Consequently the number of university graduates in 1985 was six times the 1949 level; and the number of university teachers and professors was nine times that of 1938. However, despite the undoubtedly favorable statistical trends, Hungary still trailed behind Western European countries in the number of university students at the end of the 1980s.

Another symptom of precarious social modernization was the relatively low level of the service industry and the noticeable slackening of social morals in the sixties and seventies.

A distinguishing feature of the Hungarian social structure was also the fact that parallel with the "first economy" of state ownership, there existed a loosely defined "second economy" of private enterprises and market forces. It all resulted in a "Janus-faced society."²

Under political pressure the transformation of the social structure in Hungary was spectacularly accelerating between 1950 and 1975. Mobility in Hungarian society gradually became more open and intensive after 1945. However, the openness was seriously curtailed by the late 1970s and early 1980s. Afterwards the chances of changing one's social status gradually dwindled away. Apparently the ratio of the urban population grew more slowly than the number of job opportunities in the cities, while industrialization did not bring about the development of infrastructure and the extension of urbanization.

Social transformation in Hungary in the 1950s and 1960s shows situational similarities with colonization, when the representatives of foreign powers and foreign values forced their authority on a conquered nation by any means avail-

able. The indigenous people did not have the slightest opportunity to determine whether or not they wanted to accept or refuse the foreign impositions.

The per capita national income in Hungary was \$120 in 1938, or 60% of the European average. World War II considerably reduced the national income, and the 1938 level was only achieved again in 1949. The 1950s brought some notable fluctuations, but by and large as compared to 1949 national income was on the rise. The increase prevailed until the early 1970s. On the other hand, despite forced economic development, the gap between Hungary and the economically developed countries was further widening during the post-war decades. Moreover, Hungary's inept reaction to the 1973 oil crisis started yet another period of relative decline. By then it was obvious that the country was unable to maintain the living standards and economic improvements, which were financed with foreign loans. The policy of restraint in the 1980s failed to bring any noticeable success; then the collapse of the eastern markets was a further blow to the Hungarian economy. Consequently the GDP was down by 20% as compared to the end of the 1980s.

Although personal consumption had been almost entirely subordinate to the goals of industrial development before 1956, the consistent increase of living standards became a pivotal aspect of the Kádár regime. As a result the following two decades between 1957 and 1978 brought a significant and steady improvement of living standards. Real wages more than doubled during the period. Personal consumption per capita increased by 150%, more than ten times as many durables were purchased, and three and a half times as much household energy was consumed. The tide turned at the end of the 1970s. From 1979 the directors of economic policy tried decisively to limit wages in order to restore the balance in the economy. The widest strata of the Hungarian population were directly affected, as the reduction of real wages was all too noticeable. In comparison to what came afterwards at the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s, the devaluation of real wages was a moderate 0.6–0.8% a year between 1979 and 1987. Individuals could make up for the lost income by moonlighting and working overtime. Between 1988 and 1995, however, real wages dropped by 3.0–3.3% every year. *Real wages in 1995 were only 73% of the 1978 level.* Declining living standards became a general phenomenon, and only those could maintain their previous lifestyles, who were able to complement their income with extra work or dip into previously amassed capital.

Although the inequalities of income generally decreased between 1948 and 1970, the equalities demanded by the prevailing ideology were never realized. Moreover, due to the "second economy" the income gap between the different social and economic groups was again gradually widening by the end of the 1970s. Material growth during the socialist era demanded strenuous efforts from the population. Although the average time spent at work was decreasing for both men and women between the 1960s and 1980s, the amount of time devoted

to small-scale agricultural production and generally to the "second economy" dynamically increased, especially among the male population. Considerable time was needed to manage household and ancillary farms. Men who were employed full-time spent on average one and a half to two hours, and pensioners spent four and a half hours working on the household farm. Employed women spent a daily two to two and a half hours on the far. More time consuming activities were usually scheduled for the weekend. With so many hours spent working, obviously most people had little time left for cultural activities and entertainment.

