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VOLUME III 1962

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No. 5.

On the basis of experience and the advice of some of our readers, we have decided henceforth to number successive issues serially, beginning with No. 1 of Volume II and without regard to years. The present issue consequently bears the figure 5, although, as our readers will recall, this is in fact the sixth number, the first and only issue of 1960 having been marked Vol. I, No. 1, followed immediately by Vol. II, No. 1.

IF I WERE YOUNG TODAY

by

LÁSZLÓ NÉMETH

I

When I meet with my contemporaries—people of about sixty—I frequently hear them jocularly complain: "We've certainly been an unlucky generation. When we were young, it was better to be old and now that we have grown old, it is better to be young."

This, of course, is only half true. Even in the past, life was only easier for the aged if they had a little power in their hands—a few acres of land, a shop or money—or if they received a pension. On the other hand it is true that life was harder on the young. Hundreds of people in search of a job would loiter about for every vacancy. To this day I consider it the greatest miracle of my life that the chief medical officer picked on me from among four hundred candidates (perhaps because he had read my first works) for one of the seven vacant positions of school medical officer. And what was I, the father of four children, paid in this post? Exactly half my father's pension, who had retired as a simple grammar-school master. And even so, what I received was sufficient to cause me pangs of conscience, for it was three times what a worker earned if he happened to have a job at all.

Nowadays lads of twenty have the same incomes as heads of families working in the same trade, and a young couple will earn as much as five times their retired parents' pension, if the father alone went to work. Young people today have only a vague idea of what I saw in the case of the parents of my civic-school pupils—the real nature of unemployment. The other day I was correcting the proofs of my novel *Bűn* ("Crime"). I wrote this novel in 1936, and it is about a young man who has come to town from a village and tries to obtain work and a living around the villas of Buda. I emerged from my own novel as though I had been relieved of a profound pressure—like being brought up from a caisson. And if I were asked what

I considered the greatest achievement of the quarter century that has elapsed since then, I would say it was that it has freed me of the pressure under which that novel was written and which spelt the death of its second hero—the intellectual who sympathized with the lot of the young labourer.

Nevertheless, I see from the young people around me that the youth are not happy today either. Not only the few thousands who have failed to gain admission to the universities, but perhaps even those who have achieved more than their parents would ever have dreamed of at the time when *Bűn* was written. I was asked this spring by a Soviet paper to take part in a debate on the problem of the young, and at home too there is ever more talk regarding this problem. Now where there is a problem there is also trouble, or at least unrest. This unrest will, I believe, not decrease, but rather grow, if the young are to have what is called an even better time, *i. e.*, if hours of work are to be shortened, wages to be evened up, more flats at less cost to be made available, and superfluous commuting to be reduced. What is the explanation for this contradiction?

I think it is to be sought in the fact that the more independence and leisure time the young people have, the more they are confronted with the new task of having to create their own selves. Formerly millions of young people were moulded by their whole day's work, or, if they did not have any, by privation. The peasant youth in our time took up the yoke of a morning, and pulled away at it, like their beasts. Only a very small part of the working-class youth found a home and people to educate them in the Trade Unions. In point of fact even a writer like myself could only mould his thoughts. His life, and through it his problems, were inexorably shaped by his circumstances. At the age of twenty-seven, when I wrote my first big novel, I set out at seven every morning towards my district at the other end of town, came back from there at about two, attended to my patients in the afternoon, still had my old students that year, and then did my writing into the small hours of the night. Of course I could only do this for one year, then illness called a halt, but my time-table continued to be such that I did not have occasion to acquire dissolute ways, or as they now put it, to become a hooligan.

Now the situation is different, and we hope it will become more different still. Several of my daughters, sons-in-law and relatives are working in research institutes, where, after the completion of a small amount of prescribed work, it is left almost entirely to the interest and industry of the members to develop their knowledge. But as the leisure time between work and sleep—those six, eight or ten hours—grows longer, so everybody's life will become like a little research institute in which the individual, or

later the small family team, will have to decide what to do with the time available and which of the ever more easily accessible opportunities for entertainment and study to seize.

And this is a matter of no mean significance. For work in healthy surroundings will not ruin a person, but leisure time, if he does not make good use of it, may ruin him. And history proves that it does in fact do so. How many examples there are of how the sons of an emergent social group, of those who have fulfilled a great historical mission will, when they have suddenly attained to conditions of security, of themselves decay. This was the undoing of the aristocracy before the French Revolution, when they had become drones and the beneficiaries of court favours; and the same lot befell the shareholder offspring of the pioneers of industry and, in Hungary, the rich peasant progeny of the former tenant serfs. Now, of course, there is no need to fear so sudden a surfeit of leisure time and of financial affluence, nor are bad examples so omnipresent, but latently the danger is there, and the fact that it is now a matter not of the children of a single social group, but of all the young people of a society, may indeed have an aggravating effect.

It is a difficult and thankless business to give advice and furnish a program, especially to the young people of another generation. Having, however, as a father and a friend, witnessed the struggles and endeavours of quite a number of young people and always tried to discern future developments, I find it hard to desist from trying to put myself in their place and imagining (though not wishing for it) how I would, if I were young today, arrange the course of my life.

2

The way I arrange the course of my life depends on what I think about life in general. Now I can no longer think, as the good Christians of old did, that this earth is only a testing ground and that life here is the great entrance examination to a life beyond, which may be hard to pass but entitles the successful candidate to eternal bliss. Nor, on the other hand, do I consider, as so many people do nowadays, that the earth is a garden of pleasures, to which admission must be gained by doing a little work, or if you are cleverer, by jockeying for a position.

I would set out from the Universe. What is this vast machinery that exhibits such marvellous orderliness and yet occasionally leads us to despair through its very senselessness? Balls of fire, racing on predetermined paths, with planet-sized agglomerations of matter attached to them, on one of

which, in the layer of mildew that covers the earth, I too must conduct a gasping struggle against death, on behalf of a life that has lost its balance and hastily thrusts its toppling heritage on to the new generation? Or can it also be seen as something else—a vast field of opportunities, characterized not by what has been accomplished, but by that which is latently inherent in it? Those engaged in the chemical industry will readily understand what I am driving at. Where were the many hundreds of thousands of organic and inorganic substances which chemistry and technology have conjured up in the last century? They were obviously present in the world before this, but lay there unevoked. Life too slumbered in a similar fashion until—perhaps only among the favourable circumstances of our planet, perhaps as on the branch tips of a giant Christmas-tree, at distant points in Space—it lit up and raced through infinite varieties of form, somewhere in the middle of the Tertiary to give birth to human consciousness.

The fact that I am myself the possessor of such a consciousness is, though it is often uncomfortable, nevertheless a wonderful thing. How many billions of tons of matter exist without possessing so much as a single nerve cell, while I have that something through which the seemingly lifeless world can achieve a realization of its own self and seek an ally for the discovery of ever newer possibilities. I did not, of course, volunteer for this work and would sometimes fain reject the invitation, but since I have chanced to become a human being and my instinct in life in any case persuades me, then let me avail myself of that which this invitation offers.

Through the act of living, man passes across the landscapes of his various ages and, as he glances out of the window of his mail-coach or his jet airliner, he obtains a picture of a part—larger or smaller as the case may be—of the world. He travels. The fine thing about travelling is that while we are on the way, our attention is more vigilant than at other times. A scene that we have never before seen glistens in fresh colours, and an unusual environment once more poses the time-worn questions about how people really live, what their connections are with one another. In the first years of youth, man's condition is by nature similar to that of the traveller. For he too comes to new regions, the lands of adult work and love, to mention but two of them. And he too is possessed of an inquiring curiosity that urges him to gain an understanding of the secrets of men and to peer into the depths of social relations. Must this attentiveness necessarily be worn away? Can one live so that instead of blunting, it should rather be sharpened?

I believe (and perhaps even know from experience) that one can. And that even today the possibility is there, and is even greater than it was in my youth. Carried onward, as he is, by the years, man continues always to reach new and yet newer scapes, even when he is past his youth. And though he may in former times, in the silence of his village or in his township, perhaps have been more thorough in his observation of the new moods that manhood and even old age bring, he had very much less opportunity than we to compensate for the slowing of the rate by expanding the horizon and thus always to maintain the vigilance of his attention through new sights. Work itself is now no longer attached to a single locality, more often it leads to ever new environments. And even though the opportunities for seeing the world are, due to political obstacles, not expanding as rapidly as technology would permit, it is possible to organize tours even from under one's reading lamp, and it is precisely in such sight-seeing tours that progress has been so extraordinary.

3

If upon departing I were asked on another planet, what had been the greatest happiness of life on earth, I would say it had been studying. Not the kind that ultimately leads to an examination, but that undertaken for curiosity's sake, as an excursion to a new language and the world that can be attained through it, to a new branch of science or a new field of work. And if I were then asked what it was for which I regretted leaving the earth, even after all that had happened, I would say that it was the fact that I had come from an age and from a country where opportunities for study, and the desire of people to avail themselves of them, had both grown simultaneously and in extraordinary measure.

Recently I spent a few days at the home of a young relative of mine. He obtained his university degree as a worker and it is only technical works that he reads in German, but what a library and what a wealth of information he has accumulated by buying and reading that which has appeared in Hungarian! In my youth I would not have been able to obtain the like in five or six languages even. And these books, like the extra-mural university lecture courses, are not forced on readers and audiences by the government, but rather demanded by them. Just as it is the workers and student lads, exercising their fantasies as they sit opposite each other in the trains, who buy several hundred thousand copies of each issue of the magazine *Élet és Tudomány* ("Life and Science").

As a young writer it was my aim, while compelling myself to assume

this wide range of interests, also to arouse it in others. In fact I published a periodical of essays written by myself, of which this was the main task. It was then an occasion for country-wide surprise that this apparently hopeless paper was bought by a thousand people. If I were young today, I would do something similar, yet different. I would write guide-books to meet the existing interest in and desire for study—describing the places worth making excursions to and the sights that should there be inspected. For if there is something wrong about this fever of learning, it is its lack of a clear program. We dash about hither and thither over regions selected at a moment's whim and for all our great voraciousness are finally unable to construe a model of the world for ourselves.

Unfortunately I could not now manage to keep up with the present fever of interests. Not only because it has become greedier and I older, but also because that which takes place behind the eye gradually dims the eye itself. In those days I tried in a series of works to show that if you introduce the spirit of science into life and set about observing the unpleasant features, conducting little experiments with them—whether it was a case of an irksome job, of a child that needs extra tutoring, of a violent boss, or even of a grave disease—then that which was formerly burdensome suddenly becomes interesting, that which was base becomes instructive, and, as I was wont to say, even the galley's bench becomes a laboratory. However, the reverse is also true. It is not only that interest cheers the soul and keeps it fresh, but cares and suffering, once nestled in the soul, also weaken, or at least render less sincere, the interest one displays in the world.

And what is the origin of this suffering? Mostly the fact that we do not have a correct approach to the second great item of the program on our invitations. For life is not only a journey, but also an act of sculpture. Man must not only admire the possibilities that have already become realities, but also evoke those that are still latent, and of them he must create himself to become as perfect as may be. This is a very beautiful and a very interesting task—to let the tiny chisel strokes of each day shape something beautiful not from stone, but from living matter, from ourselves. And men, especially the young, have very powerful biological forces to spur them to this end. Morals, in my view, are the system of controls that strive, once bodily development is completed, to bring something more out of man. That which we call ambition is the anxiety or, if you like, the whip of these morals. There are, however, many varieties of ambition, and a great part of our unhappiness stems from having grafted the wrong species of ambition onto our young lives.

The nineteenth century set many wonderful careers free—there were errand boys who became newspaper moguls, an artillery lieutenant become the emperor of Europe, and poets strode like the Biblical pillar of fire in the van of their peoples. The various political and art histories recorded all this, and in a popular form it also became available to the children, while no one doubted that it was very wholesome for these biographies, these marvellous careers, to let loose the devils of emulation in adolescent lads. A very long time ago a little boy who was a relative of ours once came to see us and in his boredom started tapping away on my typewriter. Later I had a look at the the paper he had left there and at the obviously ingenuously composed text. "The life of N. N. in six volumes" was the title, with his name in place of the letters N. N. The work began with the words: "At this juncture a young man of extraordinary gifts appeared on the stage of history..." I have remembered these few lines not only because they showed what sometimes goes on inside an unassuming, pimply teenager, but also because of the third person in which he speaks of himself. He had credited himself with an essay about him, a historical appreciation, and thus actually pointed to the sources of the bad kind of ambition.

We men of the arts have of course absorbed even more of this ambition, and just how insatiable it can be, I can show by recollecting the first appeasement of its appetite. At the age of twenty-four, without ever having published so much as a line or even known anyone who was by way of being an author, I won a short-story competition arranged by *Nyugat* ("West"). I was able to see the short story, fished out from among a heap of manuscripts, published on the first page in the Christmas issue of the periodical I had admired from afar. You may imagine how happy I was. But at the same time I also went in for an essay competition, whose result was announced a fortnight later. Now the fact that one of the two competitions had put an end to my anonymity might have been enough for the monster, but the polite rejection of the essay caused such a turmoil in its appetite, which had come with eating, that I was unable to sleep all night, and my young wife, who had lived with me for one week then, looked aghast, in the wakeful hours we spent together, at what she had received for a life's companion.

Fortunately I also came to know, both in others and in myself, the good kind of ambition that is concerned with the matter in hand and not with one's person. When, for instance, I went to give my lessons as a schoolmaster, my aim was not that those who listened to me should be enchanted by me, or even that I should be promoted for my achievements

to the post of inspector of schools or director of education. Instead I paid attention to the material I had assembled, to the picture I had formed in my mind, in order as best possible, in the manner most likely to be retained by their memories, to convey it to the minds that hung on my words, so that both pupil and master should, in the act, feel they were participating in a beautiful and great event. And how different are the memories left by this kind of ambition, in which all people who do their work, even the old woman who roasts the chestnuts, can participate with me. Even today I look back upon the four or five years of my teaching career as upon a Garden of Eden.

Yet the main advantage of this good kind of ambition is not that it does not cause such devilish suffering—it also helps us bring more out of ourselves, and better serves our growth. For men grow just as trees do—using their roots and the wide-spread fibres of their contacts. The more and the sounder the contacts with which they draw upon the world, the higher the crown which their tree can grow. Those who have taken their mothers, their children, their friends and their country seriously will, whatever this relationship later involves, have become the richer for once having taken them seriously. Now bad ambition, with its impatience and the constant fever of competition, severs, tears and rots these fibres, and, enclosing its victim in a sheath of self-worship and offendedness, causes him to decay. On the other hand, good ambition, by turning our attention to the matter in hand, to work and to people, leads to the discovery of new, nutritive minerals and broadens the network of roots.

And we know that it is not only in the lives of artists, scientists and politicians that the two kinds of ambition grow and act beside each other. At every place of work, at every workshop and office, one may observe who it is that strives at whatever cost to attain something, concerned only with the opinions of others, and inclined even to avail himself of forbidden advantages, and who it is that shows an interest in the business in hand and cannot be rendered happy or unhappy by the mere arrival or non-arrival of success. Readers who have the many personal intrigues and the dictatorial ways of lesser chiefs in mind may possibly shake their heads when I say that, in our society, the valuation of ambition and of that which a man can achieve through it is undergoing a slow but inexorable and favourable change. Yet this is indeed the case. For even in old times we kept saying that the true strength of a society lies not in the phenomena that shoot up from it like rockets, but in the value of the people who work in its depths. The age of free competition nevertheless directed the instinct for self-assertion of the young towards the exceptional, showy careers. Now

these glamorous careers are losing their power of attraction. Fortunes of any considerable size can no longer be accumulated; power is not desirable, and people who are concerned for their future are inclined to avoid its possession; and the magic of artistic careers is also decreasing. Those, for instance, who see the forces that hedge a writer in, prefer not to be in his place. Of the illustrious careers it is that of the scientist that has preserved its magic most. The true scientist, however, inscreasingly resembles a simple worker, who is absorbed in his task and engaged in attending to it, and for whom results, and with them success, are by-products which he himself regards as fortunate accidents.

This de-glamourization of the showy careers is obviously favourable to true ambition. I see an ever increasing number of valuable young people who look upon their anonymity and greyness as a kind of protection, behind which they can work, study and experiment undisturbed, and if there is any respect that they endeavour to earn, it is that those who are about them should feel their beneficial influence and should look upon them as their path-finders, later their masters, and particularly as upon people who have led a successful life. Because the greatest, the only genuine success is a well-developed, balanced life that lends warmth to others, whose dignity those around involuntarily recognize, whose secret they seek and recipe they strive to adopt. And this kind of success is more frequent among simpler people than in the case of careers where the struggle for glory ruins the characters of the contestants. "We are now to witness an age of masterpieces bound in human skins" is what I usually say to console those who complain of a stagnation in literature. In other words, a single perfect person in his own skin is a greater and more fertile object of reading than what the publishers give us. In ages past, when men read less, those who according to their ideas became examples of right living were called the wise or, in religious periods, saints. Literature, with its reminiscences and legends, accompanied these successful lives as their recorder. It might perhaps not be a bad thing, if the relation between literature and excellence were now again to develop in a similar manner. In the case of my own books, for instance, I am quite sure that it is not *Égető Eszter* ("Eszter Égető") that has been the most perfect, nevertheless it has been read with the greatest affection, because it has recorded the life of a simple, harmonious "contemporary saint."

Man, however, is not only a traveller and his own sculptor, but also a fellow man, who while he creates himself, endeavours, in however small a sphere, to propel the whole life of mankind towards some higher level. Those, of course, who have done well in the other two tasks, cannot go

far wrong in this one. For it is certain that those who are blind and deaf to the world, who bury themselves in their own troubles and grievances, and strive to attain their own ends to the detriment of others, cannot recognize the interests of the majority and come into conflict with them. It is just as certain, however, that those who are attached to the world and to men by bonds of interested love, who know that they can only achieve their own growth through others and that the particular protein and carbohydrate from which the soul grows—a serious approach to our relations with others, to our common interests—will almost unnoticeably, without any deliberate altruism, become immersed in the Good Cause that seeks a way forward in the depths of men's lives. For obviously not only each individual person will, as the card-players put it, attempt to make the most of his bid, but also every nation and the whole of mankind. And the distinguishing mark of a correct personal bid, and nowadays even of the national bid, is that it coincides with the bid of mankind and that they thus mutually support each other, while the wrong bid will be opposed to it and will lose its power.

When I was young I used to say that is was the writer's job to hedge off his own opinions from other opinions through sharp boundaries, thus crystallizing, as it were, his own contribution to thought. I do not now wish to go into the considerations that then made this attitude justifiable. But if I were young today, I would endeavour rather to identify myself with life, with the great human interests that seek their way in life. I would look upon this life as a plant, feeling its way among the hard stones with its tenacious roots, and I would myself participate in its persevering and hesitant labour of tracking the light and grinding away the rocks. Over the given form of socialism, for instance, I would not endeavour to hold the glistening Platonic ideal of a perfect socialism, but would rather try and permeate it from the bottom with the Good Cause that I carry in my heart, in order that it should come as far as possible to resemble it.

4

This somewhat abstractly conceived program (for a youth that I shall not myself experience) may perhaps become more life-like if we attempt to follow it and see what it involves in a few basic human manifestations, such as nature, work, love and death.

To what degree our consciousness considers itself a part of nature is a very characteristic human quality, which is also revealed in the large variety of religions and philosophies. The feeling that our consciousness

is something completely strange to nature and struggles in it as though entrapped, is one of the parents and a sustainer of belief in the afterworld, characteristic of several religions—Buddhism, some varieties of Christianity—as well as, generally speaking, of Northern thought and, among contemporary philosophies, of existentialism.

I myself have never had to suffer so much at the hands of this solitude of consciousness, of which in Hungary Ady has spoken most beautifully, as have other "northern people." If it does occasionally seize me, a few trees or even an overcast landscape suffice, in the sweet proximity of fraternal life, to make me feel as one wave of nature. Just as the eye, though a separate little sphere, adapted to wonderful purposes unknown to other cells, has the warmth, the pressure of the whole body present behind it, so my consciousness too is only apparently closed to the world, being ultimately the achievement of self-recognition by that very world. What I would rather blame myself for, is that in the wild struggle of life I have kept this ever-present feeling of oneness, tenacious though it has been, at a level below its own natural condition; thus I have almost staunched the main stream through which nature's warmth has been able to penetrate me. Nor was the interest I took sufficiently tender and detailed—in this I have partly followed the natural sciences, which in the process of understanding, dismantle nature, making chemistry of biology, physics of chemistry, and so forth. I was attracted to the varieties of nature, but I have not known them sufficiently. "I don't know my botanics" was the title of one of my youthful elegies, and it is with that same sense of guilt that I shall have to quit my life. I felt a great bond of sympathy arise when I read Gandhi's explanation of the cow-cult of the Hindus as representing the respect felt by men for the subhuman forms of existence (and indeed, is it not man's mission in nature—by which he may make reparation for the havoc he causes—as far as possible to extend his humanism to the non-human sphere, after eliminating the mutual slaughter of men?) For my own part, however, I cannot, beyond a little gardening, reveal much of this subhumanist trait. If I were young I would endeavour to make up for it all, not perhaps so much by sports and botany and feeding birds, but by generally not being in such a hurry (sport is itself a form of haste) and by leaving more time to my existing inclinations for getting to know the world and making friends with it.

My work too I would do as Attila József put it: "accurately, neatly, as the stars go their way in the heavens." I would be particularly careful not to let my work and my interests become divorced from one another. I know that with the increased division of labour and the progress of

automation this is not so easy. But maybe it is not impossible for all that. If, for example, I were to become a worker in a nitrogen plant, I would find out what shops there were in the factory, what their purpose was, and how they were interlinked. I would get hold of some little technical booklet that would explain to me what the Rosch—Haber process was. I would go back into the past, when nitric acid was made not of air, but of Chili saltpetre. My own job would take me *via* a thousand branches to the other branches of technology and to their histories. I would find out where our products were used and try to understand the machines among which I walk. And the people! Their myriad natures, each with its own hidden springs! It does not actually make much difference where you set about it, for all jobs permit you to unravel the whole of life. While a slapdash, perfunctory approach to work will avenge itself, in the first instance, on the worker.

I was fairly late to notice this. My earnings were derived from being a school medical officer, a post which (though even among doctors it was held to be a fairly limited, administrative job) was a tremendous quarry of observations about people. But I was a writer, and when I had finished with the drudgery I wrote essays about Italian plays and novels about my peasant relatives at Szilas. It was only in the seventh or eighth year that I realized I must not let my forenoons be foreign bodies in my day, and that I set about making the school and the children who happened to be assembled there the objects of my observations and experiments. Of course I did this too as a writer and published a book about it; and my investigations were duly forbidden. This led me to lose my enthusiasm; besides, my other vocation, that of writing, also egged me on, so that I left my "open quarry." But I keep reproaching myself for not having made better use of those fifteen years. If I had each year visited only one hundred boys in their homes and asked them about how they lived, what treasures I would have gathered even from the literary point of view, let alone the human!

In appearance, we have more freedom in the choice of our recreations than of our work. In actual fact they too are in general fairly strictly determined by opportunity, environment and society's force of habit. Yet if there is a place where we must today fight for ourselves, then this is it. The capitalist world has, we know, reversed the relations between production and life or consumption; in olden days people produced to be able to live—now they live in order to consume. If a new kind of motor car, wireless, TV set, film, synthetic shirt, salt-cellar or toy is produced, the citizen feels it his duty to buy one. And in between his acquiring and

consuming these products, his life goes by. It is to be feared that, with the greater abundance of necessities and of recreational opportunities, life in our country too is tending in this direction and that the human mind will be inundated, under the pretext of entertainment, by the flow of products let loose upon it.

What defence can be put up against this? Independence and restraint. By making our recreations an integral part of our plan for building ourselves. I fail to see any sharp boundary between real recreation and real study. If you are taking a holiday, try also to get to know a bit of your country; if you make friends, try and reconnoitre a less known zone of life (a job, a social stratum, a human character). Recreation perhaps differs most from self-education in that it contains more adventure—you read things that are not included in your plan, or you go to meet people from whom you do not hope to learn anything. But even this serves to permit those roots of ours to pry and feel—it opens up a kind of uncertain, hesitant zone about the confined area, and we know that sometimes it is just from this zone that the most surprising and most fertile inspirations come.

5

The great spice of human life is that nature has composed it for two voices—the two sexes. One half of mankind is a mystery, a game, a stimulation to the other. That man is still a very new creature, in whom the animal past and the new spiritual aspirations have not achieved harmony, is best shown by the fact that even this lovely fount of joy has been so badly poisoned, once by tyrannous prohibitions, then by its exaggerated and unhealthy cult. This is now perhaps even more obvious than it was of old; the shackles which could make love a hell have dropped, the sexes are not segregated, women earn and therefore do not have to sell themselves, and the opportunity of divorce is available so that an error need not be perpetuated as an act of fate. Nevertheless there seems to be more trouble about love than ever there was—at least so the old folks say.

Yet how I could envy the young of today! The other day I travelled by train with the co-educational class of a Transdanubian technical school. How lucky these adolescent boys are, I thought, as I listened to their accustomed and natural badinage. They can spend hours on end in the company of lovely girls of seventeen and eighteen without feeling any restraint. They need not approach them from the segregation whose emergency exit was the brothel, and social exit the process of "courting"—a mendacious, boastful and at the same time abashed form of contact,

always designed to achieve something, if nothing more, than the enslavement or breaking of another's heart. Yet the great secret of juvenile love is precisely this leisurely pace. That which later or in coarser ages is so urgent, is here a lengthy road, whose every step has its sweet or painful surprise, once stimulating and then again abating the sensory urge.

It may well be, of course, that if I were able to walk among them as a downy-cheeked youngster, I would myself find out by experience why here good circumstances can bring forth bad fruit. One great fault is obviously that the films, art and fashion educate the imagination and people's tastes in the direction of admiring certain stereotypes. Only few, and, at that, not the finest among the real partners of the opposite sex, will approach these types. The rest, however, will only be considered as a compromise, as substitutes. Literature, and even more the visual arts, by throwing aside these types and training people to recognize the charm—often mixed with ugliness—gleaming in real people, should, in fact, be promoting the corporeal harmony of one soul with another, rendering our carnality more spiritual and at the same time more realistic. An even greater trouble, as I see it, is that, where the feeling of security leads to a search only for enjoyment, love also dwindles to this rank and considers boring the many other kinds of value to which you can attain while discovering the opposite sex. But whatever the experiences that awaited me, I would not give up exploring the opposite sex—like a lovely landscape enshrined in a magic mist—with sensuous devotion and the scientist's patience. If, on the other hand, I were to decide on marriage—not early and not foolhardily—I would again undertake it as I did in my youth, taking a vow of a kind of semi-asceticism, to be repaid in the moral help necessary for the common endeavour. At most it would be in self-sacrifice that I would be more cautious, and in comprehension and love more generous.

I believe that the misery of young couples with children is due to two things. They do not take into account that marriage is a very complex enterprise, but that if it is successful it brings ever greater returns as they advance in age—that it needs preparing, not only by love, but also by a very great deal of circumspection, as in the case of a scientific experiment that depends on many conditions. The other thing is that, having been disillusioned in their own lives or their marriage, they transpose their ambition to their children, which is one of the causes of the present exaggerated cult of the children—and, through it, of what we are discussing, the problem of the young. The extent of care, stimulation and joy that a child requires and that it can accept has its limit. Exaggerated attention,

whether it takes the shape of "indulgence" or of "encouragement to greatness," does more harm than neglect. The one makes it natural to be selfish, to demand things that have not been deserved, and carries with it the attendant spleen and unhappiness. The other prematurely wears away the artificially aroused ambitions and by the age of twenty lands the child in the abyss of dashed ambition, which the father reached at thirty or forty. The abilities of our children are no cause either for shame or glory. They have drawn the lottery ticket of their heritage from among the motley of their forebears' characters. It is therefore wisest (and here too I would not err again) to look upon our children as our portion of mankind's future, as little bodies in whom the constant gentle radiation of good will must help the germination of their possibilities, the while providing us with the treasury of experience involved in paternity.

Religions are apt to encourage their believers by saying that those who devote themselves to them will overcome the fear of death. "No longer does my heart feel fear, as I regard the solemn bier," says our fine Calvinist hymn. And the philosophies have also taken over this role of the religions—they too would bid their followers make friends with death. But is this really necessary? I have myself—together with our Hungarian János Vajda—from my youth felt eternal life to be a grotesque thought, certainly more insupportable than that of annihilation. Yet the latter must, if they are conscious of it at all, be the hardest for the young to bear. Children die like animals—they do not know what death is. Old people ripen for it. Montaigne was surprised at the spiritual power of his peasants, who during an epidemic dug their graves and nonchalantly lay down in them. But they must obviously have suffered already quite enough, and they knew that their further lives could be no better than the former had been. If man is a tossed-up wave of possibilities, an old man will know (as I recently felt myself, when a bad attack of pneumonia sent me nearer the opposite shore) that his possibilities are on the whole exhausted. Even if he had more within him than what came to fruition, that which could still be accomplished was not worth the suffering it would cost. Young people, however, cannot feel this, and, if death nevertheless confronts them, they are led to despair by the particular cards they happen to hold and which they have to throw in, without having played their hand. And though medical science is decreasing the proportion of those who die in youth and the elimination of war will diminish it still further, the young, if that is what they wish to be, will always need to have a measure of contempt for death. How can this be made compatible with the defence of the aims set out in their ambitions?

Simply, I think. A motor cyclist has to consider the possibility of a fall. This risk (however careful he may be) is inherent in the sport in which he engages. Nor can the full development of life be undertaken without a certain amount of danger. Youth carries an awareness of this in its very cells, and it manifests itself without any kind of philosophy, in the form of courage. If one's thoughts can indeed influence this feeling, I would like in my future life to be braver. I have, occasionally, been reckless, but my imagination and the perception of danger by my ambitions never permitted me to be steadily brave. Despite my knowing the consolation which I have ascribed to Apáczai, who died in his youth—that, even though I may fall, the good cause to which I have bound myself will avenge me.

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The reader, who has made his way through this long conditional sentence, may think that I have thrust the feelings of my old age back in this imagined youth, and that it is fortunate my youth was such as it was, without my having been able to infest it with a senility parading in the guise of wisdom. I, on the other hand, believe that what I have said has been derived not only from my personal experiences, but also from a survey of the circumstances amid which the young people of the present must live, and that the cleverest among them live in the manner I have here outlined. This, however, is an assumption that can only be verified by a further step in the progress of man, removed from the present-day youth by the same distance as mine has been from theirs.

HORIZONS

by

GODFREY W. LAGDEN, M. P.

During the last 50 years the world has undoubtedly become a much smaller place and the horizons of its inhabitants have at the same time extended far beyond anything which could have been envisaged. This of course only applies in the economic and cultural fields, for in other fields, such as the military, which I do not intend to touch upon in this article, they have regrettably lessened.

With the advent of the invention of radio and television, faster travel and greater education, particularly in the field of languages, new possibilities have presented themselves. It should be that peoples should have a better understanding of the ways of life of the various countries with which they come into contact, it should be that they should have better appreciation of the ideals of their fellow men, but perhaps this ideal has not proceeded as fast as we would have liked. However, there are extremely hopeful signs in the last few years, chiefly owing to holiday travel and the actual physical meeting of the people of so many nations, and I am sure that this must in the long run have its effect on the thinking of the executives of the nations.

There is, however, another field which has much to add to the understanding between nations and the people thereof, this is of course the field of economics and trade, which it is most desirable to encourage. Whereas in the past even educated businessmen were apt to look askance on their counterparts, the introduction of business contacts has played a great part, but not nearly enough.

The written word with all its virtues cannot convey to the individual the many desirable features of each other and I am sure that all men of goodwill will realise that world peace can be greatly affected, for the good, by world trade. The English people have much to offer to the world, not only in material goods, but in the knowhow of manufacture, and the once 'take it or leave it' attitude of industry is rapidly being replaced by a keen desire to share in the many good things, both cultural and economical

which we have to offer, and it is most encouraging that at the same time, and possibly for the first time, the post-war years have clearly revealed a desire to accept from other nations that which they have to offer.

I myself visited Hungary in the early part of last year for a short period, and in retrospective I have been wondering what sort of memory I brought away with me, and on reflection I am sure that it must be mostly that the people of Hungary, like the people of my own country desire most of all to improve relationships and to be allowed to improve their way of life and to preserve for their children the heritage which they themselves have had handed down to them.

It should not have suprised me, but perhaps it did just a little, that those I came into contact with, the lift operator, the shopkeeper, the taxi driver, were not in any way different from their counterparts in London. The Stadium and the beergardens, all were there as they are here.

It was unfortunate that during my short stay it was not possible to contact the business executives, and this I regret deeply because I feel that much might have been done and much remains to be done by bringing about an exchange of trade which must eventually be of benefit to all concerned.

One memory which I brought away with me was the similarity between the Palace of Westminster and the Hungarian House of Parliament, one overhanging the Thames and the other the Danube, and the atmosphere which was common to both. Here one felt, as one knew, that great decisions, momentous decisions had been taken and would be taken in the future and that these decisions would have an effect on the lives and happiness of those who passed by on the pavements outside, and one then felt the heavy responsibility which rests on the shoulders of Members of both Parliaments, and one could only hope that all would be well. Two nations with great histories and great culture behind them can play such a part in ensuring that those who follow them may have cause to bless the actions which they must take from time to time.

I am wondering if I might for a moment venture into the realms of personality and to say how much I enjoyed and how greatly I was pleased to meet in London the editor of The New Hungarian Quarterly, and to all my friends in Hungary I would like, if I may, to express the hope that our first meeting in the early part of last year will be only the start of many such meetings in our respective countries, that perhaps our example may be followed by more and more of our people in every walk of life and that the interchange of ideas which must flow from these meetings may have the effect of a much closer understanding and a happy future for us all.

GENEVA IMPRESSIONS ON THE STATE OF EAST-WEST TRADE

by

IMRE VAJDA

Satisfaction was expressed that European trade as a whole as well as intra-European and east-west trade in Europe had shown an increase in the past year—reads the Report published on the September 1961 session of the Economic Commission for Europe, Committee on the Development of Trade; and this satisfaction was manifestly shared by the attending delegations. In the conference room at the *Palais des Nations* the representatives of twenty-nine countries listened attentively to the addresses delivered there, and considering the tenor of the speeches made, everybody agreed that the development of east-west trade provided notable mutual advantages. There were, however, among those represented, countries which—in their deeds, if not in their words—could not be regarded as supporters of this evolution. The volume of US trade with the eastern European countries was doubled in 1960 but — as a consequence of sundry restrictive measure — this still represented less than 0.5% of the global foreign trade of the U. S. At the same time, several western European countries, achieved an increase in their exports to the socialist countries of eastern Europe amounting to 400 million dollars during the same period, while imports from these countries expanded in approximately the same measure. As a result, the over-all trade between eastern and western Europe continued to grow during 1960.

In the conference room of the *Palais des Nations* in these fine September days the western delegations went out of their way to prove the absence of restrictions by their governments on the development of east-west trade, as evidenced by the actual increase in the turnover. Nor was there anything to impede further increase, said the western delegates, and invited the countries of eastern Europe to buy—especially industrial products and, above all, consumer goods. The socialist countries were encouraged not to be narrow-minded in their purchases, to abandon the

objective of bilaterally balanced trade with each individual partner, and to take at last to the only proper road, that of multilateralism. In addition, they tried to convince the representatives of the socialist countries that the customs policies of the western European blocs, the ECM and EFTA, were entirely harmless, not intended to wrong anybody, in fact not worth talking about. In a more or less concerted action, the western delegations thus endeavoured to present the actual state of east-west economic relations as largely free of any problems, with their future development depending solely on the socialist countries. A few hindrances of administrative character or due to trade policy might still linger here and there, but were not important enough to play a significant role. The real obstacles to trade were to be sought in the planned economy of the socialist countries, in their isolation, their state monopolies; let them therefore remove these obstacles.

But does this really correspond to the facts? Not in our view; nor does reality bear out this western "optimism." The volume of east-west trade is still only a fraction of what it could be once the existing barriers were removed. True, trade has increased in 1960, but it still accounts only for about 4 per cent in the total trade of western Europe; in the case of the United States this proportion is even lower. The embargo is still maintained, and it is in each case a matter of long deliberation with the US Department of Commerce whether the permission to ship certain classes of machinery to the socialist countries should be granted. As a rule the embargo is lifted only when the firms concerned contrive to prove that their competitors in Britain or western Germany would be only too willing to step in if they were to drop the deal.

We are nonetheless prepared to regard it as an achievement that the desirability and the value of east-west economic contacts has come to be generally acknowledged and that the strenuous work that called for such hard efforts by the socialist countries is beginning to bear fruit.

Let us now examine the obstacles to the development of trade relations. Does the composition of east-west trade correspond to the economic structure of the countries concerned? According to recently published statistics of a western institute for economic research, the socialist countries provided 36 per cent of the world's industrial production in 1960; the corresponding percentage for western Europe was considerably lower. On the other hand, 1960 trade figures published in the last issue of the Economic Bulletin for Europe* put the share of manufactured commodities in western European

* United Nations, Economic Bulletin for Europe, Vol. 13, No. 1, Geneva, 1961. Table 19.

imports from the European socialist countries at 32 per cent of the total, whereas the corresponding percentage for exports was 78. The report moreover indicates that over the past year this disproportion has grown, western European sales of machinery, vehicles, and basic metals having increased at a quicker rate than the corresponding purchases. As a matter of fact, the whole increase in exports was due to these items, whereas the part played by manufactured commodities in the slightly broadening flow of trade from east to west was less significant (55 per cent of the increase resulting from food and crude materials, 45 per cent from manufacture).

Thus in east-west trade the ratio between the volume of industrial production in the two regions has failed to assert itself. The exports of western Europe to the socialist countries consist mainly of manufactured commodities, while imports comprise chiefly raw materials and fuels, as well as food. These facts are evidenced in the table below.

COMMODITY COMPOSITION OF EAST-WEST EUROPEAN TRADE
JANUARY-SEPTEMBER 1959 AND 1960

(millions of dollars, imports c. i. f., exports f. o. b.)

Commodity group	Imports from eastern Europe		Exports to eastern Europe	
	1959	1960	1959	1960
Food, beverages and tobacco (SITC 0, 1)	368.1	375.0	133.9	132.4
Crude materials and mineral fuels (SITC 2, 3, 4, 5, 6)	621.2	763.6	177.4	186.7
Manufactures (SITC 5 less 5, 6, 7, 8)	433.2	552.0	840.5	1,121.9
Total (including unspecified)	1,428.6	1,699.0	1,158.7	1,448.0

Sources OEEC Statistical Bulletins—Foreign Trade

The question now arises whether this obvious disproportion stems from the omission or inability of the eastern, socialist countries to offer manufactures to the west in a quantity proportionate to the volume of their industrial production. This view is not held even by the Secretariat of the Economic Commission for Europe. On the contrary, its Bulletin says:

"Although east-west European trade in consumers' manufactures remained small, recent experience shows that there is scope for increasing imports into western Europe. Imports of such goods from eastern Europe

are not admitted freely to most western European countries, and any relaxation of controls normally yields a certain increase in imports... As has been observed before in ECE publications, there is little economic justification, in most western European countries, for the restriction of such goods from eastern Europe even if the reverse flow of similar trade remains very small. However, the general tendency to bargain for balanced flows of trade in consumers' manufactures in fact tends to inhibit the rapid expansion of this trade." *

The Secretariat of the Economic Commission for Europe thus points out that—at least as far as consumers' manufactures are concerned—the obstacles to the barely growing imports of the western countries lie in the western import controls and not in the lack of offers on the part of the socialist countries, stating furthermore that this relative isolation can hardly be justified on economic grounds.

Can the contention that customs policies of the economic blocs are not fashioned to obstruct east-west trade be taken seriously? What would be their aim if not to hamper the trade of outsider countries? Why should Great Britain worry so much about the existence and the customs policies of the Common Market, why should she risk her traditional relations to the members of the Commonwealth, were she not experiencing the restrictive and often prohibitive effects of these policies? Yet under GATT Great Britain enjoys in the Common Market relative advantages which are generally denied to the socialist countries by means of additional discrimination. Established facts thus do not bear out the claim that the introvert customs policies of the two western European trade associations form no serious and increasingly forbidding barriers to east-west trade and to bilateral economic relations in general. This is, moreover, admitted in the final report concerned with the discussions of the Committee on the Development of Trade, which contains the following sentence.

"Taking into account the creation of sub-regional economic groupings in Europe, the Committee, following resolution 9 (XVI) of the ECE, recommends that in case of any difficulties arising in trade between individual countries, participants and non-participants, the representatives of such countries will meet in the framework of procedures agreeable to both sides concerned as often as it is required with the aim of overcoming the difficulties and finding ways and means of assisting the development of trade between them."

Let it be said here too: We are ready to regard it as a considerable

* Loc. cit. p. 40.

advance that the economic blocs, in a text based on mutual agreement, have given up their former attitude of insisting on their common representation as solely entitled to discuss matters of economic policy, and now leave it to the countries concerned to overcome their difficulties through bilateral negotiations.

And what about multilateralism, so frequently alluded to? Representatives of the western standpoint often reproach us for hindering the growth of trade by bilateral agreements and for endeavouring to keep bilateral trade with individual partners in balance. In their view, these methods are apt to raise artificial barriers to the flow of trade. They point to the steady growth of trade between the western countries without the need of reciprocal balancing. They advise the socialist countries to abandon the methods of bilateralism and to adopt the principles of multilateral trade so successfully employed by western countries. Of course, they refrain from mentioning the circumstance that multilateralism among the western countries is based overwhelmingly on liberalized trade, in sharp contrast to the quota system employed in their trade with the socialist countries, which means that they admit our goods to their markets only in restricted quantities, if at all, unless forced to do so by the necessity of balancing their trade. In a conversation during a break in the meetings—the sincerity of which may have been deepened by the brilliant autumn sunshine, the deep blue of Lake Leman below, and high up, at a seemingly unattainable distance, the almost unearthly radiance of Mont Blanc's snowcapped summits—I was told by the leader of one of the western European delegations, an old friend of mine, hardened by many tough commercial battles: "Payments may be multilateral but trade policy is always determined by the turnover between two countries." Indeed, what independent country will tolerate its own products being banned from the market where it is making purchases? What independent country will open its markets to those who not only have no intention of buying but also raise artificial barriers to prevent the realization of buying intentions? Furthermore, how can one expect any disequilibrium arising in the trade with one country to be balanced elsewhere, by multilateral sales? Obviously only if the entry of commodities were not hampered in any way, if at least the degree of liberalization prevailing at present in the reciprocal contacts of western countries were to be extended to east-west trade. Otherwise demands for multilateralism amount to nothing more than disguised adherence to the system of bans and restrictions on imports, the re-formulation of the old "open door policy" which the western powers once employed in their dealings with China—with the results recorded by history.

Finally, what is the situation regarding socialist economic planning and the state monopoly of foreign trade? Is socialist economy really an obstacle to an intensified international division of labour? Does state monopoly really hamper the development of east-west trade? It cannot be denied that the existence of two different economic systems based on different principles and forms of organization does not permit the unmodified application of commercial methods evolved in the course of capitalist development. It is thus beyond argument that in many cases mutual concessions must be made. The socialist countries will not ask their capitalist clients to undertake in their business relations any obligations incompatible with their economic system. They will not ask them to keep their prices unchanged over long periods of time, they will not require a state guarantee for the purchase or the delivery of a specified quantity of commodities, they will not expect the spirit of mutual assistance to prevail in their dealings. Yet these principles have proved to be practicable and even beneficial in the economic development of the countries which have adopted them. But they are contradictory to the capitalist system of market economy. At the same time it is, of course, necessary that the capitalist countries of the West adapt themselves to the situation prevailing on the other side, as this situation has proved to be stable and no change in it may be expected. The planned economy and political system of the socialist countries has to be taken into account by realistic thinking. This system undoubtedly prevents capitalist monopolies from acquiring economic key positions in the socialist countries; moreover, it eliminates the anomalous conditions brought about in the international division of labour by capitalist development, which still survive in a number of backward countries unable to give effective protection to their growing but still weak economies. At present this is the actual situation which must be taken as point of departure by both sides. Once the given situation is accepted reciprocally, the elaboration of realizable advantages will not meet with insuperable difficulties. The best examples are again furnished by practice. In recent years the socialist countries have turned more boldly to western markets in their endeavour to develop certain branches of industry where up-to-date demand far surpassed the existing level of production; in the first place I refer here to chemical and food industry equipment, as well as vehicles. This tendency is gaining momentum. In the past six months alone, the value of complete plant equipment ordered and licences purchased by the Soviet Union and other socialist countries in the West approached the 200 million dollar mark. As for the other side, we may recall the large-scale agreement signed by ENI, the state-owned Italian oil

industry, with the Soviet Union for the purchase of 12 million tons of crude oil in exchange for the supply of several hundred thousand tons of tubes, as well as pump equipment, sea-going vessels and other industrial machinery. As mentioned before, western Europe has been able to increase its sales of metals, machinery and other manufactures to the socialist countries by 400 million dollars within a single year. Has anything like it ever occurred before? And would a development on this scale ever be possible without the economic planning of the socialist countries? At the recent meeting of the Committee on the Development of Trade, the Soviet delegate declared that his government was ready to conclude agreements with both western countries and individual western firms, providing for long-term industrial programs involving practical cooperation in important industrial domains, as well as promoting reciprocal specialization and a more thorough and more rapid development of know-how. Would agreements of this type be conceivable on the part of any country without a planned economy? We are well aware of the fact that the wide possibilities for mutual progress offered by the cultivation of east-west economic contacts have not always been clearly recognized by ourselves either; we know, furthermore, that there is still much to be done and improved in this field. We nevertheless maintain that the socialist countries will always be ready to discuss mutual, but not unilateral, advantages; mutual, but not unilateral, concessions; but they will not let themselves be forced into situations contrary to their interests and incongruous with the actual balance of forces. The atmosphere which developed in the Geneva conference room seemed to prove that the majority of western countries are aware of these facts, and we welcome this recognition as possibly foreshadowing the inauguration of a new era in west-east economic relations.

A peculiar feature was, however, added to this atmosphere. The ECE Bulletin refers to western Germany in the following words:

"Western Germany has larger exports to each eastern European country than any other country in western Europe; and by doubling its exports to the Soviet Union in 1960, western Germany superseded Finland as that country's principal western European supplier. In 1960 western Germany also replaced the United Kingdom as the chief western European market for eastern European exports, although the latter country still takes first place in imports from the Soviet Union and Poland. Western Germany's surplus trade with eastern Europe increased in 1960, largely as a result of the substantial export surplus earned in trade with the Soviet Union..."*

* Loc. cit. p. 43.

Yet hardly any western European country showed greater reticence in the debate on the advancement of east-west trade than did western Germany. She was isolated, and her isolation could not have been more complete if she had been denied access to the Economic Commission for Europe, like the other German state, the German Democratic Republic. The Common Market partners and other allies were evidently gratified by this unwonted modesty—but refrained from exhibiting their appreciation. Apparently, the policy of Adenauer's Germany cannot find expression at a European forum.

The position taken by the United Kingdom was rather inconsistent. British trade policy has had to face too many problems in the course of the past year, and it seems that only few of them could as yet be dealt with. Future relations with the Common Market on the one hand and with the Commonwealth on the other; the prospects of the EFTA, or rather the form and time of its inevitable end; rapidly growing imports and the falling off of exports; the ensuing problems presented by deficits in the balance of payments—due to hectic movements of capital—*i. e.* instability of the pound sterling; all these questions affect British economic policy and seem to have been responsible for the inconsistencies of the British attitude in Geneva. In 1960 Great Britain's trade with the socialist countries developed at a rate corresponding to the western average; the greatest increase was obtained in trade with the Soviet Union, the most important items of which were British shipments of machinery for the textile and chemical industries. The 1961 industrial fairs in Moscow and London, respectively, also evidenced the importance of this trade and the great interest both sides attached to the further advancement of their mutual economic relations. Yet the British delegation showed no sign of willingness to throw in the weight of Great Britain's authority in the interest of intensifying commerce. Moreover, on an extremely important point their attitude—in agreement with that of the US delegation—was entirely negative. This happened in a debate—no sooner begun than suppressed—on the possible economic consequences of general disarmament. In a most regrettable manner the British representative declined to discuss the problem declaring that it did not fall within the competence of the Committee on the Development of Trade, as if the termination of the arms race could not contribute to the development of both European and world trade!

Extensive discussion of the problem having been cancelled, there was no opportunity to propound the ideas which had brought the writer of the present article to Geneva, however fervent his desire to join in the world-wide chorus of those demanding peace and prosperity, disarma-

ment and confidence. The text of his undelivered speech would have run about thus:

None of the tasks facing the Committee on the Development of Trade could be more significant from the viewpoint of the progress and prosperity of European nations than that of working out the economic prospects that would be ushered in by general disarmament.

Indeed, if we come to look upon international trade as the most promising way of mobilizing the world's economic resources, it becomes clear that by blocking a considerable part of these resources, armaments inevitably diminish the volume and intensity of world trade—as well as of inter-European trade. This can be demonstrated graphically by the comparison of some aggregate data. Compared to 1938—the last year preceding the Second World War—the value of world exports, based on constant prices, has risen to somewhat more than double by 1960; but owing to the immense increase of the world population over the same period, the per capita value of world trade in 1960 hardly exceeded the 1938 level by more than 40 per cent. The per capita level attained in 1929, more than thirty years ago, at the peak of inter-war prosperity, has most probably not been surpassed by even 25 per cent.

No one can doubt that this very modest increase of 25 per cent has not nearly kept pace with the rapid development in the world's resources, that it lags far behind both our abilities and possibilities, that it does not meet our requirements or correspond to the advance witnessed in every domain of material production in the past thirty years. Where are the manufactured commodities, where the technologies which thirty years ago were considered as up-to-date? In technical museums. Where are the tools, the methods of production, the chemical agents employed in agriculture at that time—and where, for that matter, the crops of that period when compared with those attained since in agricultural production? And how do the means of communication and the capacity of world traffic of thirty years ago compare with those of the present day?

To say that in the course of the past thirty years the productivity of labour has over the whole field of economic activity been at least doubled, may be considered a very sober estimate of the progress achieved. World trade is undoubtedly lagging behind this extremely rapid development, a fact that cannot be denied even if in the view of some people it is obscured by the recent growth of trade in the case of a few countries.

On closer examination of the causes of this backwardness the conclusion is inevitable that—beside a number of other factors—it is due in the first place to armaments, to the great mass of material and spiritual resources

allocated to this purpose, which at present absorbs a greater part of the research and production capacities than before in times of peace—except during that darkest chapter of history, the years between 1933 and 1939 in Nazi Germany.

The example of the United Kingdom will perhaps serve as the best illustration of the correlation existing between the immense resources allocated to armaments on the one hand and world trade on the other. Of all European countries in the post-war period, it was the British government which spent the greatest proportion of the national income on armaments, on the development of the so-called "independent atomic weapons"; at the same time the United Kingdom, as regards international trade, remained farthest behind the world average, which is itself progressing at too slow a pace.

The yearly sum of about 100 thousand million dollars which might be released for other, productive purposes by a termination of the arms race would open immense possibilities to international trade. Who of us will fail to be reminded by this figure of another one of similar magnitude? The 100 thousand millions absorbed yearly by rearmament approximately equal the total annual value of world exports. And the growth of the former unfortunately keeps pace with that of the latter. Disarmament, as the most convincing proof of peaceful intentions and of international confidence, would by a single stroke sunder the whole network of political discriminations and embargos which now hamper the flow of trade. The productive forces released by disarmament would necessarily turn to the large-scale technical and cultural tasks presenting themselves all over the world, the solution of which—though within the scope of our present knowledge and technical abilities—could not be undertaken so far because the necessary resources have been swallowed up by the arms race. How many great projects concerning both East and West could be realized! How much could be done to make our world a better place to live in!

A landslide-like change would take place in the position of the backward countries. From the inevitably unfavourable position of countries *seeking* foreign aid in realizing their investment projects they would suddenly swing over into the opposite position of those whose favour and goodwill are sought by the bidders competing for investment and trade outlets. The present outrageous inequalities in world exports would be bound to decrease; no longer could the situation prevail where the industrially advanced capitalist countries with less than one fifth of the world population are the beneficiaries of more than three fifths of world exports, whereas barely one fifth of the latter falls to the share of the underdeveloped countries compris-

ing the vast majority of the world's peoples, and even this one fifth is largely monopolized by the great capitalist interests in oil, copper, rubber, etc. There is nothing to indicate that the present upward trend in trade between the advanced industrial countries would suffer a break in consequence of the termination of arms production—apart from the cyclical course inherent in capitalist production. On the contrary it seems most probable that this trend would be reinforced; that shifting over of the arms industries to other uses would rather increase the international turnover of industrial goods; that the methods of mass production and automatization employed in the manufacture of arms as well as the various new agents developed there would find their way much quicker than hitherto into the industries which serve peaceful purposes, again to the benefit of international trade. It may moreover be taken for certain that in a world where the guiding principles were swayed no longer by military strategy but by an endeavour to promote human welfare, the underdeveloped countries could greatly increase their participation in international trade. There would then be no coffee surplus in Latin America, Africa, and south-east Asia, nor unsaleable quantities of cocoa, sugar, and tea in the tropics. The eternally destitute millions in Asia, Africa, Latin America would no longer be deprived of the chance to draw strength from the surplus food which is at present rotting in the warehouses of America and Canada or which European farmers dare not even produce on account of the limited scope of their markets. And those who are now still dependent on food from other continents in order to gain strength and better their lot, the ominous legacy of colonialism, could within a few years give where at present they are still compelled to ask.

Disarmament constitutes one of the most important guarantees of the peaceful future of mankind. It is bound to bring about extensive changes in the present-day economic structure of the world, to prepare for which is the primary duty of every country and every international organization, including the Economic Council of Europe. The view that maintenance of the present level of employment in world economy depends on the continued production of arms and that disarmament or, more specifically, the termination of arms production would lead to lasting mass unemployment, crises and impoverishment cannot be considered worthy of discussion. True, millions are at present employed in the production of arms and further millions are under arms all over the world. But if the incessant and ever growing efforts devoted to the organization of arms production and of armies were to be diverted by the capitalist countries to the solution of the economic problems arising in connection with disarmament; if they were

to proceed as vigorously in organizing genuinely peaceful production as they have been in carrying out the militarization of their economies and the adaptation of war economy to a situation that can hardly be called peace but in which the most dreadful weapons of mass destruction have fortunately not been employed as yet—nobody could harbour any doubt about the solvability of the problem.

Of course, if the governments of the capitalist countries were to fold their arms and leave the necessary transformation of the economy to the operation of the market mechanism, troubles would inevitably arise. In this connection suffice it to point out that recently neither the United States nor the British or Dutch governments have left the solution of actual and threatening difficulties to the much-praised free market of the liberal theoreticians or to Say's harmony, but have resorted to state intervention whenever the market mechanism caused grave troubles and threatened to produce even worse. Disarmament economy *can* be organized—this is the conviction of economists almost without exception all over the world. And it *must* be organized—in the universal interest. Disarmament could not but serve to increase the volume of world trade and would provide it with new possibilities which, as a result of the rapid growth in productivity, have been present in a latent form ever since the end of the Second World War, but could not be utilized as yet owing precisely to the arms race.

Socialist economy, far from being afraid of the consequences, fervently wishes the realization of disarmament. It has no fear of unemployment, but, on the contrary, urgently needs the brains and brawn of every worker freed from unproductive labour. It anticipates no slackening of world trade in consequence of disarmament, but counts upon a spectacular upswing in which we wish to take an appropriate part."

Well, this speech remained undelivered in September 1961, at Geneva, however timely it would have been on that late summer day in the present strained international situation. It stands beyond dispute that general disarmament constitutes a problem and a task of primarily political character; its fundamental and universal importance, however, makes it the duty of everyone to share in furthering its solution. And being a political task makes it inseparable from the problem of east-west economic relations, where, at least for the time being, politics still play a decisive part.

In the past century, extension of the world market followed in the wake of imperialist wars, at the price of blood and tears. Though its way was paved with human suffering, the trade which came to embrace the globe has undeniably added to the wealth of the world. But it has also become instrumental in opening the eyes of the have-nots excluded from this

wealth and in making their voices irrepressible and their wrath unappeasable. In the remaining decades of the twentieth century, once so proud of its achievements, the world market will have to be reconstructed peacefully, without wars, to make the wealth derived from the international division of labour and all the treasures produced by human labour and by man's mind accessible to every inhabitant of this globe. Expanding and flourishing economic relations between East and West, resting on an intensified international division of labour—this is the foundation on which the reconstructed world market should be erected.

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DOING BRITAIN WITH A GIRAFFE

(First pages of a diary)

by

IVÁN BOLDIZSÁR

This part was written at home. My acquaintances in Britain, both old and new, appear to maintain contact with one another by means of some secret, imperialistic telecommunications system that is so far unknown to us. I can find no other explanation for the fact that they all, as they bad me farewell, said: "We're very curious to see what you're going to write about Britain. In the next issue of the Quarterly, I suppose?" I stammered an evasive answer, to which the English language is eminently suited; though it also permits one's partner to interpret these non-committal noises as an affirmative. I have thus landed in a "dog-squeezer"—an expression which cannot be rendered in English, nor needs to be for that matter, as the Hungarian metaphor speaks for itself. Let us presume that, since the collective question I have quoted was posed by the sons and daughters of an immensely individualistic people, we should subtract twenty-five per cent for understatement and twenty-four per cent for conventional courtesy. Even so, I am left with a fifty-one per cent obligation, impelling me really to publish something about this journey in the next issue of the Quarterly. Not to mention the fact that we appear to have some kind of socialist telecommunications what's-it here in Hungary too, for the question has also been asked in Budapest.

If you are sent to a foreign country as a private traveller but with more or less official approval, and if in that foreign country you are received, shown about and taken hither and thither as a private traveller but again with more or less official approval—if you land in Britain the way Goethe's fisherman plunged into the deep in pursuit of the mermaid he loved: "Halb zog sie ihn, halb sank er hin," then you have indeed to struggle hand and foot, if you want to avoid sinking. This is exactly what I have endeavoured to do in these travel notes and fragments from my diary. I have had no time to digest and polish them, because the incubation period of an issue of The New Hun-

garian Quarterly is four months. If I was to set about writing up my experiences as I would like and am in duty bound to do, then it would be the end of summer before they became a printed article in the Quarterly. Yet the least that I owe my hosts in Britain is that I should requite their polite curiosity as soon as I can.

In the pages that follow, I am therefore copying out a few leaves of my notebook. Most of the entries were made while travelling by train or car, or in the evenings, at night or at dawn, whenever I finally went to bed. The changes I am now making in the text supplement in the main the monosyllabic words which I put down to help my memory, and occasionally to attempt to recall what I thought or felt at the time. In some places I am adding a remark or two taken from a later page of my diary. I am well aware that this method is circumstantial. I know in advance that I shall not reach the end of my diary. But I am also aware that it is an essential feature of a diary that it should be detailed. I shall therefore start writing, and get as far as I can.

On the train between Folkstone and London, October 9th, 1961

Britain does not begin at the Cliffs of Dover, nor even at Calais, on the steamer. The latter was in any case French and surprised me with the worst French menu of my life—acting, perhaps, on the supposition that it would in any case soon be returned to the fish. The sea was indeed stormy. "*Un peu inquiète,*" said the French sailor as he asked whether he should take my suitcases down to the customs at Folkstone. "Rather rough," said the Immigration Officer, blotting up from his writing desk the remnants left by the Greek granny who had immigrated before me. Britain might have begun with him, but it began even earlier—in Paris, at the Gare du Nord, on the Calais train. There were six of us in the compartment: an American couple and three young Englishmen of my own age. I took out my notes; I would be able to prepare undisturbed for my journey to Britain. My travelling companions would be sure not to talk—the couple were busy with each other, while the Englishmen would be secluded, taciturn, unwilling to make friends with a stranger.

(This was the first superstition that was to be shattered. Within half an hour the Englishmen had asked me my nationality and why I was going to Britain.)

"So you edit an English-language periodical?"

"Yes."

"In Budapest?"

"Yes."

"Do they make you do it?"

"No."

"Is it a Communist propaganda pamphlet?"

"No."

"What's the sense of your doing it, if you don't have to?"

"You weren't obliged to go to Paris either."

Full-throated, boyish laughter.

(What did I like best in Britain? This.)

"What's your periodical like then?"

I thought it would be awkward to open my suitcase and dig out the latest issue—after all, I wasn't going to Britain to canvass for subscribers. An old Budapest joke occurred to me. "A little boy is taken to the Zoo for the first time. He stops in front of the giraffe's cage, rooted to the ground, just staring and staring. 'Do you like it?' his mother asks. 'I don't know,' answers the little boy. 'There's no such animal'."

"There's no such animal"—two of my English travelling companions said it in chorus with me. The old Budapest joke is an old London one as well. On board ship I took out the copy after all. My companions of the boat-train did not have to pass by the Immigration Officer, but one of them saw me in front of him and called over:

"This gentleman's travelling to Britain with a giraffe."

I repeated the giraffe story, showing the magazine this time. The official also appreciated the comparison.

(Henceforward I was to use it as a visiting card in Britain.)

I believe I finally succeeded in winning the sympathy of my fellow-travellers of the train by belonging to the midget minority of those on board the boat who did not return their lunch. The three Englishmen, with the half-bottle of tax-free whisky which they had purchased on board under their arm, stood round me. "We know that the greatest problem when you're abroad is the tip to give. We'll show you our British coins."

They stopped at the shilling piece. "Now this is a very nice coin for a tip. Would you give as much at home?"

"Yes," I said, for the sake of simplicity and as a matter of courtesy. I was immediately to regret it, for they now put the next qutesion:

"And how much is it worth in your money? What can you buy for it?"

It is always hard to convert foreign currencies, but it is particularly so when you are struggling with an ever more persistent bout of seasickness. The official rate of exchange for the pound is sixty-six forints, but in Paris I was told it was worth eighty, and Hungarians in London say it is a hundred,

especially when they are helping out a straitened tourist, against repayment to a Budapest aunt.

"About four forints."

"Would you give that much for a tip?"

"To whom, for instance?" I asked in return.

"A taxi driver. A lift-boy. A porter. A waiter."

I took them in turn—that I'd give it to a taxi driver for a long journey, or half as much to the lift-boy, that the porter would tell me his charge, that the tip to the waiter would depend on the bill and might well be more.

"And how much are your four forints worth? How long do you have to work to earn it? And a worker?"

I hesitated a moment, wondering whether I'd not do better to choose seasickness. (I did not know then that I was to conduct the same conversation four times a day.) A shilling is not much money in London, when you are giving a tip or paying it to travel from Russell Square to South Kensington by the Underground. Four forints are a lot of money in Budapest, when I am giving a tip, or if I was to be asked that much on the Underground or the tram, instead of the fifty fillérs (half a forint) my ticket actually costs. In Britain that shilling is one two-hundred-and-fortieth part of a bus conductor's weekly pay packet, in Hungary it is one hundredth. Yes, but your London bus conductor pays one third of his weekly wages for rent, his Budapest colleague one twentieth. What we finally decided, first on board the boat, then dozens of times again in London, Oxford, Stratford, Alvestone, Cambridge, Windsor, Eton, York, Harrowgate, Leeds and Hampstead (which is of course London, and yet not London—both more and also less), was that people's lives could not be expressed in money, and that the difference or similarity between every-day life in Britain and Hungary could therefore not be stated in those terms.

*

The train was waiting at Folkstone. There was a strong smell of carbolic acid that made my throat feel dry. It must be something in that sack on the platform. A good opportunity to drink my first cup of tea. I went to the buffet. It was much cleaner than an espresso in the inner city at home. The red plush settees were reminiscent of old-fashioned country confectioners' shops, the bead-strung lampshades of flats in Moscow.

The tea was good, the smell persisted. It accompanied me all the way, throughout all my journeys by train in Britain. I enquired several times to what this smell was due. "What smell?" No one notices the smell of carbolic

acid, not even the Hungarians living in Britain. It is rather tactless of me to do so too, for the trains are dream-like, the lavatory compartments have pale green or cream-coloured tiles, and the towel is dispensed by an automatic device called the towel-master, which always lets you have about twenty centimetres, and that snow white.

There are no coat-hooks in the compartments.

(It was only at home that I realized the reason lay in the excellent quality of British wool. People can simply fold and crumple their overcoats and put them in the net above.)

The train was still waiting. There were two hundred and fifty immigrants, Greeks from Crete and Italians from Sicily, on board the boat, complete with kith and caboodle—prams, grandmothers and a hundred little parcels—frightened and vociferous. The whole of Folkstone was one great cry of "Mamma mia!"—this was their anxious, yet happy greeting to their new foster-mother, the emerald isle.

For it is very green indeed. I was tired of waiting and went to the front of the train, to the engine outside the glass station building. I had really intended to have a look at the sea, but the view here is of the land. My eyes were dazzled, but pleasantly, by the brilliant green that reflects the light in a cool, filtered hue. It is October, the sun is shining, and the meadows, the gardens, the pavements, the houses, the sky are all as freshly, dewily, expectantly green, as they are for one week in May at home. The emerald isle, I muttered to myself, and was suddenly assailed by a feeling of uncertainty. It is not England, but Ireland that they call by that name.

(Throughout my journey I dared not ask anyone, because I did not know what English, Scottish, Welsh or perhaps Irish susceptibilities I might be offending. Most probably I would have offended none, for though a football match between England and Scotland is an "international" event, and though most people I met were, perhaps for my sake, eager to point out in a somewhat jocular manner whether they were English, Scot, Welsh or Irish, one has to be afflicted with the persistence of Central European traditions to be afraid of offending people by a mistake of this kind.)

I do not know how the English can ever forgive Dickens for having, in the imagination of Europe for the space of a century, smothered the sky and the land of their country in soot. The oppressive atmosphere of his masterpieces is more powerful than any recent picture, film spectacle or experience. I was surprised at the sunshine in England, the pretty, colourful houses, the small gardens that were clearly visible from the elevated corner of the station, at the Mediterranean richness of their flowers, and, a little beyond, at the provocatively blue sea. I first visited Britain twenty-eight years ago, I no

longer remember the month. Can it be that the sun never happened to shine just then? Or is the experience of Dickens more powerful than one's personal memory?

"Mamma! Mamma!" the Latin-voiced children and men behind me cried. Uncertain though I am as to the rightful owner of the title "Emerald Isle," some lines of poetry which I recall from early youth, from the distance of my Dickensian reading, certainly are about England: "This other Eden, demi-paradise... This precious stone set in the silver sea, which serves it..." Here my memory deserts me, but the end still rings in my ears: "This blessed plot, this earth, this realm, this England..."

(Back home I looked up the full text in Richard II, in the new Hungarian Complete Shakespeare. "*Ez új Éden, e fél-Paradicsom... Ezüst tengerbe foglalt drágakő, melynek a hullám épit védfalat...*" Ah, I have it "...which serves it in the office of a wall." György Somlyó's translation also has a fine rhythm, but seems somehow more archaic than the original.)

On the first evening, in London

This is the first time I have set foot in the Russell Hotel, but I know it well. I often assembled this structure from my set of toy building blocks at the age of five or six. The only difference was that the frontage of my model bore the inscription "Castle in the Carpathians." The reception desk asked to be excused because they only had a room on the sixth floor. I was glad of it, because there would be less noise from the street. Now that I have come up I am particularly grateful to them, for the window provides a view of London's new aerial contours, of what here too has come to be called by the American term "skyline." The tower of the Houses of Parliament is dwarfed by the skyscraper tower of Shell House.

