NHQ

The New Hungarian Quarterly

VOL. XXIX ■ No. 109 ■ SPRING 1988 ■ $4.00

109

The New Hungarian Quarterly

Editorial offices:

17 Rákóczi út, H-1088 Budapest, Hungary. Telephone: 136-857
Postal address: H-1906 Budapest, P.O. Box 223, Hungary

Annual subscription: $13.50 or equivalent post free to any address

Orders may be placed with
KULTURA FOREIGN TRADE COMPANY
H-1389 Budapest, P.O.B. 149
See also distributors listed on back page

Residents in Hungary may subscribe
at their local post office or at *Posta Központi Hírlapiroda*,
Lehel út 10/a, H-1900 Budapest

Published by Pallas Lap- és Könyvkiadó Publishing House, Budapest
General manager: NORBERT SIKLÓSI

Printed in Hungary by Kossuth Printing House, Budapest

HU ISSN 0028-5390 Index: 26843

INDEX

VOLUME XXIX. 1988

ARTICLES, ESSAYS

ECONOMIC LIFE

TRANSYLVANIA

HISTORY

SURVEYS

PROSE AND FICTION

POEMS

BOOKS AND AUTHORS

ARTS, ARCHITECTURE, ARCHEOLOGY, PHOTOGRAPHY

THE EDITOR'S NOTES

MUSICAL LIFE

THEATRE AND FILM

IN FOCUS

ILLUSTRATIONS AND PLATES

The New Hungarian Quarterly

VOLUME XXIX * No. 109

SPRING 1988

SURVEYS

BOOKS AND AUTHORS

ARTS

THEATRE AND FILM

MUSICAL LIFE

OUR CONTRIBUTORS

This issue went to press on 25 November 1987
Last proofs read on 1 March 1988

POLITICS AND HISTORY

What will obviously strike the reader's eye in our table of contents are the new headings. I must therefore correct this impression right away: these are not permanent sections but some essays and articles that have been grouped under specific headings in order not only to make them easier to sample but also to emphasise their special importance. Hungarian opinion and foreign observers —reporters and correspondents—are currently occupied with two large subjects: the Hungarian economy and the Hungarian national minority in Rumania. Under the heading "The Economy under Review" we analyse precisely those questions—laying stress on related problems or difficulties and the search for a solution—which are being dealt with in the Hungarian mass media as well. József Bognár examines most thoroughly and takes up the new world economic factors in East–West relations. His succinct article outlines, practically one by one, the forces active in the world economy, with special regard to two things, the seeking for reforms in the international field and, of course, the continuation or progressive development of Hungary's economic reform. His article points to the importance of East–West economic cooperation and raises key questions and proposals. Béla Csikós-Nagy analyses the elements and the significance, the conditions and difficulties, of the revival of a socialist planned economy. He begins by sketching the broad historical background, starting from the nineteenth century when socialist thinking argued that not only capitalist private ownership should be abolished but also the market mechanism; a view whose vestiges are still with us today. He refers to the introduction of Lenin's New Economic Policy, in which the main point was that there could be no equation of commodity production and capitalist production, nor could the market be consequently eliminated from the socialist economy. This realisation led to the socialist market economy—the very subtitle of Béla Csikós-Nagy's article. The final conclusion of the article is that the socialist market economy is not an alternative to a planned economy.

Independently of Béla Csikós-Nagy, Márton Tardos practically follows the same train of thought in his paper on technological progress, socialist ownership and the state. He outlines the conditions for the autonomy of the individual enterprise, takes the socialist market as given and points to the possibility and extent of its regulation. Zsigmond Járai discusses a new phenomenon, opposed by some but accepted by the public at large, in the Hungarian economy: the introduction of bond issues. His article "A Growing Bond Market" discusses the enlargement of the concept of the market. He refers to the initial issuing of bonds in 1983 and 1984, then elaborates on the reasons for the expansion of the market and the popularisation of trading in bonds. The bond, as he points out, is already an economic necessity in the Hungary of today.

The second group of articles singled out follow under the heading "Transylvania" and deal with the current controversy in Hungary and Rumania which the publication of *A History of Transylvania* precipitated. This major work in three volumes is reviewed by István Nemeskürty who writes concisely and directly with the intention of informing the English speaking reader—who is probably utterly unacquainted with the history of Transylvania—as to why the book has become a bestseller in Hungary and the subject of heated argument in Rumania. In the spirit of the authors and editors of the work, I might say, of Hungarian public opinion in general, Nemeskürty concludes his review with words written 250 years ago. Please read the quotation for yourselves as I will content myself with by referring only to Noah's dove with the olive branch. The other piece in this group is a transcription of a radio round-table in which authors and editors of *A History of Transylvania* discussed their working methods, the immense difficulties they encountered in writing the work, and their effort to observe complete impartiality—an effort which permeates the three volumes and which consistently interprets and, where necessary, refutes some positions taken by both Hungarian and Rumanian historians. The atmosphere of this round-table shows the intention of the Hungarian historians concerned to engage in sober dispute with their Rumanian counterparts. Unfortunately, however, the intention of engaging in a scholarly disputation has remained just that—an intention; indeed, the Rumanian response has consisted of slanders, insinuations and misleading allegations.

It is a tradition of our magazine to publish annually, for the record, the Hungarian foreign minister's address to the United Nations General Assembly. This time Péter Várkonyi, after stating the position of the Hungarian government, analysed the increasingly important role of the United Nations in a period when East–West dialogue is being resumed. The new

conception of international security, based on the appreciation and recognition of mutual security, has added to the importance of the world organization. The foreign minister pointed out in particular that the new structure of security policy presupposed the active participation of all states, irrespective of their size or political and social system. He emphasised, on behalf of the Hungarian government, that the Charter of the United Nations provided a firm foundation, for creating balanced conditions of international relations. In this respect Hungary is primarily interested in the continuation of the East–West dialogue and in the further development of cooperation.

Mátyás Szűrös's essay assesses the prospects of the favourable change in international relations which has occurred in the past two to three years. The current situation creates challenges of a new type which are bringing about structural changes in the world economy, shifting the emphases in the international division of labour and raising new demands on technical development. The author examines the prospects for the world, including Hungary, looking forward to the year 2000. The gist of his discussion is not a forecast on the shaping of international affairs, but an identification of the tendency in existing and new structural changes, the establishment of new conditions and the opportunities they offer. As a matter of course in this search, emphatic consideration is given to our common home, Europe. Our continent deserves this, since its traditions and cultural identity distinguish it from other parts of the world, and also because of the contradiction residing in the fact that the arms build-up is at its most intensive in Europe. Mátyás Szűrös relates the trends and opportunities of European development with a brief review of the political, economic and cultural conditions in Hungary today. In this connection he does not neglect to make the point that Hungarians outside the border of the country constitute the largest national minority in Europe. In effect, 40 per cent of all national minorities in Europe are of Hungarian extraction and speak Hungarian as their mother tongue. The author expresses a view he has already voiced more than once earlier: that if governments gave evidence of sincere political will, minorities could pay an important role in maintaining and strengthening relations between nations instead of dividing them and raising obstacles to good neighbourly contacts. He cites as a good example of the development of such relationships the ties that now exist between Yugoslavia and Hungary.

While on the subject of international affairs, let me call the reader's attention to an article bearing the title "Looking at each other through the Arts" and subtitled "Hungary at the Holland Festival". The author is Arjen Schreuder, a young Rotterdam journalist, who cast a close eye on this festival of Hungarian literature, fine arts and cinema. Our Dutch contributor

gives his favourable or unfavourable reactions as well as a description of the items; indeed, he goes further and criticises certain faults in the Hungarian organization and queries the character and style of Hungarian cinema as presented in Holland. In his view the self-criticism reminiscent of the past and the description of the present situation, a feature of the films on display, may fulfil the organizers' intention, yet it is questionable whether they are likely to awaken interest in Hungarian art in another small country.

Recalling the past, but with quite different intention and style, is István Bitskey's essay on Péter Pázmány, the seventeenth century Hungarian churchman and statesman, a master of Hungarian prose. Although in the recent past the name of Péter Pázmány and his works had been for a long time relegated into the background, this could not eclipse his importance. A selection of his sermons was one of the bestsellers of last year's Christmas book fair.

"A Great Political Thinker" heads the review written by István Sőtér, subjective in tone but scholarly. Sőtér's review is devoted to István Bibó's selected essays, which have appeared in three volumes running to more than 2,300 pages and covering this great twentieth century thinker's works from 1935 up to the year of his death, 1979. Having personally known him (there was a difference of less than two years in age between us), I was deeply moved when reading the introductory lines of István Sőtér, another contemporary.

He writes of Bibó who already as a schoolboy and student showed gread promise As a young scholar he was the outstanding and most interesting thinker of our generation, respected as a master among others of his age. Nor am I against the subjective tone: I remember well that in 1946, when I was editor of the weekly *Új Magyarország*, I was both pleased and gratified to publish one of Bibó's essays in several instalments, still the most important of his writings to this very day, entitled "The Misery of the Small Countries of Eastern Europe". Sőtér's article discusses and reviews these writings; here let me point out only that the period of autocracy known as the personality cult did not tolerate independent political thought and thus István Bibó was not able to publish for a long time: practically not a line of his saw the light of day from 1949 to 1971. In the meantime he had taken a place in the Imre Nagy government of 1956, for which he served a sentence of imprisonment. In his impaired health he still wrote more than half a thousand pages, whose analytical content and the many views stated in them are the subject of study for contemporary Hungarian political thinkers, whether they endorse them wholly or partially, or reject them entirely.

NHQ 109 directs attention to two great Hungarian thinkers, separated by a gap of three centuries.

THE EDITOR

THE COMMON FUTURE

by

PÉTER VÁRKONYI

Conditions for extending the dialogue and developing practical cooperation among States now seem more favourable than they were during the 41st session of the General Assembly. The positive trends in the international situation have somewhat strengthened, though grave tensions also persist.

The dialogue that has resumed and has become constant between the Soviet Union and the United States of America points to the direction of reduced international tension and strengthened confidence between states. The progress made in their bilateral disarmament talks gives rise to hopes and may induce far-reaching favourable changes that would usher in a new period in the history of international relations, leading us on to the 21st century. This imposes increased responsibility on the two leading great powers. The entire community of nations rightly expects that by accepting mutual compromises they will steer the course of international developments in this direction. However, the most important lesson to be learnt from our foreign policy activity in recent years shows that every country, irrespective of its size, should assume a share of that responsibility and do its utmost to contribute towards easing international tension and strengthening cooperation.

An excellent possibility for doing so is afforded by the United Nations, which are, within the system of international relations, an irreplaceable forum for cooperation among countries of different size, with different social systems and at different levels of economic development. We are deeply convinced that the world organization has considerable possibilities yet to be explored and a great potential yet to be mobilized for implementing the noble objectives and principles of the Charter. To avert and to remove once and for all the danger of a nuclear catastrophe, to halt the arms race and to

Text of the address by the Hungarian Minister for Foreign Affairs, delivered at the 42nd Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations, New York, September 29th, 1987.

adopt effective disarmament measures, to build just economic relations free from discrimination, and to create living conditions worthy of man in the 20th century are tasks for nations and for the international community in the solution of which, we believe, the United Nations and its agencies should take more initiative and play a more active and pioneering role. It is this awareness that leads my Government, together with other socialist countries, when we emphasize the need for the United Nations General Assembly to take steps towards bringing about a comprehensive system of international peace and security. The aim of this initiative is to lay the basis for broad international cooperation in interstate relations to replace the present confrontation and mistrust.

In our nuclear age, the military and non-military challenges to the security of the world, the complexity and intricacy of international problems, and the interdependence of States call for entirely new approaches to questions of security. The related discussions at the 41st session of the General Assembly have allowed some conclusions to be drawn which should form an integral part of security policy concepts in our time.

The events of the intervening period have strengthened the conviction that national and international security can no longer be separated and that neither can be preserved in a lasting way to the detriment of, or in subordination to, the other. Given the realities of our age, no single country can rely exclusively on military-technical means for guaranteeing its security. This can only be achieved by political means, by joint action. No single country has an exclusive right to security. Creation of a new structure of security policies supposes the active participation of all states, whatever their size, political or social system. The threats to common security are, in our days, impossible to remove except by a comprehensive management of the different problems, those which emerge separately or in conjunction in the political, economic, humanitarian, human rights and ecological fields. In our world, interwoven as it is, this conclusion is on they way of becoming a cliché, but the manner of implementation, the course of action to follow, appears to have won less of a general acceptance.

The responses given so far to our initiative reaffirm our opinion that the objective pursued is right. With due account to the interrelationships between different areas and with the involvement of the member states of the United Nations, joint efforts should be made towards elaborating a viable system which, resting on the Charter of the United Nations, may provide a firm and long-term basis for a balanced development of international relations. Such a system should be based on the democratisation of international relations and world politics, on the reduction of the role of military strength

and its possible relegation as a security policy concept, on the creation of conditions for, as well as the elaboration and application of, an institutional system, and rules of conduct, necessary for a political settlement of international conflicts, on the joint solutions to global economic and ecological problems, and on achieving a fuller measure of human rights.

On the one hand, the framework and mechanism of this new system of security should be devised and, on the other, action based on broad consensus should concurrently be taken on whatever concrete issue that is ripe for solution. We consider that such action is possible on several global problems. I refer to, among others, international action against terrorism, drug abuse or diseases, like AIDS.

Consideration of this agenda item under such an approach may give an opportunity for a substantive dialogue on both the conceptual aspects and the concrete problems of international security and may allow concrete courses of action to be charted on the basis of mutual interest and a consensus.

The core and substance of activity in this direction is that no state or group of states may claim a monopoly of action, for the related problems are shared and their solution can also be promoted only by joint efforts.

The encouraging progress made in certain areas of disarmament talks over the past few years is a clear and most important indication of positive processes unfolding in international life. The Hungarian People's Republic finds it desirable to ensure that the favourable opportunities emerging in the field of disarmament should not be missed and that their impact be extended globally through the transmissions of international relations.

The fundamental truth of the nuclear age affirmed by the leaderships of both the Soviet Union and the United States is that a nuclear war cannot be won and must not be fought. The recent Soviet–American agreement in principle on the elimination of medium-range and tactical-operational missiles represents a real breakthrough in the practical implementation of that recognition. The destruction, under strict international measures of verification, of these two categories of nuclear weapons systems could prove to be a milestone in nuclear disarmament as a whole. The agreement would create a qualitatively new and favourable situation in Europe and would open the way to new measures aimed at further reducing military confrontation. The favourable political effect of such a highly important step would be felt not only by Europe, but also by the world at large.

An agreement between the two great powers on a 50 per cent cut in strategic offensive weapons and on a concurrent strengthening of the ABM Treaty limiting the building of anti-missile systems would be another major step towards strengthening strategic stability. The Reykjavik summit in 1986

paved the way, also in this field, for bringing closer the positions still differing on several important issues. The range of problems which continue to impede the successful conclusion of the multilateral negotiations of over ten years on the complete prohibition and destruction of chemical weapons is also narrowing.

There is nothing to support and justify the downgrading of multilateral disarmament talks, rather the contrary is true. All of us must jointly seek ways and means of a solution, for which an excellent opportunity is provided by the forthcoming 3rd Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly devoted to disarmament.

Europe, where the greatest stockpiles of weapons and armaments as well as armed forces opposing each other are concentrated, is a continent of particular relevance to disarmament. Any armed conflict between states of the continent would very likely instantly plunge into danger the peace and security of the whole world.

The Stockholm agreement last year opened a new chapter in the efforts to promote European disarmament and to strengthen confidence and security. The measures agreed upon are shown by initial experience to have produced favourable effects in themselves, but, what is perhaps even more important, they serve a useful purpose in paving the way for significantly lowering the level of military confrontation in Europe. On the basis of the Budapest appeal, issued by the Warsaw Treaty member states in June 1986, and of the NATO responses thereto, 23 States participating in the CSCE process have since last February conducted consultations about the mandate of future negotiations on the reduction of armed forces and armaments in Europe. These negotiations must lead to reductions in conventional armed forces down to minimum levels of sufficiency for defence and thereby to an increase in European stability.

The proposed measures constitute a short-term programme of action for disarmament. They should be supplemented by steps creating the foundation of the infrastructure of security in the next century. Without the comprehensive prohibition of nuclear weapons tests, without the adoption of effective multilateral nuclear disarmament measures, and without the prevention of the deployment of weapons in outer space it is hardly possible to think in terms of 21st century security.

Continuing multilateral negotiating efforts are needed to attain these goals. In light of the quickening tempo of bilateral and multilateral regional talks, slow progress or marking time in multilateral disarmament talks within the United Nations system, particularly in certain areas of the Geneva Conference on Disarmament, is becoming a source of growing concern.

By signing the Final Act of Helsinki more than a decade ago, the states of Europe have expressed their conviction that security cannot be based solely on military means and that appropriate political, economic and humanitarian conditions are equally indispensable. There is no room for doubt that the process of European security and cooperation is an indispensable framework for the maintenance of East-West dialogue and of the development of co-operation.

Hungary has a vested interest in the continuation and intensification of this process. The large number of proposals submitted at the Vienna follow-up meeting is another indication of a vivid interest shown by the participating states in a steady development of cooperation in Europe. This is made evident by the fact that on several issues states belonging to different groups of countries and having different social systems have shown themselves to have identical goals.

Hungary, which is situated in the zone of direct contact between countries with different social systems, is bound by myriad traditional ties to the European states. Despite differences in ideology and socio-economic system, the countries of Europe have established useful, fruitful and ever broadening cooperation in numerous areas. Hungary's relations with the countries of Western Europe likewise testify to the recognition that a novel approach to international relations, to dialogue among states, as well as practical cooperation and action based on mutual respect for divergent interests are the only viable path to the future for Europe.

This recognition is naturally true for all continents. It would be a significant contribution to just and lasting solutions for regional conflicts, and to the elimination of hotbeds of crisis, if the present session of the General Assembly adopted the declaration on the enhancement of the effectiveness of the principle of non-use of force in international relations, the draft of which was elaborated at this year's session of the Special Committee established for that purpose, with the active participation of representatives of socialist, non-aligned and Western countries. Indeed, the most urgent task of our age is to banish the use of force from international relations. The adoption by the General Assembly of the declaration, which is relevant also to the progressive development of international law, would be more than a symbolic gesture of commitment to strengthening this basic principle embodied in the United Nations Charter.

Numerous developments of the past year have strengthened our conviction that the United Nations should play an active and growing role in the relaxa-

tion of tension and in the elimination of regional hot eds of crisis. Effective involvement of the world organization would considerably increase its chances of future action in other issues, while adding to its weight in world politics and enhancing its prestige. The activities of the United Nations, including those of the Security Council, the Secretary General and his representatives in quest of negotiated settlements, the relevant relations and mediation efforts assume growing importance in setting good examples. They express the political will of the overwhelming majority of member states and bring about a mechanism for settlement applicable to any conflict, giving prevalence to the basic realization that a negotiated settlement is the only way out of armed conflicts. This is substantiated also by developments in the Iraqi–Iranian war. Consequently, we welcome and support the active and constructive role of the Secretary General of the United Nations in the search for a solution of the Gulf crisis that is acceptable to all. Crises can only be solved through a process of comprehensive settlement with the participation of all the parties concerned and on the basis of the principles of equality and equal security, the principles of the United Nations Charter, and the norms of international law. Such efforts can be served most effectively by international conferences to be held under the auspices of the United Nations. This is as true of a just settlement of the Middle-East crisis as of a peaceful solution of the conflict in Cyprus. Attempts to use tensions as a pretext for increasing foreign military presence and for intervention counteract these principles and United Nations efforts for settlement.

The elimination of the crisis in South Africa could be promoted by the implementation of the relevant United Nations resolutions and by resolute and concerted international action. The racialist régime of South Africa persists in its efforts to prevent the black majority from exercising their fundamental human rights. Internal repressive measures, including the use of force are applied and it attempts to stabilize its position in the region by economic blackmail and by military action against the frontline states. We support resolute international action to ensure that the Republic of South Africa does not evade in every way the relevant resolutions of the United Nations and continue its illegal occupation of Namibia. Repeated armed attacks from that territory against Angola must also be put a stop to.

We consider it urgent to strengthen security in Asia and the Pacific and to establish cooperation between the countries of the region. It is gratifying to note the growing activity and role of small and medium-size countries in Asia as well. We support any efforts by the countries of the region aimed at creating peace and security in Asia. In this spirit we welcome the policy of national reconciliation of the Government of the People's Republic of Kam-

puchea and support the policy of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea aimed at the peaceful and democratic unification of Korea. In our opinion, the policy of national reconciliation proclaimed by the Afghan Government and the mediation activities of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General have increased the chances of the elimination of the crisis situation around Afghanistan.

The events in the Central American and Caribbean regions continue to give us cause for concern. The Hungarian Government favours a just, negotiated settlement of the Central American crisis on the basis of full respect for the sovereignty of the countries concerned and for the legitimate interest and the national dignity of the peoples in the region. It lends support to the joint efforts of the Contadora Group as well as to all initiatives of the countries of the region aimed at finding a genuine solution.

Also at the current session of the General Assembly our delegation will devote great attention to the situation of the world economy and to the problems of international economic relations. The openness of the Hungarian economy and the intensity of our external economic relations compel us to follow with close attention any shifts in the external environment of our economy.

Imbalances of the world economy have continued to grow, notable strains have accumulated in the international financial and monetary system, and the indebtedness of numerous countries has reached critical levels. The costs of the arms race divert enormous resources from the productive sphere. The erosion of the international trading system has continued. The growth of protectionist tendencies, the discriminatory measures impeding the expansion of international economic relations, and the restrictions based on non-economic considerations, which make their effects felt especially in trade in modern technologies, are a source of concern.

Solutions to the problems of the world economy demand a new type of global approach, particularly on the part of governments which have a decisive influence on the conditions for economic cooperation. Some progress in developing such an approach has been made in the recent past. Let me refer, in this respect, only to the round of talks started by the Contracting Parties of GATT at the ministerial conference in Punta del Este, Uruguay, and to the 7th session of UNCTAD last summer.

This new world economic outlook, which is more responsive to realities and to worldwide interdependence, is also reflected in the highly important document, "Our Common Future," of the International Commission for Environment and Development, chaired by Prime Minister Madame Brundt-

land of Norway. The Hungarian Government agrees with the message of that document.

Efforts for the creation of international economic security, supported also by Hungary, are directed towards ensuring that the principles of partnership relations based on mutual respect for one another's interests, stability, reliability, predictability, and fulfilment in good faith of contractual obligations are observed in international economic relations. Implementation of these basic principles can promote mutually advantageous solutions to the present-day problems of the world economy as well as its balanced growth. World economic problems cannot be solved except with the active cooperation of all participants of international economic relations.

The promotion of respect for human rights and their universal implementation and, to this end, helping cooperation among states, is one of the fundamental objectives of the world organization. Present-day events bear out the recognition as expressed in the letter and spirit of the Charter that there is a close relationship between respect for human rights and the maintenance of international peace and security. The elaboration, by strenuous efforts, of an internationally recognized system of principles and norms relating to human rights by the United Nations are among its achievements which merit our recognition.

We consider it a central task of the United Nations to take effective action against mass and flagrant violations of human rights, which pose a threat to peace and security as well. Disregard for the right of peoples to self-determination, the humiliating policies and practices of racial hatred, racism and mass discrimination against nationalities and in any other form, demand from our organization and from each of its member states the adoption of a resolute stand, as well as action.

A no less important task for the United Nations is to promote respect for individual and collective human rights and their effective exercise.

We are convinced that the postulate to respect and implement human rights is a major and indispensable achievement of our civilization, a common value of mankind which we all have contributed to creating. It is necessary to seek points of common interest as well as ways and means of cooperation in order to enrich it.

Countries and peoples have traversed different historical paths and have started from different foundations in moving closer to the shared values and ideals evolved within the framework of the United Nations system. Such differences are natural, just as the diversity of cultures is, and awareness of this fact may contribute to strengthening confidence in the human rights and humanitarian fields as well.

The need for universal implementation of human rights implies exercise of the rights of peoples and individuals, just as recognition and protection of rights for different segments and groups of society, including national minorities. Constructive cooperation in matters affecting the situation of national minorities has an important role to play in interstate relations, in the development of good-neighbourly relations, and may even influence the political atmosphere of entire regions. In Hungary, the equal participation of nationalities in the political, economic and cultural life of society is an important component of national unity. The recognition of individual and collective rights for nationalities, including the right to education in their mother tongues, and the creation of institutional and democratic frameworks for their existence, serve to help them preserve, develop and strengthen their identities.

The favourable tendencies recently observed in international relations have allowed the multilateral forums, including first of all the United Nations, to resume an active and effective role in the development of international cooperation. To enable the world organization to live up to that role makes it indispensable to enhance its effectiveness and to streamline its activity. At the same time this requires that every member state contributes constructively as much as it can to overcome the difficulties in the operation of the United Nations.

We have now a propitious moment for the world organization and for the entire community of nations. The member states of the United Nations have to seize the opportunity to steer the course of the world irreversibly to that of disarmament and international cooperation. I do hope that the work of the present session of the United Nations General Assembly will also help to ensure that more and more states will become aware of this opportunity and will take an active part in joint efforts for the accomplishment of this mission.

CHANGES IN THE INTERNATIONAL LANDSCAPE

by

MÁTYÁS SZŰRÖS

I

The interaction of the historical rivalry and the mutual dependence of the two socio-economic systems, and in relation with this the military bipolarity that is also embodied in the confrontation of the military-political alliance organizations, are factors acting over the long term which have a lasting influence on the international situation and will determine the evolution of international relations up to the end of the eighties. The further strengthening of the internationalization of economic and social processes, the expansion of the international division of labour and the resulting growth in interdependence are also among the lasting trends. Problems of a global nature that therefore require cooperation on a world scale, in particular the aggravation of the problems of underdevelopment, must also be taken into account in the long run.

International relations in the years ahead will also be influenced by processes, relatively new in origin, that will almost certainly continue to operate after the year 2000. For the most part these are challenges of a new type arising from the restructuring of forces in the world economy, from structural transformation, shifts in the international division of labour and the demands of technological development. We must also anticipate the strengthening and lasting operation of such processes as the growing differentiation and democratization of the world political system. The reform policy and efforts for renewal that have begun in different socialist countries and, in conjunction with this, the new approach to foreign policy and the role assumed in international affairs will have increasingly felt effects as well.

In making a world political forecast it is difficult to take into account the third group of changes: short-term events that are often of a contingent

nature but that have a considerable influence on the situation in a given country or even in a whole region. Thus, the possibility that regional crises will flare up, or even that new ones will emerge, cannot be excluded.

The duality of influences arising from the rivalry of the two social systems and from the growing awareness of their mutual interdependence and the need to find a common solution to universal problems, will leave its imprint on the developments of the immediate future. This can be expected to place the questions of the development and lasting coexistence of socialism and capitalism, and the possibilities and limits of rivalry and cooperation between them, in a new light. The evolution of the balance of forces will be determined to an increasing degree by economic performance and social progress. The development of military technology and, consequently, the excessive value placed on the military factor—because of the threatening consequences of mutual destruction—will place growing limits on the possibility of using armed force in the interest of attaining global political aims. In keeping with the level of science and technology at the end of the century this circumstance calls for responsible thinking and action from all the participants in world political affairs.

The relationship between the two global big powers, the Soviet Union and the United States, will largely influence the East–West relationship and even the entire system of international relations. Although confrontation and rivalry has been, and remains, a lasting element in these relations, in the second half of our decade more favourable conditions have arisen for dialogue and cooperation. Soviet–American relations have shifted out of an impasse, largely as a result of the new foreign policy line of the Soviet Union.

However, despite more lively foreign policy activity, the summit meetings and the expansion of cooperation extending to the cultural, scientific and other fields, we cannot speak of a breakthrough in Soviet–US relations.

The agreement on medium and short-range missiles signed in Washington can be interpreted as the beginning of the breakthrough. It is a concrete step forward not only as regards nuclear arms but in disarmament as such since two modern kinds of nuclear arms will be eliminated. The agreement on disarmament has outstanding political importance precisely because of the attitude it expresses. It shows that even disagreements that earlier seemed unbridgeable can be overcome, given the appropriate political will. In a sense faith in the efficacy of the political will has been restored. Strict control measures will ensure the implementation of the agreement, and this may well also create trust between the two sides. Greater confidence will facilitate further agreements, serving as an important condition for the intensification

of the Soviet–American—and in a wider sense the East–West—Soviet–American dialogue, further improving the international atmosphere.

The need for this is all the greater since it has not so far proved possible to curb the arms race. Developments to date show that the military balance of power between the two alliance systems is still moving in an upward spiral, to ever higher levels of armament. In the coming years it can be anticipated that there will be a growing demand on the part of both big powers for a certain degree of control on the arms race, thereby reducing the possibilities for the expansion of conflicts that break out by chance and for local conflicts to grow out of control. The ideological, political and military contradictions between the Soviet Union and the USA will continue to exist. Hopefully however, there will be a narrowing of the gap between confrontation and the constraint to cooperate thanks to the recognition of mutual dependence.

Among the processes acting over the long term and the conditions that have a lasting influence on international relations, special emphasis must be placed on the interdependence of countries, particularly in the economic field. In recent decades the international division of labour has grown broader and deeper and assumed new forms so that, as a result of the growing linkage between the reproduction processes in the individual countries, the world-wide spiralling effect of different influences has accelerated. The lasting growth of world trade at a rate double that of production had, by the mid-seventies, produced a considerable growth in the dependence of both small and large countries on international economic relations. This trend was not reversed even in the period of prolonged recession but it was enriched by new elements. The situation in which groups of countries were able to make themselves permanently independent of unfavourable processes in other regions or were able to improve their positions to the detriment of others, is coming to an end. The tensions arising from the unregulated state of the international monetary system, the threatening scale of the debt crisis and the increasingly alarming protectionism urgently raise the need for an effective international institutional system capable of handling these problems, and the elaboration of appropriate mechanisms.

Various global problems must be mentioned among the permanent conditions. From the mid-seventies there has been an increase in the number and gravity of problems of a global nature directly or indirectly affecting all countries. The easing and solution of these problems calls for the combined efforts of the whole of mankind. The steady depletion of non-renewable resources and the energy crisis drew attention to the consequences of waste. The spectacular economic development of certain regions made the considerable backwardness of the greater part of the developing countries even

more striking. This is reflected in the terrible paradox that while millions are dying of hunger, elsewhere there are problems of surplus food production. The population explosion should also be mentioned in this connection. The world population will probably exceed six thousand million by the end of the century and the overwhelming majority will live in the developing countries that bear the typical characteristics of underdevelopment. Another challenge at least as great facing mankind as a whole is whether we will be able to halt the process of the rapid destruction of the natural environment, whether we will be able to cope with the as yet unforeseen dangers in the spread of the technological civilization.

As a whole the permanent factors influencing international relations manifest the simultaneous operation of conditions leading to the emergence, and sometimes aggravation, of tensions, and of efforts directed at easing these tensions and strengthening world economic and political stability. The confrontation due to the intense economic and political rivalry among countries, groups of countries and regions can be eased to a growing extent by greater interdependence and the need to deal with global problems. However, a breakthrough cannot be expected by the end of this decade since the objective conditions for it do not yet exist given the present balance of international forces and interests. Nevertheless, it would be desirable to achieve gradual progress in the creation of the subjective conditions: promotion of the awareness that these circumstances increasingly demand a new way of thinking and a new approach and it would be a qualitative change if this recognition were to be embodied in political will. It is perhaps not groundless optimism to assume that the new approach—and also action—will grow stronger in the coming years.

II

The processes of relatively new origin that will influence international relations in the coming years and which are exerting an increasingly powerful effect, are inseparable from the permanent factors. This can be seen in the far-reaching transformation of the strictly bipolar international economic, political and military system that emerged as the basic situation after the Second World War. One may assume that the bipolarity in the military field will not be radically changed within a short time, and for the foreseeable future the Soviet Union and the United States will remain the world's two leading military powers. At the same time, the shift towards multipolarity in the economic, and recently in the political, field is becoming more marked.

As a consequence of the restructuring that has taken place in recent decades, the multicentrality of the world economy is now an accomplished fact. The economic and technological power of the United States has been counterbalanced to a certain extent by the progress of Japan and Western Europe. New regional economic centres have emerged, such as Southeast Asia. The outlines of a possible new centre of development, the Pacific Basin, are now emerging.

The accelerating post-war internationalisation in Europe took the form of efforts for integration. The two organizations of economic integration, the CMEA and the EEC, have become world economic factors. In the years to come, the importance of the production capacity provided by the regional integrations and their protected markets can be expected to grow. Both the capitalist and the socialist countries are seeking the most effective forms of international cooperation.

In the eighties the efforts for the renewal of the CMEA's operating mechanism have been directed towards the strengthening of external relations and a firmer integration in the world economy, parallel with the strengthening of cooperation among the member countries. This was confirmed by the latest CMEA extraordinary meeting in October 1987. The modernisation of the European Economic Community's integration programme further strengthened the interest of the capitalist countries outside it, the members of EFTA, in closer cooperation with the Common Market. These processes clearly show that the capitalist countries wish to meet the complex challenges and to make up for their loss of ground in the world economy mainly by achieving Western European unity. At the same time, under the influence of the aspirations of the European socialist countries, there is growing recognition that a greater chance for the more effective strengthening of Europe's international economic positions is to be found within the framework of broader all-European cooperation.

A welcome development is that, following protracted discussions, there are signs that the CMEA and the EEC will soon establish contacts with each other. Over and above mutual recognition this will create favourable conditions for cooperation and the exploitation of the advantages of a division of labour between the countries of the region. Negotiations regarding possible agreements between the EEC and individual member countries of the CMEA are going on at the same time. Hungary's aim is cooperation in trade, and economic cooperation in general, of the sort which ensures mutually advantageous contacts free of limitations. This implies that relations between the EEC and Hungary most genuinely be based on the most favoured nation principle. It is important that the EEC put an end to

discriminatory quantitative restrictions to which Hungary is subjected, a course of action which it undertook to take earlier, as part of GMTT. Our aim is a real improvement of the conditions under which Hungarian agricultural and food processing industry products are marketed, in other words that the protectionism of the EEC agricultural policy be somewhat relaxed. We are ready to make concessions in return. We set great store on a reduction by negotiation of tariff disadvantage to which our industrial goods are subjected. It is my judgement that, given mutual political good will, such an agreement could be concluded within a short time.

A feature of the past decade—the democratization of international relations—can be expected to continue and even strengthen that, by overcoming hierarchical relationships of super- and subordination, and lessening tutelage by the great powers, can be characterised as the gaining ground of relations on an equal footing between countries. The process is clearly reflected in the fact that more than a hundred and fifty states are now present as active participants in the international arena and, in addition to the UN which can be regarded as universal in character, they are also grouped in numerous regional and other international organizations. The growing democratization of international relations makes it increasingly possible and necessary for the desire for equality to imbue all international relations, regardless of the national, ethnic, religious, tribal and other make-up of the individual states.

It is important, particularly as regards the democratisation of international relations, that the People's Republic of China is now increasingly playing a role commensurate with its being a major socialist power.

The strengthening international role of the developing and the non-aligned countries also points in the direction of the general democratization of international relations. An important manifestation of this is their growing efforts to win and consolidate their economic independence, and also their greater readiness to act as intermediaries in the search for compromises. The international importance of these countries is objectively increased by the fact that without the solution of the fundamental problems of the developing world, the proper progress of the advanced countries will not be possible either. The crisis spots in this region and the new tensions that they create are a constant source of potential danger. We anticipate an increase in the activity of the developing countries in the next two to three years as well.

The evolution of the international situation can be decisively influenced through a shift in the balance of forces by the circumstance—the full impact of which will only become visible later—that the process of economic and social renewal of the socialist world has begun. It is gradually getting off the ground in the eighties. One of the early precedents was the Hungarian

reform of 1968. Although similar aspirations emerged in a number of socialist countries in the course of the sixties, for various reasons the ideas were not implemented at that time. This process is taking place in Yugoslavia as well, although under very different conditions and through different means. The present efforts for reform and renewal are the product of a dual challenge. They were made necessary by the need for domestic modernisation and also by the intense rivalry among social systems, integrations, regions and nations. In the socialist countries reform is the basic means of modernisation. Unfortunately, the reform process—as a general trend—was started belatedly due to the heightened competition resulting from major changes in the world economy, by the accelerated differentiation; it was and still is slowed down by reservations of a largely ideological origin.

The recognition—to a great extent thanks to the Hungarian experience—that reform in the economic sphere can only be successful if it extends simultaneously to the infrastructure and imbues the entire socio-economic system, has great significance for the fate of the reform. As regards the development of socialism, it is the reform of the system of political institutions and the full flowering of socialist democracy that will be of decisive mportance in the coming two or three years. It is very important for the renewal of socialism as a whole that a reform has been under way in China as well since the end of the seventies and has already been able to produce substantial results in both the economic and the social fields.

Soviet endeavours making for acceleration, transformation and democratization have already had an appreciable influence on the course of world affairs. Drawing on earlier Soviet experimental reforms and the experience of other socialist countries, the Soviet leadership, since the mid-eighties, has been working for the renewal of both the economic and the social environment, simultaneously and in close conjunction. It would seem that they have also learnt from the experience of others that a reform must be consistent.

The steady progress and transformation of the Soviet Union will improve not only the country's economic, scientific and technological performance. The more open Soviet international approach, increasingly taking the interests of others into consideration, as well as its greater sensitivity to humanitarian issues can improve the possibilities for building East–West relations. It can promote the renewal of socialist international economic cooperation. Its positive effects can have an indirect influence on the reform efforts of other socialist countries.

Perhaps it is no exaggeration to say that the coming period will be characterized by these experiments, making an imprint on the further development of the two social systems and on international relations as a whole.

III

Numerous reasons justify giving special consideration to Europe, which continues to play a major role in human civilization. This emphasis is given not only because Hungary is near the geographical centre of the continent of Europe but also because the processes outlined above have taken place to a greater extent and, it could be said, in a concentrated form, in Europe.

Cooperation and confidence-building in Europe are particularly important since this is the continent with the most intensive arms build-up. Forty per cent of all nuclear weapons of mass destruction and a total of six million troops are massed along the borders between the two social systems. All this shows that in Europe even a local conflict involves the danger of nuclear weapons which would have fatal consequences for all mankind.

Apart from factors of division, there are particular European interests stemming from the intertwining of contradictions and mutual dependence which link the countries of the region. It is in the common European interest to act against the tendency of the international political and economic balance of forces which has shifted to the disadvantage of the continent. For that reason, the extent to which Europe, as a whole, is capable of intellectual renewal and of meeting challenges posed by the accelerated processes of restructuring in the world economy will have growing importance.

The recognition of the importance of cooperation between the two parts of the continent and of their growing interdependence, accompanied by the political will and readiness for action made possible the process of European détente from the early seventies. In the course of the Helsinki process the representatives of the European countries, as well as of the USA and Canada seek an answer to the most important questions concerning the improvement of relations on the continent and in a certain sense of international relations as a whole, the strengthening of general security, and the deepening of cooperation among nations.

A unique mechanism for the handling of regional conflicts and problems has been created by institutionalized cooperation in the European security and cooperation process. The thirty-three European and two North American signatories hold regular follow-up conferences to review the implementation of the principles and recommendations of the 1975 Helsinki Final Act, as well as meetings covering timely issues of political, economic and humanitarian cooperation. The main guarantee of democracy in this cooperation is the principle of consensus enabling small nations as well to represent and assert their interests. At the same time, consensus decisions require a high degree of flexibility and readiness for compromise. At present, we consider

that the most important thing is for problems of European military security, and economic, scientific and technological cooperation to be stressed in the European security and cooperation process. An important development has made it possible to place greater emphasis on the results achieved in military confidence-building and on reductions in conventional forces.

The complexity of the challenges facing the European continent makes a greater awareness of European unity and of the need to place European cooperation on firmer foundations more important. Better understanding, the strengthening of confidence and a more clearly marked image of cooperating partners would be promoted by a genuine step forward in facilitating direct contacts among people, in the handling of humanitarian issues in a way that places the emphasis on man, and in cultural exchanges.

Today when the great majority of the European countries are grouped in different political, military and economic organizations of cooperation and integration, the role the small and medium-sized countries play in the system of European relations is a striking example of the democratization of international relations and the recognition of common interests. The cooperation of these countries and their relations with the two leading powers proved indispensable in keeping up the East–West dialogue in the early eighties, at a time of increasing tensions and when Soviet–American relations were at a low ebb. They helped to improve the international climate, to maintain a minimum of confidence and to ease tensions all round.

The active role played by the small and medium-sized countries on both sides contributed to the changes in the relations of allies to each other, and also—through the relaxation of earlier hierarchic systems—to more democratic ways in relations between the leading powers and their allies. The increased activity of these countries will be a characteristic feature of international relations in the future as well. Their direct contacts, many-sided cooperation and their activity within their alliance systems will continue to be a stabilizing factor in the international climate.

The external conditions for the development of social and economic relations in Hungary are determined by the major international, including European, processes, which influence the options open to us in the assertion of our interests, in keeping with the specific conditions of the country and to ensure more active participation in the international arena. As an open though relatively small country we are more exposed to favourable and unfavourable changes in international relations. The directions and goals of our international activity are determined by a vulnerability deriving from our openness, and the strong dependence on the international division of labour and on trends in the external environment.

It is our major task to secure most favourable external conditions for social and economic construction in Hungary by establishing the widest possible political, economic and human contacts, by becoming acquainted with, and making use of, the science and culture of other countries and by presenting our socialist achievements to influence the image other countries form of us in a manner in keeping with the present situation. We can serve these goals most effectively through realism in our foreign policy, forward-looking initiatives and a flexible but dependable international approach.

The national traits of Hungarian foreign policy are deeply rooted in our geographical situation and history. The fate of our nation has always been closely linked to changes taking place on the continent; it has always been our vital interest to foster wide-ranging international relations and to strive for a peaceful external environment. We do not wish to be Europe-centred in any manner that insists on an obsolete priority for this continent, but in the nature of things Hungary's policy will continue to be centred on, and determined by, Europe.

In formulating the goals of Hungarian foreign policy in the future too we cannot fail to take into account the fact that the coexistence of many different nations has considerably influenced the past and present of the central and eastern parts of Europe. Frontiers separating states often cut across ethnic units. In the course of history national minorities have often been the sources of tensions, mistrust and hostility among the states in the region. The principles and practice of Hungarian national minorities policy, that is the rejection of nationalism, chauvinism, of the denial of rights and forced assimilation are a common cause for all the nations and governments concerned. This is a factor that considerably influences the political climate in this region.

As a consequence of the peace treaties, which followed the Great War, one third of ethnic Hungarians, the largest national minority in Europe, now live outside our present frontiers as the citizens of neighbouring countries. (Around 40 per cent of members of national minorities in Europe are Hungarian!) We consider that if the governments show sincere political will, the minorities could play a role in linking nations instead of dividing them and putting obstacles in the way of relations. The evolution of relations between Hungary and Yugoslavia is a good example of this.

This is why we attach special importance to humanitarian relations in the process of European security and cooperation. They can lead to a further democratization of European relations, to the strengthening of confidence and to the general improvement of the international climate. Hungarian foreign policy will, in the future as well, support the extension of the in-

dividual and collective rights of national minorities, the fostering of their languages and culture, and free contacts with their own kind in countries where they make up the majority of the inhabitants. It is our endeavour that the dual ties of the minorities should enrich relations among the countries of the region with new elements. The credibility of this endeavour is served by a constant improvement of minority rights in our country.

The openness of Hungarian foreign policy, its will and readiness for cooperation, are demonstrated not only by the quantitative growth of our international relations in recent decades, but also by the fact that our relations with almost all the countries in our immediate or wider environment have become more intensive. There has been no change in the basic principles of our foreign policy but we have tried to give more consideration to the given conditions, special characteristics, and possibilities. In the majority of cases we have made fruitful efforts to remove the obstacles impeding mutually advantageous cooperation with our neighbours. For the first time in our history, we maintain equitable and normal relations with all the great powers and with almost every country in the world. In our relations with our socialist allies, our activity is directed at carrying out our mutual obligations, at creating the conditions for increasingly democratic cooperation among our countries. We strive to establish mutually advantageous relations and fair dealing with the capitalist countries. We continue to extend relations with the developing countries on the basis of solidarity and reciprocal advantages. This line is in harmony with the current trend in inter national relations and will remain a lasting element of our foreign policy.

Making forecasts is not easy, even for merely two or three years. It is almost impossible to take account of the impact of contingent events. Forecasts are even more difficult to make at a time when various processes have speeded up considerably, when international political and economic factors are often interwoven with global, regional, national and local problems and tensions which create insecurity in the context of international relations.

Military bipolarity will certainly continue to characterize the international balance of forces in the immediate future and even up to the year 2000, but the trend towards political and economic multipolarity will grow steadily stronger. Parallel with it, the system of international relations will become more democratic. The changes in the international political and world economic situation will be more closely interrelated than before. The existing confrontation and tensions will be diminished by a common interest in survival and the aggravation of universal problems requiring global efforts. We are living in a rapidly changing world. I should like to hope that the future will justify our basically optimistic expectations.

BRINGING THE YOUNG INTO THE ECONOMY

by

ISTVÁN HARCSA

The situation of the young starting out on their working life in the eighties can be approached from two different aspects. One is to adopt the viewpoint of the young themselves when considering their integration into society and so to reflect their actual feelings. Surveys in recent years on the socialisation of young people have shown that the economic recession of the eighties was a severe shock to the younger generations too.

Through this approach several subjective (and justly so) elements emerge. The second approach, based on the methods of social statistics is more objective, and, as a consequence, perhaps duller. As statistical methods do have their limitations, what led up to the present situation has to be stressed; however, evidence has to be provided so that subjective views can be confirmed or not.

To see more clearly, it thus is also necessary to sketch out the most important processes that have given rise to the present situation. In describing it, this article concentrates on the two most important aspects of the situation the young find themselves in, schooling and employment on the one hand and wages and housing on the other.

Schooling and employment

Over a longer period, a strong similarity can be observed between fluctuations in education and employment. Both have quite a high level of independence and self-movement and so the causes of this similarity have to be considered.

We have to go back in time to the early fifties. Economic progress at the time resulted in a strongly increased demand for a highly qualified labour force. Both individuals and society commenced to place a higher value on schooling and education. The structural development of the economy gave rise to an expansion and—only too often—a reorganization of the educational system. The demands of the economy were, however, so strong that the educational system could only meet them formally; very often there was no real knowledge backing newly acquired qualifications. This meant that the educational system had to lower its requirements in order to be able to fulfil the demands of society and the economy. This period had, however, quite a few advantages for the individual in that higher qualifications automatically meant the opportunity for upward mobility. School became an important step in this process. From the beginning of the seventies, the demands of the economy for a highly qualified labour force stagnated and even declined. There was, however, one unchanged factor, a result typical of an economy characterized by shortages: an unrealistically high demand for labour.

A further feature of the situation was that the development of the educational system, accelerated by external factors, had to come to a standstill at a half-way stage. An over-expansion of the educational system appeared as a necessity but this overlarge system could not develop in accordance with its own internal demands through lack of financial resources. Structural changes in the system were hampered both by obstacles of finance and attitude and by rigid demands for labour on the part of the given economic system.

Under the circumstances, there is still no decision at government level whether an adequate educational structure can be achieved within the framework of centrally determined figures or through the signals of a more market-sensitive economy. The postponement of a decision can be partly explained by the fact that market sensitivity on matters of employment is still far from the desired level.

This situation understandably resulted in greater tensions. In the beginning of the eighties, an increasing number of studies on the position of the young concentrated on these problems, since young adults are the group who suffer most from them. The studies have shown that processes of education and employment have to be synchronized; an end must be brought to the devaluation of higher qualifications, and the reproduction of untrained labour should be diminished. As these trends are caused by the lack of restructuring of the economy, the above aims cannot be reached without such measures.

The educational system has to endure a double pressure caused by economic difficulties; as profitability falls there are not adequate financial means to

modernise education, so far there has been no concrete programme to restructure the economy, and so the educational system has not received any indications as to how to form new educational structures. Such indications are sorely needed as the educational system should be aware of the predictable future demands of the economy if it is to cater to them before the needs become acute. If not, history will repeat itself, the answer to strong economic demands will be *ad hoc*, unsatisfactory solutions and an educational system out of balance.

Another important factor is that the differences within society and thus within the younger generation have increased; these differences are transmitted and often enhanced by schools. The most efficient method to prevent or at least to reduce this unsatisfactory effect would be to reform the educational system. This, however, seems to be wishful thinking as even the present standards can only be sustained with the greatest difficulty.

To give different social groups a more equal chance to education, it would be desirable to promote more extended schooling for the under-educated. Several studies agree that multiple deprivation seems to be mostly caused by low standards of education. From the point of view of the multiply-deprived, the option of attaining higher qualifications is not a realistic one: it neither provides higher wages nor more attractive employment since there has been a general fall in the demand for highly qualified labour.

The situation can be summarized by saying that these groups are trapped in their situation essentially by structural factors.

Examining those who are at the other extreme of the educational scale, it can be seen that the general level of education is significantly higher in the younger generation.

In the last ten or fifteen years this has also caused contradictions in social mobility.

It is true generally that for the younger generation the importance of mobility, as a channel of upward movement within society, has decreased. (This is doubly true if we also consider the well-established traps of mobility, e.g. that the advantages connected to a high level of education are far smaller than earlier.) Thus it is not surprising that the role of the first, original qualification has increased. Analysis of the connections of mobility within a generation and level of education has shown that the original qualification is the all-important determining factor at both ends of the social scale, among unskilled labourers and the educated. Young people who very often have not even completed an elementary school education (school-leaving age is 14) are much more likely than before to remain unskilled labourers all their lives; thus this group is reproduced on an increasing

scale. On the other hand, a higher education received at the outset is almost the only way to become a practitioner of one of the professions. The most important reason is that people with lower qualifications, having recognized the loss of prestige of an intellectual career, do not take the trouble to avail themselves of opportunities to study while working. This is also demonstrated by a strong fall in the number of students taking evening or correspondence courses and by the marked change in the function of the qualifications received from such courses. Most students taking, at secondary or tertiary level, evening or correspondence courses are not there to obtain a higher qualification but to obtain a second or complementary qualification at the same level as those they already possess.

Other figures also show that higher qualifications play a relatively unimportant role in entering responsible posts; among young executives (under 35) the proportion of people with a university or college education is the same (about one third) as among their older colleagues. On a social plane this means that the mechanisms of choosing executives—that came about in the fifties and sixties—still work unchanged; this means for the individual that it is not absolutely necessary to have higher educational qualifications in order to get into an executive position (and to have more power, which is an important factor of prestige, and a more advantageous financial position).

Perhaps these mechanisms are partly to blame for the fact that, in the eighties, contradicting predictions, no great numbers of executives have given place to younger people. Detailed surveys have shown that among executives in industry the proportion of those under 35 fell from 29 per cent to 22 per cent within the 1974–1984 period; thus it is true both in the social and the biological sense of the term that the older generation have not yielded place to the young.

All this causes grave concern and demonstrates the truth behind the common belief that Hungary has devalued higher education and qualifications in particular and the mental resources of the country in general.

As it is this group that is primarily concerned, it must be considered when discussing the position of young professional people that the leaders of the country do stress the better use of intellectual resources in reviving the economy. The recognition that intellectual resources are a force of production came rather late; as a consequence, specialized knowledge was not made use of, and intellectuals neglected to keep their knowledge and skills up-to-date. This is demonstrated by the fact that the time devoted by intellectuals and executives to study and self-education has fallen in the last ten years by fifty per cent; what this means for the whole of society needs no further comment.

It is indisputable that the increasing difficulties in making a living have also had an effect on the fall in the amount of time devoted to study among quite a few of the well-qualified. More and more of them look to participation in the second economy as a way of supplementing their incomes, and thus knowledge directed at the future—itself affecting norms of behaviour—has lost in importance. However, it can be said that devaluation of mental resources was mainly caused by the continuous interruption of the economic reform and the long-term failure to be flexible. This means that the economic structure features an unnecessary predominance of the extractive and raw material industries; these mechanism cannot give an adequate answer to the challenge of, and the signals from, the world economy. It will be very difficult to break out of the framework of this structure and mechanisms, although the example of several countries shows that there is no alternative.

In future the position of the highly-qualified will be greatly affected by the length of time needed to make better use of the country's intellectual resources.

Wages

The capacity of the first economy to generate income has been declining and the means of safeguarding living standards have also been diminishing; this has affected both wages and the chances of obtaining adequate housing of young people and families. Opportunities open to social policy, including policy concerning the young, are strongly impeded by this.

In order to obtain a clearer picture, factors deriving from the structure of the economy and factors caused by the internal movements in wages and housing should be distinguished. The principles governing wages and housing construction are fundamentally incapable of resolving the problem of financial resources inadequate to create a socially acceptable living standard. This problem can only be solved by an efficient restructuring of the present economy, one which is becoming more and more income-consuming.

Some tensions, however, originate from the internal malfunctioning of the given sub-system (policies on wages and housing). One of the most spectacular examples here are wage and income rates. Studies on wages and incomes have shown that the relative position of the young has deteriorated over the last twenty years. Over a longer period the wages of the young increased at a significantly slower rate than those of their elders.

The search for the causes has shown that the employment structure of the younger labour force was different (fewer executives, fewer engaged in well-paid physical labour, and more young mothers temporarily at home on

maternity benefit, and because in the Hungarian system higher incomes are essentially linked to age and status).

It was inferred from the survey that age should play a lesser role in wages. It was also shown that the processes of a labour market characterized by shortages modified the original mechanisms to a great extent. In the resultant system, those in branches where there is a shortage of labour can receive good wages, while the original system of wages still operates.

It seems a wholly secondary question in these circumstances that, as a result of the above mechanisms, there are great differences between the career incomes of the highly qualified (college and university graduates) and blue-collar workers. Young professional people must reach the age of 37 before they have the same income expectancy as skilled labourers.

It is problematic whether such an important element of economic—and to a certain extent—social processes as wages and incomes, can be influenced adequately by a modification of the norms. Economists studying the connections between economic processes tend to believe that, on the basis of theoretical and practical considerations, in an economy characterized by a shortage of resources, tensions cannot be resolved by a modification of norms. Similarly, modification of the norms governing wages—part of the over-all system—cannot bring lasting results.

As a consequence the young cannot be given a promise that their position will improve within a reasonable time by modifying the norms governing wages.

The majority of the younger generations have recognized this and have tried to discover alternative sources of income. As a necessity, the second economy has come more into play, as in the last eight or ten years it has become a continuously growing source which has enabled the labour force to safeguard its living standards.

Work engaged in to complement salary—after the normal eight-hour workday—is what is meant here by the second economy. For most, this means agricultural work on household-plots or small-scale private farming; however, in recent years many people have sought complementary income in industrial service or intellectual activities (e.g. teaching, translating, giving expert opinions, etc.).

This extra work has modified in the last ten years to a great extent the proportion of income deriving from primary work. Ten years ago 28 per cent of all incomes originated from work done outside one's regular job, today this figure is 37 per cent.

According to one of the most recent surveys, about a fifth of heads of household under 35 had some non-agricultural extra work providing a

complementary income, and also about one-fifth gained complementary income from agricultural work. Household and small-scale private farming naturally have an important role in villages, while in the towns moonlighting in industry or in services is more typical. The incomes resulting from such activities vary widely. No precise figures on the amounts concerned are available.

The growth in the number of people with a complementary income has both beneficial and negative consequences. The benefit is that the effects of the difficulties of the first economy are diminished to a certain extent and thus several families reach a level of financial consolidation as a result of much extra work.

However, there are disadvantages in that this requires sacrifices, and a work-centred, or to be more exact, a time-centred way of life becomes even more general; most of the families taking on these extra burdens have almost reached the tolerance threshold, and in many cases have exceeded it. Neither in the short nor long run can this method bring durable results in the arrangement of the finances of these families.

Recent data demonstrate how grave the situation really is: the proportion of young families has increased greatly within the group occupying the lower 10 per cent of the income table. This further highlights my earlier statement that the relative position of the younger generation is deteriorating.

Income tax, which has been introduced in January 1988, will, it must be feared, enhance the intensity of this deterioration. Real wages are expected to diminish by 5–6 per cent in the first year of introduction. A further difficulty is caused by the fact that the income tax provides for no allowances for the number of dependants in the family. The sum assigned to increase the children's allowance will not be sufficient to counterbalance the sums lost through paying income tax. This means the decline in the income of young families will be greater than the average, up to 1991 it could reach 25–30 per cent).

Two fundamental conclusions can be drawn in connection with this trend. 1. It seems to be proved repeatedly that the type of a certain measure is in itself sufficient to bring certain groups into a disadvantageous position. In this instant young families are justified in saying that the income tax will mean further disadvantages for them, so from the point of view of youth policy there seems less and less justification for retaining its present form. 2. The consequences of the planned income tax will show clearly the process whereby the structural crisis of the economy will—somewhat belatedly—spread to living standards and conditions. The crisis in living standards will,

however, take on a more open and thus more acute form and so the finding of a political solution will pose greater difficulties.

The social and economic tensions to come will be amplified by a longer-term problem, namely that the policy of allowing living standards to fall will not in itself be sufficient as a solution to the structural difficulties of the economy or to increase its profitability. Some of the purchasing power will be curtailed through taxation, but the extra income thus generated for the government will not even be sufficient to finance the sizeable budgetary deficit. Nor are there yet extra resources with which to build up a suitable economic structure.

Thus, within a few years, if the structure of the economy remains unchanged, extra resources may be needed to subsidize branches of industry and the large enterprises that are running at a loss. But at this point—if not earlier—it will be doubtful whether incomes can be further diminished, as this would lead to further deterioration of the standard of living.

Housing

The other factor determining the financial and living positions of individuals is housing. Because there is a great housing shortage, its importance is higher than ever before. You have to live somewhere, but wages alone do not allow one to accumulate the necessary funds for building a home; this has created an immense social tension, which perhaps cannot even be adequately illustrated by the alarming facts.

Let us examine the cost of buying or building a new flat or home now or in the reasonable future. (The costs are borne by the young and by their parents.) In 1986, 11 per cent of all new flats and homes were state-owned residential blocks. A resolution by the last Party Congress spoke of raising this to a modest 20 per cent—but right now this is no more than wishful thinking. The 7th Five-Year Plan reckons with a small improvement at the end of this period. So most people wishing for a flat or home have to build or buy for themselves, and it is very probable that the present unrealistically wide gap between wages and the growing housing costs will become even greater. In the first half of the eighties, real wages diminished by 6 per cent, while building costs rose more than 10 per cent annually. In the second half of the eighties, real wages will continue to decline by 15–20 per cent within a few years, while even the conservative prediction is for a further 10 per cent annual increase in building costs. So there seems to be full justification for the ironic comment that it is not important how much the increase in building costs surpasses the fall in real wages, as the latter cannot finance

the former anyway. In the purely economic sense of the term, there really is no connection between these two; indeed, there was not intended to be such in earlier political considerations. The housing shortage is, however continually being reproduced, and this means that a reconsideration of the above principles is timely; it is not enough to say that the resources of the public must also be reckoned with in eliminating the housing shortage. In accordance with economic and political considerations, this would only be an acceptable solution if the costs of housing were also accounted for when determining the wages.

This is only a half-solution and is based on some unspoken suppositions: 1. People will not spend all their wages needed to sustain their labour power, but be satisfied with less, and save sums of money; 2. large segments of the population have capital at their disposal; 3. in a dire situation the population will do everything possible in order to obtain housing.

This reasoning is a castle in Spain from an economic point of view; it has neither a financial nor a social foundation. The conditions will be fulfilled only in a few cases, and the effect cannot be other than short-lived since they are based on additional self-exploitation. The balance of income and expenditure of the public is in deficit. This is a consequence of the state having shifted the burden without ensuring adequate incomes.

Private capital invested in the construction of new housing is 16,000,000,000 Ft yearly—this is almost 5 per cent of the net annual social revenue. Government agencies responsible for housing automatically count on this sum of money, but what happens if after a few years this source too will dry up?

As in other cases, here the crux of the matter is also whether the economy is able to produce a profit; in this case, however, the difficulties that derive from the working of the system over-all are enhanced by further problems resulting from the malfunctioning of housing policy. In effect the building of state-owned flats is one of the factors that increase the housing shortage and inflation, as these flats are expensive and small, and pay no heed to the demands of the public.

No significant improvement can be expected within a reasonable time; the measures to be taken starting with 1988 will not only increase the advantages but also the burdens placed on those building privately. One favourable measure is that the interest-free loan granted to families with young children will be significantly increased. Starting with 1988 it will be:

for families with one child	50,000 Ft
for families with two children	150,000 Ft
for families with 3 children	400,000 Ft

As a result, the real value of this loan—as compared to building costs—will improve to some extent. Depending on the type of housing this loan will represent 7–13 per cent of the total building costs; this is, however, still a strong deterioration as compared to the early seventies, when this type of loan covered about 25 per cent of the total costs of construction. The difficulties will be, however, increased by the fact that the price of building materials will no longer be subsidised by the state. This will mean an increase in prices to the order of 30 to 50 per cent.

These unfavourable trends clearly amplify each other. The most spectacular consequence is that the gap between wages and housing costs will be even greater. As a result of income tax, less activity can be expected within the second economy and thus the opportunity to increase profits within this sector will also diminish.

Financial support by parents

These harmful trends increase the pressure on the younger generations most directly and the generation of their parents will be looked upon for more help.

According to the survey, 85 per cent of married couples under the age of 35 have received or are receiving support, financial or non-financial, from their parents. An extended system of parental support no doubt exists. So the above difficulties will spread across generation boundaries and also influence the lives of the middle-aged. One may presume that this will increase the dependency on the younger generations.

