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Q *The New Hungarian Quarterly*

My First Steps in the Movement

— *János Kádár*

Hungary, Europe, and the World

— *Mátyás Szűrös*

The Cultural Identity of Central and Eastern Europe

— *Iván T. Berend*

The Poetic World of Sándor Weöres

— *Miklós Vajda, Edwin Morgan*

Socialism and Reform

— *János Berecz*

The Reorganization of the Banking System

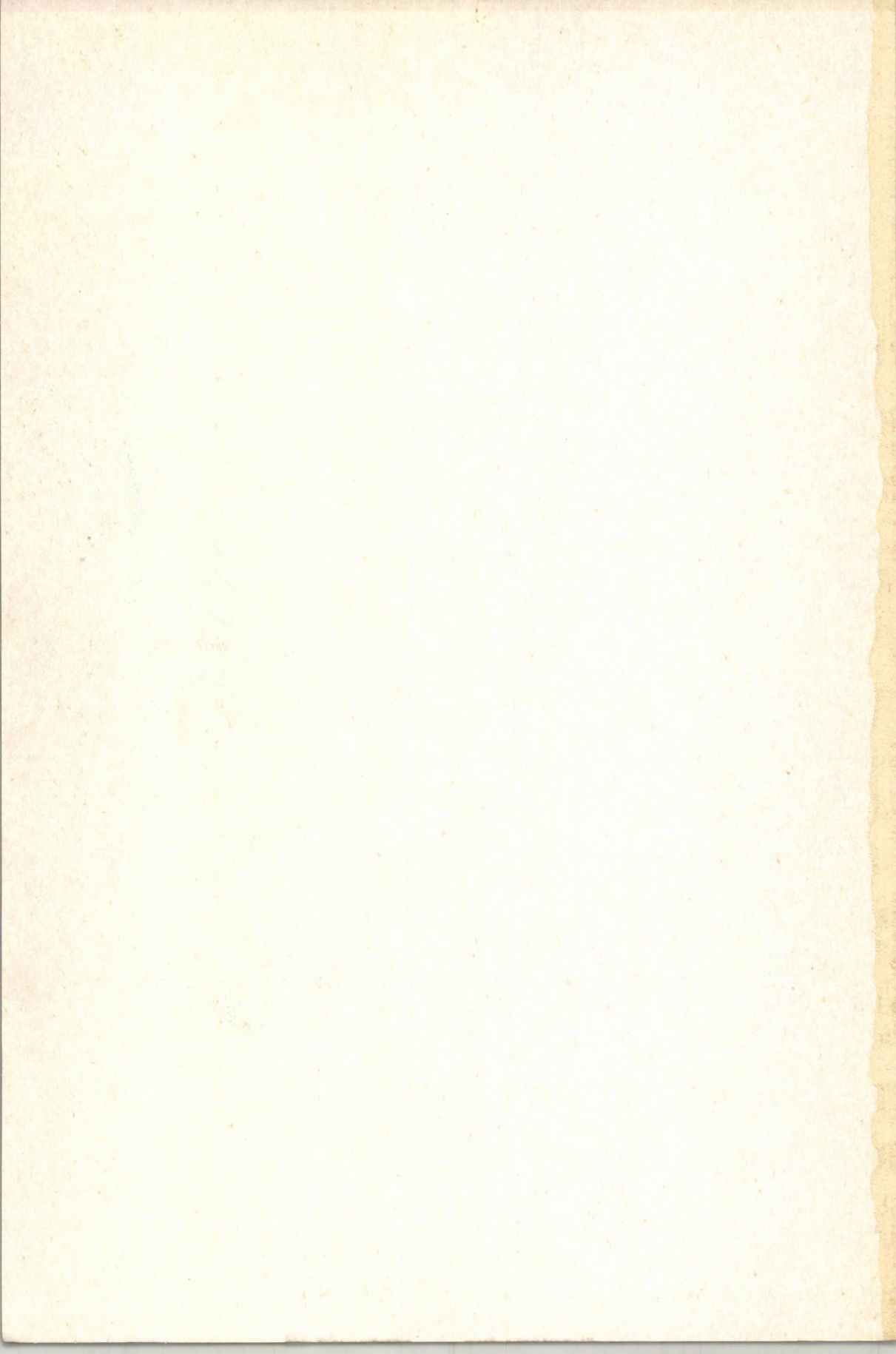
— *Tamás Bácskai*

Access to Culture for National Minorities

— *András Bertalan Székely*

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This issue went to press on 29 May, 1987

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EUROPEANS, DANUBIANS, HUNGARIANS

A glance at the table of contents suggests that the present issue is more political than most. The first article is only apparently so: János Kádár's account of how he first took part in the working, class movement and then joined the Communist Party is a moving personal memoir, of documentary value, since it first appeared in the literary journal *Új Hang* in April 1956. I need not explain, I am sure, why the month is even more important than the year. After an absence of some years—for reasons that are well-enough known—János Kádár had once again joined the Central Committee. *Új Hang* did not enjoy a wide readership, and the events that soon followed also contributed to the article sinking into oblivion until its re-publication in May 1987, on the occasion of János Kádár's seventy-fifth birthday. There was not much of a celebration—the Hungarian media usually devote more space and time to the seventy-fifth birthday of a famous actor, writer or artist, but some of János Kádár's friends arranged for the article to be issued in a limited edition, and that was the text which we had translated.

János Kádár's writing, as it were, evokes the pre-history of socialist Hungary, the articles and reports, however, which are based on the material of a conference held in Szeged early in 1987 take us *in medias res*, as far as Hungarian political life is concerned, into the deep waters of problems and the whirlpools of anxieties, the hopes of finding the way that leads to the other shore. More than three hundred ideologues, sociologists, historians, journalists and leading politicians deliberated for four days. We publish an article based on the closing address by János Berecz, the convener and chairman of the Conference, as well as summings up by those who chaired the deliberations of particular sections. The headings in themselves give a fair idea not only of the subjects but also of the atmosphere of the deliberations, of the honesty and boldness with which the problems were tackled. János Berecz certainly does not shrink back from confronting touchy issues, more

precisely such as had been considered touchy earlier. No doubt many will think of what he has to say about political pluralism under the heading of "Party, Socialism, and Reform," as the most interesting part of the article. Turning to the work of particular sections: István Huszár who heads the Institute of Party History, outlines the state of Hungarian public opinion, Kálmán Kulcsár, a Deputy Secretary of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, defines the changed and changing image of socialism, Sándor Lakos, a sociologist, sums up the debate on the efficiency of the system of political institutions, and Valéria Benke, the editor of the journal *Társadalmi Szemle*, discusses various views on the relationship between ideology and public opinion.

At Szeged contemporary Hungarian society was examined from the inside, in the case of Mátyás Szűrös's paper, the heading "Hungary, Europe and the World" already points to wider horizons. This is a subject which this journal has discussed again and again in the course of the past quarter of a century, at various stages of political progress. Politicians, historians, sociologists and writers have addressed the issue, including myself, on a number of occasions. With all due modesty I might mention that, in 1986, I published a volume under the title *Szülőföldünk, Európa* (Europe, our native country). Mátyás Szűrös, an active participant in international affairs, endeavours to define the place of Hungary in the history of Europe and the world, but chiefly in the present. What is the present role of Hungary and what options are open to small and middle-sized countries in the present constellation of world politics? Szűrös refers back to François Mitterrand's saying in 1976 that it was not only Hungarian leaders who had impressed him but that Hungary's cultural prestige stood high, that in his eyes Hungary was part of the European cultural mainstream. Speaking of Hungary's foreign policy activity of recent years, Szűrös mentions that the country has undertaken to act as a locomotive within the socialist community.

This role continues though now it appears to be more difficult than at any time in the past fifteen or twenty years. The difficulties are illuminated in an interview with Imre Pozsgay parts of which we publish in the From the Press section. The General Secretary of the Patriotic People's Front discusses the difficulties and contradictions of the present situation of Hungarian society, covering questions such as individual freedom and the state, self-government and autonomy, the possibilities of further developing parliamentary activities and finally, the need for a dialogue.

Tamás Bácskai writes on the reorganization of the banking system, that is the foundation of numerous commercial banks in recent years, a process

which aims to make Hungarian economic life more flexible and efficient, and also less bureaucratic. When restructuring the banking system, Hungary acted as an innovator in the socialist community, undertaking the difficulties and risks that go with pioneering work. The results so far are promising.

Pierre L. Siklós, in his account of hyper-inflation and stabilisation in 1945 and 1946, demonstrates that Hungary has, in the past, managed to cope with worse economic crises than the present one. The author is a Canadian economist of Hungarian birth who found new sources during a recent stay in Hungary.

János Fekete, the First Deputy President of the Hungarian National Bank and a frequent contributor to this journal, addressed a symposium held in Washington, D.C., early this year, and jointly arranged by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank on "The Future of Adjustment Programmes." In his usual concise and succinct style János Fekete makes lucid suggestions that are valid well beyond 1987, naturally bearing in mind the options open to the Hungarian economy.

Iván T. Berend writes about the cultural identity of Central and Eastern Europe. What he has to say is geographically valid for the whole of Europe but morally and socially to be taken to heart particularly by the nations of Central and Eastern Europe. He offers a historical survey of the peoples of the region, Western, Eastern and Southern Slavs, Rumanians and Hungarians and, naturally, Germans, particularly since it was largely German thinkers and historians who defined terms, frequently initiating decisive processes which led to the recognition of the cultural identity of the Danubian nations and the resultant confrontations and reconciliations, more precisely attempts at reconciliation and, finally, the present situation. Berend discusses notions such as *Kulturnation* and *Staatsnation* and also ideas like that of a Danube Confederation that has been part of the thinking of historians, politicians and ordinary people in this part of the world for over a century, though apparently forgotten—or suppressed—for long stretches at a time. It has certainly not been mentioned too often in recent decades. Berend offers a concise account of Oszkár Jászi's 1918 book on a planned or, rather, wished for, Danubian United States and then refers to similar Austrian and Czechoslovak ideas as well as Tito's and Dimitrov's 1946 to 1948 plans. It is of particular interest that Berend discusses not only similar ideas by Hungarian writers between the wars, such as Dezső Szabó and László Németh, but also refers to Béla Bartók's passionate championship and to paintings in the thirties by Lajos Vajda and other members of the Szentendre school which were inspired by the common fate of the nations that dwell in the Danube valley. Finally, Berend points out that the memory

of these historical attempts and experiments is still very much alive in the thinking of these nations, as is the recognition of the importance of, and the desire for, a shared cultural identity opposed to a recurrent nationalism.

Iván T. Berend explicitly and implicitly argues against nationalism and chauvinism. András Bertalan Székely writes about the cultural identity of national minorities in Hungary and about the endeavours, and their implementation, directed towards the survival of the cultural identity of these national minorities, that is the use of their native language, the maintenance of their traditions, and the humanism of an education system that serves these purposes. The fact that these national minorities are not large in no way diminishes their importance.

Ferenc Fejtő is better known as François Fejtő in France and the rest of Europe. A long Paris conversation with him is one of the high points of this issue. This writer and editor, Hungarian and Frenchman, socialist and humanist, friend of my youth way back in the thirties, was an important member of the Budapest literary and political scene of the time, one of László Rajk's fellow accused in his early Communist years—in an earlier Rajk trial. Later he and Attila József jointly edited *Szép Szó*, a literary journal. There was a time around the middle thirties when we saw each other just about every day since Inre Cserépfalvi published both *Szép Szó* and the *Szolgálat és Írás* (Service and Writing) series of sociographies which I edited. In the past twenty years I may not have seen him daily, but at least yearly, some years more than once, since, fortunately, my travels frequently take me to Paris. We often talk about much the same things as he discussed with György Litván, or more precisely, Fejtő mentions much in this interview that has been forgotten in Hungary, or things that public opinion was never really aware of. Ferenc Fejtő is very much part of an intellectual tradition in which being Hungarian and European, and thinking in worldwide terms, figure in conjunction.

*

I conclude with Sándor Weöres though I could really have started with him. He is one of the greatest, perhaps the greatest, of living Hungarian poets and we publish a number of his poems accompanied by an essay by Miklós Vajda, the Literary Editor of this journal. If there is a twentieth-century poet who combines the tastes and flavours of Hungarian peasant culture that he absorbed in early youth, with the inspiration of European and eastern literature, and who can express what it means to be a modern man in the idiom of an artist working with the Hungarian language, then that man is Sándor Weöres. Outstanding English and American poets have undertaken a task that appeared beyond anyone's powers: making it possible

that an almost inexpressible Hungarian poet should speak in English. This small selection printed here (from a soon forthcoming book to be published jointly by Corvina in Budapest and Anvil Press Poetry in London) was produced by Edwin Morgan, William Jay Smith, George Szirtes, and Alan Dixon. Edwin Morgan sent us his epigrammatically brief "The Challenge of Weöres," (which appears in the book as a translator's afterword). Some challenge it is, indeed. But, Morgan writes, "the reward of any success is that this uniquely rich and distinctive poetry should become more familiar in the English-speaking world."

Hungarian prose is represented by part of the autobiography of the eighty years old Emil Kolozsvári Grandpierre, one of the grand old men of Hungarian prose. He presents his long dead father, and the father-son relationship in a memoir that carries the marks of a sinuous prose and a fine essayist in a language that is tart and yet rich in sentiment which is so characteristic of him alone.

*

The world's media reported that a statue to Raoul Wallenberg was erected in Budapest. We publish a number of photographs of this interesting and moving work by Imre Varga. Éva Hajdú tells the story of the Wallenberg memorial.

THE EDITOR

FROM OUR NEXT ISSUES

THE NATIONAL QUESTION AND SOCIALISM

György Aczél

NEW THINKING IN INTERNATIONAL POLITICS

Gyula Horn

NEW WORLD ECONOMIC FORCES
IN EAST-WEST RELATIONS

József Bognár

THE RENEWAL OF THE SOCIALIST PLANNED ECONOMY

Béla Csikós-Nagy

MY FIRST STEPS IN THE MOVEMENT

by

JÁNOS KÁDÁR

There are people who talk as if they had come into the world as fully fledged Communists. Again others claim that, when coming across the working-class movement for the first time in their life, they knew right away that this was the right direction for them and thus, immediately and fully aware of all the implications, set course for the class struggle. I did not at first meeting the working-class movement recognise that this was the true road and I became a Communist only when, as a member of the League of Young Communist Workers, the Party, the Young Workers' League, the working class and the struggle itself taught me to be one.

If a young worker today sets out from the front door of No 11 Tanács körút, in whichever direction he chooses to go window-shopping, a few steps away he will see numerous Marxist-Leninist works on display and if he so desires he can buy any one of them on impulse, not only because they are there, but also because the small change in his pocket will buy at least two such volumes. When I was sixteen, in 1928, I lived on today's Tanács körút, called Károly körút at the time. Starting from the house I lived in, I would have had to walk for at least eight days at a stretch before I could have set eyes on a work by Lenin—in Vienna. At that time it was forbidden to publish, to print or to sell Communist books in this country. But I could not have bought the book even if I had walked as far as Vienna—provided I had been in possession of a passport authorising me to cross the frontier—since I did not have the money which a book cost at the time. As a second-year apprentice mechanic I was paid a weekly wage of 4 Pengő minus health insurance, and I had to give my mother the rest to the last penny if we did not want to starve. There had to be some other way to get access to Marxist books.

Around 1930 a young worker had to run his legs off and he still could not find, in all Hungary, Party Youth League premises since Communist organizations were banned. The majority of people dared to utter the word Communist only in secret. Horthy's lot kept a close eye on young workers. Workers under 18 were prohibited by law from joining a trades union. It could well be that Nebenführer, the only union man in the workshop where I was an apprentice, did not speak a single word to me about the class struggle or organised labour in the three years I was apprenticed there. This too I had to find out in some other way.

I'll admit it like a man, confusion reigned in my head as well at the time. I did not even know myself what I was after, what it was I had to guide my life by. All my barely literate mother, a servant girl turned factory hand, knew about the class struggle was that she cursed the bosses, but when I began doing likewise she told me: "Son, the bosses are crooks, they hassle the poor, but you cannot defeat them, because they are the stronger." That didn't take me far. In comparison to a young worker of thirty years ago, a young worker of 16 or 18 today, even if he cares little about social issues, is—thanks to the influence of school, the young pioneer movement, the busy life in factories, and the proletarian dictatorship—a man well versed in social questions.

Before I became one of the young Communist workers, I had already seen a great deal of life, things which today's young workers fortunately do not see. I had been a village swineherd's sidekick, a kulak's hand, a newsboy, an errand boy in town—and even an evicted tenant, too. I worked from five in the morning till school started, then again in the afternoon up to late at night. Then came the pleasures of an apprentice of the time. Later, when I became a journeyman in 1929, the great depression and unemployment had started. This is how young workers lived in those days.

I could not get far with my worldly wisdom. I did not understand life. I was looking for a meaning in life. I wanted to be happy, but not in the manner of a hamster, alone, but with my mother, my brother, my fellow apprentices, my friends, with all those whom I liked and who were tormented and humiliated as I was. I was proud as well and would have liked to pay things back to the bosses who mocked our poverty and our wretched life. That was all my wisdom amounted to.

The Communist movement was illegal at the time, it was not present to my eyes. I stood helpless and was only looking for a way out of the maze of life at the time. How did the movement hit upon me, how did I hit upon the movement, until I reached the point where the Communist movement and my own destiny became—I am convinced of it—united once and for all?

"Do you like to play football?" asked Laci Segesdi, a classmate of mine (both of us were then second-form pupils of the junior high school in Wesselényi utca). I not only liked to play football but I believed, secretly but all the more fervently, that within a few short years I would be a new Kohut, Zsák or Opata. These men meant to us at the time what Puskás, Bozsik, Kocsis or Sándor mean to the boys of our days. My friend took me along and had me join the HSC, i.e. the Hársfa utca Sports Club. Albeit we had a real strip with yellow-blue stripes, I wore down many pairs of shoes—for which my mother gave me innumerable slaps in the face—and nearly every Sunday for two years I fought like a lion, playing attacking centre-half, for 4 to 5 hours at a time in the deep sand of the Népliget (People's Park)—but, after all that, I never played for Hungary. On the contrary, having become an apprentice, I had to say goodbye also to the HSC. But this playing football made sense to me. While I was an HSC member indulging in boyish dreams about playing for Hungary, I met the Fenákel boys, one of whom was later to play an important role in my life, because he showed me the way that led straight to the Hungarian League of Young Communist Workers.

My friend Reiz, a barber's apprentice, need not have asked me, when I was sixteen, whether I liked to play chess, since the whole neighbourhood knew this about me. The boys of Károly körút knew well that I read or played chess while sitting out on the pavement or on a bench till 11 or 12 o'clock almost every night—for it was only then that I had time to spend in this way. In our parents' small homes we could not even move, they liked us to be aside. There was no electricity in our home, and burning a kerosene lamp cost a lot of money.

My friend told me that a chess competition for young people would be held that Sunday afternoon in the Havas utca premises of the Barbering and Hairdressing Workers' Union, with various prizes to win, and boys of other trades also were allowed to take part. I went there, because at the time I not only liked to play chess but I thought I would be a grandmaster in a short couple of years.

I won the contest there in Havas utca. Later, encouraged by another friend of mine, I joined the Outer Ferencváros Workers' Chess Club, too. I took part also in tournaments and won most of them, yet I never became a grandmaster. What is more, owing to the worsening of my living conditions, I had to give up the chess club. But playing chess always made sense to me.

The prize I won at the youth competition of the Barbering Workers' Union in Havas utca was a book. The comrade, a man around 30 or 35,

who handed me the prize talked to me for about half an hour there with keen interest. He was pleased to hear me say that I was very fond of reading, and he earnestly advised me to read that book several times over if I could not fully understand it. I still think affectionately of this anonymous comrade who was also the organizer of the whole competition.

True, for a long time after that, I took much trouble to understand that book, and it is also true that what had led me into this workers' organization was my youthful fancy for the game of chess and not any sort of class-consciousness, but it was worth it all the same.

When I looked into the book at home, I could not but wonder. Its very title—"How Herr Eugen Dühring Would Transform All the Sciences"—was very strange to me. I had even more trouble with the contents. I had read much from penny dreadfuls like "Mister Hercules" to books by Verne and Zola but never a book like this. On first reading I was taken aback. How come it was written in Hungarian? I recognised the letters, I understood the words and some of the sentences, too, yet I could make nothing of the whole. At that time—there is no need to mention this—I valued my intellectual abilities very highly, I thought therefore the trouble lay with the book. The secret of life excited me. And it was written in this book that "life is nothing but the mode of existence of protein cells." This shocked me but also made me uneasy, it keyed up my interest.

I do not wish to enlarge upon this point. I was enthralled by the book. I was more and more engrossed in it, I read it for almost eight months, I do not know how many times. My friends dragged me this way and that making fun of me, but I did not give way. In the end, pointing a finger at their forehead, they signalled that they thought something was wrong with me. I would not say I fully understood Engels' *Anti-Dühring*, the first Marxist book that fell into my hands, but from that time on I thought about life differently from the way I had done earlier. I was not finally committed to the idea of Marxism yet, but an unquenchable flame had been lit in me, an interest in scientific socialism.

Thus, when I was hoping to win the first prize of a youth chess tournament, I won something that was a thousand times more valuable to me: an admission card to the wonderful world of Marxism. I met the idea of Communism, although I did not yet become fully conscious of it. I could not find a job in my trade but we had to live, so I got a job as a storeman with a carpet dealer in Klauzál utca in the summer of 1930. Knowing little about the political struggles of the working class, I was doing my job one morning when the warehouse was closed in frantic haste, and I was told that next day we would not have to work. I looked around and saw: the

near-by shops and workshops were all locked up in a hurry. Few people were about in the street. An elderly working man passed in front of them and shouted while shaking his fist: "Just wait, you bourgeois, now we'll get even with you!" He was alone, he hurt no one but I saw that he had put the scare into the petty bourgeois of Klauzál utca. Then I heard that the unemployed demonstrated in Nagymező utca. I hurried there; it all looked like a deserted battlefield. The street was empty, I stepped on smashed plate glass. A similar spectacle received me in Andrásy út. I went off in the direction of the Városliget. A cordon of police blocked the Nagykörút. I was not allowed to go on. More of the same in Király utca. At the corner of Dob utca I met demonstrating workers coming from the Városliget. I joined them. They talked about clashes in the Városliget and nearby. We all felt it to be a festive occasion, a sort of joyful tension overcame us, me included. A horse-drawn lorry loaded with soda syphons left a house in Dob utca. A worker walking at my side called out to the carter and his mate: "Why are you working, we are on strike today!" Thereupon the carter took his whip and struck the strikers. What followed after that, only took a few moments. I did not think, I had not decided on anything. I still do not know today how it all happened. I suddenly found myself in the midst of a brawl between hooligans and demonstrators, where I was busy using my fists to beat the soda-works people who used the syphons as weapons.

I recovered my senses sitting on a bench in Károly körút. I was aching in every limb—and just the same: never in my life had I felt as good as I did then. I had got a taste of a fight, I had been swept along by the tide of the militant working class on the great battle day of the Budapest proletariat, the first day of September 1930. I was not a Communist as yet, but I regretted that I had had no foreknowledge of the demonstration and that I could take part in it only at the very end. In the first half of 1931 I spent much time out of work, waiting for a job to be allotted to me by the mechanics section of the József utca labour exchange. It was not for nothing that the state-managed labour exchange was named the spittoon. He who had something to eat for breakfast and 20 fillérs in his pocket to buy a bit of bread and five Levente cigarettes seemed to be a rich man amongst us. Thus cursing the bosses and going about hungry, our chief pastime was really spitting.

The spittoon was also the scene of impassioned political debates. Some of the workers under the influence of Social Democrats kept repeating the words of the Peyer party: "You have to wait and show patience, you must not do damage by saying ill-considered things!" Many non-union workers lacking class consciousness also frequented that place at the time. I was

still one of them. But the vast majority of people, including myself, agreed with the true words of the Communist agitators. We urged a struggle and hooted down those who asked us to be meek as lambs. More than once a day we chased out the policemen who tried to calm us down. Earlier I had thought I was weak and helpless, that I might die of hunger or freeze to death with my family without being noticed by other people. There, however, I already understood that we, the workers, were many, many thousands, and would work and live—if we fought.

I had already been liberated from the youthful daydreams which drew the veil of oblivion over our misery. I no longer wished to play football for Hungary or to be a chess grandmaster, all I wanted was to be a working man, an iron-worker receiving a fair wage for a fair day's work. I already knew that I would have to fight for that. Thus, when one day a comrade, whom I knew because of our daily discussions, said that we should go and demonstrate on Rákóczi tér, I was the first to join him. Out at the demonstration I also resolutely and loudly shouted our demands to the world. Then it was that I first took part, with deliberate determination, in the struggle of the working class, under the direction of a Communist comrade.

Early in September 1931, walking along Barcsay utca, lost in thought, a familiar voice greeted me, my friend János Fenákel of the HSC football team whom I had not seen for five years. In the course of our conversation it turned out that both of us were preoccupied with identical ideas, thoughts alien to footy. We were both unemployed young workers. I told him about the way things were at home, how I was hunting for a job, and all in vain. I told my friend that I had taken part also in a demonstration of the unemployed, that I knew we would perish without fighting, but I added that I had no idea how to go on.

When my friend heard me talk in this manner, he told me that he was a member of the League of Young Communist Workers, and that I also should join. I saw for the first time a man standing before me who was a member of an illegal movement, a Communist. I was quite surprised, I can no longer remember what I imagined the Communists to be like at the time, but I saw to my astonishment that a skilled worker just as young as I was—whom I knew well and who in his boyhood had been kicking a ball around with me—was a Communist! But my astonishment was replaced by joy, because I came to understand that I also could become one.

A week after, on a Thursday, at about five o'clock, I was also on my way to Paulay Ede utca number 22, the scene of the first illegal Communist meeting in my life.

This was the meeting of the Sverdlov cell of the League of Young Communist Workers (KIMSZ). This all belonged to the inner area of the district of northern Budapest.

At that meeting I was admitted as a member of the KIMSZ.

Until that time, this all had consisted of only three young workers, among them a girl who chaired the session in her capacity as secretary. They talked about who Sverdlov was, who those Bolsheviks were, what the Soviet Union meant to the workers of the world. They spoke about conspiracy, that is, about defence against persecution by Horthy's police, about linking up illegal and legal work, and many more important matters. I was given the name Barna in the movement.

After the meeting I went home with my heart throbbing. I knew I had assumed a great responsibility and that my comrades had confidence in me. I was proud of that, indeed I was. But boyish ideas also occurred to me. I imagined how my friends would be filled with amazement and envy when finding out about my becoming a member of the young workers' illegal movement. And I was also a little afraid. But, characteristically, when I thought of being arrested by the police and of landing up in gaol, which my comrades had mentioned as possible consequences of our struggle, I was most afraid of how my bossy mother would tell me off.

Until that meeting there were eight or ten persons who were really close to me and whom I liked in different ways. My mother, my young brother, a former fellow apprentice, a decent journeyman from the workshop where I had learnt my trade, a young girl of my dreams. But within an hour on that evening, strangely enough, they were joined by three KIMSZ members whom a day before I had not even known existed. Somehow it seemed to me as if I had known them earlier and better than my brother. I held them to be braver even than the bravest boys whom I had ever met. The secretary of our cell seemed more beautiful to me than the most beautiful girls whom I had ever seen. To put it briefly, I would have gone through fire for them. They were Communists, and this was enough for my heart to open out before them.

I also became a Communist. This great and proud feeling, making my heart throb, overwhelmed me while I looked at passers-by who walked past me without having an idea of my big secret.

(*Új Hang*, April 1956)

HUNGARY, EUROPE AND THE WORLD

by

MÁTYÁS SZÚRÖS

Hungary, Europe, the world—the enumeration may even be reversed. True, Hungary is a small point on the world map but the most important of all to us Hungarians. It is the scene of our life, our country at the centre of Europe. In today's world, in the nuclear age, however, it is hardly possible to give an adequate description, still less an evaluative one, of countries without placing them in a world context, in the uninterrupted, complicated succession of events. By creating nuclear weapons of mass destruction, then continually improving them and accumulating stockpiles of such devices, man has entered a new age. The globe has shrunk, and it has become technically possible to kill all humanity. In earlier times there was always not only a hope but also an effective possibility that mankind would survive the most horrible wars even if the number of individual victims ran into millions. What has been left is only hope, since conditions and guarantees for preventing the outbreak of a nuclear war do not exist. The creation of the necessary safeguards and coping with other major anxieties—like serious damage to the environment, famine, etc.—require new ways of thinking, a new kind of attitude by the people and approach by politicians.

It is an open question whether mankind is able and mature enough to avoid its self-annihilation. Can man rise to what the age demands or is he helplessly heading for disaster? Forty years ago Albert Einstein expressed the view that the A-bomb had changed the world but not the way people think.

What Einstein said still applies in the mid-1980s when the true dialectics of progress lies in the combination of competition and confrontation between two different social systems and of the mutual dependence of states. The age demands that this be recognised in international affairs. On the basis of facts and existing realities, it is most important to recognise in general, as well as to understand and accept in practice, that nuclear war cannot be

politics by other means. It cannot be won but can destroy civilisation and human life on earth. Owing to this danger, and because of other global problems, the interdependence of countries and peoples has immensely grown.

An obvious and unequivocal conclusion is that, unless a radical change can be induced in general thinking, in the state of world affairs, one fateful day mankind may be annihilated. If the armaments race is continued in the hope of survival or imaginary benefits to national security, international developments and processes may surely escape control.

As regards the necessary new attitude and approach, this is something which must differ considerably from human experience so far. In the world today it is not against the opponent, but with concerted efforts, that a system of universal peace and security—mutual and equal security—can be created. A real breakthrough is needed when it comes to war and peace, what has to be cut is the historical process in the course of which military equipment and weapons—from the sling and bows and arrows up to strategic nuclear missiles—have always been and are still produced at the highest standards of technology and the forces of production. That is to say, the use of force, first of all the large-scale use of force, must be eliminated from international relations. The established relative balance of military forces, the actual possibility of mutual deterrence, can only be temporary, since it provides no certain and definitive security to the nations.

In this way the formation of the new conception and way of thinking will inevitably have—and already has—an effect on the notion formed of the enemy, on the concepts of just and unjust war. Moreover, if conditions change for wars between nations, they also do for the class war, as Engels argued at the end of the 19th century. This connection assumes particular significance and meaning in our times, since there is no more important goal than to guarantee universal peace and security. The choice of the proper forms for the class war can, in these days, grow into a problem concerning basic human existence. Obvious forms are the compromise solutions, since such agreements between equal parties can be reached on the basis of present realities in international life as well. But endeavours to create a peaceful environment cannot justify the existence of systems based on exploitation and national oppression, and on discrimination. The point is that the emergence of global problems under the conditions of a world made up of differing kinds of societies has made timely the duty of shaping an integrated world, of letting humanity live in peace.

It must still be added that when it comes to shaping the international situation, and preventing the outbreak of nuclear war, decisive respon-

sibility rests with the two leading great powers: the Soviet Union and the United States of America. But contributing to these efforts and to the transformation of ways of thinking of world affairs is the concern not only of these two great powers but also of the small and middling countries. Over and above this, it must also be taken into consideration that as time passes more and more countries will be in a position to develop nuclear weapons of their own, thereby increasing insecurity, mistrust and, in the last analysis, danger on the international scene.

Finally, two more ideas belong to this brief outline of the general picture of world affairs. First, any worthwhile policy must proceed from a concrete and realistic analysis of the actual situation, while the statesmen concerned must exercise a high degree of patience and circumspection. Impatience and fluster are the worst counsellors in politics. Politicians in the world today need especially good nerves. As George F. Kennan argued in 1947, whoever meddles with foreign policy must have first-hand and first-class knowledge of the soil and the vegetation. He must show great patience as well since one cannot tear out plants root and branch every day just to make sure that the roots have grown stronger.

Following recent changes, the importance of social and human factors has grown. Will they be able to handle tension, and to make full use of human knowledge, initiative and foresight? Such factors can emerge and even play a very considerable role, irrespective of the size of countries. Let us just think, in this sense, of the constructive international activity of Sweden, India or—speaking in all modesty—Hungary, and I could cite numerous other examples, too.

General pattern of the situation in the mid-1980s

At present, in the middle of the 1980s, world politics are characterized by elements of détente and tension as well as confrontation and cooperation. Starting with the late 1970s, the factors of confrontation were unfortunately gaining strength. On the other hand, a certain improvement that has become apparent in recent years is tending towards the relaxation of international tension.

The strengthening of favourable trends is promoted by the domestic and foreign political renaissance in the socialist countries, primarily in the Soviet Union. The new Soviet ideas of external and security policy demonstrate that mutual dependence and the necessity of partnership have been recognised, that the formulation of a new way of thinking in international

affairs, a foreign policy philosophy, is urgently needed. The understanding that from the point of view of the survival of human civilization as a whole it is of decisive importance to curb the armaments race, is particularly significant. Cooperation must therefore be established between the nations on a footing of equality.

It has become increasingly obvious that the successful solutions of big international questions can be reached only through a new approach, common will, confidence among countries, reasonable moderation, compromises, and negotiation. Since there is only mutual security, it is necessary to refrain from taking any one-sided measure prejudicial to the security interests of the other party. Such a one-sided measure is the U. S. Strategic Defence Initiative, known as SDI, a challenge which will meet with a response by the Soviet Union unless an agreement on this matter is reached or there is some kind of cooperation.

Forcing the arms build-up does not diminish the level of the opponent's security, but only steps up the arms race and its dangers. The West is miscalculating if it reckons that the Soviet Union and the countries of the socialist world can be forced into a corner economically. The Soviet Union has already given up the principle of absolute security, its position is now one of sufficient security, claiming no greater measure of security than others enjoy. This is an indication that the Soviet Union is truly transforming its ways of thinking and approach. Within our alliance, we Hungarians also have a modest part to play and no small responsibility in this process.

The proposals made by the socialist countries with the view of cooperation and disarmament—concerning all types of armament—give evidence of growing flexibility, readiness for compromises and a pragmatic approach. Should the leading capitalist powers abandon their impossible strategy aimed at achieving absolute superiority, and should countries with different social systems look on one another not as enemies but as partners in all respects, it would be possible for all to join forces in drawing up agreements keeping in view and promoting the interests of all countries and nations. After the successful Stockholm Conference on confidence-building measures, a favourable basis and opportunity may be provided in this regard by the Vienna follow-up conference on security and cooperation in Europe which opened in early November 1986. The historic possibilities of reaching an agreement must not be permitted to slip out of our hands; dialogue and negotiations are needed.

Representation of a specific all-European interest that can be isolated within the complex of international security is possible and desirable even given the existence of two opposing systems of military-political alliance.

This specific all-European interest can be clearly shown to exist practically everywhere in the life of societies, and in the relationship of states. Thus, a circumstance of fundamental importance from the viewpoint of security policy is that the two different alliances march on each other along a line that runs through Europe. This is where about 40 per cent of the weapons of mass destruction stockpiled all over the world are concentrated. The concentration of military forces on the European continent is twenty times as large as the world average. An armed conflict in Europe between the two alliances would in all probability grow into a nuclear world war bringing about the total destruction of our continent. It is evident therefore that Europe is more interested than any other continent in the promotion of disarmament and in the lessening of tension.

A common European interest is manifest also in the fact that economic ties between the eastern and western parts of our continent exist and continue to develop even despite the social and political differences. A joint interest in strengthening these ties is also enhanced by the circumstance that extra-European economic changes have modified the relation of forces to the detriment of Europe and to the advantage of Japan, so that concerted efforts are required to avert and fight off the damage done. It is in this spirit that we are looking forward to the possibilities of developing cooperation with the Common Market.

Europe is the cradle of great intellectual-cultural currents such as Hellenic and Roman civilization, Christianity, the Renaissance, the Enlightenment, and Marxism. European culture still constitutes a homogeneous whole today, it is equally in the common interest to take care of its values and to boost them.

Hungarians have been an integral part of Europe for eleven centuries now. Hungarian policy has—over and above those that derive from the social system and bonds of alliance, which are related to global interests—aspects as are basically European. We might as well say: Europeanism appears in particularly concentrated form in the case of Hungary, for this nation pursues its own happiness, together with others, where two cultures and two systems march on each other. Hungary has thus far done a great deal, and is ready to do still more, in order to maintain all-European interests in accordance with its own national interests and the common interest as well.

Since the middle of the 1960s, but especially since the Budapest Appeal of 1969, when we asked that a Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe be convened, up to the present, Hungary has taken an active part and continues to do so with a view to guaranteeing peace and security on this continent and furthering, in respect of all three baskets, the Helsinki

process. By acting as host to the Budapest Cultural Forum in 1985 within the framework of the Helsinki process and contributing to substantial initiatives, we have displayed our European character to the world, the strong bonds between the nations that dwell on this continent, the national values and the universality of their cultures, their interdependence—that continuity which manifests itself in civilisation and culture and those novel aspects as well which still link Eastern, Central and Western Europe together.

The role of small and middle-sized countries

These days the Soviet Union and the United States alone are capable of pursuing a world policy. They have a decisive role to play everywhere. At the same time the increasing international activity of small countries and middling powers can also be observed. This does not mean at all that we could take over the responsibility of great powers, but it surely means that the prominent role played by the Soviet Union and the United States does not preclude, but even demands, that small and middling countries should increasingly participate in international affairs.

Countries with potentialities similar to those of Hungary can contribute most effectively to creating, preserving and strengthening the atmosphere of confidence indispensable to the lessening of tension. They can do much, for example, towards overcoming instability in relations between the great powers. A telling example is the way in which, after 1979, small and middling European countries, Hungary among them, made successful efforts to pursue the East-West dialogue, preventing an irreparable deterioration in international relations.

Countries of such size can stimulate attempts at seeking and contriving flexible means of solution both within and without their own respective alliances. Beyond this they can come up with initiatives concerning international relations as a whole and do their bit in other such actions. Hungary, for example, always takes an active part in working out the disarmament proposals of the Warsaw Treaty and in promoting their acceptance. She is thus able to contribute considerably towards the furtherance of the Helsinki process, having a share in the work of important international forums.

Even a relatively small state can spark off international conflicts and tensions, while it can exert a positive effect only at the cost of considerable efforts. This is one of the important things Hungary has experienced over the past thirty years. Another conclusion is that small and middling states can be stabilizing factors in and around the region of which they form part. We can

only say that domestic stability in Hungary, and the sound development of its interstate relations have had a beneficial influence on the shaping of the political atmosphere in the Danube basin and, through it, on relations within Europe as such. Hungary endeavours to get on with her neighbours, and her relations maintained with all great powers are well ordered. It is in this way that the country furthers the centuries-old aims and policies of Hungarian progressives.

Small and middling countries are thus neither determining nor inessential factors of international affairs. But they can play their growing role well only if they keep an open mind and have a realistic view of things, and if their foreign policy is predictable in the eyes of allies and others.

In our complicated and contradictory world every country tries to create harmony between its national and international interests. Our time is an age of complex relationships between interdependent states. Not one of the countries, including Hungary, can make itself independent of outside circumstances. This is why it is very important for us to take proper stock of our national and international interests and to do everything possible to bring them into harmony.

We proceed from the conviction that there are general and global interests and problems which all countries are obliged to take into consideration. Such is the interest in the safeguarding of international peace and security and the prevention of war. The campaigns to combat famine and backwardness and the defence of the environment are part of this, since nothing can be done without extensive international cooperation. There are also regional interests unrelated to social systems. In our way of looking at things there is and acts an all-European interest in the consolidation of security and cooperation in Europe, an interest which finds expression in Hungarian foreign policy as well. Interests which follow from our belonging to the socialist world, the socialist community are also organically present in this connection.

Modernisation of cooperation

Clearly visible endeavours have been in recent years those aimed at continuing to develop cooperation within the socialist community, and to seek new forms. This is motivated by two compound factors: the needs of the internal development of our countries and the challenges of the international environment. Since the 1970s, the qualitative requirements of development have come to the fore in most of the socialist countries. This historical change of course, however, took off only slowly and, in addition, just at the

time of the world economic depression when the rate of economic growth was on the decline, scientific and technical progress was slackening, and several countries ran into debt. On top of it all came the fluctuating aggravation of international tension. In this manner there came more distinctly into view the functional troubles of intra-CMEA cooperation, first of all the organization's more and more limited ability to fend off negative world economic effects and to discharge its earlier dynamic function by the application of old-established methods.

It was thus rather belatedly, in the 1980s, that it became generally understood in the CMEA countries that the further postponement of the new type of cooperation might call into question our earlier achievements. Of course, efforts at renewal were recommended long before that; Hungary indeed did so more than fifteen years ago. It is true, however, that on a community level political and subjective conditions have become ripe for comprehensive changes only around the mid-1980s. Highly instrumental in this has been the 27th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

At the same time it has become obvious also that there is need to modernise the Warsaw Treaty and to put new life into our political links. Informal working methods are increasingly gaining ground in the democratic forums of political cooperation between member countries, and real working meetings, free of the shackles of protocol, are now customary also at the summit. This is how new avenues are opened for the more efficient coordination of national interests and for the more effective representation of common interests.

The efforts at internal transformation and at the modernisation of cooperation have thus sped up. This is an extremely important and encouraging circumstance in the socialist world. Our countries have the necessary political will to reach these decisive objectives and have the appropriate material basis and an adequate intellectual background. This is at the same time a guarantee that we shall be able to diminish the degree of our backwardness, to consolidate our position in the worldwide division of labour, to add to the international attraction of the socialist system and to heighten its beneficial effect on the development of the world situation.

Thirty years of Hungarian foreign policy

Present Hungarian foreign policy reaches back forty years into the past, but its actual line and style have shaped up in the course of the past thirty years. Its markedly specific character is the fruit of the most recent past.

Thirty years ago Hungary's international situation was in a mess, its prestige was at a low ebb, while today the country has a sound reputation and enjoys prestige in the world. The difference between the state it was in at the time and the present one is conspicuous. In 1956, following a national tragedy we began to emerge from a profound domestic crisis and a state of isolation. Hungary today is working in the interest of peace, security and social progress not only as a reliable and sovereign member of the community of socialist countries, but also as a generally honoured participant in international affairs.

Having taken into account the experiences of other similar crises, Hungary carried out post-1956 consolidation very rapidly. This can be explained primarily by the fact that the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party had learnt its lesson in that crisis and was able to restore the broken confidence between the HSWP and the people, placing it on new moral-political foundations, evolving a new working style. This allows us to draw one of the most important lessons of the past thirty years, and that is that what provided the necessary backing for Hungarian foreign policy activity was all the time a national unity concerning the major questions of socialist reconstruction as a result of the Party's sound policy of alliances at home. It was increasingly realised in the country that satisfactory results in economic and cultural life and in other fields could be attained only when we applied the general principles of socialism in accordance with specific national conditions. All this was reflected also in Hungary's foreign policy activity.

Another important experience and lesson of the thirty years is that co-operation with the socialist countries is a vital condition of the fulfilment of our national and international ambitions, but its system must ceaselessly be improved and developed. As an equal member of this community, Hungary has from the start been one of the initiators in refreshing the experiences and methods of socialist construction, in coordinating the national interests more and more efficiently, in further developing mutually advantageous co-operation and in strengthening unity. To be brief: Hungary has endeavoured to act and work as a locomotive in the community of socialist countries.

In addition, an important lesson and experience is that, within Hungary's relationships, a stable—and by no means subordinate—place is held by relations maintained with capitalist countries, relations which it is the long-term duty and fundamental national interest to entertain and develop on the basis of equal partnership and mutual advantages. In addition, we proceed from the fact that the economic, cultural and humanitarian ties between countries with different social systems constitute a material, spiritual and moral foundation of the policy of peaceful coexistence.

We have endeavoured to draw the proper lessons also from the fact that the developing countries, that is the Third World, occupy a particularly important place in the world today. In this respect the movement of non-aligned countries pursues, objectively and for the most part also deliberately, an anti-imperialist policy, playing a stabilising role in international life. However, local conflicts and wars still occur in the Third World. We consider it a fundamental duty of Hungarian foreign policy to explore the actual possibilities of strengthening mutually advantageous relations with the developing nations, to find out those permanent and temporary places where interests coincide and to ascertain the extent and means of providing assistance as far as we can in the interest of sustaining solidarity.

The fifth lesson is that the foreign policy of a country similar to Hungary in size and potentialities can really be successful only if it has its feet firmly on the ground, insisting on firmness of principles and morals and on flexibility in practice. Hungary and its foreign policy are open, in our opinion this country forms an integral part of the inconsistent but united world not only in principle and in theory but also in respect of the practical improvement of international relations. In recent decades, but especially in recent years, we have made clear what advantages, but disadvantages as well, can result from a small country's role. Realistic dimensions and proportions could gradually be established in Hungary's international relations.

It is equally instructive and informative that, in harmony with internationalism, thinking in terms of the political nation and the common people has increasingly been refined in Hungarian foreign policy, and political activity has taken shape in accordance with the public consensus. Relying on the experience and wisdom of Péter Veres, a great Hungarian writer, humanist and socialist, we can declare with him that love and affection for our own people and country as "a natural communal feeling is not nationalism but a civic responsibility indispensable for the survival of our country, for the self-preservation of our nation, a spiritual-moral commitment. . . Without this there is no country, there is no political life. . . Internationalism does not desire that we waive our own nation's right to existence, but to acknowledge, honour and respect other nations too, all nations."

Our starting point is that development does not move in the direction of the supranational. For this reason we can exert a favourable effect on the international scene first of all by our own example, achievements and by our civilization and culture. On the other hand, we have in mind also that, while revolutions are the engines of history, human and social evolution has another, more enduring, line and shape: consolidation and stability, the continuous formation of civilisation in the course of which generations are

relying and building on one another. We live at a time of reforms, it is under these circumstances that we now have to create, by means of our foreign policy and diplomacy, the appropriate peaceful external conditions. Experience shows that in such historical periods it is advisable and necessary to work and build on the broadest possible socio-political basis also in foreign politics, that is in international affairs. François Mitterrand put it pertinently in 1976: "Talking to the Hungarian leaders made a very interesting impression on me. I met realists who feel a strong, deep attachment for their country and are naturally loyal to their ideology but show interest in foreign experience at the same time. . . . In our eyes Hungary has cultural prestige: the country is part of the European mainstream."

Hungary's specific national interests include the maintenance of contact with Hungarians living beyond the frontiers and the representation of their interests. Securing national minority rights, however, is also a general international demand. We have gained experience of general validity first of all owing to the fact that Hungarians constitute the largest national minority in Europe. In Hungarian foreign policy there were undoubtedly periods when this question was relegated to the background. This was, however, not due to indifference but the conviction which the Party had formulated, for example at the 9th Congress, as follows: "With the coming into being of the socialist social order the possibility has been created for hatred to be definitively eliminated from relations between nations. . . ." We now know better. Socialism will not automatically and in a short time solve this problem either, the possibilities that have arisen can be translated into reality only by hard work. This is the reason why today we look at this question and handle it in a more realistic manner. Our endeavours are in harmony with the realities, with the need for confidence and understanding that is indispensable to interstate relations, with the provisions of the Helsinki Final Act and in general with the principles and norms of international law. We systematically support the strengthening of friendship between the nations and national minorities living in Central Europe and in the Danube valley.

In consequence of all this, international public opinion today reckons with the Hungarian People's Republic as dependable and conscientious. Hungarian foreign policy is appreciated, of course, not only in the international arena but also at home, it is thus an organic part of the national consensus. This is due also to the fact that our words and deeds are in harmony, our foreign policy is strictly national and international at the same time. We have taken the mainroad of human progress.

THE CULTURAL IDENTITY OF CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

by

IVÁN T. BEREND

There is a question over the very existence of a cultural identity for Central and Eastern Europe. This can hardly be answered without examining the particular historical processes in order to discover why the linguistic and cultural factors became particularly significant for national development in Central and Eastern Europe. Such an analysis must start from the specific conditions prevailing there from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries when the peoples of the region did not join in the process of national development experienced by the countries of Western Europe, then undergoing its capitalist socio-economic transformation. Another missing element in that period was the modern absolutist State which, as in England or in France, was paving the way towards social, economic and political modernisation, which in turn brought about the capitalist transformation of the economy, radical structural changes in society and the establishment of the political nation.

These factors had a considerable integrating role in the historical development of the peoples and countries of Western Europe. Accordingly the various ethnic, religious and linguistic communities in Western European countries underwent a national integration process lasting two- to three-hundred years, as a result of which the population within a single state, in spite of surviving ethnic, religious and linguistic differences, managed to form a unitary *Staatsnation*. (Here the term is used as coined by the German historian Friedrich Meinecke.)¹ The integrating role of the nation-state and especially its social and economic substance seem to have minimised the importance of differences in ethnic, religious or linguistic communities. Despite all these differences, the fact and experience of belonging to one and the same nation-state became the grounds for the self-identification of individual and community.

¹ Friedrich Meinecke: *Weltbürgertum und Nationalstaat. Studien zur Genesis des deutschen Nationalstaates*. Munich and Berlin, 1908, p. 6.

Widely differing from this was the Central and Eastern European process. Instead of achieving a gradual capitalist transformation with the abolition and disappearance of the institution of serfdom, the peoples of the region reverted, in the period in question, to a condition recalling the rigid early forms of feudalism and serfdom, often described as a second serfdom. From the sixteenth century on, in contrast to the tendencies towards convergence observable between the eleventh and fifteenth centuries, the peoples east of the Elbe found themselves on the margin of the modern world economic system then beginning to take shape. Under the conditions of the incipient international division of labour, they were reduced to the role of agricultural suppliers to the gradually modernizing, industrializing and urbanizing West. As this divergence became wider, the structure of their societies also became increasingly obsolete. These "societies of nobility" conserved the traditional classes and failed to make room for the modern middle strata to emerge, for the peasants' rise to middle-class status.

The absence of modern national development

All this occurred at the same time or may well have been the absence of modern national development. The majority of the peoples in the region were unable to create independent nation-states and, for the most part, were combined in multinational empires or, lacking a uniform national framework, divided up into tiny statelets and principalities. The latter was equally true of the German and of the Italian situation in the largely similar South European region; most of Eastern Europe belonged to the multinational Russian, Turkish and Habsburg empires.

This absence of independent national development lent special significance to cultural identity. Instead of the nation-states brought about by the "unifying force of common political history", the *Kulturnation* began to develop on the basis of "cultural goods which had in a certain sense been jointly experienced and acquired" (Friedrich Meinecke). In Central and Eastern Europe, therefore, a common national language, culture and history became a substitute for the modern and modernising *Staatsnation*. The preparation for social and economic modernisation (which was the substance of national development in Western Europe) called for the establishment of independent nation-states. The struggle for this—being a struggle directed against the dominance of those peoples ruling over multinational empires or against the absence of national unity—needed in particular a sustaining myth of the superiority of the national language and culture. This was the foundation

underlying self-determination (*Selbstbestimmung*) and the birth or rebirth of a much needed national consciousness and will. "Nation means the nation which wants to be a nation", stated Friedrich Meinecke, the leading proponent of the *Kulturnation*, and added that national activity unfolding and thriving from the late eighteenth century "gave birth to entirely new states, formed by nations which had throughout centuries existed as civilised nations only."²

Without attempting to give a comprehensive summary of the evolution of the notion of the *Kulturnation* in Central and Eastern Europe, two names, Johann Gottfried Herder and Johann Gottlieb Fichte, should be mentioned.

As early as 1767 Herder saw in language and literature the embodiment of "national character", as opposed to the rationalism of the Enlightenment and to the concept of universality. For Herder, human thinking is powerfully influenced by language, which is why man lives his life in national groupings, which are clearly determined by their (national) language and literature. The struggle he initiated "was waged to enforce recognition of the independent worth" of the German language—and this can be regarded as characteristic of the defensiveness imputable to belated development—it was conducted against the dominance of the French language and French literary taste and proclaimed the equality of all nations and cultures.

The *Nationalgeist* demands a kind of fulfilment which only and exclusively national communities can ensure. In place of the imitation of foreign models it requires development to rely on language, poetry and custom for the intellectual advancement of the peoples concerned. To Herder the very idea of the "human race" is a mere generalisation and his essay states that "every human perfection is national, secular, to put it more precisely, individual." There is no point in imitating others, because "every nation carries in itself the centre of its happiness as every sphere carries with it its centre of gravity."³ The worth of a nation, which can be expressed only through its language and culture, is contrary to every form of "empty cosmopolitanism". Classical German philosophy intended culture to unfold the processes of belated national development.

Johann Gottlieb Fichte turned to the idea of a united German nation which, even despite "all dividing differences", survived the shock of defeat at the hands of Napoleon. National development "was determined by the

² Ibid., pp. 7 and 8.

³ J. G. Herder: "Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit." In: Herder: *Zur Philosophie der Geschichte*. Berlin, 1952. Vol. II, p. 202. Cited by János Kelemen: *A népszellem és a nyelv génusza. Közösség, nyelv, történelem összefüggése a német klasszikus filozófiában* (Popular spirit and the genius of language: Interconnection of community, language, history in German classical philosophy). Doctoral dissertation submitted to the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, 1982, pp. 94 and 201.

national character of peoples." In a course of lectures given in 1807 (*Reden an die Deutsche Nation*) Fichte attaches special significance to primitive Teutonic (*Ursprache*) which has not mixed with other languages, and which embodies specific qualities belonging to no other language. National language and culture are products of the divine in man, and "language fashions man rather than man fashions language." "Primitive language" and "primitive people" represent characteristic, essential qualities, a special German "capacity for enthusiasm", which ultimately involves that "to be a man of character and to be a German . . . undoubtedly means the same thing."⁴ National awakening in Central and Eastern Europe was therefore a result neither of capitalist development nor of natural processes taking place within the framework of an absolutist State, but was the outcome of aspirations to respond quickly to the outside challenge. It followed precisely from this that the rational elements in the late-starting social, economic and national development were mingling, naturally and from the very outset, with the mystic and irrational features of desperate revolt.

South Slavs, Czechs, Slovaks, Rumanians

Originally the *Kulturnation* was a typically German idea which aspired to put an end to the division of Germans into several states and to create unity. Instrumental in this aspiration was the fact that the absence of objective processes conducive to the rise of a *Staatsnation* coincided here with those concepts of classical German philosophy which sought in ideology a way out of the serious obstacles to social and economic development. In one form or another, however, the ideologies of national revolts in this region show many similarities of thought to the nation-ideal of German culture. In the absence of a *Staatsnation* and national independence, the national movements of the peoples of Central and Eastern Europe, their emerging intellectual classes and political élites, with a view to escaping backwardness and creating independent national states, sought support in their own languages and literatures, in an idealised and mythicised sort of national character. In most cases the national movements grew out of language movements.

One of the most typical examples is provided by the South Slav national ideology, which exhibited clear traits of the *Kulturnation* idea. The ideal of a Greater Illyria of the early nineteenth century proclaimed the national

⁴ Cf. D. Bergner: *Neue Bemerkungen zu J. G. Fichte. Fichtes Stellungnahme zur nationalen Frage*. Berlin, 1957, pp. 71-89.

unity of South Slav peoples in the same manner as the Herderian-Fichtean notion advocated the unification of different German states within a unitary German nation. To provide an historical support for national consciousness, the South Slav national movement regarded the South Slav peoples established between the Black Sea and the Adriatic as direct descendants of the ancient Illyrians. From the 1820s and 1830s on, the idea of uniting the South Slav peoples in a unitary nation-state became closely linked with the effort to create a uniform South Slav language. During those decades, the typical attempt to create a modern literary language—as was to be observed in the entire region—in Croatia, which belonged to the Hungarian Crown or rather to the Habsburg Monarchy, resulted in the compiling of the first comprehensive grammar and the publication in 1821 of T. Miklusic's *Encyclopaedia*. In accordance with the notion of Illyria, a Croatian language reformer, Ludovit Gaj, selected the Stokavsky dialect as the basis for the modern Croatian literary language. This dialect was very close to the South Slav dialect of Herzegovina, which D. Obradovic chose as the basis for a Serbian literary language, instead of the inadequate, dead Church Slavonic. V. C. Kardzic, who published his Serbian grammar in 1814, went even further. His twenty-five collections, issued in 1918, explicitly drew on "the speech of the ploughman" and served the principle of "write as you speak, and speak as the people speak." The Croatian and Serbian language reform movements deliberately linked Serbian with Croatian, modernising them on essentially the same principles.

The Czech and Slovak national movements, whose evolving philosophies likewise went parallel with the linguistic movement, showed similarities to and differences from the latter. The Slovak national movement furthered various rivalling aspirations among them. The traditional Slovak Church literary language was based on the Krelc bible written in Czech. The first Slovak grammar, which A. Bernolák published in 1780 with a view to language unification, took as a basis the western Slovak dialect which stood closest to Czech. The dictionary he produced between 1825 and 1827 tried to reduce the differences between the Czech and Slovak languages. In 1821 J. Kollár, a leading figure in the Slovak national movement, fired his opening linguistic shots in a Swiss periodical. But Kollár—along the lines of Croatia—thought in terms of an autonomous Slovakia as part of the Habsburg Empire and, together with J. Palkovic, was content to see the Czech language Slovakised to a certain degree. Another branch of the Slovak national movement, beside those represented linguistically by Bernolák and Palkovic, was associated with L. Stur; his Slovakised Czech or western Slovak dialect akin to Czech was closer to Ukrainian. As the clearest expression of Slovak aspira-

tions for national independence, Stur considered this dialect to be the appropriate foundation on which to build an independent Slovak language.

In the case of both the Czech and the Slovak national movements, language reform was clearly linked to the ideology behind the attempt to establish national culture as an independent entity and just as it was linked to the "creation of a national past". Frantisek Palacky's vast synthesis, the first of whose ten volumes came out in 1836, presented Czech history as continuous struggle—interspersed with at best provisional compromises—between the Czech (Slav) and the Germanic nation (of the Holy Roman Empire); the bellicose, antidemocratic nations (Romans, Huns, Germans and Magyars) continuously attacked the peaceful and democratic Czechs and Slovaks, who concentrated all their efforts on their intellectual progress. As a consequence they were compelled to protect their own values. The impetus towards Slav freedom and the Czech historical struggle, shaped by German oppression, also operated to defend other peoples along with their interests, too.

The Rumanian national awakening also displayed similar traits, partly because it emerged almost simultaneously in the Rumanian princedoms and in Transylvania. The language movement of the Transylvanian Rumanians was headed by the famous triumvirate of Samuil Micu, Gheorghe Şincai and Petru Maior. The Rumanian grammar published by Micu and Şincai in 1780 consciously presented general linguistic norms; it also substituted the Latin for the Cyrillic alphabet used by the Eastern Church and until then predominant. This reform was of immense symbolical importance because the Latins were regarded as ancestors to the Rumanians; for this reason, in contradiction to most of the language reform movements of the region which turned to the vernacular, the Rumanian authors ignored the speech of the people and tried to create a "pure Rumanian language" by the "expulsion of foreign words". The *Lexicon Oudense*, published in 1825, represented an unnatural and rigid method of deriving or re-creating a collection of Rumanian words from Latin.

This turn of the language reformers to Latin was very closely connected to the historical sense of the national ideology as it developed. The Daco-Rumanian theory, as in most other cases, was intended to demonstrate the Rumanians' descent and their presence in the area before that of the neighbouring peoples.

One of the earliest proponents of this theory was Samuil Micu who was a major factor in the development of national ideology among the Latinizing Rumanians of Transylvania. He propounded as early as the 1760s that the Roman and Dacian population of the Roman province of Dacia had

intermarried and were the ancestors of the Rumanians and that the Rumanians had formed the populations of Transylvania, Moldavia and the principalities of Rumania since Roman times. In 1812, Petru Maior's history of Rumanians became a powerful force in mobilizing national sentiment and theoretical weapon for awakening national consciousness, proclaiming the ambition of unifying the Rumanians living within and without the principalities, especially those in Transylvania.

The South Slav, Czech, Slovak and Rumanian ideas on language, culture and *Kulturnation* show, in their principal features, similarities to the German *Kulturnation*.

Intensifying nationalism

It follows from all this that in historical retrospect, it is impossible to speak of a uniform cultural identity for Central and Eastern Europe. Quite the contrary: there developed numerous separate and isolated, conflicting national and cultural efforts at self-identification. The theories behind them, by way of compensation for the national inferiority complexes, historically characteristic of this region and kept alive by backwardness, were usually in conscious opposition with one another and enhanced the aspiration for national isolation. It is in fact they which underlay the expansionism of the "sacred national mission" as in the case of pan-Germanism and pan-Slavism. This aggressive and expansionist element, which had been implicit in these theories from the beginning, grew especially strong from the last part of the nineteenth century; occasionally, it became predominant and, ending in extreme nationalism, distorted the notion of civilised nation.

In many respects this was a natural and understandable consequence of the existence of multinational states, of alien dominance, or of the absence of a unitary nation-state. From the 1880s on, the pan-German and pan-Slav movements strove to create powerful national integrations. The Slavs were dreaming of a vast empire extending from Russian territories to those of Bohemia, Serbia and Bulgaria, with a uniform Slavic language and a united Slav nation. Early in our century the Czech composer Leoš Janáček declared that there would be no separate music for Czechs, Russians or South Slavs, but a single and indivisible Slavic music would exist.

The *pan* movements embodied nationalism and expansionism. Their aspirations sometimes led to the development of pre-fascist ideologies, from the proclamation of the superiority of a particular national culture to doctrines of the superiority of race and blood. For example, the pan-German movement produced a differentiation among the categories of typical *Volks-*

fremde (alien to ethnic Germans, non-Germans, ethnic elements living among Germans or on German territory, primarily Jews) and *Staatsfremde* (alien to the given state, German ethnic groups living in non-German states). The *Volksfremde* were considered to be natural enemies, the *Staatsfremde* were the victims of foreign nations. Accordingly, the struggle for the nation became identical with the struggle against aliens both within and outside the country. Around the turn of the century and after the Great War, the more or less direct consequence of this was the emergence of ideologies which were pre-fascist and fascist.

The thinking that lay behind the various national cultural identities in Central Europe often went hand in hand with interrelated currents of right-wing radicalism and extreme nationalism.

There were, however, equally important and opposing efforts in this region. Just as in the period between the two world wars, a considerable portion of the peoples in the area between the pan-German and pan-Slav ideological zones living under the multinational great powers of the region—the Habsburg and the Russian Empires—attempted to create the foundations towards an ideology postulating a common identity of small peoples. This was conceived within a community of small peoples which might counteract foreign domination and help to set out on their independent existence and unfold their historical development.

The idea of a Danube Valley federation

In opposition to the dominant powers, there evolved the conception of a Danube valley community; this entailed the rise of a political movement whose object was to bring it into being, occasionally attempting to do so in a naive and utopian manner. By the middle of the nineteenth century several plans for confederation in the region had seen the light of day. Lajos Kossuth came to realise that what was essential after the failure of the Hungarian revolution, during which the hostility of the national minorities in Hungary to Hungarian aspirations as formulated in the 1840s had come as a shock to the Hungarian leadership. The earlier Hungarian consciousness, that of the superiority of the *Kulturnation* over the nationalities in Hungary and the successful Habsburg policy of *divide et impera*, quite naturally contributed to the rise of aspirations to establish a Danube valley community. Further plans for a federation or confederation came into being during and after the Great War. Neumann's *Mittel-Europa* above all contemplated new methods to promote German expansionism. There was good reason why the best proposals were

put forward in the area which had formerly been Austria-Hungary. In fact, these proposals proceeded, in some way or other, from the existence of the former Austro-Hungarian Empire and were intended to mould it into a truly modern and democratic confederation. Oszkár Jászi wrote in 1918 that "The Dual Monarchy of Austria-Hungary is no mere military-feudal formation . . . it has an intrinsic evolutionary logic of its own for the past and for the future alike. . . ." Posing the question of "how could the Danubian Monarchy be transformed into a viable, harmonious federal State ensuring the development of all its peoples?", Jászi answered that "the new model for the formation of states is the supranational State, a federation of free states equal in rank." Equally, this plan for a Danubian confederation connected political organization with fundamental social objectives relevant for the whole of the region. This was necessary in what Jászi called the "half-finished part" of Europe, which was backward historically and thus the development of its nations and therefore a "danger zone"; it was not an accident but the "centuries-long historical processes of development that had logically resulted in the outbreak of world war in this region."

This led Oszkár Jászi to the conclusion that ". . . if war has its deepest-seated cause in a crisis of state organization and national policies in Eastern and Central Europe, then its logic also requires nothing else but to complete Europe's total . . . integration by establishing in the backward central and eastern part of Europe a state organization which, by guaranteeing the free national and cultural development of all peoples, will create all the opportunities for democratic solidarity."⁵ Indeed, the plan for a "Danubian United States" went far beyond the limits of the former Empire and encompassed the whole of the Danube valley.

In a narrower regional sense and by no means following the principles of national equality resembling those of Jászi in consistency, the Austrian socialist Karl Renner in 1918 also came forward with a plan for an Austrian confederation which would have united eight nationalities of Austria in a centralised confederation under the governments of four member states and a single parliament, which "secured autonomous regional contacts between the elements historically supporting the empire."⁶

It was more than fifteen years later, during the stormy 1930s, that Milan Hodža produced his plan in the autumn of 1935. His ambitious ideas and circumstantial diplomatic efforts were founded on *Realpolitik*. The Czechoslovak prime minister aimed at a comprehensive and gradual economic

⁵ Oszkár Jászi: *A Monarchia jövője. A dualizmus bukása és a dunai egyesült államok* (The Future of the Austro-Hungarian Empire: The Failure of Dualism and the Danubian United States). Budapest, 1918, pp. 17, 98 and 99.

⁶ Karl Renner: *Das Selbstbestimmungsrecht der Nationen*. Leipzig and Vienna, 1918, p. 231.

and political integration of the countries situated between Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union. Hodža, who had been a member of the Hungarian National Assembly before the Great War, understood the centuries-old problems of the region and was able to view them from many angles. He wanted to create a federation which would primarily be a defence against the German threat and in keeping with French political aspirations and which would have taken into account the basic interest in cooperation between the industrial and the agrarian countries of the region. The natural interest of conjoining the industrialized Austro-Bohemian territories to the region's agricultural countries was the basis, for his plan of a Danube valley federation. By politically revising the principles of the post-war Little Entente, he was seeking a solution which would have brought into being a system of tactical and practical alliance between the Italo-Austro-Hungarian triple alliance and the Little Entente.

From the Hungarian Oszkár Jászi through the Austrian Karl Renner and the Czechoslovak Milan Hodža to the plan for a Balkan federation after the Second World War, primarily associated, between 1946 and 1948 with Josip Broz Tito and Georgi Dimitrov, many Central and East European politicians have wished to bring into existence a unified community founded on the equality of small nations.

The concept of Central and East European cultural identity, linked with these political aspirations, has emphasised the regional similarities that exist despite national differences. The finest intellectual forces of the region have consciously striven to build bridges. By way of illustration, let me content myself to mention, of the many possible examples to be found, the extremely strong intellectual aspirations generated in Hungarian artistic and political life. In the mid-1920s, Dezső Szabó was a pioneer in the Hungarian populist movement and, while being a proponent of nationalism, emphasized with a vehemence peculiar to him that Hungary belonged not to Western Europe but to Eastern Europe. He urged that East European peoples living side by side should learn more about one another and learn one another's languages. This "East-Europeanism" makes an even stronger appearance in László Németh's literary work of the 1930s. Németh spoke of the East European peoples being fed by the same breast, pointing out that they had grown up as blood and they must therefore evolve a common culture. However, the most important Hungarian figure who represents a consciousness of an East European identity was Béla Bartók, who collected Slovak, Rumanian and Hungarian folk music, using all their elements to create a modern world of music. Béla Bartók made a profession of faith with a passion and pathos that was unusual to him: "My real guiding idea, however, of which I have

been perfectly aware since I established myself as a composer, is the idea of fraternising peoples, of their fraternity despite all the hostility and disagreement. I try, as far as I can, to serve this ideal in my music; this is why I resist no kind of influence, be it from Slovak, Rumanian, Arab or any other sources. Only that the source should be clear, fresh and wholesome! . . ."⁷

Even the incipient Hungarian surrealist movement in painting, Lajos Vajda and the Szentendre School, consciously represented this line of aspiration in the 1930s. By making use of Slav, Rumanian and Hungarian elements in their painting, they were endeavouring to create a common East European art. Lajos Vajda put it this way: "We want the same thing that Bartók and Kodály have already accomplished in music. I think such aspirations have not yet existed in the realm of painting . . . Our startingpoint is that nothing can be done without tradition, and in today's Hungarian conditions this can only be Hungarian folk art. . . It is our aspiration to mould a specific Central-East European art under the influence of the two great European cultural centres, the French and the Russian."⁸

This cultural aspiration in most countries of Central and Eastern Europe became particularly important in the inter-war years, but chiefly after Hitler's access to power. Thus the feeling of a Central and East European cultural identity went parallel in time with the growth in hostility between nations.

But the two tendencies were not of equal weight as regards their political impact and consequences. The first, mainly right-wing, trend to national isolationism became dominant and enjoyed considerable popular support. The second, the cultural and political movement towards the creation of a Danube valley community, was rather an intellectual aspiration, politically fairly isolated and lacking in mass support. Nevertheless, even though historical developments did not permit the spread of this consciousness of a Central and East European cultural identity, and until the outbreak of the Second World War appeared only as isolated efforts, it is extremely important that the idea of belonging together, similarity, common history and common fate emerged time and time again over a century on the occasions of the most critical changes in historical fortune. A tremendous living force resides in any past aspiration that seeks historical solutions. Efforts made together by peoples living side by side arose in and runs through this ethnically mixed region of Europe; these attracted the best minds of the region in opposition to overemphasising the conflicts between nations.

⁷ *Bartók Béla levelei* (Béla Bartók's Correspondence). Ed. by J. Demény. Budapest, 1986, p. 397.

⁸ Cf. Endre Bálint: *Hazugságok naplójából. Tanulmányok, novellák, esszék* (From a Diary of Lies: Studies, novelettes, essays). Budapest, p. 94.

THE FUTURE OF ADJUSTMENT PROGRAMMES

by

JÁNOS FEKETE

The economic and political weight of the developing countries in today's world is such that it is not an exaggeration to say: the success or failure of finding a solution to their debt problems will shape the future of our world. Compared to what is at stake I am afraid that—despite honourable efforts and some encouraging progress made during the past couple of years in this field—until recently at least, the approach to these problems has been far narrower-based and shorter-term than necessary.

The so called “Baker initiative” was a most welcome turning point in this regard. Implicit in the proposal that long-term adjustment is only possible through economic growth, and that the international institutions have to play a pivotal role in orchestrating this process, was the recognition that the indebtedness issue is in fact a development issue. Unfortunately, more than one year went by since the launching of this initiative, and from the slogan “adjustment through growth” only the first half is going on in the Third World—there is plenty of adjustment, but growth is nowhere in sight. How long can this situation last? I am afraid not very long—my very pessimistic feeling is indeed that we are quickly approaching the 24th hour.

World Economic Outlook 1985

In the following I will first briefly outline my own version of the “World Economic Outlook 1987” and what I think are the lessons we can draw from the type of adjustment followed until now. Then I will advance my proposals for redressing the situation—a modified Baker initiative, if you want.

Text of remarks by the author at the IMF-World Bank Symposium on “Growth-Oriented Adjustment Programmes”, Washington D.C., February 25-27, 1987

During 1986 the structural disequilibria in the world economy have further increased.

1. Balance of trade and payment distortions among the leading developing countries have further widened and have attained an unsustainable degree.

2. In order to correct these imbalances, the Group of Five countries have undertaken coordinated interventions in exchange markets to precipitate a correction of severely distorted exchange rates. These interventions succeeded in triggering a correction—which, however, went too far, and, as could be expected from the past experience with the floating exchange rate system, now threatens to degenerate into an other round of persistent exchange rate distortions, this time in the opposite direction.

3. In spite of the substantial correction of the US dollar against the currencies of the two other major developed countries, the beneficial effects of this correction on the US balance of trade failed to show up. As a result, protectionist pressures within the US continue to mount.

4. At the root of the problem is the exhaustion of the lopsided recovery in which the US played the role of the locomotive. The policy of running large budget deficits financed from abroad is nearing its limits because of its consequence—the siphoning off of an increasing share of US domestic demand by imports. As the US locomotive ran out of steam, and as the dollar weakened, the yen and DM strengthened, the export-led recoveries of Germany and Japan slowed down.

5. The major developed countries are at present in a stalemate. A more restrictive US fiscal policy—necessitated by the need to reduce the enormous budget deficits—will mean less stimulus for the US economy and so its possibilities are restricted. Under the present circumstances, however, the freedom of monetary policy is also severely restrained: for fear of a collapse of the dollar, and with it, a steep rise of US interest rates which would trigger a recession, the FED cannot further ease its monetary policy to stimulate the economy, even if Germany and Japan were ready to cut interest rates and otherwise stimulate their economies. But they are reluctant to make such a step—Germany, for instance, argues that it would lead to an overheating of her economy and in any case it would not be able to take over the role of locomotive from the US.

There is a clear danger that this stalemate can result in “beggar thy neighbour” kind of policies—the manipulating of exchange rates, increasing protectionism, etc. Even a trade war among the leading industrial blocs—the US, the EEC and Japan—is already no more a remote possibility.

6. Because this stalemate is not likely to be solved any time soon, it seems virtually certain that economic growth in developed countries in 1987 will

fall short of the minimum 3 per cent necessary according to the IFM for developing countries to service their debts.

7. While the major developed countries are fingerpointing at each other, the situation of developing countries continues to deteriorate at a rapid pace: the anemic growth and protectionism in developed countries severely depress their export earnings while real interest rates at which they have to service their debts continue to be very high. Despite the Baker initiative—voluntary lending by commercial banks to most of them has practically ceased—the negative transfer of resources from developing to developed countries continues. (Even the World Bank and the IFM—which are accused by some circles to distribute free lunches out of taxpayers' money—are net receivers of funds!)

Without the prospect of any improvement in this situation, the impatience of Third World countries is understandably growing—many countries already force out “unorthodox” rescheduling agreements, limit debt servicing to a certain percentage of exports, etc.: *de facto*, the classical model of adjustment seems to disintegrate.

Lessons from past adjustment

1. Neither the inflation of the 70's, nor the deflationary environment of the 80's was a result of the policies pursued in the Third World: the rules of the game in the world economy are set by the major industrial countries. A major part of the debt problem stems from a sudden change of the rules—this has to be kept in mind, when “allocating” the blame—and the adjustment burden—among diverse participants.

2. The decisive impulse for pulling out the developing countries from their present situation must come from stable growth in the developed world. Developing countries cannot “pull themselves out” alone.

3. A successful adjustment strategy has to require from each participant what it can realistically deliver. The main reason why the Baker initiative has not worked until now was that it put an unduly large burden on commercial banks. These already have burned their fingers by taking over the role of development financing during the 70's: they are understandably reluctant to play again the leading role and put up additional money. This time, governments, parliaments and international financial institutions must take over the leadership from commercial banks and lead the way to solve the debt problem. Then, and only then, will the banks follow.

4. The IMF's traditional prescriptions for adjustment may be very efficient to promote the correction of temporary balance of payment problems of *developed* countries. But the problems of developing countries are not of a temporary nature: they *have* to run balance of payment deficits during an extended period. Consequently, neither the type of policy recommendations, nor the time horizon the IMF has focused upon until now seem to suit the type of problems developing countries struggle with. In some cases these policy recommendations risk to contradict one of the basic purposes of the IMF itself: namely, that it should "provide (member countries) with opportunity to correct maladjustments in their balance of payments without resorting to measures destructive of national or international prosperity."*

There are at least four basic consequences of the above short remarks.

1. The Third World—an immense market of 4000 million people—is the greatest potential source for the growth of the world economy. Making this market solvent would help break the stalemate among the major industrial countries and ensure economic growth for all.

2. Long-term problems—such as the development issue—need long-term solutions. Our most important task is to find ways of substantial long-term financing for developing countries, under conditions that guarantee that the loans are self-liquidating. The international institution par excellence to provide such funds is a substantially strengthened World Bank.