(Several weeks later, I repeated this sentence among architects and town planners. One of them asked: "Do you propose to write this down at home as you have just said it?" "Probably," I said. "Don't do it," he objected. "People will ascribe a political double meaning to what you say.")

The trees of Russell Square are illuminated by green fluorescent lighting. If I stick my head out at the window I can see the glass roof of one of the halls of the British Museum. I would best have liked to run down, and carefully, so as not to harm the marble and to escape notice by the warden, to stroke of with my open palm the dust from the forehead of the moon goddess' horse on the Parthenon frieze. That was how I began and how I ended my last visit to London, twenty-eight years ago. A quick phone to the porter—unfortunately the Museum is closed. "Nine o'clock tomorrow morning, sir."

"Thank you, very kind of you." I put down the receiver. Nine o'clock tomorrow morning would not be the same thing.

I was nevertheless to meet the moon goddess' horse in the course of the evening. And thus there began the succession of chance encounters which was to accompany me throughout my visit to Britain. I had four the very first evening, and others almost every day subsequently. This may indeed have been one reason why I did not find the dimensions of London as oppressive as do my compatriots who live there. I am thinking not only of the dimensions in miles—they are in any case easier for the stranger to put up with than for the Londoner, or for the inhabitants of London's suburbs, who twice a day have to travel an hour and a half, by train, Underground or bus. The foreigner, for a long time, finds every journey interesting. From the bus he will be looking at the streets, on the Underground he will study faces. The really oppressive dimensions are those that weigh upon the mind. In Budapest everyone knows everyone else, or at least he has an acquaintance who knows the person unknown to him. In London nobody knows anybody, and how indeed could they, when there are more inhabitants than in all of Hungary, and more varied ones, at that? Fate is, it seems, a lover of animals (and therefore English?...), it likes giraffes, and thus allotted me a larger number of chance encounters than the average for the duration of my visit to London. By doing so, it was to lend me the help of the red road-marks of intimacy and the green ones of familiarity in the course of my wanderings, and occasionally, by repeatedly overfulfilling its benign plan, it managed so much to lessen the burden of strangeness that I was able to imagine I edited a periodical not only in the English language but in the English way and for English readers.

When, on that first evening, I reached the lowest of the steps in front of the hotel and had waved "no" to the uniformed gentleman who had wanted to whistle for a taxi, I strained my toes downward and let them just touch the pavement, as a shivery bather will before entering the water at the swimming pool. To dip into the same water after the passage of twenty-eight years is a process that arouses emotion and uncertainty. Is the water the same? And how much has remained of the bather of old, a generation later? What shall I remember—which street corner, which Lyon's Corner House, what people, and which of my youthful states of mind? I set off, slowly strolling under the trees of Russell Square. I was sure to have been here, for I had gone from the British Museum to the University. Whose lecture had I heard? A complete blackout, I thought. I remembered nobody. Then, suddenly, as I turned back into Southampton Row, the word "blackout" reminded me that I had argued till I was blue in the face with my contem-

poraries of those days. I had just come from Germany, and Hitler was a novelty. They did not believe me when I said there would be a war. I leapt with joy, as though I was really twenty again—now I knew why those somewhat bitter and coarse dregs had remained at the bottom of my London memories. I had been certain that there *would* be a war, and no one had wanted to believe me. Now I am certain that there will *not* be one, or, more precisely, that there will not be one after all. Will they believe me this time?

(My second great experience in Britain has been that more people believed this than I had dared hope, despite the fact that the big experimental nuclear bombs were being exploded just at the time of my visit.)

It was growing dark. Southampton Row conveyed nothing to me. It consists of modern commercial buildings of the period preceding the really modern style in architecture. I purposely did not have a look at the map, entrusting myself to the distant light-houses of my memories. If they flashed the right signals to me in the dark, I ought to land in Fleet Street.

As yet, the nearness of the University and of the great museum imprinted its mark on the shops. Two of them, with the inscription "Souvenirs," furnished proof of the international character of bad taste—of *les horreurs*. In another place they had a Harris Tweed coat put out at £ 7/10/—. I shall certainly buy one before I go home. But where? For in the next shop the same coat was marked £ 8 and something, and in the third it was only £ 6/10/-, though in this last place the price-tag also bore large exclamation marks. That prices differ in various parts of town is all right, but what is the difference between these shops, if the quality of the cloth is the same?

(I spent so much time hesitating, pondering and comparing prices, that I finally failed to buy a Harris Tweed coat.)

I met the moon goddess' horse at the Holborn Underground station. Its dilated and marvellous nostrils, its aristocratic ears and clever forehead shone at me brighter than the full moon, from above the papers of a newsvendor displayed against one of the square, white-tiled pillars of the Underground station. I was so enchanted with it, I nearly neighed at it. What was it doing out here, in a public thoroughfare? My joy became complete when I discovered that the horse of the goddess Silene was actually one of the British Museum's posters. It has a very clever text to introduce it to passers-by in the street and enjoins them, if they wish to make a closer acquaintance with it, to look it up among the Elgin Marbles at the British Museum.

I walked round the pillar. The moon goddess' horse was not alone. Beside its moon-coloured golden-violet poster there was yet another. A crowned head, a sceptre, beside them lace-frilled Elizabethan ladies, in the distance

the four towers of the Tower of London. This time, the text beneath was more than clever; it was downright sophisticated. I jotted it down, glancing up occasionally as I did so, to see whether I was not being too conspicuous, standing in front of a poster with a notebook in my hand. (I was a beginner in London. Now I know that even if I had stood on my hands and held my pen between my toes, no one would have turned to have a look, unless I had put a cap on the pavement to indicate that I was a spectacle.)

The text recommends the national Pantheon of the English to the attention of the honourable public in the kind of intimately couched terms used in the advertisements of the Daily Mirror, with their personal appeal to the reader. The motto and the clue is: personal contact. Here, at the Underground station you are led to fraternize with the kings of England: "Was Edward III in his later years a great old man, or an immortal dotard? Was his Queen Philippe as good a cook as she looks? Was Richard II a neurotic dictator or an Oxford don? Was his Queen Anne of Bohemia a beloved spouse or a crusty accomplice? Was Henry VII really as scholarly as he looked at Timpare? Let the Royal effigies in Westminster Abbey give you their own answers to such questions..."

(They did not answer me. I visited Westminster Abbey twice. On the first occasion a former cabinet minister was being buried, and without a top hat I was unable even to get near the entrance: I consoled myself with the magnificent Chapterhouse. On the second, it was getting dark and I saw little of the royal profiles. In any case I was more attracted by the pointed arches and clustered pillars. Next time, twenty-eight years hence.)

I did not recognize Fleet Street. What I recalled, was a narrow, dark lane. Memories usually grow—what had made this one contract? Perhaps reality was here being expanded by the neon-lit walls of the newspaper offices. *The Daily Telegraph* had then still borne in its subtitle, the *Morning Post*, the name of its mother whom it was later to swallow up like the monsters of mythology, when I first ventured to enter its premises after loitering about outside for half a day. I was a medical student then and had published some short stories. What was I after here? I wanted to give up medicine, for the sake of only writing short stories. "I'd like to lay out," I said to the lady who had disguised herself as Queen Mary and was keeping court in the News Editor's anteroom.

"Have you ever learnt boxing?" she asked. I cannot understand to this day why I was not surprised at her question. Probably I was then better able, even without specific study, to appreciate or to divine English ways of thought. I had in any case learnt to box, and said so without undue pride.

"All right then. Take this and go up to Mr. Brown."

I went up, and for two months I learned laying on the slab. (This I discovered, was the English expression for setting up type print.) In the meantime I waited in vain for the day when I would have to do some boxing with Mr. Brown, or when he would send me to write a report on a boxing match. I turned the conversation to boxing on a few occasions, but he listened to me with the same obliging, enchantingly distracted attention that he devoted to anything else I had to say, or indeed to what anyone said to him. I loathed Mr. Brown.

Fleet Street was narrow in those days, and I ran short of money during the third week. But that is another story. I wonder who is now sitting in Mr. Brown's tall, slender, tennis-umpire's chair, from which he directed the process of laying out and taught me to read English texts backwards from the lead type-face?

I walked on as far as the Strand, because Mr. Brown had been in the habit of saying: "Remember this even when you'll be going to lunch with Parliamentary Private Secretaries at Simpson's in the Strand." I had frequently made the pilgrimage to stand outside Simpson's in the Strand and watch the Parliamentary Private Secretaries as they went to have lunch in their black jackets and pin-striped trousers. I was proud, then, that I had taken my school leaving exams in the same uniform. According to my recollection, it was just a stone's throw from Fleet Street to Simpson's. It now seems as if I could have thrown a stone even further then. Twenty minutes, half an hour — what a lot of new shops—I grew tired and gave it up.

*

I was waiting for tea in the lobby of the hotel. Opposite me, a little to the left, a man with a baldish, black, elongated head sprawled in an arm-chair. From time to time I caught a glimpse of his face behind the Guardian. I was sure I knew the high brow, broadening towards the top, from somewhere. I went up to the reception desk and asked who he was. The clerk thumbed through a suspended card-index. He is as pink-cheeked as though he had been painted by Gainsborough. He wears the same black jacket and pin-striped trousers as the Parliamentary Private Secretaries and as the leaving students at Budapest in 1930. His enlarged photo could well be displayed at a British exhibition abroad, with the inscription: "*The perfect English gentleman.*" His name, however, is Mr. Svéd; he came to England in the spring of 1956, from Miskolc if I am not mistaken. But he only confided this a week later. Now, faultlessly drawling in his public-school English, he said:

"A gentleman from Columbia."

I ambled back to my arm-chair and poured out my tea. The gentleman from Columbia slapped me on the shoulder from behind:

"Iván, old chap! How come? When did you escape?"

I recognized him now. We gave each other a hug. He was Péter Áldor, the cartoonist. He had drawn for my weekly, the *Új Magyarország*, for a couple of years immediately after Liberation.

"Do you remember Zakariás Dinnye?" he asked, and his pencil was already at work to resuscitate him. There was no need to. Everyone in Budapest remembers Péter Áldor's characteristic figure, the Hungarian Colonel Blimp, with his bowler hat, cane and growling countenance.

"But how did you happen to come here from Columbia?"

"That's simple. The British Council has invited me, as a representative of the Columbian intelligentsia."

We went up to his room. Photos, drawings, his wife, car, villa, successes.

"So you've made a fine career?"

"Is that what the folk in Budapest would call it?"

"Yes."

"But they don't."

"No, because they don't know about you."

"Will you dare to tell them you met me? Won't you land in trouble if you do?"

"In Budapest I would answer that you are a fool. But in London people are more polite. I'll even write about it."

He did not believe me, but was moved and patted my shoulder.

"What exactly was it that made you leave home?" I asked.

"Don't you remember?"

I remembered now. He had gone for purely racial reasons. He had no quarrel with the new world, where he was appreciated. But the shadows of the murdered would not let him rest. He went legally, and in his application for an emigration passport he wrote: "Because of racial discrimination."

"So you really remember?" he asked. "Well, that is amusing. Look at this."

He showed me his Columbian identity certificate. It has a heading marked "colour of skin." He translated the Spanish entry—it said "brown." I know his face, but now I had another look. It was not Gainsborough pink, but it was no darker than that of any of us.

He laughed, guffawing and slapping his knee. "In Columbia a thin stratum of Spanish aristocrats are on top. Only they are real "whites," the

people are Indians or half-castes. Those who come from somewhere else are not real Spaniards, therefore not real whites, therefore their skins are brown. My wife and I have had many a good laugh about this."

The first day

On the first day everything is interesting. (I made this entry in London, and after it I only put down some words: "taxi; newspapers; men's clothes; Zola; thank you—thank you; coffee." I must now try and fit the appropriate memories to each. I do not know whether I shall succeed everywhere. Really good stuff about a city can be written by those who have seen it for one day, or for a week at the most. At the very beginning of a love affaire every word is significant, every movement interesting, every birth-mark has a mysterious meaning, and every sigh portends a whole world. I think my four weeks were not too little, but they were too much of London for me to be able to write down what I saw. Yet they weren't enough to permit me to believe I know London.)

Taxi. They are all black and were all built specially for the purpose. The idea is that the passenger should not have to bow his head as he gets in. This was explained to me by the taxi-driver himself, but not on the way, for that is impossible. The passenger is sealed off from the driver by a window, and by the driver's side there is a special open space with straps for luggage.

"And the Minicabs?" I asked, for already on the Continent I had read about the London taxi battle.

"Would you take a car, sir, where you have to contort yourself to squeeze in?"

I did not dare admit to him that I do this several times a day, for I have the same kind of car at home as the rebellious Minicabs: one of Renault's Dauphines. An enterprising London firm has bought a few hundred Dauphines and takes its passengers for cheaper fares. The old taxi-men call the new ones rebels. They beat up one of them almost every day. This has led to an increase in the number of candidates for a job as Minicab-driver.

"So the Minicab people are in revolt against the establishment?" I asked my chauffeur.

"Against what, sir?"

Newspapers. The morning papers are set out in the hotel lobby, beside them a small wooden box. You help yourself and drop your pennies in. It occurred to me that in the eyes of many of my Budapest friends I was

now the most enviable of people — I could read British papers on the day of publication. It is while I write this that I notice how important that last phrase—"on the day of publication"—really is. Five or six years ago I would have written the sentence without that clause. Just read it again, will you? What a difference! I mention this, because it cropped up in almost every conversation. No, Western papers other than left-wing cannot be bought from street vendors or at news-stands in Hungary. Yes, nevertheless practically everyone who is really interested in and capable of reading British papers, may do so. "You are joking." I am not joking, though occasionally I felt tempted to have a visiting-card-size text printed (in London a visiting card can be had in twenty-four hours, unlike Budapest, where it may take as much as twenty-four days...) The text on this card might have been: "Foreign papers may be read in the periodical rooms of some great public libraries, at offices, ministries, editorial offices, the bureaux of factories and trading concerns." "Are they available to everyone?" I say: "Practically speaking, yes." Very persistent questioners would still go on: "Even in small towns? And in the villages?" I was almost glad finally to be able to satisfy their wishes: "No, not there. But people can do as much listening to the press reviews of, say, the London broadcasts, as they can put up with." "And do they listen to them?" That was a question I could not answer. But I did tell them my own frequent experience with the British press. Since I have been editing The New Hungarian Quarterly we subscribe to a number of British papers at our offices—dailies, weeklies, magazines, with and without illustrations. I have had several of my friends, former school-fellows, vague acquaintances and relatives six times removed, dropping in and saying: "I say, old boy, couldn't you let me have The Times for a day or two? I'll take care of it, don't worry, I'll take it and bring it in a dispatch-case, I shan't let it out of my hands." *Tolle, lege.* From this point the story proceeds along the same rails, only the passengers differ. At first they come in to exchange their papers every second day, then only after a week, then they forget to bring them back and reappear with a guilty look a month later. "Do you want another packet?" Hesitant smiles. "No thank you, you know I haven't the time... And they're so boring for us. How on earth can they manage to scribble so much every day? And who reads it all?"

I am firmly convinced that *The Times* could perfectly well be sold at the Budapest and provincial news-stands. The worst that might happen would be that the Circulation Manager at Queen Victoria Street would not understand why so many copies were returned after the third week. He would suspect that there was a plot by the authorities behind it, and who could

convince him of the opposite? I, at any rate, would certainly not undertake to do so.

Here were the fresh morning papers in front of me, and I felt like the little boy in the sweet-shop. I bought *The Times*, of course, and the *Guardian*. Also the *Daily Mirror*—hee-hee, I shall be reading the adventures of Garth and Buck Ryan two days earlier than Lajos Korolovszky, my accomplice in Garthism and Buck-Ryaning in the editorial offices at home.

"The Mirror too, sir?" asked the newsagent's lady.

"Yes please."

She looked at me and took my measure.

"Are you sure, sir?"

"Of course I am," I replied.

"All right, sir. Excuse me, sir."

(I only came to understand her reluctance a few days later. I saw her surprised, somewhat wondering look reappear on every face when my answer to the question: "And what British papers do you read in Budapest?" included the *Daily Mirror*. I seemed forthwith to topple down a few floors on the stairs of the classes. A tolerant smile was all I got when I tried to explain that, after all, this paper appears in five million copies. "Well, and?"... If you are living in Budapest and want to have at least some idea of the British, you have to know what it is that interests five million readers every day.)

I also bought the *Daily Telegraph*, because it has the reputation of being a good paper, but at home I simply cannot get round to reading or even to opening it. The *Daily Express* too I added to the packet, for it is read by hardly less—by no fewer—by more people (let the reader delete what he finds unsuited) than the *Daily Mirror*. I did not buy the *Daily Mail* because ever since my childhood days—Hungary's Place in the Sun, by Lord Rothermere—I avoid it. Though I ought really to be grateful to him, because I first became a republican when as Boy Scouts we were made to attend the reception of Edmond Harmsworth of whom rumour had it that he was to be elected king of Hungary.

I took the papers and went to the breakfast-room, but was unable to read so much as a line, because I did not have the knack of folding the pages. I need not have had it for the *Daily Mirror*, but I looked round in the Russell Hotel, and for the sake of my future reputation I concealed the Mirror under the rest. I hurried over my breakfast, which is a deadly sin, and went out into the lounge to read the papers. I read the front-page headlines of the Guardian, the first leader of The Times, took one glance at the pictures in the Mirror, looked for, but did not find, Michael Frayn

in the Guardian, then glanced at the clock and took the papers up to my room. I had a bad conscience all day. Late at night I wanted to make up for my omission, but my eyes would not stay open.

The next morning the news-lady had the five morning papers assembled for me without my asking. I had risen earlier, I ran through the leaders in The Times and marked two articles on the arts page of the Guardian with a red pencil. Meanwhile, my conscience would not let me rest: the previous day's papers lay unread in my room. I would tackle them in the evening.

On the third morning I did not have the strength of spirit to refuse the packet of five papers. I had an early program and I carried the Guardian about with me all day. By evening it looked as worn as though I had carefully perused it.

On the fourth day I only bought The Times and the Guardian, and my conscience improved somewhat. From the fifth, I alternately bought The Times one day and the Guardian the next. After a fortnight I learned how to fold my papers and actually managed to read about one twentieth of their contents during breakfast. In the remaining period my diligent public opinion polls led me to conclude that my opposite numbers had read little more. And also that there are secret Mirror and Express addicts. They look round furtively at the Underground station to see that there are no acquaintances in sight, buy their paper, read it on the train, and leave it there. They incidentally also leave their Times there. The Mirror for reasons of snobbery, The Times because of its weight.)

Men's clothes. In London I felt that my dark grey suit, which I even wear to go to the theatre in Budapest and of which members of my family say it is grandfatherly, was ludicrously summery and rustic. Everyone goes about in black—morning, noon and evening. The type of cloth we call "English" is what is worn at week-ends in the country. London is a man's city—there are three or four men's fashion stores for every women's.

Zola. There is a small store in Shaftesbury Avenue. You can get everything here, from airborne suitcases to screwdrivers and transistor radio sets, and it is claimed that they are all a little cheaper than elswhere. The everything includes books. Each book has a wrapper around its belly, with an explanatory note. I took one down:

"Exciting novel, very sexy. The author was imprisoned for his daring."

The author, Zola; the novel, "Thérèse Raquin."

(I know in advance that all my British friends will bear me a grudge for this little observation. I only put it down here to let them know what it feels like when a British visitor to Budapest picks on some particularly hair-raising, singular item, makes a note of it, and writes about it, omitting to

add that it is not a general phenomenon, that he only saw this one instance and has used it to draw conclusions on the low level of Hungarian literary or non-literary tastes.)

Thank you—thank you. It was not the tips that caused me the greatest concern as a tourist in London, but the thank-yous. Everyone always thanks everybody for everything. If there is one thing that I would compulsorily import into Hungary with immediate effect, it is this habit. Yes, but what are you to answer? In Hungarian or German you say *kérem, bitte.* In French, *pas de quoi.* Unfortunately I also tried this in English, saying *please* and *never mind.* People just stared at me. It took me several days before I learned that the answer to *thank you,* was *thank you.* This discouraged me a little. Can it be that the first, original *thank you* also means less than our rarer Hungarian *köszönöm?*

Coffee. No comment.

*

But what did I do, during my first day in London? I do not know, I cannot remember. I meandered about in the streets. I phoned people whom I had not seen for ten years. I had read in one of the London papers back in Budapest that the Park Crescent had been rebuilt. I can no longer remember whether I saw it during my previous visit or whether it was its picture that I recalled, but I had an irresistible urge immediately to have a look at it. I felt a special hatred for the German bomb, complete with its maker and aimer, that hit this terrestrial half-moon.

The sun shone through the mist. The park shimmered slightly, its contours uncertain. Beyond a spacious green lawn, the new moon had indeed descended to the earth. The gentle crescent of ivory-white houses, that again and again aroused my admiration, had now taken on a violet and gold-dust hue, striving to be worthy of the name of the place. Where can its designer have set the point of his compass on the map of London, to get the breath-like arc of his circle to appear at this very spot, to be at once a building, with pillars, porticos, windows and proportions, and also the crescent of the moon?

I went along to Eaton Place. When our Minister, who unsuccessfully endeavours to conceal his original, gruff friendliness behind a façade of smooth diplomatic amiability—his only failure, as far as I was able to see, since he has been in London—gave me the address of our Legation, I felt my head jerk at the name "Eaton Place." Now what was the novel in which I had encountered it? I seemed to remember a young woman in a pink silk dress flitting out at the front door of one of the minor mansions

there... As the Underground whisked me to Sloane Square I mentally thumbed through dozens of novels. I could not recall it.

While I sought among the innumerable Eaton roads, squares, streets, gardens, terraces and even mews for the deliverance of a Place, I came across a somewhat bitter item from the history of my youth—Cliveden Street. I had imagined the homes of the *Cliveden set* to have been rather different: splendid palaces, French courts, gardens, many storeys. Instead, here were these narrow houses, though each with a different decorative pattern on its single-winged front door, each with its carvings, statues and reliefs, and none less than two centuries old. The splendour, the palace, the money is concealed beyond them. How could they, from *this* environment, have fraternized with *that?*

Eaton Place has a hundred identical, narrow front doors along either side, each flanked by four pillars. And there, flitting out from the neighbouring front door, is the pink-clad lady. She smiles at me, and her look, her shoes, her Rolls Royce immediately remind me of the author I was searching for. It was, of course, our Kosztolányi, and not in a novel but in travel notes written in 1927, in which he so aptly depicted the elegant folk of Eaton Place that my memory had livened his description into action.

Another word put against the first day in my notebook was *hó*. I have racked my brains for days to discover what this catchword stands for. It was only just now, as I looked out at the window and saw the snow on the pines, that it all came back to me. I had, of course, been explaining to W. that the Hungarian word for "snow" was *hó*, and actually wrote it down for him, because he asked whether it was spelt with a *w* at the end. I had dropped my four millstone-sized pennies into the slot of a phone-booth at Camden Town Underground Station, although it would have been more apposite to call C. P. Snow from somewhere in the vicinity of Whitehall, as the next best thing to putting a toll-call through from Cambridge. I felt a touch of timidity—this was the first English stranger on whom I was to intrude by phone. The excuse that I found for myself was that he was not wholly a stranger to me, for I had read three of his novels and he had also been the first Englishman to send an article for The New Hungarian Quarterly. He would be sure not to understand my name. I decided to begin straight away by spelling it: B for Birmingham, O for Oscar, L for London... However, I did not even get as far as Birmingham before I heard my name echoed with a fullthroated Falstaffian chuckle and an impeccable pronunciation, to be followed immediately by a fluent enumeration—as though, indeed, he had been thinking about nothing else all day—of the articles he had read in the latest issue of our periodical and of what

he had thought of each item. And: "Tomorrow, no, just a moment... Pamela!" I heard his deep bear's voice through the phone, as he must have shouted towards the neighbouring room. I did not catch the rest, but while I waited for the answer I felt as though Fate had done me a special favour—here were two famous English authors, C. P. Snow and Pamela Hansworth Johnson, talking about when they could receive me. "Will the evening of the day after tomorrow suit you?" "This is why I've come to London."

"How now?" Falstaff asked. "Is it only in your magazine that you consider understatement obligatory?"

The day of planning, October 11th

I must confess that I stole my first day from the British Council. I had hardly arrived when they phoned to ask when we could get together to draw up my program. They suggested the next day. I pleaded the excuse of an official appointment at the Legation. I needed one engagement-free day to look about, get the feel of the place, and not be tied to a time-schedule. But on the second day I went to pay my respects to the people at Davies Street.

In the lift I was overcome by a feeling of uneasiness. The doors close and open by themselves, then close again without another button being pressed. There is a house telephone set on the wall of the cubicle, with the legend: "In case of danger dial 9." On my third journey, that same day, a young member of the staff lifted the receiver and dialled. "Is there anything wrong?" I asked. I trust my voice did not quaver. He covered the mouthpiece with one hand and said: "Oh no. It's only that all the phones in the rooms are always engaged. I can be certain of getting a town line here."

The Central Office of Information, which is actually none other than the former Ministry of Information, also took part in the preparation of the program. (I do not know to this day exactly how the British Council and the C. O. I. shared out the items of my program among each other, but I do know that both institutions and all the members of their staffs with whom I had anything to do were engagingly cheerful, ready to accept and return my banter, and at the same time admirably efficient.)

They asked me what I would like to see. The only answer I could give was to ask what they would like to show me.

"Whatever you like."

"Whatever *you* like."

When it came to plays, I asked to see Osborne's *Luther*, Arnold Wesker's *The Kitchen* and Snow's *The Affair*. They nodded and made notes.

"And the *Mousetrap*," I added.

I had nine partners in this conversation and all nine sat back in their chairs. "The *Mousetrap?* But that's an Agatha Christie piece."

"That is exactly why I'd like to see it."

"Well, but it's a detective story. Isn't it a waste of your time?"

I said that as far as I knew the play had been running for nine years on end at the same theatre. They hemmed and hawed—a process to which the English language, with its sing-song half sounds, is eminently suited. "Now if that is so," I continued, "then it would interest me as a phenomenon of social and mass psychology."

There was no enthusiasm among the honourable members of the conference.

"And finally," I said, "I've already come to like everything in Britain very much. I am sure you too will show me many excellent things. You must give me an opportunity also to exercise negative criticism over something."

Laughter and approval. My proposal was sportsmanlike and would be accepted.

I asked for J. B. Priestley. Hemming again. He was not in London, he was working on a novel and could not spare much time for visitors... But they would have a try. By all means.

*

In the afternoon I went to Collet's Bookshop in Museum Street. I had a great thrill—a fair-haired, bearded undergraduate, wearing a sweater, bought a copy of No. 3 of The New Hungarian Quarterly for cash, before my very eyes. The sales-lady, who is of Hungarian extraction and actually called Mrs. Magyar, winked at me, as much as to ask whether I had seen him. He leaned against a bookshelf and started reading the magazine straight away. Mrs. Magyar, who knows the student, asked him whether he was looking for anything in particular. He told her with a disappointed look that he was, but in vain. "They promised an article in the previous issue," he said, and under cover of another book I came as near as I could. "On the harmonic and formal structure of Béla Bartók's music. It isn't in this issue."

The obliging Mrs. Magyar promised to let the editors know.

"Oh, I wouldn't like to put you to the trouble."

"You have no idea how easy it will be," said Mrs. Magyar.

In Hungary I would have gone up to the unknown customer, but in Britain I felt this would be tactless and forward behaviour. I hope he will buy the present issue and read—though still not the promised article—this reassurance that the essay is being prepared and will shortly appear.

The first workday, October 12th

A phone call in the morning, followed by a messenger bringing a letter. I am to call on Mr. Willett at the editorial offices of *The Times Literary Supplement* at twelve o'clock. I knew that The Times was an ancient and respectable institution, but I would nevertheless not have imagined that it dwelt in so decrepit and ugly a group of buildings. I had no luck with the porter. The blue-uniformed rear-admiral who occupies a vantage point in the building could simply not manage to understand my name. (This was, incidentally, both the first and last instance where this occurred.) Finally I wrote it down for him. He was sorry, but he could not find Mr. Willett. I was sorry, but I would go away. I should not do that, there was a waiting-room just by the porter's lodge, a copy of the latest Times, and would I please take a seat. At last I had an opportunity to read The Times, completely undisturbed. Half an hour later, though there was still much left in the paper that I had not read, I felt I had sat as much as the difference between The Times and The New Hungarian Quarterly warranted.

I got up and folded the paper. At this juncture Mr. Willett appeared. I was sorry for him the moment I saw him. It was obvious that he had been working or had forgotten about me, which amounts to the same thing, but that at all events he had not kept me waiting purposely. I did not, in fact, let him complete his apology, but interrupted him and told him I would be glad to wait the whole day long for him, because I was grateful for the review of the first issue of our magazine which had appeared in the Literary Supplement. I did not sit down but took my coat and started for the door, in the belief that we would be going up to his offices. However, he asked me to sit down, and at this all that I was going to say froze in me. We were on such neutral ground, in so bleak a waiting room, that my thoughts—and, as far as I could see, his too—failed to find a handle which they could grip, to pull themselves out from the terrain of stereotyped conversational commonplaces. I would have liked to ask him to have someone write again about our periodical, but the atmosphere was not sufficiently personal. Finally we talked about a book by Albert Vajda, a Hungarian humorist who is living in London—a strange confession entitled *Négyszemközt a szememmel* ("Eye-to-eye with my eyes"). It has not been published in English, but was nevertheless reviewed. I told him that Vajda's friends in Budapest had learned about the loss of his eyesight from The Times Literary Supplement.

We got no further. I had an invitation for lunch at one and would be late in any case. Mr. Willett saw me to the street and showed me the bus stop.

Newsprint was being unloaded from large lorries. This loosened our tongues. Willett told me that The Times had only recently bought the paper mill. I suddenly felt that we might have gone on talking for hours.

My luncheon invitation was to the Travellers' Club. My host was Robert Duke, the head of a department of the British Council and a Budapest acquaintance of ten years' standing. "You'll probably be interested to see one of our English clubs," he said as he invited me. (I was to be invited with the same motto on six subsequent occasions. I must admit that I never had the nerve to tell the rest that they were not the first to invite me.)

The lunch began with oysters, followed by roast mutton and finished with Stilton—a cheese that is wrapped in a napkin. You have to scrape it out with a spoon, starting at the middle. It was tasty and exciting. I noticed that my host wrote out his own orders on a pad.

"Why do you have to do that yourself," I asked, "with the waitress standing there at the end of the table?"

"That's so that a gentleman can go to his club and have lunch without having to say a word to anyone."

Fortunately Mr. Duke was busy with his cheese and did not notice my expression.

After lunch I had a date with the most charming young lady I was to meet in Britain.

I have the British Council to thank for this acquaintance. It was they who assigned Mrs. Elizabeth MacLeod to accompany me when, having glanced at the draft of my program, crammed with a host of meetings and visits, I complained: "I shall see everything, except London." They then proposed that I should devote my brief spare time to walking about with an official guide. I was not particularly enthusiastic over the idea, until I had spent my first quarter hour with Mrs. MacLeod. She not only knew London, but showed me every nook, every inn, old wall or rarely visited museum, as though herself seeing it for the first time, yet at the same time also in the way the ladies of old showed their houses, which really were castles. And what good laughs we had together, for instance when we decided that, supposing we had been allotted half an hour for Westminster Abbey, we would rather go to the George and Vulture Inn. It seemed to recall something to me. "Didn't Dickens go there? Or did he write about it?"

"He went there and he wrote about it. But that's not why we're going there".

"Why, then?"

"First, because that's where they have the best mutton chop in London. Second, because women don't generally go there for lunch and I love to

see your fellow men looking daggers at me, as much as to say 'What's this old hag doing here?'"

The mutton was delicious, I scolded her for the "hag," and the guests of the George and Vulture took Mrs. MacLeod for granted, at least so I thought, though to the British eye she was being stared at all the time. We wandered about in London as though we were contemporaries—undergraduates of course—though when, in her student days, she had volunteered as a nurse for the Dardanelles, I could not yet write my name.

This afternoon it was the banking quarter's turn. She showed me the building of the Bank of England. I thought it was awful and maintained a profound silence.

"Don't you like it?" asked Mrs. MacLeod.

This was at the very beginning of our acquaintance, so I was now even more profoundly silent. Her eyes glinted, "Hideous, isn't it?" I smiled back at her, for a guest has duties, as well as rights. "Yet what a lovely, fine building it once was, even during the Great War. You know that practically nothing has been left of Soane's building?"

I did not know. My imagination at once attached a photo of the Bank of England to the name of Sir John Soane—the picture of the present Bank, of course. "Not at all! It was rebuilt in the twenties, and later too, they went on for years. Nothing has been left of Soane."

"Then we might as well go on," I said.

"Wait a moment. There is something, after all."

We went in at the main entrance. A giant in fancy dress barred our way, but on seeing my guide he smiled. "All right for you, madam." We had a look at one of the right-hand offices—a hall where Soane had, at the end of the eighteenth century, experimented with modern, indirect ceiling illumination, doing it all with lemon-coloured marble recesses and arches. A rococo banking hall. Mrs. MacLeod assured me that she did not show it to everyone. Those who say that the building is splendid from the outside do not deserve to be shown it from within. "This, and the staircase." The staircase leads eight storeys upward from the street level, and four or five downwards. What lovely playing with intertwined fairy-like ellipses!

We passed by the Stock Exchange. I had only been in London a few days, so I still gazed in surprise at every young man in a bowler hat and pin-striped trousers, carrying an umbrella. Here was one in a top hat, coming towards us. "That must be the managing director."

"I'm afraid he's more likely to be a messenger.... It's not worth while going to the Stock Exchange—it's become just like any other." I confessed that I had never seen any of the others either. I was

given a startled glance—Mrs. MacLeod seemed to think I was pulling her leg. You cannot, of course, enter the Stock Exchange itself, but recently a small, closed box has been opened for visitors, above the floor of the hall. This was where we went. A humming, teeming scene. Solemnly dressed gentlemen, some with their hats on, stroll about in the hall, go up to one another, exchange a few words, then jot something down in a tiny notebook. The deal has been concluded. Some do not put down anything. The deal is valid nevertheless.

My guide peered intently at a pillar which had the stock quotations written on it. She was annoyed. "I'm afraid I can't read them."

"Don't bother," I said, "it's all the same to me."

"But not to me."

"Have you got shares?"

"Of course. Well, not many, but I do have some."

"Do you speculate with them?"

"I don't, but my bank does. But why are you so surprised at this?"

She was right. Why was I surprised? I could not explain to her that I somehow considered this as old-fashioned a business as double-decker aeroplanes. She, on the other hand, thought me old-fashioned for putting my money in the bank instead of buying shares with it. Towards the end of our friendship I managed to get her to accept the fact that we have no Stock Exchange, no shares and no shareholders; she would never believe, however, that I did not keep my money in the bank, but...

*

In the evening I had stage-fright. I had been invited to C. P. Snow's. He was so good and obliging to The New Hungarian Quarterly at its inception that I would not dare to tell him how relatively late his name had become known in Hungary. Instead, I would rather say that I had first heard of him through Christopher Marsden, in an English-language book review broadcast from London. It had treated the fifth volume of his series of novels, and I was a little put off by this fact, though at the same time, I found Snow's highly attractive. At that time I was tormenting myself by writing a novel about a scientist, and doing so in the first person singular, at that. I envied Snow who—as it indirectly appeared from the review (for Marsden could justifiably presume that every listener was surely aware of the fact)—is both an author and a physicist. I obtained some volumes of his novels, but was unable to find a copy of the first and therefore fought shy of the rest. Later few pieces of

writing had such a fertilizing influence on me as the Two Cultures. It was through this work and through Snow's controversy on the BBC and in *Encounter*, that I began discovering present-day Britain for myself, at the time when I was given, and accepted, my giraffe-taming assignment.

The source of my stage-fright was that I was anxious not to be disappointed in my personal expectations, and also that I had still read only three of his novels and none by his wife, Pamela Hansford Johnson. The first cause for stage-fright was at once allayed—he was exactly like himself, that is, like Lewis Eliot, the central figure of his Strangers and Brothers. Only, while the hero of the novel had Hamlet for a relative, the author's was Falstaff. My other reason for anxiety was only partly overcome. Right at the beginning of the conversation I held up my fellow-guest, William Cooper, as a shield in front of me, and while taking cover behind him, I basely betrayed him. I told them that Cooper had given me a copy of his little book about Snow in Budapest, saying that it contained all I needed and I could save myself the exhausting labour of reading his novels.

I shall not forget the long, sonorous, leonine roar of undergraduate laughter that answered my anecdote. The very arm-chair rocked as he guffawed. Cooper kept him company, and so did the ladies. Later I realized that the two friends were always baiting each other, like students, and that I had furnished ammunition for the game. They obviously took it in good part, for Cooper soon turned the tables—he asked me the same question I had put to him on one of the last days of his stay in Hungary: "What did you like least?"

Unfortunately he had stolen a march on me in giving the best answer ("I'll only be able to tell you in a month's time. . . "), and I therefore had to make do with an evasion.

"I've been here no more than a few days, so for the time being I can only answer the opposite of that question."

"That's very much less interesting," said Snow, "but let's have it."

I asked to be excused for having, after so brief a stay, already fabricated theories about the English, but that was something you either did on the grounds of your first impressions, or not at all. I added that my theorem would be couched in its ultimate form here, in this very arm-chair—another burst of leonine laughter—and that the two of them, or with their wives the four, were to be my accessories in the crime of its formulation. Returning to the question, what I had liked best was that the English were actually different from the picture that lives in people's minds. English sang-froid, detachment, reserve, anti-intimacy, in fact all the traits that gave rise to the question: "The English, are they human?" are nowhere to be found.

Over this they immediately began a vehement controversy. I pointed out that the very vehemence, the causticity of their argument, the thrusts they delivered with their eyes half contracted, served to prove the truth of my conjecture. And another thing—that the English themselves spread these illusions about their own nation. I could not discover why.

The argument now got well under way, but I kept repeatedly stressing that we had not yet come to my theorem. These were only lemmata, just as you needed the lemma of the squares constructed on the sides of the triangle to prove the Theorem of Pythagoras. The two author-scientists, scientist-authors—William Cooper is also a physicist and in mufti happens, under the "pseudonym" of Harry Hoff, to be a leading official of the British Atomic Energy Authority—stared at me, hardly crediting their ears at my familiarity with the terminology of their science. I reassured them that, though I happened to remember this item, I would be hard put to it to deduce the Theorem of Pythagoras itself, albeit the misdemeanours of my youth had included the torment of completing a University science course. I asked for their permission to revert to this issue—the tow cultures!—at a later stage. But what about these real and false concepts that had arisen about the English? One idea that had occurred to me was that they spread this legend about their detachment because they would like it to be true. Or else they pose in the artificial baldness of lacking all sentiment, because they are in fact very sentimental, but are ashamed of it.

"The two are not identical."

"On the contrary, they are mutually contradictory."

"They are complementary."

We did not get anywhere by this method. I risked proposing my theorem, which is but half mine, the first part of it having been told and written several times before. The English were originally boisterous, gay, extremely exuberant people, with a love for blood in their meat and their lives, and not squeamish at its sight. They liked to laugh uproariously, to have a good cry, to ravish the lasses, seduce each other's best girl-friends and wives, and have a thoroughly jolly time over it all.

"For heaven's sake, what makes you think so?"

"Your history. Your literature. Shakespeare."

Then came the Puritans, but by the time of the Georges the English people had begun to free themselves of their influence. The door was shut by the Victorian period, and here the more personal half of the theorem commences. If you have a young girl for a Queen, you have to be very refined, quiet and polite, the English thought. The queen knew nothing of life or of her people. She believed this lack of sentiments to

be the real thing; subsequently it matured through the influence of her person and entered history and the English sub-conscious under the name of Victorianism. At present, the basic character of the English was once more beginning to reassert itself.

"So we are on the verge of a new English renaissance?"

"*Voilà*," I answered, and made a circular gesture, for I would have liked again to hear the lion's laugh.

My theorem had only moderate success. According to my hosts it had not been the English who had changed, but the opinion of them that was held abroad.

I did not wish to continue the argument, for it was not really an argument at all—merely a pleasant and informal chat, as though we were continuing a regular, weekly conversation. But back home I have been pondering over that last, not particularly emphatic objection of theirs. I think we struck the right track there, but failed to follow it up. In the Victorian era, which did not end with the death of Queen Victoria, only a narrow stratum of the English travelled abroad, and an even scantier group of Continentals visited Great Britain. It was these who spread the image of the introversive Englishman all over Europe, and the rich and fastidious visitors from Continental Europe, having met their own ilk in Britain, only confirmed this view. The War and the motor-car have changed the nature of contacts all over the world. It needs no particular schooling in the class theory to enable the idea to be pursued to the requisite depth.

There is a strange picture on the wall of the drawing room in Sir Charles Snow's home. A man is seated on a horse, or perhaps it is a mule, with his back to the viewer, advancing into a yellow, non-existent waste, with a saucepan in the place of his head. It caught my attention for a moment and my hostess asked me whether I liked it. I thought it interesting, it had fascinated me, there was more to it than met the eye. It was art anyway. "The only thing that surprises me," I said, "is to find a surrealist picture in the room of one of the main representatives of the new English realism."

(This, of course, was a sign of absolutely Continental thinking—I immediately realized it myself. He might well have even an abstract picture on his wall, indeed perhaps he does, in another room. Nevertheless I was not sorry I had made the remark, for I had wanted to talk not of the picture, but of the style and realism of Snow and of Cooper.)

The conversation that began over the picture took us further afield than I had thought. It turned out that the painting was not surrealistic, but actually very faithful to reality. Its subject was an Australian highwayman,

a kind of modern Robin Hood or Sándor Rózsa, who robbed the rich and distributed the money, or a part of it, among the poor. It had been painted by the Australian Sidney Nolan, a mutual friend of Snow's and Cooper's. (I later met him at the Coopers'.) The saucepan on his head was a strange sort of iron mask, which he did not actually wear, but which legend had fitted on his head. The picture was nevertheless not wholly realistic, for its style embodied elements of surrealism and of other modern trends in its alloy. It portrayed reality, but also something more. Was it that iron saucepan, that something strange in its proportion, which according to Bacon is indispensable to art? Did he perhaps adhere so painstakingly to reality because he wanted to point beyond it?

We had for some time now no longer been talking of Nolan's picture but of Snow's novels, though without actually saying so. These novels produce the opposite effect from that of Nolan's picture. A first reading or perusal might suggest that they are too realistic. In the beginning I had the impression that Snow had not read the great English authors of the century, Joyce and Virginia Woolf, or that if—as proved to be the case—he had read them, then he had squelched them. But if you delve deeper into even one of the volumes, let alone the series, you will notice that Snow and Cooper (and of course others not present) have assimilated the achievements of Joyce and Woolf in their own, without adopting their style.

We had now come to the matter of time, the foremost professional problem of all contemporary authors. We envied Nolan—on this score at least, he had no worries. I quoted Bence Szabolcsi, who once said about music that it was an "unenclosed art." (I had a hard job translating the original expression.) I risked the conjecture that what Joyce and Woolf—and, of course, Proust, and in their wake, many others—had done with time within one novel, was the same as what Snow was doing in his series of novels. They did not begin at the beginning or continue at the middle, nevertheless they came to realize an entity. Snow declared that this had not occurred to him. I was embarrassed now, for I had stuck my nose into English literature and bumped it. Where could I seek better refuge than in Hungarian literature? I told them the anecdote about János Arany. A critic had said of one of his poems that in it the poet had intended to say this, that and the other. On the margin of the review Arany wrote, in effect: "The devil I did!"

A literal translation of *„akarta a fene,"* would be even harder to achieve than in the case of Szabolcsi's *"bekerítetlen,"* and my difficulties in finding an English equivalent were a good introduction to what is translatable and

what is not, to that which is different and that which is common—to the problem of East and West, to that of Europe.

"Whenever I visit a socialist country," said Snow, "or when I talk to people who have come from there, I am always surprised to find how much fewer the differences are than we think, and how much more numerous the common features."

I had really been in Britain for no more than a few days then. It was mainly as a matter of principle that I concurred with Snow. I was glad when he said he was preparing to come to Hungary. It was only towards the end of my stay that I fully appreciated how well he had expressed the essential point. Big words, even if they are true, obscure the issue in this case. An understanding among peoples? Yes, but the peoples, that is we ourselves, think that this requires some sort of big effort, special preparations, study, a great endeavour, relapses, possibly failure. Yet what is involved is no more than to find out what it is that makes the other fellow happy, to ask him what worries him.

I left the Snows at eleven. I thought I had already overstepped the limits set by British propriety, but on later occasions I stayed even further—till a quarter past one at William Cooper's, half past one at Monica Pidgeon's and at Theo Crosby's—*mea maxima culpa*—till half past two. But I need not stray so far, for this evening too... Yet this was a different case. I did not tell either the Snows or the Coopers, who had wanted to see me home by taxi, that my day had not yet come to an end. Albert was expecting me in his mother's kitchen between eleven p. m. and midnight.

Albert's parents have friends in Budapest, who had sent them a volume of Csontváry reproductions through my intermediary. I had delivered it on my first day of strolling about and had found the family in a great state of excitement. They were expecting their grown-up son Albert home from prison. At first I thought that they were pulling my leg or that perhaps they were being ironical at my expense, with rather indelicate allusions motivated by reasons best known to themselves. However, it turned out within a matter of minutes that the opposite was the case. Albert had taken part in the latest great Ban the Bomb demonstration, and the police had arrested him. "You know, when Bertrand Russell was."

I was curious to meet Albert, but I felt I would be superfluous at the family reunion. I 'phoned the next day to ask when I could see him. Both he and I had engagements all day. This was how we had come to fix a nocturnal meeting. "That'll be fine," said Albert. "You see there's a meeting of the Committee of 100 in the evening, and we'll be able to have a chat after it. Just come up and go straight to the kitchen."

I went up and walked straight into the kitchen. Albert could not have been there long, for he was just having his supper. The parents looked on, delightedly. He was not alone, for there was a young girl in a short leather jacket and tight jeans sitting beside him, also tucking in food at a fair pace. I felt at home. My elder son is also about six foot three, wears pullovers and tight trousers that just reach to his hips, and to my prejudiced paternal eye has just the same open look as Albert. With him too I usually exchange views in the kitchen, late at night when he comes home from the University or his basket-ball training. Occasionally he also has a girl with him, and it is always the same one. Albert's mother reassured me, when I recalled these features of my own home to them, that in their case it is also always the same girl. The much maligned youth of this age appears to be steadier than we once were. The youth I mean is of course not a quantitative, but a qualitative concept. Not every young person is "the youth" in Britain either, I think. But Albert, his friends, and this girl Catherine and her friends, are certainly part of them. I suddenly felt myself very ancient—not old, for that is a different matter, something that I shall get used to. What I now felt was that I was part of another generation, and particularly that these young people now saw me as belonging to another. I had come here and was enquiring about them, as though they were a kind of oddity.

Our conversation was informal, at times even convivial, yet I felt like when we had—at their age—first started going to the villages and talking to the peasants. On the first occasion, the second and the third, they had felt that they were playing a part. We had had to become accustomed to one another for them to talk as they would do if they were among their own folk. Albert and Catherine were also not able to rid themselves of the oppressive feeling that this foreign chap, who was their father's age, was going to write about them. For—and this was something I had been unable to do in the villages—I told them that this was just what I was intending to do.

We did not talk of the three weeks he had spent in jail, though the word "prison" occurred over and over again. They were blushingly proud of it, all of them, though each in a different way. As far as I could make out the parents were, of course, proud of their son's courage, Catherine of how natural she considered Albert's conduct and his adventures, Albert, on the other hand, mainly of the fact that this sort of thing could happen even in Britain.

"So you demonstrated to show your nonconformity?" I asked.

"We are beyond nonconformity. The trouble with British society is not that it is conformist."

"Why, isn't it?" I asked. "I can't tell yet, but that's what I always read, and it is also what I am told."

"It is," replied Catherine. "But that's a terribly comfortable attitude. Our society is conformist, I am not conformist, that puts my conscience in the clear, and that's all there is to it. It's like the soap-box orators in Hyde Park. They get through their piece, they've salved their souls, and so has society by letting them do it."

"Now wait a moment," I said. "As far as I can see your society isn't as conformist as all that. At least one aspect of it, for it didn't allow Albert and Bertrand Russell to..."

We speculated over this for a while. Albert's mother agreed with me. Catherine said that the conformity of liberalism was just that it was liberal, and this was the complicated thing about Britain, because it was a flexible, multiplex and elusive kind of conformity. One of its features was that at a certain point it was no longer liberal. Albert's father argued that the law was the law, even in a liberal society, and that the good thing about it was exactly that it applied to everyone, without distinction.

I was outside the argument by now, which was just as well, for I could join Albert in devouring the contents of the salad-dish. I gathered that I was witnessing a family conversation, or one between two generations, whose shades of meaning could only be understood by those who lived within British society and were beginning to become intolerant towards tolerance itself. We halved the huge fish mayonnaise—one o'clock at night is the hungriest time for a man, isn't it Albert?—and I declined a helping of the pudding, thank you very much. A cup of coffee would have been fine, but no one in England ever thinks of making one. I swallowed a Saridon pill; not that I had a headache, but the caffeine in it would, in its effect at least, prove a substitute for coffee.

"If it's not for the sake of nonconformity, then why do you do it?" I asked, once more gathering up the scattered threads of my first question.

"Because we're living in a Nuclear Age," answered Albert.

"Everyone's living in a Nuclear Age," I retorted, because I thought his answer was put on. It was not.

"Those who look for more in our movement than what we ourselves say, won't find anything. You won't be angry, will you?"

I had not the slightest intention of being angry. On the contrary, I was pleased, because we seemed to be on the right track now.

"C. N. D., that means Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament and that's all I can tell you about it. Because that's the only thing I belong to."

"And that is the only reason why they put you in..."

The maternal affirmative interruption was quickly silenced by a strict and bashful filial look. Albert quietly and consistently expounded that this was a political movement, but that he himself and some of his friends had joined not merely for political reasons, but because they realized what he had already said when I had not taken him sufficiently seriously, that we were living in a Nuclear Age. From this Bertrand Russell had in the first place drawn the conclusion that mankind could under no circumstances survive a nuclear war. This was reason enough in itself for them, the young people of Britain, to join the C. N. D. But for them the atomic era would carry grave consequences even if it did not come to a war. Firstly for Britain as a country, secondly for British society, and thirdly for the individual person.

"Have you ever delivered a lecture about this?" I asked.

"No," he replied, and continued. He had not understood my question and I did not wish to go into the matter. Later, after visiting schools and universities, I realized that, though a training in logical, almost rethorical speech did not figure in English educational curricula, it was nevertheless a part of them. Perhaps it is to dissemble this faculty that the more schooling an Englishman has had, the more he will tend to hum and ha, and to stutter.

Albert went on to explain that for Britain as a nation the Nuclear Age implies that she is no longer a first-rate Great Power, not only because she has had to give up a large part of her colonial empire, nor merely because the Soviet Union and America are stronger, but because in a Nuclear Age there are no Great Powers.

"At the moment, we know, there still are," said Albert. "But as more and more countries become able to manufacture H-bombs, even the smallest countries will become sufficiently Great Powers to be able to put an end to mankind. Therefore the first thing to do is to make it impossible for anyone to make thermo-nuclear bombs at all, secondly Britain must live in such a way as to enjoy the advantages of the Nuclear Age instead of its dangers, and it is here that she must become the pioneer. The Russians have already realized this."

The rest now appeared to be quite simple. Society must be transformed from a steam-engine society to a nuclear one. Naturally, this society cannot be capitalistic. How socialism is to be achieved is something over which they don't rack their brains yet, for they still have the threat of a nuclear war hanging over them. "When this has been averted," said Albert (I noted that he used the more definite *when*, and not the vague *if*), "for there can ultimately be no doubt that it will be, then the picture of the world will

be so completely changed that we shall find the right solution." They hope that it will be one that does not require violence.

Albert and those like him believe that sooner or later the Nuclear Age will have a similar effect on the individual person in Britain to that of the war. During the war—he wondered whether I knew of this—a "silent revolution" had begun in Britain. Everyone had had to face death in the same way. At the time of the London *blitz*, people had come into close proximity with one another in the tube shelters who would never before have exchanged more than two words. They had come to talk more frankly; they had also become more frank towards their own selves. Contacts had become less entrammelled by formalities.

I took fright now. I had more than once read, in the characteristically allusive and quotative style of the English weeklies, of people who sigh regretfully for the "good old wartime days," not for the sake of the war, but of the more informal and genuine human contacts it involved. What a contradiction for two young people, who risk their freedom to argue and demonstrate against war, to have to return to the wartime days for the concept of good, common, human experiences! I did not interrupt to tell them this, for I feared they would then begin to explain away what I had never thought about them anyway. When, however, they repeated for a second time that to live in the Nuclear Age is tantamount to reckoning with the permanent presence of death, I could not withstand asking their permission to recall a youthful experience of my own. They would not take it in bad part, would they? When I was their age, the young people in Weimar Germany kept saying that they would prefer a war to this stagnation.

The reply was pleasant to hear. They did not feel offended, on the contrary, they assured me that they also knew of this, that they knew the history of Weimar Germany, that it had interested them. The pleasantest —and once more I can but affirm, the most English—part of it was that it did not so much as occur to them to return the question by saying that surely I did not think they were now at the same stage as the German youth of the thirties? They knew that this was not what I had meant, and that I had merely drawn their attention to a latent danger. They now wished to substitute some kind of Nuclear-Age-consciousness for the lacking class-consciousness as a motive force of society.

"In any case, a war now would provide no opportunity for any kind of new relations to be established, for there would be no one to establish them. This would be a war that differed qualitatively from all previous ones."

A kind of nervousness now crept into their tone of voice. It seemed I had

diverted them after all from their train of thought. I tried to set the engine back on the rails. I remarked that I had written much about this problem and that the greatest danger was that the word "atom" still signified mainly war and death in people's minds, that one's imagination runs away with one and makes one write and speak of this aspect.

"That is exactly what we're explaining!" exclaimed Catherine. "You have to recognize that we are living in a Nuclear Age and that war is therefore impossible, but it is also impossible to live as though a war were possible."

"Bravo!" said Albert. "A good way of putting it. Did you invent it now?"

Catherine gave him a symbolic slap on the hand, to reprove him for teasing her leg with a guest present. But the definition really is good. I put it down and, in a bantering tone, asked what I was to write under it. Who had said it? "Shall I write: 'The other Britain'?"

"No. Just ('Britain',") replied Albert.

Oxford and Stratford-on-Avon, October 16th

A crowded day in Oxford, but a *dies interrupta*, because in the midst of the most interesting conversations there was a toll call from London to say that J. B. Priestley was expecting me for coffee today at his new house near Stratford. Every program had to be shrivelled and as a result I too have not retained many more memories than a headhunter's shrivelled trophy could hold.

Oxford began on the train, for Miss Evelyn Gore-Symes, my program-maker at the British Council—nine deep obeisances to her name, I say, to quote Sándor Weöres, the poet, whom she knows, because she speaks Hungarian—had the good idea of letting me have a little book about Oxford for the journey. And now, at last, I understand the structure of the old English universities and can find my way about the profane hierarchy of undergraduates, graduates, fellows, proctors, seniors and dons. The author of the book is no other than Richard Frost, my host at Oxford.

I was met at the station by the Oxford equivalent of Mrs. MacLeod—the same girlish charm over sixty, the same tiredness at the beginning ("another barbarian or exotic to whom I'll have to show our treasures"), the same relief when she hears that this particular barbarian or exotic has heard of the Bodleian Library and would like to see it not only from the outside. And the same pain, reluctantly revealed, yet unconcealable—my new friend in London had a son who fell at Monte Cassino, her colleague at Oxford lost her husband, who went down with a corvette. My Oxford guide, Mrs. Buss, also asked me whether I had taken part in the war, and after I had answered in the

affirmative, there was a painful bond between us. Those who have not been to war, those who have lost no one, will not understand what I mean; the rest will—I am a trifle ill at ease at having myself returned.

The Gothic wall of the old part of the Bodleian Library looks from the outside like a cathedral seen from the inside. Only here the architect of old expressed himself in the lattice-work, the proportions, the breath-takingly minute symmetry and an occasional unexpected disproportion of the wall itself, in place of stained glass windows.

One more reason which will one day make me go back to England is that in the end I was able to see only the museum part of the Library, the dead part, for barbarians, exotics and other tourists. Though this too has a Magna Carta "in the second reissue of 1217," a second edition, if I may be permitted to use this later expression. Very beautiful words, of eternal value, I could copy them out from any history-book, but here the spirit of the place guided my stylus:

"*Nullus liber homo*... No free man shall be arrested or imprisoned... except by the lawful judgement of his peers or by the law... To none will we sell, to none deny right or justice."

There is also a copy of the 42-line Mainz Bible, the Gutenberg Bible, though the label says it was not printed by Gutenberg. My reverence was just as great even so, through the glass show-case. But how good it would have been to turn at least one leaf! I once more attempted to penetrate to the live part, but you need a permit to do so, a guarantor, indeed even that will not do, you have to be an undergraduate or a fellow of one of the Colleges.

"Well, I suppose I'll have to put it off to one of my next lives."

"Are you a believer of Hindu philosophy?"

"No, I am an angry young man that is, I would be if my age permitted."

To propitiate me, my guide showed me her favourite corner in the exhibition hall. There were a lot of old, yellowish sheets of paper, obviously ripped out from somewhere or torn off a larger sheet.

"You know," she explained, "we have a habit at boring meetings of sending notes on scraps of paper to one another. I don't know whether you do that in Hungary?"

"We don't even have meetings," I answered, without so much as a twitch of my eyelids. She laughed.

"I see. Then just read these sheets. They were written by King Charles II at a meeting of the Privy Council, to his minister, Clarendon."

'I would willingly make a visit to my sister in Cambridge,' the King wrote. He had a fine, legible, distinguished hand, with no flourishes. Clarendon used ink of a different colour, his letters were smaller, but more polished.

A Chancellor had, after all, to do a lot of writing. The scrap of paper had been passed back and forth, amid matters of State. Clarendon had objections, the King dispelled them. Clarendon yielded. The King reassured him: 'I intend to take nothing but my night bag.'

I suddenly came to like this exhibition better—it had been brought to life by the King's nighty. Next to the post-card stand, I discovered a catalogue of the periodicals which are permanently stocked for lending by the Library. They include numerous publications of the Hungarian Academy, an apiarists' journal, the *Magyar Nyelvőr* (Guardian of the Hungarian Language), but nowhere was the Quarterly to be seen. (I have checked up at home—we regularly send it, with the respect due to an institution of such great traditions.)

I met Richard Frost at lunch in the Mitre Hotel. A young historian, J. R. Hale, who graduated last year and had been the editor of *Isis*, the undergraduate magazine, was also there, and so was this year's editor, A. J. Macdonald of Trinity College. The conversation was at first halting—we had mutually erroneous ideas of each other's persons and papers. Our small talk only broke into a slow canter when it turned out that I had been a Boy Scout. The theme of our conversation had been the problem of young people, their education, organization and my own undergraduate son. This was where scouting somewhere came in. Mr. Frost had also been one, and we discovered common acquaintances at some Jamboree or other. Nevertheless another hour passed before Frost told me that he had a friend in Budapest who had been a Count and that he would like to hear about him. "Would it cause you any unpleasantness if you went to see him and gave him my regards?"

(I have been to see László Teleki and he is well. I hope that in a year or two people will realize by themselves that they can simply write a letter.)

Young Macdonald ensconced himself in an exaggeratedly respectful silence throughout lunch, though he edits a fine magazine. I do not know what he thought the Quarterly was like (or rather, I am afraid I do know), but I must admit that for my part I had thought of a roneographed or poorly printed, modest student paper. When we finally strolled over to the editorial offices, which are situated in a glass cage in the mezzanine of the printers', as in so many small Hungarian print-shops, and I was handed a copy of the *Isis*, I gave a low whistle. Why, this is an adult periodical, a rich magazine. It is edited by undergraduates, but the paper is graduate. What I liked best was its lack of respect. "You and your magazine together are very English," I said to young Macdonald. His answer was also very English: "Do you think so?" And I was not at all English, for I re-answered his "do you think so", with: "Yes, I do. Your respect for authority and the antirespect of

authority in your paper appear to the outside observer to be terribly English." All those present had a good laugh at this. Or at me?

The hind-quarters of the lion of Knossos. (This is one of the notes I made under the heading of *Isis.*) It was with the above-mentioned part of the famous lion statue at Knossos that they illustrated the following caption: "'There is a great deal of thinking to be done ahead.' Mr. Gaitskell. Oxford."

(I just picked up the paper and had another look. The devil! It is not the statue of the lion of Knossos, but a photo of a live dog. What I had taken to be the ruffled marble mane, is a plaited, conical peasant straw hat or a beehive, into which the dog has thrust its head, up to the shoulder-blades. The dog, as far as I can tell from its hind half, is a bulldog. They did not so much as bat an eyelid at Oxford, when I mentioned the lion of Knossos. As I say, they are very English.)

A nude on a couch. (This is my other entry.) The title under the picture: "Me—? I'm opposed to any union." Now what was I to make of this? Was it just a piece of undergraduate, or rather fifth-form smut? Even as such, it would not have been bad at that, but that's not what it was. There is a discussion going in the magazine on whether women students should be admitted to the Union, the famous Oxford student society, the debating club and mock parliament. The naked lady is a contribution to this discussion.

What does the Union do? It is to have its first meeting of the Term the day after tomorrow. The subject for debate is traditional. "This House has no confidence in the Government." The day after tomorrow? That would be interesting. I might come back and listen to it. Long faces. "You'd do better not to, sir." "Why?" "Because we're fed up with it." "Why are you fed up with it?" "Because it'll be boring." It was up to me to make a long face now. Were they not glad to be able to debate freely? Did they not know that throughout the world, or at least in Europe, among students and former students, the Oxford Union is a concept? The object of envy, a rank and a source of reference? "You don't know how good you have it," I quoted, changing Macmillan's election slogan a bit to suit the occasion. They had a good laugh, obviously at my use of English political slang, but they did not feel in the slightest that I had scored.

The homely smell of printing that came wafting in through the half-open door to form a common medium about us, encouraged me to consider myself the senior among these foreign people, and so I told them that they had put me in a difficult position. What if I was to draw conclusions about them from this brief conversation? It had, even so, been rather striking, for a first impression.

"What do you mean, sir?"

"That you are lukewarm."

"You see, the world's so boring," said an angel-faced grown-up baby, gathering up the two tails of his black cloth student's gown, like a sorcerer. "I envy the French! At least they can explode bombs or fight those who do the blowing up. I envy the Hungarians, too."

I pointed out that people in Hungary do little blowing up nowadays. The angel let the tails of his gown fly, and threw his arms up in the air like a Frenchman to lend force to his words: "I know, that's not what I was thinking of." I never found out what he was thinking of, for the others went for him... What's this I am saying? Went? They stayed exactly as they were, one leaning against the edge of the table, another sitting on it, the third in the far corner of the room, only using quiet, stinging remarks in their battle.

"What do you want? The world's always boring. That's what's interesting about it." This was a thick-set lad with a drooping moustache like Péter Veres's, only not grey yet. His speech was also slow, and if his accent had had less sing-song about it, I would have asked him whether he was not one of our own 1956 vintage?

In Hungary they would have been saying "you're a fool" to him by now, or worse still: "Blimey, what a clever lad you are!" At Oxford a third, bespectacled, bookwormish chap answered him as follows:

"I'm afraid you're mistaken. The world is never boring, and you're acting a part. The world's interesting, if you throw a stone in its water."

"And do you throw them?" I asked.

"Do you mean Communist propaganda?" said the angel, returning my question.

I suggested we should agree, if it was felt necessary, that everyone should say what they were thinking. They assured me that this had been the case so far. I assured them that this was true of me too.

"I assure you," said the angel, and I do not know whether there was irony in the repetition of the formula or, on the contrary, courtesy, "that I would also be bored with those plastic bombs. Moreover I don't think I'd explode one."

"Was it not the magazine *Isis* that we had wanted to talk about?" asked Macdonald. "I'll show you some volumes."

He opened one of the older issues of *Isis* and pointed at one of the pages. At first sight I thought it was an advertisement, such huge letters had been used in setting the text, right across the page, like the advertisements for Oxford Marmalade: "Many generations of university men have retained their preference for this unique marmalade long after leaving College..."

But this page was blank, even the usual frame to advertisements was missing. The text was this: "Censored by the Proctors." They are as proud of this censored page as our youth of March 1848 must have been of the first sheet printed at the presses of Landerer and Heckenast. "Us, lukewarm? Why, we were actually censored by the proctors!" The fact is, that the *Isis* had, a few issues previously, started reviewing and criticizing the university lectures. It was against this that the university authorities had acted.

"The trouble was," said the bookworm, "that the National Press took up our criticisms. The Oxford dons are doing shoddy work and are overpaid—that was the refrain. It was this that put the proctors' backs up."

"It was a poor show." interjected the angel.

"It wasn't," protested the one with the Hungarian moustache. "Iris Murdoch wrote that it was a poor show, so it was not a poor show."

(It is only for the benefit of possible Hungarian readers that I add that Iris Murdoch is bracketed with Doris Lessing as being one of the best new English authoresses. I would have liked to meet her at Oxford, because before leaving I had read "A Severed Head," and I would have liked to discuss with her why it is so brilliant, perhaps too brilliant. Iris Murdoch is, in fact, a lecturer at Oxford, if I may be permitted to express myself with such barbaric simplicity. For her title is "Fellow and Tutor in Philosophy at St. Anne's College," but I would not be able to translate that into Hungarian if I were to study English at Oxford for a hundred years. This Term, she is lecturing on "The Concept of Alienation.")

"Now finally, where exactly do you people stand, when you're not talking this Camus language?" I asked.

"Nowhere," answered the angel.

"Everywhere," said the thick-set chap.

"We're non-conformists, you see," continued the bookworm.

"Left of center," said a fourth with an engaging smile—it may well have been the reserved Macdonald.

This was the first place where I heard this expression in England—it was later to recur almost daily. You always have to pretend to be even more uninformed or asinine on a foreign journey than you really are, so I asked: "Left of center? What's that?"

They had a good answer—their paper. "Anthony Arblaster—does that name convey anything to you?" they asked.

"A good piece of alliteration," I answered with undergraduate wit.

They proceeded to show me his picture, in any of the issues of *Isis*. He looked more like a crooner to me, until I read some of his stuff. Under the title "It tolls for thee," I found him writing just as we used to in 1945:

"I want to write in such a way as to interest, disturb, provoke, or even persuade, the 'uncommitted': anyone who feels involved in our common problems, social and political, without being so firmly attached to a particular point of view that he is certain from the start to agree or disagree with what is said: anyone whose mind has not yet been gripped by the frost of unthinking conformity..."

During my stay there, and ever since, the most important question with which I have been contending is to decide what is bad in Britain. I know that such a question sounds as though I were pretending, here at home too, to be more uninformed or asinine, which may be permissible abroad as an adjunct to research, but would make one seem rather odd if one continued to do it at home. The question does indeed become simple the moment a traveller looks at Britain with the approach of what *we* think bad. In that case you have your ready-made pairs of conceptual opposites: socialism and capitalism, republic and monarchy, people's democracy and parliamentary democracy, socialist society and class society. If you apply this method you cannot err, but you cannot get very far either, because you learn that which you already know. If, on the other hand, you want to find out why things are the way they are, then in Britain you have to ask what the British think is bad, in Hungary what we think is so. It is the mutual understanding and explanation of the answers to these two questions that serve to bring people closer to one another. This is the harder method, and I fear I shall have to experience myself, how much more ungrateful it is.