Another factor that necessitated household and ancillary farms was the persistence of shortages. In the early 1970s commercial chains were so underdeveloped and their standard of service so inept that the rural households had to produce their own food. Selling the small surplus also provided them with extra income, which was an important part of their subsistence and contributed to the material growth of the family. Short of capital and bound by economic regulations, people could invest nothing but their individual work. As the surplus income was almost impossible, or at least very difficult, to reinvest in production, the profit from household and ancillary farming was usually devoted to personal consumption. If we consider the ratio of household durables within the entire national wealth – between 1960 and 1974 it nearly tripled from 73.3 to 180 billion *forints* – the material growth resulting from the consolidation of the Kádár regime is obvious. The size and structure of households also changed considerably. The size of the average Hungarian family was gradually getting smaller; and there were fewer children per family. Both in rural and urban areas there were considerably fewer extended families living in the same household. In the villages the multigeneration, cohabitant family model was replaced by a new trend: young couples were starting a family and life in their own household. It subsequently became accepted that married couples moved into their own homes and lived independently from their parents.

Household work had a significant economic role in Hungary after 1945. From the end of the 1960s and the beginning of the 1970s Hungarian households showed an increasing tendency to alleviate the burdens of housework through modernization of homes and consumer services. Between the 1950s and 1970s the costs of maintenance and general expenses more than doubled in household consumption. Money spent on personal travel increased tenfold between 1955 and 1975. There were also important structural changes in the purchase of durable goods. Until the late 1950s the typical durables one could buy were furniture, bicycles, stoves and traditional fireplaces, motorcycles and radios. Starting with the 1960s electric household appliances, washing machines, spin-driers, refrigerators and television sets became leading consumer goods, while from the early 1970s the motorcar became one of the most desirable purchases. The nature of household expenditure heavily depended on location as

well. In the 1960s and 1970s the village population spent much less on services and public transportation than city dwellers; on the other hand, they spent considerably more on travel.³ Further differences by region were manifest in the use of household utilities. Rural areas were usually less saturated with household amenities than city homes. This was true probably because people in the villages were more concerned with maintaining their small farms and acquiring the necessary agricultural tools than with buying general household durables. In urban households exactly the opposite was true.

The most radical change of lifestyle in post-war Hungary occurred during the 1960s and 1970s.⁴ Large numbers of people moved from villages to cities during the 1960s and 1970s, thereby changing not only their homes but their lifestyles as well. Their living conditions also changed dramatically. They usually left their old belongings at home and decorated their homes according to the norms of their new environment. The radical change of everyday utensils finally swept through the villages during the 1970s. The dichotomy of innovation and traditional values is evident in the fact that in most new village houses, which were built in the 1970s, the traditional “clean room” – decorated and almost never used – was preserved in a somewhat transformed version.

As opposed to the earlier era of socialism, household and fancy articles, some of which represented social standing, both became attainable in the 1970s. Despite the difficulties of purchasing the “right” article and the “poor” choice, a significant proportion of Hungarian society might have thought that they could form their private spheres as freely as they wanted, accumulate wealth, consume food and drink, buy all sorts of goods and property beyond their physical needs.

In the decoration of urban homes during the 1950s and 1960s the traditional concept that the home should reveal its owners’ social status had been somewhat neglected. In interior design most people wanted to follow the patterns of their corresponding social group. The central goal of most Hungarian families in the 1970s was to have a home of their own; and following the example of the reference group, they crammed their personal space with all kinds of objects.

Under state socialism people, following emotional impulses, organized their personal space in a hedonistic fashion and identified themselves with the citizens of twentieth-century consumer society. They did not follow the puritanical, practical and sensible model of the bourgeois home but chose instead the object-driven ideal of consumer society.⁵

The transformation of habitation in Hungary during this period showed the revision of cultural heritage and customs as well. The new lifestyle was centered around private spheres and personal space, which revealed a yearning toward an identification with Western European consumer societies. Hungarian homes, however, had on average very few rooms. Consequently it was difficult

to separate different activities within the house and preserve personal space for the individual; and this would have been the epitome of modern bourgeois habitation. Significant changes in this respect only happened after the end of the 1980s.