The cause for such support can be either simple necessity or the greater opportunities available because of an affluent parental background. It is, however, logical, that there will be very large differences between the amount; if we also consider the not insignificant number of the young who cannot count on any parental support, we see that the chances that the young will repeat their parents' position have become much greater. This also means the inheritance of social differences.

Although it does have these negative side-effects, parental support is mainly advantageous; among those who enjoy it, the number of those married couples having to live with parents is much lower. There is also a significant correlation between the lack of parental support and divorce; the percentage of those divorced at least once is twice as high among those who enjoyed no parental support.

The question is how long the support of parents can be counted upon.

Because there is price-inflation in the housing market, the value of the parental capital can very often only be safeguarded by various tactics. This capital will, however, very shortly be swallowed up by the real-estate market. But the next parental generation will consist of those who are forty today, and who, since they have been living in a time of economic recession, have had very little chance of accumulating property, or if they have, at a much higher price than their elders. This means that in the reasonable future these parental resources will become less and less significant and the new generation, who will need housing in the next ten years, will have every cause to ask who will help them.

On the basis of all this, it should be pointed out that as the spiral of generation dependence grew, so did tension between parents and their married children. Support is an increasing burden for parents, and the grown-up children are understandably sensitive about an extent of dependence which renders independence well-nigh impossible. Under the circumstances, the disturbances in the process of growing up are increasing and the danger is acute of a wholesale loss of perspective.

*

In conclusion, it should be pointed out that the objective situation of the younger generation is not favourable, but this actual situation is the only possible starting point from which to set the course and details of planned economic development. As at the moment there are no mechanisms which could guarantee that there are no social groups—in this case the younger generation—whose situation will deteriorate more than average, these institutional guarantees must be sought. The different social minimums (e.g. wages, housing, etc.) must be reconsidered within the complex of the minimum subsistence level, and institutional guarantees must be sought to ensure the necessary financial resources. I firmly believe that the programme of economic development can succeed only if it both enhances economic efficiency and takes the social factors mentioned into consideration.

GYŐZŐ FERENCZ

POEMS

Translated by Alan Dixon

WARNING, DANGER OF COLLAPSE

If I were a building plasterwork would flake
in hefty pieces from the groggy bone
and here and there its tottering structure like
a skeleton would then be clearly shown.
Odds-on I am unlikely long to stand,
for shrapnel damage and new piping have dealt
their blows, supporting posts are tilting and
just to keep standing up is difficult.
There's not enough for me to set aside
what's happened in a simile. I was tardy
with renovation. The last who occupied
—myself—is leaving me, and the façade is
staring, forsaken; a mauled half steps out,
a signboard by the wind is tossed about.

"I KNOW I CAN'T DENY THAT YOU EXIST"

Until now my still brief career as a schoolmaster provides
plenty of things for me to digest. It has recently been shown
that payment of my regular Meat Price Supplement, which I call the
starvation pittance,
has been officially forgotten, probably for months, or ever since
the beginning of my career.
Perhaps I am just too meaty, I thought at the bursar's office,
as they tried to find out where and when this oversight had originated.

By the way, I would, as far as I am concerned,
willingly accept the permanent refusal of the Meat Price Supplement if,
at the same time,
obstacles to the increase in my weight
were also removed from my path.
After my six months' appointment as school librarian had expired,
I was thrown into the deep end of form-mastership,
and possibilities never hoped for unfolded before me.
Just a few days before the beginning of term in September
the thought would never have occurred to me that I would soon be
winding
yards of dressing around my pupils' hands,
injured in the course of agricultural labour.
At the same time I once had to halt a passing tractor
and arrange for a female pupil, just then becoming acquainted
with the sometimes less than pleasant laws of nature
and therefore bitterly sobbing, to be transported to our camp.
Since then I have never set out on a longer group excursion without
an adequate supply of antispasmodic tablets.
A year later a more serious injury occurred.
This time we were not stalking the countryside of early autumn
looking for fallen grapes in the sandy soil,
but were picking apples for export. The culprit this time was
a branch of an apple tree, one prematurely mouldering,
as in this case the suffering victim of the event could hardly be called
a weighty individual. Multi-layered clothing, required because of
the sometimes near-to-freezing temperatures at dawn,
made ascertaining the gravity of the injury suffered possible only
if the female pupil dispensed with certain
layers. To imagine a really mortifying scene would be taking it a bit
too far,
but it would be difficult to think up another situation
in which the same sort of thing could happen before such an audience.
The extraordinary situation, however, required extraordinary action,
and so she did have to do it, and the gaping wound, rarely seen,
received expert medical attention within a matter of hours.
In the same school year it so happened that during a mixed
basketball match, held in the early morning hours, I was unable to
stop...

and an inevitable collision involving myself
and one of my pupils occurred. In order to avoid landing on the floor,
instinctively I grabbed the female pupil,
needless to say, not by the most proper part of her anatomy.
As the participants in the match belonged in the adolescent, that is
secondary age group, I could only hope that
this event, not perhaps quite so unnatural to them, would not
be misinterpreted. Anyway I played with considerably less
gusto during the rest of the match.
The event I designate, out of consideration for chronology, to be
mentioned here
as the final one, fits in chronologically between the latter two described
above.
I have always had a predilection for celebratory speeches as a genre,
but when I was given the task of planning the programme of the
school Spring Festival
I decided that two pupils should deliver the celebratory speech,
feeling, under the circumstances, that was the only thing to do,
as at the time no one stood at the top of the institution,
and, in my opinion, the making of such speeches
is part of the job of the current administration.
It occurred to me that otherwise my colleagues would think
I might have my eye on the post, now empty.
The Festival took place in due course, and among its numerous
interesting features
it's worth mentioning that our temporarily appointed acting headmaster
(who, as before and after, made good use of his ability as a sleuth—
an asset in a deputy's position) had serious misgivings
regarding the singing of our national anthem as an overture,
which was the custom, as that might, he felt,
unnecessarily extend the duration of the programme.
I should add that this custom occurred to me just a few minutes
before the programme started and I feared
I might be charged with serious negligence if I omitted to include it.
The programme, national anthem and all, lasted
hardly longer than ten minutes, because afterwards we enjoyed,
in an all-school framework, one of the relatively
early classics of our recent cinematographic art.
The choice of film was another thing on my conscience.
In the course of the next school year a suitable applicant was found for
the post,

and, just before the Christmas holiday, the senior staff, its ranks
once more at full strength, asked me to deliver
another kind of speech—for its new leader had,
in the course of his routine, never met the pupil in question. So, between Christmas
and the New Year, one tooth-chatteringly cold morning, I was one of those who met at school.
My main problem was not to be late, for I had no clear idea
either of my destination or
of access thereto. I carried no briefcase,
but there lay hidden, in the inside pocket of my overcoat,
the text of the speech, prepared as circumstances permitted,
after careful deliberation. Together with a couple of other teachers
I was offerred a lift in the school secretary's car.
For this pupil I was merely another teacher,
which might render my competence to deliver the speech
doubtful. Before departure—partly on account of
the cold to be expected—I had a nip of an otherwise detested
stiff drink in the secretary's office.
We had some difficulty getting there, and, as soon as we arrived and parked
in front of the entrance, a noise, hard to define,
began approaching from behind our backs. Soon the mother appeared,
as, supported on both sides, she approached the gates.
On our way, inside the cemetery, I suddenly got a whiff of a certain scent
which I was momentarily unable to identify.
It was then that I realized that we had arrived at the mortuary.
I wondered where exactly I was expected to deliver the speech;
that it was not going to be a cremation, as we had been told,
became apparent when I set eyes on the coffin.
There was not enough room for the throng in the mortuary and I too was jammed in the entrance,
but, as a privileged person, I elbowed my way inside.
The mother gave such loud utterance to her grief,
making the same noise as before, that it became rather embarrassing.
She uncovered her daughter's face, which then remained hidden only by a nylon veil.
When, after a good ten minutes, the crowd began to leave,
I too went over to have a look at it. The length of the walk
to the grave I do not remember. All the way there it snowed heavily.

The coffin—in case it might slip into the grave—was immediately
lowered,
and one of the gravediggers asked in an undertone, and rather snottily,
if there was going to be a speech at all or what;
I walked round the grave and stood on top of the slithering heap,
waited until the attention began to focus on me,
and then began to read the speech. This did not take more than ten
minutes either,
and my voice hesitated twice. I had to speak up
so that people, scattered over a relatively wide area,
could all hear what I was saying. The mother continued her sobbing during
the speech,
which, however, contributed something to my first occlusion;
but, later, on the contrary, helped me to steady my voice.
The paper became sopping wet in my hand
and snowflakes made it difficult to decipher the letters
beneath them before they melted. The speech over, the grave was filled
and a little mound was erected over it, as is the custom,
and this was then covered with wreaths. Then we started
towards the exit, which, of course, was the same
as the entrance. The strangest thing about the whole affair
is that even now I think nothing of it.

PROFANE SONG: RECOGNITION

That feeling shows through words is no
disgrace; as, when it came,
blind, open-eyed, I'll see it go;
I'll ride it just the same.

I still need much experience
to make me believe it's true
you are one and the same who held my sense
of sight when I met you.

It is your shape I recognise;
you need not be exposed.
The hand, the foot, the face, the eyes
I know, yours each of those.

Whenever, and as often, when
I found you—I would stray—
whenever, you, a copy then,
formed in another way.

When I am not then you are not
the one who lives in me;
together, in other words, we've got
from two, a trinity.

IN THE ETERNAL PRESENT

I have been watching for so long
the conkers dropping onto the road, until...
I shut the window ... evening;
the early dark's infectious symptoms swell.
Before, this once, I start on something new,
I'm here: that's reason to rejoice.
I'd like to know if I have strength to do
whatever I do, leaving all this.

Dry foliage is underfoot:
green frogs squatting, and each rigidifies.
How could have been what just is not?
Now I can follow it, that's how day flies.
I know that I'll be leaving myself soon,
no matter that I won't be here;
this moment breaking off—when it has gone
and is distant—nothing is so near.

Now I shall cross the room once more;
here once, and there, and there I stepped;
I may mark out the boundary for
my territory: it was never kept.
There's nothing here—no dark street, room or path
to bind and lead, and no tradition;
on a line of minutes, no continuous growth,
is where I wait, a timeless heathen.

THE RAILWAY STATION

(Short story)

by

IVÁN MÁNDY

"Your face is tanned."

"You don't say! So tell me then, where did my face get tanned? In the compartment?"

Zsuzsi gave me a searching look.

And I repeated:

"Would you please tell me where I could have got a tan? On the train? In the compartment?"

She was not listening. Her eyes were still fixed questioningly upon my face. And she was smiling, a somewhat perplexed smile. What's the matter? Has my face been swapped during the journey? Has someone swapped faces with me unbeknownst? Or have I put another face on? A travelling face?

We were standing beside the train, our suitcases around us. They had got off earlier. Had left the train before us. Had left us too. Formed a small, compact group of their own. Something is hatching there. Those suitcases are planning something. Going places? Perhaps they've received an invitation to some sort of international conference. An invitation and right to speak.

As for the train, it had drawn into the station smoothly, without a hitch. Somewhat disdainfully. As though it could hardly wait to be rid of its passengers.

"What's wrong with my face then?"

But Zsuzsi had already turned away.

"I must find a luggage-trolley."

"A what?"

Zsuzsi disappeared.

Alighting passengers surged around me. As though they too could hardly wait to be rid of their travelling companions. A haggard-looking woman stopped in front of me. Took a good look at me. Does she, too, find my face tanned? Or does she, on the contrary, think me pale? But why does she have

to pick on me of all people in this busy swarm? A pack of rucksacked young people. A dark-complexioned lady in a deep purple sari. The boyish curiosity of a group of Japanese. Plenty to look at here! And she has to choose me?!

"What are you spinning around like a top for?" Zsuzsi appeared, pushing a four-wheeled conveyance. Pushing it deftly before her. That searching look again. "Spinning around like a top and muttering to yourself."

"A luggage-trolley. . ."

What a pretty, touching spectacle! As it stands humbly, waiting, ready to carry its burden. In eternal servitude. Laden with suitcases. And they, if possible, seem even haughtier than before. Well, of course, this is how they have to arrive at the conference. Impossible to tell as yet what questions may arise during the discussion. One thing is for certain—they shall not disgrace themselves.

We trudged onto the concourse. An infinite checker-board of black and white tiles. Zsuzsi wheeled the trolley in a wide arc and stopped in front of a bench. Without letting go of the handle-bar she motioned toward it.

"Wait for me here."

"Are you going somewhere?" I stared at the suitcases. "Where are you going?"

"To find a hotel." A moment's silence. "I'll have to look all over town."

What a confident tone. Zsuzsi knows where she's going. All in all, she appears to be familiar with the place. Yes! She knows this city. The streets, the squares, perhaps even the hotels. She's been here before, she must have. When was she here? When?

I walked with her for a short bit of the way but she turned me back with a firm though gentle hand.

"You stay here with them."

The suitcases! Of course! I can't desert them.

Zsuzsi took hold of my arm "There's no need to look so miserable. We will see each other again soon."

That didn't sound too promising.

In any case, Zsuzsi disappeared. To look all over town. While here I am, among the suitcases. This is the only certainty. The suitcases' company.

They are still on the luggage-trolley. But irresolute somehow, at a loss. What does it all mean? How long must they wait? They have received an invitation to an international conference of crucial importance. It may already have begun. The opening address may well be over. And here they still are, at the station!

I hovered around them. No, they don't trust me. They never did. Not while they were packed, not while they were loaded, not while they were

taken off the train. They have always despised me—and now they've been entrusted to me—to me of all people!

Groups of people crossed the concourse. Gaping as though they were in a museum.

A black-bearded man glanced around irritably. He was looking for a woman he had long grown tired of. His wife perhaps. One thing's for sure: he does not want to find her at all.

A milky-white, slightly cloudy glass door. Shadows dancing inside.The swish and seething sound of a waterfall.

I crept back to the suitcases. Tried to smile at them. And then a soft, gentle female voice said:

"Sie sind so müde!"

The anxious eyes of a tall, grey-haired lady. Who knows how long she's been watching me. Dazzling white shirt, black apron. She was pointing to the bench. Motioned me to sit down. With the courteous gesture of the mistress of the house. Unquestionably she came from behind the milky-white door. From among the shadows. From the waterfall. The concourse. The benches of the concourse... they all belong to her. She is the madam here.

She added something, speaking slowly and distinctly. I nodded, smiling insensibly. Someone was standing beside her. A man in a white yachting-cap. They bent their heads together. Spoke quietly, almost inaudibly. And watched me all the while.

The sound of the waterfall was becoming louder and louder. Everything was lost in its torrent of sound.

How long did this last?

All of a sudden the suitcases were there, standing in front of me. Looking rather malicious. What's up, old man? Dozed off, did you? The staunch and loyal friend... to whose care we have been entrusted. Bah!

The trolley! The trolley's disappeared!

It couldn't just have disappeared. Someone must have taken it. But first he took the suitcases off it. Ours is not to reason why! No! Impossible! No one could have opened the suitcases in all the hustle and bustle of a busy station! And why ever not? Haven't we all heard about the impudence of railway thieves?

I knelt before the suitcases. Ran my hands over their clasps. Which could they have opened?

I couldn't open any of them. The clasps and braces did not yield to me.

I tugged and pushed at the suitcases.

Suddenly, I stood up. Towered above them.

What do you want of me? What kind of investigation do you expect me to carry out?! All right. So they've taken the trolley. But you can't just make youself at home in a place like this. Bagging a trolley for hours on end! In such a busy place... This is a station after all! A metropolitan station! Such mistrust is uncalled for. Looting... and all that. Nonsense!

Push-chairs trundled by me. Among them a boyish-faced, grey-haired man. Every now and then he would catch hold of a push-chair, push it a little way, then back. Once he patted a woman's face.

"Uncle Zsiga!"

Of course! Zsiga Kun, Father's old friend! Would you believe it! Over eighty and still spry enough to undertake a journey of such length! He certainly isn't one to worry over trifles!

I set off in pursuit.

"Uncle Zsiga!"

He turned towards me in good-humoured surprise. And repeated, pronouncing the word in a strange, foreign-sounding accent:

"Zsiga..."

And now the entire hall was echoing:

"Zsiga! Zsiga!"

Suddenly, there was silence. The push-chairs had disappeared. And so had he... Uncle Zsiga.

A cup of tea arrived. Behind it, the madam. Her face anxious, concerned, as she held out the cup to me. Held it embarrassedly almost. As though she had planned the whole thing differently. Who knows! Perhaps she had wanted to ask me in. Hadn't wanted me to sip my tea on this bench. Would have preferred me to drink it inside, at a table laid with a white cloth. But someone had prevented her.

Undoubtedly there must be a little room somewhere. A tiny, dazzlingly clean little room. A couple of steps away there are two doors. A black bowler hat on one of them. A ladies' feathered hat on the other.

The madam did not look back when she took the cup away.

Zsuzsi had turned to look back at me. Her eyes troubled, like the eyes of an anxious mother. Why did she look at me like an anxious mother?

I must change my shirt. This one is all sweaty from the long train journey. But where can I change my shirt? On the concourse? In this impossible rush and scramble? Where else but in this rush and scramble! No one will notice. A couple of quick gestures and there you are.

The lavatory!

Why not? No reason why I shouldn't go into the lavatory. I could even have a wash... to the waist at least. Have a wash, change my shirt. The

madam wouldn't object. She would raise no objection. But first I must open the suitcase. I seem to remember having tried that before. And the result? Failure. Total failure. But I won't give up. I'll give it another try. I shall proceed coolly and methodically. You've got to find the knack of these things... Yes, that's it, you've got to find the knack.

The shirts are in that brown suitcase. Folded carefully on top. The shirts are always on top.

On top!

On top!

I found myself chanting "On top" beside the brown suitcase. I knelt down beside it amicably, suppliantly. Tinkered with the clasp. Hopeless. Of course! You need a key to open it with. But where is the key? It should be in the lock But it isn't.

"Zsuzsi!"

Now what did I want with Zsuzsi?

So Zsuzsi on the chores of a hotel somewhere. Sombre-suited men behind a counter. Poring over ledgers, reaching out for telephones. Turning politely towards an arriving guest. An arriving or departing guest. Never toward Zsuzsi.

Meanwhile the tugging and pushing of the suitcase commences. The tugging of clasps and braces. I turned the suitcase over. Ominous clinking sounds from within. Knives? Spoons? Something else? Leave it! Forget all about it!

I stood up in a kind of daze.

In front of me, a full-bearded man. Panting a little, as though he had come running from far away. Smiling, somewhat confusedly. No doubt about it, he wants to ask me something. For a while he just stared at me. His smile withered and was lost. He turned and went away.

What could he have seen in my face? What could he have discovered? What had discouraged him so? Was it my face? My tired, denuded face?

"Your face is tanned," Zsuzsi had said beside the train.

Zsuzsi is gone. She is looking for a hotel. But the sombre-suited men behind the counter never give her the keys. Like in a horrifying game. The keys pass from hand to hand, but never into hers.

And here I am with the suitcases. They seem so impossibly worn out. They hadn't even wanted to travel further. As though they had received some kind of warning during the journey. Some abysmally appalling news. The directorship of the congress withdrew the invitation. Without offering an explanation. And they have not even been granted leave to appeal.

A luggage-trolley strayed in. They did not even notice it.

A gaunt-looking man leant across the suitcases.

"Don't you remember me?"

I stared at the brick-red face.

"I don't remember you."

He smiles vaguely. This somehow makes me nervous.

"I have a bad memory for faces. You'd best tell me your name."

"I am not going to tell you my name."

"Did I write something unpleasing about you?"

"Rather." For a moment he was silent. "But that's beside the point."

Fresh groups of people marched across the concourse. Milled and surged. My eyes began to smart. To smart and to water.

"I don't suppose you happen to have a bottle of eye-drops on you, have you? Viscosa or whatever..."

"Viscosa? What do you want Viscosa for?"

"Well, to use it, I would have thought. You see, my eyes... oh, never mind. What is the point then?"

He leaned a little closer. He's probably nursing some old grievance. From way back. From the times of Népszínház utca or Sándor tér.

"What was the point, did you say?"

"You shouldn't have put Klári Kosztola into that short story or whatever."

"Klári Kosztola? What Klári Kosztola? Who's Klári Kosztola?"

"Couldn't you have dreamed up some other name? Kati? Or Gizi? Oh no! You had to pick on Klári!"

"But... please believe me, I never..."

"It was a mean and dirty trick." He glared at me. Unexpectedly spun on his heel. Marched over to a group of people. Was lost in the crowd.

A madman. A belligerent madman. Never mind, he's gone now.

I laughed out loud.

A bit of Hungary!

And almost burst into tears. It came upon me stealthily, unexpectedly, grabbed me by the throat. That's all I needed. To start howling... on the bench of a strange railway station.

A bout of coughing welled up and shook my body. An acute, racking cough.

A long-drawn-out howl. Like a stray dog on the prowl from the suburbs. Why doesn't it keep its mouth shut? There'll be the devil to pay for causing a disturbance.

Perhaps Zsuzsi got the keys after all.

Keys in hand she goes up in the lift. Walks down the corridor. Opens the

door. Does not even look round the room. Goes to the window. Pulls down the blinds. Throws herself down on the couch. And lies there in the dark, unmoving.

A shadow behind the glass door. The madam. Watching. Watching me. Sitting in front of my suitcases. Perhaps she'll come out soon. Or is she waiting for me to go in? Why not? Perhaps that is exactly what she's waiting for.

Sie sind so müde...

So müde... She had pronounced the word particularly softly... softly and dolefully, with the ü drawn-out... *müde...*

That is how it began.

How what began?

Some kind of deep affection. Profound sympathy. Let us call it that. One can always sense that kind of thing. She won't throw me out if I open the door to go in. She'll understand my position. I have no other choice. I can't cool my heels on this bench for ever, can I? Sooner or later I'll arouse suspicion. May even be requested to prove my identity.

Not that that would be so very terrible. After all, I've got my papers. A passport... But where the hell! I groped and fumbled in my pockets. Grew more impatient by the minute. Tugged tissues out by the handful. Tissues flew from me.

The madam will protect me. Her husband... now that's another story. He'd be glad if they took me away. For a start, he stopped me from having my tea inside. Perhaps he isn't even her husband. That would lessen my chances...No! It is the madam who has the last word. She gave in as far as the affair of the tea was concerned. But this time she's got to sense that...

They'll take me in. They've got to take me in! I may not count as a member of the family exactly, but surely they'll put up with me.

They surely won't begrudge me a bowl of soup. They may not even like soup. Perhaps they prefer cheese. I am not overfond of cheese myself. If the worst comes to the worst, a bit of smoked cheese... What does it matter! For the time being, all that's beside the point. One thing's for sure: I'll not abuse their hospitality. I know my duty. And if perchance certain ties of intimacy should develop between the madam and I... God forbid! That would be much too risky. Perilous. Better to draw in my horns. Confine myself to rendering minor services. Good God! What on earth do I mean by minor services?

Oh no!

Let us not forget one important detail. I do possess certain reserves. Shirts,

night-dresses, pyjamas, cloaks, dressing-gowns, shoes, not to speak of all the rest. A truly rich assortment.

I'll sell them. I'll hold a sale.

And given a good start... Yes, that's all it needs...

Two gaping suitcases on the checker-board tiles of the concourse. Cloaks, shirts, blouses, pyjamas, petticoats, socks, stockings, shoes.

A small silent group around the suitcases. Sizing up the wares displayed. Exchanging glances, poking each other in the ribs, shrugging their shoulders. They did not even notice me standing behind the suitcases. An older woman in spectacles snatched up a pink petticoat. Made it float in the air as though she wanted to float with it. Let it fall with a disappointed gesture.

The others still motionless.

A gentleman lifted my dressing-gown. Tossed it in the air. Threw it back contemptuously.

Undershirts rose. Were thrown back. Waistcoats fared the same way.

Stockings floated in the air. Stockings and ties.

Someone lifted a grey box with a great show of condescension.

Perhaps simply to put an end to this humiliating ordeal. Carrying it, he began to walk toward the exit. I dashed off in pursuit.

"My razor!"

He did not turn back.

"I say... do you mind? I shave every day! I am a daily shaver!"

He stopped. Turned slowly around. Rapturous awe on his face as he held the box out to me. Placed it reverentially into my hands.

Whispering voices from among the columns.

"A daily shaver!"

The whispering ceased.

The spectacled woman stepped up to me. Touched my arm.

"You'd best begin! You cannot put it off a moment longer!"

What should I begin? What can I not put off a moment longer? Can she possibly mean the act of shaving? Is it the act of shaving that she is thinking of?

I did not look at the woman. I did not raise my face to her.

"Please... I have no shaving-foam on me. Neither foam nor cream! And besides... No! You can't expect me to do it."

I clutched the box to me and muttered apologetically:

"I do skip a day sometimes...!"

I cowered on the bench. I did not look up. And now it was only emptiness that I hugged so fiercely to myself. The box was gone. It must have slipped out of my hands... I don't know!

Profound silence around me. As though everyone had left the concourse.

And then a piercingly clear voice said:

"Well, it wasn't easy!"

Zsuzsi was standing by the bench. Her face was drawn, but her eyes so triumphant!

I just looked at her. At her face, her hair, her shoulders. And then, in a flat, colourless voice, like when a duster is shaken out, asked:

"Did you find anything?"

"A dear little hotel! A room overlooking the courtyard, and that old tree down below. . . !"

I stood up slowly. Held on to the back of the bench with one hand.

Turned toward the glass door. It seemed as though rain was streaming down the glass. Fine, pearly-grey rain. Fine black contours of figures. Men and women. Coming, going, disappearing, reappearing again.

A tall, grey-haired woman appeared. Slipped her hands beneath her apron. Smiled a strange, enigmatic smile.

I heard Zsuzsi's voice from afar.

"What are you staring at? Would you please tell me what you're staring at?"

Translated by Eszter Molnár

ZSUZSA RAKOVSZKY

POEMS

Translated by Alan Dixon

ONE HOUSE FURTHER ON

Here not until today, here never again:
light comes and goes in the house, as a dull pain
inhabits: now the fridge and now
the sink or the side of the bath
flood whitely in the dusk as I,
opening, shutting doors, am washing
the two glasses, here never again,
here not until today, but now all this: the cornered
washing machine, the windowsill's
dark octopus cacti, Balatonfüred palm-sized
on the postcard fixed to the mirror: I move into them,
make them my memories. That which was actual
filled space from now on lives and works into time
in the living body. Water is being
poured out in front of the house, for a moment
—before the grey is patched with a darker grey—
it is a plane of shadow suffused with slanting
beams, speeding away, apart, a galaxy.
The way the leaves outside
are nodding, and on the veranda the lino floor
lights up, then fades. Here not again, but
another time, elsewhere, as into consciousness
slow waves are tossing me, other walls,
other dispositions of cracks and pictures
are constituted before my eyes—
on the surface this is what spins to appear:
that here I'll be, here now when I am there.

NOON

Just half an hour ago
with your skin my naked skin,
in shell-ridged flesh rucks still
the foam of lovemaking:
two feet to the right and left
are falling apart, the sun
crashes, winged host from blunt heat
comes flooding, swishes within
vibrating vermilion,
rides up to my womb as if
I conceived when half asleep
from two sires one pair of twins,
dark sister, a sister fair;
one of them throbs in an ache
not being the other, shines.

ALLEGORY

As if a transparency
had been turned to the light
above Turkteaser Hill,
the skyglass burns bright

Red-hot iron has been plunged in
a pail the M7's
blue-greyish and moony
divan cushion stiffens

Like millennia laid out
before God restless fire
is still there on the right
on the left there is night

Against overdone smoulder
the hill—a dark leap—
the two tawdry extremes
of contentment and grief

here But already blue tones
the relief already
here cool nothing of you left
of you no not any

A-shiver in the meantime
from the balcony shift
the "was" on the right
and the "soon" on the left

EXCERPT FROM A POSSIBLE NOVEL IN VERSE

Crowded in smaller or in larger rooms,
although hemmed-in by our unwanted chattels
—in adulthood calcification comes
with fridge and furniture and tableware, settles
in the style of life—yet more things in the picture
point to incorrigible youth which tangles
so tightly we aren't able to escape:
we are conditioned to improvise the shape

of life, we like to sit on a rubber foam
mattress and on the floor (for decoration
hang poster and fake icon); half as costume
and half as symbol wear our discomposition.
Shelved among paperbacks the odd reference series,
an encyclopedia, L as culmination,
and on the record player firmly squats
the imperfect tense of our heroic age: old hits.

And, as the wine subsides and crumb-soiled plates
collect, the time comes to decide who's taking
the part of foolish hope now, and who dictates
the facts through a restraint of our own making;
and just in case one suffers, being bored
by superficial talk and is awaiting
some happening, the others could explain
where even such a freedom can't obtain.

But more and more the frozen status quo
is thawing daily. Speed, silently overhauling
the limits of our state; we are below
a balcony, a flower-pot is falling.
It seems the party has just reached the point
at which the clincher also needs performing,
and when, far from our spot in time and space,
what will befall has fallen into place.

We do not know the nature of the change,
suspect the fact alone, not knowing even
if we'll inhabit a stiff and grizzled range
or to dramatic hues and horrors be given.
Parts of the age wear out, it breaks at first
here, and then there, and each solution
is only a makeshift, serving just to show
how we feel in our bones that it is so.

And, under the weight of expectation, our
awareness of the present, shaken, collapses.
Whar is still here and tangible is more
part of the past, we think, or of what passes.
But, what can't well continue in this manner,
seems quite unable to find other uses,
until some blunderer comes on to fasten
upon, as luck might have it, a variation.

Must the picture, freezing, stop? Whose shadow will
be shown on the projection, where, which number playing?
Who'll stand or sit, and where, when through the interval
of space, through waves of probability straying,
an unprompted sentence tugs into existence
what is abeyant? Shall we be implying
—eyes on watches: buses still running, we wonder—
that is is already "already", that "still" is over?

SEEING EACH OTHER THROUGH THE ARTS

Hungary at the Holland Festival

by

ARJEN SCHREUDER

Recently a discussion flared up in Dutch newspapers and periodicals on the position of the intelligentsia in small countries. The controversy was started by an essay by the philosopher Lolle Nauta. He reproached the Dutch intelligentsia with conducting too few debates in public and with fighting each other in these scarce discussions not with pertinent arguments, but on the basis of personal likes and dislikes. There are several journalists, who, in the wake of Nauta asked the question, what role members of the intelligentsia should play in a country such as Holland, which has had a rich history, but has a relatively small importance in present-day affairs that concern the whole world. Quite a number of arguments expressed regret and frustration. The general complaint is "we do look at the other, but the other doesn't look at us."

This discussion was continued a short time after "Hungary in Holland" in June 1987. There is probably no connection, only a coincidence; yet this cultural manifestation disclosed once more that there is a high degree of similarity between these two countries. The Hungarian cultural programme was opened officially on the 2nd of June in Amsterdam, by the Dutch Minister of Culture, Elco Brinkman, his Hungarian colleague, Béla Köpeczi, and deputy minister Ferenc Rátkai. The programme lasted about one month and included ballet, film, photography, literature, art expositions and symposia, and exchange programmes for scientists.

The motive for this was a similar presentation of Dutch art and culture in Budapest in 1986, which Queen Beatrix attended. We learned from history that this mutual interest does not date from today or yesterday. The Reformation formed in both countries the basis of multiple contacts. In the

seventeenth and eighteenth centuries about four thousand Hungarian students visited the universities of Leiden, Franeker, Groningen and Utrecht. There is a memorial in the city of Debrecen, dating from 1885, recalling what the Dutch naval hero, Admiral de Ruyter, had meant to Hungary: in 1675 he paid in Milan the ransom to free twenty-one Calvinist and five Lutheran clergymen who had been sentenced to the galleys during the Hungarian counter-reformation.

In the twentieth century a great number of literary and scientific writings was translated and published; they were mostly the work of the married couples Antal-Opzoomer and Székely-Lulofs. In the last ten years the Hungarian Erika Dedinszky, who lives in the Netherlands, has done a lot of work in this field. After the First World War, when there was famine in Hungary, many Dutch families took in Hungarian children—in total several hundred—for a few months. And finally, in 1956, about three thousand Hungarians fled to the Netherlands, where several of them still live and work.

There is more than one similar feature between Hungary and the Netherlands. Both countries have had a rich history, both have had to experience the diminishing of their influence, both have had a very confined language area but at the same time a valuable culture for which the boundaries had become too small. All these similarities helped to make the organization of "Hungary in Holland" possible. But at the same time the supposed similarities in art and culture evoked high expectations which were not always fulfilled, and caused misunderstanding and non-comprehension. I will return to this later.

Many items of the programme "Hungary in Holland" were included in the framework of the Holland Festival in Amsterdam, which was organized this year for the fortieth time. The most important composer in the festival this year was György Kurtág. Different pieces by Kurtág were performed in the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam. According to the press—it was striking how much attention they payed to the programme—these concerts were really highlights. The critics of almost all the important dailies agreed that the works of Kurtág had an intriguing force and that he was a master in the composition of very short, obstinate and always very interesting pieces, which permitted no more than one interpretation. The critic of *NRC Handelsblad*, Ernst Vermeulen, said the "Kafka-fragments" of Kurtág to be a labyrinthine masterpiece and his "Truszova-songs" "surprisingly beautiful." Kurtág was commissioned by the Dutch Opera to compose an opera; the première is to be in 1990 in the Muziektheater in Amsterdam.

A gala performance from the Liszt Ferenc Chamber Orchestra, Budapest,

given on 7 June, received much praise. S. Bloemgarten wrote in *NRC Handelsblad:* "Only seldom have I heard a chamber orchestra producing such a noble, rich and still lively ensemble playing and phrasing, at the same time quite naturally, almost carefree." The Dutch audience had less appreciation for the experimental, in some ways old-fashioned, music of the composer and conductor Péter Eötvös. Frits van der Waa, the critic of *De Volkskrant*, wrote that "Eötvös made shamelessly bad use of his commission from the Holland Festival. His composition, 'Endless Eight,' turned out to be a flop, unworthy of the festival." And Ernst Vermeulen wrote in *NRC Handelsblad:* "Eötvös's music is effective and displays dynamism in an over-generous use of percussion instruments, but I was unable to detect in it anything what was his own. His characteristic feature is being out of control."

The Muziektheater is situated in Amsterdam on the banks of the Amstel; it opened a year ago and is the first opera house in the history of the Netherlands. It was here that Prokofievs's *Romeo and Juliet* was performed on three consecutive nights by the Ballet of the Hungarian State Opera. The choreographer was László Seregi. Opinions were divided. Some liked the vitality, the strength and freshness of the dancing, others frowned at the lack of nuances, the less refined atmosphere on the stage. This division of opinions on the production is reflected in the reviews in *NRC Handelsblad* and *De Volkskrant*. Luuk Utrecht wrote in *De Volkskrant:* "This Hungarian *Romeo and Juliet* doesn't have a grain of poetry. This funfair-like performance of Seregi's even crushes the dramatic character of the events." Ine Rietstap, however, wrote in *NRC Handelsblad:* "The choreography perhaps does not seem to us to be really sensational, as our eyes are used to lots of styles and renewals, but considering it was a performance of a state ensemble working in the Eastern block, we found the approach to movement to be strikingly unconventional."

Within the framework of "Hungary in Holland," several literary events were also organized. The Literary Museum presented a delightful exhibition which was sent over by the Petőfi Museum in Budapest, "Imre Madách, The Tragedy of Man." The play was translated into Dutch and published in 1887—as a gift to subscribers of the daily *Nieuws van de Dag*. In Amsterdam an exhibition was presented of 750 books of classic and modern Hungarian authors. This was part of a series of eight exhibitions under the title "Magyarország-Hongarije" which gave a survey of the history, culture and what was called "the identity" of Hungary.

The festival "Poetry International" in Rotterdam was also remarkable; this year an important part of the programme was dedicated to poetry from Hungary. Poets from various countries produced in Rotterdam about seventy

translations of poems by Imre Oravecz. This Hungarian poet was substituting for Sándor Weöres, who felt too ill to travel to the Netherlands. It was striking, however, that Oravecz was not present during the "Evening of Hungarian Poetry," which was part of the festival. On his arrival he courted the displeasure of the organizers by saying that, although he had received a cable from the Netherlands, he did not know that his poetry would be translated. He complained in several interviews about the—according to him—unsuitable intention of the festival and quite simply did not appear at a translating session where other poets endeavoured to translate his work. Those who did come to the Hungarian evening were Miklós Veress, István Bella, Péter Kántor, and Judit Kemenczky.

They read from their own works and Veress and Kántor made an impression on their audience. The poems of Veress often had a classic form, an evaluating tone and a slurring music which clung to the memory of the audience. Kántor received applause for what would be best called "everyday poetry." His poems had titles like "After there was no school because of lack of coal" and "While the Hungarian national ladies' handball team suceeded in winning against the team of South-Korea,"—and the audience was both amused and touched.

As stated earlier, there is a seemingly great similarity between Hungarian and Dutch culture. However, this supposed similarity also has its drawbacks, as it creates expectations which are not always fulfilled. The pop groups *Vágtázó Halottkémek* (Galloping Coroners) and *Európa Kiadó* (Europe Publishing House) gave concerts in Amsterdam during "Hungary in Holland;" these truly illustrate the misunderstanding, which—beside surprise, respect and admiration—was sometimes felt. In the Netherlands pop music is considered—and doubly so after the student revolts and democratisation in the sixties—a symbol of freedom. There are still several people who do not expect pop music to fulfil any artistic requirements, their only demand towards this genre is that it be "young," "new," and "different," nothing more. Dutch people apply the same standards to pop music from Central and Eastern Europe—and the result is rather often disappointment. The audience who heard the two Hungarian groups was not very impressed. "It was quite easy for the spoiled Dutch audience to regard with disdain the naive, passionate music of the *Vágtázó Halottkémek* or the not very original songs of *Európa Kiadó*. If Western standards were applied, no concert hall manager in his right senses would think about putting such bands on the stage. These groups were made interesting by the fact that they came from Hungary," wrote Nicoline Baartman in *De Volkskrank*.

There are some in Holland who evaluate the art and culture of the

countries of the Warsaw Treaty by political and not artistic criteria. Whether it is pop music, literature, film, or ballet, the Dutch tend to suppose there is a similarity between Hungarian and Dutch culture and the only question they are interested in is how much a Hungarian artist succeeded in freeing him- or herself artistically from the assumed supremacy of politics. And perhaps this is not always justified. Perhaps several Dutch have more or less hazy notions on Hungarian art and culture. They overestimate the influence of politics over culture and presuppose a cultural policy which was followed in the fifties under Rákosi, but plays almost no role in present-day Hungary. These are prejudices about "social realism" and are irritating for many Hungarians, as I learnt from conversations with artists, authors and film-makers.

It happens, however, rather often that Hungarian art indicates the recognition of political aspects and there are several artists who sponsor this image. When speaking of the role of authors in Hungarian society, the author Erzsébet Galgóczi told me, "authors are confessors." According to her, it is the duty of the author to reflect the "reality" of Hungarian society in novels, as, she said, Hungarians are more inclined than other people to be reticent about difficulties, secretive about problems and to say nothing about the truth. Filmmaker Károly Makk stated in a conversation that it was the duty of Hungarian artists to make never-spoken truths common knowledge.

These statements indicate an explicitly political starting-point. But this starting-point has became unpopular in the Netherlands—at least for lots of people. A critical approach to society and commitment are not fashionable in Holland. In recent years art was expected to be of high quality and refined, not free, rebellious and authentic. And perhaps this is the core of the greatest misunderstanding in this cultural exchange between Hungary and the Netherlands: several Hungarian artists expect to harvest praise for their critical approach to society, but the Dutch are inclined to call such art old-fashioned. I do not intend to say by this anything about the quality of Hungarian art, simply to indicate in what sort of climate this art had been presented in the Netherlands.

A very good example was the exhibition of the work of 25 Hungarian photograpers, presented in Amsterdam as part of Hungary in Holland. Visitors were confronted with several portraits of tattoed persons, families in poor circumstances, peasants from Vietnam, and people taking part in the May Day parade in Budapest. The pictures demonstrated the strong ties between the photographer and his subject, but the message, the social connections were much too obvious for Dutch spectators. I thought the sociol-

ogical approach to art was stressed too much, the artists did not accentuate the stylization of their ties with the figures in the pictures. It was very clear that these photographs endeavoured to shock and this did not make them attractive.

Something very much like the above criticism can be applied to Hungarian films of recent years. Some time ago Miklós Jancsó, Károly Makk and István Szabó were very well spoken of in the Netherlands. In Dutch eyes they were directors of films with a more or less critical approach to society which were able to convey a message charmingly and elegantly. However, it seems the new generation of Hungarian filmmakers lacks charm and elegance. The Hungarian Film Days—organized for the seventh time in ten different cities—received, apart from a retrospective, mostly negative criticism. Joyce Roodnat wrote in *NRC Handelsblad:* "As far as I am able to judge, Hungarian films from 1984–1987 presented in Holland do not have the necessary distance, and are crushed under their critical subjects, disguised or not. It is quite naturally the duty of a filmmaker to present his subject as something of paramount importance, but some refinement is necessary too. And Hungarian filmmakers do have difficulties with the latter." Esther Kerkhof stated in *De Volkskrant* that these new Hungarian films are not up to the standard of those from the sixties and seventies. "Most films are confined to trivial subjects. Conventionally presented problems of human relations, with a striking amount of nakedness form the most frequent motif. The films are in general of medium quality, with a few happy exceptions, like *The Great Generation* by Ferenc András."

I think the most successful parts of "Hungary in Holland" were those which were not easily connected with social engagement and political coherence, and those which did not remind directly of earlier periods of comparable Dutch art, and so could not lead to misunderstandings. Most successful were forms of art permitting more than one interpretation, art which did not aim to please at first glance, the beauty of which was hidden so that the audience had to search for it. This was the case with music of György Kurtág and perhaps also with the video-films of Gábor Bódy (who died two years ago). Some of his films were projected in the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam. They were projected from a Tatlin-like installation of Gábor Bachman's, a constructivist steel structure, reminiscent of the views of Russian futurists. The films of Bódy demonstrated the great possibilities of a gifted romantic and that he was almost too lavish with his talent, a many-sided person, who, in his comprehensive work commended the capacity of admiring, who was able to incorporate the thoughts of others into his own world—an election in the most positive sense of this word.

The same is perhaps true for some works of fine arts presented at an exhibition in the Museum Fodor in Amsterdam. This museum compiled works of eight Hungarian artists under the title " The Construction:" Lajos Kassák, Gábor Bachman, János Fajó, Imre Bak, Tibor Szalai, Dezső Korniss, Tamás Trombitás, and Tamás Hencze. Without belittling the work of the other eight, I had the greatest admiration for the paintings of Imre Bak. Here I found what was missed so strongly in some parts of the programme "Hungary in Holland:" the synthesis between tradition and personality, the following of the traditions of constructivism without breaking under the weight of a rich past, the ability to integrate the past into a new tradition, and to find equilibrium. Bak paints heavy, strict forms, but between these forms happy, sharp colours are swimming which lend almost a decorative character to the work. The works of Bak demonstrate a great talent but he also knows how not to crush the spectator with it. It is as if his paintings said 'well, we are hanging here on the wall, but you are not obliged to look at us.' Is this a form of modesty? The paintings of Bak reminded me of some lines by Franz Kafka, lines chosen by György Kurtág as the title of a part of his Kafka-cycle: "Ich kann [. . .] nicht eigentlich erzählen, ja fast nicht einmal reden; wenn ich erzähle, habe ich meistens ein Gefühl, wie es kleine Kinder haben könnten, die die ersten Gehversuche machen." (I can't ... really tell a tale, I'm almost unable to speak at all; when I'm telling stories I mostly feel like small children might feel when they take their first experimental steps.)

PÉTER PÁZMÁNY: CARDINAL, STATESMAN, MASTER OF HUNGARIAN PROSE

by

ISTVÁN BITSKEY

Péter Pázmány was born in 1570 at Nagyvárad, into a Protestant Hungarian family of noble descent. He became a Catholic at the age of twelve and was then educated at the Jesuit gymnasium in Kolozsvár, Transylvania. At the age of seventeen he himself entered the Society of Jesus and pursued his theological studies in Cracow, Vienna, and Rome. After ordination he was sent to Graz to teach philosophy, where he spent nearly ten years embroiled in polemics against the Protestants of Austria. There too he began his literary career: he wrote philosophical, theological and scholarly works in Latin and later produced a rich oeuvre in Hungarian. Today he still rates as one of the great masters of the Hungarian language. Religious conflict was raging in Hungary and in 1607 he found himself at the court of Archbishop Ferenc Forgách of Esztergom, the centre of the Hungarian Counter-Reformation. In 1616 Pázmány was created Archbishop of Esztergom and received his cardinal's hat in 1629.

In the summer of 1616, immediately before his elevation to Archbishop, a strange rumour spread in Northern Hungary about Péter Pázmány, the newly appointed provost of Turóc. There was talk that he had resigned from the Jesuit Order and was preparing, with the help of royal troops, to take arms against Protestants in order to regain the lost positions of Catholicism. The nobility of Zemplén County formally called upon neighbouring Sáros County to keep its armed forces in state of readiness since it was thought that Pázmány might even call for help from the army of the Voivode of Moldavia to assist in the realisation of the goals of the Catholic Counter-Reformation. Armed action against the Lutheran and Calvinist nobility and burghers would, of course, have been a violation of the feudal constitution: the practice of the Protestant religion in Hungary had even been guaranteed by two treaties (those of Vienna in 1606 and of Zsitvatorok in 1608). Páz-

mány soon heard of those rumours and immediately took up his pen to protest with indignation, before Palatine György Thurzó of Hungary, against the "malicious news," the preposterous slanders. With the self-respect of a man whose Hungarianness and nobility alike had been offended, he bluntly spoke his mind: "I also claim to be about as much a Hungarian as anyone else."

We have no reason today to disbelieve this claim. But, as the above episode illustrates, Pázmány's activity was interpreted in more than one way both in his own time and by posterity. Controversies about prominent personalities are always livelier, and Pázmány seems to have been at the heart of wrangles over the state of seventeenth-century Hungary.

Factions differing in religious, political and literary respects were opposed to each other in a country that was then partly under Turkish rule and partly under the sway of the Habsburgs. Hungarians were at loggerheads with Hungarians despite the fact that both sides were seeking ways to Hungarian survival, exploring the possibilities of wordly and heavenly bliss. However, the contending parties differed in their choice of the ways and means fit for that purpose and all were convinced of their own correctness. The situation was further complicated by the fact that additional disagreements disrupted unity inside both the Protestant and the Catholic camp, splitting the two great parties into factions, as partiality for the Habsburgs and orientation towards the Turks could be represented in several ways.

Religious disputes

It is clear that the essential traits of Pázmány's personality were moulded by his Catholic fervour, Jesuit education, and Roman theological studies. Imbued both with Aristotelian philosophy and a Thomistic theology reinforced by Jesuit commentaries, the young novice with an extremely rational outlook on life gradually developed into a thinker and writer of rich imagination. He became a theologian whose world view was always fettered by his scholasticism, yet he was nevertheless able to produce something original in practically all his works—in literature or in politics and church organization.

When looking at the years he spent as a teacher in Graz, this side of his career seems to have been less significant and less spectacular than the rest. Yet, the courses in philosophical and theological studies he taught during a decade at the University of Graz (1597–1607) contributed considerably to a knowledge of enormous dimensions, which was admired by his contem-

poraries and later readers primarily—and understandably—in his works written in Hungarian. The university lectures he delivered in Latin he did not even publish in print; most of them appeared only in the fifteen volumes of his complete works (1894–1904), and their completion is still in progress today. Notes by his pupils, which have come down to us, give a very clear, logical and lucid picture of the conception of the world professed by early baroque scholarship and by Pázmány himself. He did not object to the new discoveries in the natural sciences, he cited and propagated the astronomical theses of Copernicus as well as the mathematical precepts of Christopher Clavius, and boldly compared the sometimes conflicting views of authorities on theology. Of course, he was anxious to comply fully with the rules of study of the Society of Jesus, the *Ratio studiorum*, but even at the time he could be seen to be more at home in the world of the religious polemics that raged all over Europe than in the peaceful repose of his university chair.

Upon his first return home from Graz he had already kindled the flame which he continued to keep ablaze right up to his dying days: in a country which then had a Protestant majority, he called into being the Catholic polemical treatise in Hungarian. What is more important, he started using a language in which he could become a worthy adversary of the best of Protestant polemicists, István Magyari and Péter Alvinci. Indeed, he further improved the language that is represented by Gáspár Heltai's grace and flexibility of style, by Péter Bornemissza's swelling passionate gloom, or by Péter Melius's straightforward rudeness. Even his first polemical essay, *Felelet* (Reply, 1603), written against Magyari, is proof that Pázmány could use softer, more lyric tones in the same way as he could strike thunder, that he could equally argue through logic as through biting irony or boisterous, coarse humour. (Dezső Kosztolányi, the twentieth-century Hungarian poet most susceptible to stylistic values, wrote of him: "Hot ink is trickling from his pen, for his inkwell contains fire, heavenly sparks, but the sulphurous flame of hell, too.") And Pázmány did this after fifteen years abroad, lectures in Latin, Greek, German, Italian, and other languages, with such great stylistic ingenuity and linguistic force as only a man writing with extreme consciousness can command.

A strong attachment to his mother tongue, references to Transylvania in affectionate terms even from a distance of decades, an intimate connection between the cause of the Hungarian nation and that of Catholicism—all this resulted, during those years, in building up the virtues manifest in his first polemical essay, in enriching the arsenal of his art of writing. His essay *Öt szép levél* (Five Fine Letters, 1609), written against Alvinci, is the finest

example of this literary genre in Hungarian. It is a pity that most of the papers of his antagonists have been irretrievably lost in the course of the centuries; with those writings at hand we would be in a position to trace the progress of the far-reaching polemic which created such an intellectual stir among his contemporaries.

Who in fact was the ultimate winner of these religious disputes? The answers given during the past centuries have been formulated in several ways, depending mostly on religious standpoint. Some thought the question was to be answered by pointing to the return of aristocratic families to Catholicism, while others argued that the Protestant churches had survived and grown stronger. An apposite answer today can only be that the winner of this religious warfare was ultimately neither one nor the other of the two parties but Hungarian language and literature, Hungarian culture. Of course, the polemicists were constantly compelled to undertake new intellectual efforts: new styles of locution and chains of thought turned against one another, new schools, printing works and churches were built, new books were brought out and the number of readers kept increasing. This is the true significance of the religious polemics, this is what the feverish zeal of Pázmány—and of his antagonists—helped to create.

The writings produced by religious controversy were the stones used to build the most monumental edifice of ideas in old Hungarian literature: Pázmány's *Isteni igazságra vezérlő kalauz* (Guide to Divine Truth, 1613). This summarised and completed the theses in his earlier works, and presented a comprehensive view on the interpretation of the Catholic faith. The work, in fifteen books, is well-proportioned and easy to read through despite its vast dimensions. It is not so much a theological as an apologetical synopsis. What Pázmány clearly intended to write was not a complete dogmatics, still less a dull school-book; rather, he explained his opinion on questions at the centre of the polemics, and argued against the position adopted by opponents, "those holding on to the tail of Luther's horse," "the new faith-carving boors." That is why he spoke with special emphasis on good deeds, the sacraments, salvation, reverence of the saints and the Virgin, clerical celibacy, purgatory, the papacy, the interpretation of the Bible, for it was these issues that produced the most violent clashes between the antagonists. The *Guide* is characterized by a feeling for topicality, a grasping of the roots of the questions, a pitting of the conflicting opinions against one another. It received no substantial answer; his opponents were unable to maintain its level precisely on these points.

After the *Guide* the waves of polemics receded a little: henceforth the Catholic party used the work as a reference source, while the Protestants

lashed out at most at one or another section and thus Pázmány had only to concern himself with parrying sporadic Protestant onslaughts.

A hundred sermons

In 1616 Pázmány was elected Archbishop of Esztergom and thereby appointed head of the Catholic Church in Hungary. As primate he was not only a religious polemicist and a militant of the Counter-Reformation, but also the moral leader of his own Church, one who wished to provide the faithful with norms and guidance. He himself distinguished his sermons from 'militant writings' and these sermons practically crowned his literary career. His insights into the human mind, his educational and ethical experience were distilled in the representative collection of a hundred sermons that was published in his declining years. By that time the fiery fanaticism in his polemical works had abated, the anti-Protestant ardour smouldered only in the background and he laid stress on his intention of giving guidance on sin, ethics and virtues.

Practically every figure in contemporary Hungarian society is mentioned in one sermon or another in this extensive collection. Pázmány had something to say to lords, princes, subjects, servants, priests, monks, bishops, Christian warriors, judges, merchants, crafstmen, farmers, serfs, to married women and widows, the sick and old people, the young--he laid down moral norms for people of every age, rank and occupation. Nor was it an accident that his sermons were often attended by those of different faiths who, contemporary records show, spoke of him in terms of appreciation. Central to Pázmány's ethics is the intent, which is what qualifies one's deeds, as opposed to Renaissance morality, in which the effect of the act was the criterion for moral judgement. Another central element in his ethical system is the demand for activity, readiness to act, an active shaping of reality. Will and reason thus gain emphasis, being for him guarantees of an active way of living; he considered everything to be dynamic and capable of being shaped and actuated by them. This attitude successfully counteracted the influence of neo-stoicism, which was rather strong in Hungary during the first half of the seventeenth century, and which inspired passivity and religious indifference.

The sermons also outline Pázmány's view of society. Explaining through parables why the hierarchical structure of society was a necessity, he emphasized the interdependence of the different classes in society, decrying the abuses of authority and other trespasses. His discourses described a

model of a feudal class society free of anarchy; this was his justification for subordination and for inveighing against the lack of social justice.

In style, his sermons do not feature the extremes of contemporary Italian baroque prose, the sumptuous adornment of bombastic harangues; rather they are moderately elegant with an emphasis on social utility. What is typical of his sermons is their rational and moderate approach, their consistent application of scholastic logic. But the striving for synthesis, the imposing mode of construction, the architecture of blending constrasts, the suggestive metaphors and, last but not least, the arguments for a return to Catholicism also fit the collection into the European baroque manner. Pázmány's oeuvre, thanks to the polemical essays, the *Guide* and his sermons, is the most outstanding use of Hungarian religious baroque prose, which—at least for literary quality, wit, depth, suggestive force, and linguistic wealth—can stand alongside comparable works by Donne, Swift or Richelieu.

The political thinker

It is not for nothing that I began with Pázmány the writer, since he has bequeathed to us most enduring values in literature. But the Archbishop of Esztergom was also Lord Chancellor of the country, and in this capacity he had an equally leading part to play in the politics of the country. The development of his political views throughout the nearly forty years of his career can be appraised through his extensive correspondence.

Almost all Hungarian political thinkers of the first half of the seventeenth century were of the view that the Hungarians alone would not be able to expel the Turks and restore unity to the country split in three; where opinions differed was as to which of the two opponents, the Turkish crescent or the Austrian double eagle, was more dangerous. As against Transylvania's orientation towards the Porte, Pázmány thought Hungary could be defended relying on the Habsburgs, and he considered the ousting of the Turks as the foremost task facing the country. He waged a vigorous campaign in 1617 to have Archduke Ferdinand of Habsburg elected King of Hungary, because he was confident that the Habsburgs would furnish assistance in liberating the Hungarian territories under Turkish control. On the other hand, when Ferdinand II acceded to the throne in 1618, Pázmány persuaded the King to issue a charter safeguarding the Hungarian feudal constitution and, later, he frequently brought up the matter of Hungarian feudal freedoms.

Jesuit constitutional theory supported the rise of absolutism almost everywhere in Europe but, as a matter of course, coupled it with the

Counter-Reformation. Since, however, Pázmány himself was also of noble Hungarian descent, his national and class bonds both prevented him from lending blind and unequivocal support to the absolutist ambitions of the Habsburgs. He became an advocate of compromise between the alien sovereign and the Hungarian Estates; in these terms he wished for peace and wanted to carry out, without interference from state authority and by the force of persuasion, the re-Catholicisation of the Hungarian nobility. Thus in 1608 he stood up—in opposition to several prelates—in favour of religious freedom for Protestants. A landmark in his political thinking was the Diet of 1608. The compromise arrived at at the Diet made him realize that flexibility and adaptability in diplomacy and politics was the only sensible expedient through which Hungary could attain his final goals: the consolidation of Catholic positions and, with a favourable turn in external relations, the expulsion of the Turks. Later, as Cardinal Archbishop, he worked hard to bring about an anti-Turkish alliance of the Christian states of Central Europe, an effort that could not succeed during the Thirty Years' War.

With Prince Gábor Bethlen of Transylvania, Pázmány exchanged letters on the political conflict between the two parts of the country. As appears from these letters, which are of literary value too, Pázmány denounced Transylvania's pro-Turkish policies and especially the part played by Bethlen in the Thirty Years' War; on the other hand, he was shocked at the excesses committed by German mercenaries during the campaigns on the lands of the Kingdom of Hungary, and he was also aware of the disadvantages of military aid from the Habsburgs. This induced him, towards the end of his life, to recognize the important role of the independent Principality of Transylvania, and from 1630 on he exchanged cordial letters with the new Prince, George I Rákóczi. By that time Pázmány also had convinced himself that the steadily strengthening Hungarian Principality of Transylvania might prove in the end to be the guarantor of the country's potential unification and independence.

Foundation of the university

Pázmány was at least as much a man of action as of ideas and words. He worked with unflagging zeal to spread education under the aegis of the Church: in the regions under Habsburg rule he helped establish, one after the other, Jesuit houses, colleges, schools, libraries, printing presses, and charged with their direction learned fellow-priests who had been educated mostly in Rome. Baroque buildings began to rise on the streets of Pozsony,

Nagyszombat and Győr; the Austrian and Italian masters invited there introduced the style of pomp and decoration that was to considerably determine the evolution of art in Hungary over the next two centuries. The development of the new culture, however, could hardly have persisted so long without the contribution of sound university education. Although Pázmány created facilities for the education of young theology students both at the Hungarian seminary (called Pazmaneum) he had founded in Vienna, and at the Collegium Germanicum Hungaricum in Rome, these could not supply the need for a Hungarian university. (The first university, established in 1367 in Pécs had since ceased to exist.) He succeeded after much effort in having a university founded at Nagyszombat: with a deed of foundation, dated May 12, 1635, he established—at the cost of 100,000 florins—the institute which has had a continuous existence since that time, albeit under a different name. In the eighteenth century Maria Theresa had the university transferred from Nagyszombat to Buda whence it was moved to Pest in 1784, and the institution today functions as the Eötvös Loránd University of Budapest.

Although Pázmány's acts in culture and education were clearly inspired by religious goals, the educational institutions he founded, after being adapted to the requirements of later ages, embraced all the sciences and enriched Hungarian culture for the centuries to come. All that he wrote—polemical writings and sermons just as his educational establishments or political tenets—served to promote the interests of his faith but they ultimately became media for the expression of universal national values, implying a sort of attempt at survival and progress "in the century of Hungarian decadence." Pázmány excelled his contemporaries in many respects, but perhaps chiefly in being able to combine sectarian interests within a broader system of relationships, so that the points of view of Church and nation completing one another appear in harmony in his world of ideas. All this is a reminder that Hungarian history as well as Catholicism can respect in him one of its highly influential leading personalities, and literature and culture as a whole must endorse the ideals and artistic values he created. The decorative metaphors and social ideas to be found in Pázmány's works—or, as he defined them, the "embroidered words" and "firm realities"—are true reflections, images sometimes elevated to art, of the situation of his Hungary; they have equally enriched Hungarian literature, political thinking, arts, and public education in the same way. If, later on, Hungarian history did not proceed in every respect in the expected direction, one thing remains certain. Where "the implantation of wisdom and sciences" are concerned, Pázmány can rightly be ranked with the greatest scholars of Hungary's past.

TRANSYLVANIA

"A HISTORY OF TRANSYLVANIA"

Erdély története (A History of Transylvania). In three volumes. Editor-in-chief: Béla Köpeczi. Editors: László Makkai, András Mócsy (from the beginnings to 1606); László Makkai, Zoltán Szász (1606–1830); Zoltán Szász (from 1830 to this day). Contributors: Gábor Vékony, András Mócsy, Endre Tóth, István Bóna, László Makkai, Gábor Barta, Katalin Péter, Ágnes R. Várkonyi, Zsolt Trócsányi, Ambrus Miskolczy, Zoltán Szász, Béla Köpeczi. Vol. I: 611 pp.; Vol. II: 574 pp.; Vol. III: 806 pp. With maps, black-and-white and colour photographs. Akadémiai Kiadó, Budapest, 1986.

This work to which some of the best Hungarian historians have contributed in three volumes (an abridged English version will appear before long) reviews the history of Transylvania from the beginnings to this day. Transylvania has been part of Rumania de facto since December 1918, as a state of affairs sanctioned by the Peace Treaty of Trianon in June 1920 near Paris. Before 1918, however, it had been part of Hungary for more than a thousand years. The present Rumanian regime and its historians try to deny or distort this fact. They claim that the prior inhabitants of Transylvania were Rumanians or the ancestors of the Rumanians, the Romanised Dacians who, they say, inhabited Transylvania without interruption after the Roman Empire abandoned it. Relying on archeological findings, in the absence of documents, *A History of Transylvania* demonstrates the untenability of this Rumanian assertion. As Professor Norman Stone of Oxford University states in his review published in *The Times Literary Supplement* of October 2, 1987: "These three volumes are undeniably scholarly in approach with an impeccable list of sources in various languages and a grasp of difficult techniques in archeology or the interpretation of place-names. This is not surprising, since the editor-in-chief and the three editors of the separate volumes have names that carry conviction: in the case of László Makkai, the editor of Volume Two, great conviction. [...] The Hungarian historians have behaved with fair-mindedness and common sense."