While in England, I put the question every day, to almost all my partners in conversation, to writers, artists, students, or at those heterogeneous but very charming parties that would gather after dinner. There would be some deliberation, an exchange of looks, a hesitant answer or two, then I would invariably have the question returned: "And what do you consider is bad in Hungary?" I always replied readily and precisely, telling them even things that they could not understand, because they were only clear in their context. However, I wanted them too to answer in the same way, and I hoped that since I was on the spot, I would understand more of it. I took the risk of spending most of our time arguing about Hungary, for a unilateral knowledge and understanding is worth even less than a unilateral love. Generally then, when my British friends saw that I was talking about my own country *from within*, they also did the same. Their answers were of many kinds and I shall try, in these fragments of my diary, or later in the whole, to recall them all in turn. Suffice it to say at this juncture that not even my Communist friends answered by saying "capitalism," or "class society," or "formal democracy." The first good answer I had or, to use a fashionable English

word, the first comprehensive one, was furnished me by this young Oxonian with the alliterating name, whose face I know, though I never met him.

What he writes, and his intonation of it, so closely resembles—as I have said—the writing of my own generation in 1936, '38 or '45, that my heart grew warm and I was set to thinking. Even the liking for quotations is a familiar feature, though A. A. is certain not to have read the Hungarian literary publicists of the late thirties, not even László Cs. Szabó or Zoltán Szabó, though they now live quite near him. He begins with a frequently adduced witticism by A. J. P. Taylor: "We are entering Utopia backwards." Then he goes on to expound that it is for us to be concerned (I am not quoting now, but I willingly assume the plural) over what is happening to the blacks in South Africa, to the victims of H-bomb testes, or to the Liverpool slums. But to understand them, we need imagination, and here he calls Shelley to his aid, describing imagination as a "great instrument of moral good." Then, through Edmund Wilson, Michelet and Vico, he attains to the realization whose pronouncement is the first step left of the centre: "For what lies at the heart of all rational and progressive politics is the belief that societies are human creations and can be altered and controlled by human beings, however imperfectly and inadequately this may be done in fact." After this, he takes one more step, or perhaps it is not even a step, but merely that he turns his head away a bit further—from what? From the centre, the adults, the existing, from that which the British, with a measure of laziness in their thinking, call "the Establishment." The young writer, employing a rather subtle turn of phrase, both uses the word, and not: "Far too many people are still imbued with a quite unthinkable respect for the established order."

"And if they have less respect for it, what are they to do then?" I asked.

"We'll find Anthony and ask him," suggested someone.

"Why? Does only Anthony know?"

"No. We do too," answered the bookworm.

"No. We don't either," replied the angel.

We laughed, but we would get nowhere if we went on like this. The chaps also knew how to give the conversation a more serious turn. Do? They do not want to do anything. It is not their business to. Changing ideas is more in their line. Most of their arguing is about what should take the place of national feelings.

"Take their place?" I asked in surprise. "Why, then you are left-wing deviators."

They know this "dialect" and again had a good laugh over it. If they are that, then let them be. They do not care for compartmentation. It is not

that national feelings should be abolished, but rather expanded. The angel would like to come to one of the people's democracies to study how socialist solidarity (his words) functions there. The bookworm is in love with EUROPE, the others told me that he wrote and pronounced it with capitals throughout. "But with the whole of Europe, not only that of the Common Market." They all agreed that there was something to the idea of the Commonwealth, but that they ought also to have a look at how it is done behind the Iron Curtain. And they always used the Iron Curtain in quotation marks. I do not think I looked particularly pleased, for they explained that they only did this for the sake of simplicity in expressing themselves, and that it was rather like the convention in a game of bridge.

"The words you use in turn influence your thoughts," I philosophized. "It is not much more complicated to say socialist countries."

"But then that would include Britain," said the thick-set lad. "In Britain we have a socialist society with a conservative government."

They watched for the effect, with childish glee—what was I going to say now? I assumed a grave mien, as though this had been the first time I had heard the statement, whereas I had actually both heard and read it previously. And now we were about to dive head first into a tidy little argument.

I balanced a moment longer on the diving board.

"Did you intend that to be a paradox?"

"More or less."

"Then I'll also say something that is more or less of a paradox: In Britain many enjoy but a few of the things the world has derived from socialism, and but a few enjoy many of the things they have derived from capitalism."

I was left on the diving board. This was the moment when the phone rang and Mr. Priestley's invitation reached me.

*

Priestley had for many years lived on one of the Channel Islands—or was it the Isle of Wight? I had hoped that, if he would after all receive me, I might come to know this strange world. It turned out that he had moved the previous year, from the island to Alveston in the mellow Shakespearean region surrounding Stratford-on-Avon. The place reminded me of Almádi in Hungary, and not only because of the first two letters. A gentle slope, white houses, villas, orchards, I almost expected to see Lake Balaton. The gateway too might well have been that of a Transdanubian manor house. As we turned in, I read the name: "Kissing Tree House." I observed to my guide that it would be a difficult name to translate. She answered by asking whether I knew that Mr. Priestley was newly wed.

There I was, standing in front of a snow-white, in some ways very modern, in others very traditional house. It was modern in having one of its ground-floor walls made of glass from floor to ceiling, and old-fashioned in its rustic and, as I said before, manor-like style. The whole formed a good mixture—it had proportion and perhaps even a touch of humour.

Answering my ring, an elderly maid opened the door and took my coat. We passed through an oblong passage, like a vestibule, to the author's study. He was waiting for us in the doorway, his pipe in his mouth. By way of greeting I told him that I had imagined him just as he now was. He took the bait and asked why. Had I seen him like this on his photos?

"I don't remember your photos," I answered, "but I recently read your little tract on smoking in the New Statesman, and for the first time in my life I was sorry that I was not a smoker."

Age, world-wide fame and Priestley-ism are all not sufficient to change a writer's heart—he will still be glad if he is read, and even more if people talk about it. Yes, he also liked this little piece. I mentioned that it had a harmful effect on the young, because my elder son had held this discourse up to me when I had encouraged him to follow in his father's footsteps and not take to smoking.

"And what did you do?" asked Priestley.

"I was a soldier for a long time. I know that the corporal has no say where the sergeant-major has spoken."

It was to the accompaniment of this conversation that we reached the centre of the study. The glass wall which I had seen before entering the house constitutes one side of this room. It has a steel frame, and if the weather is warmer it can obviously be pushed up, to allow the writer to walk straight out onto the lawn. At the other end of the room, far off, I noted a desk and on it a portable typewriter with paper in it. I thanked him for receiving me and said that I especially appreciated his having interrupted a sentence for my sake. He returned the courtesy by calling me an old acquaintance. Did he really remember that we had met in Paris in 1946, at the founding session of Unesco? He did—we even recalled a detail. He had stood in the passage of the Palais de Chaillot with Julian Huxley and I had gone up to them and said something.

I was touched by his recollecting this little incident. But did he know that I knew him from earlier still? He contracted his brows and thrust his pipe deeper in his mouth. No, his memory was not at stake. This acquaintance was one-sided. I had heard him over the wireless, during the war. And whether he believed it or not, this had been in occupied Kiev, at the time of the great retreat of the unhappy—in two ways unhappy—Hungarian

Army, in February 1943, at the quarters of a hurriedly evacuated signals unit. They had left a short-wave transceiver behind, over which we tried to find out what was really happening to us and to the war. I had looked for London and had come across his voice. I had translated for my comrades. "You spoke of the ordinary English people."

The October sun was shining into the study, there was peace, good cheer and pipe-smoke. The maid brought the coffee. It was over so unrealistic a distance that I now recalled that deep, slightly hoarse, very masculine voice of his — as we had listened half-frozen and young in the office of a half ruined garage, with the thermometer well below zero—that I was unable to continue. What if he did not believe a word I said? Perhaps he thought I wanted something from him, and that was why I was recalling old memories. If I did, it was only to find out whether he was still the same. I told him so. Was he the same man who in 1945 had written the *Letter to a returning young soldier* which I had translated—if I am not mistaken—without asking permission from either him or his literary agent? He was not angry at this, was he? But at that time, I told him, he, the excellent and acclaimed writer of the victorious Great Power had used so much the same language as we, the sons of a small people just rising from their humiliation and still at odds even with the unfamiliar savours of freedom, that I had thoroughly enjoyed translating it. And was he the same as the author of the *English Journey*, who...

"Do you know it too, in Hungary?"

"Yes, we do. And the Dangerous Corner has been another great success for two seasons running."

He was glad to hear it, but he made a gesture with his pipe. "That was just a game. But that you remember my letter to a returning soldier... It was a piece that was particularly dear to me. You know, at that time we still thought we could change the world."

He had passed the ball to my foot, I had to shoot for a goal. "And now?"

His return volley was a fine one. I had no desire to save the goal:

"It'll be a great thing now, if we can maintain it."

We had come to the real subject. He had not answered me before, when I asked whether he was still the same, and now too he only gestured back with a movement of his pipe: "I always like to be engaged on the most important thing." However, he did not stop at the end of the sentence, but went on in one breath with something that I no longer remember. Obviously this too was intended to indicate that he had not made a solemn declaration and would not, for the life of him, allow himself to become committed. I later said to him that I did not wish him to do so, but by this time I no longer

had to prove it, for over the most important question of all we were in such agreement as to surprise both of us. Priestley was indeed taken aback—had he not gone further than he had intended to? He also suspected a little that I had not gone as far as where I really stood.

But these were only the initial skirmishes of all my conversations in England. They were mostly more tiring than the real contest or battle. For then it was not our blades that clashed in them, to size up the sharpness of our swords, their pliancy, the strength of our arms, the firmness of our stand, but, rather, my fencing partners were intent on discovering whether I had a sword or a dagger, whether there was only one weapon or whether I had another stealthily concealed under my cloak—possibly a pistol in an inner pocket. For some, the most surprising thing was my very desire to fence in a sportsman-like way, observing the international rules and making no attempts to deliver deep lunges. I am writing this as part of the account of my talk with Priestley, but it is not him that I have in mind, nor C. P. Snow, or William Cooper, or Doris Lessing, or Walter Allen, or Kenneth Tynan, or... but here I am, listing all the writers whom I actually met. In the case of the writers, the introductory skirmishes consisted of pleasant assays of each other's foils—perhaps because my giraffe had preceded me as my herald. But many other conversations—with students, professors, ministerial or city people, librarians and library members, industrial people both at the top and the bottom of the ladder—began in an atmosphere of suspicion. How many years or decades of encrusted prejudices and false beliefs have to be scraped off the wall of consciousness by an enquirer who has already attempted to accomplish this as regards himself and would like to know from within what is good and what is bad in the other's country, having willingly told this of his own? When I was asked on my return what my journey to Britain had been like, my second word was: tiring—the first: wonderful. Tiring, because I had several times each day to fight for my terrain and for the honour of my sword and my pen. This fight was always worth while, for it immediately brought its reward: tolerance, irony over themselves, a love of humour, and a minute and unflagging interest replaced the reserve and suspicion I first encountered. I was talking with Englishmen.

Priestley, and I first talked of the Bomb. Rather, half-words were enough for us to convey our agreement to each other. It must be stopped, yes. This was the most important, the only important thing that needed doing in the world. But could it be done? We glided straight away to the topical problems—the ones that were then topical. It was the middle of October, the Berlin crisis still looked ugly. "Do you think so?" asked Priestley. "As much as you," I returned. We did not waste any more words

on it. But the next, the second or third crisis? By then, considerations of prestige might become very dangerous indeed.

"This is where you British can play a big part."

"This is where you Hungarians can play a big part."

He immediately agreed with the part the British could play, for this had been exactly what he had wanted to say. They must become accustomed to the fact that their place, their situation, is now different, and that therefore their part and their calling in the shaping of the world is also different to what it had hitherto been. This was why he had joined the campaign for nuclear disarmament. "So has my wife," he added, and at well over sixty he was just like a young husband. Which indeed he is. It had been incorrect, though very appealing and sportsmanlike, to demand unilateral British disarmament. "People don't like unilateral things," I interjected. He continued speaking, but rewarded my remark with an even broader smile, for he had anyway been smiling all the time, mainly with his eyes and the whole posture of his body, the movements of his shoulders. I felt a mounting envy of his youth.

"That is why we have now abandoned the qualification of 'unilateral.' Nor are we any longer unilateral in our demonstrations," he added. I understood what he was referring to, though he had not himself taken part in those painful petitionings that had followed the Soviet atom tests in London. The changed part of Great Britain was that of a mediator, as was all Europe's. "Yours too."

I would have liked to hear more about the new British role, but I was also impatient to find out what Priestley intended us to do. And perhaps not only he, but the whole of this movement, progressive and attractive for all its pangs and hesitations, in whose name he occasionally talked in the first person plural. I therefore interrupted him: "And what can *we* do? We are a small people."

He gave me a friendly scolding, which I deserved. For this had been exactly what he had tried to explain just now, and several times in writing: that national concepts had changed (Oxford students please note!), that there were no small peoples and big ones, or rather there were two big peoples, but when it came to eliminating nuclear war they too were small, or everyone was big, whichever way you liked to put it. Our part, that of the Hungarians, in case I did not know, though he thought I did, was to eliminate from the conscience of the world the spasm that we had caused.

I did not ask what the spasm was, I did not argue over who and what had caused it, I did not say anything, I waited for him to ask. But he did more than this, he more or less declared what he next said. He had heard that

conditions in Hungary were improving, but in the Western world, including Britain, this was not really being noticed. It was an odd thing that I was now to hear the name of A. J. P. Taylor for the second time in the space of a couple of hours. Priestley referred to his article in the previous year's New Statesman, which had, with Shawian wit, stated not only in its title that it was "Too good to be true." He mentioned the name of another mutual friend, Gerald Abraham, who has been to Hungary twice in his capacity as a musicologist and has also written in The New Hungarian Quarterly.

"Is it true that in Hungary everything is very fine?" he asked, thrusting the question at me.

We were no longer sparring but standing on ice, as we faced each other. I had to be even more careful, for a sudden movement would send me toppling. This in itself would not be too bad, but he would obviously clutch after me, and then we would both fall flat. I could not at that instant decide (nor have I been able to since) what this question was intended to be—a trap, banter, or a helping hand. Probably all three. I took my inspiration for the answer from the game of the previous dialogue:

"Is it true that in Britain everything is very fine?"

(Back home, I have been told by Miklós Hubay that roughly the same conversation took place at about the same time in Hungary in the Alveston-like small town of Szentendre, between Anthony Rhodes and Lajos Kassák. It is a pity that Rhodes did not mention it in his article in *Encounter.)*

Priestley had a good laugh and I laughed with him. We were no longer standing on ice, but on a comfortable, warm, rich English lawn. "Yes, that is exactly the point. That she should live in international opinion like any other country, with her faults and virtues. To have that, you must not always talk of everything in superlatives."

I assured him that we were trying—to the best of our abilities—to stop doing so, and that if anyone nevertheless did it we ourselves were the angriest with them. But we also had to have others no longer always talking of us in the "pejorative."

"That is just what I would like to see," he said.

My giraffe kept tamely stretching its neck on the table, eager to help. I picked it up and, holding it in my hand, tried to 'write' *viva voce* a "Hungarian Journey" for the author of the *English Journey*. What would he say to paying a visit to Hungary once? I knew from his latest book, *Saturn Over the Water*, that he had recently travelled over half the world, North America, Peru, India, Australia. "Hungary is certainly as exotic," I said in encouragement.

"But it is further off," he answered. Anyway, the Saturn was not his

latest book. He got up and went to the thirty-foot-long, narrow table in front of the glass wall (I have always dreamed of a table like this, where I could set out the latest books and periodicals, everything would be at hand, and I could go on looking at them till I had the impression that I had actually read them all) and took a tomato-coloured volume from it. "This is the latest. *The Thirty-First of June.*" He dedicated it "with J. B. Priestley's best wishes" and handed me the copy. "Complete nonsense, but really complete nonsense."

I thanked him and was astounded at his handwriting. Every letter stands separately, the only difference between the *e* and the *i* is the dot, while nothing but their situation distinguishes them from the *z* and nothing whatever from the *s*. His writing is translucent, humorous and inscrutable. I told him so.

"Quite. I hope, then, that you'll enjoy this piece of nonsense."

(I did enjoy it. It is a direct relative of the limerick, of Edward Lear's rhymes, of the "Week-end Competition" in the New Statesman, and—ostensibly—of Alice in Wonderland. The story — story? — takes place simultaneously in King Arthur's time and in the atomic age. Priestley says on the blurb that he heard his secretary laugh out loud as she copied the text. My guess is that Priestley had an even greater laugh as he wrote it, for he pokes fun at everything and also at the opposite of everything. For me this was a second "English Journey," as it led me to understand things which I did not understand during my stay in Britain, or, if I did, I was not sufficiently amused by them.)

Previously it had been the Quarterly, now it was Priestley's Remington that started stretching its neck and its forty fingers. "If that typewriter happens to be empty one day and the white paper in it looks very bored..." I began.

"I won't promise you anything," said Priestley.

"Nor the opposite."

"No."

At the front door of his manor house I took a snapshot of him. "But not for the press?" he said defensively.

"For my sons," I answered.

"Then I'd like to have a copy myself."

(I've sent him one.)

*

In Stratford I noticed that every third house bore the legend: "Flowers." Yes, so many florists can only exist in Shakespeare's town. The big theatre,

the many actresses, the poets... By evening I found out that Flowers was the name of the local brewer. My disappointment was only palliated by the fact that I discovered the name of Flowers in the theatre, on the wall of the Royal Shakespeare Theatre, as one of the main contributors to its reconstruction. It was with some emotion that I entered the theatre, though the building is strange, bleak and uninspired. This does not really matter—here, at his place of birth, one is so overcome by the most august spirit on earth, the heart, mind, tongue and memory are so completely inundated by lines, scenes and situations, quoting texts in Hungarian and in English and seeking their continuation, by the feeling of oneness with him as perfect as that of the drop with the ocean, one so intently seeks the trace of his hands on the house and the furniture, on book and paper, that a slight prosaic lack of inspiration assists in restoring ones spiritual equilibrium.

It has the advantage of relieving you of your awe as you take your place in the stalls—after all, you are to see a play, not to go to church! I believe I had regained my proper balance as a spectator, as I listened to Hamlet. I was grateful to chance, that this was the play being shown tonight. It is of Hamlet that I know most by heart, in Hungarian of course, the translation of János Arany. Hamlet is the play that I have seen most often. In front of me I heard someone speak German—yes, it was in Berlin that I saw Hamlet for the first time, just thirty years ago. The auditorium tonight was filled with the wide world. Left of me there was a turbaned Pakistani, to the right five French people. I did not have to turn my eyes to see Negroes and Chinese, while two car-loads of Swedish, Finnish, Danish and Norwegian visitors had come from the private hotel where I had been accommodated.

I bought a copy of the beautiful, crimson program. On the front page there is a swan, obviously an allusion to the "Swan of Avon," or did it perhaps also have some other link with Shakespeare? Tomorrow when I go to see the house where he was born, his wife's and his mother's, I shall look for traces of the swan. This drawing is at any rate older than Shakespeare himself —the program says so in fact, indicating that it was drawn by Villard de Honnecourt in the thirteenth century. I cannot fathom how such a confusion of time—or, rather of periods—could rise. If I saw this at home on a theatre program, I would say, things like this could only happen in Hungary. This realization strengthens me in my basic experience of the decay of differences and the reinforcement of similarities.

Then Shakespeare spoke. This was the first time I heard him on the stage in English, and whenever I could I murmured the Hungarian translation. I would not have changed places with anybody in the audience now, for where is there another language that had a János Arany?

It was the performance as a whole that I liked best. In Hungary Hamlet takes at least four hours, and generally more. Here they got through in three hours, without omitting a single line. (The next day, when I had lunch with Tony Church, the impersonator of the Actor King, and my host here, I asked him about this, just to make sure, but he almost murdered me with his fiery eyes for the mere idea.) The rhythm of the performance was *allegro*, but nowhere too fast. The text was never garbled, the actors did not hurry, they maintained the dignity of the piece, but did not overplay it. Hamlet was done by the young Ian Bannen. He is a good actor, of powerful, fine diction, attractive and fearsome. Unfortunately he was victim to a misconception, for his first intonation was that of a madman. He was able with his voice, his acting and temperament to augment this impression, and it was obviously his ambition to do so. Only that is not what the drama is about.

Or is it I who am wrong? It is after midnight in this exquisite private hotel, as I take a copy of Hamlet from the bookshelf, to read it once more before dawn.

ENDRE ADY AND THE PRESENT

by

LÁSZLÓ BÓKA

He knew the anguish of the marrow
The ague of the skeleton;
No contact possible to flesh
Allayed the fever of the bone.

T. S. Eliot

A diffident, somewhat despondent feeling beset me, as I prepared to write about the greatest Hungarian poet of the first half of the twentieth century, the masterly pathfinder of modern Hungarian literature, for our British readers. There are hardly any acceptable translations of his works, and the whole of his life's work can only be read in Hungarian. It would be a vain endeavour to seek a parallel with any of his contemporaries. The British poets, novelists and scholars who were born in the same decade—Walter de la Mare, Wilfrid Wilson Gibson, John Masefield, Harold Monro, John Cowper Powys, Somerset Maugham, Theodore Francis Powys, Winston Leonard Spencer, George Trevelyan, Bertrand Russell, James Jeans, Ernest Barker, Norman Angell—provide no opportunity for fruitful analogy. He was not like any of them, and his early decease in any case interrupted the parallels of time. As I got down to my work, I was haunted by a memory. A collection of the German translations of Ady's poems was once assembled for Thomas Mann to read. The great German writer studied the translations in his brilliantly pedantic way, then said: "From these translations I cannot form an idea of the gifts of your poet, but the way you speak of him, your tones of voice, the sparkle in your eyes—these convince me that he is a great poet." It is this recollection that has made me diffident and despondent. I would like to prove what I say, or at least to substantiate its probability, not to achieve mere belief—and this is anything but an easy task.

One of the characteristic features of Ady's poetry is that he wrote very many political poems. At least one, but sometimes even two cycles in his volumes of verse consist of poems with a political subject. And these poems on political subjects are not about general political ideals—liberty, national independence, social progress, etc.—but are linked to everyday political events. He cursed the prime minister with the passion of an Old Testament

prophet, called the Minister of the Interior a lackey, wrote a menacing poem to the Chief of Staff on the occasion of some manoeuvres, and devoted a cycle in verse to a political demonstration. The West European reader—estranged even from Dante, whose political fervour constructed the Inferno, Purgatory and Paradise—, the present-day reader, bored by the political allusions of Byron himself, will find Ady's political poetry odd reading indeed, particularly if he is not Hungarian and requires explanatory notes to tell him that when Ady talks of a fool or a scoundrel, this must be understood to mean Count István Tisza, then Hungarian premier of the Austro-Hungarian Hapsburg monarchy. My British and French friends, who usually listen with gratifying patience as I guide them through the world of Hungarian literature, hardly bother to conceal their distaste for a poet one of whose prime sources of inspiration was politics, and they are apt to consider Ady a kind of versifying political agitator.

The fact is that this inspiration by politics is a peculiar feature not only of Ady but of almost all Hungarian poetry, from its very beginnings. The reason for this is to be sought in our specific national history. I would not like to enter on lengthy and exhausting historical explanations, but five sentences may, perhaps, not be too much by way of commentary. When the Hungarian people—about a thousand years ago—settled in their present homeland, they were wedged between the conflicting spheres of interest of the Holy Roman Empire and Constantinople. When the Hungarian State was consolidated and embarked on a period of prosperity at the middle of the thirteenth century, the country was overrun by the Mongol hordes of Batu Khan, who converted almost all of Hungary into a wilderness and decimated the population. From the fourteenth to the seventeenth centuries Hungary became a rampart against the Western campaigns of conquest conducted by the Sultans of Turkey, and in their course the most fertile part of the country fell under Turkish occupation for 150 years. From the middle of the sixteenth century up to 1918 Hungary's throne was occupied by members of the House of Hapsburg, and during this period the country lived in a condition of veritable colonial subjection to Austria. In this historical situation both our struggles for independence and our social revolutions were drowned in blood, and only in the second half of the nineteenth century could bourgeois development on the European pattern get under way and begin to achieve any measure of success in its struggle against the feudal socio-economic obstacles in its path. I have tried to confine the five sentences to a bare communication of the facts, but perhaps this will make it even more obvious that the political events which continually threatened our existence and thwarted

our progress, achieved the status of a fatal mythology, personified in the shape of an evil deity. It would thus be astonishing indeed, if they had not become the prime inspiration of our poetry.

Another feature that has now also become an obstacle to Ady's international recognition is that a considerable part of his poetry is couched in the language of symbolism. As a literary trend, symbolism is now outdated and European poetry has long entered on different paths. But those Western readers in whom an interest in Ady has arisen thus find it peculiar that Ady should have appeared on the scene as a symbolistic poet towards the middle of the 'nineties and essentially remained one to his death, at the eve of the 'twenties. For symbolism had really flourished in the 'eighties and 'nineties, so that Ady's symbolism is felt to have been anachronistic even in his own age. Those who today endeavour to popularize Ady must also take this source of aversion into account, and of this your author is well aware. Before embarking on any account of Ady's poetry—for it is only through this that his symbolism can be explained—it is therefore necessary first to draw attention to this very anachronism and belatedness. Ady's symbolism is not identical with the literary trend that is hallmarked by the names of Mallarmé, Moréas, Maeterlinck, Yeats, Ruben, Dario and Sologub. Ady's relatively late symbolism indicates that in his creative work symbolism was to some extent transformed. With him, for instance, musical effects, suggestive twilights, ambiguities and visionary effects no longer play anything like the decisive part they did in "classical" symbolism, and Ady's poetry was in direct contradiction to the aesthetic program of *L'art pour l'art* writing, of "*poésie pure.*" Those who are opposed to symbolism in general need have no preconceived aversion to Ady's poetry.

I

If indeed there was a guardian angel over Endre Ady's cradle, his name must have been *Disillusionment*. On the paternal side Ady stemmed from an ancient family of nobles, while his mother's forebears were highly erudite Protestant clergymen. The ancient nobility had, however, dwindled to no more than a disquieting tradition, for his father farmed his little land like any peasant. The offspring of his scholarly clerical ancestry, his strangely beautiful mother, though endowed with natural wit, could barely read or write. There was not so much as a bookshelf in their house—literature was represented by the Bible, a Psalter and an old calendar. Ady's family was Protestant, but his father quarrelled with the

presbyters and removed his son from the Presbyterian School. He thus received the second part of his elementary schooling and the first four years of his secondary education in Roman Catholic schools, finally to complete his training in an ancient Presbyterian College. He was alternately subjected to the two trends of religious bigotry, which were at that time fairly sharply opposed to each other, and this in precisely his most receptive years. In obedience to the laws of interference, this resulted in his early disillusionment with respect to all exclusive dogmas. In an age when the flames of Hungarian chauvinism flared highest, when the Hungarian ruling class thrust their heads in the sand to avoid facing the calamitous crisis of the minority question, Ady was born in a village of mixed nationality, with both Hungarian and Rumanian inhabitants (indeed the village of his birth, Érmindszent, now lies in Rumania). His school-fellows included at least as many Rumanians as Hungarians, at least as many of his first playmates were Rumanians as Hungarians, and he even learned their language. A comparison of the political slogans about Hungarian supremacy with the realities of his childhood experiences soon achieved his disillusionment with all brands of haughty chauvinism and rid his heart of all national conceit, of contempt for people of other tongues and other races. In Hungary the Protestant creed was at one time possessed of traditions of noble opposition, of struggle for freedom and democracy, as the Wars of Religion in this country had coincided with the Wars of Independence against the Hapsburg dynasty and against Austria. These were the traditions which were instilled into Ady in the ancient College at Zilah, where he completed his secondary school studies. Yet as soon as his first independent thoughts began to take shape, he was forced to the recognition that this democratic tradition of protest had become no less remote from reality than the significance of his noble ancestry. Protestantism had been tamed to become just as loyal to the dynasty, just as antidemocratic a trend, as the liberalism that kept voicing the ideals of the French Revolution. Acting on his father's wishes, he entered a provincial law school after leaving the College, but in pursuit of his natural bent he took up journalism while still a law student. The legal system, with its petrification of rigid, dry and lifeless doctrines, and the glimpse which his activities as a contributor to the small provincial daily afforded him of the realities of social and political life, finally completed his disillusionment.

The last foothold he might have found would have been in the cultural field. But what did contemporary Hungarian cultural life have to offer him? Official Hungarian cultural forums, in pursuance of the policy of personal union with Austria, nurtured a one-sided, Germanic

trend. Scientific life was at this juncture dominated by the most barren positivism—a trivial compilation of facts devoid of even the intention of achieving a comprehensive, definitive synthesis. In literature the great popular realism of the middle of the nineteenth century had been reduced to a "folky" epigonism, as though the British poets of the early twentieth century had been required to write only in the style of Burns. Even where an occasional bold path-seeker did arise in science and the arts, the official cultural forums, the senile Academy, the die-hard literary societies isolated and compromised them, pronouncing a veritable anathema upon them. The tardily developed Hungarian bourgeoisie was too deeply embedded in the social life of the period, dominated by feudalism, and, having embarked on a course of compromise in place of revolt, it did not provide effective backing for progressive science and literature. The fertilizing influence which the incipient upsurge of the natural sciences, the impetus of technical development and the theory of Marxism exercised throughout the world (recall G. B. Shaw!), was almost hermetically excluded from Hungarian cultural life through the industrial backwardness of the country—artificially maintained by Austria—and through the dominant positions held by the landed aristocracy and the Roman Catholic clergy. The clergy perhaps hated the development of the natural sciences even more then it did socialism.

The young Endre Ady set out on his path without illusions and ideals, without appropriate aims or real opportunities, and he became what he could. He abandoned his law studies to become a journalist (beginning his career as the correspondent of Government and politely oppositional papers) and also set out on the path of literature, achieving success in official quarters. If we now, in the knowledge of the whole of his poetry, peruse his first two volumes of verse—*Versek* ("Poems"), 1899, *Még egyszer* ("Once Again"), 1903—we may discover traces of the lion's claws that were to be the possession of the great poet of later years, but we can feel no surprise whatever that these little volumes earned official recognition when they appeared. As a whole they fit into the customary pattern of contemporary poetry, and Ady is here no more than a gifted epigon of epigon poets. It was not these poems that betrayed his gifts, but the fact that he himself rapidly became disillusioned with his first successes, wrote ever fewer poems, and in one of his own autobiographic essays openly declared that he had desisted purposely from writing because he had not been content with the results he could achieve by progressing along the conventional paths of poetry.

He began as an insignificant poet, but was then already an excellent journalist.

He was rendered an excellent journalist by qualities that were later also to play an important part in developing his poetical gifts. This young columnist, who rapidly advanced from being the correspondent of insignificant provincial papers to become a celebrated contributor to the largest Budapest dailies, had three virtues to distinguish him from the ranks of the footsloggers of journalism. It is now with amazement that we read the articles he wrote at the turn of the century in the isolation of a small township, and this mainly because they bear witness to such very broad interests and knowledge. He was interested in everything and able to become conversant with the salient facts in next to no time. What he had once learned was not acquired for a particular occasion only, but actively continued to persist in his thought, as though it had been incorporated in a special system of logic whose internal organization rendered it accessible at any instant. This wide-spread, rapid and lasting facility for acquiring information was accompanied by the lightning alacrity of a clever mind. He was matchless in his readiness to appreciate the special and singular consequences of general phenomena and to find the way from individual, apparently random events, to the general phenomenon. While his inquiring spirit was that of a newsman, his intellect was the philosopher's, using a uniquely dialectical approach to discover the link between the singular and the universal. It was his third quality, however, that made him ferocious as a columnist: his pen was guided by indomitable moral courage. Endre Ady's life was frequently fraught with struggle against his human weaknesses, and women and friends had many unjustly inflicted wounds to complain of. But what he wrote in an article entitled "Letter to my father" in 1903 is true as it stands: "We are very often comedians. Readier to strike a bargain than a copper, more flexible than a reed... Until... Until the lethal, steel-nibbed devil beckons, until he calls... The godly devil... And then the world becomes all faith and life, all worthy of the flames of love. And then we beat and whip our miserable bodies and shredded nerves into this great love. For a better life, a more decent world, for advance, for light and for that most phantom-like of all phantoms, the most foolish and lovely of them all, for truth... Such we are, these we are, we knights of the holy ghost..." He was later ashamed of his youthful poems, and he bought up all the copies he could find of his first volume of verse and destroyed them. But among his many hundreds of newspaper articles there is not one that he would later have had to regret. He struck no bargain over truth with either those who paid him or the mighty men of politics. He would not palliate even his harshest sentences and was obedient only to his pen—the "steel-nibbed devil."

Even if he had remained a journalist, our literature would have recorded his name. And for a long time it did, in fact, appear as though he would be no more than a brilliantly gifted columnist. Keats had died and become one of the greatest lyricists of international literature at the age when Ady had not yet published a single remarkable poem.

2

Endre Ady was twenty-nine when—at the beginning of February 1906—he published a volume of verse under the title *Új versek* ("New poems"). The appearance of this volume immediately made poetry the prime issue of the country's cultural life and caused a cleavage in literary opinion. Ardent supporters gathered round Ady, and a camp was formed of his opponents, thus initiating an argument over Ady's poetry that was to flare up even ten years after his death, with an intensity sufficient to break up literary groups and tear old friendships asunder. And this volume, which aroused such a storm, was not the exceptional product of a unique flash. The "New Poems" were successively followed by the rest of Ady's volumes—*Vér és Arany* ("Blood and Gold"), 1907; *Az Illés szekerén* ("The Chariot of Elijah"), 1908; *Szeretném ha szeretnének* ("Desire to be Loved"), 1909; *A Minden Titkok versei* ("The Poems of All-Secrets"), 1910; *A Menekülő Élet* ("The Fugitive Life"), 1912; *A Magunk Szerelme* ("Our Own Love"), 1913; *Ki látott engem?* ("Who Saw Me?"), 1914; *A Halottak élén* ("At the Head of the Dead"), 1918. This fecundity only apparently diminished between 1914 and 1918. Gyula Földessy, the faithful curator of his heritage, published a volume of over one hundred poems entitled "*Az utolsó hajók*" ("The Last Ships") in 1923, after the poet's death. These were the poems which he had, on account of the war censorship and in deference to the admonitions of his friend, Lajos Hatvany, omitted from the last volume published in his lifetime. Forgotten or unpublished poems by Ady are still occasionally found—the sum total of his poems is close on a thousand. And even that is not the full picture of his prolific writing. Five volumes of his short stories were published in his lifetime; they include *Sápadt emberek és történetek* ("Pale People and Stories"), 1907; *Új csapáson* ("On a New Track"), 1909; *A tízmilliós Kleopátra és egyéb történetek* ("The Cleopatra of Ten Millions and Other Stories"), 1910; *Így is történhetik* ("One Way It Can Happen"), 1910; *Muskétás tanár úr* ("Mr. Muskétás, the Schoolmaster"), 1913. Together with the short stories assembled since his death, their number may be put at about threehundred and twenty.

He also published a small collection of essays entitled *Vallomások és tanulmányok* ("Confessions and Studies") in 1911. The publication of his complete journalistic works is now under way, and the number of articles will also be over the thousand mark.

The question naturally arises as to what it was that made this poet-columnist, who had only incidentally and insignificantly dabbled in poetry, and who had come close to abandoning poetry for good, all of a sudden the most important and most prolific poet of twentieth-century Hungarian literature. What had happened to him?

We have seen that his background and upbringing had at the outset freed him of the nebulous illusions in which his contemporaries faltered. I have spoken of the qualities that not only made him an excellent journalist, but gradually arranged his broadly based experiences and observations into a set of views opposed to the Hungarian realities of the day and involving a rejection of indigenous illusionism and conservatism. Life and institutions in Hungary were unbearable, outdated and mortally paralysing, the doctrines propounded by Hungarian officialdom were mendacious, retrograde and immoral—this was how he saw the world around him. As a journalist, topically reacting to concrete facts, he could express his opinion, but as a poet he could not. He felt that the style and the petrified, stereotyped forms of dominant literary trends, the idyllic epigon folk trend and illusionist romanticism were inappropriate for the expression of these views. (Ady was not the only progressive, revolutionary-minded poet in Hungary who urged the need for change, but it was precisely through the example of poets with views similar to his own that he learned how novel ideas were neutralized by an obsolete, stereotyped style.) The outlines of a new style, of the possibility of a new form began to loom up before him. He was thinking of an artistic portrayal of the world which would have the effect of reality but would depict the world in visionary pictures that differed from all accustomed reality—in a style that would strike the reader but would nevertheless not repel him; it would be startling in its novelty and yet attractively familiar. But where should he have found similar strivings, what could have afforded him encouragement and incentive in a Hungarian literature which in the twentieth century, at the culminating point of capitalist development, in the new regional and emotional environment of urban life, at the time of the emergence of the vast forces of the labour movement, depicted idyllic village scenes in the mid-nineteenth century manner and style of Sándor Petőfi and János Arany, in the key of the folk-songs? And how could he have dared give way to his poetic instinct when, in a Hungary which had been by-passed

by the bourgeois revolutions, he saw only the need but not the opportunity for change? Without fellows or a perspective the poet can but curse, as the prophet did, in the wilderness. He cannot write.

In the summer of 1903 a Hungarian woman residing in Paris, Mrs. Ödön Diósy, visited the provincial town where Ady was working as a journalist. Her Parisian fashions and cosmetics—so alien to the remote Hungarian township—lent her mature, strange, sensual beauty a bizarre setting, and this captivating woman was not only replete with the experiences and reading of another, distant world, but also supremely clever. Mrs. Diósy had, with touching loyalty to her native land, subscribed to the small opposition paper of her town in Paris, and she had thus noted Ady's bold articles, which so incongruously excelled the standards of the provincial journal. At one of their very first encounters she told Ady that he should go to Paris, where he would find the atmosphere appropriate to his talent. This clever piece of advice, however, was proffered by a woman of seductive beauty, to a strangely handsome young man, and her encouragement thus became an irresistible call. The young Ady's heart echoed her "Go to Paris" by beating to the tune of "Come after me!" The poet in him received the encouragement that inspired his development, from her who gave the man in him a love that relieved his solitude. Mrs. Diósy's Christian name was Adél, and Ady—with fatal poetic playfulness—reversed her name and, recalling the myth of the god who approached mortal woman, called her Léda in his poems, which, from their first encounter to their parting, flowed to his Léda throughout nine years. Ady had received the first decisive impulse, and at the beginning of 1904 went to Paris, where he stayed till January 1905. Henceforth, up to 1912, his life was to be divided between Paris and Budapest.

Theirs was a critical relationship—for Léda was a married woman and her husband an admirer of Ady's gifts—but it was all the more extreme in its human intimacy. The constant fervour of the passion of a fatal love, replacing the superficial loves of youth—this was one of the overwhelming gifts of that first year in Paris. It was the double influence of happiness and hopelessness that ripened the young man into a human being of deep feeling.

This personal and human change took place in Paris. Ady, who had been born in a village and had grown up and so far lived in small townships (he had only seen Budapest superficially, while passing through on one or two occasions), was landed without any transition in a metropolis. Only those who have an idea of the nature of these Hungarian townships (a few two or three-storied public buildings at the centre, surrounded by single-

story village houses with primitive lighting and water-supply, and an administration with leaders dependent not only on the government, but also on the landowners of the vicinity and the Church dignitaries of the town or county, *etc.*)—only they can appreciate that this was a greater leap than if the son of a nineteenth century Scottish village parson, brought up on Victorian authors, was now landed in present-day Paris. Ady all of a sudden, in concentrated form, experienced the results of the bourgeois development of which people in Hungary were only dreaming. It was in Paris that Ady fully realized the extent of Hungary's backwardness, and Paris gave him proof that his efforts at home, the promotion of radical bourgeois development, did not represent a Utopian dream but an attainable aim. Yet, because Ady was devoid of illusions and his dialectical mind was quick to seize upon the facts, he also soon noticed that this bourgeois development glistened with the beauty of an over-ripe fruit, ready to drop. He not only saw the Paris of lights, but also came to know the workers of its industrial districts, sensing that the bourgeoisie was now in the same kind of opposition, a defensive opposition, as the aristocracy of the Age of Englightenment had once been in respect to the bourgeoisie. Ady recognized the significance of the labour movement, he saw the brilliant—though as he then thought, distant—perspective of Socialism, he felt the possibility of a new revolution and the advent of a new force in world history. That which at home had been no more than dissatisfaction and an amorphous desire, here became a realistic aim and a distant but definite perspective. All that he knew of the world was now suddenly arranged in the dialectical order of historical development.

He was in Paris when news came of the outbreak of the Russo-Japanese War, and it was in Paris that he took heed of the ever stronger revolutionary movements in Russia. It was from the perspective of Paris that he watched the Russian Revolution of 1905, the prologue to the 1917 Revolution. This set off the line of thought which by the end of 1905 took shape in his article *Földindulás* ("Earthquake"): "Through fire, rubble and embers, Russian democracy triumphantly reaches the throne. But it will conquer enemies more powerful even than the throne. The selfish landlord manor, the tormenting factory, the stupefying parsonage and the heartless barracks. Then, voluntarily to bow its head to the dominion of humanity and civilization. This earthquake will be the pride of history. Its pride, its lesson and its verification. Only soulless commonplaces and wild poems have now told of the people. Not even the most ardent apostles have expected conscious action on the part of the people. And behold! The proletariat has returned the people to the people. The people have risen and are shaping the world.

This is how the people engage in revolution. When they set out, there is an earthquake, and only the people can engage in revolution. And salvation can come only of the people. The people, whom gentlemen rashly call the mob. Shall we compare ourselves to Russia? An unsavoury and unjust task. But we can profit by the Russian example, for all that. Rotten, impotent societies can only be saved by the people. The terrible, invincible, irresistible people."

This was what happened to Ady.

And because he was an artist, beside the great signs of life he passionately observed the signals of the human spirit. It was here that he came to know the holy trinity of Baudelaire, Verlaine and Rimbaud. The *Humanité* of Jean Jaurès was set up as a daily during his first stay in Paris, and its first contributors were Anatole France, Octave Birbeau, Tristan Bernard, Jules Renard, Leon Blum, Jean Longuet and Aristide Briand. At the same time he also attentively noted the developing art of André Gide, Guillaume Apollinaire, Jehan Rictus, Paul Fort, Jules Romain and Charles Vidrac, became acquainted with the painting of Gauguin and Matisse, and wrote an enthusiastic article about Rodin. He was receptive to every intellectual current and read everything that he came across. He did not enter into anyone's footsteps, but the opportunities that opened up before him encouraged him in what, at home, he had previously imagined with regard to a novel manner of writing.

In 1913, with great successes and hard struggles behind him, he summed up the influence Paris had had on him. "The way it had to be, was that I should first receive the justification of my writer's courage in Paris—from one or two tragic Frenchmen—for Paris has not yet taught me anything else for my trade. Then I came home and wrote in the papers, everything, politics, criticisms, reports, short stories, poems. I tried to live an enormous lot, or rather better to attend to that which I had always lived with powerful feeling and suffering. My writings, especially the poems, simply aroused indignation—I was mad, a comedian, meaningless, un-Hungarian, a traitor, in a word, I attained everything that a new poet in Hungary could achieve, but I did not die. My poems and the persecution also won me militant, good supporters, and four or five years in Budapest and Paris were spent in marvellous contests and feverishly hasty work. Perhaps it might have been more seemly for me to leave this earth in good time as a misunderstood lyricist, but I was seized by the mania of a vocation and the superstition that I must, for the time being, still write."

3

The first scientific appraisal, written by János Horváth in the poet's lifetime, after the appearance of his first three volumes of poetry, and published in 1910, bore the title *Ady s a legújabb magyar lyra* ("Ady and the Latest Hungarian Poetry"). After Ady's death, Lajos Hatvany in 1924 began a powerful series of essays about Ady, entitled *Ady világa* ("Ady's World"). In 1949 Gyula Földessy published his commentaries on Ady in his book *Ady minden titkai* ("All Ady's secrets"). My aim is not to write about the philological literature concerned with Ady and I shall not, therefore, continue the list—it is to the titles that I should like to draw attention. The title of Horváth's work indicates that as soon as Ady appeared on the scene everyone looked upon his poetry as the opening of a new epoch and considered that its effect would be the hall-mark of his generation. The titles of the books by Hatvany and Földessy, moreover, show those who wrote in appreciation of Ady's work to have been well aware that the essence of this poetry was a kind of fullness and universality, that Ady cannot be appreciated by taking this or that quality separately, and that the value lies not in his work as a whole, but in the composed unity in which he wrote his works.

Ady's poetic works are—however strange it may sound to say this of a lyricist—a composition. Not a composition in the sense that a novel or a play are, but like a philosophical system, or a Baroque wall painting, or like a piece by Bach. Everything has its well-defined place and form in it. Does this mean that his lyrical poems are not independent, complete works but only parts of a string of poems? No. Each of his poems is an independent, lyrical unit, conceived in a unique mood. But beyond this independence, each poem somehow fits into a system of visions. There is a poem of Ady's called *A Tisza-parton* ("On the banks of the Tisza"), which was published in the first volume. This is how it begins:

Fresh from the Ganges' river shore
A-dreaming in the noon sun's shower
My heart was a great harebell blossom
And tender tremors were my power.

This is a regular, beautiful, symbolistic, lyrical image, with the exoticism of the distant Ganges' shores and the tremors of an enigmatic flower. The reader is not even struck by the strangeness of using the harebell's blossom as the symbol of a man's heart. Yet eight years after the publication of his

first collection, in the volume entitled "Our Own Love", one of his love poems begins thus:

Black was the blossom you sighted,
Strange to behold, so you plucked it,
Pardon be granted by a libertine God,
Sin if you thus did.

It appears from the poem that this black blossom is the poet's heart (the next stanza begins: "A heart you saw... My heart it was..."), and it is now obvious that in contrast to the stereotyped poetic imagery, here it is the man's heart that is the flower, and the woman who plucks it. "On the banks of the Tisza" is an early political poem in which the dreamland of the Ganges' shore is used to counterpoint the barrenness in Hungary, "Black was the blossom you sighted" is a late love poem, yet in the peculiar internal order of Ady's world it is always the poet's heart that is the strange flower to be plucked.

Even this single example is sufficient to suggest wherein Ady's symbolism differs from the poetic practice of the symbolists. Ady's were not individual symbols, but his poetry is itself one vast system of symbols. For the symbol appears not on a single occasion only, but consistently and always with identical meaning. Having in one poem called himself "The Poet of the Hortobágy" (in Ady's time the Hortobágy was an uncultivable waste, suitable for grazing, at best), we may be certain that the symbol of Hungary will henceforth consistently be the waste plains, the barren, marshy land. ("On marshy plains I yearned for hills," "Oh, this great desert, Oh this the Magyar Puszta," "This sad Hungarian plain, Death-scented grief-struck Hungarian plain," "I know this rank and ancient ground: This is the Magyar fallow," "And let us die here in the Magyar Marsh," "Alone we three are on the field: A peasant curse and God and I," "As the steam train speeds me, Through the Magyar plains," "This sorry lake with breath of stench Is also called: Hungary" *etc.*) This consistency and unity of vision is equally valid for every elemental part of his style, down to the individual words and concepts. The white colour, for example, is possessed of special brilliance in this poetry, and compared to white, all else is faded ("I've seen a white heart fade to red"). Whiteness always glitters in the same three sets of notions in his poetry. Death is white ("White Frost-Death speeds," "Happy are they who in God's grace Do wither themselves white," "White, orphaned and frosty," "Like red blood on the white snow," "Many white hamlets on the Magyar plains," "At Winter's

white table," *etc.*), unattainable love is white ("I hug you, drag you, yet cannot reach you, Covered by white Silence, the white shroud," "Flower-hands of maiden white," "Vainly you tempt me white as snow," *etc.*), and redeeming hope is white ("For I worship above all, the white Ararat of my Ark," "God comes in great white sheen, To conquer all my foes," "The white cloth waves before us," pure desires are "white lotuses", and the proletariat that brings revolution, he calls the "Whites of the future").

However, this extraordinarily well defined poetic world does not grow rigid or static, for the coherent force of the poet's view of the world is that of the "either-or" presentation—Ady's world is a system of dialectical opposites. He once called himself "Apollo, the faun-costumed," and on another occasion described himself as a "Nightingale-masked gull". One of his Léda poems begins:

Oh, ugly was my lifetime,
Oh, ugly was my lifetime:
What a beauteous corpse I'll be,
What a beauteous corpse I'll be.

In one of his Paris poems he writes "A martyr of the Holy East am I, Who to the West for mitigation fled." In one of his first revolutionary poems it is these alternative possibilities that urge revolt:

N e w winds are shaking the old Magyar maples,
Waiting we wait for the new Magyar miracles.

Either we are madmen and all of us shall perish,
Or what we believe in shall verily flourish.

New flames, new faiths, new kilns, new saints
Exist, or anew void mist the future taints.

Either flames shall strike the wild old county castles,
Or our spirits stay ever in their shackles.

Either the Magyar verbs shall have new senses,
Or Magyar life will stay sad, ever changeless.

It is sufficient to read the titles of some of his poems for it to become obvious that the inner structure of this poetry is provided by setting

opposites against each other. ("Judas and Jesus," "Snowy Mountains and Riviera," "Blood and Gold," "Eternal Struggle and Honeymoon," "Mary and Veronica," "Ruth and Delilah," "Flower of Death: the Kiss," "Laughter and Tears," "Starling and Dove," "Kissless Living in Kisses," "Shivering in the Burning Fire," "Psalm of Penitent Merriment," "Death is Dawn," "The Joy of Joylessness," "Hated but Admired," "Woman and Cemetery," "Struggle and Death," "Serpent instead of Fish," "Hours instead of Life," "Torment and Obstinacy," "Hatred and Struggle," "Man in Inhumanity," "From Far Off to the Present," "Fighter and the Fight," "Love and the Bier," "Volcanoes and Hearts," *etc.*) It is not that Ady found special pleasure in seeking for opposites and setting them against each other, and in exacerbating extremes. One of Ady's special abilities was a by no means superficial dialectical approach which was sensitive not only to the obvious antithesis of mutually distant concepts, but also recognized the interior contradictions within apparently homogeneous phenomena and concepts that had seemed unequivocal. There is a poem of Ady's whose title fits in among those enumerated above and which sheds a penetrating light on this dialectically constructed world of the poet: "Unbelieving I Believe in God." Ady is a past master at this. No one has so consistently set forth the interior contradictions of contemporary man and of his complex spiritual life, with its unbelieving belief and doubting hope and the alternatives of individualism or collectivism, as he did:

I am, as every human: highness,
Northern-cape, secret, alienness,
Mirage-lit, distant light,
Mirage-lit, distant light.

But oh, I cannot thus continue,
How I would like to show me anew,
That seeing seen I be,
*That seeing seen I be.**

And this dialectical approach was manifested in all the structural parts of his poetry, from the themes to the poetic idiom he used. Ady wrote the most militant, confident revolutionary poems that had appeared in Hungarian since Petőfi; but it was also he who wrote the most pessimistic poems, prophesying final destruction. Ady was the great bard of the mood of the outlying, mute Hungarian villages and sleepy provincial townships,

* For another translation of the same poem see p. 109 of this issue (Ed.)

but it was also he who first made the complex spiritual entity and the nervous vital rhythm of modern metropolitan man a lyrical subject in Hungarian poetry. He was the most consistent poet of anti-feudal, radical bourgeois revolutionism, but it was also in his verse that the anti-capitalist, socialist class struggle was first voiced in elevated, poetic tones. Ady was a haughty individualist and at the same time he proffered his heart to the masses in the tender lyricism of his love poems. And I must repeat that this strange dialectic was manifested down to the elemental particles of his poetic forms and poetic idiom. Ady remained immune to the strivings of his period for the disruption of traditional forms and never wrote free verse—he always wrote in close forms. Within this closeness of form, however, he carried out a veritable revolution in forms—almost each of his poems has a different stanza construction. According to statistics compiled by Gyula Földessy he created some eight hundred kinds of poetic structure, disrupting the traditional rhythms of the poems by making lines with even and odd numbers of syllables rhyme, and introducing startling dissonancies. In his poems the West European quantitative metre and the Hungarian stressed metre are constantly intertwined. The poetic vocabulary of his verse shows a similar strange duality—his poems are full of the common words of modern life, and he was not averse even to city slang, yet at the same time he also used the ancient, forgotten words of the Hungarian language and rarely-heard, full-flavoured dialect expressions.

And that this was not a case of the chance encounter of a thousand random factors, a posterior construction by historians of literature, is proved by two features.

We have already spoken of Ady's peculiar symbolism. The function of symbolic expression in poetry is that the poet clothes a particular phenomenon, hard to define conceptually or in time and space, in a perceptible, visual symbol, whose mood suggests that which the conceptual definition cannot yet precisely define. The symbols with which Ady strove to express his new view of the world are mainly derived from three sets of ideas—the religious mythologies, the Hungarian historical and legendary past, and the names of characteristic Hungarian regions. Hungarian readers, who in Ady's age were well versed in Biblical lore, were familiar with the story of Hagar, Abraham's Egyptian servant, who was the embodiment of extra-marital love and of alienness in Jewish mythology. Ady wrote one of his most profound confessions on the erotic love of modern man in his symbolic poem *A Hágár oltára* ("The Altar of Hagar"). One of the tragic figures of Hungarian history was György Dózsa, the hero of the greatest Hungarian peasant revolution, whom the state authority of his day, the

feudal peers thirsting for revenge, burnt alive on a throne of fire. When Ady became the spokesman of the new revolutionism of the century, he began one of his first revolutionary poems by declaring, "I am the grandson of György Dózsa," and he frequently calls the proletariat "Dózsa's folk." When the Hungarians of old occupied their present homeland in Europe they entered the territory of this country by way of the Verecke Pass over the Carpathian range, while the westernmost frontier township of Hungary in Ady's day was Dévény. When Ady intended to convey that he was an heir to Hungarian traditions and at the same time the Hungarian representative of the culture of Western Europe, he began the second stanza of the prologue to his volume "New Poems" thus:

Verecke's famous path was where I came
Hearing the strain of old Magyar tunes chanted,
May I at Dévény break the spell with
New period's new enchantment?

The examples clearly show that we are here concerned with a consistent poetic method—the more unknown, the more strange to public thought, the more startling through its novelty the idea which he voiced in his poetry, the more he turned to the deepest, atavistic layers of common knowledge for his symbols. This corresponds to the dialectical approach that unites polar opposites, and at the same time by no means lessens the visionary and suggestive power of his symbols. To the public's mind Dózsa's name recalls a bloody revolutionary struggle, but when a twentieth century poet calls himself the grandson of György Dózsa, then, beside the automatic evocation of a revolutionary mood, the reader is also made to feel that he has now encountered a new, a different phenomenon, familiar, even in its unfamiliarity.

Another proof that this is a case of the poet's composition is the cyclic arrangement of Ady's volumes. They usually begin with a prologue, the striking of a powerful note, characteristic of the whole volume. This is followed by cycles of poems. The cycles, in a sense, respond to one another. In the volume entitled "The Chariot of Elijah" there is a cycle called "Winter Hungary" which contains poems on the terrible situation of the Hungarian people, while the response is a cycle "The Song of the Street," which is a collection of Ady's revolutionary poetry, linked to the labour movement. The same volume contains a cycle entitled "Between Léda's Lips" of his love-poems written to Léda, but the volume also has a cycle "Flower of Death: the Kiss," devoted to love in general, as a tragic feeling

in life. There is a similar dialogue in the volume "Desire to be Loved" between the poems of the cycle "Friend of Tamás Esze" (Tamás Esze was a leader of peasant extraction in the Rákóczi rising, one of the Hungarian freedom movements) and those of the "Whites of the future" cycle, conceived upon the inspiration of the revolutionary labour movement. This, moreover, is how his love for Léda is recalled by the cycle called "Two Holy Sailing Boats" and the poet's views on love by the cycle entitled "The Altar of Hagar." It is clearly to be seen that this is not simply a case of a highly intellectual poet arranging his poems according to subject, but that—as the mutual responses of the cycles show—the poet confronts the special features (the fate of the Hungarians, his love for Léda) with the general (the world revolution and love).

It was by no means fortuitous for one of our critics to write that Ady's individual poems are beautiful, but that in the unity of the volumes, the unity of his whole life work, they are even more beautiful and significant, because in the system of ceaseless, mutually relevant responses established by the poet's composition, they are given the same radiance that musical notes and chords—melodious in themselves—acquire in the harmonic unity of a symphony. In the course of one of the debates concerned with Ady, his greatest fellow poet, Mihály Babits, compared Ady's poetry to Dante's *Divina Commedia* and called it an edifice of symbols in which each tone, apart from its intrinsic value, has a value given it by its position—or, in the language of philosophy, a systematic value.

4

We have called Ady an intellectual poet and have spoken of the compositional unity of his life work, of his system of symbols, and of the dialectical structure of his image of the world. Like all similar structural and formal characterizations, the analysis of intentions and artistic methods carries with it the danger of painting a superficial and exaggeratedly schematic picture of the poet and his poetry. As though a hero was characterized by describing his armoury and not through the wounds which he inflicted and received, nor the aims for which he fought.

Ady, whom a complex of experiences freed from the framework of the standard epigon poetry of his period, used this armoury to fight his battle for the attainment of concrete aims and the creation of the new Hungarian poetry. The battle was not bloodless. And as far as his opponents were concerned, they did not use chivalrous means to fight him. Those in power

could not tolerate the complex phenomenon of someone who as a columnist advocated political ideas which were not favoured by the establishment, who as a bourgeois radical democrat drawing close to the socialist labour movement was prepared to fight for these ideas, and who incorporated these same ideas and deeds in overpowering, suggestive poetic symbols through the magic of his art. Count István Tisza, the leader of the pro-Hapsburg political trend of the period of Francis Joseph, personally engaged in a brutal attack against Ady, the official sector of the political press ceaselessly attacked him, monks maligned him in books and essays written in the narrow-minded tones of theological disputations, the enterprises of the entertainments industry, the orpheums, cabarets and humorous papers did their best to ridicule his poetry—this much he could have put up with. But he also had to fight against his younger brother's being hampered in his career as a school-master simply because he was his brother, and during the First World War—although he was then increasingly sick—he was hauled off to recruiting centres and pestered with obviously superfluous call-up papers. The war censorship persecuted his every word, attempts were made to ruin him financially, to turn public opinion against him by base, compromising accusations, and even after his death his poetry was for a long time banned from secondary school and university education.

His struggle was nevertheless not barren. Gradually a veritable camp was formed around Ady, consisting of the most progressive, most gifted writers of the period. In 1908 the most powerfully influential periodical of modern Hungarian literature, *Nyugat* ("West"), was started with the backing of Lajos Hatvany and edited by Ignotus, Miksa Fenyő and Ernő Osvát. It soon rallied Mihály Babits, Dezső Kosztolányi, Árpád Tóth, Gyula Juhász, Milán Füst, Zsigmond Móricz, Margit Kaffka, Frigyes Karinthy and Lajos Nagy–the general staff of the rebirth of Hungarian literature–to Ady's banner. A short-lived but highly effective series of anthologies entitled *Holnap* ("Tomorrow") fought for the new poetry and mobilized the progressive intellectuals of the sleepy provincial townships in support of Ady's ideas and his poetry. The leading papers of the radical bourgeois democratic trend, the *Budapesti Napló* ("Budapest Diary") and *Világ* ("World"), regularly published Ady's poems and articles. From 1906 Ady steadily wrote for *Népszava* ("People's Word"), the paper of the Hungarian Social Democratic Party, and contributed to *Szocializmus*, the theoretical paper of the Social Democrats. His poems reached the working-class masses, and the workers, then only entering upon the initial stage of acquiring an education and class consciousness, became friends of Ady's poetry rather than of the colourless, stereotyped poems of the movement.

The poet's struggle soon became a battle for existence. Taking fright at the Russian revolution of 1905, the bourgeois radicals ever more insistently demanded a political reformation of the country, while the labour movement, which had been encouraged by the fruits of the Russian revolution, advanced with ever intensifying fervour along the road to revolution. Ady's poetry became one of the mighty motive forces of these positively and negatively oriented progressive political trends, whose aim was nevertheless identical. He was the most farsighted spiritual leader of the political struggles between 1905 and 1912. It was only natural for the situation to develop towards Ady and his camp's becoming the most effective counter-propagandists against the World War that was unleashed in 1914. Ady clearly saw that this war would delay the solution of the complex Central European nationality question and land it in a blind alley. He knew what fatal consequences would be involved if Hungary's fate was linked to the imperialist policies of the German Empire. Ady's aim was to battle against the senselessness and inhumanity of war, to struggle for the delayed social revolution. Though most of his fellow poets and writers could not follow him to his ultimate political ends, he nevertheless succeeded, in a world of sabre-rattling agressive militarism and blood-thirsty chauvinism, in inducing the greatest Hungarian poets and writers to sound the pure chords of peace. It was due to him that our literature was not besmirched by the tones of hatred against other peoples, that it unfalteringly advocated the unity of peoples and of cultures. Nor was it a chance event for the leaders of the Hungarian bourgeois revolution of 1918 to have sent a delegation to pay homage to the dying Ady, or for the Hungarian proletarian revolution of 1919 to have acknowledged Ady's poetry as its own. Indeed, one of the youthful leaders of this revolution, József Révai, in the sorry years of his emigration, wrote the essay on Ady that first showed the full grandeur of Ady's poetic stature.

Ady fought these battles with head unbowed and weapons untarnished to the end. Yet his unsettled life and the permanent insecurity of his existence (which could but be allayed, but not removed, by the selfless goodness of his friend and patron Lajos Hatvany), the havoc wrought by a then practically incurable disease which he had acquired in his youth, moreover nicotine, alcohol and coffein—the narcotic stimulants of his creative work and his struggles—gradually consumed his alluringly beautiful body, with its seemingly indestructible physique. His love for Léda, that was unresolvable, led to a crisis and ended in a tragic parting. The new love, which finally led him to the haven of marriage, came late, in the midst of the horror of war—it too began with a crisis. Ady's wife, Berta

Boncza, came from the circle of István Tisza, Ady's greatest political opponent. Her father was one of Tisza's confidants, she was sixteen years younger than Ady, and their marriage took place over her father's protests. The four happy years they spent together in the maelstrom of war and revolution may best be described in Ady's words—the title of one of his poems—as "The Hours of Huddled Fear."

The period that hurtled toward war, and then became drenched in the shame of war, was a terrible tribulation for Ady, who was born to be the leader of a triumphant revolution and not the funeral orator of a world suffocated in hopelessness. His last years were marked by the tragic vision which he created in his poem *Az eltévedt lovas* ("The Lost Rider") and in which he depicts himself as a horseman lost in the morass:

Nothing but secrets, nothing but sires,
Nothing but power, nothing but gore,
Nothing but forests, nothing but swamps,
Nothing but madmen feared of yore!

Toward a new and tangled path
Strikes a lost horseman from the past;
But of the hamlets there's no trace,
And lamp-lights not a glimmer cast.

The hamlets are benumbed in sleep;
Shivering they dream of days more fair;
And from the foggy forest rush
The aurochs, wolf, and raging bear.

One hears the muffled gallop of
A horseman lost from long ago,
The shackled souls of ancient fens
And former forests wake to woe. *

The dawning horizon of peace and the familiar lights of the revolution were only to shine upon him for a fleeting flash. On a misty morning of January 1919 he died in the ward of a Budapest nursing home, so quietly that the night nurse knitting by the window only noticed that his slow, laboured breath had suddenly ceased.

* For another translation of the same poem see p. 118 of this issue (Ed.)

5

International literary opinion knows little of the meaning of the *whole* of Hungarian literature—how then, could it appreciate what Ady's appearance meant in the history of that literature? We can do no better than seek analogies to convey it, to indicate that Ady's appearance in literature was a phenomenon much like the appearance in music of Béla Bartók, who in his tremendous compositions united primitive tunes, folk songs, the music of distant, exotic peoples, with the restlessness of modern man's soul and the atonal, cacophonous noise of the city. And where do we stand now, removed as we are from the ideological and political struggles of the turn of the century and its first ten years—from symbolism and intellectual poetry? Not only the Western reader, but also the young people of Hungary today feel this to be remote history, no more real than the personal, accidental features of Ady's life, with his tormenting and blissful loves. Their memory fades, as the wine has dried in his glass and the smoke of his eternally lit cigarettes has been wafted away. If he were still alive, an old man of eighty-four, he would look back on even the greatest pinnacles of his poetry with the objectiveness that the old Goethe evinced towards the works of his youth, towards his Werther. He would appreciate their poetic beauty, but the combat, the blood, the tears, the topicality would be alien to him.

Of Homer we may at most believe that there once lived a poet (or perhaps two?) of that name, but what do we know of his life, his fate and his poetic workshop? Yet Homeric poetry continues to live even without the accoutrements of the historians of literature, and there is a certain kind of smile that lights up our faces when the epics of Homer radiate toward us the live world of gods, wandering, quarreling and making love beneath the brilliant Greek skies—the fates of men mingled with those of gods, and the comic and naive grandeur that billows through the ocean of hexameters.

Of Ady too I can say nothing more and of better proof than that—even after the passage of his epoch, the end of his life, and the triumph of his ideas—his poetry continues to live. The Paris that Ady saw is now, after two world wars, a German occupation and half a century, almost not the same city any longer, and hardly a man alive could still tell what that Paris summer was like, when sauntering down the Boulevard Saint Michel he felt the coming of Autumn. But ever since he wrote his poem *Párisban járt az ősz* ("Autumn in Paris"), whenever we see a crumpled leaf swirl past us in the Summer dog-days on a sweltry city street, whenever a

greying hair in the summer of our lives reminds us of the coming of our autumn, the feelings they arouse will be imbued with Ady's sigh:

The Autumn skipped through Paris yesterday,
Whisking in silence down Rue Saint Michel:
In sweltry dog-days, beneath the hush of trees
She met me with her spell.

I was just sauntering slowly toward the Seine;
Small, twiggy songs within my spirit burned:
Purple and pensive, strange and smoky-hued.
I knew for death they yearned.

Then Autumn whispered something from behind;
And Rue Saint Michel now began to quake;
Whish, whish: the jesting leaves began to swirl
In Autumn's gusty wake.

One moment; Summer was yet undismayed;
And Autumn fled away in laughing ease.
She came, but that she came, alone I knew
*Beneath the moan of trees.**

In point of fact the experience is a trivial one, not even necessarily that of a poet, for it happens to all of us that as we stroll along the sun-kissed streets of a city, humming a droning little song, the strange mood of evanescence takes hold of our hearts. The picture is really a tremendously concrete one, determined even geographically, we even know which way he was going along the Saint Michel, since he was heading for the Seine. But the way a personified autumn flitted through the concrete little experience, the way he harkened to its whispered message in the dry, rustling sound of the leaves, the way he made an entity of the poem, like a rondo, with autumn swerling in in the first stanza and being wafted away in the last—this is the magic of poetry. The little item of concrete experience loses its momentary topicality and raises the reader to the mysterious sphere of the passage of life.