3. Much of the present economic problems in both developed and developing countries ultimately stem from an inadequate world monetary system. Any attempt to revitalize the world economy and to find a lasting solution to the debt crisis must necessarily deal with this problem. Instead of being based on a national currency, the new international monetary system should be built upon the SDR, in accordance with the IMF's stated objective of "making the special drawing right the principal reserve asset in the international monetary system."**

4. The IMF—which is today "searching an adequate role" for itself—is a natural candidate to take the leadership in devising and coordinating such a new international monetary system.

In fact, nothing radical would be required: the IMF should only resume performing on its basic purposes as stated in its Articles of Agreement. Especially, it should concentrate again on the letter and spirit of Article IV which stipulates that "each member undertakes to collaborate with the Fund and other members to assure orderly exchange arrangements and to promote

* Articles of Agreement of the International Monetary Fund, 1987, Article I, Section V.

** Ibid., Article IX, Section 7.

a stable system of exchange rates.”* Article IV is explicit on what this requires: “fostering orderly economic growth with reasonable price stability”; “promote stability and a monetary system that does not tend to produce erratic disruptions”; “avoid manipulating . . . the international monetary system”; “follow exchange policies compatible with these undertakings.”** I would recommend to devote particular attention to Section 4 (entitled: “Par Values”) in this regard.

Proposals for a solution

1. Every debtor country willing to adopt and follow through a reasonable, growth-oriented adjustment programme must be rendered creditworthy. (I think here on an enlarged Baker-list).

2. The necessary funds for this should be created by the IMF in the form of a “New SDR” allocation. This allocation would not be the usual one based on quotas, but would depend upon certain conditionalities.

3. To avoid possible inflationary effects and expectations, this “New SDR” allocation should have a certain economically reasonable backing, as well as a limit.

4. Such a backing and limit could be provided by the IMF’s gold holdings.

5. The “New SDR” allocation would be made at a certain ratio to the market value of these gold holdings, the ratio to be defined by the IMF Board of Governors. — Something like 1 to 4, for instance, would seem a reasonable ratio: in this case, the 103 million ounces of the IMF’s gold holdings (their market value is about 40 billion US dollars). The allocation would be made under a five-year schedule.

It may seem a huge amount of money, but one should keep in mind that it is at about the same order of magnitude as were the deficit on the current account of the US, or the combined surplus of Japan and the FRG—during the sole year 1986. To those who fear an inflationary impact of such an allocation, I would reply that, looking at the latest figures of the OECD countries, one cannot help to think that “Public Enemy No. 1” is today not inflation, but depression. Real GNP in the OECD area was 2 1/2 per cent in 1986 and unemployment exceeded 8 per cent. Forecasts for 1987 do not

* Ibid., Article IV, Section 1.

** Ibid.

look much better—except for inflation, that is forecast to remain at a 20-year low of about 2.5–3 per cent well into 1988*.

6. The availability of the “New SDR” allocation to debtor countries would depend upon an agreement with the IMF and the World Bank on an appropriate *growth-oriented* adjustment program. The settlement of debt payment arrears, as well as the orderly servicing of debts—rendered possible by using up part of the allocation—would figure among the conditions of agreement.

Parallely, debtor countries’ imports could be liberalised, giving a chance to the industrialized countries to export more to this area.

7. The governments of lender countries would provide new extended limits on export-financing guarantees through their credit insurance agencies.

8. The World Bank—substantially reinforced by a major capital increase—would launch an extensive program of Structural Adjustment Loans. World Bank supervision over the use of these loans would be an additional guarantee that “good money is not thrown after bad”; that the errors of the 70’s would not be repeated.

9. Commercial banks could participate in financing these new projects, with keeping a certain ratio (say 15–20 per cent) at their own risk, not covered by official guarantees.

10. In order to alleviate the already existing debt servicing burden, a fair “cap” should be set on today’s irreasonably high real interest rates on developing country debt, together with an extension of maturities. From commercial banks this would require also a certain sacrifice—largely compensated by the orderly flow of debt servicing. Lower real interest rates and later repayments are better than no interest paid and writing off debts.

* OECD Economic Outlook, December 1986

THE POETIC WORLD OF SÁNDOR WEÖRES

by

MIKLÓS VAJDA

The sixty-eight poems included in this volume are a modest introduction to a prolific life's work further screened by an accidental factor, that of translatability.* It is not the poet's first appearance in English: in 1970 twenty-four Weöres poems were published in Edwin Morgan's translation in a volume of poems by Weöres and Ferenc Juhász, in the Penguin Modern European Poets series. However, this book was not given the reception it deserved; besides, it has long since been out of print. Weöres's writings have appeared in several other European languages as well. His name is familiar to those with a special interest in verse, but his presence is nevertheless marginal and in no way proportionate to his achievement.

In Hungarian, the collected Weöres oeuvre includes three volumes (over one thousand eight hundred pages) of poetry, and another three (almost two thousand five hundred pages) of poetry translations. His verse plays and plays for children make up another volume (of nearly five hundred pages). Furthermore, the unusual two-volume (almost one thousand pages long) anthology of forgotten or previously undiscovered gems of Hungarian poetry entitled *Három veréb hat szemmel* (Three Sparrows with Six Eyes), compiled, annotated and introduced by Weöres, is also regarded as part of his work. His own articles, prose works, interviews, comments on his experiments, as well as letters documenting the birth of some of his work, have been published here and there but not systematically. His oeuvre is the subject of several books** and countless in-depth studies, and after long years of official neglect, it seems that he has taken his rightful place in Hungarian

* Introduction to "Eternal Moment," a volume of selected poems to be published later this year simultaneously by Corvina Press, Budapest, and Anvil Press Poetry, London.

** Of these, I have used Zoltán Kenyeres's *Tündérsíp* (Elf Pipe, Budapest, 1983) in writing this introduction, I take this opportunity to express my thanks.

literature at last, though there is no consensus amongst his critics. His popularity with readers is unparalleled, though this is true only of certain parts of his work. The poet himself is still with us; he will be seventy-four in 1987, and though less frequently than before, he is still publishing.

For those familiar with it, this extensive *œuvre* constitutes an organic whole. Some basic qualities which go hand in hand with Weöres's poetic talent—his attraction to myth, transcendental and mystical interests, empathy, feeling for reality coupled with a pronounced inclination for abstraction, love of play and humour, the daring and persistence of his experimenting, a striving for the reconciliation of opposites, a serenity which raises him above the everyday world and, last but not least, an impressive linguistic and formal inventiveness—are the pillars on which the thematic arches of his works rest. Weöres's poetry is seemingly full of contradiction—it reveals its inner harmony and unity only gradually. The variety of themes, subjects, voices, the multiplicity of form and prosody, the virtuosity of language apparent even in this small selection, are so impressively rich and unusual that the non-Hungarian reader surely needs some background information.

Weöres was born a year before the outbreak of the Great War on his father's 150 acres that had been a 1,500 acre estate in his grandfather's time. It was here, in the countryside, that he learned the folksongs, sayings, tales and games that were still prevalent at the time among the peasants. He became acquainted with poetry thanks to his mother and German governess. There was a local Theosophical Society, founded, like many others, during a visit by Annie Besant to Budapest in 1905, which in the poet's small village in time metamorphosed into an Anthroposophical Society, and his mother took the small boy with her to its meetings. Even decades later, the mysterious undercurrents, the surrealistic march of bizarre, unembodied beings, coupled with the other magically handled effects, helped to expand the field of vision of his poetry beyond the describable.

He was brought up a Lutheran, and his interest in the transcendental and, metaphysical, and his attraction to mythology became apparent early. A history and anthology of Classical Antiquity in his parents' library started him on his way, and soon he also read Far Eastern philosophy, myths and, later, the medieval and modern Christian mystics. He was a poor student. At times he had a private tutor, at others he was sent from school to school in western Hungary. Yet even as a schoolboy he had impressive classical learning, and his perceptive teachers eased his way towards modern literature. Since the age of four or five he had been regularly writing verse, and this aptitude was coupled with an instinctive sense of form and inventiveness. Like a sponge, he soaked up the sound of folksongs, and he also experimented,

on the basis of his classical and modern reading, with variations on the poetic attitude, on the handling of his tools, imagery, condensation, linguistic and rhythmical shaping. Thus, poetically Weöres was mature at a truly Mozartian age; he wrote poems worthy of a poet, some of which are included in his collected works. His first appearance at the age of fifteen in a national daily caused quite a sensation. He first corresponded, then came into personal contact, with the major poets of the day, and soon his work was published in *Nyugat*, the country's leading literary journal. One of the poems ("The Old Ones") he had published at the age of fifteen caught the eye of Zoltán Kodály, who set it to music; it became one of his most popular works for mixed choir.

But such early success so easily come by did not have an adverse influence on Weöres, who continued steadily on the road dictated by his talent. "The Old Ones" and the "Lunatic Cyclist," also included in this selection, are a good foretaste of the later works. In these he does not describe an experience or an episode; he completely leaves himself out of the poem, describing his subject from a distance, and focuses on the general, on the abstract, yet in a very concrete manner and sharply, as it were, placing it, and, in the case of the latter, the 'message' of the grotesque is never spelt out but is created by the reader. The handling of form and language are also impressive.

In 1933, Weöres started his studies at the University of Pécs in southern Hungary. Though there is no room here for a detailed study of the poet's development, mention must nevertheless be made of three great men who had a decisive influence on him. Karl Kerényi taught classical studies at the University of Pécs from 1934 on. Under the threat of Nazi propaganda, which even exploited Germanic mythology, the subsequently world-famous classical scholar, interpreter of myth and historian of religion emphasised the Mediterranean heritage, that spirit of the South which could serve as the basis of a modern Hungarian national consciousness as opposed to the false romanticism of the Asiatic steppes. Later, in Budapest, he edited a series under the title of *Sziget* (Island), which also had a strong influence on writers. In this he propagated the somewhat idealistic philosophical island idea, and tried to confront the barbarism of Fascism with an idealised Greek culture.

The philosopher and novelist Béla Hamvas, who also belonged to the *Sziget* circle, and with whom Weöres became personally acquainted only in 1944, was the second strong influence on his thinking. Starting out from modern traditionalist philosophy, Hamvas began tracing the vanished world of the Golden Age, and collected and made use of those ancient texts which could serve as proof of the unity of existence or perfect harmony that was still present in ancient cultures. In his review of *Meduza*, (1944), Weöres's fourth

volume of poems, Béla Hamvas encouraged Weöres to write Orphic poetry (this was a reference to Mallarmé) and to turn away from a poetry of outerness which had gained supremacy since the "Homeric straying from the true path," from superficiality, a fascination with the surface and from sensual enchantment. "In contrast, Orphic poetry is the true poetry which tames tigers and which makes fish raise their heads out of water." This encouragement was so much in line with Weöres's own inclinations and the direction of his experiments at the time that, after reading the review, he wrote to a friend: "Today's poetry by necessity can be no other but Orphic; in other words, it encounters reality not on the surface, not as phenomena, but only in the upper spheres; it must penetrate the substance of things, must experience things from the inside, must speak not *about* a thing, but must speak *the thing* itself. Or, rather, it shouldn't speak but sing, because man speaks *about* something and sings something."

The third person who had a major influence on Weöres was the art historian and philosopher of art Lajos Fülep, teacher first at the University of Pécs, then for a short time at the Eötvös Kollégium in Budapest, where the intellectual élite was trained. Though in no way a radical, he was officially neglected for most of his life. At the time Weöres met him, he taught history of art at the university while the Calvinist minister of a nearby village. Weöres learned from him what it means to be a Hungarian in the European sense; he learned a modern, humanist ideal of culture and an approach to art based on philosophy. Even when he was an acknowledged poet, in fact until Fülep's death in 1970, Weöres always showed him his new poems first. Fülep was one of the most important intellectual touchstones and sources of inspiration to several generations of writers and artists, thanks not so much to his relatively small oeuvre but to his charisma as a teacher. His influence can be compared only to that of the essayist and novelist László Németh and the Marxist philosopher György Lukács.

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With his third volume, which appeared in 1938, Weöres had already taken an entirely independent direction, that of existence-expression instead of self-expression, the experimental road of the constant that is inherent in changing *phenomena*, not experience. He was searching for the unity between man and nature, the cosmos, in fact, the ennobling assurance of finality, gradually exiling the concrete self in all its forms from his poems. In his experiments he made use of every means at his disposal, from symbolism all the way to surrealism.

The result of Béla Hamvas's encouragement first took shape in a prose volume of brief pieces of wisdom, published in 1945. With its mixture of Oriental philosophy, pantheism, neo-Platonism, Christian mysticism and modern existentialism, it declared war on both individualism and all intentions directed at improving society. "Do not tolerate in yourself even the germ of any kind of intention to better society. For every generalised community is a fog; and he who runs about in the fog will sooner or later step on something living," says one of his teachings. The artist's escape from individualism does not point towards the world but towards uncommitted mediation which will lead to "love without feeling." "There is no good or bad in totality, there is no merit or mistake, no reward or punishment." "The home of science and art is not existence, the *esse*, but the possible, the *posse*, and if it is manifest in existence, it will make existence all the richer." Thus, though the human condition, or life, may be hopeless, it can still be ennobled through art and creation. "There is something that is unchanging. The essence of everything is this unchanging thing. If I am freed of all incidentality, nothing of me will remain except the unchanging," says the "Summation" towards the end of the book.

This book appeared during the first awakening of a country in ruins, humiliated by the war, at the birth of the hope of a new age, and though in part it carried the trauma of war, with doctrines expressing in detail a social hopelessness and despair of a future, it met with general disapproval. In addition, Weöres's original poetic attitude was totally unlike what had been expected of a Hungarian poet throughout the centuries. Since the 16th century, history has shaped the fate of this nation, severed from Western Europe and not coming up to its own expectations, so that for want of the necessary institutions, a free press and so on, the cause of national independence, and social progress, or both, became the responsibility of writers and poets. The great, eternal, universal subjects of poetry appeared, even in the works of the greatest, such as Petöfi and Ady, peculiarly entwined with the cause of the homeland and of progress. The poets centred around *Nyugat*, the generation before Weöres, specifically Mihály Babits, Dezső Kosztolányi and Milán Füst, who supported the young Weöres and whom he regarded as his masters until their death, were the first who dared to be poets, and could be great as such, without undertaking this role, though they never turned their back on the cause, and in their own way, outside of poetry, as men and writers, were part of it. Weöres turned away from it completely and explicitly. He was constitutionally unfit for the role.

Forging together his natural skills and the influences that acted on him,

Weöres continued experimenting. Between 1945 and 1948, when he was silenced, four more volumes of his poetry were published. He had entered a critical stage of experimentation. In the early fifties, the time of Stalinism, when he wrote for his desk drawer and only his translations could be published, he was already a great poet at the height of his powers who had solved the problems of attitude and expression. In his experiments he made use of surrealism and dada, automatic writing, logical permutation, inter-projection or superimposition, or else the floating of motifs living their own lives within the poem, daring games with rhythm, and an interaction of motifs and construction reminiscent of musical composition. In this volume, for example, his early poem, "Homeward Bound," is an attempt at creating a fugue, while his "Symphonies" are large-scale 'musical' compositions with several movements, long songs at any rate in which the pronouncedly rhythmic, sometimes mysterious, almost melodious text—in Hungarian, at least—creates a definite musical, extra-verbal impression. Some of the choruses of "The Assumption," for example, are baroque and almost polyphonic in character; at other times the text is reminiscent of a chorale, a hymn, an anthem, or folksong. But above all, after banishing the poetry of experience, the poetic Ego and the individual, and even going beyond modern objective verse, Weöres solved one of the most difficult problems of modern poetry, that of the expression of emotion. For this he needed the impersonal, ancient, collective voice of myth, to create the impression that it was not the poet but, as it were, the consciousness of the world itself that was registering what is happening.

"The Assumption"—the "Seventh Symphony"—is outstanding not only in Weöres's work but in all of modern poetry. After the grave, seemingly detached images of mourning, relying on opposites, he presents the eternal, mystical themes of womanly existence, life, death, time, suffering, sacrifice, and love, in a manner which makes the poem emotional and rational, modern and ancient, deliberate and spontaneous, narrative and dramatic, gentle and cruel, grave and joyous, even exultant, all at the same time: philosophically abstract and sharply concrete in its imagery, but above all, spellbindingly evocative and suggestive. Going through a mysterious metamorphosis, the body turns into the source of life, and the assumption of the Virgin becomes the triumph of poetry which alone is capable of conquering death and calling forth the cosmic serenity and harmony indispensable for living. The brilliantly rendered, banal yet philosophical micro- and macro- story of "The Lost Parasol" radiates the same serenity as, following its slow decline and disintegration, this man-made utensil gradually returns to impassive nature.

The reader will notice that the present selection does not include poems

from the seventies. At the time Weöres wrote an extensive and—by its very nature—untranslatable book, the complete works of an invented early nineteenth-century Hungarian poetess, Erzsébet Lónyay—*Psyche*—(1795–1831): her verse, translations, personal notes and letters, complemented with a biographical study by one of her ‘contemporaries,’ as well as the real text of a modern (real) critic, accompanied by a postscript relating the circumstances of the ‘discovery’ of this oeuvre. *Psyche*, the adopted daughter of a count, was educated in a convent, but on her mother’s side was a Gypsy, and therefore lived a life of extremes, full of adventure and amours, which in the language and poetic voice of the late rococo and early biedermeier she described with great honesty. She met Goethe, Hölderlin, Beethoven, and the great Hungarian men of letters, and writes about her secret love affair with a (real) Hungarian poet of the age, just as she writes about every aspect of her feminine soul and the trivial events of her daily existence. Her life was cut short by a carriage accident; it is possible that her (justifiably) jealous husband, the Silesian landowner Count Maximilian Zeidlitz, had her put out of the way. The work is a *tour de force* on several counts. As pastiche, a brilliant linguistic game, it is so perfect that not even a stringent analysis could detect that the poems were not in fact written in the early nineteenth century. But the feat is multiple: thus *Psyche* sends her poems to the great critic of the age (who actually lived), who in his answer makes up a poem in the style of a contemporary (actual) poet. Weöres does not parody this poet, rather he writes lines as the critic who lived a hundred and fifty years ago and had nothing of the poet in him would have written them. On another level, *Psyche* goes beyond the display of Weöres’s empathy and love of games and turns into a feat of psychological transvestism as well. We experience the life, loves, maturation into a woman and later mother, the happiness, and sufferings of a real woman. Going even further, as Zoltán Kenyeres writes in his above-mentioned book, *Psyche* “is the virtual creation of a life-style and a new possibility for life. The dream of what a late rococo, early biedermeier literature would have been like in an independent and free Hungary, where poets are not burdened by the need to express the crucial problems of society and the nation but are free to devote themselves to the common manifestations of love, joy, and sorrow. This is the dream of a Hungarian literature, European in character, one that could afford the luxury of being Hungarian in language only and not necessarily in subject.”

One of the secrets of Weöres’s great popularity lies in the effect of the ribald poems and brilliant stylistic devices of *Psyche*, the other in the folk-song-like and humorous children’s poems, sayings and short songs written

with wonderful simplicity and magical poetic power. These fruits of experimentation with rhythm encouraged by Kodály, are known by hundreds of thousands, most of whom hear them first in kindergarten where they give them the first joyous taste of true poetry. These two aspects of Weöres are *ipso facto* untranslatable, and must remain Hungarian secrets.

What translation, which by its very nature flies in the face of providence, is capable of in the case of a poet who steers his poems from the ancient myths through the Far Eastern, classical and modern mystical philosophies all the way to the world of contemporary European man in the magnetic field of universal human culture, and does all this in Hungarian, the reader can judge better than I, who may have selected the poems for this anthology and have even participated in their translation, but like Weöres am Hungarian myself and know the poems in my native language. One thing is incontestable: there are first-class translations in this volume, which nevertheless means only that they provide an approach to, approximation and glimpse of the original. I hardly know of any other poet in whose work form, rhythm, rhyme, linguistic invention and verse melody, all language-specific yet magical means which go beyond language and understanding and which touch the reader not in the sphere of the rational but at more ancient, more profound and sensitive spots matter so much. All these are carriers of intangible content-defying meaning. On the other hand, there are also few poets in this century with so much imagination and power to make things manifest, who are able to see man and cosmos, life and death, microcosm and macrocosm, the material and the spiritual as an integral whole, making this magnificent vision shine forth with the serene harmony of real poetry, this greatest of human accomplishments.

SÁNDOR WEÖRES

POEMS

THE OLD ONES

They are so derelict, the old ones.

I watch them sometimes through the window
as they trudge home in an icy wind
with a back-load of firewood—
or in a panting summer
as they sit in the sunny porch—
or on winter evenings by the stove
slumped in deep sleep—
they stand in front of the church
with palms stretched out in sadness, downcast,
like faded autumn leaves
in the yellow dust.

And when they stutter through the street
with a stick, even the sunshine looks askance at them,
and everyone makes it sound odd to say:
'How goes it, old man?'

The summer Sun,
the winter snow,
autumn leaf,
crisp spring flower
all pour an endless song in their ears:

'Life-cauldronful of old meat,
life-cartful of old hay,
life-candleful of guttered wax:
you are eaten up,
you are thrown away,
you are burnt to nothing,
you can sleep now . . .'

They are like someone
ready for a journey
and starting to pack.

And sometimes, when their gnarled hands
caress the blond head of a child,
it must surely hurt them to sense
that these two hands,
hard-working hands,
blessing hands
are needed now by no one any more.

And they are already prisoners,
prisoners in chains, drowsy, apathetic:
seventy heavy years shackle their wrists,
seventy years of sin and grief and trouble,
seventy heavy years have chained them to wait
for a kindly hand,
a dreadful hand,
an unarguable hand
to give its command:

'Time now, lay it down.'

(1928)

Translated by Edwin Morgan

THE CONSTANT IN THE CHANGING

from 'The Sixth Symphony'

The earth flies fast, the old shag bird. And now, as it turns
on autumn nights, progressively withdrawing its north face from light,
we may feel the fan of its wings as, ever faster, it furrows
the furthest pleats of space.

If you have seen much, speak: what is space hiding?
A vastness of unbodied arches, our latest brains reply,
springing its awful vault among infinities of light years,
pierced blindly by the stars—while we, stumbling on its veins and fibres,
opening tiny windows, stare amazed at night,
that massive crown which rests upon no forehead,
and its inhuman radiance touches us.

But I know of another space—more human
and even more mysterious. Just watch:
you shut your eyes; where light has stabbed, the wound
continues boiling for a few more seconds,
the colours reversed, spattered as a hedge
then washed away, your lidded eyes project a dark space only,
a vaulted hall, you cannot tell how large,
now small and reassuring, now immense, although it never changes,
and a flame ignites within it, near or far, who knows,
and a soothing or a terrifying face,
and faint skeletal memories go flying,
and miracles, those creatures of glass, fanning.
—I say: an inner space where not a speck escapes the tangible,
where nothing can be measured or has order,
where all is magically nascent, flitting, evanescent.

The space out there and that within us flood
and merge; this minute is a gift:
an open autumnal window where a tart breeze hesitates,
then streams in with the taste of mouldering stump-wood,
subdued carillons blunder in the fog, like violins,
and you can guess the metallic scent of stars.
A pergola spirals to the sky,
half mist-light and half thought,

a thousand flowerheads of creepers climb,
 such slender pale and round eyed little girls,
 all different but you see the common sign:
 the care that shaped their garments is the same.

Deeper than care nesting in your heart,
 under the thin crust of things,
 the shallow basin of phenomena,
 the joints of the world glisten,
 the flame whirls in its vortex and live fire
 spins on unshored with all its thousand eyes,
 blanketed in mist the horses drub,
 their lather haunches flash,
 their iron horseshoes clatter audibly,
 that thin element whistles by your ear,
 the infinite taps at your skin,
 sizzling, growing a crust
 as molten steel does on the ice.

It calls you—do you dream it? If only you could wake
 to feel it, neither alien nor hostile!
 to feel it is a living wave of love!
 to feel it more your kin than your own self!

(1938–39)

Translated by George Szirtes

FRAGMENT

My lips, my teeth will perish: but my laughter will not die!
 My brow, my eyes will dry out: but my weeping will not die!
 because my members are all separate, but my laughter and my weeping
 are one and the same thing: dualities,
 all things keyed in to it like islands in a stream,
 which sifting and sifted, trickles through what perishes.
 My laughter and my weeping are not me, clothes do not make the man,
 for you though heaven clothes me in seamless, frayless garments.
 My hands hold nothing finished—I could well be mournful.
 I could well turn from mutability—I could indeed be happy,
 on earth though, where all sorrow begets sorrow: I don't want to be
 mournful.

not yet suspecting anything. Only the bleary pap-eater,
 the great-great-grandfather of them all, who had been alive from the
 beginning

and had seen earth and water burst forth from nothing
 and the stars pullulate like showers,
 knowing that no one would listen to him anyway,
 mumbled to himself: 'It was like that then too—
 a lot of food and drink opened the gate,
 but no good came of it.'—And the feast was readied:
 in the place of honour the young master lay and
 beside him, at his head his mother, at his feet his woman,
 around him his sisters one after the other, and, at the end,
 the opulent stranger who was both guest and host.

Their door stood wide open
 in the yard noon was shining,
 bridal trees extended and
 displayed their blessed branches;
 a white horse went prancing by,
 its colt hurrying behind it,

while inside gaiety broke loose in song: and the master-eye
 did not notice that from afar, snakelike, stealthily,
 a bushy, lumpish hand had reached over;
 it caressed all his sisters, his mother, his woman,
 from knee to hip.—Then at the cooling fireplace
 the flame shot up for the last time and hid in the ashes,
 the charred log gave off a final puff, its smoke wreathed in dirt.
 By then the master was alone. Of a sudden
 blood shot up into his head, his sight became blurred,
 his throat glowed, hot and dry:
 he ran to the sleeping quarters. His mother stood there in her shift,
 his sisters peeped out, cuddling together, naked,
 and there was the stranger, vintaging on the master-bed.
 resting between the wet thighs of the young woman,
 torn like a stump from the earth. The young master reeled,
 a rock-heavy hollow noise burst from his throat,
 and, seeing that they had all pulled away and no one remained with him,
 collapsed in the corner like a rag and wept there quietly.
 And the old man, a witness since the beginning of time,
 mumbled: 'The same thing happened long ago;

it was just so when the Earthmother was raped
and that one came into the world of whom there is no riddance.'

(1949)

Translated by William Jay Smith

A SESSION OF THE WORLD CONGRESS

A white-hot glow as every brain
glitters in diagonal section,
a chief from Papua chairs the session,
face to face with Britain's queen,

a princess of Upepe's crown
chews her quid with mobile lips
while the French ambassador keeps
his face from being a spittoon,

a Bazongan pair swing from the lights
but since they know decorum's steps,
love scatters its obliquer drops

in rainbow arcs of mays and mights:
one more year of shuffling chips,
and they'll have an agenda, perhaps.

(1959)

Translated by Edwin Morgan

THE DOUBLE I

Out of the globe of an unfamiliar lamp
I am unfolded, beaming,
on a lengthening shadow stepping
from the more and more distant country
and voices that escape,
from sweat, through crosses I have sold,
the hundred cindered butterfly antennae,

a thousand bloody fingernails that crimp
into a garland, beneath me, deeply holed,
the other's agitated thump:

'Wait—I am here as well, I am your slime!
I am noosed in the seaweed of dark.
My eyes from seven miles observed to look,
I know the trouble in their gleam,
each hue finds its reflection there;
like those of a crack hunting hound,
at the slightest sound my sharp ears prick;
replete yourself, you leave me here to suffer,
among the broken bottles I am thirsty,
yet in your bosom's grieved outpouring drowned.

'You do not know the torrent which you pour
on me, which you have poured with such profusion;
perhaps a mist drop is enough to please you;
the price-boards which they score
in black at markets are my own
and show the ephemeral for sale,
so that I topple, lose myself and dive
in the flash of a shooting star;
eternal death, I cannot bear
this barren vault I beg you to remove!'

I travel on, don't hear this sad insistence,
and from the lost horizon I look back;
a tower obscured within a thick
ash-cloud is guardian of the distance;
I do not know what is to come,
and all my power to think is numb;
I would not mind the earth swallowing up
that other one the hole entombs;
he'll be the only listener to the music
till the Last Judgement comes.

(1962)

Translated by Alan Dixon

SATURN DECLINING

In memory of T. S. Eliot

They took my flock away. Should I care? I have nothing to do now,
 no responsibility; easy an old man's life at the poorhouse.
 Firstly they chased the priest, that antlered rambler,
 off his springboard, from which he took to the sky daily—fool!—
 and appointed more clever priests; then deposed the king, the defender
 undefended, and welcomed the sabre-rattling kings; then the sage,
 saying, We have enough scholars as it is; lastly the poet;
 What is he counting his fingers for anyway, prattling? Singers,
 styled to requirement, flock in his place as a consequence.

So I stand, face to the wall turned, with broken crook.
 My flock jostles at the trough; how many bright, brand new
 splendid things are swimming in it! nose at nose, pushed nose nosing
 away—should I care? It's not my vocation any more;
 they stick teeth in me if I look; what will happen to the enormous
 progeny, the scraped womb, ravenous,
 stupefied, quickening, and the murderous rays,
 the explosive left at the doorway—

As it is when a train

rushes towards the deep with no shore on the other side—should I care?—
 maybe they'll stop it at any moment;
 there could be tracks to carry it over the chasm, perhaps I am blind;
 perhaps, at the edge of the abyss, it will open its wings, and fly;
 they know. I do not. Their trouble, if they do not.
 All the same to me now: my shepherd's crook broken,
 so easy to lie about in the straw, resting
 from centuries of toil. They can't see, their heads in the trough;
 I only see their rumps and flapping ears.

(1967)

Translated by Alan Dixon

THE CHALLENGE OF WEÖRES

by

EDWIN MORGAN

For worthwhile poetic translation, it has always seemed to me, two things are required: a devotedness towards the task in hand, and a certain empathy between the translator and his chosen poet. The professional skill and agility of the first requirement will take the translator so far, but it is only when he can project himself confidently and happily into the mind of the target poet that his work gains the lift and fluency we all want to see. The work of Sándor Weöres is often difficult; it is characterized by unusual variety of form, content, and 'voice;' and it must therefore offer the most acute of challenges to a would-be translator.

By a lucky chance, I found that my own approach to poetry coincided at several points with that of Weöres: I have always enjoyed the use of many different voices and personas, I like variety of verse technique from the most free and exploratory to the most strict and metrical, and I relish giving immediacy to distant or mythical events in place and time. Although in other respects there are important differences between us, I felt that I had a certain *entrée* into Weöres's poetry. This did not mean it would be plain sailing! I had to test myself against the very formidable talent which produced on the one hand the intricately rhyming but metrically irregular ten-line stanzas of 'The Lost Parasol' (*Az elveszített napernyő*) and on the other hand the blocked-out non-syntactical visual patterning (allied to concrete poetry) of 'Wallpaper and Shadows' (*Tapéta és árnyék*). Could the same poet possibly have written these two poems? Yes! But I could only show this by showing that I myself, as poet-translator, took joy in both poems, however far apart they might seem. Wherever possible, I tried to deal with the virtuosic technical effects for which this author is famed, though I realized that this must not be at the expense of the deep meditative concern with man's fate—the casting of aesthetic bread over enormous waters of history and wonder and possibility—that was equally a part of Weöres. The bitingly humorous,

obsessional *majom*-compounds of 'Monkeyland' (*Majomország*), the international allusions and ironic collage (camouflage of the unpunctuated, but rhyming!) 'Le Journal', the moving, pared-down, short-line stanzas of 'For my Mother' (*Anyámnak*), the smooth shimmering Horatian verse of 'To the Moon' (*A Holdhoz*)—in each case the problem is that one is not steadily and clearly deepening one's acquaintance with a poet's 'style' but having to adjust to the ad hoc precision of a series of poetic solutions.

Although eventually one may feel there is such a thing as 'a Weöres poem,' this is necessarily qualified by the element of surprise, of exploration and discovery, which he guards as the ultimate prerogative of a man writing for an unknown future.

The challenge he offers is the challenge of a great poet; he keeps his translator stretched, even in his light and playful poems; the reward of any success is that this uniquely rich and distinctive poetry should become more familiar in the English-speaking world.

FROM OUR NEXT ISSUES

KARL POLÁNYI (1886—1964)

THE POLÁNYI FAMILY

Erzsébet Vezér

KARL POLÁNYI'S HISTORIC UTOPIA

Géza Komoróczy

JEAN-JACQUES ROUSSEAU
OR IS A FREE SOCIETY POSSIBLE?

Karl Polányi

AFTER FATHER DIED

From an autobiography

by

EMIL KOLOZSVÁRI GRANDPIERRE

Many years after my father's death, through complements of a long-lost aunt, I came into possession of a most telling fact. The lady in question (a shrivelled old maid if ever there was one) heard my father's mother address this following caution to someone:

"Don' tshow your children you love them!"

The lady could not recall the details—who the children were and who was the target of the admonition. However, I recall my own reaction with the utmost clarity.

"Why not!" I jumped to my feet as if someone had pricked me with a needle. "If they don't show it, how on earth is that miserable kid going to know anybody loves him? And what good'll come of it if he grows up thinking nobody gives a damn? Who gains from that? Not the kid. Or the parents. So what the hell's the use of their keeping their love under a lid?"

I reacted as sensitively to that comment of the grandmother I'd never seen as if I myself had been the object of her words. Indeed, that's just how I felt, for throughout my entire "happy" childhood, and even more during my adolescence, I suffered most from a lack of love. It turned out later that there was no lack of love, it was just that they didn't show it. Consequently, I didn't know it was there. By all odds I was the victim of a rigid bringing-up which worked among the Northern peoples, or so they say, though Bergman's films, among other things, suggest otherwise.

I tried to imagine what kind of childhood my father must've had with his mother, whose puritanical method of rearing children must've been utterly devoid of gentleness or warmth—elements that make life a little easier to bear. Nothing could've been more natural than for my father to

become used to this chilling and paralysing life from an early age; thus, he took the utmost pains to stifle his emotions even though he was sensitive and emotional by nature. No wonder he didn't learn the language of affection. He loved us, his children, just as he loved our mother, but he rarely showed it, or if he did, it was in a timid and equivocal form.

My brother's long illness cracked the ice of my father's inhibitions; as my brother hovered between life and death for weeks, if not months, he was very worried he'd lose him. This prompted his love for my brother to go to unfortunate extremes. It was partly my fault; my constant rebellion contributed to Father's losing all sense of moderation, as the career of the "little blond" demonstrates.

Let us turn back the clock. I was not yet four years old when Mother was in the family way with my little brother. What should the baby be called if it's a girl, and what should it be called if it's a boy?—the question was put daily in our home. In keeping with family tradition, Father wished to call him Károly—should it be a boy, of course.

"What would you like your little brother to be called?" Father asked. He wasn't really interested in the answer, though.

"András!" I said, without thinking.

"Why András, of all things?" Father asked in surprise. "There's no András in our family."

"That's just why!"

Indeed, there was no one near or far either in our family or among our acquaintances called András; the lack of Andráses was our natural environment, so to speak. I have no idea what made me think of the name. My father skipped over my wish, he did not take it seriously. But I put up such a stubborn and tenacious fight for the name I had chosen that, confronted with my doggedness, my brother was finally christened András.

My father was in his thirty-seventh year at the time, in the prime of life, and I, a four-year-old boy, enforced my will on him. Regardless of how he looked at it, this was out of the ordinary. I don't know to this day why he backed off.

In any case, I suspect a certain consistency in his behaviour, and this took the form of resignation.

This resignation, the first for me, was preceded by other, even more puzzling resignations. The fact was that my father, as you will see, had accustomed himself too early to resignation; in certain respects, resignation became a way of life for him. But while he lived by this, he also felt ashamed of it. This regret was partly to blame for the silence of Sicilian proportions that ruled in our family. For example, my father took the secret of why

we had repatriated ourselves from Kolozsvár to Budapest to the grave with him. According to one version, he was disgusted by the abuse of funds sent from Pest to support minority institutions. He was forced to sit back and watch the corrupt practices. It wouldn't have been wise to cause a scandal either from the point of view of the Transylvanians or of the Hungarian authorities. According to another version, the faction of the Transylvanian Hungarian Party to which Father belonged was defeated, and that was why he chose to repatriate. And he kept quiet about it because, whatever it was that prompted him to return, his real reason was his withdrawal from the battle. And nobody likes to talk about a thing like that.

It was a grave and painful enough decision to leave Kolozsvár, our native soil, to leave our beloved Transylvania, the native land, and this was only complicated by the problem of where to strike up the family tent a second time. Father had two courses to choose from—either he is appointed to the administrative courts, or else he accepts the invitation of the University of Szeged to teach law. His own preference was for Szeged, one small town for another.

So why didn't we go to Szeged, then?

Because my father entrusted the decision that would, first and foremost, decide his own life, his future and career, and especially his old age (he had his retirement to think of, after all)—in short, my father entrusted the decision to us immature children and to our mother, who was never before or after allowed to interfere in any way in matters existential, whose experience was for this very reason extremely limited and who pined for the big city only because she hoped to receive compensation for the drabness of the life.

In no time at all we had decided to move to Budapest. My father must've realized the disappointment awaiting us there, yet he bowed his head before our unanimous vote.

Another resignation, which had caused God only knows how much torment, how much predictable, though stoically borne, suffering. Naturally, the indications of this were only indirect indications, such as the fact that Father never got used to life in Budapest and lived out his days in the capital like an emigrant who'd lost his roots and has given up for ever even the thought of going home.

Besides his work at court and with the various associations dealing with Transylvania, he was kept afloat by preparations for his years of retirement. The small house he was building on the outskirts of Visegrád, the money for which he scraped together with superhuman economy, meant resignation from just about every form of pastime. He hoped to retire there, to

that humble little house, as compensation for the missed opportunity of Szeged, where he could have spent his retirement among friends and intimates, for the University of Kolozsvár had transferred there.

"Why must you work so hard?" my mother asked from time to time. "Why don't you rest?"

"I'll rest in Visegrád," came the response. "Have patience."

This was his last dream, this cabin in Visegrád, and this too went up in smoke. The small house wasn't even half built when death unexpectedly took him away.

It was I who brought his personal belongings away from the county court. Towel, soap, a few papers and a calendar, that's all. In the calendar he had carefully crossed out the past weeks and months. Two arrows facing each other indicated the month he had marked out for his holiday. For years he had spent this in Kolozsvár, in the company of our aunt, Dr Katalin Fugulján. At the end of the calendar a disproportionately large V, which did not stand for victory but, in all probability, for Visegrád. Hope had shrivelled to a single letter. My heart ached. What a life, clip-winged, like a bird's.

The practice of resignation thus ended in the final resignation. . .

Father's inclinations upset me greatly for it influenced our lives too. As soon as we were faced with some unexpected difficulty, Father's first reaction was to "wait it out." Let's not fight back, let's not improve things through action. This was one of the traits that turned me against him. This line of resignation, which I've already mentioned, I discovered myself; but how far in the past it had its roots I found out only a couple of years before his death, from his own lips.

To this day my stomach still turns in surprise. Why did he open up to me, of all people, with whom he clashed at every step? For there was constant animosity between us, that had been declared long ago. Anyway, in a moment of weakness, when chance left us alone in the dining room of our apartment in Budafoki út, without preamble Father told me that the most cherished wish of his life had been to become a conductor. The matter of fact and aloof tone of his voice was deceptive, and contrasted sharply with the burning pain behind his words.

"A conductor?" I asked stupidly.

"Yes, son, that was my dream. Not just a childish fancy, mind you. I attended the Music Conservatory and my teachers said I was not without talent."

I recovered only gradually. Finally, the question burst from me.

"I don't understand. Why did you become a lawyer then?"

He flung his arms apart in a gesture of helplessness.

"I had no choice. Father died unexpectedly. We had to make do the best we could and school was expensive. So I abandoned a career in music. I never quite got over the blow. There's nothing worse than . . ."

He didn't finish. My mother brought in the dinner and we sat down at the table, me shaking with excitement, Father with his usual reserve. After dinner he went to his study without so much as a word. I was not able to profit from the rare opportunity.

Knowing Father's uncommunicative nature, I tried to keep my excited curiosity in check. Naturally, I never dreamed of starting a conversation myself. I told myself that Father acted on a whim, that's why he talked to me about his most intimate thoughts. I didn't know yet that such confessions have their own inexorable laws and if someone starts in at the age of sixty-one, he won't stop half-way, even if he is as uncommunicative as my own father. Something wants to be told and this something demands its continuation with the relentlessness of a natural force. It is just as impossible to stop a confession as it is to turn back a birth.

One evening we were left alone again. His interest at half-mast, Father asked about my plans to become a writer, never for a moment concealing his lack of curiosity. He was not proud of me, but he accepted the inevitable without batting an eye. I was curious to hear the continuation of the sentence that had been left in the air during our last conversation, so I turned to him timidly.

"We were talking last time about how you wanted to become a conductor. You said it was the great dream of your life."

"Yes, indeed," he nodded, "I always wanted to be a conductor."

"You began saying something but didn't finish, because Mother brought the dinner. 'There's nothing worse than . . .' That's how you began."

He looked at me puzzled.

"What were you thinking of, Father? What's worse than anything else?"

"You should've asked me then. I can't remember." And he stood up. "I'm sorry. I've got work to do."

In an instant he had shut the door behind him. I stared at the handle. It turned, then fell back to its horizontal position. But I wouldn't leave things at that, I had to know how he had meant to continue what he had started to say. Gradually I realized that I would never get an answer like this; he had started something, then forgot.

I tended towards the theory, supported by my father's shyness, that he regretted his momentary revelation, and being a man reluctant to talk about himself, saw no reason to continue. But I was wrong again.

One evening we were by ourselves once more, and Father made another confession. He brought up the house at 77 Monostori út.

"Everything was decided there, in the house where you yourself and the little ones were born. There were only three rooms at the time. You remember Mr Köves, who fooled with you so much?"

Mr Köves and mortar were intertwined in my memory. How could I forget him and the lime that got in my eye and caused so much pain.

They had inherited the house from their father, and the three brothers lived under one roof. A lady, a distant relative, took care of them. His story didn't reveal at what stage of their education the three brothers were at the time, only that the eldest, my Uncle Károly, had already completed his first years of law studies. Father made his living by tutoring; whether he concurrently attended the Music Conservatory I never found out. However, he did tell me that he saw to his younger brother Jenő's needs.

The unexpected information astonished me; nevertheless, I asked, "What do you mean?"

His expression turned grave. Such questions always irritated him, he felt they were tactless.

"I meant it just the way I said it. Somebody had to take care of him."

I nodded dutifully that I understood, that it was clear to me. In fact, I didn't understand a thing, but I didn't want to upset him.

Father continued.

"I couldn't just sit back and watch my younger brother become half a man. I wanted him to finish school and go on to university. He's got me to thank for his law degree."

I ran back over what I'd learned so far with a sense of disbelief, and braced myself. With his usual irony, Father would surely turn on me for my stupidity.

"In other words, you could've finished the Music Conservatory and become a conductor if you hadn't sacrificed yourself for the sake of Uncle Jenő's career?"

"You can put it that way," he confirmed with his special brand of sour reticence. He did not look me in the eye, as if he were ashamed, as if he didn't want to own up to what he had done.

I still could not see clearly, but I was sure I had the thread in my hand, and it was up to me whether I unravelled it or not. There was no sign that Father would be reluctant to answer the question I had already formulated in my mind.

"So you were forced into a legal career in order to spend your income on Uncle Jenő's education?"

"I was interested in medicine too, not just music. As a child I wavered between these two callings. I'm sure you understand, you hesitated enough yourself before you took the plunge and enrolled at the University of Pécs. Unfortunately, this wish didn't come true either, I wasn't able to study medicine."

He spoke matter-of-factly, as if he weren't giving an account of the tragedy of his life. I felt in my bones that this was the point where his ship had foundered, and the series of resignations that ended in catastrophe must have begun somewhere around here. Many years had passed since, yet I was profoundly shocked by the calm with which he was able to look this blow—for a merciless blow it was, a blow one could never get over—so causally in the eye.

"And what stopped you?" I asked timidly, humbly, so he wouldn't back off now that, after long years, he had finally decided to speak honestly for the first time.

At this time the three brothers were still living at 77 Monostori út, and continued to have their meals together.

"We were just eating the roast," my father said, his voice bitter, "when I mentioned that I was planning to go to medical school. I didn't think it important; after all, it only concerned me. I only mentioned it because I didn't want my brothers to be surprised, to find out from somebody else. That's why I was so taken aback by the way my brother Károly reacted. He gaped open-mouthed, put his knife and fork down on his plate, stared at me, his face red, and jumped to his feet. 'What's got into you?' I asked.

"'What?' he repeated, pulled himself up, and began to shout for all he was worth."

"To shout?" I asked, puzzled. I was as blind to what caused Uncle Károly to do so as Father had been at the time.

He looked into space as if he still couldn't quite understand what had happened back then.

"I'd never seen him like that," Father continued. "He had never been carried away like that. He was always in high spirits, easy-going, witty, he was courteous, a real ladies' man, he took everything lightly, like a real gentleman."

Father shrugged, as if bewildered.

"But what was he shouting for?" I burst out impatiently.

The shrug was followed by a sleepy yawn and the knitting of his brows, a sign that it was difficult for him to recall what had passed between them.

"What was he shouting for?" he repeated, like a man who had just

picked up the scent. "That he's not going to sit at the same table with someone who gropes around the insides of corpses all day."

As a commentary on the above, he added a light, resigned wave of the arm. This annoyed me even more than the story itself.

Because, what had happened? For his younger brother's sake he said goodbye to being a conductor, and for his older brother's sake, to medicine. He was fortunate that he didn't have a third brother, for whose sake he could've offered another sacrifice! It took a great effort of will to keep the sarcasm to myself.

I saw the direct cause clearly now, but the matter in its entirety, especially the financial background, was still in the dark. For if he could finance his younger brother's and his own tuition as well, then there was probably enough for the Conservatory of Music. But for that I'd have to know the prices in those days, the money that could be made from tutoring, and God knows what else.

My lively urge towards sarcasm suddenly turned into sentimentality, sympathy, pity. What could a life, towards whose end, at the age of sixty-one or so, one is haunted by the opportunities missed as a kid, what else could it have been other than sheer torture, a childhood devoid of joy—"don't show your children you love them"—and in the adult years an incessant struggle with a career that does not satisfy your sense of calling—what else could such a life have been than suffering renewed from day to passing day?

I also caught a glimpse into the reason behind Father's unexpected revelation. In Kolozsvár he had served the Hungarian government for seven long years, he had helped support the *Pásztortűz*, *Magyar Nép*, *Erdélyi Helikon* journals, Jenő Janovics's theatre, the parochial schools, and so on, he had had his share of the Royal Rumanian prisons, and he got nothing for his pains, not even a medal. A job he did get, they were kind enough to give him an appointment, but he said himself that he could've got it anyway as he climbed the promotional ladder. This injustice prompted him to look back to the beginning, where everything was "decided," as he said; whereas, had one thing happened one way and another thing another way, he could've become a celebrated maestro; it was relatively free sailing, since so many talented conductors had decided to emigrate.

I turned to him, my emotions almost giving way to tears, and said, "You must regret deeply, Father, that your life turned out as it did, that you can't bow on your conductor's dais to the audience, and..."

Usually, Father tried to remain in the background, there was nothing he disliked quite as much as being the centre of attention, acting up, having

to justify himself, or bragging. His statements were all made in a sourish, almost timid manner, and he acted as if what he said had no importance whatever. Now he pulled himself up to his full height, raised his head, his demeanour, voice and expression underwent a magic transformation, and an almost belligerent sense of self shone in his eyes.

I was dumbfounded at this complete change in him. I couldn't get a word out; puzzled, I shifted my weight from one foot to the other.

"I never wanted to be a lawyer, son," began my father's confession, "yet I've made more of myself than my own brothers, who wanted to be lawyers from the beginning. I've left most other lawyers behind too. For your information, I'm considered to be one of the best lawyers in this country!"

I stared at him stupefied, I'd never seen this side of him before. I nodded profusely to show my agreement. In reality, I was paralysed by a profound dismay at the improbable masterstroke of his immune system, with which he transformed failure into success, weakness into strength.

"I know that, Father," I said at last, "everybody knows that," I added, feeling that my voice lacked conviction, and Father was obviously expecting enthusiasm.

He gave me a searching look, and a barely perceptible, sour expression appeared on his face. He sighed, and after a moment's hesitation, went to his study. This was the last time he spoke to me in confidence. This time it was not I who had broken off with him, but he with me and once and for all, though unspectacularly. He never gave the least sign that he had put me out of his life.

I realized only in my old age that this was when he became really lonely. Mother was a world apart, it was impossible to have an honest conversation with my younger brother, while my younger sister was an introvert, just like my father. I also understood then what at first I could not understand at all, namely, why Father had picked me for his confidant. I, the constant adversary, was his only partner.

One thing is for sure, I was the only one interested in him as a person, I alone tried to enter his inner world, and the fact that I was unsuccessful (how could I have been otherwise?) did not alter this. Despite our conflicts, he felt this embarrassed yet adamant interest, which was why he opened up to me. And surely he must have shut me out because I was following him on the road to self-deception.

Possibly, this is the place to look at Father's strange relationship to reality. If he, who wanted to be a musician, then a doctor, could become an outstanding lawyer, then why couldn't my brother András become a doctor, and me a textile engineer? The outcome is a matter of will. The double career

change, the change in his calling, plans, and hopes, surely demanded the restructuring of his inner world and led to a double shock. All this finally came to a head in an 'I'll show them' reaction. "Just you wait!" he said in the teeth of the world. Then, with hard work, exemplary persistence, he proved not only to his family and friends but—immeasurably more important for his peace of mind—to himself that he missed out twice on a career without really missing out at all; he got his life off course in such a way that in the end it was not only others who thought him successful but he himself too.

As for his relationship to his family, this can be divided into three distinct periods, the first lasting till 1918, the second from 1918 to 1925, and the third from 1925 to his death.

Somewhere at the beginning of this book I wrote that I have only one pleasant memory of my father: our singing together in an amber-lit room. This is not strictly true. As I was writing, there came to me a much more meaningful memory, in whose brightness Father's figure is shown in a very different light from anything I have written about him till now.

Here, then, is the first contradiction I must face,

Father took me along with him on a journey into the mountains of Transylvania. For weeks we travelled by train, on foot, and on horseback. I can't reconstruct our route, but we visited Torda, Abrudbánya, Hátszeg, Torockó, and other towns as well. Father's colleagues and their children also came along, all men, and with all of my twelve or thirteen years, I was the youngest of the company. Before we set out, Father painted a painstaking picture of the trials ahead and asked me to stay home should I not feel up to it. During our tour, he also questioned me repeatedly, don't I want to rest, haven't got blisters on my feet from walking, or on my behind from the hard saddle? I didn't want to disappoint my father and regardless of the aches and pains I felt, I didn't whine or complain, I gritted my teeth and bore it.

The journey provided me with a host of unforgettable experiences. At Torockó our host warned us that at a certain spot a grazing cow had fallen into the abyss. We found the place. We didn't see the carcass of the cow, but from a safe distance we delighted in the sight of the striped piglets of a wild sow wandering here and there before our eyes. We visited a salt mine and a gold mine, the salt mine was breath-taking, the gold mine devoid of interest; we saw the famous underground stream on the outskirts of a village whose name I no longer recall; it disappeared into a cavernous opening at the foot of the mountain and broke out noisily on the other side half a day's walk from there. We met flashing-eyed charcoal burners, peasants with

axes, cutting down the forest, and peasant women working their distaffs. We marvelled at the Rumanian peasants and their wide belts who, in order to please us, blew their loud, full-throated wooden mountain horns. But of all these romantic happenings, my adventure with an unsuspecting ox on the peak of the Detonata stands out.

We reached the foothills of the Detonata around morning. From down there it seemed that they had built a quaint little summer house on the peak, a kind of Chinese bamboo hut. We rested to catch our breaths, then began to climb the narrow trail to the summit, bordered on the right by a high cliff and on the left by a rocky ravine. Here and there among the rocks, stunted bushes fought, with varying degrees of success, for survival.

In the best of spirits we continued climbing until about half-way up, where we ran into two oxen of limited intellect grazing on the sparse grass, staring at us uncomprehendingly with their large Juno-esque eyes, wondering what the hell we were doing there. A pat or two on their behinds made them understand that they must move off; to turn them back would have been dangerous, both for us and for them.

Around noon we reached the clearing in front of the pagoda. It wasn't till then that we realized the pagoda was not built of light bamboo, but was erected of timber cut so large I couldn't put my arms around the butt. The flight of stairs leading up to it looked very much like the one in front of the National Museum; we dispersed on its steps to delight in the countryside stretching out to the horizon. I followed suit until one of the oxen, grazing peacefully once more, came closer to me, without turning its back. I don't know what made me do it, to this day I can't figure it out, but with a sudden idea I jumped on its back and grabbed its two horns.

The animal was gripped by panic, the unexpected burden was too much. Maddened, it began to run down the narrow trail now bordered by the vertical cliffs on the left and the gaping ravine on the right. The stones flew right and left from under the hooves of the frightened animal, it slipped repeatedly, sometimes losing its balance and almost falling into the ravine. I was no longer enjoying the gallop as I had at first, but held on to the animal's horns for dear life even though I knew that wouldn't be of much help to me if we fell.

The only means of escape, if any, was to the right, towards the ravine, on whose edge barren bushes fought for survival, sometimes alone, sometimes in clumps. At first I spotted only solitary stands of shrubbery, in twos or threes, but they all seemed too weak to take my weight. Soon I noticed a relatively thick clump of shrubs, an oasis in the moraine of the desert. Now or never, I said with desperate bravery, and as the ox neared the shrubs, in my anxiety

I jumped further than I had meant, grabbing the most distant shrub, so that my feet were off the ground. I put all my weight to the not too promising plant, which—I could feel without any doubt—had not bothered to dig its roots any too deep in the soil that had accumulated among the rocks, so that unless I grabbed the bottom of a nearby bush, thus dividing my weight between the two bushes, I'd fall into the ravine. I let go of the bush with one hand, and stretching out my other hand I gave a mighty kick, and thus managed to grab another bush, then a third, a fourth, with another thin body, alas, and I could begin to pull myself up. Soon I found my footing on a piece of jutting rock. From this juncture I moved with confidence, and soon fought my way back up to the trail. My body was drenched with sweat, I was wheezing like an engine; I lay on the ground, my sense of relief subduing the pain of the sharp stones in my back.

By the time Father—overtaking the rest of the company—reached me, I was sitting in safety, my back to the rocky wall, still breathing faster than usual. I forced a smile as if to say everything's fine, I'm not hurt. Father stood right in front of me, his worried glance giving me a quick once-over, taking stock of all my limbs, to see if I was in one piece. Forming two groups on two sides of us, the lawyers stared mutely at my father, their Doomsday expressions prompting him to lose no time in applying the punishment that would reinstate moral order, in short, that he should give me an exemplary clip for my unexemplary conduct. Father took no notice of this mute urging; he leaned down to me, and gently stroked my sweaty cheeks and hair.

"Now then, little fellow," he said softly, "don't do that again. You could've paid for it with your life."

"No, Father, I shall never do anything like that, never again," I panted shamefacedly. And the prickling in my cheeks that presaged his slap vanished.

The countenances of my judges radiated indignation, disappointment, disapproval; they would have looked the same way had a murderer been acquitted right before their very eyes. But they did not say anything, probably Father's, by then overwhelming, personal authority forced the words back down their throats.

And I slowly got to my feet. They did not approve.

The ox continued its galloping, the sound of the flying stones bringing news of its efforts. Then followed the soft thud of a large body falling, immediately followed by a horrible bellowing, which soon died away to the accompaniment of rocks rolling down the mountainside and the raw clatter of chipped boulders.

That's when I got really scared; my whole body shivered, my knees grew weak, and had I not leaned on my father, I might have collapsed.

"Little fellow," he said again soothingly, and gave me a tight hug with his right arm. I almost started to bawl.

All by itself, this recollection proves that during the tender years of our childhood, we did not lack for love, care or even tenderness from our father. But this happy time disappeared without a trace in the years of upheaval that were soon upon us.

Now, recalling these memories of Detonata, summons up our childhood outings across the Törökvágás to the forest of Mólya, the long journey to Mount Árpád, to Kányamál, grilling bacon around bonfires, the splashing around in some shallow arm of the Szamos. Our parents took turns in looking after us, while the other went for a swim. Until we could swim, we could go to the little Szamos—at Kolozsvár it was called the Little Szamos, and Szamos meant the Malomárok.

The Treaty of Trianon is the dividing line, no, not even Trianon, but the end of the Great War, specifically 1918, when the Károlyi government appointed Father as Lord Lieutenant. With this act a good, kind, caring father disappeared, and practically overnight a surly, bad-tempered stranger with frayed nerves, who never had time for anything, stepped into his place, a stranger with whom we couldn't exchange a word because he turned up at home only to sleep.

Transylvania's most important town was Kolozsvár, so with his appointment as Lord Lieutenant, Father was automatically promoted into the leading position of the Hungarians of Transylvania, a rank he kept until our repatriation, since he was appointed or elected on the side of a not overly active aristocrat to be vice-president of the Hungarian Party, founded after the change of supremacy. His post involved many duties, and Father, who was brought up in a puritan Calvinist spirit, wished to satisfy, under any and all circumstances, the demands of the office he had accepted. In his ethical hierarchy, the cause of the Hungarians took precedence over the cause of the family. Today I realize what then as a sensitive but immature kid I did not even suspect, that our family life was not shaped by Father, but by history; it was history that wrested Father from us.

It therefore fell to Mother to take care of the family, whereas through the role she had played till then, not to mention her nature, high spirits, youth and habits, she was more like our elder sister than our mother. She joined us in just about all our games; she played hide-and-seek, catch-the-thief, and came to get us when we climbed too high up a tree and then couldn't get down from the branches. We loved her and did many things to please her,

but she had no authority in our eyes. So as we became estranged from Father, we also became completely out of hand.

For a long time, until my old age, in fact, I could not gauge how many things my father was forced to deny himself so he could devote all his energies to the by then lost cause of the Hungarians. First and foremost, the singing together stopped, the journeys and hikes, of which I have already spoken; he stopped going with his friends to the Házsongárd, the club they called the Society, for beer; he did not receive company at our home and even stopped playing four hands on the piano with Rezik, the principal of the Music Conservatory. His days were taken up with work, fruitless work. He believed, along with William the Silent, Prince of Orange, that you need no hope to act and no success to persevere.

We settled in Budapest in 1925, following all the events mentioned. Well, in the seven years of hardship spent in Transylvania, Father became so used to his ascetic way of life that he led the same life in Pest that he had led during his years as minority leader: he did not visit his colleagues, he did not invite company; instead, he accepted various posts at institutions dealing with Transylvanian affairs. He was not a broken man, but the joy of life and the old initiative had gone out of him. He expended all his energies on his work.

In this way it fell to Mother to take care of the family's affairs, but without the right to make decisions. As I have already mentioned elsewhere, she did everything but had a say in nothing.

Let me try to conjure up my father's physical presence.

He was somewhat taller than average, an attractive man unmistakably European in his education, manners, speech and demeanour. His training in law was the basis of his learning and accomplishment, which was above the average in more than one field. Nothing was more alien to him than narrow-minded specialisation; his intellect was not bogged down in a morass of paragraphs. He saw with the eyes of a lawyer, he judged with the standards of a lawyer, but he appreciated literature, history, medicine, and, especially, music. I've already mentioned his playing four hands on the piano. Because of his erudition, sharp wit, impressive knowledge and, last but not least, his penchant for irony, he was regarded as a formidable opponent in any debate. The fine lines of his countenance revealed a man of thought.

This he proved, among other things, by the fact that he began his lord lieutenancy differently than his predecessors, whose first care was to have themselves painted. The portraits of all the former lord lieutenants hung in the reception chamber of the county hall (until the Rumanians removed them), in gorgeous Magyar court dress, in a *mente* with a sable collar, a high

fur cap with an aigrette, and a sword at their sides, the hilt adorned with precious stones. Like so many ghosts from the time of the Turkish occupation. Father refused to subject himself to this aristocratic tradition; he could not be persuaded to dress up, which in the eyes of the European peoples was as good as an open confession: thanks to our Turkish-inspired costumes, we openly admit our newcomer status to this part of the globe. With this single gesture, Father won the sympathies of those with democratic leanings. This act surely contributed to the formation of the legend springing up around him.

Thanks to the research of Mária Ormos, we now know down to the smallest detail that while the Great War was still in progress, the neighbouring peoples had already agreed in the matter of the new boundaries. The Serbs, who suffered the greatest losses, were the least rewarded.

During the years of transition, between 1918 and 1920, it seemed that nothing had been decided. Well, during this interval, Father kept up the spirits of the Hungarians of Transylvania, especially of those living at Kolozsvár. In his naive good faith, he rejected even the thought that the "cultured West" might disrupt the ideal political and economic unity of the Carpathian Basin, as Mihály Károlyi had it.

Father was not alone in his good faith; an army of statesmen shared his optimism, the journalist and social scientist Oszkár Jászi among them, who displayed the same kind of adamant naivety in his discussions with the national minorities after the Great War. Perhaps he never realized, not even at his death, that Beneš, through devilishly clever diplomacy, had lead him by the nose. Yet everyone knew that relations between the nationalities and the Hungarians had been irrevocably corrupted at the time of the 1848 Revolution. Though our fates are joined, solidarity is determined by historical interest; the situation has not improved since, as the complete failure of the proposals espoused by Klapka during the Kossuth emigration showed. (See Béla Borsi-Kálmán: *Együtt vagy külön utakon*—Together or on Separate Ways. Magvető, 1984.)

László Zágoni, a Kolozsvár journalist, gave the title "Man in the Storm" to an eulogistic article on my father. Among his other talents, Father did not lack the gift of men destined to be leaders, namely, the ability to fire the faith of others with their own unshakeability. He stood by his beliefs like a man, and talked the government clerks out of taking an oath of allegiance to the supreme power. Perhaps this is why he made the rounds of the Royal Rumanian prisons. It was the public view that determined the birth of legends around his charismatic personality and not his own nature. The Hungarians of Transylvania wished to live as part of the mother country, that is,

they wished to remain Hungarian. Father wanted the same, all his energies went into the effort—he pursued the impossible. This was the secret of his greatness, and this explains why wanting the impossible veiled his vision to the real world.

At the end of the thirties and the beginning of the forties, fifteen years after his death, his legend was still very much alive. Whenever I visited Kolozsvár, not a week passed without someone asking, “Tell me, when will your father get round to doing something?”

Behind the question, and suppressed in the consciousness of the speaker, there was a trace of reproach, too; after all, the years passed, but there was no advance. Father had died years ago, but the belief persisted, the legend that he, personally, was capable of remedying the great historical injustice of Trianon.

Translated by J. E. Szollosy

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THE SZEGED CONFERENCE ON THEORETICAL QUESTIONS

SOCIALISM AND REFORM

by

JÁNOS BERE CZ

Between February 21st and 27th, 1987, the Central Committee of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party held a conference on theoretical questions in Szeged under the title "Timely questions of socialist progress in Hungary." More than four hundred social scientists took part, including economists, university teachers, office-holders and managers.

János Bere cz gave the keynote address under the heading "The realities of socialism and their progress in Hungary." Separate keynote addresses were given as each section met: István Huszár, the Head of the Institute of Party History, on: "Our Historical Past and Public Thinking"; Iván T. Berend, President of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences on "Looking for the way in the Hungarian practice of socialist construction," Kálmán Kulcsár, Deputy Secretary General of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, on "Social conditions and processes in the eighties," Sándor Lakos, Editor of *Pártélet*, a periodical, on "The efficiency of operation of our system of political institutions" and Valéria Benke, Editor of *Társadalmi Szemle*, the theoretical organ of the HSWP. on "Social process, states of consciousness and social policy." The five sections then met for discussion. Thirty-five contributions had been submitted in writing and another one hundred and thirty spoke. A plenary session concluded the proceedings. The discussions of the five sections were summed up by János Bere cz who drew some conclusions from the aforesaid.

We publish the full text of János Bere cz's concluding temarks and a pré cis of the summings up of the work of individual sections.

Our conference was preceded by long preparations which did not pass off without debate. As a matter of course, the deliberations were not free of certain conflicts of ideas because, as is well known, in social and ideological life there is more tension than is visible on the surface.

Essentially we intended the conference to discuss socialism, to analyse its connections. This has been done. Whatever matter was on the agenda, the speakers were concerned about formulating more precisely, more plainly and in a modern form, a valid idea of socialism and to enrich its social practice.

The principal method of discussion consisted of an analysis of the practice: we proceeded from this to examine theoretical implications, and the concept of socialism based on it.

The debates mirrored certain differences of opinion regarding our recent past, the nineteen-fifties in particular. Of course, those years have much that still has to be learnt from them.

Two points must be made clear, however. He who solely concerns himself with what has gone wrong is following a false trail, nor do those act rightly who only remember the good times. The right proportion must be found with the help of a sense of responsibility for the nation. The historical experience of our Party can be of much help for the future, too. Our Party had the courage and strength to break with what had to be given up, and this led to renewal. But in those years we had experience to rely on, and we could accept continuity. It is just as important, politically and on principle, to ensure that, by exposing the earlier negative experience, we shall not cause the rising generations to feel antipathy against socialism but strengthen the conviction that our work and our policy must do all it can to prevent a repetition of mistakes. Only in this way will it be possible for criticism of the political distortions encountered in the initial period of the building of socialism to have a positive effect. This must be understood because, under the current, more difficult conditions, it is easier to rouse strong feelings and emotions among people who have had no historical experience. Furthermore, we must take into account that, in the present more complicated situation, however painful this may be, the self-defensive reflex of power inevitably comes into play. Thus we bear joint responsibility for making sure that the lessons of the past will not produce a reaction but will create a source of intellectual and political energy that will help us cope with current tasks.

Some doubt is still expressed now and then, though not to a significant degree, whether the Party leadership takes seriously, and wants to preserve, the atmosphere characteristic of today's Hungary, this spirit of openness, this sense of an open debate. Practice has demonstrated that we are quite serious about this. I think everybody has felt it. This is also the reason why our work has been inspired with the responsibilities of debate. It is due to this seriousness and this consciousness of responsibility that Party activists, scientists and instructors, as well as specialists engaged in other fields of life, having taken the floor at our theoretical conference convened on the initiative of the HSWP Central Committee, have been able to carry out a high-standard exchange of views. Part of this is also that we wish to remain open to debate in the future as well. What has been said at Szeged does not close the issues but will be a stimulus to further thinking together.

Ideology and policy

One can often hear observations to the effect that ideology finds itself in a difficult situation today, ideological work has fallen behind reality. It may not matter even if complete agreement does not always exist between theoreticians and politicians, between scholars active in a theoretical workshop and Party activists at work in the field. But there is no requirement we can formulate concretely. Theory and policy must work in tandem. There must be a field jointly cultivated by the social sciences and the decision-makers and that is political ideology. Political work relies on the conclusions of social scientists but expects, in addition to situation analysis, also the elaboration of different options. The political demands can be defined on the basis of scientific conclusions and, conversely, the scientific arguments used for their definition can be put forward in support of well-considered political decisions.

The results and experiences of the past thirty years offer sufficient evidence to show that, had it not been for cooperation between theory and policy, we could not have made any progress. Modern socialist agriculture could not have been created if decisions had been reached only in the political sphere. It happened that, under the controlling influence of theoretical conclusions, modifications had to be carried out during the process, e.g. to alter the system of allowances in farmers' cooperatives, to unify the different forms of farm management, and to make joint efforts to convince public opinion that the chosen road was right and could be walked.

The economic reform of 1968 was also introduced in such a way that specialists in political, scientific and practical work came together. If a difference arose somewhere between them, if they could not reach a satisfactory agreement, then this failure produced deadlock. We share responsibility for the prosperity of this country. It should still be added that not even the social sciences by themselves can rely on reason alone. Reason is the first requirement in our life, but we must not lose sight of the fact that we cannot live without feelings either. The general condition and morale of the country, and the hopes of people, must be taken into account.

From this point of view it is worth taking note of Lenin's last writings. Once conditions within Soviet Russia had consolidated, Lenin declared that we are compelled to admit that our entire view regarding socialism has radically changed. This radical change meant that the centre of gravity of all social action had to be shifted from the political struggle to peaceful organization and cultural work. Such momentous changes in the political outlook show especially plastically the extent to which policy determines the

directions and limits of social rationality. In another place Lenin asked people to "analyse precisely the social conditions, and offer a personal example as proof of your conviction only afterwards." Rational political faith and action cannot therefore exist without the help of theory and without a knowledge of truth. Finally, let me refer to one more of Lenin's ideas: the real proof of a Communist is his ability to know how, where and when to change Marxism into action. In Lenin's view the worth of a theory is measured not by practice in general, but by the realisation and consideration of existing concrete practical possibilities and needs.

Party, socialism, reform

This conference showed that everyone backs the reform process. The reform today is already a means and a form of our existence and perhaps its substance as well. For this reason, among others, we must keep in mind that in the course of socialist construction, the reform was initiated by the Party. If we regard as reform also the changes carried out between 1957 and 1968—and we may well do so—our Party has for thirty years now been pursuing a policy of continuous renewal. I think we can be proud that it was the HSWP that introduced reform into the process and the way of thinking of socialism. This initiative was prompted by earlier, sometimes bitter, historical experience, and required political courage as well as the conviction that the country needs it. In proceeding with this reform policy we were actuated by internal and external motives alike. Processes of renewal have now begun elsewhere as well, the furtherance of reform processes in socialism has become a national and international concern. Foreign experience must be studied and analysed with scientific thoroughness in such a way that it should induce us to draw new lessons and put them to use. Of course, we have to take care of this, but one of the most important tasks before us is also, at this time, to make use of the experience of our own development.

It appears from our debates, too, that we have to answer more clearly and explicitly the questions put by political reform and pluralism. The Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party has recognised the existence of pluralism in society in several respects. By declaring its desire to secure the hegemony of Marxism-Leninism, it has at the same time recognised the existence of several ideologies in our society. From the ideological point of view Hungarian society is a plural society, that is why what the Party has proclaimed is not monopoly but hegemony. Of course, the HSWP does not consider this a static condition but fights to make sure that its ideology gains ground.

The HSWP recognised pluralism also at the time when it formulated in the reform programme, the multiplicity of interests within Hungarian society. The purpose and character of the reform made it impossible not to make note of this objective attribute of reality, that is the multiplicity of interests in society. It must be admitted that in the beginning there was a certain fear on this account, efforts were made, by reasoning in line with old patterns, to enforce the social interest with the agency of power. However, we have since gained much experience in this field as well, and this makes its effect felt also in the system of political institutions. Practice bears out that a one-sidedly negative view of our system of institutions is indicative of the same sort of outlook as was shown by putting it on a pedestal. Certain of our institutions are in motion today, they can develop and change in accordance with changing requirements. There are also some institutions whose functions and powers must be extended. The trades unions, for example, have much experience and entertain many ideas on how to enhance their role and influence. But one can give other examples as well. There is no need therefore to create a new political structure in order to strengthen the operation of our system of political institutions and to increase its effectiveness.

The term political pluralism often comes up in debates these days. We still speak with shyness of it, although everybody considers it a logical conclusion that, if there is a multiplicity of interests, this should also find political expression. Not even the political sphere itself could function if it failed to take account of the different interests and their political reflection. The question may arise, however, whether as a result there can develop, at the present stage in the building of socialism in Hungary, a multipolar socialist society involving the division of power or pointing to such possibility—a socialist society with several centres of power. The unequivocal answer is: no. Although in some socialist countries several parties are functioning, yet these do not constitute power centres but serve to express or formulate certain interests. Multipolar political pluralism in the current period of the building of socialism is inconceivable, because such centres would wage a political struggle radically dividing society instead of promoting the activity and cooperation of the political institutions which express the stratification of interests. Under our present conditions there is no realistic basis for a multi-party system of the kind established in bourgeois democracy.

In arguing about the plurality of power, one hardly ever thinks of the opposite extreme. There was a time when the Party leadership monopolised power. We all had to suffer the consequences, since what resulted was not merely a social and political crisis but a political explosion. These days power must be exercised within a variously developing system of institutions

in which the HSWP is the leader but it exercises power with the cooperation of different groups. Thus the interests expressed by various political institutions really represent a common goal. None of the institutions or political parties can undertake to exercise power by themselves. The duty of the HSWP is to play a leading role in cooperation with different social organizations. This does not exclude the differentiated political movement of society, the organization of particular types of social groups, no matter whether the initiative comes from above or from below, nor does it exclude spontaneous organization. The perspective of the exercise of power—the road of progress in socialist democracy—is the gradual development of self-government and self-administration. This makes it all the more evident that a multipolar political system can be no real alternative, since it is bound to have as a consequence that the interests of one social group dominate over others, and this would be contrary to the interests of self-government and to the reconciliation of interests.

There can be differences in the realisation of interests and in the choice of alternatives, and it is even necessary that interests and ambitions should conflict in this field. Competition between alternatives, the choice of the best solution can in fact result in the optimum enforcement of the social interest.

From this point of view the HSWP must still develop a great deal. The starting-point is obvious: the leading role of the Party can no longer be confined to its earlier accepted global interpretation, it requires also the growing independence of organizations functioning in different fields, their growing political responsibility, or else we shall all suffer the consequences.

This is conceivable only by strengthening the Party's working-class movement political character. Instead of guidance merely by resolutions, the living practice of working-class movement policy can be the cohesive force creating harmony in the work of self-directed organizations, enhancing the inner unity of the Party. Its working-class movement character needs strengthening for other reasons as well. We can already see clearly today, for example, that a better division of labour must be established between the HSWP and the government. The HSWP cannot take over the responsibilities of state and public agencies on the excuse of control. It is desirable that the elements of political influence, orientation and principled direction should get stronger in asserting the Party's leading role. This is a condition of fundamental importance for the particular functions of other political institutions and organizations and for the functioning of the entire system of political institutions.

The role of the market and the interpretation of enterprise

The independence of institutions and enterprises plays an important role especially in carrying out the economic reform. The continued development of the economic reform inevitably brings on conflicts in society, but the Party cannot undertake to settle all conflicts of interest. Concrete economic measures entail concrete consequences, and interests are sometimes hurt by the decisions taken. This must be taken into consideration by state agencies and economic organizations. An exchange of view on the preparation of decisions is possible today only together with the persons involved. Our society no longer accepts unexplained decisions. Nowadays we can see more and more often that economic executives and directors of institutions make it their duty only to make decisions on the basis of economic rationality and do not care sufficiently about the personal and political consequences of their decisions. They do not bother to discuss things with the labour force. That economic considerations are given priority can only be endorsed, but such a manner of acting is increasingly difficult for Hungarian society to tolerate. It happens that people compelled by economic rationality to give up their jobs are not informed about the root causes of their dismissal, that managers do not discuss with them what they can expect in the future. No wonder if they feel that such a course of action is unfair and injurious, and they object to such a managerial attitude.

An essential and controversial question these days is how to interpret the role of the market in socialism. One of the speakers at this conference looks on the market as the theatre of free competition. Another speaker has expressed the view that the market of state monopoly capitalism is the one able to function. There were some who talked of the different—damaging or just necessary—limitations on the market. Several speakers used also the term real market. We know from experience that there are considerable differences between the idea of the market entertained by the ministries and that of the enterprises. The ministry insists on the implementation of the regulators established by it, while economic units do not like the regulatory restrictions but require protection. The different views and approaches indicate that further, more profound analysis, careful consideration and generalisation of experience are needed with regard to the market. We have to work out an idea of the socialist market based on the analysis of Hungarian experience.

A subject that has been brought up several times is the interpretation of enterprise. In this connection many speakers criticised the legal and administrative restrictions which act against undertaking. I consider enterprise and

initiative to be socialist principles, because socialism is inconceivable with people whose only duty is to implement the decisions. Enterprise is a right and a possibility—the best things are produced by people and collectives who think, are innovative, and strive for more.