By confronting the country's role in and contribution to World War II, Hungarian social consciousness had a brief opportunity for democratic change immediately after 1945. However, the political shift of 1948–49 put on hold for several decades the development of modern national identity and left open such important questions as the "identity of small nations," – repeatedly postulated by the 1947 Paris peace treaty – or the assimilation of the Jews. For decades after 1948 the value system of Hungarian society underwent major changes. The values most directly stemming from Marxist ideology were forced on society most intensively between 1948 and 1956. Collectivism was carried to the extreme, along with the suppression of national feelings and an overt disdain for human rights. The forced "modernization" of the 1940s and 1950s in Hungary resulted in the strengthening of individuation, atomization and secularization, which created a new trend of social integration. Behavioral patterns of the pre-war era were less and less important, while the new behavioral norms of the communist power elite promoted disintegration.

The era after 1956 can be divided into two distinct periods. The first period lasted until the mid-1970s was characterized by the ideological neutralization of Hungarian society. The second period lasted from the late 1970s until the end of the 1980s and brought about a gradual deviation from Marxist ideology and its values. In the 1950s the authorities demanded of society an unconditional acceptance of, support for, and identification with the goals set by the political leadership. From the 1960s on the basic requirement increasingly became a silent acceptance and respect for the ideological and historical taboos of the existing political system. The change of attitude was appropriately, if infamously, summed up by János Kádár in 1962, "Whoever is not against us, is with us."

The new system of values – an apolitical attitude that overestimated the tranquillity of private life and formally aligned with the "expectations of socialist power" – did not change much between the mid-1960s and late 1970s. A gradual departure from these values started in the early 1980s and accelerated at the end of the decade. An idiosyncrasy of the Hungarian value system in the 1960s and 1970s was that several individual values remained highly stable, and this relative stability prevailed during the 1980s as well. Under the circumstances the high level of individuation in Hungarian society at the beginning of the 1980s was remarkable. The principal reason is that parallel with the slackening ideological pressure, the values and behavioral patterns connected to material wealth came to the fore. During the 1960s and 1970s, despite the apparent problems, family played an important role in everyday life.

Although the power structure did not change significantly after 1956, the method of the exercising power gradually became more sophisticated. As opposed to the practices of the Rákosi regime, “politics” no longer intended to convert society by all available means but rather tried to neutralize it. According to the more pragmatic approach of the Kádár era, the reconsideration of the past became the most important ideological question.

The most poignant means of consolidation in order to exert an apolitical effect is dehistoricization. The new political course did not want a new look at the past. [...] The authorities can only prevent society from owning a historically articulated political consciousness by eliminating the picture of the past itself.⁶

The first step in this direction was the total eradication of the events of 1956. Aware of its defeat and personal connections to the revolution, Hungarian society became a partner in this effort. Due to this suppression, however, “the Revolution of 1956 was not remembered by Hungarians as the eternal past should be remembered.” As a consequence Hungarian national consciousness lacked a

major political landmark that determined the following twenty-five to thirty years in every possible respect. Whoever casts 1956 out of his memory, cannot form a clear political consciousness about these thirty years. [...] Dehistoricising 1956 makes it impossible to have a real insight into the social situation.⁷

The system inflated technological and economic development and offered to society material growth as a pragmatic vision of the future. They added a glimpse of a “career society” where the big steps ahead were not viable any more – especially after the late 1960s – but small promotions seemed to be ensured. Solidarity was replaced with rivalry. Human relations, mostly family ties and friendships, were invariably inflated and the network of connections and mutual help remained a practical, working system. Outside the scope of connections, however, relationships were plagued by severe distrust. A possible reason for this could be that the political system usually tried to regulate social behavior with coercion, by disciplinary correction and legal penalties. At the same time, they prevented the forming of spontaneous behavioral patterns, self-regulating social norms, and systems of connections that went beyond the private sphere and operated outside the control of the authorities. One cannot disregard the fact that by its very nature the system was interested in creating and maintaining an air of distrust. Because in this situation the members of society were exposed, defenseless, and never knew when those with whom they had no direct connections used the authorities against them.