From the indiscrete reminiscences of his contemporaries we still know something about those wineswilling evenings, when Ady sat in the public

* For another translation of the same poem see p. 114 of this issue (Ed.)

house known as the "Three Ravens" consuming ferocious quantities of drink, lighting one cigarette off the other, occasionally pushing his copious hair back from his damp forehead and looking into emptiness with those great eyes of his. It was of them that a contemporary wrote that they burned with a blackish-red light and that whether his expression or words were happy or contentious or sad, these great eyes never changed, but shone with a constant light, like the diamond eyes of an idol. But his drinking mates are now very old men or dead; we too, who know of these evenings from hearsay, are greying, and the "Three Ravens" have long gone out of existence. But the ecstasy which Ady experienced on these evenings lives on, fearsome, in his poem *Az ős Kaján* ("The ancestor Kaján"). And this is not the ecstasy of wine, but of the soul-saving instant when the shadows of the past and the lights of the future converge in a single man's heart, when he grows ecstatic over the fact that, possessed of the burden of ancient Babylonian cultures and Christian myths in his thought, he is at the same time the herald of a future of unknown purpose. Timidly he questions history as to what fate awaits his people in the eternal stream, the birth and passing of peoples and cultures, and mercilessly asks: "What is a man worth, if he is Hungarian?" This is an instant that will never pass. And the mysteriously named ancestor Kaján (the word *kaján* in Hungarian means *malicious, malevolent*, but it also suggests the fatal name of Adam's murderous son, Cain) at once symbolizes history, the traditions of the nomad Magyars of old in their surge from East to West, blind fate, and to some extent Ady himself, who in the companion-laden solitude of a public-house table poses himself the problems of the future and drives himself into the ecstasy that alternately brings despair and hope. What pained the Hungarian poet at the turn of the century is hard, perhaps even impossible, to explain to a foreigner. But whoever has once gazed through a drink-filled glass and, forgetting his companions at table, has, in the cold, liberating intoxication of alcohol, simultaneously felt his own individual fate, the fate of his people, and the problem of mankind's future, will no more forget Ady's struggle with the ancestor, Kaján, than I, who write these lines in Budapest, will to the end of my days look into the fire on a hearth, without recalling Steerforth, Dickens' attractive-repulsive hero, gazing into the fire of Mr. Peggotty's house at the turning point of decency and dishonour.

Those who today peruse Ady's volumes of verse will hardly consult the chronology of Ady's poems to find out that the poem entitled *Emlékezés egy nyár-éjszakára* ("Remembrance of a Summer Night") was written in the spring of 1917, when mankind was approaching the third, and perhaps most horrible anniversary of the outbreak of the First World War. They

may not even know, perhaps, that it recalls the alarm-filled summer night in 1914, when the first news of war, heralding the world-wide holocaust, bore down upon him—a man in love, preparing to marry, to be reborn and happy. But twentieth century man, accustomed to wars and world cataclysms, does not in fact need to attach to a concrete date or biographical fact the oft-experienced moment which Ady's vision projects before us: "From heaven a furious angel beat A tocsin on the sad dark earth." Even so he will experience the thrill of horror through the strange progress of the poem, enumerating concrete and apparently minor experiences (a broken-legged colt, a stray dog, *etc.*) as the requisites of a peaceful life, then exploding into a recognition of horror:

The ghastliness o'er the souls of men
Gloating joyously bent to grin.
Every human now came to possess
Every ancestor's secret destiny,
Bloody, terrible jubilee whither
Drunken there started the Thought that is
The Human's proudest servitor
Who, lo, now no one and numb became:
Curious,
*Curious night-time in summer.**

The way the poem repeats six times over: "Curious, curious night-time in summer," produces the same feeling of the unavoidable, monotonous thud of approaching Fate, as Beethoven said the main theme of the Fifth Symphony did, when he remarked to Schindler: "That is how Fate knocks at the door." Goethe also did not know what Beethoven had felt—concretely and through his experiences—when he composed the symphony, but when Mendelssohn played the old Goethe the first movement, the whitehaired poet muttered to himself in alarm: "This was something absolutely great, absolutely wild; you feel afraid the house will collapse. . ."

Ady's significance as a poet—this is the significance of every true poet—is that he was able to put into verse his subjective experiences, conceived in the concreteness of time and events, in such a way that, a generation after his death, half a century after these experiences, we are able topically to apply to our own experiences forms and feelings with whose inspiration we no longer have anything in common. He was able

* For another translation of the same poem see p. 119 of this issue (Ed.)

to impart eternal forms to human emotions, because he moved among things eternal and wrote of fundamental human feelings. For what was it that this poet wrote about, whom once in the struggles for literary recognition and over politics, people called an excentric, unintelligible and bizarre? If I make an inventory of his symbols, my answer must be: about life and death, joy and suffering, friendship and love, God and Satan, haughtiness and humility, tradition and revolution, homeland and humanity, and about those things that evade all our cleverness and impart a mysterious incandescence to life—about the dream, the miracle and the secret.

POEMS

by

ENDRE ADY

DESIRE TO BE LOVED

None comes before me and none after,
No kin, no friend for grief and laughter,
To none belong I—none.
To none belong I—none.

I am as all men—polar whiteness
Secret, alien, gleaming brightness
A far will o' the wisp.
A far will o' the wisp.

I cannot stay without friends, brothers,
I fain would show myself to others
That seeing they might see.
That seeing they might see.

For this all—self-torment, song, giving,
That others' I might be, then living,
They loving, I would love.
They loving, I would love.

A LEGEND OF SAINT MARGARET

Saint Margaret's Isle has whisper'd me a tale
One lonely night whose secret haunts me yet:
An ancient king had promis'd to the veil

His snow-white daughter, maiden Margaret.
Out of a dreaming sleep she woke to cry
And swoon away because of sudden din...
Into the royal court-yard, wild of eye,
A savage horde of men came spurring in.
—Away to westward someone waits, no boor
Of churlish manners like the palatine,
But just a youth, a singer soft and fine,
A gentle, wistful, wandering troubadour.
Long, long she waits, and falters, numb in heart.
Within the clamerous castle horsemen rear
And Magyars come, but not—to take her part—
One lov'd dream-cavalier.
He did not come, he did not come at all,
That gentle kiss, that plaintive serenade
Return'd no more, where Danube's waters fall:
And Christ's grim cloister claim'd the weeping maid
Whose dust still sleeps in its lonely wall.

THE CHARIOT OF ELIJAH

The Lord, Elijah-like, to heaven
Takes all, whom, smitten with his rod,
He loves, and gives them quick hearts, glowing,
The burning chariots of God.

Skyward Elijah's sons up-rushing
Where winter reigns eternal, stay,
And on the ice-peaked Himalayas
Their roaring wheels fling snow-dust spray.

Sad, between heaven and earth to wander,
Driven by wind of fate their lot,
Towards beauties sinister and icy
Gallops Elijah's chariot.

Burning their hearts, their brains are ice-cold,
Earth looks up, mocks the course they run.
Upon their cold way, diamantine
Dust scatters, pitying, the sun.

THE OLD BOY'S GREETINGS

To Zilah let there go this song of greeting:
Half sad, half glad, tender:
His scholar sends it his old master, weeping,
His scholar old and vagabond, the sender.

The old school since is younger grown, renewing
Youth and youthful vigour.
Us only time has kissed, and kissed us aged,
Time, distance, wine and song and conflict's rigour.

Paris shrieks at me while I weave these verses
'See your scholar, master!'
Ah! my old teacher, my good Greek professor!
The curse of Greece brings still today disaster.

Homer, the cloudy tragedies of Hellas
Stab my heart. You, reading
The Grecian lines, we, God!—ye gods, I hear you—
We listen, idle, boyish and unheeding.

But Homer's blue, clear sky is overclouded:
Gods, heroes high-hearted
In swift succession, since with life I battle,
Go from my heart, forgotten and departed.

Aner and genitive of aner, andros—
Right, the declination?
But I have long forgotten Greek, wise master
I wait, a man, my fate, life's consummation.

Today, yet on my face I feel you looking,
Eyes so calm and healing,
You gave so much of courage: ah! life passes
Never to me the joy of life revealing.

You would we held life fair, so of life's beauty
Would be ever telling—
Upon your lips there played a smile of sadness,
But those lips spoke of strength and faith indwelling.

You too confirmed me—in your little journal
Gave my songs a hearing,
The years have passed, and I the rhyming scholar
Grow older, like my master, old age nearing.

You stand before me, when I near surrender—
Life's hostage, self-giving:
Willing, unwilling, on your head, wise, stately,
The gods shall set a crown of laurel living.

So comes the festal day, but you stand leafless—
Once a rose-spray bearing:
Fate broke it off, fate, fate, Greek fate, malignant,
True then the myth, the ancient myth unsparing?

Like you I leafless stand: but for me blossom
No remembered roses:
We live for others: we are givers always,
For thus the god of destiny disposes.

It matters little, green the hills of Zilah,
Gay, the wine-press flowing,
A drop of joy, a short forgetfulness
Gives him whom fate strikes, smites, no mercy showing.

Yet now how many on your head enwreathed,
Speak their benediction?
For man to find a key to life's enigma,
Still high the quest, though followed in affliction.

Yet am I here to push your festal chariot
To glad homage leaping,
And I would fain your hands kiss, my good master
With blessing and with cursing, and with weeping.

THE HORSES OF DEATH

On the white road of the moonlight
The winds, wild shepherds of the sky,
Drive on their flocks of scudding cloud
And towards us, towards us, without sound,
Unshod, Death's horses onward fly.

Silent, death-bringing steeds of death—
And shadowy horsemen on them ride,
Sad riders, dumb in grief obscure—
Yea—the moon fears and hides her face
If the white road along they glide.

The whole world slumbers, soundless, still,
Whence come they? Who knows? Who can guess?
They loosen stirrup, stay their course,
Ever one horse a horseman lacks,
Ever one saddle riderless.

He before whom those horsemen rein
Into that saddle mounts, his breath
Catching, grown pale, and with him fast
Along the white road of the moon
Seeking new riders, gallops Death.

AUTUMN IN PARIS

Yesterday Autumn into Paris crept.
Boulevard Saint Michel glided soundless through,
In the fierce Dog-Days, under still leafage
And came upon me there.

I wandered slowly towards the river,
My heart burned with songs, little faggots that flamed,
Purple spirals of song smoke—laughing—sad,
Song that sang of my dying.

And Autumn reached me and whispered to me,
Boulevard Saint Michel shuddered suddenly.
Swirling, rustling, down the long Boulevard,
Flew the leaves playing.

One moment—Summer had not shrunk alarmed,
And Autumn Paris left and sped laughing,
But Autumn had been there and I alone
Know it beneath the sighing leaves.

THE ANCIENT EVIL ONE

Forth from the East, in cloak of purple
When song of old dawned as a sun,
He came wine-thirsty, proudly riding,
With music came he, and with song,
Hailed me, the Ancient Evil One.

Close to my ear, wild rake he sings me,
'Drink, drink!'—I make him no reply.
Red dawn, red dawn in long succession
Follows, and on the window knocks
With drunken fingers gliding by.

The lost bliss of the East, the holy,
This present's shame and dark disgrace
And the mist-future, vapour-patterned,
Dance on a winy table where
The Evil meets me face to face.

My coat is worn, my head nods weary,
Upon his shoulders purple glows.
Crucifix, two candles—brooding dark.
A sad, great tourney, without end,
The wine upon the table flows.

He fights with me through the long ages
Since Babylon, whose streets once trod
My ancestor, it may be, lustful,
And since, he comes to me, my comrade,
My father, and my king—my god.

A scornful-eyed Apollo, wanton,
He slips his cloak—the long hours pass—
Still the dance whirls—the conflict rages—
Still stands his horse—Around, around
The blood-stained table goes the glass.

Great lord, brave comrade, grant me pardon,
My head is heavy, and above
Broods grief—Much, much there was of goodness,
Of sin, of fierce nights—of desire,
My father, there was much of love.

Groaning, my broken lyre I offer,
My broken heart, he laughs, loud-long.
Beneath the sacred tavern windows
Life passes rushing, roaring by
Life, full of wine and blood and song.

My lord, with others join the battle,
For me joy is no joy—and fame
And wine fumes bow my head with aching
In bitter dreams the claws are worn,
The lion's pride and strength grown tame.

The soil of Hungary my soil is,
Barren, exhausted—Vanity
Thy frenzy's high great words—What profits
The feast of blood and wine? What man?
Be he a son of Hungary.

My lord, I am a poor worn servant
A roving fool who wastes his breath,
Why must I drink till I fall senseless?
I have no money—lost my faith,
My force spent—I am near to death.

I have a mother, loved and holy,
Leda I have—may her God bless—
And a few dreams that glow as lightning,
A few friends, and, beneath my soul
A great marsh—a vile rottenness.

A few songs, it may be, I have too,
Songs new and great, wild songs of lust,
But in this struggle, old, unceasing,
In drunken fever I would fall
Beneath the table in the dust.

O Lord, dismiss thy worn, sad servant,
Nothing is left—what lies before
Is certain, ancient, certain ruin;
Cast no spells, give me no more wine—
Leave me my lord, I drink no more.

I have a sickness, deadly, loathing,
A withered, ailing body—See
For the last time I bow before thee—
Down to the ground I dash the glass,
My lord, I yield myself to thee.

And now he goes to mount his charger,
Claps on my shoulder—mightily
Laughs, and rides on with pagan singing —
With lusty dawns, along the wild
Witch-conjured winds, that sweep the sky.

Forth from the East towards new conflicts
Pagan, he fares towards the West,
A numb joy fills my cold frame—With me
The crucifix—the broken glass—
Beneath the table stretched I rest.

KINSMAN OF DEATH

I am akin to death, his kinsman,
Fleeting to the love I love, swift burning;
Her lips to kiss I love who goes
Not returning.

Roses I love, the sick, the languid,
Women whose passion fears the morrow,
Years of the past, radiant years,
Years of sorrow.

And the sad hours I love, that summon,
Sound with their beat a ghostly message,
Of mighty death, of holy death
Shadowed presage.

And they I love who go far journeys
And they who weep, and they who waken,
Meadows at dawn where sweeps the rain
Cold, forsaken.

Peace I love, I love weeping tearless,
And the tired renunciation,
Bringing the wise, the sick, the poet,
Consolation.

Him I love, the deceived, who suffers,
The crippled, him who halts, unmoving,
Him who believes not, mourns, I love,
The world loving.

I am akin to death, his kinsman,
Fleeting to love I love, swift burning,
Her lips to kiss I love who goes
Not returning.

THE LOST RIDER

Lost and ancient, the horseman rides,
Blind the trot of the horse's feet,
Of the forest that was, of the reeds that waved
The fettered spirits start at their beat.

Where the trees of the silent past
Brooded still in the chequered shade,
On a sudden the shapes of a winter's tale
Leap to life in the listening glade.

Here dense and solemn the forest stands,
Here the song of the years of old,
Since the days of our forefathers, fighters sad,
Lives in the deaf mist's silent hold.

Spectral autumn is with us now,
Men are few, and their numbers wane,
In his cloak of eddying mist-wrack treads
Grey November the hill-girt plain.

Suddenly, strangely the plain anew
Clothes with rushes and woodlands green
Its limbs of November, its limbs of fog
And hides in the mist of the years that have been.

Only bloodshed and mystery,
Footprints ancestral in ancient ways,
Only the forest, only the reeds,
Only the madmen of vanished days.

Lost and ancient the traveller rides,
Through new grown brushwood upon his way,
No light shines forth, and no lamp burns,
Unseen the villages of today.

Villages unseen, shuddering,
Dream of the past and dumbly sleep.
From the mist and the forest, the ancient, the dark,
The wolf, the bear and the great elk leap.

Lost and ancient, the horseman rides,
Blind the trot of the horse's feet,
Of the forest that was, of the reeds that waved
The fettered spirits start at their beat.

REMEMBRANCE OF A SUMMER NIGHT

From heaven a furious angel beat
A tocsin on the sad dark earth.
At least a hundred young men perished,
Of stars at least a hundred fell,
Of purity the fillet cherished
At least a hundred maidens lost.
Strange, strange that night of summer.
Our old bee-hive took fire and burned,
Our finest foal, too, broke its leg,
I dreamed the dead lived once again,
And Burkus, our good dog, was killed,
And Mari, the sewing-maid, the dumb
Suddenly sang hoarse rasping songs—
Strange, strange that night of summer.
Beggars on horseback clattered boldly,
While true men cowered cravenly,
Grown arrogant, the robber plundered,
Strange, strange that night of summer.
We knew that man is prone to fall

And deeply held in debt to love;
It was in vain, and strange in truth,
The world was changed from what it was.
Never more mocking shone the moon,
Never more little yet was man
As on that night.
Strange, strange that night of summer.
Over the spirit terror leaned and smiled
With evil joy. The secret destiny
Of every ancestor into all men
Entered, and drunkenly thought lurched
To a dark feast of fear and blood.
Thought, the proud minister of man,
Thought that walked not with limping feet.
Strange, strange that night of summer.
Then I thought, then in truth I thought
Some god neglected caught at life
And bore it death-wards, and behold
Here I yet live since, such a one
As that night made me, and upon
The citadel of God remember
That dreadful night that sunk a world.
Strange, strange that night of summer.

Translations by J. C. W. Horne

AURÉL BERNÁTH

by

ISTVÁN GENTHON

The sexagenarian Aurél Bernáth, who is one of the outstanding personalities of present-day Hungarian painting, was born in 1895 in the village of Marcali (Western Hungary). He showed his first timid efforts to Ödön Rippl-Rónai, younger brother of József Rippl-Rónai, the prominent Hungarian painter of the first years of the century. The former was himself an amateur painter, his brother's only confidant and an enthusiastic collector. The first of Bernáth's pictures that we now know is "The Fleiner Family's Drawing Room," dated 1914. It is an interior of shining colours, whose unusually elongated horizontal width is itself reminiscent of Rippl-Rónai.

A year later, he was working at Nagybánya, the favourite summer venue of Hungarian painters, as a pupil of Thorma and Réti. He was awarded the Nagybánya scholarship. The "Marketplace at Nagybánya" (1916) shows, as yet, few individual traits in his style of painting.

It is necessary at this stage to point out that Hungarian painting—like British—has not followed the various periods of French development. In the region of the Danube, realism was not succeeded by impressionism but by an almost pantheistic school of painting with exuberant enthusiasm for nature and a marked preference for sunshine. It was centred at Nagybánya and its leading personality was Károly Ferenczy.

Aurél Bernáth took part in the First World War and in 1920 went to Vienna where he made a very scanty living as a horner. However, he did not give up his artistic activities, and in 1922 published a folder under the title *Graphik von Aurél Bernáth*, with six prints and lithographs, mostly of village scenes. This aroused attention in Budapest. He next lived in Berlin for four years (1923—1926) which were fraught with grave internal struggles. He sank into inactive lethargy, doubting not only the triumph of the progressive style, but also his own gifts. The young artist joined

the German expressionist trend. Herwarth Walden gladly exhibited his works in the Gallery of the *Sturm* in 1923 and 1924—on the latter occasion they were shown together with those of Béni Ferenczy*. Walden's interest in his art was a great honour, because the *Sturm* only concerned itself with the most prominent among the foreigners (e. g., Chagall).

Of Bernáth's expressionist, Berlin pictures only a dim recollection remains of his cubistic "Live Square" (1923) and of the vast "Composition" (1923); the latter was lost in a fire during the siege of Budapest in 1945. The "Red Beast" (1924), which was more expressionistic and reminiscent of the works of Franz Marc, was also destroyed.

Bernáth, however, soon endeavoured to escape from the dead-end of German expressionism. His pastel "Still Life with Chess-board" (1924) is an indication of this, for in it Bernáth showed himself ready to embark on the road that was to lead away from Berlin and toward his own self. It is a prospect composition, like so many of his later works, only its motifs are far more modest. After the stupor of expressionism, the objects still appear to sway and seem uncertain. The surface is velvety and the finest feature is the breath-like lightness of the table-cloth. Two of Béni Ferenczy's small cubist sculptures are depicted in the room—this was the year of their common exhibition in the premises of the *Sturm*. This is the first real Bernáth picture, one that was to initiate a succession of others. It is a mixture of contemplation, poetry and a soft, caressing presentation.

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It took two years for him to befriend the idea of painting large compositions. Then he painted his "Riviera" (1926—1927), a picture of enormous dimensions and one of his best known canvases, where the whole surface is now entirely unequivocal. It has much detail, especially in the bizarre delineation of the right-hand rock, and yet it is homogeneous. Its solemn, spiritual idiom was new to Hungarian painting. "Whence this mode of expression?" the art critic, who is always liable to exaggeration in his search for causes, might perhaps ask. Maybe it was his own expressionist experiments that influenced him, and nothing more. As Stravinsky once said of himself: "He draws brave and pure lines in space."

"The Port of Genoa" (1926—1927) was the second link in the long succession of landscapes. The prospect composition is again dominated by the various hues of blue, for Bernáth was a songster of the deep blues.

* See *The New Hungarian Quarterly*, Vol. I. No. 1. pp. 147—157.

The houses in the foreground are still a trifle fragmented, but the great unity is coming into being.

One of the greatest feats of his still-life painting, the vast "Morning" (1927), appeared suddenly, without any precursors. Its composition, embedded in deep blues, contains in finished form the mode of grouping that he was later to use on several occasions—it is a still life, with the landscape visible through a window behind it. In front of the open window is a small table with a book, an electric lamp and a pot of flowers. The goldfish in the bulbous glass dish on the sill glow red. But most important is the landscape, with its deeply melodious chromaticity. This early still life is one of the most excellent.

Memorable among his early landscapes is the "Walchensee" (1928). Once more, deep blues and ultramarine transitions dominate the enormously big canvas. The two houses in the foreground almost bend forward to peer into the dazzling mirror of the water. By now, as in his later works, the artist ruled securely over the relations of space. Few people have been able to arouse the feeling of space so involuntarily and naturally. And the lyrical intensity has a frightening, awesome quality about it. Shelley wrote of the clouds that thunder was their laughter, and Bernáth's poetry too is not always kindly in character.

From 1926 Bernáth spent increasingly more of his time in Budapest, though for the greater part of the summer he would go to Pöstyén. He had come home almost unknown, but links of friendship formed around him in a matter of weeks. News among artists travels along capillary tubes, and when his first pictures were seen, those at home did not need to be convinced that he was destined to play a leading part.

It was time, however, that he made his *début* before the public. In September 1928 he exhibited twenty-two pictures at the Ernst Museum, and of course the "Riviera" and "Morning" could not fail to be among them. His works scored a resounding success, and visitors to the exhibition realized that they had encountered a significant and distinctive painter, hitherto unknown in Budapest.

The pastel "Still Life with Nike" (1928) was an important station, even in the long series of still lives. A small-scale copy of the Nike of Samothrace stands dominantly white on a writing desk, amid sketches, glasses and painting kit. Only the window is lacking behind it. Velvety shapes come to life upon it.

The most magnificent of the early pastels was "Winter" (1929). The lazily winging crows enhance the melancholy of the snowy country landscape. The bird that is nearest floats in boredom, the other appears to be

trying desperately to break away, flaps upward and digs its head into the mist. Tiny cottages fringe the hillside, enveloped in a white fur of snow, under a spell. The seasonal death of nature strikes an elegiac tone of which it would be hard to seek the like. Rarely has the sadness of hopeless hopes, the shiver of the abandonment of faith in spring, found such an interpreter. The "Violin" (1929), another still life, merits mention here for its velvety soft presentation.

The Galerie Hartberg of Berlin arranged a collective exhibition of Bernáth's works in 1931. This display was noteworthy, among other reasons, because Julius Meier-Graefe, who had so successfully propagated the French impressionists in Germany, now wrote a highly laudatory article about Bernáth in one of the December issues of the Frankfurter Zeitung. He concluded his appreciation by saying: "With this one painter Hungary has, as Norway once did with Munch, surged forward into the ranks of those modern artist peoples to which we shall henceforth have to pay great attention."

Three self-portraits followed. These, in a manner characteristic of Bernáth, differed greatly in their dimensions and technique, but proceeded, step by step to eliminate the various obstacles. The "Self-portrait Before the Window" (1929) shows the artist standing in a shabby hotel room. It is done in pastels and is relatively small. The oil "Self-Portrait in a Yellow Coat" (1930) has him facing the viewer, his hands clasped, looking rather bitter and emaciated. To the left, a winged angel hovers on the easel, obviously not fortuitously. It is the Genius of the wonderful Syracusan coins, but it does not yet bring the wreath. "You must win through"—or something to that effect—is probably its message. Finally the gigantic "Self-portrait" of 1930 retained the composition of the first pastel, transforming the downiness of the surface into a glazy, lustrous oil technique with breath-like delicacy in the differentiation of both colour and shape. It has an abundance of shades and triumphantly presents the painter's own being.

The first period thus came to an end. A characteristic feature perhaps, beyond those mentioned, is that sensitiveness had never so far appeared with such force in Hungary. His is a man's confession of the miracles of workaday life, modestly, almost as if whispered to himself.

It should be stressed that his art has had its various periods. If, in what is to be said, two additional great periods are to be clearly distinguished, then the only reason why it is confined to two is because the present limitations of space do not permit of the refinements of a monograph.

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The second is the period of visions, which was to be expected of a lyrical painter. The pastel "Woman Musing," also done in 1930, before the "Self-portrait," points in this direction. A woman in a blue dress is languidly leaning her elbows on a table. She is as ethereal, transparent and uncertain as a flame of brandy, about to go out with a last flicker.

Figural compositions, such as that of "Spring" (1931), in which the five figures of the company pass their time on the terrace, were not rare in this visionary period. The depth of the colours, their suppressed, Venetian-style gleaming was ever more intense. Another picture of similar phosphorescence, though smaller in size, was "Terrace" (1930). "Morning" (1931) becomes meaningless in monochrome reproduction, without its ponderous browns. Its strange composition, bisected towards the viewer, is also nebulous if it is not the original picture that we look at. On the left, a city comes to life, and, separated by a wall, a woman dons her shirt. The dream is at an end, a new day greets the city and its inhabitants, of whom the artist has singled out one, instead of many. No one since Degas had attempted a similarly bizarre pictorial construction. In place of the trembling optical pomp of impressionism the melancholy of organized order dominates. It was this cogitating melancholy that inspired the magnificent vision in colour of the "Woman artist" (1931), with its elusive poliphony of smouldering crimsons and full-flavoured tobacco-browns. A woman with an elongated face holds a violin in her left hand, while a wreath of laurels with the name Coelia upon it hangs behind her head. These are the pinnacles of Bernáth's art, revealing heights of colourism never yet achieved by Hungarian artists. The tension could only be relieved by the "Fishing-Harbour with Gulls" (1931), with its organ-chords of blue and its birds disintegrating into spirit images.

Another successful exhibition followed in October 1932 at the Ernst Museum, when sixty of the artist's pictures and fifty-two of his water-colours and drawings were on show. It was in the following year that the present author published a book about him.*

The "Girl Going to a Harvest-feast" (1932), which was completed a year later, appears to foreshadow the author's later, realistic period. The two yellows are reminiscent of the crop that she is about to celebrate. This picture is well matched by the robust figure of the "Dock-worker" (1932), which nevertheless has its subtle hues. It has nothing in common with "Venus" (1932), which terminated the series of visions. The goddess of love timidly faces her admirers. She smiles, but in a rather unwilling

* István Genthon: *Bernáth Aurél*, Ars Hungarica, Budapest, 1933.

fashion. She is a northern Venus, who has donned her mantle to protect her from the icy wind. In vain does she smile—she is the daughter of Ossian as she frostily gazes ahead.

After the visions, the artist's path led him to reality. Periods cannot, of course, be severed from each other with scissors, and the styles are interwoven, to re-emerge at unexpected places and times. The vast canvas of the "Pöstyén Park" (1935) is a try-out of this more contemplative attitude, and one of its interesting features is that it introduces the fashionable clothes of the period into the picture, without its appearing incongruous or outdated.

Bernáth's new works were shown in the premises of the Fine Arts Exhibitions in November 1935, as was the custom of the day. Twenty-two pictures were presented, including the "Pöstyén Park."

The almost musical rhythm of the composition of "Shepherdess" (1937), with the red-clad girl and the white goat laying its head in her lap, is once more purely lyrical, though far more closely knit in form than its precursors. It recalls the finest of Pisanello's medallions, the reverse side of his Cecilia Gonzaga, with a girl and a unicorn bathing together in the moonshine. A picture of unforgettable deep harmony is the "Woman and Child" (1939), the woman's arms spread out in a gesture of yearning. The forceful, yet tender forms of the "Scene at Zebegény with Danube" (1939) also belong here. Further masterpieces were to follow, now inspired by the artist's new hunting-ground, that inexhaustible treasury of motifs, Lake Balaton. As regards its simple subject the "Scene at Kisörs" (1940) is no more than a house seen from above, with vegetation around it. Yet what a brilliant jungle the power of his brush conjures up! The green of the foreground and the blue of the background seem to grapple with each other, and flashing yellow lights tremble among the trees on the shore.

The canvas entitled "In the Country" (1941) is of overpowering force. A man clad in brown leans on his elbows as he meditates in the midst of a penurious still life. His sadness is almost oppressive. A cock squats on the post of the fence, its red comb ragged. Lyricism, vision and abdication mingle in it. The "Water scene" (1942) shows a boating couple on Lake Balaton, while the outlines of a female nude appear among the reeds. The monumental figure of the "Woman Painter" (1943), with its breath-like refinement, is one of Bernáth's richest figural pictures.

Fifty of his pictures were destroyed in the Second World War. After the liberation in 1945 he was appointed a professor at the Academy of Art, and in 1948 he was awarded the Kossuth Prize. It was after the tempest of war had blown over that he prepared his charming pastel, the "Christmas-

tree" (1946), which was a return to his old compositional form by setting the glittering tree before a window. One of his most delicate still lives, the "Fishes with Dish" (1946), also in pastels, was likewise painted at this time. Silver-coloured shads are ranged on a brown table, with a discreet glimpse of the blue-edged dish.

The new life confronted the artist with new tasks. Bernáth had never lived in an ivory tower, and he had a try at new subjects and new methods of presentation. His vast painting in distemper, the "Beginning of the Labour Movement in the Building Trade" (1950), is the first in this series. The painter of lyrical and visionary pictures now showed a multitude of flesh-and-blood figures, with perhaps only the ardent, profound lustre of the colours to recall the past. However high the standards of the work, however admirable the beauty of its details, the conflict between the lyrical artist and his mode of expression is evident. His great panel, "The Industrial Workers and Sports" (1952), also has many figures. The "Rally" (1953) is a vast preliminary study for the panel, done in distemper. The fine rhythm of its composition undoubtedly makes it a significant work, but Bernáth's most singular, most suggestive features are lacking in it.

In the fifties Bernáth went on a study-tour of Moscow, Leningrad and Yerevan. His study of the great realist compositions also made his own mode of expression more realistic. This is evident in the calmly contemplative formulation of the red-clad "Marili" (1952), or the "View of Pest with the Parliament Buildings" (1954), embedded in a grey of breath-like delicacy. Bernáth's excursion into the field of portraiture resulted in a masterpiece of character-painting—the picture of his close friend, the poet Lőrinc Szabó (1955), with his idol-like, bitter, brown face. "The Woman in Evening Dress" (1957) is the magnificently coloured, latest item in the series of portraits. A mural with an ethereal treatment of form decorates the reading room of the library at Inota; the centre is occupied by the figure of a Muse of Greek augustness.

It has often been said that Bernáth's art has a certain northern savour about it. This, of course, does not imply that he is in any way related to Edvard Munch or any Norwegian or Swedish painter—even Meier-Graefe, whom we have quoted above, did not allude to any such link. What is northern is his reserve, his control over his feelings, and his somewhat bitter devotion. The search for Latin formal beauty is completely foreign to him. As regards his portraiture, it would be unfair to claim that it had anything to do with Kokoschka's psychological approach. Kokoschka sets out on a Freudian basis from the magnificent model he has chosen, while Bernáth chooses a model to convey his message—the two processes are opposite

in the extreme. Whether, on the other hand, the passionate, very bluish landscapes of Kokoschka's late period are in any concretely discernible way related to Bernáth's works, is a point that has not yet been examined.

The present sketch would be incomplete if we failed to mention Bernáth's work as a critic and author. Most of the former was published in a volume entitled *Írások a művészetről* ("Writings about Art") in 1947. He always discusses both Hungarian and foreign masters and the present-day problems of art in serene and impartial tones. The first part* of an autobiography intended to be completed in three volumes appeared in 1957 and earned general acclamation. The recently published second part** has proved so popular that even a second edition is rapidly selling out. The success is due neither to the finish of the books, nor even the magnificent coloured illustrations, most of them done by Aurél Bernáth himself, but to the fortunate blending of content and style. In the first volume consisting of almost five hundred pages, the author tells the story of his youth, and acquaints us with the "Land of Somogy" (in Transdanubia) and its people, and with Lake Balaton. A kaleidoscope of fish-stew suppers, heathen drinking-bouts, Balaton storms and anxious adolescent loves emerges from their pages, while the second volume also recalls Bernáth's experiences on becoming an artist in Berlin. This phosphorescent prose, with its flashing colours, is a brother to his best canvases. Those who have read it are expectantly looking forward to the third volume.

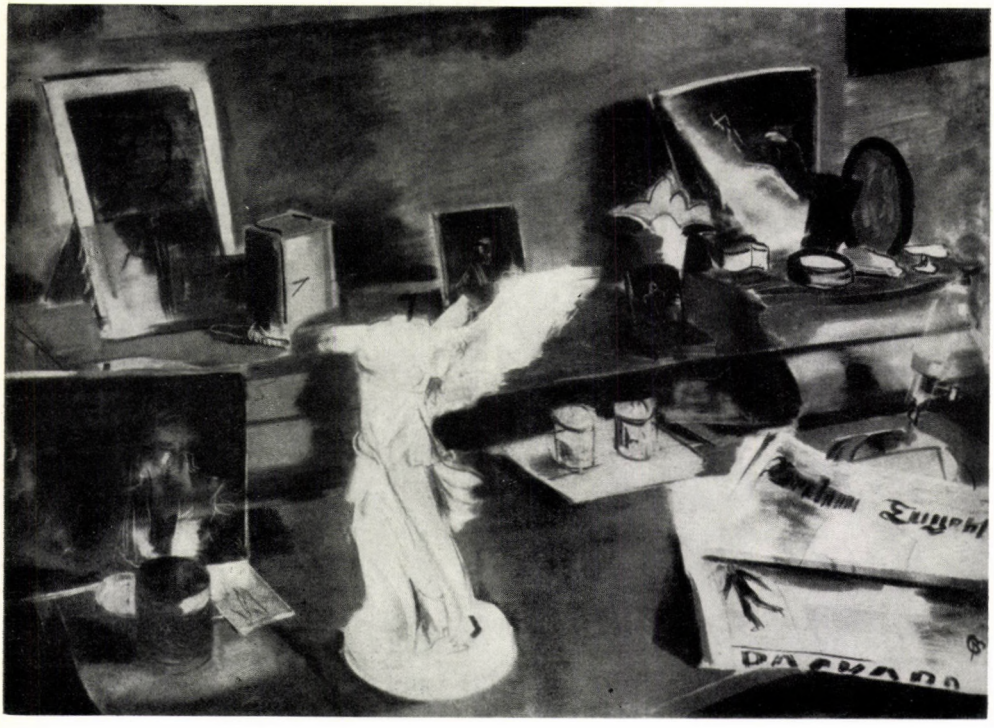
It has not been possible to give more than a very fragmentary bird's eye view of the rich oeuvre of a great Hungarian artist. There is no other Hungarian painter whose masculine lyricism is so suggestive and complex. His singular sensitiveness has led him to open up new realms to Hungarian painting, ranging from his melancholy, languid landscapes to the tropically flamboyant beauty of the Balaton region.

* Aurél Bernáth: Valahol Pannóniában (Somewhere in Pannonia)

** Aurél Bernáth: Utak Pannóniából (Roads from Pannonia), 1961. (An extract from this work has appeared in Vol. II. No. 4. of the New Hungarian Quarterly. — Editor's Note.)

Aurél Bernáth: Riviera (1926/1927)

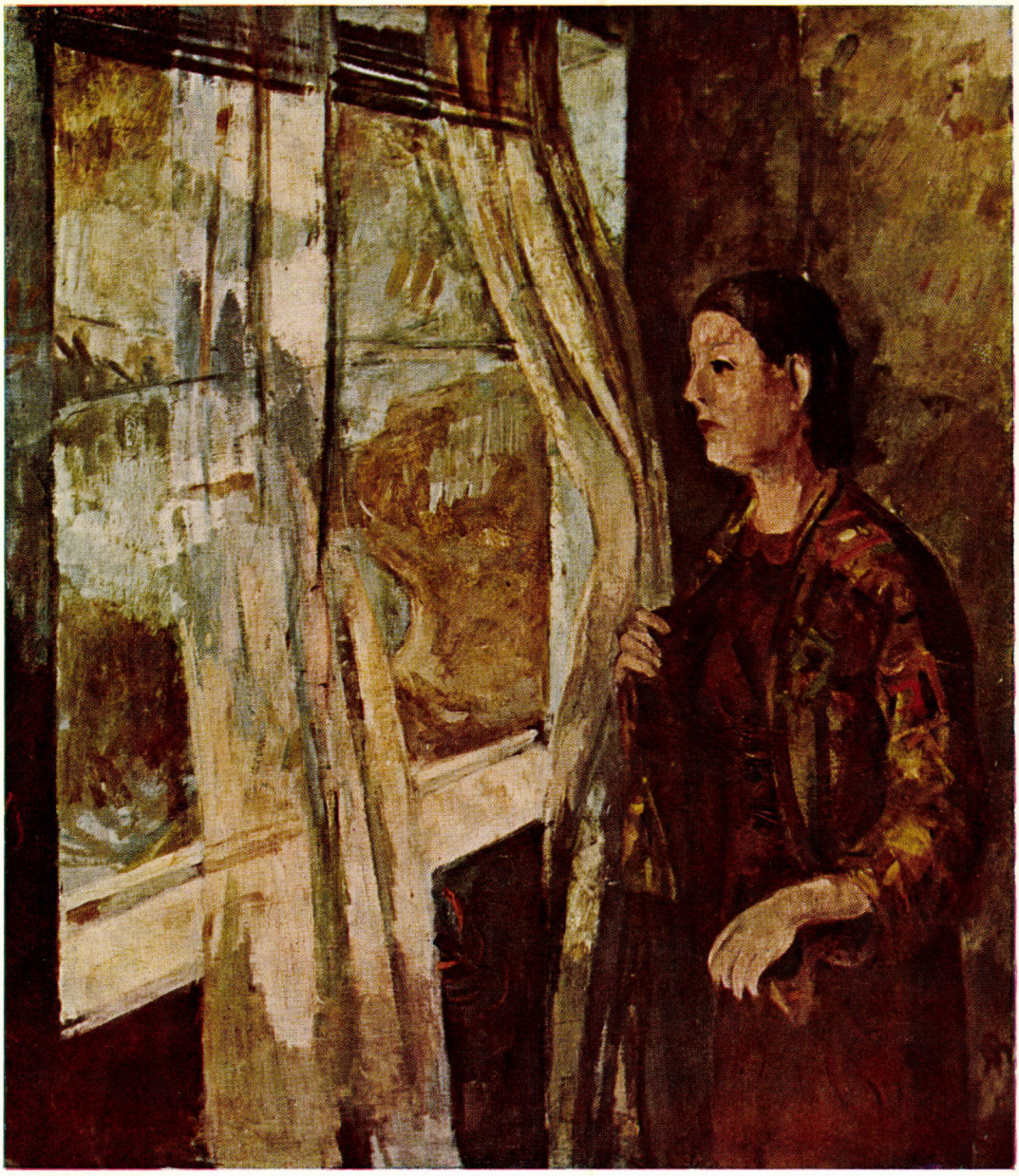
Aurél Bernáth: Winter (1929)



Aurél Bernáth: Still-life with Nike (1928)

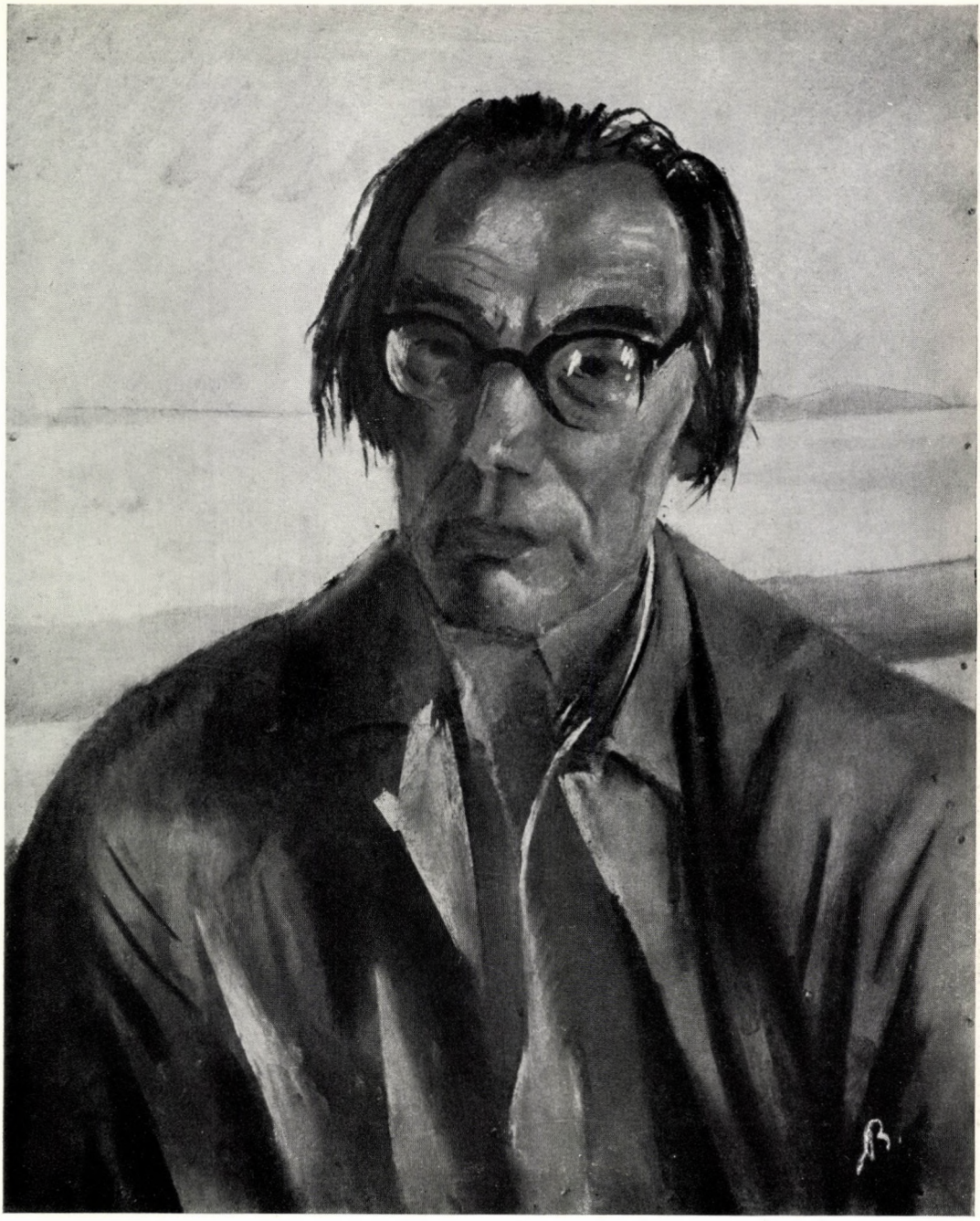
Aurél Bernáth: Self-portrait at the Door (1933)

Aurél Bernáth: Dock-worker (1932)



Aurél Bernáth: Girl at the Window (1928)

Aurél Bernáth: Woman with Child (1938—1939)



Aurél Bernáth: Portrait of Lőrincz Szabó the Poet (1945)

Aurél Bernáth: Self-portrait (1929—1930)

SEXCENTENARY OF DEBRECEN

by

LÁSZLÓ PASSUTH

It may be presumptuous to compare this Hungarian city of medium population with London, as regards their origins. Yet Europe's largest metropolis also stems from the growth and fusion of neighbouring villages, in the same way as the "Calvinist Rome," in whose present place nine medieval villages once sprawled. The most vigorous, centrally situated village among the nine, called *Debrecen*, swallowed up the rest and gave its name to its brother villages.

Debrecen's urban existence is hardly more than a fragment of a past that stretches back at least five thousand years, and whose pages are all replete with archaeological relics. When the city's power station was being built, exquisite pottery made by neolithic man was found. This flat area of the country east of the River Tisza, its vast prairies alternating with forests, was the plain-land residence of nomadic peoples in the Great Migrations. Tradition has it, that this is where Bayan, Grand Khan of the Avars, had his palace of tents, and that it was in this part of the country that he received the deputation from the Byzantine Emperor which came to pay him homage. The remnants of his glory are now prized treasures of the Debrecen Museum. They consist of belt buckles, stirrups, weapons and jewels, corresponding to the varied traditions of the Age of Migrations.

The noted English traveller Robert Townson, who visited Debrecen in the second half of the eighteenth century and wrote about the big "*civis*" * city (by this time with about 30,000 inhabitants) wondered what could have induced so many people to build a town for themselves here, on a plain without rivers or hills, and there to feel comfortable. Townson's critique was by no means particularly flattering, as he wrote that "Debrecen, though

* *Civis:* rich peasant who lived in town.

called a city and endowed moreover with city rights, should, however, be regarded as a village and hence is maybe the largest village in Europe..."

Indeed, an eye accustomed to the West-European type of town must have found the old Debrecen a strange spectacle, not in any way reminiscent of the *civitates* established in the place of the Roman *castra*. Mainly, perhaps, because in all the long history of the city we know of no period when it was either a fortress or a fortified town.

The fact that stone suitable for building purposes is extremely rare in the vicinity of Debrecen was actually to determine both the character and the fate of the settlement. Since, in place of a strong wall, medieval Debrecen was defended only by a broad moat and a rampart topped with wattles, it is certain that in place of warlike virtues, the city rather had need of diplomatic skill to be able to defend its bare existence. Despite its poor defences, the small metropolis beyond the Tisza, which emerged from the nine villages, did not suffer from havoc and destruction wrought by the enemy. Its existence was secured more by the payment of indemnities than by its bastions. One powerful enemy, however, remained to accompany it through the long centuries of its history—this enemy was fire. The annals mention innumerable disasters through fire, the two greatest having taken place in 1564 and 1802. These both reduced almost half the houses to cinders, for the greater part were not built of stone and were thus easy prey to the holocaust, particularly as Debrecen has no river. Fire proved to be a cruel but effective town-planning authority. The rebuilt city (particularly after the disaster of 1802) strove in the course of its restoration to eliminate the provincial features that had proved so surprising to Robert Townson.

As already pointed out, the developing city, which in the last two centuries of the Middle Ages enjoyed the protection of the Hungarian kings, was not too richly endowed with martial virtues—its mythological ideals must rather have been Mercury and Pallas Athene. Due to its fortunate situation, Debrecen in the course of the centuries became a nodal point for East and Central European transit trade. The Balkans and Poland via routes through Transylvania, moreover the various provinces of the German Empire, Augsburg and the Hanseatic towns, were Debrecen's trading partners both in agricultural products and industrial goods. The kings of old favoured the city by bestowing the right to organize fairs on it, and the number of fairs—on a national and even an international scale—rose to four a year. These were considered truly Central European trading events, particularly in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, up to the latter part of the seventeenth. The first decades of the Reformation, moreover, gave rise—on the foundations of the medieval Latin-language Catholic school—to the great

School of Debrecen, the College and Theological Academy, which established Debrecen's fame among the European Protestant Colleges.

Debrecen's "great" period was the sixteenth century, during which the power of the city grew in extraordinary measure. In order to understand how it became possible for Debrecen to emerge from among its Hungarian sister cities, it is necessary to cast a glance at the events of the time. The disastrous defeat at the Battle of Mohács (1526) set the seal on the tragedy of medieval, feudal Hungary. Close on half of the territory of the country fell under Turkish occupation, including Buda, the capital. The part of the country which remained under the rule of the Hapsburg kings was confined to Transdanubia and the Northern Counties, while Transylvania became a Principality, independent but obliged to pay tribute to the Turks. This state of affairs subsisted till the Turks were finally driven from Hungary at the end of the seventeenth century. When the country was rent into three parts, Debrecen became subject to the jurisdiction of the Principality, but never formed an organic part of Transylvania.

Debrecen's geographical position and urban rank explain why, precisely because of its peaceful character, the town, from the middle of the sixteenth century, was able to act as mediator between the three parts of the country. The Transylvanian merchants on their way from Poland or the Baltic regions would stop at Debrecen and take the wares of the town's craftsmen with them through Brassó to Constantinople.

These were the decades of the triumph of Calvinism in Debrecen—the spiritual and religious movement which is to this day so characteristic of both the outer aspect of the city and of the fundamental character of its inhabitants. Century-old ties had undoubtedly developed between the Debrecen School—then still of the Catholic denomination—and its Western sister Colleges during the era marking the close of the Middle Ages. Nevertheless, nothing but aversion for the German spirit can serve to explain the fact that the first Protestant proselytizers in Debrecen adopted not the Lutheran faith, then regarded as a German religion, but the Helvetian Geneva confession which they made the "state religion" of their urban empire. Calvinism, both in its original conception and its spiritual influence, was tantamount to the idea of *puritanism*. Outwardly this spirit was to leave its imprint on the town's appearance. Everything that could be regarded as superfluous ornament was removed from the churches, public buildings and houses. The strictly conceived, rational views and the unpretentious, moderate way of life of the *civitas* were to determine the life of the city and its people.

The Hungarian cities, like those of other lands, were only able to

extricate themselves from under the feudal order of the Middle Ages with very great difficulty. In the fifteenth century several aristocratic families shared dominion over the city, including the great general, János Hunyadi, father of King Matthias Corvinus. Not until the decomposition of the feudal order had brought a change in the situation, did the wheel of fortune turn. The nobility of the neighbourhood, whose estates and political power were equally destroyed by the great landslide, successively moved in behind the moats of the city, where the wisdom of the *civis* fathers provided shelter for them too. In return they had to renounce their aristocratic prerogatives and became taxpayers of the city. The same fate also overtook those urban citizens who had obtained patents of nobility by the grace of either the Hungarian king or the prince of Transylvania.

At this time Debrecen was one of the most populous Hungarian urban communities, whose fame had spread throughout Eastern Europe. Its government was in the hands of the Senate, which consisted mainly of the heads of the guilds—craftsmen who excelled in their trades. They were, however, at an early stage joined by the intellectual element, representatives of the circle of professors, clergymen and *literati*. In the sixteenth century at least five hundred students attended secondary or higher school courses each year, and this figure continued to increase. The yellow leaves of the annals have preserved the reports on the schools. They reveal that there were also a number of girls' schools, and it is estimated that by the end of the sixteenth century at least half the young people were receiving school instruction. This fact is especially relevant, considering that the basic character of Debrecen was determined mainly by agriculture.

It is not to be wondered at, that the nomad chieftains, whose names we no longer know, had chosen precisely the vicinity of Debrecen as the seat of their prairie empires. The vast grassy expanses were extremely well suited to a pastoral life, and they could rear vast herds of cattle and of horses here, especially on the Hortobágy, which is perhaps the only "puszta" in Central Europe to have survived to this day. This animal husbandry on the prairies was for centuries to be one of the main sources of income for the inhabitants of Debrecen. Stockbreeding on the pastures owned by the city was a communal undertaking. Viticulture was also a close adjunct of urban life. This required diligent everyday work, but yielded the wine which served to brighten the citizens' lives and became a trading commodity and a present fit to sooth the predatory appetites of the Emperor's captains and of the Turkish beys. The regular cultivation of cereals was practised on a small scale on the common municipal lands. There was little privately owned land within the city's limits, viticulture being more characteristic of the citi-

zenry. The use of the pastures and forests was collective, and it was the latter which permitted the city to be reconstructed fairly quickly after the fires.

The name of Debrecen is of ancient Turkish origin, and according to our etymologists it means "in perpetual movement." However, in the ancient documents of the city, from the very first relics, only Hungarian names may be encountered, with but rare instances through the centuries of Italian or German craftsmen who settled there. The administration of all the guilds was in Hungarian hands, and beginning with the sixteenth century the records, the city's documents and papers were all in the Hungarian language. The senators, magistrates and notaries who emerged from among the order of craftsmen, preserved their fine, expressive language to the end. Even in the second half of the seventeenth century, the most critical period of the city's past, the chief magistrate, Boldizsár Bartha, described Debrecen's policies in the following terms: "... this city, built in the fields, without strong bounds, accustomed only to obedience, has escaped havoc through clever self-adjustment and all kinds of ransom, instead of the use of arms." Up to almost the end of the seventeenth century Debrecen was known as a densely populated, rich metropolis inhabited by people of one tongue and one belief. These years represented the climax of the development of Debrecen at the close of the Middle Ages and the beginning of the New Age. Its character was determined by its trades and craftsmen, who also supplied the aldermen of the Council. Spiritual perspective, on the other hand, was provided by the intellectual groups that formed about the College and interpreted the currents of thought prevalent in distant countries, scientific academies and universities.

The students received autonomy at an early stage. To a certain extent they had the right to invite their own professors, as in the case of the more liberally organized universities. The *coetus*, a student body, was in sole charge of the affairs both of the students and of the College.* The financial aspects alone were the concern of the municipality and of the Calvinist Church. These autonomous rights made the "gowned youth" an important factor in the life of the city. The close on a thousand intellectually well prepared students, the majority reading for the free professions, served to set the city's intellectual climate.

We have pointed out that the prosperity of Debrecen had become wholly dependent on the economic structure of a Hungary divided into

* For a more detailed study of this subject, see part III of the article on "Old Hungarian Colleges" by Imre Surányi in The New Hungarian Quarterly, Vol. II, No. 1. — The Editor.

three parts. As soon as the Hapsburgs' power succeeded in the eighteenth century in forcing the Turks to retreat, with Transylvania also obliged to abandon its independent status, the significance of Debrecen as a frontier city suddenly ceased. The main trading route now, as a consequence of Hapsburg centralization, lay through Vienna and avoided Debrecen.

The imperial general Caraffa, who was notorious for his cruelty, in 1683 imposed indemnities on Debrecen, obliging the population to pay a levy of several million forints. Shortly after the ominous visit by Caraffa the city was decimated by fire and struck by the plague. The population decreased considerably and the process of provincialization began. All these events left their mark on Debrecen, so that Townson could write of it only that almost all the houses were single-storey buildings with their back walls towards the streets.

"The population," he continued, "are for the greater part Calvinists, whose way of life, their sombre clothes and the overcast weather that would not cease throughout my stay, together made a very bleak impression. This is where this denomination has its largest College... apart from the College the most notable features of the city are: the Debrecen pipe, cape, bread and the four national fairs... outside the city lie the vineyards..."

The English traveller also recorded that he had met several professors and doctors who had been to both England and Holland.

On November 13, 1714, the Chief Magistrate and Postmaster, Sámuel Diószegi, entertained a strange guest—King Charles XII of Sweden, who had arrived incognito for one day, in the course of a fortnight's journey from Bender to Stralsund. According to the city records he spent his evening "amid lively disputation in Latin," tasting the good wines of Debrecen, in the company of the local professors, whom Diószegi had invited.

In the eighteenth century, puritanism and provincial seclusion weighed on the city, hampering municipal development. Debrecen was a Calvinist, Hungarian city accustomed to freedom, within whose bounds the nobility were obliged to pay taxes. This was sufficient to earn the disapproval of the Hapsburg regime and for it to strive to limit and even to suppress the economic and cultural hegemony which Debrecen had so far exercised over the part of the country beyond the Tisza. The city was forced to agree to the erection of a Catholic church, and the monastic orders also established seats in Debrecen. The autonomy of the College was curtailed, and a succession of financial levies was imposed on the city. Added to this was the fact that Debrecen came to be dominated intellectually by a narrow-minded brand of puritanism. The original population began to assume the

character for which they were to be called *"civis"*—to become quiet-spoken burghers, who, though ever discontented with conditions, had no desire to step beyond the confines of their narrow world, no interest in the intellectual currents of distant parts, small requirements, and no ambition to undertake more elaborate enterprises. This puritanism could also be perceived in the microcosm of the College. If there was occasionally a professor with a more modern approach—such as the excellent scientist István Hatvani—he was rumoured to be engaged in witchcraft; his statue in the College became a bogy to frighten the youngest of the pupils.

The great Hungarian lyricist of the late eighteenth century, Mihály Csokonai Vitéz (1773—1805), came into conflict with these rigid school rules while still a student at the College. He only returned to his native city in the last years of his life, smitten with disease, there to be hastened to an early death by the lack of understanding and spiritual isolation of this rarely gifted and erudite poet.

Csokonai too was a suffering witness of the disastrous fire of 1802. In a letter he recorded the terrible experience in the following terms:

"Even the modest abode where I was wont to retire from the clamour of the world and the little garden which served me for my Tusculanum became victims of this terrifying blow. Amid cinders and ashes do I write these lines, and beneath the Heavens that have not spared me and between the which and me, whom they have deprived of even the little I had, there is but a thin board that cannot protect me from the very rain. Through my burnt-out windows, the meagre wind even now scatters my own and my neighbours' ashes over this, my sad letter. . ."

It was from this great holocaust that Phoenix-like there arose one of the greatest Hungarian cities of our time. The disaster unfortunately consumed the fourteenth century Gothic Cathedral of St. Andrew which had later become the Calvinist Great Church. The Great School, the larger part of the College, was also destroyed. The senators set about the job of construction with increased energy. For a while the boom caused by the Napoleonic wars also came to their aid. Nevertheless, it took several decades till the present Great Church, the pride of Debrecen was completed. It is a masterpiece of classicist architecture, built on the walls of the old cathedral, and it dominates the panorama of Debrecen to the present day. The College was also reconstructed, enabling it, in its new and expanded buildings, to spread the ancient scholarship of Debrecen. These great building activities resulted in a general enthusiasm for construction, as a result of which Debrecen in the middle of the nineteenth century emerged from the picture Townson had seen, and, though neither water nor hills

helped beautify the city's panorama, it became one of Hungary's most orderly municipalities.

The Great Church was to be the scene of what was perhaps the most dramatic political event of the Hungarian War of Independence in 1848—49. It was in this building, on April 14, 1849, that the Hungarian National Assembly, which had moved from Buda to Debrecen, passed the resolution under the terms of which Parliament deposed the Hapsburg dynasty and elected Lajos Kossuth to be Governing President. An eye-witness who recorded the scene wrote:

"Perhaps every inhabitant of Debrecen stood there... Kossuth wore black velvet clothes on this day... the transparent paleness of his inspired visage was rendered the more conspicuous by his simple, sombre attire... He began his speech in quiet tones, but the more he became immersed in the development of his reasons... the more did his voice assume a magic quality, and his oration evoked a response of which no mortal has ever seen the like inside any church..."

Almost a century later the historical role of Debrecen again became a decisive factor in the life of the nation. In 1944, during the gravest days of national tribulation, when a large part of the country was still suffering under the German occupation and Budapest became a besieged fortress, the first democratic government of liberated Hungary was formed in Debrecen, thence to reorganize the life of the State until it could move to the liberated capital in the spring of 1945.

What is the appearance today of the great urban centre of the plains? What are the impressions to be gathered by a present-day traveller from afar?

The city's new, modern railway station is shortly to be opened to traffic in place of the old building which was partly destroyed during the war. The station is linked to the heart of the city by a big avenue, which broadens to form a square in front of the Great Church. Everywhere there are enormous quantities of flowers, and this colourful carpet accompanies the visitor wherever he goes—it is present everywhere to delight the eye. The city is a model of cleanliness, which is one of the manifestations of puritanism in its administration. The streets are lively and the volume of traffic is great, indicating that Debrecen is still a "communications hub" and that the six-hundred-year-old city has continued unchanged as the emporium of the entire region beyond the Tisza. The basic structure of a modern map of the present-day city corresponds to the medieval Debrecen, built according to the first urban surveys. The agricultural character of the city is still decisive in the distribution of the population, and the same is

also valid at the scientific level. The Debrecen University of Agriculture is one of the most important institutions of its kind in Hungary. Debrecen's University of Arts and Sciences is also of a high order—thousands of students prepare for their future careers at its faculties. The Déri Museum of Debrecen deserves special mention, for it ranks high above the standards of the provincial museums and its archaeological, scientific, oriental and folklore collections, as well as its picture gallery, make it one of the most significant Hungarian museum centres. The sources of natural gas that have been discovered in the vicinity of Debrecen, and those that still remain to be discovered, open up a tremendous perspective for industrial municipal development.

Even in old times Debrecen was known as an industrial town and—to mention but a few trades—the tanners, the leather workers generally, and the wood-working manufactories were famous in distant lands. Traces of all these industrial traditions, dating back over several hundreds of years, have been preserved in the industrial life of modern Debrecen, for it has a famous leather-works and a high-quality furniture factory, while the tobacco factory processes the products of this excellent tobacco-growing region, which also enter into Hungary's export trade.

It has, however, been the process of social change and the policy of large-scale industrial development that has established the city's largest new industrial plants. Of these the two most important are the roller-bearings factory and the pharmaceutical works. The best-known products of the latter are antibiotic preparations. The Hajdúság Industrial Works at the city limits supply not only this part of the country but also the people of the capital with household machinery. We may further refer to the precision engineering plant, a building and civil engineering firm, a fibre-processing factory, the leather-works and shoe factory.

The evolution of industrialization has naturally also involved a change in the social structure. The demand for many thousands of industrial workers in Debrecen has led to a more rapid change or flow, we might even say dynamization, of a part of the population. The sons of *civis* fathers have, either as workers or engineers, become employees of the developing factories. They are growing used to the swifter rhythm of modern industrial life and are emerging from the more conservative approach which was so characteristic of their ancestors, the founders and upholders of the city, through the centuries of the bitter Hungarian lot. And this process—a fortunate synthesis of the way of life of the fathers and the sons—may be observed not only within the various families, but in the city itself, in the fusion of traditional features with the needs of modern urban life.

A recent international congress on town planning decided that the most ideal types of town are urban centres with 150,000-200,000 inhabitants, living under the most advantageously organized circumstances. Debrecen corresponds in every respect to this imaginary ideal type of town. Industry, commerce, agriculture and cultural life here form a harmonious whole. When Debrecen celebrated the sexcentenary of its establishment as a city in the summer of 1961, the country's attention was again focused on what the language of the romantics called the "Calvinist Rome." The traditions of the past and the harmony of the present secure for the town beyond the Tisza, which was once called "the largest European village," a peaceable, urban rhythm of life.

THE "ANTI-THEATRE"

by

PÉTER NAGY

Art always renews itself by a negation of its former self. Only later, as it enters on yet a further period and the former negation is negated in a new manner, does it become apparent how many features of the old were retained in the new, in that which seemed to have been a radical break with what went before. After the Second World War art in general and the drama in particular turned over a new leaf throughout the world, and has opened a new chapter since. The late 'forties and early' fifties brought new artists, new artistic trends and endeavours to the surface—the "angry young men" and the "beast generation" are both expressions of the period which in France is marked by the specifically French product of the "anti-theatre." Artistically, this latter is the most extreme—or we might say the most distilled—of them all, as an expression of the sentiments, fears and passions which moved and frightened the intellectuals of the Western world during these years. And it is specifically French because, though it has certain contacts with the art of John Osborne, Doris Lessing and Sheila Delaney on the one hand, and of Friedrich Dürrenmatt and Max Frisch on the other, and may even have influenced them to some extent, no play has yet been written anywhere outside France which would fully have deserved the label of the "anti-theatre."

The French theatre and French dramatic literature have for centuries been in the forefront of European drama. The hegemony which they exercised over the stages of Europe in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries they have, it is true, only been able to regain for brief periods since (as at the time of the romantic drama, or especially in the second half of the nineteenth century, through the French *pièce à thèse* and moral comedy). Even though there were periods when the French drama was overshadowed by the Scandinavians (Ibsen and Strindberg) or by the Anglo-Americans

(Wilde, Shaw, O'Neill), the French theatre and dramatic literature have throughout retained two decisive and first-rate characteristics: a continuity, and an extraordinary ability to interpret new ideas and trends into the language of the stage.

The crop of dramas after the Second World War precisely expressed this ability. On the one hand the plays of Jean-Paul Sartre and Albert Camus developed the *pièce à thèse* into ideological drama, on the other hand the tradition of classic tragedies involved descending into the turbid depths of the psyche, as in the plays of Henri de Montherlant. Perhaps the most characteristic feature of both trends is that in matters of form they did not strive to introduce any innovations, or at least very few. They considered the content to be decisive and used the already polished, unproblematic forms of the recent and more remote past to convey their thoughts and create characters and situations. Any change in form was undertaken only if, and to the extent that, the subject-matter absolutely demanded it. Even such clever and success-seeking playwrights as Marcel Aymé or Félicien Marceau did not experiment with really new forms, but made use in their plays of tried-out methods and more or less accepted ideas, trimmed with a few new flashes, thus achieving that mixture of the familiar and the apparently new which is attractive to the general public. Even Audiberti, a playwright of considerable talent, took the same path; in his plays arabesques of poetic phantasy embrace vaudeville traditions, and result in a theatrical idiom which may not endure but is highly individual and attractive even in its narrowness.

With the appearance of the "anti-theatre," the early 'fifties brought something radically new to French theatrical tradition. French historians of literature endeavour to include in this trend Schéhadé, of Lebanese origin, and also the Flemish Ghelderode. Their tendency towards abstraction, their combining of poesy with vulgarity, undoubtedly bring them into close relation to, indeed, make them the precursors of, the founders of the "anti-theatre." The school itself is, nevertheless, actually linked to three or perhaps four names—those of Arthur Adamov, Eugène Ionesco, Samuel Beckett and Jean Genêt.

It is interesting to note that the "anti-theatre" appeared at the end of the 'forties and the beginning of the 'fifties, at a time when the cold war was at its peak and the West lived in constant fear of a nuclear war. The French dramatists who appeared at this moment virtually blew up dramatic traditions and introduced something radically new, something fundamentally different from their predecessors. But one cannot blow up anything without an explosive, and this explosive was furnished by Piran-

dello, and by German expressionism and its highest manifestation, Bert Brecht, whose genius far transcends expressionism and achieves classical stature. This school has but little in common with the French dramatic tradition of the remote or recent past—a possible exception being Alfred Jarry's *Ubu roi* and its strangely grotesque mysticism, not to speak of the ever-experimenting Jean Cocteau and his futuristic plays.

All these playwrights are artists of distinct individuality, which cannot be brought to a common denominator. What is it that nevertheless unites them, at least to the extent that they can be grouped under a common label? What is common to all the creators of the "anti-theatre"? Above all, contempt for all those forms that they have inherited from their forebears. Of course, they are bound to write acts and scenes, but they try to tear the drama out of the context of time, to make it timeless, abstract, and thus "universally human." They try to deliver it of the conventions of intrigue, of sensation, of effective *Abgang* and even of logical sequence; to eliminate all that the development of characters and of their mutual relationship has involved for drama since the Greeks, or at least since Shakespeare, and to substitute for it static, abstract relations. It is the very inscrutableness and unreality of these relations that lends the piece "dramatic" tension, enveloping it in an oppressively mysterious atmosphere reminiscent of Kafka, imbued with an inherent and unfathomable sadness, at times a hopeless despair. Yet these writers are not "tragedians," or, at least, the tragic content is not infrequently expressed through farce and boundless jollity. Sadness with them is always accompanied by humour, and tragedy by comedy—or to put it more precisely, their tragedies are comic, and their comedies horrifying. This is the duality in which their approach to life finds unity, and it is, perhaps, by means of this duality that they render their most definitive and most condemnatory verdict on the world. While the catharsis of tragedy relieves and pacifies the mind and the eruptive laughter of comedy is itself a verdict that satisfies a sense of justice and thus tranquillizes the viewer, the anti-catharsis of the anti-theatre is disquieting, upsetting, and strives to incite to rebellion against the world which it illustrates and of which it is an expression. For even though it be the author's determined and indeed obstinately upheld intention that he should speak of man "in general," of human fate generally, independently of time and place, the work itself cannot be torn from the world in which its roots are planted—it expresses and, in turn, influences it.