It is beyond question that the three volumes of this work, written with a scrupulous care for detail, refute the Rumanian critics' violent objections, not really couched as arguments, but rather invectives in abusive language. (See, e.g., the articles by Nicolae

Edroiu, Constantin Cazanisteanu, Ladislau Gyémánt, and Ion Patroiu. *Romanian Review*, Bucharest, No. 8 of 1987.)

Many readers outside Central Europe will not know where exactly this Transylvania is, and what its fate was throughout the centuries.

If we take a look at the physical map of Central Europe, we see before us a region almost perfectly round in shape, a table-land with alternating hills and valleys intersected by rivers, in the east-south-east section of the semicircular ring of the Carpathians. This area, about the size of Scotland, inhabited by Slavs when conquered by Hungarians (A. D. 896)—settled previously by Germanic tribes who had moved out of there later—has been inhabited by Hungarians since then. This region with specific geographical features practically offered itself to be constituted a principality with a certain degree of self-government within the Kingdom of Hungary. The fact is that already from the time of St Stephen, the founder of the Hungarian State (who reigned from 1000 to 1038), Transylvania enjoyed internal independence under the rule of leaders called *Gyula*. Its chief town was Gyulafehérvár, i.e., the "White Castle of the Gyula." (The term *fehérvár* denoted "centre" or "chief town;" cf. the one-time coronation town of Hungarian kings in what is today's Transdanubia—a part of the former Roman province Pannonia—in western Hungary: Székesfehérvár, or *Alba Regia* in Latin.) By analogy Gyulafehérvár became Alba Julia in medieval Latin. On the bleak wooded areas of Transylvania during the Middle Ages from the mid-12th century on, the kings of Hungary settled Germans (Saxons) and granted them self-government and privileges furthering commerce and industry. Besides them, privileges were accorded also to a separate Magyar group, the Székely, charged with the task of guarding the frontiers.

It was Transylvania that suffered the first great shock of the Mongol invasion of Hungary (1241). The Tartars destroyed villages and towns so much that, according to the testimony of an eyewitness, Canon Rogerius, one could travel amidst whitening human bones for days on end without coming across a living soul. Then it was that Rumanian shepherds began penetrating into the deserted tracts of Transylvania. Before that time these Rumanian (Vlach or Walachian) herdsmen had lived in the lowlands between the Danube and the South Carpathians. All this is proved in the book.

Transylvania acquired added importance in Hungarian history when, in 1541, the Turks captured Buda, the capital of the Kingdom, and took possession of the middle third of this country. Since King John I of Hungary (who died in 1540) wished for peaceful cooperation with the Turks (and his endeavours were supported both by Francis I of France and by Henry VIII of England), the Sultan, who in a letter to Francis I wrote that he had occupied Hungary lest the Habsburg dynasty should lay hands on it, did not invade Transylvania but, being well disposed towards the deceased king's infant son, considered its territory, in return for a yearly tribute, as an independent principality. When grown up, the prince became the first ruler of Transylvania under the name of John Sigismund. He was christened John after his father, and Sigismund after his maternal grandfather, the king of Poland. It is of symbolical interest, however, that his father, the late John I, wished to name his son Stephen after St Stephen, the founder of the Hungarian State, and the Turkish Sultans also referred to him by this name for a long time.

In the 16th–17th centuries Transylvania, under the protection of the Ottoman great power, became the refuge of Hungarian national literature and culture. Had it not been for Transylvania, there would have been no Hungarian literature either. It was at this time that, mainly under the influence of Luther, national literatures were created and disseminated also in print. Important printing houses existed in Kolozsvár and

other Transylvanian towns. Under the Hungarian prince's orders, the typographers printed books in the languages of all the peoples living in Transylvania: thus, in addition to Hungarian (and Latin), in German and Rumanian, too. The first books in Rumanian were published by order of the Hungarian prince of Transylvania for the insignificant Rumanian population mostly in the Transylvanian hills—i.e., not even on the territory of the two Rumanian principalities.

Poets, musicians, dramatists, scientists, theologians were permanent guests at the princely court. Transylvania thus became identical, for two centuries, with the Hungarian nation, replacing the defunct old Kingdom of Hungary. The rest of Hungarian territory was shared by the Turks and, in the west and northwest, by the Habsburg emperors. Unparalleled religious tolerance was the rule in Transylvania. Escaping from Italy, those denying the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, called Unitarians or Socinians, took refuge there and, in addition to Catholic, Calvinist and Lutheran Trinitarians, the Jews also enjoyed full rights. Prince Gabriel Bethlen's letters patent granting Jews the right to freedom of settlement and worship survived. Transylvania resettled the Jews expelled from Spain; one of Gabriel Bethlen's chancellors, Simon Pécsi, converted to Judaism.

English Puritanism was of considerable influence in Transylvania. György Csipkés of Komárom, a clergyman, was influenced by his stay in England in the 1650s when undertaking a new translation of the Bible into Hungarian. He also wrote an English grammar for students going to England. Many Hungarian scholars, educators, painters (e.g., Jakab Bogdány) worked in London. Miklós Bethlen, the last independent chancellor of Transylvania, who went to England in the winter of 1663–1664, related in his memoirs—a famous Hungarian literary work—that in the first London inn he had stopped at he happened to meet the Transylvanian schoolmaster of his boyhood. Pál Jászberényi was so successful a teacher that he had been invited to England as a tutor to sons of families of the aristocracy. In Bethlen's words: "With the permission of the King of England, he maintained a public school, especially for children of notabilities, in the vicinity of Charing Cross." At that time Bethlen, as he writes, was received also by the king, "Carolus Secundus," who "graciously asked me about Transylvania."

Indeed, this was a great time for Transylvania; as Norman Stone writes in his afore-mentioned review of *A History of Transylvania:* "Transylvania counted for a brief, brilliant period among the great powers of Protestant Europe, one of those little Protestant countries, like Sweden or Holland, that mysteriously shot into prominence and then mysteriously shot back again into provinciality. The list of Transylvanians who contributed to Hungarian civilization is long, quite out of proportion to their share of the population generally."

After the Turkish wars, when the Habsburg emperors, with the help of other European princes, had expelled the Turks from Hungary (1686), Transylvania became part of the Habsburg Empire. Owing to the wars, the population had declined, and there was a growing demand for the cheap Rumanian labour that moved in in large numbers from Walachia. Then, in the 18th century, there began a definite growth in the Rumanian population of Transylvania. Instrumental in this growth was (also) the fact that the populations of Moldavia and Walachia, east and south of the Carpathians, were longing to live in Transylvania, which offered a more settled and assured life.

In the second half of last century, the two Rumanian principalities of Moldavia and Walachia, with Russian help, were liberated from Turkish rule, and at the Berlin Congress (1878) the Great Powers agreed to combine the two principalities into a kingdom under the sceptre of a Hohenzollern Prince. It is worthy of note that the Great Powers, England among them, insisted on

provisions that the Kingdom of Rumania should not persecute its ethnic and religious minorities, Jews included, or else it should forfeit its right to exist as an independent State. This is an indication that, in 1878, European politicians were alarmed by racial and religious persecution by nationalist elements in Rumania. At the same time, towards the end of the last century, the Rumanian intelligentsia of Transylvania enjoyed freedom of speech in Hungary, where they sent representatives to Parliament in Budapest, and published newspapers and books on their own. On the other hand, it is true that between 1896 to 1918, Hungarian governments did not take seriously the claim of the Rumanian population of Transylvania to some kind of autonomy; they failed to grant universal suffrage by secret ballot (true, this was not extended to the Hungarian population either) and thus roused the hostility of the minorities against the Hungarians. France took advantage of this situation during the Great War by promising Rumania that, should it go to war against Austria–Hungary (and Germany), it would be allowed to seize Transylvania in case of victory. The victorious powers then finalized this promise in the Treaty of Trianon in 1920. That things could get thus far was due to the exceptionally great role played by the Scotsman R. W. Seton-Watson, who signed himself Scotus Viator, and who conducted a campaign for a decade.

After the outbreak of the Second World War, when Rumania ceded Bessarabia to the Soviet Union (June 26, 1940) and southern Dobrudja to Bulgaria (August 21, 1940), the Rumanian government was afraid of a Hungarian attack and, for this reason, requested Germany to arbitrate in the matter of Transylvania. Hitler, in concert with Mussolini, made the Vienna Award, gave the northern half of Transylvania to Hungary (September 4–13, 1940), thus keeping both states in check. The Hungarian government found the award to be disadvantageous but could not repudiate it, given the state of public opinion. Towards the end of the war Rumania turned against the German Reich, while Hungary, by then occupied by German forces, continued to be Hitler's ally to the very end. As a consequence, the 1947 Paris Peace Treaty confirmed the 1920 decision: Transylvania was definitively annexed by Rumania. Hungarian public opinion in Hungary and in Transylvania, however, still had some hope. It had after all been possible, at the time of the Royal Rumanian governments, to do a great deal in the interest of Hungarian culture, arts and literature in Transylvania, thanks largely to the ingenuity and generosity of the former Royal Hungarian Foreign Minister, Count Miklós Bánffy, who had moved to his Transylvanian estates, and of the writer Baron János Kemény. At the time it seemed much more likely that a Rumania committed to socialism would give fair treatment to the two million ethnic Hungarians and to the smaller German community.

The concluding chapter of the third volume of *A History of Transylvania* describes, in plain terms, with restrained conciseness and without indulging in passion, however justified, the ordeals of the two million Hungarians of Transylvania annexed by the Rumanian State. Restrictions and, what is more, prohibitions in the use of their language, the gradual and planned closing-down of their schools, and the gross falsification of history. This situation has become so distressing that the Rumanian government may sooner or later be accused of being engaged in deliberate cultural genocide and forcible assimilation. This reserved tone is the most proper to be used in the present situation by authors who, though categorically and convicningly refuting the theory of Daco–Rumanian continuity, speak in detail about the failures of the Hungarian public and governments in the Rumanian question, write with understanding about the manifestations of Rumanian national consciousness in the 18th century, and point to the disastrous policy of Francis

Ferdinand, the heir to the throne, who before 1914, in the best "divide and rule" tradition knowingly stimulated Rumanian–Hungarian antagonisms.

As regards the Rumanian attitude verging upon cultural genocide, it has been censured by both chambers of the U. S. Congress; furthermore, at the Vienna Follow-up Conference of the Helsinki process (March 1987), Hungary joined Canada and Yugoslavia in submitting a draft resolution on the protection of the rights of national minorities. The U.S. even withdrew most favoured nation treatment.

*

In the autumn of 1946 the Rumanian government issued the following statement:

"Rumania does not delay declaring that it will ensure the full and general observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms to all persons under its authority without distinction of race, national or social origin and religion."

We can only wish all this to come true.

The great Transylvanian politician and writer Miklós Bethlen (the selfsame man who had been received by Charles II in London) expounded in his petition to the Emperor Leopold in 1704, that he would desire to see the Transylvanian nationalities live in a state of peace with whose sign Noah's dove returned into the Ark from the sea of devastation. ("Noah's dove carrying an olive leaf," 1704.)

ISTVÁN NEMESKÜRTY

HISTORIANS ON THEIR WORK

A radio round-table with István Bóna, Béla Köpeczi, László Makkai, Zoltán Szász, contributors to the recent "A History of Transylvania" (Akadémiai Könyvkiadó, 1987, 3 volumes). The discussion was chaired by András Gerő.

András Gerő: One of the most important projects ever undertaken by Hungarian historians was completed at the end of last year: *The History of Transylvania.** This three-volume comprehensive work discusses major periods in the past of our State and nation: the history of what was for centuries part of Hungary. Before 1541, when Hungary was split into three, Transylvania had been an integral part of the Hungarian realm. Thereafter, in a difficult situation, the continuity of Hungarian culture was preserved within its borders. When, at the end of the seventeenth century, Hungary was liberated from the Turks, the Habsburgs exercised sovereignty in Transylvania which was separately administered. It was again declared an integral part of the country by the Union Act of 1848 and, in effect, from 1867, by virtue of the Austro–Hungarian Compromise. Since the Great War, apart from a short and partial interruption, it has been part of Rumania. This change produced much passion which has not really subsided to this day. The expectations of the public to publication were therefore far from dispassionate though it is to be hoped that

The slightly abbreviated text of a radio round-table, broadcast in February 1987, and printed, in Hungarian, in issue 1987/5 of the monthly journal *Kritika*.

* See *NHQ* 105.

disinterested scholarship will help to calm things. The nature of the sources which contributors relied on, is therefore of vital importance.

Béla Köpeczi: Indeed this is so, available sources determine whether the writing of a scholarly work is possible. In addition, however, the approach is also crucial. Of course, sources available on different periods widely differ, and I think that, writing the history of Transylvania, we have to take into account not only written documents but also evidence of an archeological nature for periods for which no written sources are available. A touchy key issue is precisely who inhabited Transylvania—or Dacia, if you will—at the time of the Hungarian landtaking in the ninth century. Documents do not tell us and material relics are therefore of particular significance. Let me take a great leap across the centuries to 1918, and what followed, especially after 1945. Frequently the most essential data are not accessible concerning the economic, social and cultural development of Transylvania. Thus statistics fail to break down data ethnically. In these circumstances, therefore, no description can really be given of the demographic or occupational structure of Hungarians, including the Székely, the Germans, including Saxons and Swabians. Neither are the figures referring to cultural conditions really accurate, since a considerable proportion of schools use Rumanian as a teaching language even where the pupils are Hungarian or German. The number of schools which employ other languages of instruction is not precisely known.

István Bóna: Original written sources on the period from the withdrawal of the Roman garrison and administration from up to the Hungarian Conquest could be printed on about four or five pages, and these would largely be unconnected facts. The presence there of certain peoples can be verified, but this is not enough to permit the construction of a continuous narrative. This is where archaeology comes in, which before the Second World War was used only to illustrate history books but is now a primary source for the Roman period as well, considering that the new material, ranging from numismatics to inscriptions, has been produced by archaeologists. In Rumania and within Rumania, in Transylvania, where the recognition of the importance of that period was growing to the same degree as in Hungary, museums staffed with archaeologists were likewise established in the 1950s. They publish periodicals and yearbooks, so I have had to go over far more secondary literature than earlier historians. Naturally, it is for the most part in Rumanian, but since the subject is Transylvania, research in the area has always been conducted with the assistance of German and Hungarian scholars, and with the use of publications and periodicals in German and Hungarian. In fact, a vast comprehensive work on the early Middle Ages has been written by Kurt Horedt.

He has lately left Kolozsvár and Nagyszeben to live in Germany, where he has brought out, simultaneously with our work, a voluminous monograph which, breaking with his earlier views, divides the times I have also discussed in three: the Germanic, Slav, and Hungarian periods. The difference is that I have emphasised the importance of an Avar period as well. Things are tough for an archaeologist who has to work without direct access to relics and with no chance of topographical autopsy. Fortunately, over the past six years I have travelled all over Transylvania, visiting all the museums, crossing the passes and walking the valleys, and I have tried to procure, in Transylvania or in Frankfort, whatever was published on my period. I can claim to have examined all of the Rumanian secondary literature printed up to early 1986, as well as everything exhibited in museums—looking behind the labels, since, as a working archaeologist, I can tell anyway whether or not the thing on show was produced by Gepids, no matter what the label says.

András Gerő: László Makkai, who is with

us here, is the author of an earlier comprehensive history of Transylvania, which was published in Hungary, I think, in 1946. My question is addressed to him personally. As far as sources are concerned, has it been easier now, or more difficult, to write your section of the work?

László Makkai: Unfortunately, it has not been easier. As my colleague István Bóna mentioned, the shortage of sources is great and this goes for the Middle Ages as well. For up until 1250, that is to say, roughly up to the time of the Mongol invasion of Hungary, the entire material on Transylvania amounts to a rather thin booklet. What appears in most documents is only an occasional mention that so-and-so is bishop of Transylvania, that so-and-so is the voivode of Transylvania, dated Gyulafehérvár. That's all. The text tells no more and it may well not even be on Transylvania. There are a few fragments of chronicles which run to seven or eight printed pages at the most. But two serious problems have arisen. One is that the literature produced in the past thirty years dealing with the origins of feudalism in Europe has been very prolific and this is true for Hungary too. The range of problems concerning the whole of feudal Europe has changed; some scholars, particularly in France, have been responsible for a change in the way we view the subject now, and this applies to Transylvania as well. The history of medieval Transylvania is a very interesting, specific case: it concerns the fringe of a world, that of western feudalism. At the same time, however, this is a strikingly curious domain, one which I might call the boundary zone between two worlds as well. In the 10th century, after the Hungarian Conquest, a crucial decision was taken. Was Transylvania to belong to Eastern or Western Christendom? If King Saint Stephen had not seized Transylvania from the *gyulas* (princes) of Transylvania, the strange case might have occurred that two Hungarian nations would have emerged. We know of two nations who straddle the divide and speak one language: the Serbs and the Croats, separated by religion, belonging to East and West respectively. Saint Stephen's conquest, his victory over the *gyulas*, resulted in Transylvania's inclusion in the western type of feudalism. This, in turn, created an extremely peculiar situation also for the Rumanians of Transylvania. Clinging to their Orthodox faith, they were linked by their culture to the Eastern Church. However, their social development followed western ways. Consequently, as the Rumanian *cneaz*, these heads of settler groups, climbed the social ladder, they were assimilated to the Hungarian nobility and participated in western development. This is why I think our work is of international interest since it presents the medieval history of a region where in effect two worlds met and both show their own strong features. The other observation relates to the sources and poses the same problem again: which are those sources after all? And, though this may shock some, I have to say that, even in the period following the Mongol invasion, when there are documents available, if not by the thousands then at least by the hundreds, place-names, that is linguistics, still provide the principal source that speaks loud and clear. It is loud since fortunately all three Transylvanian nations' methods of naming places differ widely. Names in Hungarian are plain sealing until about 1270, because personal names appear in the nominative, e.g., Alpár, which is the Magyar version of Albrecht, a German personal name. Or, here is another name: Drag. One would think it might be Rumanian or Slav, but it can be neither. If it were Rumanian, its form would be Dragul, and if it were Slav it would be Dragovse or something similar. Drag is a place named in Slav by a Hungarian. This makes our job very easy, since it enables us to draw a map of the areas where places are named in German, Hungarian, and Rumanian. It should be added that at the back of all this is an extensive practice of using words of Slav origin as place names. So, when these nations came to settle there—all

three, Hungarians, Rumanians, and Germans—they still found Slavs living in this region who spoke a Slav language.

Zoltán Szász: The source material of the 18th and 19th centuries, which is of special importance to the formation of current thinking, is already of vast dimensions, be they German, Hungarian or Rumanian. Yet we can say that we are short of sources, because a mass of material has been destroyed in the Budapest National Archives, and still more have been lost of papers that never got there, such as family papers. Much in the Rumanian archives is still inaccessible. The closer we come to our days—and this makes the historian's job more difficult—the greater the political passion involved. For this very reason it is essential to emphasise the need for a balanced analysis in the first place. The 18th century has extraordinary importance for the evolution of Hungarian national consciousness, but is essential for the national development of Rumanians as well. The late 18th and the early 19th century is the period when, within the Transylvanian school, the theory of Daco-Rumanian continuity was formulated and propagated with the intention of historically underpinning Rumanian rights. This is the period of a strengthening desire for a Latinised language which, in the second half of the century, came to dominate Rumanian everywhere, leading to the abandonment of the Cyrillic alphabet. The socio-economic history of the 19th century, the period of modern bourgeois changes in Transylvania, deserves special attention since it lifted the region out of the state of stagnation it had been in before. These are thus major problems of the reform era. There are a great many problems: 1848–49 and the Revolution, the national question, progress, liberalism, how they converged, how they ran counter to one another, what led to the conflict situation that arose in Transylvania towards the end of 1848 and in 1849. And, to top it all, the big questions of the post-revolutionary period, economic modernisation, further changes in social structure, the infrastructure, mining, and metallurgy, the institutions of the various nations, churches, schools, cultural societies, and economic organizations. All this took place not in isolation but in conjunction with European—especially East-Central European—processes, while illustrating at the same time the characteristic regional problems of the nations concerned—Hungarians, Germans, Rumanians.

András Gerő: Béla Köpeczi has also mentioned our approach to the subject. Let me return to the section written by him, which must have been very difficult from this point of view. The post-Trianon period, when Transylvania was no longer part of Hungary, was the time when Hungarian passions ran highest, not only because after Trianon the idea of irredentism imbued historians and the entire press, but also because after 1945 and mainly after 1948, an opposed basic trend prevailed. The spirit of proletarian internationalism eclipsed national commitment. In covering the post-Trianon period, what methods were used to evade dangerous pitfalls?

Béla Köpeczi: The first is perhaps a question relating to methodology. In complete agreement with fellow editors and authors, we came to the conclusion that the post-1918 period should be treated as a brief prospect, as a sketch of major tendencies, perhaps as a summary. The story of this period cannot claim to be a history in the full sense of the term. I think this restraint is fully warranted. It is warranted first of all because, as I mentioned earlier, the sources are not really accessible. It is also warranted because the processes of this post-1918 period have not run their full course and the outcome cannot as yet be foreseen. A certain historical perspective, about which many nasty things have been said by students of contemporary history, is now necessary if we are to form a reliable opinion on the events of our age. Editors and authors have agreed that we must not follow the example of the old nationalist historians. It has been our most

resolute intention to break with a tradition which made history the handmaiden of some real or imagined national interest. This applies to Hungarian as well as to Rumanian or German historians. This meant also that from the very beginning we tried to eschew polemics but, while aiming to express our own opinions on the basis of the sources, striving for objectivity. Part of this was having an idea of the nature of history. I think the history of Transylvania is a novelty also because we very deliberately made use of all the methodological experience which Hungarian and international historians have lately accumulated. Our methodology covered wide-ranging and overall tendencies, especially in economic, social, ethnic, and cultural respects. There has not yet been any Transylvanian history written with a view to analysing in this complexity events and personalities alike. Let me add that we undertook from the start to record the history of all three nations, and do so in great complexity. This means that we had to look into interactions and to size up the influence of the same processes on the particular ethnic units and, at the same time, naturally, we had to discover the differences, too. I think such an undertaking is a powerful test for any historian. It is a different matter whether we have been successful and whether we have been able to apply these principles and this method equally in each and every period.

László Makkai: There is a conceptual pitfall which we have tried to avoid as far as possible: this is a conjunction of history and historical rights. What do historical rights mean? If by historical rights we mean what has been liberally committed by Hungarian and Rumanian historians against each other, namely that the rights of one side mean the deprivation of rights to the other side—thus the historical right to a territory, the historical right to some economic resources, and so forth—if it is implied that one of the nations living side by side and sharing the same fate is deprived of certain rights, the writing of history changes at once into a threat of force against the others. We know that this problem continues. It still exists today, now also already in another relation. The way I should like to put it is that each nation has a right to its own history. Thus, if its history is disputed, this is a sort of deprivation of rights. It is undeniably true that earlier Hungarian historical writing—and I personally cannot be absolved from blame either—wanted, in some respects, to deprive the Rumanians of their right to their own history. We thus concealed things which ought not to have been concealed. Earlier I have referred here to the history of the Rumanian people's specific and highly valuable culture which is precious also for humanity. It must be said plainly here that they are now making efforts to deprive the Transylvanian Hungarians of their own history. Unfortunately, we are quits on this point. In my opinion each nation should be accorded the right to its own history, but without thereby depriving anyone else of any rights. I consider this to be an important point of reference.

Béla Köpeczi: That is so, and something should perhaps be added. We have given up making reversed inferences which had characterised earlier Hungarian historians and which are characteristic of certain Rumanian historians today, that is commenting on the past so as to start from a current situation and divining, by inferring from the current situation, what sort of development the nations must have gone through in Transylvania during either the Middle Ages or the 16th and 17th centuries, and so forth. This is a historical anachronism, we are all of the opinion that at the end of the 20th century it is inadmissible to go back to certain conventions of romantic historiography. This may have been justified at that time, for all nations looked for their roots and searched for the most distinguished ancestors possible. We Hungarians also did so, starting with Attila. But we live as the 20th century is coming to a close, and we have to take up a

realistic attitude to history which shows a proper regard for the circumstances of the given period and for the thinking of the time as well, and must not employ the pseudo-methodology of reversed inferences.

András Gerő: These points are quite clear in principle, but in my judgement the situation is not so simple, and this is the next problem I think we ought to discuss. This work formally deals with the disputes—not only those amongst Hungarian historians but, let us say, also matters of controversy between Hungarian and Rumanian historians—in such a way that it includes the related references or the data indicative of differing opinions in the scientific apparatus. In the main text itself it does not engage in polemics but expresses the current Hungarian historial consensus. Sure enough, but what happens when conflicts arise in regard to matters in which—as mentioned here both by László Makkai and by Béla Köpeczi—the dispute or, rather, the argument, is concentrated on problems of political legitimation. Thus, for example, the question of Daco-Rumanian continuity, or the theory, or the principle mentioned by László Makkai that each people should be accorded the right to its history. There are periods, for example in the case of '48–49, where the question polarizes into a matter of either-or. How can these lucid principles be employed when the demand for truth as well as the demand for the rejection of national excesses point in the same direction, that of clashing views?

István Bóna: To tell the truth, the theory of Daco-Rumanian continuity has never completely dominated Rumanian scholarship either. There have always been, and there still are, scholars who present the facts in a realistic manner. It has thus been possible, in practically all respects, to find Rumanian, German, and Hungarian scholars who are of the same opinion on certain questions, for example, on the point that the Goths occupied Transylvania after the Romans withdrew from Dacia. A considerable number of English, French, German, Scandinavian, and even Rumanian historians agree. It is already a matter of detail how certain historians try to present this Gothic dominion as concurrent with a sort of survival of Roman settlement. The whole of Europe also agrees in general that in the 5th and 6th centuries Gepides lived in Transylvania, so much so that the centre of the their kingdom can also be supposed to have been located there. Sumptuous royal tombs were discovered, unique in Europe at the time. And there have always been, and still there are, scholars who have recognised that Avar finds discovered in Transylvania were in fact Avar.

András Gerő Excuse me for interrupting: I do not see why indentifying an Avar find as Avar is such a great thing.

István Bóna: The fact is that such identifications are an Austro-Hungarian specialty. Others carve up the Avar empire in terms of modern boundaries. In Slovakia, for example, they call such finds Avar-Slav, and so on. Furthermore, it was of much help that during the early 1950s a very important, state-sponsored campaign of Slavonic research was conducted all over Rumania, but primarily in Transylvania. This campaign, which was the responsibility of mainly German and Hungarian archaeologists of Transylvania, but Rumanians were involved as well, uncovered an enormous quantity of Slav relics from regions where—as we had known earlier—place-names indicated that Slavs must have lived. Today it is clear, thanks to a series of studied settlements and burial grounds that, from the 7th century until the 11th, that is, up to the foundation of the Hungarian State, there are a considerable number of archaeologically relevant finds that demonstrate the existence of a Slav period in Transylvania.

András Gerő: What happens if the same principles are applied to 1848, namely objectivity or freedom from national prejudice as one of the principles, the right of each nation to its own history as another principle, and at the same time the recognition of the

fact that men took pot shots at one another. And he who pulled the trigger on one side aimed his gun at Hungarian revolutionaries, while he may possibly have fired in support of legitimate national demands, though in the last resort fighting as the ally of counter-revolutionaries. How can one stick to these principles and describe what went on? Do we not fall into the trap that our standpoint may become too formalistic, or perhaps we do not even venture to take up a position? Indeed, is there a need to take up a position on these questions?

Zoltán Szász: There is no writing of history that is able to escape evaluation. But I must emphasise that these disputes have two components. One concerns scholarship and the other politics which is still more important. Here we have composed, first and foremost, a scholarly work. Consequently, we have tried to solve, first of all, the scholarly questions at currently prevailing standards. But we are not formalising controversial issues. Nothing of the kind. It is impossible to find a solution by which we arrive at a kind of compensating compromise and, blending one nationalist position with another nationalist position, produce a new synthesis or deal out justice half-and-half. No, this is not the point. If earlier Hungarian nationalist historians were not right on one or another question, this does not entail that an anti-Hungarian view must be the correct one. In our work we have proceeded so as to describe these extremely complicated things, first of all by relying on new research results, by asking new questions and using new ways of approach. Concerning 1848–49, for example: yes, one who in '48–49 fought against the revolutionary government was, of course, an ally of the counter-revolution, and this was the view of Marx and Engels at the time. But our task is to point out clearly also what factors caused those forces to join or, drift into, the service of the counter-revolution, which led to a situation where Hungarian and Rumanian intentions clashed. Contemporaries were indeed already aware of the problem. We know of such letters from '48–49, Rumanian views from '48–49, we know about the attempts made in '49 to coordinate the intentions of Rumanian and Hungarian progressives. The same applies also to subsequent periods. It is true, for example, that the Compromise of 1867 involved many elements difficult for the other nations to accept from the political point of view, it was in reality a means of national oppression but, in respect of Transylvania, we have to add also that it united, for the first time in the course of history, the Rumanians of Transylvania and the Rumanians of Hungary proper. Which again had its own great importance, for even thereafter it took decades before Rumanian political attitudes integrated in the Kingdom of Hungary.

András Gerő: Yes, I see, but I am invariably of the opinion that these must have been serious handicaps and problems. Since, in the course of writing, one is concerned also with moral values, one indeed stands for a system of ethical values. And in this respect the approach employed in *A History of Transylvania* really can be considered ideal. A practically impossible job had to be done, as moral values, professional truths and objectivity had to be integrated.

Béla Köpeczi: Permit me to come back to the issue of moral values. What is the principal moral value? Respect for individual man and for human communities, the acknowledgement of their rights. At the same time, of course, also consideration for the relation in which nation and progress stood to each other at various times. But I think that what has been most important to us, and what is particularly important now, at the close of the 20th century, is to acknowledge each other's rights. Let us acknowledge them, even when the subject is history. We have already mentioned that each people should have a right to its own history, but let me add that each people has a right also to its own present. And our

moral mandate is to defend our freedom, the rights of man, against the nationalist tide that has lately been swelling in different parts of Europe, and not only in East Central Europe.

András Gerő: In the case of a comprehensive work like this it may be asked with good reason: what new results has this history of Transylvania produced for Hungarian history? What is that extra we have, thanks to the publication of this work?

László Makkai: The most valuable of all is the archeological material. This is incontestable. No one has ever before summarised so completely all that the late András Mócsy has discovered about the Roman period, including also the story of Ostrogoths, Visigoths, Gepides, and Avars. The darkness has been penetrated by the light of archaeology. As regards fresh information about the Middle Ages, I should say that we have not become richer in sources, but we still owe ourselves one thing: we have to continue studying regional Transylvanian history, something that has not been done up to the present. This is a shortcoming. At the same time a great positive result is the clarification of certain matters. And here I have to refer to ethnography, from which we have learnt a great deal. Earlier we Hungarians dismissed the history of the proto-Rumanians simply by stating that they had been nomad shepherds. It has since been found out that there is no question of nomadism, we now know full well what transhumance is, meaning a seasonal switch of pastures, which in no way excludes horticulture or agriculture. Ethnographers have helped. This, for example, is a novelty. Another is that we have made progress in our knowledge of the history of culture, and I think this is the cue that can prompt the nations of Transylvania to show greater respect to each other as we recognise and realise what the culture of another people means, what its picturesqueness means, what the novelty and experience mean which we receive as a gift from strangers.

István Bóna: Hungarian historians used to think that much of Transylvania was uninhabited because the documentary sources referred to by László Makkai had hardly ever mentioned inhabitants. Now it has become clear that Hungarian settlements, though not too important, can be supposed to have existed also in the 10th century as far away as eastern Transylvania. In the 11th–12th centuries, however, they were considerably larger and wealthier than we had thought.

László Makkai: Considering that the 10th and 11th centuries are a black period as regards souces, we have to say that a difference of opinion had arisen, concerning the 10th century, precisely between Professor Bóna and myself, and that this surfaces in the text. For the time being we must agree to differ. It is up to the future to dispel this 10th-century darkness on the basis of new sources or new considerations. In any case, we today already know much more about the 10th century than we might have known even twenty years earlier.

Béla Köpeczi: Speaking about the differences of opinion: the comprehensive history of the epoch of the Principality of Transylvania is something new in itself. But how we judge, for example, the nature of economic development or ethnic settlement scatter and social mobility, is largely a matter of opinion. To take just one example. The memory of Prince Apafi does not rank high amongst Hungarian historians, chiefly because contemporary writers of memoires mostly held him in low esteem. It has now become an interesting subject of controversy whether or not Transylvania had been developing at all in the reign of this Prince, from the 1660s to the 1690s. Economically, I mean, but also in its social structure, in cultural respects, etc. Ágnes Várkonyi, who wrote this section, has taken a favourable view of this development, the author of the chapters on the preceding period, Katalin Péter, and the subsequent period Zsolt Trócsányi, on the other hand, have doubted

its justification. In the last resort, of course, the viewpoint of each particular author prevails in the description of the history of Transylvania, and if we shall be blamed for having rehabilitated Prince Michael I Apafi, this cannot be ascribed simply to our enthusiasm but rather to new sources on economic development.

Zoltán Szász: About the 18th and 19th centuries I should say that we have been able to give a new picture primarily of the great transformation taking place just in the middle of the 18th century, when the Rumanians clearly became the majority of the population of the Principality of Transylvania, a fact which was to become an important determining factor of later developments. As to the period of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, I should perhaps stress only that we have presented first of all the opposing tendencies of political and socio-economic development. We have shown that there had existed, on the one hand, national oppression, attempts at Magyarisation, and, on the other hand, economic and social development which helped Rumanians, Hungarians, and Germans alike to make progress, to become stronger, and as a result of which in 1918 they could weather the storm of history not as defenceless ethnic communities, but each of them had a developed middle class, they owned land, and they had national, cultural and economic institutions.

András Gerő: My questions so far have been primarily addressed to specialist historians. In conclusion I wish to address you as Hungarian intellectuals. As the saying goes, *habent sua fata libelli*. This work is too young for that, but one thing is certain, it did not appear in a vacuum but in an existing Hungarian and international environment.

Béla Köpeczi: It is certainly true that the publication of these volumes has created immense interest, and not only in Hungary. The first edition, of 40,000 copies, was soon sold out, something that is extraordinary for a scholarly work, at this price. This demand is obviously not only a manifestation of historical interest as such but because the subject itself is very much at the centre of attention. The question is the fate of the national minotirites, in particular that of Hungarian national minorities over the border, primarily in Rumania. People have personal experiences, their kith and kin live there, and many friends, especially in Transylvania, and many feel anxious indeed, bearing in mind what they know about the shape of things there. I think I can speak on behalf of my colleagues saying that we too are interested in the way of life of Hungarians of Transylvania, in their rights and their ability to exercise them, especially concerning their native idiom and culture. Historians not only formulate such principles in a general way but support them, when necessary. Membership of a particular nation is their entitlement. Scholarly objectivity and solidarity can go hand in hand. What reaction can be expected? I think this history will demonstrate to Hungarians—and this is very important—that different ethnic communities have coexisted on the territory of Transylvania, that Transylvania has a Rumanian majority,—something of which the Hungarian public has not always shown itself aware—and that this is not a new development, and that, owing to this majority, and national proportions in general, there cannot even be a frontier problem. The real problem is whether the three nations can live together not only in peace but also in a productive, creative harmony. If the Hungarian public can thus be given a more realistic and more objective picture of the past and present of Transylvania, I think we have done a great deal to overcome the old nationalistic stereotypes by conveying authentic information, through the example of Transylvania, about East Central Europe, about its features and potentials. It is this which, in my opinion, lends the work an importance which transcends mere scholarship.

THE ECONOMY UNDER REVIEW

NEW WORLD ECONOMIC FORCES IN EAST-WEST RELATIONS

by

JÓZSEF BOGNÁR

The technological revolution and economic changes linked to it have been the most important international development since the Second World War. They have induced new trends and have shaken up ideas entertained earlier concerning the purposes of economic activity. The change of tides exerts a vigorous influence not only on the various countries and regions but also on the interests which motivate the countries and regions in question when they formulate their economic and political priorities.

1. Accelerated technical progress intensifies the contradictions between the technical sphere, the biosphere, and the social sphere, including the international sphere. The growing danger to the biosphere is something of which one and all are aware these days. The environment-damaging effect of existing facilities must be reduced, and new development objectives have to be achieved using new technologies which are not harmful to the biosphere. The intensification of the conflict between the technosphere and the biosphere has important economic, legal, and international consequences:

— free goods as defined by economic theory have ceased to exist, in other words the air and water have become cost factors;

— looked at from the aspect of constitutional law, the environmental effects of economic growth are not a national but an international problem;

— the solution of important environmental problems requires international agreements, common budgets, and international norms and verification.

2. Accelerated technical progress offers a new challenge to the social sphere as well, in every country and in any kind of social system.

The given social structure:

— must be sensitive enough to sense or foresee the changes;

— must transform the targets of economic development, since the old ones have become obsolete;

— must adjust the speed of its actions to the external changes and to the setting free of the internal innovative resources;

— must take into consideration the technological and economic problems caused by the shortening of the life cycle of products (the "technical rent" is available for no more than 2–3 years);

— must strengthen its ability to change flexibly.

In addition to these problems, which refer primarily to national economies and national structures, the hazards of technology as well as the strengthening of interdependence must be taken into consideration from the international aspect.

What I have in mind when I speak of the hazards of technology are not only military technologies or biology, but also the complex direct and indirect hazards in the knowledge of which János Neumann* asked whether we can survive technology. Have we these capacities, flexibility, wisdom, and institutions, organization which will prevent the catastrophes?

On the other hand, interdependence means that we are dependent on each other not only in the security-military sense—and this includes the world powers—but are also in respect of a large number of problems connected with the biosphere and the technosphere, and generally with economic progress, that is with the progress of mankind.

Besides the challenges mentioned, it has to be pointed out that in this new age those conventional links have become disrupted between the different economic or production processes which had been established in the period of mass production making the prediction of interlinked processes possible. Such is the situation:

— between production and the energy needed;

— between production and the quantity and nature of materials needed;

— between production and transport;

— between the equipment needs of the new and the old technologies;

— between the flow of capital and the order of magnitude of trade;

— between production and employment;

— between the economy and the state budget.

The disruption of these links means that less energy and raw material, and consequently less transport, is needed for production of the same value. Furthermore, less manpower is needed for modern production, and since the

* John von Neumann: "Can We Survive Technology?" in *Fortune*, June 1955.

technical revolution of tertiary services advances at a great speed—without having reached its peak—there are no absorbing occupations at present.

In the past, the flow of capital preceded or followed trade, but boomed or recessed in close connection with it. Today, however, the flow of money is thirty times that of the flow of goods, i.e. of international trade. That is, money is being moved for other reasons.

The links between economic growth and the state budget have also become disrupted. This contributes to a considerable extent to those budgetary deficits which can be found today in all parts of the world.

The disruption of the connections mentioned means that e.g. the supply of energy, raw materials, or transport capacities is higher than demand, and consequently their prices are as low as they were prior to the great crisis of 1929. This means also that the export income of the developing countries has fallen, while their debts accumulated to a degree unimaginable earlier. It has thus become obvious that the accumulation of debts—which in the present conditions is the main obstacle to the organic growth of world trade —can be reverted only within the framework of a rejuvenated international monetary system.

Finally, it must be taken into account while thinking about international economic conditions that the world economy cannot grow in an extensive way either, i.e. existing tensions and problems cannot be overcome by the extension of development to areas which had remained unexploited earlier, since with the appearance of the countries and economies of the third world economic processes now cover the entire globe. Consequently, the problems, contradictions, and dangers which the technical revolution gave rise to can be overcome only by better cooperation and better distribution.

The problems of the socialist countries

After this brief outline I shall now pass to the analysis of those problems which have emerged in the European socialist countries and in the People's Republic of China as a resultant of the change in tides and the ensuing challenge to the world economy.

In the European socialist countries, in the second half of the 1960s, those economic driving forces had weakened which had come to the surface in the course of the social transformation which began after the Second World War and which gave an impetus to growth in spite of the contradictions. As a consequence, economists and politicians of broad horizons came to the recognition that fundamental changes are necessary. Manpower reserves be-

came exhausted which had become available in the course of the socialist reorganization ofagriculture, and a chronic shortage of manpower came aboud in numerous occupations.

Experience shows that unjustifiable quantities of capital, material, and labour were employed to produce one unit of increment of national income, and this, from time to time, caused imbalances in the economy.

An analysis of these phenomena and symptoms has led to the conclusion that the economic model of the period of social transformation is not adequate for the solution of the problems of intensive economic growth, and consequently a reform is needed. Since the mid-1960s the expression 'reform' has had two meanings: the more radical economists thought of a reform which covers the whole of economic activity and which consequently extends at an appropriate time also to the socio-political area, while the more cautious spoke only of the reform of the system of control and guidance, which meant that instead of plan instructions the economy should be controlled by economic levers. According to the radical reformers, not only the in-kind instructions and plan instructions caused the problem, but also that individual and group interests were not integrated into economic action, commodity and monetary relations were neglected or considered secondary, monopolistic organisations were established, production and distribution were rigidly separated from each other, and that the firms had no freedom of action. Especially grave mistakes were committed in agricultural policy, as a consequence of which most European socialist countries—Hungary being a notable exception—came to be dependent on agricultural imports. Agricultural imports have a crucial effect on every possible model of economic growth, since food has to be imported instead of technologies, and this leads to a slowdown of industrial progress.

It appears important to me to speak also of the external economic components of the model of the period of social change. In the course of the analysis of the external economic concept, it must of course be taken into consideration that the European socialist countries suffered numerous blockades and embargoes which made it difficult or even impossible for them to adjust the external relations to the requirements of economic rationality.

A planned economy functioning in conditions of the embargo is inclined to turn inward, since it is unable to plan convertible currency exports realistically, and sales prices depend on circumstances which it is not able to forecast. Consequently, instead of a broad international economic concept they stood for the idea of the inevitability of the exchange of goods, which meant in practice that the national economy must produce everything that it can, irrespective of costs and reason, and should import resources of which it

does not dispose, or goods which it is as yet unable to produce owing to its lower technical standard. It is obvious that in such a situation relations become minimised and their forms impoverished. In that period this did not run counter to the ideas or intentions of the western countries.

It was in accordance with these reform intentions that a very modest reform or rationalisation of control was introduced in the Soviet Union in 1965, which is usually referred to as the Kosygin reform. How the quantity and quality of changes introduced relate to the elements which remain unchanged is the decisive question determining the efficiency or survival of every reform. It can be said unequivocally that the quantity and quality of the intended changes were both inadequate for survival in a conservative structure which prefers the old ways.

The Hungarian economic reform

But in 1968 an economic reform was introduced in Hungary, which has survived despite the fact that, after the Czechoslovak events of 1968, the tide of reform reversed in the socialist countries. I am inclined to argue that in the socialist societies strict, rigid, and preponderantly ideological cycles interchange with liberal cycles. The single-party system relying on a broad coalition makes such rotation possible, since it allows for the representation of different political platforms and supports, through a system of reconciliation of interests, the representation of different interests.

The change of tides in the world economy which was heralded by the energy crisis brought about a new situation in the socialist economies as well. The new developments did not make themselves felt simultaneously in the different national economies, since the first wave of changes (high prices for energy, raw materials, and gold) still favoured the Soviet economy, but had already a negative effect on countries short of energy and raw materials.

The raising of loans—the credit crisis

However, the second wave of the changes (slow-down of economic growth, the stagnation of world trade and then its slow growth, the changes in the terms of trade, the credit crisis, the high interest rate, and the sudden acceleration of technical progress) were unfavourable for every socialist economy. Under the influence of the changes, export incomes declined in the different countries (this being a structural question, volumes were not diminished and

the prices of agricultural products too fell by 40 per cent compared to 1975), they were unable to reduce imports to any significant degree (which was linked also to the situation of the other socialist countries), i.e. deficits occurred in the balance of trade, which they tried to counteract by raising credits. This was possible until the end of the 1970s. However, owing to the credit crisis, the raising of loans became more difficult, interest rates rose vigorously, and this involved increasing debt servicing obligations.

Debates evolved in the socialist countries as well about the nature of the world economic crisis. The reformists argued that the changes were the consequences of a huge structural change, and were the resultants of a new situation in the world economy. Consequently, they were not only here to stay but would also spread to areas in which they had not made themselves felt until then.

Consequently, the economic reform must be continued, or implemented, but in the course of it adjustments have to be made to the given world economic situation.

Others, mostly the more conservative economists, argued that perhaps a larger than usual business cycle crisis was involved, and that, in its course, the recession would be followed by recovery. This view implied the postponement of the crisis, which was bad, *inter alia*, because in this period the economy had already used up a considerable quantity of its energies, and later a graver form of the crisis had to be faced with fewer energy reserves.

A new reform period

The world economic crisis and the strengthening tensions gave rise to new processes and endeavours in the internal movements of the economies, and in the 1980s this led to a new reform period in the socialist countries.

In the Hungarian economy—which had been unable to introduce its planned external economic reform owing to the anti-cycle which had lasted since 1972—the reform again gathered momentum from 1979 on, and has also shifted to the political and social sphere. At the beginning of the decade, after thorough preparations and preliminary studies, the People's Republic of China started on a reformation of the economy and of society. In 1986 rebuilding began in the Soviet Union on the initiative and under the leadership of Mikhail Gorbachev. As distinct from the situation in Hungary where the reform was introduced at the time of relative political consensus, though there may well have been different expectations concerning the further development, expansion, and significance of the reform, in China and in the

Soviet Union the rearrangements of political power had or have to precede economic reform. In this respect, the position of the Chinese leadership was simpler, since the cultural revolution had destroyed the old structure acting from the left in an extreme way, and thus provided room for action for the reformers. It is obvious that the movement of socio-economic reforms is not influenced by goals alone, but also by the situation and power relations in which—and the means by which—these goals can and need be realized.

It is, of course, necessary to reckon in every case with the cyclic movement of the socio-economic processes. Resistance, attempts at slow-downs, passivity too occur on the one hand, and on the other the reform itself creates tensions which may change in some period the power relations between progressives and conservatives. In addition, the new problems caused by the introduction of the reform do not appear in the traditional sphere, such as the shortage of goods, bureaucracy, slow reaction, etc., which gives many people the impression that these are problems alien to socialism and demonstrate the distortion of the political concept. Finally, it must also be taken into account that the world economic crisis has brought about an extremely difficult external economic environment, due to which the results of the reforms appeared only slowly. On the other hand, it is also true that every government considers the reforming of a well-functioning economy or society to be superfluous. It can therefore be assumed that as a result of these meditations we cannot come to any other conclusion than that it is easier for the conservatives in every society.

The question of security

Returning to the Soviet and the Chinese reforms—which have tremendous importance from the aspect of world politics—let me refer to the recognition of the fact that economic growth—for which the implementation of the reform is a condition—is today the most decisive problem of socialist society and the socialist system. It also exemplifies the revision of views and action systems which had earlier existed concerning the question of security. This increases the importance of the reform from the aspect of international politics, since the new approach offers new opportunities.

I should finally like to point out that the determination of the Soviet Union in the introduction of the reform will—presumably—speed up the reform process in those countries in which the political leadership insisted on maintaining the old system of control. When a political leadership of a more conservative type takes up the cause of reform the result may well be transformations of a more novel type which I shall discuss later.

Two kinds of requirements

It is made clear by what I have said so far that two kinds of requirements are intertwined in the reform movement of our days: the replacement of the transformation-centralized-bureaucratic model of the socialist economy and society by a modern model promoting intensive development and leaving more scope to economic rationality, on the one hand, and adjustment to the new economic-political-international conditions produced by the changes in the world economy, on the other. In the case of the Hungarian reform these two *foci* could still be clearly distinguished and separated in time as well. Of course, these two kinds of requirements are not contradictory, since they mutually influence and complement each other; it is nevertheless necessary to point out that this situation decisively determines the quantity of changes and the speed of their adoption. This situation influences, of course, also the degree of freedom of the different systems and types of action, since adjustment to the world economic situation includes a great many elements of constraint. It is obvious, for instance, that the liquidation of poorly performing firms has to be speeded up, subsidies must be reduced and prices raised since the load-bearing capacity of the state is limited, the regrouping of manpower must be accelerated, the reduction of the standard of living of certain sections of society must be accepted, etc., while incentives must be intensified, greater differentiation must be permitted in the distribution of incomes. On the other hand, small enterprises and the private sector enjoy an unjustifiably high income due to the delayed demand, etc.

Some of the reformers were always anxious that the problems and difficulties caused by the reform would be undistinguishable from those economic problems which arise independent of it, or which are resultants of activities which impeded the introduction of the reform in time. This, unfortunately, has come true. It is another question that it is unrealistic to assume or to wish that thorough economic-social reforms should be introduced in a vacuum.

External economic policy

From now on we shall discuss primarily those questions and problems which decisively influence the external economic policy of the socialist countries in the new economic way of thinking fostered by the reform.

Reference was already made to the fact that the external economic notions of the transformation-centralized model were inward turning, owing to the embargoes and blockades, in other words the cold war affecting the economy.

One of the leading ideas of the model of the period of transformation was the avoidance of external economic dependence; this meant that the socialist countries should not find themselves in an economic situation, or only to a limited extent and for a limited time, where their notions of economic development should depend on cold-war adversaries. The formula to avoid dependence was industrialisation, as a result of which they would be able to produce the goods which were necessary for their economy. Of course, this notion proved a failure. This was proved by the constant growth of imports needed by the different economies. The strength of a given economy does not depend on import restrictions but on the ability to export. On the other hand, industrialisation concentrating on end-products created a huge demand for intermediate components, sub-assemblies and semi-finished products, which in most cases had to be met from imports since both domestic industry and intra-CMEA supplies proved inadequate. The economic policy concentrating on defence against imports did not take care to provide adequate exports stocks, and the factories liked to sell to markets with which they were familiar and which accepted lower-standard goods. Consequently, the balance of payments problems of these economies are not due to excessive imports but to inadequate exports; i.e. only the development of adequate export capacities can provide a satisfactory solution, especially in the longer term.

Consequently, new external economic notions are needed, the development of which would even have been inevitable if no major changes or crisis had occurred in the world economy. However, these changes make it obvious that the reforms must rely on intensive economic cooperation and fitting into the world economy. This applies to both the individual economies and to the CMEA.

Such steps have already been taken in almost every European socialist country, even if not to the same extent. Of thesech anges—some of them within a general economic reform, but some also in countries conducting a conservative economic policy—I wish to mention but the most important ones:

a) The Hungarian economy explicitly accepts what other economies do in practice, that economic growth depends primarily on the ability to export. This means that, within development policy, priority must be given to those economic activities which concentrate on convertible currency markets.

b) In the course of the reform to be effected within the CMEA as well, priority must be given to those activities, and those forms of cooperation must be promoted which are directed at third markets.

c) The methods of industrial and commercial cooperation with the

convertible currency countries must be modernised and in the course of their development the exporting of components, sub-assemblies, semi-finished products, etc., must be undertaken.

d) The quality of our existing export products must be improved by the application of advanced technologies in such a way that they should be competitive as regards quality rather than prices.

e) Imports of technologies which further the development of domestic production, tertiary services, and the infrastructure, must be boosted.

f) The foundation of joint ventures must be made possible which provide technologies and markets for the economy.

g) A flexible trade policy must be conducted, which promotes the appearance of Hungarian products and services in new markets, adjusted to the requirements of the countries and markets in question.

h) The link between production and distribution must be organized on a new foundation, and we must apply the most advanced marketing methods in the international markets.

The above assumes that these tendencies will continue—within the cyclic nature of social movements—since rapid technical progress presumes flexible socio-economic structures. On the other hand, it is obvious that the disruption of links between different economic and production conditions, as well factors of the world economic situation such as the extension of markets in conditions of indebtedness, demand new and coordinated economic policies.

In addition, global factors must be taken into account which can be settled only on an international scale and in cooperation, while the absence of cooperation and settlement endanger the survival of mankind and radically increase the danger of potential conflicts. Finally, the system of interdependence which has come about in the world economy and which determines the worldwide business cycle, must be interpreted as something new. Mankind, the community of nations, is not yet able to handle these grave and extremely important problems, since one hundred and eighty national economies still exist and there is no hope that—within the foreseeable future—a supreme international power should be established which is able to solve these problems institutionally.

East-West economic cooperation

However, the unilateral readiness of the European socialist countries for an opening towards the external economy is insufficient by itself. The inter-

national conditions—which I have already discussed in some detail and of which I have more to say—contain numerous factors which are for the renewal of East-West economic cooperation. However, two things must be clearly pointed out definitely; one is that economic cooperation is the resultant of concrete shared economic interests. If such do not exist, cooperation cannot come about in spite of the best intentions. In this context, it must of course be stressed that in addition to the existing common interests there are also potential interests, and their discovery and development is no less valuable than the technical innovation which furthers the solution of a given problem. On the other hand, interests are never of a static nature, since existing contacts may represent the foundation and the driving force for new ones. The other factor is that, in the course of the historic-economic changes which have occurred since the thirties, the economic way of thinking has come to be powerfully dependent on political and defence considerations, and economic considerations do not prevail on their own. Since the subordination of the economic to the political way of thinking has been continuous over two or three generations, we consider today as natural and exclusively possible those economic points of departure which have become assimilated into the economy out of the politics of the past 50 to 60 years. This allows one to conclude that, in the course of thinking through the economic possibilities, we should set out from the present and future political and security situation, and not from commonplaces that have stuck in our memory for 50 to 60 years. It is obvious that the reorganization of socialist society and the reform of the socialist economy involve also the changing of some existing situations. It can, for instance, be imagined that temporarily the quantity of foreign exchange available for purchases will diminish. (E.g. China had substantial foreign exchange reserves before the opening, but has accumulated debts within a few years. These may be temporary problems, but it would be ridiculous to claim that the depletion of the foreign exchange reserves sets back trade opportunities, while a market consisting of a thousand million, which has been closed until now, is now opening up.)

East-West relations expanded rapidly, e.g. in the sixties, but this occurred on an extensive basis, the driving forces for which have become exhausted. Stagnation occurred in the 1980–1983 period, on the one hand, because the driving forces of the intensive stage had not yet got off the ground, and on the other, because debts had become accumulated.

Owing to the decline, East-West relations in 1983–84 accounted for only 2 per cent of world trade. According to an international survey, the weight of East-West trade in the foreign trade of the CMEA countries has also diminished since 1980. This is presumably due to the forced reduction of

imports caused by equilibrium tensions. If we project today's trends—considering an unchanged course of economic policy—we cannot reckon with a substantial improvement in the immediate future either, since the expansion of the export capacities of the CMEA countries is a relatively slow process, being linked to restructuring, and consequently, in order to ensure the balance of payments, imports cannot be raised to the necessary degree.

Europe's loss of ground

On the other hand, it is also obvious that the loss of economic ground by the whole of Europe is a long-term process which is becoming effective along a broad front. In the first post-war quarter century the economic dynamism of Eastern and Western Europe considerably surpassed the world average, but in the eighties it has been lagging considerably behind Japan, South-East Asia, and the United States. This falling behind has by now taken up such clear and characteristic forms that we are justified in speaking of an end to the Atlantic age and the emergence of a Pacific age.

Compared to the 1970s, the share of Europe has fallen considerably within world exports and imports, in world engineering exports and imports, in the imports of the United States and of Japan, and even in OECD imports.

Before the Great War, European scientific and technical achievements were still the foundation of the industrial development of the United States and of Japan. In Western Europe, the decline in competitiveness on the world market is due, in addition, to the smaller number of scientists employed in high technologies (per 1000 inhabitants) and the smaller quantity of money spent on research, to the slow-down of growth, considerable unemployment, and the slow expansion of home markets. The lower dynamism of Western Europe is attributed by numerous economists to the fragmented nature of Western Europe—compared to the United States or Japan—but we may perhaps add to this the division of Europe into two parts, which came about in the 1940s. However, at present—through approaches and agreements on military questions—broad economic cooperation and an intensive division of labour may become possible between Western and Eastern Europe.

The reduction of trade and economic relations between East and West in the 1980s is the resultant of numerous new factors with the appearance of which one cannot count, since there has not yet been a precedent for the discussion of economic policy of this nature between the Common Market, EFTA, and the CMEA. The fall is not due to prices and the forced restriction of imports alone but also to structural and contact problems. The share

of industrial products is low (58 per cent) in the exports of the CMEA countries, but in the case of the Soviet Union it is as low as 12 per cent! Approximately 80 per cent of the exports of the CMEA countries are material-intensive products or such as are sensitive to cyclical fluctuations. No doubt, in the case of the Soviet Union and Rumania, the high price of primary fuels hid the weaknesses of the export structure.

On the other hand, from the geographic or historic aspect, the East-West contacts were developed with a focus on Europe, the share of Western Europe in East-West trade being 82 per cent between 1982 and 1984, and the share of the United States and Canada 8 per cent and that of Japan also 8 per cent. There is no doubt either that in the old structure and in the present monetary situation opportunities for developing economic relations are limited.

This is one reason why—especially within Europe—the potential offered by an intensive division of labour should be thought through thoroughly.

Key questions and basic proposals

There are indications that in the course of negotiations between the Common Market, EFTA and the CMEA—or parallel with them—there is great need to analyse this potential.

In the course of this, some fundamental possibilities of a political nature should be considered:

a) Should it not be possible—assuming a military agreement—to restore the economic unity of Europe, something that should be possible in practice in the case of cooperation in economic policy and external economic relations between existing organizations?

b) How would an intensive intra-European division of labour influence the competitiveness of the participants on the world market? This is a question of decisive importance to Europe.

c) What would the market of one party offer to the other party in the conditions of current merciless competition?

Besides, and in the course of the thorough analysis of the problems, one should also consider that:

1. The politics of the three biggest powers of the contemporary world have become more economy-centred, and this process continues. The Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China have made declarations in this sense, and the economic reform is decisive evidence of the seriousness of this intention. Everybody who is acquainted with the nature of the economic reforms and is able to forecast the complications involved, can see clearly that at least one

or two decades are needed for the implementation of reforms of this nature. Furthermore, a reform of this kind turns the power and energy of public opinion in favour of the changes, not to mention that the political equilibria coming about in the course of the transformation assume the maximum concentration of the attention and power of the leadership. So far the United States have not declared similar intentions, but it is clear to an economist that, while the model of excess-armaments may in the short run have some advantages and may even balance out various disequilibria, strengthening the economic position of some states within the United States, in the longer run the growth in the budgetary deficit and balance of payments deficits lead to the accumulation of debts and the weakening of the key currency. The economic-political situation of the United States confirms this in every respect; the peculiar thing is only that the falling behind—especially compared to Japan—applies also to high technology. The treasury economists and politicians sing wonderful odes to the immeasurable advantages of the market economy, while a considerable number of their large firms are dependent on the treasury, and costs show aspects which are usual in a monopolistic state sector.

Consequently, I believe that, irrespective of the results of elections, the United States must in the near future replace excess-armament by an economy-oriented policy.

An economy-centric development model of the world's three leading powers would fundamentally change the international economic climate, since the evolution of economic cooperation among different countries was often rendered difficult by the unfavourable climate which had come about in the last resort owing to the side-effects of political animosities between the leading powers.

2. At the time of this historic change in the world economy and world politics, the relationship between the political-military and the economic factors should be thought through, including their movements, interaction, and opportunities for feedbacks. An agreement in the military domain is, in our dangerous contemporary world, a condition, indeed the beginning of political and economic cooperation. But, on the other hand, the relatively narrow elbow-room of the military factors in everyday life should be taken into account, since they do not create mutual interests and are not organically fitted into the system of actions of the national society and economy. It is obvious that international verification systems will be established, that the signatories to the various agreements will reciprocally control each other, which it is necessary to consult in the case of the appearance of new technical trends, etc., but this is generally the problem for a few people in the know

who are in possession of sufficient information and who grasp the different alternative solutions.

As against this, the economic interests are deeply fitted into the life and fate of each society, since they stand for jobs, incomes, profits, growth, and new markets for the firms and economies taking part. In addition, they also determine, in the longer run, the international positions of the different countries.

To sum up such ideas, it is hardly possible that an agreement on the restriction on armaments should prevail on its own, if the parties have no common goals and—primarily—economic interests, and if they do not develop these adequately.

It is usual to claim that the balance of power forms the main foundation of the maintenance of peace, if contrary or diverging power interests are assumed. But what do we mean by the balance of power in the closing decades of this century?

A general balance, or a balance of all aspects of power? Worldwide balance, or a separate balance in respect of every region? Can the various aspects of power be converted, does the preponderance of one party in some region neutralise the preponderance of the other party in another region?

Can it considered a balance if the situation is balanced militarily but one party has overwhelming economic power, or the other way round?

These are, of course, questions which can only be answered by scholarship, and even by scholarship only in a multidisciplinary and long-term way of thinking.

*

Unfortunately, in the course of the—otherwise absolutely necessary—co-operation between scholarship and the political-economic leadership, it is rather the scholars who adjust to the short-term reference system of political-economic problems, and it is not the political-economic leadership that learns to practise the long-term complex way of thinking which is more necessary at this stage than ever before.

Of course, problems of this nature cannot be solved overnight, but at the time of such major changes economists must do everything in their power to approach the new problems using new and better methods.