It is beyond question that the social sciences must examine first of all the social conditions and objective factors of economic activity and are not expected to take decisions concerning some technical solution or undertaking. But we must not leave out of account that technical development and enterprise alike have important subjective aspects. This is essential particularly in these days, since we cannot just wait for the future results of long-term processes and for the favourable effects of compulsory regulation, but have to make use of the immediately available reserves and extra energies hidden in the subjective factors. In addition, the subjective side cannot be considered to be of minor importance, if only because society, or public opinion, vigorously responds to any economic change, and to the various attitudes of consumers and economic organizations. Public opinion and the general sentiment of society exert an influence on the development of our economy.

The reserves the subjective factors contain are perhaps best displayed by the fact that technical development is realised through a series of managerial decisions. Undertakings are greatly dependent on personal initiative. The decision-taking executives are motivated by material interest and are influenced, stimulated or hindered by regulation. It is, however, certainly not a matter of indifference whether management is inspired by intrinsic honesty and responsibility, whether it can give public proof of the social usefulness of its activity, whether it enjoys privileges and a monopolistic position in the economy or has to work hard in order to prosper. To questions of this kind economists often reply that it is neither possible nor admissible to rely on anything except financial interests, and the negative consequences must also be accepted, since only in this way it is possible for the economy to progress. But the public argues somewhat differently. Strong antipathies and contrary opinions are provoked by negative phenomena, by irritating excesses. Who is in the right here? It can't be everybody! I think it would be well to reconsider and examine our economic principles and intentions from the point of view of those working in different fields. I should add to this that, while upholding the principles we should not absolutise certain forms. Enterprise should not be identified with small private undertakings since to venture on undertakings is a socialist requirement valid for the whole of society, and, this ought to be complied with in the case of state-owned enterprises as well.

The various economic formations, including the forms of enterprise, are

changing and developing, they appear in new shapes under the joint pressure of economic requirements and environmental impacts. This is actually no more than the criticism of practice, which is important to theory as well. We can learn most from that.

The universal cause of socialism

Several speakers have emphasized that the development of Hungarian society and of the Hungarian economy is in close interaction with the shaping of the situation in other socialist countries, and with the universal cause of socialism.

We abide by the rule that socialism is an internationalist idea which, however, is realised under concrete national conditions. Neither can be left out of consideration. We well know that there is no socialist development in Hungary without interaction with other socialist countries. To us the essential thing is to build on our own national experience. At the same time the processes taking place in socialist countries can give us an impulse, render our working conditions more favourable and enlarge our scope of action. This is why we are filled with pleasure and sympathy when looking forward to the process of change on about to unfold in the Soviet Union. This process will make also the external conditions of our own work more favourable and more appropriate, enabling us to analyse and utilise fresh experiences.

We can contribute to strengthening socialism further if, by giving more thorough consideration to our own experience and utilising it better, we act deliberately and readily in order to give a greater impulse to constructive work at home.

What we need today is action in the first place. The workers are right in demanding greater dynamism and greater determination from the Party. The intellectuals are right in demanding greater creative freedom. Well, let us agree to both. It is impossible for a single body to answer all questions. The different institutions must have a degree of self-mobility and it may well be that these are in conflict, and we shall clash in debate—I accept that the progress of the Party is a key issue now, and in my view we have to reckon with the fact that the interpretation of democratic centralism also cannot be independent of place and time. Considering that the Party takes the lead in everything, its development is a question of particular importance.

At the beginning of our conference the question was raised whether, as a result of the debate, our idea of socialism will be more uniform and more explicit, and whether there will evolve a scientifically substantiated and

theoretically exacting synthesis regarding the continued growth of socialism. I think we can agree that the conference has enriched us with some knowledge. We can see more precisely also where we are at present and in what directions we have to proceed. It would of course have been unrealistic to think that the conference would end up with a sort of accomplished theory of a future socialism to which we must adapt our action at all costs. Fortunately our policy has long grown beyond dogmatic ideas of this sort. All things considered, the synthesis, the image of the future, will always take shape in practice, but never definitively, like a finished product, but always in accordance with the given situation.

This practical process must be continuously furthered and made clear to public opinion by scientific and ideological work. We indeed have an idea of socialism. Our socialism is based on the firm soil of reality, it looks out at the world and also has a programme for the future.

The most important thing is to know what will follow this conference. I think it can be expected to fertilise the activity of creative workshops. It will provide incentives for a more thorough consideration of important questions—for example, the problems of all those whose activities lie outside agricultural and industrial production and the conditions of higher efficiency of the system of political institutions, and other future tasks of the reform process. Our conference will certainly prove to be of much help in preparing for the Central Committee meeting which will discuss the ideological work of the HSWP, in intensifying ideological activity within the Party. Much will depend on how the press will reflect the spirit of the conference and its suggestions. Sound information can contribute not only to making the debates of the conference widely known, but also to enabling public opinion the better to understand the problems of the country, and to have a more realistic view of our possibilities of development, becoming partner in responsibly considering how to mobilise the material and intellectual forces of society.

THE CLOSING ADDRESSES OF THE SZEGED CONFERENCE ON THEORETICAL QUESTIONS

István Huszár: Our historical path and public thinking

Without a study of international connections—István Huszár emphasized—developments in Hungary cannot be properly understood. In this respect speakers laid special emphasis on the effect of the 20th Congress of the CPSU on developments in Hungary. The progress made by Hungary in the past thirty years demonstrates the existence of autonomous thinking, of autonomous stages of development in many areas. "...The HSWP was able to give proper solutions to the questions posed by social evolution at home. These included, for example, the reconsideration of the role the party had to play in social processes, or the interpretation of property relations, the acceptance of the principle of equivalence of the socialist forms of ownership. But I might as well mention also how the earlier general bipolar perception of interest relations has changed and how we have become aware of their plural character. Here too fall the drawing up and implementation of the reform process."

The second point at issue was a detailed examination of the historical path covered so far. "As regards this topic," stated István Huszár, "an objective analysis of the fifties is not as yet complete, we have to go beyond a simple enumeration of general theses, the commonplaces." In connection with the next important issue, the relationship between theory and practice, the accepted view is that for the solution of the practical questions of today there is no kind of ready formula to be sought in ideology. "Our party has in this respect also gained important experience over the past thirty years," said István Huszár, "it has learnt that a false interpretation of theory can result in serious problems."

This led on to a discussion of the current state of public thinking, the fourth main item on the agenda. This also involved drawing an image of socialism. According to István Huszár, "To form some kind of complete image of socialism is impossible. Striving to develop a concept valid once and for all would mean courting the danger of dogmatism." Instead, he recommended widening the knowledge of the reality of socialism, of its historical progress.

As part of his conclusion he mentioned one important concern of Hungarian public thinking, the complex problem of national consciousness, which had been analysed by Zsigmond Pál Pach in his address. "His thoughts have found a response, first of all from the point of view of what should be considered and how of the problems concerning the situation, in places not always reassuring, of the Hungarian national minorities living beyond the frontiers," stated Huszár. "These problems strongly preoccupy Hungarian opinion and have an essential influence on public thinking."

Aladár Sipos: Looking for the economic way out

Solving economic problems being one of Hungarian society's major objectives, the discussions of the section were followed with lively interest. Of paramount importance among the

economic topics were issues concerning the transformation of the structure of the national economy. "In the macrostructure of our industry," said the speaker, "energy and raw materials carry far greater weight than they do internationally. Short-term interests often compel us to put off cutting down traditional sectors and thus withdraw considerable resources from potential vehicles of development." The question arises as to whether structural transformation and dynamic development of the economy can be achieved simultaneously, for this could possibly lead to a cost explosion. Several participants urged that a new system of economic policy objectives should be drawn up stressing that undertaking to effect the changes was not easy but could hardly be avoided.

How to develop further the system of economic regulators was also discussed: an essential element of the changes must be the establishment of a selective mechanism for development. . . This can function well if it guarantees the possibility and the stimulations of rapid adaptation to the unforeseen changes in conditions.

"The speakers have concurred in the view," stated Sipos, "that commodity and money relations form an immanent part of the socialist relations of production. The opportunity to move forward must be sought within the framework of a commodity economy; this is conditional on the strengthening of commodity and money relations, on the enhancement of the freedom on enterprise management. . . The majority of speakers have not agreed with the suggestion that the notion of a self-regulating market ought to be adapted to our domestic conditions, although some have taken the view that the self-regulating market must also be effective in certain sectors of the economy. Structural transformation, for example, cannot be left to the market alone. . . in the shaping of the structure, in selective development, an important share must be taken by the state through the formulation of central programmes."

Kálmán Kulcsár: Social conditions and processes

The section dealing with social processes focussed on what sociology could contribute to the development of political action. Whether it can provide therapy in addition to diagnosis, whether it can tell what is to be done.

The discussion on property relations made it plain that certain fundamental conceptions had not been completely clarified as yet. It is not clear, for example, whether state property is managed by the state-owned enterprise or by the whole system of economic guidance, including public administration, the banking system and the state enterprise itself. Critical remarks were also made to the effect that the state-enforced regulation system was cutting off the enterprise from the real market. Under such circumstances the enterprise can do relatively very little on its own initiative, since its decision-making powers and financial means are limited; the outcome of how affairs are conducted depends in a small way upon the decisions and results of the enterprise.

A very interesting discussion centred on the relations between long-term planning and spontaneity. It was pointed out, for example, that in 1948-49 there had emerged ideas which were later synthesised in a conception devised by the state concerning the improvement of human settlements, but these plans failed to take into account the real conditions and the historical trends of the development of settlements in Hungary; thus an irrational scheme was adopted instead. In the long run the development of settlements did not accord to these "ideal" conceptions and voluntarism necessarily had unfavourable consequences. "More general conclusions can also be drawn from all this," Kálmán Kulcsár continued, "about how to direct and regulate social processes. If we start from insufficiently verified assumptions, life can easily get ahead of the regulation. . . There is danger in attempting to have the

already regulated processes 'straightened out'—owing to a wrong assessment of the real phenomena—by new regulations, even perhaps by penal sanctions. Thus we create a situation in which action and attitude are not, or can be less and less, in compliance with regulations. For this reason the stagnant elements in social processes come to the fore and concrete attitudes will be shaped by these elements and not by the regulation—which is in many respects unenforceable and unusable."

The changes taking place in society have not thus far been followed by the necessary alterations to organizations, as, according to Kulcsár, many speakers emphasized in the debate. They voiced the opinion that the organizational system of Hungarian society was not sufficiently diversified, did not sufficiently express different interests. They mentioned as a salient example the Young Communist League (KISZ). "Organizations like this are unable to attract their membership organically and look like formations assuming some different type of unmanifested non-official form. By the way, these must not in the least be taken for oppositionist, politically antagonistic 'organized combinations', since what takes place here is simply a certain kind of spontaneous expression of interests. Since, however, this is not taking shape within the framework of the officially functioning organizations or in accordance with their original statutes, their effectiveness declines and a particular uncertainty is expressed in the entire organizational system. This could be helped by reforming the system; organization based upon real interests could be established which might ultimately solve these problems."

The analysis of the relations between power and social stratification led to the conclusion that no definite system of relationships can be found to be in the society. ("To avoid misunderstandings, I should like to add that what I mean here is *not* simple political power," added Kulcsár.) "Sociological analyses show that the most important thing is not the 'power' position held in the political-institutional structure, nor even high income, but cultural wealth; this is what can best of all put those who possess it in an advantageous position. This is a very interesting inference, since there is a recurrent view that social inequality is generated mostly by the position occupied in the political power hierarchy. It appears from research that this is not the case. If we examine the conditions of inequality in society, it becomes evident that they can be ascribed to several factors; the cultural advantages or disadvantages of these contributing factors seem to be continuous since the 30s and most important."

This section witnessed a fierce discussion on whether it was possible to picture a real image of socialism, or at least a consistent image of society. Most of the speakers held the view that this was impossible at present. "There are some who have questioned whether we have ever had any such image of socialism," said Kulcsár. "The question is whether it is at all possible to form a consistent image of socialism in the society we live, in a society which can be characterized by its transient processes. The old images of socialism conditioned by one take-off period of modernisation are still present and so are certain ideas which have their roots in the economy of shortages. Both are maintained by habits of mind which serve conservative interests. Therefore the idea that has seemed more acceptable is that we must strive to shape an image of society which, even though in some ways defective, is verified as far as possible."

Sándor Lakos: The efficiency of our system of political institutions

In describing the discussions of the section concerned, Sándor Lakos analysed those speeches which had dwelt on the activity of the Party. Some demanded the strengthening of the independence of grass-roots Party organizations, the establishment of a mechanism

for the conciliation of interests within the Party, so as to make possible a sound confrontation of interests and, as a result, the conciliation of interests and the reaching of consensus.

During the exchange of views regarding the relationship between the party and public organizations, several speakers stressed that the latter did not carry sufficient weight. The efforts to renew KISZ are being hindered by paternalism, which is an obstacle to the unfolding of independence. The question was raised in connection with the trade unions whether a structure based on sectors should be maintained. The view was generally held that the trade unions did not sufficiently represent the interests of workers and employees, that the function of social control had been neglected in the relationship of the state and the trade unions.

With regard to the relation between the Party and the state some queried the way in which the separation of party and state had been effected. It was brought up that there might possibly be need for structural modifications of major significance to be made in this matter.

Where the electoral system and parliamentary representation are concerned, the idea was raised that, in spite of a considerable improvement, further developments were needed in both, if only because interests were not sufficiently reflected in the work of the representative organs. "The demand has again been formulated," said Sándor Lakos, "that the representation of interests, maybe in a form different from that originally envisaged, must be more markedly apparent in the work of Parliament. Within the constituencies it would be necessary to devise new ways of further improving the electoral system."

A number of speakers emphasized the need for the government to have greater independence, with special regard to its accountability to Parliament. On the National Assembly, the opinion was given voice that Parliament should not deal with matters which those sitting there knew to have been settled beforehand. That is, the legislature should be enabled to fulfil its mission.

"A fact I still have to mention," said Lakos, "is that quite a few speakers have proposed a scholarly analysis of particular topics, including a specific sociological study on the party as an organization. It has been suggested that it is necessary to reconsider the issue of democratic centralism, to reinterpret the relation between minority and majority. . . . There has been a debate about the so-called self-defensive reflexes of power, which, according to some, seem to be too strong."

In conclusion Lakos emphasized: "Members of this section feel that the political system must respond better to the challenges emanating from the economic system. Under our conditions only institutions of the political system are capable of settling the conflicts arising in the economic system, such as clashes between enterprises and the central authorities. Some think that the methods of handling such tensions are not efficient enough and especially not institutionalized enough, that there are no reassuring guarantees for their progressive solution, even though this is an element of great importance from the point of view of the future. This is why it has been demanded that we should make the functioning of the political system more effective, that is, accelerate the process of renewal."

Valéria Benke: Social processes, states of consciousness and social policy

Summing up the section dealing with the relations between ideology and public thinking, Valéria Benke singled out the views according to which a necessary ideological renewal cannot be accomplished within narrow provincial bounds, without utilising the international achievements of Marxism. "From the process of renewal initiated in the Soviet Union and some

other socialist countries we can deduce important political and ideological conclusions," she emphasised.

She pointed out that it was necessary to support the self-organization of local communities, to increase the number of communities built on free association. The essence of what remains to be done should be looked for in the promotion of social solidarity, in the increasingly organic social-personal reintegration of the individual. Of outstanding importance are the strengthening of local society, the development of its internal system of relations and of its public character.

"Ideas of no lesser importance have been formulated against the contradictory phenomena of the process of secularisation," stated Valéria Benke. "After the initial immense loss of ground of religion a substantial change and a refinement of its methods of propagation can be observed these days. An important result is at the same time that the ideological boundary between piety and atheism today does not imply a sharp division from the ideological and, in a certain sense, political point of view. The ideological standpoints regarding concrete political and social problems are namely not definitely and inherently characteristic of any world outlook."

The crisis and confusion of values are held by some to be symptomatic of socialism. In fact this is something always encountered at times of great historical transformations and more considerable changes of course. "The change in the evaluation of labour," she added, "is also an expression of the international depreciation of our economic activity."

"We have had interesting empirical data referred to on the ideological tendencies observable among the Hungarian intelligentsia of today," stated Valéria Benke. "Accordingly signs of liberal, popular-national and of the so-called conservative socialist ideologies tending towards the irrational and seeking new values are equally to be seen. . . Empirical data also show that, although diverse and varied images of socialism can be detected in our society, they have numerous elements in common. To mention just one that the surveys indicate, full employment takes an important place in all images of socialism."

Speaking of the dangers of applying clichés, one of the clichés was a simplistic confrontation of economic interests with ideological values. In reality economic interests also have ideological content, a value judgement—ideological values, on the other hand, are always reflections of historically determined socio-economic interests.

"... an example of the application of the clichés mentioned is the confrontation of the principle of economic performance with egalitarianism as an allegedly socialist value," said Valéria Benke. "The reality is, however, that socialism—in its theoretical exposition begun by Marx, just as in its many years of history—has always been meant to be the society of labour, of distribution according to performance. It is thus not the alleged old principle of equalization that must be replaced by the more modern theory of performance, the task is not as easy as that. We have to explore those complicated socio-economic causes, whose dimensions are many which hinder the practical enforcement of the always accepted principle of distribution by work, because the same causes hold back the implementation of the principle of performance."

Finally, Valéria Benke pointed out that many participants in the debate had urged the drawing up of a comprehensive forward-looking conception of social policy, because without this there could be neither effective economic development nor an appropriate uniform ideological scale of values. "A catechistic image of socialism as a requirement is of course not real. . . but we need to develop a modern image of socialism making use of experience, to orient action and able to stand the test of the future. . . this cannot be confined merely to certain political or scientific workshops. It can only be the product of a democratic process."

IN FOCUS

OPTIONS OPEN TO A REFORM OF THE POLITICAL SYSTEM

In Hungary, starting with 1949, when the Communist Party fully established its hegemony, the importance of the parliamentary institutional system diminished and barely played a role in the legitimation of the regime. According to the official ideology, the centralised political leadership headed by Mátyás Rákosi was legitimately in charge because it was familiar with the teleology of history which led to the chiliastic goal of a classless society. This legitimation was backed by massive violence and detailed controls.

This teleological legitimation was no longer mentioned by the press or radio by the end of the sixties. It was replaced by the recognition that society was made up of various strata which have different interests, and the business of the political leadership was to reconcile these interests. However, the activities of parliament, which could be the forum of the opposition and reconciliation of interests, did not come to the fore to a degree which would have been justified by the shift of emphasis in the legitimising ideology.

However, outside parliament and concealed from public view, the confrontation of interests and the creation of compromises actually occurs. Anticipating the peaceful solemnity of legislation, in the course of the preparation of the bills, there are stormy

struggles between ministries, central party agencies and interest-representing organizations. The Hungarian political system is much more pluralistic than its public functioning suggests. This, however, is an apparatus-plurality. The ministries have turned into the representatives of the territory entrusted to them, e.g. agriculture or industry. They are no less representative of interests than the organizations actually established for the representation of interests, such as the National Council of Farm Cooperatives, the National Council of Industrial Cooperatives, the Chamber of Commerce, the National Union of Artisans, etc. Actually, the ministries and the other organizations mentioned confront each other as quasi-parties. Mechanisms have not been established yet which would adequately channel the differing political opinions of various sections of society into governmental decision-making. At the same time politicking of conflicting interests divides the administrative apparatus of the government.

According to Béla Pokol, a reform of the political system must address itself to two tasks: (1) unity must be established within the central administration and (2) political activity separated from administration must grow. An independent institutional system should be established where political views can be debated and tied in with decision-making.

Government as a power centre must therefore be strengthened. On the other hand, the administration should be made subject to a body in which clashes of interests and opinions are articulated. Some have argued for some years now that this should be the national assembly. The electoral reform in 1984, which made the nomination of several candidates mandatory from every electorate, was a step in this direction. Béla Pokol argues that the adequate evolution of this alternative should lead to the recognition of a plurality of parties or party-like groups, representing various interests, or, for instance, political trends that use this or that periodical as their flagship.

An alternative is neo-corporatistic institutionalisation, something that is happening in Western Europe as well. Pokol claims that this can more easily be reconciled with the logic of the contemporary Hungarian political system. A chamber of interest representation, which may function as the second chamber of the national assembly or as a consultative forum at the side of the government, would include the delegates of the various interest representing organizations.

For this purpose administrative and interest-representing functions must be separated. The ministries must deal only with administration and the interest-representing bodies should only represent interests. Further, many more interest-representing bodies would be needed, and the monopoly of the various interest-representing bodies must be abolished. For instance, the interests of all those working in agriculture would be represented on the one hand by the National Council of Farm Cooperatives, and on the other, by the Farm Workers' Trade Union. The leaders of the interest-representing bodies should be elected by the sections of society they are meant to represent.

Pokol recognises that some would consider these proposals utopian while others would accuse him of recommending a compromise. He thinks, however, that such a reform representing a gradual and moderate

political movement is a realistic alternative in contemporary Hungary.

Pokol Béla: "Alternatív utak a politikai rendszer reformjára" (Alternatives of the reform of the political system). *Valóság*, No. 12, 1986, pp. 32-45.

R. A.

LEISURE AS A COMMODITY

One of the most important changes in Hungary in recent years has been the rapid gaining ground of work done outside working hours. Surveys in 1972, 1978 and 1982 studied the frequency of the various activities relying on interviews. The six types established are listed below together with their frequencies.

1. Persons, mainly women, busy on household plots and in the household: 16.3 per cent.
2. Persons, primarily the aged, doing much work on household plots: 12.4 per cent.
3. Persons, primarily men, doing much on household or plots elsewhere in the second economy or engaged in all kinds of repairs, and building work around the house: 17.7 per cent.
4. Persons, primarily recruited from the privileged, engaged in an active social and cultural life outside working hours: 19.7 per cent.
5. Persons who spend their leisure alone at home, and in whose life watching television, listening to the radio, reading and hobbies are especially important: 20.5 per cent.
6. Persons with minimal leisure in whose time off neither work, nor social and cultural activity occur frequently: 13.4 per cent.

Between 1972 and 1982 the frequency of the first three types rose, and it is about these that the authors claim that they sell or commodify their time off, using it to produce

income. The ratio of those socially and culturally active, who read up their subject or engage in further training, and go to the theatre and concerts, as well as engaging in social work and politics, has fallen considerably.

These different patterns of spending one's time off are powerfully determined by the position occupied in the social hierarchy. High culture and political-professional activities occur more frequently only in the case of those who are at the top of the social hierarchy, while those at the bottom (the rural population, unskilled workers and farm workers, and even a considerable number of pensioners) spend much of their time earning extra money and the rest doing jobs around the house.

The authors explain these changes by the fact that new chances for upward mobility have not been created in the official sphere. The role of the market has not grown by all that much, the political institutional system has remained unchanged, new forms of representing and reconciling interests have not been established, and yet economic reforms have legalised second-economy activities. In the second half of the 1970s crisis phenomena have occurred. The level of real wages declined, and consequently a great many were compelled to earn something extra outside working hours. One good effect of this was that doing well financially has to a certain extent become independent of the position occupied in the official hierarchy and also from the changes in preferences of the political sphere. However, work done in time off is capable of counteracting negative social and economic phenomena only to a limited degree, beyond which it endangers precisely those goals (welfare, a more civilised way of life) for the sake of which the time off is turned into a commodity.

Bruszt, László-Lilli, Róbert: "Az áruba bocsátott szabadidő" (Leisure sold as a commodity). *Társadalomkutatás*, No. 3-4, 1986, pp. 82-99.

R. A.

HEART DISEASE—RISK—SOCIETY

In Hungary, since the mid-1960s, the life expectancy at the age 30 has declined by three years for men and nearly six months for women. The main cause are the cardiovascular diseases, especially deaths due to acute myocardial infarction and by cerebral haemorrhage. Since 1980 the National Cardiological Institute has conducted a comprehensive survey studying the biological and social causes of these diseases. In several smaller regions a population sample of people between 18 and 64 years of age was surveyed, using medical and sociological questionnaires. The present article relies primarily on the survey conducted over a five-year period in the 17th district of Budapest. This is one of Budapest's outlying districts, where 83 per cent of all dwellings are single-family cottages, and where the proportion of white-collar workers (24 per cent) is lower and the proportion of active earners belonging to the industrial working class (65 per cent) higher than in Budapest as a whole.

In the course of the physiological examination, body weight, height, blood pressure, cholesterol and blood-sugar levels were tested. In the course of the sociological survey, questions were asked concerning social status, way of life, and knowledge about health and hygiene.

Obesity is one of the most important risk factors. 55 per cent of the adult population surveyed was found to be overweight on the basis of the index calculated by the comparison of weight and height.

Obesity was more frequent on the lower rungs of the social ladder (especially amongst the unskilled) than in the case of the privileged (professional people). The correlation proved to be even stronger with social origin: the proportion of overweight persons was highest among the children of peasant fathers. Today obesity is closely related to an underprivileged social status.

According to the survey, obesity (with the exception of the grossly overweight persons)

is not caused primarily by nutritional habits but by the absence of active leisure. In Budapest, and throughout the country, there are few sporting facilities, there is no adequate provision for leisure sports, and this is one reason why few people exercise. Among those who do so regularly and/or whose knowledge about health and hygiene is higher, the proportion of overweight persons is substantially lower. On the other hand, a considerable part of those interviewed who were obese and whose diet was unsatisfactory, thought of their eating habits as healthy.

The systolic blood pressure was definitely high in case of eight per cent of those tested and 25 per cent were border cases. On the basis of diastolic blood pressure 12 per cent were classified as having high blood pressure and 15 per cent to be border cases. After the effects of age and sex had been eliminated, it was found that high blood pressure was also more frequent amongst those of lower social status. Living and working conditions involving much stress showed a positive, and physical activity in time off (sports, excursions) a negative correlation with high blood pressure which was also more frequent amongst those groups where the carbohydrate content of food was higher. Again, blood pressure of those who were better informed on health issues was lower on the average.

Since the frequency of the cardio-vascular diseases mentioned is increased exponentially by the accumulation of the different risk factors, the proportion of those who were at risk owing to obesity, high blood pressure and their cholesterol level was examined. Only 2.1 per cent of the population did not reach the critical lower limit in respect of any of the three risk factors. Seven per cent showed all three factors as above the critical value.

Such multiply endangered persons included a higher proportion of women, aged persons, unskilled workers, those not engaged in sports or going on weekend walks and for each group some form of social deprivation, or stress, can also be demonstrated.

Gyárfás, Iván—Kishegyi, Júlia—Makara, Péter: "Szívbetegség—kockázat—társadalom" (Heart disease—risk—society). *Társadalomkutatás*, Nos. 3-4, 1986, pp. 15-36.

R. A.

SMALL IS BEAUTIFUL

In Hungarian industry mergers have been common since nationalisation in 1949. The number of small flexible workshops employing 10-15 persons declined to a minimum, and at the other extreme the number of large firms employing several thousand person grew steadily. In 1980, firms with a shop floor work force smaller than a hundred employed hardly 0.2 per cent and those employing between 100 and 1000 18.5 per cent of industrial workers in state-owned industry. By the early eighties it had already been recognised in the centres of economic policy that—precisely for the sake of greater efficiency—large works had to be complemented by a large number of those of small or middle size and in addition small workshops relying on family labour and flexibly meeting changes in demand were also needed. Owing to this recognition, starting with 1982, various smaller works were founded or made organizationally independent and legal conditions for new entrepreneurial forms were created, making it possible for those in the business of manufacturing in a small way to form their own firms. The state-owned firms were given the right to establish subsidiaries, the cooperatives could divide into smaller units and establish industrial service teams. Economic working teams became an entrepreneurial form based on small-scale and complementary production, and industries which had earlier been closed to them were also opened up to small-scale enterprise. The rules of taxation and administration were simplified for types of enterprise which had existed earlier.

In the first stage of this organizational dating up to the end of 1984, approximately 170 small enterprises and nearly 200 small cooperatives were established, the number of

intrapreneurial working teams exceeded 11,000 and the number of the cooperative groups approached 800. The range of activity of private small-scale industry was also extended. The number of working teams and contractual associations established by private persons and conducting industrial activity was already over 2,000 in 1984, and the number of artisans surpassed 43,000. Despite this dynamic growth, private industry had a share of only 1.4 per cent of the total value of industrial production in 1984, and the

*Number of the major industrial units
at the end of the year*

Economic unit	Number of units on Dec. 31				
	1980	1982	1983	1984	1985
Industrial enterprises established and controlled by a ministry	546	572	564	572	672
Industrial enterprises established and controlled by a municipal council	153	152	151	150	302
Industrial enterprises functioning in a simplified administrative system	—	—	—	—	216
Industrial cooperatives	661	635	623	618	604
Cooperatives functioning in a simplified administrative system	—	—	—	—	15
Small enterprises	—	2	148	169	*
Small cooperatives	—	80	138	193	352**
Cooperative groups	—	158	436	791	1,132***
Intrapreneurial economic working teams	—	1,634	5,811	11,183	14,516***
Licensed artisans	39,275	43,429	44,287	43,703	43,406***
Economic working teams established by private persons	—	837	1,684	2,021	3,201
Extra-industrial economic entities also engaged in industrial activity	2,555	*	2,586	*	*

* For 1985 the small enterprises are included among the industrial enterprises controlled by a ministry or municipal council, and these are responsible for a majority of enterprises functioning in a simplified administrative system.

** The small cooperatives are among the units functioning in a simplified administrative system.

*** Ministry of Finance data.

Employment in industrial units

Economic unit	Average number employed				
	1980	1982	1983	1984	1985
	(1,000 persons)				
Industrial enterprises established and controlled by a ministry	1,295	1,235	1,196	1,192	1,195
Industrial enterprises established and controlled by a municipal council	97	93	90	89	99
Industrial enterprises functioning in a simplified administrative system	—	—	—	—	21.6
Industrial cooperatives	222	212	202	197	200
Cooperatives functioning in a simplified administrative system	—	—	—	—	16.7
Small enterprises	—	0.1	12.1	14.2	*
Small cooperatives	—	3.6	6.0	8.9	**
Cooperative groups**	—	2.8	8.3	18.0	27.0
Intrapreneurial economic working teams	—	18.2	65.9	133.8	174.0
Licensed artisans	46	51	52	53	53
Economic working teams established by private persons	—	3.7	7.9	10.4	*
Extra-industrial economic entities engaged also in industrial activity***	186.0	*	244.2	*	*

* In 1985 the small enterprises and simple type cooperatives are included in the data of industrial enterprises and industrial cooperatives respectively.

** As of December 31.

*** Includes only the number of manual workers.

share of the new forms (small enterprise, small cooperative, intrapreneurial economic working team, cooperative group) was somewhat lower still, at 1.3 per cent.

In 1985 the number of state-owned firms

rose by a further eighty, and that of small cooperatives by approximately one-hundred-and-fifty. The number of units of new forms continued to grow, even if more slowly, and in 1985 the number of members of intrapre-

neurial working teams exceeded the figures of the preceding year by 40,000, and of those in cooperative groups by 9,000.

In spite of the changes, Hungarian industry continues to be dominated by large units. In 1984 small enterprises employed only 14,200 persons and were responsible for less than 0.5 per cent of the total turnover of industry. At the end of 1984 small cooperatives employed only approximately 10,000 persons. Their share to cooperative industry was under five per cent and six per cent of the turnover of cooperative industry. It is a good indication of the importance of the economic working teams that one or several intrapreneurial teams functioned in more than four-fifth of the state-owned industrial enterprises, but only 11.8 per cent of those employed in state-owned industry were members of such teams.

All in all, in a period when the performance of the Hungarian economy did not grow to the desired extent, the small units—even if only modestly—contributed to improving the performance of the economy, the reduction of shortages and the lessening of difficulties in intra-industrial cooperation.

Lakatos, Judit-Nyers, József: "Az ipari kis-szervezetek szerepe és fejlődése" (Role and growth of small industrial organizations, 1982-1985). *Statisztikai Szemle*, August-September 1986, pp. 781-800.

M. L.

FRIENDSHIP IN PORTRAITURE

In Hungary, Baroque portrait painters were satisfied over a long time with presenting and interpreting social status, rank and occupation. This was the client's most important message about himself. Characterization was unimportant in late Renaissance and early Baroque painting. Both the painter and his client were satisfied with a likeness.

From the mid-18th century, however, when—under the influence of the Enlightenment—someone's private life, feelings and

thinking were accepted when manifest in public, this affected portrait painting as well. In group portraits, entire aristocratic families are shown in the same *tableau vivant* pose as the numerous head-and-shoulders portraits of individual aristocrats. Naturalness and intimacy are in these portraits the most important elements of the acceptance of a new social role. Enikő Buzási gives two portraits by Mattin van Meysens as examples. The Family of Count Miklós Pálffy (1752-53, Barockmuseum, Vienna) and Count Miklós Esterházy (1746, private collection, London).

Another group of the portraits of a new type throws light on different intellectual aspects. The education of the portrayed person, his interest in the life of the mind and culture appears visually, mostly thanks to an objective reference turned into a symbol. In charcoal sketches of Count Miklós Esterházy and Countess Sarolta Pálffy the boy is shown with a primer and the girl as doing calculation using a slate. Things become more difficult when the counterfeit is meant to describe feelings, such as friendship or intellectual attraction entertained by one person for another. This is a classically anti-visual task, indeed there was no uniform pictorial solution around 1800, only different variations. Besides the most obvious, the joint portrait of two friends, individual solution is a small portrait of a friend or human ideal given some function in the picture. Thus J. J. Stunder shows his amateur painter friend working on his own portrait; or elsewhere, behind the highly educated free-mason aristocrat (Count Sámuel Teleki), the portrait of his spiritual kin (Baron Samuel Brukenthal) hanging on his library wall. Count Teleki is painted in such a natural, unassuming posture, in a sort of undress which emphasises that this is a gesture addressed to his good friend. The author-aristocrat Count Gedeon Ráday had himself painted wearing a night-cap in a portrait meant for his writer friend Ferenc Kazinczy at the request of the latter. The writer friend later had the portrait



Thomas Klimess-Quirin Mark: Portrait of Gedeon Ráday. 1788. Engraving

published as an engraving and emphasised their friendship in the caption.

The majority of these portraits are of Hungarian aristocrats. What was important to them, however, was that not their rank and status but an education owed to personal inclination and human relations and sympathies that were part of their adult life should be the elements through which they presented themselves before their contemporaries and posterity. It is this decision that makes their portraits documents in the history of the modern human image and sensibility.

Buzási Enikő: "A barátság motívum térhódítása a 18. századi magyar portréfestészetben" (Friendship in 18th-century Hungarian portraiture). *Művészettörténeti értesítő*, 1984, No. 3 pp. 212-236.

STYLISTIC VARIATIONS IN THE AUSTRO-HUNGARIAN EMPIRE

It was at the 1986 Vienna Hungarian Studies Congress that the literary critic Béla G. Németh gave a lecture on the antecedents and theory of Hungarian and Austrian Impressionism and Symbolism. He pointed out that his subject was Hungarian writing (excluding the literatures of the national minorities) as compared with literature written in Austria, including consequently e.g. also Rilke, who was born in Prague. At the time, educated Hungarians spoke and read German and did not make any difference of substance between German and Austrian literature. Although Impressionism and Symbolism appeared also in prose and plays, they became really important in poetry. In Austria both schools were stronger and more unambiguous than in Hungary where the different trends seldom appeared in isolation. In this part of Europe universal schools were received with a certain time-lag, piling up on one another. Consequently they were modified considerably, producing distinctive trends in accordance with the autonomous features of the individual national cultures.

Impressionism and Symbolism strove to transcend naturalism. In Austria there had been hardly any important naturalistic literature, and consequently the anti-naturalistic movement did not have any noteworthy antecedents either. The Hungarian situation differed and resembled that of Germany although against a very different background. The German economy showed dynamic industrialisation, and intellectual life was strongly influenced by late Positivism relying on the natural sciences, in which psychophysics, based on physics and biology, played an important role. In this way of thinking, Darwinistic determinism received a great emphasis, including national and social features. Writers and thinkers searched for the biopsychological reasons that handicapped personality growth in German junker-bourgeois society.

G. G.

After the establishment of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Hungary was a multinational state with a liberal nationalist policy based on a social hierarchy and hereditary rights. The new literary intelligentsia wanted to abolish this hierarchy, desiring not only a liberal state but also a liberal society. The naturalistic novel offered an adequate form for this intention. As regards national minorities they remained nationalist, the idea of a federal state was rejected by them. They wanted to support the capacity of the Hungarians to sustain the state by modern scientific arguments, and consequently they too necessarily called on theories of heredity and selection of Darwinism, i.e. they considered this capacity a basic quality given by nature.

In Austria federal institutions looked back to a long past and the Austrian liberals interpreted the Compromise with Hungary in this sense. The slow but continuous industrialisation of the country did not upset the equilibrium between town and country, the ancient *Gemeinde*, the municipal self-government, resolved the tension. Consequently there was no demand for the naturalistic registration of social ills in literature. Only the highly cultured intelligentsia, which felt oppressed by the rigid social hierarchy, sensed a crisis, but it had neither the political courage nor the theoretical skill to change this situation. By then it had already become disillusioned with positivist philosophy, and in the 1880-90s it turned towards psychology, and consequently the individual. The sensualism of Positivism, respect for the laws of natural science more than once changed into a complete relativism (Franz Brentano, Alexius Meinong, Eduard Mach, Sigmund Freud, etc.). Consequently, naturalism penetrated literature through psychology, coloured by Impressionistic and even Symbolistic elements, in which there was always a strong longing for the transcendent (Schnitzler, Hofmannstahl, Rilke—the latter creating genuinely Symbolistic poetry).

In Hungary the first wave of naturalism lasted only a short time. Those searching for

new ways chose the attitude of social outcasts (Gyula Reviczky, Jenő Komjáthy), for which the philosophic foundation was provided first by Schopenhauer and then by Nietzsche. However, the social troubles which multiplied around the turn of the century brought forth a new wave of naturalism, but this literature was already mixed with Impressionistic and Symbolistic elements. A particular style to which this gave rise may be called *Art Nouveau*. The novelist and playwright Sándor Bródy should be mentioned there, who blended the influences of Zola, Turgeniev, and even of the late Ibsen. Every important novelist and poet contributing to the periodical *Nyugat*, which was started in 1908, learned from him. Endre Ady adopted dramatic Symbolism from Bródy, Gyula Krúdy the nostalgic, mildly frivolous style, Dezső Kosztolányi, the lost intimacy of emotional life, Milán Füst the mythological pantheism of man and nature, Árpád Tóth the elegiac-stoic resignation to fate. But by the 1910-20s, all these had already developed their own individual style the common mark of which was a fidelity to the Hungarian Art Nouveau.

The characteristic trends of the turn of the century appeared even more clearly in Austrian literature creating distinctly personal achievements (Kafka, Trakl, Musil, Canetti, Rilke, Broch). And this expresses a kind of individual classicism of the great movements of the early century in both literatures.

Németh G., Béla: "Közös korszak, kétféle variációval." A magyar és az osztrák impresszionizmus és a szimbolizmus előzményének és jellegének néhány vonása" (Common period with two variations. Some features of the antecedents and characteristics of Hungarian and Austrian Impressionism and Symbolism). *Jelenkor*, No. 1. 1987. pp. 43-49.

BIBLE STORIES
IN HUNGARIAN FOLKLORE

In 1982 a story was recorded in the West-Hungarian village of Velem about a wayfarer who, together with his two daughters, asked for shelter in a village. A householder gave them shelter. The young men of the village cast their eyes on the beautiful girls and wanted to force their way into the house. But God deprived them of their sight, and they were unable to find the door or the windows, they groped along the wall in vain. The story agrees with that of the angels visiting Sodom and Gomorrah in Genesis. These were sheltered by Lot, and the immoral Sodomites tried to force their way into Lot's house. (Moses I, 19, 1-11)

The story was published in *Parasztbiblia* (Peasant Bible) by Annamária Lammel and Ilona Nagy in 1985. The book was a great success. Many of the stories were issued on gramophone records, and there were several attempts to adapt them for the stage. The two authors did field work collecting popular Bible stories in all regions where Hungarian was spoken as the native language. Their 1985 volume was compiled from their own collection, supplemented by some earlier recordings. The volume tells the folklore versions classified in terms of their place in the Bible. Some go back to what was taught in school or church, others to apocryphal writings and traditions.

The two authors have now discussed the transformation processes which produced this folklore. They reckon with an interaction between the textual sources and the peasant world, which in turn generates the substitution of persons, actions and cultural elements manifest in the action. The field of transformation allows the peasant story-tellers to assert their own personality and creative talent. The creation of folklore of biblical origin occurs on different levels. 1) The textual source remains pure, but it is lent another degree of identity in folklore. 2) Several textual sources enter into a new relationship

and thus a new story takes shape. 3) The textual sources of the narrative and the internal culture sources of the narration are transformed into each other in various degrees of identity.

The story from Velem is an example showing that the realistic peasant world can appear in folklore while maintaining the structure of the Old Testament narrative. The charm of beauty and attraction are there in the case of both the girls and the angels. But since the idea of homosexuality is alien to traditional popular thinking, they imagine the beautiful and attractive creatures to be girls. The angels visiting Lot do God's bidding and the wayfarers are also protected by God. In the peasant text the father of the girls also appears, since rural morality does not permit the girls travel on their own. The difference in manners is reflected by the fact that Lot himself hurries to meet the angels and persuades them to accept his hospitality, while in the Hungarian story the wayfarers ask for shelter. The concluding scene is identical in both sources. But the final message of the stories differs. That of the folklore text is that God protects virginity. In the Old Testament, the story is evidence of the sin of Sodom and Gomorrah and justifies the destruction of the towns.

The analysis of two-hundred-and-fifty texts, shows how Hungarian Bible-based folklore reflects the way of thinking, culture and everyday living conditions of the story-tellers and of Hungarian village folk listening to the stories. This reflection, of course, differs also according to the period in which the texts were recorded.

Lammel, Annamária-Nagy, Ilona: "Transzformációs folyamatok a magyar néphagyományban élő biblikus történetekben" (Transformation processes in the Bible stories that are part of Hungarian folklore). *Ethnographia*, Vol. 97, 1986-1987. pp. 1-24.

T. H.

TATTOOERS AND TATTOOED

The literary and cultural periodical *Forrás*, published in Kecskemét, devoted its March 1987 issue, with 32 pages of the coloured picture supplement, to tattooing. At the same time, an exhibition on this subject was held in Kecskemét, which will later be shown in Budapest. The issue surveys the history of tattooing and indicates also how it found its way into art and literature. The main object, however, is to document tattooing in contemporary Hungary.

It would be wrong to look for tattoos only on the fringe of society. One of the pictures in *Forrás* depicts Admiral Miklós Horthy, Hungary's Regent in the interwar period, playing tennis and a tattooed dragon is clearly visible on his left arm. Egon Erwin Kisch wrote that he had never seen a more beautiful tattoo in his life. At the time, Miklós Horthy would not have had to be ashamed. There is evidence of the members of several European ruling families, including the Habsburgs, (e.g. Francis Joseph and the Empress Elizabeth) and of Kaiser Wilhelm II being tattooed, and a family slogan was also tattooed on the arm of Count Mihály Károlyi.

In respect of contemporary Hungarian conditions, the periodical relies on extensive research, on a sample of ten thousand young men doing their national service and the gaol population. Some articles try to throw light on the social background and psychological motivation of tattooing (Katalin Solymosi, Ágnes Lampert), and others view the tattooed texts and pictures as the manifestations of body art, visual expression, or folk art (Géza Balázs, Mihály Hoppál, László Beke, Ottó Mezei, Ernő Kunt). It turns out that tattooing customs, owing their origins to different periods, coexisted in Hungary even in recent years. In the south, in some Danubian villages, the women and girls had decorations and the sign of the cross tattooed on their wrist or lower arm. This custom is perhaps linked to the tattooing of women which was continually practised on the Bal-

kan peninsula since Turkish times, which decorated the wrist, or which marked the Christians living under Moslem rule with the sign of the cross in their adolescence.

Tattooing began to spread widely in the large European cities only towards the middle of the last century, and typical pictures of this international fashion of tattooing frequently occur in Hungary too. Géza Balázs, who examined the tattooed texts on 6000 examples, analyses—besides the tattoos referring to names, figures and the function of some parts of the body—those as well which are surviving fragments of traditional folklore, and those which take over literary texts on the borderline between high culture and mass culture. The tattooed pictures and texts published are supplemented by interviews with the tattooed persons.

The entire issue reflects the desire not only to point at facts so far ignored by the Hungarian press as well as scholars and scientists, but to throw light on the way of thinking of the underprivileged who practise tattooing and the organization of their culture. (For instance those in gaol, where the proportion of the tattooed is sometimes as high as 77 per cent.)

The articles do not propagate tattooing but wish to understand problem areas of contemporary Hungarian social reality, and the underprivileged.

The issue of the periodical was edited by Ákos Kovács, and he also arranged the exhibition. Trained as he is in the history of art and in ethnography, he has explored in recent years areas of our everyday life which count as no man's land and which can be described through the concepts of visual communication and art. He has also arranged exhibitions and publications of embroidered kitchen hangings in rural and lower middle class homes, Budapest graffiti, and village Great War memorials.* Thus, this exhibition and issue are part of the charting of manifestations of popular culture.

* See *NHQ* 101, In Focus.

Kovács, Ákos: "A (test) művészet örök, avagy Bevezetjük a tetoválást." (Body art is eternal, or: we introduce tattooing); *Forrás*, No. 3, 1987, pp. 2-25. Balázs, Géza: "Titok a neved, Suha János...". Magyarországi tetovált feliratok ("Secret is your name, János Suha...") Tattoos in Hungary). *Forrás*, No. 3, 1987, pp. 35-52; Solymosi, Katalin: "A tetoválás motivációi" (The motivations of tattooing). *Forrás*, No. 3, 1987, pp. 59-65.

T. H.

COORDINATION IN ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

1986 was not a good year for the environment. The world had hardly got over Chernobyl when appalling news was received about a serious chemical spill into the Rhine.

Several smaller cases of pollution have recently come to light in Hungary as well. Hazardous waste was taken to Mosonmagyaróvár from Graz, and to Szentgotthárd from Vienna. Spent oil from West Germany was taken to and hazardous waste disguised as a sewage clearing additive to the Sewage Clearing Plant of North-Pest. Although the country is indeed short of foreign exchange, these local decisions produced consternation and fortunately resulted in high-level interventions. Unfortunately, imports of waste products, which have become more and more frequent, are registered by the National Office for the Protection of the Environment and Nature *ex post facto*, and while it tries to act in the maze of offices and regulations, the garbage keeps on coming by the truck load undisturbed.

According to Imre V. Nagy, Chairman of the newly established Council for the Protection of the Industrial Environment, economic regulation unequivocally runs counter to environmental protection, for instance by imposing an accumulation tax on environmental investments of a non-productive nature. According to the Chairman for the Protection of the Industrial Environment, the majority of economic units do not think of the protection of the environment as a duty

and seize every opportunity to make garbage disappear in contravention of the laws and rules.

Too much attention is also paid to the economic performance of the firms which cause great environmental damage. Even if a fine is imposed, higher authority soon provides relief if the firm's liquidity is in danger—the economist János Szlávik writes in an interview published by *Élet és Tudomány*.

On Rózsadomb, the most desirable residential area of Budapest, sewage is an open problem in many places. Open drains running with sewage even get into Szemlőhegy case where the waters are already infected by coli bacteria. The cave was opened recently to the general public. After this it is an open question what the response to an article published in the technical periodical *Impulzus* will be, which discussed the methods of individual sewage purification. This method which is of great importance in the industrialised countries is not established in Hungary. Neither citizens nor the hydrological authorities have shown interest. The organizational, technical and financial conditions for bacteriologically safe sewage purification are absent, and without these the quality of the surface and subterranean waters continues to deteriorate.

The *State and the Protection of the Environment*, published by the Central Office of Statistics in 1986 does not contain any precise data either about the quantity and treatment of all sewage. Turning the pages of this publication it appears that indices concerning the state of environment still have to be formulated if citizens and decision-makers are to keep an eye on influences affecting the environment and their consequences.

Since one has to reckon with the fact that the quality of the environment will continue to deteriorate in 1987, a smog contingency plan will be prepared for Budapest, and afterwards a similar plan will be drawn up for the surroundings of Miskolc and Tatabánya. The 1987 world conference on the treatment of hazardous waste will be held in Budapest.

"Portré V. Nagy Imréről, az Ipari Környezetvédelmi Tanács elnökéről" (A portrait of Imre V. Nagy, Chairman of the Council for Protection of the Industrial Environment). *Heti Világgazdaság*, No. 50, 1986, p. 55.

A. V.

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Valóság—a monthly of the social sciences

Társadalomkutatás—a monthly of the Economic and Legal Section of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences

Statisztikai Szemle—monthly of the Central Statistical Office

Heti Világgazdaság—an economic weekly

Jelenkor—a literary monthly published in Pécs

Művészettörténeti Értesítő—quarterly publication on art history of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences

Ethnographia—quarterly review of the Hungarian Ethnographical Society

Forrás—a literary monthly published in Kecskemét

FROM OUR NEXT ISSUES

WHERE IS CENTRAL EUROPE?

Csaba Gy. Kiss

AFTER DIVORCE

Katalin Szögby

THE EXTERNAL CONDITIONS OF INDUSTRIAL GROWTH

Béla Kádár

SURVEYS

ANDRÁS BERTALAN SZÉKELY

ACCESS TO CULTURE FOR NATIONAL MINORITIES

Since the Middle Ages, multinational, and hence multi-cultural, societies have had a practically continuous existence in East-Central Europe. Nationality and state have frequently not concurred in this region; over the last century this has been further intensified by repeated shifts of frontiers with the movement of population that these entailed. The existence of peoples, cultures, languages, and religions side by side has produced achievements that created respect for each other's values. At the same time the spread of various nationalisms has also brought in its train intolerance, whose negative consequences are to be felt to the present day in the social awarenesses in this region.

National minorities as a special form of political and cultural question are present in most countries in this region and in Europe as a whole. This has been acknowledged in the documents drawn up at the Helsinki Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe and its follow-up meetings in Belgrade and Madrid. The Helsinki Final Act has set down that national minorities and regional cultures have a definite role to play in inter-state cooperation and exchanges in the cultural and educational fields. Further efforts to realise these principles, which have not yet been reassuringly translated into practice, were made at the European Cultural Forum held in Budapest in the autumn of 1985, and the follow-up meetings at Berne

and Vienna. In Budapest, for instance, a proposal was submitted by Hungary, Poland, the GDR, and the Soviet Union on the conditions necessary to assert the cultural rights of national minorities. At the Vienna follow-up meeting, a joint Hungarian-Yugoslav proposal was submitted, urging the observance of the obligations set down in the Helsinki Final Act on the protection of minorities and the right of ethnic groups to acquire information in their mother tongue. Hungary co-authored a proposal submitted by Canadian, West German and other delegations in Vienna, urging legal protection of ethnic individuals and the preservation of the specific aspects of minority cultures, including their language and literature.

What follows here is an outline of the present state and processes of minority cultures—the decisive factor for ethnic survival—in Hungary.

*

In contrast to the pre-Trianon country, the number of members of national minorities is relatively low in present-day Hungary. The four largest ethnic groups are the Germans, Slovaks, Rumanians, and South Slavs (a collective name for the Croats, Serbs, and Slovenes). Unlike the practice of several other states, Gypsies are treated as an ethnic community, not ranking as a national minority, and Jews a religious

community; this, however, does not mean that they lack cultural autonomy or a due protection of their interests.

According to the latest (1980) census returns, 84,000 people, less than 1 per cent of the country's population, declared themselves to be of national minority stock with the language concerned as their mother tongue. Of these 31,000 were Germans, 27,000 South Slavs, 16,000 Slovaks, and 10,000 Rumanians. The number of people using these languages is 158,000, nearly double the above figure. An even larger number of people "interested in the culture of national minorities" are in evidence in other estimates and the assessments of the national minority associations.

The distribution of the national minorities within the country's population and the circumstances of their settlement follow from the historical past of the Danube region. In the ninth century, the conquering Hungarians found fragmented groups of Slavs and other ethnic elements in the region. Medieval monarchs, partly to introduce new economic activities and partly to stabilise their own reign, invited several ethnic groups into Hungary. During the early days of the Reformation, many sought refuge in the Carpathian Basin for religious reasons. In most cases the new settlers clung to their own customs and jurisdiction, enjoyed collective rights and self-government forming part of the Hungarian feudal state.

It was from the Hungarians living on the plains that the Turkish occupation of the country claimed the highest number of lives. After the one-hundred-and-fifty years of Osman rule, the Slovak and Rumanian inhabitants of the northern and north-eastern counties, which had a substantial population density, moved down to the Great Plain. Alongside this spontaneous migration, the Habsburg court in Vienna—not least to hold in check the "rebellious" Hungarians—settled great masses of Serbs and Germans into the depopulated regions, granting them major advantages (exemption from taxation, free-

dom to practice their religion, among others), while at the same time prohibiting Hungarians by law to move into the region. As a consequence, the relative weight of the Hungarian population within the country diminished. The process is clearly illustrated by a comparison: before the Turkish occupation, under King Matthias (fifteenth century), 80 per cent of a population of four million were Hungarians, while the census ordered by Emperor Joseph II in the eighteenth century, after the resettlements, registered a mere 40–44 percentage of Hungarians among 8.2 million inhabitants. Thus the majority of the nationalities came to live in their current regions around the turn of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Capitalist development, gathering great headway in the last third of the 19th century, brought further waves of minorities, particularly as a consequence of the attraction of the cities and industrial regions.

Encouragement from beyond the country's borders, the centrifugal force of the minority movements, the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire at the end of the Great War, and the defeat of two revolutions (1918 and 1919), led to the break-up of a Hungary that had existed for a millennium. As a result of the Treaty of Trianon, Hungary lost two-thirds of her territory and one-third of her population. Thus the neighbouring states of Czechoslovakia, Rumania, and Yugoslavia have become countries with large national minorities while there was a sharp decrease in the minorities population of Hungary. The end of the Second World War saw the loss of further territories with Hungarian inhabitants and partly, according to a decision of the victorious allied powers, the forced evacuation of some 200,000 Germans. The Potsdam Conference decided on the resettlement of several million Germans from Eastern Europe to German territories (considering them as Hitler's fifth column). Czechoslovak nationalism, backed by Beneš, was planning a similar solution in connection with the 700,000 Hungarians in Slovakia.

Although international protest and pressure from the Hungarian government and public prevented this from being fully carried out, there did take place a population exchange between Hungary and Slovakia, involving tens of thousands of Slovaks and Hungarians. All this, together with the psychological effect of the events, explains the low proportion of inhabitants with a sense of minority identity.

None of the four national minorities live in closed settlements in ethnically homogeneous regions in Hungary; in most cases they live in an admixture with a Hungarian population in cities and villages. Their scattered geographical location partly shows the accelerated population movement in recent decades (mobility, migration) and partly the specific features of their original settlement. Their language (or dialect), which in most cases was in usage before the establishment of a standardised literary idiom, is usually an archaic linguistic variant which has no unity even within Hungary and strongly differs from the literary language of the country they came from. These specific features present specific requirements and methods of procedure to the bodies concerned with the culture and education of national minorities in Hungary, including the development of their school system.

Following from their relatively low proportion and geographical distribution, it is impossible to grant minorities rights and political institutions which are linked to given geographical areas, such as regional self-government. As the minority population lives in scattered settlements, what is needed in Hungary—as in several other countries with similar potentialities—is to ensure collective rights linked to communities, not to localities. Primarily this means that Hungary's legal system not only recognises the equality of all citizens but also equality of all the nationalities living within the country, their language and culture included. This ensures that no individual can be discriminated against because of his origin, mother tongue,

and nationality; furthermore, special rights are granted to the various ethnic communities to maintain their "collective personality." The equality before the law of individual citizens and the group rights of the national minorities are guaranteed by the country's constitution and by several acts of legislation, from the council law through the educational and public educational laws to the civil code.

National minorities in Hungary can conduct any public business in their own language and in all the forms of public life; they have representatives in Parliament and in regions with a mixed population, they are present in the village and county councils and in local administration, in proportion to their numbers. In June 1985, according to the new election law, candidates for parliamentary and council elections were nominated on national and local registers. A representative of each of the four nationalities were elected to Parliament from a national register of 35 names representing various social sectors and forces. Over and above this, members of national minorities were also elected to Parliament from various constituencies, having been voted in from local registers which compulsorily have two or more candidates.

The state institutions include the Advisory Committee on Nationalities. This was established fifteen years ago and comprises deputy ministers of the relevant ministries and representatives of the Party and other bodies. The nationality department of the Ministry of Education coordinates cultural activities, education, and research into the national minorities. In all but one of the country's nineteen counties, the policy on minorities is put into daily practice by the councils, the local bodies of state administration. What are called "nationality committees" form a transition between social and state institutions, submitting proposals and reconciling, controlling, and enforcing interests on council, city, and settlement levels.

The four nationality associations are the

main social organizations. Under the aegis of the the Patriotic People's Front, their responsibility is consistently to enforce special minority rights, protect their interests and coordinate the relevant cultural work. They maintain lively relations with the appropriate nations beyond the Hungarian borders.

Education for members of national minorities

Consideration for national minorities is present at every level of the educational system today. The basic types of the relevant educational institutions consist of bilingual kindergartens and schools and those where the first language is being taught.

In the school-year of 1985-86, there were 265 nationality kindergartens functioning in Hungary. Of these 147 were set up in areas with German inhabitants, 54 for Slovaks, 44 for Croats and Serbs, 15 for Rumanians, and 5 for Slovenes. Two days a week, the activities in these kindergartens, centering on environmental and literary subjects and singing and music, are conducted in the children's mother tongue. Regulations also allow for activities to be conducted in the given language on the other days of the school week as well. Despite the dynamic development of these kindergartens, in nearly a quarter of the primary schools for national minorities, children begin without having attended the linguistic preparation thus provided for them.

Of the 317 schools where the native languages are taught to minorities, 181 are German, 77 Slovak, 51 Croat and Serb, and 8 Rumanian. These schools have several classes a week of compulsory language and literature lessons and optional study circles, all in the language of the nationalities in question. In the other type, the bilingual school, the sciences are taught in Hungarian (with terms, propositions, and definitions also taught in the other tongue) and arts and humanities in the ethnic language. Of this latter type of school there were 30 operating in the 1985-86 academic year: 8 in German, 5 in Slovak,

7 in Croatian and Serb, 6 in Rumanian, and 4 in Slovene. As about a third of the minority schools function in settlements with a population of less than a thousand, there is a special problem to overcome the educational and other drawbacks that follow from this. There are 8 independent bilingual grammar schools or bilingual sections in grammar schools, 3 for Germans, 2 each for Serbo-Croats and Slovaks, and 1 for Rumanians. The network of specialized secondary schools educating kindergarten teachers includes one for Serbo-Croats and one for Germans. The work in most of the ethnic secondary schools is of a standard above the national average; this is borne out by the proportion of students who continue their studies in institutions of higher educations.

The system of higher education offers several forms of training in the language of the national minorities. With the exception of Slovenes, education in the ethnic language is provided for all the national minorities in a separate training college each for kindergarten teachers (two in the case of Germans). The same is true of the training of teachers qualified to teach the first four years of primary schools. The teachers' training college of Pécs has a German and a Serbo-Croat department and that in Szeged Rumanian and Slovak departments: students graduating from these will teach in the upper four years of ethnic elementary schools. Slovenian teachers are trained at Szombathely. Some of the training of would-be teachers is also carried out in the colleges of the mother countries concerned. The German, the Slav, and the Rumanian departments of the University of Budapest naturally also receive ethnic students. As far as the training of teachers is concerned, the situation gives cause to satisfaction. However, for doctors, engineers, and other specialists, this justified request cannot be met within the country; from the 1970s on, provision has been made for the young to study on scholarships in institutions of higher education in the mother nations as well. (For a long time now, this op-

portunity has not been granted to the two million Hungarians living in Rumania.)

Alongside the four associations of national minorities, other state and social institutions and organizations are also engaged in questions of the education of national minorities. These include the Nationality Section of the National Educational Institute, the Ethnic Section of the Hungarian Educational Society, and the educational working commission of the Patriotic People's Front. The ethnic editorial section within the Budapest Educational Publishers is the main body responsible for the provision of textbooks, closely cooperating with the relevant institutions of the mother countries.

Hungary can boast of a continuous quantitative growth both in the number of institutions and pupils. In 1968 the number of ethnic students taught in their own language in elementary and secondary schools was 21,615; by 1984 this had grown to 55,004. It was in this period that the basic documents on minority education were issued, together with the textbooks needed to implement them. There appeared the first audio-visual devices, an adequate school inspectorate was built up, and more schools and student hostels were opened.

To tackle new tasks, a comprehensive ministerial project was drawn up in 1985 whose aim was to supplement and modernize the system. It is to be expected that the number of elementary schools which will also teach using the minority language will be extended with further German and Slovene schools. Of the existing schools, one is to be selected in every linguistic region where the conditions will be created to launch parallel classes with training provided in the ethnic language in all the subjects in the curriculum. The experience thus gained should pave the way for an extensive modernisation of bilingual schools at a later date.

A continuous improvement of the curricula and textbooks is intended to strengthen the overall cultural context by laying more emphasis on teaching the history, literature,

and general culture both of the mother country and of the minority itself. The 12-class Slovak school and hostel in Budapest will be moved into a new, modern building, the Serbo-Croat school and hostel will be modernised and expanded, and the German grammar-school department will also receive a new, independent student hostel in Budapest. The educational unit, complete with a boarding school, planned for the town of Baja, where children of German nationality can study from kindergarten age to their matriculation examination, will provide an ideal linguistic and intellectual environment for them. An adequate reorganization of the training of teachers, the extension of the teaching staff and the engagement of instructors in the mother tongue are intended to gradually remove the shortage of professionals. The plans also include the development of scholarly research at the nationality faculties in high schools.

Education as a cornerstone for the future of national minorities and the strengthening of their sense of identity, offers many possibilities for international cooperation. Although we know of some encouraging examples (relationships between schools on the two sides of the border, partial education of would-be teachers in the mother country, professional education abroad; the writing of textbooks), there are a great many opportunities still to be exploited. The bridging role of the several million Hungarians living in neighbouring countries and of the national minorities living in Hungary needs strengthening in this field too.

Culture and mass communication

Cultural activities based on the fostering of traditions and folk customs have been unfolding among the South Slavs, Slovaks, and Rumanians since the country's liberation in 1945 and among the Germans since the first half of the 1950s.

Altogether about 150 folk ensembles are

devoted to tradition. A special fillip to activity in the folk arts among the minorities has been given by the "Fly Away, Peacock" TV talent competition from the late 1960s onwards. As a result, the number of minority choirs and folksong circles has multiplied (at present 140 or so choirs are active). In some 110 settlements the activity of the dance groups and choirs is supported by folk music ensembles. Mention should also be made of the courses organized for minorities by the Institute of Popular Education in dancing, choral leadership, acting and staging, and of the opportunity for travelling abroad.

Folklore and the collection and display of material in museums are an important and much-used field in the preservation of traditions. From its beginnings, Hungarian ethnographers have studied the history, culture, and society of all the peoples living in the country. During the last fifteen years, summer camps have been organized for the collection of ethnographic and other materials concerning local history. These one-week camps, usually held in the native language at from one to three places a year for each of the national minorities, are attended by young professionals and by secondary and high-school students. The material they collect is added to the stock of the national-ity associations and or the local or ethnic museums. Foundation museums have been established for all the four minorities: for the Germans at Tata, the South Slavs at Mohács, and the Slovaks and Rumanians at Békéscsaba. The Slovene collection is in the museums of Szombathely and Szentgotthárd. These foundation museums are responsible for the collecting work of the given nationality all over the country, with the majority of their staff members coming from ethnic families; ever since their establishment, these performed a significant scholarly and educational service. With their help, or at local initiative, ethnographic model-houses, skansens, and private collections of local history have been set up in many villages. A national minority branch is active

within the Hungarian Ethnographical Society.

Some of the study circles covering subjects that contribute to a thorough knowledge of the country also tackle the local history of settlements with ethnic inhabitants. Many valuable collections have been set up from material amassed by private collectors. National minority reading camps are also organized for elementary and secondary-school children.

The linguistic clubs are major venues for the fostering of the minority language and culture and strengthening a sense of ethnic identity. Their flexible structure and range of activities allows them to operate both in villages and in several industrial centres and cities. By now their number is close to a hundred. These clubs often have theatrical groups and stages attached to them run in the native language, some fifty of which are in existence. A few years ago a German-language theatre was set up in Tolna County, with professional actors. The elements of fostering tradition and social entertainment are joined in the minority dance-houses, which mainly make use of the South Slav and Rumanian folklore. All this makes it clear that folk culture, a respect for traditional values has become essential in the cultural life of national minorities in Hungary.

One of the most important forms of state support for the cultivation of minority languages is realised by measures passed in 1969 for the development of the hitherto rather neglected minority libraries. Since then a network of base libraries has been worked up, providing library services in the small villages of their service area. At present there are 6 German, 4 Slovak, 4 South Slav, and 1 Rumanian base libraries which coordinate the library services in the 365 settlements with minority inhabitants; their stocks are expanded through state purchases and international exchanges of gift books. This latter is also beneficial to Hungarians living in the neighbouring countries.

Drawing on their years of experience of

publishing minority textbooks, since 1975 the ethnic editorial office of the Educational Publishers has also become the main publisher of fiction, ethnographic, scholarly, and other publications for minorities. The growing number of volumes, the improving opportunities for publishing and the interest from beyond the country's borders are also having an encouraging effect on the work of minority authors as well. The national minority associations also issue programme notes, methodical and other publications to help local cultural work, and some of the associations have even set up literary sections functioning in the native language.

The weekly newspapers of the four national minorities are produced in a total of 11,000 copies: they are the German *Neue Zeitung*, the Slovak *L'udové Noviny*, the Croat, Serb and Slovene *Narodne Novine*, and the Rumanian *Foata Noastră*. The Calendars, published annually by all the minorities, provide forums for their chronicles of cultural, literary, and similar events; they are always received with interest in the mother nations as well. Furthermore, the Germans and the South Slavs also issue literary reviews (*Signale*, *Literarischer Rundbrief*, *Neven*) and the Rumanians publish ethnographic and cultural history periodicals and supplements (*Izvorul* and *Timpuri*). Both national and local radio stations broadcast a fairly large number of minority programmes weekly. The last decade has also brought regularly scheduled minority programmes on Hungarian Television, even if for the time being on a modest scale. The same period has also seen the release, initiated by Hungaroton, the Hungarian Record Company, of LPs with recordings of folksongs and instrumental folk music.

Religion also plays a significant role in the preservation of minority languages and cultures.

Many churches in towns and villages with ethnic inhabitants hold their divine services in the language concerned, and display relevant works of religious art. More than once

a close relationship has developed between churches on the two sides of the frontier.

Regularly recurring regional, national, and international cultural events provide the opportunity of encountering minority, majority, and mother-nation art groups and scholars, and the strengthening of ties. These include county minority days, national minority festivals, the national conference on ethnic education, minority folk-music meets on the radio, international ethnographic research conferences, and folklore meetings along the Danube.

Prospects

If a state does not accept the need to preserve the culture of national minorities, if it pursues an aggressive policy of assimilation, this may easily lead to tension within the given country and in interstate relations. On the other hand, if a state supports the minorities' efforts at survival, by doing so it not only meets a democratic requirement but also increases its own internal stability and creates firmer, more lasting conditions for its domestic policy. This can be reinforced by supporting the role of the minorities to act as a bridge, mediating and furthering an approach in interstate relations, which usually has a favourable effect on the relations between two neighbouring countries, and indeed on the system of international relations of a whole region.

Milanka Renovica and János Kádár stressed in a joint communiqué issued at the Hungarian-Yugoslav inter-party talks in Budapest in February 1987 "that their countries assign great significance to the conditions of the Croat, Serb, and Slovene national minorities living in the Hungarian People's Republic and the Hungarian national minority living in the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, to creating the social, economic, cultural, and educational conditions indispensable for their many-sided development, and particularly to satisfying the requirements

related to their education and instruction in their mother tongue. They stressed that the questions concerning the position and development of national minorities are treated by both sides in a principled way; they form an important element in the strengthening of friendship between the Hungarian People's Republic and the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the peoples of the two countries, and contribute to a broader European cooperation and agreement. The two sides will in the future too aim at having their national minorities, as loyal citizens of their country, *form a bridge in cooperation*, and be important factors in the development of good-neighbourly relations between the two countries, in understanding and in many-sided, mutually advantageous and equal Hungarian-Yugoslav relations." (Italics in the original document.) So the national minority issue is equally capable of bringing states and peoples together or into confrontation, and in this sense it is a component of international peace and security. The relationship with minorities is at the same time also a major touchstone of a society's maturity and political culture, and of the level of citizens' rights in it.

It may have become clear from this summary that the democratic ensurance of national minority rights is a long-range element and not a short-range one in Hungarian cultural policies. The day-to-day contact with minorities, as representatives of a neighbouring or more distant nation, brings with it a harmonic cohabitation based on a realistic acquaintanceship with their ethnic characteristics, which is not a negligible factor in the peace of the Danube region and the continent as a whole.

Since changes in the social environment bring along changes both regarding the minorities and their relations between each other, the view voiced by several countries according to which the minority question can be solved once and for all, or indeed, is already solved, is unacceptable. The realization of equal rights for minorities calls for con-

tinuous and constantly renewed efforts and the search for new solutions, means, and methods.

For a survival of the languages of minorities, Hungary desires more cooperation involving the work of guest teachers, and, in accordance with the general standpoints of educational policy, the use of textbooks, visual aids, and other educational means coming from the mother nations. It is expedient and mutually advantageous to draw experts from the mother country into the contentual design and linguistic supervision of the textbooks for minorities.

It is of great significance if ethnic teachers, educational experts, and high-school students are offered the opportunity for linguistic and professional extension training. There have been favourable experiences with some of the countries concerning a mutual exchange of schoolchildren in native-language camps. The policy pursued by Hungary regarding national minorities wishes to further develop the reading camps mentioned already, by offering more frequent opportunities for the young participants to meet writers and students from beyond the country's borders. Opportunities for practising the language beyond the borders could also be ensured by reviving the once well-proven projects of childrens' exchanges. In 1985, a National Minority Council was formed within the Society for the Propagation of Knowledge, which has as one of its major goals of adult education in the native language of the minorities in the country. Towards this end they reckon with guest lecturers from the neighbouring countries.

As a general experience, the provision of books for national minorities is hard to realize without the cooperation of the mother nations. Hungary supports contacts abroad of organizations and institutions responsible for providing books for minorities, their regular and direct information, mutual book exchange between central and regional libraries, and institutionalised book consignments. The bookshops in ethnic regions

should sell volumes both coming from the mother nation and published within the country on a more extensive basis.

Possibilities for regular appearances in the mother country of ethnic folk artists, poets, writers, painters, sculptors, ensembles, and museum exhibitions should be ensured.

Similarly to the successful cooperation already going on in certain fields, a joint drawing-up and preparation for publication of the ethnographic and cultural material that has been collected or is still to be collected by minorities, could also be a successful venture on both sides of the border.

The border regions in several European countries show a great many kindred features in their history, culture, and development, and they also have an ethnically mixed population. Hungary considers it justified to develop forms of inter-regional cultural cooperation in these regions (by joint historical and art exhibitions, joint publications of works by writers of different languages living in the region, joint efforts in environmental protection, and the preservation of common architectural heritage). Such cooperation could be strengthened by regular meetings of the representatives of minorities living in the area, mutual or joint programmes for their folk-art ensembles and so forth. Within the frames of the Pannonian Cooperation (which covers cultural and economic interactions between Western Hungary, the Austrian Burgenland, and the border regions of Slovenia and Croatia), Hungary has acquired experience which it considers useful in its relations with countries both of similar and differing social systems. I could go on listing examples of already existing forms of cooperation from get-togethers of neighbouring national minorities through the joint Hungarian-Slovene research work* to symposia of historians.

It seems necessary for the media of mass communication in European countries—both in the language of the minority and that of the majority—to provide more extensive in-

formation on the minority question. It would be useful, for example, to cooperate on bilingual or multilingual radio and television programmes which would offer an informative picture of the cultural scene of the minorities in the countries in question. (An example for this has been the TV documentary series "National Minorities—the Wealth of Europe".)

Simultaneously with this, the minority press and radio and TV programmes should give more regular information on the life and cultural events of their mother nations. The cable television system to be laid on in the Slovene region of Hungary and the construction of the relay tower in Slovenia to improve reception of Hungarian TV programmes are examples to be followed by the media in the interest of the minorities.

Hungary considers it expedient to discuss typical features of the culture of national minorities at international meetings, with the participation of academic experts and those with practical experience in the field. A token of this was the third international ethnographical conference on national-minority studies held in early October 1985, at Békéscsaba, a town which has multi-ethnic cultural traditions. The success augurs well for the future as well and one hopes for an expansion of the circle of participants and the idea of continuing the series of conferences in different countries with the involvement of representatives from the other social sciences as well.

It would be useful to facilitate cross-border travel and commerce for the border population, to maintain and extend inter-regional cooperation (labour mobility, flood protection, and environmental protection) and to launch joint and coordinated development projects in regions along the border regions which in many cases have for centuries formed economic, ethnic, cultural, and transport units.

The languages of national minorities should be taught as optional subjects in a few ordinary elementary and secondary

* See *NHQ* 101

schools. In Hungary this will be realised in the near future and we also know of examples from Yugoslavia.

Hungarians feel an understandable concern and indignation over the revival in certain countries of anti-minority nationalism, the revival of dubious theories of national origin, and the strengthening of educational and cultural policies aiming at forceful assimilation. A political practice that disseminates inter-ethnic hatred and slander and makes concessions to chauvinistic emotions can only be condemned. Hungary considers the artificial assimilation of national minorities an extreme manifestation of nationalism and rejects it as such.

Hungarians living as national minorities form the most numerous national minority in Europe. The Hungarian state and society recognize the present *status quo* and the inviolability of the borders. At the same time they consider the Hungarians living beyond the country's borders as integral components of Hungarian national culture and naturally condemn efforts to prevent and break up the eleven-century-old bond of history by administrative, psychological, and other means. So the fate of the Hungarians living in the

neighbouring countries signifies for Hungary more than an issue of foreign policy, it also affects the country's internal life. Hungary urges the assertion of the same minority rights and humanitarian principles on both sides of the frontiers. In their self-government and in international relations alike, national minorities should play an active and not merely a passive role. Thus only can they become a democratic element in domestic processes and a linking, integrating factor between their mother nation and the ethnic majority of their country.

The minority question is equally capable of linking or confronting states and peoples. In this sense it is a political factor of peace and security. The development of a system of cooperation more open and more democratic than the present one would also guarantee a greater internal and international security for the states concerned. The small and medium-sized countries in East-Central Europe, having drawn painful lessons from the events of the century, could also strengthen each other's position by such relations; at the same time they could create a sphere which builds confidence and strengthens security in Europe.

ÉVA HAJDÚ

THE WALLENBERG MEMORIAL IN BUDAPEST

The war had hardly ended and Budapest was still in ruins when the Wallenberg Committee, founded under the patronage of the President of the Provisional National Assembly, Béla Zsedényi, and the Chairman of the Budapest National Committee, Árpád Szakasits, addressed a letter to the Mayor of Budapest: "We request . . . that the governing body of the capital city grant permission for a statue of Raoul Wallenberg to be erected out of public contributions. The model of

the statue has already been prepared by the sculptor Pál Pátzay." On the agreement of the municipal board, fund-raising started. In support of this noble aim, a charity concert was organized where renowned artists such as Annie Fischer, Ede Zathureczky, Hilda Gobbi, Imre Ungár, Mária Basilides and others performed. However, due to the rampant inflation of the time and the grave economic situation, the outcome was still not certain, so the organizers could only finish prepara-

tions with the aid of the municipal authorities. Pál Pátzay's memorial to Raoul Wallenberg was erected in Szent István Park in Budapest in March and April 1949. On a high granite pedestal, which bore a relief of Raoul Wallenberg and an inscription describing his activity, stood the main figure, a man fighting a snake, symbolising Wallenberg's struggle with Fascism. The inscription read as follows: "Raoul Wallenberg, envoy of the Swedish nation, directed the brave and noble humanitarian relief action of the Royal Swedish Embassy in Budapest from the beginning of July 1944 until January 1945. In that dark age of destruction he became our legendary hero. Let this memorial testify to our never-ending gratitude in the centre of the very district where lived those persecuted who in the night of an inhuman age were protected by his unwavering, vigilant humanity."