With their widely differing methods, with tones and implications that vary according to the individual, they all protest passionately and

rancourously against the "given world" in its singular manifestations and general aspects. True to their school this protest remains abstract and absolute, at the same time. They see the capitalistic world, but speak in terms of all mankind; they tear to shreds the repellent features of the bourgeoisie and petty-bourgeoisie, but see in them the characteristics of Man and from that humanity they turn away. These are the features that make the school and almost all its achievements so contradictory, and, as we shall see, ultimately impracticable beyond a certain point. This is the reason why the followers of the school have now, though each in a different direction, departed from the "pure" line of the anti-theatre and are, in their own manner, groping in a new direction, towards a new kind of synthesis, in which they can combine the achievements of the anti-theatre with those of the traditional theatre.

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The first of the four playwrights to appear on the scene was the Rumanian-born Eugéne Ionesco, whose play *La Cantatrice chauve* was first performed in 1949. This one-act play immediately evoked considerable scandal and enthusiasm. For eleven years now, it has been showing continuously in a small Paris theatre. Ionesco has since written about a dozen plays, one of the best of which is *Les Chaises*. He generally chooses an extremely commonplace, everyday situation, devoid of all dramatic qualities, as the starting point. In *Les Chaises*, for instance, it is the conversation of an old *concierge* and his wife, in *La Cantatrice chauve* a typical English couple are having an after-supper chat. In both two people start talking in the most drab and commonplace sort of way, perhaps just a shade more nonsensical than in real life (though it is hard to distinguish these shades), and then this drabness, fatuousness and boredom begin to change—unnoticeably, and always remaining within the logic of the play, we are, at once or by degree, transposed from the everyday to the absurd, from dullness to satire, which is simultaneously both irresistibly ludicrous and horrifying. Then, staying within this satire, the author exploits all the possibilities available to such a degree that the audience finally completely loses the ground from under its feet. Impossible to draw the line between reality and its satirical distortion, for reality becomes its own satire, the absurd becomes law, and law, absurdity. In the end, it all turns into ridiculous tragedy, or into an exact, mechanical repetition of the initial situation and the first sentences. This serves to open the gates of absurdity even wider, so that the audience is prompted to leave the

theatre with the ghastly feeling that such is life, that this is what is eternally repeated every minute, in every home, time without end...

Few have so passionately mocked petty-bourgeois stupidity, the customary and endlessly repeated commonplaces, as Ionesco. In this respect his works are irresistible. But as soon as he leaves this ground and tries to give more general meaning to his art, whenever he endeavours to create or present a philosophy, his work becomes inflated, laboured and empty.

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Samuel Becket (b. 1906) is somewhat older and more extreme than the others. Of Irish origin, he first writes simultaneously in both English and French. His *Waiting for Godot*, like all his dramas (particularly the *Acte sans paroles)*, is as much a pantomime or a script for ballet without music as it is a dialogue. In *Waiting for Godot* two tramps await a mysterious and never-appearing Godot, throughout three acts, in one and the same place, repeating the same words—yet their dialogue somehow is still imbued with poetry. Though Beckett here shows his characters as hopelessly repellent, incorrigible and doomed, it is humanity that he pities, a humanity which carries out its own death sentence. The same idea is brought to an unbearable extreme in *Fin de partie*, a considerable part of which consists of a dialogue between two idiotic vagrants who vegetate in dustbins, rotting alive. There is no continuing on this path, unless it be to put carrion beetles on the stage...

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It was the début of the Russian-born Arthur Adamov in 1950 that really made the anti-theatre into a school and movement, which seemed only a year before to have been Ionesco's individual extravagance. Adamov too has about a dozen plays to his credit. It is his works that show most clearly how much this school has in common with the German expressionist drama and Brecht himself. He too set out from the conviction that life is absurd and human relations bizarre, and this is what he expressed in an adequate and startling way in *La Parodie*, where one person frequently addresses another and is answered by a third, asks one girl for a dance, and has another one fall into his arms... In the early 'fifties Adamov, however, began to abandon this abstract approach, turning towards more concrete social problems. In *La grande et la petite manoeuvre*, for instance, he made fascism his target, but still interprets the opinions of a man who has become disillusioned regarding any intervention. Here again, he applies

a characteristic, though repulsive scenic formula: each of his hero's disappointments and disillusionments—the mutilations of his soul—are manifested in successive degrees of physical truncation which result in his gradually losing his hands and feet, until he finally rolls onto the stage on wheels, a helpless cripple...

Adamov was, moreover, the first among them to turn his back on abstract expression and the presentation of archetypes on the stage. In 1956 he wrote his *Paolo Paoli*, a play no longer dealing with abstract problems of an abstract society, but treating a specific instant of history in a certain part of the Globe. He presents France at the turn of the century, exposing the "good old pre-war days" through the life and competition of two merchants, one dealing in ornamental feathers, the other in butterflies. And behind the façade of the butterfly and feather trade, there is unrestrained trading in human life, strength and happiness. Through this portrait of the rivalry and friendship between two competing tradesmen he points to the essence of capitalism. His merchants are ready, with a bland smile on their lips, to fly at each other's throats, but are always in agreement when it comes to oppressing the exploited.

And after Adamov, Ionesco too abandoned the extreme world of abstractions and took a step towards social reality. The *Rhinoceros*, produced in Paris in 1959, can't be called one of the author's best plays, yet its values lie again in those parts that ridicule petty-bourgeois stupidity and empty-headedness. Here, however, this ridicule has an anti-fascist edge, though Ionesco's main aim is not to fight the concrete threat of fascism—which in the France of today is to be found in various extreme right-wing groups—but through the symptoms of fascism to wage war on conformism and surrender of all kinds, on the careless adoption of the opinions, views and behaviour of others.

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A fairly similar path has been traversed by Jean Genêt, one of the most daring talents of modern French literature, whose life has also been among the most extraordinary. The author, who is now in his early fifties, started his career as a professional burglar and homosexual and thus came to know all the larger prisons of France. Only after the war did he become known as a writer, betraying great talent in all his poems, novels and plays. For the present we shall only deal with the last. I have mentioned before that Genêt is not generally identified with the school of the anti-theatre. Yet they have their common features. Though Genêt is not anti-rhetorical like the others (on the contrary, his extremely rich and

highly poetic language, not infrequently rising in his plays to the incandescence of prose verse, is one of the most attractive features of his writing), he is, nevertheless, linked to the anti-theatre by a propensity and a striving towards abstraction, by the interplay, overlapping and identification of fact and appearance, of the real and the unreal. As though he had been a pupil of Céline's, his theatrical humanitarianism finds expression in the hatred of men—and we know the dangers of such an attitude. His first play to be produced, *Les bonnes*, is perhaps the most striking, we might say a "classical," example of this—"classical" also in its homogeneity, its overheated paroxism and its polished language. Two maids, in the absence of their mistress, play at being mistress and servant, and they continue this game each evening that they are left alone. Where does the servant end and the mistress begin? Appearance and reality are muddled up almost beyond recognition, in order that the audience should sense the thick web of feelings produced by adoration and hatred, admiration and contempt in the minds of the servants, in their relation to their masters. Finally they become engulfed in the game to such a degree that one of the girls dies in place of her mistress, for her mistress, as the mistress...

Even this may suffice to give some taste of the peculiar features of Genêt's talent. The following play, *Le Balcon*, which he wrote in 1956 but which was only produced—amid scandals—last season, really does carry these incessant transitions between reality and mere play to the limits of absurdity. Society, the "pillars of society," are depicted through the circle of regular customers of a brothel, and around them he sketches the almost wanton pictures of an abstract revolution. Finally he proclaims with a grimace the futility of revolt and the impossibility of overthrowing the existing order, however hated and loathsome.

Les Nègres, completed in 1958, outdoes the rest in combining playfulness and reality. However, in a strange way, Genêt here takes to the road that we have been able to trace in the case of the other creators of the anti-theatre: he gets closer to social and human reality. For the misanthropy which had in previous works also kept cropping up and had been a kind of inverted philanthrophy, was now suddenly invested with a concrete content in the hatred of negroes for whites, of the oppressed for their exploiters and subjugators.

A negro company enact before a white court how they killed a white girl—how each night they kill a white woman for their strange rites. But it is all just play-acting, as we soon learn, with the negroes acting what the whites imagine of them. The white court consists of white-masked

negroes, over whom the negro negroes now sit in symbolic judgement, condemning them to death and announcing, meanwhile, that somewhere, far away, forces have set out that will lead the people of the "black continent" to independence and to the defeat of their oppressors. This strange play seems like a grand performance of black magic, in which the casting of spells and the liturgical texts of an unknown heathen religion alternate with the most everyday dialogue. Nevertheless, this play has lost the characteristics of an arbitrary artistic arabesque, and, despite all its remoteness, it speaks to this world and is addressed to the world we live in; As far as the negroes are concerned, it even expresses hope for mankind's future, an aspect that was hitherto completely absent from Genêt's works. (Probably his latest play, *Paravents*, which I only know from press accounts, follows this path. It is, in Genêt's peculiar, abstract idiom, a protest against the Algerian war and the oppression of the Algerian people.)

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Perhaps this brief survey of the peculiar anti-theatre avant-garde will convince the reader that the anti-theatre as a school is on the wane, even in France, because of its creators' partly instinctive, partly conscious search for a new outlook. At the close of the 'forties, these writers looked for a dramatic expression of their abstract and pessimistic principles, and by the middle of the 'fifties gradually developed their art in a more realistic direction, more concretely linked to social reality. This is evident in Adamov's *Paolo Paoli*, Ionesco's *Rhinoceros* and Genêt's *Les Nègres*. Beckett, it seems, is either unable or unwilling to follow this direction and has, at least as far as the stage is concerned, stopped writing.

After what has been said, there is hardly any need of proving that the anti-theatre is in the first place anti-realistic. Does it, nevertheless, express reality through its own strange and often highly abstruse transpositions? More, perhaps, than we might at first realize. We mentioned the historic moment when this school came into being, and the changed world situation in which its unity ceased. The anti-theatre was the characteristic expression in the drama of the oppressive cold war atmosphere, the anxious concern and perplexity of Western society, particularly of Western intellectuals. These were by no means confined to the stage, and there were corresponding trends to be found in both prose and poetry. To speak only of French literature, witness the "hussars," Nimier, Blondin and Sagan, whose novels were born of existentialism but rejected all "commitments" and sponsored the cult of thought-arabesques and of social irresponsibility;

and witness the increasingly esoteric nature of poetry and its reviving neo-catholicism. The burning social fervour of the 'forties had turned to ashes, and all that was left was the cinders and the acrid smoke of the impotence the writers and intellectuals felt, of their utter inability to influence the fate of the world. Having come to the edge of the precipice that divided the classes of their own country and also the two worlds, their foothold became uncertain and they began to feel dizzy. They preferred, therefore, to avert their gaze from the concrete abyss, rather to peer into the abstract and imaginary abysses of men's minds. The appearance of the "angry young men" in Britain, and the recent disintegration of their group, are another facet of the same process. The American "beat generation," though again differing in many respects, also draws sustenance from similar roots. The odd sense of existence and the dilemma that beset the non-Communist intellectuals of the West in those days: the anguish of a doomed world, source of the ever present Kafka-like mood, and the perplexity born of the contradiction between an alert or awakening social conscience and the refusal to make common cause with the progressive movements—all this manifests itself in those plays, novels and poems.

The impetus and power of these works is due to their criticism and rejection of the bourgeois, and particularly the petty-bourgeois, way of life—yet for the reasons discussed, the writer does not see beyond the bourgeois world. As a result his revolt does not spur to activity; its effect is rather to disarm, for it simultaneously proclaims both the loathsomeness of the existing order and its unassailableness and permanence. An artistic solution is to be found only when the hope of a political solution appears on the horizon of contemporary history for the first time. It is since then that these writers have been able and have dared with ever more determination to face social and historical realities and the inherent possibility of a solution.

All summary statements of this type are bound to have an arbitrary element about them. The creators of the anti-theatre can by no means be judged by the same standards as regards either their talents, frame of mind or outlook, and, though they probably keep in touch with each other, they are not so much a coherent group as a conspicuous one. Whereas Ionesco's talent lies mainly in the direction of humour and even caricature, Adamov's and Beckett's is rather tragic, while Genêt is a master at playing all scales of moods. These four playwrights are fair examples of divergent talents; they also illustrate the extent to which it is not purely talent that determines the possibilities of a career. For doubtlessly as far as talent

alone is concerned, Beckett and Genêt considerably outstrip Ionesco or Adamov. Nevertheless, the achievement of the former—particularly of Beckett—will most probably be and remain smaller, mainly because Ionesco and Adamov apparently are able to renew their contact with human reality. It may be taken for granted that in this respect the courses followed by those four writers will definitely separate.

So far, however, their work can be surveyed together. If we reduce the contents to a common denominator, then, as I have pointed out, the obvious one is that they all declared war on philistine thinking, commonplace formulas and models of thought, yet without touching the problem of the social basis of behaviour but accepting it as given, unchangeable and universally valid (with the exception, of course, of *Paolo Paoli*, which is, however, a sign of the disintegration of the school).

Though these writers have up to now tried the most varied dramatic forms in the course of their work, a certain identity of form may nevertheless be discovered among them. This is most characteristically apparent in the abstractness of subject discernible in each of their works and also in the fact that their characters are, almost without exception, abstractly conventionalized manifestations not so much of a particular trait as rather of a specific situation. Hence the conflict also necessarily remains an abstract one, not infrequently to such an extent (particularly with Beckett and Ionesco) that the hero or characters of the play are in its course involved in conflict only with external, atmospherically present forces.

This identity may, moreover, be pursued further still, to the roots of the decadence of these writers, for the original source of their dramaturgy is disillusionment. The most extreme manifestation of this is Beckett, whose disillusionment in man is exacerbated to the paroxism of misanthropy, and in this respect Genêt comes close to being his kin. But it is also the real source of Ionesco's "humour noir." And this is what gives to Adamov's plays a painfully sad modulation. Yet these two are heading from disillusionment towards a new kind of hope—in the case of Adamov it is the worker in his *Paolo Paoli*, with Ionesco the great tirade delivered in the last act of *Rhinoceros* by the central figure, Bérenger, that suggests this conclusion.

Abstraction and disillusion are the main characteristics of these writers, accompanied by the interaction of illusion and reality, fact and appearence, until they almost become undistinguishable. This, however, is characteristic not only of them, for modern French literature pullulates with similar phenomena. Either as the fundamental problem of existence and art, which has to be faced philosophically, in order to draw the divid-

ing line—this is the attitude of Sartre, Camus, Beauvoir and their followers—, or as a pre-accepted premiss. Here the author's task is not to analyse but to represent its multiplicity and the identity of its two components: this is the attitude of the anti-theatre as well as of the surrealists and of the various trends springing from surrealism. It can hardly be regarded as fortuitous that this attitude permeates French literature to such an extent, for its roots can be traced in the specific social situation of France. It may indeed be said that no other country in Europe is subjected to so extreme a tension of polar antagonisms and contradictions as France. The largest political party has been excluded from power for fifteen years now, while state power has been divided up between temporary conglomerations of factional groups; the overwhelming majority of the population are supporters of democratic and republican principles, yet the country is constantly threatened by the danger of an extreme reactionary coup; a considerable part of the national economy is state property, yet economic life is governed by the uncontrolled vagaries of private interests; the overwhelming majority of the citizens are enemies of imperialism and oppression, yet the country has been unable for fifteen years to extricate itself from the mesh of successive imperialist wars—to mention only some of the most striking contradictions. These, however, permeate the whole of the country's life and are manifested in the most varied forms, intensifying the feeling of absurdity, especially among artistically sensitive people. Of course, this does not mean that the artists whose works reflect this social absurdity in various artistic absurdities are consciously aware of the correlation. On the other hand, those who do recognize the contradiction turn, more or less, towards realism. This process was demonstrated in the analyses given above: as a writer approaches the recognition of these relations, the realist elements in his art become strengthened to the detriment of the previously dominant decadent traits.

We have several times referred to the influence of Bertolt Brecht. Brecht's art only began to be known and to be an effective force on the French stage and in dramaturgy in the years after the liberation. And although the anti-theatre may at first sight seem related to the Brecht school, a closer examination will soon show that the similarity does not extend to the essence of Brecht's art. For it is true that Brecht also presented abstract qualities and situations on his stage, characteristic of German expressionism. But the source of his genius and of his lasting significance lies precisely in his ability to individualize his characters, representing these abstract features in such a manner that, at the same time, their

concrete roots are pointed out, *i. e.*, their social and even class origins, and also their concrete historical determinants. This at least goes for his most mature works. And—though this is not the place for a detailed discussion of the subject—Brecht, with instinctive ingenuity, avoided the exsiccating effect of the abstract choice of subject by mostly drawing his theme from the common and generally known cultural heritage of mankind—that of tales, myths and legends—and using them as vehicles for his new, topically significant message. He was thus able to rely on the sentimental resonance and factual knowledge of his audience. Precisely these essential features are missing from the plays of the anti-theatre: their relation to Brecht is like that of the German expressionist drama, long since forgotten, while Brecht lives to this day and will influence the morrow.

From the very beginning, the anti-theatre has evoked passionate enthusiasm and opposition. Looking at it today and from outside, this movement has become obsolete, an interesting and stormy detour in the history of the French drama. It would be too early to judge what this trend has meant for French drama, how much of it will survive, and what will disappear. One result that can unequivocally be stated is that it has helped a few playwrights of indisputable gifts to express themselves. Whether any among these plays will outlive their first audiences is difficult to say. But that some of those playwrights who have grown out of the anti-theatre will outlive the instant of their first success may be regarded as almost certain.

"TIMBER HAULING"

A Carnival Custom of Western Hungary

by

MARGIT LUBY

On February 20, 1955, I had a rare and beautiful experience at Alsószölnök in Vas County.

The rarest of traditional peasant customs at carnival time, timber hauling, a pageant which lasts a whole day, was performed with the participation of nearly the entire community. The village has a population of about 600.

Commissioned by the Institute of Folk Art, the cameraman László Kovács shot all phases of the pageant, while I recorded in writing all details. I was the more enthusiastic about the job since just the day before I had succeeded in putting on record the mythical traditions of timber hauling as told by the "timber-judge" (the master of ceremonies), Vendel Fickó, aged 45, by the farmer János Kovács, and by others.

The legendary origins of the pageant are the following. The village is woe-begone, for the most beautiful maiden has been carried off by giants, who are still holding her captive. The villagers have found out where these robbers dwell and also that they keep the girl in a tower that has no windows. The whole village has been plunged into mourning because no girl there may get married before the loveliest of them all has been brought home.

The whole village, led by its oldest man, sets out for the robbers' haunt to liberate the maiden. No earthly power being great enough to accomplish this, they invoke the aid of the devil. He is indeed willing to assist them, and thus they contrive to release the girl. She is represented by a tree (always a pine), which is to be brought back to the village as a bride, with great festivity and under the devil's protection; thereafter marriages may again be contracted.

Having interviewed Vendel Fickó and János Kovács, I went to see Mrs. János Jundt, a widow aged 65. She, as well as Mrs. István Orbán,

who is 50, and several other enthusiastic people who kept cutting in, told me about a number of stipulations on which the game depends. I have put down the following:

A "timber hauling" may be staged only if there have been neither weddings nor betrothals in the village during carnival time. Take the neighbouring village of Felsőszölnök. It is a bigger community, and there the last timber hauling took place in 1880 or so, because in such a big village one engagement, at least, inevitably will occur during the carnival.

If a girl of the village marries a young man of another village at carnival time, the young men may stage the timber hauling. This is said to have happened in 1892. At least that is what Vendel Fickó was told by his mother-in-law.

If a widower marries a girl of the village—during carnival time, of course—then, too, the young men may perform the timber hauling.

When a young man of the village marries a girl from another village, or if he marries a widow of his own village, during the carnival season, the girls are entitled to stage the timber hauling.

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"What must the timber, *i. e.* the tree symbolizing the bride, be like?" I asked.

On hearing this, old Mrs. Jundt grew excited, while the others corroborated her words.

"The tree must be absolutely sound and pure. It must not have any flaw; after all, it is the bride."

"What flaws might it have?"

"What flaws?" Mrs. Jundt seemed to be annoyed. "We had a timber hauling here in 1902. The steward of Count Batthyány's estate gave the village permission to choose a tree. The tree selected happened to be hollow, but this was discovered only when it had been felled. The woodcutters declared that they did not want it as it was not immaculate. So the steward let them look for another tree that suited them. They found one in the Bakonya region and felled it. In diameter the trunk was no less than one yard. Nor could they drag it down to the village in one piece, it had to be sawn into three. Even so, night had fallen by the time they reached the village."

Then it brings contempt on the whole village if the crown of the tree breaks off. At this point the men interrupted the women and, three at a time, explained the village itself would be put to shame if such a thing

happened. They would be disgraced before all the neighbouring villages, and the ignominy would be cast in their teeth years later.

That is why the place where the tree was found was kept a secret in 1955 too. Only the woodcutters entrusted with the job go out the day before and lop the branches off the tree so that merely the crown remains. The trunk with its lovely crown is watched all night, lest malevolent young fellows from some neighbouring village should saw notches in it just below the crown, which would then break off the very moment it was felled. In olden times, as elderly people related, as many as ten trees had to be felled, for only the crown of the tenth proved to be impeccable and worthy of being taken home.

In the old days it also occurred that unknown persons cut off the crown and stole it in the dead of night, putting to shame both the "bride" and the village.

In 1955 I myself noted that while the tree was being dragged, an unknown youth tried to nip off a tiny twig. He narrowly escaped a sound thrashing. Even so all the escorts of the timber kept an eye on him.

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Of course, the tale—or rather the myth—must be brought to life, and this is done by enacting a regular wedding. While the tree is being hauled, the bride and bridegroom sit on it, accompanied by the oldest man of the village, the "timber-judge." A host of best men, bridesmen and groomsmen, together with the bridesmaids drag the tree along.

In this respect, too, sundry traditions still exist. The oldest marriageable man of the village and the maid whose turn it was to get married, used to be entitled to the distinction of riding into the village on the tree. In 1955, however, it was not so. It was agreed that the girl who wanted to play the bride and the young man who wished to impersonate the bridegroom, should each offer a tree. Finally, it was Ilonka Fiedler's father who offered the finest tree and Ferenc Kovács the grandest piece of timber.* Though one of the young men had offered his two months' earnings for being given the bridegroom's part, while another had offered 600 forints, their offers had to be turned down, since the timber must be supplied in kind.

Every wedding ends with the bride's dance, for which each of her

* Both the tree offered by the bride-to-be and the one offered by the would-be bridegroom are felled and sold at auction, but only one of them is hauled into the village in solemn procession.

partners has to pay. As soon as the timber has been dragged to the centre of the village the "timber-judge" announces in a loud voice:

"The bride is for sale!"

While the timber is being auctioned off, the bride and bridegroom dance together. For the tree is considered the bride and her return brings fertility back to the village.

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Best men, groomsmen and bridesmaids make up the wedding procession. However, every one of them must be a native of the village. It was just in 1955 that the young sister of a recent settler, a publican, wanted to be a bridesmaid. In vain had she been on the best of terms with the girls—they spoke against her. They'd have none of her, for she was not of the village. The girls got all het up about it, the organizers of the pageant said with a smile. And, though they were smiling, there was a certain amount of satisfaction in their statement, since in the girls' protest they saw an assurance of the maintenance of traditions.

As a matter of fact it is the privilege of the first two bridesmaids and the first two groomsmen to walk beside the tree as far as the village. In 1955, however, because of the keen rivalry, the organizers of the pageant made a compromise. Three couples were appointed first bridesmaids and groomsmen, on condition that they would take part in dragging the tree, otherwise there would not have been a sufficient number of young people to do the hauling. Still, to make a distinction, these three couples were to pull immediately in front of the timber and they alone were allowed to wear pink bouquets.

For reasons of economy they had first planned that only one pink rose should adorn the hair of each girl. But then the married women began to stir them up: "What? Are you not good enough to wear garlands?" Thereupon a decision was passed pronouncing them worthy of wearing garlands. Then all the twenty-two girls had similar garlands made to match their pink silk dresses.

Further characteristic features emerge in the course of the pageant itself, therefore I shall now describe it in some detail.

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The reveille with music was scheduled for six o'clock in the morning. However, the brass band came from a nearby village and was rather late. Consequently, the morning program was somewhat condensed; still, no

item was omitted from the whole series of ceremonies and formalities customary at a wedding.

It was always the herald who went first, dressed in black frock coat, carrying a walking stick with a large and ornate knob. He was followed by the band. They started by calling on the first groomsmen and on the bridesmaids. The whole grand procession then called on the best men and went through the usual play of fault-finding and fussing. The herald produced six kinds of documents to prove that he had come from Australia following the path of righteousness. This having been done, they went to pick up the bridegroom first and then proceeded in his company to call for the bride. Unfortunately, owing to condensation of the program, the facetious battle of words between the two best men had to be omitted. They had to hurry lest they be late for the nine o'clock mass. By twos—according to strict rules of precedence—the wedding procession marched into the small church, where the priest, who was celebrating mass, addressed the young people:

"The Lord sent Adam and Eve on their way commanding them to proliferate. That means: get married! But you, young people, have not obeyed this command during the present carnival season. Therefore go and perform instead the traditional timber hauling according to the custom that has come down to you from your ancestors. Fine traditions and fine customs should never be discontinued."

Those disguised in various costumes were also allowed to enter the church unless they had donned "unnatural" attire. Thus the devil was not permitted access, the less so because in his hairy cloak, with a red tongue hanging from his sooty face and red horns on his head, he was waiting in a pigsty along the road, in chains—where he justly belonged, as the organizers of the play asserted. Two young boys were keeping him in chains, mere children. But the devil has no power over a child's soul, and when the two boys raised their short sticks in command, the devil had to obey.

Only when the procession, increased by hundreds of people dressed in costumes, had left the church, was the devil allowed to rush into the street, but even then only in chains. The devil acted his part to perfection. He picked a quarrel with everybody and found fault with everything, but had to fall back whenever the two small boys lifted their sticks.

By the time the procession reached the Cultural Hall, all the people in fancy dress had joined it. There were six clowns, two of them with wooden masks carved by themselves. There followed a gipsy tinker, two knife-grinders, two vendors of balloons, two doctors, and two gipsy women telling people's fortunes. It was forbidden to reveal one's costume to anyone

in advance; this accounted for the appearance of more than one person in the same disguise. But what an abundance of ingenuity and imagination they displayed in acting the character they had chosen! There was an African, two engineers, fully equipped with instruments of their craft, a hunter, two gipsy musicians, a postman, a jocular photographer, two typical Hungarian horseherds, an excellent drummer-boy, and, attended by the midwife, a bearded wonder-baby in swaddling clothes, sitting in a tarpaulin-covered waggon, smoking a pipe and tippling. There was also a novel figure: that of Matyi the Gooseherd, with a red ribbon around the neck of his goose. Matyi the Gooseherd—in Hungarian Ludas Matyi—is a Hungarian folk-tale character, who became the hero of a highly popular epic poem. His name has been chosen as the title of Hungary's favourite comic weekly. Handsome Matyi pushed his way everywhere: he even got onto the timber while it was being dragged, but he and his goose, cackling with terror, were welcome everywhere. The comic journal may be proud of its popularity. The goat-drawn small cart created a particular sensation. It carried a little barrel out of which the owner drew and offered liquor all the way. The two small goats were among the most charming figures of the whole procession. When their master pulled at the reins, they got out of the way, overtook people, or stopped, as desired. Their master was befittingly dressed in a pair of wide linen pantaloons and a shirt, both garments snow white, and had a fur cap on his head. He and his team looked as though they had stepped out of a Dionysian revelry. The great number of people dressed in various costumes I have not mentioned, together with the colourful group of the bride, bridegroom, the groomsmen and bridesmaids along with the "timber-judge," made up a magnificent sight. This pageant was certainly no disgrace to Prince Carnival.

The procession marching uphill on the snow-covered highway was a splendid and fascinating picture. We climbed nearly two kilometres before we reached the tree, prepared for felling.

At this point the oldest man in the village took over. On behalf of the villagers he addressed the woodcutters, whom he kept on calling giants. The latter were sitting around the tree, close to a blazing fire, in a space enclosed by ropes and poles, in the "castle."

I took down the following dialogue:

Robber (Giant): "Stop! Who goes there?"

Judge: "An unfortunate small community. We are looking for our stolen bride."

"There's no bride here."

"But she must be here. Our spies have informed us that she is held in

captivity by robbers armed with axes, who keep her in a tower that has no windows."

"Your spies must have been misinformed and have misled you. Do not disturb the peace of our realm. Go back to your native land."

"Not an inch shall we budge without our bride. Deliver the maid!"

"Even if a host of men came against us, we could not grant your wish."

"We are not begging. We demand our rightful property and are going to take her along."

"It is in our power to turn the whole forest against you."

"But we shall take your castles. We shall make you our slaves and force you to break down the bride's jail."

"No earthly power can destroy our bastions."

"Lord of Hell! Do your duty! Get us back our lost happiness!"

The devil rushed forward, pushing aside the barriers. His four clowns followed in his footsteps; two of them began to saw the trunk with huge saws. Presently they stepped aside while the most experienced woodcutters struck the last blows with their axes. The huge trunk fell exactly in the direction intended. The giants exlaimed in chorus:

"We are done for! Woe to us!"

Then the devil rushed forward again. He threw himself on the crown of the tree, *i. e.* on the crown of the bride, and exclaimed:

"The bride is mine!"

"The bride belongs to me!"

From this moment onwards up to the minute when the bride was "put up for sale," the devil was responsible for the crown of the tree.

While the tree was being felled, the band had been playing the woodcutters' march.

The cut tree was also measured officially, and, of course, the two men dressed up as engineers were most busily engaged in this activity.

The tree was 25 metres in length and even though it was hauled through the woods by a cart with two horses, its transport needed a great deal of care. Its crown was as big as a Christmas tree. As soon as it reached the highway it was fastened to a long cart designed for the conveyance of timber. In a few moments a green garland was wound around the trunk. The horses were unharnessed. A rope, as thick as a man's arm, was tied to the cart and dragging poles fastened to the ropes at a distance of a metre and a half one from the other. There were twenty-two dragging poles, since twenty-two couples were to haul the tree. The first three bridesmaids and groomsmen were pulling directly in front of the tree, and the remaining nineteen couples took up their positions in a sequence laid down by strict

rules. All of them assumed the same attitude for holding the pole and dragging along the tree in a slow procession.

It was a magnificent sight, just as if an equipage of fairies were proceeding through the wintry landscape. Twenty-two girls, every one of them dressed in a pink taffeta frock, with a pink wreath in her hair. Twenty-two young men in dark blue suits, with white flowers, tied with streaming pink ribbons, pinned to their breasts. None of them wore hats.

The "timber-judge," dressed in traditional peasant costume, was standing on the tree. The bridegroom, wearing a wreath of rosemary around the crown of his hat, sat behind him, his snow-white bride at his side. Sometimes the devil popped up above them as though to protect them, and now and then Matyi the Gooseherd with his goose under his arm and his stick in his hand would mount on the trunk too. The two best men were walking beside the tree.

That is how the wedding procession reached the Cultural Hall, where the "timber-judge" jocularly berated the young people because there had been no betrothal or wedding at carnival time. Although, according to tradition, only the girls should have been made fun of, this time the young men too were given a facetious lesson. At times there arose quite a commotion, when the jocular dressingdown became a bit too outspoken, particularly when it was addressed to the girls. After the young people had received their dressing-down, the final act followed. The timber-judge exclaimed, "The bride is up for sale!"

During the auction the bride danced with the bridegroom on the terrace of the Cultural Hall. It was but a short dance—and no wonder. A blizzard had overtaken us during the second half of the procession, but nobody complained, no girl was vexed at the harm to her finery, and, in the highest of spirits, the young people marched into the big room of the Cultural Hall.

The obligatory entertainment, provided for partly by the best men and partly by the foremost couples, was offered there to the wedding guests. In order to maintain the semblance of a real wedding, the guests were seated after the customs prevailing at weddings. The bride and bridegroom sat in the middle, with their own best men on either side. Then came the wives of the best men. The opposite side of the table was occupied by the foremost couples. Nobody else was allowed to sit at that table.

*

The primitive belief in the great unity of nature has been preserved marvellously fresh in this carnival pageant. If there is no wedding in the

village—fertility is frustrated. But it returns as soon as the evergreen tree—impersonating the maiden—is brought to the village.

The tree must be flawless—in the same way as the bride should be immaculate and pure.

It is by no fault of man that fertility is absent. Here man faces powers that are beyond him. Popular belief endows the giants with excessive power or even with magic, supernatural powers. Thus the girl they have carried off can be released only by a supernatural power, human strength being insufficient to achieve such a feat. That is why they invoke the assistance of the devil, another being invested with magic powers. In Hungarian the very name of the devil evokes memories of a pagan religion. Despite the adoption of a new faith, in popular belief the old gods are alive in the form of harmful spirits, and assert themselves as such in this pageant. The magic and mythical power of the giants can be broken and vanquished only by another mythical being, the devil.

The inclusion of a team of goats is also of mythical character, since the goat is associated with the cult of Dionysus.

The custom of timber hauling dates back to ancient times in Hungary. In a rudimentary form it exists in the eastern part of Hungary, in Szatmár County, too. Most probably there it is a remnant of the removal of winter, a mission that may have been assigned to the girls. A more practical interpretation of the custom may be the mocking of those girls who failed to find a husband during carnival time. In Szatmár the young men drag the tree along the village on Shrove Tuesday and shout the following ditty before the girls' windows:

"Shrove Tuesday, Shrove Tuesday! Carnival has left the girls behind!"

Whereat some of the more impudent girls will step out of the house and, standing at the front door, shout back:

"Drag the timber! Break your back! Why haven't you taken a wife?"

Regarding the antiquity of the Alsószölnök pageant there is another characteristic feature. As late as in 1938, at the penultimate timber hauling, the tree had to be paid for "in old money," *i. e.* in gold or silver coins. In old times, the handsel, given as an engagement present, had to be in gold or silver.

*

As a point of interest I should like to add that the village of Alsószölnök is situated on the Austrian border and from the hillside the village of Nagyfalu in Burgenland can be seen. Over there, a timber hauling had been held the day before in the very same manner as at Alsószölnök.

NOCTURNAL ACQUAINTANCE

A Short Story

by

IMRE SZÁSZ

The alcohol had seeped in under the gaudy, minaret-and-camel-patterned plastic tablecloth and attacked the pale polish of the slender-legged table. By midnight everyone was the worse for their drink, and the tall, curly, black-haired Lipi, whose real name no one apart from the hosts ever bothered to remember, had gone home to change into his dinner-jacket and had not yet come back. He was lying on his couch at home, in his one-room flat, with the room slowly rotating about him and his side frostily numb, as though he had had a local anaesthetic. That was a subtle concoction Erzsi had the habit of making. Tea and alcohol, with lemon and orange-peel steeped in the alcohol for forty-eight hours to give it a good tangy flavour, then lemon and orange juice added so that it was like drinking lemonade, only it layed you out after a glass or two.

"Why, you're dead drunk, blacky-boy," the blonde Mary-Magdalene had said to him.

The taxi was waiting for him downstairs and the dinner-jacket hung ready on the chair. He had known before he set out that he would get drunk and that he would come home and change for the fun of it. Not that there was much fun about changing, but he was always supposed to be cheerful and one of the boys, and he had not been able to think of anything better. How tiresome it all was! It was tiresome to be one of the boys, it was tiresome to have to put on the dinner-jacket, and it was tiresome that he would never have anyone to call his own.

He got up, stifled his belching in a cough and rushed out of the room. Then he lit the geyser, took a shower and put on the dinner-jacket. He felt much better. A large photo of Anna hung above the couch, and, as he dressed, his glance halted on it for a moment. Viktor Kovács, the photographer, had also died a couple of years ago. He had committed suicide.

Lipi had himself given him a prescription for a box of morphine tablets, Feri had written another, and he had got hold of two more. Viki had told them all he had a dreadful toothache. Viki had also been in love with Anna. Would he have given him the prescription if Viki had told him what he wanted it for?

The taxi was waiting downstairs, nestled up against the pavement like a shiny-coated big beetle. The driver was on tenterhooks, standing by the front door.

"I won't make a living like this, sir," he said reproachfully. "I could have done ten trips by now. Saturday, you know."

"We'll see what we can do. Was I very drunk?"

"You were a bit on the cheerful side."

He leant back lazily against the comfortable seat of the Pobeda. The blue light of the whiphandle lamps was just the same, just as reliable, shadowless and bleak, as in autumn or winter. Two drunks tottered at the edge of a street refuge.

Near the Western Station a slim man, bald at the temples, waved to them wildly. The driver slowed down.

"Shall we take him?" he asked.

"Let's have a look at him."

Lipi opened the door.

"Where to?"

"Pasaréti Street."

"Same way. Hop in."

The man got in.

"I'm very drunk," he said; you could see he was.

"Don't you go making a mess of my car," said the driver, turning round. "Only last Saturday I had a drunken swine sick all over it."

"I'm not, as a rule," said the stranger with conviction. "We could go and have a drink somewhere. I know a joint where they've got decent wine."

"No," said Lipi. "You've had enough to drink. I've had enough to drink too. In any case, I'm booked."

The man was somehow familiar to him. He had seen him somewhere, though it might only have been in the street, on a bus, a face in the crowd. A tired, sallow-skinned, rather insignificant face, the sort you see twice, three times, a fourth, and by then you cautiously and hesitantly nod to it.

"Let's go up to my place then," said the stranger. "I've got good wine too. György Dobay's the name. I'm a ceramist."

Luci's expressionless, grey eyes came to Lipi's mind.

"Let's," he said.

The ceramist had the driver come up as well. It was only in the flat that you could see how drunk he really was.

"Take what you like," he said, pointing round the flat. "I'll bring the wine."

He opened the wardrobe and took a demijohn from among the shoes. The cabby unhooked a picture from the wall.

"Just what I wanted. Newly wed, you know. Haven't been able to afford one yet. Who's going to pay?"

"How old are you?" asked the ceramist.

"Fifty."

"And you've only just got married?"

"No. Twenty years ago. But we haven't any pictures yet. Who's going to pay?"

"An Egry painting," said the ceramist. "I like Egry very much. Do you know who József Egry was? Mind you prize it for what it's worth. What's your fare?"

"Eighty."

"Sixty, mate. I never lose my head or my eyes, however drunk I am. Here's a hundred, the rest's yours. You can't have any wine. People who drive shouldn't drink."

"No, indeed," said the driver, emptying his glass at one gulp. "And you'd better see to those eyes of yours, because it really was eighty."

"Worse luck for you," said the ceramist, and the driver went off.

There was a large, broad couch in the corner of the room, and he now sprawled full length on it. "That's the most idiotic thing you can do when you're drunk, to lie down... Go ahead, choose yourself something."

Lipi walked round the room. On top of a colonial-style bookshelf there were rows of Negro heads with large earrings and lips glazed bright red; there were also Greek lamp bases with ducks sprouting out of them and twisting back on themselves, coffee cups and leaping stags. They were ranged closely one beside the other.

"Ghastly, aren't they?" asked the ceramist from the couch. "There's big money in them. Trash to help build Socialism. Choose one. The driver had sense, he took an Egry. You haven't that much sense, you're too modest. If you've got the nerve, take a picture. I've got two Mednyánszkys, a Derkovits and a pile of István Nagy's. Take'em if you've got the guts."

"Go to hell," said Lipi.

"I've got good pictures. Good pictures and bad figurines. I earn enough

with the bad figurines to buy good pictures. Don't take a rug, they're good too, but I'm more attached to them than to the pictures. Fewer people know anything about rugs than about pictures. You're too stupid to, anyway. Though I'd let you have it, mind you. Take some figurines. You'll be ever so successful with'em. Those that have taste will guffaw and those that haven't will be faint with admiration. I say, are you happy?"

"Go to hell."

"Take some figurines. You'll be a howling success. You can tell'em you met a drunken ceramist, he invited you up to his flat, the driver took an Egry picture, and you took three figurines. See what a friend I am to you?"

One of the walls was covered, all the way up to the ceiling, with bookshelves. Simple, unvarnished shelves, full of books, with more books lying scattered all over the tops of the standing rows. A modern, shiny record-player lay concealed on the fourth shelf; Lipi opened it, then snapped it to. Snobbery, he thought, to hide the record-player because it was modern. A good job he had not had a period dresser built to house it.

He went to the window. The sparse, tired lights of the hill twinkled opposite, and over the dark contours of the ridge he saw the pale luminescence of the city's sky, the rose-tinted awning of its reflected lustre. But above it all, very high up, there was the real sky, with the stars shining just as tenderly and aimlessly as the distant lights below, and with a warm May breeze blowing. Anna had linked her arm in his and let him pull her a bit, up the hillside; the wind had blown through her thick, long hair, and she had looked up at him like a puppy. Anna had always been able to look the way young animals do—she had a contented, playful benevolence in her eyes, a soft and mendacious obedience. They had been to the theatre.

"It's not true," said Anna. "I do love you. You know I love you. But I shall never be your wife. I don't know why, don't ask me, it's no use. It'd be a lie. I'll tell anyone a lie, but I don't want to lie to you."

He took Anna's arm.

"You're lying right now, for you don't love me."

"I do love you. But I don't want one man to expropriate my life. I love you Laci, do understand me. But I shan't be your wife. I don't want to, I don't want to. Do you want me to be your mistress? I've never been anyone's mistress before."

"Don't become my mistress. I want more. Everything. Just what you are not willing to give me."

Anna picked leaves off a shrub, ground them between her fingers and let them drop.

"It's your 'Wholly for Nothing' again, is it? 'Like any lamp that I extinguish, you'll live or not but at my wish, nor speak, nor cry, nor see the confines of your dungeon, while I shall settle with my conscience, for tyranny to win your pardon.' Didn't you dare quote it? This is what I'm afraid of. This is what I don't want. Can't you understand me?"

At this moment he hated Anna. They stood on the slope in the dark, at the very spot where he had disturbed a kissing couple when he had first gone up to Anna's. He squeezed the girl's arm, hating himself the while for his theatrical gesture.

"Of course, your people are rich. And I'm only a hungry medical student. I know very well that professor Felkai's daughter can't marry me."

"You're crazy," said Anna, "and let go my arm. It hurts. That has nothing to do with it. I said I'd be your mistress."

"It wouldn't be derogatory for you to have even your father's chauffeur for a lover. But you'd as little marry him as you would me."

"We're crazy, both of us," said Anna. "We're arguing about something that's impossible. You couldn't marry me anyway. You can't marry a Jewess. And I love you."

"This nightmare will pass. There'll be an end to the war, and then I can marry you. But that's not the point. The point is that we should both act as though we were free to do as we liked. As though there were no war, no Hitler, only this hill and you and me. Would you marry me then, Anna?"

"No," said Anna sadly. "I wouldn't marry you."

"Laci," she shouted after him in the dark. Only Anna called him Laci, to everyone else he was Lipi; "Lipi's a clown's name," Anna had said.

At first he lay at home in his small, sub-let room, but later his restlessness drove him out, and he ran like a madman, the perspiration streaming down his face. He was sorry for himself and felt that both he and that which was to come were unclean. It was Tibor who took him to the hospital and everything was so terribly humiliating and ridiculous—he himself and his suffering and his grief, the big ward where they plumped him down at the end of a long table, while men in striped clothes stood around him and almost furiously shoved the thick, red rubber tube down his throat and poured down immense amounts of water that welled up from him black and disgusting, and he was terribly ashamed of himself among the others who were really ill. But later it all seemed as though he was drunk, and he swayed, and all his parts went cold, and his heart beat so hard, he felt it would not let him breathe. When he had been put to bed, the head physician came in to see him.

"I'd have thought, young man, that a second-year medical student would be beyond these servant's tricks with aspirin. Next time come and see me, I'll give you better advice."

Anna's mouth was so lovely and soft as he lay on the hospital bed and she bent over his parched and ill-smelling mouth, and it was lovely three days later in the brickyard where they hid. They kissed so wildly that Anna's skirt slipped up to her waist and Anna backed away laughing and happy, and did not cover herself, but he adjusted her skirt. What beautiful, stupid, youthful romanticism it had all been. And Anna's strong thighs, her somewhat thick legs, her soft bosom had disappeared and had never become anyone's own.

"Don't just stare out at the window, but choose something to take. A good Negro woman. And come and have a drink."

The ceramist was sitting up a wineglass in his hand, and seemed by no means as drunk as he had been, only tired and thoughtful. His hand trembled and the wine swayed in his glass like the liquid in a water-level.

"All right," said Lipi, loudly. He went up to the colonial-style shelf and took down a Negro woman, a duck and a stag. "I'll take these. I don't want a coffee cup. It has its uses."

He knew now where he had come to know this man. He had gone into hiding with her at Komárom, in the hotel. They had gone there as husband and wife, with false papers. Anna did not look Jewish. They slept in the same bed, lying side by side in the dirty, dreary room, with black-out paper over the windows. Anna's head rested on his shoulder, her long hair spread over him and occasionally tickled his nose.

"I shall never be your wife," said Anna. "Though I'd like to be your wife. But I shall die, I know. No, don't say I'm imagining things. Maybe I am, I've often felt I would die, and I'm here for all that. Possibly I shan't die this time either, but I'm very frightened. And I'd very much like to be your wife. Let me be your wife now."

His whole body was atremble at having Anna lying next to him and feeling her body through the silk, because Anna was clad in a slip and pants—they had not been able to bring night clothes. He edged away and wedged the dirty blanket between them.

"Look at the Knight of the Holy Grail," said Anna sadly. "Have you laid a sword with the blade up-turned between us?"

"I didn't lay it, Anna. First it was you, and now it's the whole world."

"Don't you trust me even now? Don't you believe that I want to be wholly yours?"

His grief compressed his throat, but he could do no other than say:

"I cannot believe you Anna. I shall not believe you until you are my wife."

Anna sat up in bed, embraced her legs with her arms and leaned her head on her knees. The strap of the slip was taught on her shoulders and the dull, fearsome, bluish-violet light hardly showed the dark down of her armpits. Before dropping to sleep he still felt in the dark that Anna had her head bent on her knees and was sitting up motionless in bed.

At midnight there was a hammering at the door. Anna was awake and dressed with improbable speed, as though she had been waiting for them. By the time the two arrow-cross men came in, she was sitting on the edge of the bed, putting on her shoes. It was raining, and in the wind the hooded lamps poured their light on the black pavement like watering-cans. They went quickly and were not allowed to talk to each other. They were taken to the gymnasium of a school. There were youngsters with sub-machineguns at the doors, and one of them, guffawing, climbed up the wall-bars and did exercises. At the end of the hall, under the basket-ball board, there was a table with a black-moustached arrow-cross man behind it, examining the papers. Behind him, natty and supercilious, the ceramist walked up and down, never saying a word. The moustached man occasionally turned back, questioningly and humbly.

Lipi threw the picture on the ground and the glass gave a crack.

"You killed Anna," he said wildly.

"Yes," nodded the ceramist. "How do you know?"

He sat calmly on the couch and looked at Lipi. "You," said Lipi, choking. He went up to him and with all his strength smote him in the face with his fist. The ceramist's mouth was all blood. But he made no move, only seizing Lipi's wrist when he tried to hit him again. His thin fingers were like pincers. Lipi tugged at his arm and tried to strike with the other, but the ceramist seized it too. He was very strong. The blood trickled slowly from his mouth.

"Look out," he said, "or you'll get your dinner jacket all bloody. What business of yours was Anna? Were you one of her lovers?"

The blood flowed down at the corner of his mouth and dripped from his chin onto his white shirt.

"You beast!" yelled Lipi. "Anna had no lovers. What business of yours was Anna? Only that you killed her."

"Yes, I did," said the ceramist, continuing to hold Lipi's wrist. "What business she was of mine? I was her husband. When were you in Paris?"

Lipi looked at him aghast. His body suddenly went limp.

"Never."

The ceramist let him go.

"Then you're talking of another Anna, not of my wife. I didn't kill any other Anna, only her. She had many lovers. I knew that she only loved me, but she had many lovers. I believe she must have been a nymphomaniac. We lived in the Quartier Latin right up to the end of the war, as befitted a great and penniless artist like me. One day I could put up with it no longer, and I told her I would go, and she said she would commit suicide if I went. I knew she would do it, but I had to go. I couldn't stand it any more. If I had stayed there, she would not have committed suicide. But she would have been the one to teach every young stripling in Paris how to make love. She was mad about those young cubs. In other things she was charming and good. If I had not been drunk, I'd have realized straight away that we were at cross purposes. Do you think I'm a murderer?"

He took out his handkerchief and wiped his bleeding mouth.

"Wait, I'll go to the bathroom and have a wash."

Lipi sat down on the couch, poured himself a glass of wine, drank it, then poured himself another and drank it too. The wine tasted tart now, and he felt a shiver go through him, though previously he had sensed the bitterish after-flavour of a good wine when he had drunk of it.

The men and the women had been herded into separate groups. The nice, smooth plank floor of the gym was all filthy and muddy. The men were lined up behind the dismantled vaulting-block, whose sides had been smashed in in several places. The leather upholstering on top had been ripped open and the horsehair hung from it. In the corner beyond the vaulting-block there was a flattened mound of straw, and on the floor leading to the vaulting-block an ever sparser track of stalks, as though they were beetles that had swarmed out and fallen on the way.

There were very many people there, and he searched for a long time to find Anna among the women. He found her eyes first. Anna smiled at him, and she was obviously very frightened. There were far more men—unarmed soldiers, schoolboys, three factory lads in overalls, some elderly peasants.

"I brought my brother-in-law a bit of flour this afternoon, and they nabbed me for black-marketeering," said one of them. Lipi saw him later as the youngsters took him to be shot.

"Papers," yelled the black moustached man, and everyone rushed to the table. He took each of the papers in turn, had a thorough look at them, also took a good look at the man, and then began to yell. There were some he did not yell at, but merely said: "You can go." Lipi saw that these went out to the courtyard by the back entrance of the gym. The rest were sent to

the changing-room. His papers were also not in order, the arrow-cross man yelled and sent him to the changing-room. "Beasts," he thought and walked out at the back door to the yard. The guard, who was smoking a cigarette, did not say anything, and he crossed the muddy yard, his heart throbbing. He had a tingling sensation in his back as he felt a muzzle aimed at his shoulder-blade. He wanted to run for it, to sprint round the corner and flop down in the mud. Dawn was breaking, and the rain fell slowly, uniformly, unendingly.

He had not dared to look back at Anna in the gym, but he knew that Anna had seen him and that she had also seen which way he went out. There was no one on the streets, and his shoes tapped a lonely and provocative tune on the pavement. About a hundred yards from the school he took shelter in a gateway and waited. Steps approached from the school, and as he peeped out he first saw only a hurrying pair of boots, then a moustached face, and amid the wrinkles on the face the signs of old age and of exhausted terror. A few minutes later two more people came. Two of the three factory lads, talking to each other in a low voice, so he could not understand. "Scram," said one of them on catching sight of Lipi in the gateway. "They'll get you again and then you won't be able to escape." They were followed by a woman, an ugly young woman with a large nose, wearing a green felt coat and a head-cloth. Then another woman, also in a felt coat. Then no one else came.

The sun rose. The tiles on the roofs of the houses shone, the pavements were black and shiny, and on the roadway there were the melting, muddy clay tracks of the peasant carts. A window opened and steps came tapping closer. A key turned in a lock behind his back, and the door in the big, brown wooden gate opened. "What are you doing here?" asked an old woman. "I'm waiting for someone and it's raining." "This is no place for dates," groused the old woman, slamming the door. The key turned in the lock again.

Then they came out, some twenty men and women. They were accompanied by four men with sub-machineguns. The sub-machinegun, with its black butt, lay across their bellies, and their hands rested on the magazines. There was one on either side and two went behind. The fifth was the ceramist, or the man the ceramist resembled. Anna was also walking there among them, in the second rank, her head bowed and the rain falling on her lovely, long hair. She did not look up, she looked nowhere, except before her feet. He followed them at a distance of about two hundred yards, kept stopping, and didn't dare look at them often. He scratched his forehead and rubbed his fingers together, as though thinking hard about

something. At the last house the procession took a turn and he dared not follow them to the Danube. He heard the volleys from the sub-machineguns at a distance. A pebble badly hurt his foot, so he leaned against the wall of the last house and took off his shoe. Then he ran back, tottering, along the shingly path and again a pebble hurt his foot, but he just continued to run in the rain and his tears flowed freely.

Anna's father and mother did not come back from Germany. Nor did Lili, who had shouted, "there's a black-haired boy coming, there's a black-haired boy coming!"

Three soldiers were hanging from the big, bare plane-tree in the square. On their chests they had notices that read: "This is the fate of every deserter." One of them had been manhandled and his short hair stuck up in sticky tresses, as though it was not really his, but a child's clumsy wig. The rain washed the black mask of caked blood on his face. He was in shirtsleeves, with thick arms, unbelievably white, as though made of wax. That was just how the whole body hung there, limp, sack-like, in its uniform trousers and short pioneers' top-boots, as though it was a dummy—an advertisement of terror. However hard he tried to look away, something always magnetized his vision.

It was horrible, and yet he had to look. That moment before death, when the noose is put on a throat, when the rifle is raised, when there is only one more moment left, when you might shout a curse at them, or collapse and spread an evil smell about you, but whichever it is, the finer or the uglier, it is all the same, you have to endure that moment awake and sober by the wall, under the tree. What could Anna have felt?

There were many people in the square. They were looking at the soldiers. The soldiers' clothes had become dark from the mass of blood. The rain formed beeds on the bare branches and dripped down, and the people looked at the soldiers and the dripping tree. His clothes were wet through and he went into a pub, sat down in a corner, asked for rum, cried and shivered. Then, swaying drunkenly, in muddy clothes, he walked out of the town and asked for a lift on a peasant cart.

The ceramist came in, washed and wearing a clean shirt.

"I never fight people who have run wild, if I can help it. Though I once learned to box. Who killed your Anna?"

"I still think it was you. Where were you in forty-four?"

"In Paris, I told you so. I only killed my Anna. And I have no similar twin. Nor even a dissimilar one."

Lipi now recalled a big scar on the forehead of the arrow-cross man.

"It was not you who killed her. I'm sorry."

DOCUMENTS

THE MEETING OF GÖMBÖS AND HITLER IN 1933

The following introductory essay and the supplementary documentation constitute parts of the author's more extensive work treating the subject in fuller detail. The complete text has appeared under the same title in the 1961 volume of the *Levéltári Közlemények* ("State Archives Publications").

The events covered by Elek Karsay's compilation formed a turning-point in Hungary's inter-war history, which was to have tragic consequences. The period of economic consolidation under the Bethlen government had been brought to an end by the 1929—33 depression, and in 1931 Prime Minister Bethlen was forced to tender the resignation of his cabinet. Dreading a leftward development on the part of the Hungarian people, the ruling classes of the country, in their endeavour to strengthen their position, increasingly resorted to measures and solutions of a fascist character. It was under such circumstances that Gyula Gömbös—the personality who seemed best suited for the realization of these endeavours—became Prime Minister of Hungary on September 1, 1932. Less than a year later—and barely half a year after Hitler's assumption of power in Germany—the meeting took place which is dealt with in Elek Karsay's study printed in the following pages.—The Editor.

On June 17, 1933, after lengthy preparations carried out in strictest secrecy, Prime Minister Gömbös left for Berlin to have a meeting with Hitler.

The visits of the Hungarian Premier to Berlin and Erfurt attracted the attention of all of political Europe, the more so since the communiqué issued after the talks by the Foreign Relations Bureau of the NSDAP (national-socialist party) admitted of the inference that important agreements had been reached at the encounter of Gömbös and Hitler.

The meeting between the German and Hungarian heads of government took place against an international background full of tension. The world-situation had been gravely deteriorating since January 30, 1933, the day when the NSDAP came to power through Hitler's nomination as "Führer und Reichskanzler."

The events in German home politics, the terror campaign launched against the leaders and the membership of the social democratic and communist parties as well as their Landtag and Reichstag deputies, the paralysation of trade union activities, the persecution of the Jews which—based on "racism"—had become part of the government's program, the silencing of progressive art and literature, the drive against the Christian churches and organizations, the reports on happenings in the concentration camps—all these facts contributed to the crea-

tion of an atmosphere of general aversion to and, in the political field, distrust of the new German regime throughout the world.[1]

The international aims of the Hitler régime were causing particularly grave concern among the forces opposed to German fascism. The imperialist aspirations, notably the putting into praxis of the "Lebensraum" thesis as propagated in "Mein Kampf" and in the articles and speeches of the nazi leaders, came to constitute a serious menace to world peace.

Let us now outline the most important problems emerging in the wake of Hitler's "Machtergreifung."

In the spring of 1933 the prospects and the atmosphere of the disarmament talks between the great powers were vitiated by a series of aggressive statements by German political and military leaders. These statements in turn elicited sharp replies from the western powers.

In an article which appeared in the "Leipziger Illustrierte Zeitung" on May 11, 1933, Foreign Minister von Neurath argued in favour of the acquisition by Germany of aircraft, sea-planes and heavy artillery, and the building up of her land forces, irrespective of the outcome of the disarmament conference.

On this same day of May 11, 1933, in the House of Lords in London, Lord Hailsham, the Secretary of War, speaking of Germany's threat to leave the conference if her demands were not satisfied, said in part: "Should Germany nevertheless leave the conference, the rest of the powers would be compelled to give the most serious consideration to the further measures to be taken. I believe the legal consequences of such a step to be—though at the present moment this is only my personal opinion—that, the provisions of the Treaty of Versailles being still binding on Germany, all attempts at rearmament in contradiction to these provisions would constitute a breach of the Versailles Treaty and give grounds for the application of the sanctions envisaged therein."[2]

In his speech at Münster on the following day, May 12, 1933, Vice-chancellor von Papen rejected the British War Secretary's threats of sanctions against Germany, declaring that "the word pacifism has been blotted from our vocabulary." (In its leading article of May 14, 1933, the French paper "Le Temps" declared that von Papen's speech "opposed, at the middle of the 20th century and hardly 15 years after the war which had cost the lives of millions, to modern ideals the medieval concept of refusing to exaggerate the value of individual life, with the individual taking his own life none too tragically either. Such an ideology will but strengthen the conviction all over the world that Germany has reverted to policies incompatible with the system of universal security, abandoning herself to the ideas of men who are living only by war and for war. Hitlerism thus reveals itself as the most terrific menace to our civilization, a menace to be fought by all the peoples small and great having a sense of freedom as the first prerequisite to national as well as human dignity."[3]

Next to the question of disarmament it was that of the relations between Germany and Austria which was being aggravated in an alarming manner by nazi Germany since the "Machtergreifung."

In April 1933 Göring, the Prime Minister of Prussia, and Vice-chancellor von Papen went to Italy to obtain Mussolini's consent to the German annexation of Austria, which they called "Anschluss."

It was still during the stay of the German statesmen in Italy that on April 11, 1933, Austrian Chancellor Dollfuss also arrived in Rome, where he was given reassuring promises by Mussolini to the effect that the Anschluss would be prevented.[4]

In addition to the problems of disarmament and Anschluss—the latter will be reverted to later on—German agrarian isolationism constituted an issue of primary im-

portance to Hungary. In February 1933 already the Hitler government, anxious to win the support of the agrarian interests, had considerably raised import duties on pork and beef, lard and goose-fat, as well as on a number of other agricultural products.[5]

Notwithstanding these facts Prime Minister Gömbös—true to his political past[6]—showed himself from the very outset most sympathetic to the Hitler régime. On February, 1, 1933, the day following the Machtergreifung, he instructed the Hungarian Minister in Berlin, Kánya, "to establish contacts with Chancellor Hitler by calling on him formally as soon as possible. Present to the Chancellor my respects and congratulations. Remind him of the fact that ten years ago already we were in communication through the intermediary of Herr Scheubner-Richter, on the basis of common principles and a common ideology... Give the Chancellor to understand that I am asking... for the honour of remaining in close contact now that his position has become an official one, it being my conviction that our countries should act in concert in the domains of both international and economic policy. Draw his attention to the importance of close cooperation at the disarmament conference and especially to the fact that I consider the economic ties between Hungary and Germany as regrettably loose. What I am most concerned about is the failure to find Germany disposed to serve as natural outlet for Hungarian agricultural produce to the degree our common lot would involve... It is my wish to see a brisk flow of goods developing in both directions as from next July already, to serve this purpose."[7]

With Hitler's favourable answer to these ouvertures the way now stood open to a *rapprochement* between the nazis in power in Germany and the Hungarian counterrevolutionary régime.

In an interview granted to Arthur Kornhuber, the correspondent of the "Berliner Börsenzeitung," on April 13, 1933, Gömbös declared: "Friendly relations with Germany have always been the guiding principle of Hungary's foreign policy. I am determined to foster and to develop such relations, since the existence of a community of interests, nay, of a community of fate, of the two countries seems to me obvious and clearly indicated by the international situation. Both countries must, in my opinion, make some sacrifices in the interest of necessary cooperation, and it is for this reason that I hope for understanding in Berlin if, in view of our endangered agricultural exports to Germany, we expect our economic claims to be taken into consideration."[8]

Competent German circles were far from unfavourable to the approaches of Gömbös. In view of the almost complete international isolation of Germany the interests of German foreign policy also called imperatively for the improvement of relations with Hungary, with the Gömbös government. The first tentative steps were therefore taken on both sides and preliminary negotiations started.

The way to a *rapprochement* was—most characteristically—paved on both sides by personalities and organizations of no official standing; following the invitation of Archduke Albrecht of Hapsburg a delegation of the NSDAP, led by Werner Daitz—according to the semi-official statement of MTI (Hungarian Telegraph Agency) he was "head of the NSDAP's department for international trade, with the rank of a Minister"[9]—arrived in Budapest in late May 1933.

Information about the talks of the NSDAP delegation in Hungary is meagre. At any rate, the Hungarian Telegraph Agency let it be known that a lecture entitled "Aims of economic policy with special regard to Hungaro-German trade" was delivered on May 29, 1933, by Werner Daitz in a private room of the Hotel Hungaria. Those present included Baron Schön, German Minister in Budapest, and, on the Hungarian part, Archduke Albrecht; Minister of Trade Tihamér Fabinyi; Minister of Agriculture Miklós Kállay; Ferenc Mengele, Head of the

Press Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Miklós Kozma, President of MTI; a number of parliamentary deputies with Móric Putnoky, Zoltán Meskó, Ferenc Ulain, Tibor Eckhardt, Endre Bajcsy-Zsilinszky, Count Ferenc Hunyady among them, as well as many other representatives of Hungarian political and economic life.[10]

In his lecture Daitz pointed out that he was particularly glad to accept the invitation to Budapest as "the friendship between Hungary and Germany had been one of long standing." He was lavish in alluring and attractive promises. He declared that "due to her central position Germany considers it her duty to promote with all her might the intensification of the exchange of goods with those countries which are her natural trading partners. With the British Empire, with France and her colonies, with northern and southern America—those rather developed and self-sufficient regions—there exist no such natural ties as ought to be established between Germany on the one hand and the south-eastern Danube states as well as the regions in the north-east on the other..."

He also held out the prospect of "the north-eastern regions covering their corn requirements in Hungary and the Danube states. It was this new trend in German foreign-trade policy that prompted the German government to reopen the trade negotiations through official channels."

His lecture delivered, Daitz was questioned by some of those present about the possibilities of exports to Germany. In reply Daitz declared that "it is one of the German government's principal objectives to secure the import of the commodities in short supply in Germany as far as possible from neighbouring and friendly countries."

One of the speakers gave expression to some political misgivings. Daitz thereupon referred to the latest speech of Chancellor Hitler, in which the Führer pointed out that "Germany would never think of absorbing any other people and would respect the freedom of other nations just as much as she respected her own. Germany's only endeavour is to be of assistance to the other nations."

It was in the course of the Budapest visit of the NSDAP delegation that the idea of personal talks between Hitler and Gömbös on the economic and political problems of mutual interest to both countries was put forward.

These problems were the Anschluss, economic relations between Germany and Hungary, and the situation of the German minority in Hungary.

In early June of 1933 all three questions constituted veritable stumbling blocks on the path to a *rapprochement* between the Third Reich and the Horthy régime.

As for the Anschluss, things were going from bad to worse ever since the visit of Göring and von Papen to Italy. Hungarian public opinion was, quite understandably, deeply worried by the news from Austria. On May 20 the Austrian paper "Neue Freie Presse" reported from Berlin that the Austrian Minister, in the course of a conversation with the German Minister of Foreign Affairs, presented to the latter the text of a speech held in Graz by Reichsjustizkommissar Dr Frank. Pointing out that the speech contained insults to the Austrian government as well as passages inciting to violent action, the Austrian Minister mentioned the fact that nazi students had called anti-government demonstrations for May 20. The Minister expressed his grave concern about these demonstrations, which constituted a new menace to friendly relations between Austria and Germany.[11]

Nor did the reports on the two meetings arranged by former Austrian Minister Rintelen between Federal Chancellor Dollfuss and Reichstag deputy Habicht reassure public opinion. In the course of these conversations Habicht advised Dollfuss to form a coalition government of Christian-Socialists and National-Socialists. The idea was rejected by Dollfuss.[12]

On June 1, 1933, the Austrian police

in a series of raids searched the headquarters of nazi organizations, confiscating big quantities of arms, munition and propaganda material.[13]

On the same day the following announcement was published by the provincial government in Innsbruck:

"The daily demonstrations of irresponsible elements are creating an intolerable situation for the city's economic life. Therefore, the following regulations are herewith put into effect.

1) The organs of public security are given instructions to suppress by every means all forms of demonstration.

2) The culprits are to be severely punished. Aliens taking part in the demonstrations are to be expelled and deported without delay.

3) In the area of Innsbruck and Hötting all doors are to be kept closed as from 8 p. m. Heads of families are under the obligation of keeping young people under 17 years of age in their homes after 8 p. m.

4) Restaurants and cafés are to close at 11 p. m."[14]

On June 13, 1933, Habicht, "head of the NSDAP's section for propaganda in Austria," was arrested in Linz[15]; on the following day, June 14, he was expelled from Austria.[16]

The same day, Austrian Deputy Chancellor Winkler made the following statement to the press:

"The events of the last two days give the impression that under the strong influence of national-socialist circles in the Reich the Austrian Hitler party is about to leave the path of legality and intends to establish a régime of illegal terrorism. The government has for a long time now been cognizant of these intentions, and has therefore made extensive preparations for the suppression of any attempt at terrorism, at any place and any time. Everyone may rest assured that these far-reaching attempts against the peace of the population and aimed at further aggravating the political situation will meet with firm resistance on the part of the government."[17]

The economic problems have already been dealt with earlier.