THE RENEWAL OF THE SOCIALIST PLANNED ECONOMY

by

BÉLA CSIKÓS-NAGY

In nineteenth-century socialist thinking capitalist private ownership and the market mechanism were closely interlinked. Economists were generally convinced that the workers had to be liberated from the domination of not only the capitalists but also of the market. In socialist eyes the market was antihumanitarian. The equilibrium price was thought to rest on debarring people from consumption. The market-clearing function of price invevitably raises the problem of rich and poor, affluence and poverty, and as such it contradicts the idea of just distribution. Almost certainly this was the reason why Karl Marx thought that the market had to be eliminated in the first phase of the building of the communist society. This is why he considered essential in "The Critique of the Gotha Programme" that labour should be paid for in kind and not in wages, in the form of work authorization vouchers and not in cash.[1]

Following the 1917 Russian Revolution, the Soviet Union kept itself to the Marxist recommendations for socialist social arrangements. Barter economy was introduced for the short period we call war communism. It became clear, however, that the elimination of commerce and the money function brought in its wake an extraordinary number of disadvantages, and that reconstruction following war and civil war, particularly the generation of broad social activity necessary for progress, could not be hoped for in that way. Therefore money, price, commerce, and in general the categories of the market economy were brought into operation again. Lenin justified the necessity of the introduction of the New Economic Policy thus defined arguing that life showed that we had made a mistake.[2] After war communism the Soviet Union employed a special kind of commodity production as part of preparations for a planned economy, which we could call the classical model of socialist commodity production. This model rested on the following major hypotheses:

1 It is not possible to treat commodity production and capitalist production as equal. Capitalism cannot be imagined without commodity production, but commodity production is possible even when there are no capitalists.

2 The capitalist way of production assumes that the means of production are in private hands and that workers deprived of the means of production must sell their labour power as a commodity. This is how the organization of production based on the combination of land, capital, and labour takes shape in capitalism. The socialization of the means of production leads back to the simple commodity production practised before capitalism. There the process of production is a labour process and as such the combination of labour performed in the given phase of production (live labour) and labour already performed in earlier phases of production (dead labour) in the form of the means of production.

3 The economic organization work of the socialist state relying on planning, measures considered in advance would enable the *ante factum* assertion of a rule that can only be asserted *post factum* in capitalism. At this point organizedness and disorganization, consciousness and spontaneity arise as opposites. The distinguishing marks of socialism on the one hand, and those of capitalism on the other.

In judging this model we must not leave out of account the background in the midst of which arrangements for the socialist planned economy were made in the Soviet Union.

Until the end of the Second World War, the Soviet Union existed in the world economy as the only socialist country which had to cope with the complicated tasks of economic development faced with an international challenge. Under the given circumstances the socialist planned economy could only develop as a closed national system of economic control made possible by the vast territory of the Soviet Union and her abundance of natural resources.

Under the given circumstances the material-technical interdependencies were decisive in the development of the production structure. In addition, the Soviet Union gave preference to the development of heavy industry in the Five-Year Plans setting out from the premise that this would accelerate the further development of the forces of production and make possible the reorganization of the economy on the basis of the most advanced technology as soon as possible. Curtailing consumption seemed necessary in order to achieve this goal. The important role of the strictest saving in the success of social and economic progress was insisted on a number of times in the Soviet Union during the development phase between the two wars.

Such economic policy takes for granted a strong central control and economic constraints. The Soviet socialist planned economy developed along these lines and produced a special, socialist form of commodity production, where the basis of control was the system of obligatory plan targets. The mechanism of planning directives made possible the evaluation of not only the activities of enterprises on the basis of the fulfilment of planned targets, but also the central controls in determining the product structure as well as in distributing the means of production. The central regulation of investments, export and import contingencies, central product management, and the administrative price and wage system established a highly centralized organization.

Between the two world wars, the Soviet Union became an industrial great power by virtue of this system of economic control. In addition, the government-controlled economic mechanism proved itself capable of avoiding the 1929–31 Great Depression. It is clearly right to look on this system as the classic model of a socialist planned economy.

The countries that started on the path of socialism after the Second World War regarded the classic model of socialist planned economy developed in the Soviet Union as a basic example and carried out the transformation of social and economic changes accordingly. They did that also because at the time this seemed the only possible course, for they considered the realization of full employment as soon as possible as the most important aim. The only way that was possible was the intensification of economic contacts with the Soviet Union. The abundance of natural resources in the Soviet Union and the vast absorptive market there provided favourable conditions.

The socialist countries thus began closely cooperating with one another and established the CMEA. Their subsequent rapid industrialization soon eliminated unemployment, which they had inherited from capitalism and made use of the labour of women, who had earlier been engaged on domestric duties only, even when collectivization reduced the labour demand of agriculture. The driving force was the view that as many as possible new jobs in the non-agricultural sectors were needed. Extensive industrialization seemed the most appropriate solution. The characteristic of such industrialization is precisely that the transformation of the production structure gains expression primarily in the physical factors of growth, in the increase of the number of machines and of the industrial labour force and in the quantitative expansion of the engineering industry.

But rapid industrialization had unfavourable side-effects that grew apace in size and intensity. Some of the problems arose from government plans, which specified aims in excess of the load-bearing capacity of the economy,

and this then led to upsets of economic equilibrium. We could also say that the disorder of the equilibrium became the general and steady companion of economic growth. In its socio-economic effects this manifested itself in regularly changing forms. That in turn was the inevitable consequence of the chronic disorder of equilibrium, which had to be dealt with by economic policy. That could cope with existing problems only by creating others.

Excess-demand caused by over-investment led to

—large producers syphoning off materials from small-scale producers;

—the sector producing capital goods robbing the sector which produces consumer goods;

—and collective consumption curtailed individual consumption.

Material came to dominate man, which was also the hotbed of various forms of damage to social property. Considering this question one must not overlook the fact that the disorders of the equilibirium emerged when prices were frozen, therefore inflation could manifest itself only in covert forms.

All this produced a peculiar psychosis of shortages. The economy of shortages is a special form of excess-demand, which postulates first of all that selling is no problem, but getting replacements for material is, and secondly that the enterprise can—one way or another—find financial backing for procurable resources.[3]

This created disputes about socialist economic control. Two radically different opinions became crystallized. One wanted to improve central planning, to improve the efficiency of the system, while the other wished to increase the scope of the market. The starting-point of the former was that the difficulties of the operation of the socialist economy also arose owing to insufficient understanding of the mechanism of central control. Thus they looked for the solution of the problem along this line. They argued that improved forecasts and systems theory relying on computers would improve controls. They considered that the efficient allocation of the factors of production could be solved by mathematical programming. The latter set out from the assumption that the operational disorders of the socialist economy was due to the faulty mechanism of socialist commodity production. Those who sought the solution of the problem along this line considered that such conditions had to be developed in the functional order of the economy, through which rational attitudes could become dominant in management.

The perfection of central planning is, naturally, necessary even if otherwise steps ensuring respect for the laws of commodity production are regarded as the principal direction through which the more efficient functioning of the socialist economy can be achieved. Thus in reality the aim is to reconcile

the two. An increasing number of economists have agreed that the best chance for greater economic efficiency opens up when decisions are made where price information is quick and regular. But in computer age, when the opportunity of mathematical programming and making plan variations emerges in government planning, there could be men who argue that economic efficiency can only be achieved given powerful centralized control.

The socialist market economy

The question of what is the basis of variations of the model of socialist commodity production must inevitably arise. The market can function as a comprehensive regulator, but also as a partial regulator. Even the motives of direct product exchange can be fitted within the framework of commodity production. Looking at it from this aspect commodity production has three major features.

1 There is no vacuum in the commodity economy. The market regulates everything provided the government does not put obstacles in the way of its functioning. Thus alternatives of market regulation arise depending on whether the government wants to rely on the market mechanism in shaping the economic process, on where and in what way it pursues policies that disengage the market. This is why the opportunity for using alternatives differing from the classic model of the socialist economy is also present.

2 In the function of the market-disengaging or market-limiting policy, the government ultimately influences the efficiency of commodity production. The government must act in full knowledge of this. Commodity production can produce the expected results only if it obeys its own laws. Thus the omnipotence of the state is in reality an empty hypothesis when we consider government regulations in this total effect.

3 The laws of commodity production are based on biological, sociological, psychological, etc. laws, where man acts with the least exertion of power, endeavouring to obtain the highest return and offers maximum performance only on tracks laid down by self-interest. When government regulation disregards this, the market will find illegal channels where hedonism will cut a path. But when the second economy grows, then social morale will weaken and the view will spread which holds that the paths of meeting the needs and individual success part company with the limits given by law. This is a dangerous prospect, which is sufficient cause in itself to start the socio-economic renewal process.

Every realistically possible variation of socialist economic control is a comprehensive system of planning, regulation, and organization. Thus if one is seeking the renewal of the socialist economy in the interest of greater economic efficiency, one will have to meet the relevant requirements in respect of each of the three sub-systems of control. Approached from the aspect of the *planning system*, this model

—necessitates on the one hand a switch to value-centred planning from volume-centred planning in order to adjust to supply and demand,

—and on the other a switch from closed-system planning to open planning in the interest of adjusting to the changing conditions of economic growth.

Volume-centred planning disregards the commodity character of the product of labour and thus the circumstance that the price of the product of labour changes in the process of economic growth accompanied by structural transformation for objective reasons. Thus, however, planning breaks the link between the concept expressed in the plan and the world of commodities, even though the efficiency created by the concept is formed in the function of market relations. This is why it is necessary to switch from the planning of inputs measured at unchanged prices to the planning of prices in the wake of the economic reform, where

—the price level increases in the function of excess-demand (planned inflation),

—and the relative price of products changes in the function of supply and demand.

Closed-system planning disregards changes which may occur in the course of the implementation of the plan differing from the hypotheses that was the foundation of the plan. What the openness of the plan wants to emphasize is precisely the point that under changed conditions any deviation from the plan either in a favourable direction or in an adverse one does no harm but expresses the requirement of planned order.

Planning adjusted to planned regulation of the market was first present in Hungary in the course of preparing the Five-Year Plan for 1971 to 1975. The essence of that was that the complex plan of the national economy was not broken down to enterprise level, and that a distinction was made on the national economic level

—between plan figures (plan targets) obligatory for certain state (social) organizations on the one hand;

—and the material with which the plan reckoned on the other hand, to serve as guide in economic decisions.

Plan figures obligatory at the national economic level were fitted into the concrete system of economic control. Outwardly they did not appear as plan

figures but as direct means of economic policy regulations. Experience showed that in the great majority of instances conditions could be established for enterprises, which ensured their adjustment to planned targets at the national economic level even in the autonomous system of decisions of the enterprises. When that happens there is no outside indication that the freedom of decision of the enterprise would be restricted in accordance with some obligatory planning target. The material with which the national economy reckoned is at the same time important information for the relevant government (social) organizations, since they can interpret the scheme which the plan kept in mind in outlining the process of economic development only when they possess it.[4]

A whole arsenal of economic means is available for the central regulation of the economy. Production and distribution policy, prices and incomes policy, and budget and monetary policy provide a framework. The financial (budget and money) policy stands out giving an opportunity for regulating in an indirect way. Putting it differently: the regulation of production and distribution, price and incomes invariably means direct intervention. Contrary to that, financial regulation may be direct or indirect.

The principal dilemma in the shaping of the system of economic control is the consideration of what kind of means the government should use to achieve some target, and how it should use that. In reality this is the problem of the relation between economic policy decisions taken administratively and economic decisions subjected to market impulses. The qualitative difference between the two cannot be dimmed by the consideration that the state can also act under market impulses. On the one hand, the information system of the administration is biased, and on the other its methods are bureaucratic. It does not follow at all that regulations could be fitted into the framework of price automatism in the socialist market economy. In fact planned progress cannot be achieved with a policy in conformance with the market.

The essence of a policy in conformance with the market is that the government can do many things that influence the market conditions but nothing that restricts the automatism of prices. Direct regulation must take place within the system of the market automatism. An economic policy conforming to the market allows only restricted government activity even when that is narrowed down to financial policy. Besides that, this economic policy is a non-selective (therefore normative) economic policy. The government cannot differentiate, cannot place one sector of production in a more favourable position at the expense of the others. It must ensure equal conditions.[5]

And yet such an economic policy contains some elements acceptable also to socialist market regulation. In the first place it is opportune to give preference to this method of regulation instead of direct regulation when a target can be reached through indirect regulation. In the second place when an aim cannot be achieved by indirect regulation, it is not at all certain that direct regulation could offer a solution. The market-conforming economic-political view calls attention to self-control in government regulation. If an order of preference could at all be established regarding economic regulations, it could be this: Budgetary and monetary regulations are more suitable than natural regulators; and indirect monetary regulators are better than direct regulators.

A non-selective (normative) economic policy also contains positive elements. When economic means are used in a differentiated manner, those in control must know the answers to some questions. Where is the limit to preferences? What are the criteria that provide the basis of preference? What should determine the extent of preferences? Keeping these questions in mind may in itself save us from the indiscriminate application of selection. Avoidance of the latter is an important condition for ensuring that the market mechanism should fulfil its rational distributive function. Once economic policy is dominated by selective principles, the allocative role of the market is deprived of its rational contents.

The planning concept defines the manner of market regulation, but the economic mechanism controls the planning concept at the same time. When the means of the economic policy are derived from the planning concept, their suitability for fitting into the accepted system of the economic mechanism is also studied. The point that offers an appropriate start for such investigation is that the necessity of asserting direct means over a wide field is a sure indication that economic policy-defined targets exceed the load-bearing capacity of the economy. Disputes on that point really mean the ciritical analysis of the planning concept. That is how the economic mechanism reacts on the economic political concept.

An organizational system which makes possible efficient centralized control is an accessory of the classic model of the socialist planned economy. In this system a specialized macro-level controlling machinery (the ministries) establishes the conditions of breaking down the plan and the control of enterprise activities on the basis of plan targets. The same system also brings about endeavours to create monopoly organizations. The state monopoly assumes the form of enterprise monopoly in this model, which is expressed in organizational integration and the acquisition of a profile. Concentration on a particular profile may create a monopoly situation even in industrial

sectors, where several enterprises operate and the technological resource would make possible parallel production. The concentration of all kinds of activities facilitates the control of the economy for the administration. Financial interests linked with the fulfilment or overfulfilment of the plan figures are an additional motive.

Contrary to that, the socialist market economy demands a kind of organization, which establishes a system of horizontal connections adjusted to the production process and keeps in mind the requirements of marketing. Here competition also gets an important role. Naturally, socialist ownership and the state monopoly of basic economic activities impose restrictions on competition:

—There is no land and capital market based on private ownership. Yet a land and capital market may exist also on a socialist basis. Market relations amongst socialized production units may exist not only in the sphere of products, but also in the sphere of factors of production;

—Where there is a market, there is also competition. The question is only if the latter exists in a perfect or an imperfect form, and in the latter instance, what are its limitations. Distinguishing between state monopoly and enterprise monopoly is essential in the socialist system. The mere fact that an activity can only be pursued by state organizations does not mean that a monopoly policy is justified.

—A labour market also exists, although it may seem peculiar that we regard labour as a commodity in a socialist country.

Enterprise autonomy, responsibility for decisions, thus also the bearing of risks are indivisible features of regulation based on economic means. For this reason only the return (gross income, or the profit) can be the criterion of success. These are all necessary to ensure that price formation based on market factors should keep demand and supply in harmony with one another.

The Reform Process

Disputes about the control system have accompanied virtually the whole period of socialism and produced features differing from country to country, creating different changes in their wake. In part this can be traced back to objective reasons. The countries in question differed from one another in respect of development standards of the forces of production, socio-economic structure and concrete conditions of economic growth. The socialist countries thus could not have a single system of economic control identical in every feature. But beyond the objective reasons the economic control systems

of socialist countries differed from one another also because they differed in their judgement of some of the fundamental questions of the planned economy.

Some economists argued in favour of a more thorough exploitation of the regulative mechanism of commodity and market relations as early as the early fifties in Yugoslavia, and around the mid-fifties in some other socialist countries. The writings of B. Kidric in Yugoslavia, J. Liebermann in the Soviet Union, Sun Yefang in China, W. Brus in Poland and Gy. Péter in Hungary[6] were particularly noteworthy amongst these manifestations. Sun Yefang expressed most clearly an enterprise autonomy based on interest in profits and the activization of the market mechanism on that basis, when he expounded the thesis of "macro-level planning and micro-level freedom". As against this, J. Liebermann wanted to give a greater role in regulation only to an interest in profits fitted into the framework of control by planning directives.

Radical changes in the socialist planned economy occurred at that time only in Yugoslavia (1952) and in Hungary (1957, 1968). In a way, that is only natural. Yugoslavia is a country of many nations, regions, and cultures, and considerable differences in economic development. The introduction of a uniform system of prices and wages raised serious problems following the country's switch to a socialist planned economy, since the equalization of incomes destroyed energies of growth. The declaration of the principle of self-management and the decentralization of the regulation based on that established an appropriate ideological basis for the restoration on harmony between the state of forces of production and prices and wages.

In the instance of Hungary, concentration on the future that neglected the needs of individuals, and hostility to small-minded authority rendered the introduction of a new economic political regime inevitable after the events of 1956. An Economic Committee was set up in 1956 for the exploration of the shortcomings and errors of economic policy. The Committee completed its work in a relatively short time and submitted its recommendations in the form of a comprehensive document. It proposed that

— new criteria be defined for government planning: the policy to be pursued must ensure the proper progress of agriculture and the tertiary sector as well as industry;

— economic regulation should be separated from the planning system, that is the obligatory plan figures should be substituted by economic measures;

— enterprise autonomy based on an interest in profits should be introduced; direct intervention should be limited to specific, important instances;

— a prices and incomes policy in harmony with the activization of the market mechanism should be introduced;

— competition should be made part of the planning system in order to achieve better adjustment of supply and demand and to establish a favourable economic environment for technical progress.

The Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party accepted these recommendations as the fundamental framework of the new economic policy. Significant measures were introduced as early as 1957. The fundamental change occurred first of all in agricultural policy. The compulsory delivery of agricultural products was discontinued. The economic reform of 1968 further developed the new economic policy introduced after 1956. The reform discontinued the regulation of the economic processes on the basis of direct central planning directives. In harmony with that measue the economic reform demanded the establishment of a pricing system that would give suitable guidance to decisions. The 1968 economic reform made planned price fluctuations the subjcet of selective policy by the switch from the official price system to a mixed price mechanism.

Measures already introduced (the introduction of new organizational forms, new forms of enterprise autonomy, the bank reform, etc.) and planned (taxation reform, reform of the accounting system, reform of the system of information, etc.) in the eighties constitute a further vigorous advance towards the development of socialist market economy in Hungary.

When comparing the Yugoslav and the Hungarian economic reform, reference to four differing features seems to be important.

1 Concerning *price formation*, Hungary—in the interest of a better adjustment to demand-supply relations—introduced a flexible price mechanism by including in the price mechanism itself price fixing and the limitation of price movements on strategic points, thus securing an anti-inflationary policy. Yugoslavia, on the other hand, wanted to lay the foundations of market-orientated price mechanism, in which—according to the original ideas—the task of the price office would be limited to the inspection of actions belonging to the sphere of the order of the market.

2 In *controlling wages*, an autonomous management of wages was permitted to enterprises in Hungary. Enterprises could realize wage relations in collective bargaining created with the trade unions. At the same time the government preserved its influence on the general process of wage development. The fixed lowest and highest limits of wages for different jobs served this and so did the elements of the enterprises' taxation, connected with the movement of wages. As against this, in Yugoslavia the income of workers is controlled—in theory—by the market price, by the gross income arising

within it, the taxes levied on the gross income and, finally, a free distribution of the net income between development and personal income.

3 *Profit* is the success criterion of enterprises in Hungary. This is a natural consequence of the fact that competitiveness and the recovery of capital are the principle to be pursued by enterprises. As against this in Yugoslavia the workers' self-management introduced a system of accounting and calculation coincidental with that of cooperatives. Since there are no wages there the success criterion can only be the gross income. On the other hand, when judging competitiveness enterprises take into account the input supplemented by personal incomes.

4 In one form or another *workshop democracy* is to be found in every socialist country. This holds good particularly in such spheres of the economy where workshop democracy is in a closer connection with the workers' conditions of labour and where their interests need a stronger protection. Compared to this the workers' self-management is racidally different, for in it everything —from the election of the director to the liquidation of the enterprise—is considered to be the workers' internal business. Up to 1982 the model generally realized in socialist countries was valid in Hungary too. Since then only public services, cultural units and some major industrial enterprises have remained under government control. Certain major state-owned enterprises, and, in general, medium-sized enterprises are controlled by the enterprise council. The competent minister can veto essential decisions (e.g. the appointment of a director). Smaller enterprises are in charge of their boards.

Principles mentioned in the above four points have undergone some changes, which are more significant in the Yugoslav model than in the Hungarian one, since in the frame of an absolutely liberalized model restrictions had to be used to a lesser or greater extent. In the function of the actual situation these restrictions may extend to the control of prices and incomes, to export and import alike. In Hungary perceptible changes are to be found rather in the order of material supply. The deteriorating conditions of the international division of labour have lead in marketing policy to central interventions and restrictions alien to the model of control. The grave deterioration of the terms of foreign trade experienced in both countries since the 1970s, and the relatively weak adjustment to it triggered off the processes that have led to divergences from the model originally conceived.

In the 1970s new features emerged in the Yugoslav economic control system. The inspection carried out by the Chamber of Commerce grew stronger, and, as a result, a cooperative system came into being between the self-management units, while the market competition in the classic meaning of the term survived in economy limited to foreign relations only.[7]

Distinguished attention should be paid to the resolution passed in December 1978 in China concerning the transformation of the system of economic control. Analysing the Chinese reform process in comparison with its Hungarian counterpart seems opportune in order to better understand the issues. Seeing the Chinese reforms in this light three characteristics will be found. Thus

— the reform process is developing faster in China;

— the reform is of a single type in agriculture;

— but a different schedule is employed in industry, that is the proclaimed aim represents—at least at this time—a special transition between the classic model of the socialist planned economy and the socialist market economy.

The resolution passed in China in December 1978 was more or less parallel with the one passed in 1957 in Hungary by the Communist Party, which was reorganized in 1956. The reform process began on the basis of the Party resolution in 1979, and during the eight years that passed since more was done there than happened in Hungary between 1957 and 1964. Thus a Bankruptcy Act was proclaimed almost simultaneously in both of these countries. Indeed, China has already gone further in importing foreign equity capital. The difference of approach is evident also in the price system where the steps taken in China in lifting the restrictions on consumer prices equalled the effect of the series of steps introduced gradually in Hungary over almost ten years.

Both countries discontinued the compulsory delivery of agricultural products, gave the green light to the development of cottage industries and developed the integration of family communities with a large cooperative farms. The differences in detail, however, within these general limits are evident. The relationship between cooperative farms and household farms is important in Hungary while the development standard of the large-scale agro-technology is relatively high. The principal area of cooperation is the intensification of animal husbandry, for which household farms are particularly suitable. The mechanization of crop growing is still at a very low level in China. The principal area of integration is the intensification of land utilization.

The difference is also substantial in the organization of industry. As Ho Chien-Chang put it, the Chinese system couples direct planning (obligatory and decisive planning) with indirect planning (free production). Therefore the market mechanism fills a supplementary role there.[8]

Placing industrial prices on realistic bases was accomplished in Hungary by the 1959 price reform. This facilitated the freeing of part of the prices in

1968, as well as the discontinuation of the practice of the central distribution of the means of production. Restrictions on sales were lifted and prices freed from 1968 in principle with the proviso that the government may limit prices as far and as long as the situation of the day demands it. Contrasting with that a three-tier system of distribution and prices was introduced in China:

— About 50–50 per cent of the means of production are centrally distributed at centrally fixed prices;

— A further 25–35 per cent of the means of production are distributed in the provinces at regionally differentiated fixed prices. (These prices are higher than those fixed by the central authorities.)

— About 15 per cent of the quantity of the means of production is freely marketable. The sector, which more or less corresponds to the supplementary industrial branches of cooperative farms, village and small-town industrial cooperatives and the private sector in Hungary, was given its freedom from the aspect of both production and prices. In addition to these free market activities and prices are permitted in a number of industrial sectors to quantities produced in excess of the plan, and in respect of marginal quantities (2–3 per cent) if their plan is fulfilled. This explains why the revision of the three-channel distribution of the mean of production and the resulting three-tier industrial price system seems the most urgent aim in the restructuring of Chinese economic control.

The eighties can be generally described as the blossoming of a reform process that points towards a socialist market economy. The process became general in the wake of the revolutionary change proclaimed in the Soviet Union. The first steps in that direction have been taken.

The opening of the scissors between the planned and the actual processes in the past five years prompted the Soviet Union to reach that decision. The rate of growth declined more than planned, and capital efficiency deteriorated. They intend now to reverse this adverse process. They want to increase the 2–3 per cent annual rate of growth, which became stabilized in the first half of the eighties, first to 4 per cent, then to 5 per cent in spite of the increasing shortage of resources.

Such a change is attainable only through the acceleration of technical progress, and that only by considerable improvements in efficiency. This is why the control system which played a part in the development of adverse conditions is now subjected to powerful criticism.[9] There is, however, a circumstance that must be mentioned. The discussion organized in 1926 by the Communist Academy of the Soviet Union on the subject of "The Law of Value in the Soviet Union" is worth studying. The Soviet economists ap-

proached the subject of a socialist economic order from the anti-market standpoint.[10] They regarded the elimination of war communism and the market relations introduced by Lenin as a brief transition. In their estimate the time needed for the building of socialism and the realization of communism was about ten to twenty years.[11] The transition to communism was kept on the agenda for decades even though problems in the supply of goods did not diminish in spite of price restrictions. The programme of the early sixties and passed as a resolution of the Party Congress stipulated that the stage, where part of the products of labour would become free possessions and the conditions of transition to Communism would in essence develop, would occur in 1980.[12]

It follows from the nature of things that when socialist commodity production is regarded as a brief period of transition only, which has to be passed as soon as possible, than the party line would place at the focus of economic organization activity of the state the presumedly timely tasks of the transition to communism, and not the development of commodity production. By doing that, however, it sets up a legal framework for the economy and establishes an institutional order which would increasingly paralyse the growth forces inherent in commodity production.

The view that the classic model of the socialist planned economy was capable of efficiently dealing with extensive development, but problems arose when reserves became depleted and thus results in the future can only be expected from the intensive development, gained expression only in the debates which preceded the Hungarian economic reform.

Economists arrived at the same recognition in the Soviet Union too, but the changes decided in 1956 and in 1965 were doomed to failure because of the restraining force of bureaucratic conservativism. This could be the explanation of the fact that the radical change of 1986–87 placed the improvement of staff selection and training and the development of democracy at the centre of attention, in that way differing from the 1968 Hungarian reform. In general the processes started in the Soviet Union cover the economy, society, intellectual life, and the lives of ordinary people.

The Soviet Communist Party seems to have laid down in 1987–1988 the guiding principles of the new economic control system, on grounds of which it is to be hoped that as early as in the 1980s

1. by means of a more flexible price mechanism a basic price reform will be introduced, in which government price fixing will be maintained only in the sphere of strategic products;

2. the central control and allocation of materials or rather the general quota system will be terminated; the trade of means of production is to be

introduced, and the circulation of the means of production will be—at least partly—liberalized;

3. enterprise wage control will be given a definite framework, which will increase the significance of collective bargaining between enterprises and trade unions.

By these measures and others in harmony with them the Soviet Union will take significant steps towards a socialist market economy.

The significance of the social and economic renewal initiated by the leadership of the Soviet Communist Party is especially underlined by the effect it exerts on socialist thinking all over the world and in particular on the actual socio-economic system of the socialist countries. Regulation by planning directives was discontinued in Poland already in 1982, and, according to a resolution passed in Czechoslovakia, the control of the 1991–95 Five-Year Plan will be based on economic regulators. It is also common knowldge that Bulgaria has for decades been seeking methods of economic control which would promote resilient adjustment to the changing conditions and the blossoming of initiative.

The exhaustion of the reserves of extensive development also raises in a new way the problems of the division of labour within the CMEA as well those of East-West economic relations. What appeared a specific problem from the point of the foreign-trade sensitive Hungarian national economy two decades ago, became an increasingly general issue. The policy of isolation expressed by the CMEA concept after the Second World War and still used as the basis of the integration resolution in 1971 must be given up for objective reasons.

It is clearly evident now that this policy caused an unfavourable situation to the socialist countries, particularly in the links they were establishing with the developing world, even though they endeavoured to increase the share of these countries in their foreign trade. The other point that became evident is that the CMEA, as a whole, cannot escape the need to improve technologies and work discipline. The various CMEA countries separately can achieve this only if they build up-to-date forms of cooperation adjusted to their own economic resources. For this reason the reform efforts of the various socialist countries are less and less considered in isolation, or as still-born experiments, but rather as initiatives that are part of the general process of renewal.

Epilogue

A few final thoughts seem appropriate. The first thing that must be stressed is that the socialist market economy is not the alternative of the socialist planned economy, as many people interpret the debate of plan v. market. The necessity for a planned economy could hardly be questioned for anybody as long as the means of production are publicly owned. The maintenance of the market economy is similarly an objective necessity provided socialist society does not discontinue commodity production. After all, a commodity is the market form of the product of labour. Thus the anti-market position becomes irrational as soon as one adopts the position of socialist commodity production.

If we consider all this, then the plan v. market debate loses its point. How could market relations be interpreted as a process that limits production, when otherwise everybody agrees that the possibility for a direct exchange of products does not exist, when all of the tendencies towards a natural economy missed the target. First an abundance of products must be established for that, and the need to economize must be overcome.

What is the reality behind the plan v. market dispute? A cruel struggle fought by bureaucracy with the market mechanism. In simple terms the fact is that bureaucracy gets the better of the plan. But it can do so only if it opposes all manifestations of spontaneity. If spontaneity can be labelled as a characteristic of capitalism, then this provides sufficient basis for considering the bureaucratically interpreted state organization as the essential feature of the socialist planned economy. In that event plan and government planning directives, rationality, and carrying out directives, incentives, and an interest in the implementation of directives can be treated as equal.

The aim of the economic reform is not the establishment of a problem-free economy. The illusion suggesting that every substantial problem of social life is the product of capitalism, so that the liquidation of capitalism may also signal the end of eternal human and social conflicts, cannot be maintained. The idealized model outlined by the political economy of socialism made the hypothesis concerning the omnipotence of the socialist state dominant at a time. There the state emerged as the perfect conomic organizer, an institution possessing foresight, a clear comprehension of the complicated inner connections of the economy and thus capable of taking the economy on a problem-free course. We are all aware that this is not so. The activization of the market mechanism is in reality the alternative open to a very poorly functioning bureaucracy.

NOTES

[1] For this very reason Marx considered essential to compensate work done not by wages, but by vouchers. The Critique of the Gotha Programme. Marx-Engels, Selected Works in one volume. Moscow, Progress Publishers, 1977, 311–331.

[2] *V. I. Lenin:* Fourth anniversary of the October Revolution. Lenin, Selected Works. Moscow, Progress Publishers, 1977 639–644.

[3] There is a vast literature on the functional disorders of the socialist economy, but J. Kornai's "The Shortage" is perhaps the best (See *János Kornai:* A hiány (The shortage), Budapest, 1980.

[4] *Ákos Balassa:* A magyar népgazdaság tervezésének alapja (The Basis of Planning of the Hungarian National Economy), Budapest, 1979, is the best review on the subject.

[5] W. Röpke formulated the hypothesis of an economic policy that conforms with the market.

Engen von Böhm-Bawerk: Macht oder ökonomisches Gesetz? *Zeitschrift für Volkswirtschaft, Sozialpolitik und Verwaltung.* 1914. Vol. XIII.

Böhm-Bawerk's position was also argued by theorists of a socialist market economy. *F. Oppenheimer:* Kapitalismus—Kommunismus—Wissenschaftlicher Sozialismus. Berlin und Leipzig, 1919.

[6] See: *B. Kidric:* Sabraba Dela. 4 vols. Belgrad, 1960. *J. Liebermann:* Article in the September 9, 1962 issue of *Pravda. Sun Shan-Ching, Vu Ching-Lien, Chang Cho-Jüan, Hao Chün-Chao, Mao Tien-Chi:* An attempt to expound the socialist economic theoretical system of Sun-Yefang. Chingchi Jenchiu 1983/1.

W. Brus: Über die Rolle des Wertgesetzes in der sozialistischen Wirtschaft. *Wirtschaftwissenschaft,* Berlin, 1957. No. 1.

György Péter: A gazdaságosság és a jövedelmezőség jelentősége a tervgazdálkodásban (The significance of efficiency and profitability in the planned economy). Budapest, 1956.

[7] The change of models can be studied in detail in the work of one of the developers of the new theory. See: *M. Samardzia:* Drustvene pretpostavke za funkcionisanjei dalju izgradnju samoupravne robne proizvodnje. In: *Problemi i pravi razvoja samoupravnog privrednog sistema.* Beograd, 1970.

[8] *Ho Chien-Chang:* Once more on planned economy and market regulation. Social Sciences in China, Peking, 1982. No. 12.

[9] The central executive of the Economic Society and the Economics Department of the Soviet Academy of Sciences held a national conference in Moscow on November 13–15, 1986 with the participation of *Ekonomicheskaya Gazeta,* the weekly of the Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party on the subject of "Problems of the professional organization of the economic control." The material of the conference was published in the No. 46 and subsequent issues of *Ekonomicheskaya Gazeta.* I should like to call particular attention to:

L. Abalkin: Production relations and economic mechanism. (No. 46.)

M. Petrakov and *J. Yasin:* Economic methods of control. (No. 47.)

G. Yegiazarian, J. Gaydar, A. Shobin, V. Shcherbakov: Assertion of the principle of distribution according to performance. (No. 48.)

A. G. Aganbegbyan: Statement of the president of the Organizing Committee of the conference to the weekly's reporter on economists exploring the possibilities. (No. 48.)

The report of the General Secretary of the Soviet Communist Party, M. Gorbachev, to the January 1987 sitting of the Central Committee of the CPSU merits special attention. He stressed that the leadership of the country did not realize in time and to the full extent the necessity for changes, the danger posed by the proliferation of crisis symptoms in society, and could not work out the precise direction of overcoming these symptoms primarily for subjective reasons.

Prejudice concerning the role of money and commodity relations, the functioning of the law of values, indeed, their frequent counterposing with socialism gave rise to voluntarist methods in the economy and led to the undervaluation of the importance of economic calculation. It introduced subjective motives into price formation, violated the laws of money circulation and thus the problems of regulating demand and supply attention—Mikhail Gorbachev emphasized. He was convinced that these were part of the reason why the growth rate of the national income fell to half of the former rate, that most of the plan figures were not fulfilled since the early seventies.

[10] The 1926 debate on the law of values in the Soviet Union. (Translated into Hungarian by the author of the Introduction and the Epilogue, István Mihalik.) *Politikai Gazdaságtan Füzetek,* No. 25. Az Oktatási Minisztérium Marxizmus–Leninizmus Főosztálya, 1979.

[11] See several Stalin reports prepared for the Party Congresses of the USSR.

[12] In his report General Secretary N. S. Khrushchev outlined the programme-draft of the 1960–1980 period to the 22nd Congress of the CPSU in 1961, referring to the transition to communism.

TECHNICAL PROGRESS, SOCIALIST OWNERSHIP AND THE STATE

by

MÁRTON TARDOS

Technical progress and innovation is one of the important elements of social progress even if it is not the only one. Why then is technical renewal inadequate, and productivity in Hungary weak and why does the country seem incapable of rapid progress even after two decades of the beginning of the reform process? The explanation is to be sought under a number of headings, and the end of economic growth in Hungary lends particular timeliness to these questions.

Immediately after the end of the Second World War when the aftermath of destruction prevented European countries more highly developed than Hungary from starting out on a course of development, the pace of the rebuilding during rapid socialist transformation, the momentum of agrarian development after the land reform and the promises of the socialist transformation gave the Hungarian population confidence that the position the country occupied in the world economy would improve, that Hungary would soon catch up with the developed countries and that poverty would soon never exist here.

It did not take long, however, for the weaknesses of the development to become evident. From 1957 onwards new hope burgeoned with the ending of compulsory delivery of agricultural products, which left many peasants short of even seed to sow with, and the monumental, megalomaniac investment projects, which made consumers in towns and in the mining districts short of even the barest necessities. The announcement of the economic reform in 1968 justified further optimism, since the political powers that be not only promised changes but also demonstrated a serious determination to increase the standard of living, to improve the supply of goods and to lay

the foundations for general progress by discontinuing the system of planning directives and central distribution of materials, and by announcing a rationally regulated socialist management of the economy.

After experience of the changes, which seemed promising in the late sixties and early seventies, the current shock triggered by the emergence of stagnation and serious danger signs more than ten years ago, since aggravated, is not surprising. The situation worsened when the change promised for 1985, in other words after the "seven lean years", also failed to materialize. Attempts to explain away the symptoms by identifying the root of the problems principally in the (real) deterioration of terms of trade in both Western and Eastern markets and in certain external influences developing in the seventies, cannot be accepted.

The form of socialist economic development which proceeds along the traditional path came to the crossroads everywhere: it would either have to be content with the very restricted opportunities offered by a wasteful, autarchic economic management which shows little regard for consumer demand, or a break out of the situation is needed by way of reforms.

Fully recognizing this dilemma, Hungarian political authorities resolved to introduce profound changes in 1966–1968. Instead of insisting on an economy dominated by the state sectors, the programme opted in favour of competition between the state sector, the cooperative sectors and private enterprise. The decision was taken to trade instead of centrally distributing goods and to develop generally free prices in order to bring demand and supply into harmony instead of continuing with cost-plus pricing. It championed participation in the world market instead of a policy bent on autarchy or self-sufficiency. The intention was to turn business entities earlier controlled through planning directives into autonomous, profit-oriented enterprises and, finally, the aim was to increase worker participation in economic decisions.

The implementation of this programme, however, slowed down following 1972, after the first, successful years. There is sufficient evidence available now showing that the cause of the slow-down was not only external but also the fact that the political powers, following 1949, the year of change, were reluctant to make use of the scope offered by the economic strategy they had endorsed.

Covert attempts at recentralization began late in 1972 and ended only in 1978 under the effect of increasing deficits in the balance of payments. The unequivocal reemergence of a new wave of the reform only began in the press at that time. The practical course of the reform remained contradictory right to this day. The eighties became characterized partly by

a multi-faceted, even if not completely unambiguous advance of private business activities (under the label of 'small-scale entrepreneurial activities') and partly by the control of state and cooperative enterprises by various regulations and other methods.

Conditions for enterprise autonomy

No profound change was brought to this situation by the April 1984 resolution of the Central Committee of the HSWP. While ownership control by industrial ministries or local councils of most enterprises producing for the market was discontinued, this modification of their legal status brought no great changes to enterprise attitudes. Thus the evidence indicates that the new forms of management did nothing to further the stimulation of economic growth. The inadequacy of the changes is manifest in the low level of success-oriented economic activity on the part of the enterprises and in their persisting weakness in short-term adjustment. The poor performance of the economy in the years 1985–87 provide ample proof of this.

Any assessment of the situation calls for the consideration of two fundamental elements in the changes, at least in their broad outlines. Firstly, what needs to be done still to develop the subjective conditions of management, that is to ensure that the enterprises should really conduct themselves according to the logic of economics? Would the strengthening of the subjective side of management be sufficient for success? Starting from the recognition that mandatory planning cannot successfully coordinate supply and demand, it must also be understood that the market and its means, money, must be given decisive roles in the economy. What needs to be done to ensure this change of roles occurs?

First of all enterprises must be freed from the anything but benevolent, solicitous influence of the central organizations; they in fact pay no heed to the interests of enterprises while bureaucratically oppressing them under the pretence of national economic objectives. This compulsion—often misnamed paternalism—cannot be eliminated simply by the discontinuation of the ownership and supervisory rights of the state, as the evidence suggests. The force of compulsion was always mostly in the hands of the Ministry of Finance, the Materials and Prices Office and the Hungarian National Bank, and not in that of the bodies exercising the rights of ownership. The fundamental condition for enterprise autonomy is that the central authorities concentrate on the regulation of the circulation of money and foreign exchange in the hands of private people and enterprises instead of comparing

the importance of the objectives of various enterprises to see that the weak survive their difficulties with the help of money syphoned away from the better performers.

The new system of ownership rights giving a certain independence of the state administration is not simply a legal step. The characteristic of organizations active on the markets is that they have assets and endeavour to increase them. The purely legal limits on such behaviour had already been overcome, for instance, in the present cooperatives. Yet Hungarian cooperatives are still not acting in accordance with the logic of the market, even when they are pursuing their own objectives and not fulfilling the objectives of state bodies which are divorced from market demands. The reason for this is that they became used to consider the current incomes of their members and pay attention to the state of the assets of their cooperative only as a function of that. This attitude is, unquestionably, even more prevalent among the new forms of state enterprises. Within the limits of its restricted opportunities, the general meeting or the enterprise council entrusted with ownership supervision under the new rules, controls the activity of the enterprise only from the functional aspect of production and sales; they have almost no interest in the basic problems of management, for instance capital utilization, return and outlay.

Precisely for this reason the issue of how it would be possible to give free play the assets-directed control of enterprise management deserves serious consideration under the present circumstances in order to promote market-compatible management. The point that needs to be considered here is whether it would not be advisable to change the forms of enterprise management introduced after 1985 into modern corporations, capital-owning institutions (joint stock company, limited liability company, etc.). In respect of some of the capital produced in the recent past or right now, for instance, it could be advisable to increase the actual rights of employees by property issuing negotiable workers' shares or in some other form. Furthermore, the right of disposal of the rest of enterprise assets could possibly be handed over to existing financial bodies or others established for this purpose, banks, insurance companies, county or town councils, etc. This could happen under the terms of the Companies Act, in the form of shares or bonds. Channelling the assets of state enterprises operating on the market (not those of public utilities) into the hands of new institutional and individual owners would create a qualitatively new situation. The new owners would call upon the enterprise management to account for the profits and capital increase in their own interests—in harmony with the demands of the developed market. On the other hand, this form of market ownership is capable of substan-

tially restricting private ownership; this practice does not contradict the requirements of socialism.

Regulation outside the market

The new situation also creates new demands in respect of the trade unions. The employees of enterprises would need more vigorous protection of their interest vis-à-vis the new owners of capital, acting more efficiently than the former owners.

The unequivocal delineation of the framework of management by the government is of primary importance in establishing the conditions for modern and efficient management. I have already mentioned the most important demands in this respect, the ordering of the channels of financing, the codification of the rights of enterprises and the owners of capital. The role of the state prosperity policy, which I wish to mention here, is also important. The duties of government economic policy in promoting long-term development and supplementing the market, however, need some working out in detail. The conclusion of economics that the market—no matter how developed it may be—cannot adequately regulate everything is generally appreciated. Handling the "externalities" may remain the duty of state bodies. The most decisive of these are perhaps those with long-term aspects which can be easily overlooked by the system of decision of business entities linked to the logic of the calculation of compound interests. Public services—the arts and health—and education, training and basic research (which may be more closely related to the economic tasks), must be regarded as being outside the sphere of the economy. They must be handled wholly, or at least largely, directly by the state.

Apart from these, there are still numerous external effects for the regulation of which the market is not suitable, yet whose solution can in no way be undertaken only by the state. I should like to mention only two major areas here, environment protection and the introduction of fundamental technical changes. Both of these are closely linked with the management duties of enterprises, yet cannot be entrusted solely to enterprises. The drawing up of government programmes, taxation and subsidy systems cannot be avoided in these instances. But these must not be opposed to the requirements of the market as detailed above, that is that the budget must not be allowed to take responsibility for the risks taken by the enterprises.

The establishment of the socialist model of a developed market economy is the way to realization of social modernization and also of the solving of

acute economic and social problems. The positive side is that after the elimination of the dominating role of capitalist expropriation, it is certainly capable of bringing to an end the squandering of resources and of intensively utilizing the resources. It is capable of providing creative work for everybody and also of establishing the possibility of meeting the justifiable demands of citizens at a level of good quality. People will have to acknowledge that this is not a negligeable consideration; indeed, in real usefulness it is more beneficial than meeting the necessities in full or the seeking after the high, but romantic idea of equality.

ZSIGMOND JÁRAI

A GROWING BOND MARKET

The Hungarian bond market has now been in existence for some four years. Legislation on bond issues in Hungary was passed towards the end of 1982 and the first securities came on the market early in 1983. The years 1983–1984 were still a period of experimentation, of overcoming initial difficulties. The enterprises and local councils which had most promptly joined in then began to get used to the idea that money needed for development or investment could be borrowed not only from the state or the banks, but by direct recourse to the bond market.

True, this has also meant a departure from the routine of earlier times. Not merely a few public servants or bank officials but a wide circle of prospective bond buyers, often hundreds or thousands of firms and private individuals, must be convinced that the proposed investment is necessary and profitable and that the issuer will have enough money to redeem the bond and pay the interest.

The bond market became an everyday feature linked to management and private households in 1985–1986; the first half of 1987 brought an unparalleled upsurge. There are more than 200 bond issues worth some Ft 16,000 million on the market today.

Early experience

About one-hird of all bonds have been purchased by firms and cooperatives, two-thirds by private individuals. This form of saving is so widespread that more than a thousand enterprises and at least a hundred thousand private persons can today claim to be bondholders. The disputes which economists had engaged in over the necessity and usefulness of a bond market when it was launched have long since died down.

The most important experience of the first years can be summed up as follows:

The fact that a wide range of enterprises and councils have found an opportunity directly to draw on resources in the developing security market can contribute to speeding up the restructuring of the economy and to attaining economic and social aims.

Investments financed by the sale of securities as compared to total yearly investments are still undoubtedly negligible—a few per cent on the whole—but the significance of the market is greater than this. It is greater because it extends choice to all firms and cooperatives or councils and thus greater freedom of decision and action; it is greater also because this market allows access

at best to a source and this in turn promotes differentiation.

When preparing each bond issue, the transacting banks analyse carefully the finances and efficiency of the issuing enterprise or council, and bonds can be issued only if they can be serviced. The money of private individuals buying bonds must not be at risk, the issuers must make provision to cover interest payments and repayments of principal. Earlier this was only a demand, today it is an experience. Not once in the short history of the Hungarian bond market has an issuer been unable to meet the obligations assumed.

The necessary resources must be provided for even if the investment financed by the sale of bonds will not produce a profit, for example if the issue finances the building of a school, a nursery, a clinic or some other socio-cultural establishment. In these cases the bond issue actually makes it possible for the project to be realized more quickly. To give a concrete example, in the current seventh five-year plan period the Municipal Council of Kecskemét can allocate Ft 10 to 15 million a year towards the building of a secondary school. If this money is put aside every year, the Ft 50 million needed for the construction will take 4 to 5 years to accumulate and by that time the costs of the project will have risen to at least Ft 60 to 70 million. For this reason a bond issue of Ft 50 million was decided on in 1986, which financed the building in that year; the money to be allotted later to this purpose annually will redeem the bonds and pay interest.

In other cases, when an enterprise issues bonds for financing its expansion, the banks also examine if the money raised is to be efficiently utilized. But this is also basically in the interest of the issuing enterprise, since the payment of interest and principal will ultimately be its obligation. A number of department stores, office buildings, industrial and agricultural projects have already been financed through bond issues, and the Hungarian Post Office obtained considerable funds for the development of the telephone network.

Bond issues have stimulated more savings by enterprises and individuals. Savings are important to the economy since what income-earners save can eventually be amassed in the economy. Thus growing savings also means accumulation of capital. It is easy to understand that where the population can choose between several methods of saving, there is an incentive to thrift. Parallel with the growth of the bond market the quantity of deposits in the National Savings Bank has increased at a constant rate; thus the greater part of the bond purchases do not come from withdrawal or redistribution of deposits but from an increase in savings.

In the interest of bond purchases many people have given up wasteful consumption, or buying real estate or works of art, or engaging in speculative business ventures. In this way, money which would otherwise go out of the economy will remain in circulation and, what is more, will finance investments promoting the so badly needed restructuring of the economy.

Information on the performance of enterprises and of investments has widened in parallel with bond issues. Firms entering the security market have to convince buyers that they will be able to fulfil their obligations and that their proposed investment is profitable. For this reason they must publish the most important items of their balance-sheets at the time of issue and, in keeping with a decree from the Ministry of Finance, every year during the life of the bond. They have to keep the public informed of the state of their assets and profits. Thus the bonds of enterprises which are not performing well or incapable of development cannot be sold at all or will sell only at a discount while those of issuers showing dynamic development and with good prospects will be in demand.

No systematized process has been established as yet and therefore considerable further improvement is needed for buyers to

fully appraise the standing of an enterprise or its bonds. However, the initial steps have already been taken and are of particular importance in that bad habits of long standing have now started to change. Specific information about the management of enterprises was practically inaccessible in the past to the general public.

When legislating on bond issues, the aim was to create a stable and balanced market free of fluctuations which would ensure security to average investors of limited means and with little knowledge of bonds as a form of savings. This is why the banks examine so rigorously the issuing companies and this is also why all information is made public.

With this object in view, in 1984, the State Bank of Development (SBD) created a secondary market for the bonds issued earlier, where anybody could at any time sell his bond certificates at a price established by the Bank. From January 1st, 1987, with the reorganization of the banking system, the SBD bond market was taken over by the Budapest Bank, and other banks have also actively joined in this business. The prices are stable, with a difference of a few per cent at most from the aggregate amount of par value plus a fractional interest. The regulations and the coordinated activity of the banks have ultimately led to the creation of a balanced bond market.

The basic stability of the market has continued in spite of the 1987 explosion. The value of the bonds placed on the market in the first half of 1987 was the same as that for the preceding four years together. This rapid growth shows up the claim that the market has begun to falter. The fact is that the shortage of bonds early in 1987 has been followed, owing to new bond issues by a kind of oversupply, but this in fact helps to preserve the stability of the market. Since May 1987 no advance applications have been given for new bond purchases, there is no waiting for them and buyers can now choose among bonds of several kinds, though all are sold on similar terms.

Secure and predictable development is of the same fundamental importance to the expansion of the market as it was to its creation. Market effects show up especially sharply on the bond market. The agents often overreact to certain facts and rumours and this can cause cyclic fluctutations which then reinforce each other. This increases the importance of the balancing role of the financial administration and the banks.

Some regulations drawn up before the market opened may have to be revised so that needless restrictions are lifted and the independence of those operating on the market is increased. At the same time there is need for the banks to join hands and for the most important processes of the security market to be subject to regulation. Agreements to be concluded in the near future will outline the essential terms for cooperation and regulate transactions in securities, as well as the exchange of information.

The demand for stability of the market is being heeded by the government in such things as working out the new taxation system to be introduced in 1988. The idea is that all income from interest payments, including interest on bonds, will be subject to taxation, but the new tax will not cause a reduction in the interest paid to individual investors. The bonds put on the market before 1988 will remain exempt from taxation until maturity, and interest on new bond issues will be increased in such a way that the bondholders will have exactly as much money left of the increased interest after tax as before. Interest thus will not be liable to personal income tax, because the uniform tax levied on interest payments will be deducted by the bank at source. In this way the anonymity of bond holders will continue to be guaranteed.

The domestic bond market will in all probability grow at the same fast rate in the future as it has over the past few years. In addition to bonds, newer types of securities are expected to appear. There already exists a flourishing stock-market open to institu-

tions only; here share certificates worth Ft 30,000 million of some forty different enterprises or banks organized as joint-stock companies are bought and sold by Hungarian firms and sometimes—though exceptionally and rarely—by foreign investors. Although private individuals may not hold shares, preparations are under way for the issue of shares, negotiable instruments, and other securities which do not embody proprietary rights but which pay dividends depending on profitability.

The underlying basis is clearly the realization that trade in securities is an organic part of a socialist economy. It promotes savings and the free circulation of capital based on considerations of profitability, thus leading ultimately to the modernization and reformation of the structure of the economy. The emergence of the bond market is not a temporary measure; its creation, survival, continued development and expansion are an economic necessity.

IN FOCUS

A PROPOSAL FOR CHANGE AND ITS DISCUSSION

A few months ago a longish document, given the title "Turn and Reform" was drafted by economists, mostly young, of the Ministry of Finance and in the Institute for Financial Research. They had also coopted a number of colleagues employed by other institutes and the media. The document discussed the present troubles of the Hungarian economy and proposed far-reaching reforms. It aroused considerable interest among Hungarian social scientists which spread to a wider public and was the subject of both officially arranged and non-official debates. The Social Policy Council of the Patriotic People's Front also discussed it. The monthly *Közgazdasági Szemle* recently published an abstract which was edited by some of the authors of the original document, appending the joint comments by the Economic Team attached to the Central Committee of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party, as well as critical views contributed in writing by some members of the latter Team.

The starting point of "Turn and Reform" is that the Hungarian economy is in real trouble. The government had not succeeded in initiating changes which would ensure an end to excessive foreign indebtedness, as well as to forced exports, import restrictions and other sundry administrative interventions in the economy. On the contrary, in recent years, limited measures of economic liberalization led to further balance of payments and budgetary tensions.

A peculiar socialist stagflation has taken shape. The high rate of inflation is not accompanied by unemployment but by diminishing domestic consumption and the deteriorating efficiency in the utilization of the resources, including labour and capital. There is a danger that Hungary may drift into a state of prolonged crisis.

The cause of the difficult economic situation was not the economic reform introduced in 1968, but the inconsistent implementation of the reform, including the abandonment of some of its principles. This occurred in the first half of the 1970s and then again in 1978. The Reform Resolution of the Central Committee of the HSWP rightly pointed out in 1966 that creative energies could be liberated by the greater autonomy of firms and the strengthening of the role of the market. However, in the course of implementation, the artificial monopoly positions were not demolished. The firms continued to be subordinated to their ministries. Consequently the need for profitable operation fully governed only small businesses.

The oil price explosion, and the external market crisis, occurred in the mid-seventies. Those in charge of the economy tried to cope, presuming the trouble to be merely tranci-

tory, by raising easily obtainable foreign loans. It was not the loans in themselves that caused the trouble but the fact that they were not used to finance the necessary structural changes. The industries in crisis were not cut back, but given a shot in the arm by loans. There were no resources left for rapid growth in high-tech industries which might have been able to compete on export markets. The terms of CMEA cooperation also deteriorated. The position of prime energy carriers and raw material imports was not improved.

In the 1980s the government tried to restore the balance of payments by strict restrictions on domestic demand and support for exports paid for in convertible currency. When this produced temporary results, it again tried to switch the economy to rapid growth. In recent years this lead to large balance of payments and budgetary deficits.

According to the authors of the document, only a radical change in economic policy and economic control can create a way out of the present troubles. Such a reform must establish a genuine socialist market economy. An environment must be created which 1. favours entrepreneurship, 2. is more interested in success than the avoidance of failure, 3. is able to handle the conflicts attending the operation of the market.

Such a reform, however, does not promise rapid and spectacular success. Domestic consumption must be restrained and consequently standards of living must decline. This is necessary for the restoration of the balance of payments. It is the resources so released that can be used for efficient restructuring. Unemployment must be temporarily accepted to make structural change possible.

The role of monetary measures must increase to a great extent within the framework of the reform. National economic planning must consist of the elaboration and maintenance of a financial programme on the macro level. The administrative control of the economy must be replaced by powerful monetary restraints. Subsidies and tax concessions to firms must be reduced, just as high taxes paid by those who operate efficiently. This justifies the introduction of a uniform value added tax. A considerable devaluation of the forint appears necessary.

Various new forms of social ownership must be introduced, and the number of agents operating in the market must be increased. The government should support private enterprise and various small firms.

The document also briefly refers to the social and political measures which should accompany the economic reform. Parallel with the economic reform, a social policy programme must be created, which ensures the protection of the standard of living of those who will suffer due to the introduction of the market mechanism. All social groups and economic entities should have organizations representing their vested interests. Social transparency is one of the important conditions of the success of the reform.

The political reform should also include the definition of the constitutional position of the HSWP. The HSWP should provide guidelines and principles, without insisting that the government and the managers of the various economic organizations should be accountable—on the basis of disciplinary dependence—for the implementation of Party resolutions. The authors argue that the system of representation be further developed and that members of parliament be given the right to organize themselves in groups.

The report of the Economic Team expresses agreement with the evaluation of the situation as found in "Turn and Reform" and with the essence of the ideas. Numerous proposals, however, were declared not to be feasible. It was stressed first of all that besides consistently insisting on the competitive market principles, important non-market spheres should continue. It considers the emphasis on monetary policy to be exaggerated. Not every process can be regulated by monetary instruments. As regards political reforms it does not support the formation of

independent groups of members in the National Assembly.

The contributors to the debate all individually emphasize the merits of "Turn and Reform." They agree with the analysis of the situation in numerous aspects and with some of the proposals for reform. They do, however, make critical comments.

Ádám Angyal's twenty-five points agree in many respects with the proposals made in "Turn and Reform," and in some respects even go beyond them. Thus, he claims that major social loss is due to the bureaucracy which should therefore be reduced resolutely. He considers that a minimum income sufficient for subsistence should be ensured to one and all and that pensions should be indexed. On the other hand, he suggests that the state should reduce its subsidies for culture, sports, and other leisure pursuits.

Márton Buza fears that the value added tax and the personal income tax may involve unforeseen rearrangements of income as well as price changes. He therefore thinks it inadvisable that both should be introduced simultaneously. He also questions the acceptance of the presence of unemployment, since full employment is after all the only feature of the old image of socialism which has survived.

Zsuzsa Ferge disagrees with the way in which the document interprets the nature of the market. The introduction of market ways into non-market spheres—such as health and education—does not tackle present problems, which are due to underfinancing, excess bureaucracy, rigid hierarchies, and the absence of citizen participation.

According to Róbert Hoch it is not necessary to be as afraid of growth as "Turn and Reform" shows itself to be. He stresses that the present underexploitation of resources promises the possibility of growth. He stresses the infrastructure among the sectors to be developed. Its present backwardness is an important impediment to efficient production. Its import requirements are much lower than that of manufacturing.

Ernő Kemenes criticises mainly the monetarist economic policy advocated by "Turn and Reform." He supports the devaluation of the forint, the reform of the financial system and the creation of a market, but he considers these to be insufficient instruments for efficient management. He insists on the active role of the state.

Imre Tarafás fears that the large-scale dismantling of consumer price subsidies accompanied by a significant devaluation of the currency will give a powerful inflationary impetus to the Hungarian economy which will be difficult to control; nor does he consider that economic measures relying exclusively on monetary instruments are either clear or realizable.

Antal, László–Bokros, Lajos–Csillag, István–Lengyel, László–Matolcsy, György: "Fordulat és Reform" (Turn and Reform). *Közgazdasági Szemle*, 1987. No. 6. pp. 642–663. "AZ MSZMP KB mellett működő Közgazdasági Munkaközösség állásfoglalása" (Report of the Economic Team of CC of the HSWP) *ibid.* pp. 664–670. Angyal, Ádám–Buza, Márton–Ferge, Zsuzsa–Hoch, Róbert–Kemenes, Ernő–Tarafás, Imre: *Hozzászólások* (Contributions to the debate). *ibid.* pp. 671–708.

R. A.

THE LOGIC OF ECONOMIC REFORM

Hungary (1968) and Poland (1982) are East-European CMEA member countries, which have carried out radical changes in the economic mechanism. Kálmán Mizsei, comparing the two cases, endeavours to forecast the further development of the economic system of the two countries, as well as the expected changes in the economic model of the other CMEA countries which are confronted by similar problems.

After the reform of 1968 the organizational concentration of firms and the monopoly situation governing markets were not mitigated significantly in Hungary, and firms

continued to be responsible for supply. The liberalisation of the price system, including that of pricing, was only partial, and numerous brakes were built into the wages regulation system. An important characteristic of the regulations is the survival of the racket principle. The new system differed mainly owing to the absence of all-comprehensive plan targets. The Hungarian system is thus one which differs also from the theoreticians of the 1968 reform argued for, but it is coherent within itself.

Almost all the characteristics of the Hungarian system, and even the logic of the entire system, are present in the Polish reform. The comprehensive system of directive management ceased there as well, and plan targets survived only as rare exceptions. The Poles, however, have not succeeded in creating a genuine market either. The logic of taxation agrees in the two countries, down to details. The pattern of the formation of the enterprise funds also agrees. Polish regulations fundamentally establish the racket principle just as is the case in Hungary. The Polish price system is also similar to that of Hungary. There are controlled, limited and free prices. The credit system is also much like that which operates in Hungary.

The consequences of these structural similarities are also similar. The economy of shortages has survived in both countries. The inefficiency characteristic of a socialist economy continues although it is beyond doubt that supply adjusts somewhat better to demand than elsewhere in socialist countries.

In spite of the differences of numerous conditions, the reformed economic mechanism of the two countries therefore proceeds along the same path, with a difference in timing. Additional similarities are changes in the order of social values as well as modifications in political transparency.

Both reforms have grown out of the soil of economic problems of a similar nature, although the consequence differed. In Hungary the growth problems of 1964–1965 reminded of the political shock of the preceding decade, and this resulted in the reform. In Poland it was the political crisis that led to the leadership's commitment to reform, which, after December 1981, became its main legitimation. In both countries economic problems and expected or real political consequences were needed to produce reforms. The planned reforms came up against the same institutional structure of economic control and interests, which—similarly—distorted them.

Does this mean that similar reforms can only be expected in the other East European socialist countries if the present economic crisis overspills into the political arena? Mizsei does not argue that but it is certainly true that the extent of the trauma caused by the economic crisis is in one way or another the criterium on which the leadership's readiness for reform depends. In those countries where the stage of the Hungarian model has already been reached, economic tensions are likely to become more acute again and again, and this is the soil in which the demand for the further radicalisation of the reform grows. However, Hungarian experience shows that the chances for this reform to succeed are much smaller than those of the earlier reform. The reason is that the further decentralisation of economic decision-making affects basic vested interests.