No unveiling of the memorial ever took place. Some time before the ceremony, planned for 9 April 1949, the statue was taken down and carted away at night by persons unknown. The whereabouts of the pedestal and the relief are unknown to this day. After serious damage had been repaired, the main symbolical figure was set up in 1953 in front of a pharmaceutical works in Debrecen, and entitled "The Snake-killer." Thus it represents, instead of Wallenberg's fight against Fascism, Man's fight against disease.

Though the former memorial has been lost, the remembrance of Raoul Wallenberg has never died. His self-sacrificing, heroic deeds are remembered not only by the thousands whose lives he helped to save but also by the entire Hungarian nation. As Béla Zsedényi said in his letter to Gustav V, King

of Sweden: "Embassy Secretary Raoul Wallenberg rendered invaluable service to the Hungarian nation not only by saving from certain destruction thousands and tens of thousands persecuted by the Fascists because of their race, religion or political views, but also by taking a share, self-effacing, heroic and decisive, in preventing the mass murder planned against innocent and defenceless citizens, and through the success of his undertaking he saved the Hungarian nation from further defamation."

A street in Budapest bears Raoul Wallenberg's name, and there is a memorial plaque in the 13th district where the Swedish-protected houses stand.

In the spring of 1987 a new memorial, the work of Imre Varga, went up in Szilágyi Erzsébet Fásor in Buda. This was done on the initiative of Nicholas Salgó, at the time US Ambassador to Budapest, funded in part by the Wallenberg family (the marble for the statue was their donation). The costs of erecting it were covered by the Municipal Council of Budapest. History has dispensed its own form of justice in that Imre Varga was a pupil of Pál Pátzay's. Varga's statue also bears an unmistakable allusion to Pátzay's monument by displaying the silhouette of the original work on granite broken in two. The inscription is from Ovid: "*Donec eris felix multos numerabis amicos, tempora si fuerint nubila, solus eris.*" Varga's figure, however, is not of a hero standing high above on a pedestal: he is a man looking forward, seeking the way. The erect posture suggests bravery, the hand pointing forward is tragically fragile. The work is heart-rending and uplifting at the same time: man contending against humiliating, murderous destruction.



IMRE VARGA:
WALLENBERG MEMORIAL, 1987





FERTŐD. MAIN ENTRANCE OF THE ESTERHÁZY PALACE.

REAR OF THE PALACE WITH THE PARK.



Tamás Mihályik



Tamas Mikalik

RÁCKEVE. EUGENE OF SAVOY'S CHATEAU. A VIEW FROM THE DANUBE

NAGYCENK. SZÉCHENYI CHATEAU

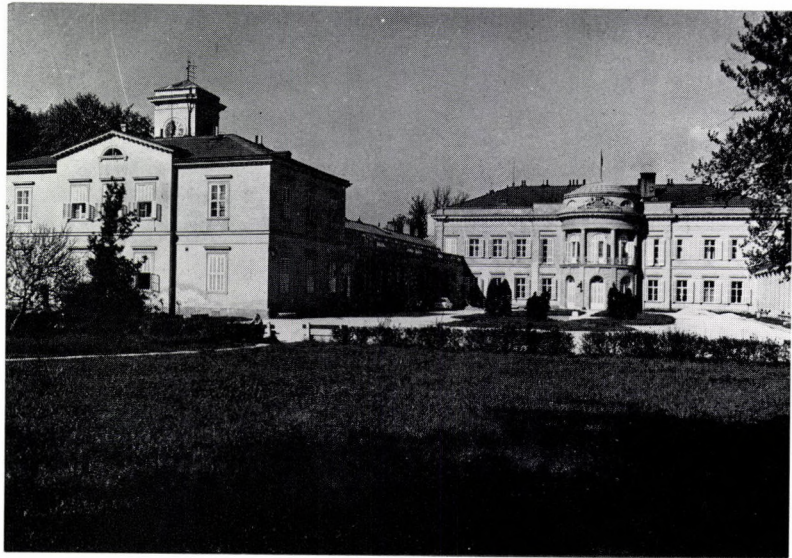
Lajos Dobos





Lajos Tamás

MIHÁLYI. DÓRY MANOR.
REAR ENTRANCE



FEHÉRVÁRCSURGÓ.
KÁROLYI CHATEAU



Tamás Mikalák

GÁLOSFA,
FESTETICH MANOR



SEREGÉLYES. FAÇADE OF THE ZICHY-HADIK CHATEAU
SEREGÉLYES. INTERIOR

Robert Hack





VASSZÉCSÉNY. OLD-EBERGÉNY MANOR



VASSZÉCSÉNY. NEW-EBERGÉNY
MANOR



MAJK. EREMETIC HOUSES

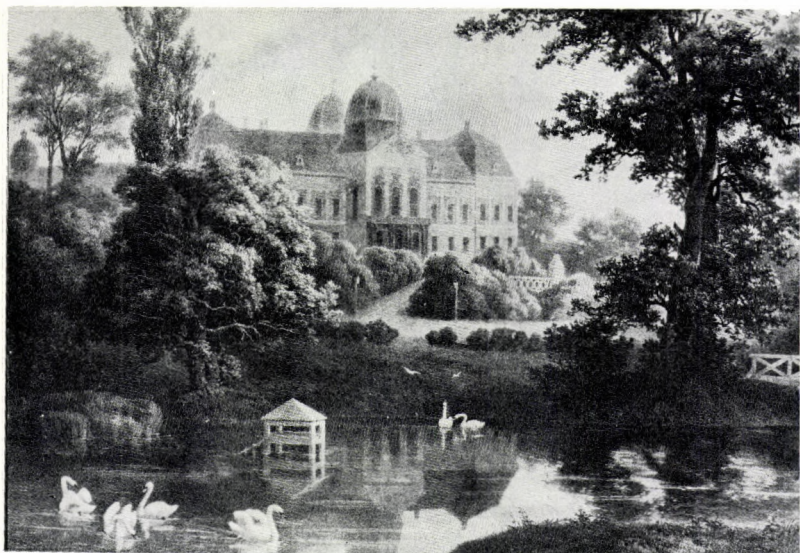


SZIRÁK. TELEKI-DEGENFELD MANOR

Lajos Dobos

KESZTHELY. FESTETICH PALACE.

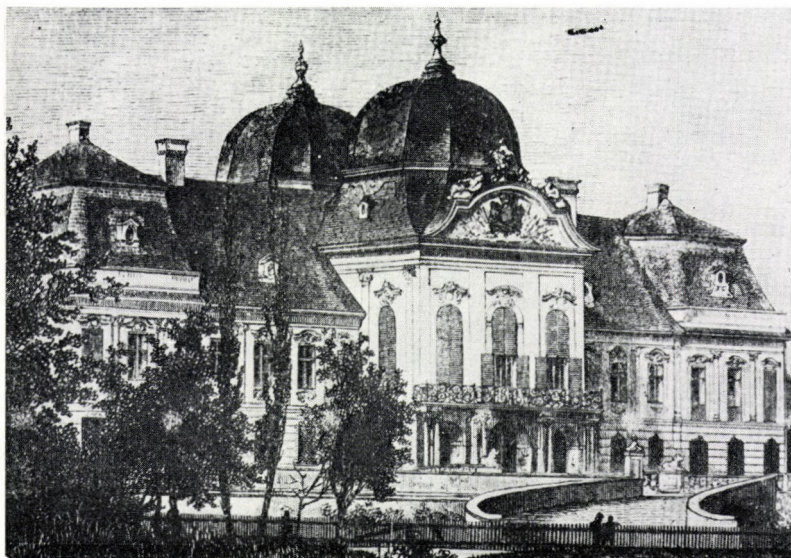




GRASSALKOVICH PALACE
AND GARDEN

THE HABSBURG
ROYAL FAMILY IN GÖDÖLLŐ.
FRANZ JOSEPH,
EMPRESS ELISABETH, RUDOLPH,
MARIA VALERIA, GISELLA.
LITHOGRAPH BY KATZLER. 1871.

*Courtesy Gödöllő
Local History Museum*



GÖDÖLLŐ.
GRASSALKOVICH PALACE,
MAIN ENTRANCE
WOODCUT FROM 1867

ERZSÉBET JUHÁSZ

SAVING HUNGARY'S GREAT HOUSES

Six hundred chateaux and country houses have been declared historic monuments in Hungary. Of these we have chosen a few small and large, some restored and some in ruins, to try to portray all of them. In origin they go back to the Middle Ages. Latin chronicles and documents from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries speak of *castella*, small fortresses with bastions, turrets, bridges and palisades and surrounded by moats. Architectural research in the recent past has traced the remains of these medieval fortified buildings in many of the country's manor-houses. These had later been reconstructed as manor-houses, whose purpose was to serve as a residence.

The Hungarian golden age for the building of these houses was the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, when the Emperor Charles IV and the Empress Maria Theresa resettled areas, depopulated during the Turkish occupation, with Austrians, Germans and Slovaks. Many Hungarian and foreign nobles were granted lands in these parts and they launched a wave of manor-house construction.

The Savoy Chateau at Ráckeve

The Savoy chateau one of the first Hungarian manor-houses built after the expulsion of the Turks, stands in Ráckeve, a small town on the Danube, near Budapest. The Imperial Commander of the liberating armies purchased his estate in 1698 and commissioned Johann Lucas von Hildebrand to build a manor-house. The work, begun in 1702, was completed by 1722; stables were added in 1750. Hildebrand's design was for a single-storey building, facing the Danube, with a courtyard and an octagon-shaped, domed state-room. The ground-plan reflects the influence of French Baroque, the richly

ornamented façade that of Italian Baroque. After the death of Eugene of Savoy the estate and its manor-house came into the possession of the House of Habsburg. In 1814 the cupola burnt down and was rebuilt in a neo-classic style. In the second half of the last century, another storey was added. Between the two wars, it was used as a granary; after the Second World War it served several temporary purposes and rapidly deteriorated. In 1973, several design enterprises and institutes, backed by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Construction, teamed up to reconstruct the building. Work began in 1975 and was concluded in 1982, carried out by the National Board for the Protection of Historical Buildings, with considerable state support. Today the manor-house is used as a resort for architects of the institutions concerned; it is also a centre for cultural and professional events.

The Grassalkovich Palace at Gödöllő

The Gödöllő manor-house, built between 1744 and 1748, has significance in art history as a Baroque house that created a new style in Hungary. The proprietor and commissioner, Count Antal Grassalkovich, had a prodigious career; he ran his estate in an exemplary manner and was also a generous patron of the arts.

The manor-house in Gödöllő is the largest in Hungary, with a floor area of 12.5 thousand square metres; the total length of the exterior and interior façades come to around a kilometre and a half. Its typically Hungarian architectural feature is that the wings surround not the reception court as is usual in manor-houses abroad but the upper garden, which was originally French Baroque in form and later English landscape in style.

The manor-house still preserves the pomp with which in 1751 it received Maria Theresia. The luxurious state-hall with the ceremonial staircase and the room with red marble panelling, specially furnished for the sovereign, have remained intact. The park, now smaller in size, still covers more than 28 hectares.

In the mid-nineteenth century, the manor-house, which had lived through the glory and decline of three generations of the Grassalkovich family, became a summer residence of the imperial family, and later that of the Regent.

The last few decades have been cruel to the building. During and after the war it was pillaged and looted; several bodies moved into it but none took care of it. Its lot has only recently turned for better now that the government has granted state support to cover the most urgent protection of its fabric and repairs of the most severe damages. Work has commenced and the features of architectural and art-historical interest are now being examined. One result has been the discovery of the only surviving small, private stone-built annexe attached to a great house. Tenders have been invited for the complete restoration and for an appropriate utilisation of the complex of buildings. The plan is that after the restoration is completed, the building may offer a home to a hotel, a museum, a library or to an educational institution.

The Hungarian Versailles

Another significant house, unique in its size and in its representing in Hungary the Versailles type of palace, is situated in Fertőd (formerly Eszterháza) in western Hungary. This stately ensemble of Baroque buildings was built on the site of a hunting-seat between 1763 and 1784, by Prince Nicholas Esterházy. Melchior Hefelei appears to have been the architect. The two-storey main building is joined by ground-storey wings, which enclose a court within their horseshoe

shape. From the court a grand staircase leads to the upper-floor state-room. The rich internal decoration is Rococo. The main building was originally joined by a gallery and a conservatory. The auxiliary buildings were also used for the performances of operas and puppet shows. Behind the palace was situated the most important Baroque garden in the country.

Between 1770 and 1790 the palace was the scene of a brilliant court life. At this time Joseph Haydn was the prince's *Kapellmeister*. After the death of Miklós Esterházy the princely household was reduced and later transferred to Kismarton. The palace was deserted and was left to slow decay. At the turn of this century, it was partially renovated, but the Second World War brought serious damage and most of its furnishings were destroyed. From 1946 an agricultural research institute and secondary school used the palace. The main building was partially renovated in 1957-59, and in the 1960s the park around the residence began to be reconstructed. Today the most precious premises in the building are open to the public as a museum and a Haydn memorial exhibition, and the building is regularly used for concerts. However, a complete renovation and proper utilisation of the buildings still requires great efforts.

The Festetich Palace

The present Festetich residence, dating from the middle of the eighteenth century, is in Keszthely on Lake Balaton. It was originally built by Count Kristóf Festetich on an estate that came into the family in 1739, by the architect Kristóf Hofstädter. Hofstädter also designed the expansion of the house in 1769-70. Between 1792 and 1800, Count György Festetich added further extensions, and later, towards the end of last century, the palace was once again renovated and reconstructed on the behest of Count (later Prince) Tasziló Festetich. That is when it received its

present form: its arrangement in space, neo-Baroque façades and partial forms resemble the Belvedere of Vienna and the Dresden Zwinger.

After the war, the building housed various company and institutional offices and even residential apartments. Although it had only suffered minor damage during the war, this incongruous and disgraceful use, with its attached maintenance problems, reduced the building to a poor state. The reconstruction started in 1969, with state funds, and will be completed in the near future. The building now houses a museum and an exhibition hall, the city library and a music school. To the nineteenth-century wing, to be completed in the last phase of the reconstruction, a social centre and guest rooms will be added.

The Széchenyi Chateau at Nagycenk

In the village of Nagycenk, near the Austrian border, lies a Széchenyi chateau of outstanding historical and artistic value. It was built by Count Antal Széchenyi around 1750-69 on his estate here.

Count Ferenc Széchenyi moved into the house in 1783, where he displayed the collection which in 1802 he donated to the National Museum he had himself founded. Around 1800 he had the palace rebuilt, transforming the oblong main building by adding a storey, having stables built and, on the western side, erecting the Red Palace. The main building was given an early neo-Classic facade.

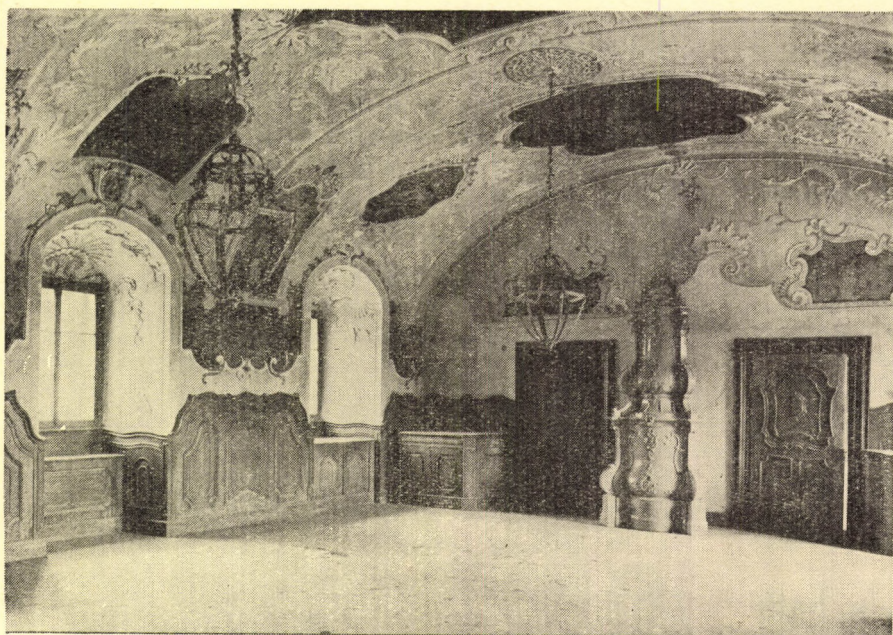
In 1820 the castle came down to Count István Széchenyi, a leading figure of the Reform Age in the early nineteenth century. He commissioned Ferdinánd Hild to work on the west wing, which was done between 1834 and 1840. Hild had ventilating cellars built and, for the first time in Hungary, installed gas lighting, bathrooms and flush toilets. The stud in the agricultural wing became the centre for horsebreeding in Hungary. His son, Count Béla, from 1860 on, had only minor transformations done. The

complex of buildings survived unchanged until the end of the Second World War. The garden had also undergone changes, being turned from a Baroque garden into a landscape garden. During the war the building suffered significant damage and, left masterless for nearly fifteen years, was exposed to further deterioration. The National Board for the Protection of Historical Buildings renovated the main building in 1970-73, where the István Széchenyi Memorial Museum now has its home. The agricultural wing was renovated in 1976 and now houses a stud-farm, a riding school and a coach museum. Between 1979 and 1985, the István Széchenyi wing was also reconstructed, again to serve as a museum. At present, reconstruction is going on on the Red Palace, which will house a hotel.

The home of Beethoven's friends

The Brunswick chateau in the village of Martonvásár, 40 km from Budapest, may sound familiar to music friends: Beethoven allegedly stayed here a number of times between 1800 and 1809, as a friend of the count's family. The house was built by Count Antal Brunswick in 1773-75, in Baroque style; in 1875 it was rebuilt in the English neo-Gothic and as such is one of the finest of Hungarian Romantic houses. At the end of the nineteenth century, the estate came into the possession of Archduke Joseph and later still into that of the Dreher brewing family. The park of nearly 100 hectares had been developed into a landscape garden from the 1790s. After the Second World War, the house came under the management of the Technical and Economical University; in 1949 it was assigned to the Agricultural Research Institute of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, which has remained there since.

The house was renovated between 1973 and 1977, maintaining details dating from earlier periods. The Beethoven Memorial Mu-



Refectory at Majk

seum is on the ground floor. Today the park is one of the best kept historical gardens in the country after being declared in 1953 a nature conservation area. In the summer open-air concerts are held there.

The restoration programme

After this brief look at some of the more important houses, something should be said about the poor state buildings of this type in Hungary came to in the post-war years. The social transformation which took place in those years saw the distribution of the landed estates but no attention was paid to the future of the houses on them. Of the approximately 1,500 to 2,000 country houses that fell on evil days, many were abandoned for many years. Even those that the war spared were plundered and despoiled. The social transformation meant that they had lost their original function. Many were dilapidated, those responsible had no feeling of ownership

and neglected maintenance. Yet the future of some of these buildings that had come into public ownership after the war, was settled and many of them found careful masters. However, those bodies which made use of these buildings, did so without any coordination and made no attempt to consider them as historical monuments. Some of the houses were turned into cooperative centres, barns, schools or flats, and only a few of them were assigned any adequate function. By the late 1970s, some of the houses in the country found themselves in a perilous state, mainly due to lack of maintenance or to the fact that many were left empty after new establishments had been built.

By the end of the 1970s, changes taking place in the economy and in public attitudes paved the way for a programme to save Hungarian country houses of historical or aesthetic significance. The National Board for the Protection of Historical Buildings surveyed

412 houses and chateaux, and this survey became the basis for a government programme which, despite the country's economic difficulties, set itself the goal of saving these houses and palaces and of maintaining and properly utilising this architectural inheritance. From 1982 onwards, the state has provided financial assistance for the reconstruction of 170 historic houses from a central fund placed at the disposal of the National Board. Restoration has now been completed on 23 buildings, which have also been turned over to appropriate functions. This action succeeded in warding off the destruction of those buildings that had been in the greatest peril.

The state support granted for the renovation of these houses and for investment aimed at laying foundations for their proper utilization—supplemented by financial and other allowances—has mobilized considerable resources on the part of enterprises, cooperatives and private undertakings. The Taurus Rubber company, for instance, has renovated the Zichy-Hadik house of Seregélyes, near Budapest (built by the finance minister Count Ferenc Zichy in the mid-nineteenth century according to tradition, for the occasion of the visit of Emperor Francis Joseph). The enterprise not only rebuilt the building but also had its beautiful frescoes and the surviving pieces of furniture restored; they also restored the park and the ornamental lake. This house is now the company's training centre and a hotel. The Hungarian Hydrocarbon Industrial Research and Development Institute has restored the Teleki-Degenfeld house in Szirák, northern Hungary, a house dating from the 17th century and rebuilt in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The Institute has set up a hotel and an educational centre in the building.

In the village of Mihályi in western Hungary, Dóry Hall, dating from the 15th century, was rebuilt in the Baroque period but has preserved Gothic elements. This too has been restored and had been fitted out as a postgraduate centre.



Coat of arms of a Majk monk

In the village of Gálosfa, situated in the hill-country of Transdanubia near Lake Balaton, the local cooperative farm has transformed the Festetich mansion, built in 1772, into an inn.

A fine example of private enterprise's role here is the inn set up in the single-storey Felsőbük Nagy chateau in the Louis Seize style, dating from around 1780, in the village of Bük in western Hungary. The Baroque Szapáry house dating from 1696, in the same village, was renovated and turned into a hotel in the 1960s. Another private undertaking has been the renovation of the Óbergény house in nearby Vasszécsény, dating from the Middle Ages and rebuilt in Baroque style in 1750; someone has leased it and is operating it as an inn.

Future plans

The government has drawn up a high-priority plan to protect the fabric of five large buildings and to commence work on their

reconstruction. The one in Gödöllő has already been mentioned and its reconstruction is under way. The huge Baroque set of buildings of the L'Huillier-Coburg chateau dating from around 1730 (whose architect is unknown), in the village of Edelény in southern Hungary, is in an extremely poor state; most of its park has also gone to ruin. (It had been used for flats and offices.) Work on protecting its fabric and on reconstruction has been started and plans for its future use have also been worked out; it would be perfect for a hotel but for the time being no entrepreneurs have come forward. The out-buildings of the Óbuda Zichy mansion have for the most part been reconstructed to house the Vasarely Museum which will be set up in it.

A special sight in the village of Fehérvárcsurgó, near Balaton, is the huge Károlyi residence in late neo-classic and Romantic style, built around 1844 with the participation of Miklós Ybl, after a design by H. Koch. The building is surrounded by a landscape garden, which is now protected, and a lake has been created by damming the stream flowing through it. This house was used as a children's home but no one saw to its maintenance and since 1979, when the home moved out, it has remained unoccupied and has rapidly decayed. Reconstruction work has been started here too but no decision has yet been reached as to its future use. Negotiations are under way on adding the building to a chain of hotels.

Finally let us mention a particularly valuable complex of buildings whose restoration has also been given special priority in this programme given. The buildings of the Camaldolese order of hermits, the last to have survived in Hungary and in the whole of Central Europe, are to be found in Majkpuszta in the Vértes Hills, near Lake Balaton. In his deed of foundation of 1733, Count József Esterházy donated the land. The designs for the complex of the monastic houses were drawn by Franz Antol Pilgram, and the construction of the central cloister was commenced. Between 1737 and 1770, 17 self-contained cells were built, each with its own garden, the family crest of the hermit on the front, a chapel within, and the walls covered by frescoes. The complex also included a church and an ornamental park. Emperor Joseph II suppressed the order in 1782 and the site was abandoned. In 1828 it was bought back by the Esterházy family, and in 1860 the central cloister was transformed into a hunting-lodge. After the war, until 1971, the building housed an agricultural secondary school. The reconstruction of the cells is now going on; they are to be used by enterprises as holiday homes. The hunting-lodge still stands empty and is now decaying. No enterprise has so far offered to take on the reconstruction and utilisation of the building; negotiations, so far unsuccessful have included it along with the Fehérvárcsurgó house in a future hotel chain.

FROM THE PRESS

CONFLICT, ORDER, FREEDOM

From an interview with Imre Pozsgay

A recent interview with Imre Pozsgay, General Secretary of the Patriotic People's Front, by András Sylvester, a writer on the staff of the monthly *Világosság**, began with a reference to an essay Pozsgay published in 1972. There the author enlarged upon the absolute necessity of handling public sentiment, public opinion as a political reality regardless of the source it feeds on and that a distinction must be made between condemning mass opinion deriving from real errors, conflicts of interests and that resulting from errors of the mind.

During the fifteen years that have passed—says Imre Pozsgay—sharp conflicts in the workings of historical-social truth and the errors of the mind have been experienced. It seems certain that it has not only been society that was responsible for the development of these errors of the mind and wrong reactions on the part of society. One of the principal lessons of this period was that the functional problems of socialism have become manifest in every East European country. The series of crises cannot any longer be considered as separate malfunctions, incidental problems. It is generally appreciated that the classic crises of capitalism were caused by over-supply, over-production. Yet we did not analyse the question of what causes the low efficiency of capital in the socialist countries, why the

functioning of public ownership causes cyclical crises, why supplies are far from saturation point, and the political consequences these phenomena produce.

Pozsgay was emphatic about the vital importance of carrying out these analyses, for if no genuine dialogue develops with the people, if there is no open debate, then the result can easily be that people would link the reform with the deterioration of the circumstances of life, inflation, possible unemployment accompanying structural change, corruption, the loosening of moral conditions... even though all this mentioned arises not from the reform but from the inconsistencies of the implementation of the reform.

Individual freedom and the role of the state

"The fact that capital efficiency is the highest, and so is its opportunity to develop, had been discovered by Marx and clearly and exactly described by Max Weber, as a sociologist," emphasised Imre Pozsgay. "This seems to be paradoxical, but it means no more that, where capital under its developed conditions produced the system of civil liberties characteristic of the capitalist mode of production, there the price for the free movement of civil society is high performance at work. We reversed this relationship, restricted civil society through the organization of

* *Világosság*, 1987/3.

the state and socialised system of relations, and now this civil society is recapturing its liberty in production."

In the course of the discussion, Imre Pozsgay returned to the basic question outlined above, pointing out that order can only be established in freedom, and that the current development programmes demanding high technical and scientific standards cannot be imagined without people who are free. It is possible to continue production, to stagnate, to eke out some sort of existence for years, it may even be possible in countries, where the historical past is different, to develop "modernized" societies under restrictions of freedom, but European man cannot cope with large and complicated tasks if he does not feel free.

After this discussion turned to the role and importance of the state. To the fact that there is a region in East-Central Europe and another in Eastern Europe, where the role of the state appreciated because of the necessity of political and economic protection. "If one recalls or re-reads the remarks of Marx and Lenin concerning the state," said Imre Pozsgay, "one is shocked to see how much we turned away from the basic ideas of Marx about the state and how high we placed the state... Fortunately, views on the state characteristic earlier, even some five years ago, are now being strongly questioned even in the Soviet Union." Imre Pozsgay added that this does not mean that a society progressing towards autonomy can do without the organization of the state, but that we must turn back to the Marxian basic idea, which holds that everything should be in the scope of autonomy, save matters it cannot cope with. And the latter are the general objectives, such as, for instance, determination of the proportions of the sectors of the economy, the defence system, the system of education, in other words all of the affairs one would consider part of a national programme.

Speaking of the economic reform, Imre Pozsgay stressed that the furthering of the reform cannot be solved simply by a modifi-

cation of the control system and of incentives. "Looking at the initiatives and reform movements of the last two decades, I must say that the reform always progressed where and when it was accompanied by certain political changes... The abstraction that there is an economic sphere that can be separately handled, and there is a society which will cooperate according to the rules and develop an integrated mode of living for the people, just cannot be accepted. The view that the key to solving economic problems is not in the economy today, but in society, is, I think, much closer to reality."

The countries of Eastern Europe set out to find a course, as did Hungary, where important political steps were also taken besides economic reform measures, such as the up-dating of the council system in 1971, then the reform of the election system in the early eighties, insisting on at least two candidates for each constituency at national and council elections. The changing of the internal system of management of enterprises, the setting up of enterprise councils and management elected by the collectives constituted a further step forward. However, these changes were accompanied by a certain paternalistic attitude, and that prevented the development of a general, popular dialogue. "... Taking into consideration other issues, my view is," added Imre Pozsgay, "that the reforms were not deep enough, did not affect the fundamental political structure. In this respect the basic issue is the clarification of the relationship of the Party and the state, the Party and society."

*Realistic alternatives,
self-organization*

In re-assessing the scope of movement of political forces and the leading role of the HWSP, the objective must be to ensure that the Party—which is the rallying point of those members of society most committed to the cause of socialism—offers a realistic alternative. "There is no knowledge that could

be possessed by a single political faction, which could pass on that knowledge in the form of a will to the people, and make it into an order, for then the needs of the people should also have to ordered and met accordingly." On the other hand, various forms of spontaneous social organization ensure more efficient alternatives. The preconditions for further progress are the development of such forms and opportunities of civil initiative and association, where the initiative no longer comes only from a single centre but from any sphere of society. In this connection Imre Pozsgay considers it necessary to reconsider the mutual links of various social organizations. "These organizations cannot be regarded purely as driving-belts of the rationalizing means of the central will," he stressed, "or stage scenery in the case of movements, such as the Popular Front, destined to surround the play of a ritual, while Power operates its own means in its own way."

The HSWP had made initiatives in that direction during the sixties and seventies. The resolution that extended the authority of the trades unions, the acknowledgement of their representation of interests, for instance, was a step forward; however, developed forms of this system of representation of interests have still failed to materialize, although Imre Pozsgay considers that the development and efficient operation of it is feasible as long as a political system operates above this representation of interests, which is capable of changing people into communities where they live and where they work, beyond the interests that find expressions in corporations.

"I think this is an interesting idea", Pozsgay said, "and very rational in modern societies that produce highly developed forces and means of production. I agree with corporative forms of organization and the representation of interests, with one proviso, if this does not imply the extinguishing of political attitudes. The corporative model does not make sense with a political party and social and political organizations."

Pozsgay mentioned that the word corpora-

tion awakens unpleasant political memories for some. At that time they wanted to destroy precisely what was political and de-politicise men, so that human action became meaningful only in terms of the interests it expressed. He only accepted an interpretation of corporations which also allowed for the operation of a political system which expressed human autonomy.

Conflicts, bureaucracy, parliament

"An enormous bureaucratization of society had taken place under the conditions of socialism," stressed Imre Pozsgay. "I agree with Crozier, who says this is nothing but fear of conflicts." Pozsgay opposes the attitude that will not even put questions on the agenda in which conflicts may arise, where there is no hope of a consensus from the outset. In fact, he says, this developed in the early period, when socialism was an initiative supported by a minority in underdeveloped, backward countries, where the image of unity had to be developed in an unsteadily accepted social order and that image was preserved as a fetish. Quoting Marx and Engels, Pozsgay pointed out that differing trends, divisions, hard and clarifying debates have to emerge within socialism too. "The organization of society is unimaginable without creating the opportunities for autonomous organization. If everything can only happen dogmatically and on the basis of predestination, then society itself will become chaotic."

Bureaucracy often emerges as an obstructive, negative factor opposing the democratic organization of society. "The superiority and superciliousness of bureaucracy is invariably caused," says Pozsgay, "by the circumstance that the bureaucrats regard themselves as representing expertise, feel a deep contempt in respect of all kinds of non-professional bodies and non-professional initiatives, while in fact the only reason they can have that feeling is that they themselves have created conditions whereby they could belittle the associations;

unfortunately their system of decision applies for political sanctioning and agreement mostly in respect of issues that have already been bureaucratically decided."

Pozsgay points out that the institutions of democracy have always been non-professional institutions. But when interests are suitably asserted through their functioning, then particular interests demand the assertion of professionalism, and the institutions engage suitable professionals. In this relation he stressed the importance of parliament: "Parliament is the representative institution of people of the most diverse occupations and education, expresses the sovereignty of the people and mirrors the composition of society. From this aspect the parliament, as a non-professional democratic body, is equal to the task and when the government and the various bodies are controlled by it, then its dignity also stands high in the eyes of society."

Crisis in values, social integration

What has caused the crisis of values evident today in Hungarian society? According to Imre Pozsgay, it is that the planned objectives are not being realised. While industrialization, the transformation of the agriculture, the development of the fundamental social structures were taking place, it became clear that eventually the high degree of social mobility would splinter society, but no new integration has replaced the former one.

The new relations between social classes

and strata which can fill a role in the building of the community did not develop, or at least failed to reach adequate levels. Mobility sloved... and that produced a feeling in people of being restricted, being bottled up. The principle of performance, the drive for better performance gave rise to a demand for differentiation; controlling this demand slipped from our hands and produced pecuniary differentiation in our society, that is—particularly under the effect of inflation—the enrichment of a few and the impoverishment of many. The poverty generated on our own soil was outside of our view of values."

The processes outlined in the above, which are in close causal connection with the sudden halt in the performance of the economy, the backwardness in technological and scientific development, inevitably render a reassessment of the whole of society necessary. In order to do so, the functions of Marxism in cognition and methodology must be restored, and the fact that Marxism is in a hegemonic but not in a monopoly situation must be taken into account. It is absolutely just that many choose to live according to views and ideological convictions that differ from that, pointed out Imre Pozsgay. Only tolerance and persuasion can be the sole suitable methods... Dialogue is needed and not only that between Marxists and believers. A community will have to be created in which Marxists and non-Marxists face those who do not accept this form of the communal integration.

ECONOMIC LIFE

TAMÁS BÁCSKAI

THE REORGANIZATION OF THE BANKING SYSTEM

The Hungarian banking system developed from the first third of the nineteenth century along the usual continental path whereby banking led to predominantly general banks—department stores of finance as it were. The system, consisting of a large number of small banks of which a sizeable proportion were at county and town levels, was controlled by a handful of large banks closely linked with large foreign banks.

This situation brought into being a sizeable number of well-trained and multiply-skilled banking personnel since especially in the provincial banks with relatively small staffs, bank employees had to be jacks of all trades mastering all banking and stock exchange operations. Thus the new regime was able to draw its cadres to a considerable extent from professionally well-trained, politically loyal or neutral banking officials. Even after 1949, when the controlling posts were filled with cadres from the labour movement, the lion's share of the former banking staff remained in lower ranks, as deputies to the new upper-level managerial staff or in influential advisory posts. Thus, the correctness and the professionalism of banking operations, accounting, calculation, compilation of balance sheets, correspondence, both domestic and foreign, was maintained at high standards. Nevertheless, by having sacked the former top-level, decision-making managers, there

was and is a scarcity of bankers, i.e. experts in allocations capable of optimising the safety and profitability of allocations in a portfolio. This lack did not become obvious until the present decentralisation as—even after the reform of the economic control of the economy in 1968 there remained a number of legal and informal limitations—the autonomy of the banks in allocation was severely curtailed. There is justified hope that this gap will be filled; from 1951 on, university training in banking has been available and a large number of banking posts which hitherto had not required higher educational qualifications are now held by university graduates. Even in the 1950's Western banking was taught on university courses, albeit with an emphasis on ideological criticism; since the 1968 reform of the economic control and management system, courses have been consecrated to Western banking. Other factors facilitating the emergence of bankers are the country's strong involvement in foreign trade, the handling of World Bank loans, the setting up and running of joint ventures with foreign equity; all these have made hundreds of Hungarian banking staff familiar with the procedures of foreign banking.

Hungary established her own Central Bank rather late, in 1924. Nevertheless, this bank, the National Bank of Hungary, had as its predecessor the Budapest Main Office of

the old Austro-Hungarian Bank, the Central Bank of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The new Central Bank operated between 1924-31 under the influence of the Bank of England and the personal influence of Montague Norman (later Lord Cobbold); it excelled especially in keeping the money supply tightly tied to changes in the gold-base through its rediscounting operations. From mid-August 1931, with the suspension of convertibility, the National Bank of Hungary assumed the function of managing and rationing foreign currency for imports and ran scores of bilateral clearing accounts. With the advent of the 1938 armament programme, indirect financing of the budget and direct controls over commercial banks came to the fore and, thereby, a bureaucratisation of operations.

At the same time, the National Bank of Hungary, with its branches in every county and major towns and with a trained personnel, by offering bank accounts, carrying out payments and clearing operations and the rest of the range, naturally presented itself as the skeleton of the future banking system.

*The banking system
in directive planning*

The new government which took power in Hungary made industrialization based on full employment and the establishment of collective farming the principal aim of its economic policy, and government (or state) management the means. There were several factors to facilitate the latter. Among these were a disillusionment with market mechanisms and their consequences; on the other hand there existed an apparatus, a range of instruments, cadres, legal stipulations and a vast experience inherited from the war economy of 1938-45 and, in the field of foreign currency management, from 1931 on. Equally there were the huge post-war shortages which could only be dealt with by rationing and not by market-conform methods,

the relative underdevelopment requiring enormous efforts in redistributing funds from consumption to capital formation in general and from agriculture to industry in particular.

The nationalisation laws of 1948 and 1949 and the subsequent collectivisation of farms concentrated in the hands of government practically the whole of industry and the bulk of the land was cultivated by collective or state-owned farms. All these were guided by a central plan.

The idea of a national plan was not new in Hungary. In March 1938, the Darányi government launched a "thousand-million-pengő plan" which—from budgetary means and bond issues—envisaged the annual expenditure of 200 million pengős (8 million at the then prevailing exchange rate) for five years as investment subsidies to heavy industry, transport and agricultural improvement. It was due to capital formation under this armament plan that the numbers of factory workers rose from 289,000 in 1938 to 392,000 in 1943: an effective means expanding employment. Hungary launched in 1941 a ten-year investment plan for agriculture which was disrupted by the war. Thus, there were civil servants experienced in planning and implementation. Returning Marxist exiles from the Soviet Union and the West brought with them theoretical and some practical planning and implementation experience.

The post-war plans were novel because they were intended to guide productive and distributive activity as an integrated entity and thereby deeply influence consumption. Another novelty was the detailed planning of production and its distribution in physical units, with some aggregations of some units in money terms. The techniques for the preparation of plans was based on material balances, with a process of bargaining whereby ministers for the industries concerned or other political authorities negotiated for supplies.

Statistics and public administration re-

flected the delineation of plan targets in physical terms. Industrial enterprises were grouped by their products and subordinated to intermediate-level central administrations, which were components of an industrial ministry.

In this hierarchical system, where decision-making was concentrated very close to the top of the pyramid, where targets were formulated in kind and industrial enterprises were directed through administrative commands and where lateral contacts among enterprises could only be made at the top managerial level, as well as where the means of production were being rationed in kind, (the enterprise was allowed a quota of specified current inputs and capital equipment and could recruit manpower only within a specified wage-bill), where there were no choices available to enterprises in technologies or markets or whatever the banks had no say in allocations, there was no active role for credit and money.

There was, alas, a passive role, that of reflecting or mirroring through a financial control carried out by banks, or one bank, plan fulfilment under the above constraints.

The banking system was reorganized and cultivated so as to fulfil the aforementioned expectations. Banks were nationalised in 1947—nationalisation being restricted to Hungarian-owned shares—and reorganised so as to meet the new requirements.

If the execution of every planned movement of goods and services had to be "controlled by the forint", they had to be checked by a corresponding bank entry. In order to facilitate double checking, accounts had to be held in a single bank. Indeed, the National Bank of Hungary became the mandatory centre of the accounts for the publicly owned enterprises, including the cooperative sector. The National Bank, in its capacity as a central bank, first managed all government and municipal accounts and only later those of central government agencies. In order to ensure an adequacy movement of goods and of payments, the maximum time elapse between the

two was limited to one month. This was also a means of preventing and indeed outlasting any inter-enterprise credit relationships and establishing the sole source of bank credits later for certain purposes or for particular credits customers of one or other single authorized bank.

Control meant not only the assessing of the flow of goods and services but also whether the companies remained within the tight limits of their working capital, wage-bill, labour-force and inventories. Hence, the bank financed current production, audited and re-audited the companies' balances, carried out on the spot controls of inventories, compared planned and actual wage-bills, sanctioned over-runs of the latter where they were not substantiated by the appropriate increase in productivity. In scrutinising credit applications, an inquiry into the solvency and the creditworthiness of the enterprise was not important, as the political guideline of "the absence of money cannot hinder planned economic activity" exempted the banks from these obligations. They had to find out whether the activity to be backed by loans were planned or not, whether it had material collateral (inventory, building, plant) and whether the companies own funds and constant passives (wages accounted but not yet paid, debts to suppliers) were not sufficient for the financing of the planned action.

Division of labour within one bank or among banks was based upon specialization for a score of reasons. The administrative reason for this was that a bank or a directorate or department of the bank had to have a valid counterpart in the hierarchically constructed agencies of control (branch ministries or departments of the latter, county and district councils and so on). The deeper reason was that the supervision of the implementation of company plans formulated in kind required specialization by the bank inspectors in the particulars of their area such as seasonalities within certain branches and made no demands for a comparative assessment with a view to opportunity cost and the building up

of a portfolio. Last but not least there was a specialisation which had not existed for the old universal banks in Hungary—separating current, working capital financing and the collecting of deposits from investment financing. Since for a long period investment outlays were non-reimbursable and bore no interest, there banking expertise (except in accounting) was not required, but an inspectorate composed chiefly of technical experts was.

All the banks were large hierarchically organized entities paying little regard to small ventures. The lack of choices in allocation, the absence of a material interest in the outcome of their operations gave rise to bureaucratic features.

Finally, but by no means the least, the National Bank of Hungary has also remained a bank of issue. As an amalgamate of a bank of issue, a commercial bank, an investment bank for agriculture, the foreign trade bank of the country (the Hungarian Foreign Trade Bank fulfilling only auxiliary lines of business), the central bank and a foreign currency management agency, it grew into a mammoth institution with wide monopolistic competencies and features of an authority, manageable only through detailed instructions. This made its decisions on loan applications similar to decisions of public administration with few traces of business-like behaviour. The different functions could only be carried on at each other's expense within the Bank, without open conflicts and compromises of interests, without public control. Thereby it ceased to function as a real bank of issue, financing planned targets without a meaningful impact on the deviation of their costs from the those planned. The bank operated till the mid-eighties without any target figure on money supply, without regard to the size of its deposits and their maturity composition. Until the early sixties it tried to control only the notes and coins in circulation, without controlling its roots, the other monetary aggregates. Commercial banks in its bosom did not have to face liquidity con-

straints, nor to take into account risks, hedging against risks (except for term operations in the international money market), nor had they to build up a portfolio. The narrow specialisation according to branches and sub-branches of the national economy limited the horizon of the collaborators to one company or a group of companies and led to an unsound identification of the banking employee with the sector financed by him or her.

Banking services for the population at large were restricted to the National Savings Bank, with insignificant competition from isolated, mostly rural savings cooperatives; this bank until the late fifties had no significant active services for its depositors.

*The reforms process
and its impact on banking*

Enterprise-level economic decision-making were expanded between 1963 and 1965 by a constant reduction in the obligatory target figures, the elimination of medium-level administrative agencies in industry and by granting some major industrial enterprises the right to autonomously handle their own exports and—in very few cases—their imports too.

The cooperative movement—both in agriculture, in industry and services—acquired a number of efficiency-raising new features.

When, in the mid-sixties, the reserves of extensive development, mainly labour, had been exhausted and a switch to an intensive economic development became necessary a creative and—as we only later realised—an entrepreneurial attitude from those involved in the economy at every level and especially at managerial levels was required.

Hence, in 1968 a c o m p r e h e n s i v e r e f o r m of the economic control and management system was carried out and this included industry as well.

The reformers reinterpreted the concept of central planning and control in the context of an open and sophisticated economy of the

late sixties and came to the conclusion that national economic plans had to concentrate on the major trends of economic development and have to be open to changes based on differences between the assumed and actual conditions of the external and domestic environment during the—usually five year—planning period. At the same time, plans had to leave choices open to enterprises.

Unfortunately, institutional changes were extremely slow to follow the reform, especially in banking, no choices were left for enterprises. Specifically, the absence of a reform in banking lay first and foremost in the tight constraints imposed upon economic rationality by the retaining of unchanged employment and supply conditions which in itself excluded the application of a monetary policy and a commercially realistic allocation of loans, for both working and fixed capital formation.

Manipulated prices and, hence costs are not the best guides for allocation decisions based on commercial considerations. The maintenance of unsuccessful enterprises and their employment effect restricted the ability to reject credit applications, affecting thereby both allocation and the money supply. Foreign trade quotes limited choices both between input of different origins and output with different destinations. Apart from these causes, which derived from the regulatory environment of banking activities, there were other sorts of counter-considerations as well. Those who did not favour or only reluctantly supported the reform process, considered the untouched centralized monobank system a safeguard for predominantly centralized investment decisions through centrally managed long-term investment loans. The National Bank of Hungary did not easily surrender its monopolistic powers and argued that "more banks only cost more but do not increase capital formation", that a "multibank system does not lead to competition when credit is scarce" that a "multibank-system with money creation by commercial banks is more inflation-sensitive than a monobank with ex-

clusive rights of money creation," that the "compartmentalizing of banking will be an obstacle to the full, comprehensive view of the economy by a monobank."

In an article M. Tardos wrote the following—correct—statement: * "After 1968, the National Bank of Hungary . . . has received an increased role in financial management, alongside the National Planning Office, the National Office for Materials and Prices, and the Ministry of Finance. This role has remained, however, much more that of a central institution of control and management than that of a commercial bank. It is characteristic of this situation that it cannot deny loans for development projects supported by Government authorities and cannot stop granting working capital credit to enterprises whose solvency it no longer believes in . . . The Bank issues a quantity of money corresponding to the planned rate of inflation and reconciles it, not with a safe return of the money placed, but with the financing of economic actions judged to be useful from the national economic aspect . . . It does not raise the rate of interest to insure against a demand for credit jeopardizing the stability of the currency but applies credit quotas." Nevertheless, meaningful changes have occurred within the banks:

- non-reimbursable investment grants were replaced by loans;
- banks were required to filter credit applications by both passing a judgement on the project and on the credit-worthiness (even for the future lifetime of the loan-backed project) of the applicant;
- the same had to be done—though temporarily, without an immediate effect—for loans on working capital;
- the payment of interest on medium term deposits of the companies;

* "Question Marks in Hungarian Fiscal and Monetary Policy." *Acta Oeconomica*, Vol. 35 (1-2), pp. 29-52 (1985)

-- the introduction of more market conforming—though not equilibrium-interest rates (based on the costs of the resources of the bank).

Similarly, significant changes occurred in legalising inter-enterprise credit and equity relations, and a small but rapidly growing bond market.

These measures made the work of the banks more commercial-minded and offered somewhat more choice to enterprises for sources of finance.

Debates on banking reform

While the economic reform was being drafted the question of banking reform was the object of heated discussion and this is reflected in the economic literature from the late sixties on. It was pointed out that in a socialist country either a single- or a double-level banking system may exist. A single-level banking system exists if the central bank is not solely a bank of banks, a lender of the last resort, but maintains direct credit ties with the economic units, handles their accounts and fulfils their payment orders. A double-level system is one where the central bank operates in the traditional way, indirectly influencing, through commercial and other banks, the behaviour of the enterprise. The monobank system was not embodied in a single bank in Hungary. In the typical single-level banking systems one usually finds, in addition to the central bank, granting of working capital loans and different degrees, investment loans and the management and/or operation of foreign currency transactions, one or more investment) development banks with or without short-term lending operations to the building industry which is deeply involved in investment activities, a foreign trade bank sharing to different extents external operations with the central bank and one or more savings banks. Yet each of these banks is in a monopolistic situation as regards either

a certain group of customers or certain types of operations.

In the discussions of the future banking system, four types of banking systems were put forward. Professor Sándor Ligeti summarises and analyses the four types. "In principle, the interrelationship of commercial banks in a twin or double-level banking system may be set up in the following ways: 1. There exists only a single commercial bank beside the central bank. 2. Commercial banks are specialised according to branches and sub-branches of the national economy. 3. Commercial banks cover certain geographic regions. 4. There is no division of labour among commercial banks, customers may utilise the services of any commercial bank: there is competition among the banks;"* in the same issue of *Külgazdaság* research fellow of the Institute for Financial Research, Lajos Bokros features this latter type: "... in order to arrive at all to a situation of competition it is necessary to have at least an overlapping of the spheres of customers and types of transactions of the credit banks."**

Solution No. 1 is only of a technical, perhaps I may venture to say, a technocratic solution. Technocratic, in the sense that there would not be a control through competition over the single commercial bank. According to Ligeti, it would artificially create a monetary policy impact between the central and the sole commercial bank and a technical buffer-bank facilitating the rejection of "exaggerated" credit demand at an "outpost" of the central bank.

Solutions 2 and 3 are purely the continuations of monopolistic positions in new forms. An additional counter-argument is also mentioned by Prof. Ligeti: "These banks may easily become the representatives of particular interests." I think this is true as branch

* "The Reorganisation of the Banking System." *Külgazdaság*, No. 12, 1986

** Conditions for the Emergence of Business-like Behaviour in the Double-Level Banking System.

ministries in the past and counties in the present too, are enviously representing the interests of economic units under their supervision to each other's detriment.

My view was that there should be banks founded by interested state-owned and co-operative enterprises, or, in the form of savings banks by the savers in the form of co-operatives, if those have the necessary capital and are able to "buy" banking expertise. In this case, one cannot exclude the possibility of banks on a branch, sub-branch or a territorial base, but in competition with the banks with mixed clientèle and transactions created "from above" in the reorganisation process.

From the point of view of monetary policy, banks based on a branch or a territorial base should require individual monetary regulations because of the differences in their deposit-collecting and placing possibilities, which would be an obstacle to a general, normative policy.

A radical change can come about only by having recourse to No. 4 of the mentioned types, a system of competing commercial banks with overlapping competencies existing in market economics and in Yugoslavia. In the discussions, ample attention was given to the conditions under which it makes sense to reorganise the banking system. (The minor changes in 1970 did not alter the essentials they only regrouped certain activities between banks.) It was agreed that a further development of the reform and of the institutional framework is required for a meaningful banking reform.

I have mentioned already the compromises blunting the edge of the reform and the delay in implementing institutional changes. In practice, however, more than these factors put a brake on the application of the reform. "Initially the consistent practical enforcement of the principles of the economic reform was greatly hindered by the fact that central control could not always meet its functions efficiently enough, and some enterprises failed to meet new and higher requirements."*

Later the consistent enforcement of the principles of economic reform was hindered by unfavourable changes in the world economy, namely the re-adjustment of relative prices, the world recession, the recession of the capitalist economies, their growing protectionism. I should add, too, the slowing of growth in the socialist economies and the unwillingness to change economic policy in our country by a restructuring of the output in view of the new cost- and demand-structure in the world and our investment structure in view of the latter and in view of the newly emerging competition from the so called "threshold-countries" in the commodities and markets of Hungary. All this entailed a growing state subsidy to outdated branches and enterprises, and to a growing supremacy of fiscal policy to the detriment of monetary policy and sound credit allocations. Instead of taking into account these factors of the shortcomings of central economic policy, the booklet puts the blame of enterprise management, writing: "Inadequacies of management came more and more to the surface."

There was a wide gap "between the reform rhetoric of the government and the actions and process which took place."**

A resolution of the Central Committee of the HSWP correctly determined that "Enterprises, plants which are not profitable, the activities of which are not in harmony with the interests of the national economy and which—among the given investment possibilities—cannot be profitable by means of rationalisation might not be maintained, their losses might not be covered by state subsidies. In such case the state organs, helped by party and social organisa-

* Quoted from: "Further Development of the Economic Control and Management System" (No. 17), 1984, of the series Public Finance in Hungary, published by the Ministry of Finance, pp. 14-16

** Central Economic Management and the Enterprise Crisis by M. Laki, *Acta Oeconomica*, Vol. 35 (1-2), pp. 195-211 (1985)

tions—as a final solution—have to be determined and use their means for partial or total liquidation.”*

It is a striking feature of the period how these central intentions were frustrated by ill-interpreted social considerations and delayed the adjustment process which should have taken place in a differentiated utilisation of capacities, capital and labour flows. Instead, state subsidies were introduced described in the already cited booklet from the Ministry of Finance which “were not coupled with the raising of the standards against economic units and their managements is a satisfactory way.”

These subsidies affected economic organisations in a differentiated way; thus the *normativity* of the regulatory system suffered. Also the scope of authority of directive, administrative bodies, for example of branch ministries, increased at the expense of enterprise decisions—both unfavourable for businesslike decision-making by banks. A high degree of volatility of the regulatory system, especially of taxes, their range and their codes developed. As the previously mentioned booklet of Further Development of the Economic Central and Management System emphasises, the stability of the regulatory system “. . . is especially important, so that economic organizations should be in a position to adjust their business policies with the necessary foresight and be able to undertake obligations related to development or to the raising of personal incomes.” This development did not tally either with businesslike banking as, even in cases of the best loan-backed enterprise allocations, changes in taxation or in the exchange rate may have had a disproportionately larger impact on enterprise profits after taxation than any change in the market situation. (There was a constant revaluation of the Hungarian forint in the years 1968–1981.)

Only from the late 70s on were there substantial efforts made to modernise the

institutional system of economic control of the enterprises and to correct built-in brakes in the Economic Central and Management System. This was hindered by subsequent deterioration in the world economy in 1979 and 1982, giving rise again to direct interference by government agencies into short-term economic processes—phenomena not aligned with a change in the content and forms of the banking system.

Yet, with all the relapsing, there was and is a process of the development of the Economic Control and Management System. In the field of producer prices, the old autarchic price formation was replaced to a great extent by producer pricing of industrial goods trade in international markets and which are adjusted to export or import prices. At the same time the range of prices determined administratively was narrowed. This was a major achievement of 1980, completed with the introduction of a uniform exchange rate for convertible currencies on October 1st, 1981. Though the tax burden of enterprises has increased, the autonomy of enterprises in the utilization of after-tax profits has grown. In the financing of investments, the share of non-repayable state grants has decreased considerably. These affect now only investment projects in infrastructure and a small number of particularly large investment projects. Channels for inter-enterprise capital flows as well as population-enterprise flows were opened.

The changes in the institutional and organizational system were of equal importance. In the late 70s, artificially amalgamated large enterprises with monopolistic positions were split up, corporations called trusts were not trusted anymore but eradicated and the enterprises they had controlled released to autonomy. In order to promote a more flexible adjustment to market requirements, more than 200 producing and domestic trading enterprises were given autonomous foreign trading—especially export—rights so that they no longer have to have a specialized foreign trading company. The specialization

* Resolution passed on 6 December 1978

and thereby monopolistic situation of these latter companies have been abandoned.

New legal stipulations permitted the formation of various forms of small-scale ventures in order to encourage individual initiatives and to adjust ownership forms to the scale of the activities.

A highly important step was the amalgamation of three former branch ministries into a single Ministry of Industry dealing with industrial policy and not with the exercise of ownership rights. This has developed into a new division of powers between the authorities and enterprise managements concerning ownership rights and the exercise of the rights of the employee. Two new forms of management have emanated: enterprise council management by an elected management.

In the banking field, three joint ventures with foreign equity emerged, an off-shore bank (CIB) a bank functioning under Hungarian regulations in the domestic currency sphere (Citibank) and Unic-bank, in which IFC has a stake as well as an Austrian and a West-German cooperative bank for financing small and medium-size enterprises. A score of so called developmental financial institutions have been founded, financing primarily innovative investment projects with a quick return both by taking a stake in the capital and by granting credits.

Generally and from the point of view of banking decentralization, the most important event was Law No. 11 of 1986 on the bankruptcy (euphemistically called "winding up") of enterprises. It also regulates the economic rehabilitation procedure and the creation of an Economic Rehabilitation Fund. These developments created the necessary conditions for the reorganisation of the banking system.

The banking system after the 1st of January 1987

The National Bank has been transformed into a classic bank of issue (a bank of banks

and the lender of last resort) and a central bank (the bank of the government) retaining temporarily the bulk of actual management and the regulation of foreign currency operations. There are five commercial banks fully authorised for all operations (accounts, deposit, credit, etc.), except—temporarily foreign currency operation for three of the latter and for services to the population, which had been the domain of the National Savings Bank and the 260 savings cooperatives with more than one thousand branches, and—perhaps later that of an Giro Bank—under consideration. There is a strong pressure on behalf of the commercial banks to eradicate the above restrictions in their field of activity. Initially the five banks "bring" their original clientèle. In mid-1987, clients may switch to another bank with their account and/or may make use of the services of more than one commercial bank. The banks may also select their customers and reject credit applications; they are only obliged to open an account for the client.

There is a major problem with the initial clientèle. As pointed out in the article by Mr Bokros, "The five commercial banks bear sectoral features with their initial clientèle. The Hungarian Credit Bank (*Magyar Hitelbank*) has initially a heavy-machine—and building industry bias, the National Commercial and Credit Bank (*Országos Kereskedelmi és Hitelbank*) an agricultural, food industry, light industrial and domestic trade one, the Budapest Development and Credit Bank (*Budapesti Fejlesztési és Hitelbank*) a broadly defined infrastructural one, the Foreign Trade Bank of Hungary (*Magyar Külkereskedelmi Bank*) carries—true to its name—a clientèle with a marked foreign trading feature. (The General Bank for Securities—*Általános Értékforgalmi Bank* did not have an initial clientèle)."

Though this statement is relevant only to the headquarters of the mentioned banks and not, or not to a significant degree, to their branches in the counties, nevertheless there is more than a grain of truth in Mr

Bokros's anxiety. The largest companies are, namely, financed at the present by the headquarters. There is the danger of habits—habitual clients do not move. And the habitually industrial, agricultural, etc., credit inspector will, perhaps, remain without a broader horizon and opportunity cost knowledge with their "habitués". In any case the initial "mix" does not foster competition. On the other hand, I write this reluctantly, as there was a king who advertised for a one-arm economist to avoid "on the one hand—and on the other hand" types of ambiguous formulations, enormous administrative difficulties would have arisen by distributing clients among banks not yet existing. The initial mix may not prove counterproductive if there are no such differences in size, the network of branches, the composition of resources which give insuperable or so seeming advantages to some over the other. Two banks—the Hungarian Credit Bank and the National Commercial and Credit Bank—have comparable balances, but the other three are lower by one or two orders of magnitude, the latter may take up major ventures only through syndicated loans. The biggest balances go hand in hand with a large number of branches, though unevenly. The second biggest bank assessed by balances has twice as many branches than the first one, the third one significantly less (46-23-18) and the two others have none at all. This administratively determined mix brings major differences among banks in the deposit-coverage and the degree of Central Bank refinancing with its consequences as to cost and favouritism.

There will be certain problems with the regulatory role, with the constraints put by the National Bank of Hungary on money creation by commercial banks. Because of the very big differences between credit/deposit ratio a high and differentiated cash reserve ratio may be necessary—contrary to inter-

national experience. A major task will be the determination of the upper limit of refinancing which probably will be determined as a multiplier of the banks' own capital eternalizing initial differences. Too large a burden will lay on these instruments and on the rediscounting policy in the absence of open-market operations due to a virtual absence of gilt-edged instruments government bonds. There are both company and local bonds in circulation which are unsuitable for the task of monetary policy.

Last but not least, there is the standing of the Central Bank versus the Government. In a planned economy, the validation of monetary aspects in the planning process is of utmost importance. There were proposals to raise the standing of the President to the level of cabinet member (a Central Committee membership would be desirable, too) or to subordinate the Central Bank directly to the Parliament to have in the Bank a valid counterpart of—in the first case—ministers and in the second of the Government.

The small financial institutions mainly compete with each other through their expertise in different fields (innovations, patent and licence protection procedures, etc.) as well as their readiness in risk-taking through participation in capital. Nowadays they have entered major ventures through syndication. The new regulation does not exclude their later arriving at the status of banks.

Besides competition, there is a tendency towards establishing joint services for all the banks and financial institutions by joining forces as well as towards setting organ representing their interests. We find also a joint effort to organise the training in a manner which produces bankers and not meek banking clerks. In the last instance, the success of the banking reform depends on this goal being attained.

PIERRE L. SIKLÓS

HYPERINFLATION AND STABILISATION, 1945-1946

The acceleration of inflation into hyperinflation and its eventual stabilization continues to interest economists for several reasons. For example, it is of considerable theoretical and empirical interest to know how close the link is between changes in the money supply and variations in the price level. Thus, authors such as Thomas Sargent and others have cited evidence to support the notion that parallel movements of the money supply and the price level need not take place (Sargent 1986). Such a conclusion is at variance with the Quantity Theory argument espoused by Friedman and Schwartz (1982), for example, whereby a given change in the quantity of money induces an equal change in prices. Hence, only moderation of money supply growth, to levels consistent with the growth of output, will stabilise inflation and the process of adjustment may be costly in terms of unemployment or output loss and operate with a significant lag.

The attack on the Quantity Theory stems from the idea that it is important to consider how money is introduced into an economy rather than examine the quantity in circulation alone.

During most hyperinflations deficits in the government's budget appear which are largely financed by the issue of new money. If there is no reason to expect the government to finance current as well as future deficits other than by resorting to the printing press such shortfalls in revenue will be inflationary.

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If, however, a current deficit is seen as temporary and financed by future government budget surpluses, then a deficit need not be inflationary. Such is the view of adherents of the real bills doctrine according to which the money supply should change to accommodate the needs of trade. Expectations play a vital role since it is the expectation of future surpluses which prevents a current deficit from contributing to inflation. If it is assumed that individuals act rationally, that is they utilise all the available economic information at their disposal, only a credible reform of government finances will stabilise inflation and the reforms need not be especially costly for the economy (Sargent 1986).

Unfortunately, problems in obtaining data and difficulties in determining whether the ends of past big inflations were rapid or not, as well as problems of measurement of subsequent macroeconomic costs have led to contradictory interpretations of the evidence.

Although all the issues described above have important implications for macroeconomic analysis, and thus attract considerable interest, the present paper will seek to deal only with the question of the credibility of the reforms attempted between December 1945 and August 1946. Early so-called attempts at inflation control are explored in the following section while a later examines the successful preparations for the reforms that came into effect in August 1946. The paper concludes with a few additional comments.

The development and acceleration of inflation

Some of the features of the Hungarian hyperinflation of 1945-1946 are well known

and need not be repeated here. Only those aspects that have not been given sufficient emphasis previously, or where new evidence can be brought to bear on relevant questions, are reported below.

Although most writers tend to emphasize the extensive overall damage caused by the war (40.2 p.c. of 1944 National Wealth; see Pető and Szakács 1985, p. 18), it is the relatively more substantial destruction of transportation (59 p.c. of 1944) and other industries (between 54.2 and 69 p.c. of 1944) which is noteworthy. Coupled with reparation payments of U.S. \$300 million at 1938 exchange rates, and the almost total absence of a tax base upon which the government could collect revenues, the financial situation of the newly formed Hungarian government was desperate. It is therefore not surprising that, once the printing presses were in operation, the government essentially resorted to the issue of money to carry out spending. It also seems clear, from a reading of newspapers shortly after the liberation in April 1945, that it was widely understood that the government had to embark on an inflationary policy.

Other significant events also contributed to such bleak expectations. Foreign loans could not be expected in part because Hungary still had to negotiate a formal peace with its former enemies and settle on new borders. Moreover, the country's entire gold reserves were in the hands of the Americans

who captured them from the Hungarian fascists attempting to find refuge in Germany. Finally, as the war effectively ended in April, and because of the widespread destruction of agricultural production, there was the prospect of a poor harvest.

With this background, let us examine some reforms attempted in 1945 and 1946 which were not, in my view, credible and thus failed to slow the inflationary process.

The tax on the pengő

The measure of December 18, 1945 to tax bank notes in circulation was introduced with the objective of providing additional revenues to the government without resorting to direct taxation. The effect of the tax was to reduce currency in circulation by forcing individuals to purchase a new 1000 pengő note at a cost of 3000 pengő. The tax did not apply to notes with denominations of 500 pengő or less and was only applied to notes in circulation outside banks. Yet, as shown in the table below, the purchasing power of money (real balances) continued to fall and currency in circulation continued to increase though at a slower pace than before. Finally, it was well known that the tax enabled financing of government expenditures for 11 to 13 days only and that indexation of the pengő was widely advertised as forthcoming on January 1, 1946. It is thus doubtful that

Real Balances*

Date	
Nov. 30, 1945	23.0
Dec. 23, 1945	18.6
Jan. 23, 1946	18.9

Currency in Circulation
(millions of pengő)

Date	
Dec. 7, 1945	450,608.3
Dec. 15, 1945	563,166.1
Dec. 23, 1945	737,027.3
Dec. 31, 1945	765,446.3
Jan. 7, 1946	777,996.7

* Money supply divided by the price level (consumer prices; January 1938=1). Sources: See Barsy (1946) and *Magyar Nemzeti Bank Havi Közleményei* [Communications of the Hungarian National Bank], July-Sept. 1946.

the tax policy had any credibility whatsoever as a method of permanent inflation control.

The tax pengő and 'calory' money

On January 1st, 1946 a system of indexation, known as the tax pengő, was introduced. The primary objective was the protection against erosion of government revenues from inflation since, during the delay between assessment, collection, and then disbursement, inflation had lowered the purchasing power of tax revenues. The procedure involved tying the value of the pengő currency to an index of consumer prices based essentially on prices prevailing in Budapest. The index was to be announced daily, based on the previous morning's prices (Varga 1964; initially there was a two-day delay until March 1946). At first only a portion of deposits were indexed but soon the nominal value of all bank deposits was tied to price fluctuations. As expected, an immediate outcome of this policy was the increase in deposits as a proportion of the money supply since currency in circulation was not protected from devaluation from inflation (Bomberger and Makinen, 1983).

Additional objectives of the policy were to curb both private spending and ensure that greater funds would be available for government borrowing from private banks. Instead, the policy was unsuccessful for at least two reasons. First, since taxes were to be paid in regular pengő, based on the index prevailing on the day of tax assessment, the delay between assessment and collection of taxes was sufficient to reduce the purchasing power of the pengő notes the government eventually obtained. Moreover, the costs of reconstruction, as well as the continuing demands on the budget from war reparation payments, meant that no effective control of the deficit was possible in early 1946. This can be seen from the Table below which shows total revenues as a per cent of total

Government Revenues as a per cent of Expenditures

October 1945	5.7
November	6.6
December	7.1
January 1946	14.6
February	15.0
March	14

* Source: Ausch (1958, pp. 93, 96).

expenditures for the period October 1945 to March 1946.

As the financial demands for reconstruction mounted, and as the budgetary benefits of the tax pengő disappeared, a conscious decision was made to erode the extent to which the announced tax pengő price index protected individuals against inflation. A secret decision was made in April of 1946 not to fully adjust the daily price index to actual changes in the prices of the commodities sampled (Berend 1962). The impact must have been clearly understood for, by the end of April, tax revenues represented only 8.6 per cent of expenditures.

Credibility in the value of the tax pengő was affected by other factors as well. It was widely known that, for example, the government was beginning to purchase and store commodities as part of its preparation for the resulted in the unusual situation whereby official prices on occasion were rising faster than black market prices (Huszti 1986). Since the political parties at the time could still not agree on the introduction of a comprehensive tax system, it was clear that the deficit could only be expected to grow further. Hence, as shown in the table below, the introduction of the tax pengő temporarily moderated inflation but not the growth of currency in circulation.

Soon after the introduction of the tax pengő, the little-known episode of "calory" money was introduced in February 1946. The reluctance or refusal of peasants to sell their products for regular pengő notes (or later even tax pengő notes), coupled with the

Average daily per cent change in:

Date	Currency in Circulation	Consumer Prices
December 1945	2.57	6
January 1946	2.45	2
February	4.30	18
March	6.31	11
April	9.01	60
May	17.53	1012
June	48.74	4504
July	23,330.10	75,655

Sources: Author's calculations and Pető and Szakács (1985, p. 61). Consumer prices excluding rent.

continuing shortage of food, produced serious difficulties for large firms whose production was affected by, among other things, interruptions in production as workers attempted to purchase food as soon as they were paid. It was therefore decided that part of a worker's wages would be paid in kind with the firm responsible for purchasing and distributing food. Wages were thus partly based on a weekly allowance of 5000 to 16,000 calories per person depending on the type of work accomplished (Ausch 1958, p. 140). Its effects were largely beneficial if firms were able to purchase food and, as shown in the following table, real wages under the calory money system were much higher when payment was in kind than when regular pengő notes were used to purchase goods. However, given the volume of goods available, the calory allowance was too generous. As a result, individuals quickly became aware of the inability of firms to meet their wages in kind and thus "calory" money could not operate effectively. Moreover, only large firms of firms located near agricultural areas had the wherewithal to pay in calory money.

As I have attempted to demonstrate, none of the policies enacted between December 1945 and February 1946 appeared to have been credible. In the next section I briefly examine the preparations for stabilisation and the reasons for its credibility.

Real Wages

Date	in pengő (July 15, 1945 = 100)	in kind
February 1946	57	97
March	56.2	103
April	44	102
May	23	97
June	8	87

Source: Ausch (1958, p. 141)

Preparations for stabilisation

There were clear indications by March 1946 that the Supreme Economic Council² was planning the introduction of a new currency and other economic reforms for sometime in the late summer. Since, traditionally, many crops were harvested by August it was believed that stabilization should be introduced then or, at the earliest, in July. Although the transportation and industrial situations were quickly improving, feeding the population remained a serious problem particularly in Budapest. Thus, the pressures for reform mounted but the planners were determined to time the introduction of the new currency no earlier than late July.

As described in section 2, inflation was accelerating rapidly by March 1946 and would continue to do so at ever increasing rates. The regular pengő notes were becoming worthless and the printing presses would literally soon be unable to print new money quickly enough. Hence, by May 1946 tax pengő notes began circulating and by early June they became legal tender thereby completely replacing regular pengő notes. Prices in regular pengő became astronomical and so the pengő practically ceased to have any value as a medium of exchange (Varga 1964, p. 112).

During the same period planners were directing the stockpiling of goods in preparation for stabilization. Moreover, those responsible for preparing the introduction of

what would be called the forint had made a conscious decision to ruin the pengő completely through the printing of, at first, ever larger quantities of regular pengő notes and then of tax pengő notes. Such a policy would insure that, as of August 1st, the liabilities of the Central Bank in terms of the old currency would be minimal. At the same time the expected return of the gold reserves held by the Americans, the renegotiation of war reparation payments to provide for a longer payback period, as well as agreement on a system of individual and corporate taxation, contributed to the general belief that the government would at least have a chance at controlling the deficit. However, a lesser known fact was the decision to set an attractive value of gold and of US dollars in terms of the new currency to further bolster the Central Bank's reserves after stabilization. This policy contributed to establishing confidence in the forint as it was to be fully backed by gold and foreign currency reserves. In addition, credits to large firms, which were slowly being nationalised, were severely restricted. It was believed that owners would be able to continue operations by exchanging their hidden reserves of dollars and gold for new forints since the exchange rate would favour the holding of the new currency.

Also less well known were the difficulties in establishing the quantity of forints to be issued for stabilisation and thereafter. Planners had to estimate the economic progress made during 1945-1946 and decide to base prices and incomes for 1946-1947 on national income figures for the preceding peace-time year (1938). Estimates of the destruction to national wealth from the war also entered into the calculations. Estimates were to a large extent conservative as the desire was to issue less currency, at first, than necessary to satisfy the needs of trade (see, for example, Varga, J. 1946) as well as being due to considerable problems in obtaining useful economic data. Such a policy did not produce a serious recession. Moreover,

I have argued elsewhere (Siklós 1986) that so-called supply side effects (i.e. the economic impact of the reconstruction after the war, and recovery from livestock and crop damage, etc.) were no longer as important at the time of stabilization as others have claimed (Bomberger and Makinen 1983) for the Hungarian economy was rapidly recovering from the war.³

The combination of the above policies produced dramatic results and has been called by one author the Hungarian currency miracle (Varga, I. 1946). It should be pointed out, however, that the results were almost instantly credible both because the nation had been prepared for reforms since probably March or April and also because the eventual exchange rate between the dollar, gold, and the new forint made the latter a relatively more attractive currency to hold. Finally, there is little doubt (see Vas 1977, Aush 1958, Varga 1964) that strict controls over the budget and the expectation that current deficits would be financed by future surpluses convinced the population that stabilization would be successful.

To be sure, there were difficulties which could have lessened the chances of stabilization. First, rising post-war inflation abroad would be transmitted into Hungary through imports. Second, the Supreme Economic Council set industrial prices too high relative to agricultural prices. The reasoning was that, since reconstruction would be relatively more rapid in agriculture than in industry, a greater price incentive was necessary for the latter to re-develop quickly. Yet, Hungary remained an essentially agrarian society and peasants refused to accept the prices offered by the government. Together with the poorer than expected crop of 1946 black markets continued to flourish. Despite the above difficulties, the stabilization was successful primarily because a deliberate deflationary policy was instituted through restrictions on the money supply and severe budgetary controls enforced. As a result, money supply growth and inflation no longer

accelerated at hyperinflation levels in the last quarter of 1946. This is revealed in the table below.⁴

Date	Money Supply Growth	Inflation
September 1946	71.3	-4.5
October 1946	39.1	1.5
November	11.6	12.2
December	3.6	-3.3

Source: Siklós (1986 Tables 5 and 6). Figures represent monthly growth in notes and coins in circulation and consumer prices, including rent.

Conclusions

Some of the economic issues relevant to an analysis of hyperinflations were briefly described. The Hungarian hyperinflation and stabilization of 1945-1946 is of considerable interest as a test case of several important hypotheses in macro-economic theory and policy.

This paper focussed on the issue of the credibility of various policies instituted between December 1946 and August 1946. It was argued that only the reforms culminating with the introduction of the forint in August 1946 were credible whereas previous attempts, especially during the December 1945 to February 1946 period, were not credible and, hence, could not lead to stabilization. In some sense it was a "real bills" type doctrine which ended hyperinflation in Hungary.

NOTES

¹ Two additional points are noteworthy. First, pengő notes required a stamp to continue as legal tender. The reason was to prevent the reintroduction of notes, generally bearing large denominations, taken by the Hungarian fascists and which amounted to approximately 9.1 billion pengő.

² The political situation at the time was such that the government effectively had lost power over preparations for stabilization. Rather, a Supreme Economic Council was provided with almost dictatorial powers to plan and implement reforms and monitor the economy. See Vas (1977).

³ It was widely reported in late 1946 that, along with Belgium, Hungary was recovering the most rapidly among European nations after the war.

⁴ Account must be taken of the fact that the economy had to be remonetized and that official prices understate inflation because price controls were in effect as well as due to the existence of black markets.

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INTERVIEW

FERENC FEJTŐ: A STUBBORN PARTICIPANT

This interview, conducted in late 1984 in Paris for Hungarian Television and published in the 1986/8 issue of the Budapest journal *Kritika*, marks an important comeback after almost fifty years.

Ferenc Fejtő is most likely better known to the reader under the French version of his name, *François Fejtő*. The noted journalist, historian, foreign policy commentator, editor-in-chief of the AFP for many years and author of books on the history of the people's democracies, China and other subjects, some of which were available in English, has had an important place in French intellectual life for more than forty years.

Still youthful and active, Fejtő played a major role in Hungarian political and literary life about half a century earlier when he was in his twenties.

In 1932, he was the principal defendant in a political trial of university students, trainee teachers and others accused of organizing a communist group. (One of his fellow accused was a student of Hungarian and French literature and a class-mate, László Rajk.) The court sentenced Fejtő to one year in prison, most of which he actually served.

By then he was already drawing away from the Communist Party and, on his release, he joined the Social Democrats. In the next five years (1933-1938) he published at a prodigious rate and with pioneering spirit in the best socialist and left-wing journals of the time, in Hungary and neighbouring countries.