With regard to the situation of the German minority in Hungary the position was the following:

In the parliamentary session of May 9, 1933, the grievances of the German minority, particularly those connected with schooling, were brought up by Jakab Bleyer, a government party deputy and spokesman of the German minority in Hungary. Based on statistical data published by the government, Bleyer put before the House rather unfavourable figures relating to German-language teaching in the villages inhabited by Germans. He referred to the 1930 census, according to which the German population in Hungary numbered 73,000 less than in 1920.[18]

Bleyer's speech was received by the House with great indignation, and he was severely attacked by a number of deputies.[19]

Both Bleyer's speech and the ensuing debate found a lively echo in the German press. The nazi papers—especially the "Vossische Zeitung"—were strongly critical of the stand some Hungarian papers and parliamentarians were taking in the matter.[20]

An affair highly characteristic of the prevailing atmosphere occurred on May 20, 1933, when the principal of the Hungarian Institute in Berlin gave a reception in honour of the Hungarian team of collegiate fencers. The German team refused the invitation on the grounds that as long as Bleyer was not given satisfaction they were not prepared to mix socially with the Hungarian fencers. Thereupon the Hungarian team withdrew from the championship and returned to Budapest.[21]

In spite of these events the Gömbös government continued in its friendly attitude towards the Third Reich[22] and the tone of the statements made by Foreign Minister Kálmán Kánya in the foreign affairs debate of the House of Deputies was markedly pro-

German. In concurring with Gömbös's speech of May 17, Kánya declared: "I do not believe the Anschluss to be a present issue, that is, I consider all anxieties concerning the imminence of this question as premature. The definition of the Hungarian government's attitude in this matter at the present stage could therefore not be regarded as either timely or opportune. It is, in my opinion, the less opportune bearing in mind that we do not count among the great European factors and could exert no decisive influence on the solution of this question."[23]

It was after such antecedents that Gömbös decided to accept Hitler's invitation and to leave for Berlin.

From the documents published below it becomes evident that the meeting of Gömbös and Hitler in June 1933 constituted a determining factor in the foreign policy of the Hungarian counterrevolutionary régime, signifying as it did a decisive turn of Hungarian foreign policy in the direction of the aggressive aims of German nazism.

The talk enabled Hitler and Gömbös to establish a common standpoint on the central issue, *i. e.*, that the long-term objectives of the Third Reich and of counterrevolutionary Hungary could not be achieved by peaceful means and that war constituted the only possible solution.

Of decisive significance from the Hungarian point of view was the fact, fully supported by these documents, that on this occasion Gömbös—for the first time at a head-of-government level—raised the idea of the possibility and the necessity of political, economic and military cooperation between Italy, the German Reich, Hungary and Austria. It was here that the first elements of the later "axis" policy thus made their appearance.

Beside the two preceding issues the handling of the Anschluss problem at the Hitler—Gömbös encounter would seem at first sight to have been of minor importance from the Hungarian point of view. Such, however, was not the case: in the early 30's the problem of Austria's annexation was one of primordial importance, as the fall of Austria would throw open the gate to the realization of the nazi "Südostraum" concept.

The material of the discussions was, of course, not made public at the time; but the very fact of Gömbös's voyage and the commentary on it of the NSDAP Foreign Relations Bureau elicited angry and passionate protests from the Hungarian opposition parties.

On June 20, 1933, the day following the return of Gömbös from Germany, Endre Bajcsy-Zsilinszky—who was later to resist with arms in hand the SS-men coming to arrest him on March 19, 1944, and who was sentenced to death and executed in Sopronkőhida prison on Christmas day of the same year—asserted in the House of Deputies: "... there are times when one has to be ready to face the bullet and the gallows. I declare that we are not willing to give way here to German imperialism. There has been no German world here for a thousand years and there shall be no German world here, and to prevent it we are prepared to face the bullet and the gallows!"

The voyage of Gömbös was also attacked by the official social-democratic party organ *Népszava* and by well-known opposition politicians such as the liberal Károly Rassay or the legitimist Marquis György Pallavicini.

Not only did the openly pro-Hitlerite foreign policy meet with the opposition of these politicians at the first moment of its emergence—but it was also highly unpopular among the broadest masses of the Hungarian people.

However, all this could not deter the counterrevolutionary Hungarian leaders from a policy that was ultimately to lead the country to ruin. Every attempt, every movement, to oppose this policy was ruthlessly suppressed by the terrorist apparatus of the Horthy régime.

ELEK KARSAI

Notes

1) On April 12, 1933 the British Trade Union Council, together with the parliamentary group and the executive committee of the Labour Party, organized a meeting in London "in protest against the policy of reprisal and persecution." (OL*—MTI,** Hungarian edition, April 12, 1933, 28th edition)
2) OL—MTI, Hungarian edition, May 11, 1933, 35th edition (retranslated from the Hungarian)
3) OL—MTI, Home Bulletin, May 15, 1933
4) Cf. the article in The Times on the results of the Rome visits of Papen and Dollfuss (OL—MTI, Hungarian edition, April 21, 1933, 6th edition)
5) For fuller particulars cf. Berend, T. I.—Ránki, Gy.: *Magyarország a fasiszta Németország életterében* ["Hungary in the 'Lebensraum' of fascist Germany"], 1933—1939, *Közgazdasági és Jogi Kiadó* [Publishing House on Economics and Law], Budapest, 1960, pp. 74—78
6) Gyula Gömbös (1886—1936) was a Captain on the General Staff in World War I. An intimate of Horthy's he played an important role in the organization of the White Terror which followed the collapse of the Hungarian Soviet Republic, and in the establishment of the counterrevolutionary régime. In 1922 he joined the government party of the day, but left it later on, finding Bethlen's policy of consolidation too liberal for his taste, and founded the so-called "race-protector" party, one of aggressive racism. Returning in 1928 to the government's Unity Party, he soon became under-secretary of state in the Ministry of War, in 1929 Minister of War and on September 1, 1932, Prime Minister. His government represented a turning-point in the pro-German orientation of Hungarian foreign policy. Already in the 20's Gömbös maintained close contact with the German nazis and was personally active in fostering cooperation between the Bavarian and Hungarian secret counterrevolutionary organizations. One of their most notorious common actions was the forging of franc banknotes, brought to light in December 1925. For fuller particulars cf. Nemes—Karsai: *Iratok az ellenforradalom történetéhez* ("Documents on the history of the counterrevolution"), Vol. II. Szikra, Budapest, 1956, pp. 328—332. Also Vol. III, pp. 83—84, 466—479, 532—533, 570—579
7) OL—Küm.* pol. 1933, 21/7, 306. Cited in Berend—Ránki, op. cit. pp. 71—72
8) OL—MTI, Hungarian edition, April 13, 1933, 17th edition
9) Ibid., May 29, 1933, 51st edition (retranslated from the Hungarian). It may not be without interest to mention that the name of Werner Daitz came up in the Nuremberg trial of war criminals, when George S. Messersmith, former US Consul-General in Berlin and US Minister in Vienna said in his testimony: "In the course of my official trip to Germany I was often visited by a nazi economist by the name of Daitz. He held no high government post but prominent nazi leaders entrusted him with important tasks in south-east Europe. He travelled extensively in Yugoslavia, Hungary and Rumania. For some mysterious reason which I could never find out he often came to see me and, in his return from his voyages, he would always tell me what he had achieved and what economic advantages he had promised in the event that the country in question would be willing to cooperate with Germany. He cynically remarked at the same time that Germany had no intention whatever of keeping these promises and added: 'How stupid of those peoples to believe such promises." (Procès des grands criminels de guerre devant le Tribunal Militaire International, Nuremberg, 14 Novembre 1945—1er Octobre 1946. Édité à Nuremberg 1948, Vol. XXX, p. 304, Doc. No. PS—2385)
10) OL—MTI, Hungarian edition, May 29, 1933, 48th and 49th editions
11) Ibid., May 20, 1933, 4th edition
12) Ibid., May 31, 1933, 15th edition
13) Ibid., June 1, 1933, 4th and 7th editions
14) Ibid., June 1, 1933, 12th edition
15) Ibid., June 13, 1933, 10th edition
16) Ibid., June 15, 1933, 10th edition
17) Ibid., June 13, 1933, 5th edition
18) Journals of the House of Deputies of the Parliamentary session convoked for July 18, 1931, Vol. XV. Budapest, 1933, pp. 212—213
19) Ibid., 176th session, pp. 221—224, particularly the speech of Endre Bajcsy-Zsilinszky
20) OL—MTI, Hungarian edition, May 11, 1933, 28th edition
21) Ibid., May 20, 1933, 21st edition
22) For fuller particulars see the above cited economico-historical work of Berend and

* OL = Országos Levéltár = State Archives

** MTI = Magyar Távirati Iroda = Hungarian Telegraph Agency

* Küm = Külügyminisztérium = Foreign Ministry

Ránki, which deals extensively with the points of view of the Gömbös cabinet and of Gömbös himself, and gives the full texts of Gömbös's instructions to Kánya of February 1, 1933, concerning the establishment of contacts with Hitler as well as of his message to Chancellor Hitler and the latter's answer. The text of the exchange of letters between Gömbös and Hitler, which played an important role in the preparation of the June 1933 meeting, is also given in the work of Berend and Ránki (pp. 78—79)

23) Journals of the House of Deputies of the parliamentary session convoked for July 18, 1931, Vol. XVI, p. 152, 185th session, May 22, 1933

The Documents Concerning the 1933 meeting

June 16, 1933

Draft of conversation for use in negotiations with Hitler

Prepared in the Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs for Prime Minister Gyula Gömbös

Introduction

Sympathies, personal as well as national, with Germany to be stressed.
Similarity of world outlook.

Factors currently disturbing good relations: attempts to influence public opinion by legitimists, Jews and discontented agrarian circles. These, however, are but ephemeral phenomena, particularly if the last-named factor is successfully removed through the conclusion of an adequate trade agreement.

I. (a) The Problem of the *Anschluss* (Fundamentals)

A few years ago public opinion in Hungary was not ill disposed towards the *Anschluss* problem. Isolationist German foreign trade policy has, however, greatly altered the climate. Hungarian agricultural interests are dismayed by the possibility of their losing the Austrian market in the event of the *Anschluss*—a circumstance which would have a disastrous effect on Hungary's agriculture. Things would substantially change if Hungarian-German economic relations could be placed on a basis that would satisfy Hungarian economic interests. Besides, Hungary is, unfortunately, too small a political factor to be capable of exerting a major influence upon the realization of the *Anschluss* in any way.

(b) The Present Situation in Austria

The deterioration of Austrian-German relations is a very deplorable development as far as Hungary is concerned. We maintain good relations with both countries and it is of the utmost importance to us that we should cooperate with them on a number of issues where our interests run parallel.

Question to Hitler: Is he willing to soften his policy in respect of the Austrian Government?

II. Italian-German Relations

It stands to reason that the development of Italian-German relations in the friendliest possible manner is extremely desirable as far as Hungary is concerned. What is Hitler's opinion of current Italian-German relations and of their possible development?

III. Hungarian-German Economic Relations

As regards the reciprocal relations between the two countries, it is of decisive importance whether economic relations between them can or cannot be brought back on to an absolutely sound basis. It is true that Herr Waldeck's latest talks have led to a welcome easing of the situation. What is really needed here, however, is the resumption of trade on a large scale between the two countries, as this is warranted by the geographical situation of the two countries and by their complementary interests, economic as well as political. We realize that up to the rise of the Third *Reich* party politics raised serious obstacles on the German side to such development, since most previous German governments were dependent on the goodwill of extremist agrarian parties, which had to be secured by all means. Today this factor is non-existent, and, as I see it, there is no longer anything to prevent economic relations between the two countries from being governed solely by economic and foreign policy interests. A radical change in existing relations is absolutely necessary from both points of view.

It is of vital importance to Hungary to find an outlet in Germany for her agricultural produce. I believe, however, that it is equally important to Germany that German industrial exports find a market in our country and other agricultural countries, otherwise an adverse effect on Germany's balance of foreign trade could not be avoided. On the other hand, I believe that, for his part, the Chancellor too attaches much importance to fostering political relations between the two countries, which, as a matter of course, are bound to be affected most adversely by an eventual exclusion from Germany of Hungary's staple export items.

I ask Hitler to throw all his authority into the scales in order to obtain an improvement of German-Hungarian economic relations. I also ask him whether he might be willing, out of political considerations, to grant us more favourable treatment than is enjoyed by Rumania and Yugoslavia?

IV. National Minority Question

(a) German Minorities in Hungary

The Bleyer affair* has been grossly misinterpreted in Germany, and, in general, outside Hungary. The chief criticism in Hungary has been elicited, not by the merits of the case, but by Bleyer's tactless attitude. In part this was due to the fact—and I shall speak to Hitler quite openly on this score—that Bleyer is an uncommon bore and a highly unpleasant individual, so that quite a few people in our country will, without a moment's hesitation, oppose anything Bleyer may do. As for the merits of the matter, I have indicated my willingness to talk all unsettled matters over with Bleyer. I intend, in the cultural sphere, to grant the absolutely loyal elements among the Germans of Hungary all legitimate claims they may advance—in that respect I mean to continue the policy pursued by previous governments, all the more so since I myself was a member of them.

(b)

The conduct to date of the *Verein für das Deutschtum im Ausland* ("Union of Germans Abroad") which—and this is very well known to us—has been closely linked with the policy pursued by previous German governments, has had an extremely embarrassing effect upon Hungarian-German relations. That policy, alas, was not only diametrically opposed to Hungarian political interests, but it also outraged Hungarian sentiments. We

* See introductory article by Elek Karsai, published in this issue, pp. 174.

can conceive of nothing more offensive to us than the fact that the German inhabitants of regions that have been detached from Hungary have—largely as a result of persuasion by the V. D. A.—in very many instances come out against Hungarian national aspirations. In those cases where individuals were acting out of opportunism, so as to wangle some favours out of the new possessors of power, such proceeding might still be viewed with some understanding in our country. But in instances where we have seen evidence of planned action, the natural reaction in our country could not be other than deep resentment. It may be an important factor in this matter that these movements are directed by persons lacking in practical political acumen, who are only concerned with the question of schools, trying to calculate the number of German schools—*i. e.* German in language, if not in spirit—there are in a given area. In drawing comparisons between previous conditions and present conditions in Hungary, they ignore the fact that it is inconceivable in present-day dismembered Hungary—as it was inconceivable in Old Hungary—that anyone's livelihood should be made precarious because his native tongue is German, as is being done in the Little Entente states; and that, in Hungary, not only have our Germans enjoyed—and do enjoy—equal opportunities with the Hungarians in the economic field, but any office is equally open to them—there are numerous instances to prove this, among them the case of Bleyer himself, of Gratz, etc., who have risen to ministerial eminence.

As Hungary is a politically-minded nation *par excellence*, no one has understood the V. D. A.'s attitude in considering all Germans outside Germany equally important from the point of view of German policies. It is obvious that, as far as Germany is concerned, coherent German ethnic groups inhabiting areas bordering on Germany are of far greater importance than other sprinklings of Germans elsewhere. Public opinion in Hungary was indignant at seeing the V. D. A. display disproportionately more interest in the Germans of the Danube Valley than in the millions of Sudeten Germans. After all, the question of national minorities is an eminently political issue and not, as the V. D. A. seems to look upon it, a cultural and sentimental one. In Hungary it is regarded by all as a political matter; hence it is taken for granted that, for instance, we can take no interest whatever in the conditions of the Csángós of Bukovina and Moldavia. I ask Hitler to exert his influence so that the Hungarian and the German national minorities in the territories that have been detached from Hungary should, as far as possible, maintain good relations with each other and that the Germans should at least refrain from taking a stand against legitimate Hungarian national aspirations. I am compelled to stress this, for the aftermath of the old policy is still being felt. Thus, for example, there have been many instances of Germans taking part in anti-revisionist demonstrations in the Succession States when such participation could not be explained solely by coercive measures on the part of the authorities.

Original fair copy, four and a half typewritten pages. OL. Küm. res. pol. (State Archives, Min. of Foreign Affairs, pol. affairs 1932—21—303./284/1933

JUNE 19, 1933

Report by N. S. D. A. P. Foreign Policy Department on events leading up to Gömbös-Hitler meeting and on the matters discussed at the talks

As previously reported in brief, Prime Minister Gömbös of Hungary paid a visit to the Chancellor Saturday evening; he had arrived at 10:40 a. m., flying from Munich on board the Führer's aeroplane in the company of First-Lieutenant Brückner, the Führer's

representative, and Herr Schneider and Herr Dietz. The visit was a corollary of the negotiations begun in Hungary last month by a visiting delegation of the Foreign Policy Department of the National Socialist Party, headed by Minister Daitz. The delegation's mission had been to bring about a settlement of the utterly disordered commercial relations with Hungary, an objective which was achieved with surprising ease. It seems that, as a result of this initiative to put an end to economic chaos which was accomplished with much vigour and much goodwill on both sides, the complete re-formation of the south-eastern part of Europe has started and, as can be seen from Premier Gömbös's visit, has already given rise to its first far-reaching political consequences. All this, it goes without saying, cannot fail to affect developments in Austria too. The economic comprehension which was manifest in the settlement of German-Hungarian relations prevails, it seems, also at the conclusion of the Hungarian-Rumanian agreement and holds out the prospect of further auspicious developments. It is extremely gratifying that the Foreign Policy Department of the National Socialist Party should have made such intensive efforts, in Berlin and in Vienna, to further the good cause as to have engaged in downright pioneering work for a coherent reorganization that would be satisfactory to both parties in one of the most tangled parts of Central Europe, which has generated the gravest difficulties.

The report, except for the opening sentence, was read before the House of Deputies at the June 19, 1933 session of Parliament by Károly Rassay (Liberal Opposition). Parliamentary session convoked for June 18, 1933, Journals of the House of Deputies, Vol. XVII. Athenaeum, Budapest, 1933, p. 336. 200th session, Monday, June 19, 1933.

JUNE 19, 1933

Semi-official letter from Szilárd Masirevich, Hungarian Minister in Berlin, to Foreign Minister Kálmán Kánya, on some unusual circumstances concomitant to the Gömbös-Hitler meeting

June 19, 1933
Berlin, Germany.

Honoured Friend,

May I report on a few impressions concerning G[ömbös]'s visit here, impressions that are designed to complement the picture which emerges from newspaper reports of that visit. The arrangements made for the visit as a whole conveyed the impression, not only to me, but to others as well—*e. g.* the Foreign Office here—that the N. S. party here intended to monopolize G. It went out of its way to keep all official factors at a distance from him. This anxiety to keep people off seems, strangely enough, to have extended even to myself, for when I learned Saturday noon that G. was in Berlin, it took Haubert three hours of telephoning and becoming quite emphatic in the end, to learn from the nazis where G. was being put up. A number of symptoms indicate that the N. S. party crowd are trying to create the impression that the improvement of Hungarian-German relations—and, primarily, the conclusion of the economic arrangement—is really *their* work, and this goes for the gesture of Hungarian-German friendship at the H-G meeting. I believe I am not wrong when I say that Rosenberg's political ambitions have played a part in the expropriation on behalf of the N. S. party of G's visit. R. had failed at the London test and is now making up for it, and he may be making himself once more

eligible for the future, by cashing in on the political success that is to be derived from G's visit.

In view of the above considerations, I had some misgivings whether some *froissement* might not have arisen in the Foreign Office here in the wake of G's visit. I have been making soundings in the Foreign Office to find this out, telling them that originally we had wanted G. to have lunch with us before he left Berlin, *i. e.*, on Sunday, and that I had intended to invite Bülow to that luncheon, but that this plan had come to nothing owing to G's departure for Erfurt on Sunday morning, earlier than had been anticipated. The result of my inquiries do, I believe, warrant the conclusion that there is no question of any *froissement* here.

Finally, I should not leave it unsaid that, since I took up my post here three short weeks ago, I have seen evidence of definite goodwill towards Hungary—one which also finds expression in actions—on the part of the Germans, whether it be the Foreign Office or some party forum. I believe this is going to prove a lasting thing, albeit one must never forget Madame Mère's ever-valid saying: *Pourvu que cela dure.*

Yours very sincerely,
M. (unintelligible word)

Two typewritten pages signed in Masirevich's own hand
OL. Küm. pol. 1933—21/7—1825. (1390/1933)

JUNE 19, 1933

(a) Question addressed to Prime Minister Gömbös by Endre Bajcsy-Zsilinszky, M. P.

(Transcript from the Original, No. 1840/1933.)

Question

to the Rt. Hon. Prime Minister

The news of the Rt. Hon. Prime Minister's trip to Berlin has alarmed public opinion in Hungary exceedingly. There are in circulation diverse and contradictory speculations, one more fantastic than the other.

Is the Rt. Hon. Prime Minister prepared to reassure the agitated public opinion of Hungary to the effect that

(1) his Berlin visit does not mean a shift in Hungarian foreign policy towards a one-sided friendship with the German *Reich*;

(2) it does not involve any weakening of the Austrian nation's struggle for independence;

(3) the visit took place with the knowledge and approval of our Italian and Austrian friends, or was made with the precise objective of enlightening and disabusing the foreign policies of the German *Reich;*

(4) Hungarian foreign policy does not have its hands tied by possible—and in any case not vitally important—concessions in trade policy, which the Government are trying to secure on the markets of the German *Reich.*

Budapest, June 19. 1933

Endre Bajcsy-Zsilinszkv, M. P.
man. propr.

Certified copy
Budapest, June 22. 1933

István Kovács Bodó man. propr.
Junior Clerk of the Speaker

Authenticated copy, single typewritten page. OL. Küm. pol. 1933—31/7—1825 (2510/1933)

AUGUST 20, 1933

(b) Communication from the Foreign Ministry to the Prime Minister's Office containing the proposed draft of the reply to be given to question put down by Bajcsy-Zsilinszky, M. P.

With reference to the reply to be given to the question enclosed with Your Excellency's note No. 6719 MEI of 16th inst., In take the liberty of making the following suggestions.

Item 1.—The trip to Berlin means no change whatever in the fre-hand policy repeatedly announced by the Hungarian Government—we continue to abide by that principle as before.

Item 2. — The said trip had no connexion whatever with Austro-German differences.

Item 3. — Hungary is a free, independent state, which makes its policies according to its own counsel. Further, both the Italian and the Austrian governments were informed of the trip.

Item 4. — The answer to tho question in this point is included in Item 1.

Aug. 20. G.[róf—i. e. Count—Teleki]

Original draft, written in ink. OL. Küm. pol. 1933—21/7—1825. (2510/1933)

JUNE 20, 1933

Excerpts from a speech by E. Bajcsy-Zsilinszky, a member of the Opposition, in Parliament concerning Cyula Gömbös's trip to Berlin

...I regard it as irreconcilabe with the standing of a Prime Minister of Hungary and with the dignity of the Hungarian nation that this visit after all be recorded in all countries as feasting at the invitation of junior national socialist officials, during wich—for instance on that certain Saturday night—not the Chancellor served as host, but a department head from the Foreign Office and the head of the National Socialist Party's Foreign Affairs Department, or the Department itself. This, in my opinion, can be reconciled—let me emphasise this again—neither with the constitutional standing of the Hungarian Prime Minister nor with the dignity of the Hungarian nation. In a way, the whole thing reminds one of a fashionable hunting party where people of distinction find accommodation in the count's mansion, while second-class guests are put up at the bailiff's cottage...

...Was it right for the Hungarian Prime Minister—who does nothing but constantly support his negative attitudes by arguing that a tiny little country like Hungary, such a dismembered little nation, can undertake no initiative in European politics—to undertake the audacious initiative of going to the capital of an empire that is being kept in a veritable moral, political and economic quarantine and of identifying himself with this policy...

THE SPEAKER. — I must warn the Honourable Deputy that he should refrain from using such expressions in reference to a foreign State which is on friendly terms with this country. (Noise on extreme Left.)

E. BAJCSY-ZSILINSZKY. — I was citing words spoken by my Honourable Colleague, Mr. Károly Rassay, who, in turn, had cited points made in *Magyar Szemle*, Count István Bethlen's newspaper. Those things are said in *Magyar Szemle*, and the Prime Minister would have done well to read that article, since he won't believe us of the Opposition. Never had a Prime Minister of Hungary permitted himself to take so audacious an initiative as the Hon. Prime Minister did in going to Berlin recently. (Cries of acclamation at left Centre. — Gábor JÁNOSSY: That is a wrong premiss, and a wrong inference!)...

...I ask you: should Hitler and his set go on pressing the *Anschluss*—according to various German newspapers they are in fact preparing to overrun Austria—and should it come to European action to save Austrian independence, ought not Hungary to be on the side which defends Austrian independence? Ought we not now to stand by Austria, who is now protecting us as well; what is more, protecting us more than she is protecting herself, for she is defending our very existence, while for herself she is only seeking opportunities for greater freedom? Ought we not to be playing the part now that Jan Sobieski's Polish troops played two hundred and fifty years ago—I now have political, not military, action in mind. Should we not take this stand, primarily, so as to back Austria and help raise the siege of Vienna, and thus save Hungary's future by preventing German imperialism from setting out once more on a course that would deprive of its Danubian heritage a Hungary that for a thousand years has been defending its independence in the face of German power ambitions?

Mr. Speaker, today the issue of the *Anschluss* is not only the issue of peace in Europe. The *Anschluss* is also the pivot round which the Hungarian question is centred, and to refer to our constitutional and other political struggles against the Austria of old as an argument against cooperation with the truncated Austria of today is to be ignorant of the actual historical situation. For truncated Austria, with her population of six and a half million, cannot possibly threaten us; on the other hand, she does protect us from the German steamroller and from that *Süd-Ostraum* policy which is already preparing the German minorities throughout the territory of historical Hungary for the task of being the first pioneers in helping to establish the German empire's dominion in the Danube Valley—(cries of acclamation on the Left)—a policy to which the Hon. Prime Minister has by his air-trip wrongly—I do not question his patriotic design—I say, wrongly and foolishly lent his services. (Acclamation on the Left.)...

...Mr. Speaker, permit me now to say a few words about the *Süd-Ostraum*, a theme which we have heard discussed in German-language lectures here and about which we read and hear often enough in the German Press and in official statements and speeches made by German politicians. There is no doubt—it will suffice for you to read Hitler's *Mein Kampf*—that German foreign policy as a whole is intending to apply all its energies to the *Süd-Ostraum*. Germany has lost her elasticity and expansive capacity towards the west, and to some extent her outlet in the direction of Poland has by now become blocked up too—so the simplest route for her lies across the Danube Valley, where strife is afoot,

where unhappy small nations are at loggerheads with one another, and where there are fairly big chunks of German minority groups, which are now being trained for German imperialist thought and action. It almost stands to reason, of course, that the German empire, which explores every avenue in furthering its expansion, will strike down this road. This is the thousand-year-old road of German imperialism, anyway. A thousand years ago, we managed to clamp down a bar across this road on the Austrian frontier, a thousand years ago we managed to halt this imperialism on the Leithe, and is the Prime Minister of Hungary now going to lift that bar for the German empire? Is it possible that we are being offered an alternative of such impossible courses—to be forced either into acceptance of a Little Entente conception or into acceptance of that system of German dominion which is about to be launched and to be realized from Berlin with such fierceness, with such determination and ruthlessness?...

...Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Prime Minister has been practically dogged by luck, and I have been pleased to see his good fortune. However, I am afraid lest this good fortune of his turn out to be another case of Polycrates' ring. I would therefore caution the Hon. Prime Minister that he should not permit himself to be carried away by his luck. Let him ponder in good time over what he has done and what will be the consequences, what may be the contingencies, and let him draw the conclusion, the only one that is correct, wise and patriotic. (Hear! Hear! on the Left.) That conclusion, Mr. Speaker, will ripen. That conclusion is that the Hon. Prime Minister will have to abandon the Prime Minister's office. The Hon. Prime Minister should resign, because by his unfortunate trip he has set himself against the vital foreign political interests of the Hungarian nation. He has set an avalanche rolling of which I have no idea where we may bring it to a halt. This is the right thing to do: To make mistakes is human, so let the Hon. Prime Minister admit like a man that he has made a grave mistake, and let him tender his resignation; let him give up his post.

For one thing must be said, Mr. Speaker, and it is this: Hungarian history is one vast gesture of self-defence in the face of German imperialism—that is something no one can deny. Today, the problem of German imperialism culminates in the question of Austria. Our place is by the side of Austria by all means, with all our energies and all our resources. (Applause on the Left.) And if the Hon. Prime Minister wants to continue to pursue his disastrous policy, if the Hon. Prime Minister wants to continue to frame his policy on behalf of Berlin and against Austria, over the head, so to speak, of Austria, and if he intends to open the way to these dangerous things, that ominous empire, then let him be aware that we are not going to play ball. Count István Tisza has said that there are times when you have to face the bullet and the gallows. I wish to make it clear that we in this country have no mind to make way for the German empire. Never for a thousand years has Germany held sway in this country, and she shall not hold sway here now. To prevent that, we shall face the bullet and the gallows! (Acclamation and cheers on the Left and extreme Left.)...

Printed in the Journal of the House of Representatives, session of Parliament convoked for June 18, 1933. Volume XVII. Athenaeum, Budapest 1933, pp. 351—357. 20th session, Tuesday, June 20, 1933.

JUNE 19, 1933

Cipher telegram — in three sections — from Jenő Nelky, the Hungarian Minister in Vienna, to the Hungarian Foreign Ministry on his interview with Chancellor Dollfuss concerning the Gömbös-Hitler meeting

Vienna, 19/6/1933
Budapest, 19/6/1933
5866.

No. 96

Attention
H. E. the Minister
H. E. Minister Count Khuen-
-Héderváry
H. E. Legation Counsellor
Baron Apor

Secret

After I conveyed Premier's message and ..... Chancellor returned in our conversation to following points.

Above all he was surprised that he had not been notified beforehand, although this was a practice both he and Premier had followed, for instance on trips to Rome. He had received first news from London, slanted, characteristically, to purport that aim of trip was German-Hungarian cooperation to oppose Austrian restoration plan. For his part he was perfectly aware of economic urgency of trip, but since the main thing about such visits is not so much motive—which public may or may not believe—but appearances, he feels bound to say that it was extremely inauspicious for his government. This was so because, since Premier had had no contact with German official circles but solely with leadership of National Socialist Party, and had even seen Hitler only in private, and since he had even gone to National Socialist meeting at Erfurt, his visit had been meant, by all appearances, for National Socialist Party, not for German government. Habicht's constant appearance as ex-press chief; according to his information, latter had accompanied Premier not only on his flight but also on car drive to Erfurt. Continuation follows. — Nelky.

Transmitted: 19/6/1933, 20 hrs Sülyi
Received: Vágó
5867.

No. 97.

Cipher telegram No. 96, continued

Secret

In view of aforesaid, I pointed out to Chancellor that originally meeting had been planned to take place in Munich; this was changed at last moment, and so Premier had no possibility of exerting influence on details of Berlin sojourn or saying which national socialist leaders should attend. Dollfuss took note of this and added he had no doubt that Habicht, after being fêted in Premier's entourage, had thus been rehabilitated.

Chancellor mentioned that in his London statement he had repeatedly pointed out excellent relations with Hungary and that this seemed to be contradicted by surprise visit in question. Replying, I referred to Premier's latest speeches in Parliament and his statement

this morning, and declared most emphatically that for his part Premier too was abiding by Austrian policy as hitherto pursued by him.

Stressing he was not saying this in order that I should report it to my Government, Chancellor further said that, as our sincere friend and in knowledge of anti-German feelings in London, he did not think trip to Germany had favourable results for Hungary, especially in Britain, where Premier's host, Rosenberg, had been such failure. — Nelky.
Deciphered: 19/6/1933, 21:30 hrs Edl, Vágó, Zsindely
Typed: Ob[ermayer]

No. 98

Cipher telegram No. 97, continued

With regard to Premier's message that he saw a chance for a solution of German conflict on the line agreed upon between the two of them, he said that what counted was not what the Germans were saying but what they were doing in Austria; in any case, he would have to suppress national socialists.

He thanked for invitation, but before he came, he said, he would rather wait and see the turn events would take. After interview with Chancellor I went to see secretary general, who also deplored Hungarian omission to send previous information. Both he and Chancellor asked whether Italian government had been informed previously. I said I had no information on that point. Finally, secretary general remarked this visit was Hitler's first success in foreign affairs.

I understand Prince Starhemberg, after being closeted with Chancellor for two hours, told general manager Mandl he had asked for interview with Premier Wednesday evening. I take the liberty of suggesting that his request be granted.

Finally, I take the liberty of bringing to Your Excellency' notice that negotiations on preferential wheat tariff are due to begin tomorrow afternoon. Dollfuss' mediation will be needed on presumably difficult matters. — Nelky.

Edl man. propr.

Deciphered: 20/6/1933 11 hrs. Edl, Biró, Széchen
Typed: Ob[ermayer]

JUNE 20, 1933

Foreign Ministry's cipher telegram instructing Minister Nelky in Vienna to reassure Chancellor Dollfuss in Gömbös's name

III

60. Nelky *Vienna*

Please tell Chancellor, Premier would regret if his trip to Berlin were to give cause for misinterpretation, the more so as in his view good relations between Austria and Hungary

as well as personal friendship between himself and Chancellor are, in the nature of things, above all possible suspicion.

You might do well to point out that we were not informed in advance about Chancellor's trip to Paris.

20/6 G. —

Original draft, in ink. OL. Küm. pol. 1933—21/7—1825. (1851/1933)
The draft was prepared by Count Teleki, initialled by Baron Apor, approved of by Kánya, June 20. Mark under heading 'To be signed': "Khuen-gróf" [Count Khuen].

JUNE 20, 1933

Foreign Ministry's cipher telegram instructing Minister Hóry in Rome concerning information to be given to Italian Foreign Ministry

118. Exung Rome

Idea of Premier's visit had been raised by German National Socialist Party at the time of Hungarian-German economic talks. Trip was made at Hitler's invitation. Premier satisfied with result of trip.

He wishes to give account of his talks partly in a personal letter to Mussolini, partly in detailed instructions to Your Excellency.

You will please inform Pal.[azzo] Chigi of above points.

20/6 G. — Kánya

Original draft, in ink. OL. Küm. pol. 1933—21/7—1825. (1857/1933)

JUNE 21, 1933

Cipher phonegram from Minister Nelky in Vienna to Foreign Ministry about his talk with Dollfuss

Transmitted: 21/6/1933 21:40 hrs Sülyi
Received: Zsindely *No. 100*

Attention
H. E. the Minister
H. E. Minister Count Khuen-Héderváry
Political Department

Re Your Excellency's cipher telegram (No. 60) of 20th inst.

Chancellor thanked for Premier's message and spoke warmly of his friendship for him.

In course of talk I pointed out that reaction of entire Hungarian press and public opinion showed views and sentiments expressed in Premier's above message regarding relations with Austria were shared by entire nation. Chancellor noted this with satisfaction. Still, he said he believed any ground for misinterpretation should be removed in other countries beside Austria. For the moment he could not suggest how this might be done, but again referred as an example to importance of British public opinion and money-market.

Lastly, emphasizing he did not mean to interfere in Hungary's affairs, he mentioned press reports of Premier's impending trip to Rome. He believed such trip might give rise to fresh speculations, this time to effect that Premier might be acting as intermediary for exchange of views between Berlin and Rome concerning Austria. He considers both states interested in not providing occasion, for time being, for rumours concerning relations between them.

Nelky Edl

Typewritten transcript, signed by head of cipher department. OL. Küm. pol. 1933—21/7—1825. (1900/1933)

JUNE 21, 1933

Report of the German Ambassador in Budapest to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Berlin on Prime Minister Gömbös's Berlin Visit

9565/E 673554—60

The Minister in Hungary to the Foreign Ministry

A. No. 104 P. 3

Budapest, June 21, 1933.
Received June 23.
II. Ung. 372.

Political Report

Subject: Trip of Prime Minister Gömbös to Berlin.

The trip of the Hungarian Prime Minister to Germany, which became known here only through the telegrams from Berlin, had the effect of a great sensation on the Hungarian public. As I know through M. de Kánya, who incidentally was himself told in confidence only the day before Gömbös's departure, the latter wavered repeatedly as to whether he should undertake the trip, in view of the tension between Berlin and Vienna at the present moment. What turned the scales in its favour was the recently intensified anti-Hungarian attitude of the Little Entente and the concern that the Dollfuss Government might involve itself more closely with France and Czechoslovakia.

M. de Gömbös, with whom I spoke today, is exceedingly satisfied with the results of his trip. Both the personality of the Reich Chancellor, whom he praised for his great amiability, and the dynamic force of the National Socialist Movement, of which he could convince himself in the Berlin stadium and particularly in Erfurt, have made a deep impression on him. M. Gömbös spoke in really enthusiastic terms of the overwhelming impression made by the psychological bond between the masses of the German people, particularly the workers, and the Führer, and he said he had carried home the conviction that the National Socialist regime was not a passing thing but was firmly and permanently established. He had felt that he should stress this in his speech in the House of Deputies yesterday, too, and point to the historic service that the Reich Chancellor had rendered to Europe by crushing communism.

As for the relations between Germany and Hungary, he had the impression that the old alliance had been sealed anew by the Reich Chancellor and himself. He hoped that this

could be further developed economically and militarily, but also politically, and that the two Governments would remain in permanent contact. M. Gömbös did not go any further into details; on the other hand M. de Mecsér mentioned the plan of forming a German-Hungarian study commission with the task of making suggestions on expanding economic relations. M. de Mecsér reported further that he has been charged with the establishment of the Hungarian Export and Import Corporation, likewise planned, whose counterpart is represented by the Foreign Trade Office of the Aussenpolitisches Amt of the NSDAP. The purpose of these corporations, to be supplemented later by similar ones in Vienna and Bucharest, would be to facilitate mutual trade (somewhat on the pattern of the Brocchi Treaties).

Gömbös's commitment to a political and economic orientation of Hungary on the side of Germany, which resulted also psychologically from the Berlin visit, has unmistakably had an effect that is desirable for us on the Prime Minister's attitude in the Austrian question. Gömbös has completely adopted as his own the German position in the Austrian question, and he told me that he would also express his opinion clearly to Prince Starhemberg, who was going to call on him here today. Moreover, he also intended to tell Federal Chancellor Dolfuss that it was not a matter of indifference to Hungary if France's influence increased in Austria. I should like to remark here parenthetically that it has been held up to M. Gömbös by the Legitimist side that his Berlin visit signified a weakening of Dollfuss. At the same time the fact that on the return trip through Vienna he had not paid a visit to the Federal Chancellor was criticized. As I have learned confidentially in this regard, Gömbös refrained from getting in touch with Dollfuss because he felt that "when you come from a friend you can't turn around and shake hands with his enemy." However, Hungary would be very much interested in a reconciliation between Germany and Austria, as Kánya has also told me, but they do not think here that it is their affair to intervene in any way in the quarrel between brothers.

Should Gömbös, as he expects, be invited by Mussolini to visit Rome in the near future, he intends to prevail on the Duce to influence Dollfuss in the direction of an understanding with the Austrian National Socialists. According to information from M. de Mecsér, Gömbös wanted to convince Mussolini that the Anschluss would not be pushed by the German side and that Germany only wanted the National Socialists in Austria to share in the power according to the will of the people. Gömbös, who had in the past even avoided commitment to the triangular coalition Rome-Vienna-Budapest advocated by Italy, now considered the economic coordination of Germany, Austria, Hungary and Italy, with the later inclusion of Rumania, as the big objective to be striven for. Austria would belong to this economic area as an independent state. Gömbös did not go into the minorities question in his talk with me today. On the other hand, M. de Kánya told me that the Prime Minister had explained to the Reich Chancellor in detail his position in this matter, which "was the sole encumbrance on German-Hungarian relations." It had been felt here as particularly painful that the German minorities had participated in the latest anti-revisionist demonstrations in the countries of the Little Entente.

At the conclusion of our conversation the Prime Minister remarked that the Hungarian Minister of Finance had informed him by telephone from London that his Berlin visit had been accepted calmly there.

As for the reception of Gömbös's trip among the Hungarian public, the liberal-Jewish press—as was to be expected—expressed itself in a highly derogatory manner and especially stressed that it was contrary to Hungarian interests to draw closer to Germany at a moment when she was entirely isolated.

In Parliament too the democratic and likewise the Legitimist spokesmen sharply criticized the trip. On the other hand it was warmly welcomed by the government press and particularly also in agricultural circles. There, as Gömbös told me himself, it was stated that he had rendered a historic service by his visit to Berlin.

I enclose the two speeches in which Gömbös dealt with his trip.

Schoen

Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1918—1945,
Series C (1933—1937) Vol. I.
London 1957. 586—589 l.

JUNE 22, 1933

Memorandum by the Director of Department II, Reich Ministry of Foreign Affairs, concerning the information received from Ambassador Hassel on the Gömbös-Hitler meeting

3086/616551

Memorandum by the Director of Department II

Berlin, June 22, 1933.
(II Ung. 366.)

Ambassador von Hassel stated that on the occasion of his visit today Chancellor Hitler had also told him something about the conversations with the Hungarian Prime Minister, Gömbös. The Reich Chancellor had expressed his satisfaction with the cordial character of the visit and emphasized that on both sides there was complete agreement that closest contact would be maintained. Especially gratifying was Gömbös's statement that Hungary did not desire a restoration of the Hapsburgs in Austria and Hungary. The question of the King of Hungary was a strictly Hungarian affair and would always be treated by Hungary as such. A restoration of the Hapsburg monarchy in Hungary and simultaneously in Austria was out of the question.

In Herr von Hassel's conversation with the Reich Chancellor there was no indication that during this visit the problem of the German minorities in Hungary had also been discussed between the Chancellor and the Hungarian Prime Minister.

Köpke

Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1918—1945
Series C (1933—1937) Vol. I.
London 1957. 589. l.

JUNE 24, 1933

(a) Memorandum by Gömbös on his talks with Hitler

Essential points for use of His Excellency Kánya in giving instructions to Minister Hóry

1. Enclosed please find questions I raised in Berlin.
2. As I have given His Excellency Kánya an accurate account of the results of the discussion of these questions, I omit many details as superfluous.

3. The essential points are: that I see economic openings for Hungary; that I made a clear statement to his Excellency the *Reichskanzler* of my attitude on national minority questions; that I elucidated with His Excellency the issue of the importance of Italian-German relations as well as the issue of the Austrian *Anschluss*. The essential point in this respect is that the *Reichskanzler—the Führer*—is not intent upon the *Anschluss*, for in his view the Germans do not think the *Anschluss* of Austria opportune either from the economic point of view or from the point of view of European politics; on the contrary, they are expecting to see Italy and Germany intervening together on Austria's behalf, primarily in the economic sphere. The Chancellor's only wish is to see a political regime take over in Austria which would offer guarantees that Austria will remain an absolutely reliable friend of Germany, Italy and Hungary and would not, for financial reasons, sail into French or Little Entente waters, thereby harming political and historical interests of said countries. The Chancellor sees no guarantee that this will happen save in new elections; though he realizes that the Nazi movement could win no majority, he hopes that Starhemberg, Dollfuss and the Nazis, without the Social Democrats, would obtain a working majority which would ensure both a community of world outlook and political reliability. As regards Colonna, I have said already that the course to be taken in this matter would be to explain to Hitler and also to Dollfuss that the latter should call the elections in a year's time; because during that time, either Dollfuss will have managed to obtain a majority, or the view will have been proved correct of those who claim that the people have already turned away from the colourless, middle-of-the-road Christian Socialist parties which have ruled until now. Considering that Hitler does not want the *Anschluss* even if there were to be a Nazi majority in Austria—as I see it, Hitler will not obtain a majority in any case—it will be possible for us to continue to uphold the idea of an independent Austria, an aim supported by both Italy and Hungary and facilitating the continued *dénouement* of the European situation. I also take the view that it is an absurd proceeding for the Austrian Chancellor to go now to Germany, now to Italy, inquiring about financial support and then, certain of obtaining it, to go and knock on the door in Paris. Austria too will have to realize that it is only in the Italian-German-Hungarian sphere of thought that she can further her interests.

Minister Hóry is to inform His Excellency Mussolini that the trip to Berlin has been cleared up with the Austrian Chancellor and that differences do not arise on this matter, all the less so since the Hungarian Government had informed the Chancellor, then away in London and Paris, in due time.

24/6/1933 Gö[mbös]

Original fair copy, one and a half pages, bearing Gömbös's initials in blue pencil, OL. Küm. pol. 1933—21—303. (284)

JUNE 1933

(a—1) Draft of questions, prepared for Gömbös

(Translated from the German original)

Questions:

1. Does the *Führer* agree that the various World Conferences do not yield positive results (because they correspond rather to a formality), and that it is necessary to work according to smaller but nonetheless comprehensive conceptions? This conception must be based on historical, economic and defence considerations.

2. Does the *Führer* agree that this conception extends as a matter of course to Germany, Italy, Austria and Hungary?

3. What is the *Führer*'s view of the political aims to be set for the said four States beyond their frontiers with regard to joint tasks, and what are the specific political problems of the individual States? Where are the boundaries of spheres of interest between the individual States? What is the mission of Austria under the said conception?

4. What is the *Führer*'s opinion regarding Peace Treaties? Does he believe in a peaceful settlement through Conferences or the "Quadripartite Pact"? If so, what is to be done next? If not, what are the means, the aims, and the tasks?

5. As I do not believe that any essential settlement can be reached by peaceful means, what decisions has Germany taken concerning defence policy, and what would be the tasks facing Italy, Austria and Hungary in this respect? Is there no need already for the cooperation of the four General Staffs with regard to operations, organization, mobilization, war industry, communications policy, rearmament policy, etc.?

6. As the foundation of the prosperity of all countries is primarily an economic and moral one, does the *Führer* approve of the extension of the system of self-sufficiency to the broad basis of the outer frontiers of the four States, through most far-reaching preferences, hence through most far-reaching and mutually complementary economic ties, *i. e.*, through the abolition of autarchy within the four States and the establishment of autarchy outside the four States? The necessity of this arises from considerations of history, economic policy and especially defence policy—under which the independence of the four States would not be curbed, but would be bound by the need for joint decisions—further, from moral considerations, in the realization that the four States are governed through similar, morally purified, political systems.

These principles having been laid down, it is hardly necessary to deal with the following concrete questions to be settled between Germany and Hungary:

The question of Austria, the question of Western Hungary, the question of the German minority in Hungary, and the question of the cooperation between the German and the Hungarian minorities in the occupied territory, with special regard to the harmful effect upon Hungary of the *Verein für das Deutschtum im Auslande*. The question of whether Germany might not purchase Hungarian farm produce at the expense of Rumanian and Serbian farm produce, through preferential treatment; the question of Southern Tyrol, and the question of the relations between Italy and Germany.

As all these questions can be regulated neither through bureaucratic nor through diplomatic channels, a permanent committee ought to be set up, composed of trusted men of the *Führer* and of the Prime Minister, who would constantly discuss these questions and who would present suggestions on the political and the economic plans, on the one hand, and from the point of view of defence policy, on the other.

Original note, two typewritten pages. OL. Küm. res. pol. 1933—21—303. (284/1933)

The document is undated; it was prepared, presumably, before Gömbös's departure for Berlin, on the basis of the Foreign Ministry's Draft of Conversation, as a supplement to same.

Both the paper and the type of the document differ from the paper and type used in the Foreign Ministry; it is possible that this Draft of Questions was prepared for Gömbös in the Prime Minister's office.

MAGYAR KIRÁLYI KÖVETSÉG
KÖNIGLICH UNGARISCHE GESANDTSCHAFT

116

166/pol.-1933.

BERLIN W.10 CORNELIUS-STRASSE 8 1933.julius 7.

Tárgy:Beszélgetés François-Poncet francia nagykövettel.

Követség

Ma fogadtam M.François-Poncet itteni francia nagykövet viszontlátogatását nála nemrég tett magánjellegü vizitemre.Nem tartom érdektelennek annak papirra vetését,hogy a berlini francia nagykövet ezidöszerint miképen itélte meg velem szemben a Hitler-Németország jelenlegi helyzetét, annál is inkább,mert elöadása folyamán minket is érintö allusiók hangzottak el.

Tévednek azok,mondja M.Poncet,kik azt hiszik,hogy a Hitler kancellár által meginditott mozgalom valami muló jelenség.Csak azt nem lehet tudni,hogy ez a mozgalom hova fog fejlödni: vajjon a benne ható konzervativ vagy radikális erök fognak-e tulsulyra jutni.A Hitler revolució,nagyságához képest eddig eléggé nyugodtan indult "on a seulement fessé les gens,mais on ne les a pas décapité.Il est un peu humiliant d'avoir le derrière fessé,mais c'est encore toujours mieux que d'avoir la tête coupée".Mindezek dacára nem hiszi,hogy ez mindvégig igy fog maradni "l'ère hitlerienne sera une époque tourmentée dans l'histoire allemande".A hitlerizmus követöi között igen sok a zavaros fej;a germán Wotán szemben áll a zsidó Krisztussal,agyaikban Ariovistus és Arminius hadakoznak Varussal és más romai hadvezérekkel.

KIVEZETTE
VII/14 Thomly
VII/14 K

Nagyméltóságu

MAGY. KIR. KÜLÜGYMINISTERIUM
Politikai osztály.
Érk. 1933 VII/12
2112 sz. 1. drb. mell.
Elöirat

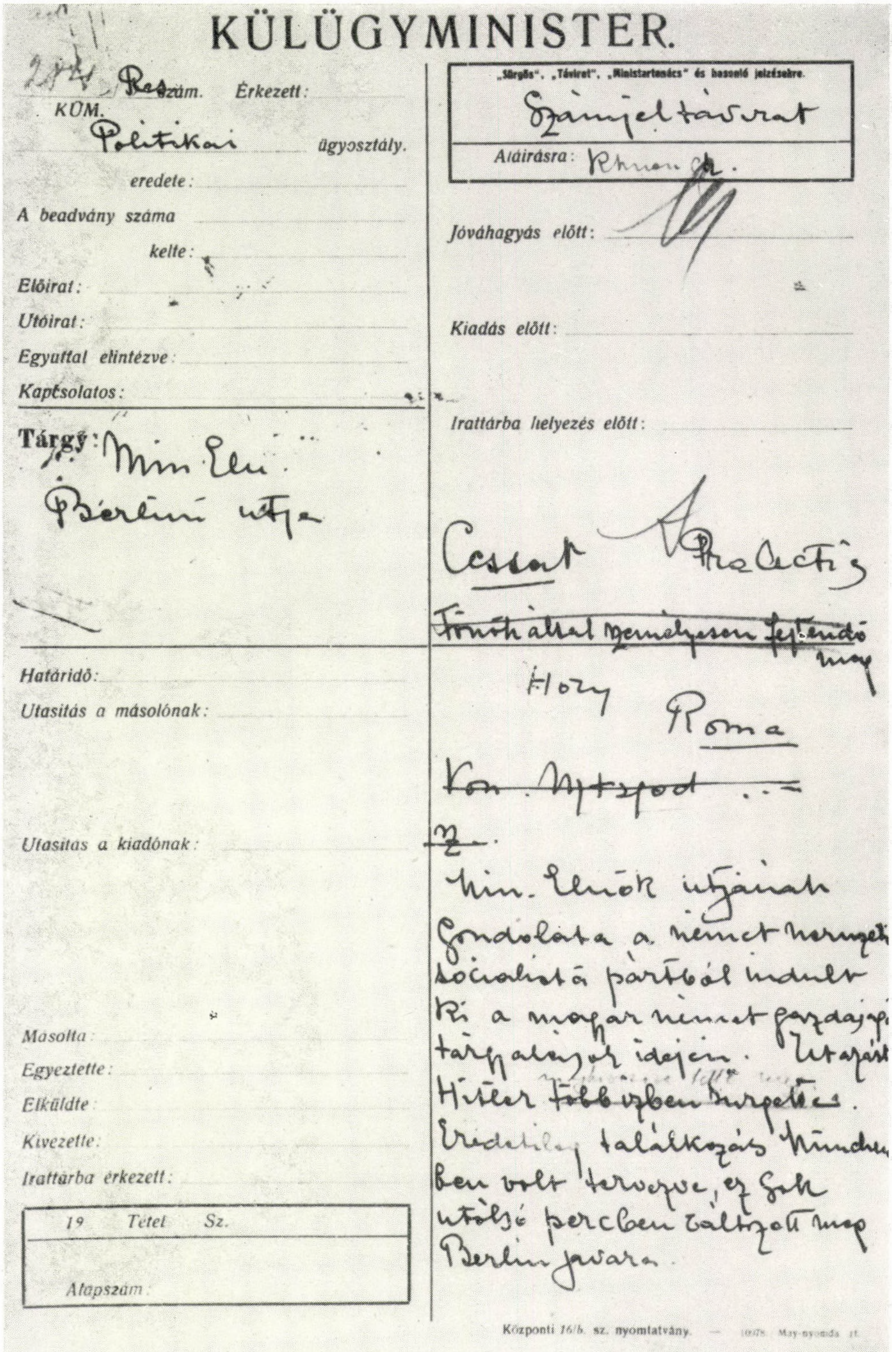
kányai Kánya Kálmán urnak,
magyar királyi külügyminister,stb.stb.

1865/933
21/7

110

Budapest.

Report of the Hungarian Ambassador to Berlin, Masirevich,
on a talk with the French Ambassador, François Poncet



KÜLÜGYMINISTER.

KÜM. Res. szám. Érkezett:

Politikai ügyosztály.

eredete:

A beadvány száma

kelte:

Előirat:

Utóirat:

Egyuttal elintézve:

Kapcsolatos:

Tárgy: Min. Eln. Berlini utja

Határidő:

Utasitás a másolónak:

Utasitás a kiadónak:

Másolta:

Egyeztette:

Elküldte:

Kivezette:

Irattárba érkezett:

19 Tétel Sz.

Alapszám:

„Sürgős", „Távirat", „Ministertanács" és hasonló jelzésekre.

Számjeltávirat

Aláirásra:

Jóváhagyás előtt:

Kiadás előtt:

Irattárba helyezés előtt:

Cessat

~~Főnök által személyesen fejtendő~~ meg

Hóry Roma

~~Kon. Nytszod~~

Min. Elnök útjának gondolata a német nemzeti socialista pártból indult ki a magyar német gazdasági tárgyalások idején. Utazását Hitler több ízben sürgette. Eredetileg találkozás Münchenben volt tervezve, ez csak utolsó percben változott meg Berlin javára.

Központi 16/b. sz. nyomtatvány.

Draft of a telegram from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to Ambassador Hóry in Rome regarding the Berlin visit of Gyula Gömbös

On Page One, there is the note, written in Gömbös's own hand, in black pencil and underlined in blue:

"Strictly confidential
Hitler."

On Page Two, there is a note, written in Gömbös's own hand, in black pencil:
"Disc. with H. E. Hitler
in Berlin, 17 and 18/6/1933
G."

The last passage of the draft is marked in the margin by Gömbös, who added the following remark, in blue pencil: "I discussed this with Papen, at his initiative."

JUNE 1933

(a-2) Supplement No. 2 to draft (a):
Memorandum by Gömbös of issues raised at the talks

Groups to form, such (two illegible letters)
H. seemed to show understanding
H. agreed that there was no peaceful solution

*Ich werde Frankreich zermalen**

Polit. friendship, also economic
Counteract Little Entente intrigues
Circumstances attend. trip
Suspicious of D., embitterment
Cooperation between H. and D. out of question
As we foresaw, red-black coalition

Original, pencilled, half-page memorandum. OL. Küm. res. pol. 1933—21—303 (284)
— Numbers 1., 5., 6. and 4. refer to questions listed in (a-1).

JULY 1, 1933

Foreign Ministry instructions to Count Széchenyi, the Hungarian Minister in London, directing him to inform Foreign Office about Gömbös-Hitler meeting, on the basis of directives given

Top secret

Széchenyi London

I request Your Excellency to initiate conversation at the Foreign Office and—without referring to instructions from your government—explain the following points with regard to H. E. the Prime Minister's trip to Berlin:

* (sic)

The idea of the visit was raised when Herr Daitz was in Budapest to discuss some economic matters. The initiative had come from the National Socialist Party, but H. E. the Prime Minister only decided on the trip at the repeated invitation of Chancellor Hitler. In Berlin, the technical arrangement of the visit was tackled by the foreign policy department of the Nazi Party, which, lacking necessary experience, proceeded in an unusual manner.

The purpose of the trip was, first of all, the clarification of some economic questions and the extension of Hungarian-German trade, as well as a study of German-Austrian relations on the basis of impressions obtained on the spot. The Prime Minister had no intention of mediating, but owing to the circumstance that Hungary has maintained—and wishes to continue to maintain—good relations with both countries, a more intensive study of German-Austrian relations became desirable.

In the course of the conversation on this subject, the Prime Minister was sorry to learn of Chancellor Hitler's embitterment, which was elicited mainly by the Austrian ministers' truly intemperate and offensive utterances (about the "brown plague," etc.), and which aroused the impression in him that any improvement of German-Austrian relations is bound to meet with great difficulty, but is not ruled out altogether.

(In their talk they touched upon the question of Southern Tyrol; on this point, Hitler declared that, in his view, this question was of comparatively subordinate importance and that one must not sacrifice for it political objectives of greater scope.) The Chancellor expressed his regret that German-British relations had of late left very much to be desired and said that he ardently wished for the re-establishment of good relations between Germany and Britain.

I think the above points should be brought to the notice of the appropriate authorities there; but you must take care to avoid even the semblance of what might be regarded as an undertaking on Hungary's part to mediate between the two great powers or, at Chancellor Hitler's request, to convey messages on his behalf.

Original draft, written in ink. OL. Küm. pol. 1933—21/7—1825. (1983/1933)

July 7, 1933

Report of Masirevich, the Hungarian Minister in Berlin to the Foreign Ministry on his talk with François-Poncet, the French Ambassador in Berlin

(Characterization of Hitler movement, the Gömbös-Hitler meeting)

Königlich Ungarische Gesandtschaft
(ROYAL HUNGARIAN LEGATION)

Berlin, W. 10, July 7, 1933
Cornelius-Strasse 8.

166/pol.-1933.
Talk with François-Poncet,
the French Ambassador.

Today, I had a visit from M. François-Poncet, the French Ambassador here, who was returning a private call I had paid him recently. Perhaps it is not entirely without interest

if I note down the current assessment the French Ambassador in Berlin gave me of the present situation of Hitler Germany, the more so since in his discourse some allusions were made which concern Hungary.

People who believed that the movement launched by Chancellor Hitler was some transient phenomenon were mistaken, M. Poncet said. Only you could not tell whither this movement would go from here: was it the conservative or was it the radical forces, both being involved in it, that would eventually gain the upper hand? So far the Hitlerite revolution, considering its extent, had got off to a quiet enough start—*"on a seulement fessé les gens, mais on ne les a pas décapités. Il est un peu humiliant d'avoir le derrière fessé, mais c'est encore toujours mieux que d'avoir la tête coupée."* All the same, he did not believe that it was going to be like that all the time: *"l'ère hitlerienne sera une époque tourmentée dans l'histoire allemande."* The followers of Hitlerism include a great number of muddle-headed people; the Germanic Wotan stood opposite the Jewish Christ; in their minds Ariovistus and Arminius were at war with Varus and other Roman generals; the ancient Germanic concept of law was opposed to the alien notions of Roman law, etc., etc. And all these turgid things were curiously blended with the doctrinairism inherent in the German character. Who could tell what these immature and starry-eyed ideas might yet produce? This uncertainty was giving rise to anxiety the world over and was provoking reactions against a future Germanic peril. Some of these reactions were, Poncet said, the eastern pacts just concluded.

In his opinion, the Hitlerite empire was facing three grave issues:

1. The above-mentioned inner conflict between the conservative and the radical forces at work within the National Socialist renascence;

2. economic and financial difficulties and the attendant threat of inflation;

3. complications that might arise from problems the *Reich* was meeting in the field of foreign policy.

Thus M. Poncet. In an attempt to conceal the selfish ends of French egocentrism, he invariably indulges in the self-complacent thesis that the Germans are a dangerous race, Huns, Scourges of God, who are threatening to turn into a holocaust the entire civilized world, *y compris* the Soviet paradise. *Difficile est satiram non scribere.*

After that, our conversation turned to Prime Minister Gömbös's visit in Berlin. This visit, said the French Ambassador, had made a great stir everywhere and, as he understood, had not met with unanimous approval in Hungary either. I replied that just at present our chief concern was to find ways of alleviating our economic troubles. For the moment, the Hungarian policy of realistic self-interest could not afford being concerned about the *meneh tekel* of a possible Germanic peril; *rebus sic stantibus,* it was elsewhere that Hungary felt the pinch. We had declared over and over again that, in order to ease the general economic crisis, we were ready, at any time, to cooperate—on a parity basis, of course—with anyone, Germany included.

M. Poncet noted with sympathy that we were seeking to secure economic benefits wherever this seemed possible; but, he said, it could not be in Hungary's interest to commit herself politically to a formation with an uncertain future like the Hitlerite *Reich.* He looked upon the system of alliances as constituting a threat to peace in Europe and the world and had expressed this view often enough at the disarmament conference.

With this our exchange of views came to an end.

Masirevich
R. Hung. Minister

Original two-and-a-half-page, fair copy, typewritten on the Berlin Legation's note-paper, OL. Küm. pol. 1933—21/7—1925. (2112/1933)

1943

From a short comprehensive survey of activities in 1933—1943

Prepared by the NSDAP Foreign Policy Department

. . . Only on those of the World War I allies who had been completely deprived of their rights—on Hungary and Bulgaria—did the newly formed centre of power in the north exercise some attraction. This was based upon the hope of these countries that they might achieve an expansion of their own power through a fresh consolidation of Germany. In Bulgaria, however, there was a certain reserve towards, or aversion from, national socialism that rested on a widespread contagion of communism, and a similar reserve in Hungary, displayed by a still influential feudal stratum depending on Jewish capital. It can be mentioned here, nevertheless, that *the first foreign state visit after the take-over took place through the agency of the Foreign Policy Department.* The then Prime Minister of Hungary, Gyula Gömbös, who had in earlier years pursued anti-Semitic and racial policies himself, paid a visit to Germany in September 1933 and was received by the *Führer* in Erfurt. By this visit, the official isolation of national socialism was broken for the first time . . .

From *Procès des grands criminels de guerre devant Le Tribunal Militaire International*, Volume XXV, Nuremberg, November 14, 1945—October 1, 1946. Published at Nuremberg, Germany, 1947. p. 36.

APPENDIX

Apor, Gábor, Baron. Diplomat. From 1923 to 1925, chargé d'affairs at Warsaw; from 1925 to 1927, counsellor of the Hungarian Legation at Paris; then chief of the Political Department in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Kánya, Kálmán. Diplomat. From 1912 to 1918, ambassador of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy to Mexico; from 1921, permanent Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, envoy extraordinary and minister plenipotentiary. From 1925 to 1933, ambassador to Berlin; from 1933 to 1938, Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Khuen-Héderváry, Sándor, Count. Diplomat. Official in the Austro-Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. From 1912 to 1918, secretary at the Berlin Legation; from September 1918 to November 1918 head of the press department at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; from November 1918 to October 1925, first-class counsellor of legation, head of the political department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; from November 1925 minister extraordinary and plenipotentiary, permanent Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Mecsér, András, M. P. From September 1919 to the end of 1920, military attaché to the Hungarian embassy at Berlin. Retired to his estates; elected to parliament on several occasions; from 1934, chairman of the National Chamber of Agriculture.

Teleki, Gyula, Count. Second-class counsellor of legation, official in the political department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

* (sic)

ENGLAND AND BUDAPEST BOYS OF FIFTEEN

The Second Form of the Budapest Secondary School named after Sándor Petőfi has a students' periodical, entitled "Chronicle." Number two of this year's volume (published in 55 mimeographed copies) contains the following article:

'Adversity's sweet milk, philosophy'

(Shakespeare: Romeo and Juliet)

"A literature lesson. There is a tense silence. Who will be the first to be questioned on Shakespeare? The teacher stands up, turns to the blackboard, and in less than thirty seconds it bears the sentence: 'Adversity's sweet milk, philosophy.' The boys are puzzled and giggle. But the solution quickly follows: 'Explain this quotation in four or five sentences'—appears on the board. First there are inquiring, vacant looks but shortly the heads bend over the papers and the boys start explaining Shakespeare.

"'Adversity is not always useless and bad for human beings. It is useful because, whereas a merry man is dazzled by his joy, in sorrow he will experience the bitterness of truth.' (A. R.)

"'When one is tortured by grief and sorrow one tries to break out of the humdrum of every day life. What better medicine could there be for this than choosing wisdom for a cure. In times of adversity wisdom has the same effect as sweet milk in times of drought.' (D. V.)

"'Adversity makes people sober and serious-minded. Grief is bitter and painful, but also contains some good: a realistic aspect of life and a clarification of judgement. And yet man protests and defends himself against adversity. He tries to avoid shock, because in his memory the pain remains and not the lesson that follows. And the unpleasant experiences which adversity entails prevail over the only good: wisdom.' (B. M.)"

These short compositions urged me on to further experiments. The offspring of smaller nations—and the Hungarians among them—are often puzzled by the question of what their reputation in the wide world is like. Let us reverse the problem this time and find out what the fifteen-year-old generation, those who attend the second form of the secondary school today, know about the world at large? It is the generation born in 1945.

All over the world these teen-agers are considered problem children both from the point of view of morals and culture. Let us find out what they know about Britain, the country many Hungarians have been interested in ever since the Reformation; and later, from István Széchenyi onwards, Hungarians more than once considered her the model to be followed. The boys' knowledge has apparently been gained partly from hearsay, but mostly from literature, plays, films, and the radio, so their knowledge reveals the sources too.

I consider that such an orientation would by no means be useless today, when we have learned to our own cost that the atmosphere of Europe in the future will be substantially determined by the sentiments and attitudes which the young people of every country harbour towards one another.

Pupils of two parallel classes were questioned. At the time of enquiry there were 59 boys in these classes. But for the reader's information I indicate the social background of the boys. The fathers of 24 boys were intellectuals, 20 were non-manual employees, and 10 were workers, whereas the parents of the remaining 5 were engaged in private business. We should add that owing to the area the school is situated in, the proportion of intellectuals is larger than in the nation as a whole.

In these two classes both Russian and Latin are compulsory subjects. There are other classes where English is the compulsory second foreign language. Among the 700 pupils of the school in question, 160 or more than 22 per cent are studying English in six groups. In almost every Hungarian secondary school—and this refers virtually without exception to all in Budapest—the pupils have the opportunity of learning English. In this connection I was first of all interested in the following questions: what is the main immediate link the boys have with English culture? How many of the boys questioned have ever studied or are studying English? These boys did not learn English during the eight years they attended primary school, and, as already mentioned, are not taught the language in their secondary school classes. The first answer given in the questionnaire distributed among the pupils, disclosed that in one class one third of the boys and in the other an even greater proportion—35 per cent—had studied, or were taking private lessons, in English. Some of them had been studying English for over two years. This phenomenon, by the way, tallies with the information obtained from the Society for Disseminating Scientific Knowledge, according to which a considerable part of the students attending their language courses are secondary school pupils.

The second paragraph of the questionnaire inquired which English novelists, poets and dramatists the pupils had heard about. The names of those authors of whom they had also read something had to be underlined. The questionnaires were to be handed in anonymously, of course.

It is worth mentioning that in the second form the pupils are for the first time studying the history of literature systematically. The subject, we may add, covers Hungarian literature from its beginning to the 1840s. Regarding world literature, they are reading Dante, Shakespeare, Cervantes and Molière, and the French writers of the Enlightenment, Voltaire, Diderot and Rousseau. The curriculum ends with Goethe and Pushkin. They have to read one outstanding work of the above mentioned authors, e. g., Shakespeare's Hamlet.

Shakespeare heads the list, but it was a pleasant surprise to discover later that in addition to Hamlet the pupils know several other works of Shakespeare. Julius Caesar, Romeo and Juliet, King Richard III and A Midsummer-Night's Dream are the most frequently mentioned. The popularity of the latter two might be due to the fact that the successful English film King Richard III, with Sir Lawrence Olivier, was shown in Budapest cinemas for almost a year, and A Midsummer-Night's Dream has been played year after year at the open-air summer theatre on Margaret Island.