Mizsei, Kálmán: "Ideáltípus-e a magyar gazdaságfejlődési modell? (A magyar és lengyel állami szektor működési jellegzetességeinek összehasonlító elemzése)" (Is the Hungarian model of economic evolution an ideal type? [A comparative analysis of the functional characteristics of the Hungarian and the Polish state sector.]) *Közgazdasági Szemle*, 1987, No. 7–8. pp. 1230–1239.

M. L.

VILLAGE WEDDINGS

In Hungary, life in villages is becoming less and less communal, and the importance of festive customs and rites is on the vane. Weddings are an exception. Their importance, the number of guests, etc., all appear

to be growing. Zsuzsa Pápay studied weddings in a village in Northern Hungary.

She looks on weddings as having a formalised dramatic structure with a precise scenario, cast, and setting. There being few children, weddings occur more rarely, and this heightens the importance for the acquisition or loss of prestige in the individual case. Housewives are able to give a colourful account of the tensions and anxieties of a wedding, making sure that no sign of nervousness be apparent to outsiders. Zsuzsa Pápay argues that the following three conditions must be satisfied by a successful wedding: plenty to eat and drink, punctiliousness, and the good mood of the guests. Many people share in ensuring these conditions: every invited guest brings a present of food, many male and female kin help in the preparation of food, in cooking, in erecting the wedding tent under which the eating and drinking takes place, and in killing the pigs. Specialists play an increasing role. Sometimes a professional cook is employed. A few experienced men tend to act as master of ceremonies for the entire village.

The scenario itself is traditional. There are still two separate parties at the groom's and the bride's home. A ceremonial procession leads first to the civil and then to the church wedding, the sentimental taking leave from the parental home of the bride still takes place, and some of those present still cry. Godparents and others with various roles are in charge and, besides them, the part played by the parents, and indeed by the young couple, appears to be passive, although they are in the centre of attention. The number of wedding guests may be as high as 250 or 300. In addition, uninvited onlookers also have a role. They accompany the wedding procession and tend to act as onlookers at the party. It is customary to offer them food and drink.

Besides the traditional scenario, the factors of change are also worthy of attention. In this village, until the 1960s, weddings were mostly held in winter, between November and January, and always on a Monday or Tuesday. By then the harvest was in, the new wine had settled, and pigs and geese were fat. There was less work to be done in the fields. Collectivisation changed things and the majority of weddings are now held in summer. Saturday is the usual wedding day since many participants are now in paid employment.

Things are now on a larger scale. Until the 1950s poultry provided most of the victuals, today it is not unusual to kill as many as three pigs. Wedding gifts tend to be replaced by money. Earlier, unmarried girls invited to the wedding used to gild small rosemary branches, these were worn by the lads, and this was a sort of identification of the participants in the wedding. Nowadays the participants are given a scarf and an apron. Distant kin and friends are given a square and close relatives a rounded apron cut out of the same cloth. The red or blue trimming depends on age.

The function of some elements of the wedding has changed substantially. Earlier the women gathered on the day before the wedding to make the shell pastry for the wedding broth, which had to be twirled piece by piece. Shell pastry making still takes place, and is even a sort of curtain-raiser, since the guests are offered food and drink, but most of the pastry is now made much earlier. The function of communal gathering has replaced that of sharing in the work.

What keeps wedding feasts going, and indeed boosts their importance? The importance of kinship is usually reduced by modernisation. But in the village the earlier organizations, such as yong man's society, amateur theatrical society, farmers' circle, have ceased to exist, and attempts to create new communal associations have not been successful. "What then does the village do?"—writes Zsuzsa Pápay. "It begins to operate the still existing community—that of the family—more forcefully." The wedding demonstrates the ties which bind kith and kin,

the lifelong obligation attached to them, which 'interweave and embrace the individual and the family. It is a nest for some, a prison for others—or both together."

Pápay, Zsuzsa: "A lakodalom szociológiája" (The sociology of weddings). *Mozgó Világ*, 1987. No. 6. pp. 90–100.

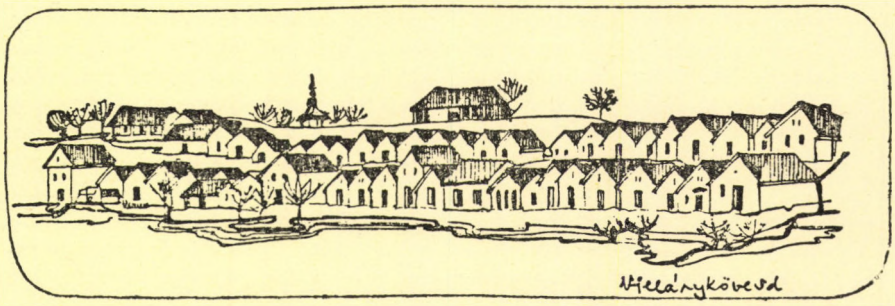
T. H.

THE PROTECTION OF PEASANT BUILDINGS IN BARANYA COUNTY

The broad triangle flanked by the rivers Danube and Drava has kept alive the ethnic culture of Baranya county. This area was liberated from the Turks at the end of the 17th century, and new settlers, including Germans, joined the small Hungarian and South Slav population that had survived. The common work of the three nations produced the traditional architecture of the villages of this region, the peasant homes, their farm buildings, wine cellars, flour mills, and artisans' workshops. These have, of course, changed a great deal in two centuries and a half, nevertheless the traditional way of living conserved traditional buildings until recent decades and frequently kept up their functions. Although the social structure and ownership relations changed after the Second World War, the radical rebuilding or even demolition of old village buildings only speeded up when ways of living also changed. This took place in Hungary starting around 1970. Village folk, accumulating money, built homes with bathrooms to replace the old cottages. As some buildings disappeared, so did villages change—often to their detriment—though they had once harmoniously reflected traditional taste and ordered values.

Although the authorities responsible for the protection of monuments do their best to slow down this process, neither decrees prohibiting demolition, nor contributing —moderate—amounts to the maintenance costs of the buildings, produced noteworthy results. The natural demand for more modern accommodation—often accompanied by the desire to follow fashion—proved stronger. Most of the old buildings were left empty and deteriorated.

The National Inspectorate of Ancient Monuments has again surveyed the region in order to save as many buildings as possible. In 1963 only eleven buildings were kept on record as protected peasant buildings in this region, in 1977 already one hundred and fifty were so designed. Major restructuring or demolishing are subject to permission by the ancient monuments authorities. Of the one hundred and fifty buildings, more than a hundred are rows of wine cellars, many of them at Villánykövesd, which is famous for its red wine. Unchanged function is the best guarantee of the future of these buildings. In the case of dwellings and work-



Villányköved, row of wine-cellars (Drawing by János Szigetvári).

shops the dilemma is whether to save the original or to make it usable by restoring it. Two kinds of solutions suggest themselves. One is to dismantle the buildings, and reerect them elsewhere, using modern methods of presentation and displaying them as a regional village museum. These include the village museum of the Ormánság region at Sellye, or the display of traditional flour milling at the Orfű water mill. The other method, which is given preference in the county, is to seek a new function for buildings which are being restored on the spot. These include the ensemble of the restored dwelling and farm buildings at Magyarlukafa, which was turned into a folk crafts centre. Another example is Nagydobsa, where the original house on piles has been restored to house an educational centre, and the farm building next to it was turned into a theatre. A typical peasant cottage has been turned into a house presenting regional architecture and traditional German, South Slav and Hungarian objects at Mecseknádasd, Kásád, and Zengővárkony respectively.

Szigetvári, János: "Népi műemlékek védelme Baranyában" (The protection of peasant buildings in Baranya County). *Műemlékvédelem*, 1987. nos. 118–125.

G. G.

A SMALL HUNGARIAN TOWN AT THE END OF THE MIDDLE AGES

A volume of scholarly papers was issued on the occasion of the exhibition arranged to celebrate the 600th anniversary of the ascending to the throne of Hungary of Sigismund of Luxemburg who was also Holy Roman Emperor. It includes a report by Ilona Valter on the archeological exploration of a small Hungarian town of the age of Sigismund. In recent years Hungarian history has been enriched by numerous perceptions due to protection of monuments activity, and this is now being confirmed at Pásztó, a small town on the northern fringe of the Great Hungarian Plain.

Although the site had already been occupied before the Hungarian Conquest, it was a major event when, in 1507, Sigismund granted a charter to the *Paztho oppidum*. The rights of the town were limited but its cultural and economic role nevertheless grew in importance. Excavation presents the picture of a town which grew during the 15th century boom.

The Cistercian monastery and the parish church on the fringe of the town formed its real nucleus. The monastery stood under the patronage of the Rátót clan, but in addition to the noble families the order also had serfs in the town. A separate funeral chapel for the clan was built already in the 13th century, and in the early 15th the Rátót clan extended the parish church itself. The growth of Pásztó must have played an important role in this extension. It should be noted that a secular and religious centre, so characteristic of European urbanisation, took shape here with a delay of several centuries. Its superiority was symbolically expressed, as elsewhere, by its being in a secluded and elevated position.

Ilona Valter demonstrates the other important element of towns of this kind, the commercial centre with a market and storage facilities along the north-south axis at the foot of the hill. The stores were cellars. So far forty six Gothic stone cellars have been excavated in houses which were built on deep and narrow sites. The houses were built at right angles to the street, something that is general in the Carpathian basin. Pásztó was a town of wine merchants. The cellars consisted of two or three rooms. Corridor-like side-branches and dug-in holes made their ground plan even more varied. The holes were needed for the adequate treatment of the wine, since those happy times were unfamiliar with conserving agents. The grapes were pressed on the hill, but the must was taken to the protected cellars in the towns, and

the barrels were placed in the holes, where fermentation and maturing took place at a steady temperature, sometimes for years. The cellars in the other towns on the edges of the Great Plain, Hatvan, Gyöngyös, Miskolc, Tokaj and Sárospatak were built according to a similar pattern.

Of a house of an unassuming appearance, which had been rebuilt several times and was occupied until 1968 by the teacher—being still known as the schoolmaster's house—the excavation demonstrated that it had kept its basic shape since the 15th century. The building, near the church, is made of pebbles, its length is 17 metres, its width somewhat under six metres, and it has a single floor. It can be considered as typical of market-town dwellings. It consists of three rooms with a loam floor, the entrance is in the middle, and leads to the kitchen. The bigger room, opening from there, was probably also used to hold classes. It was lit by four small stone-framed windows, and in one corner there was a stove which was fired from the kitchen. Three pear-shaped larger pits for cereals were found there and in one even characteristic 16th century household tools, perhaps hidden there by a teacher in the time of the Turks. This type of house was common in medieval Hungary. Later town-houses and even peasant cottages were developed from it.

Valter, Ilona: "Pásztó, egy zsigmondkori mezőváros" (Pásztó, a country town of the age of Sigismund). "Művészet Zsigmond király udvarában" (Art at the court of King Sigismund). *Tanulmányok*, 1987. pp. 271–283.

Gy. G.

MALE COURT FASHION IN THE AGE OF KING SIGISMUND

The Age of Sigismund exhibition includes the extraordinary early 15th century statues which were excavated some years ago on Castle Hill in Budapest. Éva Kovács now compared the clothing of the statues with the illustrations of a chronicle of the Council of Constance.

King Sigismund himself apparently preferred a sort of wide cloak, which was either armless, or had long slits for the arms. This cloak was comfortable apparel for both men and women; its length, width, the shape of its collar and arms, but even the methods of fastening, varied. It was often made with a stand-up collar and arms down to the ground. There were varieties which were buttoned up in front, while others were laced at the side. The cloaks with arms were most often worn with a belt, but luxury could be displayed also by the decoration of the back, the front and the arms including had metal buttons, embroideries, and sometimes silversmith's work, pearls and precious stones. It is strange that among the finds at Castle Hill a single figure wears such a cloak with arms, and this is a variant reminiscent of a short peasant jacket.

Most important parts of male attire were tight hose, the upper borders of which were fastened or laced to the jacket. The hose is often of two colours, but that of one of the Castle Hill figures was only red. Shoes as soft as gloves, thin, usually laced at the heel and with short uppers. Outdoors, especially in the street, wooden soled outer shoes were worn in addition. The shoes which were cut of white leather, were sometimes decorated with lace, and several pairs were bought at a time. Headcovers were varied. In addition to hats and the fur-caps hoods were the most fashionable. Fashionable young men remodelled this primitive piece of clothing with great imagination. There are good examples among the Buda statues. They dress the front of the hood over their head with a rolled-up opening, raised the shoulder part in the back, or made it hang over their shoulders, or even formed it into a turban by using the ends. Sigismund's brother, Wenceslaus, created a revolution in fashion with his rolled-up and knotted scarf emblem, which appears almost as an ornamental element in the illustration

of the above mentioned chronicle, as well as on one of the statues of the town hall of Ulm.

Kovács, Éva: "Viselet és divat Zsigmond korában" (Clothing and fashion in the age of Sigismund). "Művészet Zsigmond király udvarában" (Art at the court of King Zsigmond). 1. *Tanulmányok*, 1987. pp. 226–235.

Gy. G.

PORTRAITS FROM THE 17th CENTURY

By the 16th century Hungary lacked a centre that might have passed on the latest European fashions, nor were there any art patrons. Those who commissioned portraits: aristocrats, noblemen, sometimes a wealthy burgher, wanted an illustrated document of their social status. In consequence, the figure always had to wear ornamental clothing, weapons had to be displayed and other small luxurious objects, not to mention the arms of the armigerous. The inscriptions had to show all the titles. The authenticity of the counterfeit was suggested much more by these elements than by the appearance of the person.

The painters working for the Hungarian ruling class were local artists who knew little of the changes in style in the great centres. In their works new and obsolete ways coexist, and the way of thinking of their clients changed slowly. An interesting change, that is a new requirement can nevertheless be observed early in the 17th century. When a considerable section of the nobility turned against the Habsburgs, the character of their portraits also suddenly changed. In mid-16th century the great political figure of the time, Tamás Nádasdy, and his wife, were still shown life-size, in imitation of Italian, Dutch and South-German fashions that dominated the court of the Emperor Charles V. The influence of Titian can also be recognized on Nádasdy's portrait. His wife appears in rich, fashionable western clothes, wearing numerous jewels. The posture reminds of a portrait by Arcimboldo.

Early in the 17th century the subject of the portrait himself becomes an ornament, a part of a closed pictorial unit, in which richly decorated surfaces and vivid spots intermingle. The change was due largely to the clients. The Hungarian aristocracy wanted to be painted wearing their own peculiar national costume, as Polish noblemen did. The roots of the style went back to one of the Cranachs and the younger Holbein, and suitably indicated the colourfulness of the clothes Hungarian noblemen wore. On these pictures single colour and multicolour surfaces interchange. This manner was already popular by the middle of the century.

Nevertheless, in the last quarter of the 17th century, something else changed. Head and shoulders portraits became popular which—in contrast to the full figure portraits—give more attention to the depicted person. The provincial painters had become familiar with Dutch techniques. The face was no longer painted in patches but chiaroscuro. The postures are much more lively, and individual features began, in some cases, to show a pictorial idealisation which became universal in baroque portraiture. In the second half of the 18th century, provincial portrait painters tried to overcome the timelag of 150–200 years, but time was still needed for the clients to wish to see an image which is formulated by exceptional artistic skill, and, at the very least, tries to radiate psychological aspects.

Czennerné Wilhelm, Gizella: "A magyar provinciális portrék stíluskapcsolatai" (Stylistic links of Hungarian provincial portraits). *Történelmi Szemle*, 1986, No. 2. pp. 219–237.

Gy. G.

KINSHIP TIES IN CONTEMPORARY HUNGARIAN SOCIETY

Mór Jókai, Kálmán Mikszáth and Zsigmond Móricz drew a sensitive picture of the

role of family ties in the 19th century, around 1900 and in the early 20th century. They wrote of gentlemen and of those who aspired to that status, and about wealthy peasants. Such categories disappeared under socialism and ways of life changed considerably. The large-scale geographic mobility tore many out of their earlier environment. Following the experience of other industrialised countries, the general assumption was that the role of kinship ties had diminished and become negligible in Hungary as well.

However, research abroad in recent years, as well as the early results of surveys in Hungary indicate that—contradicting such assumptions—kinship ties still have important functions in contemporary society.

A distinction between "family" and "kinship" can be made on the basis of cohabitation. Married children, after they move from the parental home, become "relations". There exists a wider circle of relations which is "kept on record." Kinship exists in a sort of latent way, but can be activated in certain situations. It is within this circle that the group of "active relations" can be distinguished, with whom the nuclear family or the individual maintain regular contact. Everyday usage confines the term "relations" to this group. Within the active kinship, a distinguished position is taken by "intimate family" ties, e.g. between parents and adult children, brothers and sisters.

Kinship or family ties have a major role in letting individuals "be aware of their place in society." This also explains the "search for ancestors", which is becoming more common in Hungary. The emotional and practical substance of kinship, manifesting itself also in mutual help, depends also on how alive and important other social ties due to neighbourhood or to workplace, are. In contemporary Hungary family and kinship ties provide emergency solutions for important social needs. The outer circle of relations, who are only kept on record, can be of help e.g. when children want to obtain a place in a school, or in the search for housing. Hungarians travelling abroad regularly rely on relatives living abroad. In critical situations relations can mean support and refuge. There were numerous examples at the time of the Second World War.

The relationship between parents and adult children is lent great importance by special problems of contemporary Hungarian society, as e.g. the extraordinary difficulty of acquiring housing, and the diminishing purchasing power of pensions. Parents often make great sacrifices to provide housing for their children. Later, on the other hand, the pensioner parents need the help of their children. This reciprocity has been observed in other societies too, but is perhaps more pronounced in Hungary. Mutual help can play an important role also in the wider circle of kinship, e.g. assistance by wedding gifts to the establishment of an independent household by a young couple, help given in the acquisition of housing, in contributing work or visiting the sick, etc. The "grandmother" role of women between the age of 50 and 70 was especially important in the 1950s in looking after grandchildren, when their daughters and daughters-in-law went out to work in great numbers. This situation has changed in recent years, because childbirth is mostly concentrated in the first years of the marriage and, consequently, many grandmothers are still young and in employment when their grandchildren are born. They therefore cannot look after the grandchildren. The introduction of childcare leave has made it possible for many mothers to look after their infants. Grandmothers and grandfathers nevertheless fill an important role in the bringing up of children and in their emotional life.

If we look at the functioning of kinship ties from the aspect of the whole society, it should be said that the kinship network sort of complements, or substitutes for, the functioning of numerous organizations established for special purposes, as e.g. day-boarding, looking after the children of school-age, home care, called upon to look after the old

who are unable to look after themselves, sick care institutions, etc. Activity of the family sort of contributes to the welfare services. Unfortunately, however, not even the combination of welfare services policy and kinship ties overcome negative phenomena, such as loneliness, which is shown e.g. by the large number of suicides in Hungary. "Many in our country feel that they live in an atomised world, and the family does not respond to their calls for help either." However, in the theoretical model created for the survey of kinship functions, accepting the positive functions, not only complacency must be reckoned with, but also the negative features, including nepotism, well described by the literary works mentioned in the introduction.

Cseh-Szombathy, László: "A rokonság szerepe a mai társadalomban." (The role of family ties in contemporary Hungarian society). *Magyar Tudomány*, 1987, No. 5. pp. 348–358.

T. H.

SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC CULTURAL POLICY IN THE POSTWAR YEARS

Hungarian historians nowadays endeavour to fill in the gaps in the country's 20th century history. Éva Standeisky recently published an interesting small book on the cultural policy followed by the Hungarian Communist Party in the immediate postwar years, and she followed this up by an examination of the cultural policy of the Social Democratic Party in the same period.

Comparing the two kinds of cultural policy, it becomes clear that in those years that of the Communist Party was the more conservative and more nationalist in character, while that of the Social Democratic Party was of a more international, revolutionary and avantgarde nature. The policy of the Communist Party at the time was to support a democratic coalition. In literature and the arts it looked on the populists as its main ally. This line was first formulated as early as the second half of the thirties, as part of the popular front policy, by the two principal ideologists of the party: György Lukács and József Révai. They declared the great historic tradition to be that of the bourgeois revolution of 1848–49, and the ideal style to be that of what they called Great Realism. They abandoned the revolutionary traditions of 1918–19, and the modern, avantgarde, Weimar-type art and approach of the twenties.

The cultural policy of the Social Democratic Party was almost the opposite. Its traditions were largely responsible for this and so was their position given the intellectual climate of the period. Social Democrats were not on good terms with the populist writers. In some cases there was outright hostility. Populist writers had been equivocal about racialism, their right wing supporting antisemitic and fascist parties. Furthermore, the Social Democratic Party lent its supports to outstanding avantgarde artists and writers, like Lajos Kassák and his followers, and the European school headed by Ernő Kállai.

Éva Standeisky tells her story through three key figures. She describes Kassák's post-1945 ideological activity within and without the party (for some time he even worked in the Ministry of Public Education), the important articles and debates published by his two periodicals *(Kortárs* and *Alkotás)*, as well as his close relationship with the party's cultural policy spokesman, Pál Justus.

Discussing Justus's revolutionary socialist views, the author finally—as she had done in an article in *Valóság* 1987/8—recalls the almost forgotten figure and work of this gifted and versatile ideologist and writer who, in the prime of his life, was a defendant and victim of the Rajk show-trial. Although he survived this hell, his early death made it impossible for him to complete his life's work.

The third part of the article discusses the

publications in Hungary between 1945 and 1948 by François Fejtő, the well-known critic and journalist who is now a French writer. These articles by Fejtő dealt mainly with the posthumous reputation of Attila József, the evaluation of Jean-Paul Sartre, and his arguments with György Lukács.

Standeisky, Éva: "Művészetpolitikai elképzelések a Szociáldemokrata Pártban 1945–1948 között." *(Kassák, Justus, Fejtő).* (Ideas of cultural policy in the Social Democratic Party between 1945 and 1948 /Kassák, Justus, Fejtő/). *Történelmi Szemle*, 1986. No. 2. pp. 325–340.

Gy. L.

RUDOLF ANDORKA is Professor of Sociology at the Karl Marx University of Economics in Budapest... GÉZA GALAVICS is an art historian, who wrote a book on the Turkish wars in art... GYÖRGY GRANASZTÓI is Assistant Professor at the Department of Medieval and Early Modern Hungarian History of the University of Budapest... TAMÁS HOFER is Deputy Director of the Ethnographical Institute of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences... MIHÁLY LAKI is an economist on the staff of the Research Institute of Cooperatives... GYÖRGY LITVÁN's recent work is on the opposition movements in Hungary around 1900.

*

Közgazdasági Szemle—monthly of the Committee for Economic Sciences of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences

Mozgó Világ—literary monthly, published in Budapest

Műemlékvédelem—a quarterly, dealing with the preservation and restoration of ancient buildings

Művészet Zsigmond király korában—a collection of articles accompanying the catalogue of The Age of Sigismund exhibition at the Budapest Historical Museum.

Történelmi Szemle—the quarterly of the Institute of History of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences

Magyar Tudomány—monthly of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences

SURVEYS

ENDRE CZEIZEL

THE TROUBLED COURSE OF MEDICAL RESEARCH

Derek de Solla Price[1], an international authority, wrote: "... taking the absolute measure of the scientific activities of the country as well as of the per capita indices, it is evident that Hungary... belongs to the category of countries for which—whether the population, economy or the level of industrial development is the basis—a very high standard of development is characteristic..." However, he added two riders to this evaluation, of which we can otherwise justifiably be proud. One is that "while the potential of those working in he sciences is high, the actual amount of the potential that is exploited for the benefit of society is by no means high." Secondly, "the growth (in the efficiency of research) ... is of the lowest order. Herein lies a clear warning that Hungary's outstanding position in world ranking is gradually weakening." De Solla Price was writing this in 1977. Since then the Hungarian position has considerably deteriorated.

Reform of scientific research is being urged by the authorities; without such, in an age of scientific and technological revolution, Hungary's opportunities will gradually get worse in every field of the national economy and in medicine. It is enough to refer to the principles for renewal laid down by the Hungarian Academy of Sciences in 1986 or the decisions of the highest political bodies. The Central Committee of the HSWP discussed the proposal "on objectives related to the acceleration of technological progress and the upgrading of the efficiency of scientific research," on the 28th of December 1986. The statement that followed the session[2] pointed out: "It follows the fundamentals of the country that the economy can follow the technological progress only if it builds on international cooperation. It is important to adopt what can be obtained from abroad under rational conditions. Arrangements must be made to quickly and efficiently employ and further develop the technology adopted."

These principles should be directly asserted in the field of medical research. We must concentrate our research capacities on the topics that can quickly be utilized in practice as widely as possible. Furthermore—as part of international research—we must make up for, or at least reduce, our increasingly frightening lag through cooperation with the appropriate experts. Finally, although this is often little more than wishful thinking, it would be useful to carry out research financed partly from abroad, that is by winning grant assistance. My personal experience is, however, that vitally important scientific progress and the application of new findings in medical research are often hampered by old reflexes, antiquated regulations, and management that does not understand the need for change. At least this is what the four cases I will describe appear to show. I must apologise in advance for the

many personal, and what would appear to be immodest, references, but the only clearly documented data were what were part of my own professional experience.

Congenital anomalies and Valium

In the seventies a North American and a Finnish research team simultaneously reported in *The Lancet*[3], the British medical weekly, that cases of cleft lip and cleft palate were more frequent in infants whose mothers had taken Diazepam (generally sold under the name of Valium, in Hungary as Seduxen) during pregnancy[4]. Since 1970 doctors in Hungary have been obliged to report infants born with any congenital anomaly—similarly to contagious diseases. Thus it was easy to check this rather important working hypothesis on the linkage. (The importance of the problem is apparent when I say that as much as 11 per cent of women take Seduxen in Hungary during pregnancy.) The evidence indicated that anomalies were not more frequent among infants of Hungarian mothers who did take Seduxen than among those who did not. I published these results in *The Lancet*.[5] The month after the paper was published, Dr John Ward, an executive at the Basle headquarters of Hoffmann–La Roche visited me. (Hoffmann–La Roche were the original manufacturers of Valium, which subsequently became the most popular tranquillizer in the world.) He was seeking information on our method of registering congenital anomalies. (There is in fact some reservation among Western professionals on the validity of the work of the other camp.) Apparently the information he was given satisfied him, for the day before he left he revealed the second objective of his visit: he invited me to carry out a more extensive survey (extending to all types of anomaly), using the data available concerning possible embryonic damage due to Seduxen (that is, Valium) during pregnancy. He offered some advice and professional assistance from the staff of Hoffmann–La Roche, one of the most important pharmaceutical research centres in the world. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, they offered $50,000 to assist in the research. All this I reported with great joy and some pride to the head of the Department for the Protection of Mothers and Babies of the Ministry of Health. After a long wait, I received a negative answer. It was its reasoning that I found particularly shocking: no experiments are allowed on people in Hungary. In other words, those who had made the decision did not even understand the point; that is, that we had been asked to evaluate existing data related to medicines that had earlier been taken during pregnancy. Personally I considered this very important from the point of finding out whether Seduxen did or did not cause congenital anomalies. I decided to carry out the enquiry on a voluntary basis. * Since this was additional to my normal work load, it took rather long to complete. Eventually, in 1980, I was able to send a manuscript of my findings to the abovementioned Hoffmann–La Roche executive.[6] Three months later they asked me to visit them officially and lecture to their institution on our epidemological research. This I was able to do. Apart from a flattering reception, I had two other pleasant surprises: they informed me that Hoffmann–La Roche awards a prize each year to a few authors of scientific papers and that one of these was to be awarded to me. (The prize amounted to US $30,000.) I was excited when I considered the possibilities this sum opened up. If I took the money home, I could repay the loan I had raised to build our home. My research ambitions, however, urged me to go for the other alternative. I asked the executives of Roche if they would use that money to donate two computers to us to assist us in our further research. The reason I asked for

* What we needed was the assistance of a computer programmer to write the programme and to get computer time. A friend of mine solved this problem.

two computers was that I felt it just to share the prize with the man who had done all the computer work on the project as a friendly gesture. La Roche agreed to my request. When I returned home, I wrote down all this in my report.

It was discovered, however, that even the donation could not be transacted without difficulties. Fortunately, Lajos Alföldi, a member of the Academy, chief executive of the Institute of Genetics, Szeged Biological Centre, called my attention to Biotechnika Ltd. Accordingly, I got in touch with that foreign-trading company; they then entered into a research and development agreement with our institute whereby the computer processing of some of our already published enquiry data and its international marketing were guaranteed; in addition, they entered into a second agreement with Roche, such that importing the computers and other objectives could be arranged. Eventually we received the two IBM AT 02 models and could thus process data at a considerably higher level (even though the chief accountant in our institute complained about the problems of taking these into the inventory caused him).

The other pleasant surprise was that they suggested we should apply for one of their grants, the objective of which was to study the effect of Valium taken during pregnancy on the development of children. Since we did not engage in behavioural research, and knowing already the attitude of the Ministry of Health, I rejected this offer. A year later, however, Biotechnika Ltd. saw an opportunity for the domestic financing of the theme within the research and development agreement signed in the meantime, an opportunity for providing the subjective and objective conditions. The team needed could thus be organized: one part-time psychologist, one full-time and one part-time graduate welfare worker. To assist in presenting internationally Hungarian methods and results, J. Joffe, Professor of Psychology, (Vermont, USA) joined our team and took part in the work in Hungary whenever that was necessary.

Under no circumstances could one say, therefore, that the international cooperation vital from the medical aspect can be stimulated, helped or managed at the moment in Hungary.

The MRC Vitamin Study

In the early eighties an Englishman, Professor R. Smithells, recommended, after careful preliminary investigation, that women desiring pregnancy should take multivitamin preparations at least one month before and three months after conception in order to prevent frequent closure defects of the neural tube (anencephalia, encephalocele and spina bifida cystica). The first inquiry suggested an 86 per cent effectiveness for this method of prevention.[7] If that were true, it would be a tremendous discovery! Indeed, as many as 450 such children were born annually before that in Hungary alone. All infants born with anencephalia die. A considerable percentage of those born with open backbone, however, can be kept alive. The combined costs of medical care and special living conditions for each of these children amount to about one million forints. Yet often only the existence of these children can be saved; a life cannot be ensured. True, a secondary prevention programme of another kind was already in operation in the seventies. This is based on the screening of alpha-fetoprotein (AFP), the foetal protein in the mother's blood, and ultrasonic examination of the foetus. This method is about 80 per cent effective. Multivitamin prevention promises similar effectiveness, but it is cheaper and, what is more important, it reduces the number of cases where the damaged but already moving foetus has to be aborted around the 20th week of pregnancy. On learning of this method, I immediately and officially informed my competent superior in the Ministry of Health. The answer was un-

equivocal: there was no money for the purpose, and anyhow, he did not believe the claim. Unfortunately, the equivalent of the British-made Pregnovit Forte F preparation was not available in Hungary or in the socialist countries and therefore we could do nothing without financial support. In the meantime two further reports appeared in the international literature supporting the effectiveness of the method.[8] Just then I learned of grants available from the MRC (Medical Research Council): they were organizing an international inquiry into the theme. This called for offering multivitamin supplement to women who had already borne a child with such a defect before deciding another pregnancy. We submitted our application, and won the grant after the usual local enquiries (that is a visit to Hungary). The MRC offered to supply not only the multivitamin preparation but also to pay the salaries of those working on the programme. The number of the latter depends on the number of cases involved in the inquiry. When the Minister of Health approved the Hungarian participation in the MRC vitamin inquiry, he laid down two conditions. The first of these was that the inquiry had to be carried out precisely according to the conditions in the prescribed agreement. The other was that no propaganda could be made for the programme. (Thus, unlike the Swiss multivitamin: Elevit Pronatal used in the Optimal Family Planning Programme, this British preparation is almost unknown in Hungary. However, this posed no real problem, since we informed every concerned family who figured in the Hungarian Congenital Malformation Registry of the opportunity available.) When the programme began we set up six centres (our Budapest institution and centres in Debrecen, Miskolc, Pécs, Szeged and Szombathely), so that women eligible for participation in the programme (those who had already borne one or two children afflicted with these defects) would need to travel as little as possible. Naturally, each centre receives the financial assistance separately. Our centre is eligible for £3,368 a year in quarterly payments. Out of that sum the Hungarian coordinator of this MRC research receives 3,000 forints a month, the retired chief physician of the Budapest centre 3,000 forints per month; the secretary 6,000 forints a month (she is a full-time social worker, who is also the hospital steward at our Family Planning Centre), while an assistant gets 1,500 forints (for taking blood and urine, and for preparing specimens for carriage), and a retired clerk 1,500 forints (to recontact drop-out cases). After paying for the cost of telex messages, the remaining 1,000–1,200 forints (depending on the prevailing exchange rate) fall to the director of the programme. From this we can pay the costs incurred annually of entertaining MRC personnel when they visit us on checks that last a few days. Until the autumn of 1985 the programme proceeded in an orderly manner, to the satisfaction of MRC.[9] Then, however, a lengthy audit was started by the Ministry of Health to check the "chaotic" financial matters of this international cooperation—the auditor's explanation. As a direct result of this audit, salaries were not paid to the staff until June 1986. That is, the MRC paid an extra 25 per cent over and above the salaries of the participants in order to cover life and accident insurance and social insurance contributions. This surplus—with the knowledge of MRC—was used to remunerate the participating staff. The final result of the audit was crushing. It found that numerous irregularities had occurred. (For instance, we did not forward Hungarian translations of our English correspondence in the official way, etc.). But what was far more important, they began deducting 10 per cent overheads for the institute from the time of the audit and 25 per cent for the state for tax. The overheads deduction is unreasonable for two reasons: because the agreement consented to by the Minister of Health states explicitly that this is to be provided by the institution receiving the grant, and because

the inquiry is conducted in our Family Planning Centre, whose rent, electricity, heating etc., are paid from the subsidy received from the State Insurance Company. And the 25 per cent tax makes it impossible to pay the salaries of the assistant and the retired clerk, which in turn seriously affects the professional standard of the programme. The official reaction to my verbal protestation, that the programme could not be carried on this way, was characteristic: 'well, then stop it!' I believe all that is unpardonable. In my opinion the cost of such important prevention programmes should be paid for by the Hungarian health authorities. But if they are not capable of doing so, they should at least encourage such beneficial opportunities (taking on Hungarian responsibilities with money received from abroad). Instead, they deduct a rake-off from the foreign assistance given in foreign currency for the prevention of illness and call into question the execution of the programme. In cases like that, I believe, the proper treatment would be to reward the people participating in the programme—if for nothing else, but for their attracting foreign currency—with a 10 or 25 per cent contribution instead of syphoning away 35 per cent of the grant. But in any case, there is a crying need for the reform of statutory orders and outdated economic regulations that harm the interests of family planners and the sick.

WHO Collaborating Centre for the Community Control of Hereditary Diseases

In the seventies I came to see clearly that Hungarian science had to meet two conditions in order to catch up with the international vanguard. (Now I know that there is a third one as well.) One of these was to find research topics which are neither instrument-intensive nor chemicals-intensive and are outside the focus of international interest. It is more popular to win the Olympic 100 metres sprint than to take gold in the 1,000 m. canoe event, but the latter is not to be sniffed at either. Of course, the Hungarian presence in properly selected topics must be evidenced by publications in the best-known professional journals abroad. The other is that international cooperation must be developed and attempts must be made to get foreign financial assistance. I should like to list the topics we are researching in this way. (I consider that necessary for an understanding of the issues below.) We are studying the genetic consequences of severe chemical intoxication in self-poisoned (suicidal) persons within a 10-year research cooperation with the Moscow medical-genetical institute.[10] This project of tracing the fetuses of women who attempted suicide during pregnancy is supported by the Lyon Cancer Research Centre of WHO.[11] Our biggest endeavour so far is the Optimal Family Planning Programme commissioned and partly financed by the World Health Organization (WHO).[12] Because of the WHO connection, several foreign and Hungarian institutions also contributed to this project, of which special mention must be made of the *Állami Biztosító* (State Insurance Company) whose financial support provides the running expenses of the Optimal Family Planning Programme. Professor W. Lenz (West Germany), who exposed the Contergan (Thalidomide in some countries) catastrophe, joined us in the analysis of the increased occurrence of congenital limb reduction abnormalities observed in Hungary in 1975–1978.[13] The cause of an increase in hypospadians (defect of the urethra) in boys, observed in Hungary in the past ten years, was successfully found in a cooperation project involving seven nations.[14] Because of the knowledge abroad of our twin research, we carried out a number of inquiries (for instance into the frequency of disorders in the absorption of lactose) among Hungarian pairs of twins jointly with Professor G. Flatz (West Germany).[15] The electro-encephalograph (EEC) examinations for objective evaluation of matureness of children about to start school

are conducted with the help of Professor F. Vogel (West Germany). Hungarian eco-genetical research was started with the help of Professor W. Goedde (West Germany) and the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. In cooperation with Professor Sankaranarayanan, secretary of UNSCEAR (a UN committee engaged in the scientific evaluation of the radiation effect of nuclear bombs) we are inquiring into the fluctuation of the genetic burden of the population.[16] In our profession these names resound like that of Platini in the world of football. Their participation ensures easier entry into the highest forums of international science. Furthermore, they also took on the responsibility of providing the bulk of the research costs. Finally, and most important, we can utilize the results as our own here in Hungary, in preventive medicine.

Be that as it may, the flattering letter of the European Office of WHO at the beginning of 1985 surprised us: WHO proposed to make our institution a European Collaborating Centre for the Community Control of Hereditary Diseases. They proposed four concrete objectives: 1. Supervision of the fluctuation in hereditary disorders in the Hungarian population. 2. Checking the efficacy of preventive genetic programmes. (The Hungarian Congenital Malformation Registry offered a good foundation for both these tasks.) 3. Continuous evaluation of the method of information-guidance genetic counselling in Hungary elaborated by us and of its effectiveness. 4. Controlling the efficacy of periconceptional multivitamin supplementation for the reduction of neural tube defects within the framework of the Optimal Family Planning Programme, operated since 1984 as a WHO programme. However, the officers of the Ministry of Health responsible for the matter did not answer the letter from the WHO European Headquarters until September 1985. The reason for the delay was (or so I was informed by the deputy head of the Department for the Protection of Mothers and Babies concerned) that they did not consider us competent to carry out these tasks. The answer to my points of argument—that I had a senior doctorate in medicine, that our team published between six and eight papers in English annually in the leading professional journals, that our citation index of references was the highest in Hungarian medical genetics—was that we would not want to apply our research results in practice. We were not licensed to do so. In the meantime I received several calls from the Copenhagen office of WHO enquiring on what had happened to their proposal. Finally, the official in charge of the matter responded to the proposal demanding considerable alterations to the objectives and offering no assistance to the Collaborating Centre. The European Office of WHO—without changing any of the objectives mentioned—made the Department of Human Genetics and Teratology, National Institute of Hygiene, Budapest, a Collaborating Centre of WHO in late 1985. They simply informed me that on the basis of our international publications and of their personal experience they considered our institution capable of meeting the original objectives. In the letter acknowledging the appointment, the official of the Ministry of Health acting in the matter observed that we were not entitled to handle national tasks. That was strange from two aspects. On the one hand we had to base the work on the first two objectives on the Hungarian Congenital Malformation Registry, which was, by Order of the Minister of Health, a national programme. Secondly, our task was to inform the professionals concerned in European countries of the results of the work, but Hungary was to be left out of dissemination of the results.

The contradiction between this flattering international appointment and the Hungarian judgement put us in a difficult position. Management of the third and fourth objectives was not possible under the earlier, very poor conditions at the No. 2 Gynaecology Clinic of Semmelweis University and the

out-patient department of the Schöpf-Merei Hospital. Because of this I made an attempt to secure new premises in 1985, even though I held little hope of being successful. But then a miracle happened. The secretary of the executive committee of the City Council and the deputy council chairman of the Budapest 14th district helped us obtain suitable premises for the WHO Collaborating Centre in the 14th district—in a building which had earlier housed a nursery. However, when I asked for an official permit, it turned out that the deputy departmental head of the Ministry of Health dealing with the case did not consider us competent to operate the Centre. To our good fortune, the director general of the Emil Weil Hospital and Clinic, which is responsible for the health care of the 14th district, took our side and suggested that we should manage the use of the bulding jointly with their Family and Women's Counselling Service. The only problem was—and the director general emphasized this repeatedly—that they could not contribute even a penny from their hospital budget for this purpose. Again to our good luck, an elderly lady wanted to set up a 1,1 million forint foundation in memory of her late husband and left the utilization of this sum to me; it seemed adequate to cover the cost of minor alterations and painting the premises. Thus the Emil Weil Hospital ordered the work to be done. But the WHO Collaborating Centre had also to be furnished and equipped. Eventually this problem was overcome by donations from the firms DOMUS, Medicor, OMKER and others to the Centre, for which we will be always grateful. Indeed, it turned out rather well, considering the general standard of health institutions in Hungary. Then yet another crisis arose. The foundation could not be used to pay for the alterations and painting. The Ministry of Health came to the rescue with a grant of 800,000 forints. Unfortunately, even that was not enough, since the cost of painting exceeded the original estimate; however, Biotechnika R. T. (Ltd) transferred to us the needed 200,000 forints under an R and D contract. Thus Judit Csehák, a deputy Prime Minister, on our request opened our family planning centre on the 6th of November 1985. The WHO Collaborating Centre was then visited by 15,373 couples between November 1st 1985 and December 31st, 1986. That volume entailed a great number of medical and laboratory examinations.

However, three further problems emerged. One of them was of an organizational nature. I had believed that the duties of the Family and Women's Collaborating Counselling Service of the 14th district could be met without any problems within the framework of the WHO Collaborating Centre. (The genetic counselling of residents of this district had fallen to us before too.) The chief surgeon of the No. 2. Obstetric and Gynaecology Ward, who was also ex-officio head of the Family and Women's Collaborating Counselling Service, was of the opinion that the activity and staff of the WHO Collaborating Centre should also be subordinated to the district hospital department he headed. I could not accept that and the two institutions are now working side by side, independently of one another.

The second problem is that the staff of the Optimal Family Planning Programme, which operates within the WHO Collaborating Centre, receive no remuneration whatever. Since most couples looking for family planning advice and assistance come to us after working hours, they are received until 7 p.m. This, however, does not mean the actual end of our own working period. Most of my colleagues thus work unpaid between 4.30 p.m. and 8 p.m., *after* their normal working day.

The third and most severe problem is the future of the Optimal Family Planning Programme. This deserves a separate chapter.

The Optional Family Planning Programme

WHO made the appointment for a four year period between 1984 and 1987. Thei

financial support is also tied to this period. Thus we will receive new couples until the 31st of December 1987, after which we will guide through the programme only those already enrolled. When we took on the task, we hoped that we were undertaking the testing and introduction of a programme that would eventually become national. At present this seems rather uncertain, although a general introduction of the programme is badly needed. For the pregnancy care centres begin dealing with the next generation only around the 10th week of pregnancy. By then, however, much has already been decided, since the major parts of the body and the organs have already developed in the foetus. Ensuring the optimal conditions for conception and for protecting the early pregnancy would therefore be very important. Mandatory pre-marital counselling cannot meet this requirement; in fact it has lost its practical usefulness and degenerated—with few exceptions—generally to bureaucratic formality. The Optimal Family Planning Service should be introduced gradually to replace this since its three major principles would create a fundamentally new situation in family planning. 1. Much could be done to help reach successful pregnancy by clearing up the reproductive health of the couple planning a child (e.g., checking the ability of the woman to conceive and that of the father to sire children, ascertaining whether the woman is protected against rubella). Our society is paradoxical in that it requires the preexamination of ability of applicants for a driver's licence, of sportsmen, even of many job applicants, but does not do so in the socially vital case of reproduction. 2. The basis for a three-month period of preparation for pregnancy is given by the scientific fact that life begins with conception and not with birth. Thus conception must be prepared, for instance by the increased protection of the spermatozoa for three months, by considering the optimal days of conception, by vitamins to protect the foetus from neural tube defects and so on. 3. Finally pregnancy can be confirmed immediately after the first menstruation missed by women prepared for conception through new highly sensitive pregnancy tests and thus a better protection of early pregnancy can be provided. As a result of all this only 4 per cent of the women participating in the Optimal Family Planning Programme give birth to babies weighing less than 2,500 grams, instead of the usual 10 per cent frequency of premature births. The proportion of congenital anomalies is also significantly lower. The results indicate that the occurrence of mentally handicapped babies is also much less frequent than usual. Naturally, when evaluating these excellent results, it should be kept in mind that the participants in the programme are usually better educated and have a keener sense of responsibility than the average individual. Yet even taking this into consideration we are justified in the statement that the programme greatly contributes to the avofdance of foetal damage. The deputy head of the relevant department of the Ministry of Health, however, questions the benefit of the programme. In so doing he, in fact, is questioning the purpose of scientific research. The advantages of each of the 15 methods used in the Optimal Family Planning Programme have been proven by many tests. It would be absurd to assume that their effect would not assert itself when they are used together. On the other hand, the question of to what extent those planning a child require the improvement of the conditions of family planning is not yet clarified. Last year more than 2,000 couples sought the services of our programme. (We have reached the stage where we can only receive couples by appointment.) Our correspondence and contacts in the country reveal that there is a considerable demand. In other words, couples planning a child are no longer satisfied with simple counselling, they also consider examinations promoting the health of the child necessary. Thus anyone who thinks that the programme is limited to discussions discouraging smoking and drink-

ing, misunderstands the very essence of the programme. The third and probably decisive question is the establishment of the conditions for a national application of the programme. Obviously this would require investment. However, provided that the Optimal Family Planning Service would be supplied at the county seats as a development of the present mandatory premarital medical counselling, most of the premises and staff would already be available. From now on I believe that this service should be entrusted to social workers who possess tertiary qualification. It would be a challenge that would suit their qualifications and interest; naturally this would not mean any lessening of the work of obstetricians. Examination of suitability for pregnancy would be their work in the future and they would encounter far better prepared mothers in the pregnancy care centres as a result of this service, and better prepared infants in the labour ward.

The evaluation of the Optimal Family Planning Programme is contradictory. We were very proud that the Deputy Prime Minister considered it an important new initiative when speaking in the parliamentary debate on the Family Act. The National Council of Hungarian Women have promoted the principles and methods by publishing a book on the principles of the programme. The Hungarian Red Cross and the National Institute for Health Education and their respective heads undertook considerable parts in the practical realization of the Programme. The State Insurance Company and the National Youth and Sports Office have given and promise to continue to give financial assistance to the programme. Executives of the social insurance body also indicated that it was in their interests to see as few as possible handicapped babies coming into the world and that they were willing to supply financial assistance to that end. In Osaka, Japan, they are planning the introduction of the Optimal Family Planning Programme. The deputy head of the relevant department of the Hungarian Ministry of Health, who thus has official competence here, does not consider its use necessary. He has already informed us that the National Institute of Obstetrics and Gynaecology would pass a similar opinion and thus the introduction of the Optimal Family Planning Service would become professionally impossible. The latter is surprising if for nothing other than the fact that this same institution recommends the use of several methods employed by the programme. A decision of that sort would be problematic also because the medical geneticist, the gynaecologist and the andrologist, the sexologist and many other experts would have almost equal roles in the new medical service. The issue is not decided yet; we are fighting our own battle. I have no reason to deny that this present article can also be interpreted as a cry for help.

Transform or Deform?

I believe that the quality of leadership is the third factor that today determines the success of research. It would have been difficult to prove the usefulness of the research projects described here in the fifties, without central subsidies. Not to mention the broad social assistance we enjoyed, for instance, in relation with the Optimal Family Panning Programme. Nor could the above exposition of discontent have been imagined. However, we are still far away from the ideal of socialist democracy. Today we are free to air almost anything, indeed we are free to put it in writing, but lots of arguments seldom have any effect; practised officials in positions of authority do not even lend an ear or simply pigeon-hole the issue. This is what we call the *cul-de-sac* of the official way. Certain recommendations, submissions, critical observations always go in front of the same persons and there their progress comes to an abrupt end. Let me give just one example: in a serious error, genetic counselling clinics

were placed under the professional control of the National Institute of Obstetrics and Gynaecology. Medical genetics has hardly any more ties with obstetrics than with any other branch of medicine, say neurology or pathological anatomy. Thus the people who direct genetic counselling clinics themselves have never carried out any work of this nature. This has led not only to a loss of prestige for genetic counselling and counsellors (for which reason their replacement has come to a complete standstill) and to a diminishing of their professional standard (for which the complete chaos in counselling that followed the Chernobyl accident was a sad example), but also to their absolute financial defencelessness. That is that their remuneration—if any—is channelled through the Family and Women's Counselling Service organizations. For instance, our Genetic Counselling Clinic, which is the busiest of its kind in the country, receives no financial support. I have often reported this verbally and in writing to the competent authorities but without positive consequences. Indeed, they even let me know that they were the ones who decided on every submission and that therefore there was no need for me to make a fuss about it. The other oddity is that when composing the chosen professional fields one must exercise a certain cunning in order to exclude or at least neutralize people who cause difficulties.

Subjectivity of evaluation is another characteristic problem. Publications, scientometric and foreign acknowledgements are valued only if they happen to coincide with a responsible individual's scale of values. Otherwise they often explain all that away with personal "cleverness" or "suspect" personal connections; sometimes they do not even take notice of them. Of course, the leaders concerned can also happen to be not even capable of reviewing scientific achievements or their objective evaluation in the fields entrusted to them. Because of this they do not even know what research has achieved, indeed, often speak about it with some contempt. Some of these responsible individuals are of the opinion that principles have their place in editorials but they control practical matters as they please. On a number of occasions I have even been told that controversial treatises of this kind can only harm the cause (and, of course, the writer); controversial issues should rather be dealt with at the dinner table. But to what extent is this schizophrenic hypocrisy tenable between the purity of principles and the impurity of practice?

This particular third factor means how the principles sanctioned by higher authority are realized in practice through the crucial activity of those of middle rank. The latter are like transformers: they have to transform the high-voltage (conceptual) energy into energy suitable for practical utilization. As long as this transformation is successful, things are going well; if not, we must expect deformation instead of transformation.

I should not like to be unjust. The social position naturally determines our mind. I, as a professional man, would like to urge the much faster and more efficient application of our own achievements and of those of international science. And the individuals in authority must decide on preferences over a far wider field and, in their own interest, avoid risks. In any case, change, reform is not urgent to them, since it is difficult to calculate the consequences concerning their own person. As a result, high-ranking officials of that kind represent socialist conservatism, the delay in making necessary changes, the checking and, where necessary, the bringing to heel of 'unruly' people. Because of all this, the application of the achievements of science takes place after delays that are long, even measured against the existing opportunities. It is also true that I work in a new field of public health concerning family planning. Progress is particularly fast, almost revolutionary here and the institutional system has not yet developed. But that does not gainsay the fact that family planning is in the very van of the

leading medical ideal in our century: prevention. Health can only be maintained when one is born healthy. This is the reason why the awakening and wide-spread use of family planning is a pivotal question in public health.

P.S. This was written in December 1986. The situation has changed since publication in April 1987, largely thanks to this article, organizational and personnel changes occurred in the Ministry of Health. It was promised to me that the 35 per cent deducted from the MRC Vitamin Study Grant would be returned. The WHO Collaborating Centre has received much praise. Finally, the Minister of Health at the time decided that the Optimal Family Planning Service would be able to operate at seven places in the country starting with 1988, and be given special support. There is therefore every reason for optimism.

NOTES

[1] Derek de Solla Price: *Kis tudomány—Nagy tudomány.* (Small Science—Large Science.) Akadémiai Könyvkiadó, Budapest, 1979.

[2] *Közlemény az MSZMP KB 1986. december 28-i üléséről.* (Statement on the December 28th, 1986 meeting of the Central Committee of the HSWP.) *Népszabadság*, December 30th, 1986.

[3] Safra, M. J.–Oakley, G. P.: Association between cleft lip with or without cleft palate and parental exposure to Diazepam. *Lancet*, 1975. 2, p. 478.

[4] Saxen, I.–Saxen, L.: Association between maternal intake of Diazepam and oral clefts. *Lancet*, 1975. 2, p. 498.

[5] Czeizel, A.: Diazepam, phenytoin and etiology of cleft lip and/or cleft palate. *Lancet*, 1976, 1, p. 810.

[6] Czeizel, A.: Studies of cleft lip and cleft palate. In: Melnick, M.–Bixler, D.–Schields, E. D.: Etiology of Cleft Lip and Cleft Palate. Alan/Liss. New York, 1980, p. 249.

[7] Smithells, R. W.–Shepherd, S.–Schorach, C. T. et al.: Possible prevention of neural tube defects by periconceptional vitamin supplementation. Lancet, 1980, p. 339.

[8] Smithells, R. W.–Shepherd, S.–Schorach, C. T. et al.: Apparent prevention of neural tube defects by vitamin supplementation. Arch. Dis. Child., 1981. 56. p. 911. Lawrence, K. M.–James, N.–Miller, M. H. et al.: Double blind randomised controlled trial of folate treatment before conception to prevent recurrence of neural tube defects. Brit. Med. J. 1981. 282. 9. 1509.

[9] Czeizel, E.–Mayer, E.–Jánossy, A.: *Az "MRC Vitaminvizsgálat" Magyarországon.* (The MRC Vitamin Inquiry in Hungary.) *Népegészségügy*, 1985. 66, p. 155.

[10] Szentesi, I.–Molnár, G.–Raposa, T.–Czeizel, A.: Filippova, T. V., Stukalov, S. V.: Study on sister chromatoid exchanges in self-poisoning persons. Mutation Research. (To be published soon.)

[11] Czeizel, A.: Endpoints of reproductive dysfunction in an experimental epidemiological model: Self-poisoned pregnant women. In: Chambers, P. L.: New Concepts and Developments in Toxicology. Elsevier, Amsterdam, 1986, p. 49.

[12] Czeizel, E.–Fritz, G.–Pataki, V.: *Az Optimális Családtervezési Modell—az első év tapasztalatai.* (The Optimal Family Planning Programme—Experiences of the First Year.) *Népegészségügy*, 1986. 67, p. 99.

[13] Bod, M.–Czeizel, A.–Lenz, W.: Incidence at birth of limb abnormalities in Hungary, 1975–77. Human Genetics, 1983. 65, p. 28.; Czeizel, A.–Keller, I.–Bod, M.: An aetiological evaluation of increased occurrence of congenital limb reduction abnormalities in Hungary, 1975–1978. *International Journal of Epidemiology*, 1983. 12, p. 445.

[14] Källen, B.–Bertolini, R.–Castilla, E.–Czeizel, A., et al.: A Joint International Study on the Epidemiology of Hypospadias. *Acta Paediatr. Scand.*, 1986. Suppl. p. 324.

[15] Métneki, J.–Czeizel, A.–Flatz, S.–Flatz, G.: A study of lactose absorption capacity in twins. *Human Genetics*, 1984. 67, p. 926.

[16] Czeizel, A.–Sankaranarayanan, K.: The load of genetic and partially genetic disorders in man. *Mutation Research*, 1984. 128, p. 73.

JÓZSEF HÁMORI

THE SECOND WORLD CONGRESS OF NEUROSCIENCES IN BUDAPEST

Under the auspices of IBRO (International Brain Research Organization) the Second Congress of Neurosciences was held in Budapest between 16 and 21 August, 1987. The First World Congress hosting 1,500 participants in Lausanne, in 1982, clearly indicated the need for similar meetings in the future and indeed, more than 3,600 scientists from 60 countries registered for the five-day event. The Congress itself was organized in the premises of the relatively new Budapest Convention Centre. A total of 22 symposia, 50 workshops and 30 round-tables made up the bulk of oral presentations. In addition, day-long Poster Sessions were organized for about 2,500 presentations.* This appeared to be perhaps the most successful part of the whole event. The resulting "atomization" (an inherent property of all large conferences) gave ample opportunity to participants both to listen to and to discuss problems of particular interest. The rather extended (2 1/2 hours) luncheon-breaks were utilized by many to continue their discussion of the morning sessions as well as to establish new contacts. Relaxation after the day's work was provided by social events, such as concerts and performances of folk-music and dance.

From the extensive, although still incomplete, list of the items discussed during the congress, I selected three particularly important topics (molecular receptors, certain neurological diseases and transplantation++nerve growth factors to demonstrate the rapid progress made by basic and clinical neurosciences in clarifying the ways in which the brain operates as well as in approaching promising possibilities in the treatment of such diseases as Parkinson's or Alzheimer's diseases.

Transfer of messages

The "messages" of the external or internal world as weak electric currents are carried along the nervous system via (sometimes one-meter-long) processes of the nerve cells. However, in most cases the transfer of a message from one neuron to another is mediated by chemical substance(s), called "transmitter" molecule(s), which are released upon the arrival of the "messenger" electric current from the nerve ending and—after crossing the

* The rapidly growing fields of neurosciences were grouped in the Programme of the Congress into five main classes.

1 *Cellular functions: a)* the structural build-up of different brain regions, particularly of the mammalian neocortex, *b)* membrane properties of the impulse-conducting and transmitting nerve cell processes, *c)* chemical messengers transmitting cell to cell impulses, *d)* chemistry and properties of receptors which bind transmitters or endogenous and/or exogenous molecules of drug effects, *e)* plasticity of nerve cells to form new connections during development and/or in the adult nervous system, *f)* transplantation of brain tissues, *g)* regeneration or nerve cell processes, *h)* nerve growth factors.

2 *Integrative functions* in the brain (including the sensory and motor systems), pain, neuroendocrinology, neuropharmacology.

3 *Behavioural functions* of the brain, including such important properties as emotion, motivation, learning and memory, cognitive functions, the language centre of the brain and brain modelling.

4 *New techniques* in brain research, including PET-positron emission tomography and, NMR-nuclear magnetic resonance, almost indispensable in clinical practice.

5 *Clinical sciences*, including neurological (epilepsy, Parkinson's disease, Alzheimer's disease, Huntington's diesease, etc.) and neurosurgical problems, as well as most current psychiatric (e.g., effective disorders) and psychological (e.g., lateralization of human brain) disorders.

10–20 nanometer thin intercellular gap—will bind to the membrane of the "next" nerve cell and produce a (weak) electric current. The contacts where the messages are transmitted from one neuron or nerve cell to the other, are called "synapse". The human brain is built up of about 50×10^9 neurons; on average, each neuron has synaptic connections to 1,000 other nerve cells. Until recently, the most studied property of impulse transmission has been the mechanism of release (and production) of the "excitatory" (or "inhibitory") transmitter substances. Although this field is still a focal point of interest, it became gradually more obvious that the molecular properties of the message-receiving neuronal membrane, particularly the properties of the apparently highly specific receptor molecules, are equally important. The released transmitter molecules become effective only if bound to specific receptor molecules. Evidently, tlhe pattern of receptor distribution is highny important not only for the interpretatior of signal transmission processes, but also fo the study (and possible effects) of sometimes extremely harmful external (e.g., heroin) or internal substances of drug effect.

More than 80 papers discussed molecular receptors in the brain (some from Hungarians working in Szeged). Researchers successfully purified different sub-types of opiate receptors for endogenous pain-killer endorphin substances. The production of antibodies against opiate and other receptors was also reported. This is an important step, since the use of immunocytochemical methods renders feasible a detailed mapping of the distribution of the different receptors, both in healthy and pathological conditions. Swedish scientists presented a new method of positron-emission-tomography for in vivo demonstration of several receptors. The advantage of this method is that it can also be used with human patients. The use of this approach was already demonstrated in patients with early Parkinson's syndrome, making a timely (thus promising) start of drug treatment possible.

The aging process in the human brain

With the extension of the life span up to an average of 70–80 years in many developed countries, the medical profession and laymen are encountering more and more problems related to the functional aging of the brain. There is almost a general consensus that the decline with aging of the learning and memory capacities is a natural, unavoidable process. The lecture of Professor Batistin (Padova, Italy) has, however, shown that the brain of 80-year-old healthy adults is comparable to that of (healthy) young adults in respect of glucose (sugar) and oxygen consumption. (The brain utilizes 20 per cent of the total oxygen supply and a considerable part of the sugar available to the organism.) Indeed, other studies using psychological approaches have also demonstrated that although certain processes (e.g. spinal reflexes) become slower with old age, healthy old people still have an enormous potential to learn, to accumulate new data or to retrieve memory from the information bank collected over a lifetime in their brains. The main danger to the health of the brain—particularly with increasing age—is caused by calcification of the blood vessels (thus arteriosclerosis) leading to a poor oxygen supply locally, resulting in the destruction of millions (or billions) of nerve cells. (Nerve cells in the adults are not produced—therefore the loss of neurons is irreversible.) It is, however, also obvious that the actual condition of our vascular system depends to a large extent on our life-style, diet, habits and so on. Another, equally important factor in maintaining normal potentials of the "old brain" is social rather than biological: in the absence of adequate stimuli and motivations, a sense of being useless or, even, a nuisance to society frequently develops in old people This may lead—even in the absence of other biological-pathological factors—to a rapidly fading learning-memory capacity, and to the deterioration of the whole personality. The socially-induced decline of the brain activities

obviously can be only halted or reversed by social means.

There are, however, certain *organic* (degenerative) diseases of the brain which develop usually slowly, and show themselves mostly over the age of 50 (Parkinson's disease) or of 60 (most senile dementia, including Alzheimer's disease). These neurological diseases—including also Huntington's disease or "chorea"—were dealt with in great detail at the Congress.

Alzheimer's disease

More than 2.5 million old people in the US alone are suffering from Alzheimer's disease. This form of senile dementia—which leads ultimately to the total abolition of all conscious, intellectual functions—was described by Alois Alzheimer in 1907. This is characterized by extensive loss and pathological alteration of nerve cells in the cerebral cortex. More recently, a loss in acetylcholine-producing large cells in the Meynert-nucleus at the base of the brain (these cells project acetylcholine-containing processes to the cortex), was discovered; more precisely, these large cells, even when present, failed to produce acetylcholine. Indeed, it was found in experimental models that acetylcholine-treatment of the cortex reduced the rate of destruction of the cortical cells.