Alongside György Lukács, then in exile,

Fejtő was regarded as a Marxist critic of perhaps the broadest outlook, free of dogma, who kept a close eye on the latest international developments. His support for the poet Attila József will long be remembered. He remained József's enthusiastic reviewer and friend right up to the poet's death.

In 1935 they founded *Szép Szó* together, the journal which became one of the most important intellectual and anti-fascist centres in the Hungary of the pre-war years.

Attila József committed suicide at the end of 1937. Fejtő, as he recounts in this interview, was forced into exile in 1938, and measures taken to restrict the press introduced in the following year, as Hungary slid towards fascism, strangled *Szép Szó*. Fejtő soon found friends and helpers in Paris left-wing circles. He spent most of the years of the German occupation in the country. He joined Agence Havas, the predecessor of AFP, in 1944. He visited Hungary in 1946 and soon after became head of the Hungarian press office in Paris, working closely with Count Mihály Károlyi, the Hungarian minister in Paris. He broke with the Hungarian government and the Rákosi brand of leadership at the same time as Károlyi, in 1949, when the friend of his younger days, László Rajk, was dragged into court on trumped-up charges, condemned and executed.

Along with Károlyi, Fejtő clearly saw that the trial embodied a terrible and dangerous lie. This he immediately expressed in a lengthy article published in *Esprit*; in another pub-

lished about the same time, he analysed perhaps more perspicaciously than anybody else the reasons for, and the objective of, the ideological attack on György Lukács at that time.

Most of his later writings undoubtedly struck the East European regimes as unfriendly. Relations between him and his native country, or rather the government of the latter, were unambiguously and mutually unfriendly for long years. Recently, however, the situation has much changed even though he himself has not visited his native land. Several articles and even a book by Péter Agárdi have been published on Fejtő's early literary criticism; and the pre-war work of the young Ferenc Fejtő is again read in Hungary.

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We are in Paris, or rather in one of its suburbs, Neuilly-sur-Seine, in a pleasant roomy home filled with pictures and books. The master of the house is Ferenc Fejtő, of Hungarian birth, who turned 75 this year. I believe you have lived in this same home, in these same surroundings, for decades.

Yes, I have lived in this same town, and in this same home since November 1944, the time of the liberation, and I often tell my friends, sometimes jokingly, occasionally with some venom, that I think I am the only one of us who has not changed his home, wife, telephone number or ideology in forty years.

You have lived in France since 1938. But you spent the first thirty years of your life in Hungary. This is the period I think we should concentrate on. What is it that you feel is essential, you should say about your family and social background?

Well, I think a great deal can be said about that. To my French friends, however, the cosmopolitan nature of my family in various parts of the Austro-Hungarian Empire has always seemed the most interesting. I am Hungarian-born, but my grandfather was German-speaking from Prague, one of ten children, and a typographer. When the *Pester Lloyd* started up in Pest in 1854 after the suppression of the Hungarian Revolution, the paper—which in time became one of the most

respected in Europe—had to find their typographers in various parts of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. There were no Hungarians in the trade and anyhow they needed German speakers. That is when grandfather started work in the *Pester Lloyd* printing office and he stayed there for some years until he married the daughter of a Nagykanizsa printer and thus became the owner of a printing office himself. He added a book-shop, a stationery shop, book publishing and so on to the original business and eventually founded the first newspaper in the County of Zala, the *Zala*—I do not know whether it still exists. But this is only part of the story. The other interesting thing is that my grandfather turned into a Hungarian patriot in Pest.

A large part of my mother's family lived and still lives in Yugoslavia. My cousins took part in the Yugoslav resistance movement, and evidently that saved their lives. I would say that this part of my family completely adopted Croat ways. The international language, the Esperanto through which Croat, Hungarian, Austrian and Italian members of the family communicated, was German. I have no doubt that these multi-national relations made a deep impression on me as a child.

I would say that it is rather the positive aspects of the Austro-Hungarian Empire that I remember even though I am aware of the negative features. Still, it was a great international unit, in which no visas were needed for travel just as in Europe as a whole, where visas were not absolutely necessary except for Russia.

These roots in the Austro-Hungarian Empire must have left their mark on your way of thinking.

Chauvinism became a notional impossibility for me at the time I began to think. I was cosmopolitan, that is multi-national, by virtue of my family circumstances. If one spends one week at Arad, another in Zagreb, the next in Fiume and so on, then a way of thinking develops in one, which cannot be chauvinistic, for it recognizes that people are the same everywhere. However, it is not all that simple. It was in my own family that I

first experienced chauvinism on the part of Croat relatives.

The first time I encountered anti-semitism was in 1919. Until then I did not even know what it was. My father was a man of importance in the town, where he was generally liked, particularly by the ladies, for he was a ladies' man. But I had never heard that someone was Jewish or non-Jewish, that it was worse to be a Jew.

I should like to ask you about your intellectual development, your early reading. You were ten years old at the time of the revolutions, presumably that was when some sort of process began which made you a young man of the left ten years later.

Well, yes, in fact that was the time when the problems which disturbed and upset mutilated Hungary emerged, and which have not been really settled even to this day.

I must first mention my school. I was a student at the *gimnázium* of the Piarist fathers of Nagykanizsa, which took proper pride in the fact that Ferenc Deák had been one of its most eminent students. It was as the effect of the 1919 sermons of Bishop Prohászka and Father Bangha that anti-semitic feeling first emerged amongst the teachers, but that did not make it impossible for me to be the prize pupil from the first year onwards. I became friendly with teachers of intellectual interest steeped in literature. Unfortunately, one of my favourite teachers, a man called Lajos Nagy, was an admirer of Petőfi and terribly set against Endre Ady. This became a cause of serious conflict between us. I do not know how things are nowadays, but at that time one started one's reading with Petőfi. He was not only the poet but also the hero of freedom, his life was the model of a heroic life. I adored Petőfi and imitated him. But in the fourth form I discovered Endre Ady. Then came the other poets: Dezső Kosztolányi, Árpád Tóth, Gyula Juhász, Mihály Babits, and all of world literature. Perhaps I ought to be ashamed, but I even read Dezső Szabó¹ with pleasure. I met him later in Pécs and Budapest. In fact he awakened in me the problem of the awareness of Hungarian ident-

ity, following Ady. Who is Hungarian? Someone whose ancestors have been buried in Hungarian soil for a thousand years? Can someone of a different race, a Jew, a German, a Croat, profess himself Hungarian? What does one have to do to be accepted as a native son of equal standing? I burned with the desire to be worthily described as a Hungarian, to serve the "pure-blooded" Hungarian people of Dezső Szabó and later László Németh and his fellows² as the exploited victims of aliens ("us"). That was what I could call my nationalist period, when I wanted to deny all of my Jewish past and cosmopolitan disposition for the sake of assimilation.

A great variety of people came to Hungary, Germans and the rest. The last such immigration were the Jews, not only from the East, from Galicia, as was generally believed, but also from the West, as the example of my grandfather illustrates. To escape persecution, they migrated to a country known to be relatively tolerant and which was underpopulated. In their case the right word was therefore not invasion, but acceptance. In other words the quality of acceptance. I arrived at such a notion, I think, already when strongly influenced by Dezső Szabó, where I put myself at some distance from the idea of equal rights and was inclined to argue that those who live in the country by right of long settlement should be able to expect that those who chose assimilation should handle the country's business with a certain circumspection, that they should not try to talk in the name of the nation and should not aspire to leadership. I think I expressed this in my literary and political life and did so in both the Hungarian and the French parts of this life.

It was only later that I realized that this inferiority complex did not exist in the instances of Léon Blum, Mendès-France, Fabius or Kissinger—it simply does not exist in their mental make-up. It was the Hungarian environment that implanted this inferiority complex in me and not only me. Today I see this problem rather differently

and I do not very much like to look back on this attitude of mine. Obviously I would have considered this cautiousness less necessary in a democratic Hungary than I did reckoning with the antisemitism incited by the established Christian political line³ and the sensitivities sublimated by the populists⁴. Since then I have become accustomed to the fact that the public generally pays attention to a writer's arguments and does not necessarily relate them to his origins, although it must be said that a certain claim to superiority by those who imagine themselves more truly French, and the demand for more rights on that account, are not entirely absent in France either.

Allow me to refer this same problem to the late twenties, when you finished your secondary school and started university, when you began or were preparing to have your say in the affairs of Hungary. To what extent can you recall what your feelings were at the time? To what extent did the racial theory of the time or your Jewish origins bold you back or didn't such things trouble you when expressing your views and taking part, or wanting to take part, in public life?

It is not usual to admit to this, but I have to admit that my ideology was pretty confused in 1927, when I began studying at the university of Pécs. There was some Ady in it, some Nietzsche and Dezső Szabó, some Christian socialism, and a very serious interest in Christian theology, which led to my conversion just at that time. A love affair caused my first political and psychological shock as well as my first encounter with communism. I fell in love with the daughter of a Komló miner at Pécs, who was intelligent, sensible and, what is more, fond of reading. She took me to that mining settlement to let me see how her family lived, how the workers of Komló and other collieries near Pécs lived. It was with an enormous shock and bewilderment that I saw the poverty, distress and overcrowding there. They lived in their barracks there almost like people in an internment camp. So, how can this be reconciled with the Christian ideology, I thought,

which was the dominant ideology of the university, the ideology of the teaching clergy? This was the first window that opened in me towards Marxism and the communist ideology. I owe this to this girl whose name even I have forgotten.

In 1929, in Budapest where I continued my studies, I got into the Bartha Miklós Society, which aspired to be a renewal of the pre-war clubs and circles. Some of my friends at university called me, friends like Béla Szász⁵, who later belonged to Rajk's circle of friends. There were all sorts of intellectuals there, open and secret communists, Trotskyists, reactionary conservatives, monarchists, progressive nationalists and many police informers. After attending their meetings, I met a few interesting people, some of whom later became my friends and, I might say, my teachers, who introduced me to Marxist thinking. One of them was Dr Ferenc Danzinger, who published under the pen-name of Ferenc Agárdi and, I am convinced, was one of the most educated men I have ever met, a man of truly encyclopaedic knowledge.

Attila József liked Danzinger very much and thought of him as one of his best friends, as he did of Miklós Horner, a journalist who knew all about international affairs, Vilmos Lázár, the expert on agriculture, and Péter Pál Lakatos, the proletarian poet, a hunch-backed printer with shining black eyes, whose look of enthusiasm made you think of the dedicated pioneers of the labour movement of the end of the nineteenth century. Once Lakatos invited me to dine with him and his beautiful wife. As we proceeded, he said he was going to recite a poem to me. Good, I said, and asked if he had written it. No, he answered, and began reciting:

I have no father, neither a mother. . .

It is hard to describe the spell that seized me when I first heard this poem, which expressed things I had not yet heard said by Hungarian poets. Who wrote it? I asked. Attila József, said Péter Pál. Well, I have not heard of Attila József, but this is a splendid poem. That was the moment I decided I

would never again write verse. For I knew I could not produce a poem of such beauty. . . . When Péter Pál Lakatos saw my enthusiasm, he recited two or three more poems by Attila József which he knew by heart. Then he asked me if I would like to meet him? And how! Well, then, he said, let's go and see him, most likely he will be at home. I was really turned on to go to meet such a great, such a very very great man. So off we went there. At that time Attila was living with Judit Szántó in a side-street close to the Nyugati Railway Station, I cannot recall the name, a working-class tenement.

It's difficult to speak of such moments which later became a legend even within oneself. Meeting the man of genius. The only details I remember are the sort that Judit brought bread and apples, and put a bottle of wine on the table. Apart from that, we just talked and talked for hours. What still surprises me when I remember this day, that is that in spite of all my enthusiasm, my ecstasy even, I did not know that I was experiencing the most momentous day of my life. I was not aware of that, yet I had no doubt from the first moment, the moment when I heard his first poem, that Attila was a poet of importance to the world. I had not the slightest doubt about his genius. Later, arguing with critics, I was often amazed that they had no insight into the greatness of Attila. I am not speaking about the Right, he had nothing to do with them, but even critics of the Left did not realize his greatness although he was a Communist, a Marxist at the time, and this was reflected in his poems. The tone was new, that was what they did not understand, that he spoke cheerfully of his own misery and the misery of the world.

It was the novelty, the daring, the roguery of the tone, that Hungarian Villonqueness that struck me. A feeling that we were friends, which I think he felt as well, to the end of his life, sprung up between us from the first moment although one could form a library, a whole literature of the writings which claim the opposite and imagined

they discovered conflicts between Attila József and myself. Anyway, time has refuted the lies and smears. I think if my name will get into the history of Hungarian literature for anything, it will be that I was one of the first, if not the first, who recognized his genius, who spoke and wrote about it accordingly, to his delight and comfort.

Let us turn to your first contact with the Communist movement. How did you come to join the Communist movement at Budapest university, the university group of KIMSZ, and what were the events that led up to your arrest and the noted trial, where the young László Rajk sat next to you in the dock?

Yes, the Hungarian court was so magnanimous (or anti-semitic) that it made me, the only non-Aryan member of our group, the group's leader, which I was not.

Because your name, Fischel, fitted this role better, for their purposes. I think this is what mattered.

Obviously. The group emerged spontaneously in the arts faculty within the walls of the university after a few months of talk and getting to know each other. First I became friendly with Gyula Schöpflin, the son of Aladár Schöpflin,⁹ then with Béla Szász, a student of literature, another student called István Stolte¹⁰ who we learnt later was Schweinitzer's¹¹ informant, and then one day a good-looking, tall chap came to us, introduced himself as László Rajk, who later became one of the most active members of the group.

You were all of the same age.

Indeed we were all in the same year, attending the lectures of professors János Horváth¹² and Zoltán Gombocz¹³ together and going to the meetings of the Bartha Miklós Society together. Eventually we agreed to organize a small study group to study Marxism and the problems involved in Marxism together. Péter Mód,¹⁴ the future ambassador, who had an air of diplomatic taciturnity about him even then, a number of artists, such as András Beck¹⁵ and László Mészáros,¹⁶ whom I converted—I wish I had not—and then Aladár Mód¹⁷ also joined us. In other

words, we organized our group, met frequently, argued with each other, held lectures and as time went by the original five grew to ten then, to fifteen, and God only knows how many more came to us from the Academy of Fine Arts and the Academy of Music. The ranks simply swelled and we were around one hundred, when István Stolte suggested that we should get in touch with the Communist Party, or rather the Hungarian Communist Young Workers League (KIMSZ). That would not commit us to anything, he said, but at least it would put us in touch with the working class. In this respect we were truly given something but less than we expected. The nature of the Party organization was such—very likely because they were operating underground—that they tried to keep the intellectuals and industrial workers apart. Later, when I joined the Social Democratic Party, in 1934, the situation was altogether different. Then I was giving lectures all the time, arranged by the various trades unions, timber workers, building workers and metal workers. My view was that since we had established a group of intellectuals with between one and two hundred really top quality members in about one year, our organization must be continued on the existing basis. From the point of view of the Party, our great disadvantage was that nearly all of us came from middle-class, some of us even from upper-middle-class, homes. For instance János Bertók, son of a Calvinist bishop, who was later executed in Moscow, Schöpflin and others. So we were of the middle class and at that time it was customary in the Party to disparage the middle class and the steers, as they called the intellectuals. The important thing for the executive of KIMSZ evidently was to produce quick results for Moscow rather than to create something substantial. Because, really, to organize hundred and twenty intellectuals to take an interest in Marxism at a Hungarian university in 1931 was no mean achievement.

And that was done partly in the Eötvös College, the seat of the élite. . .

Yes, it was the élite of the élite, in fact a good part of our members were at the Eötvös College. On the other hand the Communist Party wanted us to write pamphlets designed to lead poor students into action against the capitalist regime, etc. The fact was, however, that although we all championed the cause of the poor, 90 per cent of the poor students at that time joined student societies of the Right.

At the end of 1931 and early in 1932 I organized a KIMSZ group at Nagykanizsa with my local friends, including György Ádám, the economist, who later covered a varied course. Then, Emil Stolczer, who was responsible for the Party at Nagykanizsa, proudly told his girl, who happened to be the daughter of a policeman, what an important part he and I have already played and would play in the movement. This honest maiden immediately told everything to her father, and as a consequence Stolczer was promptly arrested. The next morning two plainclothes policemen called on me too and courteously escorted me to the police station. I do not wish to go into the details, but for three days and nights on end they beat me, beat my soles and the rest, without letting up and made a wreck of me. The trouble was that one of our friends did not read the newspapers, although *Az Est* reported under prominent headlines that "the red teacher and his black bride have been arrested." This friend of mine went to my flat to take away our just published journal, *Valóság*, which we published together with Attila József, to distribute it. I will later return to this. In any case, they caught my friend, who was such a skilled conspirator that he had his note-book with him with the complete list of the whole company. When I noticed that some hours passed without a beating I smelled a rat. They came for me, took me away again, but not for another beating. We stopped before the door of the room of Schweinitzer, the chief of political police. There I saw lined up Laci Rajk, Schöpflin, Károly Olt¹⁹ and about an other dozen of our lot. Well, I had suffered

for three days and nights for nothing to save them from arrest and yet the police had got them all the same. The tragi-comic part was that by then my relationship with the Party had slackened—but it was impossible not to accept solidarity with my friends, I just could not say look, I no longer believe in an imminent bloody revolution. Schweinitzer, who loved to show off his knowledge of Marxism, kept me in his office for two hours, he offered me coffee and cigarettes, and kept asking how a talented intellectual like myself could be a Communist. He didn't convince me, nor I him.

It would be right to say that this was the first generation of young intellectuals after 1919, which showed a clear sympathy and attraction towards Marxism. Was it right to imperil, in fact to destroy, this intellectual movement in this way, resulting in two trials, just to distribute some pamphlets—not to mention the personal consequences for very many people, including you, whose professional career, I believe, was destroyed?

Completely destroyed. Naturally, I cannot speak for my other companions in misfortune. I can speak only for myself. But I consider that the Party made a grave error—*pire qu'un crime, une gaffe*—when they destroyed this spontaneous organization of ours, which had brought together the cream of the intellectual young, for simply Party interest or ostentation or I do not really know what to call it, perhaps the leaders concerned know better. It finished my university career for good. János Horváth, who was my professor, and whom I thought the world of, and who I believe also had a good opinion of me, angrily reproached me for doing such a stupid thing, for destroying a career. Well, ultimately it was not destroyed, for even if the University of Budapest expelled me and never bestowed the title of doctor on me, the Sorbonne compensated me after forty years and conferred a doctorate on me. At the time, however, this was a great blow to me, for I wanted to be a teacher and a scholar, and I was not able to realize this ambition of mine at least not at the university level and in the

country I felt to be my own. The teaching career, for which I felt a calling, was finished at least until the time when the *École des Sciences Politiques* invited me to teach there. In France, I also had to wait about thirty years to receive compensation for the blow I suffered in Budapest.

How did the process of your estrangement from the Communist movement begin, and how did it come to a conclusion?

I've already mentioned the primary reason, my dissatisfaction with the organization and cultural policies of the Party. Then came the greatest drama of our century, the coming to power of Hitlerism. I was still in prison then, but learned about the events since, as a political prisoner whose conviction was still subject to appeal, I had the right to read the newspapers. In those days the Hungarian prisons were not as strict or as inhuman as under Rákosi. I got books also through the Red Aid, I read Hegel there, even *Das Kapital*, and I also learnt English. I would not call it paradise, but it was not the hell it later became. I used to have my morning walk there together with a number of Communists in detention or remand, among them József Révai and Frigyes Karikás, who was later executed in Moscow. On one of these occasions I told Révai that the Nazis had come to power. Révai began to be hostile to me already then, he did not stay long at the remand prison, he was taken to another, to Szeged, I think. He did not want to believe that Hitler's victory was real and final. He considered it a transitory state before the Communist Party took power. Attila József, who continued to visit me in prison, and myself were deeply shocked by that event and what we slowly learned about the circumstances of that fatal turn of events had a decisive effect on both of us. We learned, for instance, that the German Communist Party continued to look on the Social Democratic Party as their number one enemy almost until the last moment, and that this attitude led to collaboration with the Nazis in many places in order to overthrow the Social Democratic

government of Prussia. We thoroughly discussed this and it completely destroyed our faith in the infallibility of the Communist movement. Things cannot be done in this way any longer, we thought. Attila then wrote an article in a semi-communist paper, the name of which I forget, expounding that the whole of the working class, Socialists, Communists, the radical middle class, etc., must cooperate against fascism.* I agreed with him one hundred per cent. If my memory serves me right, he was expelled and disowned because of this article. In any case, they regarded him as someone who was no longer a member of the Party. They did not look on him as a Party member.

I must, however, emphasize that breaking with Communism, or rather with Stalinism—for that's all it was, even if only the Trotskyists called it that—did not mean breaking with Marxism for Attila or for me. Naturally, experience slowly made us more critical in respect of Marxism, we no longer read the tenets of *The Capital*, supposed to be valid for all ages, with the childish faith we had before: yet we considered that the lasting substance of Marxism was protest against injustice, exploitation and inequalities. We agreed with the humanist Marx, we became familiar with it in those years thanks to the German edition of his early works which left a deep impression on us. Reading the young Marx made us humanist Marxists—for I believe there was not even a shadow of difference between what Attila believed and what I believed—anti-dogmatic Marxists of open spirit and, at the same time, enemies of sectarian and dogmatic Marxism of the Stalinist brand.

What practical consequences did you, or the two of you, draw from these recognitions?

* *Új barcos*. May 1933. The article concludes: "It would be a good thing if the workers would realize before it is beaten in their heads by the black-jags of fascist terrorists that supporting the struggles of each other is more important than any ideal party discipline."

First of all the approach to the Social Democrats. This was prompted by other reasons besides the ideological metamorphosis we experienced. The initiative belonged to Attila József, and I must strongly emphasize this, because I've read the opposite in several places written by so-called well-informed scholars. No, Attila József was the first to talk about me appreciatively to Illés Mónus,²⁰ he took me to the office of Mónus, where the latter worked at the desk of Leó Frankel²¹ and that was how both of us came to contribute to *Szocializmus*²² and *Népszava*.²³ For me, however, this friendly relationship lasted not only up to my exile from the country, which could perhaps be called emigration, or flight, but it continued as their Paris correspondent until the war, in which Mónus tragically perished, and even after the war.

When and how did you find your way into literary life?

About a year later I left prison. That year was hard indeed. My wife and I between us only earned a pittance and we could barely pay even the low rent. An ex-prisoner and his dependant could not find a job anywhere. Eventually I got a job, with great difficulty, at a private school, teaching French and German. Little by little we began to make a living. I also had time to write. My mentor and chief help was Attila József. He was well known in literary circles, and introduced me to his writer friends who at the time still included Gyula Illyés.²⁴ I owe Gyula Illyés my introduction to the very citadel of contemporary literary life, to Mihály Babits.

A major writing of mine was published in 1935 in *Nyugat*.²⁶ Under the title of *Zagreb Diary* I included experiences in Zagreb and Dalmatia, family memories and political reflections with a description of contemporary Yugoslav life. The article also included a long discussion with the great Croatian writer, Krleža,²⁷ who was not at all known at the time in Hungary (László Németh wrote about him some time later). The success it enjoyed was totally unexpected. László Dormándi, himself also a writer and the owner of the Pan-

theon publishing house asked me to go and see him and suggested that I should write a book based on this *Zagreb Diary*. Lajos Hatvany²⁸ also liked the article very much, and invited me to dinner. I went there feeling anxious, for even if I was not really familiar with the recent history of Hungarian literature I knew who Lajos Hatvany was, and what his role was particularly in connection with Ady, and I felt real respect for him. Hatvany received me in a most friendly manner, he embraced me and introduced me to the guests, who included some important writers and poets such as Dezső Szomory, Frigyes Karinthy, Ernő Szép, naturally Attila József, Pál Ignotus, László Cs. Szabó and others. It was a great dinner. And in the middle of it Hatvany stood up and said: "Allow me to call your attention to Ferenc Fejtő, who is a real writer." A real writer! Coming from Hatvany that was praise indeed, a sort of graduation and it became the beginning of a long and warm friendship. Great foreign writers also visited Hatvany. The greatest of them all, Thomas Mann was his guest a number of times when he was already in exile and took part in the meetings of the Commission Internationale de Coopération Intellectuelle, the predecessor of Unesco, where Paul Valéry was the leading light. Čapek came over from Czechoslovakia, and I saw him too at the Hatvany house. We attended a dinner there one day, Pál Ignotus,²⁹ Béla Reinitz,³⁰ myself and others. The centre of the evening was Thomas Mann who we mainly talked to. Thomas Mann asked Hatvany if he knew Béla Bartók, the composer well, whom Mann knew only in passing. He said he would like to meet him and ask him, for instance, why he considered Liszt to be such a great composer, while he, Thomas Mann thought Liszt was a brilliant but second-rate composer? Hatvany said: "Oh, well, I think it will not be difficult to find that out, Bartók is a friend of mine and he lives only a short distance from here." So he telephoned Bartók, and the composer arrived about ten minutes later,

for he was delighted to meet Thomas Mann. I think I have never ever had such an experience either before or after, for the two of them talked for hours, into the early hours, and we, the others, only sat around them and listened to them devoutly. They talked mainly about Liszt and Wagner, but Bartók sat at the piano and illustrated for Thomas Mann with his playing what he thought the great and misunderstood Liszt was like. At the time, people in Hungary and abroad knew only the Rhapsodies, and knew little if anything about his really great works, his oratorios, his *Christus*, his religious meditations and the others. And these were exactly what Bartók played so wonderfully there. I do not know if he succeeded in convincing Thomas Mann about the greatness of Liszt. But it was a great evening, and also the occasion when we, myself and Attila József, whom Bartók thought highly of, as it turned out, persuaded Bartók, who promised that he would write articles for *Szép Szó*. He kept his word. Writing for *Szép Szó*, a left-wing journal, then counted as a political commitment.

Bartók was the Attila József of Hungarian music, and Attila József was the Bartók of Hungarian poetry. A deep intellectual, artistic and political relationship existed between the two men. They both had their roots in the people and reached the heights of universal art. Both were cosmopolitans and democrats unconditionally, making no compromises.

*Szép Szó*³¹ had also arranged a rather stormy function with Thomas Mann at the Academy of Music.

Yes, you are right. We asked Thomas Mann to give an address at a function organized by *Szép Szó* at the Academy of Music. He was going to read a chapter of *Lotte in Weimar*, the work he just finished. The plan was for Pál Ignotus to introduce Thomas Mann briefly, then Attila József would welcome him with a poem which he wanted to write in twenty-four hours. I must add that he was very fond of improvisations of that sort. He was told to write a masterpiece by

eight o'clock the following night, then he produced a poem by that time, one that really was a masterpiece. This is exactly what happened to the poem *Welcome to Thomas Mann*. He wrote it in one day, just as he did later his poem *Air!* ordered for *8 Órai Újság* by Bandi Hevesi.

That was one of his greatest poems.

Yes, it was. But the police banned it, God only knows why. They authorized Thomas Mann's lecture, they also gave the green light to Pali Ignotus's introductory remarks, but banned the reading of Attila József's poem and this had a highly depressing effect on Attila, for he was all keyed up writing that poem. Someone, I do not know who, quickly translated the poem into German. Thomas Mann read it and considered it a work of genius. Although this is really a different matter, but in a later discussion it was clear that he had already spotted certain symptoms of mental disorder in Attila József then, in June 1936, when these had still completely escaped our, or at least my, attention.

Could you say something about the development and role of your journal, Szép Szó? It started almost half a century ago.

Young men visiting me from Hungary often ask me what *Szép Szó* was. And my answer is that it was above all a forum for Attila József. The reason *Szép Szó* was established was that Attila József needed it. Before that he did not have a forum where he could freely express himself.

The fact is that even the name of the new journal was given by Attila. I recall that I insisted on the title *Eszmélet* (Consciousness), keeping in mind one of Attila's poems, the second part of which I was the inspirer. But we could not agree on that, and then Attila József suggested we should all dictate a title, he would write these down, we'd put them into a hat, and all agree to use the name we drew from the hat. There was a knock on the door then, and in came Albert Gyergyai, the Proust translator, who also cooperated with Cserépfalvi—we were holding our meeting in the back-room of Cserépfalvi's bookshop. We

asked Gyergyai to draw. He put his hand into the hat and drew out the name Attila suggested: *Szép Szó*. * Attila triumphed. We did not very much like it but resigned ourselves to fate. *Szép Szó*, we said, perhaps does not really sound all that bad, but what it stands for will need an explanation. What are we trying to say with that name? Attila said he would explain. Which he did clearly, beautifully, unambiguously in one of the first issues of the paper. Then we all went out to have dinner after which Attila, laughing childishly, showed us how he had outwitted us. He had written *Szép Szó* on all of the bits of paper.

What were the seeds of the conflict between Attila József and Gyula Illyés? What was your role there, caught, as you were, between them?

When I met Attila József this conflict already existed potentially. I have no desire to romanticize the matter but there is no doubt that a rivalry between two males was also at play. The two young Communist poet-Titans, Gyula Illyés and Attila József, fell in love simultaneously with Judit, the ex-wife of Antal Hidas, alias Gyula Szántó, the Muscovite poet. They vied for her in an almost medieval manner: love, vanity and poetry played equal roles in this, a contest in which Attila József came out on top. This victory added a lot to Attila's male self-confidence—or to his yearning for that—which was powerfully evident in him by the time I met him. Using a phrase of Thomas Mann's, I used to call Judit in those days a surly angel. She was beautiful, a fine figure of a woman, a cold Amazon. As far as I was concerned, she remained, even later, the symbol of a stern, ascetic, militant woman. The fact that they both yearned to be the first in the regions of Communist poetry which was then taking shape under French influence (they both spent some time in Paris) contributed to the rivalry between the two men. It was also odd that shortly before the death of Attila the

* Literally "Fine Word" with the overtone of persuasive tone.

amorous passions of the two should again be crystallized on one and the same woman, Flóra.

The Flóra affair was the last chapter of Attila József's life and poetry. She was the last passion of his life, she inspired him to write wonderfully moving poems at a time in his life when his mind was already on the brink of collapse, when indeed it had just about stepped over the edge. Let me tell you straight, though it does not do much credit to me, that I, through the poems watching the development of this love from more or less close quarters, judged these poems primarily as a critic and an editor. I concentrated on the poems that fatal love inspired in Attila. Naturally, I know no details. I met Flóra once or twice at the sanatorium, at Attila's sick-bed. I found her to be a quiet, shy, modest girl. I learnt about the depth of Attila's passion only from the poems. And it was only in 1985 that I really understood that Attila's passion triggered at least a very deep sympathy, if not a similar love, in Flóra when their correspondence was printed in a private edition. At the time I was much surprised when I heard of the marriage of Gyula Illyés and Flóra. I could not but see in that an odd, tragic recurrence of the youthful rivalry in love of the two poets. But as far as poetical rivalry is concerned, Illyés, according to Flóra also, had no doubts that Attila was the greater poet. On the other hand, Illyés was the more fortunate of the two if for no other reason than because he became the favourite and successor of Mihály Babits, which ensured him considerable respect and *pouvoir*. And when *Válasz* started he became its star author, just as he did later at *Magyar Csillag*. One should really find out where Attila József's poems were published before *Szép Szó* got started. He simply had no place under the sun before Mónus and Szélpál helped him, not even *Népszava* wanted him, as I've mentioned. Kaczér's *Toll* gave him a public of sorts. His finest poems appeared in *Szép Szó* and could be published only there.

Something else that also determined his

role in *Szép Szó*, was the then growing opposition between the populists and ourselves. Our adversaries thought of the term *urbánus* in my opinion first of all because they did not openly want to call us dirty Jews, and also because they did not wish to publicize the fact that the *Szép Szó* lot were mainly liberals and Social Democrats. Pál Ignóty represented liberalism, Attila József, myself, Zoltán Gáspár and some others Social Democracy. Attila József rejected even the term *populist* in an article on the subject published in *Szép Szó*, underlining the suspect origin of the word and its kinship with the German word *völkisch*, to which the Nazis applied a racialist interpretation. I saw the essence of populism a little differently from Attila József and Ignóty. I conceived it rather in the historical-sociological sense as something transitory and characteristic of backward countries, and expressed this in an article I wrote in *Szocializmus*, in which I called László Németh and his followers Hungarian *narodniks*.

That article of yours was recently republished in an anthology compiled from writings in the journal Szocializmus.

I am aware of this. One man was particularly angry with me and quarrelled with me about this article, and that was Péter Veres. But I heard that László Németh, whom I had never met, was not completely dissatisfied with the article in which I mainly discussed his deep-Hungarian, etc., theories and the racial socialism of Péter Veres. These were not hostile criticisms. It was I who brought Péter Veres to *Szép Szó*. He wondered a little why I invited him, since he did not feel too comfortable in the company of the bourgeois Ignóty and Attila József, and looked on me also as too much of a towner. It was odd that this rather talented writer, also a *plebeian*, did not understand Attila József. Although we met quite regularly at the headquarters of the Social Democratic Party, I never got to clearing this up with him. In spite of his racist excesses, Péter Veres continued to work for *Szocializmus*. Mónus found him muddled, but at the same time he appreciated Veres as

a writer, and I think he was right about that. Returning to Attila, however, he was, of all of us, including even Pál Ignotus, the most sharply set against the populists. Right from the start he had no faith in either the New Intellectual Front, or the March Front, although we supported the latter's programme, I think mainly under pressure from me with the support of Zoltán Gáspár. Attila did not believe in the whole thing, he did not think they were genuinely reformist but opportunists, searching for a compromise with the ruling classes. He also clearly recognised the heterogeneous nature of the whole populist group, the fact that it included covert and not all that disguised Communists like József Darvas and Ferenc Erdei, others who were drifting towards the right, like Lőrinc Szabó or János Kodolányi, elements of the extreme right, like József Erdélyi and even future members of the Arrow-Cross Party, like Ödön Málnási. But there were also honest and sincere democrats there such as Imre Kovács and Zoltán Szabó. We maintained steady contact with them and we understood one another. I attempted to make peace between the two camps with the help of Géza Féja, whom I met frequently at Hatvany's. In this respect a great number of falsifications have been perpetrated in connection with me in literary writings inspired by Rákosi, Révai and Lukács. These presented me, along with Pál Ignotus and Béla Zsolt, as one of the most ranting opponents of the populists. The opposite was true. I wanted to establish a unity of the left with them. This does not mean that I ever found myself in serious opposition to Attila or Pál Ignotus. Our friendship was always close and we shared our principles. These days I am inclined to admit that they were right at the time and not I. The difference between us as regards the populists was at the time that I judged their role with my tailor-made Marxism. The *narodnik* label itself proves that I assumed historical antecedents for them and thought that the evolution of such populist-utopian ideas cultivating the peasantry was natural in

agricultural countries like Hungary, Rumania, China or India, where the peasantry were in the majority. The essence of authentic populism was, I thought, the idea of the historic leap, which Lenin had once opposed in the name of the Social Democratic tradition. László Németh believed that it was possible to move to socialism from feudalism, by-passing capitalism, and that the result of that exercise would be "genuine Hungarian socialism." I thought that even if these ideas were erroneous, for the stage of bourgeois democracy could not be by-passed, we should make an approach to them all the same and the more so because there were Zoltán Szabós amongst them, whose place was in the anti-fascist popular front just as that of my leftist Jewish or non-Jewish bourgeois, monarchist or Catholic friends. My idea of the popular front was perhaps no less utopian than that of the others; but I was convinced that the Social Democratic Party with its trades union, etc., must become the centre of the popular front in Hungary with which middle-class, liberal, agrarian, even purely monarchist people would cooperate and those, whom I termed non-dogmatic Communists, such as György Bálint, Tibor Déry, György Faludy or Miklós Radnóti amongst my friends. I discussed all this thoroughly with Illyés, who considered my arguments valid. He was, however, already too tightly bound to the role he had in the vanguard of the populists. He was the leading figure there even though he did not share the political opinions of most of his so-called populist friends. Pali Ignotus and Attila József did not trust Illyés. In the case of Radnóti, however, whom he did not like, but who had been a close friend of mine since our student years, Attila gave in and we published his poems, although Attila was the absolute and despotic tyrant of the poetry pages. He also agreed to allow Péter Veres and others, who fitted in with my popular front idea, publish in our journal.

But of course, as the years passed I had to realize that my ideas were utopian mainly for

personal reasons. I have to mention the case of Géza Féja as an example, whose book, *Viharsarok* (Stormy Corner) I liked very much, and I wrote a highly favourable review for *Szép Szó*. When he was tried because of this book I published a protesting article. That was in 1938, but as things turned out I had to leave the country a few months later. I had only been living in Paris for a few months when I received some clippings from the journal *Kelet Népe*, whose spiritual leader was Illyés and whose actual editor was Géza Féja. One could not possibly imagine a filthier and more slanderous calumny. The man whom I had supported a few months earlier called me a traitor, denounced me as a deserter, and demanded the severity of the courts against me.

If I recall, the editors of Szép Szó answered Féja in your name.

Yes, so they did. Those who were still in Hungary, Ignóty, Remenyik, Gáspár and the others, the whole editorial staff answered and defended me in a long article, which they all signed. I read a suggestion somewhere that the Féja attack was an answer to an earlier attack against Illyés. This is not true. What is true is that thinking, evidently wrongly, that the denunciation originated from Illyés and not Féja, I took revenge, perhaps childishly, by writing a satirical pamphlet about Illyés, *Felsülésem Illyepusztáival* (My fiasco with Illyepusztai), sent it home to *Szép Szó* and the journal published it. In the article I picked mainly on Illyés's contradictions and his chameleon-like nature. I re-read this article a few days ago. Naturally, I was unjust to him, but being unjust is part and parcel of a pamphlet. It was injustice, though at the bottom there was some truth. Illyés wanted to be a Petőfi, a champion of freedom, but he was really a writer-diplomat, who always steered clear of straightforward, clear-cut positions.

With this I reached the end of my life in Hungary, in Horthy's Hungary. As it is perhaps made clear from all I have said I left behind a rather odd country. It was an au-

thoritarian state, complete with feudal, reactionary and parliamentary trimmings increasingly pushed towards fascist Italy, then towards Nazi Germany by the foreign political interests or ambitions of its leaders. An opposition journal, such as we made of *Szép Szó*, could still be published, but we were under police surveillance just like the socialists and others in opposition whom the regime tolerated. The circumstance of my leaving, which preceded the first Anti-Jewish Law, also illustrate the limits of this Horthy-brand semi or pseudo-parliamentarism in Hungary. The story started at Makó. *Szép Szó* answered an invitation from the Peasant Circle of the town and arranged an evening devoted to Attila József. This was a few months after Attila's death. His name was well-known in Makó, indeed, many of the peasants even knew his work. It was an interesting evening, we had a full house and were treated as celebrities. After the recital, we talked to the peasants until about two or three in the morning.

When I returned to Budapest I wrote an article for *Népszava* under the title of "Discussion at Makó." The conclusion of the article was that if the Hungarian middle class had as sober a mind and sense of history as I observed in the course of the discussion amongst the peasants, then I would feel less uneasy about the future of Hungary. The next day plainclothes men came for me and proceedings were instituted against me. The trial soon took place, and I received a six-months sentence for that article, which the court deemed as incitation to class hatred. Pali Ignóty learnt from an acquaintance of his in the Ministry of the Interior that they wanted to put me in an internment camp as soon as I was released from prison for being a dangerous person. But the court made one mistake: when I appealed, it did not revoke my passport. I decided right then and there to do what I had already planned: I'd go to Paris for a few months as correspondent of *Népszava*, *Szocializmus* and *Szép Szó*. Pali Ignóty put me in a taxi, took me to the French

consulate, where I immediately got a visa, and I left the country the very next day without even saying good-bye to my parents and to my brother.

This is how the first phase of my life ended and a new and different life began under different conditions, climatic, political, linguistic and historic circumstances. Those who want to know the story of this second life of mine in France, will soon have the opportunity of reading it in memoirs to be published in 1986 by Calmann Lévi.

GYÖRGY LITVÁN

NOTES

¹ SZABÓ, Dezső (1879-1945). Writer, who exerted a wide influence on young professional people, particularly in the early twenties, through his personality, style, rhetoric talent and his racial and nationalist ideas.

² NÉMETH, László (1901-1975). Writer, essayist, literary critic. One of the leading writers and dramatists of the generation that appeared in the twenties and thirties, an original social thinker of great influence.

³ Christian political order: the term used to describe the counter-revolutionary, chauvinistic and anti-Semitic regime which came to power after the revolutions of 1918 and 1919.

⁴ Populists (*népiesség*): a new and vigorous group in Hungarian literature and descriptive sociology between the two wars, which saw the existence and future of the nation in the peasantry and therefore fought for a land-reform and the break-up of large estates.

⁵ SZÁSZ, Béla (born in 1910). Writer and journalist. A Communist from his student days, he lived in the Argentine during the war, returning to Hungary and working in the communications field. He was arrested in 1949 and sentenced to 10 years imprisonment on a charge related to the Rajk affair. He was released in 1954, delivered the eulogy in the name of his companions in 1956 at the ceremonial re-burial of the remains of László Rajk and his companions in death. Since 1957 he has lived in the United Kingdom, where he published a book on his prison experiences: *Volunteers to the Gallows* (1972).

⁶ Bartha Miklós Society: an intellectual circle founded in 1925. Principally a debating forum for university students sympathizing with various trends which sought a way out of the prevailing crisis. The executive was dominated by leftists until 1933, afterwards by rightists.

⁷ KIMSZ: Young Communist Workers' League, the illegal youth organization of the Communist Party in Hungary between 1919 and 1943.

⁸ RAJK, László (1909-1949). Teacher, later Communist politician. One of the leaders of the Communist student movement, then of the illegal CPH; as a volunteer fought in the Spanish civil war. After 1945 one of the leaders of the Hungarian Communist Party, Minister of the Interior, then Foreign Minister. Principal defendant and victim of a political trial in 1949.

⁹ SCHÖPFLIN, Aladár (1872-1950). Literary critic, aesthetician, editor, one of the principal authorities on modern Hungarian literature in the first half of our century. His son, Gyula Schöpflin (born in 1910) writes under the pseudonym of István Nagypál. Director at Hungarian Radio after 1945, then Hungarian ambassador in Stockholm. He resigned his post at the time of the Rajk trial and has lived in the United Kingdom ever since.

¹⁰ STOLTE, István. Active in the Communist movements of the thirties, turned against the official line of the party and advocated Trotskyist ideas. He was expelled from the Party, thereafter thought to be a police agent. Since 1945 he has lived abroad, but figured as a witness for the prosecution in the Rajk trial.

¹¹ SOMBOR-SCHWEINITZER, József: chief of the political police between the two world wars.

¹² HORVÁTH, János (1878-1961). Literary historian, university professor; influenced several literary generations.

¹³ GOMBOCZ, Zoltán (1877-1935). Linguist, university professor, director of Eötvös College.

¹⁴ MÓD, Péter (b. 1910). Underground Communist from his student days, held diplomatic posts after 1945.

¹⁵ BECK, András (1911-1985). Sculptor, a Communist from youth, active in the student organization in the early thirties. Lived in Paris since 1957.

¹⁶ MÉSZÁROS, László (1905-1945). Sculptor, communist, emigrated to the Soviet Union in 1935, where he became a victim of Stalin.

¹⁷ MÓD, Aladár (1908-1973). Historian, university professor. Active member of the CPH from 1932. Worked principally as an ideologist during the movement's underground days as well as after 1945.

¹⁸ Eötvös József College: an institution established in 1895 on the model of École Normale Supérieure in Paris for the support of talented students, and the development of an Hungarian intellectual élite. In addition to their regular university studies, students of the college followed further courses.

¹⁹ OLT, Károly (1904-1985). Underground

Communist; after 1945, holder of various government portfolios and other offices.

²⁰ MÓNUS, Illés (1886-1944). One of the outstanding leaders of the Hungarian Social Democrats between the two world wars. He was killed by Arrow-Cross men after the German occupation.

²¹ FRANKEL, Leo (1844-1896). A leading figure of the Hungarian labour movement in its early years, Minister of Labour in the 1871 Paris Commune.

²² *Népszava*: the central daily of the Social Democratic Party in Hungary.

²³ *Szocializmus*: the theoretical journal of the Social Democratic Party of Hungary.

²⁴ ILLYÉS, Gyula (1902-1983). Poet, writer, a leading figure in Hungarian literary life from the thirties to his death.

²⁵ BABITS, Mihály (1882-1941). Poet, writer

editor of *Nyugat*, the authority of literature right through the period between the two wars.

²⁶ *Nyugat*: The most important periodical for modern Hungarian literature from 1908 to 1941 (the death of Babits). After that it was succeeded by *Magyar Csillag* edited by Gyula Illyés until 1944.

²⁷ KRLEŽA, Miroslav (1893-1981). Croat novelist.

²⁸ HATVANY, Lajos (1880-1961). Writer, literary historian, a patron of the arts, supported Ady, Attila József and other writers.

²⁹ IGNOTUS, Pál (1901-1978). Critic, one of the founders and editors of *Szép Szó*.

³⁰ REINITZ, Béla (1878-1943). Composer, musicologist, active in the Social Democratic movement.

³¹ *Szép Szó*: literary, art and critical journal established in 1935 and published between 1936 and 1939. Its editors were Attila József, Pál Ignotus and Ferenc Fejtő.

BOOKS AND AUTHORS

LANDSCAPES IN MOSAIC

Vilmos Csaplár: *Egy látkép története* (Story of a Landscape). Magvető, 1986, 402 pp; Gyula Kurucz: *Lukács evangéliuma* (The Gospel according to St. Luke). Szépirodalmi, 1986, 301 pp; Mihály Sükösd: *Halottak napja: feltámadás* (All Souls' Day: Resurrection). Magvető, 1986, 344 pp.

"What is, in fact, our story? When and where does it start, what action or experience of which person make for a beginning?" asks Vilmos Csaplár in *The Story of a Landscape*, after several hesitant attempts at finding one in a number of fragmentary incidents. The reader may well add another question, namely, who is the above question addressed to? To the reader? Or to stories 'as such,' to history, to Fate, to that muddy substance from and under which the truth must be extracted? Or is it addressed to fiction or the writer himself, wondering if he can begin a story at all when, after all, any beginning is arbitrary and optional? Does a story exist or do we just pick out random strands from a tangle of things? In the first chapter of the novel, *Elkalandozások I* (Digressions I), Csaplár fumbles in some sort of primal haze, with waterside plants and animals, witchcraft, old inventories, rumours, fragments of newspaper items, images rigidified into myths, leaves from a family book of legends looming up, swirling and touching—giving an impression that they are the marginal comments, splinters of consciousness, wayward 'digressions' of an impersonal, almost collective, narrator

who puts them forward as potential elements of a story. The angle this narrator takes is, as the book later says, 'floating'—as though he were circling above the waters and the times in search of his quarry. For a time what is caught is dishearteningly poor: morsels from here and there, a snapshot, a series of shots, fragmented and incomplete. There is no coherence, no plot, only the mosaic pieces of a landscape, of a view of something from somewhere. As we read on, the pieces are slowly assembled as in a puzzle; we realize that the time is the beginning of the century ("With the leisurely loftiness of past centuries, the new century is preparing to become the future"—unaware that it carries a world war in its womb); the scene varies between Upper Hungary, north of the Danube, later part of Czechoslovakia, and Budapest; wax figures of village artisans, Budapest servant maids and burghers look at us from the scandal pages of contemporary newspapers; the contours of a figure begin to emerge—of Franciska, the peasant girl who seeks her fortune in Budapest as a servant maid, and whose archetypal seduction on the river bank, lurking in the depth of the memory, seems to emerge

after all, in hindsight, as some sort of a beginning.

The Story of a Landscape is in the last analysis a family saga. The sleeve-notes state quite vaguely that "it is a family novel which is not about a family," which, rather than help, tends to add to the confusion. One is tempted to add, in the same vein, that it is a family novel about a non-family. It is, in short, a family novel that is and is not a family novel. The digressions are, unexpectedly, followed by a soliloquy—long-winded, diffuse and in reported speech—by Zsigmond, who is charged with the rape and murder of his own daughter. It takes some time for the charges to become clear from his monologue. In the course of his monologue, the defendant, self-assuredly citing his blameless life as the owner of several houses and blaming sensation-hunting journalists and the negligence of the investigative bodies, voices his innocence and shows an almost monomaniacal trust that the truth will out. Yet he allows the reader no insight into the actual state of affairs, not even of the allegations, let alone his own version. His seemingly unending and non-sequitur explications draw towards an end when the writer allows us to suspect that the charges are real, the incident did happen, and the man of property suffers from some hereditary abnormality. But we never get an answer to questions such as the relationship this part of the book has with the rest; what is the point of the absurd and pathological formula according to which, in his stream of consciousness (for although in reported speech, it is in fact, by its very nature, an interior monologue), Zsigmond does not show even the faintest sign of being aware of the truth.

Apart from other digressions, the book contains two longer sections which are also interior monologues told by two characters. The section entitled *Zelma levelei* (Zelma's Letters) consists of fictitious letters written by the granddaughter of the alleged rapist and murderer Zsigmond, that is, by his victim's daughter. We learn that the victim,

Lili, was a stunning beauty, a red-haired, reckless demi-monde who had once disappeared from Budapest for a time, to surface again as though nothing had happened, to carry on her fatal adventures. As we later infer from Zelma's letters, she left for the provinces in order to give birth to her daughter, Zelma, who was brought up by foster-parents and would never know who her mother was and what had happened to her. The drama of Zsigmond and Lili took place some time in the twenties; Zelma's letters are about her youth in the thirties and her love and marriage with Antal in the forties and fifties. Rather than real letters, they are the soliloquies of a sensitive, prudish and proud woman living a life on the borderline between the petty-bourgeoisie and the working-class and hiding the secret of her background. She has composed them as fictitious letters addressed to various witnesses to her life during times of loneliness, for instance when her husband was taken prisoner of war right after they married. This is the most powerful part of the book; its form and elaboration are adequate to the subject. Zelma's speeches sound authentic, faithfully mirroring her attractive personality and social status. The capriciously changing topics are also, more or less, functional; from them emerge the portraits of Zelma and her husband, son of Franciska whom we had known as a mythical primeval mother. Franciska herself also appears as a flesh-and-blood figure in the letters, first as an aging, then dying, mother-in-law.

The third part of the book is devoted to Tóni, son of Zelma and Antal. This is a regular Joycean interior monologue, in the first person singular, verse-like in its highly subjective and associative character and esoteric abstraction. Csaplár, however, is (should be, could be) a better prose-writer than a poet, and this part has basically miscarried. One can sense his intention to show as the specific feature of Tóni's attitude and views a duality of, and incessant oscillation between, the 'floating' and 'immersing' mentioned—a personal involvement in the events—a dual-

ity that is also apparent in the novel as a whole. Consequently, the novel is in the last analysis a family saga in which the representative of the last generation appearing in it is, just as in most family novels, modelled after the writer himself. He, however, exerts himself almost with spasmodic force to make us see it as different from any other family sagas. Csaplár's family novel disintegrates and its fragments can be either interesting or banal. This fragmentary character, however, reflects not the fractures of Hungarian family stories in the twentieth century, nor the fragility of contemporary East European existence, but the writer's forced efforts at innovating the family novel. It is perfectly understandable that Csaplár does not consider the traditional family saga as an adequate form in which he could write on the issue that concerns him most, a multi-layered relationship to the past, an eternally moving and changing connection between the viewer and the landscape, the interaction between 'floating' and 'immersing'. The novel cannot be seen as a successful attempt at solving his problem.

Gyula Kurucz belongs to the same generation as Csaplár does, at forty-three he is the senior by three years. In his earlier novels he was primarily concerned with the ups and downs in the lives of young intellectuals. His new novel, *The Gospel according to St Luke*, is set in an entirely different milieu and is also in marked contrast to Csaplár's novel as regards its form. Its features are a massive realism and a narrative carefully detailed from episode to episode. The story takes place in the early fifties in Hungary's north-eastern corner, in and around a small village and a nearby small town. The protagonist is Lukács Kiss, a police sergeant, whose job makes him an active participant in the atrocities that Rákosi and his crew commit in the name of the dictatorship of the proletariat against innocent people arbitrarily declared to be class enemies. Lukács Kiss believes in the ideals of socialism and reveres Stalin as a demi-God in his Communist creed. In his spare

time, pursuing perhaps the traditions inherited from his shepherd ancestors who excelled in wood-carving, he makes several likenesses of Stalin. Though in his innate integrity he recoils at seeing the purges, the actions carried out at night, the sadism of the state security force and the political officers, he attributes to them some higher sense that he, a simple policeman and peasant, cannot grasp. However, Lukács Kiss believes not only in Communist ideas and practice, which he himself perpetrates too, but also in the ideas of Christianity, in its specifically Hungarian, Calvinist, peasant version. For him it is a redeeming creed that promises as much welfare for the oppressed and the poor as the ideology of Marxism-Leninism. Though the rebellious and national religion of Protestantism, the spirit of which Lukács Kiss absorbed from the historical past of his homeland, stands in contrast both to the teachings of the God of the Old Testament, who acknowledged only the Jews as the chosen people, and to the internationalism and atheism of the communists, who acknowledge neither God nor nation, yet he continues to feel that it is his calling to solve such apparent antagonisms, assuming the role of some socialist-Hungarian-peasant Messiah. This he does in spite of the disturbances it causes in his mind and soul, and despite the agony of carrying out his orders. Stigmata resembling the wounds of the crucified Christ appear on his feet and hands, and in order to fulfil his mission, he eventually stabs himself in the heart, thus producing the fifth wound between his left ribs.

Gyula Kurucz sets his story in an evocative rendering of contemporary Hungarian provincial life—indeed it is this reality that stands in the foreground, with portraits of the Calvinist community of the village, led by the minister who first behaves bravely, then is intimidated, of a rural way of life that was relatively intact at the time. All this is shown through Lukács Kiss's eyes by this modern urban writer in an idyllic, nostalgic light; so too are the state security force, the

political officers, the district commanders and various functionaries, the atmosphere of terror, and the art of bootlicking. Examples are also given of people who manage to hold their ground silently and obstinately: the smith and the persecuted, intelligent 'Horthyist' colonel from the 'old world,' both of whom serve as models for the police sergeant. Within this vivid picture, rich in powerful and authentic details, the character of Lukács Kiss and his mental agony appear as unreal products of the imagination, elements that are not organic parts of the whole and thus unable to fulfil the organizing role that the novel apparently accords to them.

Lukács Kiss's character is full of contradictions and speculative elements. One feels that the description of his past, as it appears in contrived and tendentious interior monologues and memories, is some sort of compulsory exercise performed by the author, assembled as it is from clichés and sentimental motifs. It is highly unlikely that a man chooses to become a policeman a year after his own father had been killed by a policeman for refusing to take part in the farce of rigged elections, claimed as free and democratic. A sense of calling rooted both in nationalism and Calvinism can still be explained by schooling, both state and religious, though not much is said about it in the novel. It is not clear, however, how, where and why Lukács Kiss has become so carried away by the Communist ideology, how it has been implanted in a mind conditioned by centuries of peasant traditions. For Lukács Kiss is not a great mind; he is a simpleton who cannot see further than his nose and is not much of a thinker. So one cannot be realistically expected to believe that an ideology, so flagrantly different from the influences received from background and surroundings, found its way into his head smoothly and effortlessly. Furthermore, he does not always appear to be such a simpleton. Servile and undisturbed in his beliefs, he does carry out inhumane orders given by his superiors, yet when he ponders on the reconciliation of the creeds in his

mind, he at times proves himself an intellect of almost Tolstoyan dimensions. These two elements are also incompatible. He believes that the drunken typist who leads him toward an empty weedy lot merely wants to relieve herself; yet when he visits the colonel he listens to Vivaldi and contemplates on the question of being a chosen one. Is Lukács Kiss a madman? An idiot, a Hungarian peasant Mishkin? Gyula Kurucz has not really clarified the issue for himself, nor has he found a precise narrative angle from which to guide the reader into the world of the novel. Lukács Kiss is portrayed the way he is sometimes from the outside, sometimes from within; the narrative at times loses him from sight and strays into a description of the surroundings, in itself correct but functionally mechanical, occasionally it turns into caricaturistic anecdote and these highly different areas are contained by a somewhat rigid, uniform descriptive style. Apart from a few successful, short-story-like vignettes, the most important achievements of the book are its passionate and merciless exposure of the true character of the age and the courage needed to tell the truth.

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Both Csaplár and Kurucz belong to a generation of writers who made their appearance with prose works of a subjective, autobiographical character, and both have now employed more objective techniques and treated subjects that, given their age, can be regarded as historical. Mihály Sükösd, their senior by some ten years, has attracted attention mainly by his inclination toward an objective, parabolic treatment. This time he has written the story of his own life as well as of his generation in an openly confessional, personal style. When reading his new novel *All Souls' Day: Resurrection*, well-informed Budapest circles may frequently be tempted to guess at the models for various characters in spite of efforts to transpose and change. The average reader, however, does not usually possess in-

formation of this kind, nor is it an aesthetic criterion as such; Sükösd's novel should thus be weighed without its piquancy and behind-the-scenes knowledge.

It all takes place on a single day, *All Souls' Day* in 1981, when the narrator, a writer in his late forties, with more than one divorce behind him, remembers his dead, one by one, and recalls his memories of them. Then he visits a number of places and encounters those who are alive and constitute his human environment. Except that it is *All Souls' Day*, no especial dramatic justification is provided as to why the dead should be summoned, and though the narrator does not observe the prescribed feast days—indeed he loathes *All Souls' Day*—he makes the conventional visit to the cemetery. "It is half past eight in the morning. The beginning of a substantial day. The beginning of a day that will, to all expectations, be eventful, evoking my past, bruising my present, and determining my future. I perform the daily chores in my customary surroundings. A three-room flat full of myself, of certain memories of my past and of dubious hopes for my future? Mostly—for the time being—of things to be done in the present."

The protagonist lives emphatically in, and is preoccupied with, the present, but this single day is set in the perspective of thirty years of his past life, every moment and momentum of the day taking on multiple meanings. This multiplicity, the historical perspective, and the constant juxtaposition of present and the past are not to be interpreted as psychological and are not the result of an alleged process of recollection, but an assertion of the perspective of an essayist on the part of the writer. The day on which the story takes place could not really have happened as it did; it only exists in the novel and has only literary and intellectual dimensions. Sükösd's novel is in fact a montage of personal confession, images of the past—like the montage and documentary inserts in a film—present happenings, historical scenes, sociological case studies and so forth. This form

has its interesting points. An essayist, Sükösd is concerned with the theory of the novel, and the structure of his novel is obviously informed by his concern for theory. *All Souls' Day* is both a stream of consciousness novel and an objective documentary. Its style wavers between bashful intimacy, diary-like subjective tone and an ironic detachment, reflexive superiority, the wry, distanced attitude of a notary.

Certain jolts and mannerisms in this witty, elegant play of styles, crammed with understatement and euphemism, reveal that the brilliant surface is deceptive. Sükösd has amassed an imposing body of material for his novel, yet the theoretical and moral guiding principles needed to organize and arrange it seem to be lacking. This is not to say that he or his protagonist are expected to offer some ideological creed or guidance—that could hardly be expected from anyone in the chaos of our time. Still, Sükösd is too detached, permissive and forgiving toward his arrogant protagonist, towards his conflicts and experiences, which are thus not really conflicts and experiences. The author seems to be both too close to, and too far from, his hero. On one hand, he understands his actions, just as he is understanding toward all other figures in the book. On the other hand, however, he seems to be totally indifferent to them, as though in the process of viewing them from the perspective of decades or centuries, from a 'grand total' of the narrative position, the issue of what they are like proved to be quite unimportant. Life is a little bit of this, a little bit of that, now one thing happens, now another; people would commit various acts. But this is both commonplace and untrue. Still, this is what in their total effect the numerous personal and historical incidents in the novel—especially the brief, sketchy life-stories that follow one another in mechanical repetition—seem to suggest.

In an important scene of the novel (its dramatic peak?—it comes too early to be so), a high-ranking official in the Parliament—his

sketchy biography, whether imaginary or real, is also provided—offers our protagonist a post as a cultural diplomat in New York. Merely ten years ago the narrator would have grabbed the opportunity, but he no longer believes in such a mission, preferring to do his own thing, writing; now he hesitates. And since during what is left of the day, indeed in the greater part of the novel, his present is still to be 'bruised' by several other figures, we do not even learn how he has decided in this matter. Again we do not in fact object to this display of indecision, which could be authen-

tically depicted as a symptom of a real intellectual attitude, yet we are baffled at seeing that the hero does not become truly involved in his own dilemma and thus cannot be taken seriously. "How can one know what is important and useful, and what is useless and harmful? When did I perform a useful act and when did I do harm? The answer is becoming more and more ambiguous to me," meditates the hero towards the end of the book. The reader, however, takes leave of him and his unsolved dilemmas with no special emotional arousal.

MIKLÓS GYÖRFFY

THE DEFENSIVE PERSONALITY

Ottó Orbán: *Összegyűjtött versek* (Collected Poems). Szépirodalmi, Budapest, 1986. 607 pp.; Ágnes Gergely: *Árnyékváros* (Shadow Town). Szépirodalmi, Budapest, 1986. 224 pp.

Convincing the reader is difficult for a poet; convincing the critic is even more difficult. "We are writing poems to each other, my friend (debarring the language of common days) and everybody, who speak only that language"—is the opening of a poem by Bálint Tóth, who practised this writing to each another with not negligible results for some thirty years. Yet the paramount problem is not in creating a language that is different, above the tongue of common days. To shape a certain poetical language, which differentiates any poet worth his (or her) salt from the next, yet still remains of the common language bearing the unmistakable marks of a given time. The poet alters that, just as widely differing dialects are variations on a common language. The problem is not only the development and the securing of the acceptance of the individual language, the idiolect of the poet. For when all is said and done, it is not the trick of creating, using a language, the slowly working magic by which the poet persuades us to understand the word, the image, the peculiar syntax, the way he

wants us to understand them, that convinces and wins over the readers. More is needed to convince; the appearance and acceptance, the clear embodiment of the poetic personality. The rather emotionally tuned relationship poetry must have to ensure better acceptance, a relationship between the acceptor and the poetic persona, is unavoidable. The reader must empathise with the person of the poet.

The path to the development of sympathy is thorny. In the rarest of instances it may arrive like a bolt of lightning but generally it grows in the slow process of familiarisation, through a series of minute motifs. Some enthusiastic readers of poetry—and these still exist, even if their numbers are falling, enthusiastic readers of poetry in Hungary—have always had their favourite poets. Poets they swear by. Poets, of whom any criticism, no matter how mild, revolts them. If a reader of this type would attempt to retrace, through self-analysis, the course whereby his attachment to a favourite poet developed, the role of the aesthetic experience, of the sheer aesthetic pleasure and the extent to which

sympathy with the personality of the poet contributed (the feeling of kinship with the mind of the poet, the parallel with his way of seeing the world, seeing a common lot), he would be forced to admit that aesthetic experience is attended by much that is (personal compatibility, emphathetic willingness or similar experience.)

What the poet can do is to reveal himself, in the language he has fashioned to his personality. And he must wait for sympathy. If that develops at all, sometimes (or mostly) it develops only with difficulty; this is particularly so for sincere, self-dissecting poets. It is easy for those—generally the majority, even if not of the heaviest weight—who always assume an air of moral superiority, moral example in their poems: saints amid squalor. (Self-complacency of this nature is evident in Hungarian poetry, particularly as a consequence of the poetry written during the fifties, the Stalinist era.) Any self-portrait that conforms to the facts almost tempts providence—not only in eras that tested people's morals. There occurred a trampling of the romantic and lofty ideal of the poet which is still vivid in most readers. The drive for something more humane is not always gratefully received.

It is, nevertheless, difficult to sufficiently appreciate the sincere drawing of the personality in modern (and not only in modern) poetry. Ottó Orbán, whose *Collected Poems* are to be discussed below, takes hold of the sensitive reader through his sincerity, even in his early poems where his characteristic mode of expression is still undeveloped. Orbán began to write or was persuaded to write poetry as a kind of psychological therapy when a child. He became an injured child prodigy curing himself through poetry, a poet of opposition. He had very good reason for this oppositionist attitude, also widespread in the present generation of teenagers—not that he was a neglected, frustrated child. His father had been transported to and murdered in a German concentration camp; he himself was herded for two weeks towards

a death-camp. The 'lesson' taught him to see poetry, the romantic role of the poet, as absolutely deheroized. The poet as pronouncer of asserted justice, a seer, a marker of the road to salvation, is not for him. Having experienced a savage reality that made a mockery of ideals, he regards poetry as a personal hand-hold at the most, a straw offered to a drowning man. "I saw pointless suffering—and believe only in happiness," sounds the young man's statement of naked disillusionment. True, he still grabs at every piece of straw. But in his mature period, he still regards poetry as "dangerous hope," "rusty obsession," "fervent idiocy," "irrational spite," "lunatic trust in nullity." These are words of a man, a mature poet, who managed to reach shore clinging to that stalk of straw, one who eyes with suspicious irony that which helped him escape and on which, whether he admits it or not, he staked his life.

The dual, ambivalent way of seeing, which is so characteristic of Ottó Orbán, becomes evident here, this quality documented above limited only to the role of poetry (expressing the tone of things through his practice of verse, his being a poet and their converse through the words he uses), characterises his relations with the world, his whole outlook. This dual vision extends not only to ideals and to the judgement of the events of the past but, with surprising and sympathetic consistency, even to his own affairs. Unlike the run-of-the-mill carvers of statues of themselves, Orbán only speaks of himself through contrasts, even when looking back at his youth. He described himself as a "wretched troubadour," an "impassioned botcher." There is some narcissism in this, but it is counterpointed.

I have attempted to feel out a characteristic mode of looking here. But the way of seeing, built on the inner qualities of the personality, always determines expression. It creates the style that suits itself. Orbán's mode of expression is based on the constant and simultaneous enlivening of opposites, on a ceaseless ironical self-control of a lively,

feverish world of emotions. A mixture of sublime and grotesque elements dominates not only the structure of the verse, but even penetrates the sentence and phrase, forming contrasts between adverbs and the words it modifies. Yet it is the metaphor, the parallel succession of metaphors—Orbán's strongest quality—which is most spectacularly typical. Over the years, as Orbán perfected a language of his own to rise above the common tongue—characteristically learning from two poets, Ginsberg and Pilinszky, who could not be more different—he developed a mode of expression linked through a succession of metaphors, sensual yet not symbolic, not allegoric but intellectual. A kind of squared circle, as he put it, in which the concept is sensuous, the abstraction is flesh and blood. He is able to express his wounded soul, where indignation over the crime of the century (Auschwitz, Buchenwald,) and over the crimes that followed has left a permanent mark; through the use of this intellectualised and always dual-seeing sequence of images, he makes us forget the conventionality of the emotional or mental technique adopted. Using tricks, ideas, twisted pictorial effects, he grows above his themes, giving them a distanced poetic assertion.

Clearly, the reader encounters a poetic persona of stature and complex poetry when reading the six-hundred pages of this collection. But beyond the aesthetic experience, which Orbán's poems always provide, how does he fare in the matter of sympathy? How does the reader manage to "receive" this vibrating, ironic and self-ironical intellectuality? Did he succumb to the attraction of the poetic personality? Do not the ambivalencies in forming, the predictability of emotional movement, the narcissism breaking through the irony, limit the empathy of the reader? Limit an affective personal identification? Will Orbán become the favoured poet for a wide range of readers?

Even a not very attentive reader would notice after reading well into the *Collected Poems* that there is in fact a change of tone in

his mature and apparently finally developed poetry. He would notice that this witty and entertaining mode of speech changes—even if only moderately—and becomes deeper and not merely witty and entertaining. Sincerity, which is his quality despite himself, couples a new nexus of themes to a social and historic restlessness, the focal point of his personal inspiration; these may be personal but they are open for others to identify with. Orbán has crossed the Rubicon between youth and old age: as he puts it he has gone past the unconcern that "deems rumours about old age to be scare mongering". "Within two years," he wrote in one of his earlier volumes, expressively entitled *Two of the Sisters Three Talk, the Third One Keeps Silent*, "I came close to death twice." There too he wrote: "I'm bidding farewell to the high-flown verse of my youth." Even if this farewell to poetry whose voice is at a high volume is not complete, some moving (no longer challenging or defiant) personal intimacy mixes in, intrudes his tone, his handling of the theme. As befits a great poet, he can speak with the voice that vibrates sympathetically in everyone, of life, fate and God. I think this is the point where the affective relation between Orbán and his readers becomes final.

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Ágnes Gergely too was a child when she lived through the historic cataclysm Ottó Orbán experienced. Perhaps her lot was luckier, at least her nature surely was. An extreme experience and all that happened in adolescence, which made Orbán so critical, induced positive qualities in her. This is not to say that she too had not received some never-forgotten and still healing wounds. One cannot go through what did happen without such wounds. Pilinszky, for instance, became a poet of compassion reacting to the merest glimpse of the same misery which did not involve him personally. Yet, instead of questioning the ideals of human existence, the order of values, these injuries prompted the very opposite; it strengthened them and

brought them to active realization. Ágnes Gergely is one of those poets who wishes to build the world, not to demolish it. One of her earlier books, *Kobaltország* (Cobalt Country) creates a whole kingdom complete with a king, royal mistress and, of course, court jester who fears not to speak the truth; this country, as she reveals it in an inset poem, *Notes of a Quartermaster*, is a product of a childhood fancy; Cobalt Country is related to our world in the way that the movement of fancy is always based on the kaleidoscopic, continually changing arrangement of the play of light on elements of reality. The mode and degree of the transmission depends on the prism of imagination. Some things are immediately selected from the poet's real life and made part of the country she founded. Usually these are intellectual and artistic experiences: remembering Auden in his later years (an exceptionally moving poem) and others about El Greco, Emily Dickinson and Petőfi, and a faith-inspiring encounter with Kassák, the apostle of the Hungarian avant-garde. That which hurts is more likely to become transmissional. The memory of war, of persecution, the series of tragedies that rise like vapour out of the well of the past thus fall, like light rain, throughout the poems of the book. But how powerfully they sound when they are given a place! What hyper-real power they receive when inserted into the quasi-playful surrealist text! "Remember Lipi, the scientist? Who—that was his science—cried hanging onto his invisible umbrella: 12-22-32-2,—12-22-42-2!—Yes, I remember. Since that was the number they tattooed on the back of his hand somewhere." Or the beginning of the poem *The Invisible Family*: "They are the only ones left now. The Invisible Ones.—Those who flutter in the darkness, chase one-another in the darkness: "Dad! where is Mum?" "Lili! where is Dad?" "Mum! where is Lulu,—Lulu, Lili, Dad, Mum, Lala, Pepe—where are they, where are they. . . everyone says they have gone, have gone away. . ." This is the rain of the past beating in. Yet it is rather the

childish lesson, expressed through the mind of the child that works to build Cobalt Country, the construction of the writer herself: "It is not judging that is needed, but surviving. . . time is also a possibility!" There is the principle concisely carved out by the poem *While Reading Borges*: "do not wither into yourself, / do not grow above yourself / do not be anything, but identical / leave the choice free. . ." It is by no means simple in the regions of East-Central Europe, however, to be identical, and always to choose freely, with such a past and such deeply determining Hungarian culture. "Dream a country for yourself," says the last line of *Cobalt Country*. An echo is to be found in the introduction to this volume of selected poems, *Shadow Town* (which includes *Cobalt Country*): "This selection was meant above all to be evidence. Its author always wanted to establish a town. A metropolis, a small town, sometimes a whole country, but in any case a foothold, where one can dig one's toes in, and which could be, when needed, a haven to herself as well as to others."

This yearning to establish a country or a haven is not that exceptional or unusual in this Central European region (or even in other regions of the world). At most it seems to be covered by the context of modern poetry and its distancing itself from romanticism. But is it really romanticism when used to find her place and her identity among those who speak the same mother-tongue amongst people living within the same culture? Can it be called romanticism in the case of a writer who adds to this culture—even if there are those who wanted to exclude her spiritually, indeed even bodily? Surely she is right in saying that in this part of Europe, and let us dare to say in Hungary especially, it was vitally necessary for decent people, no matter what stratum they came from, "to dream a country for themselves"? To found a town, a country a tradition there? The question of identity has always been vital here since the beginnings of Hungarian literature right up to the classics of the present.

The injury inflicted by history places Ágnes Gergely willy-nilly into the midst of traditions aspiring for something better, something more noble. In that terrible period which excommunicated her as a child, Gyula Illyés, the "national" poet of the era, said about his position: "For even if nowhere, I stand at home for it's reality that I see even if I see the world upside down, as a mirage."

The idea of Géza Ottlik's Other Hungary as the moral country of the good—to refer to a living classic—was also conceived in the midst of the events of that era.

In her special situation, her painful self-determination realized in *Stations*, a unique novel, as well as in her poetry, Ágnes Gergely thus continues something that is almost ever-present in Hungarian and in most literatures. This does not mean that she is traditional as a poet, that her poetics or her enhanced language bind her to the past. What gives a special and unrepeatable tone to her inevitable and bespoke writing is precisely that it is realized through the modern world-lan-

guage of association of ideas and construction of metaphor. What characterizes her, is a style of understatement free of pathos, an ability to shift ideas and a somewhat concealed manner of procedure. Characteristic too is a straightforward voice approaching prose in the poems; she inserts descriptive texts that can also be taken as prose, indeed written as prose, into the volume. This gives an attractive image of an unstuffy personality, precisely because of her modesty. The volume gives a personal picture of struggling days, fortunate or less fortunate experiments, poetical bull's-eyes and the occasional over-complications within the personality of the author.

If I am searching for the path of the sympathy of the reader, that of the development of empathy towards the mature poetical work of Ágnes Gergely, then the route markers stand in what has been said there. For the contemporary reader also has a huge need to found a town, a country or at least a haven. Where can he turn if not to the poets?

BALÁZS LENGYEL

A HUNGARIAN HISTORY OF THE FRENCH ENLIGHTENMENT

Béla Köpeczi: *A francia felvilágosodás* (The French Enlightenment).
Gondolat, 1986, 477 pp.

"Why should I, after so many histories of the French Enlightenment, undertake to write yet another book on the subject?" is the question put to himself by Béla Köpeczi, in the preface to his new book. "Because," he goes on, "I think that, after a great historic undertaking, in the course of constructing socialism, we now see and judge many a question differently from our contemporaries in West Europe. New things can be said also by relying on a method which, while starting out from cultural history in accordance with the established view, examines the slow changes of everyday culture as well as the course taken by those ideas which created an

awareness of consciousness in the great socio-economic trends."

The first Hungarian compilation on the life of Voltaire is nearly two hundred years old. It was published in 1790 by the poet Ferenc Kazinczy—a Protestant, Freemason, and supporter of Joseph II—in his periodical *Orpheus*. Interest in the French Enlightenment has practically not let up since, and the scholarly study of the subject has particularly flourished in recent decades. In the past ten years alone, two books in Hungarian on Voltaire and another two on Rousseau have been published, while a number of Hungarian works have dealt also with other schools of

philosophy, ideology, and art. Nevertheless, Béla Köpeczi is the first Hungarian author to have written a comprehensive, systematic history of the French Enlightenment. But what is it really that Köpeczi has written—the history of what? In our age, heavy with methodological disputes, the answer is certainly not self-evident.

D. H. Fischer's extraordinarily interesting and unjust *The Historians' Fallacy* was published in 1971. As proof of the vagaries of composition the author refers to the fact that quite different books were written by Cassirer, Backer, Cobban, Talmon, and Crocker on the European—including French—Enlightenment. Cassirer related everything to Kant; Backer singled out Montesquieu, Voltaire, Rousseau and emphasized the importance of Paris. Cobban laid stress on English developments. Talmon's protagonist was Robespierre, while Crocker's was the Marquis de Sade. D. H. Fischer does not even mention the American Peter Gay who wrote the history of the Enlightenment first of all from Voltaire's angle, and the Belgian Roland Mortier who did so primarily from Diderot's. Fischer's observation is justified: really, as many authors as many protagonists—but this is not necessarily a consequence of fallacy. Cassirer wrote his book centred on Kant between the two world wars. In 1952 Talmon's questioning the values of the Enlightenment was a reaction to the Second World War and to the incipient Cold War. In 1959 Gay, who was a follower of Cassirer's, first wished to defend the values of the Enlightenment in *Voltaire's Politics* (the introduction to his great synthesis). Mortier tried to call attention to the importance of Diderot who is usually the mostly ignored. But this was not the only reason for the "as many authors as many protagonists" syndrome.