From the end of the 1960s and the beginning of the 1970s the economic reform and the emergence of the second economy caused serious changes in social consciousness. The reform process was aimed at improving the macro conditions of everyday life, while the extension of small farms resulted in the creation of a new lifestyle, a new strategy for life, and new way of thinking. By the late 1970s the private economy – in part legally and in part covertly – occupied a principal role in the life of Hungarian society. As a direct result the values it promoted, such as diligence, talent, inventiveness, and quick reckoning were considerably strengthened. From the late 1970s the values of private life had a share in shaping national consciousness and expressed a sense of identity independent of the political system. A major move in this direction was the rediscovery of Hungarian minorities living abroad. Nonetheless, the dual nature of the value system, the way of thinking, and the behavioral patterns did not have only positive effects. An obvious problem of social psychology emerged from the findings of a 1988 survey, which stated that 15% of the adult population suffered from moderate or severe neurosis. The decrease of life expectancy indicated the presence of social deviation and that modernization as well as the consolidation after 1956 has taken their toll. A major factor in this sphere must be the extreme tension of everyday life, or in the words of Péter Józán, the “symptom of unfortunate social adjustment.” The crisis in morals and values was more prominent in the period, while alienation became a notorious phenomenon in Hungarian society. In the 1970s and 1980s the majority of the population felt that they could achieve only part of what they had set out to accomplish; and their lives depended not so much on their personal will as on the often inscrutable goals of the political elite. The sense of defenselessness became ever stronger; and people came to feel that they were in part independent citizens and in part subservient subjects. From the late seventies

intellectual values became dominant and instrumental, sometimes exceeding moral values, and almost exclusively determining the trends in the structure of value systems. Even though the communist party had started the strengthening of individuation, atomization and intellectualization, their independence prevailed after the fall of the regime. [...] There is every reason to think that 1990 was not only the grave of an old regime and system but the cradle of a new, healthier society as well.⁸

The last issue that I would like to consider is the assessment of social processes during the period. Is it possible to interpret what happened in Hungarian society between 1945 and 1995 as an essentially steady march with smaller or greater digressions towards the middle class?

I do believe that it is more sensible to say that the process of developing a bourgeois mentality was drastically interrupted at the end of the 1940s in Hungary. From the late 1960s and early 1970s, however, the rapid expansion of the

second economy started the wide-scale restitution of bourgeois values and mentality, which until the mid-1980s remained almost exclusively confined to the economic sphere. The Hungarian people, when working in a state firm, or factory, or taking part in public life, in as much as their limited rights allowed, were thinking and acting as humble subjects. When working in a small-scale agricultural farm, or from the early 1980s, in a small legal enterprize, they were doing their jobs, or managing their own enterprises, with a quasi-bourgeois sense of responsibility and proprietorship. Until the late 1980s and early 1990s the striving citizen could only develop his economic freedom and autonomy, if his limited social and political status remained unaffected. By reforming the political order and restructuring the economic system – a process involving serious sacrifices, such as the steep fall of real wages and living standards, and the soaring unemployment that touched a half a million people – the new order made it possible for the dual society, value system and social consciousness, to finally become one.

Toward the middle class – with detours? This is what I asked in the title of my discussion. The answer is yes. The two and a half decades of socialism after 1948–1949 were a long and almost fatal detour in the twentieth century history of the Hungarian bourgeoisie. Nevertheless an overt advance towards the middle class was resumed again after 1990.

Notes

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