Quite recently, however, an even more promising experimental treatment of Alzheimer's disease emerged from the studies of nerve growth factors (NGF). It was found that one of the several NGF-s of the brain can prevent not only the destruction of large cholinergic nerve cells, but also induce the reappearance of acetylcholine-production of these cells. This, in turn, secures the re-innervation of the cortex by the (acetylcholine-containing) nerve fibres, and prevent the development of Alzheimer's disease (in experimental animals).

Huntington's disease

This is an inherited neurological disorder, characterized by progressive involuntary chorei-form movements, psychiatric symptoms and leads to total dementia. In recent years, it was found that the main pathological change occurs in the subcortical large nuclei (striatum) which is a relay station of one of the two main motor-systems (the extrapyramidal system). About 80 per cent of all neurons in the striatum are lost; this means the selective loss of all inhibitory neurons, explaining partly the uncontrollable, involuntary dance-like movements of the patients. Quite recently, an animal model of Huntington's disease (when the inhibitory cells were destroyed by a specific chemical substance) was developed for testing different preventive or curing methods. While no pharmacological treatment was found to produce lasting improvement in behaviour, a sensational report from a Swedish group has demonstrated a permanent improvement of Huntington's disease in animals, which occurs after transplanting fetal striatal nerve cells to replace those lost. It was also proven that the transplanted neurons developed a new striatum which integrated into the host brain perfectly.

Parkinson's disease

In contrast to the form of dementia described above, this neurologic disorder is —most probably—an environmental (civilizational) disease, caused by certain chemicals and results in the gradual and selective destruction of dopamine-producing nerve cells in the middle brain. These cells project to the striatum where they help to maintain a healthy equilibrium between local inhibitory and excitatory neurons. Their disappearance results in the breakdown of this equilibrium and in the development of well-known clinical symptoms. In animal models, the transplantation of fetal cells or tissue, containing prospective dopamine cells, was found to be

successful in normalizing the behaviour of experimental animals. Histological checks had shown (this work was done by Tamás Freund in Budapest) that the transplanted fetal tissue became integrated into the host, dopamine-deficient striatum.

Although these results were achieved only in animal models, it is hoped—as Professor A. Björklund of Sweden put it—that utilizing carefully planned experiments, similar approaches (using either NGF-s, or transplantation of fetal cell suspensions) can be also introduced for human patients. A schedule of such human tests cannot be given but it is remarkable that the first transplantation experiments in 12 Parkinson's disease patients were reported a few months ago from Mexico City.

Transplantation and nerve growth factors

It became obvious during the congress that brain transplantation—as imagined by utopian writers over past centuries up to the more recent best-selling *The Biological Time-Bomb*—has serious, ethical and technical, limits. It seems that with the exception of specific diseases (Huntington's, Parkinson's) where the transplantation of certain cell types may be helpful, brain regions or larger brain centers will not be transplantable—at least not in human beings, and especially not in the foreseeable future. It seems, however, that the rapid development in the isolation and purification of different specific nerve growth factors may give new hope. It was reported, for instance, that old rats which had lost part of their memory and learning capabilities, can be rejuvenated by a 4-week treatment of NGF. (Although similar positive results were previously reported when using the transplantation of foetal cortex to the old animal, it was soon discovered that this effect was due partly to the foetal nerve growth factor present in the transplant.) Other reports gave similar promising results when using specific NGFs to enhance regeneration of particular nerve cells. Again, the nerve growth factor approach is still in the animal model phase; however, there are good hopes for similar treatments (in carefully planned experiments) in humans in the not too distant future.

Three hundred of the 3,600 participants were Hungarian, each presenting one or more papers. This shows, or is at least a good indication of, the strength of the neurosciences here. Of course, one of the main scientific attractions for scientists abroad was the fact that the honorary chairman (and very active participant) of the Meeting was Professor János Szentágothai of Budapest, who has a world-wide reputation in the neurosciences. Professor Szentágothai was also the organizer and chairman of one of the most inspiring symposia on "The Future of Neurosciences." This symposium, with the participation of G. M. Edelman (New York), one of the three Nobel Laureate participants at the Congress, provided new insights into what one should expect from research in the next twenty years. As Edelman put it, neurosciences are not only pragmatic human sciences, but also, and perhaps, the most important tools in understanding the essence of the existence of the self-conscious living being, *homo sapiens*.

In the Governing Council Meeting of IBRO, held during the Budapest Congress, Dominick Purpura of New York, President, and David Ottoson of Sweden, General Secretary of IBRO expressed their hope that the successful Budapest Neuroscience World Congress will serve as a model of future meetings, the next of which will be organized in 1991.

CSABA GY. KISS

HUNGARIAN STUDIES

The Central European dimension

If there exists such a thing as the study of a particular language and its literature for which the geographical factor is of a special importance, then Hungarian studies would have that character. Not in the sense widely believed last century that a specific culture was created by climate and other geographical conditions. The sense would be historical rather, partly because Hungarian literature and culture developed and were shaped in, and by a close interaction with, the cultures of the nations largely sharing the same environment, and partly because Hungarian culture bears a similarity not to the Finno-Ugrian cultures it is related to linguistically but to the cultures of that East Central European zone which lies roughly between the German-speaking and Russian-speaking regions.

Here I shall endeavour to highlight a few connections between Hungarian studies and Central Europe, referring to the Second International Conference of Hungarian Studies held in Vienna in 1986. *The International Hungarian Philological Society* was established ten years ago in Budapest with the following objectives: to promote research into the Hungarian language and culture, to foster Hungarian studies as an international discipline, to offer a forum (meetings and publications) to coordinate to a certain extent the research done in various countries, and to provide scholars with the opportunity to exchange views and establish personal contacts.

Hungarian culture itself is international. The Hungarians have been a part of European culture for more than a thousand years, ever since they were Christianised. Only approximately two thirds of those speaking Hungarian as a native language live in Hungary. The Hungarians who live amid Slav, German and Rumanian neighbours, have no close linguistic relations, and none of any kind in their proximity. In Central Europe state borders frequently do not coincide with ethnic and linguistic borders. Thus, in the countries neighbouring Hungary, there live between three and a half to four million people whose native language is Hungarian; most of them live in Rumania, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, and the Soviet Union, smaller numbers in Austria. From the end of the last century, for economic and political reasons, hundreds of thousands of Hungarian native speakers emigrated to Western Europe and America; the number of people living in this Hungarian diaspora is estimated to be between one and one and a half million. Furthermore, in the recent past the interest in Hungarian studies and the history of Hungarian culture has increased among scholars who have no connections with Hungary whatever, either of language or origin, in France, Italy and West Germany, for example. New centres for Hungarian studies have come into being, the opportunities to do research into Hungarian linguistics have increased in the universities of several countries and related disciplines such as ethnography, sociology, history and musicology have shown more interest in things Hungarian.

The fact that the Second Conference of the International Society of Hungarian Studies was held in Vienna, the former imperial capital, is surely not without its piquancy. It reminds us of the important role played by Vienna in Hungarian history and culture, quite apart from its geographical proximity, and the current state of political contacts between the two countries. Furthermore, there is the recent growth in interest in things Austro-Hungarian, and, last but not

least, discussions on the subject of Central Europe. The conference was connected with all those questions although it was not the intention of the organizers to keep up with the issues of the day. For about half a century, it has been a concern of Hungarian linguistic and cultural studies to try to establish parallels with events elsewhere in Central Europe and by so doing, to seek to establish an understanding among the nations of the region. The choice of subject also reflects the recognition that the access of Hungarian culture to the world must be through Central Europe. This is the context in which what it has to say comes into its own. The best things that Hungarian culture has done primarily address those who have an interest in this part of Europe, which has so often been misunderstood and was for long left out in the fog.

The sub-title the organizing committee chose was "Hungarian language, literature, history and ethnography in interaction with the cultures of the nations of the Danube valley, with special emphasis to events around 1800 and 1900." It is impossible to give an account of how these subjects were treated in detail since, in addition to the lectures which all the participants attended, there were sessions held in seven parallel sections. No observer, no matter how industrious, could keep up with everything. The opportunity to balance things will come when the papers of the conference are published. However, on the basis of the bulletin and the lectures I attended, I can state confidently that the Central Europe dimension was one of the basic and formative features of the Vienna conference. This became clear in the presentations outlining the fundamental tendencies of development in the whole region and also in the lectures describing the tapestry of which the Hungarian language, literature and culture and the cultures of our neighbours near and far are the strands, thus calling attention to the different forms of cultural symbiosis.

The place occupied by Hungarian culture within Europe has been a key question bothering Hungarian intellectuals. "Hungarian culture has grafted the western spirit onto an eastern language; the Hungarian spirit has been swinging like a pendulum between West and East for close to a thousand years; the Hungarian eye, like that of an unhappy lover, is fixed on the lights of the West doggedly, obstinately, with the simultaneous flaming of desire and hatred..." is how the issue was expressed by Mihály Babits, the poet. East and West, as two points of comparison, indicated one of our dilemmas: identity with Europe and the difference from it. This difference may have been one of time (backwardness, or lagging behind, as the Hungarian has it), it may have been a lack of originality (adoption of ready patterns, imitation, secondary character); what it did do was to constantly force Hungarian thinkers and artists to make comparisons and draw conclusions. They were confronted with a dilemma giving a choice of directions: to adjust to and keep up with the culture of Western Europe and to turn one's back on Western Europe and proclaim the peculiar identity of Hungarian culture. Those choosing one or the other were happy to argue, trying to prove the justness of their choice and the falsity of the other which, according to them, lead to a dead-end. Perhaps it was only the greatest, like Béla Bartók, who managed to escape the horns of the dilemma.

Thus Hungarian culture of the last two centuries displayed a number of elements which seem of secondary importance, or are almost impossible to understand, when looked at from a vantage point within the European mainstream. A significant part are not specifically Hungarian but those of a region. Explaining even the basic concepts of national culture may sometimes cause problems; when writing about the history of Hungarian literature, for example, finding the equivalents in foreign languages for the individual trends, streams such as "populist writers", "urbanists", "village researchers" can pose a major problem.

That is what makes Hungarians at times prone to believe in the national character in the terms of the Romantics. That inclination may be strengthened by the difference between the Hungarian language and those spoken by our neighbours, limitrophe nations as well as those settled at one remove. However, those who examine ways of thinking and culture can list a number of facts testifying to similar behaviour and related folkways, linking Hungarians and non-Hungarians in the region.

The metaphor of Janus, simultaneously facing East and West, reveals something of Hungarian culture. This dichotomy cannot be left out of consideration by Hungarian scholarship. In the age of Romanticism, when a special emphasis was laid on uniqueness, frequent reference was made to the Central Asian origin of the Hungarians. Several features of the supposed national character were derived from the times when they were nomads on horseback galloping across the steppes, as if living in Europe for a thousand years had been of secondary importance. Turning to the East meant looking back to the land of the ancestors, to something that was not Europe. It was much later, in the twentieth century, that the idea of being part of Eastern Europe took root in Hungarian thought. This, to some extent, reflected the disappointment of Hungarians in the educated West following the Peace imposed on the country at Trianon. Dezső Szabó, László Németh and Géza Féja are writers that spring to mind in this connection. Trianon meant that, in keeping with the principle of national self-determination, non-Hungarian inhabitants of pre-war Hungary joined states which they dominated, but it also meant the forced separation of close to one third of Hungarians from the new Hungarian state. The fact that the structure of society—a small middle-class with feudal remnants—was to no little extent different from highly developed areas of Europe also strengthened the assumption that here was indeed a different, eastern Europe. Hence the image of a "counter-Europe" came into being; there were, for example, the *Sarlósok* (literary, those with sickles) of Upper Hungary (young Hungarian leftists in Czechoslovakia). In the works of Edgár Balogh, one of them, here was a Europe that had been exploited by the more highly developed regions, a Europe primarily agrarian and rural, consequently anti-capitalist. In this view—in a way reminiscent of that of the Russian narodniks—great emphasis was laid on being different; the argument itself borrowed a great deal from the ways of thinking which criticized bourgeois developments in the West.

Naturally, since it is true that Hungarian culture is different in several respects from both that of the West and the East, it is not impossible that it does represent something unique and particular within Europe. This was the view readily held both by Romanticism and introverted provincialism. However, comparative ethnographical, historical and literary studies show a rich tapestry of European relationships and a high degree of kinship with the cultures of the region. Several features of development in the Modern Age go to show that the existence of an inter-European region may be assumed whose historical and cultural aspects differ in several respects from the territories lying both West and East of it.

In speaking of the regional elements of Hungarian culture, the rich heritage represented by the multicultural nature of the Hungarian Kingdom prior to 1918 should not be overlooked. In the centuries preceding modern nationalism, extremely interesting forms of cultural interaction were created in an empire inhabited by several peoples in a specific form of commonwealth. The lands of the crown of Saint Stephen were populated, apart from Hungarians, by Slovaks, Germans, Rumanians, Serbs, Ruthenians (Carpathian Ukrainians) and Slovenes living in more or less definible regions. Croatia had autonomous status. There were other communities scattered all over the country, such

as Armenians, Gypsies and Jews. There was a diversity of denominations too. In addition to Roman Catholics, there were Protestants, both Calvinists and Lutherans, Catholic Christians of the Eastern Rite subjected to Rome, and Orthodox Christians, Serbian, Rumanian and Russian, not forgetting the above-mentioned Jews and Armenians and members of smaller denominations such as the Anti-Trinitarian Hungarian Unitarians of Transylvania.

Common cultural wealth grew out of a natural framework of coexistence. Scholars or writers writing in several languages formed a specific unity. However, the dichotomy of *Hungaria* being the common homeland of several nations and the aspiration of ethnic Hungarians to take possession of it as a modern nation state continued in the twentieth century as well. Similar intentions were present in Bohemia and Poland, where the aspirations of people whose native language was not Czech or Polish, were set aside.

In his Vienna lecture, László Kósa made the point that the desire to compare peoples living together was present amongst Hungarian ethnographers from the very beginnings. He referred, for example, to János Csaplovics (Jan Čaplović), a scholar of Slovak origin, who had planned to describe ethnic plurality in the spirit of *hungarus patriotismus* in the twenties of the last century and said of the Hungary of his day that: "The Hungarian Kingdom is Europe on a smaller scale." This tradition had ample continuation; it is perhaps enough to mention Béla Bartók, who also worked towards the realization of this ideal by extensive research into comparative folk-music.

If all this is looked at from the angle of Hungarian studies, it becomes clear that the questions of the coexisting and neighbouring peoples from the Baltic to the Adriatic are related to national scholarship to a much wider degree in the case of Hungarians than elsewhere. The complex historical-cultural nexus cannot be divided easily into parts that coincide with languages. The apparently unequivocal linguistic borders of national linguists in several cases represent an arbitrary caesura, the disruption of a natural context. This is especially true of the times before the nineteenth century. Thus, for example, we cannot consider as Hungarian, Slovak or German—in the modern ascription of nationality—Mátyás Bél (Mathias or Matej Bel) who wrote his scholarly works in several languages in the first half of the eighteenth century and emphasised the importance of all the languages of the common homeland. A long list of writers and scholars of the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries in Hungary who wrote in several languages, to whom several nations in Central Europe lay claim, could be compiled. Let me just mention here the single example of the Zrínyi (Zrinski) brothers, Miklós was the epic poet of Hungarian Baroque and Peter translated *The Siege of Sziget* into Croat in the seventeenth century. Large numbers of bilingual and multilingual communities lived in this Danube region and many details of the various cultural symbioses still remain unexplored. The shadows of nationalism haunt the national branches of scholarship in our century as well.

Naturally, important influences were exerted on the formation of the cultural relationship by the wider political framework, that of the Habsburg, later specifically the Austro-Hungarian Empire of which Hungary formed a part for centuries. Vienna was a mediator, a filter and a barrier, all at the same time. In the second half of the eighteenth century, it was the centre of Hungarian culture for a brief period of time (just as it was a significant centre for the smaller Slav nations), a challenging imperial capital which also had an indirect influence because of the rejection of things originating there. Today Hungarian historians discuss and demonstrate the role of Vienna without any complexes, avoiding exaggerations in both directions. This was Zoltán Kenyeres's approach to the beginnings of the journal *Nyugat* and the intellectual currents at the turn

of the century. Several lecturers dealt with this period and the Austrian connections and parallels of Hungarian events.

In no way would I wish, however, to identify Central Europe, the wider region of Hungarian culture, with the territory of the Austro–Hungarian Empire. The term 'Danube region' might suggest a concealed reference to that effect, might even obfuscate with its metaphoric character. Naturally, the political framework that existed for centuries, the Hungarian Kingdom and the Habsburg Empire played crucial roles; but these two political entities may be looked upon as independent regions only to a limited degree. Within the Carpathian basin, for example, the coexistence of peoples for a long time facilitated the exchange of folk art elements. It meant a lot to cultivators of the sciences or arts that, in spite of their various languages, they were connected by a similar way of life and by common institutions. But that multicultural character, the distance from European centres, the backward social structure, is not to be solely linked to being part of the Danubian region. Several similar phenomena are to be found north of the Carpathians, in regions which, prior to partition and redistribution, used to be part of the Polish–Lithuanian Republic, one of the largest political units in Europe. There is a specific region which may largely be localized in the belt running between the Baltic and the Adriatic Seas. Examining parallels between Polish and Hungarian Art Nouveau, Elzbieta Cygielska pointed out that the rewording of national identity lends a specific colour to the Central-European version of the international trend east of Vienna.

Endre Bojtár surveyed the specific connections between scholarship and the national question. He argues that there are some characteristics in the development of Central and Eastern Europe relating to the specific role played by scholarship and literature in these two regions in the ages of the Enlightenment and of Romanticism. In a witty summary, he referred to the differences which separate the middle European zone from Russian development. The most important element in this difference may perhaps be best grasped in the manner of transformation into nationhood. Between the German and Russian language zones, small and medium-sized nations endeavoured to create their own national states under more unfavourable conditions, within large dynastic empires, in mixed ethnic regions and lacking political centres or institutions.

I am convinced that a comparative examination of this intermediate region might help us understand that specific qualities frequently believed to be national have a wider validity. Thinking in terms of regions might greatly recude national complexes since it soon comes to light that types of provincialism show similarities in the eastern half of Central Europe. One should examine what, if any, parallels existed in bourgeois development. In these regions not only craftsmen and tradesmen but noblemen and peasants were also involved. How did it prove possible to formulate a national ideology in the absence of nation states, under complicated ethnic relationships? An interesting parallel is the role of the lesser nobility in the social and cultural history of the nineteenth century, among Poles, Slovaks, Hungarians and Croats. Neither east, nor west of Hungary did this crucial social group have such an important part to play. Several cultural and intellectual features of Intermediary Europe are connected to this heritage. These include a kind of agrarian-rural world view, conservatism, opposition to centralization and a respect for personal freedom. For centuries, the nations of this region, not without justification, considered themselves to be the defenders of Europe. They looked on themselves as the protecting shield of Christianity against the Ottoman Empire. The literatures of this region are much imbued by a sense of being threatened, and not only in the age of Romanticism. In this region literature primarily had to assist social and national progress, and didacticism was frequently

transparently present even in work produced in the age of Realism.

Timothy Garton Ash in The *New York Review of Books* of October 1986 asked whether Central Europe actually still existed. There are good reasons for expressing such doubt. It would really pay making the notion of Central Europe modish again. Now it cannot even be said precisely where its borders are. One should familiarize oneself with a region which, as the history of the past two centuries bears out, differs in several aspects from both Western and Eastern Europe. Perhaps it is not the name that counts but a broad survey of the heritage of the nations that live between the Baltic and the Adriatic.

Of course, it is we who live here who have to undertake the lion's share of that work. We have to chart the network of national prejudices and then break out of rigid patterns of thinking. We have to wear our historical tragedies on our sleeves, without illusions but also without feelings of inferiority. A common tradition of this region is to either denigrate or overestimate one's own nation. Perhaps this trap is best avoided if we look at ourselves and our neighbours at the same time when examining the nationalisms of Central Europe. What follows from this for Hungarian studies is that even narrower national studies cannot be carried out without an approach that is comparative and Central-European.

ATTILA'S GRAVE AND BURIAL

A legend in the light of new publications*

"It is commonly accepted that the message of the Hungarian chronicles covering the early centuries cannot be studied without first clearing up the textual problems in them." Thus Jenő Szűcs, a leading contemporary Hungarian historian, begins his critical study of Master Simon of Kéza's *Gesta Hungarorum*, the classical source for the Hun tradition in Hungary. The Hun tradition, argued by Hungarian historians for many years, which found much favour amongst the general public, maintained that the invasion of the Carpathian Basin by the Hungarian tribes in the ninth century was only a second conquest, following an earlier one by the Huns. Attila, the king of the Huns and "Master of the World" (d. 453), who resided, at the zenith of his power, somewhere in the southern part of the Great Hungarian Plain, is alluded to in the first Hungarian *Gesta* (by *P. dictus magister*, known as Anonymus, c. 1200); however, the identification of Huns with Hungarians is only made, in the form of a detailed narrative, in Master Simon's *Gesta* (1282/85). The controversy on the authenticity of the Hun tradition, its sources and background is now nearly a century and a half old. Szűcs has demonstrated the impact of contemporary Western

* Márta Rimóczi Hamar: "Attila temetése (Legenda és valóság)" [Attila's Burial (Legend and (Reality), *Studia Antiqua*, 31, No. 1. 1984 (published 1986), pp. 73–9.

Ildikó Ecsedy: "The Oriental Background to the Hungarian Tradition on Attila's Tomb", *Acta Orientalia Hung.*, 36, 1982 (published 1983), pp. 129–53.

See further: István Bóna, in: *Magyarország története tíz kötetben* [History of Hungary in Ten Volumes], Vol. I. Part I (*Akadémiai Kiadó*, Budapest, 1984), p. 275.

Gyula László: "Geschichtliche und archäologische Angaben zu dem Sagenkreis um Petőfis Grab", *Omagiu L. C., Daicoviciu*, Bucharest: Editure ARP Romine, 1960, pp. 323–32. Julius Moravcsik: "Attilas Tod in Geschichte und Sage," *Kőrösi Csoma Archiv*; 2. No. 1–2, 1926, pp. 83–116. Jenő Szűcs: "Theoretical Elements in Master Simon of Kéza's Gesta Hungarorum(1282–1285)" *Études historiques hongroises*, 1975, *Akadémiai Kiadó*, Budapest, pp. 239–81.

European political ideas in Master Simon's narrative.

One of the strands of the controversy around the Hun narrative is concerned with the historical background; another centres on the Hun elements in Hungarian folk tradition. It is scarcely an exaggeration to say that the Hungarians have been captivated by Attila and that his grave is the Atlantis of Hungarian popular tradition. Many historians and archaeologists, including the present writer, can attest to the fact that anything connected with archaeology is immediately conjoined in the popular imagination with the site of Attila's grave. Some years ago, after Hungarian TV broadcast a lecture on the Ancient Orient, in which there was a casual mention of neolithic sites in Southern Hungary I received a good many letters from young and old alike, offering their help in the search for Attila's grave. They even gave hints as to where it might be found; further particulars, however, they insisted, had to be kept secret. And yet, whatever the archaeologists say, the Hungarian popular tradition on Attila's grave is still flourishing.

Amédée Thierry's work of 1856—despite its indiscriminate approach still a classic—and in particular Gyula (Julius) Moravcsik's source criticism (1926), show that traditions, scholarly views, and rumours on Attila's burial can be traced back in writing as far as the sixth century. The only early source which gives some details acceptable as a source, is the work by Iordanes, *De origine actibusque Getarum*, or *Getica* in short (of 551), which presumably follows here Priscus Rhetor. Iordanes (c. 49, § 258) speaks of (a) Attila's grave; (b) the rites and the manner of the burial; (c) finally, he mentions that those who took part were killed to keep the site of the grave secret. These three motifs make up the most significant structural element in the narrative on the burial; popular tradition is also linked to these motifs, particularly to the first two.

Possible interpretation of Iordanes' text are discussed in a recently published study by Márta R. Hamar ("Attila's Burial (Legend and Reality)". The author looks at the Hungarian tradition regarding Attila's burial in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and attempts to interpret Iordanes' text afresh. The aim of her work is to apply scholarly methods to legends which, in some recent school history text-books, are presented practically without any reservation. Her paper examines exciting questions, and despite some flaws, undoubtedly deserves attention.

It is held in Hungary, both in written sources and by popular tradition, that Attila was buried in the bed of a river whose course had been temporarily diverted for the occasion. Iordanes, however, only has this to say about the site of the grave "... *stravam super tumulum eius ... concelebrant*", that is, they celebrated a funeral ceremony, or feast (*strava* being a Gothic or Slavic word, the exact meaning is unknown) over his (Attila's) *tumulus*. The word *tumulus* in this context can hardly mean anything other than a burial mound, i.e. at first, the body was lying in state, and then the log tomb subsequently built over it was covered in earth, and thus turned into a real *kurgan*. (This word does not figure in Márta R. Hamar's paper.) Iordanes goes on to write: "Then, in the secrecy of night, they buried his body in the earth" (*noctuque secreto cadaver*—a variant adds: *est terra reconditum*). In Márta R. Hamar's discussion, additional support for the *kurgan* interpretation is Iordanes then mentioning the killing of the people who had been ordered to do the work. The depth of a river bed would keep human curiosity *(humana curiositas)* sufficiently far away from the grave and the buried treasures. Furthermore, special precautions are only needed in the case of tombs that are easily accessible. Iordanes undoubtedly used the word *tumulus* in the sense of grave or burial mound. This also seems to be borne out by everything he adds concerning the circumstances of the burial: the tent pitched in the field, displays

of horsemanship around the body lying in state and so forth.

The notion of Attila's burial in a river bed was held up to ridicule more than half a century ago by the writer and archaeologist Ferenc Móra, in his "Leszámolás Attilával" (Squaring Accounts with Attila, 1929); the same line was taken by Márta R. Hamar. Móra established that this motif found its way into tradition (which otherwise relied on Iordanes) only in the mid-nineteenth century, after certain literary treatments. In Mór Jókai's story on the sons and followers of Attila, *Hadak útja* (Hosts on the March, 1854), the dead king is buried in the bed of the river Tisza. Popular tradition has ever since clung to the Tisza or its tributary, the river Maros. At the same time as Jókai wrote, Arnold Ipolyi also referred to the burial in a river bed in his *Magyar mythologia* (Hungarian Mythology, 1854). In describing the burial, Ipolyi discernibly uses another, similar account by Iordanes, concerning the burial of Alaric, king of the Visigoths (c. 30, § 158: *Alaricus rex Vesegotharum*). He makes no special reference to the relevant source, stating simply: "I have knowlegde of a tradition." Márta R. Hamar speaks of unscholarly imprecision, accusing Bishop Ipolyi of misleading his readers. Strong words these, and, I think, not appropriate. Without wishing to cut Ipolyi's defence I should like to place his work and views (including the issue in question) in the perspective of the history of comparative mythology. Ipolyi wanted to reconstruct Hungarian mythology, which previously had not yet been discussed in a proper way. Making use of a generally accepted scholarly method of the time, he naturally resorted to analogies in many cases. This is one argument in his favour, the other being that those who, like Ipolyi, cultivated folklore in general, for instance by collecting folktales, must have considered it natural, after the model of Jakob Grimm's *Deutsche Mythologie* (1835) and other works by the Grimm brothers, to rely on popular tradition in their reconstructions. What if he had knowledge of some popular tradition regarding the motif of the burial in a river bed as well? In any case this motif in Attila's story was not Ipolyi's fabrication, for it had been used before him, by Petőfi, for one, in his poem *Lehel vezér* (Chief Lehel, 1848). The history of the motif earlier still awaits clarification. What is certain is that the early Hungarian histories, which integrate Attila into Hungarian history, know of nothing like this, starting from András Hess's *Chronica Hungarorum* (1473) through the biography *Attila* (1537) by Miklós Oláh or Gáspár Heltai's *Chronicle* (1575) to Ésaiás Budai's *Magyarország históriája* (The History of Hungary, 1805), to mention just major works. The motif of the burial in a riverbed must have been linked with Iordanes' account, or with the Hungarian Attila tradition in general, in the first half of the nineteenth century, the age of national Romanticism.

The critical attitude first shown by Ferenc Móra which attacked the authenticity of the account of the burial in a riverbed has recently itself been subjected to scholarly attack by the Sinologist Ildikó Ecsedy, in an article (1982) overlooked by Márta R. Hamar. Ildikó Ecsedy studied an extensive list of oriental records to show that burials in riverbeds had in fact been customary. This, of course, is borne out by Iordanes himself, only not in connection with Attila but with Alaric. Ildikó Ecsedy goes on to say that there were several other customary ways to conceal royal graves in addition to the precautionary measure of killing the servants who buried him. She cites some (not always unambiguous) references in the record, archaeological relics of burial customs borrowed from barbarian tribes, that is the nomadic tribes of the steppes, and the recently excavated spectacular finds in China: the tomb of Emperor Quin Shihuang Di (259–210 BC) and graves from the Han empire (206 BC to AD 220) in the Xian and Shaanxi provinces. Those concealed Chinese royal tombs, the gold, silver and bronze—

and later iron—treasures, weapons, and articles of daily use placed in the graves, and the double or—as in a Mongolian folktale—triple coffins all belong to the historical and cultural climate exemplified by certain Asian ethnic elements later integrated into the Hun empire. Ildikó Ecsedy is of the opinion that the tradition which emerged from this climate and which, according to her, has survived in Hungarian folklore, might have contributed to the survival, perchance the emergence, or indeed (in the case of its scholarly or literary origin) the acceptance of the motif of Attila's burial in a riverbed. The present writer cannot question the information provided by Ildikó Ecsedy but has not been convinced by her arguments. The Chinese data at most serve as a loose parallel for the ancient royal burial customs made up of a number of elements, in others part of Eurasia. The Chinese parallel is in all probability irrelevant for the interpretation of Iordanes' record. Iordanes speaks of a *tumulus*, a sepulchral mound, that is of a grandiose burial, worthy of the Scourge of God, but technically a common burial and not one in a riverbed. It is not unnecessary to repeatedly return to this point, as Márta R. Hamar has done in her paper.

As far as the killing of the servants is concerned, Iordanes' description does call for comment. In modern Hungary, this question was dealt with in 1960 by Gyula László, the eminent Hungarian archaeologist. In connection with the legends surrounding the death of the poet Sándor Petőfi, László discusses the concealment of the graves of noted men, going into records taken from many different sources. To the best of our knowledge, Petőfi died in the summer of 1849 at the hands of Russian lancers and no one knows where he lies buried. He was presumably interred in a common grave. According to a popular tradition, however, he was buried immediately after the battle but the Russians had Cossacks trample upon the grave, and their general had those of them who knew the actual site shot. László draws a parallel between this legend and the popular tradition related to Attila's grave, with special attention to the motifs: the hiding of the grave and the killing of those involved in the burial. The famous Chinese tomb referred to by Ildikó Ecsedy, with its hundreds of lifesize clay figures acting as the royal escort, and even the oldest relevant relics unearthed by Sir Leonard Woolley in Ur (known as royal graves) with the actual remains of servants and court attendants, from the middle of the third millennium BC, two epoch-making finds, even though they need some explanation themselves, along with similar materials from elsewhere, allow for a different interpretation of Iordanes' description of the killing of those delegated to do the work *(operi deputatos)*. It was the attendants of the royal court, the retinue who were buried together with the king—in Mesopotamia in reality, in China of the time in question symbolically, and at Attila's burial probably also in actual fact. As Iordanes puts it "...and thus sudden death was the lot of those who buried him as well as of him who was buried" *(emersitque momentanea mors sepelientibus cum sepulto)*. This was the meaning of Géza Gárdonyi's story of the killing of the court attendants in his novel *Láthatatlan ember* (Invisible Man, 1902). To my mind, therefore, Iordanes describes a ceremony. Even the *opus* for which part of the army or the court attendants were delegated, refers perhaps not to the labour of digging the grave but to the work as a whole, the burial ceremony.

The question of Attila's coffin or coffins was touched upon by Ildikó Ecsedy too and Márta R. Hamar now deals with it in detail (without referring to the former) in her discussion of Iordanes. According to Hungarian folk tradition, and even to historians from Ésaiás Budai on, Attila was buried in a triple coffin, gold, silver and, outermost, iron. Iordanes' text reads: *"copercula primum auro, secundum argentum, tertium ferri rigore communiunt"* (rec. Th. Mommsen, Berlin, 1882). Ildikó Ecsedy inclines to the opinion

that there are really three coffins; at most she is ready to admit that the description might perhaps refer to three covers or mounds on one coffin. Márta R. Hamar simply rejects the interpretation of the word *coperculum* as coffin, and instead suggests it should be taken as the grave goods covering the body, being of gold, silver, and solid iron. According to her, the translation should simply read: "...(the body concealed in the earth) was covered first with gold, secondly with silver, and thirdly with iron *copercula...*", *coperculum* being "any kind of gold, silver, etc., grave furniture." Márta R. Hamar has not dealt with the variant readings of the text (referred to by Mommsen), otherwise she would have noted that one strand of the manuscript tradition uses *cuius fercula* instead of *copercula*, to which Mommsen added the note (p. 183): "*coperculum-cooperculum, si lectio vera*" (if the reading is correct). As is usually the case in such instances, there are editions that use the reading of the other traditional strand as main text as that by C. A. Closs, Stuttgart, 1861. According to the Latin *Thesaurus (IV*, Leipzig, 1906–09) *co[o]perculum* means cover, lid, etc., and *ferculum* is a movable stand or something similar; here it may mean (funeral) stand, bier. But the verb *communio* (whose interpretation Márta R. Hamar also leaves out of consideration) causes difficulty as well. To translate it as "is covered" is at best a conjecture. What is the object of the verb? Is it the corpse, *cadaver?* (as R. Hamar's translation indicates.) Or is it *copercula/fercula?* The verb's lexical meaning of "to strengthen" rather suggest the latter alternative. It is perhaps not fortuitous that tradition has separated the first words of the sentence, as I have indicated already: ... *cadaver est terra reconditum*, thus beginning a new sentence with *copercula*, etc. Even if we consider the insertion of *est* a conjecture, the verb *communio* in all probability refers not to *cadaver* but to the word *copercula* (or *fercula*). And whichever of the two words one accepts, it is obvious that standing with the verb "strengthen" or "protect" it must refer to some object(s) used during the funeral. This is how the sentence is interpreted in most modern translations, for instance by M. Nisard in French (1878), Ch. C. Mireow in English (1908), and E. Ch. Skrzhinskaia in Russian (1960), who all write three coffins or sarcophagi. This, however, only apparently supports the Hungarian popular tradition. The plural here is something like saying "the coverings of the corpse" or "bier." If, as seems more correct, one opts for the first solution, Iordanes' text should be translated something like this: "the covering (of the body) was strengthened, first with gold, secondly with silver, and thirdly with solid iron." However it may have been, Attila was buried in the manner customary among the peoples of the steppe at that time. Many princely graves are known from the steppes of Eurasia and the Altai region, several of which have been unearthed by archaeologists. In most of the cases the body was put into a wooden coffin, a single one, which was decorated in various ways. The Hungarian archaeologist István Bóna, specialized in the Migration Period, recently (1984) described Attila's funeral in a paraphrase of Iordanes' record, even if not referring to him: "...The lid of his coffin was hooped and decorated with gold, silver, and iron plates, and then, according to the burial custom of nomadic princes, it was secretly hidden in the earth during the night. His status weapons, splendid trappings, and princely insignia were buried with him."

Jenő Szűcs, whose remarks I quoted at the beginning of this paper, is, of course, right. History cannot be grasped directly, only through the medium of surviving sources. In the case of written sources, this involves problems of textual criticism. One may add that this is true not just for the Hungarian chronicles but is implicit in the very nature of written sources. Often one does not only have to engage in the criticism of the source in question, but also the criticism of earlier interpretations of the text as it was read and

interpreted over centuries. This also holds true for the tradition regarding Attila's burial. In Hungary this tradition has long become part of the nation's sense of historical identity. Thus any form of criticism concerns not only the source but also the relevant elements of national consciousness. It is true that the sources must be viewed critically, but the same critical approach should also be applied to the traditional ideas of these sources. The secret (and the vital element) of healthy scholarship is a critical spirit. This is true for a healthy national consciousness as well.

FROM OUR NEXT ISSUES

TURN OF THE CENTURY GLASS WINDOWS
Katalin Gellér

SIGISMUND OF LUXEMBURG, KING OF HUNGARY
Ernő Marosi, Pál Engel

THE CHIVALRIC ORDER OF THE DRAGON
Éva Kovács

SCHOENBERG AND HIS HUNGARIAN ADVOCATES
János Breuer

THE LATE NEOLITHIC IN THE TISZA REGION
János Makkay

BOOKS AND AUTHORS

A GREAT POLITICAL THINKER

István Bibó: *Válogatott tanulmányok* (Selected essays). 3 vols. Vol. 1: 1935–1944, 737 pp; Vol. 2: 1945–1949, 923 pp; Vol. 3: 1971–1979, 653 pp. Magvető, Budapest, 1986.

The three volumes of István Bibó's selected studies present the scholar's reflections on Hungarian history and especially on the period of the liberation of the country; they provide an almost complete overview of his œuvre. The essays are accompanied by a thorough, careful, critical study by Tibor Huszár, which considers its subject with sympathy and respect even when refuting or rejecting Bibó's views.

I could not read Bibó's writings without constantly being reminded of his warmth and the soft and reserved voice which I have treasured ever since my student days. In the student society of the Piarist Secondary School in Szeged he delivered a series of Sunday morning lectures on the drawing of the borders of the European states. He must have been seventeen or eighteen years old at the time; in order to illustrate his theme, he unfolded maps, wrote dates on the blackboard and we listened to him in astonishment without understanding all the ideas he gave forth and with a slight feeling of being at university already.

In this selection of his studies, I came across over and over again the borders of European states which Bibó had evinced so much interest in when still a secondary school student. In writing about the misery of the small states in Eastern Europe, in one of Bibó's most logically constructed studies, this misery is accounted for by the lack of concurrence of the linguistic, ethnic and state boundaries, their arbitrary and chaotic shifting which was one of the obstacles to democratic development. Just as this writing is connected to Bibó's student days, so too are the pieces he wrote between 1945 and 1948 connected to each other. Tibor Huszár has every reason to consider these as being the best in Bibó's output, although the great study that he produced at the beginning of the 1970s, *Az európai társadalomfejlődés értelme* (The sense of development of European societies), in spite of all its problematic details and a certain embittered passion, is the summary of all his work and its train of thought sheds light on a great number of things in his earlier works. The piece on the misery of the small East European states, to which the boundaries of the states have contributed so much, is in several respects an extension of the ideas of Guglielmo Ferrero, István Bibó's former professor in Geneva. Although Ferrero's book *Reconstruction*, on the role of Talleyrand at the time of the Congress of Vienna, was published in Paris in 1940, it only became known in Hungary after the liberation of the country in 1945. This almost prophetic book, whose preface is dated December 31, 1939 in Geneva, found an echo all over in the Europe of the immediate post-war period. The starting point of Ferrero's book is the great fear that, following the destruction of the Bastille, swept

through first France and then the greater part of Europe. The peasantry which had looked to the power of kings for protection against robbers, brigands and ruthless landlords from the Middle Ages on, now felt helpless and prey at the hands of ruffians through the weakening of central power, and these bands of vagabonds were only to be curbed in the age of Napoleon, mainly by Fouché's gendarmerie. Naturally, it is not a fear of this kind, yet it is still a kind of fear through which Bibó interpreted certain periods of crisis in history, and in which he sees one reason for the misery of the small states. Fear was to prevail during the whole revolutionary and Napoleonic era and this fear was only enhanced by what Ferrero called 'adventure,' and discussed in his *Aventure*, a book which preceded *Reconstruction*. The Adventure is Campo-Formio, the partition of Italy between Vienna and the revolution. This adventure continued to promote fear since, from that time on, borders in Europe became even more uncertain.

This fear reached its peak in 1814: "In the centre of the big fear, Paris, in the hideous winter of 1813–1814, a man, instead of shivering together with the others, began to think. Where does this hideous fear of the world originate from?" This is the sentence with which Ferrero begins the chapter on Talleyrand; it turns to an analysis of the settlement of Europe that was to be realized at the Congress of Vienna. 'The Great Fear' was banished from Europe until 1914 when the settlement of 1815 collapsed. The motif of fear may be traced through all the work of Bibó; it can stand service as an explanation for the misery of the small states in Eastern Europe too.

Bibó's studies are constructed according to a strict and comprehensible logic and in this respect too he proves to be the student of Ferrero. What he failed to learn from Ferrero is the elegance of presentation which comes from Ferrero's carefully pruned sentences. Bibó's longish sentences, burdened with a striking number of clauses, are far more cumbersome than Ferrero's lucid and clearcut prose. This study on the misery of Eastern Europe is one of Bibó's best pieces of writing; perhaps only his study *Eltorzult magyar alkat, zsákutcás magyar történelem* (Distorted Hungarian character, Hungarian history as a dead-end), is more concise and more apt. This is Bibó's best writing from the formal point of view. Morover, great importance is to be attached to his great study, "The sense of development," much less carefully constructed and sketchy in some of its chapters, to which I shall come back later. In his piece on Eastern Europe's misery, his precept of each peace treaty having to be concluded on some valid and authentic basis, may be looked upon as a Ferreroian idea. Talleyrand's basic principle was legitimacy. Bibó pointed out the right of the peoples to autonomy as the basic principle of the peace treaties concluded in Europe in our century. This basic principle was violated in 1920 by Trianon, providing a source of new fears, and it was no less seriously violated by the 1946 Paris Peace Treaty as well. Bibó rightly states that in Masaryk's Czechoslovakia it was not a fearful position to be Hungarian or German. However, in the aftermath of the Paris Peace Treaty, the resettlement of the nationality groups began, again in the atmosphere of fear.

Bibó's analysis of history is moral and psychological. For this reason the question of responsibility keeps recurring, constituting the centre of his excellent study on the Jewish question. Thus all his studies treat the questions of standing up to violence, of moderation in thinking, of mildness even, and of consciousness disturbed by fear and political hysteria. These are the concepts that Bibó operates with, analysing them in various political eras and drawing historical conclusions through them. However, the main question and objective of his work is democracy. He points out the obstacles to democracy in the history of Hungary in particular and the other East European countries; his whole career is in the service

of educating for democracy. One of the ideas in his writing on misery will be a good example: "To be a democrat first of all means not to be afraid"—that is, not to be afraid of other people's opinions, revolution, plots, denigration, and all those imagined dangers "which become real dangers through our fear of them."

Bibó's system of ideas composes a circle which necessarily returns to the same points. Thus it returns to the question of democracy in Eastern Europe: "The countries of Central and Eastern Europe were afraid because they were not completed, ripened democracies and since they were afraid they were unable to become democracies." Thus this idea, with obvious links to Ferrero's Great Fear, its East European version, is the key to Bibó's analyses. With very few exceptions, these are extremely clear and comprehensible and that in itself indicates Bibó's significance as a thinker. Tibor Huszár has rightly placed him among the most important thinkers Hungary has produced.

While making use of the moral and psychological concepts mentioned above, Bibó remains strictly historical: he deduces the lessons for today from a series of historical analyses that begins with the Middle Ages. However, at times it is enough for him to go back to Napoleon only, since he was the first to cause harm that is still to be repaired in Europe. The eighteenth century "humanized" war and concluded peace treaties "without passion." Brutally imposed peace dictates began with Napoleon. This brutality also originated from fear, and the strength displayed in such a situation actually concealed weakness. However, Talleyrand believed that "If we have principles, we are strong," and the principle of legitimacy meant at the same time that "historical borders are good borders." The result of Talleyrand's principle of legitimacy was a stabilized Europe, while the Holy Alliance came into being as the invention of Tsar Alexander, the "fantasist" and "instrument" of the reactionary Metternich. In vain did Talleyrand eliminate "cynical Napoleonic nihilism;" its place was to be taken by the "maniac nihilism of Hitler." As can be seen, the tolerance and moderation of Bibó's analysis are not free of justified passion.

His analysis of the most recent phenomena in East Europe's misery is also coupled with historical reasons. The borders of the small East European states were established in the Middle Ages; while the national framework of the western states display a "surprising constancy," in the East the development into nation and state was disrupted in turn by the Ottoman Empire and the Habsburg Empire. A striking statement of Bibó's is that the cause of the chaos in Central and Eastern Europe following 1919 was not the collapse of the Habsburg empire but its actual existence. This very harmful historical antecedent was coupled with three national catastrophes: the dismemberment of Poland in the eighteenth century, the defeat of the Hungarians in 1849, and Czechoslovakia's invasion by Hitler in 1938–1939. Eastern Europe was characterized by the uncertainty of the national frameworks through which was formulated the approach based on territory in its region; this is qualified by Bibó as antidemocratic. Since the study, written in 1946, a great many things have changed but a great many things have not; thus the doubt remains in our mind whether the face of Europe today was formulated in accordance with the ideas of Ferrero.

Bibó's thinking and his political approach are at their most typical in "Distorted Hungarian character" *(Eltorzult magyar alkat)* written in 1948. This is to a certain extent connected to László Németh's work *Kisebbségben* (In minority) although Bibó rejects and amends the latter in the central question of "deep Hungarianism" and "diluted Hungarianism," and looks upon Petőfi as the personification of healthy Hungarian development, in contrast to László Németh. Even

more than earlier studies, this concentrates on analysing the processes of the consciousness and thought, again through historical analysis. The Hungarian character was actually distorted in the course of a century; this meant that the leaders of the country lost touch with reality, tilted at windmills, their ability to make decisions was blunted and were eventually unable to recognize the real interests of the nation. This distortion and bluntness led the country to catastrophe. In this way, the Hungarians were unable to recognize the "real potentials of their own situation" and the consequent duties between 1914 and 1920, and between 1938 and 1944. Hungary could not find good leaders, it did not act "instinctively according to its own interests." This is what the series of historical failures led to. The first tragic stage in the process was the revolution of Dózsa in 1514; not as tragic but the source of new troubles were the defeat in the War of Independence in 1849, and the Austro-Hungarian Compromise of 1867.

As has already been mentioned, the poet Petőfi, in whom István Bibó sees the prototype for optimism and rationalism, proves to represent a healthy way of Hungarian development. In European development, each nation must enrich its own character with this optimism and rationalism. So Petőfi is the son of healthy Hungarian development and is free of Hungarian crisis symptoms. István Bibó's observant eye notices what literary historians have largely missed, namely that Petőfi revived Hungarian prose as well as poetry. His innovations in prose were to be carried on by the novelists Jókai and Mikszáth, and it was these that were to gain ground in all our prose of this century too. Petőfi's innovations have lasted longer in prose than in poetry. Petőfi's type of optimism and rationalism ceased to exist after 1849, but the impetus of the Age of Reforms survived for a while in the era of absolutism, and Hungarian literature of the 1850s is to be looked upon to a certain extent as the continuation of the Age of Reform.

There is, however, an essential difference which exerted an influence on literature and poetry. Hungarian thinking after 1849 had an unshakable faith in two precepts, one of which was that the Habsburg Empire was a European necessity which Hungary was unable to rid itself of. In Bibó's view, this was not true at the time, and it was even less true later. The second precept was that, with the collapse of the Habsburg Empire, Hungary's nationality groups would break away from Hungary. This was true but this would not have been prevented by the survival of the Habsburg Empire till the very end either. Bibó pointed out that Hungary should at any cost have given up certain nationality regions and a really democratic Hungary would have done so sooner or later, and this would have been a superior solution to that of Trianon.

Following 1849 the two precepts testified to the chaos that was to prevail in the judgement of real interests which was to lead to the intellectuals of the Hungarian nation "losing their enterprising spirit under the influence of these two shocking messages and were considering how to save what could be saved rather than produce a brave élite for a new revolution." All that is true, especially if we have in mind the course of the novelist and thinker Zsigmond Kemény's ideas in that period. But we must not forget that following 1849 the only objective could have been to preserve and maintain the existence of the nation, and this was done by an élite from Arany to Madách. It was a task that could not create a revolutionary élite, since some believed that bourgeois development was more important than national independence, as it might also lead to the latter some day. The poet János Vajda thought and the Czechs acted in that vein.

In Bibó's view, it was primarily the 1867 Compromise with Austria that hindered the ability to see clearly, judge correctly and act in accordance with real interests. Bibó qualifies the Compromise as self-deception and a lie, in which both parties overestimated each other's strength and, in Bibó's word-

ing, which is again reminiscent of Ferrero, "the contracting parties were brought together not by common objectives and plans but common fears and worries." And another generalization, so characteristic of Bibó: "the mechanism of fear oppresses the mechanism of the intellect." A faulty concept led to a significant part of intellectual and political strength being frittered away in debates on public law. It came to light on the threshold of the first World War, how little policy, based upon the Compromise, recognized the elementary interests of the nation. All that is true but it must not be forgotten either that the situation was not so hopeless intellectually or economically after 1867. For a while literature could live on the heritage of the period of Petőfi and Arany, and it underwent a healthy renewal at the turn of the century. Just at this time the natural sciences enjoyed an upswing comparable to that of poetry in the Age of Reform in the first half of the 1800s. Great individuals and important scientists appeared, including people like Loránd Eötvös and Gyula König. This was the initial development of the applied sciences in Hungary. It cannot be said that József Eötvös's long-term concept of education met with complete failure. Nor should it be forgotten that it was in this period that Budapest developed into a metropolis, and from the 1880s on, bridges, public buildings, ring-boulevards and avenues were built at an amazing rate. All that proves that, in spite of the increasingly distorted thinking of the political leadership and their unreal approach, some healthy development survived, at the outset of which István Bibó so justly distinguished Petőfi. Even more than the Compromise, the Hungarian leadership is to be blamed for their inability to make a better use of the opportunities which opened up after 1867. For opportunities did exist. They existed even for the development of a more genuine democracy, but they were discarded by Hungarian political leaders because of the fear and anxiety that lurked in their souls.

One of the notes in the book justly criticizes István Bibó's comment that Ferenc Deák, Zsigmond Kemény and József Eötvös "celebrated" the Compromise "and had it celebrated by the nation." There is no doubt that all three of them had taken an active part in the drawing up of the Compromise; Deák, the real father of the Compromise, indentified himself with it and assumed responsibility for it. At this time Zsigmond Kemény was already slowly going insane; József Eötvös, on the other hand, as testified by his diaries and by letters written to his son Loránd, the physicist, was soon to be disappointed in the Compromise and severely criticized both the government of the Compromis eand political life itself. True József Eötvös had been working on the Compromise for a long time, and one has to say that his previously incisive judgement became severely disturbed after 1867; similarly, he, who at one time had been in such close intimacy with French culture, shrank from the Second Empire, seeing the French only as the "people of the cancan," and real "morals and civilization" in Germany! After 1867, Eötvös stood for German orientation, which was later to prove so fatal and tried to win count Gyula Andrássy the Elder, the Austro-Hungarian Foreign Minister, over to his views.

István Bibó cleverly drew up the three political precepts which the creators of the Compromise clung to so sincerely: the independence of Hungary, constitutional monarchy, and the maintenance of historical Hungary. Bibó is correct in stating that the latter two exclude the first, and that the supporters of the Compromise had failed to recognize this and their work finally proved to be one of self-deception. "It is not possible to lie in politics," states Bibó, and the creation of lies will sometime turn against the liars and the deceived. We must also accept the groupings that Bibó made of those who defended a spurious construction and of those who attacked it. The first group includes Ferenc Deák, Ferenc Salamon, the

Andrássys, father and son, Albert Apponyi, István Tisza, Gyula Szekfű, otherwise "elevated intellects," but "today nothing whatsoever is valid in their proclaimed precepts on the problems of the Hungarian community of the time." The second group includes the exiled Kossuth and his followers, Mihály Táncsics, János Vajda, Lajos Tolnai, Endre Ady. Bibó includes the novelist Dezső Szabó among them too.

István Bibó has made what we can consider the classic summary of the one hundred years of the Hungarians following 1849, when the nation staggered down a series of dead-end streets, political and social, up to the time "when at the end of the Second World War it again faced reality among the ruins of a state edifice constructed from fictions, assumptions, claims and visions of desire. In the course of these some hundred years the Hungarian nation lived within political and social structures where it was not only impossible but actually forbidden to call a spade a spade, where facts had to be interpreted and explained not in the simple chain of cause and effect but through exterior assumptions and expectations, where the strength of the good had to be wasted on false problems, and real problems had to be remedied by incantations ... where the objective measures of the righteousness of acts were missing and instead a particular system of fears and grievances was applied as a moral yardstick."

These lines were written in 1948; much later, in the epilogue to his study on the social development of Europe (written in 1971–72) he refers to a statement attributed to Moltke, who suggested to a young soldier that if he wanted to read good writing on strategy, "he should read the ancient authors because they have not yet lost their sense of how to trace things back to their causes." Bibó could call this principle as his own at the time he wrote on the Hungarian dead-end. However, I do not feel that László Németh's "deep Hungarian" theory explains things with the help of their own causes. For Bibó rightly points out that the traits of the deeper Hungarian character may also be recognized in Ady and in the other Hungarian thinkers capable of seeing "the essence." Nevertheless, "That they are truer Hungarians does not yet mean that they have to be truer Hungarians," from which it also follows that Németh's *Kisebbségben* (In minority), in spite of several brilliant recognitions, only increases the number of wishful structures, even though Bibó, out of sheer consideration, does not say so outright.

At times István Bibó was inclined to build his own structures of fantasy; something for which he had reproached the thinkers and men of letters of old Hungary. His work on the crisis in Hungarian democracy, written in 1945, closes with a fantasy: if the coalition works properly in Hungary, "a synthesis of the Anglo-Saxon and the Soviet democracies" may be created, and in this way Hungary may "develop into the workshop" of transition to socialism and "construct a new harmonious system of social values." Thus Hungary's role would be similar to that of Belgium after the reaction that followed the French Revolution, a workshop ironing out the "conflicts torturing the world." As we know, his fantasy did not come into being and could not have done so since, in 1945, Hungarian society was not yet capable of forming a democracy at that level and some of the coalition parties would not have been good partners in such a workshop. Still, one would have been somewhat moved in viewing this picture of fantasy immediately after the war.

History may create syntheses different from the one Bibó had in mind. Openness goes hand in hand with creating syntheses, and we consider the Hungary of today open, capable of creating economic, cultural and scientific syntheses. Bibó's hope was a dream but in no way the "rightist criticism" of Hungarian democracy that György Lukács was so quick to describe it. Today we read, in the discussion following Bibó's article, with some uneasiness certain statements made by

Lukács such as "there are no serious people or serious mass forces which might desire the dictatorship of the proletariat," or "the sectarians have no influence whatsoever on the leadership of the Communist Party;" similarly strange today is Lukács's statement that "the Communist Party has certain elements, lagging behind development, sticking to the old approach" (the nineteen-nineteen lot). The communist ideologist József Révai was much more moderate and admitted that Bibó's article "expresses certain uneasiness," an uneasiness against the danger of "Hungarian democracy arriving at a deadlock." Révai admitted that Bibó's "intuition is not the worst, it is necessary partly to highlight the social background in which this atmosphere, characterizing the whole article, was born."

Bibó's approach to history and his political evaluation have a purely moral basis. This is well shown in his study on the Jewish question, written in 1948. No one could feel so deeply, assume the responsibility for all that had happened to our countrymen of Jewish origin in this century as István Bibó did. Bibó's study is one of the most sincere moral acts in the history of Hungarian thought. This study is that of a lawyer, almost of an attorney in court and, painful as it is, it is with clear argumentation that it pins down the responsibility of a society. What is more important, its objective is to evoke a feeling of responsibility. For this feeling of responsibility was lacking even after 1945. After the liberation of the country, Hungarian society lived together with a group that had been persecuted, who could not feel that the country had stood by them—unlike the Jews in Holland, Denmark, Italy, and Yugoslavia. In addition to the hatred and cowardice, Bibó refers to a deaf inability to understand and to indifference; we feel these accusations to be the more weighty. The final distortion of Hungarian society is demonstrated by the fact that otherwise decent people were not even aware of the atrocities that were taking place around them. They were carrying on with their work and living their family lives with an easy conscience, while their innocent neighbours and acquaintances were being dragged away to be murdered. This insensitivity and indifference are simply blood-curdling.

The degeneration of thinking is manifested in those irreproachable public officials who refused to forge the documents that might have saved human lives—out of consideration for their oaths. Whereas, as Bibó writes, "it would have been only the deceiving of a murdering and thieving state." For "only few people went as far as to consider the state power as a band of gangsters, its decrees scraps of paper, and disobedience, deception and forgery a moral obligation." Practising Christians did not even realize that they were denying the basic principle of Christian faith and were trampling on the Gospel all over the country. Hungarian society truly lacked a social ethic; it was a society that did not even notice that the fate of the Jews was to reflect the fate in store for the whole Hungarian nation.

Bibó condemns the leaders of old Hungary ruthlessly and with genuine passion; without seeking excuses for them, he reveals the incentives for their sins more fully and overtly than any other Hungarian writer has ever done. For it is true that the political foolishness of the country came to its apogee after March 19, 1944 (when Hitler invaded the country), and it is also true that the ideals of national feeling and progress had long been separated from each other, and Hungarian thinking had been infected by an antidemocratic nationalism. It is also true that a normal community refuses to internalize antisemitism, or to adopt the "exclusiveness of Jewish experiences" as an approach. It is characteristic of Bibó's thinking that he imagined the ultimate solution of the Jewish question to lie in a classless society, together with the solution of all social questions, where, naturally, the Jews

would not be entitled to any special treatment.

Of all Bibó's studies, the one on the Jewish question is the most gloomy in tone, although its final conclusions are the most realistic. István Bibó himself conjectured that he was unable to achieve his objective of awakening the feeling of responsibility, a feeling that society after the liberation did in fact lack. Whereas "if we have a feeling of responsibility, we must face it without any manipulation, since that is the only way we may become a grown-up nation and put our own morals right." However, Hungarian society failed to take on this responsibility and, consequently, a question of conscience has remained unsettled since the liberation and has been lurking dangerously in the consciousness of society ever since. It is always the latent unsettled matters which are the most dangerous, since they may bring about unexpected crises.

Bibó considers it important that the Jews do not demand a supra-national status but they lay an emphasis on their being part of the Hungarian nation. The development of this train of thought is the most brilliant part in the study which argues for the importance of arousing the feeling of responsibility. Somewhat more obscure are the paragraphs containing a criticism of intellectual resistance. Bibó rightly considers it too little; however, he seems to have failed to have taken into consideration the realities of the time, and he also seems to have disregarded the fact that it must have meant much more than any manifesto to the persecuted if they received personal and individual help. Still, the extension of support of that kind must not be underestimated. More than that could not be offered even by the Dutch, Danish, and other societies. However, the tragic shame of inability to understand and of indifference was borne by Hungarian society even after 1945; that was a heavier burden than the political burdens, for which not the whole society but its leaders of old could be held responsible. The study on the Jewish question is not Bibó's most logically constructed piece of writing, but it is his finest from the ethical point of view and his clearest from the emotional point of view. It has to be placed among the classic accomplishments of the Hungarian essay, as a continuation and late counterpart of the fine and moving study by József Eötvös on the assimilation of the Jews.

Bibó refuses to accept Marxist philosophy and denies the precept that history is a sequence of class struggles. The basis of his system of thinking is not materialism and he does not derive social phenomena primarily from economic determinants. As we have seen from the above, he thinks in moral and psychological categories, he looks upon revolutions as complicated phenomena which may result in regression as well as progress. At the same time he is against the inheritability of large estates and large capital properties, but has doubts about the existence of ruling classes in capitalism which existed in feudalism. He admits that modern society is assuming an increasingly more intellectual character, but warns us against the intellectuals ever forming a ruling class. He is even more afraid of the rule of bureaucracy; with all that, however, he is unequivocally for socialism as a system which must comprise the ideal of freedom.

All those ideas are given and elaborated on in his great work of historical philosophy *Az európai társadalomfejlődés értelme* (The sense of social development in Europe, 1971–1972). He dictated this study on tape and its special attraction is that its style is at times permeated by the vividness of living speech. By the way, it permits us to place Bibó both in the history of Hungarian thinking and in the wider circle of European thought. The fundamental principle and recurring motifs of "The sense of social development in Europe" display a close connection with József Eötvös's work *A XIX. század uralkodó eszméi* (The ruling ideas of the nineteenth century), which describes the ideal of the liberal state of the post-revolutionary era.

In his turn, Eötvös is akin to John Stuart Mill. It is difficult to decide whether Bibó consciously continued certain trains of thought in the "Ruling ideas" or was led by the logic of history to where the same logic had also led Eötvös and Mill. The Christian elements gaining ground in European democracy, the liberal judgement of the role to be played by the state, the reasonable limitation of the influence exerted by the state, the balance between a centralized state and autonomous institutions are put forward by Eötvös, and the same ideas almost invariably crop up in Bibó. Thus Bibó continues and represents the line of thinking which, starting from the enlightenment, enriched and modified by the French liberal thinkers and historians, reached Eötvös and was maintained almost continuously by the second-rate thinkers in Hungary in the second half of the past century. Bibó has most in common with Eötvös rather than with Zsigmond Kemény, even less with Ferenc Deák and not much with Kossuth. In Bibó, Eötvös's liberalism is supplemented by some important elements of Ferrero's approach to history.