After the Second World War, there was a boom in Enlightenment studies almost everywhere. At first it concentrated on Voltaire. New national and international centres of research mushroomed over the

world, opportunities arose for writing up, more thoroughly, and more systematically, than before, the almost immeasurably rich material. A great many new manuscripts also came to light. Basterman discovered one of Voltaire's principal works, the *Notebooks*, and doubled the number of his known letters. It was established also that the greater part of Abbé Raynal's widely known *Histoire des deux Indes* had been written by Diderot. New recognitions and reappraisals were a commonplace. The most spectacular of them was perhaps the publication and study of the works of the Marquis de Sade, but attempts were made also to present the forgotten values of eighteenth-century French poetry. Each author or work was appraised differently from country to country. For a century and a half, for example, Voltaire was not considered a poet in France. Alain wrote: "Voltaire a écrit des milliers en vers, parmi lesquels il ne s'en trouve pas un qui soit beau." In England, on the other hand, Matthew Arnold's authority was great enough to ensure that Voltaire's verse continued to be read to this very day. The syndrome of "as many authors as many protagonists" and the fact that most books concentrated on one, or a few, selected authors cannot be explained by any fallacy but by ideological, political, social, and aesthetic reasons.

The hero of Köpeczi's book is not this or that creative genius, but a broad section of the new-type intelligentsia. Köpeczi writes in the introduction: "In the *Berlinsche Monatschriften* of September 1789 Moses Mendelssohn asked: *Was ist Aufklärung?* What is the Enlightenment? The Königsberg philosopher Immanuel Kant answered in Latin: *Sapere aude!* Dare to be wise!—In a wider sense: Dare to use your nous, experience, science, in other words, all that makes man man. The Enlightenment interpreted in this way was proclaimed by the French *philosophes*, who were not professional philosophers but writers, or much rather men of letters who cultivated literature, the

arts and sciences alike, and who meant to apply also in practice the truth they had arrived at, and thus were shaping a new type of intellectual attitude.

The Enlightenment is a movement of ideas which wished to make a break with the dominant ideology of feudalism, with religion as institutionalized by the Catholic Church, which wished to modernize the economy and society by reforms, wished to spread the light, that is the values of science, proclaiming a new morality based on man-centred values, and intended thereby to free man as an individual, whom it imagines as happy. It expresses the aspirations of several sections of society which are bound up with concrete economic and social processes—even if often unaware of the relation of cause and effect—but what shows up in it is the ideology of the bourgeoisie in the first place.”

Köpeczi writes the history of the new-type intelligentsia without blurring the individual features of men of genius, of great or important creative spirits. From Fénelon, whose critique of Louis XIV, *Télémaque* and *Lettre à l'Académie*, exerted a profound influence on the philosophers of the eighteenth century, up to André Chénier, whom the Jacobins put to death two days before their fall, Köpeczi sketches more than a hundred portraits, and there are even more who he only refers to in a couple of sentences.

A feature of post-Second World War research into the Enlightenment is that historians laid emphasis on the differences and disagreements between the philosophers. For this there were two main reasons. The first was that, as I have already mentioned, much new material was discovered, and during its study and interpretation earlier ideas were modified, often substantially changed. The Marquis de Sade, though he had already come to Baudelaire's notice, emerged from practically total obscurity into the focus of attention. The other, and maybe the most important, reason was that modern historians of the Enlightenment, most of

whom favoured the movement, wanted to respond to those who thought of the *philosophes* to be dull and abstract, lacking features of their own. The differences and disputes, including Helvetius's criticism of Montesquieu, are also emphatically mentioned by Béla Köpeczi, who repeatedly points out how differently the political and social views of Fénelon, Montesquieu and Rousseau were, and could be, interpreted by contemporaries or the immediate followers. Still, he stresses the similarities and identities in the same manner as do Jacques Barzun or Roland Mortier. Or, to be more precise, Köpeczi emphasized the unity of the philosophers—who were critics and, more than once victims, of the *ancien régime*—in order to set forth more convincingly their disagreements and those of the authors.

Köpeczi formulated his own ideas in the course of nearly twenty years of research. He refers to the conferences of historians at Mátrafüred (1971, 1975, 1978, 1981, 1984) which dealt with “The Enlightenment in Hungary and in Central and Eastern Europe.” The chief convener of those conferences, the proceedings of which have since been published in French, had been Béla Köpeczi. They were attended by historians from Western and Southern Europe as well and offered an opportunity to discuss matters of general interest such as the problems of enlightened absolutism or the literary and artistic styles of the age of the Enlightenment. Béla Köpeczi was also one of the moving forces of the symposium which French and Hungarian historians held to survey the history of the intelligentsia in France and Hungary from the Middle Ages up to our days. (The proceedings of this meeting, edited by Le Goff and Béla Köpeczi, were jointly published in 1986 by Akadémiai Kiadó, Budapest, and C.N.R.S., Paris, under the title *Intellectuels français—Intellectuels hongrois, XIII^e–XX^e siècles.*) Köpeczi first presented his ideas on the Enlightenment in his *Eszme, irodalom, történelem* (Idea, Literature, History, 1971). There he stressed the in-

dependence of the history of ideas and culture, and pointed out the importance of the history of related institutions as well. A book on the life and time of Louis XIV as well as various works on the history of Franco-Hungarian relations can be regarded as immediate antecedents of the present volume.

After such theoretical and historical research, he writes in the preface to *The French Enlightenment*: "...the peculiarities of the Enlightenment can be defined as follows: in politics, the theory of a strong state, an economic and cultural reform; in religion, less orthodoxy and more tolerance; in philosophy, the rejection of metaphysics, and an emphasis on epistemology and natural philosophy; in the writing of history, the idea of progress; in morals, the pursuit of happiness; in literature and art, a stress on the importance of ideas, with writings on science acquiring a literary character, on the whole an increasingly close connection of philosophy, literature, and the arts; in general cosmopolitanism as well as patriotism and, especially in the more backward countries, the modern idea of the nation. The Enlightenment gives news of the new and is, in this sense, the ideological forerunner of the revolution, but only few of its representatives are in favour of revolutionary changes, and still fewer take part in the revolution itself."

These are general principles or features, which certainly do not apply to each and every philosopher, and particularly not in all the periods of their activity. In most cases they try to satisfy even identical demands by different methods and different objectives. Since Jean Bodin's *République* (1576) one of the principal propositions of French political thinking had always been that anarchy is the worst of all evils, and that between anarchy and absolutism there is no middle course. Montesquieu, however, by reviving Polybius's theory of the mixed state and proposing the principle of the division of power, offered a middle road evoking the age of

classical feudalism. But he is not less in favour of a strong state than the absolutists Voltaire or Diderot; he, however, wished to achieve it by different methods. Their view of history expresses the idea of progress, which also implies the rejection of the idea of providence revived by Bossuet and the extension of military and political history into a history of civilization. But as Durkheim towards the end of the last century already noticed, the idea of *progrès* is absent in Montesquieu's case. And Voltaire himself also thinks rather ambiguously about *progrès*, about its chances and values, although this fact is obscured by his polemic with Bossuet and Rousseau. As regards literature, Fontenelle's prophecy came true, literature annexed areas and subjects that earlier were part of science. Poetry as well, mainly the long narrative didactic poems of the latter half of the century, was permeated by the spirit of the *Encyclopédie*. Ideas were stressed and created new genres as well. As I. O. Wade observed, the new subjects of study extended or changed the conventionally accepted bounds of the genres.

Historians and political philosophers have long debated whether the Revolution was the continuation of the Enlightenment or a radical break.

The *philosophes*, Köpeczi argues towards the end, "did not act as advisers of the various trends, they worked through their ideas which the revolutionaries interpreted in various ways."

The methodological purpose of Köpeczi's Preface is to make clear that he interprets the Enlightenment as applying to every field of intellectual life. The intelligentsia of the new type did not confine itself to isolated fields, say ethics or politics. Various activities influenced each other all the more so since this or that *philosophe* operated in various disciplines or arts.

Köpeczi divides his book into eleven major chapters. The subject of Chapter I, "External Circumstances," is explained by the subheadings: Economy, Society and the

State in the 18th Century; The Setting of Everyday Life; Intellectuals and the Propagation of Culture. Chapter II bears the title "Periods of the Enlightenment." "The initial period," says the author, "extends from the last decades of the seventeenth century to the forties of the eighteenth... The second period can be reckoned from the forties to the mid-sixties and is determined by the publication of the *Encyclopédie*. In it the philosophers and seekers of the new in general act more or less in unity. The third period is decisive with the sharpening of opposition within the Enlightenment, and this ends in 1798." Köpeczi discusses in particular detail the first period, the "dawn of the Enlightenment," the "fountainhead," with an eye to the disruption of traditional ideas. He deals with the Bossuet-Fénelon dispute and the polemic between Bayle and Jurieu as well as the political and social views of such dissenting men as Vauban, Boulainvilliers, Saint-Simon, and Jean Meslier. He describes the scepticism of Saint-Évremond and Fontenelle and appraises the significance of *la Querelle*. Chapter III is entitled: "Dispute over Religion." In accordance with the title (*dispute*), Köpeczi discusses the "answer of the Church" which has been left out of many books dealing with the Enlightenment. These generally confined themselves to confronting the views of different philosophers or to evaluating the changing opinions of some of them. The titles of the following chapters are: "The Scientific View of the World," "Political Thinking," "The Conception of History," "Economic Theories and the Practice," "Morals and Education," "Literature and Other Arts," "The Enlightenment and the Revolution." Finally, the last chapter discusses, under the heading of "The French and the Hungarian Enlightenment," the reception in Hungary.

The chapter headings demonstrate, I think, the vast scope of the book. Köpeczi also writes about the differences of views expressed in the several volumes of the

Encyclopédie, Montesquieu's social theory, the success of Italian opera in Paris, eating habits, as well as the role of the theatre during the French Revolution.

Historians of the Enlightenment, for example Peter Gay to whom Köpeczi refers on several occasions, take pleasure in spectacular paradoxes. Köpeczi writes without paradoxes, and is more interested in continuous narrative than in argument. True, it would be superfluous to refer to some of the disputes, since he can quote Gay against Talmon and Crocker, and Mortier against the periodisation of Philippe van Thieghen. In any case Köpeczi, like Gay, wrote his work as an author who sympathised with the Enlightenment. The American and the Hungarian scholar agree on two basic principles: the Enlightenment was not a wrong turning, and its philosophy is still in many respects timely today. Mainly as against the conservative, traditional, mystic ideas.

As a Hungarian author, Köpeczi makes use of Hungarian documents and sources of the period which have so far escaped attention elsewhere. His work is characterised by consistent but never disproportionate references to Hungarian sources. The Hungarian material provides nothing surprisingly new but makes the already known picture more varied. Historians of the Enlightenment and the revolution regularly quote Young's observations. Köpeczi is not an exception, but he is the first to be in a position to compare them with the impressions of a Hungarian traveller.

Gergely Berzeviczy, a Lutheran nobleman from northern Hungary, went to Paris in 1787. Aged twenty-four, a Freemason and a supporter of the policies of the Emperor Joseph II, he came from Göttingen, where he had been a pupil of the historian August Ludwig Schlözer. (Berzeviczy later became an economist of note. He opposed serfdom and supported bourgeois changes in a Hungary dominated by Habsburgs who, going against the tide, were opposed to the Enlightenment and the Revolution.)

Berzeviczy travelled along the route commonly taken by Göttingen students via Frankfurt-am-Main, to Paris, the "centre of the civilized world," where "culture is at such a high stage that it nearly passes over to its opposite." His impressions are summed up by Köpeczi as follows: "Berzeviczy's observations tally with all that the English traveller Arthur Young noted in 1787-89. He also was of the opinion that great changes were about to happen, a fact explained primarily by the difficult economic situation and the incompetency of government." But Young observed also something that the Hungarian traveller could not see: the growing influence of the American Revolution.

Like every good book, this also shows only the tip of the iceberg of the author's knowledge. Béla Köpeczi has not found it necessary to cram into his compendium all that he had earlier written or told about the

French Enlightenment. This self-restraint is in general justified but occasionally exaggerated. In 1969, for example, Köpeczi emphasized, in a lecture, that Bayle had attributed the revocation of the Edict of Nantes not to the absolutism of Louis XIV but to the weakness of his absolutism. He leaves this out of his new book, although this helps us understand Voltaire's monarchism.

Köpeczi's book is a well-proportioned production elegantly rich in facts. As a stimulating history of the intelligentsia, it is useful to the general public and specialists alike. The book includes a well-selected bibliography, which includes virtually all works which represent opinions opposed to the author's views. The rich illustrations have been selected by Vera Kaposy, and the highly informative chronological table has been drawn up by Marianne Sági.

LÁSZLÓ FERENCZI

AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY

Rezső Bányász: *Századunk Amerikája—„amerikai évszázad”* (Twentieth-century America—"An American Century"). Zrínyi, 1987, 382 pp.

Quite a few of the recent books written by Hungarian journalists who have spent some time in the United States have quickly achieved popular success. Among these are a guidebook by Csaba Kis and books by Pál Bokor and by István Kulcsár, which summarize their authors' impressions of the United States of America. The situation is somewhat different as regards sociological and historical works on the U.S.A., which have not come out in quantities sufficient to satisfy Hungarian readers. Works of this kind have been translations for the most part: few Hungarian authors have had the opportunity to compile a volume deriving from indepen-

dent research. Here, however, is an author who has now issued his fourth book on the United States, and whose previous three, despite their relatively large editions, are now very difficult to obtain. His fourth book is still available since a second edition quickly appeared. The success of these works is their recommendation (bad books cannot be forced upon the reader) just as it is proof of how great an interest the Hungarian reading public takes in the life and problems of the United States of America. This interest implies a sort of demand for "servicing a debt". Owing to a being on opposing sides in the last war, then to the long period of Cold

War and to the simplistic propaganda picture that dominated that period, entire generations of Hungarian intellectuals had no strong grasp of American events and no power to form an independent opinion.

Hungary is linked with many bonds to the New World. Hungarian émigrés were present in the successive waves of immigration, scientists and artists of Hungarian birth have played a prominent part in American life. Consequently Hungarians often raise the question: "What makes them tick?" What motives actuate this remote country which, together with another superpower, exercises a definitive effect on the course of world events? How does the United States look at the world and how should the world look at the United States? These questions are given answers by the books of Rezső Bányász, which get to the essence of the historic junction points.

The first in this series was, in 1980, *Kissinger and Brzezinski* which, along with the next two, was produced under the pen-name *Békkés*. It was followed, in 1982, by *The Shadow of Truman: Continuity and the Changes in Post-War American Global Strategy*. Drawing on primary sources as well as secondary, this book exposed how long a shadow Truman had cast upon the successors and how he had restricted, in a certain sense, his successors' scope for action.

Somewhat different from the first two as regards the amount of source materials and commentaries relied upon, was the author's *Pax Americana: Fifty Documents on 20th-century American Global Strategy*, which appeared in 1984. An introductory essay in this volume surveyed the epoch which opened with the Spanish-American War, then followed fifty relevant documents. Half of these followed through the trend in US foreign policy from the Yalta agreements to the intervention in Cuba the other half narrated events from the Truman doctrine to President Reagan's address at the 1983 Convention of the American Legion. The documents were complemented by many footnotes clarifying the

historical context for the reader. Reviews, however, gave the opinion that the documents contained in the volume, even in this form, were not easily digestible for the broader public. It appeared that explanatory notes could not be amplified beyond a certain limit. For this reason the author and his publisher decided to compile another book drawing on the same documents and on additional sources and set in a broader context of the happenings of the same period. This is the fourth book, here under review.

One of its most remarkable sections is the first chapter—on the introductory period. It is a clear outline that demonstrates that the change in historical epochs cannot be calendared by consecutive centuries. Bányász comes to the conclusion that first of all it was the initial difficulties of overproduction imposed by rapid economic development which suggested to leading circles in the United States that new markets had to be conquered by whatever means, that outlets had to be secured for some of the goods produced in the United States and that sources for raw material had to be procured. America had to take into account that every leading European country had colonies of its own or spheres of influence at least, and that coming late for the spoil seemed unthinkable. Characteristic of US foreign policy, of the incipient aspirations to world hegemony, was a typical and unique "gilding" suited to American public thinking. The Manifest Destiny school strove to have the experience and views of the Founding Fathers, of puritan clergy and their flocks, who had fought against the European despotic powers and colonialism, wedded to what they thought the new times required. (It should be noted that Bányász not only describes the Manifest Destiny school pertinently but—as against others who have written with decidedly Marxist pretensions—pays all the time great attention to exposing the ideological and even moral elements in political decisions. He repeatedly emphasizes that US diplomacy has been, from the beginning to the present, the setting

for a permanent struggle between moralists and realists. Starting from their sense of the special mission of America, the moralists are willing to recognize only governments which subscribe to their political or moral concepts, while the realists are more inclined to accept the facts of the outside world.)

Bányász begins describing the America of the turn of the century with the presidency of McKinley and continues, in general, to weave his story around the incumbency of each US President. In this sense this work is both popular history and a collection of biographies of the number one personages.

It stands to reason that the scope of the present review does not allow me to follow the events in chronology, I wish therefore to dwell on two presidencies whose description seem to be particularly original. The first is that of Franklin D. Roosevelt, of whom probably many will agree with me that he was the greatest and most far-sighted of all US Presidents in our century. There is a striking analysis of the New Deal which, according to Banyász, was not simply "only" a way out of the economic depression which hit the whole world at that time, but was an expedient which the Roosevelt administration coupled with the improvement of the dismal situation of working families, of the labourers and farmers who suffered most from interpreting the social aspects of the New Deal simply as political manifestation of philanthropy, the author agrees rather with those American historians who take the view that the secret of the success of this "gilding" lay in the powerful coalition formed to back it up.

The book gives an idea of the greatness of FDR's statesmanship primarily by emphasising his choice of direction in world politics. He understood the basic mood of the American public when Hitler's Third Reich was embarking on its territorial expansion in Europe, when Italy had launched a war of aggression on Abyssinia in defiance of the League of Nations and Japan was overrunning China. For the USA was still in

an isolationist mood and Roosevelt was well aware of this; he moved circumspectly, never outrunning the public mood.

Roosevelt, coming gradually to concur with Churchill in condemning the expansionist nature of fascism, took a series of diplomatic and military steps in order to halt the fatal course of events. One of his foreign policy demarches was his letter to Hitler, dated 14 April 1939, in which he called upon the Führer to undertake not to attack the countries listed therein, including Hungary. Simultaneously, the President introduced economic and legal measures to prepare the country to face the worst turn events could take. A consequence of this was, of course, that the United States could enter the war as a great power whose mighty war economy was an immense contribution to thwarting fascist aspirations to conquer the whole world.

An essential part of the legislative preparations was that, by steady work on minor details, Roosevelt succeeded in putting through an amendment of the Neutrality Act so as to enable the USA to render assistance to countries attacked by the Nazis, first to Great Britain and France, later to the Soviet Union as well. Banyász does not say so explicitly but suggests to the reader that Roosevelt soon succeeded in what many regarded as the political equivalent of squaring the circle—he ultimately isolated the isolationists.

The other President whose period in office produces a particularly successful political sketch is Richard M. Nixon. In this case it would be more accurate to say that we receive parallel biographies of the President and of the architect of his foreign policy, Henry Kissinger. Banyász lets their merit be seen in the fact that they together traversed a road calling for great intellectual courage, incidental to a reappraisal of the role which the Soviet Union had to play after the Second World War. "The reassessment of the effective strength of the United States, of the position it held in the world, of its possib-

ilities and interests, could not take place without violent internal disputes, without the loss of illusions. From possible nuclear strategies conceived in a cold-war spirit, from the mistrustful reception of a Soviet-US rapprochement initiated by the Soviet Union and of the idea of détente, Nixon and Kissinger also had a long way to go before they could size up the situation in a realistic manner. It was none the less difficult to make the necessary world political conclusions. This search for new ways and a revision ended roughly by 1968. Thus the new administration already had a mature conception to steer by when setting itself to tackle the immense unsolved problems. First of all, to enforce a global strategy aimed at building up a militarily bipolar but politically multi-polar world order."

That is the author's most important deduction from military bipolarity, namely that a war between the two super powers must be prevented. In this connection he quotes Kissinger as saying that, in an age when these

two countries are in possession of the means by which to destroy civilization, the stakes have become too high for the Soviet-US relations to be presented as some test of "manliness."

Rezső Bányász, a diplomat and a former ambassador in London, is currently head of the Information Office of the Hungarian government and the government's spokesman. He began as a journalist and continued as a historian. . . His skills as a journalist have not made his work shallow but have rendered it more colourful and more readable, giving the author courage to decide where to cut the thread. He goes as far as the Gorbachov-Reagan Geneva meeting, stating that to venture nearer to the events of our days would hardly be appropriate from the point of view of the chronicler's accuracy and reliability.

This serious book is a valuable contribution to the Hungarian popularising literature on the history of US diplomacy.

PÉTER VAJDA

THE LONG YEARS OF PILGRIMAGE

György Kroó: *Az első zarándokév. Az albumtól a suite-ig* (The First Year of Pilgrimage. From the Album to the Suite). Editio Musica, 1986, 128 pp.

On reading György Kroó's book, musicians and musicologists who do not specialise in Liszt may well want to know why, in view of the enormous body of literature on Liszt, this subject was not treated as it deserved before the centenary of Liszt's death. The question is all the more justified since the work in question is the first volume of the *Années de Pèlerinage*, a three-volume cycle of piano pieces, spanning the oeuvre and of outstanding importance. Surveying the Liszt literature, one finds as major contributions only general, mainly aesthetic, comments in comprehensive works or in reference books, or

new data, which, however welcome, are, figuratively speaking, only road signs that point in the direction of a web of problems.

Kroó holds that the genesis of the first volume marks a turning-point in Liszt's oeuvre. He is primarily concerned, more as a historian than a philologist, with the highly complex, multi-layered documents extending over twenty years of creative work that preceded the final formulation of the cycle. It becomes clear that, without a knowledge of the full musical output of the previous twenty years, of the many editions, letters, prefaces and conceptions, namely the biographic back-

ground, one can neither truly understand the composer's intentions in the *Première Année* nor attempt an appraisal of its historical significance. This is not to say that Kroó has come upon an earlier version which would rank as a new discovery and add to the Liszt repertoire an independent opus, a clear example of the relevant work phase. True, some pieces or series of pieces from the earlier versions of the *Première Année* would certainly deserve to be performed; however, their publication and distribution would be, strangely enough, against the composer's will. When in 1855 Liszt published the final version of the *Première Année* with Schott's in Mainz, he disowned the earlier versions and assigned the category of a "finished work" only to the last version. As becomes clear from a letter written to Schott in 1855, cited by Kroó, his main reason was simply that the *Années de Pèlerinage* is a different and better work than the *Album d'un Voyageur* (the title Liszt gave to earlier variants of the *Années*).

In the case of piano pieces, proclaiming a version to be the "final" one was rather rare for Liszt. As we know from the memoirs of his pupils, in his old age Liszt frequently made changes in his youthful works and produced extempore variations in class. True, this happened mainly in the case of his operatic paraphrases, which, strictly formally speaking, are in inferior category and which in any case bear traces of some improvisational practice. Still, Liszt was a composer and a performing artist, who composed variants and from time to time re-interpreted his compositions in both his capacities. His naming of the last version of *Première Année* as final means that he considered the earlier versions merely as sketches and experiments, namely that they are not to be considered as variants of the same rank. The historian and the publisher are faced with a dilemma: half-finished works come under their scrutiny, in spite of Liszt's intentions, which the composer would surely have destroyed, had he been able to; at the same time, however, Liszt's development as a composer can no-

where else be traced as clearly as in the various editions of the *Album d'un Voyageur*, predecessor of the *Années de Pèlerinage, Première Année, Suisse*. The results are, no doubt, enticing. The researcher cannot help regretting for a number of pieces that Liszt disposed of in 1855 with a stroke of the pen and thus becomes an unwitting advocate.

This dilemma remained unsolved in the relevant volumes of the New Liszt Edition by Editio Musica. Had the coeditors Imre Sulyok and Imre Mező held strictly to their proclaimed editorial principles in publishing the first volume of the *Années*—namely only those pieces were to be included that appeared in the composer's lifetime and were approved by him as the final versions—then the complete edition should only have held the nine pieces that have since become well known from live and recorded performances. But they too yielded to the temptation and published as an appendix those pieces from the section *Impressions et Poésies* in the *Album d'un Voyageur* that either do not appear in the final cycle (*Lyon, Psaume*) or else appear in an entirely re-adapted form, as new pieces (*Les cloches de G. . .*). They also published the second part of the original *Album*, which comprises nine pieces entitled *Fleurs mélodiques des Alpes*, probably because Liszt used some of its melodies in the final *Années*. The result was that the appendix differs from any of the versions of the *Album*, merely serving some didactic purpose. Outlining the authentic historical picture in its entirety, to the extent this is possible at any given time, had been left to György Kroó to carry out in his book, published ten years later.

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The philological research, the assembly of the pieces of the mosaic are merely complementary means towards solving the basic issue of the book. Kroó's attention was first and foremost drawn by the changes the titles and subtitles had undergone over the years. In the 1842 Haslinger edition (Vienna) they

were, respectively, *Album d'un Voyageur* and *Compositions pour le Piano*, in the 1841 Richault edition (Paris), *Années de Pèlerinage* (sic!); and in the 1855, final, Schott edition the main title remained the same, apart from a change in spelling (*Pèlerinage*), and the subtitle was *Suite de compositions*. These consecutive titles are clearly indicative of the phases of Liszt's development as a composer. The title *Album d'un Voyageur*, which Liszt gave to a series of piano pieces around 1840, covered three different groups of works—independent pieces, arrangements, transcriptions of Swiss tunes, and paraphrases made according to the fashion of the time or in the spirit of some of his friends' compositions. Although some intention of arranging the pieces into a cycle can already be traced in the structure, the fact, as evident from contemporary editions, that both Liszt and his publishers, at times arbitrarily, picked some pieces from the collection and published them separately, leads one to suppose that the principle of organizing them into a cycle was not adhered to strictly. According to Kroó's dating, based on the printers' plate number and other documents, Liszt published, either simultaneously or at some time earlier, the section *Impressions et Poésies*, comprising seven pieces with Richault's in France, under a less conventional title, as part of a longer cycle to be completed later. Finally, in the 1855 Schott edition (which is the essence of the whole musical material of the *Album*, though without song arrangements and paraphrases) he declares that the pieces, now nine in number, belong together—by giving them the title *Suite de compositions*.

Liszt's development from the genre pieces of the *Album* to the *Suite* thus led from the 'supplementary' composing practice of a performing artist to the manifestations par excellence of a composer; to put it geographically, this led from Paris to Weimar and chronologically, from 1836 (when the oldest pieces of the *Album* were composed), to 1855. However, as Kroó warns in his study, no sharp dividing line should be drawn either

between two cities or two dates. Should we do so, we would commit a mistake similar to that—perhaps deliberately—committed by a fervent critic of Liszt's, Eduard Hanslick, when he wrote in an 1856 review of the first nine symphonic poems: "When Franz Liszt, the greatest virtuoso pianist of our age, tired of the glory he had reaped and which Europe would have been so willing to offer him for his genuine artistry for a long time to come, he decided, as is known, to surprise the world with great compositions of his own."

György Kroó's book refutes this generalisation that haunts us to this day. He puts forward the well-supported argument that the crucial, formative years of the composer fell between 1834 and 1837, that is, his last year in Paris and one of the years of his *Pèlerinage* which marked the zenith of his career as a pianist. He formulated his intentions as a composer consciously and unambiguously in a letter written to Ferdinand Hiller in 1835, marking out the path he was to follow in the twenty years to come. In particular, he was searching for an individual voice, for an 'inner line' ("*ligne intérieure*"—and that thirteen years before Weimar!) ". . . les concessions (peu nombreuses d'ailleurs) auxquelles je me vois obligé ne me feront pas dévier de ma ligne intérieure." In the first six chapters of the book Kroó shows all the digressions, obstacles, stops and bypaths of this process. Even in spite of occasionally self-contradictory intentions, three main lines of development can be detected, which were to accompany Liszt in the period when he created his own musical idiom.

1. Fashionable concepts and forms underwent a gradual re-interpretation as he worked. Stringing pieces for an album, as was the fashion of the time, was replaced by employing the higher principle of organising them into a cycle. The popular sketches and genre pieces composed under the impressions of a 'voyage', inspired mainly by the literary models of Georges Sand, were relegated to the background; their place was taken by more complex and more distanced musical render-

ings of an inner, poetic voyage. The ideas underlying the pieces gradually lost their original descriptive nature and assumed non-typical, idiosyncratic meanings.

2. It becomes clear from the various phases of work that, in the second half of the 1830s, Liszt had to face up to deciding whether priority should be given to the pianist or the composer. In this respect, Kroó makes a convincing comparison between Liszt and the two composers he recognised in his heart of hearts as superior to himself—Schumann and Chopin. By the time Liszt came to regard, as models to be followed, works by them rather than those of the fashionable pianists in Paris, the choice of the compositional form becomes noticeably problematical: should it be the arrangement of folk tune from another country, a paraphrase, a transcription or an independent composition of poetic inspiration? In Kroó's interpretation, the 1841 Richault edition points to the latter.

3. In conjunction with the above, Liszt's view on how to represent nature musically was transformed; the traveller's impressions were enriched with by his reading and imbued with poetry; the experience that had inspired the composition became more and more stylised in the course of its musical expression, until it clearly bore the imprint of a mental voyage, the high feelings of a pilgrimage. Over the long course of creating this expression, Liszt relived the original experience as a memory, consequently the directly descriptive character of the pieces became more diffused, occurring only as a distant reference, even a Platonic idea.

The first six philological chapters of Kroó's book make it quite clear why Liszt omitted pieces of a paraphrasal character from the final version and why he rejected the variants that appear in the *Album*. In the two closing chapters Kroó draws a parallel between the final version and the relevant parts of the Richault edition and presents those compositional features that justify that change of the designation in the Richault edition of

Compositions de piano to Suite de Compositions in the Schott edition. By way of summing up this detailed analysis, Kroó writes: "... the *Pre-mière Année, Suisse* consists of a series of pieces of a novel type, which are organically interconnected; it is a coherent cycle which in its own way is as purposefully built up as a Beethoven-cycle. . . the motto-like, non-musical references and the musical devices employed, the way they are used in organising the pieces into a cycle, are as logical as in any Schumann-cycle. The order of the keys, the symmetrical structure whereby two smaller cycles arranged around a core are brought into play, the continuity evident in the order of the movements, i.e. the individual pieces—the empathic points of connection, the motifs resembling rhymed prose, the references backward—and the contrastive principle in the tempi, beats and the musical programme alike . . . make for a qualitative difference from the type of cycle that merely consists of pieces strung together, and compared with which this work is of a higher order."

The author's train of thought again inspires the question as to why it is only now that a fundamental work like this has been written. Perhaps the growing-pains of Liszt research had first to be overcome—the disputes on his national identity, the dilemma of 'performing artist or composer', the forced and infertile connecting of his old-age style, apparently so distinct from the main body of his work, with twentieth-century music. The most interesting Liszt lectures given at the International Liszt Symposium held in 1986 in Budapest also seem to confirm that Liszt can best be approached from within his own work, from his genuine intentions and not from roles attributed to him. Kroó's study is an important achievement contributing towards this goal. A radical transformation of the traditional Liszt image is under way and this calls for more research of this type.

ANDRÁS BATA

ARTS

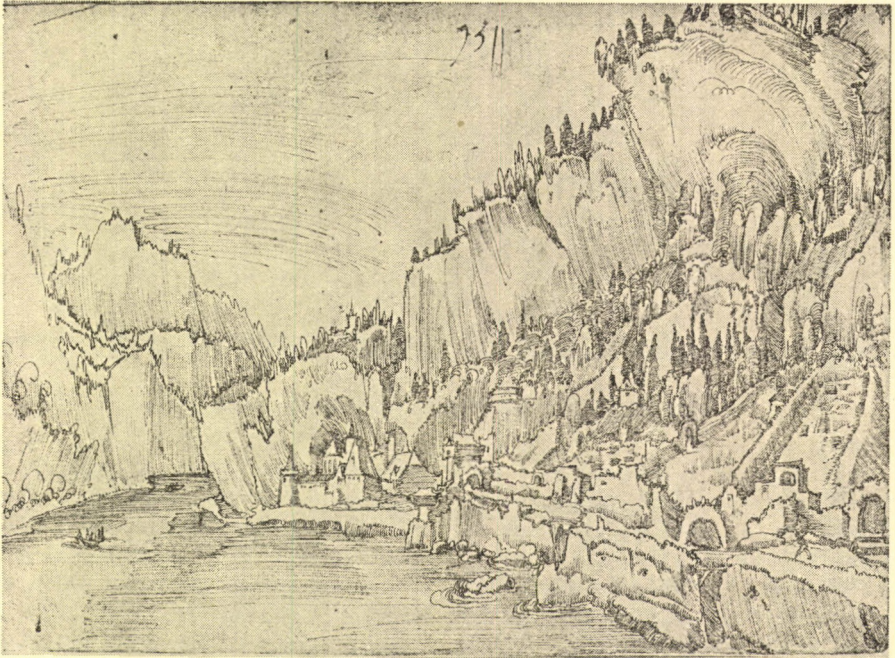
SIX-HUNDRED YEARS OF EUROPEAN GRAPHIC ART

Exhibition in the Budapest Museum of Fine Arts

The Budapest Museum of Fine Arts holds two or three exhibitions of its graphic holdings annually; within the series of exhibitions introducing individual periods, schools or artists, a recent exhibition drew attention to the collection of drawings and prints owned by the Museum. It gave a comprehensive picture from the beginnings of printed graphics in the fifteenth century up to the present day on the outstanding work employing different graphic techniques; the greatest graphic artists from Schongauer to Joan Miró and Salvador Dalí were included. The sight of the works of Dürer, Rembrandt, Tiepolo, Piranesi, Daumier, Manet, Toulouse-Lautrec and Picasso induced in the viewer the desire to know how the museum came into possession of such a rich stock, considering the country's historical circumstances.

Among the holdings of the Museum of Fine Arts, the graphics collection now numbering close to ten thousand drawings and a hundred thousand prints, is second in value only to the old master holdings. The Esterházy collection constitutes the core of the picture gallery, the drawings and the prints of the museum. The Esterházy collection developed in its fullness relatively late, at the beginning of the nineteenth century. It was mainly established by Prince Pál Esterházy (1756-1833), the owner of huge

estates in Western Hungary, a diplomatist and captain of the Hungarian Body Guard. He was an experienced and expert collector. In the course of his travels he himself and his curator, Joseph Fischer, a Viennese engraver, bought both individual works and complete collections from art dealers; that is how he came in possession of a famous picture gallery and graphic material in the course of a few decades. His collection was established in 1796 when he purchased drawings and prints from the Counts József and Miklós Pálffy. The collection grew rapidly as a consequence of fortunate purchases at the beginning of the nineteenth century. In 1803 he bought the collection in Prague of Count Franz Anton Nowohratesky, from which came, among other things, Rembrandt's *Woman with Crying Child and Dog*. From that time on, he made the collection of drawings and prints accessible to the public. A year later, in 1804, through the mediation of a Nuremberg art dealer, J. F. Frauenholz, the prince purchased Paul von Praun's collection, which was particularly rich in German Renaissance works and in Italian sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century masters. Praun had established friendly connections with several leading contemporary artists—Jost Amman and the Jamnitzer brothers in Nuremberg, Denys Calvaert, Guido Reni and Giovanni da



*Albrecht Altdorfer: Sarmingstein on the Danube. 1511. Pen and grey ink, 272 × 215 mm.
Provenance: Praun, Esterházy Collections*

Bologna in Bologna—who assisted him in the acquisition of works. Pál Esterházy purchased about one third of the Praun collection. This was the source of the drawings by Dürer, Altdorfer, Hans Baldung Grien and Wolf Huber. In 1811 he purchased, in return for an annuity, Antonio Cesare Poggi's drawings collected from every corner of Europe; Poggi was a painter, engraver and publisher of Italian origin living in Paris. This was perhaps Esterházy's most precious acquisition; it included drawings by Leonardo, Raphael, Correggio, Tintoretto, Veronese, Parmigianino, as well as works by Poussin, Rembrandt, Guido Reni, Guercino, Salvator Rosa from the seventeenth century. In Paris and London he managed to lay hands on a number of works from the collection of Joshua Reynolds and the material of two contemporary French collectors, Crozat and Pierre-Jean Mariette.

In 1814 the prince brought together his collections, earlier stored in various places, in the Kaunitz palace of Mariahilf near Vienna and thus the collection became an integral part of the cultural life of Vienna. Following the death of Joseph Fischer in 1822, Pál Esterházy's collecting diminished considerably and when he died in 1833, the family virtually ceased collecting actively.

One of the symptoms of Hungarian cultural awakening in the first half of the nineteenth century was the pressing desire to have the Esterházy collection moved from Vienna to Budapest. In 1865 the Esterházy picture gallery and graphics collection, consisting of 3,535 drawings and 51,301 prints, was purchased by the Hungarian state and became part of the National Gallery, which had its home in the building of the Academy until the Museum of Fine Arts was built. The collections continued to be enriched prior to



RAPHAEL: STUDY FOR THE FIGURE OF VENUS.
1512-1513. METALPOINT, 189 X 75 MM.
Provenance: Reynolds, Poggi, Esterházy Collections

Mária Szentei



LEONARDO DA VINCI:
STUDY OF A WARRIOR'S HEAD. 1504-1505.
RED CHALK, 226 X 186 MM
Provenance: Poggi, Esterházy Collections



REMBRANDT VAN RIJN: WOMAN WITH CRYING CHILD AND DOG. AROUND 1635.
PEN AND BROWN INK. 182 X 145 MM.

Provenance: Nowobratsky-Kollowratb, Esterházy Collections



ALBRECHT DÜRER: LANCER ON HORSEBACK. 1502.

PEN AND BROWN INK, 272 X 215 MM.

Provenance: Esterházy Collections



MARC CHAGALL: ÂNE SUR LE TOIT. 1911. GOUACHE, 430 × 345 MM.

Provenance: Mrs John Szedlár in 1969

EDUARD MANET: BARRICADE. 1871. WATERCOLOUR, INDIAN INK WITH WHITE HEIGHTENING. 462 × 325 MM

Provenance: Jean Dollfus, Majovszky Collections



Mária Szencsi

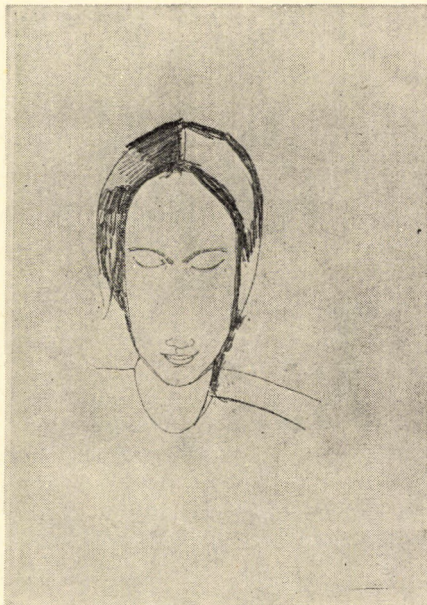
BENJAMIN WEST: CHARITY. WATERCOLOUR WITH WHITE HEIGHTENING. 358 × 295 MM.
Provenance: Ladislav Molnár in 1972

VINCENT VAN GOGH: WINTER GARDEN IN NUENEN. 1884. PEN AND BROWN INK WITH
WHITE HEIGHTENING, 515 × 380 MM.
Provenance: Majovszky Collection

the year of 1906, the year of opening of the Museum of Fine Arts.

The Delhaes and the Majovszky collection

The most significant acquisition in this period is the bequest of István Delhaes, a Hungarian painter of Belgian origin; this contained 14,453 prints and 2,683 drawings and was bestowed on the Hungarian state in 1901. The painter, of considerable personal property, lived in Vienna for many years as the picture-restorer of the Liechtenstein princes; thus his collection was mainly drawn from Austrian private collections and the commercial art world of Vienna. His rich collection of the drawings of Austrian and German artists of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was primarily responsible for the Museum of Fine Arts having the most important holdings of this period and school after Vienna. He too was the source for the Austrian masters active in Hungary such as Paul Troger, Franz Anton Maulbertsch. Delhaes' drawings constituted a fortunate supplement to the Esterházy collection which had lacked nineteenth-century works. This part of the collection was significantly further enriched when Pál Majovszky, head of the art department of the Ministry of Public Education, presented the museum with his collection. From 1911, with the expert assistance of Simon Meller, he had compiled a collection of 259 sheets in a fairly short period of time; the period covered was from the end of the eighteenth century to the beginning of our century, and the collection was closest to historical completion mainly in the French school. He collected the great French masters—Ingres, Delacroix, Millet, Rodin, Renoir, Corot, Gauguin, Cézanne—in a period when only their paintings were known and popular. Thus he managed to acquire outstanding graphic works such as Delacroix's *Horse Frightened by Lightning*, Manet's *Barriade*, Cézanne's *Provençal Scene*, Renoir's *Waltzers*. The Majovszky collection also signific-



Amedeo Modigliani: Portrait of Ada Karintny.
1912. Pencil, 215×157 mm.
Purchased from Dr Charles Letenay in 1979

antly supplemented the British and the Austrian-German nineteenth-century collection and drawings by Van Gogh also came from here. In addition to merging larger collections, the museum has continued to make acquisitions. Following the Second World War purchases came to a temporary halt; nevertheless the museum has been enriched since 1945 by 1,179 drawings and 3,845 prints, examples of the work of Giambattista and Domenico Tiepolo, Benjamin West, Honoré Daumier, Marc Chagall and Pablo Picasso.

Recent donations and acquisitions

Several valuable series and collections have been donated to the museum, including Picasso drawings donated by Kahnweiler, more than a hundred serigraphs of Victor Vasarely

and more than seven hundred old prints form Vilmos Szilárd. Collecting in recent years has concentrated on twentieth-century graphics. Recent acquisitions include drawings by Marc Chagall, four drawings by Alexander Rodchenko, Modigliani's portrait of Ada Karinthy, the drawings of László Moholy-Nagy, as well as several hundred sketches of Zoltán Kemény, donated to the museum by his wife. Among the prints acquisitions, outstanding are those by Picasso, Salvador Dalí, Max Pechstein, Amédée Ozenfant, Fernand Léger and Joan Miró.

The current collection is an integral whole constructed historically in which every school is represented by a series of significant examples. Although it may not compete with the graphic collection of the Albertina in Vienna, the Louvre or the British Museum,

it occupies all the same an outstanding place among the collections of secondary significance, as do the museum's holdings of paintings. * Since 1965, the museum has sent several exhibitions abroad. The master drawings were exhibited in Austria, the Soviet Union and the United States. Exhibitions have been arranged in Venice of its Venetian drawings and in Salzburg of its Austrian, German and Dutch drawings. The works which have perhaps been reproduced most frequently are head studies of Leonardo, made for the warriors of the battle fresco of Anghiari, intended for the Palazzo Vecchio of Florence, but never actually executed.

ANDREA CZÉRE

* See *NHQ* 14

RESIGNED EMANCIPATION

The Lajos Barta Commemorative Exhibition in Székesfehérvár

The István Király Museum is the setting for this, the first exhibition of Lajos Barta which offers a cross-section of his work, and is also a commemorative exhibition, a selection of what the sculptor has left in Hungary. The vacuum which developed around modern art and the artist in Hungary compelled him to emigrate in 1965. If he had persisted for a few more years at home and, like the other former members of the European School (Dezso Korniss, Tihamér Gyarmathy), become part of the avant-garde that emerged in the second half of the decade, he would certainly have sooner or later occupied his deserved place among the non-figurative masters in Hungarian sculpture. On the other hand, there is the bitter truth that this show would not have had been such a revelation and his oeuvre would not have to be placed as a kind of missing link into those trends in Hungarian sculp-

ture which deviate from its mainstream. But then his statues would hardly now be standing in the squares of Cologne, and West German studies would hardly be discussing his art.

His beginnings, according to the evidence of the existing drawings and studies, linked him to late Art Nouveau. He studied and worked in wood-carving and ceramic workshops, took lessons in modelling and frequented free schools but received no real regular academic training. Later, when he had evolved his own idiom, this became rather an advantage because it was one of the reasons why the weight of classical conventions did not paralyse him and, perhaps, this was what enabled him to make the bold and extreme steps so rare in Hungarian sculpture between the two world wars. First, following the advice of his painter friend, Endre Rozsda, he destroyed most of the sculptures he had

produced up to that time and then he produced his first non-figurative works in Paris in the late 1930s. Although he never became an exclusively abstract sculptor, these works had a decisive impact on his oeuvre.

His figurative sculptures also differed from the conventional Hungarian style of that period. They combined Ferenc Medgyessy's bulky realism with Dezső Bokros-Birman's sarcastic vision (*Man with Hat*). His gnome-like torsos pressed into disproportion (*Antique Figure*), his thick-set women seem malleable and flexible despite their robust forms. What is common to all of them, is their growing out from organic existence. In the early forties, orthodox surrealism also exerted an influence on Barta but his sculptures created in that spirit were slightly illustrative, they contented themselves with the visualization of one or another conceptual point (*Marie Antoinette as a Duck*). In his best works surrealism appears only as one component of a romanticism complemented with the expressive impetus of the composition. The search for the balance of Bios and Logos, the unity of instinct and reason, the intention of representing the harmony of the organic and inorganic world preoccupied many Hungarian artists at the time. After 1945 Barta became part of the European School which embraced these trends. Between 1946 and 1948 he held a series of one-man shows and participated regularly in group exhibitions: the sculptures of that period proved that he had finally found his true idiom.

However, he had first to go back to the basic forms. Through the sphere, the cylinder, the opening prism, he created those basic units, signs which could be multiplied and arranged into bold and complex compositions. In those years he experimented with a single, relatively simple form which he twisted or tilted from its natural centre of gravity; in other sculptures his configurations sway in space with an almost Baroque extravagance. What both types have in com-

mon is that they seem to deny the force of gravity. Often they are fitted to the ground plane only on a surface of a finger's breadth and they swing further from this Archimedean point. They seem to float as if nothing could restrain their defiant lightness. Barta did not want to create an unchanging sign, an idol based on the finality of a closed or bared form; even his sculptures built of elementary formations carry in themselves the possibility of change and transformation. They are created almost as plants: they sprout, burst, shoot up and continue to grow rhythmically in space. They are the formulation of a basic problem of Barta which he attempted to solve throughout his life: how is it possible to achieve the delicate balance between the mass of the sculpture gravitating towards the earth and its upward-reaching form-content. In one of his works he fitted to each other five cones with their tips turned downwards so that the whole group stands on the plane only on a single point. The other four forms seem to walk round the propped-up fifth, but at the same time they float and are scattered in space with growing uncertainty. Another solution favoured by Barta is the spiral: either the same thin gypsum band is first creased into a complicated knot, then pushes upwards with a triumphant swing, or two S-shaped lines facing each other ultimately interlace.

Barta was part of an exceptional moment in Hungarian art when, in the years after the Second World War, experiments for developing a sculptural mode of creation without prejudice were as topical as the post-surrealist aim at revealing, in the words of Ernő Kállai, the "hidden face of nature." In his work Barta managed to harmonize these two possibilities: his works could become the involuntary examples of bioromanticism. At the same time, they were independent of all the hitherto customary, "Hungarian" connections because they entrusted their message to the form: they had their kinship with the spirit of the sculptors of the *École*

de Paris. Therefore it is quite natural that critics mainly mention Brăncuși and Arp among those who have influenced Barta.

After 1948 when the European School was compelled to dissolve Barta had difficult years ahead of him. Adapting perfunctorily to the expectations of the period, he started to produce some "easily intelligible" works but continued to make abstract sculptures for himself, although the romantic passion and Baroque pathos of the earlier years had disappeared from them. The total repression of the 1950s had taken away the ground from under the theory which proclaimed the inherent unity of the microcosmos with the macrocosmos, and stifled every faith in the possibility of free experiment. So form remained Barta's only support; this was truly the time of working for himself. He continued to experiment with the fitting together of four cylinders and three octahedrons and to try out the potentials inherent in the rhythmical repetition of a multiply twisted wave form (*Waves*) or in the swaying of a spiral.

Only in the mid-sixties, when the severity of the rigid cultural policy softened, could these sculptures find a few timid admirers. So it is not surprising that, with the passing of the blissful *Sturm and Drang* period of the European School, he simplified and reduced his forms with some resignation. At the end of this reduction process, there still remained enough elements with which to build up a sculptural world which was a law unto itself, based primarily on ideas. Barta's imagination called to life such "natural forms," in Géza Pernecky's phrase, which had obtained their definite form already on paper, and were

transmitted into three dimensions almost unchanged. These drawings in red crayon or graphite also signal that Barta always envisioned the completed sculptural idea, the plastic *bon mot*; just as his formations floated in the paper's white space, his sculptures tried to contradict the banal sculptural canons with the same naturalness. His *Capriccios* were not necessarily limited to smaller sizes; in given cases they could be enlarged to public-square sculptures without changing their proportions. The finest examples here are his works in the Federal Republic of Germany, such as *Spring*, which stands in front of the college at Siegen.

Since the mid-fifties there have been no significant changes in his art. After moving from Hungary, he continued in Paris, Cologne, and in various other settings what he had begun in his studio in Budapest. He varied the same theme in several designs; then, in the next work, he concerned himself with a radically different sculptural problem. Through its openness, variety, and free spirit in the truest sense of the word this art does not only represent a European dimension in Hungarian non-figurative sculpture but, according to some recent critics, this East Central European had added new French features to a German sculpture based on expressionist traditions. Considering that this oeuvre, apart from its sculptural performance, offers substantial lessons in the geography of art, the fact that it evolved its exciting combinations in Hungary offers a special example of the correlation of universal and national art, a correlation essential to both.

GÁBOR PATAKI

ISTVÁN SZIGETHY — A FORGOTTEN EXPRESSIONIST

In his fifty years as an active painter, István Szigethy (1891–1966) represented East Central Europe and all its problems. His career encompasses "Ex Libris", published in Kolozsvár in 1916 with a preface written by Frigyes Karinthy, the revolutionary drawings that appeared in newspapers of 1919, the monotypes made for Franz Kafka's works in 1965–66. István Szigethy died unexpectedly in Nagymaros, a village in the Danube bend some twenty years ago on September 2nd, 1966. One week later an exhibition of his colour monotypes for the works of Franz Kafka was opened in the Literary Museum of Prague. He himself had initiated the exhibition, and indeed expected recognition in Hungary for it; however, he was never informed of its actually being held. The invitation arrived one day after he was buried.

The Prague exhibition was followed by one in Stuttgart. The success of the Kafka monotypes in the Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen was significantly different from the usual: *The* pictures evoked uneasiness and anxiety in the viewers, they attracted and at the same time repelled. Entering the hall, the visitor was received by *Metamorphosis*, pictures of the tragedy of impersonalisation—the family, the beetle, *The* lodgers—beside the entrance door, on the left. Next to them was *The Artist of Starvation*, with his back to the world of his viewers, hopelessly closed in upon his own self and then *The Village Doctor* lying in bed with his patient, his Christlike face merging with the distorted face of his patient. Around the circular walls came the works on *The Castle*, whose tone was set by *A Man who is Nowhere at Home*; then came the pictures on *The Trial*: the old barrister, Tirelli the painter—a suburban Bastien le Page—the director with his Gogolian nose, all dramatic caricatures, memories from the years in Berlin, from the Józsefváros district of Budapest. Finally, two portraits of the Dome scene; in which the painter represented the

dialogue between the external and the internal man. Then followed the Porter, without a body, the embodiment of the law, then the Two Actors who lead K. to the place of execution. Returning to the entrance, the visitor was faced by the monotype *A Man's Eleven Sons*, from whose centre looks out a portrait of Kafka, a representation of a face of which Kafka's first publisher, Kurt Wolff had said that it was ageless, the face of a young man who did not get older, never grew to be a man, and in which the remarkably fine eyes shine out. The same face is repeated eleven times around the portrait of Kafka.

Szigethy's meeting with Kafka was an act of fate. Kafka's age and our age have one feature in common: next to the external, visible reality, they ignore the existence of internal reality, its constant presence and influence. As the works of Kafka are a document of internal autobiography and the search for it—milestones of the process of individualization, becoming a complete whole—Szigethy's late work documents the same process leading to completion achieved through art.

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Szigethy's Kafka series closed a period in his life marked by illness, anxiety and depression, and earmarks the beginning of a new period, the last phase of his development. Its very existence seems to be the consequence of a trivial event: the critic of *Die Welt* (for which Szigethy himself was at one time a correspondent) wrote a negative review of his 1965 exhibition in Hamburg and here in Hungary he did not even manage to have his works exhibited. Szigethy decided to leave off painting for a while and return to illustrating. This decision gave birth to the monotypes which are not illustrations but paraphrases of Kafka. Kafka's atmosphere and the passion of creating took such a strong hold of him that even his health suffered. "It seems

as if I myself have turned into a beetle," he once remarked while he was working on the series. What in fact happened, however, was the very opposite. Kafka's *Metamorphosis* is the tragedy of a man who has lost his personality, his real face, being and becoming identical with his persona, the picture behind which our real selves live, hidden from the world. When working on his Kafka series and the pictures painted in the last two years, Szigethy reached that completeness described by Jung: he became his real self.

Everyone in Hungary knows Szigethy the caricaturist and graphic artist. His caricatures of writers and artists still hang on the walls of a literary café in Budapest, but with the exception of a narrow circle of friends and a few critics, he is unknown as a painter. Although he had had the opportunity to present the works created in his later period at several exhibitions abroad (1958 Princeton, 1962 Stuttgart and Erlangen, 1963 Frankfurt/Main, 1965 Hamburg and Munich) and several memorial exhibitions were also held abroad after his death (1966 Prague, 1968 Stuttgart, 1985 Tübingen), the first complete exhibition of his works was held in Hungary in the Szombathely Gallery in November 1986. "Szigethy is one of the artists," said art historian Katalin Dávid in opening the exhibition, "who started out among dangers. . . His road dates from the end of the First World War: this was a period when a pure spirit and true attention were needed to recognize genuine values and to meet with understanding, for in those days it was not so much the values as the services rendered which gained recognition."

Sketches, etchings, caricatures

István Szigethy was born in Ebesfalva, Transylvania. His father, Jenő Szigethy, was an actor, director of a company which toured the provincial towns up to the outbreak of the Great War. His mother was an

actress. It was his father's wish that he too, like his brothers, should go on the stage, but from the age of six all he wanted to do was to paint and draw. Just prior to his school-leaving exams, he left his secondary school and applied for admittance to the Academy of Fine Arts. He became a student of Károly Ferenczy's* and graduated from the Academy in 1911.

In this period the greatest influence on him was that of his friend Ede Bohacsek, a painter who introduced him to the modern trends of painting, including *Der Blaue Reiter* and his circle. Bohacsek was a strict, demanding critic and an intellectual guide for Szigethy, and after his early death (1915) the young painter was left without a sense of direction.

In the last two years of the War, he worked as a war correspondent and graphic artist in Kolozsvár.

His first graphic work, "Ex Libris," appeared under the imprint of the Granit Publishing House in Kolozsvár in 1916, with a preface by Frigyes Karinthy. The following years saw his second graphic work, which also appeared in Kolozsvár: it was a volume of pen and ink drawings created for the short stories of Dezső Szomory. Just as the Kafka monotypes exhibited under the title *Motive zu Franz Kafka* by the Literary Museum in Prague go beyond the borders of traditional illustration, the Szomory series is no simple series of illustrations either; the close relationship between the two works also makes a reference to this fact. The former indicates the beginning of a process of development (1917), the latter signals its end. The Szomory series (1917) and the Kafka series (1966) are the two pillars across which the arch of Szigethy's oeuvre lies.

From the end of the twenties to 1932, Szigethy lived in Berlin. He was a correspondent and caricaturist for *Die Jugend*, *Simplicissimus*, *Die Welt* of Hamburg, *Du* of Switzerland, *Sie und Er*, *Zürcher Illustrierte*. He fre-

* NHQ 99

quently visited the Romanisches Café, the haunt of Egon Erwin Kisch, George Grosz, Bert Brecht, Kurt Tucholsky, the expressionist generation of artists, writers, journalists, film-makers, directors and actors. He was friendly with some of them. George Grosz's work had a strong influence on Szigethy. For decades he saw and lived in the big city through Grosz's eyes, whether it was Berlin or Budapest.

In 1933 he returned to Budapest. He worked as a correspondent and caricaturist for *Színházi Élet* (Theatrical Life), various dailies, journals and sports papers. He also illustrated books. In this period he painted little and what he did displayed a conventional, academic character.

The Nagymaros Artists' Colony

The Nagymaros Artists' Colony was established in 1933. Szigethy was the only one of the artists who settled there to remain and work there to the end of his life.

The last Szigethy exhibition in Hungary, *Seven Years*, was held at the College of Fine Arts in Budapest in 1948. This presented the works created between 1941-48. He himself wrote in the exhibition catalogue: "I am fifty-seven years old. At times I am seized with panic when I come to think of whether I have done anything at all, whether I have managed to do anything that I was entrusted with."

This exhibition indicated a caesura, finally closing a period of painting, development and views. The work to come afterwards, following 1948, was of a completely different character from what had preceded, both from

the aspects of painting and that of ethics. The transition was marked by tempera paintings created in a colourful, euphoristic manner, almost like posters, between 1948-52. His pen-and-ink series *Te meg én* (You and I), almost an autobiographical diary, was completed in 1952. A pen-and-ink series of 25 sheets, *Tetőnküli falu* (A village without roofs) dates from 1953. Here the artist met the village, nature revealed; he expressed the conflicts of the urban man clashing with rural views. A period completely different started in 1953. An oil painting *A Man Sets out* hallmarks the beginning of the road. The figure in *You Have to Get out of the Boat* is a self-portrait. The meaning is that one must leave the accustomed, the safe and reach into the depths, the subconscious if one wants to reach completion. Water symbolizes the subconscious, the sun represents completeness. The picture *Fish, Man, Bird* tells us that something is still missing in the attempt to achieve completeness.

Sun and water recur in Szigethy's pictures, as does the figure of the clown who, in Miklós Szabolcsi's view, is the archetype of the misunderstood artist. The aim is also a symbol, at times of desire, at times of fear, old age, or some unknown force. The greatest puzzle is represented by *The Old Woman with a Cat*, depicted in a great number of pictures, which is generally a self-portrait. His last self-portrait, a linotype, was made in September 1966, a few days before his death, *Self-portrait with Hands Raised*. Forming a circle, the hands embrace the sun, the symbol of completeness.

ZSUZSANNA VÁGÓ

THE MYTHOLOGY OF TODAY

Gábor Karátson's exhibition in the Institut Français in Budapest

"... What characterizes him is careful observation, the full transformation of experience, patient waiting, slow, concentrated work. He ripens his pictures in a way that recalls the imaginary paintings of Klee, just as a tree ripens its fruit: the time taken is as long, embracing seasons," wrote a leading Hungarian critic, Géza Perneczky, of Gábor Karátson on the occasion of his 1968 exhibition in the Fényes Adolf Gallery. His careful analysis concluded that "at times he should descend from his aristocratic heights to avoid his early isolation so that something could be adopted from this taken-for-granted world for the poetic world of his pictures."

This is precisely a critic's function: to warn in due course and with the proper intuition the painter of the danger latent in the compositions of the pictures, in his over-complicated artistic and philosophical profusion. However, he could not possibly have hoped that Karátson, to whom nothing is more alien than the so-called "world of today," would suddenly and completely change his stock of motifs and introduce a brand-new and varied iconography, whether at the critic's insinuation or spurred on by his own decision.

Karátson himself must have felt that his paintings, describing the entanglements of mythologies with colours, saturated with loquacious motifs, were spread all too thin and drifted away from the ideas they wished to express instead of grasping them; so he turned towards the taken-for-granted matters of this world. Yet he did not start to paint after nature nor did he forsake that high point from which he observed the cultural and mythical roads winding into each other; he simply made minor adjustments to his visual viewpoint and directed it at the mythology of today. He began to base his pictures on newspaper photographs. For where can we

find the taken-for-granted matters of today's world? In the press, in this *Biblia Pauperum* of today. The Faust legend may belong to the select few, but Björn Borg belongs to everyone. Therefore let Björn Borg appear in painting.

Karátson looks upon the taken-for-granted matters of this world as he did in his Faust series of the seventies, which is precisely the unusual feature and unique value of his pictures, the revelation of intellectual character. For he casts his glance at the heroes of the Balaton Fencing Championship, Mitterrand visiting Carcasson, and the policemen armed with batons in London, in which there glitters the reflecting light of his experience and art. It is only through that glance that we may see what we look at in the papers every morning and evening. Man catches himself: he leafed dully through pictures in which are concentrated our intellectual and historical anguish.

In his *Franciszek Gajowniczek is 82* (1982-86; its complete title is in fact the original caption: "Franciszek Gajowniczek, 82, kissed the hand of Pope John Paul II on Sunday after the canonization of Maksimilian Kolbe, who saved Mr Gajowniczek's life at Auschwitz,") the kissing of the hand, the gesture of an old man's gratitude and respect, appears in the picture amidst a Gothically ecstatic glow. The event that occurs between the Pope and the old man leaning over his hand constitutes the mysterious, excited core of the composition, around which curiosity and emotions rise high; the two men are surrounded by a thick mass of people, everyone wishing to see the event (just as in *Makarios in London* painted in 1974, where a little girl kisses the ring of the Archbishop of Cyprus) as if it were a supernatural miracle, the act of a saint. The simile is not arbitrary: one of the figures is the Holy Father and the



LAJOS BARTA: FIVE WOMEN WITH HATS 1915.
PENCIL, PAPER, 8 × 10 CM

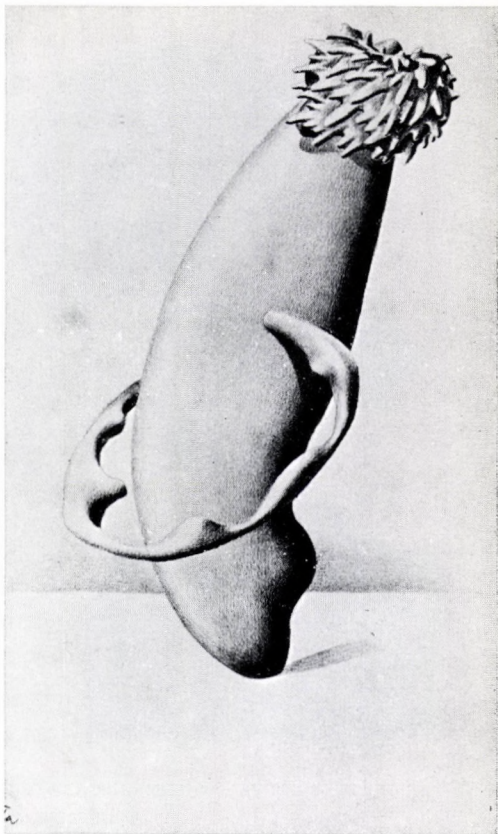
King Stephen Museum, Székesfehérvár

LAJOS BARTA: DIE STILIE FRISIERT.
1948. PENCIL, PAPER, 30 × 22 CM

King Stephen Museum, Székesfehérvár

LAJOS BARTA: AZALEA. CCA 1910. PENCIL, PAPER

King Stephen Museum, Székesfehérvár



Ferenc Gelencsér

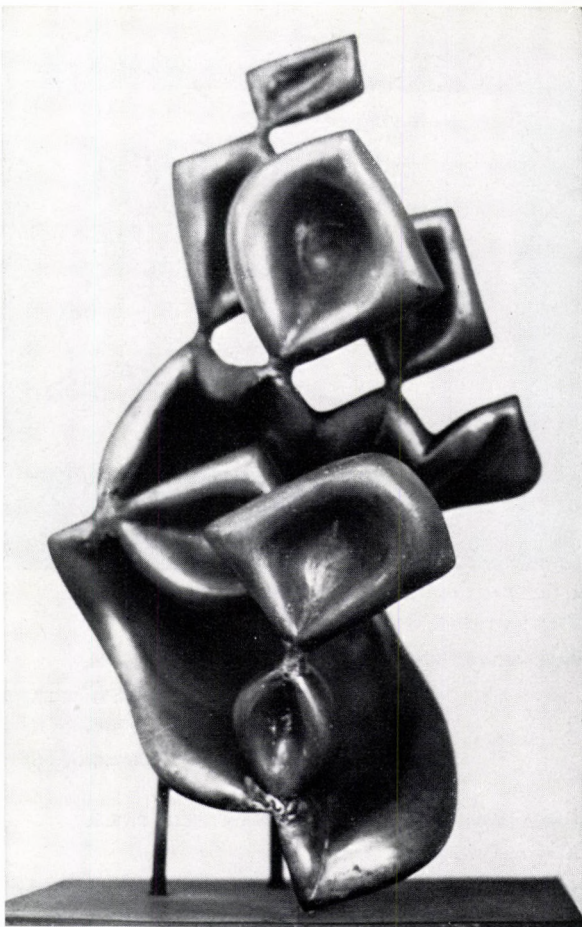




LAJOS BARTA: POSITIVE-NEGATIVE. 1969.
BRONZE, 23 CM

LAJOS BARTA: ACROBATS. 1967. BRONZE, 62 CM

LAJOS BARTA: RHYTHM. 1958. BRONZE, 32 CM





ISTVÁN SZIGETHY: ILLUSTRATION
TO FRANZ KAFKA'S "THE VILLAGE DOCTOR,"
1965-66. COLOURED MONOTYPE, PAPER.
46×63 CM

István Szigethy

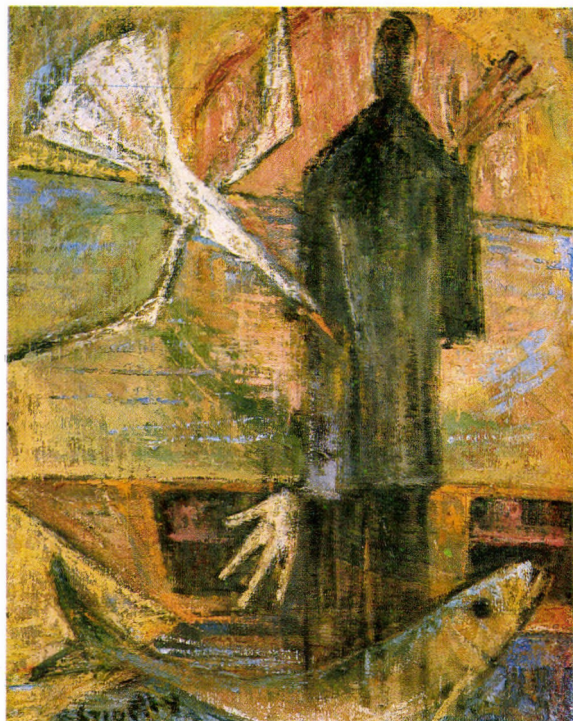


ISTVÁN SZIGETHY:
ILLUSTRATION TO FRANZ KAFKA'S "THE TRIAL."
THE PORTER. 1965-1966. MONOTYPE, PAPER

István Szigethy



ISTVÁN SZIGETHY: YOU HAVE TO GET OUT OF THE BOAT. 1963. OIL ON CANVAS, 60×80 CM



ISTVÁN SZIGETHY: FISH, MAN AND BIRD. 1964. OIL ON CANVAS, 60×80 CM

ISTVÁN SZIGETHY: SAD LANDSCAPE. 1964. OIL ON CANVAS, 60×80 CM

Levente Szepesi Szűcs





Ferenc Kovács



GÁBOR KARÁTSON: THE BALATON CUP IN FENCING.
1983. TEMPERA AND OIL ON CANVAS. 53 × 48 CM

GÁBOR KARÁTSON: SORTING THE BAGGAGE
AT BHADGAUN. 1983-1986.
TEMPERA AND OIL ON CANVAS. 70 × 100 CM

GÁBOR KARÁTSON: EARTHQUAKE IN BUCHAREST.
1979. TEMPERA AND OIL ON CANVAS. 100 × 70 CM



GÁBOR KARÁTSON:
ANNOUNCEMENT OF RESULTS.
1986. TEMPERA AND OIL
ON CANVAS. 45.5 × 80 CM



GÁBOR KARÁTSON:
CONVERSATIONS
(IN NAPOLEON'S TIME).
1982. TEMPERA AND OIL
ON CANVAS. 47 × 51 CM



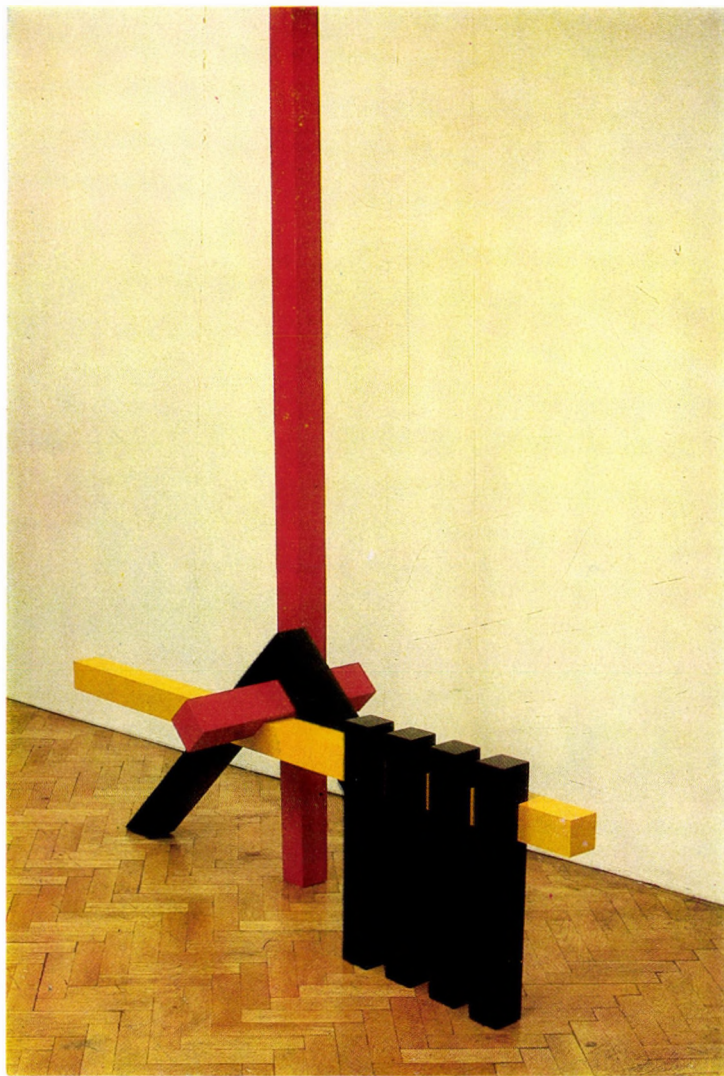
Ferenc Kovács



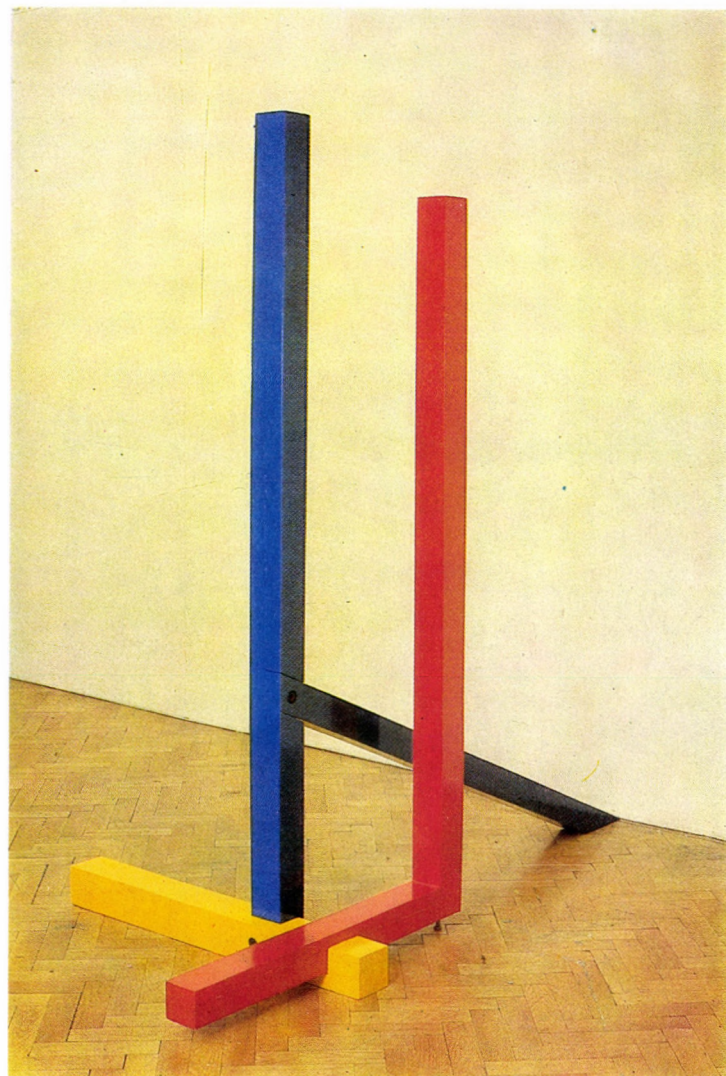
TAMÁS LOSSONCZY:
BEING CREATED. 1973.
OIL. 50×50 CM



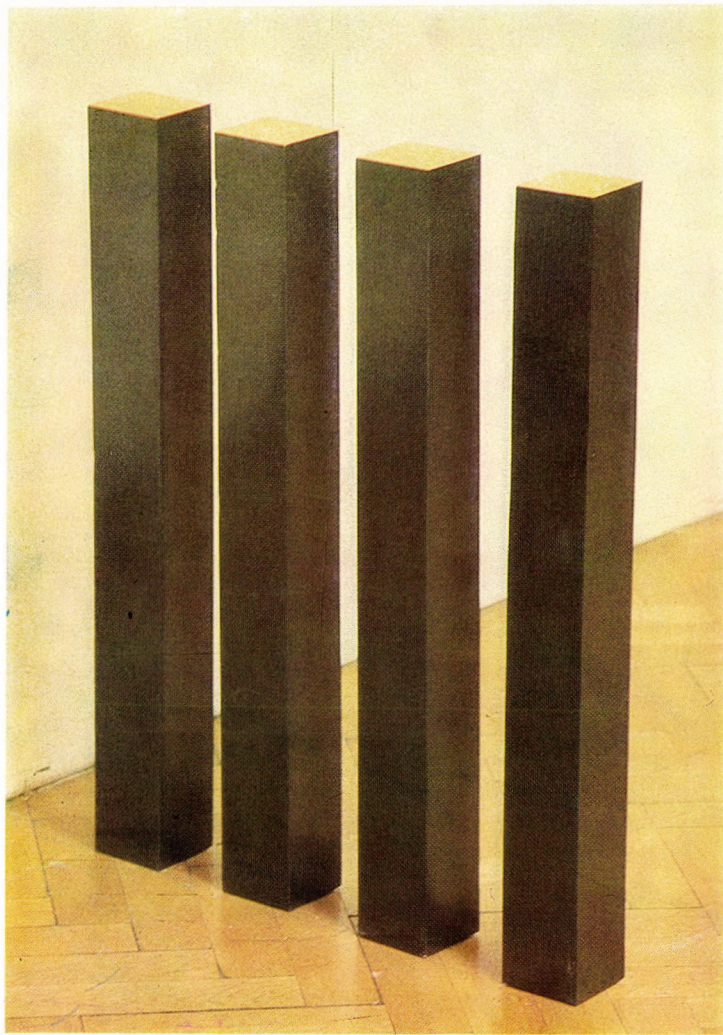
TAMÁS LOSSONCZY:
MEDUSA. 1983.
OIL. 80×80 CM



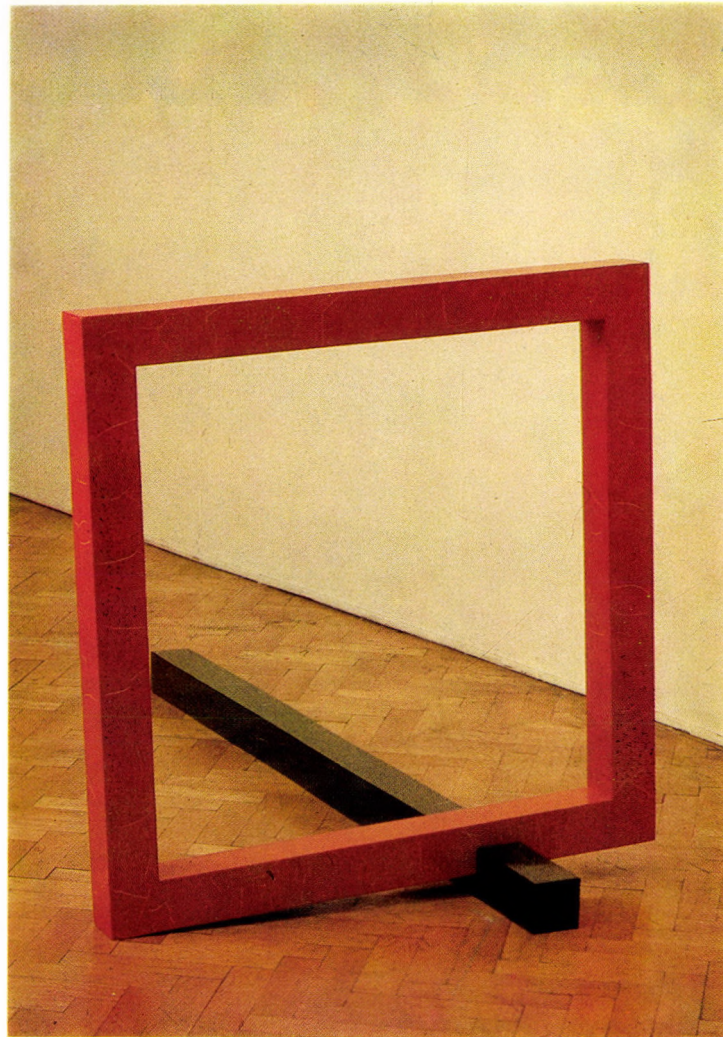
TIBOR CSIKY: MAST. 1986. PAINTED WOOD. 190 X 200 CM



TIBOR CSIKY: IRREGULAR RELATIVITY. 1986. PAINTED WOOD.