Shakespeare is not only part of the curriculum, his dramas are standing items both of the repertoire of Hungarian theatres and of the radio. Immediately next to Shakespeare stands Dickens, the favourite writer of young people. Of the 59 boys, 51 have read one of his works at least. The older translations have been followed by new ones, published since 1945, some of them juvenile editions. (Recently "A Christmas Carol" appeared in the "Cheap Library" series, which is published in tens of thousands of paper-backed copies.) His popular novels rank first: there is scarcely any pupil who has not read "Oliver Twist" or "David Copperfield." However, some of them also mention jolly Mr. Pickwick. The picture our young people have formed about the England of past days is mainly derived from Dickens' works, although they know that the situation prevailing at that time has substantially changed by now.

Defoe's ageless "Robinson Crusoe" stands third, 44 pupils having read it (possibly more, as the questions were answered at a fairly quick rate and I suppose this work did not occur to every boy). G. B. Shaw, another great "juvenile writer" came next, with 29 pupils declaring that

they had read one or the other of his works. In explanation it should be mentioned that for a considerable time there has been a veritable cult of Shaw in publishing, in the theatre and in cinema alike. While this article is being written, at least four of his plays are on the programs of our theatres, and the West German film "Mrs. Warren's Profession" is being shown. A contributory factor is that I teach history in one of the classes and have, in connection with the Hundred Years War, recommended "St. Joan" to the pupils.

In the enumeration of the great favourites, Swift came next and was followed by Sir Walter Scott. His name was mentioned by 26 of the pupils, but only 17 said that they had read something of his, mainly "Ivanhoe" and "Rob Roy." The former has lately been published in a new edition. J. B. Priestley stood seventh on the list, 22 boys having heard his name or read or listened to one of his works. To let you into a secret: "Dangerous Corner" had been broadcast not long before and the teacher had called the pupils' attention to it. The interesting remarks made by the boys on the play are mentioned later on.

Osborne, with "Look Back in Anger"—which, after being performed here for quite a long time and also being issued in book form, has almost become fashionable among young readers interested in literature—and H. G. Wells came next, with six readers each. When I was a schoolboy, some three decades ago, Wells was among the most popular writers. Today, in addition to his science fiction, one of the pupils also mentioned "The World of William Clissold".

It may be the result of the literature lessons that 21 boys put down Byron's name, but only three of them had actually read anything of his. There is a surprisingly big number of boys who like "Robin Hood." This illustrates the youth and adventurous fancy of those questioned. Two or three mentioned Oscar Wilde's "The Ballad of Reading Gaol" and his tales, Howard Spring, Kipling, Somerset Maugham, Eric Knight's "Sam Small" (which is popular here), and Graham Greene and Galsworthy. Some pupils put down the names of Aldous Huxley, Cronin, Jerome K. Jerome, Thackeray, the Lambs, Bates, and Caldwell. Four of them are fond of Burns' poems, but one of them did not remember the poet's name and only cited: "John Anderson my Jo, John."

Errors, of course, were not lacking. Thus some American authors were considered British. The list was flattering, including, as it did, the names of Poe, Mark Twain, Cooper (who is still very popular), and among contemporary writers Steinbeck and Irwin Shaw.

*

The next paragraph of the questionnaire asked what the boys' opinion was of English people and of English life in general, on the basis of their reading and other experiences?

The evaluations cover a wide range. Quite a few boys answered with clichés, but some doubted whether the question itself was justified: "This question cannot be answered so simply. For there are as many different characters as there are books."

Those who cited commonplaces in their answers were not inimical or prejudiced, but often they were not exactly complimentary either. English people?—They are conservative, cultivated, snobbish, deliberate in their actions, slow in admitting somebody into their company. One of them—oh, vain adolescence!—adds: "In general they are good-looking!"

Another one is definitely caustic: "Cold, supercilious and disdainful manners are characteristic of English people. They will never forget that they used to be masters of the world. On the other hand, they still live in the illusion that the situation has not changed."

Several boys point out "the good sense of diplomacy" of the English, while others reproach them for being too cold. "Even if father and son have not met for ten years, they won't embrace each other as people of any other nation would do. They will only shake hands, in a cool though cordial way. For their comrades they are willing to do anything."

A severe youth opines: "They are so well-off that they go in for silly things. See Pickwick Club." Or: "They have grown indifferent to the world. See 'Dangerous Corner.'"

One of the pupils represents the adherence to traditions and the observance of etiquette in the following way: "They attach relatively great importance to etiquette. For example, at the opening of the Olympic Games in Rome the English reporter appeared fully dressed while his foreign colleagues were in shirt-sleeves on account of the oppressive heat. But the British reporter could not appear on TV except in full dress."

There is an interesting statement about the heroes of English novels: "The positive heroes of English literature are kind and good behind the severe face they show, whereas the villains are smiling but wicked and mean."

There are several views opposing the incorrect evaluation of men: "The Englishman, considered traditional, retrograde and reserved by foreigners, is represented by English writers and dramatists, particularly today, through characters that are deeply passionate."

The boys are aware of the present generation's problems which also worries the English people. "Life in Britain is puritanic and narrow-minded. The present generation has somewhat changed" and "Youth has no inhibitions in painting a completely realistic picture of their own position. See: Osborne."

A lot of them mention club life, others the fog shrouding London's streets, and some five of them give vent to their youthful appetite by referring to the Christmas turkeys, which are imported, year after year, from Hungary.

Here, in conclusion, is an original, if rather naive opinion: "I like the British adoration of their monarch, since, however strange this may sound, it enriches with romance the bustling life of today."

The last question was about Priestley's "Dangerous Corner", which, it will be recalled, provides two endings. In the first, the members of the family listening to the play as broadcast over the radio unmask each other. More than one of them turns out to be guilty of grave crimes, and as a result Robert Caplen commits suicide. In this version everything gets distorted by the truth being told and the idyllic life of the middle class family is shattered and disintegrates.

According to the second version the dramatic talk does not take place at all. Everything goes on as before; illusions are safeguarded and the appearance of decency is maintained. Gentlemen continue to be gentlemen, and ladies respectable society ladies, excellent wives and exemplary mothers.

The question put here was the following: Which version would you choose and why? Out of the 22 boys who had listened to the play, 15 chose the first and only 7 the second.

Let us have a look at the reasoning some of the supporters of the first solution gave: "The first ending was more true to life, as it is a much greater crime to cover up wickedness when we suspect it, than to reveal it, even if it is done in a cynical way." "I would choose the dangerous corner", another confesses, "however painful the truth, it must be told." "I choose the first, in which they, perhaps, repent what they have done and truth is disclosed. As a result they may even mend their ways. Let us not live hypocritically!" Another said: "I pick the first ending. Although truth is a delicate

thing, it must appear at whatever cost." One youngster gave this healthy opinion: "I should listen to the truth, but would not commit suicide."

A realistic view of life is evident in the following answer: "Of course, the first variation is the honest one, though the second is much more frequent in life." And here is another: "I choose the first solution, the truth. I prefer learning the whole truth. May my dreams collapse—I can rebuild them some day, because I know the errors."

The first among those who chose the second solution wrote as follows: "This ending is the better one since it is realistic. Though people may take a dangerous corner, they will not change. Thus it becomes clear that such corners will not alter them, if wrong thinking has taken root in them." The following reasoning approaches the question from another side: "I would have wound off the play with the second ending, with a continuation of an apparently normal and polite but false life, so as to be able to give a picture of scorn and inhumanity." Again an optimistic opinion: "I would choose the second ending. Why? Because I abhor death and detest rudeness." Finally, one of the lads gives this reason for choosing the second solution: "It is cowardice to flee from reality and take refuge in death."

Let us conclude with this independent thought: "I would not have chosen either, for the writer ought to have shown a way out of the sink of iniquity. Suicide is not a solution for Robert, it is a retreat from difficulties."

*

Zsigmond Móricz, one of the greatest Hungarian writers of the period between the two world wars, in his reminiscences of the school years he spent at Sárospatak, recalls how he related the following episode—an experience that gave the greatest impetus to his development—to the pupils of the old school he attended thirty years before:

"My method of study did not prove to be successful. I had quite an individual method. In September, I read through the whole curriculum, all the school books that had to be bought at Trócsányi's bookshop, and then considered my over-all knowledge complete, whereupon I embarked upon the study of separate subjects.

"I remember as a 14 year old pupil of the fourth form, once dragging along under my arm six volumes, when Mr. Kovácsy, the teacher caught sight of me at the back entrance of the college and asked me:

"'What are you carrying there, my boy?'"

"'Motzoloy,'" I said innocently pronouncing the name Macaulay according to Hungarian phonetical pronunciation.

"'That isn't the right pronounciation,' he corrected me. "It's 'ME-KO-LEE.'"

"Macaulay is my greatest memory of Sárospatak. It was he who disillusioned me as regards Jókai, for until then I had been a passionate reader of Jókai and had absorbed at least 70 of his books by the time I was fourteen. But after reading Macaulay's grand-scale history, the romance and reality of the Scottish world, I no longer felt the need to play with glittering novels."

I have quoted these reminiscences of Móricz's to point out that today it is no longer by chance that a Hungarian secondary school pupil becomes acquainted with this great English historian. Two years ago, on the occasion of the hundredth anniversary of Macaulay's death, the chairman of the history circle of the secondary school in question made a speech in which he paid homage to the immortal author of The History of England.

Imre Surányi

HUNGARY AT THE GREAT EXHIBITION IN 1851

The first industrial exhibition ever held opened in the Champ de Mars at Paris on September 18, 1798. It lasted 13 days, with 111 exhibitors participating. The idea of yearly exhibitions—propagated by the Marquis d'Avèze, Commissioner for the Sèvres porcelain factory and the Gobelins tapestry works—was quick to gain ground in Paris and later on in the whole of France, and though exhibitions were at the end of the 18th century held also in other European capitals, the merit of having taken the initiative undoubtedly goes to France. In 19th-century Britain the organization of industrial exhibitions began as early as 1825 and those held in London, Dublin, Manchester, Birmingham and Liverpool in the course of the years preceding the Great Exhibition particularly deserve mention.

The idea of an international or world exhibition was first put forward in England, the leading capitalist country of the 19th century, where, as a result of the great economic transformation brought about by the industrial revolution, production in the 1840's reached such dimensions that it was becoming of central importance. Thus the idea of a great world exhibition, fathered by Prince Albert, the Prince Consort, was in reality prompted by the economic necessity of searching for new markets.

From the economic point of view, the country stood only to gain by the exhibition. In the 1850's, Britain was really entering a new golden age. From the 18th century to 1860, in roughly a hundred years, the volume of her external trade had increased fortyfold. The greatest relative increase, namely 80 per cent, was witnessed by the decade from 1850 to 1860, when Britain became essentially a free-trading nation. In 1850 Britain's share in world trade was 20.4 per cent of the total, while the corresponding percentages were 11.3 for France, 8.4 for the German Zollverein, 4.9 for Russia and 3.4 for Austria. A single figure will be sufficient to give an idea of the economic andvantages the organizing country was able to reap from the first universal industrial exhibition: over the two years that followed the Great Exhibition the value of British exports rose from £ 74 million to £ 99 million, an increase of some £ 25 million.

During the 141 days of its duration the Great Exhibition was visited by over 6 million people (the total population of the country at the time numbered somewhat more than 20 million), including a great number of foreigners, mainly from France. The 1855 Paris Exhibition attracted 4.5 million visitors and the 1862 London International Exhibition 6.2 millions. The total income from the Great Exhibition amounted to £ 505,107—not a very important figure compared to that year's state budget of 57,176,000, but nevertheless an imposing amount. After everything was paid for, there still remained a net surplus of about £ 150,000, which was ultimately used for the benefit of the Kensington Museum. The Royal Commission appointed to direct the preparatory work of the exhibition included beside the Prince Consort such prominent personalities of the period as Lord John Russel, Sir Robert Peel, Robert Stephenson, Lord Stanley (afterwards Lord Derby), William Cubitt, and Richard Cobden; among the members of the Exhibition's Working Class Committee we find the Chartists W. Lovett and H. Vincent, together with Charles Dickens, W. M. Thackeray, Lord Ashley and others. Prince Albert was the leading spirit in the preparations for the exhibition, with the indefatigable Henry Cole at his side, who spared no effort to make the exhibition an outstanding success under the double watchword of work and peace.

Within three months Joseph Paxton, the

architect of the exhibition building, erected a dream-like glass structure, the Crystal Palace, in the middle of Hyde Park, in the neighbourhood of fashionable Belgravia, the residence of the privileged—a circumstance that gave rise to particularly sharp attacks on the idea and the plan of the exhibition. Covering an area of twenty-one acres, the Crystal Palace was an outstanding architectural masterpiece of the period. Here the industrial revolution could be seen penetrating the architecture of the 19th century. Both glass and iron, the two novel features in construction that constituted the principal building material of the Crystal Palace, stood their test, in spite of the aversion of conservative architects, the criticism of Ruskin, and the contemptuous opinion of William Morris, who, seventeen years old at the time, called the building "wonderfully ugly." The Crystal Palace was the symbol of an age, and—as a British historian so very aptly put it—its architect was as perfect an embodiment of Victorian England as Alberti had been that of Renaissance Florence.

Paxton, a self-made man, won his commission in a competition in which 254 English and foreign professional architects participated. By applying the most modern constructional technique of prefabricated elements, he completed his marvel in no more than seventeen weeks. "The Palace itself was really wonderful," wrote Ferenc Pulszky, a prominent Hungarian emigrant in Britain, "with a roof imitating the rib construction of the leaves of the Victoria Regia water lily." Paxton took into account the provisional character of the building, and saw to it that there should be ample space for the visitors to walk in and to survey the exhibition in comfort, and that the objects to be displayed could be placed and fitted without difficulty. Provision was made for adequate ventilation, and a clever mechanism at the head office of the exhibition indicated the number of visitors actually in the building and whether it was safe to admit more. Steps were taken well in advance to meet the increased traffic the exhibition was likely to create. The police was asked to submit data referring to the density of traffic in the main London thoroughfares. In January, the Midland Railways ordered special trains to bring English workers to the Exhibition and back again within a single day. The sponsors of the Exhibition deliberately emphasized the merits of the working classes and professed appreciation for "the little bees of the world-wide hive."

Side by side with social considerations, however, class discrimination also came to play a part in the organization of the Exhibition. True, landowners and industrialists in several counties provided their workers with the fare to London, the entrance fee of many hundreds of London workers was paid for by their employer, and the cost of visiting the Exhibition was covered for a great number of schoolchildren, poor-house and orphanage boarders by individual benefactors. But the common people, the one-shilling visitors, were admitted to the earthly paradise of the Crystal Palace only a month later than the well-to-do. June 9 was the pre-set day "for the expected and generally dreaded invasion of the Huns and Vandals," as a contemporary Hungarian newspaper put it. "Every precaution had been taken and police-inspector Mayne watched the impeding catastrophe from one of the galleries... At the end of May everyone who considered himself a gentleman belonging to the higher strata of society hurried to the fairy palace, for within a few days the glorious season of the aristocracy would come to an end! In a few days it will be possible to gain admittance at the price of one shilling! The upper classes are appalled at the thought of the common people's season, and rumour has it that only the well-dressed among them will be admitted." The democratically minded reporter of the Hungarian newspaper *Pesti Napló* strongly disapproved of "the cream of

humanity, the possessors of titles and money," being first admitted, and "those below" only later on. But "such is the way of the world; so why make an exception just here and just now... it is their employers who will get the glory, and the stockjobbers who will pocket the cash." Yet the one-shilling public behaved in the same disciplined manner as the five-shilling visitors or those with a season ticket. There was no need for the police to interfere. The craftsmen and the factory workers were not blinded by the thousand wonders. As long as the majority of the visitors consisted of smart people, interest had centered mainly around the objects of luxury, while the display of raw materials, agricultural implements, engines and machinery was neglected. But the much despised one-shilling visitors immediately upon entering sought the parts of the Exhibition where their own trade was displayed and examined them very earnestly, with expert interest. By and by the fashionable world came to realize "that the one-shilling people were not all pickpockets—as they had supposed—and resumed their evening promenades through the Crystal Palace." Ladies of rank continued, of course, to prefer Fridays and Saturdays, when common people continued to be excluded.

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More than half of the exhibitors were British. According to the statistician Mulhall, there were 17,000 exhibitors; the Encyclopaedia Britannica put their number at 13,937; the Hungarian Korizmics at about 15,000. The number of British exhibits about equalled that of the other 32 countries taken together. British products were arranged in four groups and thirty classes. The four groups were: raw materials, machinery, manufactures and fine arts. Machinery scored the greatest success. The steam engines, weaver's looms, threshing and sowing machines, etc., were examined and admired by industrial and agricultural experts, engineers, mechanics and farmers from all over the world. The Queen, for instance, was—characteristically—most impressed by a medal machine which produced 50 million medals a week. László Korizmics, the Hungarian visitor who arrived in London on the 5th of July and thoroughly studied the Exhibition, gave a detailed account of the exhibits according to groups and classes, drawing practical conclusions from the Hungarian point of view. For experimental purposes he ordered adequate amounts of the fodder varieties, leguminous plants, and garden vegetables on show in the first group. Of the exhibits in the six classes of the second group, Korizmics was most impressed by the agricultural and horticultural machines and implements. He found that wood was increasingly being replaced by iron and that, though British agricultural implements were rather expensive—a thresher, *e. g.*, cost 650 florins without the engine and a root-cutter 40 to 50 florins—, their prices seemed to be proportionate to the general level, as proved by the great demand for them. In Hungary, on the other hand, where general progress was still so far behind the times, the gradual introduction of these machines depended largely on the possibility of providing simpler and cheaper solutions, better suited to the special circumstances. He would gladly have ordered some of them among them—Garrett's thresher, one or two excellent drills, ploughs of various use and construction—but he lacked the considerable funds required. Korizmics consoled himself and his readers by saying that a number of agricultural implements, including Garrett's thresher, which was known to be the best of British makes, were being ordered by Counsellor Kleyle on behalf of the Austrian government, so that Hungarian farmers would thus also have an opportunity to get acquainted with this type of machinery. Korizmics was greatly impressed by the third group, that of manufactures. He gave a detailed account of the English cotton

industry, of the number of workers employed therein, of the looms, etc.

The most important exhibiting countries beside Britain were France, the German Zollverein, Austria, the United States of America and Belgium, with 1,750, 1,450, 750, 534 and 512 exhibitors, respectively. There can be no doubt about the superiority of France over all others except Britain, outdoing as she did all other countries with her luxury articles; French machinery and agricultural implements were, however, rather unimpressive, and the value of the products was also far behind that of the corresponding British goods. Hardly any American luxury goods were on show, but the United States excelled in the mineral, animal and vegetable products displayed, notably in cotton, maize, corn, hard coal, daguerreotypes, furniture and, above all, harvesting machines (of which Hussey's was particularly successful). Among the lesser countries Belgium stood out with nearly as many exhibitors as the United States. Considering her size she presented herself to the greatest advantage both with her highly developed manufactures and her handicraft products. Russia sent 385 exhibitors. "Of the products of the Russian Empire," Korizmics reported to the *Gazdasági Lapok* ("Economic Papers"), "the most excellent are those produced by the Imperial manufactures to meet the luxury requirements of the wealthy aristocracy... Bearing in mind the peculiar features of Russia's development, which began barely 150 years ago under Peter the Great, and considering the popular measures which the government of the country continually undertakes with unsparing perseverance to further both sciences and material interests, no unprejudiced person can escape the conclusion that the Russian exhibition corresponds to the short period of development on the one hand and may, on the other, be regarded by the expert as a guarantee of further progress."

However, what mainly interests us is the evaluation of the Austrian exhibition, the fourth in order of magnitude, which included also the Hungarian products, as Hungary—in consequence of the assimilating aspirations of the Hapsburgs—was then a part of the "Gesamtmonarchie." The Austrian government had appointed a special governmental committee, with headquarters in Vienna, to organize Austrian participation in the Great Exhibition. It was decided that transportation costs should be borne by the Exchequer. The committee was to take over "all manufactures sent in for the London industrial exhibition and to act as an impartial jury in selecting the objects suited to the purpose. The committee will be in direct contact with the manufacturers." For the duration of the Exhibition the Austrian government maintained an information bureau on the spot. A number of experts were sent to London to study the exhibition and to draw up a report for publication.

Though certain parts of the Empire were not represented at all, the Austrian exhibition made a generally favourable impression. It conveyed the idea of Austria's being a vast empire with all the preconditions for further development. The most outstanding features of the Austrian exhibition were glass products, porcelain, iron and leather articles, joiner work, broadcloth, velvet, silks, etc. Of all Austrian exhibitors, 47 per cent came from Lower and Upper Austria (Vienna included), 23 per cent from Bohemia, 10 per cent from the Italian provinces, and 4 per cent from Hungary (including Pest). Thus Austria proper accounted for nearly half of the total. Agricultural produce and implements, vehicles and industrial machinery, were almost entirely missing.

The Hungarian exhibitors numbered thirty-two. The Hungarian press was highly dissatisfied with the treatment of Hungary in the course of preparations for the Exhibition and declared the representation of Hungarian products most unsatisfactory. The same opinion was voiced by Hun-

garian visitors. Only four Hungarian members had been appointed to the Vienna committee. On May 12, 1851, the Hungarian paper *Pesti Napló* bitterly commented that it was uncertain whether Hungarian manufactures were represented at all. "Not even the names of the Hungarian manufacturers and the list of their exhibits were published by the central committee in Vienna. Thus nothing more is known about the Great Exhibition as far as concerns our own country, unless it be that traveling to London is being made very troublesome and difficult even for manufacturers from this country." And a month later the paper remarked again that "this most notable Whitsuntide of modern times witnessed so poor a Hungarian representation that in classifying the European nations even the Tunisians will think of us as being good for nothing but to pick up the crumbs from the table of the rich." Reporting to the *Pesti Napló*, Jáczint Rónay wrote that "although the Hungarian part of the Exhibition—just as the country itself—was incorporated in the great Austrian section, our products were nevertheless displayed separately and the Hungarian arms were there too."

According to Korizmics the presence of Hungary at the Exhibition was merely incidental. "The events of the past were still too recent to allow the organization of an exhibition worthy of calm and deliberate labour." Some seven or eight Hungarian exhibitors from the mining regions of the country sent mineral products to the Exhibition, and there was a display of "some carmine dyestuffs from Pest, three types of raw silk from Fehértemplom and Versec, fine wools from Kéthely and Ürmény (exhibited by Count Hunyady). Birnbaum of Pest sent his hemp, Malvieux his rape-oil, both crude and refined, Kirner a fine double-barrelled gun. Králik's excellent traveller's clock met with general approval and so did a watch made by the same firm. Further exhibits were broadcloth from Szakolca and Gáncs, a horseherd's whip, a tail-coat of excellent cut, a number of shepherd's felt cloaks ornamented with fancy embroidery (from Miskolc and Rimaszombat), crude iron from Znióbánya, iron bars from the Dernő works of Count Andrássy, wine-bottles from Katarinavölgy, porcelain from Herend in Veszprém county, bronze reliefs by the eminent artist Szentpétery..." This just about described the whole Hungarian exhibition. Transylvanian representation consisted chiefly of the products of the Saxon ethnic group: crude stearin, candles, raw and washed wool, white and black cloth, long-haired blankets, boots, several varieties of brushes, Wallachian knives.

The Hungarian exhibits at the Great Exhibition served to show the country's dependence on Austria rather than the true condition of Hungarian industry and agriculture. Hungarian agricultural produce was not represented at all, and manifactures only to a very limited extent. Far from giving an idea of the budding Hungarian industrial revolution, of the beginnings of mechanized industry in this country, the Hungarian exhibition in London failed even to convey a picture of the manufacture so typical of the early century and of the industrial products, resulting from simple capitalist cooperation, that were making their appearance on the estates of the big landowners. Though Hungarian industry at the stage of development was predominantly small-scale and handicraft in character, it must be said that in the years between 1830 and 1840 about twenty sugar factories of some importance were established on large estates and that in the 1840's, under the influence of the "Society for the Protection of Industry" movement, a whole range of already existing textile manufactories (about sixty in number) witnessed further development. In the 1840s the first large-scale industrial works were established in the country. The Óbuda shipyard of the First Danube Steamship Navigation Company was put into operation as early as 1836.

The Steam Mill of Pest was established in 1842, foundries and machine repair shops were set up in Pest-Buda by Ábrahám Ganz in 1844, by István Röck and István Vidats in 1842, and by Ignác Schlick, the Steam Mill Company of Pest and the Chainbridge Company in 1843. The Ózd Iron Works also began producing in this period. In the first Hungarian exhibition, initiated and organized by Lajos Kossuth in 1842, 213 exhibitors took part, with 14,425 visitors. A large-scale industrial exhibition was already held in 1846, with 516 exhibitors and more than 22,000 visitors. The number of steam engines in Hungary was 45 in 1848 (with a total power of 760 HP), and by 1852 increased to 74 (with an output of 1,115 HP). The employment of machinery was growing in several other branches of industry too.

Nevertheless, Hungary's representation at the first world industrial exhibition was—to quote the somewhat exaggerated remarks of contemporaries—on the same level with that of the "Asian" countries. The reasons are obvious enough. The modest size of Hungarian participation was motivated by various aspects of the country's political and economic position at the time of the Great Exhibition: the lost War of Independence, the after-effects of the recent military terror, restrictive measures, the crushing burden of the newly introduced system of taxation, and, last but not least, the financial difficulties concomitant with the initial stages of capitalist production. The Hapsburg régime, based on the interests of the Austrian aristocracy and big bourgeoisie, treated Hungary as aprovince of the "Gesamtmonarchie", subordinating the country's economy to Austrian economic and industrial interests.

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In the 1830's and 1840's, the period preceding the 1848/49 War of Independece, Hungarian agriculture was in a state of marked depression closely connected with the crisis of the whole feudal system. History had posed the question of how to replace a system founded on serf labour, inefficient both from the quantitative and the qualitative points of view, by more advanced and more productive capitalist methods of production based on wage labour. However, to achieve this on a large scale proved impossible, not for lack of manpower, which, owing to the strongly differentiated character of serfdom in Hungary, was available in adequate numbers, but because of the general scarcity of capital in the country and the insufficiency of capital formation in agriculture. Though there were a few landed properties where capitalist working methods had achieved a more or less advanced stage (the Széchenyi and Batthyány estates are well-known cases in point), these rare exceptions were hardly characteristic of the general situation in the country's agriculture. To switch over to capitalist agricultural methods, capital was needed at least for two purposes: to pay the wages of field labourers and to secure the large-scale introduction of advanced technology and machinery.

In the so-called Reform Era these problems were already clearly discerned, as shown not only in the grandiose, capitalistic agrarian program of István Széchenyi, but also in the endeavours of a number of advanced property owners who sought to propagate their ideas.

An important part of this work, which chiefly took the form of publicistic activities, was devoted to propagating the use of machinery. Here, however, the reformers ran up against the backwardness of Hungarian public opinion, deeply rooted in the Hungarian soil.

With the advance of time the Hungarian Economic Society, the economic periodicals and technical books became increasingly unanimous in their claims for the speedy introduction of machines that promised to render production more profitable. Regular advertisements of machinery may be found already in the 1841 issues of the

periodicals *Magyar Gazda* ("The Hungarian Farmer") and *Ismertető* ("The Review"). But many Hungarian farmers mistrusted the machines; what is more, they were often outright afraid of them. On the better equipped estates it frequently happened that the overseer, though himself convinced of the usefulness of the machines, could not persuade his men to employ them. All the endeavours of enlightened Hungarian agriculturists devoted to the cause of progress were in vain, as were the 1841 exhibition in Pest, where a Scotch thresher and several other original English machines were presented, and the Hungarian Economic Society's decision of 1843 to bring the use of threshing machines into fashion in Hungary. The seemingly complicated mechanism of the machines, the conditions which made their repair expensive and in many cases impossible, the scarcity of operators, etc., went a long way towards deterring the majority of Hungarian farmers from employing machinery. The "common people" had a genuine horror of machines and clung persistently to their inherited implements. The aversion of Hungarian farm labourers to the machines may largely be explained by their fear of losing their job in consequence of the spread of mechanization. Contemporary records show that, whenever Hungarian cotters or day-labourers came into contact with agricultural machinery, they tried to destroy it, and even set it on fire if it was of wood.

The most decisive obstacle to the introduction of capitalist methods in agriculture was, of course, not to be sought in this sporadic resistance. It was the transition itself from the feudal system to capitalist methods of production that invariably constituted the gravest problem. A partial solution was brought about by the emancipation of the serfs in 1848, which shook the foundations of the crumbling feudal system and opened the way to the development of Hungarian agriculture. Yet the financial difficulties previously mentioned did not disappear from one day to the other, but continued to hamper the introduction of machinery on a large scale.

It is easy to understand that in this troubled period Hungarian farmers should show the greatest interest in the agricultural material of the first world industrial exhibition, an extensive account of which was given in the Hungarian economic periodicals, especially in the *Gazdasági Lapok* ("Economic Papers"). Britain was of course far ahead of the other countries in the field of agricultural machinery too, both as regards handy construction and precise and stable execution. The second largest exhibitor of agricultural machinery after Britain was the United States of America, but with the exception of a few harvesting machines, it exhibited mainly ploughs. Belgium too had sent a fair number of agricultural implements, France and Switzerland a few of them, the German Zollverein and Austria almost none. Those from Austria, though presenting some interesting features, were, as regards finish, far behind the other makes. Counsellor Kleyle purchased several machines at the Exhibition, including, among others, Howard's excellent harrow, a horse hoe from Smith & Co., Garrett's harvesting machine, implements for hay-making, Garrett's portable thresher, and a crusher. He also placed an order for a Hensman's drill, gave a description of Garrett's drill costing 51 pounds sterling (510 florins) and requiring 3 strong men and 3 strong horses to operate it. Both Kleyle and Korizmics recognized that mechanization of agriculture in Britain was so advanced as to make its simple copying quite impossible under Austrian circumstances. "The machines employed in the Austrian Empire require but one man, one boy and one horse for their operation, they are less perfect than the recent British makes, but for us they have the advantage that their simplicity makes them easy for the primitive workman to handle and for any village craftsman to repair."

The influence of the Great Exhibition on Hungarian agriculture manifested itself also in more concrete and tangible results. In 1852, the year following the Great Exhibition, the first steam-powered threshing machine made its appearance in Hungary—an outstanding event in the history of Hungarian agriculture. These machines greatly helped in solving the difficulties both of harvesting and of selling the produce. Many a prejudice had to be overcome before the first thresher made its entry in Hungary, and when it finally occurred it was mainly due to the enthusiastic support of Hungarian emigré leaders in England, including Lajos Kossuth, Dániel Irányi and Dániel Ihász. It was they who originated the idea of introducing the steam-powered threshing machine, that greatest achievement in agricultural technique of the period. In 1851 they invited Sándor Fehér to study British agricultural methods and institutions, and it was again upon their advice and on their behalf that returning to his native Török-Becse he persuaded his father to acquire—with the help of a loan from friends—a steam-powered threshing machine from Clayton, Shuttleworth & Co. The machine arrived at the most opportune moment. The countryside was in a state of depression, weather conditions were unfavourable, and the harvest was in danger because neither men nor horses were available for threshing. People first thought the threshing machine a figment of the imagination, and when, in 1852, it arrived at Török-Becse they came in processions from the villages of the neighbourhood to have a look at the infernal instrument. As soon as they observed its smooth work, they became profuse in its praise. This is how the first steam-powered thresher came to Hungary, giving an impetus to the modern mechanization of the country's agriculture and raising at the same time great hopes for its rapid progress.

In that same year (1852) the majority of the machines and agricultural implements purchased by the Austrian Ministry of Agriculture in London were presented to the public at the Polytechnic College in Vienna. The instruments for subterranean drainage, Garrett's thresher and horse rake, Hussey's harvesting machine, etc., were all shown. It would be hard indeed to estimate the practical lessons the producers of agricultural machinery in Hungary were able to draw from this display. The columns of the "Economic Papers" were at any rate filled with the description and illustration of the machines presented. Towards the middle of 1852, a well-known Hungarian manufacturer, István Vidats announced the exhibition of the agricultural machines and implements produced in his works. Within a few days this exhibition was visited by over two hundred landowners from all over the country, mainly members of the higher nobility—a fact which was looked upon by the "Economic Papers" as "a favourable indication that our landed proprietors had come to appreciate the importance of agricultural machinery." Beside the ploughs the interest of the visitors centered mainly around the thresher, which had come up to every expectation. In an article entitled "The Usefulness of Machinery in Hungarian Agriculture" the reviewer of the "Economic Papers" gave this estimate of the profitability of threshing machines: "An estate where enough corn is grown to keep two threshing machines continually busy will through their operation add 1,200 florins to its annual income. To feed the two machines continuously requires about 7,000 shocks of corn, which can be produced on 400 to 450 acres of land of average quality."

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To the political leaders of the Hungarian emigration in England the Great Exhibition was a source of inspiration for practical suggestions and measures of economic policy which, together with the stimulating effect of the agricultural machinery presented there

and the interaction of several other important factors, gave a start to the capitalistic development of agriculture in Hungary. But the rank and file of Hungarian emigrés were far from critical and impartial in their judgement of the Hungarian exhibits; their nostalgia inspired excuses even for the very symbols of Hungarian backwardness: "The embroidered shepherd's cloaks, the fancy felt coats, and the wooden flasks covered with pony-skin attracted many a visitor," wrote Jáczint Rónay, "but these objects brought us closer to the peoples still far removed from European culture; popular costumes were put on show only by the Turks, the Persians, the Chinese, the Japanese and the Eskimos; but let that pass, these nations wished to prove their progress by means of these objects; we Hungarians, however, laid them out for the purpose of proving our sympathy, our love for everything—Hungarian!" And he went on to enumerate—as did others too—the success of Szentpétery's sculptural work, the equivalence of the Gács cloth to that from Brünn, the excellent quality of the iron produced in Andrássy's Dernő works. The Hungarian products "aroused general interest, and I heard more than one Englishman say: 'How much you could achieve in that country!'" Rónay was proud to state that there were several Hungarians who won credit for Austria and even for Britain. Among the British contributions, the beautifully painted "pliable glass" of Lajos Cornides, a former major in Kossuth's revolutionary army, was received with general approval. The jewelry made by Károly Zaehnsdorf, a Pest goldsmith who had settled down years before in London, and valued at 18 thousand pounds sterling, was the subject of constant admiration. But the Hungarian artist who won most laurels was a turner from Németújhely, called Engel whose statue "The Wounded Amazon" won the particular esteem of Cobden. He had been a discovery of Prince Albert's, who sent him on a study tour to Italy and gave instructions for Engel's sculpture to be erected in one of the most prominent parts of the Exhibition.

In the course of his wanderings in the Crystal Palace, where he spent sometimes as much as six hours a day, Rónay saw many Hungarian faces and often heard Hungarian spoken. On no occasion would he and his "homeless compatriots" miss visiting the Hungarian exhibits.

The Exhibition officialy closed on October 11, and the distribution of the awards, took place on the 15th of the same month. There were three types of award: the Council Medal, the Prize Medal and Honourable Mentions. Of the total of 5,084 awards 2,039 went to Britain. The Prize Medal was given to exhibitors whose products attained a certain standard of excellence in production or workmanship, taking into consideration their utility, beauty, cheapness, adaptation to particular markets and other elements of merit, according to the nature of the object. In regard to the Council Medal, the conditions of its award were some novelty of invention or application, combined with great beauty of design. The task of the Juries—each consisted of an equal number of British and foreign jurors—was not an easy one, considering that they had to judge more than one million exhibits presented by more than 17,000 exhibitors. The number of Prize Medals awarded was 2,918, that of Council Medals 170. Over two-thirds of the latter went to the two most advanced industrial countries in Europe, to Britain and France (78 and 56, respectively). Among those to whom the Council Medal was awarded were Prince Albert for the organization of the Exhibition, Fox and Henderson for the construction of the Crystal Palace, and Paxton for its designing. Seven Council Medals went to Prussia, five to the United States of America, four to Austria, seven to Bavaria, two each to Belgium, Switzerland and Tuscany, one each to Russia, Egypt, Spain, etc. France received 628 Prize Medals,

Austria 116 (with 123 Honourable Mentions) and Prussia 125. Several of the 32 exhibitors from Hungary were awarded Prize Medals and Honourable Mentions—a fine achievement, considering that the country's dependent position, its general economic backwardness and particularly the disorganized conditions prevailing after the collapse of the struggle for independence, had prevented Hungary from herself organizing the display of her products at the Exhibition, where she was able to appear only under the oppressive tutelage of the leading economic circles of Austria.

The formal distribution of the awards on October 15 took place in the presence of 25,000 exhibitors, members of the Government and the diplomatic corps, as well as the Royal Commissioners of the Exhibition. On October 11, when the Exhibition closed officially, there were no festivities. But, in the words of *Pesti Napló*, "such festivities were arranged by the public itself. Sommer and his whole choir began the National Anthem, and every musical instrument in the building joined in... Paxton stood in the Galleries, his head uncovered. With sunset approaching, the policemen politely began asking the public to leave the building, whereupon the visitors were suddenly seized with indescribable enthusiasm: thousands and thousands of handkerchiefs, hands and hats were swung, and cheers for Paxton, Prince Albert, the Queen and Kossuth were heard in many languages. Old and young women were weeping and many a brave Englishman was sorry to leave the Palace of which six months earlier he had thought it would bring ruin to Britain".

And so the Great Exhibition ended. Shortly afterwards petitions began to reach the House of Commons asking for Paxton's Crystal Palace to remain permanently in Hyde Park. The petitioners, of course, did not belong among the inhabitants of the fashionable neighbourhood, who had been only too anxious to see the Exhibition closed and "that crowd of one-shilling people and noisy foreigners" disappear. At heavy cost, the "fairy construction" was finally removed from Hyde Park to Sydenham, where, re-erected in its original form, it remained for eighty years a great centre of popular entertainment, instruction and cultural activities. During an autumn night in 1936 it was destroyed by fire.

For the reasons pointed out in the foregoing, the role of Hungary at the first world industrial exhibition could only be an inferior one. The lessons to be drawn from the Great Exhibition—which might have been so interesting for Hungary—reached the country only sporadically, against many obstacles. Their direct influence on the development of the Hungarian economy was therefore negligible. Yet they played their part in the propaganda which in the 1850s, the most difficult years of the régime of absolutism, was initiated for the rational development of agriculture and the use of agricultural machinery.

On a European level the same may be said. To quote the prominent Hungarian emigrant, Bertalan Szemere: "... though the 1851 Exhibition did not become—as some enthusiasts had predicted it would—the beginning of a new millennium, such encounters among the nations certainly represent as many steps towards a lasting peace."

ÉVA HARASZTI

BOOKS AND AUTHORS

CONTEMPORARY ENGLISH BOOKS

JOHN BERGER: *Permanent Red.* (Methuen, London, 1960, 223 pp.)

John Berger is certainly one of the most significant young art critics in Britain, indeed in the whole of Western Europe. His name has become widely known through his weekly critical reviews, often attaining to the finish and artistic maturity of essays, published in the New Statesman over a period of nearly ten years. The appearance of his first volume of criticism therefore aroused understandable expectations. These were, indeed, largely satisfied by the book under review.

Permanent Red is the fusion of essays published mostly in the New Statesman and, to a lesser extent, in other periodicals. It is a tribute to the author's critical attitude that his book may be read not as a conglomeration of disconnected essays, but as a fully synthesized entity—almost as if it had been written as a coherent whole. A few introductory, essay-like chapters are followed by portraits and criticism of leading contemporary artists and of some great masters of the past, arranged under various comprehensive headings. These chapter titles and the names listed under them, themselves read like something of an *art poétique*. Under the title "Artists Defeated by the Difficulties" are grouped portraits of Naum Gabo, Paul Klee, Jackson Pollock, Dubuffet, Germaine Richter, Barbara Hepworth and John Bratby; "Artists who Struggle" heads critical profiles of Henry Moore, Ceri Richards, Josef Herman, David Bomberg, George Fullard, Frank Auerbach and Friso ten Holt; while under "Twentieth-century Masters" are collected writings on Juan Gris, Lipschitz, Zadkine, Léger, Picasso, Matisse, Dufy and Kokoschka. As with this last list of names, the author's choice of the masters included in, and of those omitted from, the chapter entitled "Lessons from the Past" is also revealing. This chapter deals with the lucidity of the Renaissance; the calculations of Piero della Francesca; the tastes of the Grand Siècle, Poussin's order; Watteau; George Morland; Goya; the dilemma of the Romantics; Millet; Victorian public taste; Courbet, Renoir and Gauguin.

That Berger has become a popular and authoritative critic is undoubtedly due in large measure to the fact that his writing is always interesting, full of wit and has the capacity to transpose into words the effect and meaning of a picture as well as the creative process of the artist. Yet there is more than this to his success and to the weight his word carries. He made his name and acquired distinction in the 'fifties, during the Cold War, though he has never concealed the fact, indeed he emphasized in almost every article, that he considers himself a Marxist. Berger is emphatic in stressing that truly valuable criticism can only be practised by scanning the tendencies

expressed and supporting those trends which point the way ahead; that Art in any period has got to answer the question 'What is Man?' and which—and here he cites Gramsci—is tantamount to asking: 'What can Man become?'

From this fundamental position, he is able clearly to distinguish between true modernity and modernistic mannerisms—in the chapters cursorily enumerated above, he uses a sharp eye and resolute terms to draw a distinction between the two, both between artists and also within the career of one and the same artist. In his survey of their careers and in discussing the significance of their *oeuvre* the question of class does not receive as much attention and weight as could be expected of a critic of Marxist intentions; yet he is far from ignoring it altogether, indeed, it is assigned an important and significant place in the portraits of Watteau, Courbet, Millet, Renoir and Léger. For this very reason it is to be regretted that the excellent essay on Guttuso has not been included in the book. If it had been, it could have become the hub of the problems of a contemporary artist.

Berger's facile and limpid style, his wit and profound perception of the inherent problems of art and artists, have already been pointed out. To these qualities we must add another—a broad and always active knowledge. Obviously, his book is intended for the connoisseurs, for those that have a certain knowledge of the visual arts, or indeed of modern art, because too much is just hinted at and presumed to be familiar. For these, however, each item is of interest, always thought-provoking, eliciting appreciation and approval, or challenging to dispute.

It is an odd shortcoming of this handsomely produced book that it contains no reproductions to illustrate and bear out the text.

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STEPHEN ULLMANN: *The Image in the Modern French Novel.* (Cambridge University Press, 1960. 315 pp.)

Mr. Stephen (István) Ullmann, a graduate of Eötvös College, Budapest, and one-time pupil of the most distinguished Modern Hungarian linguist, the late Professor Zoltán Gombocz is now Professor of Romance Philology at the University of Leeds. As far as I am aware, his work in linguistics had its beginning in the realm of semantics, towards which he was impelled by Prof. Gombocz's teaching. His recent work, of which the present volume is the latest product, is a step further along these lines.

From the domain of semantics he crosses over to that of stylistic studies in an attempt—as he points out in his introduction—to bridge the gulf still separating linguistics from literary studies. Nor is it his first effort in this field, for his *Style in the French Novel* (1957) must have been an even more ambitious and comprehensive experiment to this end. As I have, unfortunately, been unable so far to obtain a copy of the earlier work, I am not in a position to draw a comparison between it and the present volume, though both the structure and tone of the latter would require it. One has the impression that this volume contains mainly essays which for some reason or other were omitted from the previous work.

The title of this monography is slightly misleading; for the book does not discuss the imagery of the modern French novel as a whole, but four particulars of this problem in four different essays. These are: "The Development of Gide's Imagery," "The Symbol of the Sea in *Le Grand Meaulnes*," "The Metaphorical Texture of a Proustian Novel" and "The Two Styles of Camus." This very selection prompts the reader to polemics, for it is hard to draw conclusions of universal validity concerning the image in the modern French novel without considering the practice of Du Gard, Céline, Colette, Aragon and

Montherlant—even allowing for the fact that in the previous volume the author has already discussed the same questions in respect to Giono's, Bazin's and Sartre's works.

In the four essays, Mr. Ullmann examines the imagery of the authors selected for treatment with the methodical precision of the linguist. The images are not only subjected to a thorough scrutiny and classified according to their subject and scope, being, wherever possible, traced back to the author's original experience, but are also submitted to a careful statistical analysis, to establish their number, rate of incidence in the various novels, etc. This method leads to some interesting conclusions on certain aspects, but one sometimes has the feeling that his very thoroughness, his somewhat narrow concern for exactness, has prevented Mr. Ullmann, although his material is rich and carefully collected, from drawing conclusions which might really be turned to good use and applied widely in literary scholarship.

The least novel information is conveyed in respect to the imagery of Alain-Fournier. The interweaving of the concepts of the sea and of adventure has been evident to every attentive reader, and the investigation of the images borrowed from the animal kingdom and army life contributes little that is new towards our knowledge of Alain-Fournier's art. This approach is somewhat more fruitful in the investigation of Gide's fictional writings, and students of Gide's *oeuvre* are likely to find the author's conclusions useful. However, following Gide's progress from *Les Cahiers d'André Walter* to *Thésée*, it appears that Mr. Ullmann has failed to draw the most essential conclusion of all—one that is obvious enough from his collected material. I refer to the fact, that, while in his early works Gide started from the rich imagery of the symbolist school, he turned his back on it after *Voyage d'Urien*, trying almost to suppress his predilection for images, then building up, from *Les Caves du Vatican* onwards, a more purified and typically gidesque system—that of a suggested, hinted image, which the reader will scarcely realize, but which will influence him emotionally all the more.

The longest essay in this volume is about Proust, dealing with his imagery and use of metaphor in *Du Coté de chez Swann*. Here again, the author dazzles us by his exhaustive method. He examines the images for their provenance, images borrowed from the spheres of medicine, science, the arts, the animal and the vegetable kingdom. He examines the contexts of the images, devoting special sections to the hawthorn, churches, the Vinteuil Sonata, memory, and time. He studies the image as a medium of portraiture, and investigates the methods and forms Proust used for image-formation. All this is certainly useful and of interest. How regrettable, therefore, that the author fails to adopt as the central point of his investigation Proust's own concept of the writer's use of poetic images (expounded in a preface to a Paul Morand novel and also quoted by Mr. Ullmann): images are justified in literary works only if applied "at boiling point." The significance of Proust's imagery consists precisely of his ability to carry through his concept in almost all his work. It is a pity that Mr. Ullmann does not concentrate his investigation on finding out how this is achieved by Proust and how it affects the details as well as the whole of his work.

His most mature essay is the chapter on Camus's style. What is said about the significance of the sun and the sea in Camus's imagery is very interesting indeed, but more interesting still is the dialectic relationship between the accomplished writer's stylistic purpose and his achievement. Following his early works, rich in images under the influence of Giono, the mature writer's intention was to avoid expression through images (*"le degré zéro de l'écriture"*)—but during the process of creation, precisely at "boiling point," he actually uses profuse images of great intensity. The most significant, perhaps, among Mr. Ullmann's analyses is that

of *La Peste*, in which he demonstrates how the imagery helps to make the several facets of the symbol perceptible.

At some points one is inclined to think the author has not gone so far in his conclusions as he might well have felt encouraged to do on the strength of the material he has compiled. Even so, this book is the work of a scrupulous and competent scholar full of delicate observations which bespeak a high artistic sensitivity. The utility of the book is greatly enhanced by a meticulous bibliography and a carefully compiled Index.

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W. D. HALIS: *Maurice Maeterlinck* (Oxford University Press, London, 1960, 189 pp.)

"*A Study of his Life and Thought*" says the sub-title of the book. The first claim is true: beyond a doubt this is the most complete biography of Maeterlinck to be written so far, and the author has made use not only of the printed sources, but also of much hitherto unpublished manuscript material, particularly correspondence, to elucidate the writer's life and the history of his works. In this respect the book is valuable and useful.

Of the second promise, however, nothing has been kept. To the extent that he deals with Maeterlinck's philosophy at all, all the author can produce is one or two commonplaces. He is not interested in the genesis of the writer's thoughts: their relationship, their interlocking, with contemporary philosophic trends and fashions does not arouse his curiosity. Likewise he is not in the least intrigued by the path that led the one-time symbolist writer of middle class descent, who had flirted with the Left, to become an admirer of totalitarianism and a friend of Salazar's.

The one thing that really interests him is gossip, the history of Maeterlinck's two marriages, and even here he is not impartial. He displays distinct antipathy for Maeterlinck's first mate, his comrade in arms in all his battles and victories, the actress Georgette Leblanc; on the other hand, he has nothing but admiration and praise for his—still living—wife, Renée Dahon. The widowed countess may indeed have been an angel, whereas the actress was very much of flesh and blood, an artist in her own right, who did not forget about her own career while at her husband's side; nor is there any doubt that the aged Maeterlinck was happier with his young wife than he had been at the prime of his life with the passionate actress. Yet Mr. Halls should not have permitted himself to forget how strong an influence Mlle Leblanc had upon Maeterlinck the artist, that she had been his active companion in the period of his ascendancy, whereas Mlle Dahon's role was confined to his private life—her connexion with the author's *oeuvre* was insignificant.

This bias is also apparent in the selection of illustrations to the book: we find two pictures of the countess Maeterlinck and not a single one of the famous actress (who, by the way, made *Monna Vanna* a world success).

If this book has any relevance, then merely as a guide through Maeterlinck's life. The author gives hardly any judgement at all; but the little he does give is useless, not only for Marxist, but also for positivist literary history. This book may be useful as a reference source for further research on Maeterlinck, but an assessment of Maeterlinck the poet, as well as of Maeterlinck the dramatist, the thinker and essayist, is a task that still remains to be performed. One is almost sorry to see so much care and accomplished book-craft wasted by the Oxford and Clarendon Press on a work of such paltry value.

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ELIZABETH NOWELL: *Thomas Wolfe* (Heinemann, London, 1961, 456 pp.)

Miss Nowell was a close friend of the great American writer and, from the beginn-

ing of his success until his untimely death, his literary agent; she has also done a great deal of work on his literary heritage, such as publishing his correspondence. She is therefore, in many respects, one of the most qualified persons to have written his biography, and, indeed, this book may in many respects be regarded as a model biography of a writer.

First of all, because Miss Nowell, with praisworthy modesty, does in fact give us what she promises to. She does not try to prove her own literary theories nor seek to comment on the writer's *oeuvre;* she does not try to stress her own importance, her intimate information or her high aesthetic qualifications, but reconstructs with fond devotion and perseverance, Wolfe's life, his moods, his human and professional contacts. Her task has been greatly facilitated by Wolfe himself, inasmuch as his work is full of autobiographic elements, his diaries have been preserved and the bulk—if not all—of his correspondence has now been published (thanks, in no little part, to Miss Nowell's efforts). At the same time, however, he has made his biographer's task extremely difficult, for in his novels he uses autobiographic incidents arbitrarily, often amalgamating reality with fantasy, spinning events into romance. It is one of the great merits of Miss Nowell's work that she carefully unravels these strands and, unrelentingly but without giving herself scholarly airs, checks the works against the material yielded by the correspondence, witnesses, accounts and reminiscences. This is how she built up this biography, which is almost as interesting as Wolfe's novels, and is at the same time a faithful and lucid account of one of the most contradictory figures in twentieth-century American literature.

The author deserves special credit for having been able to steer clear of the psychoanalytical interpretations and over-explanations so fashionable in American scientific literature—even in a case which almost invites them—contenting herself with giving the facts. She does not try to give us her own views on Wolfe's novels, but has, instead, with a fortunate eye and unerring judgment, collected the most characteristic of the contemporary reviews.

Owing to these qualities, this book is likely to become a lasting part of literature on Wolfe, and the standard biography of the author. Two or three objections must be made, however, to Miss Nowell's method. First and most important: although she does not conceal it, she does not attach sufficient importance to Wolfe's radicalism, which, awakened in the early 'thirties, steadily increased from the middle of the decade onward (in no small measure due to his experiences in Nazi Germany) and made him an enthusiastic supporter of the New Deal and even aroused his interest in Socialism. This of course is a point which needs further research, and it would be worth-while to collate it with his last writings. The second and third points are closely interrelated: while Miss Nowell dwells at great length on Wolfe's ties with his publishers (mainly with Scribner's and their chief editor, Wolfe's discoverer and paternal friend, Maxwell Perkins), tracing them through all their developments, their stormy as well as bright spells and liberally quoting from the sources, she is rather reticent on his friendships, especially the literary ones, with little more than a few chance remarks on the subject. Yet to assign Wolfe to his proper place in twentieth-century American and world literature, we should be able to have a thorough look at the nature of his relations with each of his numerous literary friends.

P. N.

MUSICAL LIFE

LISZT-BARTÓK MUSICOLOGICAL CONFERENCE AT BUDAPEST

In the year 1961 Hungarian musical life celebrated two anniversaries which were observed in Hungary and all over the world as important milestones in the universal history of music. These two dates were the 150th anniversary of Liszt's birthday and the 80th anniversary of Bartók's birthday.

A whole era separates these two great Hungarian masters, yet their music shows many parallels. Both were musical "neologists," and in this renewal of their musical idiom they both drew sustenance from their love for and study of folk music. While Liszt advanced from Viennese classicism to modern music, terminating his career as its precursor, Bartók, setting out from the style of late romanticism, attained the classical summits of modern music. Ferenc Liszt had no opportunities of becoming acquainted with true Hungarian folk music, though he evinced a ceaseless partiality for it; Bartók, on the other hand, was able to fathom the deepest layers of Hungarian folk music and to reveal striking correlations. His music assimilated various elements of Liszt's late style and responded with the greatest intensity to Liszt's initiative in the creation of modern harmonies. It was the art of Liszt which Bartók chose as the theme of his inaugural address at the Hungarian Academy of Sciences.

The most significant event of the recent Liszt-Bartók Festival was the Second Hungarian Musicological Congress, the two principal items on whose program were the publication of the latest research findings on the life and art of Ferenc Liszt and Béla Bartók, and the discussion of these findings in the framework of an international conference.

Concurrently with the scientific sessions, an international competition was held, in which young artists from various countries participated.

Scholars, writers and critics arrived for the conference from numerous countries: G. Abraham, H. Searle, and J. Weissmann from Great-Britain; Van der Meer and Denijs Dille from Holland (the latter having lately moved from Antwerp to Hungary, where he has contributed to the success of the conference by his indefatiguable work in giving lectures and directing the exhibition arranged at the Bartók Archives); furthermore J. Nestev from the Soviet Union; S. Petrov from Bulgaria; Z. Vencea and A. Hoffmann from Rumania; O. Goldhammer, W. Felix, W. Rackwitz, D. Lehmann, P. Michel, and R. Eller from the German Democratic Republic; W. Boetticher from the German Federal Republic; L. Burlas, J. Volek, A. Buchner, Z. Nováček, V. Hudec, J. Jiránek, J. Raček, M. Očadlík, M. Postalka, F. Muzik from Czechoslovakia; J. Chominsky, M. Gorczycka from Poland; Tshao Fung from the Chinese People's Republic; H. Federhofer and W. Suppan from Austria; A. A. Saygun (Bartók's Turkish col-

laborator) from Turkey; E. Helm from the United States; Saburo Sinobe from Japan.

The conference was, of course, attended also by Hungarian historians of music and literature, such as Bence Szabolcsi, István Sőtér, György Bodnár, Ferenc Bónis, János Demény, Zoltán Gárdonyi, Pál Járdányi, György Kroó, Lajos Lesznai, Benjamin Rajeczky, György Kerényi, László Somfai, István Szelényi and József Ujfalussy, who reported on various noteworthy findings in their addresses.

Work was started on September 25 with the inaugural words of István Rusznyák, Chairman of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences.

"Twenty-five years ago, a memorable address was delivered within the walls of this building: Béla Bartók, the new academician, read a paper on his great spiritual predecessor, Ferenc Liszt. We regard it as a symbol that the two names were thus permanently linked, and it is no less symbolical that we can today assemble here to celebrate the initial dates of their lives: the hundred-and-fiftieth anniversary of Ferenc Liszt's birth and the eightieth anniversary of Béla Bartók's birth. Besides these external concatenations, there is a deep organic relationship connecting the life-work of these two men. Like Bartók after him, Ferenc Liszt appeared in European music as the representative of a borderland cultural community; he too strove to summarize the voices of peoples and nations, endeavouring to build up a 'brotherhood of peoples'; like Bartók, he gave an example of the artistic solution of major problems in a period of crises—fraught with fermentation and revolution.

"Of course, there are essential differences between them, for the age and society they lived in was also different. When Liszt spoke of himself as the 'son of his Hungarian fatherland,' he was imbued with the ardent romantic zeal of the Hungarian Reform Age; when Bartók turned to the Hungarian people and the neighbouring peoples with passionate devotion, he clearly saw destitute Hungary at the mercy of its oppressors. To the end of his life Liszt retained his grand illusions, while it was not only as an artist and thinker but also with the eyes of a scholar that Bartók assessed the world for the advancement of which he fought, virtually wrestling with that world—like his contemporary, Endre Ady, the poet—to awaken it to a truer consciousness. Yet both of them were great teachers who wanted change and renewal and who, above all, strove to disclose and to achieve progress everywhere. Though leaving their country, they remained faithful to their people, serving humanity and human advancement with all their work. They became innovators of European music, who left their mark on the whole intellectual development of our age.

"Therefore we may celebrate them here today in the name of Hungarian science; and we, Hungarian scholars, the present coworkers of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, hail Ferenc Liszt, as our predecessor, companion and ally no less than Béla Bartók, founder of the science of folk music; we are proud to call our own these two kindred geniuses, who are honoured by the whole civilized world as masters and models in their art."

Then Zoltán Kodály addressed the conference:

"The connection between the two artists in whose names we have assembled here today rests not on the coincidence of anniversaries. Their relationship goes far deeper. Notwithstanding every external difference, their lives and works have much in common.

"All his life Bartók fought for Liszt, both as an interpreting artist and a writer. As a student he was noted for his rendering of the Sonata in B-minor, and throughout his career as a pianist the works of Liszt were permanent items on his program, particularly the less popular pieces. Several of his writings dealt with Liszt, and so did his inaugural address at the Hungarian Academy of Sciences.

"His own works display the closest rela-

tionship to Liszt. At the beginning he deliberately continued where Liszt left off; later, as his own original individuality developed, he turned Liszt's intuitive anticipations into reality.

"Such a close connection is a sign of spiritual affinity. Of late, attempts have even been made to explain such phenomena on the basis of the relationship of gene types, apt to occur even in the case of violent contrasts. Apparent contrasts of this kind actually exist between the two composers.

"Liszt's relations to his country were centripetal, Bartók's were centrifugal. Liszt grew up abroad, in cities of world renown, but always harboured a longing for Hungary, which he regarded as his fatherland. Owing to manifold ties abroad, and also to historical events at home, his wish to live and work, at least partly, at home was fulfilled only towards the close of his life.

"Bartók, who grew up in the Hungarian provinces, always had a craving for the west, until at last he emigrated, to find there the love and appreciation he was denied at home. His over-sensitive constitution was not armoured with the *aes triplex circa pectus* which alone might have enabled him to endure the last years of his life in his own country.

"He was allotted a much briefer span of life than Liszt, but their fate was similar in that full understanding and appreciation of their works came only after death.

"The present conference demonstrates how much there is still to be discovered and explained in the life-work of both. Part of the problems are more accessible to Hungarian research workers. The extensive international connections of both men nevertheless call for cooperation among the scholars of every country where they sojourned. Good results may be expected only from close international collaboration.

"If we are brought even a little nearer to grasping the miracle presented by the work of every great master, the efforts of this conference will not have been in vain. In this hope I extend a hearty welcome to all those who have come to attend our gathering, wishing them good success in their work."

The conference met in two sections, corresponding to the themes under discussion; the papers on Liszt's lifework were read in the first section, those on Béla Bartók's life and achievements in the second.

It is noteworthy that the papers on Liszt were mostly of local character, concerned with the correlations of Liszt to some town, some country, or some composer, or dealing with the philological investigation of one of Liszt's compositions, whereas in the second section the lectures on Bartók contributed to the delineation of a portrait which permitted the first true insight since his death into his entire life work. This picture was completed by the public concerts broadcast by the Hungarian Radio with programs including such of Bartók's youthful achievements as could not be played before on account of the obscurity enveloping some domains of Bartók's *oeuvre*. Two movements (the second and third) of the E flat-major symphony of 1902 were played, furthermore the Scherzo for piano and orchestra, dating from 1904, and the symphonic poem "Kossuth," from 1903.

What is freedom and who is free in Bartók's world?—Bence Szabolcsi raised the question in his study on "Man and Nature in Bartók's World." (We shall refrain from summarizing this thought-provoking paper, since readers of The New Hungarian Quarterly have already had the opportunity of acquainting themselves with the full text in the preceding issue—No. 4, August-December 1961.)

In his paper on "Literary and Musical Folk Style," István Sőtér examined the concepts expressed by 20th century Hungarian "folk style" in music. He stated that Bartók's conception of the peasantry essentially differed from that formulated in the greater part of contemporary literature. It is devoid of peasant myth or peasant romanticism of any kind, nor does it show any trace of the contemporary romantic belief in pristine peasant

force. It is notably by the emphatically intellectual character of his art that Bartók deviates from the late-romantic principle of spontaneous art. He was filled with emotional nostalgia and anxiety at the sight of the secluded peasant world, its archaic beauty, its strict and pure moral laws, but still more so on beholding its true reality. The peasants fascinated Bartók not by the peculiarities of folklore, but by their realness and humanity. He drew on this realness, on the humanity of this world in order to transplant them into his music and proclaim them as a new, revolutionary artistic program, or rather as a new road and possibility, the need for which was manifest in contemporary world culture.

This was the course that enabled Bartók to generalize the human and artistic essence inherent in the closed, ancient civilization of the Hungarian, Rumanian, and Slovak villages, thus transforming it into an impatient, urgent message to the 20th century, to the whole of humanity.

János Demény spoke of Bartók's significance for music history in the light of contemporary reviews.

In his paper entitled "A Few Questions Concerning Bridge Symmetry in Bartók's Works," József Ujfalussy dealt with the constructions arranged after the principles of uneven-numbered mirror-symmetry with uneven-numbered central axes, encountered in Bartók's cyclic works, from the simplest form comprising three parts, through intricate variations built of five, seven, or more parts.

Lajos Lesznai emphasized that Bartók was a realist. When it came to the major issues of his period, he always stood on the side of progress and expressed his message by merging old traditions with new artistic achievements.

A study richly illustrated by examples was read by György Kroó on the "Thematic and Dramatic Construction of Bartók's Compositions for the Stage," investigating the interconnections between thematic tissue and dramatic conception in Bartók's three works for the stage.

In his lecture entitled "Quotations in Bartók's Works," Ferenc Bónis for the first time attempted to give a complete picture of those themes to be found in Bartók's music which had been derived from the music of predecessors or contemporaries. He furthermore cited documents and letters written by Bartók and reflecting his opinion of his predecessors and contemporaries. He endeavoured to elucidate the exact meaning and significance of musical borrowing and declared that in Bartók's case themes were never adopted casually and that in the majority of instances Bartók used them deliberately for the purpose of expressing something.

Of the foreign lecturers J. Nestev (Moscow) read a paper giving an account of how Bartók was "discovered" in the Soviet Union at the beginning of the 'twenties. In the Soviet press Assafiev, Beliaev and others wrote about him. The lecturer described Bartók's interest in the works of Mussorgsky and Stravinsky and in the Mari and Chuvash pentatonic regions and also gave an account of Bartók's visit to the Soviet Union. He furthermore spoke about the rapid growth in the appreciation of Bartók at the opening of the 1950's, about the performances and performers of Bartók's compositions in the Soviet Union, about the new Moscow libretto of the Miraculous Mandarin and the debate it had aroused. In conclusion he drew a parallel between the music and activities of Bartók on the one hand, and of 20th century Soviet composers and folklorists on the other.

S. Petrov chose for his subject "Bartók and Bulgarian Musical Culture," while Z. Vancea discussed "Bartók and Rumanian Music." Professor Gerald Abraham (Liverpool) gave a comprehensive summary of Bartók's art and of his visits to Britain.*

* See Gerald Abraham's study "Bartók and England" in The New Hungarian Quarterly, 1961, No. 4.

Saburo Sinobe (Tokio) delivered an interesting lecture on "Liszt and Bartók in Japan," in which he also dealt with the Japanese national scale. The problems presented by Bartók research and the tasks lying ahead in this field were summed up by Professor Denijs Dille, the chief scientific collaborator of the Bartók Archives in the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. J. Weissmann (London) reported on the literature dealing with Bartók.

Among the Czechoslovak studies on Bartók that of J. Volek under the title "Bartók's Method of Orchestration," Račeк's address on "The Significance of Janaček and Bartók in Music History," and Jiranek's paper on "The Piano Style of Liszt and Smetana" deserve special mention.

The group of scholars from the German Democratic Republic described the latest results of their research work in several papers. A remarkable lecture was held by R. Eller (Leipzig) under the title "The Place of the Theme in Bartók's Music."

The studies devoted to research into folk music formed a separate group: A. A. Saygun, Bartók's Turkish collaborator, expatiated on the correlations between Turkish and Hungarian folk music; Benjamin Rajecky and György Kerényi spoke about the scoring of folk-songs by Bartók. Pál Járdányi read a paper on "Bartók and the Systematic Classification of Folk-songs," dealing with Bartók's work of classification and the new principles of classification developed lately.

In the Liszt section, H. Searle (London), Chairman of the British Liszt-Bartók Committee, spoke about the connections between Ferenc Liszt and 20th century modern music.

Zoltán Gárdonyi took up the subject of "National Themes in the Music of Ferenc Liszt." He examined Liszt's encounters with the folklore and national music of various peoples (Polish, Swiss, Italian, Ukranian, Spanish, Russian) and drew attention to the compositions inspired by them. He also went into Liszt's sojourns in Hungary and his encounters with gipsy bands interpreting Hungarian national music. "Liszt's drawing on national music in his compositions implied open sympathy with the simple popular strata on the one hand, and a declaration of support for national movements, for struggles fought to achieve freedom and independence on the other. By investigating the national music of various peoples and by building compositions on national themes Liszt advanced ideas which made him a model for Bartók."

László Somfai's paper analysed the various metamorphoses of the Faust Symphony, supported by reference to abundant sources in manuscript material.*

Otto Goldhammer (Leipzig) drew attention to an unknown manuscript of Liszt and Reményi. Hellmut Federhofer (Graz) discussed musical ornamentation as employed by Liszt and Chopin, illustrating his subject by a colourful piano recital, while Wolfgang Suppan (Graz) described the relations of Liszt to the Austrian province of Steiermark. Z. Nováček (Bratislava) read a paper on Liszt's influence on the progressive musical culture of Bratislava, and W. Felix spoke of Liszt's compositions dating from 1848-1849. The concluding address in the Liszt section was delivered by István Szelényi on "The Unknown Liszt."

The work of the Second Hungarian Musicological Conference of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences ended with the closing address delivered by Zoltán Gárdonyi.

ZOLTÁN FALVY

* See L. Somfai's "Metamorphoses of Liszt's Faust Symphony" in The New Hungarian Quarterly, No. 3. of 1961.

KODÁLY'S MUSIC PEDAGOGY

I

Not far from the building where the New Hungarian Quarterly is edited, there is a school, the Váci Street General School. This time, neither the building nor the children serve particularly to attract our attention, for there are several hundred other schools like this in Budapest, and several thousand in the country. Nevertheless, it is outstanding in one respect: from the first form to the eighth, the children throughout sing more than elsewhere. More precisely, in the lower division, that is, in the first four forms, they have a one-hour singing class every day, later four one-hour classes weekly.