This approach has, however, an essential feature, perhaps the most essential, which is characteristic of Bibó only. His whole being, as I discovered when he was a student, radiates mildness. This mildness is, perhaps, most alien to the world of violence, but mildness may be right for all that. But it is also true that in a world such as ours, 'mild' leadership would only let loose robbery, murder—the anarchy towards which our age shows such a great inclination. The starting point of Bibó's approach to history is Jesus, and his behaviour of an observer displays the gentleness of Jesus. In Bibó's view, Jesus "was a passionate personality, prone to violent emotional outbreaks, even aggression by His basic nature, who Himself realized the power of gentleness over everything. Jesus did not become a helpless man after recognizing the power of gentleness, but through it He became capable of achieving things which He would not have been able to achieve with aggression." Bibó admits the negative features of Christianity, a certain anti-life behaviour and the tendency to dogmatic intolerance, but even then, "the tolerant basic tone of the personal message of Christ, close to life and exerting a liberating influence, has been manifest with a winning force up to the present day."

The City of God of Saint Augustine, leaving its stamp on the feudal system of medieval society, inevitably becomes the next stage in an approach to history that starts out from the premise of gentleness and tolerance. Augustus turns not to rebels but to the lords for improvement, since even this vale of tears may be ameliorated. The medieval view of the world justified the existing differences but also gave way to a revolutionary criticism of the mighty. The essence of medieval feudalism was the system of mutual service which had come to an end before the French Revolution, while the aristocracy played an "idle, ostentatious, fighting" role, producing nothing useful to society. Their only positive role was to provide a certain amount of support for the arts. Alongside the aristocracy playing the role of the idle patron, the artisan, "creating with great care," the citizen came into being. In Bibó's view, the French Revolution was not the work of the citizens but of an intellectual ideology. To his mind, the French Revolution was both the most successful and the most unsuccessful of revolutions. Its success was a fundamental reorganization of society, while its failure was the general dissemination of fear across Europe. We have already seen the role this fear played in Ferrero's thinking and, in his footsteps, István Bibó's approach to history. Bibó's principle of gentleness also goes hand in hand with a criticism of the principle of violence: if "all hatred originates from the distorted state of mind of man full of fear, then we must reject all ideas of violence as such, exerting a liberating, creating influence

in itself and that a certain type of social progress is simply unthinkable without violence." If Bibó traces the principle of a gentleness free of violence back to St. Augustine and through him to the Gospel and Jesus, then we must see in historical Jesus the manifestation of a type of man, the type to which Bibó himself also belongs.

Bibó considers it important that the French Revolution left certain questions unsettled and that the same questions were left unsettled by the other French revolutions of the nineteenth century too. In a similar manner, he correctly judges the Chinese Cultural Revolution and the student movements in the west around 1968 to be "the remedy (that) is worse than the illness," namely, anarchic violence is worse than bureaucratic violence. The socialism imagined by Bibó brings back the system of "mutual service," and places the ideal of democratic freedom into the foreground. Incidentally, this reiterates the principle in "Ruling ideas" too, since József Eötvös considered the ideal of freedom the most important. On the other hand, Bibó expresses the ideal of equality by wishing to eliminate the inheritability of large estates and capital.

A pure soul, at times daydreaming and possessed with the power of abstract thinking and of a gentleness and moderation which arouse respect even in his enemies: István Bibó's work was set by the circumstance that he viewed a society born of Marxist principles not from the view of Marxism. In his thinking we may sense a tragic colouring too. Yet when considering his position after 1964, we may feel that he is closer to the social system of our country than some might believe. Not on account of his loyal statements, since there is no intention of compromise in his proclaiming that the political system created in Hungary is "the most cleverly governed proletarian dictatorship known to history so far," or in his mention of the "moderate possessors" of power and in his recording the new positive results, the increase in legal and property security, the freedom to go abroad, the end of fear. Bibó did not say much between 1976 and 1979, and if we feel that the cause of Hungarian socialism was close to his heart, this must be judged not through these likeable, correct proclamations of his.

Tibor Huszár mentions an important and typical episode in relation to meeting Bibó, following the shooting of a documentary on the sociologist Ferenc Erdei. They were talking about the non-coincidence of historical and biological times, when Bibó made the remark that "Ferenc completed his career both biologically and historically in 1971." Then, after a short pause, he added: "And what will be engraved on my gravestone? István Bibó: 1945–1948."

Tibor Huszár justly considers his writing between 1945 and 1948 as timely and valid in his oeuvre. Of course, "Development in Europe," written in 1971–1972, is still to be looked upon as a synthesis of Bibó's thinking. But both this work and the whole of Bibó's thinking are the fruits of the exhilarating excitement of the three years following the liberation, years which may be considered as one of the heydays of Hungarian culture and whose flowers were trodden upon so senselessly and so ruthlessly. Bibó's writing in this period, discussing the Jewish question and the distorted Hungarian character, are the fruits of this brief heyday. Bibó continued on the way he started on between 1945 and 1948. It led to conflict around 1956, but more important than these conflicts is Bibó's adherence to a social ideal free of violence, exploitation, based upon humanity, gentleness, and tolerance. This ideal is in harmony with the Augustinian City but its potentials are contained in the future of ideal socialism too. It is true, however, that the proclamation of this ideal at the time of a social consciousness affected by Fascism and Cold

War was painful daydreaming and abstraction. We cannot help seeing that Bibó's thinking was characterized by a kind of abstraction too. With all that, we must agree with Bibó that his real climate was the period between 1945 and 1948, and everything that remains a light and a hope in his work still shines forth from that climate today.

ISTVÁN SŐTÉR

MOHOLY-NAGY — A RESTLESS INTELLECT

Krisztina Passuth: *Moholy-Nagy*. London, Thames and Hudson, Budapest, Corvina. 1985. 448 pp. with 252 illustrations, 44 in colour.

"Glass architecture entails European spiritual revolution and transforms the brutish, vain animal, fixed in his habits, into alert, clear-headed refined man," proclaimed Adolf Behne in 1921. In the same year the youthful László Moholy-Nagy joined Raoul Hausmann, Hans Arp and Ivan Pumi in signing the Manifesto of Elemental Art. "We demand elemental art! Down with reaction in art!" it ended. Replace 'elemental' with some other convenient term and the two short sentences could be pasted into every other manifesto of the time. It is the nature of manifestos to stride, strut, demand, posture and make unsupported statements: it is our misfortune to look back at them through the telescope of history. Few people can listen without wincing to a sentence whose form is "has become a historical relic and is finished with," or "when x happens then y will reach a peak and a perfection which could never be achieved by z means." Sixty-six years after Behne we look around at our own glass architecture and fail to catch our alert, clear-headed reflections. We know our brutalists all too well.

The recent reaction against modernism was typified in its early days by Tom Wolfe's *From Bauhaus to Our House*, which mocked such absolutist pronouncements. Yet the heroic period of modernism is undeniably heroic, despite or, perhaps, even because of, the silliness and the Teutonic strutting. A new world of new assumptions is being beaten into shape. One is aware of a consensus within which people differ so sharply that their very fury generates an imperious if imprecise energy. In order to define their differences they form themselves into what Wolfe termed 'compounds,' each of which claims exclusive possession of all truth. The most successful and insitutionalised of such compounds was, of course, the Bauhaus and the most temperamentally perfect Bauhausler was László Moholy-Nagy who, though a teacher, delighted in being taken for a student. The Bauhaus believed that students should experience the widest possible range of materials and techniques and should find it natural to move between them. No one exemplified this more than Moholy-Nagy. His activities comprised painting, printmaking, sculpture, collage, film, photography, typography, theatre and costume design, exhibition and window display, and the writing of copious theoreti-

cal texts. He found new techniques exciting in themselves and attempted to formulate practices and languages to articulate them. He was a Utopian who believed in both the perfectibility of the machine and of society itself, which after all was simply another kind of machine. And this would have been appropriate, at least most of the time. The humanist-realist in Moholy-Nagy did exist but tended to take very much second place. His Utopia placed forms before their meaning, forces before individuals.

Krisztina Passuth's excellent monograph traces Moholy-Nagy's life from his birth in Mohol in 1895, through his early acquaintance with Babits, Hevesy and Gyula Juhász, his drawings during the war, his intellectually hyper-active years of the twenties, and his subsequent experiments and wanderings. She is careful to relate his ideas to Kassák's and to set him in the context of the post-war post-revolutionary ferment, a ferment in which the pioneering role of Russian Constructivism plays a vital part. To some extent it was the 1919 Republic of Councils that discovered Moholy-Nagy's talent. His work at this time was realistic and subjective but he is already attempting to establish an abstract language. It was only after the fall of the Republic of Councils, when he leaves Budapest for Berlin, that his characteristic mode of expression emerges. He encounters Dada, particularly in the shape of Picabia, adopts some of its forms while keeping his distance from its iconoclastic spirit, and begins to contribute to well known avant-garde journals like *De Stijl*, *Der Sturm* and *Akasztott ember* ("The Hanged Man").

Passuth comments on the predominance of structure over symbol in his work, which led him towards Suprematism and Constructivism. She attaches particular importance to the *Glass Architecture* series of paintings of 1920–21, and is meticulous in defining differences between apparently similar branches of development in Malevich and Moholy-Nagy. Her greatest strength throughout the critical passages is her ability to make fine distinctions: these compensate for an occasional over-readiness to take the rhetoric of the avant-gardists at their own valuation and to resort to self-defining terms succh as 'beauty,' 'harmony,' or 'clarity.'

She is most successful at conveying the excitement of the period, and the restlessness of Moholy-Nagy's intellect. This restlessness develops an almost epic dimension as time passes. It is rich in ironies. The artist's most fertile period is associated with the period before he joined the Bauhaus, while he was still a painter. He still paints at the Bauhaus but his energies are directed more towards education, theatre, film, photography, and books. He was forever moving on. The phrase "this was only a transitional phase for him," punctuates his entire career with great regularity. It is almost as though he were fascinated by novelty for its own sake. He always seems to be arriving at something too late, forever losing interest in the very act of possessing his object.

As the excitement of the twenties wore off he became, as Krisztina Passuth observes, a modern artist rather than an avant-garde one. But where was the *garde* by this time? The missionary fervour of the years after the Great War was never to be recaptured, at least not by Moholy-Nagy. He flirted with Surrealism but it was far too literary a movement for him; it was less optimistic, less utopian and much less interested in forms. He was an international figure, if a rather shadowy one. His reputation was defined less by his individual works than by his role, chiefly in the production of the Bauhaus books. After his departure from Germany following the closure of the Bauhaus in 1933, he found himself more and more frequently engaged in what were essentially commercial or decorative design projects, especially once he settled in London. Gropius and Herbert Read tried to help, but he never spoke English well and

the loss of articulacy was bound to affect him deeply. The breaking up of the Bauhaus unity was to some extent his own breaking up. He was left with his forms, which he could apply in any medium, but maybe the forms themselves were a disappointment.

The final transplantation to America in 1937 gave him new hope. As Passuth points out, Moholy-Nagy was an instinctive teacher: "What did matter was that he should be able to import his knowledge, will, ideas, and utopian concepts to a closed and coherent group which would return the confidence he placed in them." The New Bauhaus in Chicago was modelled on the system at Dessau, and his own Institute of Design Research was on the same site. The two fell together when financial support was withdrawn. He then opened a new establishment, the School (later the Institute) of Design whose interests compassed literature and group poetry and which flourished throughout the Second World War right up to his death in 1946. His posthumous volume, *Vision in Motion*, serves as a testament to his utopianism.

The inclusion in the book of substantial excerpts from his writings, from other people's views of him and from his own letters makes this a definitive introduction to Moholy-Nagy's professional career. If one had to pick one work by which to typify him it would probably be the Light-Space Modulator of the twenties. With parts reminiscent of egg-slicers, corkscrews, bicycles, frying pans, and noodle makers, it moves and revolves, breaks up light into coloured beams. It glows in metal and glass. It is the shape of homely things to come, of what used to be thought of as the future. A light show at a rock concert does much the same thing and is taken for granted, but the Modulator is not in the business of entertainment. It seriously believes in itself as a harbinger of Utopia. Moholy-Nagy made just one and then moved on. For him too the essence lay in movement. Perhaps he realised that if you look too long at Utopia it falls apart: it may be this realisation that, paradoxically, makes his version more vulnerable, more human than others.

GEORGE SZIRTES

UNKNOWN RICHES

A History of Hungarian Literature. Ed. Tibor Klaniczay. Authors: István Nemeskürty, Béla G. Németh, László Orosz, Attila Tamás. Corvina, Budapest, 1983. 572 pp., 40 photographs. In English.

The foreword by the editor, Professor Tibor Klaniczay, makes it clear that the book was undertaken to fill in a rather large gap. A similar attempt has come from Lóránt Czigány, who lives in London, and whose "The Oxford History of Hungarian Literature from the Earliest Times to the Present" was published in 1984.* The last comprehensive history of Hungarian literature before that for foreign readers was published in 1962, "*Histoire abrégée de la littérature hongroise*," edited by Tibor Klaniczay, Miklós Szabolcsi and József Szauder. It has been translated into other languages, including English.

The task the authors of the present book have set themselves is to write a comprehensive literary history, which will fill in the gaps in the earlier work, correct its errors and take into account the rather lengthy period

* Reviewed in *NHQ* 106.

which has passed since its publication. In these past twenty-five years not only many important writers and poets have appeared, but assessment of the literature of the past has also changed considerably. Literary criticism itself shows a greater variety of approaches and these encompass everything from the traditional essay to structuralism and beyond.

The authors were able to use and refer to a six-volume history of Hungarian literature written by a team from the Institute for Literary Studies of the Academy of Sciences; this is an essential textbook for all university students (so much in use that, by virtue of its green cover, it is usually referred to as "the spinach"). Of course, this too could only serve as a point of departure since nearly twenty years have passed since its publication.

The authors' intentions were clearly complex. Their brief was to write a history of literature while keeping in mind that they were writing for readers who do not speak the language and have no in-depth knowledge of Hungarian arts and history. At the same time, pure information would not suffice; information had to be linked with description, interpretation and evaluation of the substance of a work, possibly referring to parallels to make things easier for a non-Hungarian-speaking reader who may be well versed in other literatures. Finally, they had to provide a survey not only of Hungarian literature but to a certain extent of the history of Hungarian culture and, of course, its historic background.

Four well-known Hungarian scholars shared the work. István Nemeskürty, who, incidentally, has acquired his reputation primarily as a historian and film aesthetician, took on the earliest period: from the beginnings in the eleventh century to 1770, the Hungarian enlightenment. László Orosz, a specialist on the playwright József Katona (1791–1830), surveyed the period between 1770 and 1840, the heyday of Hungarian romanticism; Béla G. Németh, a leading scholar of literature and cultural history, examined the years 1840 to 1905, roughly up to the appearance of *Nyugat*, a periodical of epoch-making importance (1908–1941). Finally, it fell to Attila Tamás, whose work concentrates on twentieth-century Hungarian literature and especially the poet Attila József, to present the period from 1905 to our days, in many ways the most exacting task.

Although attempts at coordination can be sensed, the four authors represent four different approaches. Thus one concentrates on providing information and on being easy to read, another considers the analysis of the works more important.

No particular objections can be raised to the internal divisions of the book as the authors and the editor have paid care to proportions, lending equal weight to every period of cultural history. This being said, anybody can argue with the space given to various authors, especially where the twentieth century is concerned. The structure of the individual chapters is generally similar; trends in style and historic turning points together provide chronological subdivisions. Each period is usually introduced by a short description of the historic and cultural background, followed by outlines of the authors' lives and works; the amount of detail here reflects the relative importance of the individuals concerned.

*

Perhaps it is the earliest literature which is least known to the foreign reader. The survey of this period has three sub-divisions, which are the Middle Ages (from the eleventh to the early sixteenth century), Renaissance writing (from the late fifteenth to the early seventeenth century), Baroque writing (from the early seventeenth to the mid-eighteenth, to the Enlightenment). The treatment of this rather lengthy period is rendered more difficult by the fact that one of the important features of Hungarian literature and culture is here most conspicuous.

This feature is the constant interweaving of history—which is eventful and often tragic—with the arts. Thus István Nemeskürty deliberately provides a thorough discussion of the social and historical background for the information of the foreign reader. He has space to analyse literary works in detail mainly in the case of such outstanding figures as the poets Miklós Zrínyi (1620–1664) and Bálint Balassi (1554–1594). Several poems by the latter are available in good English translation and this makes a more detailed analysis possible. Beyond this, the author is aware of the fact that what is obvious to the Hungarian reader is not at all obvious to his foreign confrère; he is painstaking in supplying data and facts. By clearly distinguishing the works written in Latin—chronicles, religious works, legends—from those written in Hungarian, thus indicating the absence or, rather, the relatively slow development of a uniform literary language, the chapter points up one of the reasons for the historically determined, relative delay which is going to distinguish Hungarian literature from some West European literatures.

The cause for the delay was the occupation by the Turks, for over a century and a half, of the largest, central part of the country, which only ended in 1686 by the reconquest of Buda, the capital, through a huge international effort. During the long Turkish occupation dozens of flourishing towns were devastated—including Buda itself—, large tracts of the country were depopulated and later settled in by Germans and Slavs. The western part of the country, which was in the hands of the Habsburgs, lived under the shadow of the struggle with the Turks and of the attempt to be rid of the double oppression of Habsburgs and Ottomans; there too social and cultural evolution was interrupted. In this period, Transylvania, which became an independent principality, politically controlled, though not occupied, by the Turks, was the refuge of Hungarian literature and culture; here some extremely important work was done in literature, in the sciences and in the arts. The Reformation also swept through Turkish-occupied territory in the sixteenth century and gave rise to a rich religious literature in Hungarian, some of it polemic. During Turkish times and after the Ottomans had been driven out, the Habsburgs unleashed an aggressive Counter-Reformation. The country has never been able to overcome entirely the long Turkish rule and its economic, social, cultural, and psychological consequences, and Habsburg dominations which lasted up to 1918. All this is generally clear and intelligible in the relevant chapters of the volume.

The next larger period confronts the literary historian with another set of problems. The Enlightenment and the Reform Era (from the 1770s to the 1820s) was a time of renewal and change in the arts, as in much else, in Hungary. A debate on the reformation of the language occurred around the early decades of the nineteenth century, just as it did among several other peoples of Central and Eastern Europe, the Czechs for instance. The "neologues," who wanted to establish a uniform literary language, clashed with a conservative group which was afraid to subject the Hungarian language to any change. The reformers, one of whose leaders was Ferenc Kazinczy (1759–1831)—a very influential poet, writer, translator, critic, and literary factotum of the period—wanted both to bring into being a uniform language, and to purify it from foreign, especially Latin and German, influence. Thus the language slowly became an instrument, and one of the most important instruments, in a struggle waged by artists, thinkers and politicans, to achieve national consciousness and national independence. This same period, the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth centuries, saw the writing of great works by neo-classic and romantic authors—which do not suffer by international comparison, if such a yardstick exists. Herein lies one of the great difficulties in approaching the period, namely that some authors, due to the linguistic isolation of Hungary,

have not become part of a universal literary mainstream. It is therefore very difficult to present, in a relatively short space, particular poetic careers, such as that of Dániel Berzsenyi (1776–1836), who lived in complete seclusion in the country and who in himself shows the transformation of the neo-classic into the romantic. József Katona's is also a unique career and oeuvre (1791–1830). He has been kept in the public eye more or less only through one work, *Bánk bán* (1815), which is, however, the first truly important play written in Hungarian. In Hungarian literature drama, especially in earlier periods, for obvious historic reasons, is infinitely less significant than lyric and epic poetry. Consequently the importance of *Bánk bán* cannot be assessed merely through its aesthetic and literary values, since it is both token and summary of a painfully recurring Hungarian problem in that it expresses the conflict between a revolt against foreign oppression and tyranny, and loyalty to the powers that be. Here too, the work of the poet Mihály Csokonai Vitéz (1773–1805) would also be a suitable example, a work which is astonishing in the many hues a short life of 32 years managed to produce, that runs the gamut from the philosophic, the mock-heroic to love poetry of great rococo charm.

Clearly, László Orosz had an almost impossible task in summing up a period so rich in exciting authors and important works, all the more so as it can only be understood through a knowledge of the complex links between the arts and the language. He takes great care to present the data and the most important elements of the background. It would be unfair to reproach him for the general outlines being somewhat faint, especially the short biographical profiles. The impression of the period and the analysis of it is weakened by the fact that it is perhaps entirely impossible to render in translation what were for the most part lyric works, because of the richness and originality of their language. Those who know the poetry of Berzsenyi, Csokonai and Vörösmarty, will easily understand that they pose impossible problems to their translators.

Hungarian literary historians have traditionally treated certain historical dates as dividing lines for the history of literature too. The lay-out of the book does not entirely follow this practice. It concentrates mainly on the evolutionary processes; consequently, and correctly, it does not consider, for instance, the revolution of 1848 and its subsequent collapse as a dividing line, nor even the Austro-Hungarian compromise of 1867. The next larger unit, on which Béla G. Németh writes, surveys the evolution of literature and the arts from the 1840s to approximately 1905. It is in these chapters that the background of cultural history is best defined and clearly understandable. The author pays attention to the international context and to interaction among the various arts. Here the intention of providing information, the sensitive sketching of the personalities of the different authors, the describing of historic, social and cultural processes, and the analysis of individual works best combine to produce the most harmonious part of the book. This is especially welcome in that the last two decades of the nineteenth century constitute one of the most spectacular periods in Hungarian literature.

It is a period which came after the Reform Era, so replete with great individuals and notable for its romantic poetry; it in turn was followed in the first decade of this century by the first generation of the periodical *Nyugat*, whose stature can be compared to that of Vörösmarty's generation. For this reason it is usual to call the generation of Endre Ady (1877–1919), Mihály Babits (1883–1941), Zsigmond Móricz (1879–1942), Dezső Kosztolányi (1885–1936) and their companions the "second reform generation," thereby indicating that Hungarian art and literature was reborn a second time at the beginning of this century. Here, in the last decades of the nineteenth century, appeared the major novelists Kálmán Mik-

száth (1847–1910), Mór Jókai (1825–1904) and the poet János Vajda (1827–1897). Lesser writers, who contributed fascinating works, also emerged, such as Gyula Reviczky (1855–1889) and Jenő Komjáthy (1858–1895), whose poetry was strongly influenced by French symbolism; there were also several fine short story writers—Elek Gozsdu (1849–1919), Dániel Papp (1865–1900), István Petelei (1852–1910), Zoltán Thury (1870–1906), Géza Csáth (1887–1919)—whose works have still not received the attention they deserve.

Apart from the telling and concise assessments and portraits of less-known writers and poets, occasionally great oeuvres also are seen in a new light. In the case of Jókai, Béla G. Németh distinguishes and discusses his works as novels of incident or anecdote, heroic novels, confessional novels, adventure novels. He deals with the writing of literary history and criticism of the period in separate sections, laying a noticeable emphasis on the similarities of certain literary careers, on analogies. All this makes for a lively, sensitive and detailed discussion of the period.

*

The subject of the last 200 pages of the book is the twentieth century, up to our days. A peculiar difficulty of the task facing Attila Tamás could have been caused, *inter alia*, by the fact that insufficient time has passed to see some authors and works with at least relative objectivity. It is probably due to the wealth of the material that it is here that we first feel the structure of the chapters to be mechanical and formal. The biographies in a few sentences, the most important data and dates, are followed by an appreciation of the career; this frequently ends in a mere listing of works. (Indeed, where living writers are concerned, there is only a rather incomplete list of names.) The categories into which writers are divided may also be contested. It is not entirely fortunate to emphasize the "purely literary" status—which sounds also like a value judgement—of Mihály Babits, who was of extraordinary importance as a poet, novelist, critic, translator, and editor, as opposed to that of the highly political and committed major poet Endre Ady, the leading figure of the period, and Zsigmond Móricz, the great realist novelist; the statement that the poetry of Dezső Kosztolányi does not have the depth of Babits's may similarly be criticized. This evaluation is consistent: the author comes down everywhere on the side of a literature of social passion, of political and realistic intentions. Again, tastes and views may of course be here in conflict but, besides the thorough description of the careers of Ady, Móricz, László Németh (1901–1975), Gyula Illyés (1902–1983)—since they obviously best meet the author's ideal—the other portraits seem unjustly meagre and unconvincing in their judgement. This can be said, for instance, of the already mentioned discussion of Babits and Kosztolányi, or of the sketchy assessment of the apostle of the Hungarian avant-garde, Lajos Kassák (1887–1967), or the casual mention only of the important and modern psychological stories of Géza Csáth (1887–1919). Novels by Milán Füst (1888–1967) and Géza Ottlik (b. 1912), such as *The Story of My Wife* (1942) or *School at the Frontier* (1959) are of such importance that they certainly deserve more than one or two paragraphs. The simplified and very brief presentation of the poetry of János Pilinszky (1921–1981) is all the more curious since his works are relatively well-known to the English-speaking world through translations by Ted Hughes and others.

Although an emphasis on realistic and committed literature is a justifiable approach, however, in a survey designed for readers abroad, a sense of proportion is important. The writers that I have listed above produced works which both added to Hungarian literature and made it more dynamic, partly rejected rigid traditions, absorbed contemporary European culture and reflected some innovations of form. If their importance is

concealed, the overall impression of modern Hungarian writing is colourless, superficial and false.

Perhaps a more detailed social and ideological background would have contributed to a better picture, especially of the 1950s. Understanding of this period, or partially assessing it, presents great difficulties even to the Hungarian reader familiar with the literature and history, let alone to those who were born elsewhere and to whom the exigencies of East Central European life are alien.

The curse of any work which attempts to be comprehensive is that some of its statements seem obsolete when the work appears. Revaluation of works an writers occurs at a faster and faster pace the closer we get to the present. This book too is half-successful: but it can be profitably read and enjoyed by the reader who seeks information. Those who develop a deeper interest in any period or author, are assisted by the detailed and thorough bibliography which concludes the volume.

JUDIT BARABÁS

TALES OF OUR TIMES

Ferenc Temesi: *Por, A-K* (Dust, A-K). Magvető, 1986, 471 pp.; *Por, L-ZS* (Dust, L-ZS). Magvető, 1987, 639 pp.; Zsuzsa Vathy: *Itthon vagyok* (I'm Home). Magvető 1987, 177 pp.; Iván Boldizsár: *Keser-édes* (Bitter-Sweet), Magvető, 1987, 243 pp.

The hottest literary success of 1987 was Ferenc Temesi's *Dust*, a monumental novel of 1100 pages in two volumes. Whether the work is in fact a novel is arguable and is disputed by many; it is not simply a question of genre but to some extent of how to evaluate the book. If *Dust* is not a proper novel, then it is not a literary creation belonging to an unidentifiable genre but an unfinished, abortive novel, an unredeemed promise. In concept and ambition *Dust* wants very much to be a novel, indeed a great novel, even to some extent the revival of the old traditional novel. However, its basic formal idea distinguishes it radically (though perhaps not so very deeply) from the traditional novel, makes it almost avantgardist—and untranslatable; according to the author it is a post-modernist work, though for him the term has a different meaning than in accepted critical practice.

The eye-catching technical innovation of *Dust* is the arrangement of the material under entries in alphabetical order as in a dictionary or encyclopedia. To each of the several hundred (according to one reference in the novel, 666) headwords are assigned one or two brief stories, anecdotes, extracts from documents, comments, insertions in prose or mosaics of realia. Initially the keywords seem to follow each other at random, according to the caprice of the alphabet but it gradually becomes clear that they follow the threads of three stories whose plots thicken only in their outlines as linear stories; as he looks at them more closely the reader seizes this or that fragment of the whole picture as he would the fragments of a puzzle.

One large group of the headwords deals with the student years of the Dictionary-Editor (more or less identical with the author) at the turn of the 60s and 70s; another

group is concerned with his family history through several past generations; the third deals with the last one hundred and fifty years of the history of Szeged, the town where he spent his student years. The book's title puns on the name given to Szeged, namely Porlód. (This fictitious place-name can clearly be identified with this large market town in Southern Hungary since Szeged and its environs are outlined with topographical and historical accuracy. Most personal names indicate real persons, from local notabilities to Lajos Kossuth, the Emperor Francis Joseph and even Mátyás Rákosi, the Stalinist leader of inglorious memory; only the personal acquaintances and ancestors of the Dictionary-Editor seem to have been given fictitious names.)

The events treated in the entries run from 1833 to 1973. The principle form of treatment is the anecdote. This refers especially to the "peacetime" period, the history of town and family before the First World War when anecdote was the characteristic manner of Hungarian society's self-reflection both in personal dealings and in press and literature. Hungarian fiction remained for a long time anecdotic in construction and tone. Temesi himself refers to this tradition and its representatives, including István Tömörkény, who described the life of the people of Szeged with charming authenticity. But Temesi does not only refer to his literary ancestors, he imitates and continues them with a brilliant sense of style: in splendidly written scenes and epiphanies he evokes the once vitally important events of that small world. His historical headwords balance between authentic contemporary closeness and literary artificiality, placing them into perspective, between the objective and the subjective.

Although he does not refer to sources, he must obviously have studied local history extensively and especially the local press over many years; ethnographic works, collections of phrases and idioms, dictionaries of local idiom, archive material, and family relics also figure. *Dust* is a montage of original documents across many pages and passages. One critic wrote that the idea of the dictionary-novel itself was not without precedent: the late Gyula Illyés in his diary for 1946, published only after his death in 1986 (which Temesi certainly cannot have known about) toyed with the idea of a novel constructed in this manner. The use of compiling documents also has a literary past: to mention only Dos Passos should suffice. The documentary character smuggles the contemporary horizon into a text, whereas the textual documents of the age—which are always documents of life—are transformed in modern fiction into the elements of an artistic sign-language in the same way that old photographs gradually acquire the status of works of art simply through their patina and obsoleteness. This metamorphosis affects the anecdote too: it becomes interesting again because it is so archaic. This elevation of the antique to an aesthetic category arouses some suspicion but this post-modernism in all the arts pits the old, the shabby and the trashy against high art, and raising them above their original medium and function, makes of them "found," artistic signs.

Most of Temesi's anecdotes and dialogues are witty and pointed. The same can be said of the scenes and episodes describing his student years and youthful debaucheries, if we look at them separately and not in their totality. Temesi is a brilliant master of style, a charming story-teller with a sure eye for the telling point. We can more or less accept the truth in the entry "critique" which contains an apology for his own work through the somewhat arbitrary claims of post-modernism that says that the era which renounced the reader closed with modernism, what follows, post-modernism, has given back to people their right to the story; according to Temesi, the beginning of this new era has been South-American magic realism reaching down to the myth, especially Garcia Marquez's *Hundred Years Solitude*. He declares his own novel the first deliberately post-modern Hungarian work.

In keeping with Temesi's intention, *Dust* makes delightful reading for much of its course. However, the reader's patience begins to wear out. For the historical episodes, the selection method for entries eventually becomes mechanical, the anecdotes lose their freshness and charm, exhausted by the monotonous recital of card-indexed sources. Many episodes of the family history simply embody—skilfully, it must be said—ethnographic or idiomatic data. As the "modern" thread, which involves the waste of the beat generation, the unending drinking bouts and sexual exploits of the Dictionary-Editor begin to tire and irritate the reader; by the 1960s the vividly presented town of Szeged seems to have been reduced to pubs and parties, lost and inebriated Titans, sad and stupid females coveting the Editor's masculinity who sometimes arouse his incomprehensible and needless love. Although the reader is not deeply touched by Temesi's pretentiousness, the ostentatious monumentality of *Dust*, its exaggerated dimensions, the whole parade of the author's skills, his admiration is nevertheless aroused. The production is indeed breath-taking but its male chauvinistic demonstrations and provincial showings-off are downright repulsive.

Despite the book appearing to criticize provinciality and the author's youthful ego and roots, for Temesi provincial is a positive value in the name of some universal regionalism. For him the world no longer has a centre, everything has become a province of equal rank—shades of McLuhan's global village. For us Hungarians, and especially for the inhabitants of Porlód—the province even of the province—who take to provincialism as a fish to water, the time has come to turn our provincialism to advantage as the South-American novelists have done. Now is the time to raise our local myths and dusty provincialism into universal parable. "It may be that our Hungarian myth is a little more earth-bound than that of the South-American Indians. The essential thing is that earth-bound surrealism is also surrealism. Hungarian existence offers such themes on a plate, being inherently surrealistic."

However, Temesi's relationship to his province, Porlód, is unclear and muddled: on the one hand he tries to raise it to a mythic level of human existence, on the other hand he represents it from the exterior and superior viewpoint of a "centre" which, although unnamed, is of a perceptibly higher order. Viewed from this angle, Porlód has grit and character but remains a fatally "provincial" dusty hole. The dénouement is that the Dictionary-Editor quits Porlód.

In *Dust* Temesi has engaged in a large experiment tempting providence: from fragments of Hungarian self-reflection he has tried to synthetize a large form. The dictionary or encyclopedia offered him a promising possibility. "The Dictionary-Editor has been guided in his work by the silent conviction that in truth we are all dictionaries of the world blessed with individual semantic content." Temesi has tried to write his own dictionary, containing both the Hungarian lexis, the world of Porlód representing Hungarian life, and his own individual semantic content. But it is this latter that does not show up in the dictionary. A view of the world is partly absent and partly contradictory and immature. This is also true of Temesi's views on literature, although here he proves to have most autonomy and his treatment of his material is to a certain extent convincing. However, we do not learn what he tries to tell us—apart from mere story-telling which exhausts itself at one point—about Porlód, himself, and his own provincialism. One can start to read this monumental work at any point precisely because it is alive in its entries—and leave off at any point, just as one reads a dictionary. But novels are not like this.

Zsuzsa Vathy's *I'm Home* also evokes the bygone world of a Hungarian provincial town. It is set in the 1950s but the life it represents reminds one much more of life a hundred years ago than that of the present

of thirty years later. This is particularly so because the author, now in her late forties, describes her native town and her family home from the viewpoint of her childhood; from this angle the setting, the objects and the accessories to a way of life are more conspicuous than the social conditions almost imperceptible and incomprehensible for a child (in this case the terror of the Rákosi-era). The starting point of the novel accentuates this shift: a thirteen-year-old girl recounts her summer holidays, a teenager who is not even quite at home in her parents' house, in the attic or on the banks of the brook but lives in a self-created world of the imagination, in a romantic-gothic love felt for a young Polish knight. This Mieczislaw is both a medieval knight and a modern freedom fighter who participates in the Hungarian War of Independence of 1848–49 on horseback, then languishes in an Austrian dungeon where he dies; thus the narrator addresses her confessions to a dead hero, since whenever she has something to say or discuss she turns to her imaginary fiancé, Mieczislaw.

The theme of *I'm Home* is how this adolescent girl, returning from boarding in the hostel of a school in a large city to spend her summer holidays at home, a teenager who is not (yet?) at home either in school, in her family or in the world, gradually awakens to the realization of the real world around her. In the beginning it is ambiguous as to whether Mieczislaw is alive or dead, he dies his hero's death only during the holidays, enabling the worshipping narrator to remove him, although with sorrow. During the holidays the figure and fate of Mieczislaw show some parallels with a real soldier, a paratrooper training officer living in the neighbourhood, carried off by Rákosi's henchmen and tried on trumped-up charges; not even his wife learns the outcome of the affair. The officer, worshipped by his subordinates, just like Mieczislaw, does not appear in person; we learn about his fate and possible developments only from the worried reports of his wife. The girl overhears them while playing and dreaming, and the despair and determination of the loving wife to find out what has happened to her husband, and the humiliations she suffers in this quest gradually and unconsciously eclipse the girl's fancies and dreams.

The authoress says that she had to be practically reborn because her chosen ideals, the products of her imagination, had permeated her adolescent being and eclipsed everybody else. She had to be reborn to make place for real, living people in her heart. So on one side there are the imagined and their birthplace, the sensitive adolescent soul, the sleepy silent small town, the old-fashioned, lower-middle class parents guarding their secrets, recurring domestic rituals of their life in narrow circumstances, the mysterious attic, the crowns of the trees, the neighbours, the antique bookshops with its itinerant palmist, and, on the other side, the real people, "who have survived the past forty-fifty years and those who did not—all of them heroes."

This is what the novel wanted to transmit as an experience of a summer holiday, but the result has remained vague. The story of the arrested and presumably executed officer does not fit in the novel. The side plot of the reports of the wife, measured out in several details which seem to reach us through the filter of the girl's consciousness and comprehension, is not poignant enough and is, indeed, a little schematic: we have read many more of this sort. Mieczislaw is not interesting enough and one does not know how an adolescent girl invented this kind of ideal, from what deep layers of consciousness it has surfaced, nor the nature of her complex relation to it. The best figures are the girl's parents but here too, the reader would like to have more information. Neither their daughter nor the writer speaking in her name have succeeded in being at home and grasping them truly.

Now seventy-five, Iván Boldizsár was

an adult in, and close witness of, the Rákosi-era. In his new book, *Bitter-Sweet* *, he has written down some of what he experienced in those times, including Rákosi himself. But there is more to the book than the years of the 'personality cult' and its 'Person'; there are also memories of both before and after, of the second half of the 1930s to recent times. Autobiographical sketches alternate with those of parallel fates and careers; snapshot portraits and the anecdotal treatment of a theme are also part of Boldizsár's presentation. True, in the fifteen or so years of Hungarian history that begin with 1944, the stories and situations are mostly bitter, some even tragic. The sweet taste which, when added, dulls rather than sweetens the bitter, is due to an ironical or grotesque black humour and a characteristic self-irony.

The first half of the book deals with two Sundays in 1944: March 19th, the day of the German occupation of Hungary, and October 15th, the day when Horthy's attempt to remove Hungary from the war failed and, as a consequence, the Hungarian nazi party took over. Using these two fatal days as centres, Boldizsár sketches the entire year he spent in the gradually, spontaneously emerging resistance movement. We learn of underground newspaper offices, leaflets, hiding, known and unknown companions, people who had their own chosen careers and ordered civilian life and, through decency and courage, found themselves suddenly on the margins of legality, and we read also of the "professional revolutionaries." The charm of Boldizsár's memoirs resides in their naive, conversational, personal tone. "I descended into the depth of March 19, 1944 and there the well—the magic well of memory—widened, corridors opened right and left, I had only to start walking." Apart from their personal liveliness, the candidness of what he recalls is fascinating. Boldizsár does not wish to illustrate a thesis, ideology or historical lesson through his stories, he has no desire to accuse or rehabilitate anybody, he simply wants to show us things as seen from his standpoint as a contemporary, things which are known, or not so well known, from history books.

Alongside the autobiographical chapters evoking the years around 1944, the other half of the volume consists of shorter, rounder, more pointed stories. The Rákosi-stories are strange indeed. Boldizsár had been a delegate at the 1946 peace treaty talks in Paris—this is the setting of the piece entitled *André*, which ends with the trial of Slansky in Prague; then, in 1947, he was Undersecretary of State in the Foreign Ministry, the deputy of László Rajk. Later he became editor of the daily *Magyar Nemzet*, until Rákosi had him sacked, as described in *The Secretary*. He frequently met Rákosi personally; the latter, in his gruesomely cutting, sarcastic style and jovial threatening manner, called him "old chap" and made him feel that he was a toy in his hands, who could be replaced, transferred or indeed, imprisoned at any time—the last when, during the Rajk trial, he offered his resignation. Boldizsár does not make excuses for having done what he was asked to do—although never a party member—nor for having been afraid. Eventually Rákosi sacked him from his editorial post. As he says, his inescapable role of editing the material of the Rajk-trial was the nadir of his life.

His short story *In the Lukács Baths* concisely summarizes the era. In July 1949 somebody, whispering under the noisy water of the shower, asked the writer to lend him Arthur Koestler's *Darkness at Noon*, the novel which deals with the trumped-up Moscow trials of the 1930s. A few days later the borrower was arrested. In his apartment they probably found the borrowed book with its owner's name on the fly-leaf; the owner awaited for his own arrest for months in terror. Five years later he met the borrower of the Koestler-book under a shower again; he

* Some of these stories were published in *NHQ* 62, 88, 91, 102

had just been released the day before and was tremendously grateful to Boldizsár, because from the book he had learned before his own detention that it was futile to deny anything, because sooner or later one would confess everything. So he had started by immediately admitting every charge despite his innocence and thus confused the interrogators who had been prepared for torturing him. Ultimately they had not harmed him and his lot was quite tolerable in prison. Those who had searched the flat had thought that the book was some capitalist thriller. In Boldizsár's bitter-sweet pieces, the sweet is portioned out by the experiences of a man familiar with the absurd mysteries of survival.

MIKLÓS GYÖRFFY

THE MELLOWING OF THE NEO-AVANTGARDE

Lajos Parti Nagy: *Csuklógyakorlat* (P. T. Riffle Drill). Magvető, 1986. 92 pp.; Tibor Zalán: *és néhány akvarell* (and a couple of watercolours). Szépirodalmi, 1987, 44 pp.

I have availed myself of these pages several times in the past to express the conviction that the language of Hungarian poetry is undergoing fundamental changes in our time. These changes, dating from the middle of the seventies, appear to be more radical than those originated by the succession of avantgarde waves taking place in the course of the century, and, above all, seem more effective. Avantgarde phrasing, be it called neo-avantgarde, transavantgarde or post-modern, has become a fad among the young or younger poets. It has become today almost as compulsory a uniform as green loden cloth coats used to be for men and women alike in the poverty-stricken years of the "personality cult." It is donned by all and sundry, though it may make some appear scruffy and others chic. It would be easy to account for this phenomenon by saying that it is in this new avantgarde craze that the late conservatism of Hungarian poetry, its fairly close bonds with a formal-linguistic tradition, is avenging itself or by saying that Lajos Kassák naturalized avantgarde poetry to no avail as far back as the 1910s, ingeniously apprehending the European avantgarde movement and keeping abreast of it. His campaign brought no breakthrough in literary taste: from the beginning of the thirties Hungarian lyrical poetry once more turned to a more traditional way of expression than that in Western Europe, and yielded work of international standing, such as the late poetry of Mihály Babits, the oeuvre of the mature Attila József, and the downright neo-classic poetry of Miklós Radnóti and Gyula Illyés, and to a certain extent even that of Sándor Weöres. But it would not be fair to consider this somewhat divergent progress of development—a divergence enhanced in the following decades by a cultural policy autocratically controlling publication, prohibiting experimentation and prescribing a particular form of crude realism—it would be a half-truth, then, to see this divergence as a reaction, cause of present-day changes.

In East Central Europe the direct influence of social and political conditions, the public-role character of these conditions af-

fects the independent development of the arts more forcefully than elsewhere. And perhaps it would not be an overstatement to say that it is the astounding irrationality, manifested from day to day, of the rational social formation determining our times, that possesses the new generation of poets, forcing them to abandon the rational tradition of linguistic communication in order to experiment with modes of communication that are neither logical nor consistent nor even normally suggestive. But this is not the right time or place to surmise what part international taste, what part Hungarian poetry's development and what part general conditions may have played in this new breakthrough of avantgarde poetry, in the predominance of pictographic and video-poems.

Allow me instead to introduce two poets, who, in their chosen mode of communication, are no longer at the stage of tuning up but have already achieved considerable and original results. At the age of thirty or thereabouts—poets mature late these days—they have published their second and fourth books of poetry respectively. I would like to present or, rather, to attempt to present them to the reader; to convey the associations, jokes, quibbles, and coupling of ideas based on similarity of sound that is so typical of avantgarde poetry and derives from the spirit of the language itself. To convey this kind of originality and wit however, is difficult if not well-nigh impossible.

I would like to convey the witty and ironic linguistic hits scored by Lajos Parti Nagy for example, upon which his whole poetical oeuvre is founded as securely as Vasarely's painting upon the clever shaping of space. In his second volume, *P. T. Rifle Drill*, he imparts his experiences and states of mind by turning them inside out, by parodying them. Funny, crafty, farcical parodies that are turned right side up by the reader. I shall attempt the impossible in attempting to give an intimation of his method.

Here is a passage from the poem beginning and ending *Non scholae sed vitae ditsomoosh*, from the short cycle entitled *Dilettes* (that is, 'amateur poems'). These opening lines—in Hungarian and even more so in English—are obviously playfully meaningless. But the word tagged onto the Latin quotation evokes in sound, and with an ironical undertone, the original conclusion of the proverb, *discimus*. In this we may recognize a method much used by Parti Nagy. He evokes an idiom or expression, only plays it false at the last moment; instead of concluding with the ending anticipated and expected, he distorts it with another, often meaningless, word. Naturally, this is only one, though typical, of his many tricks: the setting up of a metaphor that is in itself a knock-out counterstroke. Let me now take a look at the elaborately wrought couplets—more precisely, those of them that may, if indeed any of them can, be translated.

Day after day sensations creep and crawl up
the stalk of my nerves,
pegged to the clothesline the stream
of information flutters and twirls,
men's and women's underwear, berets and
eiderdowns,
and I am a little in them all, hung up
there to dry,
peg upon peg competing in the mad race
round,
get to keep abreast or else you'll surely
go numb.

A slightly surrealistic image of the "stream of information"—but in our time it is admissible even in lyrical poetry designated as traditional. All the same, the passage contains two special coups discernible only to the Hungarian reader. Firstly, the fourth line is a distorted paraphrase of a well-known line of Attila József's; secondly, the last word of the passage cited above is an evocative—and contextually meaningful—though non-existent word, the poet's own creation. Yet he carries on the construction of the poem in a neat, almost traditional manner as though nothing had happened, as though he had not infringed basic rules of

grammar, had not straight-facedly concealed a whole succession of crackers in the text. For five lines later it is a familiar Sándor Weöres line that appears blasphemously distorted, and in conclusion the poet reverts to the headline that the whole poem parodizes.

From the poetry of Eliot onwards, the English reader is inured to the method—the surreptitious or flagrant insertion of quotations into the text. Indeed, it has been used before in Hungarian poetry. But here, instead of reinforcing the message, the function of the allusion is entirely different. Taking a Hungarian or a Latin proverb and replacing a word by one similar in sound, identical in vowels and of an equal number of syllables may seem as though the poet were twisting words for the sake of it, a familiar trick of avantgarde poetry; in fact he goes beyond simply pulling funny grimaces. The twisting is deliberate and meaningful, the result an ironic or sardonic statement. His method—as opposed to that of the "traditional" avantgarde—is not to undermine or destroy tradition but an original mode of construction from the rubble that remains after the demolition. For him it is not the hair-raising, unrestrained, destructive deed that is important but the constructive statement made possible by it.

For when all is said and done, just as traditional and qualitative lyrical poetry, his neo-avantgardism also bears a message. And this message is circumscribable. It is the state, so typical of this generation in this part of the world—an existence full of doubt and distress and uncertainty, where private relations are pervaded by the public sphere, that is outlined on these pages; it is all that and the personality of the poet which, funnily enough, is not at all characteristic of the avantgarde. Therefore, contradictory though this may seem, I have to say that Lajos Parti Nagy has produced a significant and original volume of poems, set out on a poetic career that bides well for the future. Whether the language he speaks is that of the avantgarde or not, is of no consequence. In fact he appears capable of arousing a measure of healthy intellectual excitement in the seasoned reader along this little-trodden path of Hungarian poetry, for he appears more amusing and more profound. Is he untranslatable? Bound to his mother-tongue? René Char is likewise untranslatable.

Tibor Zalán's *and a couple of watercolours* is his fourth volume of poetry. It is bound in black, the colour of mourning, and not without reason: the 33 poems of this slim volume all depict a single sentiment, one of emotional estrangement, of difference. The volume is a lament for a love that is no longer.

A sentimental avantgarde poet is a most unusual creature indeed. In this century we are more accustomed to attributes such as shocking (as Apollinaire's Manifesto), disquieting (with all their hocus-pocus), astounding and overwhelming (through their associations), provoking, even insolent (via their exhibitionism) being coupled to avantgarde poetry. Let the reader rage and gape in astonishment and shock. But that he should be made to feel empathy, that he should identify himself with what he reads? No, that really isn't what one would expect of avantgarde poetry.

Yet Tibor Zalán, after a certain amount of promising gobbledegook and the compulsory amount of four-letter words demanded by the fashion of the times, discloses his inner self just like those much-derided older poets—or, at least, reveals a certain, heretofore curtained-off part of himself and describes his own personal feelings without artificiality, artifice, theatrical flourishes or hobo hair-dos. He forgoes canary-yellow dye or window-dressing too. From an avantgarde point of view, this is treason and defeatism. I can just imagine what his former colleagues, fervent supporters of pictography and video-poems, of happening-poetry, think of him now; these are the poets and aesthetes of the circle around the Parisian *Magyar Műhely* (Hungarian Workshop) magazine, who would banish all but avantgarde poetry to

the scrap-heap. In actual fact Tibor Zalán has not abandoned the direction in which poetry everywhere appears to be heading, either with an overt avantgarde purpose or by employing the gains made by the avantgarde; he has, quite simply, discovered a serviceable path for himself. A path blazed for him by Lajos Kassák, who classicized the phrasing and vocabulary of his own, more turbulent earlier times—or, more exactly, recognized that the avantgarde poem was suited not only for feverish or rebellious grand gestures, but also for the complex expression of more intimate, scintillating emotions and experiences. It is from this recognition that the profundity and subtlety of Kassák's nature poetry springs and it was this recognition that impelled him to give voice to personality within the confines of a type of writing that was militantly impersonal.

Kassák, then, must have been a sort of trail-blazer for Tibor Zalán (Kassák's tone can at times be distinctly felt), a liberating force that gave him courage to describe his most personal feelings and states of mind—momentary as well as permanent emotions and thoughts. From him came the courage to write confessions of the sort that the romantics wrote, even if he does resort to methods of his own.

But there must have been other sources of inspiration too. In a polemical essay, *schematic thoughts*, he writes: "Being an avantgarde poet in Eastern Europe is different from being an avantgarde poet in the West ... one has to be, one cannot but be different. In this part of the world, literary works worthy of world-wide interest were only born when experimental devices returned to the substance of life there, to be charged up with the tensions and basic salts that the chlorinated and sterile surroundings of the laboratory were unable to ensure. Here the virtuosity lies not in the hundredth variation of form but in the feat of contriving to make that hundredth variation organic; a rediscovered vivacity of existence."

To this perceptive and noteworthy statement—fundamental truths all—one only needs to add that Tibor Zalán appears to have been able to put this *ars poetica* into practice. As one of his reviewers writes, in this volume at least, he has subordinated the bold association of images and ideas to the conceptual and emotional message. His experimental devices have been turned back onto the substance of life and, what is more, through the authenticity of the personality are well suited to describe that substance.

It is of course difficult to demonstrate this to the reader unversed in the Hungarian knack of deciphering poems founded upon free association. Let us nevertheless consider a passage from the poem entitled *today I believe in nothing but a baby's cry—in the death that dwells in the loves allotted to me*, from this point of view.

..... I will not march with any man's army
to be present at the great doughnut
share-out; like a root
I bitterly savour the salts of my solitude:
bitterly grow
up and the word no longer blazes on my
paper. Hat-check girls
will love me and I will not love them but
warm
overcoats will open up to me and instead
of stool-pigeons clothes-hangers
will accompany me home. I live in fog
where the hammering of sometime
executions are repeated; the blood-red
bleating
of slaughtered lambs vibrates in the peal
of bells though it is too far
to be heard from here ...

And, to illustrate to what "recognitions and fears" this substance of life leads, how tense and painful a lyricism it calls forth, here is the closing passage from *somehow or other child will grow up—and something will remain of our language:*

we will bring him up and teach him
to *fight* and make him
understand the silent murders; like sponge
fingers

are defenceless live ground into crumbs
between steel teeth—he sees—
will love bright motorbikes and
leather-jacketed henchmen in the
book-burning imperial wind. and he will
be ashamed of these
poems of these fathers of these reckless
tears. will be
ashamed of notions (fatherland art man
morals) because he will see
from our lives how futile they all are:
how much filth is painted deadly with
them...
.... our child will grow up I said
and from us will inherit nothing but our
pain
and to the fear bequeathed by our tainted
genes will reply
with the freedom of destruction: neither
houses
nor cities nor monuments nor culture
nor life of any sort neither past nor present
just God who cries softly in the final great
silence
of creation and perspires forsaken
in the devastated sky.

The god who, with the act of creation completed, "shuddered at the prodigious fruit of his labours / and in his sorrow grew grey and old," has been evoked before in Hungarian poetry—towards the middle of the last century, in a great moment of bitterness by Vörösmarty, poet of the Reform Era that was harbringer of revolution, during the period that followed the defeat of the revolution and the failure of the War of Independence. This great bitterness still sizzles from the pages of every school-book. If a contemporary avantgarde poet chooses him as an example, evokes him in conjunction with tradition, even with the somewhat less restricted twentieth-century devices of verse formation, can he still continue the anti-tradition mission of avantgarde poetry? Will he remain henceforward an avantgarde poet, or does this make him "simply" a poet? Without attribute.

This, I believe, is what Tibor Zalán has achieved through this volume.

BALÁZS LENGYEL

ARTS

FIVE HUNGARIAN SCULPTORS AT THE BUDAPEST TRIENNALE

György Jovánovics, Mária Lugossy, István Haraszty, Géza Samu, Rudolf Berczeller

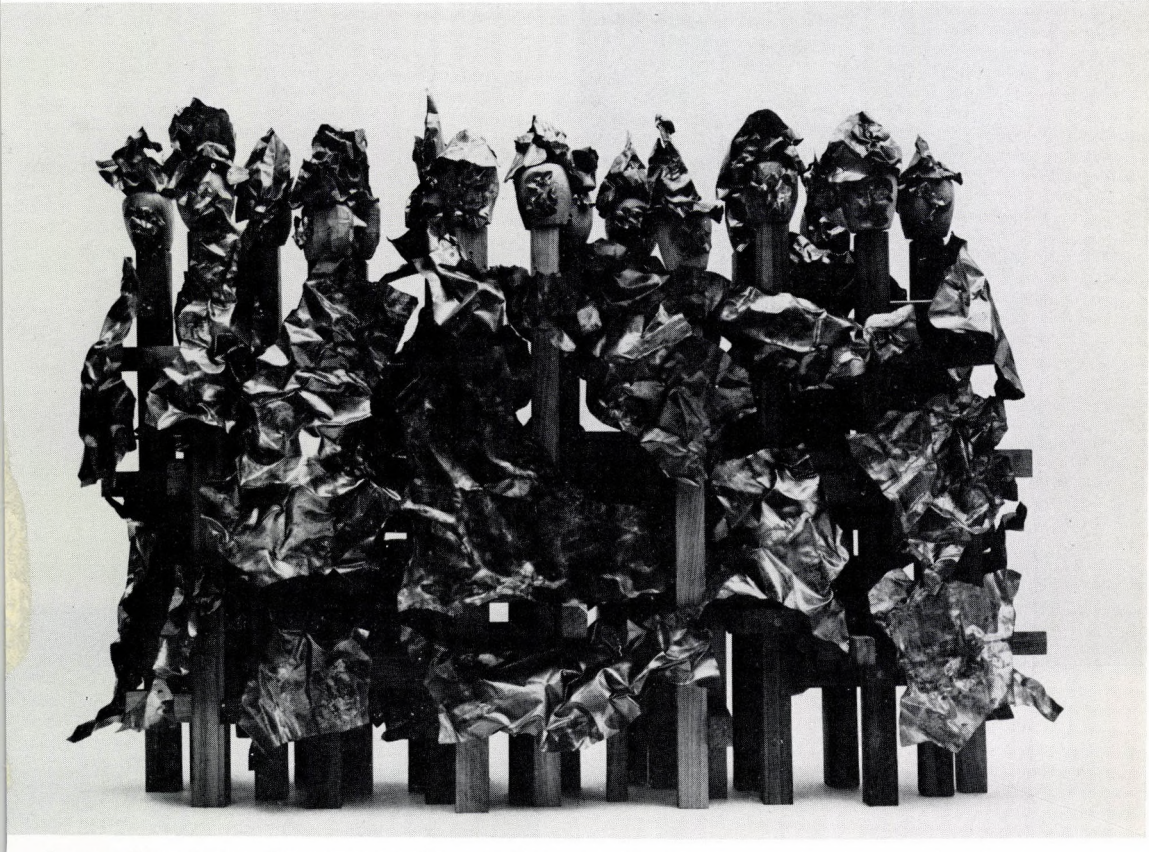
Five continents were represented by 174 sculptors from countries as far apart as Iceland and Venezuela, the United States and Mongolia, Sweden and Zimbabwe; in all 532 works were on display at the 7th International Small Sculpture Exhibition at the Műcsarnok. The sculptures were selected in their countries of origin and the prominent international jury assembled in Budapest, two of whose members were Manfred Schneckenburger, director of the Cassel *Documenta*, and Terence Mullaly, art critic of the London *Daily Telegraph*, gave five awards.

What follows is of necessity limited to the Hungarian sculptors whose work was exhibited there.

*

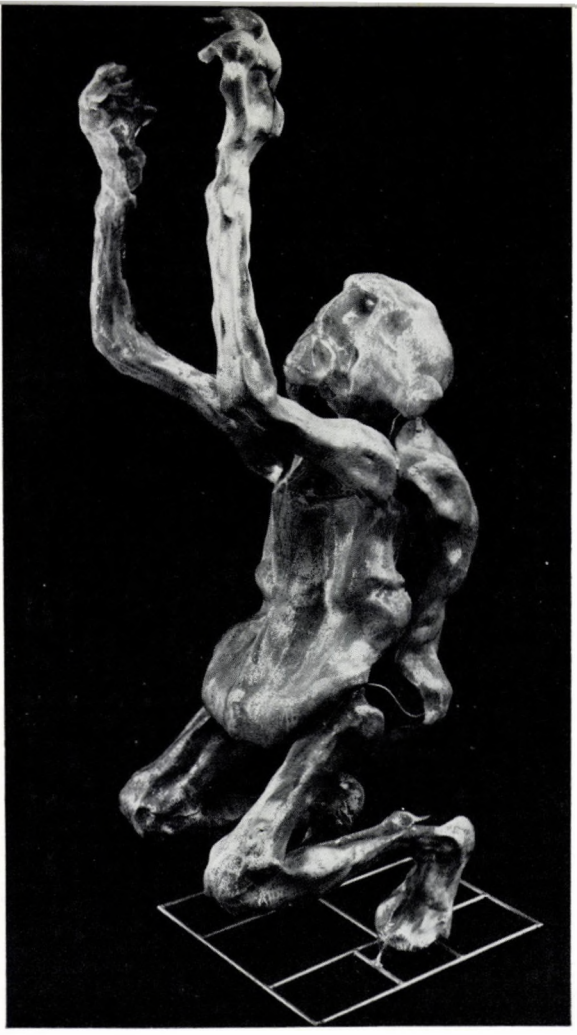
László Beke wrote in a book on György Jovánovics that his is "an anti-sculpture making use of classic elements of sculpture." For Jovánovics that intermediary material, plaster of Paris, has a central role. Whether shaping draperies or reliefs, the development of his secondary realism has been linear from the beginning. He uses only white plaster of Paris. His bas-reliefs, like Egyptian *koilanaglyphos*, are only a few centimetres in depth. His later reliefs have become bulkier and deeper. His works are framed like pictures, but the frame is part of the work of art. The artist sometimes uses fragments of frames or angled corners on the inner planes; the plane is, however, sometimes arched, slightly S-curved. This also increases the depth, which varies between a few centimetres and is never more than 10 cm. He etches an almost invisible, deliberately uneven network into the original foil from which the plaster impression is made. The open (negative) parts, which the viewer sees through, are very important in Jovánovics's work, the empty space being as important as the sculpture itself. *The Escape from the Seraglio—Hommage à Sinan, 86. 4. 26., 1986* is a more weighty symmetric piece; the *Paperworks of Troy, 1986* is subtile, is almost all trellis-work and is decidedly asymmetric; *O.T.86/6/4,1986* can be interpreted in several ways and its richness is typical for Jovánovics. He has created his own idiom in which he can express a variety of thoughts and reflections, sometimes indirectly, his progress and halts on the way to philosophical knowledge.