TIBOR CSIKY: COLONNADE. 1986. PAINTED WOOD, 70×7.5×7.5 CM

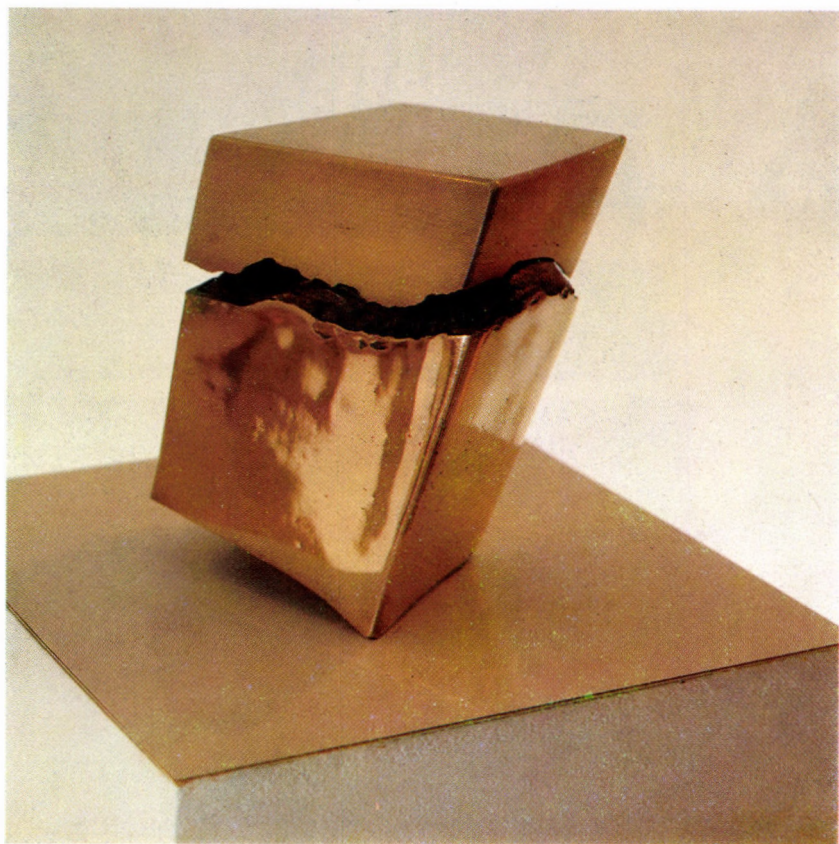


TIBOR CSIKY: INCREDIBLE EQUILIBRIUM. 1986. PAINTED WOOD, 190×190×90 CM

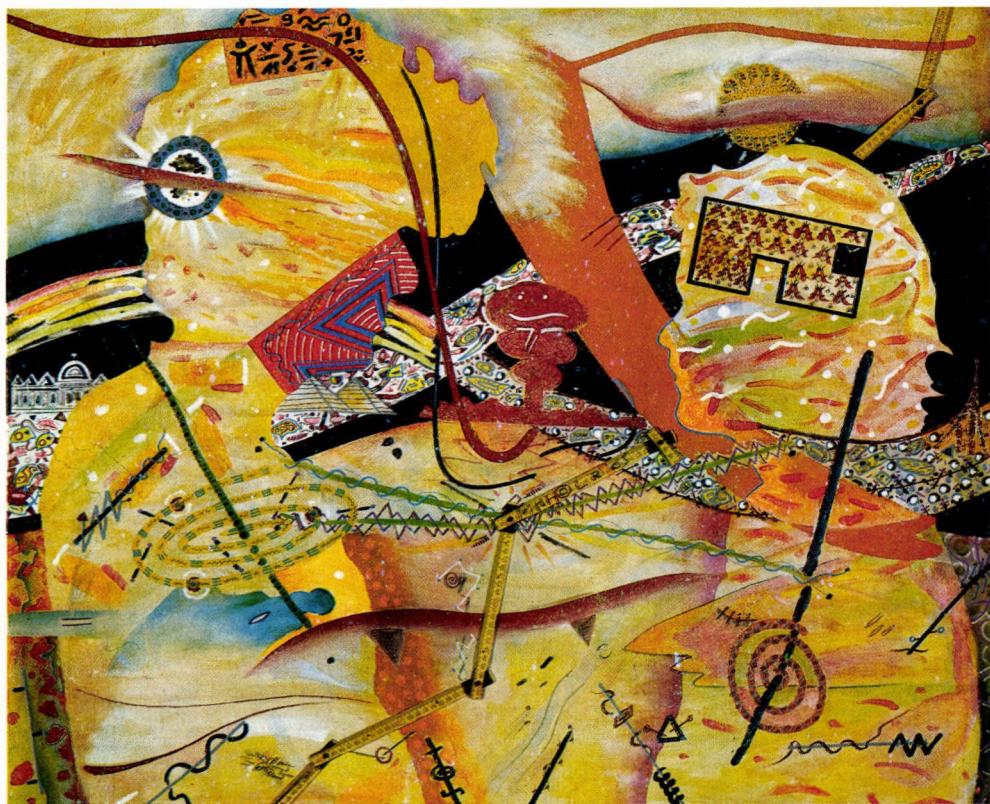


NYROM (MARIA PISZER):
TOORIS 2, 1986.
BRONZE. 60 × 45 × 56 CM

Gerhard Kisser



NYROM (MARIA PISZER):
FRAGMENT, 1984.
BRONZE. 25 × 21 × 23 CM



Imre Juhász

MÉHES-VETŐ: DUAL PORTRAIT. 1983, MIXED TECHNIQUE, CANVAS. 100×120 CM
Vörösváry Collection

MÉHES-VETŐ: TAKE IT EASY. 1983. OIL, MIXED TECHNIQUE, CANVAS. 73×95 CM
Vörösváry Collection



Miklós Sulyok



Miklós Sulyok

MÉHES-VETŐ: STILL-LIFE. 1984. MIXED TECHNIQUE, CANVAS, 110 X 120 CM
Vörösváry Collection

MÉHES-VETŐ: CHEERS! 1983. MIXED TECHNIQUE, CANVAS, 100 X 120 CM



gesture itself is connected with the canonization of Father Kolbe, who had gone to Auschwitz instead of Franciszek Gajowniczek who had a wife and children. (However, when the man thus saved returned home, he found his family dead, killed by a bomb.) In the tension of the painting, in depicting the crowded events, the ideas and passions escape, and inescapability, self-sacrifice, and the sense and senselessness of death rise up; this richness of implication recalls Gothic painting. Karátson is essentially excited by the same things Gothic painters were obsessed by: to seize the moment in which the questions of life and death are concentrated at the highest level, and place in the centre of representation the event which most concisely and expressively refers to the unanswered questions of heaven and earth. The Gajowniczek picture encompasses dense dramatic material into a single sight and the transcendent character of the event receives an adequate form in a representation that flames.

The opposite pole to this is a smaller picture, *Conversations* (1982), in which two men are talking, placed parallel to the plane of the picture. One of them, a politician or businessman with glasses, wearing a jacket, is listening with his arms folded and a cynical expression on his face. The conversation between the two is raised to an event by two excited stuffage figures, waving in the space deepened like a shell behind the plane of the picture. Their attention suggests that these two men of insignificant appearance have some significance, or that they carry a weight that may be too great. The composition is built upon a contrast: behind the calm closure of the picture plane, excitement springs up in the representation of the restless movement of the other two, and in this way, apparently insignificant news becomes disquieting. The whole makes us ponder on how difficult it is to reveal the very significant message in news that often appears to be insignificant.

The painting *Earthquake in Bucharest* (1979) (Men's Dominance over the Elements

Remains Imperfect) has in its centre a bundle held by four men—just as in another picture of his, *Finding the Dead Body*, which may contain a dead body or bodies or some debris. On top of the ruins, in the town hidden by fog, smoke, and dust, people are surrounding this bundle. The painter snatches them out of this tragic event and here in the picture they are deeply engrossed in thought. The tragedy is described by the blurred, fine pastel colours, and the wide, dirty, cold space is represented by off-white and brownish colours. Keeping a certain distance, the picture seeks the angle of wisdom and contemplation, but the expression of tragedy, misery is so strong that, finally, the picture—there is no better word for this—is sublimated into a prayer for all those it depicts and all those it fails to depict.

In contrast to his earlier pictures, Karátson's paintings created over the last seven or so years and on show in the Institut Français are characterized by the loosening of contour and by the factual content frequently exerting a paradoxically immaterial influence, coming into being from the layers of paint and glazes of pastel colours, covered and broken colours. The stratification of technique in these pictures is as rich and manifold as their intellectual stratification. The basic tension between the anachronistic mode of painting (Karátson makes his own paints) and the themes, including current events, is no smaller than the span between the perspectives of European culture and the pictures of history appearing in the papers of today—or that between painting at a distance and snapshots in general.

The narrative representation, full of contours and digressions, that typified Karátson's work earlier, has been replaced by rectangular forms and by a certain clumsiness which is to some extent softened by an extremely rich and fine use of colours. The shade of hues, the finest colours of the rainbow appear in his pictures; layers of paint and glaze looming through each other merge—to quote Perceczy again—into colours of the imagina-

tion. In his more recent work, representation has become more blurred, more vision-like: the works created at the beginning of the seventies appear almost realistic compared to the more recent ones, filtered through a lace of white spots.

Karátson's modern pictures are Gothic paintings. The excited figures, surrounding

certain mysteries, follow and convey the painter's incessant meditation and excitement; the events taken from newspapers grow into parables that go beyond themselves just as the biblical scenes did at the hands of the masters of the late Middle Ages.

ÉVA FORGÁCS

FROM THE GEOMETRIC TO THE ORGANIC

Tibor Csiky, Nyrom (Mária Piszer), Tamás Lossonczy

Turning away has always been a given point in the career of Tibor Csiky's.¹ He studied physics and mathematics at university but obtained a secondary school teacher's qualification in history and literature; all this in order to then become a self-made sculptor. Initially he fully concentrated on wood and wood carving. He made his first appearance with organic abstract wood reliefs which were not without their romanticism and music; later he had in mind painted wooden objects, but then moulded sensitive and sensuous, knotted wood reliefs into bronze. Then came Csiky the metal artist, with steel, iron objects—sometimes combined with brass—milled, turned, planed, reminiscent of mechanical aesthetics. His *objets trouvés* were also striking: nut, crowned screw, Imbus screw or a simple ball-bearing. Csiky loves metal; he is the father of Hungarian Minimal Art who founded a school *nolens-volens*, becoming the teacher and master of a number of outstanding Hungarian sculptors. His Minimal Art period was not dominated by rigid metal but sensitivity, variety and a great number of decorative elements.

His new exhibition, displayed in the Józsefváros Gallery of Budapest, seems to demonstrate that Csiky has abandoned the pigeonhole he, his colleagues and critics have

made for him. He has developed an appetite for colours (though steel grey and the golden yellow of polished bronze had also constituted a colour contrast) and was unable to resist the temptation of the grandiose after years spent on small sculpture. The artist of the lathe and the milling machine has left off with metal and returned to wood.

The basic material of the new, complete Csiky exhibition is beams, i.e. blocks with four edges and a rectangular cross section. They are of different colours. All are ground sculpture. At first sight they bring to mind the line architecture of Anthony Caro, but Caro created his object from industrial products, steel figures, steel rails—painted in different colours; precisely that which Csiky has broken away from. These constructions are made up of different angles—obtuse, acute or right. At first I thought that these huge sculptures were based on an identical modul system, with the artist mutating, variegating and then coordinating identical basic forms within a system, but I was unable to discern any law or regularity. All his pieces, different from though related to each other in some form of kinship, improvise again and again. His forms could best be compared to Latin and Greek letters if we try to transform sculptural content into the verbal. They are dominated by harmony and then unexpectedly disharmony joins the cen-

¹ See *NHQ* 98

cert. There is complete order in the exhibition hall, yet nothing is sterile.

Colour in Csiky's work does not merely cover the sculptures, but it constitutes an integral part of the object; it is an epidermis which is painted with extreme care, applied thickly so that it covers the wooden material like bright enamel. Csiky used to impart only a natural surface to his wood carvings; now it seems that his intensive colours have made him a colourist sculptor within a year.

The starting point of the exhibition is, however, *Space Curve* (1980), a beam of marbled wood, which from the ground breaks upwards in a very strange, obtuse angle. *Colonnade* (1986) is a witty, even humorous series of four identical, 70 cm tall, perpendicular beams. Their bodies are black, with an inner edge in a sulphur yellow. The main character of *Irregular Relativity* (1986) is a red rectangle (a rectangular letter O) with an angry green linear penetration. *Tectonics* (1986) is a horizontal complex in its direction; the horizontal elements are yellow, broken by black vertical elements; the dominating feature is, however, the angular red shape, similar to a letter A without its crossbar. The red-yellow-black ensemble, also complex, of *Mast* (1986) is vertical, rising almost to the ceiling. His work *Incredible Equilibrium* (1986) is a makeshift structure of beams exceeding two metres in height. It may best be described a red L turned upside down, a yellow T standing on its head and the letter signs of a light-blue Greek lambda. *Crucifix* (1986) is the most important work displayed on the main wall of the exhibition hall. Despite its title, it does not evoke sacred associations. It is more of a static sign of this extremely concise *ars poetica*. *Crucifix* is also in the term of lambda; its stem is blue and its leg is red, the whole being unexpectedly crossed by a black diagonal beam. The colours, it is worth emphasizing, are harmonious, but we are surprised by the intervening black colours, the out-of-place blues or the polished metal beam of chrome steel. This exhibition of wooden sculp-

ture, with its stern geometry and arithmetics, is in opposition to the traditions of Max Bill's. Csiky, the former mathematician, whenever he has the chance, removes his lines and angles from the places they are entitled to, deliberately striking discords. When deduction seems to be most logical, the sculptor takes a step of a quarter or a quaver; when we, as viewers or critics, are just about to constrict Csiky's mathematical cathedral, we suddenly realize that we are dancing to the artist's tune. He is fooling us and upsetting the rules of geometrical constructivity.

Nyrom

Nyrom (Mária Píszter)², a Hungarian sculptor who lives in Austria, is the daughter of Éva Szabó, an outstanding contemporary textile artist. Nyrom studied in Vienna under Fritz Wotruba. Certain constructivist influences may be discovered both in her earlier works and more recent ones; the latter demonstrate that she has made a complete break with the rectangle, with geometry. Her collection, displayed in the Dorottya Street Exhibition Hall, illustrates this metamorphosis, slow rather than abrupt.

The visitor is received by a multitude of bronze objects, polished to golden and brass colours. Nyrom is one who considers small sculptures as inseparable from their holders, the pieces of furniture on which they stand in the museum or in the exhibition hall. But she has overcome the usual limitations of museums, the stands of her statues are real tables, pieces of furniture. The constructivist objects placed on them are no longer as severe as they used to be. The characteristic feature of these boxes and prisms is that they represent two halves of the whole, separated at an amorphous break-line. There is discontinuity, air between the two "broken ends", as *Fragment* (1984) demonstrates. *Tooris*

² See *NHQ* 90

(1984) represents the same idea, but on the horizontal and connected by a stick.

This discipline, difficult to maintain, was discarded by Nyrom; her objects assumed Baroque, even Rococo features. They are the sculptor's conscious or semi-conscious transcriptions of the dented, amorphous shapes of geology—magmas, frozen torrents of lava or glaciers, morenas—polished in being clustered together. The centre of the shapeless *God Save Thee* (1985) is dominated by the island of the prism, while *My Bird* (1986) is a tongue of flame fossilised in golden yellow bronze: a conscious attempt to struggle upwards into the vertical from its basic horizontal.

One of the authors of the preface to the catalogue, Professor Giorgio Segato, director of the Bronzetto Biennale of Padova, writes: "... Nyrom is making increasing efforts to call to life the material itself, its properties liberated by light, the transforming and moulding strength of light... the hands of the artist are moved by the passion permeating her consciousness; it is full of energy which fumbles for the material as if seeking and identifying the seeds of important experience, at times with the concision and lifelike character of anatomic fragments, the meat of deep existence, at times with its purified intellect, moving her in the direction of complete immersion in the light of understanding and clear consciousness..."

Nyrom's three-dimensional works are supplemented by her drawings and paintings.

Lossonczy

*Tamás Lossonczy*³ has been faithful to the non-figurative for more than sixty years; his work might be defined as surrealist, at most abstract surrealist, and these days as neo-expressive surrealist. What Lajos Kassák⁴ wrote about him right after the Second

World War is still valid today: "... the painting of Tamás Lossonczy is a lyrical manifestation touching deeper, mostly undiscovered fields." Joining the avant-garde, the European School of Budapest, then, after the war, he and other non-figurative artists left it and displayed his works with the group referred to as Gallery to the Four Corners of the World. In the '50s he continued to work with the same unshakeable intransigence and vehemence, but only for his own studio, filling it completely with his paintings. He collected his most recent works for the chamber exhibition held in the Fészek Artists' Club of Budapest.

His first language is surrealism. Each of his pieces radiates confidence. His pictures are populated by signs, symbols, the semiotic marks of his own world. These signals of non-existent objects and beings were present prior to the appearance of spaceships, space shuttles, the state of weightlessness experienced. Lossonczy's painting was cosmic before the conquest of the cosmos. There is immeasurably strong cohesion behind the composition of his pictures and behind his apparently loose, subtle constructions. In this non-figurative art, modern to the present day, the observer feels something which he may not be able to explain even to himself: Lossonczy's extensive knowledge of painting has come from the old masters, from his thorough awareness of material and his instinctive as well as consciously developed cultivation of colour. Although it was more than sixty years ago that he created his language, this language of forms has a million versions: in the plane, in space, in lines, in curves, in representation poor in colours, in colourism. This artist is far from forcing his observer, the recipient of his work to decode his feelings of life experienced at the moment of creation. At times with more difficulty, at times with less, what may read from the paintings is what is seen or felt in them. That may be identical with the desires of the artist, but it has never been, and never will be, a programme.

³ See *NHQ* 74

⁴ See *NHQ* 106

Colourless and colourful representation alternate with each other almost cyclically in his art. One of his major works, a painting of the largest dimensions, is *Life or Death* (1970). It is a picture dominated by brownish, olive-green colours in which plasticity has a large role. The soft curved lines, narrow fields of the organic vision filling in the whole surface are caught by star shapes glowing white, tense lines representing telegraph wires or simply nerve fibres. Equally saturated is the rectangular picture in his *Being Created* (1973); here, however, is a greater emphasis on plasticity, the indication of void, the obvious space. The floating objects possess an almost sculptural plasticity, their three-dimensional existence is strengthened by shade-lines of concentric circles; with a background-base which is

loudly dominated by red and blue, with boundaries blurred almost cubistically, soothing the nerves, behind and around them. Like *Being Created, Medusa* (1983) also has a rectangular shape. Lossonczy clearly seems to be fond of the regular rectangle. This floating body happens to refer to a medusa, but that is unimportant. A bluish shade prevails everywhere, while the main motif is strengthened by the artist with shade-lines and high lights.

That the painter is still working is attested to by *The Pleasure of Daylight* (1987). Here, too, are floating bodies but the main character is the iridescent background, serene, optimistic, youthful, in blue and green, yellow, red and brown.

JÁNOS FRANK

AFTER THE TRANSAVANTGARDE

The painting of Lóránt Méhes and János Vető

In the early eighties an expansion of the transavantgarde entailed a substantial transformation of contemporary Hungarian painting. Several new and original artists, not part of the populous camp of the *new wave*, made their appearance. They were no longer satisfied with sterile forms and the theoretical character of minimalist and concept art which had dominated the seventies. They tried rather to work more spontaneously, in a more relaxed and colourful manner without aligning themselves with the transavantgarde.

The development of this new trend gave art a new impetus. As large sizes, vivid colours, thematic and stylistic constraints fell out of favour, artists who had found themselves constrained by the narrowness of analytic modes of expression which denied all tradition were switching over to a new style. Two young painters, Lóránt Méhes

and János Vető, made their appearance as if itself was undergoing this change. Their jointly painted pictures, objects and space arrangements brought them success soon after their start. Lóránt Méhes graduated in 1979 but his mode of expression and vision was shaped by his experience of avantgarde workshops. János Vető is a photographer by profession, frequently contributing to the exhibitions and performances of Hungarian avant-garde photography.

The two artists made their début in 1981 in the Bercsényi College and in the Young Artists' Club. Two years later they had another exhibition there and in 1984 they mounted an exhibition in the Studio Gallery where they showed objects which transcribed the requirements of the 1950s. In their 1983 exhibition, which could be viewed as a large environment, they placed different objects in luminous blue dust, some of which evoked

decorations. A good example is the *Moon Banner* which is constructed of a multi-coloured flag stuck onto the Moon Sphere with a vacuum-cleaner blowing air onto it. At the opening a progressive rock group contributed to the high spirits and a complex artistic effect.

Apart from their ensembles of objects which evoke the optimism, heroism, and voluntarism of the fifties, Méhes and Vető produce paintings reflecting the influence of graffiti. Thus they draw upon the subcultures of society. Graffiti, these spontaneous productions of urban folklore engraved, drawn, or sprayed which Brassai first collected in a photo album and which have much inspired the anonymous painters of the New York subway, have a definitive role in their work.

The composition *School TV is so Difficult* (1982) is a good illustration of their style. The canvas is crowded with different signs sprayed in different colours (skull with dagger, cross-bones) and with the drawings of countless small objects (television, male and female hand, and so on). The many motifs arranged together are highly decorative and provide an almost non-figurative effect.

Since 1983, probably encouraged by the changes in pictorial style and outlook, their graphic works have also started to make use of patches and larger coloured surfaces alongside line. However, these coloured surfaces only fill the background of their compositions, the character of their pictures is still determined by the figures painted quickly before or on them.

By the mid-eighties, the Méhes-Vető pictures had become more colourful but they continue to feature the signs connected with love, sexuality, or death. In *Double Portrait* (1983) the orange-coloured phosphorescing shadow-portrait of the two artists is placed among different zigzags, helices, and spirals.

In *Two Glasses Clinking* (1983), however, the glazing reds, whites, blues, yellows, and violets almost cover the principal motif, male and female hands holding champagne

glasses. Thus the central composition has the two hands clinking glasses, evoking celebrations and merriment before a background composed of various blaring circles which invoke round targets. Motifs more or less equal in size in the corners only emphasise the picture's central domination. In the lower right corner there is a flowered ball with a waving banner thrust into it on a long pole; the banner is spread out in the top right corner. At the top left corner is another flag, of triangular shape; its staff is the plastic tube of the vacuum-cleaner in the left bottom corner. These objects are parts of the previous *Moon Banner*. There are also the obligatory small graffiti: the rectangular flag has the pirates skull and cross-bones, while the vacuum-cleaner, a mouse gives evidence to the artists' fondness for decoration. The colours of the painting are so strong that the objects which at first sight seem to be over-prolific suddenly lose their materiality: in the orgy of colours they melt into decorative patches.

Take it Easy! (1983) is also a painting with a centralised composition. The background here too is composed of coloured spirals (as in *Two Glasses Clinking*). In the middle of the coloured circles there is a small emblem containing the ironic title, the artists' name and the date. As a credo this would sit well among the illustrations in Michel Butor's 'Words in Painting' because the texts on the canvas have both a conceptual and a pictorial meaning. As usual, there are many tiny figures in the circles of the background—among them, a sun, star, system-built block of flats, sputnik, hammer. This spiral symbolizes the living space of the two artists and the above realia appear in the form of graffiti.

The 1984 works have fewer but larger motifs. The painting *Still Life* (1984) replaces the decorative figures with some large coloured forms: red skull, grey-contoured red flower, whitish-grey fish and a stylized whitish-grey bird. Naturally the artists did not abandon their graffiti but here they are

evoked by sprayed contours, not by tiny figures.

Couple on the Coupon (1984) can be most directly connected to the graffiti. The female sexual organ and the heart appear as symbols of love. The sense of these symbols for emotions and carnal love is deeper because the association they permit of male and female portraits. The theme could be commonplace but with their playful, ironical representation and a sort of sincere bravado, the artists contrast outspokenness with hypocritical euphemism and social conventions. When all is said and done, this is what all their compositions do.

Their paintings are serene, cheerful, and ethical, their themes are both trivial and

cosmic. This duality, the coexistence of artistic and ethics, distinguishes their art from the fashionable transavantgarde whose works are based first and foremost on an aestheticism that exploits different period styles. Méhes and Vető still cling to the 1960s avantgarde's view that life itself is art. And this is consistently expressed in their "neo-barbarian social post-impressionist style."

Their expression is different from both the conceptualism popular in the seventies and the now favoured *new wave*; although they draw from both, they do so only as long as their originality and individuality is not threatened.

LAJOS LÓSKA

PLAYING WITH THE IMAGE

József Tóth's Photos

József Tóth in his advertisement work most frequently makes use of associations and humour. He might be called an intellectual photographer were this expression not dubious within the genre of advertising. For the primary and most important task of a poster, advertising goods or events, is to immediately attract the attention of the passer-by and to convey what they have to say instantly. It is a genre of unequivocal signs and not a means of intellectual argument and conviction. Still, what raises Tóth's posters high above the Hungarian average is his inserting a clever idea, at least one logical step between the sight and its meaning. But the task is always pleasant and easy, the joy of discovery is quick to come to the man of the street as well.

Tóth coaxes the viewer into this intellectual adventure of a few seconds in several different ways. Sometimes he uses lyrical means, as in *Budapest, City of Music*. Budapest

is the city of bridges—says a tourist advertisement in which he uses the well-known motif of the Chain Bridge, the oldest of the Danube bridges. Tóth transforms the familiar sight and slogan by replacing the tailpiece of a viola with the Chain Bridge. Enough for those who have visited Budapest; for those who have not, the poster displays an insert of the actual bridge as well. Thus connected, the musical instrument and the river evoke an association which is almost has the force of an invitation.

The psychology of advertising has been well written up and the soft sell technique has been well described. Yet still it is appealing, based as it is on intuition, wit and ideas and it cannot be taught. Advertising photography is a form of applied art where the instructions of the commissioner are to be followed and there are very few promotion managers who do not, of necessity, consider their own tastes to be the yardstick that is to

be adhered to. Nor can advertising be separated from the economy, the place and time in which it is produced and is to exert its influence. It is strongly bound to the culture and the community of the given place since the language of visual communication is international only to a certain extent. There are signs which have the same meaning only to a particular group. For example, a lion in conjunction with the British national colours has a meaning very different from a lion set against the background of a fresh green meadow.

In addition, advertising is not simply a means of competition: it frequently has the role of spreading information and attracting attention. This is the case frequently even in Hungary, where as a consequence of sporadic shortages in the economy, most goods would sell readily without any advertising. However, if advertising is successful, its effect is doubled: not only does the object come to mind on seeing the advertisement but, while shopping, the image of the advertisement is echoed in the memory of the buyer too. May an applied art object thus become independent? May the photographer be blamed for the purpose of the object advertised and the means of advertising being separated from each other, frequently at the moment of conception? The latter will be popular in itself and the former gains nothing from that. True, it does not receive anything detrimental either. What is greater success for an artist working to commission: if all the television sets popularised by his photo sell quickly or if his hallmark is immediately recognised on the posters advertising different goods and he, the artist becomes well-known? The fortunate case, of course, is when the two goals are met simultaneously, but József Tóth's career is characterised by his personal popularity rather than by anything else.

József Tóth was born in 1940. He worked

for the Hungarian News Agency between 1960-1970; from 1970 he has been a freelance photographer. He teaches part-time in a secondary vocational school for photographers. All the younger generation of photographers, more frequently employed by the advertising industry stimulated by the development of the Hungarian economy over the last twenty years, have learned a lot from him. A complete command of photographic technique, careful and accurate execution are not the merits of advertising photography but basic conditions for it. Tóth's photographs concentrate on the essence: there are not disturbing backgrounds, superfluous shadows or vague, unclarified details, Tóth generally designs his own posters too. He is frequently criticized for that by make-up editors or graphic designers who hold against him the lack of certain "golden rules" in some of his works. They may be right to a certain extent but, generally speaking, his posters demonstrate a harmonious unity of picture and the text.

Hungarian advertising photography is generally far behind its counterparts in Europe and mainly in America. It not only shows evidence of errors deriving from the initial and specific circumstances of the genre itself but it is also hindered by an increasing backwardness of the actual technology. Techniques of photography, photographic equipment papers and printing methods have enormously developed in the past fifteen or so years and Hungarian advertising photography has been unable to follow suit. Today it is still possible to compensate through the excellence of ideas. This is best exemplified by the work of József Tóth. His sharp wit, great humour will for a while keep a narrow range of Hungarian advertising at the European level. But the direction in which it has to go on will only be seen in ten years' time.

É. H.

JÓZSEF TÓTH: COUNTY BOOK WEEK



ŐSZI MEGYEI KÖNYVHETEK

1979. október 20–november 18.

TRAVEL '82

INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL EXHIBITION IN BUDAPEST
ETHNOGRAPHIC MUSEUM
BUDAPEST, KOSSUTH LAJOS TER 12
OPEN FROM 10 TO 12 MARCH 1982
10 A.M. TO 8 P.M. EACH DAY



JÓZSEF TÓTH: TRAVEL '82



JÓZSEF TÓTH: YES? NO?
JÓZSEF TÓTH: A PLEASURE IN BED





Richard Wagner

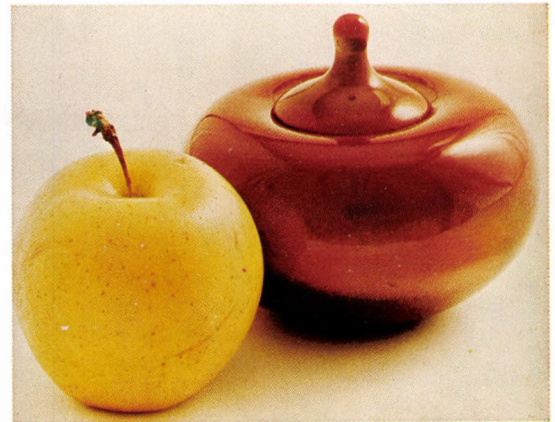
EVA ZEISEL: HALLCRAFT CENTURY PLATTERS AND BOWLS. HALL CHINA COMPANY. EARTHENWARE, WHITE GLAZE. DESIGNED CCA 1955, PRODUCTION BEGUN 1956.



EVA ZEISEL: MUSEUM DINNER SERVICE. CASTLETON CHINA COMPANY. MANUFACTURED BY SHENAGO CO., NEW CASTLE, USA. PORCELAIN, CLEAR GLAZE. DESIGNED CCA 1942-43, PRODUCTION BEGUN 1946.



EVA ZEISEL: TOWN AND COUNTRY DINNER SERVICE. RED WING POTTERY, RED WING, MINNESOTA. EARTHENWARE. DESIGNED CCA 1945, PRODUCTION BEGUN CCA 1946



EVA ZEISEL: SUGAR BOWL. RIVERSIDE PORCELAIN, IRIDESCENT RED GLAZE. DESIGNED CCA 1946, PRODUCTION BEGUN CCA 1947.



EVA ZEISEL:
VASES IN IRIDESCENT GLAZE. ZSOLNAY
PORCELAIN FACTORY, PÉCS, HUNGARY.
GLAZES DEVELOPED IN COOPERATION
WITH PETER HESZ. DESIGNED AND MADE 1983.

Richard Wagner



EVA ZEISEL:
HALLCRAFT TOMORROW'S CLASSIC
COFFEE AND TEAPOTS. HALL CHINA
COMPANY, EAST LIVERPOOL, USA.
EARTHENWARE, WHITE AND BLACK GLAZE.
DESIGNED CCA 1949-50,
PRODUCTION BEGUN 1952

Courtesy Eva Zeisel

EVA ZEISEL RETURNS TO BUDAPEST

Sixty years after her first successful, independent exhibition in Hungary, Éva Zeisel presented an excellent comprehensive exhibition of her work in the Museum of Applied Arts in Budapest. This American designer of Hungarian origin was among the first to have an independent exhibition of her work appear at the Museum of Modern Art in New York. Marcell Breuer, the architect and designer, was the only other designer of Hungarian origin to be included in Jay Doblin's book, *One Hundred Great Product Designs*, which covers design over the last two centuries. Her Budapest exhibition offered viewers the colourful and rich work of an extraordinary career. In the hall of this exquisite Art Nouveau building (designed by Ödön Lechner, opened in 1896) more than 200 works were on display, representing her art from the beginning up to the present, from Budapest to Budapest. In a space made up by the vibrant white walls and the huge glass roof, a clearly delineated career could be followed in chronological order. In this calm white installation only the main works received a special emphasis on round brown tables placed under large lemon-yellow textile shades.

Eva Zeisel was born in Budapest in 1906, the child of the proprietor of a textile factory, Sándor Stricker and the historian Laura Polányi, a member of the prominent family.* With a background of wealth and culture, polyglot even as a girl, she studied under János Vaszary at the Academy of Fine Arts for three semesters, leaving the academy to study ceramics under the master Jakab Karapancsik. She became independent in the spring of 1925. Her ceramics of traditional Hungarian character, displaying some influence from the Wiener Werkstätte, were sent to a major exhibition in Philadelphia in 1926. The recognition received led to her being invited to

work for the newly founded ceramics factory in Kispest. There she spent one year, designing vases, animal figures and teacups and other utensils. From the summer of 1927 she lived in Hamburg, working for the Hansa Kunst-Keramik where she remained until the spring of 1928. She returned to Budapest and worked as a set designer for a Dadaist theatrical group called the Green Donkey, headed by Ödön Palasovszky. However, her return to ceramics was not long in coming, she accepted a contract as a designer with the Schramberg china works in 1928. Here her world of forms was renewed: strict geometrical forms, circles and lines with reduced, strong colours, following early Cubist Constructivist modern design. Following the Deutscher Werkbund exhibition held in 1930, she parted with "soulless" modernism, shrill geometry. Her works completed in Berlin at the beginning of the thirties follow the *Neue Sachlichkeit*.

She went to the Soviet Union in early 1932 and joined other foreigners in developing the silicate industry, work which was part of the first five-year plan (1928-32). At first she worked in the Lomonosov Factory in Leningrad, whose director was the Suprematist N. M. Suetin, then, from 1934, in the ceramics factory at Dulevo, considered to be the largest in the world at the time. She was engaged in a wide range of works in these years: she designed industrial porcelain and perfume bottles and the influence of classic porcelain is to be seen in these works of hers which reflect the turn of the century. She was awarded the rank of Art Director of the Glass and Ceramics Industry: when lawsuits began to be entered against foreign specialists, she spent half a year in custody before she was finally allowed to travel to Vienna in September 1937. From Vienna she travelled to England via Budapest, going on to the United States in the autumn of 1938. Soon she worked as a designer mainly

* See our next issue

in Art Deco, which was somewhat late in arriving on the American market. In addition, she also engaged in significant teaching work, which was how her talents fully revealed themselves and she herself was to receive recognition in a wide circle in the years to come.

It was Eva Zeisel who created industry-oriented training in ceramics and porcelain design in the Pratt Institute Art School of Brooklyn, which had significant effects on early form design teaching in America. Her teaching methods adopted a practical approach to problems, a systematic development of plans and a search for the expressive force of form, 'form study', still considered up-to-date today. The claim was to establish the personal character, the relationship between the object and its user. To all this was joined an emphasis on achieving close contact with the factory. The works of her students were soon to receive great attention at the exhibition held in the Rockefeller Center in 1940; not long after her own work as a designer aroused great interest.

Eliot Noyes, equally outstanding as a museum keeper and as an industrial form designer, recommended her work as teacher and lecturer to the director of the Castleton Factory when he contacted MOMA, which had played a significant role in forming the industrial culture of America in the 'thirties and early 'forties, Eva Zeisel wanted to design "a really elegant set". In the set called Museum White she struck a harmony between traditional and modern forms, characterized by a sculptor's perfection; it is both cool and lyrical, classical and modern. Although the work was largely completed by 1943 it was only displayed after the war in Zeisel's highly successful individual exhibition held in the MOMA in 1946. From then on she received many new commissions and her designs were used one after the other.

Her set Town and Country, made at the Red Wing Pottery factory in the spring of 1946, was displayed a year later: it has lively colours and a brave design, made for informal

family meals, in five different combinations of serene colours, with a dull and bright glaze. A more regular, more finely shaped version of it is the Hallcraft Tomorrow's Classic set, designed to the order of the Hall Factory (1952), which is Zeisel's most popular work. This work deserving its title of a modern set of tableware sold rapidly and well; the factory supplemented it with a 21 piece set of kitchen and cooking ware at the end of 1954, was marketed in 12 different patterns and aroused controversy among designers, who looked upon puritanic form as *the* principle of modern design. However, Éva Zeisel never shrank from decoration, just as she was always open to every influence. From the mid-1940s, organic-biomorphic forms occurred with the same naturalness in the objects she made with various materials, with different functions: her table ware made of glass, plastic, steel and aluminium, chairs made of tubes. In the early 'fifties, various combinations of materials, wooden and metal handles in ceramic utensils, appeared with increasing frequency. The beauty and attraction of her sets and ensembles of objects desire not from identical forms but from forms that belong to each other: the dishes that fit into each other with their irregular forms too, the small and large pieces, the handles and holders with distinct forms. The best examples are the pieces of lyrical fineness of Hall-craft—Century (1956), her other work made from the Hall firm.

After the beginning of the fifties, when her family moved to Chicago, she had to give up her highly successful teaching career in the Pratt Institute. At the same time, however, she was completing commissions which she received regularly from West Germany, Italy, Japan and India. The most successful among them is the Eva set (1957–58) designed for the Rosenthal firm; this is a good example of creating a harmony between the modern and traditional forms, without the personal tone, which is normally typical of Eva Zeisel's work.

She stopped designing in the middle of

the sixties and in the family tradition of the Polányis' she concentrated on history, working on American history, for two decades. The recognition of her design work, however, gave her the emotional impetus to introduce herself at a retrospective exhibition in Budapest in 1982 and prepare her most recent plans in the city where she had begun. There an ornamental ceramics series with an eosin pattern was made in the Zsolna factory, which had participated in the world fairs of the turn of the century so successfully, a continuation of the fruit bowls and vases occurring throughout her career. A set of marked sculptural forms UFO, was made in the Granite Stone Utensil Factory of Budapest, the place whose she has first worked.

America rediscovered Eva Zeisel at the beginning of the eighties. She received new commissions and once again drew appreciation from the critics. In a lengthy study published in *Industrial Design* in 1983, Sarah Bodine called the designer the "pioneer of ceramics in the 20th century". In the actual preface to the retrospective exhibition's catalogue, Lilliane M. Stewart, President of the Musée des Arts Decoratifs de Montréal, established for collecting applied art after the Second World War, refers to Eva Zeisel as the outstanding creator in century's form design. Edgar Kaufman Jr., a former director of MOMA, compared Eva Zeisel to Hans Arp, saying that her works contain the same objectivity and wit. Hardly any of the appreciation fails to mention the designer's Hungarian origin, the Hungarian period of her career or to refer to those works related to Hungary. These, it must be added, are not among the most significant.

Eva Zeisel's once and present success is based upon an effort which Sarah Bodine called "humanistic design". She understood at an early stage of her career that good de-

sign is based on several other properties of communication of the object with the user as well as an utility and beauty. Till the very end she was striving to create objects which are as pleasant to use as to touch, to furnish her objects with high aesthetic value and make them commercially attractive at the same time. In addition to familiarising herself with the problems of manufacturing and distribution, her primary aim was always to establish a connection as deep as possible with the customer-user; at the same time she was striving to create a personal independent world of forms within the boundaries of industrial mass production as well.

Till the very end, she was able to preserve her ability to renew her art and adopt as well as elaborate the different impacts, just as she was able to harmonise in her best works the elegant forms of classical eastern porcelain with the organic, robust forms of the stone dishes of folk art. She thus managed to find her way not only in to the MOMA exhibition but into the homes of the buyers as well. The stylistic cavalcade of her works is united by a single thread running through her whole career, which makes the smaller works remarkable next to the great ones. This is nothing else but the voice of happiness palpable everywhere and in all her perodies. Intellectual excitement and the pleasure gained from playful work shine through all her creations, the sincere pleasure drawn from creating and, finally life.

The exhibition held in the Museum of Applied Arts was the result of international cooperation; it was supported by the Hungarian Ministry of Culture and the Soros Foundation, with contributions from Canadian, Japanese and Hungarian firms and institutions. The designs and the humanistic message attracted both residents and visitors.

GYULA ERNYEY

THEATRE AND FILM

NOT CONNECTING

Milán Füst: *Catullus*; Imre Sarkadi: *Oszlopos Simeon* (Saint Simeon Stylite); Miklós Munkácsi: *Lisszaboni eső* (Rain in Lisbon); Endre Vészi: *Le az öregekkel* (Down with the Old); Pál Békés: *A női partórség szeme láttára* (In Sight of the Coastguardwomen); Miklós Vámos: *Világszezon* (World Season)

Stage-plays as well as books have their fate. In the Hungarian theatre there are blank spots that mark those plays which, encapsulated in their book form, had to wait a long time before reaching the stage. One of these is Milán Füst's* *Catullus*. Written in 1927, the play was premièred in 1967, the year of the author's death, and in 1987 it caused a stage revelation. On seeing it at the Katona József Theatre's production in Budapest, the British critic John Elsom described the play as one of the great European works, adding that though he felt its kinship with Strindberg, Ibsen and Wedekind, it possessed a uniqueness which prevented comparisons with any of these. Elsom even went on to say that when he should next write a book on modern theatre, the chapter on the relationships between men and women would include an analysis of Füst's play and the Budapest production of it.

In fact *Catullus* is more than another formulation of the battle of the sexes, nor is it a stage presentation of the Roman poet's ambivalence of *odi et amo*. Despite some authentic biographical details, the play is not about Catullus who wrote to Lesbia. It takes

place on the stage of the soul of Milán Füst (an expression he was found of using), where the Catullan damnation is transsubstantiated into a play whose content is timeless but whose inner emotion and vision is linked to the verse of its twentieth-century poet-cum-playwright. The antiquity of *Catullus* makes up a world just as the Roman and Greek plots do in Shakespeare's plays. As a playwright, Füst instinctively felt what he could not realise as an aesthete in the absence of an adequate intellectual environment for it, particularly in a theatre insensitive to visionary drama; he felt that it is not the plot but intuition that provides the guiding line on stage. The common reaction of the Hungarian theatre was that it did not know what to make of *Catullus*. Sixty years were needed to abandon the sets and paraphernalia of ancient Rome and, unravelling the inner nature of the play, to transplant it into the middle-class milieu of the 1920s.

Gábor Székely's production opens in a cheap pub, a steambath and a gaming room all rolled into one, a meeting-place of dubious characters, loafers, pederasts and criminals. It continues in a middle-class home in a turn-of-the-century residential block, whose gloomy, high-ceilinged bedroom and dining-

* See *NHQ* 106

room open into each other in a complicated pattern and which are filled with heavy furniture and with Art Nouveau sliding doors and opal-glass inlay. The epilogue is set in a dreary cellar or basement room with stone bricks and a vent giving onto the street. The sets, made with a detailed realism, produce a stifling tension and provide an authentic background for the horrible mental wrangle of the characters linked together by chains of love and hatred. Clodia, the *femme fatale*, wants to shake off, even by means of murder, the tormenting captivity of her marriage, laden with humiliation. She urges Catullus, one of her former lovers, to commit the murder, but before this desperate act can take place, the intended victim, her husband, in a final gesture of despair, turns the weapon against himself. The overwrought poet, faced with the cosmic hopelessness of human relations, slumps into shock and gives himself over to a stark solitude; Clodia, reduced to a listless despair, departs on the arm of someone else.

The play sets considerable problems to a director in untangling the knot of relationships, Füst's torrent of evocative throwaway and half-complete lines and the entire charged and threatening atmosphere. To contend with, he has Catullus, hysterical and offended, Metellus, the deceived husband gradually regaining his middle-class dignity, not to mention Clodia, the unfaithful object of their painful adoration. She, in fact, is a complex figure, whose infidelity is only superficially frivolous in that it expresses a helpless movement back and forth between "the artist" and the "burgher," a desire to break free, a protest against being possessed. One of the key points for an interpretation of the play is the scene where the two men, set against each other, recognise their common lot and the end of their torturing passion for Clodia.

It is paralyzing to watch how the mysterious object of their desire, after all her embittered frivolity and sensual provocation, by the end gains a calmness in her self-induced desolation. Right to the end the production

conjoins a pitiless analysis to Füst's atmosphere, screwing the tension tighter, illuminating more and more of the detail. The retina of our consciousness retains the flushes of these details: the grotesque faces and bodies in the pub, the tramping of unknown feet behind the shutter, the water dusled to the flower by a terrified maid. The audience undergoes a terrifying experience and finds that Milán Füst's philosophy of existence can only add to the distress of his soul.

The subject of Imre Sarkadi's play, *Saint Simeon Stylite*, is the solitude of the artist and his battle with the world. Written in 1960, this play too can also be described as a drama on the inability to communicate, more precisely the rejection of any relationship with one's immediate and wider surroundings. The play treats that excessive intellectual individualism which redeems failure and the self-destroying instinct through becoming consciously an outsider. The painter János Kis is seized by the cynical demons of his soul. His creative energies have dried up, his paintings have been rejected by the jury, he does no work, he loses his post, he is abandoned by his lover, his telephone is being disconnected, and he changes the bad for the worse. He finds a living example for this philosophy of "let's see, Lord, how we'll fare doing it together" in Mrs Vince, an out-and-out slut who is virtually pure, abstract evil. However, failure is unavoidable since János Kis cannot become a Mrs Vince. His mind, sound and rational even after the complete dissolution of his human qualities, prevents him from finding satisfaction in metaphysical evil. János Kis's grotesque tragedy lies in the fact that he is only able to disintegrate his moral sense, not his cerebral functions and his mental processes make him constantly aware that what he is doing can bring no solution.

István Horvai, one of the closest friends of the writer, the inspiration and first director of many Sarkadi plays, after a remarkably long wait, made up his mind to stage this, perhaps the most personal of the playwright's

works. As was to be expected, Horvai's approach to the play was subjective and deep since he had to formulate through it his own relationship to the author, to the play and to the contemporary validity of the problems raised in it. More than twenty-five years have passed since the play was written and its author committed suicide; this distance of time has eliminated for good the possibility of linking *Saint Simeon Stylite* with post-1956 intellectual disillusionment. The director too is aware of this when he refers to the first version of the theme (dating from the late 1940s) and even adopts for the first time in the stage history of the play, certain sections from this into his production in the Pesti Theatre.

In this reinterpretation the play becomes a drama of a type of intellectual satiety, accompanied by a sort of deliberate over-statement philosophically outbidding this. There is particular significance in the fact that János Kis considers as asceticism rational observations arrived at purely through mental processes and made, symbolically, from a pillar. This, however, is not tantamount to passivity. It merely means that he no longer takes pleasure in his senses and so considers the seduction of Zsuzsi, an empty-headed goose of a girl, as part of an experiment, whose essence is simply to "gauge the world against our own selves turned into thought."

The only trouble is that with the almost total obscuring of the original background to the play, the theatre-goer of today would like to have a more exact knowledge of the reasons for this dismal, morning-after condition of the János Kis's of this world; apart from the failure of the protagonist, the play provides precious little explanation for this. The philosophising outpourings of the hero on order and freedom have a much more artificial, mannered effect today than even ten years ago. On its first appearance, in the early 1960s, *Saint Simeon Stylite* stood above the literary average of the day as a shocking intellectual play. Although it would be a mistake to dispute its value in retrospect,

time seems to have begun to undermine the play.

In the director's interpretation the murder at the end of the play is in fact suicide: János Kis himself offers the knife for the mortal blow to the defenceless woman. Although the original text makes no reference to this, the challenging of death is not alien to the character's attitude. Of course, it would be better if this challenge, instead of being expressed in the direct gesture of offering the knife, were to derive from the character's demonic intellect. Yet even in the absence of this, one has to acknowledge the tragic catharsis of this ending, the sincerity of which is guaranteed by the crisis in the author's life and his suicide shortly after writing the play, the reasons for which are still not fully clear.

As a curious gesture of changing times, a new play, Miklós Munkácsi's comedy, *Rain in Lisbon*, premièred by the Játékszín of Budapest under Menyhért Szegvári, seems to deliberately repeat the twenty-five-year-old conflict of the Sarkadi play, but this time at a greatly reduced intensity, nearly as a parody. Here too the protagonist is a disillusioned painter, who instead of producing masterpieces, earns his living making coffins in a workshop which he has inherited from his father. The main reason for his disappointment does not lie in his attaching greater importance to craftsmanship than to art, although an international prize for one of his etchings leaves him just as cold as a generous offer from a foreign art-dealer. The protagonist, with an obvious touch of the genius, despairs because his casually loose wife has left him and his adored small son may well not be his either. In Munkácsi's play nothing is said (not even between the lines) on any social conflict, the philosophical conflict between the world and the artist or the existential crisis of the creator come to the brink. Although at a certain point of the play, the hero slings a rope around his neck, he soon abandons his suicidal intention. He is only capable of wry contempt with which

he observes the people thrusting themselves upon him in the hope of financial gain. The furnishings of the ramshackle workshop are being slowly replaced as the money for the picture his "well-wishers" have sold trickles in in US dollars; he himself remains helplessly resigned.

One is aware of a striking change in dramatic approach over a quarter of a century. Sarkadi's painter still tried to understand the ultimate questions of existence, Munkácsi's would like to understand his wife. The communal business has turned into a private affair, intellectual passion into ironic grotesquery, tragedy into comedy. A fairly weightless one at that.

The grotesque is often a faithful expression of the devaluation of values. An artist's greatest treachery is not presumably when he abandons creative work to make coffins. It is much more disillusioning if he treats the older generations as a mere subject of his creation, symbolically speaking, treating the venerable simply as potential inhabitants of the coffins referred to.

Endre Vészi's *Down with the Old* has at the bottom of what appears to be the problem of the artist, a treatment of old age as a social phenomenon. This bizarre comedy, produced by the National, brings to mind a statement attributed to a Cambridge anthropologist by Simone de Beauvoir in her book on old age. Accordingly, in a rapidly changing world, where the life of a machine is extremely short, man should not serve too long either and everything over 55 years should be discarded. The word "discarded," Beauvoir adds, expresses society's attitude towards the old more precisely than anything else. Vészi seems to have had the same word in mind while writing his play. Perhaps this is why the closing scene of a Turkish bath for old people unfolds a vision of the Auschwitz gas chambers.

The key-signature of *Down with the Old* is retrospectively unambiguous. Vészi did not want to write a melodrama, but rather to stay

with the simile, a rhapsody; this is a bitter grotesquery flitting between passion and lyricism and, since it is on stage, a bizarre vision. His approach favouring the old seems to be motivated not by attentrissement or pity, but the coarse, somewhat distorting intention of confronting his audience with cruel reality. He is not afraid to cause aversion, whether towards the young who trample on the old or towards the evil or unctuous middle-aged and even towards the aged who show signs of physical and mental disintegration.

The central figure, Sasvári, a young film director who looks on his first independent production as a possible breakthrough, wants to turn the inmates of an old people's home or, more precisely, the grotesque nature of senility, into the film's drawing point, "let's say in the spirit of Bosch, or even more of Daumier." The impassive documentary form with which he brings the blotches of old age into close-up, like "burlesque in the ante-room of death," are to be explained partly by the law-of-the-jungle mentality of his trade and partly by latent childhood memories (a disgust at the sexual life of his grandparents). The traumatic proportions of this seem to be a somewhat forced cause for his attitude. Sasvári, with his resolute and open careerism, resembles the negative heroes of the old socialist-realist novels more closely than a figure who is credible and actable in a dramatic sense. Consequently, the sudden disappointment of his lover Luca, her moral indignation and spectacular break with him also fall victim to a portrayal which is far too direct.

Nonetheless, all this is not the primary reason why this well-intentioned play, which has a good many poetically inspired scenes, fails to develop into real drama. Vészi has not succeeded in expressing that what is most important, the fundamental idea on which the whole play is based: the distressingly ambivalent position of the aged, the socially uncertain, since unresolved, state of "the last station," old age. He has not succeeded in making his characters reflect the contradic-

tions of biological disintegration and mental and emotional defencelessness. Neither the profane bickerings of the old couple contracting a "shopwindow marriage" in the old people's home, nor the spoonings of an arm-chair journalist of the old school are able to present profoundly and perceptively enough the types nor slot the conflicts of old age organically into the dramatic process. The defenceless, then threatening chorus of the old in the home has the function, according to the author's novellistic instructions, of a crowd milling in the background and playing up the mood, without the individual figures developing the stage presence they need to assume a dramatic task.

These faceless, impersonal extras, only coached to movement, are unable to raise through their mute presence, the inmates of the home into protagonists. Yet the play is, or ought to be, about them. Ferenc Sík's direction does conjure up the cock-eyed vision, also felt from the text, of the tragicomic old people of the home, the cold-hearted wardens and the visitors who burst in on them like healthy young savages. Only he presents all this somewhat casually, frivolously, to make it more easy to sell. This makes the young film director's embarrassment the less authentic when, in the final scene, the vision of Auschwitz looms up out of a seemingly innocent take.

Fortunately, not everybody is as uninhibited as the pushy film director of Vészi's play. The protagonist in Pál Békés's *In Sight of the Coastguardwomen* is much humbler and gentler. All he wants is to be left alone to be able to translate a single sentence from English into Hungarian in peace. And this more or less covers the plot of the comedy at the Madách Theatre.

Milán Torda is what is called a young creative intellectual, a literary translator by trade and, at 35, in the most fertile years of his life. Or after these would be his most fertile years were he be able to work under the right conditions. He would like to trans-

late Tolstoy, sitting in a study with stained walnut furniture and ceiling-high bookshelves, enveloped in soft cigar-smoke and sipping golden tea. Instead he is grappling with some technical article on aviation in a dreary, unfurnished flat in a housing block—even the door is missing—because this work is better paid and he owes the price of half a flat to his divorced wife. Nor can he even settle into this dreary, solidary drudgery, because, as a new tenant, he is overwhelmed by his neighbours, who monopolize his telephone, his flat, his working time, settling in on him, talking their heads off and generally moving into his life. Amid the ruins of his might-have-been personality, Milán Torda is searching with mounting despair for the only adequate predicate for the sentence he is to translate. . .

Pál Békés presents a negative version of the utopia of a literary way of life, padded with middle-class comfort, perhaps recalling precisely Milán Füst (Milán being a rare forename)—a deficiency disease among the young generation who are not even unable to reach an intellectual existence. The protagonist's position is full of paradoxes. He has no personal concern with his intellectual forced labour and in order to be able still to perform it, he ought to exclude the loathsome reality around him and which, whether he realizes it or not, resembles his own life. He would like to shut himself up, while he ought to be open to receiving experiences. He is searching for a predicate, but he does not know whether he is able to predicate anything at all.

'Do you have something to say or is it merely a something you are saying?'—could best sum up the paradox the protagonist and, to a certain sense the author, finds himself in. It does not become absolutely clear from the play whether Békés is aware of the substance of the metaphor he has created, whether he will get over nostalgia for the intellectual hero in a disadvantageous position, or whether a door with a Yale lock and a mahogany desk would allow him to consider

the social position of his generation as resolved. If this were the author's predicate, then it would be more than meagre. In such a case even the formal achievements of the promising play—its fully-fledged technique of dialogues, its stage presence and a realism shifting towards the absurd—would be of no great account.

For the moment this question is settled by the spirit of the location of the production. The company which has taken the play on, stands for "splendid isolation." Péter Huszti's production seems to be saying: to hell with the writer's unattainable ivory tower, as long as the disturbing outside world can be kept out of a rotten hole at a housing development. According to this tolerable, wry point of view, the intruding neighbours are ridiculous cranks, lacking human dignity. It is always more rewarding to be funny than profound, at least according to certain conditioned reflexes of actors and audiences. As an unavoidable consequence of the director's reading, the supporting characters dominate at the expense of the protagonist. The production formulates Milán Torda's intellectual side even less clearly than the text, making it even questionable whether he has one. Quite simply, he is not put into any situation that interprets from his point of view the events taking place on the stage. The plot, instead of congealing around him, proceeds in unorganized episodes (this being also a flaw in the play itself), forsaking the actor in his inactive presence. The hero is increasingly shut out from his own conflict and all that is left to him is to gradually fall into apathy. It is only the rebellious gesture of the ending that hauls him out of this: at the last moment Milán Torda happens upon the desperately sought for predicate, the exact Hungarian translation for the verb "to shobble," a coinage in English. The metaphor is clear: in order to be able to disclose something and to have hopes of being understood, one has to create one's own words for one's own vocabulary, that is to say in one's own world.

In *World Season*, Miklós Vámos does more than coin words, he creates a whole language. This is not English or Russian nor Spanish, but an imaginary language mixed with Anglo-Saxon, Slav and Latinistic elements, the language of a fictitious country, on one of whose beaches the play is set. It is a familiar language to the point it can almost be understood. It is a familiar country, to the point that it can almost be identified. It is a familiar beach, to the point that one feels one has already been to it. The whole situation is then familiar, this multi-national globe of ours bubbling away in the melting pot of the hot summer sun.

If one of the key-words is "familiar," the other is "alien." In this familiar situation we are strangers to each other. We do not understand each other's language, behaviour and intentions. Vámos has the wit not to define exactly the nationality of the individual bathers. The audience keeps having to guess at this, just as the bathers have to, the only difference being that the audience does understand what they say, as the polyglot speech is all heard in Hungarian, complemented with non-verbal meta-communication. (It is, of course handy that meta-communication is not only the language of people who do not understand each other verbally but also a theatrical vernacular.)

Vámos's "world beach" has two dimensions, one everyday and one metaphorical. In the everyday dimension everything is real; the characters are sun-bathing, swimming, quarreling, eating and drinking, flirting and frolicking. But how far can reality be called everyday and where does it turn into absurd? And to what an extent can the audience accept this absurd reality? The characters in *World Season* instantly accept the multiple accident which takes place beyond the fence as something natural; so too do they learn of the contamination of the sea without any major shock—as both themes have already been devalued by press reports. They only shake their heads in disapproval when a turbaned bather, wedged among them, together

with his gorillas, becomes the victim of an act of terrorism. They are seized by temporary fear when aircraft pass above dropping leaflets in the local language; they huddle together at an unexpectedly sharp flash, they find the black ash falling from the sky peculiar, and are somewhat surprised at the arrival of a new bather looking like a robot or a Martian. But finally they brush aside all these matters, after all they have heard so much about such things. They have learnt to cohabit with this impossible world situation whose everyday absurdities gradually filter through and cram their big, common world beach. They almost fail to notice threat any longer and are as insensible to it as to each other.

The basic idea of *World Season* is excellent, but its dramatic realization is far from being so. Vámos can write fluently but is not strict enough with himself. He takes the stage much too lightly; his play is much thinner and limper than his dramatic conception. It lacks professional skill in the positive sense of the term: sure-handed construction, the

undulation of the speaking positions of the groups talking alternately and, above all, the inner intensification by which the basic situation could be unravelled, intensified and turned from the banal to the bizarre.

This production from the Szeged National Theatre, directed by János Sándor, does not undertake to start the play from a genre picture or everyday episodes and arrive at a caricature of our familiar present. A limp watch à la Salvador Dali is meant to indicate that the spectator is in the realm of surrealism, but what he sees is in fact a caricature of reality. In *World Season*, infantile adults are sun-bathing on the beach of world chaos. How long will this world-delirium last? Is there a universal catastrophe to come? Or will a universal scandal break out? The invented "world language" tells us that the situation is deteriorating. From time to time the loudspeaker on the beach roars the warning into our ears, but we pay no notice to it. We speak a different language, we do not get it.

TAMÁS KOLTAI

CONTROVERSIAL FILMS

Miklós Jancsó: *Season of Monsters*; János Dömölky: *Roofs at Dawn*; Péter Bacsó: *Banana Skin Waltz*

The arts of this century were much stimulated by the reworking of metaphor, of which surrealism is the most striking example. Several sources came into play, the three most fundamental perhaps being Kafka, the lyrical surrealism represented by Breton, the young Aragon and Eluard, and the popular surrealism which in literature was launched by Lorca. These trends—*mutatis mutandis*—are also evident in the cinema, with Buñuel as the Kafka of film, Godard best representing the urbanism of French lyrical surrealism, and Miklós Jancsó as the Lorca of film.

The heated arguments and sharply polarized reactions which have followed some of

Jancsó's films, particularly—though not only—in Hungary, may well be related to the fact that surrealism did not take root everywhere to the same extent. That sensibility needed to appreciate its novel qualities has not become general everywhere, not even in the circles one would expect to be receptive; resistance to the idiom of the avant-garde is particularly strong in that art with the most popular traditions, the cinema. But Jancsó's film are of course of differing values even when weighed on the scales of surrealism and his occasional allegorical insipidities and metaphors can also provide opportunity for criticism. In particular if his weak-

er works are measured against his own masterpieces, it becomes clear that this difference in quality mostly derives—as is the present case—from Jancsó moving away from Lorca, his own self that is, in the direction of Breton and indeed Tzara and switching to a kind of urbane surrealism, which is clearly not his world.

All this has to be said because Jancsó's new film, *Szörnyek évadja* (Season of Monsters), has again sparked off controversy in Hungary (and I would not be surprised if it were to polarize viewers abroad as well). He has once again brought into being criticism and attitudes deriving from the most varied sources, from stick-in-the-mud refusal on the part of champions of linear naturalism through the more aesthetic of those supporting the stylistic unity and coherence of surrealism to the raptures of a snobbishly indiscriminating fervour. Although most of Jancsó's films have produced sharp differences among audiences, never before has there been such a wide gulf of response to any film of his. Here your unfortunate critic is supposed to decide whether this film signifies a zenith or a nadir.

In fact it is a film of excessive paradoxes; it signifies neither. Jancsó has set out along a Faustian path but he has not found his Mephistopheles.

The Faust of this century no longer seeks individual fortune but that of mankind (or, which amounts to the same thing, the reasons for unhappiness, misery and general feeling of discomfort). This is a collectivistic Faust—something which is indicated in the film by his concern for the problems of the existence of mankind and by the fact that a specific and individual hero is replaced by a whole corporation of tiny scholarly Fausts, undertaking, or wanting to undertake, the Faustian function collectively. These are Professor Zoltai, who has committed suicide (András Bálint), and Professor Komondi (József Madaras), the two presumably being biologists, Professor Bardocz (György Cserhalmi), who, we are told, is a physician, Professor Kovács (Ferenc Kállai), who has been

their secondary-school or university teacher and for whose sixtieth birthday his old students have gathered together, and God only knows how many unnamed professors. Alongside them, a classmate of theirs, now a police officer (András Kozák), a lunatic (László B. Székely), a Christ reincarnate (Béla Tarr), a minstrel (Tamás Cseh), some kind of side-show-men and clowns and the obligatory girls—in and out of clothes—perform those Jancsó-esque students for which the calligraphy of the movement of horses is replaced by a more prosaic choreography of the ballet of cars and helicopters and folkwear costume is replaced by jeans, pullovers and suits. But fire remains fire, water remains water, the puszta remains the puszta, dancing remains dancing and singing remains singing—this is both the old Jancsó, and a new Jancsó. This too has its positive and negative aspects.

This transplantation of the primeval and the mythological into the modern world which—I cannot avoid literary comparisons—seems to bring the film close to the outlook of Bulgakov's *The Master and Marguerite* and Márquez's *A Hundred Years of Solitude*; it introduces elements of self-mockery and self-irony into the hitherto humourless Jancsó world. Yet it is to be feared that this bitter self-irony will only be noticed by the initiate, the Jancsó fans. What is even more striking is the way in which Jancsó here directs his questions at comprehensive and universal phenomena. Jancsó's films to date have examined—in one way or another—the problems of power, recognizing in history the causes for man's injuring and injuries. Although his symbolism—for which critics have more than once reproached him—has lacked that constancy of meaning which would have allowed an unequivocal decoding of his films, the unequivocal and forceful suggestion of the films, with their emotional impact, have still homogenized his message.

However, in *Season of Monsters*, he questions the fullness of our human existence, in the mirror of the trauma and horror, the catastrophe and cataclysms of the twentieth

century, practically the whole of universal history. The lack of homogeneity in the symbolism may express the conviction that the questions of our age cannot be answered. This is acceptable as a message: the shriek of horror, the panic, the sense of loss of future and hope within the monstrosities that have been our century; so too are the traps of nuclear destruction, environmental pollution, population explosion, terrorism, 'the permanently reproduced monster states,' in Attila József's phrase, and the discredited ideologies turning into their opposites. Tar-kovsky's last film, *The Victim*, and more than one of Bergman's, have been such screams. Thus the problem with Jancsó's has to be sought somewhere else.

Reference has been made to names and examples to sketch dimensions of Jancsó's undertaking, from *Faust* to *The Master and Marguerite*. The references are not unjustified as regards the weight of the problem posed in it. However, there is one difference between these works and Jancsó's film: while those succeeded in identifying the core around which to group their problems and thus create the realm of their work, Jancsó's work aims at a kind of comprehensive, all-embracing completion, trying to include and confront in one film all the problems of the century and practically all of human history, with all the interpretations (ontological, metaphysical, biological, social, and moral). This "ticking off," with its speculative coolness—even if it is contrary to Jancsó's "passionate" imagery and the artificially impetuous direction of the cast—dispirits and even bores the viewer, who has come to see a film and not an abstract illustration of a compendious edition of the collected works of Hegel.

What the film wants to reflect on includes the contrast between egalitarian and élite world outlook, the contradictions in Christian religious feeling, the faith in the supernatural and empirical rationalism, the clash between biology and economics, the responsibility of modern science and its horrifying

potential, the roots of national awareness—and this is only a partial list of the issues which are verbally mentioned. But the plot itself and its cluster of symbols (death and resurrection, the change of identity of murderer and victim, the interchange of the captive and the free, the stylistic shifts between surrealism, impressionism and expressionism) reflect the epistemological debate between subjective idealism (the world as man's own notion) and materialism (real without our consciousness); so too are reflected a criticism of fascism, the menaces of our age mentioned already, the suffocating oppression due to the lack of a sense of future, and so on.

Although there might be those who see the merit of the film in this completeness, I see it as its most problematic feature. Precisely because of this impossible demand for completion we are given words instead of empathy, superficiality instead of depth and, at places, even priggishness. One striking feature of Jancsó's earlier films has been the minimal usage of dialogue. But this is a film that gabbles. Not one of the—real—conflicts of the period become the drama of an individual (and what a master of this Jancsó has been!), all of them emerge on the level of reflections (but on the level of reflections almost all of them do emerge), and the central characters, despite their surrealistic postures and stunts, are only interchangeable mouthpieces for changing ideas. They are bystanders to whom the conflicts of this world exist only in their mind in this grand café transposed to an isolated farm.

The present writer is aware of the exceptional and original literary qualities of Gyula Hernádi, Jancsó's permanent scenarist, and what Jancsó's work owes to him. But the solipsism or nihilism which has marked Hernádi's recent writing and which, disregarding all thematic, stylistic and structural laws and immanencies, delivers his work to arbitrariness, even indiscriminately to anything which happens to come to mind, all this has had a negative effect on his own and on Jancsó's work. The effect is all the more negative, the

stronger Jancsó's form-creating powers are at work in this film—through the camera of János Kende—to accomplish visions of a Hieronymus Bosch.

This film is a battle between the two, and while sometimes Jancsó's sensitivity to form is victorious in the details, the whole bears the mark of—for want of a better expression—the violent and forced overflow of Hernádi's speculative intuition. Hernádi's torrent of ideas very often brings to surface ideas which deserve to be treated with attention, seriousness and patience, in short with the care due their merit, originality, depth and inherent aesthetic possibilities instead of being fooled away amid an embarrassment of riches. Gold needs washing, diamonds need cutting and polishing to become gem-stones.

Roofs at Dawn

Roofs at Dawn has been constructed deliberately and energetically out of lyrical components. It is objective poetry and the charm of the 'magic,' of the mystery in it is that the feeling it has brought forth is nameless. It defies categorisation. We, the audience do not know offhand where to put it either. No words or known formulations can be found for it, we would prefer to watch it through once again." This confession is from one of my favourite writers, Géza Ottlik, whose own work, adapted by the author and by the director János Dömölky, provides this film's script. It brings despair to a critic whose commission and calling is to unravel the magic, the charm of the mysteries, to name the nameless, to categorize and to find words and familiar formulation for that which the average viewer is not capable of putting into words. And this reviewer should confess when he examines the value of the author's intention and its realization; indeed, whenever I feel confused, I always welcome the assisting and enlightening statements of the author or authors concerned. Well, I was confused and, despite seeing

the film a second time, did not succeed in dissipating the fog of my confusion. Nor have I been helped by the author's statement, which has warned me against discerning a conventional story in the film, which has "different laws," its theme being a nameless feeling, an "overall awareness of existence," which he has called into being from the "emotional strands of images, motifs, colours, notes, tones and contrasts," and the key for which is provided by Manet's impressionism.

Personally I am fond of Monet, Ottlik and Dömölky, and I would gladly turn this key if it only fitted the lock. But it does not. It cannot be accidental that there are impressionistic landscapes and intérieurs but there is no such thing as an impressionistic historical battle-scene; there exist impressionistic poems but there is no such thing as impressionistic epics (there only the style can be impressionistic), and that every genre that is based on the narration of a story, even if it can make use of impressionistic elements of style and motif, must in its entirety point beyond impressionism. A spectacle can be impressionistic, a story cannot. A picture can, a motion-picture or the motion of a picture cannot. It can be realistic, surrealist, symbolic, allegorical, and so on, but if it is only an impression, then it is (no longer or not yet) a story.

It is in this that I see the ambivalence of *Hajnali háztetők* (*Roofs at Dawn*). Dömölky possesses the poetic ability to create impressionistic spectacles, images and scenes; this can be said with even more justification of the most exceptional camera work. But the task Ottlik's prose sets them, requires more than moods and impressions, however sparkling and forceful these may be, and when, beyond the images, the flow of the story itself is "impressionistic", they in fact make it impossible to be lived through and followed, depriving it of its causality.

Of course it would be easy and unjust to shove, under the spell of Ottlik's authority, who after all is one of the great living Hun-

garian novelists, all responsibility for the problems of the film onto the film-makers. For the problems stem from the scenario, and Ottlik has not only provided his work for it but also his co-authorship, and as his words show even undertook to provide a rationale for it. I have reread *Roofs at Dawn* and, however I turn it around, it remains a socio-psychological novella, whose value can be gauged "only" by social and psychological truths and the authenticity of the "conventional" stories (and by their presentation). This also holds true for the film made of it. The measure must be how profoundly, with what a convincing force and coverage of reality it portrays the excessively contrasted characters of the protagonists (two painters, childhood friends) and their vicissitudes in the history of our century.

This portrayal (and now I am speaking of the film) goes off at half-cock. At parts it perfectly reflects the social atmosphere (which can indeed be suggested by impressionistic means), particularly in the social setting of the Horthy period. The fact that these scenes do not slot into a coherent representation of social conditions is due to the rough and ready way in which the heroes are portrayed; the character portrayals are merely indicated, approximate and somewhat didactic. The story, which spans much too long a period, is even further expanded by episodes from other Ottlik stories; this lends it a kind of *roman à clef* character, only fully understood by those in the know. The uninitiated viewer who (rightly or wrongly), supposes live models to be behind the characters, feels shut out from this to him unfamiliar world.

Yet, this film is the partial success (or partial fiasco) of undoubtedly gifted people. Such slips are part and parcel of the careers of most artists. They are the tax paid for inevitable experimenting. The film rates as an achievement and a lesson for the director, the cameraman and the actors and this means that the film has at least some value. The very fact that film-making has reached Ottlik is a happy development in all events, even

though I am not fully convinced that this novella of his is the most suitable piece to start his screen career. His chef-d'oeuvre, *Iskola a határon* (School at the Frontier) is a debt the Hungarian cinema has still to meet.

Banana Skin Waltz

Péter Bacsó's satirical films (*The Witness*, *O Bloody Life*)—and for me his specific qualities lie in his satirical abilities—have so far been aimed at the recent past, yesterday and the days before yesterday. *Banánbőrkeringő* (Banana Skin Waltz) is his first film to put the present under his critical microscope. Ours is a period when there are no show trials or deportations, which is not marked by crude despotism or a personality cult and a mechanical classification of people; even so, we are still able to live unhappily, in anguish, struggling with invisible adversaries.

The causes are more mysterious than they were when the typical distortions emerged almost automatically in the distorting mirror of the "typical situations" and "typical characters" of the time. Today the factors and motivations which affect our fate are almost hidden within the social mechanism, and in most cases the distortions they cause appear outside but within ourselves. They occur not as crude breaches of legality, iniquity, arbitrariness threatening our liberty and our existence which are brought about by actual individuals who can be caught in the act; they occur as indifference, thoughtlessness and small iniquities, which befall us in various forms of imperceptibly encroaching psychoses and neuroses. A grotesque accident, a banana skin, suffices to shatter our social position and nearly (this "nearly" being a most important symptom of the time) cause us to break our necks. But even if this is only "nearly," it is by all means enough to manifest the anguish, the latent neurosis that, in one form or another, lies hidden in all of us.