When we visited the first form, we arrived on the thirteenth teaching day, counting from the beginning of school in September. What do first form pupils generally know at this stage? Practically nothing. Well, they do not know much here in Váci street either. At least, not as far as reading, writing and arithmetic are concerned. But still they know something that others, anywhere else, do not: how to sing clearly, in ringing tones. They sing simple songs with clearly distinguished intervals, and they already understand the rudimentary stages of polyphony. Their exceptionally talented, experienced singing teacher helps them to understand this in a very interesting manner. First they sing the song together, then one of the children goes to the head of the class and beats the rhythm on a drum. Another child now beats out the same rhythm on a triangle. The two of them stand before the class and beat the drum and triangle in dissimilar rhythms. The example is followed by the class-mates, and they have already arrived at the fundamentals of two-part singing. Meanwhile their hearing sharpens, they differentiate between the voices, and upon this experience the material of the subsequent lessons may now be based.

The head master of the school next invited me to visit the fifth form. Here the children are musically trained, veritable "scholars", and for the sake of the visitor they put on a brief request concert. The teacher wished to show what progress can be achieved with systematic musical teaching in the course of five years, and she therefore had her pupils show off somewhat. But there was nothing of an examination atmosphere to the lesson, her aim was not to flaunt and parade them, but simply to report on their progress. In any case, no one had had an opportunity to prepare the class, for the visit was unexpected.

First they sang a little composition by a contemporary young Hungarian composer, Antal Ribáry, a two-voice work entitled "Song about School." To begin with, the whole class, then two children performed it clearly, flawlessly, without any of the customary signs of uncertainty and confusion. Then they changed voices, and their assurance did not diminish. The teacher whispered to us that each child has to know both voices. The Marseillaise followed in two voices, and then a difficult Bartók work in three voices. Kodály and Mozart ended the little demonstration, which took place largely according to the wishes of the children. This was how Mozart too was chosen, with the teacher making the following condition: "Very well, but then let us sing with nice, soft, round mouths..."

In the January issue of the Quarterly, we already told our readers about the musical general schools. Since even the regular reader cannot be expected to remember exactly what our article written more than a year ago contained, let us summarize briefly the essence of the Hungarian musical general schools.

In the musical—or, as Professor Zoltán Kodály calls them, the singing—general schools, of which there are at present about

one hundred in Hungary, in the provinces and in small villages no less than in Budapest, singing is one of the most important subjects taught. We have already mentioned that at first there is a singing class every day and later, in the upper forms, almost every day. Apart from this, singing in the choir and, in many places, folk dancing, are compulsory for the children. Starting in the third form they also learn to play a musical instrument, but this—in accordance with the teaching experiences of recent years—is not compulsory. On the other hand, the shepherd's pipe, this favorite and characteristic folk instrument which constitutes no material burden on the parents and presents no technical difficulties to the children, is compulsory from the second form up.

The musical general school has a tangible, first-rate value from the standpoint of singing, because in the first four forms everybody thus learns to read music and sing at sight. This has the very important advantage that the children, in the wake of perfect music reading and the instant reproduction of the image of musical notes, become conscious enjoyers of music of a high standard. They become enjoyers rather than active cultivators, and here is where the emphasis lies. This type of school does not train artists, miscarried half-talents, who would be disappointed all their lives if they could not go on the stage. For this reason too, the further study of music is not compulsory for everyone. Naturally the school does not discourage the subsequent progress of new talent. From the Lorántffy Street Music General School, of which we spoke in our earlier article, one or two children are enrolled every year, even as they continue their general school studies, in the Academy of Music, and there are some children who finish at the Academy of Music before they are through general school. But this is an exceptional opportunity for specially gifted children. The vast majority will become audiences in musical life, an appreciative concert public.

A much more ramified, not always accurately measurable advantage of this type of school, beyond what has already been said, may be perceived in almost every subject. Edith Molnár, a research worker in psychology at the Scientific Institute for Pedagogy, and Gábor Friss, head master of the Lorántffy Street School, have jointly written a paper on the basis of studies made at the Lorántffy Street School, summing up their findings as follows: "Several research workers of the Scientific Institute for Pedagogy have paid visits on a number of occasions to general schools with singing and music departments. We have found that here the thinking process of the pupils was more mature than is the rule in the ordinary general schools... This is manifested not only in the field of singing and music, but also in other subjects."

What the scientific study expresses so concisely, means in practice that the organic relationship of the subjects with singing or—in pedagogic, professional language—"the concentration" of the curriculum on singing, has proved highly beneficial. The pedagogical usefulness of singing is apparent in arithmetic, where the conception of numbers is clearer among children who sing, the conception of fractions becomes more understandable when $^1/_4$, $^1/_8$, etc. are well known, frequent expressions in singing. A more refined hearing is a good help in the study of foreign languages, literary tastes are developed by the frequent rendering of lovely folk-songs and composed songs. The choir, with its singing in common, teaches discipline, a fuller consciousness, a more advanced community feeling, and the educational effect of these qualities is of well-nigh immeasurable importance in school life.

2

There are long preliminaries to the successive formation some ten or twelve years ago of our singing schools in Budapest and in the provinces. They go back to the

outstanding Hungarian composer Zoltán Kodály. It was Kodály who in his music teaching established the foundations for education in singing and music.

The turning point was a concert, many years ago, on April 2, 1925. This is a memorable date for contemporary musicians. Zoltán Kodály had arranged a Hungarian folk-song evening of his own works. Outstanding artists, the then stars of the Opera House, performed, but the sensation was nevertheless not this, but a boys' choir, the Wesselényi Street School Choir, conducted by Endre Borus. The choir performed two Kodály works, *Villő* (an untranslatable Hungarian title), and *Túrót eszik a cigány* ("The Gipsy Eats Curds").

Kodály himself a few years later, in 1930, said this of his conception of choral compositions for children: "The idea of children's choruses stems perhaps from the fact that I too grew up amidst such children's songs in the village." At a lecture much later, in 1954, however, he said that until 1925, that is, until his first two works for young people, he lived the customary life of a musician. But once, when walking in the hills of Buda, he heard a group of young girls singing. He sadly noted the poverty of the melodic treasury which they sang with such enthusiasm. His sorrow became deeper, as did his understanding, when he found out that the gaily singing girls were the students of a training school for teachers in Pest, who would eventually be teaching children to sing. It was this, among others, that prompted him to write works for children.

Thus did it come about that he took these two lovely choral pieces to the Wesselényi Street School at the beginning of 1925, and that the two became favourite pieces of every choral concert since that time.

The roots, of course, went even deeper than this. Béla Bartók and Zoltán Kodály's joint folk-song-gathering expeditions were the first inducements which later suggested to Kodály that the melodic treasury of Hungarian children must be built up first of all not by "fabricated" songs, by the still unfamiliar composed songs, but by what was already there, known and originally Hungarian, namely the folk-songs. He waged numerous battles by means of newspaper articles in defence of the folk-song and fought in his essays and particularly in his compositions against snobbish and prejudiced attackers. And he admitted that "the road from Budapest to Paris was shorter than to Kászonújfalu." But he did get to Kászonújfalu and many other Hungarian villages, and from these the road led directly to the realization that these often concealed treasures of the Hungarian people, regarded with contempt by the bourgeoisie, must be brought to the surface and shown, not only to the world at large, but also to the country's children. And he proclaimed his program: banish the inferior "teaching songs" from the schools and replace them by folk-songs. "Our musical public education has meant seventy years of erratic wandering, and that is why it has produced no results," he wrote in his article "Let Us Dare to Be Hungarians in Our Music Too," back in 1945. "They wanted to teach the people music by ignoring, by throwing aside, what the people knew of their own accord. Yet it is only possible to build upon what exists, using the folk heritage as a foundation, otherwise we shall build on air."

Zoltán Kodály also laid the foundations for the musical education of the people. For many decades musical education in Hungary was a pyramid on the top of which rested an institution of very high standards, the Academy of Music founded by Ferenc Liszt, but which had no solid foundation, for there were hardly any musical institutions on the elementary level. It is obvious that young people raised on bad works, unable to sing and uneducated in music, cannot later constitute a good concert public. That is why Kodály proclaimed the program that education in music must begin at its foundations. In an article in 1929 he wrote:

"Singing and music must be taught in the school in such a way as to instil a life-long thirst for nobler music... Often a single experience will open the young soul to music for a whole lifetime. This experience cannot be left to chance; it is the task of the school to provide it." And in this same article, he writes: "The State maintains operas and concerts in vain, if nobody attends them. A public must be reared for whom music of a higher order is a life necessity. The Hungarian public must be lifted out of its lack of musical requirements. And this can only be started by the schools."

Let us now hear what Zoltán Kodály has to say about the significance of instruction in singing: "It is much more important who the singing teacher is at Kisvárda than who is the director of the Opera House. For the poor director becomes a failure at once... But a poor teacher can exterminate the love of music for thirty years in thirty successive classes."

Musical education must begin already in the kindergarten, Kodály said, and he set about working out the principles on which the teaching of singing must be based. The most important among these is the reading of musical notes, because without this there can be no listening to music later. He teaches that the child's first associations attached to the image of the notes must be built by the child himself, with his own voice. Without systematic singing the love of music cannot be taught. For this, however, the initial stage of note reading had to be worked out, capable of already being understood by the children in the first form of primary school. Together with his associates he worked out the methods of relative solmization, singing, writing and reading not with absolute but relative notes, and he declared that it is only from here that the road can lead to absolute solmization, the writing, the fixing of tones in notes. One after another he worked out his theories on the singing of pure intervals, on singing in several voices. His essays and articles successively clarified the most important theoretical questions in the teaching of singing, and all these theoretical arguments say in essence that without singing there can be no enjoyment of music. "Those who are not indifferent to what will be the status of music in one or two generations' time, cannot pass by the school indifferently when they hear singing from it," he wrote in one of his essays.

3

A well known Hungarian journalist interviewed Zoltán Kodály on his seventieth birthday. In the course of their conversation she mentioned that a British critic had written of him that at the peak of his greatest success as a composer he subordinated his world career to his work as a teacher. Kodály quietly replied: "It was always more important to me to teach peasant children to read music than to pave the way for my own musical career." He says to the younger generation of Hungarian composers: "I recommend to my youthful symphony composing colleagues that they take a look occasionally into the kindergarten too. That is where it will be decided whether there will be anyone to understand their works twenty years from now!"

And he himself was the first to apply this golden rule. Let us take a look at a catalogue of his *oeuvre*. Alongside 15 instrumental works and six works for the stage, the number of his children's choruses is forty, let alone all his men's, women's and mixed choruses, his canons and choral compositions with instrumental accompaniment. His educational works are embodiments of his lofty principle that "nobody is too great to write for the little ones; in fact, he should strive to be great enough for it."

Zoltán Kodály considered it more important to write books for singing than to appear in public and create grandiose musical works. He did not spare his efforts in writing singing exercises (15 two-voice singing

exercises, 33, 44, 55 two-voice exercises, the four books of the Bicinia Hungarica, the Tricinia, the four booklets of Pentatonic Music, the 333 Reading Exercises, etc.). With a work entitled "Let Us Sing Clearly!" he laid the basis for singing on pitch; in his opinion only singing in two voices can ensure the pure rendering of intervals purely, and he based this very important exercise-booklet on this principle.

In 1945, Zoltán Kodály had hardly emerged from the bomb shelter of the Opera House, where he had sought refuge in the last days of the war during the bombing and siege of Budapest, when he at once began to work. Again he turned his attention not towards the grown-ups of the present but to those of the future, the children of today. Together with Jenő Ádám, the outstanding music educationalist and eminent musician he wrote the so-called Sol-mi booklets, and then the singing books of the school children of the liberated country, from the first to the eighth form. Meanwhile he visited all the places where children were singing, where singing instruction and the study of music were being discussed. To those who still could not understand why the master, after so many decades of music teaching, turned so devotedly to the children, he said in 1958: "Much has already been accomplished in our music education, but this is still not enough. And I have less time left now than fifty years ago. That is why the school singing book is more important to me than composing."

4

All his life Kodály has been a fighting man, and the fighter, the personality who opposed conservative opinions, is shown not only in his works, but also in his essays and articles. Since the liberation of the country in 1945 his activities have increased. He had faith in this world, he also expected support for musical education from its results. In 1947 he said half pessimistically, half jokingly: "We may certainly hope that by the time we come to the year 2,000 every child who has finished general school will read music fluently." Since then—precisely with the help of Kodály, and of the associates he has trained to carry on his struggle—a great many things have been realized, in both reading and writing music and in raising the general cultural level, among other things, through the rearing of a new concert-going public. This was why Kodály was able to say in 1958 that "much has already been accomplished in our music education", even though he did add, "but this is still not enough."

What has happened since 1945? Kodály's principles of singing instruction have been carried out in practice. The use of the song books written by him has been made compulsory in the general schools. His opinion and advice have been requested in all questions of music education. Tens of thousands of children study instrumental music in Hungary, and the young people to be seen at youth concerts also number tens of thousands. And, last but not least, the folk-song, which has become dominant in the best music through Bartók and Kodály, has also become the common treasure of the school children. And Kodály's cherished dream, his dearest plan, the singing school, has become a reality.

Yet Zoltán Kodály, whose 80th birthday we celebrated not long ago and whose youthful zest and vigour belie his age, is impatient. The divergent opinions existing between our public education authorities and Zoltán Kodály on certain educational questions are, in our view, mainly over the order of the tasks ahead. Zoltán Kodály's salutary impatience with regard to our musical education is justified, if we isolate it from the whole course of our public education. For example, he holds that there are too few singing classes per week in the music general schools as well as in other schools. So do we. But on the one hand, schools where

the children sing every day, where sooner or later they learn to play a musical instrument, or at least the majority of them do, and where attendance at choral rehearsals is compulsory but the number of hours for other subjects is reduced, cannot be established without the consent of the parents. And wherever such a desire has been expressed, the Ministry of Culture has shown a willingness to fulfil it. On the other hand, daily singing requires at least three singing teachers per school in place of one, and we are still contending with a shortage in specialized teachers. This type of school is more costly than the others, and our primary task at present is to raise every village school to the level of those in the cities, to provide each of them with a tape recorder and a film projector, etc. There is still another reason why we cannot, from one year to the next, increase the number of music general schools, and generally the number of hours of singing classes out of all proportion; this is the modernization of our schools*. The further development of our schools requires that we educate our children in every direction and make their knowledge many-sided. Let them share in the cultural treasures that mankind has accumulated over many thousands of years, let them become familiar with the outstanding works of musical literature, let them know—and we hold this to be very important—how to sing from music, but all this is not enough. Present-day youth must find contact with life, with production, with physical work. This does not contradict education in art. Work and the love of art complement each other. A contradiction comes about when the proportions are distorted, when, for example, we teach music at the expense of other, modern and important subjects. To find the correct proportions is one of the foremost and perhaps the most difficult of our school reform problems, the cornerstone of modern adducation. We can only arrange as many hours of singing lessons in the primary and secondary schools as the other, no less important subjects allow, if we are to avoid overburdening the children. For in the course of the national discussions of the school reform the important basic principle was evolved that the children must in no way have more than twenty hours of classes in the first form, and thirty in the eighth. If we were to increase the number of hours per week, we could include more singing, but we do not want to, and we must not, do this.

The general school singing curricula made up in accordance with the school reform seek to put into practice the basic principles of Zoltán Kodály's music education, for without this, without his teachings, singing cannot be taught at all in Hungary today. In all eight general school forms the chief place is to be taken by Kodály's exercise booklets, "Let Us Sing Clearly!", the 333 Reading Exercises, etc. At the same time we wish to a greater extent than hitherto to instill a love of instrumental music, a knowledge of musical literature in our youth. Here too there is no essential difference between Zoltán Kodály and the educational experts, except perhaps in the matter of quantity. Zoltán Kodály would like to have much more singing in the schools than hitherto, the directors of our musical education would like to shift the proportions towards passive music enjoyment, towards other forms of aesthetical education. Alongside singing and the reading of music, plenty of listening to music—this is the principle upon which the new curriculum is built.

The curriculum has not yet been tested, for it will only be introduced this year. Only practice will show what is useful in it and what will have to be changed. One thing is certain: without Kodály's pedagogical booklets, folk-song settings and theoretical arguments, the children of present-day Hungary would only with great difficulty

* See also: Vol. II. No. 3. of The New Hungarian Quarterly.

have grown up to be cultured young people and, in time, intelligent concert audiences.

Kodály's splendid musical principles also help to realize what the master dreamt of just twenty-five years ago, in the dedication to the first volume of his Bicinia Hungarica: "My barefoot chums of the Galánta Village School: I have written these, with you in mind. It is your voices that ring in my ears through the mist of fifty years. You pelting, fighting, fearless, thoroughly brave lads, you singing, dancing, well-mannered, industrious girls: what has become of you? If we had then been taught things like these (and a few other things), how different a life we could have created in this little country! Thus it remains the task of those who are just beginning to learn that it is not worth much if we sing for ourselves, it is finer if two can sing together. Then always more of us, a hundred, a thousand, until there resounds the great Harmony, in which all of us can be one. It is only then that we can say truly: Let the whole world rejoice!"

István Gábor

THE ARTS

NOTES ON HENRY MOORE

by

MIKLÓS BORSOS

Today the significance of Henry Moore already belongs to the domain of art history: He is *the greatest sculptor of our time*—such is the consensus of art literature.

It was in 1923 that Henry Moore first visited Paris. On looking around the scene the young artist saw that the "period of discoveries" was over, that the revolution in art was terminated. As early as 1910, Brancusi had created the basic forms of plastic art. Polishing cylindrical, oval and spindly shapes to perfection he gave his works titles that permitted the spectator to associate these sculptures—noble in material and fine in finish—with anything imagination might suggest. In the last analysis, these works were border cases beyond which the artist could proceed no further: simplification had reached its limits. Archipenko had also made his positive-negative sculptures, piercing and fretting them, making holes in the hope of creating the most varied spatial, pictorial or structural effects. The influence of Negro art and that of Oceania, which culminated in cubism, had, by that time, passed its climax. The artists who had initiated the trend had by then repudiated it and were seeking—or find-

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Henry Moore's first exhibition in Hungary, open to the public from October 21 to November 3, 1961, was arranged at the Ernst Museum by the Institute for Cultural Relations, the British Legation, and the Budapest Art Gallery from material made available by the British Council, partly from works in the artist's own possession. Six statues, 36 photographs taken of his works by the artist himself, and 11 colour prints have been exhibited.

The show was an important event in Hungarian intellectual life. Its opening was attended by an unusually large number of artists for Budapest, by over 500 persons. An inaugural address was delivered by Sándor Hemberger, head of the art department in the Institute for Cultural Relations, to which Mr Ivor T. M. Pink, the British Minister replied. Then the sculptor István Kiss, spoke in the name of Hungarian artists.

On October 24 in the new lecture hall of the British Legation Miss Margaret

ing—the delights of painting elsewhere. With his excellent instinct for alignment young Moore realized that he could not create anything new, the more so as Breton had in 1920 formulated the principles of surrealism. Moore strove no longer for novelty but rather for synthesis. He went to work—and based his work on the great traditions of plastic art. He carved straight into stone, and the bronze statues he produced also showed the noblest chiselling. When travelling in Italy he came under the spell of Florence. Masaccio's moving earnestness, his terse but mature art, impressed him for a lifetime. The statues of the Medici chapel also followed him all through his career, although in his artistic program, which he set down in writing, he rejected the Renaissance or Hellenistic ideals of beauty, in fact classic beauty as such. The sculptural problems of those times are laid down in his writings: "to purify" sculpture from every "alien" element and to acknowledge the existence of form alone in itself and for its own sake, in its spatial relations. This can become "pure sculpture." All tawdry ornaments should be discarded; which means that no elements of concept, thought, literature, or sentiment should enter sculpture. Gesture—being similarly alien to form—was also banished. Such was his program. Many artists, following the lead of similar manifestos, have failed in putting this theory into practice. However, Moore's powerful and instinctive talent refused to obey his own writings, and the argument which has been carried on within himself has produced the duality that marks his works.

His first sculptures evince Mexican and African influences, for he was still kept in bondage by the ideas he had revolted against. He started to carve his reclining female nudes. In these works, inspired by the female figures of the Medici Tombs, he reversed the idiom of forms, and all that is dramatic passion, turbulent activity, and tragic beauty with Michelangelo has been turned by Moore into compositions of tectonic and

Luce, a collaborator of the British Council's Arts Department in London, discussed the artist's achievement from the philosophical point of view; then the Hungarian sculptor, Miklós Borsos, Kossuth-Prize winner, analysed the great English artist's works.

Nearly eight-thousand people visited the show in twelve days, including several schools. On a single day—October 29—there were 1,510 visitors.

This important event in British-Hungarian artistic relations elicited considerable response from the Hungarian public. The official organ of the Hungarian Writers' Association, *Élet és Irodalom* ("Life and Literature"), has voiced the demand for similar shows.

The New Hungarian Quarterly takes this occasion to publish the address held by Miklós Borsos as well as an essay by the eminent British art critic Robert Melville, who sent us this contribution at our request.

geometrical forms of infinite calmness, although the postures of the figures are nearly identical. By a reversed interaction of shapes and by the use of asymmetry he created the symbols of pristine femininity and motherhood.

By the late 'twenties he had adopted surrealistic tendencies. Mixing elements of female forms, of animal, plasmatic and other elements, he created compositions resembling swamp monsters, often reminiscent of configurations by Breughel. At the same time, he also produced variations of his female figures. However much he "abstracted" the forms of the human body, he could not—or would not—reject figurative representation. The works that may be called the "most abstract" in his *oeuvre*, were created in this period, about 1934. They are shapes hewn into stone, the titles of which do not refer to anything but the obvious "Two Forms," "Three Forms," *etc.* They are shapes, carved into stone, resembling polished mechanical forms and displaying fine patterns of chiselled lines on their surfaces. An intersected circle, vertical and horizontal lines break up the monotony of the surfaces. From various kinds of African and Australian wood of special beauty he carved, in 1939, his exquisite shapes resembling chestnuts. In most cases he hollowed out one half of the shape and thus created a form like a chestnut whose shell contains two fruits beautifully fitted into and connected with each other. They are entitled "Two Forms." Similar shapes, though somewhat more strongly pierced, were later closely encircled with yarn. The effect achieved in this way was highly artistic and conjured up the charm of ancient musical instruments. But his instinctive talent for sculpture could not be satisfied with such subjects, and he returned to figures. The Second World War broke out. His studio was destroyed during one of the first air raids on London. The idea of the head with a helmet was first conceived at that time. The finest and most dramatic variation of this theme was completed ten years later, in 1950. With dramatic power, stronger than any realistic portrayal, these "Helmeted Heads" express the terrors of war man had to endure. It is not a hero who looks out through two awe-inspiring holes, from the shell of armour, but the eyes of a terrified and trembling worm. His youthful experiences at Cambrai—the moaning, the human flesh mingled with mud, the sufferings of men in the sea of gas—as well as the hell of the air raids of the Second World War were all needed for a great artist to be able to express all the terrors man can feel. The Second World War brought a new turn to his art. He began to draw the world of air-raid shelters, of sewers and tunnels. This work was commissioned by the Government. He always remained palpable in his drawings; and in his writings too he required that a sculptor should always design in space,

taking into consideration the surroundings—space being an element of sculpture and, as it were, a medium of the sculptor. Moore's drawings are so rich that to deal with them adequately would require a separate study; still I have to touch upon them, for these drawings play a decisive part in the development of his later sculptures. Dead-tired and sleeping, wrapped in blankets and shawls, the people of the shelters and cellars are lying side by side, or else they sit leaning against the wall, facing each other. There is a female figure crawling on the ground, like a ghost creeping out of the coffin at the last judgement. She is dragging herself along in pitch darkness. Whither is she going? There is no answer to this question. Dantesque pictures! At the sight of these drawings one may well ask, what has become of "pure sculpture?" Suffering had devastated the pure and polished forms, whose place was now taken by palpability and a dramatic quality. In his drawings Moore uses every means to enhance palpability. Pencil, Chinese ink, water-colour and chalk are used on the same sheet, which, nevertheless, always maintains unity. Here I might mention a later series of drawings representing miners—also commissioned by the Government. They depict subterranean blackness, huge backs in caverns, tiny lantern lights that fail to beautify the black world into which our fellow-creatures descend day after day.

In 1943 Moore was commissioned to make a statue of the Madonna with the Infant for St. Matthew's Church in Northampton. Here I refer to his own records according to which the artist must make allowances—if not a compromise—to produce a sculpture for such a purpose. The work is noble and monumental in its appearance. It evokes the Medici Madonna, although it bears no relation to it in form. But the same earnest dignity emanates from the face and figure. This most beautiful Madonna of our time is a perfectly balanced work. The Madonna's stylized drapery is still something arbitrary. The thought of a sculpture with drapery was conceived and developed in the drawings of the shelters. However, this had to wait for a time yet. In the meantime he made a number of surrealistic figures of unbelievable variety, the starting point being the human form. One of his biographers remarked that, although Moore may forget about possible forms, he will never forget about the human element. These grotesque compositions of forms—with recumbent figures—emanate a quixotic mood. After the war he made the three large-size female figures, the "Three Parcae," with which he won the Grand Prix of sculpture at the Venice Biennale in 1948. The most diverse elements of form are mixed in this group of statues. "Abstract" heads, naturalistic hands and breasts, and decorative, stylized draperies. It is a poetic and monumental

work in its open-air effect. His most beautiful recumbent figure was made in 1952. Moore threw off all self-imposed constraint and covered the calmly reclining figure, lovely in its proportions and devoid of distortion, with simple, but immensely rich draperies, which pour over the limbs like a cascade, reminiscent of the marvellous, living garments that undulate on the bodies of the Parthenon's two goddesses. The head and face of the sculpture are of exceptional beauty. In form too it shows a fully balanced unity. Had Moore created no other sculpture than this, he would be one of the century's great sculptors. His duality still makes itself felt. In the period when he made this draped figure he also carved, from a huge tree-trunk, his abstract composition "Inner and Outer Form": a shell, shaped like the coffin of a mummy, is opened up; inside there is a spherical form on an undulant stem. It is like a germinating plant, sprouting and forcing its way to the surface in spring. In this work he points to the unity of nature and man, for in the same way as the seed germinates within the shell and husk, life takes shape in the human body. Leonardo da Vinci, in his splendid didactic series of drawings, pointed to the same idea. Moore's composition of two figures, consisting of strange and different forms, "King and Queen," was also made in the early 'fifties. Notwithstanding its heterogeneity of form, this work has great charm. Instead of offering an explanation, I quote Moore himself* "The idea of the work was conceived when I was reading tales to my little daughter. I was inspired by the world of the kings and queens of yore. I was not thinking of kings of our present time but of very ancient ones. I feel that, despite their abstract and faun-like form, the heads have some royal quality as well." Indeed, like the poor king and queen of the fairy tales, when their realm does not happen to be besieged by the enemy, this couple is sitting on a bench as village folk will do on a Sunday afternoon.

It was rather late in his career that Moore visited Greece. But this journey had a decisive influence on his activity. After his stay in Greece he made the sculpture "Warrior with a Shield." Both in form and in spirit this work is so much at variance with his entire former *oeuvre* that one cannot but surmise an artistic conflict. Everything that he had repudiated—and until then even avoided in his works—as it were exploded in this sculpture. The gesture he had rejected now made its appearance! So did the pictorial quality of the surface, vibrating more intensely than in Rodin's statues. Anatomy, condemned before, now appeared in the details of form. In its mutilated form the sculpture is movingly epic and dramatic.

* Retranslated from the Hungarian.

His second warrior is the "Fallen Warrior," in which the artist expresses himself even more freely and dramatically. Like a cast-away toy, the figure with the shield has been hurled to the ground, but only his right elbow and left heel touch the earth. The shapes are twisted and horrifying. There is a hole in the head, giving a sense of death, and a shield in the hand. When looking at it one cannot help wondering whether man can indeed only be killed but not defeated.

The first variation of the UNESCO sculpture is a female nude sitting in front of an irregular wall. It is alive in its palpability. However, the final variant suited the given site much better. In this sculpture Moore summarized the problems of his whole life-work. Gigantic forms alternate with caves and mountains. This composition is like a rocky landscape, or like a cliff brought up from the depths of the sea.

I shall conclude with the artist's words: "Good art must contain abstract as well as realistic elements; it must be classic and romantic, orderly and playful, expressing things both known and unknown." Moore has never exchanged the sculptor's chisel for the welding-torch, nor stone for wire. His winning personality deserves particular respect. His life is spent in work, his powerful, earnest figure can always be found in his studio, among his sculptures.

HENRY MOORE

by

ROBERT MELVILLE

In the art of Henry Moore, the geography of woman mingles with vegetable and mineral substances to form sacred images of the natural world. His sculpture tends to personify the material he fashions. It seems to spring from the instinct to attribute a soul to inanimate nature, and when James Johnson Sweeney speaks of Moore's power to find in a block of stone or billet of wood 'forms that symbolize the life he feels in them... as if he were merely stripping away the concealing shell,' he is paying tribute to the sculptor's animistic vision.

Sir Herbert Read, who has a profound appreciation of Moore's sculpture, specifically rejects the idea that modern art can be identified with any revival of animism, which represents a primitive stage in human development: he considers the work of Moore to be 'inherently humanist.' But it seems to me that throughout his career, Moore has created works which provide a kind of animistic shield against the purely human level of existence which is predicated by the humanistic suppression of the divine. A number of his pre-war drawings were, in this respect, peculiarly revealing, since they could be described as intimate records of his propensity for day-dreaming about sculpture as if it were leading its own life and seeking to dominate us.

In the middle thirties, for instance, he made a drawing in which large rough-cut stone forms occupy a landscape and constitute a threat to some distant white temples; in 1939, the drawing entitled 'Sculptural Object in Landscape' depicts a gigantic bone which has never been covered by flesh, and it is evident that the sculptor has in mind a situation in which an entire countryside is menaced by an organic abstraction. This is very far from a humanist conception; it might even be said to link the religion of art with what the early fathers of the Church denounced as the worship of sticks and stones.

His work has always maintained a relationship with the forms created by natural forces—flints, pebbles, calcined bones, even leaves, as exemplified in the exquisite little leaf personages cast in 1952—and with the configurations of the land—hills and valleys, hollows and ridges, caves and pot-holes and the concavities of coastal erosion.

His doctrine of 'truth to material' arose out of his profound feeling for the natural object, and in the past even his carved reclining nudes were

like monuments to countless pebbles rolled by countless tides, or to all the fallen trees that have ever been hollowed by burrowing insects and polished by the wind and the weather: they bear only as much resemblance to woman as a stone or a piece of wood can naturally yield without becoming an imitation of another substance, and for this reason they are among the most potent nature goddesses ever conceived, rivalling the greatest of those created by archaic and primitive carvers.

During the period from 1932 to the beginning of the war, when his greatest series of carved reclining figures emerged, he was also engaged on a series of abstract carvings: they are as shape-conscious as the sculpture of Brancusi, but there is no emulation of Brancusi's purity and detachment. On the contrary, one has the impression that Moore is probing into a world which existed before man came upon the scene; searching in the darkness of pre-history for an alternative evolutionary process.

The earliest works in stone, those for instance in which a mother-and-child image emerged from the block (there was one carved in 1922 in which the child totally fills the gap between the belly and raised knees of the mother, and another, carved in 1925, where the child is on the mother's shoulders), show so much concern with the weight, density and immovability of stone that there is no point at which they are not joined. The effect of massiveness thus created is almost too powerful; it is as if his figures are being pressed tightly together by some implacable force. In both cases, the images intensify one's sense of the impacted nature of stone, and this is why they can be called personifications of the material they are made of.

It was perhaps the very intensity with which Moore was able to exemplify his respect for material in these early works that led to his use of cavities and hollowed forms, which become so profoundly appropriate in those pre-war carvings of reclining figures which stress the relationship between sculpture and landscape. The sensitiveness with which this boring and mining of the figure was accomplished, to create inner space, modified his conception of 'truth to material' in the sense that the sculpture became a spontaneous image of the infusion of matter with spirit.

This use of cavities to allow light and air to pour into and through the figure, is in accord with his belief that sculpture is primarily an art of the open air. 'Daylight, *Sunlight* is necessary to it,' he once said, 'and for me its best setting and complement is nature. I would rather have my sculpture put in a landscape, almost any landscape, than in or on the most beautiful building I know.'

I think he had stone carving in mind when he made this statement, and in particular the 'Three Standing Figures' in Battersea Park. This group was carved in 1947—48 and is intimately connected with the war-time drawings in which Moore very movingly recorded the restricted life led by Londoners in underground shelters during the air raids; the carved group commemorates the coming out into light and freedom, and the uplifted heads express not only a sense of unrestricted space, but refer back to the apprehensiveness with which the skies were scanned for enemy 'planes in the war years. Since then, Moore has worked more frequently in bronze than stone, and although bronze does not strike one as being as intimate with the land as stone, a number of his larger casts have been given settings in wild and open landscape, as well as in public parks; but his forms have so deep-rooted a congruity with nature that they naturally assume—as no naturalistic figures could do—the role of guardian, and they seem to be watching the approaches to hill and dale on behalf of all their invisible denizens.

There have been many signs since the war that Moore has been troubled by the rival claims of the human effigy and the sculptural object, and there have been times when the form references to his earlier achievements have had the look of nostalgic interjections, as in a medium-size bronze, cast in 1953, where the abstracted and twisted torso seems to be arbitrary, since the general effect is of a study, unique in his work, of the pathos of human nakedness.

The concern with bronzes implies that the sculptor no longer adheres to the doctrine of 'truth to material' without reserve: obviously it is a doctrine that is more relevant to carving than to modelling, and it is clear from the big stone carving set in the Bond Street façade of the Time-Life building, and the ambitious carving in elm called 'Internal and External Forms' and the reclining figure in marble recently completed for the UNESCO building in Paris that when Moore carves in stone or wood he continues to involve himself in a collaboration with the structure of the material. But the four abstract stone carvings for the terrace-screen of the Time-Life building are less important as a contribution to Moore's expressive development than as a brilliant solution of an architect's dilemma, and if Moore could have had his way and put them on turntables to provide different views of the stones and produce various effects of projection, it might well have revolutionized the role of solid sculpture in architectural settings. Then again, the wood carving, 'Internal and External Forms,' perfectly exemplifies 'truth to material' at the craft level, and the grain of the wood is used superbly to contour the forms, bu it lacks

the ambiguous life of the pre-war sculptural objects. And strangely enough, since it is essentially conceived as a carving, the bronze version of the UNESCO figure seems to have much more life and presence than the marble.

All the same, it is the bronzes which now dominate the situation. It is not so much the modelling technique as such, nor the lean, lithe forms that have emerged as the result of it, that indicate a change of direction, but a new attitude to subject-matter, an attitude which gives the bronzes a discursive, dramatic and openly symbolic content.

Even the beautiful 'Draped Reclining Figure' cast in 1952—53, which is still close to a static carving conception, is of quite a different order to the nature goddesses in stone and wood. She does not come out of the earth, but wears a mantle of earth as her emblem, in much the same way as Gothic martyrs bear the instruments of their martyrdom, for the treatment of the drapery turns into a symbolic wrapping composed of countless furrows and rivulets of bronze which resemble aerial photographs of the texture of untilled hillsides.

Perhaps nothing is more indicative of the change in the content of the sculpture than the drastic way in which Moore now interprets the *objet-trouvé*. This is evident in 'Warrior with Shield,' in which the torso and severed leg must have been determined by the appearance of the flint or rough stone which provided the 'germ' of the figure. Before Moore became absorbed by the technique of modelling, his 'recognition' of such a stone would not have led to the making of a human figure. He would have been more inclined to make a 'stone form' without any explicit reference to animal life, but with a mysterious life of its own. What we have now is something much more dramatic. The adding of limbs and shield to a 'given' torso is done with great sensibility, and an almost story-telling imagination is at work in the making of the head form, for its congruity with the flinty torso springs from the artist's sense of what the warrior has 'been through.' To quote Sir Herbert Read again, the forms of this figure 'do not flatter a widespread nostalgia for naturalism,' but they do disclose an explicit concern with the human situation.

One of the most fascinating examples of Moore's concern with the symbolical significance of his figures is the bronze called 'King and Queen.' As the sculptor himself has remarked, it is connected with the archaic or primitive idea of Kingship. The hands and the feet of these two remarkable figures are naturalistic, the heads belong, like the torso of the 'Warrior,' to the surrealist period of 'the found object interpreted,' and the treatment of the torsos is influenced by pre-Columbian pottery figures, but the juxta-position has been effected with immense skill, and the group as a

whole is a brilliant resolution of a conflict between a static, hieratic approach to form and a dynamic, humanist one. Yet in both the 'King and Queen' and the 'Warrior' there are instinctive intimations of a pre-Christian era, as if he were still trying to avoid the purely human level by envisaging an archaic people which might well have had animistic beliefs.

Moore is now able to move about in his creative past as if it were a world in itself with many regions still only partly explored. In 1934 he carved out of stone a superb pot-like figure with a closed top pierced by a hole and with feminine protuberances rising gently from its smoothly curved surface. It is a work of which John Russell has justly remarked that it is the most concentrated and self-contained example of the pre-war carvings in which Moore developed 'a swelling, outward-thrusting movement' and refers to 'the mysterious, even, powerful and yet perfectly contained swelling of the stone which seems, however irrationally, to have been modelled outwards from within.'* Moore began to explore this aspect of his form again after he completed the 'Warrior.' He modelled the figures in clay and they were achieved by a compulsive kneading far removed from the carving technique, but in the 'head' of the very remarkable bronze called the 'Glenkiln Cross,' cast in 1956, there is even a reminiscence of the forms of the 1934 carving.

The 'Glenkiln Cross' is a tall, slim work, 11 feet high, but it bears no resemblance to the leanness of some of his earlier bronzes, and suggests fullness and expansiveness; a swelling and ripening.

The tall, squarish pillar which lifts the figure into the air is itself an abstract sculpture. This puts it in line with several other recent works in which figure and base draw organic and abstract forms into an intimate relationship. There are, for instance, the 'Seated Woman on Steps,' of which the large version was completed in 1958, the 'Reclining Figure with Pedestal' cast last year, in which the figure seems to be lying on her own sarcophagus, and the series of figures standing or sitting against curved or straight walls which are related to the pre-war drawings of figures in prison-like settings with slotted walls, but create a sense of spaciousness and freedom.

The 'Glenkiln Cross' is named after a farm at Shawhead in Scotland, where the first cast stands. Moore says that it is 'meant to be a rudimentary worn-down cross—the cross and the figure on the cross being merged together'*, but I don't think he really meant to imply that he started to

* Henry Moore: *Stone and Wood Carvings.* Marlborough Fine Art Ltd., 1961.

make this piece of sculpture with ideas about a crucifixion in mind: I think he is simply telling us what the finished work suggests to him. I think that if the crucifixion idea had been preconceived, it would have compelled him to effect a more drastic interpenetration of figure and pillar. The idea that the projecting forms near the top of the figure might be a worn-down cross-piece arises from the assumption that they are vestigial arms, but they are so deeply involved in a sensuous conception of swelling and ripening that they do nothing to weaken the sense of a single, self-sufficient mass.

I would not wish the 'Glenkiln Cross' to be given another name, its Celtic ring is somehow appropriate, but this splendid bronze doesn't contain for me the intimations of a crucifixion which Moore himself finds in it. It seems to be quite free from ideas about suffering, sacrifice, death or life after death, and although in a different social climate it could arouse reverence or veneration or even fear, it is first and foremost a monument to that sense of the life of forms to which Cézanne was referring when he said 'an ideal of art—that is to say, a conception of nature.'

The 'Glenkiln Cross' is the first of a series of works in which Moore becomes peculiarly responsive to clay considered as an object of desire. In the powerful 'Woman' of 1958 the kneading and squeezing is so compulsive that one has the impression that it is only the sculptor's habitual knowledge of the figure that causes this or that swelling to relate itself to a particular part of a woman's anatomy, and in 'Three Motives against a Wall' made a year later, the organic protuberances relate to nothing outside themselves, and one has the faintly horrifying feeling that they could have been formed in total darkness.

In 1960, Moore exhibited two divided reclining figures in bronze—one of them rounded and boulder-like, the other square-cut and cliff-like—which may well be the richest, grandest, most monumental statements of the theme that has preoccupied him for thirty years: the double image of woman and landscape. They can, I think, be considered as the most reassuring of his many great contributions to the conceptual art of our time.

Behind us there are several centuries of striving to capture the exact appearance of the phenomenal world in works of art, and it would be surprising if we were quite untroubled by the seeming *insouciance* with which the modern artist has negated that struggle. Try as we will, we find it difficult to dissociate the artist's distortions of the figure from the threat of the living mutant which lies at the heart of our fear of the atomic age. The profound sense of reassurance that colours our response to these two reclining figures is brought about by the feeling that there has been no interference with human appearance. The emphasis is upon

the landscape element. They are images of rocky landscape which bear an 'accidental' resemblance to woman. They have the look of being products of the earth itself. They are bronzes, but we see them as outcrops of stone, formed far back in geological time; and so the resemblance to woman assumes the significance of a prediction in prehistory. They tie us more securely to the idea of our total involvement in nature than the images which give the forms of woman a resemblance to landscape, for they seem less contrived. Even the break in these images, the division into two parts, makes its contribution to their effect upon us, since it somehow identifies the destiny of man with the duration of the world.

In the essay from which I have already quoted, John Russell says: 'His subject has been the endurance of the human body and its powers of self-renewal; and when he now deals with these themes it is as our appointed public orator, whose every move is watched and recorded.' It's a terrible burden to impose upon an artist. If Moore is equal to it, it is because in everything he makes he offers us the freedom of the world, which is our own sensuous fulfilment.

THEATRE AND FILM

ROUND THE BUDAPEST THEATRES

It has been said before that in Hungary, as in the other socialist countries, theatrical life has in the last decade and a half taken on an organizational form that is different from that found in the West. The transformation whose principal feature is a single centralized, state-controlled chain of theatres covering the country as a whole is by now virtually complete. As a result, the number of permanent companies in the field, as indeed the standard of their performances, has risen considerably, and the theatres are now drawing capacity audiences never dreamt of before. Last season, theatrical attendance shot up to well above six million, or more than half the country's population. This theatre-going 'explosion' is accompanied by a burst of effervescent activity in the theatrical world. In seeking to point out the main forces behind this ferment, it is easiest to draw parallels on the basis of the eternal, dramatic clash between the old and the succeeding new—always remembering that 'old' and 'new' in this domain have in many respects acquired different meanings from what they had before.

There is, of course, nothing novel about the fact that, in the Hungarian theatre as in other theatres, the laws of nature work their changes unhindered. In the course of the last season, several illustrious actors of the old guard left the stage for ever, among them such revered personages as Frida Gombaszögi, Gábor Rajnay and Kálmán Rózsahegyi and such an important member of the active guard as József Timár. What *is* new is the sudden massive break-through achieved by the young generation of actors and actresses. The Hungarian theatre today boasts a legion of players who have come to the fore over the last ten or fifteen years. This is only partially accounted for by the general prosperity and the unparalleled demand for actors and technicians on the part of the new theatre companies, the film industry, the radio and up-and-coming television.

The hungry need for fresh talent has proved a mixed blessing, as it is often accompanied by a break-down of youthful players cutting off more than they can chew, scamped productions, resort to spoof expedients, *etc.* A few companies have adopted the very sympathetic practice of casting Academy of Dramatic Art students in some of their productions. A deplorable drawback of this practice is that students are signed up and put to the gruelling test of first performances without their abilities having been adequately tried out previously. On the other hand, this surging forward of young talents has many encouraging aspects. Bold experiments have grown in number in the capital as well as in the provinces, with the latter often taking the initiative thanks to the efforts of a few old actors who have retained their independence of style and to some young players willing to

take chances and spare no effort in the interests of their development. The young actors and actresses of the capital are trying to justify their existence and demonstrate their aspirations in many a studio performance.

The emergence of a number of new directors is also a new factor, as is, in general, the higher status now accorded to directors and to setting and costume designers. Here too increased opportunities are operating as an incentive to ambitious artists, stimulating their enterprising spirit. Yet this situation has its dangers as well as benefits. Rushed work—this most insidious breeder of dull routine—often tells on the performance even of reputed old hands; and as far as young directors are concerned, the gravest threat to good achievements on their part comes in the form of a lack of maturity and an eclectic manipulation of pleasing effects.

The clash between old and new ways is most striking in the style of acting. Here the old way is represented not by any full-fledged classicism sanctified as *the* norm. Gone are the last exponents of the declamatory, grand style which was evolved during the National Theatre's second flowering at the turn of the century, while the handful of latter-day successors who perpetuate a muted version of that long-extinct style—now but a faint echo of the original—are glaringly out of place in any cast of modern plays which includes young actors. The old, conventional way seems to be represented rather by the realist style with which the bourgeois theatre emerged early in this century and which has acquired fresh content, purpose and meaning in the Socialist realism of our day. The principal model is the realist style which is hallmarked by Stanislavsky's name; but the modern political pathos evoking the passion and dynamism of the revolutionary struggle is not foreign to it either. This style, which has a fairly impressive record of successes, has grown somewhat academic on the Hungarian stage, and so it is understandable that it should have been challenged—and that not without success—from several sides by tendencies striving to rejuvenate and modernize it, and thus to achieve greater variety. These innovatory enterprises have met with little serious resistance—indeed, a truly fossilized, rigid and overriding tradition can scarcely be said to have developed in the new Hungarian theatre. Both the Hungarian histrionic temperament, ever leaning towards impressionism, to which a kind of *ad libbing* vivacity lends real buoyancy, and the policy pursued by our theatres, which prefers the varied repertory program to long-run plays, offer little scope for such fossilization.

It is not as a previously unheard-of revolutionary reform, elaborated in detail and consistently carried through by some *avant-garde*, that the new tendencies are making their appearance. Two—often intermingling—main trends are at play, which seem to be worthy of note.

One is associated with the passionate interest in personal, intimately lyrical themes taken from private life. Obviously, plays like Chekhov's "Uncle Vanya" or Tennessee Williams' "Orpheus Descending" require the method of soft gestures, intimate diction, delicate pastel effects. In this direction some of our players and directors have come near to the limits of the bated, almost imperceptible gesture, the soft, almost tiptoe, gliding movement, and speech that blurs grey into grey.

The other trend has re-introduced some more boisterous and more colourful—often even too spectacular—media. The various offshoots of this rather composite trend are usually referred to by the collective term of non-naturalistic theatre. Its principal characteristics are: suggested sceneries and costumes; stylized movement and speech; 'alienation effects' (direct appeals to the audience, asides to technicians off-stage, *etc.)* that break through the bounds of the classic or realistic stage; and, in the plays

themselves, the rejection of the conventional rules of dramaturgy. One reason why these experiments are meeting with success in theatres in this country is that in their first flowering period abroad, in the early twenties, Hungary had known them by mere report at most. They represent, as a matter of fact, a second flowering of the great theatrical revolution which at the time issued from the Soviet Union and, after sweeping across into the Germany of the Weimar Republic—mainly Berlin—found its way to America. Now, purged of much of its former muddle-headedness, it again has a fertilizing effect through its tested and proven achievements. It is not fortuitous that the Hungarian theatre has seen a simultaneous renascence of all those initiatives which at that early period led to Eisenstein's and Pudovkin's world-famous films and to Piscator's Berlin experiments. We have recently witnessed the successful unfolding, one after the other, of productions like Brecht's and Weil's "Beggar's Opera" *(Dreigroschenoper)* and Pagodin's "Aristocrats"—productions that, put on the stage almost simultaneously in the Soviet Union and Germany three decades ago, turned to good account in well-written, highly-effective plays the achievements of this theatrical revolution.

There is no denying the fact that this multifarious experimentation (which is not always fed from autochtonous sources) carries not only the promise of rejuvenation, of revival, but also the danger of hasty imitation. As it is taking shape, the program policy of our theatres too is characterized by the dichotomy of an encouraging prospect and a remarkable danger. It equally embodies such sympathetic traits as varied interests, readiness to take chances, and an imposing sense of responsibility, side by side with such disheartening symptoms as a snug plodding along the beaten track, the routine of least resistance, easy success and superficial eclecticism.

Classics are accorded an important place in the repertory of the Hungarian theatres—the hegemony, in this field, of the National Theatre is now a thing of the past; though, of course, that theatre, as well as its 'little theatre'—the Katona József Theatre—invariably make a point of keeping alive the classic tradition. Still, this year again, they have renounced their exclusive claim to the great Greeks in favour of a group of young players and directors who for several years now have been making successful attempts at producing, during the summer closure, a number of Greek tragedies. Last summer's dramas—staged, as usual, at the *Körszínház* in Budapest's City Park—were Aeschylus' "Prometheus Bound" and Euripides' "Iphigenia at Aulis" (the first preceded by a judicious curtain-raiser).*

Summer open-air theatres in the provinces have also not been averse to producing classics—suffice it to mention Pécs, where Mihály Vörösmarty's fairy-tale romance, *Csongor és Tünde*, was produced, and Szeged, whose Cathedral Square has become the traditional site for outdoor performances of Imre Madách's philosophical verse-drama, "The Tragedy of Man." This play, by the way, is a repertory piece at the National Theatre of Budapest, and its manager has directed the Szeged production, giving some of its scenes—particularly the controversial Phalanstery scene—a topical interpretation and some very effective staging of mass scenes; much of the experience gained at Szeged he has turned to good account in the current Budapest production, which ranks among his most mature. Hungarian classics seem to have been slightly overshadowed this year: besides József Katona's *Bánk Bán*—another obligatory drama on the program of the National Theatre—the only other Hungarian classic billed is a play, now revived under what is its third title of *Mákvirágok* ("The Scapegraces"), by a late

* See also "An Experiment in Greek Drama" by the present author in The New Hungarian Quarterly, Vol. II, No. 1, pp. 187-191.—The Editor.

19th-century playwright belonging to the school of critical realism.

Shakespeare and Molière retain their firm hold on the Hungarian stage—the former too represented, for the time being, by comedies. The National Theatre has carried over from the previous season "Twelfth Night" and "Much Ado About Nothing"; to these has been added a successful revival at the Katona József Theatre of "All's Well That Ends Well." The company's production of Molière's "Tartuffe"—with the manager giving his most celebrated interpretation in the title part—has been standing the test of time for over ten years, and a smooth-running production of *Le Bourgeois gentilhomme* has lost nothing of its popularity. For the production of these classic comedies the National Theatre company has evolved a colourful interpretation that relies on strong contrasting effects, quickly shifting sceneries and attractive costumes, and is marked by a lively rhythm, a buoyancy, and a frolicking humour that does not disdain burlesque effects. On the other hand, it runs the grave risk of becoming uniform, since Shakespeare and Molière are presented in this interpretation in almost identical forms, inevitably suggesting that both authors lived in and gave expression to the same period. An interesting though hopeless venture—one that, like all previous attempts in this line, was foredoomed to failure—was the Vígszínház's (Comedy Theatre's) production of Goethe's "Faust"—both parts on the same evening! It is only the historical interest displayed by audiences newly introduced to the theatre that keeps this production precariously alive.

Last season, as before, plays by the 20th-century classics, Tolstoy and G. B. Shaw, were solid successes. For years now, "Pygmalion" has proved singularly tenacious at the Katona József Theatre, where an able, witty revival of "Major Barbara" is emerging as another hit. Two Tolstoy plays are running currently in Hungarian theatres. "The Living Corpse" represents a model of small-stage production; its psychological realism is wrapped in an atmosphere whose interpretation requires painstaking efforts on the part of actors and director alike; the difficulty of this task is here and there greater than that presented by Chekhov's plays. The National Theatre's fine production, under the guidance of the Soviet guest director, G. G. Konsky, has given Ferenc Bessenyei, in particular, a good opportunity for a thoughtfully prepared small-stage interpretation which fascinates by a simplicity that is almost entirely devoid of superficial trappings. The other Tolstoy production is a stage-version of "War and Peace," an adaptation which, when it was first performed at the time of the Weimar Republic, thrilled the Berlin theatrical world. Its unconventional "style-breaking" devices —superimposed stages, hinted-at settings and the epic-expressionistic character of its dramatic construction—has been holding the attention of Hungarian audiences for the second year. One of the ingredients of its success is the interest—already pointed out—with which the theatrical world of this country is turning to the renascence of a once-so-ardently-revolutionary avantgardism.

Thanks to this revival, Bertholt Brecht's dramas are coming into their own on the Hungarian stage. After performances of several of his major plays and a fairly wide discussion of his method, the Madách Theatre has carried over from the previous season an expertly polished production of the "Caucasian Chalk Circle," while the "Beggar's Opera" is continuing its successful run at the Petőfi Theatre, which is devoting itself to the staging of musicals, a genre that has gained popularity in this country too. Several attempts have been made at developing a specifically Hungarian version, the latest being Endre Illés' adaptation of *Szegény gazdagok* ("Rich Paupers"), a late novel by Mór Jókai, which delves into the lower depths of Hungarian life at the end of the 19th century (lyrics by

János Erdődy; music by Tibor Polgár). Revealing a divergence of temper and taste, this trio have not succeeded in bringing into being a really harmonious production. The great model still unsurpassed remains Brecht's and Weil's *Dreigroschenoper*, produced with a rare degree of congeniality.

That Brecht's and Weil's work—and, for that matter, the one-time Berlin avant-gardism as a whole—has its roots in the world of the theatrical revolution of post-revolutionary Russia, has been brought home to Hungarian playgoers by the production, among other things, of Pagodin's previously mentioned play, "Aristocrats." The Jókai company's production evoked the avant-gardism of the 1920's also by creating a kind of cockpit stage, placed in the middle of the theatre, to be viewed from two sides, and, at times, involving the audience in the action of the play, as well as by the boldly simplified, hinted-at settings and a style of acting that at times becomes pantomime. Both director and cast have managed to convey the peculiar, half playful, half serious atmosphere—now workaday and harsh, now tender and pathetic—of this "optimistic comedy." The play treats of the intelligent and courageous struggle which turns the inmates—common felons, truants and saboteurs—of a detention camp into useful workers, dedicated to a splendid constructive enterprise. One component of the success of this play is still the boldness of the dramatist in revealing the effect on individual lives of conflicts arising out of community interests.

It is by means like these that audiences—including newly recruited ones—enter into genuine, personal contact with the dramatic parables that are performed on the stage. Hence the invariable and understandable success of plays that treat, with modern media, of modern problems—whether cheerful or painful—that are familiar to the ordinary playgoer. This is borne out, *inter alia*, by Pavel Kohout's internationally successful play, "So Great a Love," whose popularity in Hungary continues undiminished after a run of several years and also by the public's keen interest in the accomplished production of Arthur Miller's "A View from the Bridge." There is, of course, a point beyond which this audience can hardly follow such authors as yet (or any more?). For instance, it is only an efficient season-ticket system that provides Tennessee Williams' "Orpheus Descending" with a precarious existence at the Comedy Theatre: the underworld atmosphere of the play, its strange characters, its packed yet airy symbolism, and a dialogue that verges on the abstractly lyrical—all these make the play rather abstruse, so that it can be followed by a few initiates only. Anyhow, this very difficult play is apparently well beyond the still limited capabilities of the Comedy Theatre. The Soviet authoress Vera Panova's "Goodbye to White Nights" is also characterized by the fact that issues of universal import arise and are solved in the sphere of the individual's life. Derived from the lives of young Soviet citizens—some irresponsible, others fully aware of the responsibility human relationships impose on the individual—the theme is developed to a greater extent, perhaps, than it ought to be, on the emotional plane. Building up dramatic situations that are well-considered from the moral point of view and well-founded psychologically is not a strong point of the authoress. She seems better at constructing scenes that move by their tenderness (or their brutality), and it is, indeed, these that the Madách Theatre's production stresses.

Two recently presented plays stand out from among a good number of new Hungarian dramas; they are: *A két Bolyai* ("The Two Bolyais") by László Németh and *Az elveszett paradicsom* ("Paradise Lost") by Imre Sarkadi. The one is a historico-biographical play, the other has a present-day subject.

László Németh spent years of research on the lives—both in their human and scientific aspects—of these two Hungarian

geniuses of the turn of the 18th century.* His play condenses into a few succinct and tense scenes the clash of these two men of incompatible character: Farkas Bolyai, a man of versatile talent whom Gauss, the celebrated mathematician, had, during their university years, called his friend and a genius, holds a mastership at a college in a little town of Transylvania and fritters away his extraordinary gifts in everyday trifles, in social intercourse, in fabricating contraptions that are of no use and in carrying on mathematical experiments. He pins all his hopes on his son, János, for whom he has managed, thanks to support from his aristocratic patrons, to provide an excellent education. He proudly looks upon his son—who has already shown the mark of genius by solving the problem of a dubious Euclidean axiom—as an achievement of his educational passion. When the ailing young János, captain of the imperial engineers, gets himself pensioned off and returns to his father's home, the old man looks forward to a happy coexistence and fruitful cooperation between educationist and scientist. However, the son breaks out of the magic circle of his father: he aspires to greater things than the mere solution of one doubtful axiom—his ambition is to create a new world in the place of the discarded Euclidean geometry. These two antithetical characters come into increasingly tense conflict one with the other as a result of jealousies, scholarly, male and human—imaginary and real; yet they are unable to make a clean break: Farkas is left to himself, while János seeks refuge in writing his "Science of Salvation," a work designed to re-create a moral order.

Németh laboured at length in building up his drama. The initial version, consisting of a sequence of scenes of epic breadth, was gradually cut down and has at last been compressed into a single setting and confined within narrow time limits. The further his work proceeded, the more was the stress shifted towards the psychological issue, onto the personal plane. It was in this manner that the author eventually evolved the dramatic psychological portraiture that constitutes one of the chief values of the play—a portraiture drawn with rare intuitive power by means of an analytical method that probes the deep recesses of the soul, and expressed, even in its monumentality, with extraordinary terseness. The other value is the strange patina of its idiom, relying as it does on a quaint syntax rather than on the use of archaic words or individual coinages for creating an historical and personal atmosphere that is extraordinarily succinct without being unintelligible, vehemently dramatic without being high-flown, and verging on the poetical without being artificial.

Plays about creative intellectual geniuses present an almost insuperable problem, and with this problem László Németh, for his part, has been grappling with rather little hope of success. How can you evoke dramatically the reality of a mathematical genius? Audiences well versed in the history of science know beforehand who János Bolyai was and what his contribution to geometry has been; but the unsophisticated spectator is required to believe that the inspired investigation of the axiom of parallelograms led to the creation of a new world, and that this was the work of a genius and the basis of his rightful claim to immortality. Failing that, all he sees from what is passing on the stage is a crabbed, cantankerous, undutiful and unfilial young man, heaping abuse on his unhappy father. Hence Farkas Bolyai's character is more alive, more dramatically convincing than that of his son. His petty jealousies only serve to make him appear more human, and his varied interests are numerous enough to make his character tangible on the stage, perceptible dramatically. It is true, though, that his impersonator, Lajos Básti, who is pivotal in the Katona József Theatre's pro-

* See L. Németh's article, "The Two Bolyais" in The New Hungarian Quarterly, Vol. 1. No. 1. pp. 115-138.—The Editor.

duction, has reached the highest point so far in his histrionic career. He achieves a monumental unity in realizing the elder Bolyai's character.

"The Two Bolyais" is no regular drama; rather, it is a psychological canvas displayed on the stage. When the play is over, one feels that the heroes' careers have been completed at best in a metaphysical sense; indeed, the issues raised in the play are all left open. Zsigmond Móricz's well-known novel, *A fáklya* ("The Torch") ends with the words "It hath been consummated; and nothing hath been resolved." There are those who like to see in this kind of construction the manifestation of a specifically Hungarian style. Be this as it may, one thing is certain: this stylistic tradition has received fresh support in the modern European trend of style, so vigorously asserted on the Hungarian stage too. And it may not be entirely fortuitous that the other new Hungarian play to be discussed, though it derives its theme from present-day life, achieves a similar stylistic result.

The *Paradise Lost* to which the title alludes is the golden time of youth, full of successes and the adventures of a promising talent. Zoltán Sebők, an excellent young physician has recklessly dissipated this golden time and only learns to appreciate its beauty and true value when certain failure already stares him in the face and when, resolved to die, he pays a visit to his father's home, where he meets a young girl with—and for—whom, he feels, life might have been worth living. To all intents and purposes, the basic position here is akin to that in Németh's play. There is, moreover, an uncanny (because, obviously, quite unintentional) analogy between both plays in that, in "Paradise Lost" as in "The Two Bolyais," it is to the father—a versatile, dependable man, who has weathered the hardships of life with staid optimism—that the highly talented son, who, blinded by his individualism, has escaped behind the mask of aggressive cynicism, is driven for refuge in his ultimate distress, a victim to the demons of his own soul. The great dialogue between these two men forms the backbone of the play. The young girl, who holds out a lifeline, and the members of the family, gathered to celebrate the father's birthday, are merely instruments for unfolding the plot. At best, they serve to evoke or reflect a (distorted or glossed over) image of the various motifs of the quarrel the prodigal son is having with either himself or his father.

In length, intensity and passionate excitement, it is the son's part that stands in the forefront of the play: some have called this work—and not without reason—a soliloquy rendered the more impassioned and the more isolated by an interlude and several counterpoints. Indeed, the father—presented as an extremely lovable character—strikes us as a confessor in whose presence the lacerated soul may fearlessly reveal its nakedness; he is like the everlasting reed bank to which the tortured Midas confides his unbearable secret. It is by the dreadful authenticity of this lament rather than by any dramatic quality of its plot that the play drives its point home.

The author of the play, Imre Sarkadi, was one of the most talented among the younger representatives of Hungarian *belles lettres*; he may, indeed, be regarded as the best short-story writer of his generation. His life came to a tragically sudden and premature end as a result of suicide. The play under review was first performed shortly after his death, and everyone who saw it could not but feel that in the lost soul of its hero and in the settling of accounts embodied in him, there vibrated painfully something of the playwright's attempt to square accounts with himself.

Dezső Keresztury

OUR CONTRIBUTORS

NÉMETH, *László* (b. 1901). Prose writer. An author who has been at the centre of so many controversies through the years, he is now undoubtedly the most significant master in every realm of Hungarian prose and one of the most interesting representatives of the Hungarian intellect. Member of the Editorial Board of The New Hungarian Quarterly. (See also his study in Vol. I, No. 1, and his essay in Vol. II, No. 2, of The New Hungarian Quarterly.)

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VAJDA, *Imre* (b. 1900). Economist. Lived for nearly twenty years in Austria as a political émigré, and spent the last years of the Nazi regime in a concentration camp. After 1945 he held various posts as Minister of Foreign Trade, President of the National Planning Bureau, and so on. He was appointed a professor of economics at the Karl Marx University of Economics, Budapest, in 1948, a post he still holds, and was a member of the Hungarian delegation to the 11th session of the United Nations. He has written numerous articles on economics and is the author of "International Trade" published in 1959 in Budapest. Member of the Editorial Board of our periodical. (See also his essays in Vol. I, No. 1, and Vol. II, No. 3, of The New Hungarian Quarterly.)

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GENTHON, *István* (b. 1903) Art historian. Since 1945 has leaded the modern foreign department of the National Museum of Fine Arts. Among the large number of his publications we should mention his comprehensive topography of historical monuments entitled *Magyarország műemlékei* ("Historic Monuments of Hungary"), his volume *Új magyar festőművészet* ("New Hungarian Painting") and his album on the life and art of József Rippl Rónai. (See also his essay on Béni Ferenczy in Vol. I, No. 1, of The New Hungarian Quarterly.)

PASSUTH, *László* (b. 1900). Author of numerous historical novels, translated into numerous foreign languages: *Eső isten siratja Mexikót* (The Rain God Weeps for Mexico), *Nápolyi Johanna* (Johanna of Naples), *A bíborban született* (Porphyrogenitus), *Fekete bársonyban* (Black Velvet), *Négy szél Erdélyben* (Four Winds in Transylvania), *Sárkányfog* (Dragon's Teeth), *Lombard kastély* (Castle in Lombardy), *Lagunák* (The Lagunas). He is a member of the Hungarian PEN Club and member for Hungary of the Community of European Writers. See also his articles "Identities Established" (Vol. II, No. 2) and "Tihany Antique" (Vol. II, No. 3) in our periodical.

NAGY, *Péter* (b. 1920). Literary historian and critic. Has published a number of works on modern Hungarian literature and especially on the question of the Hungarian novel. (See also his essays in several previous issues of The New Hungarian Quarterly.)

LUBY, *Margit* (b. 1885). Acquired a diploma as teacher of Hungarian, history and geography. From her childhood has taken an interest in village customs and has for decades devoted herself to elaborating the pertinent scientific material. Her main works include *Parasztélet rendje* ("The Order of Peasant Life"), 1936, *Bábalelte Babona* ("Midwives' Superstitions"), 1939, *Fogyó legelőkön* ("On Waning Pastures"), *Magyarország felfedezése* ("Discovery of Hungary"), etc.

SZÁSZ, *Imre* (b. 1927). "Up to my university years," writes the author, "I lived in a small provincial town, as charming and pretty as it was boring—so much so. in fact, that I have been fed up with little towns ever since and never even want to write about them. I acquired a teacher's diploma in Hungarian and English but have never engaged in teaching, since in my last year at the university I became reader at a publishing house and have remained such unto this day. My first novel, *Szól a síp* ('The Whistle Blows'), appeared when I was 27; its subject was the period of the liberation struggle under Rákóczi in the eighteenth century. *Vízparti kalauz* ('Water-front Guide'), is a volume of indeterminate literary genre, compounded of meditations, lyricism, short stories and portraits on the riparian life, the fishermen and fishes, in the company of which I spent my days. My novel *Gyertek este kilencre* ('Come at Nine in the Evening'), about modern intellectuals is shortly to be published; a chapter from its pages is presented in this issue. I have translated a goodly number of English and American authors, including Shakespeare, Chaucer and Melville (Moby Dick)."

KARSAI, *Elek* (b. 1922). Acquired his degree at the Loránd Eötvös University, Budapest, in 1946, on the basis of a dissertation on "Child Labour in Industry from the Development of Capitalism to 1914." From 1946 to 49 he worked as assistant at the Sociological Institute of the Loránd Eötvös University, when he joined the staff of the Hungarian National Archives. He is engaged chiefly in the study of the period from the Paris peace treaties to the end of the Second World War.

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FALVY, *Zoltán* (b. 1928). Works at the Bartók Archives of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. His writings deal chiefly with the correlations of and differences between ancient Hungarian and European music. His more important works are "Musical Paleography of Pray's Codex" (1952); "Antiphonarium of Graz" (1954); "Linus' Collection of Dances from the 18th Century" (1957); "Spielleute im mittelalterlichen Ungarn" (1961). From 1961 he has been acting as the technical editor of the "Studi Musicoloagica," a journal on music

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GÁBOR, *István* (b. 1928). Journalist on the staff of the national daily *Magyar Nemzet*. (See also his articles in Vol. II, No. 1, and Vol. II, No. 3, of The New Hungarian Quarterly.)

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BORSOS, *Miklós* (b. 1906). Sculptor. His statues in stone (Nude with Drapery, Tihany Shepherd, Demeter) are formed with plastic simplicity. His copper reliefs (Without Bridle, Shepherd) and medallions (Rembrandt, Tihany) are noteworthy for their lyrical mood. See his pen-and-ink sketches illustrating the article "Tihany Antiqua" in The New Hungarian Quarterly, Vol. II, No. 4.

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