A good example for this is the story of Dr Ágoston Kondacs in the film. An inter-

nationally successful sportsman and a reputable traumatologist, he is on his way to a registry office to get married when he is launched straight into an unfortunate incident. Into a square where a crowd has gathered to celebrate a patriotic holiday, wanders a young naked woman who has chosen this very moment to suffer a breakdown. Kondacs covers her with his raincoat and it is thus she is caught by the police; this fact, this banana skin, which the "imperialistic" press covers, photographs and all, sparks off a chain-reaction of entanglements which he cannot escape and which spoil his life. His identity card is in his coat pocket, which means his marriage cannot be concluded. But it is more than the day of his wedding that is postponed. His bride fails to believe that he was only trying to help a naked woman out of pure sheer philanthropy, and she breaks with him on what should have been their bridal night. Similarly suspicious are the investigating authorities, who scent some political provocation in the disturbance of the national holiday; nor do they exclude the possibility of Kondacs being an accomplice of the nude woman. They too are unable to believe that Kondacs covered the woman with his coat without knowing her, out of pure sympathy.

The more he tries to clear himself, attempting to recover his identity card and to track down the woman in order to clear himself, the more he sinks into a bog of anonymous, intangible suspicion and the more he becomes alienated from his own role and social position. His boss is also suspicious of him, his friends cold-shoulder him; he loses his job and even spends a night in one of the cells. Even though it turns out that the strange woman is insane, this is of no help to him. A high-flying friend—his former mistress, the wife of a high-ranking functionary—is willing to help him but does not believe in his innocence. Only a former girlfriend, Jutka the nurse, stands by him and saves him when he is on the verge of committing suicide.

If this story had been set in the years of "the personality cult," it would have undoubtedly ended in suicide. If it had been made, let's say, in Hollywood, about America today, an all's well that ends well ending would make this forget the bitterness that has gone before. But here and now, it becomes tragical precisely through a happy ending. Just try to imagine Kafka's protagonist in *The Castle* succeeding in entering the castle or the protagonist of *The Trial* winning his case, and it becomes clear that there was no sense at all in fighting for admittance to the castle and that nothing has been gained by winning the trial. Something like this is happening to Dr Kondacs. When in a lunatic asylum garden they find the woman and Dr Kondacs makes desperate efforts to try and recollect what has happened, there appears a police officer who casually tells him that the charges against him have been dropped, and later the wife of the high-ranking functionary tells him that he has been rehabilitated and appointed director of a country hospital. All his problems have been resolved and the whole fuss has been senseless. Kondacs, who would have borne the blows, even if with difficulty, now breaks down under this unexpected successful ending. Both he and Jutka begin to undress wordlessly and, throwing their clothes away, set out for the entrance of the asylum, as naked as the "banana-skin woman" herself once was the woman who has set the whole thing, the whole "waltz" off.

Bacsó's undertaking, as all the above probably indicates, is carrying a social critique which is exact and authentic as far as its own message goes. The plot, with its abstract frame and structure, carries the socio-critical message well, what I feel to be problematic at times is the occasional forcedness of the plot, which smuggles illustrative elements into the portrayal of real and excellently recognised social phenomena. One feels this is mostly because Bacsó cannot resist his own humour and at certain points he overwhelms the story.

Directed from his own script, Bacsó's film

is the work of a professional in the best sense of the term. The lead is played by Mihály Décs, one of Bacsó's happy discoveries, an amateur actor whose first film this is. The rest of the cast bring their best form to a performing style balanced on a razor's edge, which achieves its effect—authentic even in

its grotesqueness—on the borderline between reality and caricature. It is a delicate stylization and it provides the sense of the film's floating above reality, so that the characters, even in their abstraction, remain very real and typical figures of our own time.

ERVIN GYERTYÁN

HUNGARIAN FILM WEEK 1987

Most foreign critics agree that this year's crop of films were generally of a much higher standard in content and quality than in the last couple of years. One hears consistent rumblings from the Hungarians that overall budgets have not increased in accordance with production costs. Furthermore, there are ever fewer opportunities for too many directors. An estimated 100 qualified directors compete to realise a diminishing number of projects. In 1983, 29 features were released but the number has fallen to an average of 17–20 since then. Of nineteen films presented this year at least four or five can be regarded as polished and professional productions meriting the attention of a far wider audience. This should not be taken as a pessimistic view of the current state of Hungarian cinema. The disappointments were by no means as great as those in 1985 and 1986 when the chorus of disenchantment and resignation was justified and the word crisis reverberated throughout the industry. The Hungarians are disarmingly prone to decry the state of their film industry these days, particularly after the renaissance of the late 1970s and early 1980s, and the fact that there has been equal malaise in most of Europe does not provide them much consolation. Reforms within the state film company Mafilm, commencing this year, will allow greater financial and artistic independence for its four existing feature film studios (Hunnia, Budapest, Objektív and Dialóg).

In Hungary, as indeed in most socialist countries, film directors have much in common with writers and poets in that tradition

compels them to see their art as serving a moral purpose. Historical, geographical and political factors all contribute towards the feeling of responsibility in representing Hungarian life. One can argue that the resources for making thrillers, action packed adventures and other commercial type films are greatly lacking, but a need to examine problems and mirror what Hungarians themselves define as "Hungarian reality" are deeply engrained in Hungarian consciousness. Many of the finest films made in this country are those with a distinctly Hungarian subject. In fact, one often feels it's impossible to perceive and appreciate the fine nuances and ambiguities that a native can absorb and understand, and this fact is often pressed upon me by Hungarians themselves. Having said this, of this year's films the two which left the deepest impression on me were not very "Hungarian." Miklós Jancsó's *Szörnyek évadja* (Season of Monsters) and Gyula Gazdag's *Hol volt hol, nem volt* (A Hungarian Fairytale) (despite the title) held universal appeal, the former concerning itself with the universal question of an impending catastrophe, and the latter a personal and touching story of a boy searching for a father.

In summarising the trends and patterns of Hungarian cinema in the 1980s, it is interesting to note the growing emphasis on modern-day themes. Ornate costume dramas depicting 19th century revolutions, intricate Habsburg feuds and events from even further back in Hungary's history grow scarcer, either due to the expenses involved (István Szabó's two latest films, *Mephisto* and *Colonel Redl*, are

German-Hungarian coproductions), or because of greater outspokenness in examining contemporary social dilemmas. Hungarian reality may not necessarily emerge from every film set in the present day but issues are at last approached head-on.

Only one film this year conspicuously dealt with the distant past, three investigated the problematic 1950s, but the majority were highly topical, and concentrated in Hungary's capital. Moreover, there's a decidedly glamorous look to many of these films. Economic reforms and the growth of private enterprise have certainly made their mark in Hungary. The dingy doorways, cracked walls and dull, cramped living quarters which once represented realism are not pronounced features of films such as *Banánhéjkereső* (Banana Skin Waltz), *Zuhanás közben* (The Fall), *Laura*, and *Szia, anyu* (Love, Mother). The camera's eye deliberately focuses on the comfortable living conditions of the characters concerned. The difficulties of finding accommodation and problems in house-sharing have been the themes of a number of films recently, most notably *Ajándék ez a nap* (A Priceless Day, 1979), *Könnyű testi sértés* (Minor Assault, 1983) and *Egy kicsit én, egy kicsit te* (Now It's My Turn, Now It's Yours, 1985). Last year György Szomjas's *A falfúró* (The Walldriller) and Pál Erdőss's *Visszaszámlálás* (Countdown) showed the difficulties in starting up a business. One should not assume from the evidence of the films this year (particularly those mentioned) that a large proportion of Hungarians have suddenly become the proud owners of slick West-European and Japanese cars, video machines and villas in the salubrious Buda hills of the capital. The danger of offering the world "Hungarian reality" is all too obvious in this case. If there is a moral to these stories, and I suspect I'm supposed to believe there is, then affluence does not always guarantee eternal peace and happiness. The heroine in Géza Böszörményi's *Laura*, for instance, is a young, attractive woman of good circumstances, a promising career and good family

contacts. She is nevertheless bored with her life and finds an outlet for her frustrations with old friends in a video venture, in helping a doctor at the hospital she works in fight for his rights, and finds a challenge in a younger man who can best be described as a scruffy, idle opportunist. Playing in the title role is Juli Básti, whose face grows longer with each sour realisation of the lies in her life and of those around her. The story proceeds at a constantly bland pace and Laura's enthusiasm for the clumsily handled video venture is none too convincing. The only strength of the film lies in the doctor's battle against being given a retirement he feels unready for, arguing that he should be allowed to work the five years he was unjustly imprisoned for in a work camp in the 1950s. A smart apartment, a gleaming red BMW, an apparently successful business and beautiful ballet dancer for a girlfriend do not make for a life of bliss for one of the main characters in Tamás Tolmár's first feature: *The Fall* either. What we are presented with here is a day in the life of a video dealer, Wolf, with girlfriend problems, who gets involved with a pathetic middle-aged woman, Nóra, with husband problems. In between seeing these two develop a dreary, half-interested, half-consolatory friendship while driving around Budapest in a growingly desperate quest for money with which to buy a car for Wolf's girlfriend, a young taxi-driver, with girlfriend problems, goes about his daily work. Needless to say, the two often pass by each other and by the end of the film life's little coincidences tie up neatly when the taxi-driver sees the BMW dive into the Danube, does the honourable thing and saves them. With a little build-up of suspense, and sense of desperation and better handling of the relationship between Wolf and Nóra, one could accept the final resolution in killing off their respective partners, but by then one has lost all interest as all that remains is self-pity, banality and a drowned BMW.

Péter Bacsó's latest satire, *Banana Skin Waltz*, is also populated with wealthy and

well-connected characters. Doctors, dentists, high-ranking officials and wheeler-dealers mix and muddle, and help each other out in the merry-go-round that Bacsó is always so keen to point his finger at. One has become used to the upright, well-meaning, usually innocent type in his films, whose troubles multiply through no fault of his own. The formula worked excellently in *Tanu* (The Witness)—still Bacsó's best film to date—but he seems to have lost his edge and relies more on a series of predictable punchlines and fine comic performances from his actors.

As in *Laura*, the question of personal honour and professional ethics becomes a difficult choice in a society where a good reputation, contact and favours make for an easier life. The only honourable gesture the central character in Bacsó's film makes is spontaneous rather than well-meaning. Dr Kondacs is a successful doctor and ex-national sporting hero who, on the way to his own wedding, covers a naked woman with his trench-coat at a national memorial. Dr Kondacs's ordeals begin as the wedding ceremony begins and comes to an embarrassing halt on the discovery that his identity card was in his coat pocket. The bride to be accepts this with understandable suspicion, and from there on the relationship starts to fall apart. Everything goes wrong as one misunderstanding becomes confused with another, as he's hounded by the police for possible political misdemeanours, and is made to feel the consequences at work. Everyone who is in a position to make life difficult for him seems to have been a patient of his at one time—the vicious circle of back-scratching comes into play and although one need never fear for the future of the doctor, even when he attempts suicide, his disillusionment is justified throughout. All the more pity that a better ending could not be found than to bring the whole cast together in a sanatorium, too heavy and absurd a metaphor for any self-respecting viewer to swallow, and the all too obvious finale of the doctor and his girlfriend undressing and walking away from the party-

sick society into the entrance of the sanatorium, is equally difficult to absorb as a demonstration of cynicism.

Bacsó's interest lies in committing as many topical Hungarian in-jokes to the screen as he can and the sincerity of his motives are doubtful as he packs too much into film. János Rózsa's *Love, Mother* does not set its sights so high but remains convincing as well as entertaining. This tragi-comic story of a disintegrated family who communicate mostly by leaving messages for each other won the Prize for Best Film along with Sándor Sára's fine documentary film *Keresztúton* (Crossroads). It would be easy to dismiss the Rózsa film as lightweight, or criticise it for drawing out the one point it makes if it had intellectual aspirations. Given the limitations of the setting, i.e., the Kalmár family's home, Rózsa has skilfully created the right amount of tension, paying attention to every detail, without giving the feeling of claustrophobia. Furthermore, the film is beautifully photographed by Elemér Ragályi and the performances by the children and adults, particularly Dorottya Udvaros as the mother, and Ildikó Bácsági as one of the children's teachers, is exemplary. It would be no exaggeration to say that this film could almost be about a middle-class American family. On the surface nothing seems to be lacking, the tastefully furnished home and mod cons illustrate a fairly affluent lifestyle. One wonders if the problem would be less applicable to families where the parents work long hours and still have no time for their children, a fact of life not in Hungary alone. Be that as it may, the long hours the father puts in for some unstated private enterprise after his main job are not incidental to the little time left for his family's needs. The mother also works long and irregular hours as a tourist guide. Rózsa has often presented his films from a child's point of view, and in *Love, Mother* it is them who win our sympathy and respect. Unknown to the family, the young boy hasn't been to school for some weeks; left to his own devices he has built various crafty instru-

ments with which to spy on the rest of the house and could easily be one of Steven Spielberg's child heroes. The adolescent daughter has her own problems but can't get either parent to hear her out. When the grandmother dies alone in hospital, it is her who bears the conscience of the whole family having neglected the old lady. When her brother informs her that there's something going on between their mother and a family friend, whom she also happens to have a crush on, the situation grows even more desperate. When her father does not come home, after having given him an ultimatum, she takes an overdose of pills which succeeds, for a while at least, in bringing the family together. At the end a large question mark hangs as to whether anything has changed, which is probably the most realistic conclusion the film-makers can offer for the style of the film which alternated between comedy (some of the scenes are extremely funny) and tragedy.

Pál Erdőss's *Gondviselés* (Providence) also examines a family crisis, but in a far more sober style than Rózsa. Starring Erika Ozsda—who also played in *The Princess* and *Countdown*—and Dénes Döbrei—who give a fine début performance—the film follows the disheartening fate of a young married couple who both go to prison and on their release try and establish a home fit to accommodate themselves and their two small children. A bitter fight ensues with the “foster parents” of one of the children, who refuses to give back the child they have grown so fond of. The relationship between the couple becomes strained and, by the end, even when the four are reunited, the story ends, as in Erdőss's two former features, on a gloomy note with everything hanging in the air. The strength of *The Princess* and *Countdown* is the endurance, courage and often relentless struggle for survival in the face of adversity, and these elements emerge again in the part Döbrei plays, but the film ultimately fails to stir the emotions as sharply and vividly as Erdőss's other films because the script labours

too much on telling the story as a sociological study without penetrating the psychological conflicts that would inevitably arise in such a predicament.

One of the films depicting the 1950s also centres on the life of a family forced to stay at home during the events of October and November of 1956. Peter Gárdos' *Szamárköhögés* (Whooping Cough) shows the effect of this important chapter in Hungary's history on an ordinary family, mostly through the innocent, naive eyes of a 10-year-old boy, Tomi, played convincingly and sensitively by Marcell Tóth, and his mischievous but adorable younger sister, Annamari, played by Eszter Kárász. Notwithstanding a brilliant performance by Dezső Garas, as the father, and Mari Törőcsik, as the grandmother, it is the children who sustain the audience's interest throughout. The film's main weakness is in gauging the atmosphere of fear and tension that gripped the nation in the autumn of that year, as the unseen dramas outside the safe, comfortable family hearth seem remote from the rather eccentric, often humourously depicted wives of most of the adult cast.

Gyula Maár's *Malom a pokolban* (Mills of Hell) offers another glimpse into the horrors of the Stalinist period of the 1950s, showing the fate of a talented young student, played by Frigyes Funtek, who suffers the consequences of being true to his inner sense of conviction and integrity even at the indiscretion of his romantic involvements. Adapted from a story by the popular writer György Moldova, it adheres to the lugubrious despondency at the injustices and corruption of the authorities that the book ponderously examines, but the real force of the drama is in the character of one of Funtek's “conquests,” the crippled daughter of the high-ranking party official—who is mostly responsible for the downfall of the hero—played by Anna Ráckevei, who shrewdly plays a battle of wills with her devoted father to allow her marriage to the student against his wishes.

One of the most eagerly anticipated films,

finished just in time for the Film Week and shown as a "surprise" closing film, which, needless to say, everyone knew about, was Márta Mészáros's *Napló szerelmeimnek* (Diary for My Loves). Maybe a lot was expected following the international success of *Diary for My Children* in 1984. *Diary for My Loves* is the second part of a planned trilogy following the life of Juli (Zsuzsa Czinkóczi) and is based on Mészáros's own life, including her traumatic memories of losing both parents in the USSR, a difficult upbringing in Hungary with her harsh and often inhuman guardian, Magda, and search for a father figure in János (Jan Nowicki), as well as showing the political atmosphere of the early 1950s and the growing disillusionment in the ideals of even erstwhile Communists as Dezső, Juli's grandfather figure, and János. In both films the growth of Juli from a stubborn, often forthright adolescent to strong-willed adult seeking a career in film-making, offers the richest and strongest moments undoubtedly, particularly in those scenes showing the bitter contention between Juli, the vibrant, rebellious individual and Magda, who represents the rigid and cold idealism of authoritarianism in the Stalinist era.

Interspersed with old newsreels of leading politicians of the time like László Rajk and Imre Nagy, and giving the film an added intensity in the eyes of Hungarians, it nevertheless has all the flaws of the first, in that its pace and drama is slow, the atmosphere constantly grey and lugubrious, the acting leaden and the constant hopping backwards and forwards from Moscow, where Juli has fought for a place to study at the Film Institute, to Budapest, unnerving as one's sense of time and the upheaval of each frustrating experience is lost in the final impact.

By far the most striking and original films this year were received with mixed feelings by Hungarians and foreigners alike. Gyula Gazdag, director of *Lost Illusions* in 1982 and the painful *Package Tour*, accomplished a great feat in bringing realism and fantasy together in his beautifully photographed black and

white feature, *A Hungarian Fairytale*. Dealing with law whereby any illegitimate child has to be given a father, albeit a fictitious one, it follows the adventures of a young boy, Andris (Dávid Vermes) in his search for a father who doesn't exist on the sudden, tragic death of his mother. At the same time the official responsible for assigning these fictive guardian parents, despairing and consequently denouncing the bureaucratic nonsense of such a law, flees from his post and sets off to destroy the documents of all the cases he was charged with. Andris meanwhile finds temporary security with a family he meets in the town where his alleged father lives. On hearing that they want to hand him over to the police, he runs away to find the house where he naively believes his father to be, stealing a fun in his fear of being caught by the authorities or the police. Events from this point on become more and more bizarre, with twists of child-invented fantasy punctuating the carefully structured, coherent plot. The young woman who lives in the house knows, as does the viewer, that the boy's attachment to his gun does not represent any danger, that he is not a juvenile delinquent capable of inflicting harm, but she plays along, offering help and providing consolation. The benevolent witch who appears at the station as the pace quickens, and the three principle characters' paths cross is thus no more incongruous than the train journey and escape of the "father, mother and child" on a huge statue of a bird which comes to life and sweeps them off to a fitting "happy ending." Contrary to the usual Hungarian preoccupation of trying to find a serious answer to an absurd social dilemma, Gazdag provides escape through the wistful mind of the innocent Andris, which accounts for why the film was regarded by most Hungarians I spoke to with wry contempt. But the point is made and the destiny of all three characters, though not solved, win our hearts through the poignant, simply told storyline. Using the music from *The Magic Flute* to heighten the magical quality through-

out, as well as giving a parallel of the intertwined fate of the three heroes, it is a rare film not just by Hungarian standards. It won the Foreign Critics' Gene Moskowitz Award in Budapest.

One of Hungary's most seasoned film directors, Miklós Jancsó, provided the other most accomplished film on this year's list with his *Season of Monsters*. The plot is difficult to unravel, and the underlining moral of the annihilation of a corrupt and self-destructive civilisation too obscure and fantastic to swallow, but Jancsó has never attempted to show the world in classic, naturalistic pictures but in symbolic, visually arresting and no less thought-provoking images. If he were a painter it would be hard to categorise his art as symbolic, abstract or impressionist; all these elements fuse to give a daunting but powerful view of the precarious balance between knowledge, philosophy, religion, and law. The story-line becomes second-place half way through all Jancsó films; a group of middle-aged men come together to celebrate the 60th birthday of their old professor. One has committed suicide before the gathering, and leaves a note for his former school friend, played by the ubiquitous György Cserhalmi, who later suspects his sinister and elitist physician friend (József Madaras) of foul play. Egalitarianism meets elitism, laws are interpreted in different ways, even Christ appears to resurrect the dead before the concluding Great Flood: Jancsó has gathered together his well-known "team," Gyula Hernádi to co-write the screenplay, János Kende to whirl the camera round the action of the film in typically awe-inspiring Jancsó style; he has assembled his favourite actors, thousands of candles, a dozen sultry, and often naked, buxom beauties, even returned to the location of past productions and created some stunning visual effects using helicopters, videos, fireworks with imagination and flair. Even if some of the philosophising on human and global catastrophe is far-fetched and irritatingly pedantic, there is a certain haunting eloquence in *Season of*

Monsters which makes it richer and more vital than many of his recent projects.

Finally, some mention must be given to the documentary films on show, despite the fact that the festival celebrated the new feature films principally. Documentaries continue their tradition of being an arena in which to comment on social and historical matters. Sándor Sára's award winning *Crossroads* examined the plight of a community of Hungarian peasants shifted from one part of the former Austro-Hungarian Empire to another during the second World War. Sára succeeds in winning our sympathy without sentimentality as he presents the story of what happened from the words of the survivors, mostly women, and the widows of the 42 men who were taken away and never seen again when they were made to appear the invaders in a region which became a part of Yugoslavia. Ferenc Kósa's four-hour film, *Az utolsó szó jogán* (The Last Plea), not shown for some years after objections from the medical establishment, detailed the brave attempts of Dr József Béres to promote his cure for cancer, and the official entanglements that ensued therefrom.

Széppléányok (Pretty Girls), by András Dér and László Hartai, covered the first beauty contest since Socialism in Hungary, the corruption and profiteering that surrounded it and the suicide of the 17-year-old winner just a year after, in 1986. Purely commercial interests inspired János Zsombolyai to make a one-and-a-half-hour video type film of the *Queen* concert in Budapest last year. Pop videos are fine for one and a half minutes but if there is money to be made in such a venture, and enough Queen fans still inhabiting this planet, then why, indeed, shouldn't a Hungarian with all the high-tech at his disposal, make the most of this market? It would be no surprise to see more commercial motivation influence film productions in this country, if the social and economic climate is anything to go by.

EDNA RAUTH

MUSICAL LIFE

KURTÁG AT SIXTY

A composer's sixtieth birthday these days is usually the occasion for a major review of his oeuvre. In the case of György Kurtág,¹ this is less feasible because his output is so small and he has so recently come to international attention that any concert is scarcely a retrospective but rather, to many listeners, an introduction. The 1986 anniversary was marked by a number of important events which offered a nice mixture of introductions and retrospectives: Boosey and Hawkes published the first monograph on the composer, Hungaroton produced the third recording devoted entirely to his works², whilst willing festival directors were only too eager to put on concerts which allowed the newly-converted to compare the earlier Kurtág with the more recent works.

In Britain Kurtág's birthday was celebrated by the London Sinfonietta as part of their *Response* series. This tribute took the form of an extended concert which included the instrumental items *Szálkák* ("Splinters," for Cimbalom, op. 60, 1962-73), Eight Duos for Violin and Cimbalom (Op. 4, 1960-1) and the Eight Pieces for Piano (Op. 3, 1960) and these provided a good

contrast to the later vocal works: *Hét dal* (Songs of Amy Károlyi, op. 22, 1981) for Soprano and Cimbalom³, *József Attila-törédek* ("Attila József Fragments", Op. 20, 1981-2) for solo Soprano⁴, *Eszkák- emlékszó* ("S.K. Remembrance-noise," op. 12 for Violin and Soprano, 1974-5) and *Stseni iz Romana* ("Scenes from a Novel," op. 19, 1981-2, for Soprano, Violin, Double Bass and Cimbalom)⁵. The items were performed in what must rank as one of the world's more curious concert-venues: the Bookspace of London's Royal Festival Hall. This area certainly lent the concerts an informality which was intended to be attractive to young people, and in this it was successful. But although such attempts to interest a young audience in contemporary music are to be welcomed, the disadvantages of the venue outweighed the advantages. There was considerable noise from the downstairs foyer and from the frequent nearby trains. This distraction provided a valuable illustration of the fact that Kurtág's music is so concentrated and often so intimate that it can be appreciated only in the best concert-hall conditions. The lack of atmosphere clearly upset the performers too; on the whole the instrumental items did not come off. They

¹ György Kurtág. Ed. Friedrich Spangemacher, Bonn: Boosey & Hawkes, 1986;

² *Messages of the Late R. V. Trusova/Scenes from a Novel/Farewell my Darling*; Hungaroton SLPX 12776, 1986.

³ NHQ 93

⁴ NHQ 90.

⁵ NHQ 93

lacked the necessary intensity and shaping phrase so vital for the coherence of the works. Only the vocal items succeeded through Adrienne Csengery's superb technique. But it was still useful to hear so much of Kurtág's work on one occasion placed in comparison with works by Webern and Stravinsky, composers who have influenced him considerably.

The second major British celebration took place at the Huddersfield International Contemporary Music Festival. This provided a far more successful ambience. The central concert, part of the Arts Council's Contemporary Music Network, consisted of those items played in the Sinfonietta concert, minus the Piano Pieces, and performed by the same artists. This time the concert contained settings of Hungarian folk-music. This was another interesting piece of programming, allowing the listener a chance to compare Kurtág's exquisite simplicity with the artlessness of the folk song. The Festival also included the British première of the short song *Proshchay, moy dorogoy* ("Farewell, my dearest," for Soprano and Piano), given by Margaret Field and Andrew Ball, and a performance of the microludes for String Quartet, *Hommage à András Mihály* (Op. 13, 1977-8), played by the Lindsay Quartet, for whom this work has become a standard part of their repertoire.

The listener, therefore, had ample opportunity to observe the development of Kurtág's style from the relative chromaticism and frequent change of parameters of the early *opera*, such as the Eight Duos, to the more controlled lyricism and greater rhythmic fluidity of the later works. What was missing was a contrast between the early word-settings, preferably the *Bornemisza* Concerto (Op. 7, 1963-68) and the later ones. This would have demonstrated more dramatically the stylistic progression. Admittedly the sheer difficulty of the Concerto makes performances a rarity, but the easier *Egy Téli Alkony Emlékére* ("The Memory of a Winter's Twilight", op. 8, 1969, for

Soprano, Violin and Cimbalom) would have provided some contrast, even though it avoids the Concerto's more violent moments. What would have become obvious with this work is the greater degree of balance between text and music achieved in the later word-settings, where Kurtág is far more sparing in his use of extended instrumental passages, being content to allow the words to come through more directly. The supreme example of this is the *József Attila Fragments* which are set for voice alone.

Perhaps the highlight of the Huddersfield programme was the British première of *Farewell my Dearest*. This short song lasts just over two minutes, but it is a deeply moving two minutes, revealing once again Kurtág's mastery of the aphoristic miniature. It is a long time since Kurtág has used the piano (other than in *Games*), preferring the spikier tones of the cimbalom, but in this setting he exploits the sonorities of the piano to great advantage. There is a gentle, rocking *ostinato* of bell-like chord patterns above which the singer adds her simple, largely triadic line. Her part contains slight rhythmic skips as if she is making a feeble attempt at gaiety in the face of this sad parting. But this attempt is belied by the echoes of her line coupled with the obsessive returning to the same pitches in the piano-part which imbue the work with a tone of regret.

In both London and Huddersfield it was the items in which Adrienne Csengery was involved which were the most successful. Detailed as Kurtág's scores are, it appears nevertheless that they cannot convey all the composer's intentions. Csengery has had the benefit of intensive coaching from the composer and is now thoroughly steeped in his style giving her performances both assurance and conviction. By far the most enlightening contribution to the recent book on Kurtág is provided in her "Portrait of the Composer", which affords a delightful opportunity for extra insight into the performance problems.

The appearance of any monograph on Kurtág's music, even a short one, is welcome. Boosey & Hawkes' German-language publication in their *Musik der Zeit: Dokumentation und Studien* series is a compilation of contributions on various aspects of the composer. The book is aimed at the interested layman rather than the trained musician, and in this it serves a useful function since much that is written about Kurtág is in the specialist journals. There is a rare appearance by the composer in print—a German translation of his brief foreword to *Games*, the collection of piano-pieces for children⁶, in which he outlines the philosophy behind the work. Pierre Boulez's contribution is disappointingly short, no more than a few brief impressions about *Messages*. Far more engaging are György Ligeti's reminiscences about his meeting with Kurtág in post-war Budapest. Ligeti is blessed with a rare gift for language, and his account conveys vividly the mood of optimism and renewal despite the post-war chaos. Wilfried Brennecke gives a factual account of the background to the first performances of Kurtág in the German Federal Republic, while Hartmut Lück provides an introduction to Kurtág's compositional technique. He concentrates his study on the String Quartet, Op. 1, the Eight Piano Pieces, Op. 3, the *Bornemisza* Concerto, Op. 7, the *Pilinszky* Songs, Op. 11, *Games*, and *Messages*.

Lück is not given the space to provide more than glimpses into the composer's work, but he gives much useful background, especially regarding the psychologist Marianne Stein's influence upon the artists with whom she works. She was Kurtág's mentor when he studied in Paris in 1957. Lück also gives a good, concise summary of the main details of Kurtág's style. Just occasionally there are matters with which one might take issue: he states with reference to Kurtág's lack of an orchestral work to date: "It seems, rather, that Kurtág has not yet

found a way which is convincing for him, and therefore worthy of publication, to 'utter' his personal language through the medium of the large orchestra. . ."

This, however, would not seem to be the problem. Kurtág was genuinely eager to take up the BBC's commission for a piano concerto. He now feels that he wishes to write for a large orchestra. The problem which is delaying the completion of this work seems, rather, to be one purely of structure. Lück describes *Games* as a "piano-method". Kurtág is at great pains to stress that *Games* is not a *method*, he states precisely this in his Preface. Lück's reference to it as such even if he does use inverted commas, does not help. These quibbles aside, it must be said that Lück writes with an enthusiasm for his subject which should lead the reader to seek deeper acquaintance with the music for himself.

Adrienne Csengery's contribution is given in the form of an interview with István Balázs, and so her words come over with a directness possible only with reported speech even, as here, in translation. What emerges is a fascinating insight into the performance problems, revealing to some extent how far the score represents the composer's wishes. Csengery first met Kurtág when he was seeking a replacement singer for *Messages*. Kurtág had wanted a Russian soprano to give the first performance, but this did not prove possible in the event. Kurtág, more than many composers, has a very definite idea of the sound-quality he desires for any particular work. The work, therefore, was not composed with Csengery's voice in mind, moreover she scarcely had time to study the score in detail before rehearsing it with Kurtág, therefore they had to build up the performance from scratch. As Csengery says: "Somebody once referred to Kurtág most appositely as a 'sound-sculptor'. Therefore I gave him my voice as you would give a sculptor a block of wood to shape. He used me as if I were a musical instrument (no, that's incorrect, because a musical instru-

⁶ NHQ 96

ment is already formed); he 'used' me like a flute which must first be fashioned."

Interestingly, because Csengery and Kurtág had been working together for a year when Kurtág came to write the *József Attila Fragments* (Op. 20, 1981-2), he now had her particular vocal qualities in mind: "By that time our cooperation had lasted for almost a whole year and gradually my personality, or more precisely the possibilities in my personality which had until then lain hidden, also began to figure more."

She stresses that she was not a co-creator in the compositional process, but helped Kurtág solve the problems of passages where there were major technical difficulties. Kurtág may be a hard task-master, but he seems to have given Adrienne Csengery an extra confidence by realising the possibilities of her voice: "He believes me capable of far more than I had believed myself before now."

Much other interesting information is revealed: Kurtág's attitude to the text, his search for an opera-libretto, his wide-ranging musical knowledge, Csengery's modesty and willingness to put her voice at the composer's disposal comes through on every page. Kurtág is indeed fortunate to have found such an enthusiastic and musical exponent of his works.

The final chapter is a contribution by István Balázs. This is a series of impressions of the music. This article poses many interesting questions, but I find its gushing, high-flown style somewhat hard to take. Balázs is too forceful an apologist for Kurtág's music, since it is quite capable of speaking for itself. Comments like: "With Kurtág, although he makes use of literary 'raw materials', music emancipates itself from literature, in contrast to opera or traditional settings of poems where the music is principally either tautological or merely superimposed and therefore remains imprisoned in the text", seem dismissive of the work of composers like Schubert, Wolf or Strauss, and are probably embarrassing to Kurtág

who is both modest of his own efforts and highly appreciative of the works of many earlier composers.

The volume ends with a useful list of works, the most complete in print to date. Unfortunately, there is no discography or bibliography. Although these would have been short, they would nevertheless have proved useful to the reader who wished to investigate further.

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The recording of *Messages* is a reproduction of that already available on the *Erato* label, with Adrienne Csengery and the Ensemble InterContemporain, directed by Pierre Boulez. To me this performance lacks enough moments of repose. It seems as if it is being hurried in order to fit on one side of an LP, but the very brevity and diversity of the songs requires some degree of separation between certain of them in order that they might make their impression more fully, and so that the entire span of the work may be appreciated. This is not a problem in the concert hall where short pauses are bound to occur between the movements and where there is no recording-engineer to cut them out. *Scenes from a Novel*, again sung by Adrienne Csengery with András Keller (Violin), Ferenc Csontos (Double Bass) and Márta Fábrián (Cimbalom), fares altogether better. It is a much shorter work and the smaller ensemble is more suited to the rather dry acoustic of these recordings. Nonetheless in both works there is some difficulty in bringing off the deliberately "throw-away" endings of some of the songs. The pace and shaping of the phrases must be absolutely right and this is difficult to achieve without the response of a live audience. This in no way implies that these works rely on visual gestures, however, something which those who have attended live performances will realise. Adrienne Csengery makes this quite clear in her interview with István Balázs when she quotes Kurtág as saying: "It is your voice that should move, not you."

It is the *rapport* between the soloist and the audience, achieved partly through facial expression, which is so important to these works. The recordings will, therefore, never prove quite so stimulating, nevertheless they are most definitely worth having. The recording of *Farewell my Dearest* gives a rare opportunity to hear Kurtág himself as performer. The singer is, of course, Adrienne Csengery. This performance is quite faultless, and here the medium of recorded sound is well suited to the resonant effects of the piano's sustaining pedal.

Performances of Kurtág's works are ever more frequent, but they tend to be of the most recent pieces. This is why programmes like those by the London Sinfonietta and the

Contemporary Music Network are so welcome. It is disappointing, therefore, that the Hungaroton recordings of the early works are now no longer available. Perhaps Hungaroton would consider a re-issue using digital equipment for better sound-quality. There are even some items which are still to be recorded; the *Microludes* for String Quartet (Op. 13) are a case in point. It is a pleasure to be able to study in detail performances of at least some of Kurtág's works in the comfort of one's own home. The day when that can be done with all his published works will be luxury indeed.

MARGARET P. MCLAY

ELGIN STRUB-RONAYNE

BERNHARD STAVENHAGEN

Pianist, Conductor, Composer and Liszt's Last Pupil

The 100th anniversary of the death of Liszt has reawakened interest not only in this legendary figure, but also in the people who were closely connected with him. The present-day biographers are still having difficulties in sorting out what is fact and what is fiction, not least among the considerable variety of stories concerning Liszt's last hours. The following letter was written by his last pupil, my great-uncle Bernhard Stavenhagen, twelve days after he had been present at the death of his beloved teacher on July 31st, 1886. It was first published by the International Liszt Centre's Quarterly Magazine (15/16, pp. 20-24) in 1976 and belongs to the Schottenhof Collection. He addressed it to his friend and colleague, the Italian pianist Giuseppe Buonamici. In its simple, un sentimental style, it seems to be a more likely and infinitely more moving account of the end of Liszt's life than the theatrical versions that appeared in later years.

(Original in German)

Weimar, 12 August 1886

Amalienstr. 3

Dear Friend,

Your letter wandered about for a while until it finally reached me. I came back from Bayreuth Wednesday, but return tomorrow partly on behalf of the Liszt Foundation, partly for the Princess¹ who has given me power of attorney in order to meet a certain Dr. Brichta to settle various matters concerning the Estate. As a consequence of this tragic occasion, I have been much in contact with the Wagners, particularly Cosima. I kept watch by day and Cosima by night. Four hours before his death I spoke to him and heard him speak to me, he said he was feeling better. He was completely conscious. Two hours later, at 9 o'clock in the evening, the crisis came, the inflam-

¹ Carolyne Sayn-Wittgenstein

mation became much worse. The Master fell asleep and his heart gradually stopped beating, he died without pain and without regaining consciousness.

Only gradually did we become aware of our loss. Cosima's contribution towards his care was enormous, although you will often be told quite the opposite. No-one could have looked after him better than she did.

The Lying in State and provisional Funeral date had to be expedited as the body, owing to dropsy, would not keep. In the days before the burial I often did not know whether I was on my head or my heels. A hundred different people made suggestions concerning the funeral arrangements. Telegrams piled up from morning to night. Thode² and I formed a communication centre between Wahnfried and the world outside. Cosima did not show herself, she only appeared at the graveside. We, his pupils, walked beside the coffin with bared heads carrying storm lanterns and on Wednesday there was a Requiem Mass. That same night I left. I could not stand it any more.

Excuse me for today, dear friend, and bear with me when you read these lines. That Master has left a great, great void, now the only thing that counts is—Work!

Goodbye, greeting to Cajani and remember with kindliness,

Your Bernardo Stavenhagen

This letter contains, perhaps, the only words defending Cosima Wagner who then and ever has been universally condemned for the shameful treatment and neglect of her father, particularly in his last hours. It shows also that there was a valid reason for the unseemly haste with which the funeral arrangements were made, other than Cosima's anxiety not to disrupt the Wagner Festival, which the German Crown Prince had gra-

ciously agreed to attend. It does not mention the unbelievable fact that, at the Requiem Mass, not a note of Liszt's own music was heard. Anton Bruckner was asked to play the organ and, according to Liszt's pupil August Göllerich, improvised on themes from *Par-sifal*, so that even this final moment belonged more to Wagner than to Liszt. Small wonder that the young Bernhard Stavenhagen, not yet twenty-four years old, who had been chosen by the Master to be his companion and secretary on what was to be his last journey, and had given the Funeral Oration at his graveside, could not bear it any longer and left Bayreuth at the first possible opportunity.

The Stavenhagens were living in Greiz, a small market town in the southern part of what is now the German Democratic Republic, when Bernhard was born on November 24th, 1862. His father, a bookkeeper by trade had come from Berlin via Weimar where he met and married Martha Hilschner. At Greiz, he went into the printing business, joining the flourishing Henning Court Printing Firm. He was an intelligent well-read man and later became an authority on Schopenhauer. Both his children, Bernhard and his younger sister Hildegard showed great interest in music at an early age. At 3½ Bernhard was an enthusiastic performer on the mouth organ and at 5½ he started piano lessons with Kantor Urban. By the time he was 11 years old he was impressing everyone with his talent for improvisation. In 1874, the family moved to Berlin in order to give Bernhard a better musical education. At first he was enrolled at the Kullak Conservatorium. In the same year, however, he was accepted by the Berlin Conservatorium even though pupils under 16 years of age were not normally considered. His piano professor was Ernst Rudorff and he studied composition with Friedrich Kiel. At the age of 18 he won the Mendelssohn Prize and started his professional career by performing his own Piano Concerto in C major.

For the next four years Stavenhagen gave

² Cosima's son-in-law

many concerts. His technique was impeccable but he felt dissatisfied with his own performances. Years later when he was holding Piano Master classes in Geneva he talked to his students about how he found his way to Liszt. By great good fortune one of those students, Maria-Luise Bernhard-Orth wrote down what he said. The talk was dated January 13th, 1914. Frau Bernhard Orth gave copies of her notes to Prof. Dr. Jung in Weimar and to my mother who had been invited to attend the centenary celebrations of Stavenhagen's birth, in 1962.

"I was 22 years old at the time, a student at the Berlin Conservatoire and had already given many Recitals, had won the Mendelssohn Prize and possessed a good, reliable technique, but I was not satisfied with my playing. I had heard Clara Schumann play many times in her later years—her playing was extremely musical but it lacked verve, humour and rhythm—it just didn't 'sound'—this last thing I noticed about my own playing—it didn't sound! Then Eugène d'Albert and Arthur Friedheim came to Berlin. They were pupils of Liszt and gave some recitals. For the first only two tickets were sold and they were bought by friends, but already by the second recital it became obvious, here was something quite new and remarkable.

"Friedheim played a programme full of unknown pieces by Liszt including the B minor Sonata, the B minor Ballade, *Harmonies du Soir* and the *Lucretia Fantasy*. Even if the music was not immediately appealing, already the Sonata, where the first four pages were played totally without pedal, was astounding—what a sound!—and the more Friedheim, who was a great virtuoso at the time, played the more one realised that this was something special, a totally new conception of technique. D'Albert gave a recital in which he played in one evening Op. 106 by Beethoven, Chopin's 24 Preludes and all the Paganini-Liszt Etudes. They had what I lacked. "Things are happening in Weimar," I thought, and in spite of the disapproval of

my Professor I decided I must go there to see Liszt, to hear him and to study with him.

"I had a letter of recommendation from Hans von Bülow. Liszt was already 74 years old when I arrived at Weimar, suffering from rheumatism and eye problems, but the following summer he felt better and I was allowed to travel with him to Italy, Paris, and London. Liszt was very kind to me the first time I played to him. I myself heard him play many times—even Cramer studies!

"Many things have been told about him and some of them are fairy stories, but one thing is true—that I have never, in all the many times I heard him, known him to play a wrong note. His understanding and interpretation were unique. I do not think that there can ever be a greater interpreter of any composer than he was. In Paris once he happened to be at a social gathering with Chopin—he asked for the lights to be put out, sat down at the piano and played Chopin and even Chopin's most intimate friends believed that it was Chopin playing, and not Liszt.

"As completely as he could 'be' Chopin, he could also 'be' Schumann, Bach and Beethoven, he could get inside everyone's mind whatever the period. Every good pianist must be able to do this, he must forget himself and become an actor, in a manner of speaking. I had to completely re-learn, not the mechanics of the technique but the interpretation of technique and I noticed quite soon that it was not that the technical ability of d'Albert and the others was greater but that the Liszt pupils played more *martellato* and yet more softly and used very little pedal. I worked for a few months with Friedheim and Siloti, practised articulation and lots of octave exercises. It was obvious to me that in a Concert Hall one does not need to play so fast, it sounds fast through the precision of the articulation and the sparing use of the pedal. Liszt had in his class at that time about twenty great artists who had already given many concerts. I had the good fortune to be together with some of the greatest,

for instance Sophie Menter, Reisenauer, Rosenthal, Friedheim, d'Albert, Sauer, Lamond, Siloti, Ansonge, Friedberg, Thomán, and Annette Essipoff. There were no longer different schools of playing, those from Petersburg, Paris, Leipzig, Berlin, Frankfurt, the Brahms school—they all came to Weimar to become one under the enormous influence of our great master, Franz Liszt". (Original in German)

What actually happened at a Liszt Master Class was recorded by another ex-pupil, Bruno Schrader, in his book *Liszt* published in 1917.

"The lessons were held three times a week from 4 to 6 in the afternoon. The music that the pupils wanted to play was laid on the round table in the 'Salon' and the Master would look through the pieces and choose what he wanted to hear, asking at the same time what had been specially prepared. It was quite possible that a pupil would not actually get to the piano for weeks if his choice did not interest Liszt. The ones that chose popular pieces would fall into this trap, for instance the 2nd Hungarian Rhapsody or Chopin's G minor Ballade were works that he was tired of hearing. But even if the pupil got a chance to play he still had not won. If his performance bored the Master, he would stay in the other part of the Music room and chat. I have even seen him sit down on the sofa and go to sleep. If the was in a less indifferent mood he would dismiss a mediocre performance in a very sharp fashion. He generally became interested only when one of his star pupils played and then he also liked to play himself".

In the spring of 1886, Stavenhagen travelled with Liszt to Paris and London.* In London he gave two very successful concerts with his Master sitting in the audience. The review in *The Times* 19th April can be quoted as typical of the appreciation of his talent.

"In the case of Herr Stavenhagen, whose Recital took place at the Princess Hall on

Friday night, no question as to the source of instruction could possibly arise. He has come to this country as Liszt's travelling companion and is at present undoubtedly the "favourite pupil". His brilliance and physical endurance and accuracy he shares with many modern pianists. But what raises him far above the ordinary virtuoso level is poetry of feeling and genuine passion. Perhaps his highest achievement was the transcription in Ab of the beautiful music wedded to a Sonnet of Petrarch. We heard Liszt play this piece two years ago and the indelible impression then received was vividly recalled to our minds on Friday night. Higher praise it would be difficult to award to Herr Stavenhagen who, with the exception of Mr d'Albert is among the younger pianists most likely to perpetuate the traditions of the great Liszt."

The three years following the death of Liszt were devoted entirely to concert tours in England, Russia, Hungary and the USA where Stavenhagen played in New York, Boston, Philadelphia and Washington with enormous success. Apart from his musical gifts he appears to have had a very attractive personality. *The Magazine of Music* March 1890 wrote—"We met Stavenhagen on the 14th February in Bond St. in the former residence of the Earl of Burlington. Like Liszt there is a personal charm and fascination about him. He is full of magnetism and exerts distinct influence over others. So far from there being any of the professional jealousy, so common among artists, shown to him, all with whom he has come in contact with Rubinstein and von Bülow downwards, love him. When at St Petersburg he was the guest of Rubinstein and the two have a great friendship and mutual admiration for each other."

In July 1890 Stavenhagen married Agnes Denninghoff, the leading soprano in the Court Opera in Weimar who, under the professional name of Agnes Denis, sang a large variety of roles, such as Elsa in *Lohengrin*, Margarethe in *Faust*, Elizabeth in *Tannhäuser* and Pamina in the *Magic Flute*. Staven-

* See *NHQ* 103

hagen had been given the official title of *Hofpianist* and was beginning to make appearances as conductor of the Court Orchestra. He seemed to find time for composition as well for on November 25th 1889 he participated in a concert in which he played Beethoven's third Piano Concerto and conducted a work of his own, *Suleika* for Soprano and Orchestra in which the soloist was his future wife Agnes Denis. After they were married they travelled as a duo appearing on November 28th 1891 as far afield as Liverpool where they gave an afternoon recital, Stavenhagen playing Beethoven's Sonata Op 26, a group of Chopin pieces, and 'Mélodies Polonaises' by Liszt, finishing with Hexameron. The last two pieces were billed as 'first performance' and 'first performance in Liverpool' respectively. The programme was interspersed with Arias from the *Marriage of Figaro* and songs by Lassen, Sommer and Strauss.

In between all his other commitments, Stavenhagen worked tirelessly to promote the music of Liszt and organised concerts in Weimar where the programmes were entirely devoted to his works and the proceeds went to the Liszt Foundation. This had been created in 1887 from Liszt's Estate and also that of the Princess Caroline of Sayn-Wittgenstein which was presented by her daughter "as a tribute to the memory of the great Master". The money was used to give scholarships and assistance to composers, conductors and pianists. In 1903, the committee at the suggestion of Richard Strauss, gave 1,000 marks to Arnold Schoenberg and he received the same sum again the following year.

In 1895, Stavenhagen was appointed Music Director and Conductor to the Court of Weimar. This position had been held by Richard Strauss from 1892-94, after him several conductors including d'Albert appeared and disappeared again. This had an immensely unsettling effect, particularly on the Opera Company, and they desperately needed someone with an adventurous spirit,

energy and enthusiasm to re-vitalise it. The new Music Director began his season with *Lohengrin*, the same Opera that Liszt had given the first performance of forty five years previously. There were plans to perform Wagner's entire Ring Cycle in which *Siegfried* would be a first performance in Weimar. In the next eighteen months Stavenhagen introduced six new operas to the Weimar public including Leoncavallo's *Pagliacci*, Bizet's *Djamileh*, Delibes *Lakmé*, Schwarwenka's *Mataswintha* and others which did not stand up to the test of time. His missionary zeal while much admired by the musicians was not appreciated by the management, who did all they could to frustrate his plans until he was forced to offer his resignation in 1898. He wrote to the Grand Duke "Liszt's ideal, that Weimar should always be at the forefront of musical development without in any way neglecting the classical repertoire was also mine. To my great regret I am forced to admit that under the present circumstances I am unable to achieve this, as my position in relation to the general management is becoming so restricted that my influence on the musical life of this town can only by very insignificant, reflecting adversely on my name and my capabilities".

From Weimar, Stavenhagen went to Munich where he accepted a similar post as Conductor at the Opera, again taking over from Richard Strauss. After a trial period of half a year he was given the title 'Royal Bavarian Court Conductor' and signed a contract for three years. It was not a happy time for him. He was unable to cope with the intrigues both at Court and in the Theatre and his enthusiastic support of new music and young musicians made him very unpopular with the reactionary older generation of musicians and music critics who still exerted a great deal of influence in Munich. For this reason he did not renew his contract in 1902, however, in 1901 he had taken over the Piano Master Class at the Music Academy and was also appointed its Director. Here his plans to

reorganise and modernise the ancient and impractical Music School buildings, where there was so little space that some lessons had to be given in the cloakrooms, aroused more antagonism. Difficulties were put in his way at every turn, he was even refused time off to go on a concert tour, so in 1904 he was forced to resign his Directorship.

Stavenhagen now had time to resume his concert career, including chamber music chiefly with the violinist Felix Berber. He continued to hold Master Classes privately in three monthly sessions, each pupil receiving two lessons a week. Six of his senior pupils acted as assistants, one of whom, an American whose family came originally from Austria, was Victoria Bogel and she was eventually to become his second wife. It was not long before the Kaim Orchestra in Munich asked him to become their chief conductor and he immediately started arranging regular concerts specifically for the performance of new music, including works by Strauss, Mahler, Debussy, Ravel, Fauré, Chabrier, Dukas, Balakirev and Taneyev.

After unsuccessful attempts at getting a permanent position in Berlin and Karlsruhe, Stavenhagen was asked by the Director of the Music Conservatoire in Geneva to take over the Piano Master Class and to conduct the subscription concerts. The Conservatoire had been founded in 1835 and already in its first year the 24-year-old Liszt made a guest appearance at the Piano Class which consisted of 11 ladies. (His remarks on their performances have been preserved and make interesting reading. For one pupil he wrote "musical feeling, very satisfactory work", for another "Beautiful Eyes!"). Stavenhagen followed in his Master's footsteps and accepted on June 20th 1907 the responsibility of the Piano Class, also predominantly female.

His contract at the Conservatoire was for a class of virtuoso piano playing, a teaching course, and a class for conductors. Already before leaving Munich, Stavenhagen outlined what he considered to be a suitable syllabus for the Diploma Examination of the Vir-

tuoso Class. It should include the following:

1. 4 Bach Preludes and Fugues,
2. 3 Beethoven Sonatas, own choice Op. 53-111, excluding op. 79,
3. 2 Beethoven Concertos (excepting the first two),
4. 6 Etudes, own choice. Three of Chopin, two of Liszt and one of Tausig, Henselt, Rubinstein, Alkan or Saint-Saëns;
5. One compulsory piece of Chopin, Schumann, Liszt, Schubert, Weber, Mendelssohn or Brahms. For the first year he proposed the Variations on a Hungarian theme by Brahms.
6. A compulsory Concerto from Schumann to the present day. Here he suggested Liszt's Capriccio on themes from the Ruins of Athens by Beethoven.

A Liszt prize was also to be initiated for which all pupils in the Virtuoso Class could compete. In 1910 they had to prepare, without help from a teacher, "Harmonies du Soir", "Les Jeux d'Eau de la Villa d'Este", and "Mazeppa". These were in addition to the Diploma works. The prize was the newly brought out edition of the Complete Works of Liszt by Breitkopf and Härtel.

On January 25th 1908 Stavenhagen conducted his first concert in Geneva. The programme was Beethoven's Overture Leonora No. 3 and the Eroica Symphony and the Liszt Piano Concerto in E flat major in which the soloist was his pupil Victoria Bogel. His marriage to Agnes Denis had foundered already some years before, the divorce came through in July 1908 and the following 5th September he married Victoria (Vikky) Bogel. She was twenty two years his junior but the marriage was a happy one. Their son Hans Bernhard was born in 1910.

As always Stavenhagen exerted great influence on the musical life wherever he happened to be. Performances of Strauss's *Zarathustra*, Bruckner's 9th Symphony and works by contemporary Swiss composers, among them Ernest Bloch, were included wherever possible and he turned the orchestra into a "powerful instrument for popularising mu-

sic" (*La Vie Musicale à Genève au Dix-Neuvième Siècle 1814-1918*, Claude Tappolet, Genève 1972). For the next six years it was Geneva's turn to be "at the forefront of musical development". Then suddenly on December 25th 1914 he died. He gave his last concert in Zurich on December 12th already suffering from a lung inflammation and was unable to recover. There was no way his students, who had gone home for Christmas, could be informed before their return at the beginning of January. They arrived and were shattered to find him gone. His ashes were taken to Weimar where his parents had chosen to live after his father's retirement. A gravestone was erected on the family plot in the historic old graveyard not far from the Mausoleum containing Goethe's and Schiller's remains.

In Greiz, his birthplace, Stavenhagen is far from forgotten. On July 4th 1938, a plaque was unveiled on the house where he was born in the Bauhausgasse. In 1947, a Stavenhagen Prize Competition was founded for young musicians between the ages of 13 and 18 for piano, wind, strings, brass, voice and folk music instrumentalists. The competition has been held annually ever since. Later the street containing the Cultural Institute and Theatre was re-named Stavenhagenstrasse and on 12 November 1980, the Music School was also given the honorary title of Bernhard Stavenhagen School; his picture hangs in the Teacher's Conference Room.

In 1962 at the 100th anniversary of his birth, one of his pupils, Paula Weber, who died herself two years later wrote to Dr. Hans Rudolph Jung, to whom I am indebted for a lot of information about Bernhard Stavenhagen. "Never did I hear the Maestro lose his temper or shout at a student. Even during

the examinations he was always helpful and supportive, whether at a second piano or with the Orchestra or only with an encouraging glance. Just his very presence emanated peace and security."

Very little has been said in this article about Stavenhagen the composer. This was, perhaps, the least significant part of his great musical talent. Most of the compositions were written as a young man, before 1895. After that he found less and less time for himself. Had he not died so comparatively young, he might have developed more in this direction. Rather surprisingly, his compositions owe more in style to Brahms than Liszt. His Piano Concerto in B minor Op. 4, published in 1894, is the only piece that still gets an occasional performance. His piano suites, however, include some very charming 'Salon' pieces. The following are still to be found in antiquarian music shops:

Three piano pieces Op. 2—published 1894

Three piano pieces Op. 5

Three piano pieces Op. 10—published 1906

The Piano Concerto in A minor exists in full score manuscript owned by Prof. Dr. H. R. Jung in Weimar.

There are 6 songs Op. 1 (1882) and a song cycle of 5 songs without opus number Cadenzas for Beethoven Concertos in Bb and C minor.

Among known works that appear to be lost are:

Piano Concerto in C major.

Spanish Suite for Piano.

Variations on a original theme in A minor.

Piano Sonata in F major.

2 Quartets for 4 female voices

2 Dramatic Scenes for Soprano and Orchestra, 'Ingebor' and 'Suleika.'

LÁSZLÓ SOMFAI

FACSIMILE EDITION OF A BARTÓK NOTEBOOK

As many other composers have done Béla Bartók for many years destroyed most of his rough sketches. Only from the mid-1920s did it become his custom to keep the sketches of a work together with its draft or drafts. By then he may have known of the significance of the study of Beethoven's sketches; in any case he felt the practical advantage of a facsimile edition of manuscripts of masterworks. Some sketches have, of course, survived from his earlier periods but these owe their survival to some chance event, such as Mrs Zoltán Kodály taking from Bartók's desk some manuscript sheets which had become superfluous during the following stage of composition, or Bartók's second wife, Ditta Pásztory carefully preserving some excerpts which her husband, then working in the country, had included in a letter to her. Some sketches owe their survival to the fact that Bartók put aside score sheets on which there was still some space; before leaving for the United States, he left behind a pile of such sheets, sorting them out and marking the file "Diverse."

In this collection of sketches, rhapsodic and and meagre as it is, the discovery of a pocket-size music notebook in soft black oil-cloth cover of 68 pages of musical notation dating from between 1907 and 1922, which was recently published in a facsimile edition, counts as a sensation.¹ It will in all probability have a great and favourable effect on the study of Bartók's music, since working on sketches has become a dynamically developing area of musicology. In a comparison with the sketches of Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert, Mahler, Schoenberg, Webern, Stravinsky and others, Bartók can now be studied as a classic of European music,

¹ Béla Bartók, *Black Pocket-Book* (Sketches 1907-1922). Facsimile edition of the manuscript with a commentary by László Somfai (Budapest 1987, Editio Musica Budapest).

using methods that are generally employed in this field. Scholars can now study the first steps in Bartók's oeuvre, the first original manifestations sparked off by inspiration, the cardinal points of some forms that had been present from the outset, at least as far as the primary creative intention can actually be traced from the written sketch at all.

*

Up to November 1982, the notebook was in the Budapest home of the composer's widow, Ditta Pásztory. She presented most of her husband's manuscripts (apart from those of some personal bearing) to the Budapest Bartók Archives. This notebook she must have only shown to Zoltán Kodály, sometime in the 1960s, who wrote on it in pencil, *Vázlatok* (Sketches). In 1983, the notebook was transferred to the Budapest Bartók Archives as part of the deposit which makes up the holding of Béla Bartók Jr. After a careful identification of its contents and with the assent of the heirs and the publishers concerned, the notebook could be published in a facsimile edition.

In fact the pocket-size notebook is of the same 10-stave form, originally of 104 pages, some fifteen or so of which Bartók had used during his folk music field trips to write down the tunes heard from singers. Originally he might have intended this particular notebook for the same purpose, as page 1/recto includes some names and addresses Bartók noted down during his first field trip in Transylvania, in July and September 1907. A large ink stain may have been the reason for his using it for some other purpose; it does have yet another interesting feature concerning folk music. Page 1/verso has preserved a moment of epoch-making significance for Bartók, when he abstracted from the second notation of

two freshly collected Transylvanian tunes the pentatonic scale of G-A-C-D-E, and set it down in music notation.

But the same first two pages also include drafts of his own themes: the first theme of the youthful Violin Concerto and a more detailed elaboration of it, which he wrote for Stefi Geyer in the second half of 1907. Bartók in fact set out on his field trip from Jászberény, where he had been visiting the Geyer family, so that these first two pages are genuine biographical information

The summer of 1907 was not the only time when Bartók carried the ink-stained notebook which also included his own compositional sketches. He was using it on and off, obviously alongside many other sketches, up till 1922, evidently at times when he was composing away from home and from his piano, while on one of his collecting tours, in the country, on holiday with his family or possibly simply when travelling.

The Black Notebook contains shorter and longer sketches for the following works, presumably from the given years (though none of the sketches are dated):

- 1907 Violin Concerto, op. posth., 1907-08
- 1908 Bagatelles, Nos. 8, 9, 13, 14
 - Two Elegies, No. 1
 - String Quartet, No. 1
 - Three Burlesques, No. 1
- 1908? *Four Dirges*, No. 1
- 1909 *Four Dirges*, No. 3
- 1910 Two Pictures for orchestra
- 1910? *Bluebeard's Castle* (clarinet theme)
- 1915-6 String Quartet No. 2, 1st movement
 - The Wooden Prince*
- 1918 *The Miraculous Mandarin*
- 1921 Sonata for Violin and Piano, No. 1
- 1922 Sonata for Violin and Piano, No. 2

² László Somfai, "Bartók-vázlatok (III): A 'Fekete zsebkönyv' kidolgozatlan témafeljegyzései (Bartók Sketches III: Unrealized Sketches in the "Black Pocket-book") in *Zenatudományi dolgozatok* 1986 (Budapest 1986), pp. 7-18.

The notebook also includes a fragment of a fugue and six uncompleted sketches.²

Why didn't Bartók destroy these sketches? In the knowledge of his habits, the most probable answer seems to be that the 30 blank pages still left in the notebook made it worthwhile putting it aside for a possible later use.

*

An intelligent study of musical sketches is inconceivable without acquaintance with the particular composer's individual compositional methods (or his routine, which of course undergoes changes during his various creative periods). I have already devoted a lengthy study to the subject, expressly meant for musicologists,³ and more recently I have attempted to represent Bartók's workshop in the form of an exhibition.⁴ In commentaries for two previous facsimile editions,⁵ I have enlarged on the genesis of Bartók's oeuvre, using concrete examples, and, by transcribing and analyzing the six pages of sketches for the Sonata for Violin and Piano No. 1 in the Black Notebook,⁶ I have also dealt, to the extent of a sample, with the problems concerning sources.

Of Bartók's compositional methods it should be pointed out that under ideal circumstances—in his own home and, during

³ Somfai, "Manuscript versus Urtext: The Primary Sources of Bartók's Work" in *Studia Musicologica* 1981.

⁴ Bartók at work: Sketches, Manuscripts, Versions: The Compositional Process. Exhibition and text by L. Somfai (Budapest 1987). (See also Paul Merrick's article in a forthcoming issue).

⁵ Béla Bartók, *Two Rumanian Danes for piano*. Reprint of the original manuscript. With commentaries by L. Somfai (Budapest 1974, Editio Musica Budapest); Sonata (1926) Piano Solo. Facsimile edition of the manuscript. With a commentary by L. Somfai (Budapest 1980, Editio Musica Budapest).

⁶ Somfai, "Bartók vázlatok (II): Témafeljegyzések az 1. hegedű-zongoraszonátához" (Bartók Sketches II: Thematic Sketches to Violin Sonata No. 1) in: *Zenatudományi dolgozatok* 1985 (Budapest: 1985), pp. 21-36.

the hours or indeed days of composing, in strict isolation even from his family—he was practically composing between the piano and his desk. As a born pianist, he very often improvised and developed the material on the instrument up to the stage when it could be confined to paper as a “continuity sketch.” (This roughly resembles the traditional method in all probability used, for instance, by Joseph Haydn as well.) In such cases there perhaps did not exist a real sketch, that is to say the memo sketch of the theme. Nonetheless, it was more typical for Bartók (similarly to Beethoven) to sketch up themes that came to his mind (the Black Notebook is particularly rich in such sketches), and then, after the stage of collecting material and working out improvisations, note down the complete draft. It may be interesting to note that while writing such a draft, he developed the texture on a separate piece of paper whenever coming to some contrapuntal or otherwise specific section. (Such “partial sketches” are not rare with Mozart either.)

But the Black Notebook does not show Bartók in typical circumstances. He had no piano available and thus had to go on with the work of composition entirely in his head. In addition to the memo sketches the notebook also includes many longer materials resembling continuity sketches. Of *The Miraculous Mandarin*, for example, the whole work from the ‘Chase’ scene onwards, is noted down in the sketchbook. He obviously spent several days writing the rough continuity sketch, in ink or in pencil, over twenty pages.

The “draft” of a work, noted down throughout and usually containing many deleted and corrected sections, around 1908–11 usually counted as the only complete autograph manuscript of Bartók’s and it often served as the engraver’s copy (as for instance in the case of the autograph of *Two Rumanian Dances*, which has been published in a facsimile edition). However, it was more typical to have a fair copy made of this

draft. These fair copies were either made by Bartók’s first wife, Márta Ziegler, under the composer’s supervision (mainly around 1910–21), or, after one or two drafts, by Bartók himself, and this he then sent to the publisher (in the case of the Sonata of 1926, for instance, this was the third autograph notation), or again, from 1929 onwards, Bartók made master copies on transparent paper of his drafts, on *Lichtpaus* paper, the lithograph of which he then sent to the publisher, the performer or whoever.

The engraver’s copy is still not the last link in the chain of sources of a Bartók work. The score was further matured in the forms of proof sheets, authorized publications, possibly a revised edition, and in the case of piano works, even one or more recordings on which Bartók himself played.⁷ These particulars, however, suffice for a preliminary survey of the sketches of differing lengths and types in the Black Notebook.

A fully modern sketch edition would call for, in addition to the facsimile, faithful transcription of the complete score, which is called in the language of musicology a “diplomatic transcription.” This is to give the sketches in the line division as they appear in the original, with the deleted or corrected sections elucidated. In the present case there have been formal reasons against using the same format in the transcription in this first edition (the small size of the notebook with Bartók’s very small notes). Such a transcription however will have to be the next step, which cannot be taken from the facsimile alone. As the work referred to in Note 6 has made it clear, this transcription, now in preparation, and the analysis to follow it, will in all probability lead to some important conclusions.

Here I would mention three aspects, just to suggest the untapped information potentially present in the Black Notebook:

⁷ *Centenary Edition of Bartók’s Records (Complete)*, ed. by L. Somfai, Zoltán Kocsis, János Sebestyén (Budapest 1981, Hungaroton).



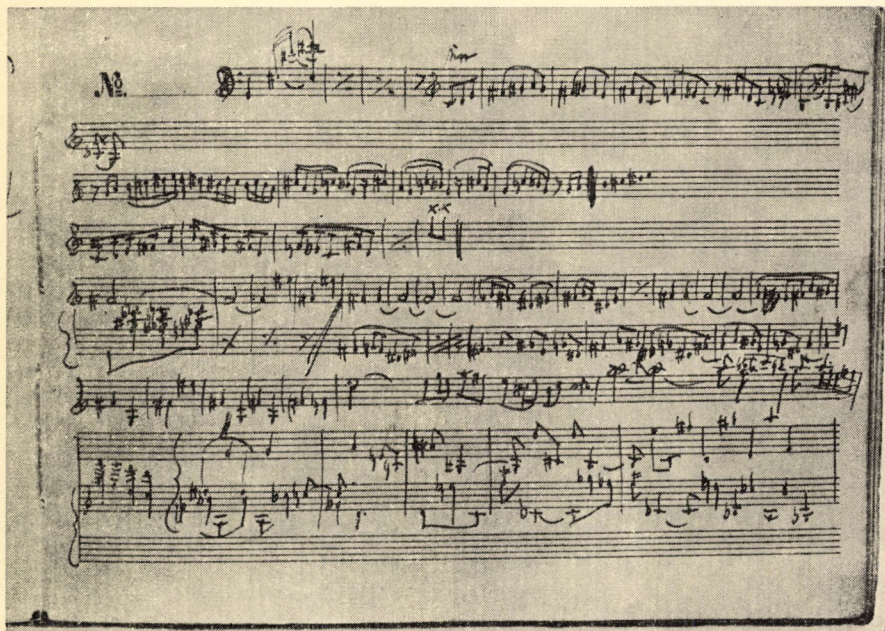
Sonata for Violin and Piano No. 2. First page of the seven-page-sketch

1) The question of context, 2) the question of the length of a sketch, and 3) the question of indications that bespeak the conception of the work as a whole.

In what context does a sketch surface, and has it any information value as regards dating and character? As already mentioned, Bartók did not date his sketches. Still, an analysis of the different shades of fountain-pen inks and of the way the notations fill out the various pages (by scrutinizing the original rather than the facsimile) can produce several minor surprises. One of these is that the clarinet theme before Rehearsal Number 20 in *Bluebeard's Castle* (1911) presumably had occurred to Bartók in 1910, while writing the second movement of *Two Pictures* for orchestra (1910—fol. 12/verso). Another such surprise concerns No. 1 of the *Four Dirges* for piano, published with the date of 1909–10, which in all probability was composed in 1908 (fol. 11/recto). A third interesting element helps to chart the chronology within a given

year, and indeed within perhaps the most significant year with the most fruitful crop: several important sections in the first movement of the String Quartet No. 1 (1908–09—fol. 9/recto) date from before Pieces 8, 9, and 13 of Bagatelles (May 1908), which means that by the spring of 1908 Bartók was hard at work at the quartet.

Another aspect still to be studied concerns how much Bartók put to paper at the start. In other words, what can be considered as the basic idea engendered by inspiration and what is that which he did not have to commit to paper immediately, as the continuation was routine work for him. From this point of view the most interesting are not the "memo sketches" of a few bars nor the continuity sketches several pages in length but those of a medium length—sketches of a relatively short piano piece which presumably had no precedents and out of which, once at home, he could immediately write the developed draft. For example, in the case



Sonata for Violin and Piano No. 2. Facing page

of No. 1 of the *Four Dirges* (fol. 11/recto): the sketch of the approximately 16 first bars of this 28-bar piano piece, where he noted down the expansion of the intervals and the melodic steps but did not need to make a sketch of the diminution after the climax, or the sketch of No. 3—a 33-bar piece—of *Four Dirges* (fol. 12/recto), which only puts down two fragments of the diminuendo after the climax (which in fact do not tally with the final form).

Finally, the third aspect concerns the sketches of works in several movements, noted down in proximity to each other. This is particularly important because it can reveal a great deal to Bartók scholars on the composer's intended ideas for the planned work. From this point of view the sketches of the *Sonata for Violin and Piano No. 1* of 1921 and those of the *Sonata for Violin and Piano No. 2* of 1922 are of importance. From them it can be established that while working on these works, Bartók did not write the pages all through, but as a

first step he noted down certain basic themes on two or three consecutive pages—themes of each would be movement on a separate page. As a next step, sometimes obviously in several stages, he continued these first ideas, and when the page was filled, he carried on on the following blank pages, but this time instead of memo sketches, more and more in the form of continuity sketches.

Placing this micro-chronology of the sketches under close scrutiny and with the knowledge of the final forms, practically everything assumes significance—what Bartók committed to paper first, where he left a space for a continuation, what and how he continued writing and also what is entirely lacking in these first sketches.

Because—and this one should not leave out of consideration—however traditional the way Bartók collected his musical raw material may have been and however much he trusted inspiration, he naturally also had plans concerning the work to be written. "I never created new theories in advance" he said in his 1943

Harvard Lectures. "This attitude does not mean that I composed without set plans and without sufficient control. The plans were concerned with the spirit of the new work and with technical problems (for instance, formal structure involved by the spirit of the work), all more or less instinctively felt. . ."

I have selected as an example the Sonata for Violin and Piano No. 2, the first two facing pages of whose seven-page-sketch (fol. 27/verso—30/verso) are given here in facsimile. The left-hand page begins with the basic themes of the first movement and the right-hand page with those of the second movement, while the following pages are rather continuity sketches. Let us look at what the first sketches of this extremely interesting form, in which the two movements follow attacca, reveal of the spirit of the new work and the formal structure involved in it. The first two pages immediately make it clear that

- The work opens with an improvisatory violin theme, which in style resembles the *hora lungă* of Rumanian peasant music (left-hand page, lines 1–6);
- In contrast to this, the theme assigned to the piano basically assumes a mirror motion (left-hand page, lines 9–10);
- As a contrast to the "Lassú" (Slow) first movement, but based on the same pitch collection, the "Friss" (Fast) second movement opens with a dance-like theme (right-hand page, lines 1–2), which develops into variant folk dance-like forms (right-hand page, lines 3 and 4);
- This second movement was to include a forceful bagpipe-imitation fiddler episode recalling folk dances (right-hand page, lines 5–7).

The seven pages of the sketch reveal many more important details as well but at the same time some important elements are also missing, such as for example:

- The theme in a free form, resembling the *hora lungă*, arrives, after a multi-stage development (as if conjuring up a long phase in the history of the evolution of folk music as conceived by Bartók), in the closing moments of the sonata, to a quasi-strophic final form;
- The second movement too was to receive independent piano thematics;
- The second movement was to be written in a large-scale but highly irregular sonata form;
- At the end of the attacca two-movement form, the work returns to the slow opening tempo, and the tonality of C with its disquieting effect in the beginning of both movements (based on the scale of C-D-E-F sharp-G sharp-A with an extension of B flat-A below) is in the closing chord clarified into C major.

Naturally, it would call for a fairly long musicological study to elaborate all this, particularly the "secret programme" concealed in the structure of the Sonata for Violin and Piano No. 2, which can scarcely be described in words without the danger of vulgarization (but which is most characteristic of Bartók's way of thinking), and what the sketches in the Black Notebook reinforce of all this. Some of this is of scholarly concern.

With some twenty years experience in the study of Bartók's music, however, I may safely state that the coming of this sketchbook into the public domain has provided new opportunities for scholarly study. After music theory and style analyses, and semantic examinations, which up till now were essentially based only on published scores, a thorough study of Bartók's personality and musicality can at long last be commenced, one which can take into account the genesis of his works as well.

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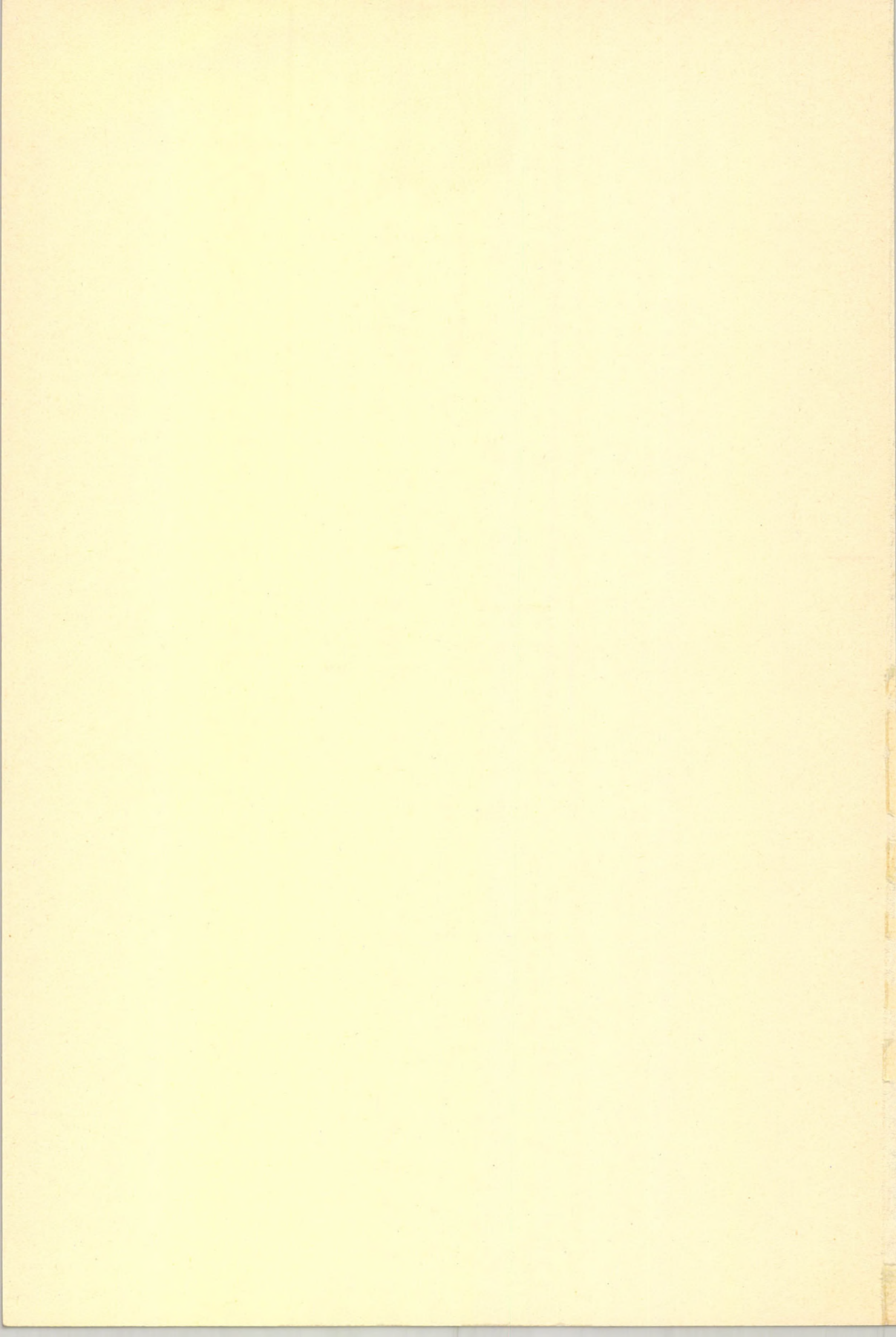
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