Jovánovics now has an opportunity to express his ambitions in monumental form. At the Seoul Olympic Games there will be an open-air exhibition of plastic art, and he has been commissioned to prepare a 10 m high



Imre Jukász

RUDOLF BERCZELLER: PROCESSION OF DRAPED PEOPLE. 1987. WALNUT, COPPER PLATE, 62×87×27 CM

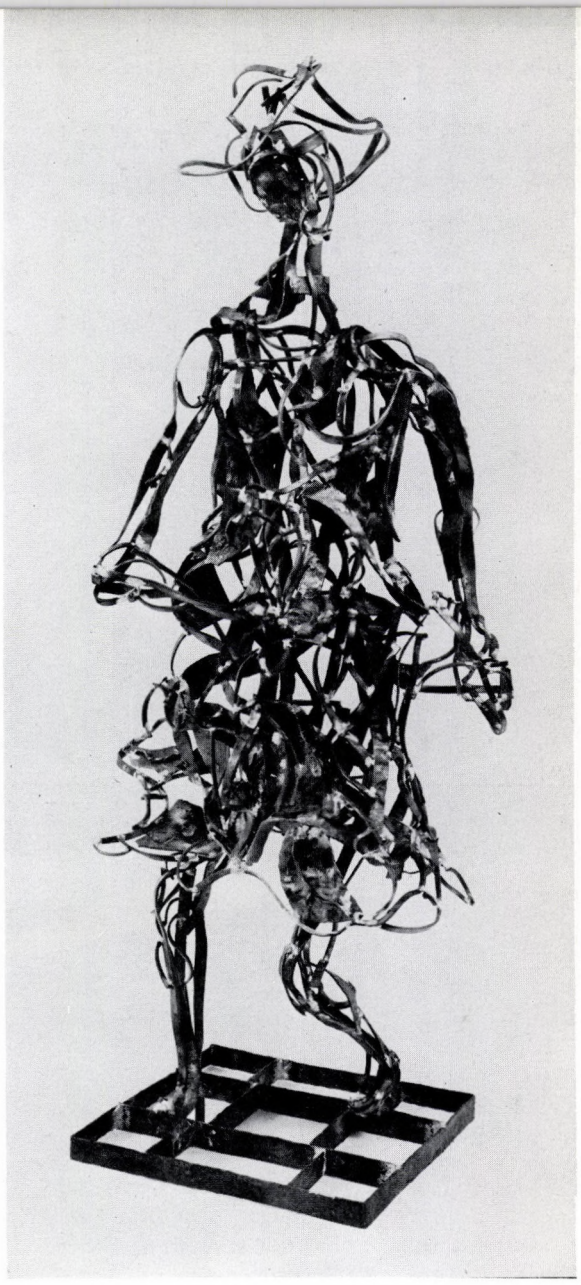


Rudolf Berczeller:
Entreaty, 1987.
Zinc-net, aluminium spray.
135×47×47 cm

Imre Jubisz

Rudolf Berczeller:
Figure on knees with crutches.
1987. Aluminium spray, zinc-net.
63×45×75 cm

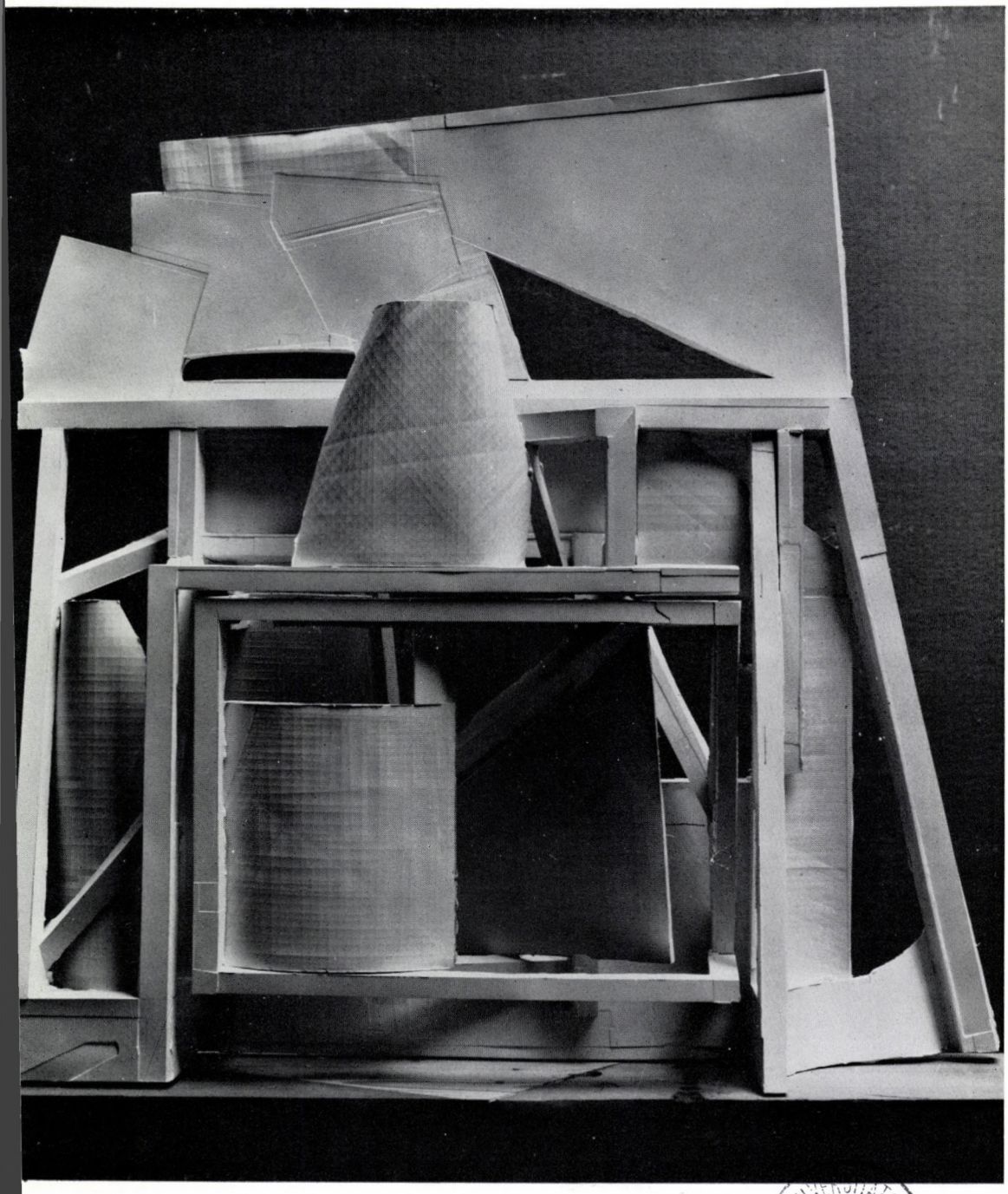
Rudolf Berczeller:
Figure with hat. 1987.
Welded bronze, bronze sheet.
75×24×25 cm



Imre Juhász

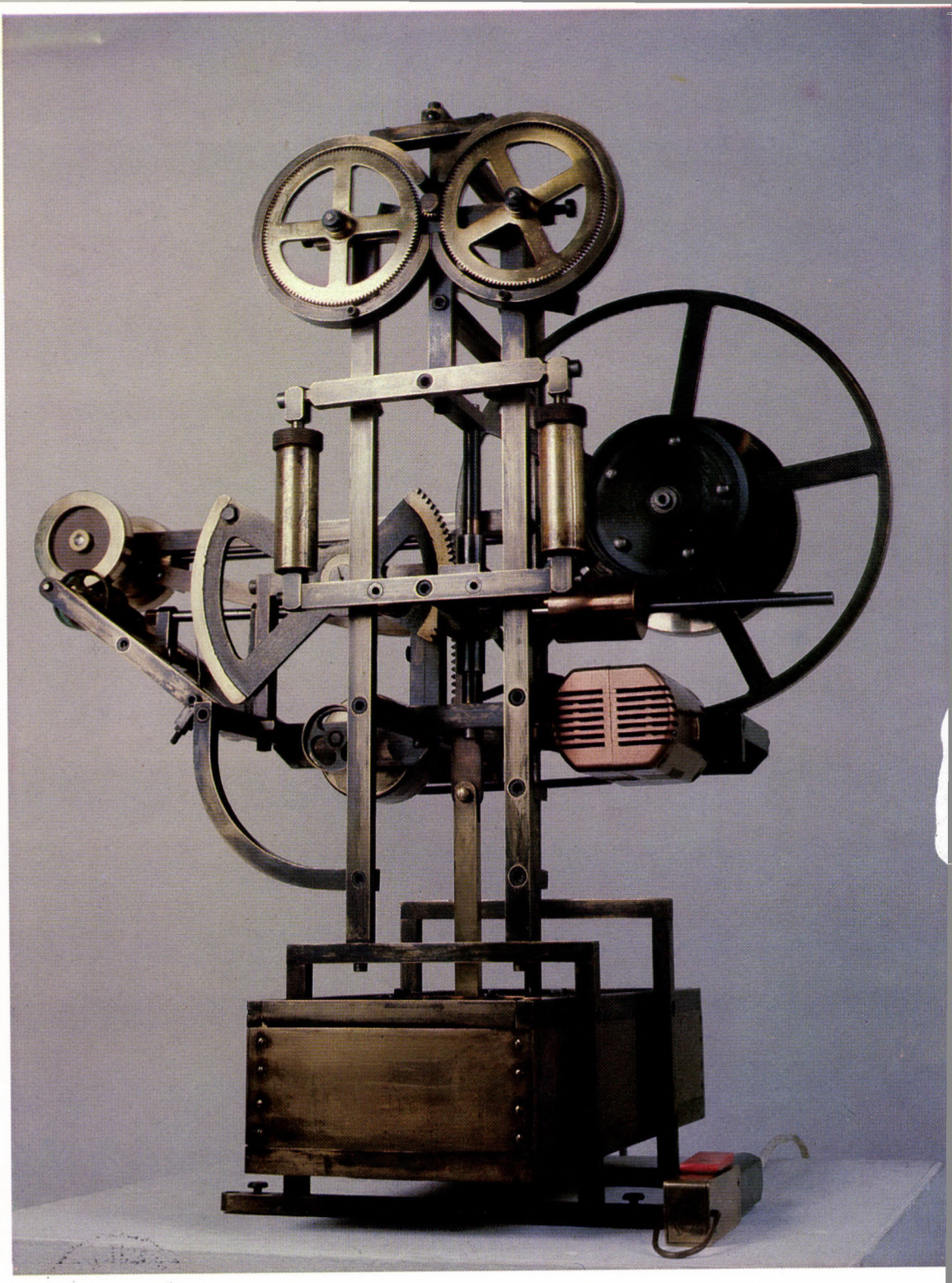
Rudolf Berczeller:
Harlequin, 1987.
Walnut, zinc-net, plastic, copper plate.
85×23×38 cm

György Jovánovics: Trojan Paper Factory, 1986. Plaster, 68×50×21 cm

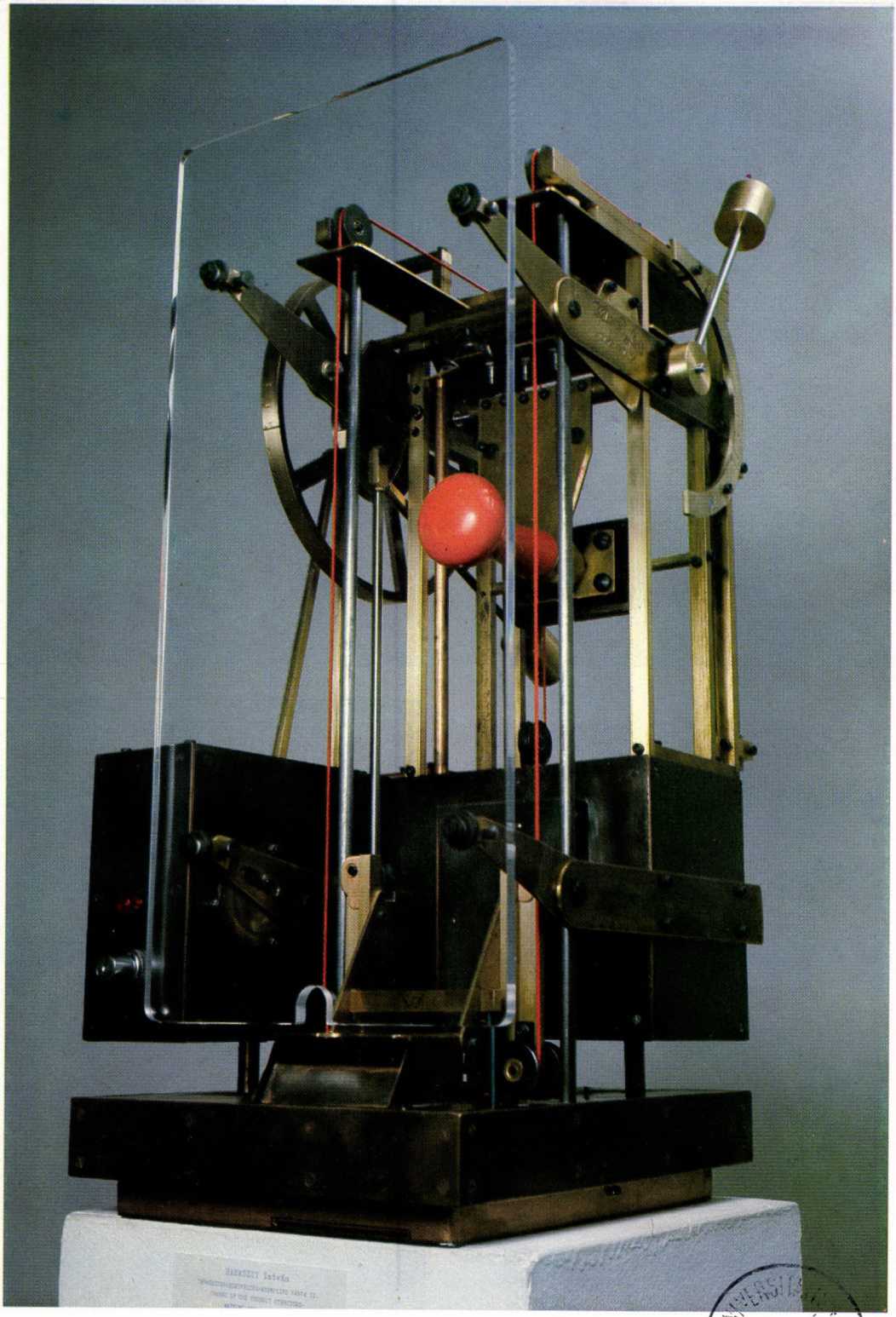


Imre Jukász

György Jovánovics: il Seraglio — Hommage à Sinan, 1986
Plaster, 76×76×14 cm



István Haraszty: Energy Transplantation, 1984. Bronze, electronic device, 70×65×60 cm



Imre Jubász

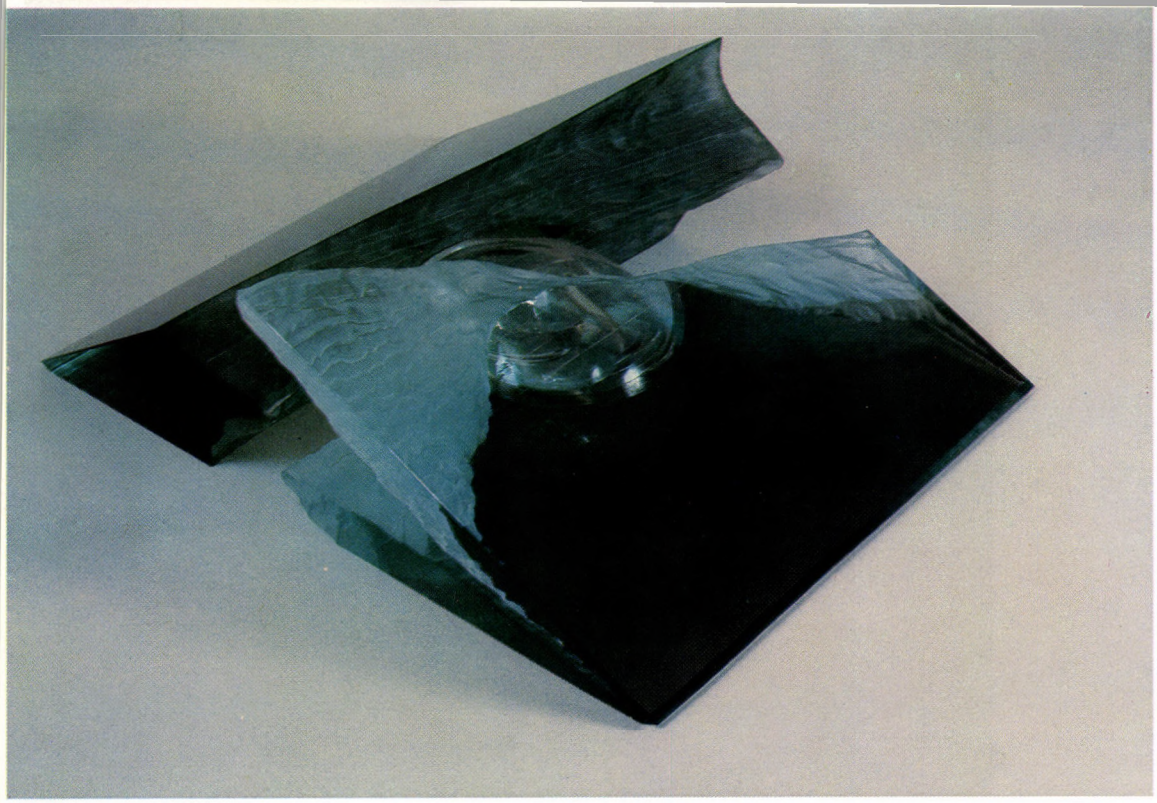
István Haraszty: Change of the Product Structure—Waiting for a Stamp II, 1987. Bronze, electronic device, 80×45×50 cm

Imre Juhá

Géza Samu:
Tree Growing in two Directions, 1987.
Cornel, acacia, 80×65×40 cm

Géza Samu: Mutation, 1987.
Cornel, poplar, apricot.
80×50×25 cm

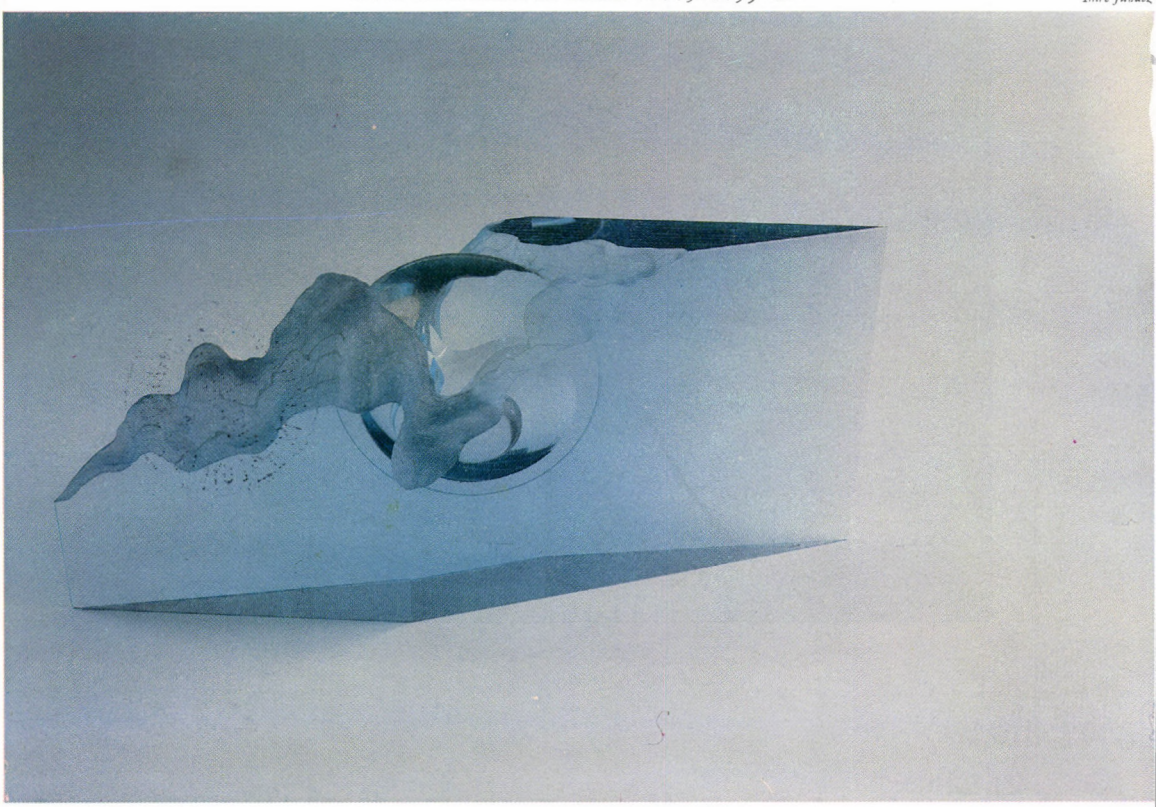
Géza Samu: Parallel Embranchments, 1987. Dogwood, poplar, apricot
80×50×25 cm



MÁRIA LUGOSSY: THE BEGINNINGS OF TIME, 1987. LAMELLATED, CEMENTED PLATE GLASS WITH BUILT-IN LENSE, 20×75 CM

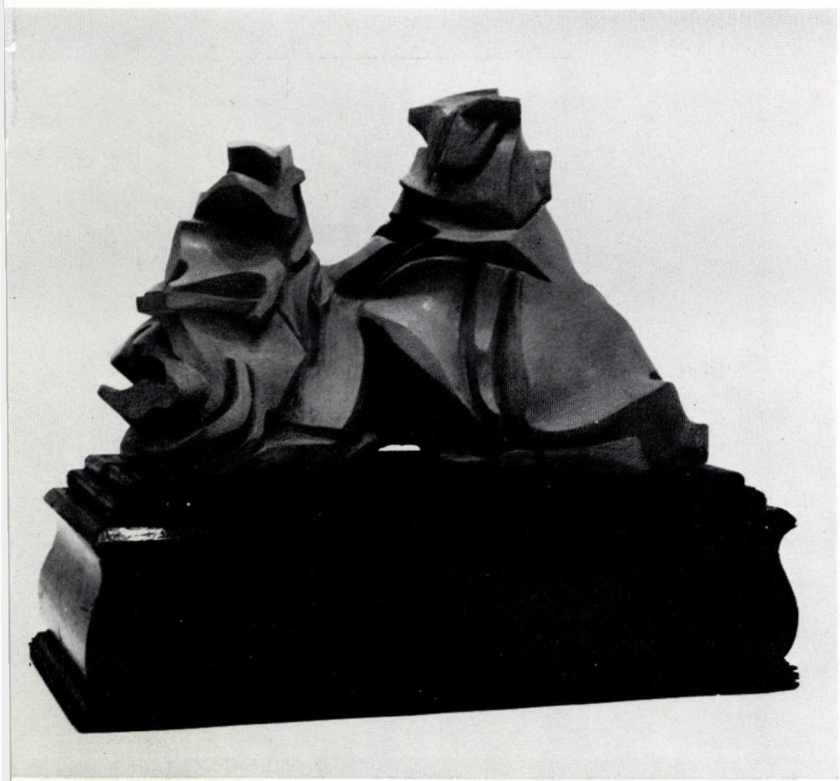
MÁRIA LUGOSSY: TEKTIT I, 1987. LAMELLATED, CEMENTED, SAND BLASTED PLATE GLASS WITH BUILT-IN LENSE. 16×50×39 CM

Imre Juhász

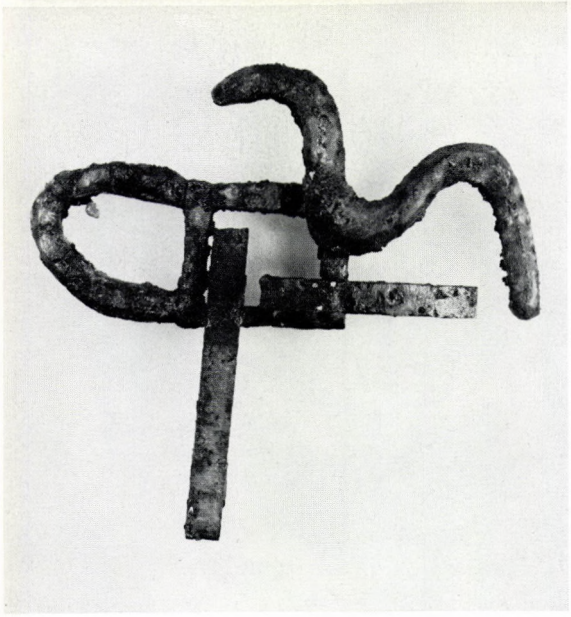


Árpád Mérei:
Portrait of a Cat, 1986.
Plaster. 40 cm

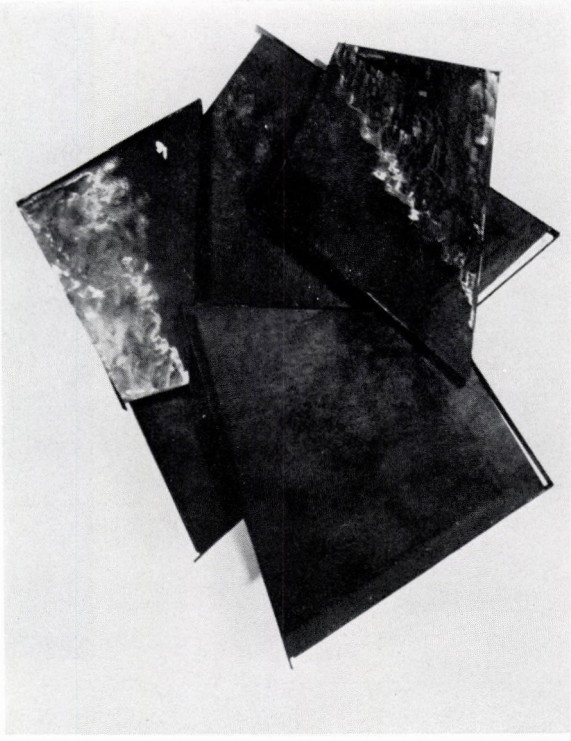
Katalin Nádor



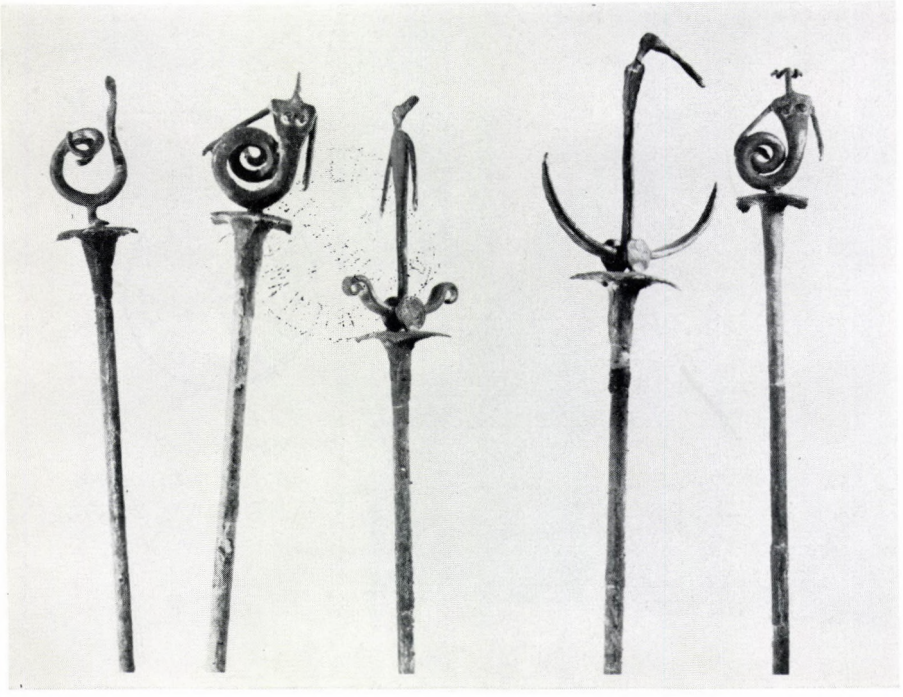
Vilmos Király:
Appointment, 1986.
Terracotta. 70×67.5 cm



Ildikó Várnagy:
Opening Frame III.
1987. Bronze. 28×30 cm



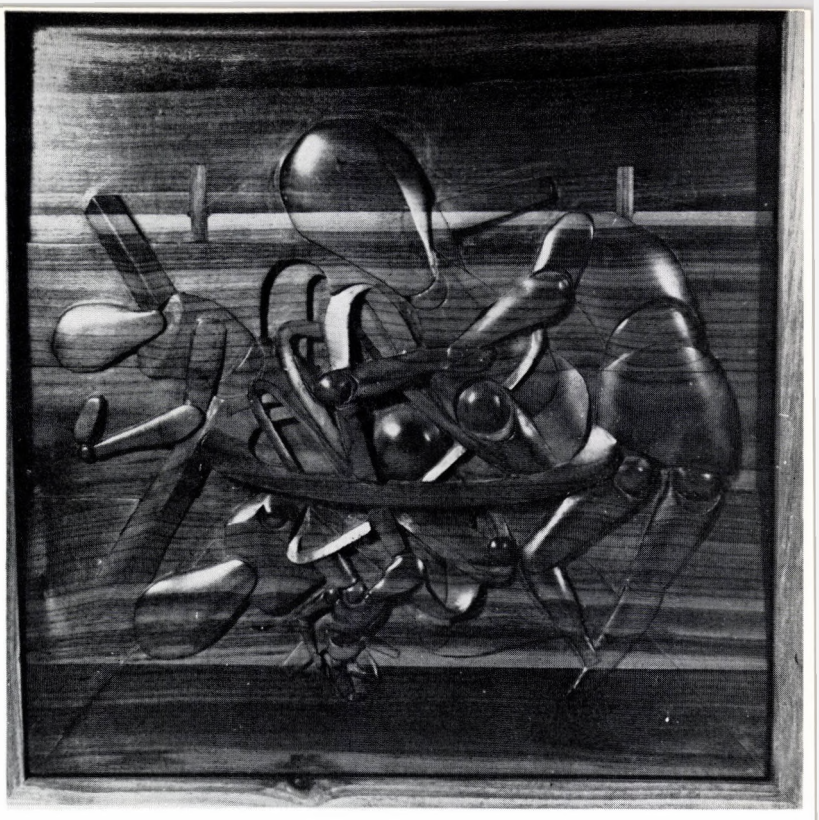
Lajos Klicsu:
Painted Steel no. 2.
1987. 80×88×8.5 cm



Katalin Nádor

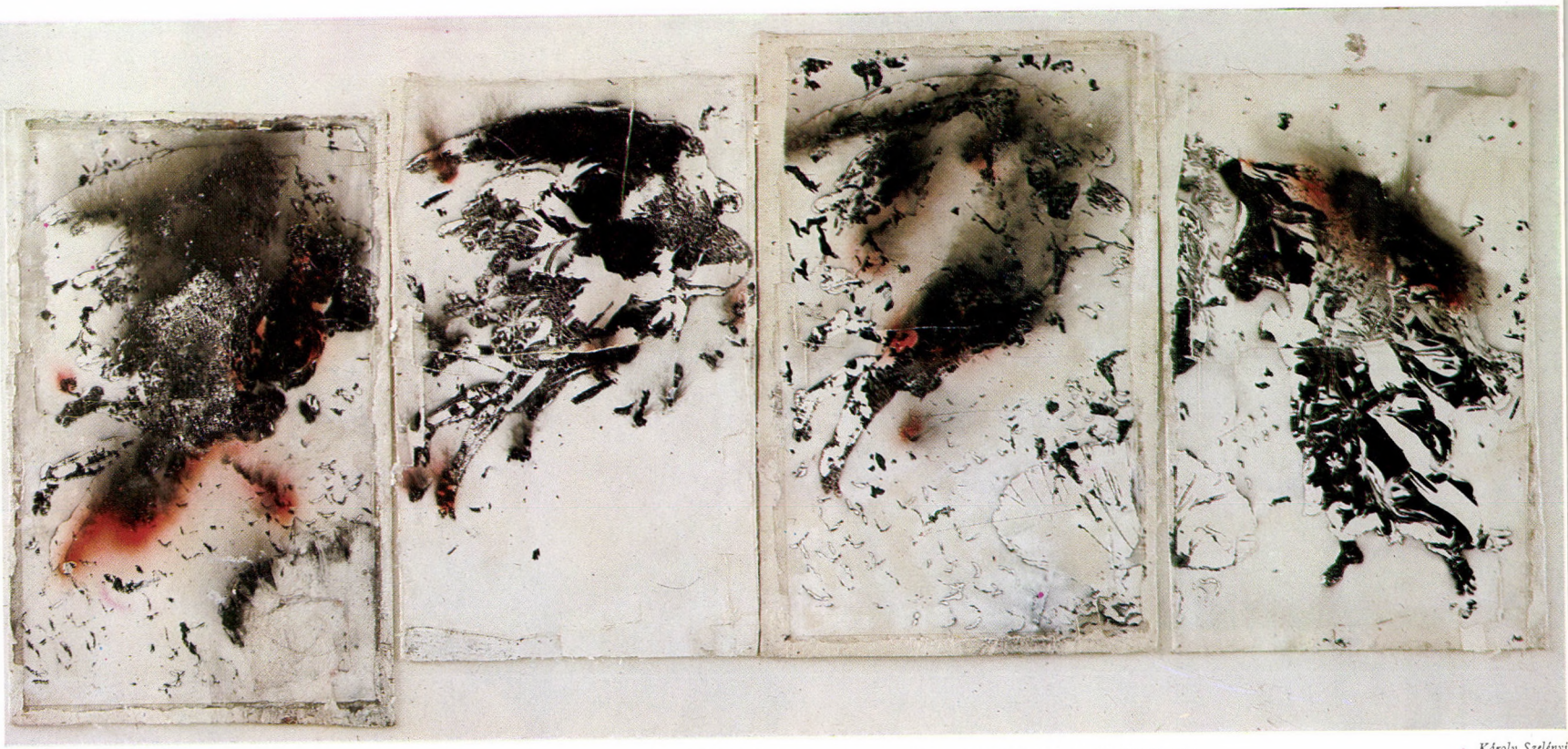
Ildikó Bakos:
Reeds IV. 1986.
Bronze, 171 cm

Frigyes König:
Alchemist Monument, 1985.
Walnut. 49.5×49 cm



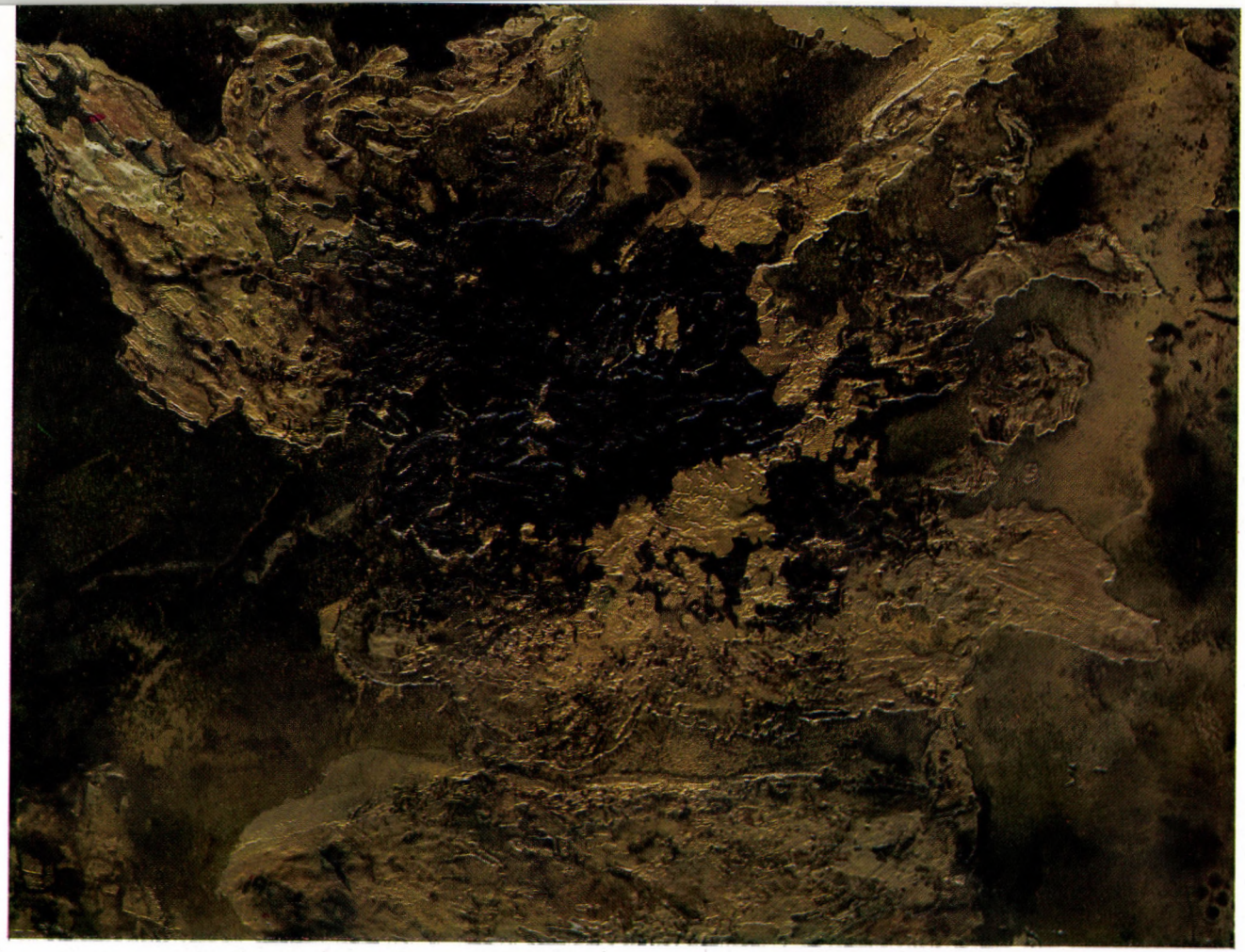
Katalin Nádor

Attila Mata:
Cameraman, 1985.
Painted wood. 60 cm



László Paizs: Floating, 1987. Coloured polyester with fibre glass, 214×523 cm

Károly Szelényi



Károly Szalay

László Paizs: Second Last Day, 1985. Pressed plate, coloured polyester, 183×244 cm

László Paizs: Layers of the Golden Age II. 1986. Pressed plate, coloured polyester. 240×360 cm

László Paizs: The Stages of Transformation I, 1987. Coloured polyester with fibre glass, 186×325 cm

white concrete sculpture, a large-scale version of the Paperworks of Troy.

In recent years the glass statuette has gained a certain amount of prestige; before this Mária Lugossy had already abandoned the medium of metal for glass. Her works are exclusively in glass; glued, multilayer or optical glass, glass polished to a shine or mysteriously glimmering from sand-blasting. Her objects are autonomous entities even if the spectator only looks at the surface; they gain in meaning for their having no secrets, the inside being also visible. The surface of the objects of Lugossy can be geometric, curved or even amorphous. I would prefer to call all her new complexes miniature Land Art, as they seem to be formulations of geological tectonics on a small scale.

Tektit I, 1987 is made up of two lying, polished prisms, as if separated, broken apart; their broken ends are strongly stressed with their serrated, dull surfaces; they are, however, connected by a clearly visible optical lens placed in the rupture; the white colour of this lens contrasts with the green of the glued plate-glass. *Tektit II, 1987*, sharp as a blade, conveys the same idea through an ostensively vertical plane. *Cosmo-genesis (Floating Island), 1987* consists of an enormous half-lens milled from glued plate-glass. The bisecting line is finished by rather amorphous, repeatedly broken, arched boundaries—this broken surface uncovers the geological layers. A small, complete lens is incorporated in the large half-lens; in the upper half of the complete lens there is the empty space of a sand-blasted groove. This space is filled by yet another material, mercury, brighter than silver. And the "floating island" itself is situated in this lake of quicksilver. Of this piece the simplest description is that it is a map in space, a relief model at an abstracted level. My first reaction to a related, enormous, complete lens is that it is majestic. This is *The Beginnings of Time, 1987*. On closer inspection, it can be seen that the lens is not complete; the indistinctly closed off nether part is decorated—it seems through the glass—by one big and four smaller built-in optical lenses, which have become an integral part whose separate effects are finally united with the effects of the primary, large lens. Mária Lugossy received one of the awards of the Budapest triennale to add to an earlier one received at the Fellbach Triennale. An individual show of her works will be organized in Fellbach in the near future.

I have written several times in *NHQ* on the original and unique electric-electronic mobiles of István Haraszty. His work exhibited here, *Button: Pull it, leave it, 1987*, is merely playful. On a vertical red cord a fair-sized (30 cm in diameter) button is turning. If the visitor pushes down the handle which is part of his machine *Energy Transplantation, 1986*, the result is as heady as when using the accelerator of a motor-car to its full.

Creativity or, perhaps, the passive manipulation of visitors, is catered for by *Change of Production Structures—Waiting for a Stamp I., 1987*. This construction is similar to the old-fashioned flatpress still used in small printers' shops. An office stamp, with a largish red pear-shaped handle is mounted horizontally onto the bronze frame. If a piece of cardboard—which is provided—is inserted correctly, the machine starts up. The wheel on which the stamp is mounted moves half a circle backwards and stops. The visitor would then suppose that the electric motor is defective, the operation has been interrupted, and that all this waiting is simply nerve-racking. And then suddenly the red tape cuts transversally into the construction, tenses, draws back the stamp, and the long awaited declaration "I hereby state that you have been waiting for the stamp," appears on the cardboard. Within six months the sculptor also prepared *Change in Production Structures—Waiting for a Stamp II, 1987*, whose structure and choreography are both

different. Into this device a piece of paper has also to be inserted; this is immediately covered by a plexiglass plate and cannot be touched again until the whole procedure is finished. The die itself rests on an ink-pad. The cardboard sets the structure into motion and is lifted by the device it lays on. At the same time the die descends from the ink-pad, and when the paper arrives, gives it stamp. After this the lift with the paper starts downwards, but insupportably slowly. It eventually arrives back into position and just as the visitor is inclined to suppose he will never get it back, the paper is finally ejected. The text is the same "I hereby state that you have been waiting for the stamp." Haraszty has given us a lesson in variations. The two stamping machines are similar in their appearance and aesthetics, the difference being that the first is a horizontal, the second a vertical structure. They are kin, although the kinetics and the structure of the second is much more complicated. It contains 5 relays with 15 separate circuits, 3 electric motors and 9 microswitches. Thus the production structure has changed so that the mechanism is of higher order; yet this is of no avail since office work remains as slow as ever. At the Triennale the artist placed the red coconut matting of the office of an important functionary before these two bureaucratic machines.

(At present Haraszty is living in West-Berlin by courtesy of a grant of the *Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst*. He has also been commissioned to send three big mobiles to the Seoul Olympic Games.)

Following his earlier personified objects, Géza Samu now exhibited wood-paraphrases. These are living things and people but primarily statuettes. There is nothing unusual about making sculptures—which occasionally aspire to the level of art—*objets trouvés* or drift wood. Géza Samu has respect and even love for nature but refuses to give up his artistic prerogative. His plastic works are not "monoliths," his pseudo-trees are joggled layer upon layer from different pieces of wood; he does not take over the original natural forms but, rather, by cutting and creating a living tree he takes over the task of nature.

Life Tree Screw, 1987 seems to have a skirt and four legs; *Bifurcating Tree, 1987*, with its twigs and thorns bows asymmetrically, as if it, too, was having a skirt made of apricot-tree shingles. The trunk of the bifurcating tree is horizontal, two bare crowns grow left and right. In the middle of *Snake Tree Mutant, 1877* there is a trumpet-formed twist and at the top a flat crown. The titles and fantasy names of materials recall free verse and have in themselves the value of analysis.

Géza Samu is an intellectual surrealist who pretends to compile his sculptures; all this recalls the so-called zoomorphic junctions among the archeological finds of the migration period with their composition of different animal motifs. He produces a never-has-been folklore without being folksy. He has a sure hand, is reductive in his own way without lyricism and never succumbing to the lure of play-acting.

(Géza Samu is one of the candidates for the Hungarian pavilion at the Venice Biennale.)

The triennale has a tradition of organizing, alongside the international collection, an honorary exhibition of the works of a leading Hungarian artist. This was the first time that a living sculptor, Rudolf Berczeller, now seventy-five, was honoured in this manner. His sculptures stood in the entrance-room under a sign reading, 'Hommage to Rudolf Berczeller.' He is an artist who has done almost nothing to further his own career. He has never been spoiled by distinctions, special favours or analytical criticism, nor even being able to sell his works. He has had only one exhibition and about 300 excellent and unsold statuettes have accumulated in his studio. He did not, however, select the works to be presented at the exhibition from these, but considered it a question of honour to

present only new works, all made in 1987. Nor had he any difficulty in producing twenty statuettes. It is also typical of the man that he did not allow a picture of himself to appear in the catalogue; he hid behind his sculptures, so that only half his face and his eyes are to be seen in the picture. Nor was he present at the official opening of the honorary exhibition; he was working, and feeding his 18 cats.

Berczeller is a member of the generation whose fundamental experience is that of German expressionism. Despite his reserve he enhances this style. He is passionate, full of pathos, majestic even in individual figurines and groups of statues. The mass, the figures in the groups are generally arranged in a line, in open formation or extended line, to use a military metaphor. His recurrent subject is that of cruel death—hanging, impalement, auto-da-fé—although this was not particularly stressed in this show. Human beings and their clothes appear in these miniature figures with crumpled copper plates and copper ribbons.

His chief work is a series of nude gnomes, sometimes bigger than the 80 cm limit for statuettes set by the organizers. He folded the zinc net used by bee-keepers in a cold state to form round sculptures. The only decoration to appear on this zinc skin is sprayed-on aluminium, which has a mellow, silvery light. In these sculptures the artist really follows a strict, apocryphal canon. His subjects are cripples, frail, broken-down people, potbellied gnomes with caved-in chests and hydrocephalics. They have no stamina, they are hopeless and prepared to die. *On Crutches* was perhaps inspired by a small painting of Breughel's in the Louvre, *Cripples*. Berczeller regards being a cripple as the natural state, and his sculpture has nothing to do with Greek aesthetic ideals, to the extent that it is not even a re-interpretation of them. The imagined model is misformed in itself and this expressiveness is further deformed by the artist into a vision of neo-expressionist logic.

Just as his earlier sculptures, this zinc net series is also characterized basically by movement, by an excited baroque or even manierist dynamism; his figures are moving, gesticulating, waving their arms, kicking. Everything is in movement, even the lamed dance, others are bent, one shoulder hanging, or sit uneasily, or fall on their knees or crash to the ground. Every figure is an individual. This series does not ring the changes in form of one figure, it is not a film recounted in space—although, perhaps, it could be that. Every body is different and although the faces are deliberately rough-and-ready, each and every one has a different expression. The positions, poses, movements combine absurdity and reality.

The series of zinc-net cripples is not finished. The sculptor has no preconceived choreography for this tragicomic ballet, yet in the exhibition the figures give the impression of a complete composition consisting of movements that follow each other logically. Rudolf Berczeller has always been restless, everything is always dramatic—a generalization of tragedy without pessimism.

JÁNOS FRANK

A NEW GENERATION OF SCULPTORS

The 10th National Small Sculpture Biennale at Pécs

In contemporary art, those movements which can be described relatively accurately and are thus open to systematization are both merging and becoming less clear; however, a few general features are observable. One is that small sculpture is gaining ground over painting, the leading genre of the early 1980s. This affected the Documenta 1987 in Cassel, and among this season's exhibitions those concerned with sculpture, such as "Inside-Outside" in Antwerp, have been outstanding. This increase in interest, however, does not extend to all kinds of sculpture: the latest efforts are typically room-sized constructions, complicated, architectural installations and giant open-air pieces.

Two exhibitions in Hungary tried to reflect to the challenge posed by monumental dimensions coupled with technical precision and architectural pretensions. The International Small Sculpture Exhibition of Budapest[1] effortlessly produced an elegant solution, proving that if limitations in size are not engendered by the limits of material and technique or the constraints of a badly-interpreted "small sculpture" tradition, then the burdens of recording only ideas and improvisations or being merely the model, the *bozzetto*, can be chucked. The review organized in 1987 at Pécs, where Hungarian artists and artists living in Hungary exhibited, presented a rather contradictory picture from this aspect since many of the pieces did not go beyond atelier-sculpture. It seems as if, under some sort of frugal pressure, artists are reluctant to renounce the treatment of any piece of stone they have acquired; they are severe also in their use of bronze and tend to prefer cheaper materials (plaster, terracotta, wood). Although the frontiers between genres have become more and more blurred, it does not seem very fortunate that the materials exhibited divide into two, almost opposing groups: the highlighted pieces of sculptures and the medals hiding modestly in their shadow.

The traditional themes, portraits, nudes, figurative groups are almost non-existent. The realistic bronze has been replaced by the expressive, the pathetic or the decorative schematic half-length portraits of porcelain and fire-clay. There are several examples of the new figurativity: Attila Mata who won this year's Grand Prize carves and colours his sculptures in a way that recalls the German expressionists and the new fauves, creating a sophisticated synthesis of rough framing and post-modern life-situations. There seem to be further possibilities also in the manierist revaluation of the classical avant-garde. Works by Árpád Mérei and Vilmos Király revive the sharply curved, impetuous forms and dynamic mass treatment of futuristic sculptures but instead of the utopian and the optimistic these works evoke the heroic decades of modern art with nostalgia. Some works refer back to the formal and ideological features of manierism: Frigyes König's mystically treated geometrical figure-construction or the mask-calligraphy of Károly Hantos.

All this indicates that in an age of new eclecticism, the manierism fashionable in the late 60s is being appreciated again: this at least openly declares the crisis in art. Most artists of course content themselves for the moment with imitating the decorative surface: what is very typical of the middle generation of Hungarian sculptors and of the many young beginners is that they make spasmodic efforts not to strain and to be witty. They also execute their ideas instantly, without caring whether these only suffice for a witty capriccio or carry some sculptural thought. Standing seven buttons turned from wood on their edges and placing them beside

one another at random is not a sculpture in itself; its creator tries to justify its existence by giving it a title *(Monument to Button-Makers)*.

Several artists try to escape from insubstantial ideas in the hope of creating their own individual myths or of attaching themselves to collective myths. The latter is a rather doubtful venture, those archaizing sculptures bearing titles such as *Touched by Ancient Breeze* necessarily stand on lost ground; today one can at most feel different myths in genesis through analogy and only through individual force can they be organised in a work of art or, even better, into a province which has its own extension. In this regard the works of István Bors, satirically paraphrasing the necropolises of high cultures, or the series of Ildikó Bakos, evoking the cultic sculpture of the Bronze Age, and the mythological sculptures of Ildikó Várnagy rise above the exhibition's average.

Together with the decreasing number of realist works there are far fewer constructive geometrical sculptures even though this was the dominant trend of the late seventies. Only Tibor Csiky[2] and the small group around him (Ferenc Friedrich, István Ezsiázs, Lajos Klicsu) have consistently preserved the traditions of "severe forms". This constructivist island provides a continuity of avant-garde traditions (in the good sense of the term) amid a plethora of laxity of style.

The overall panorama is not very promising but one can hope that the large generation of artists in their twenties and early thirties who have shown themselves at the 10th Biennial will find their own voices in time. It is also certain that the many ceramic artists, with their inherently greater mobility, will alleviate the weight of the conservative sculptural conventions still in play. However, one can hardly expect them to redeem the pains of sculpture.

GÁBOR PATAKI

[2] *NHQ* 106

EUROPEAN FOSSILS

The painter László Paizs

The works recently presented by László Paizs puzzled both visitors and critics alike. The embarrassed reaction of viewers could be seen in a visitors' book which fluctuated between the extremes of enthusiasm and ironic scorn. The indecision of critics showed itself in what could politely be called their reserve. Except for one or two short reports, the press limited itself mostly to recording the official events of the opening ceremony. In a year or two, if we relied only on the press, we might think that nothing other than one of the numerous annual exhibitions had taken place in the Műcsarnok. But was that all? A reading of the catalogue brings to mind a sort of chamber exhibition. The show did not present the life-work of Paizs and did not offer a comprehensive survey of a career going back several decades; visitors saw only a few works, parts of an unbroken cycle.

The world of László Paizs is strange indeed. Its strangeness resides partly in its difference from the artist's previous work, and partly in an attitude which is unfortunately unusual today: through the means of art Paizs speaks not of art but of the world outside art, his works have a philosophical, ethical, and indeed political message. He expresses the fears and anxieties he experiences as a social man and a member of society in a way which is unacceptable by the lights of today, namely in a style that is graspable to the point of literariness.

László Paizs made the critics' usual methods of reception difficult when, discarding the aesthetic values residing in the "perfec-

tion" of material-transformation, he had the courage to present new works which are apparently unkempt and transmit both passion and suffering. This threw professional critics and the initiated visitors in their expectations. But are these pictures truly so unkempt and so opposed to his previous works?

Certainly not. They have been preceded by experiments with materials over several years and these new works reflect not only the artist's skill in his means but the earlier skills and knowledge are also preserved in them—even if only in their omissions. The perfect handling of material and the extreme formal simplifications of his earlier works are still present; only the artistic intention has become very different from his previous minimal-art works. The truth is that this intention was formulated and even documented back in 1983 when he said in an interview: ".... beyond technical problems, the greatest worry is now whether it is enough to make our works of lasting materials that they may be preserved or we should seek out materials which can stand up to high radiation. (László Menyhárt: The Forgotten Easel, *Művészet*, May 1983). In essence, this is the idea and intention which links the new cycle closely to his earliest phase, when Paizs cast the bric-à-brac of real life into plexi-glass so as to preserve them for posterity. The only, but important, difference is that nowadays, instead of the accessories of a personal mythology, Paizs preserves the items important for a common European nexus of culture. I think this shows his artistic development clearly and if you wish, he has become a wiser man. The modesty of the sages is also reflected in the realization that we all, even the best of us, are only parts of a larger whole, and we feel ourselves threatened not so much personally but as a part of this whole. The realization itself can become cathartic in that the threat does not come from a force outside us and may not involve a world conflagration, a deliberately caused disaster; human thoughtlessness or an exaggerated belief in the civilization we have created may well be enough.

In his plastic picture-cycle Paizs has chosen for the basis of his message a few pieces prominent in the history of European art: a fresco of Uccello's, Botticelli's *Primavera* and *Birth of Venus*, and the heraldic animal of a Roman coin. 'Basis' should be taken literally since he has made a relief of these and then, with a technique worked out experimentally, encased them in plastic layers of different colours (red, gold, black); then, with something of an archeologist's excitement, he has polished them to partially reveal the barely recognizable forms of the basic layer. This method is used only for parts of the cycle, the "paintings"; the others, the "graphic works" employ a different technique.

It is very important for Paizs's message that these basic works are fragmentary in nature, that they depend on the selection and enlarging on one or another motif and detail; thus the emphasis is not on their existence but rather on how they are preserved in people's memory.

The whole cycle expresses the emotions of an artist of our time. The technique can be used for many more purposes but I feel that as the means of expressing an idea it is unique and will remain unrepeatable.

GÁBOR RIDEG

FROM PLANE CONSTRUCTIVISM TO ECLECTICISM

Imre Bak and Zsigmond Károlyi

In Imre Bak's retropsective exhibition[1], – he also exhibited at the 1986 Venice Biennale – the stages along his path are evident from the beginning. In the early sixties, when post-impressionism was still the ideal in Hungarian painting, Bak was experimenting with a different, lyrical and non-figurative mode in the French spirit.

It was a time when progressive Hungarian artists were passionately looking for the course that—after the isolation of the fifties—could again lead them back to the European and American mainstream in painting. Imre Bak discovered new possibilities in 1965 on seeing paintings by Frank Stella and Ellsworth Kelly in West Germany. In them he found a wiry, objective mode of expression, with hard edges and large, coloured, homogeneous surfaces so close to himself that along with István Nádler, he was exhibiting hard-edged pictures in 1968 at the Müller Gallery of Stuttgart; he had thus set himself apart from Hungarian post-impressionism and from abstract expressionism. At the same time he discovered Hungarian roots for this mode of expression in the painting of Lajos Kassák.[2] In spite of the conservatice cultural policy of the time, the style rapidly won popularity. In the wake of a partly spontaneous association between Imre Bak, János Fajó, Tamás Hencze and István Nádler, a group of Hungarian plane constructivists painters was formed. This association—together with the surnaturalists, who started a few years earlier—had an eminent part in the breaking of the hegemony of post-impressionism in Hungarian art.

After a brief exploration of conceptualism in the early seventies, Bak remained a plane constructivist until the early eighties, although his style changed a number of times within that mode. A decisive change occurred in the second half of the seventies when he developed an interest in the symbolic figures of myth, folk-art and archaic cultures. The outcome was that he transcribed these in terms of space, simplified into constructive formations.

Under the influence of new-wave painting, which swept the art of the world from the early eighties, of Imre Bak and his associates changed their manner too.

The 1987 exhibition at the Budapest Műcsarnok traces the development of Imre Bak's art, but the bulk of the material consists of trans-avantgarde or neo-eclectic pictures painted in the last few years. While these are peppered here and there with a few pictures from the plane constructivist and emblematic periods, though only as a glance at the course his painting completed from neo-constructivism, the hard-edge days to the present indicate the continuity of the course. There was no work, however, from the first, lyric—non-figurative—period of Bak's.

The exhibition opens with a hard-edge painting, a 1968 composition, *Stripes*, showing a clear link with manner that is associated with Barnett Newman, Frank Stella and Kenneth Noland. The search for myths and the creation of symbols of seventies are represented by the paintings *Sun-man Face* (1976) and *Symbol* (1977). In these the homogeneous, hard-edge forms resolve into space and shapes that bring to mind various pictogrammes—the human form, the labyrinth, the cross, circle and so on.

Trans-avantgarde, that style which recalls historic styles, emphasising expressiveness and fiery colours, captivating in its large sizes emerged in Hungary almost with an explosive force. Bak joined the objective-rational, neo-eclectic wing of this mode, not

[1] *NHQ* 96, 104
[2] *NHQ* 106

the expressive-sensitive one, that was the style close to his temperament, in which he could renew himself without breaking the continuity of his work. He used mainly the forms and construction commonly seen in eclectic architecture to compose his paintings. Compared to the earlier, constructivist style, his pictures become more colourful—he is fond of using yellow, purple, gray, blue and red and even black—and places geometrical or emblematic forms that run into space in front of dotted, hachured, occasionally scribbled backgrounds which are made up of organic formations. These pictures are allusions in *l'art pour l'art* manner and colours. The painter pays homage to the great names of art by taking a part the forms characteristic of the particular artist and reassembling them with his own pictorial language—but in such a way that the features of the works referred to remain. Some pictures of this kind are *Hommage à Kassák I–III* (1986), where forms recalling Kassák's antiseptic geometry are arranged before a colourful and decorative background, or *Hommage oà Tamás Lossonz y* (1986), a composition with the use of biological forms of one of the great initiators of Hungarian non-figurative painting. In *Hommage à Giorgio de Chirico* (1986) Bak suggests the metaphysical. All of these as well as *Contrasts* (1983), *Palladio* (1983) of *Folklore* (1984) are based on the contrast of the light, amorphic forms of the background filled with dots or tiny serpentine lines and the heavy geometric formations appearing in front of them.

An exhibition of the paintings of Zsigmond Károlyi, one of a generation now in their thirties, was also held in 1987 at the Budapest Gallery. Schooled on conceptionalism, Károlyi is a member of the generation that blasted their way through in the seventies.

A breach occurred in Hungarian art in the early eighties: Imre Bak, István Nádler and companions found fresh impetus in the new wave, while some working in the conceptual mode did not turn away from it but tried to renew themselves in another genre—painting—which sought intellectual objectives. Zsigmond Károlyi's exhibition was an example of this path-finding. All of his paintings are large, but their controlled, almost monochromatic colouring, their analytical approach, recalls the spirit of the avantgarde of the seventies. In 1968 Károlyi first photographed the cross-beam timbers used to make scaffolding rigid and he used that motif as raw material right up to the middle of this decade. In variations of that subject, he produced xerox, screen-prints, photographs and photo-paintings. The influence of minimalism, however, no longer dominated his recent exhibition. The X-formation still appears in his well-controlled, greyish-whitish-brownish compositions, but they are now accompanied by a number of other motifs. These large pictures also show evidence of lack of a way out. The paintings are reminiscent of Tarkovsky's rails and tunnels that run into nothingness, the intervals of life, when we suddenly come to realize our own place and role, since the monotonous series of actions indicate concrete objectives and are always in the present tense.

LAJOS LÓSKA

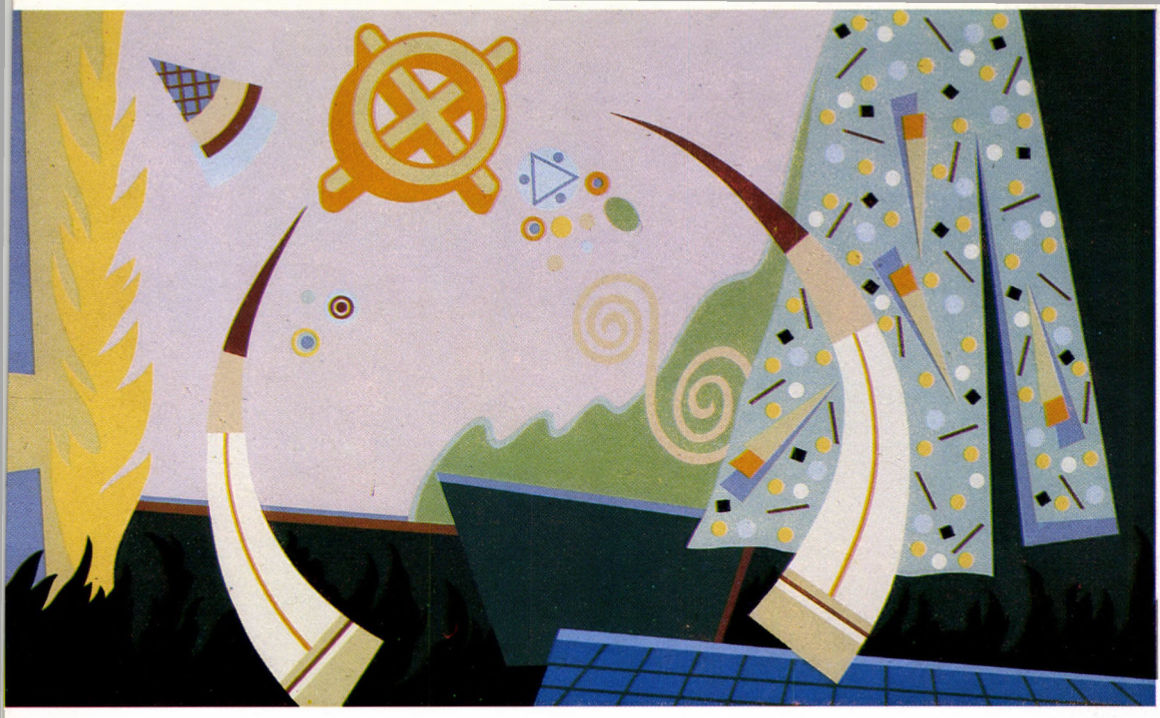
THE BOOK DESIGNER'S ART

Tibor Szántó's exhibition in the Vigadó Gallery

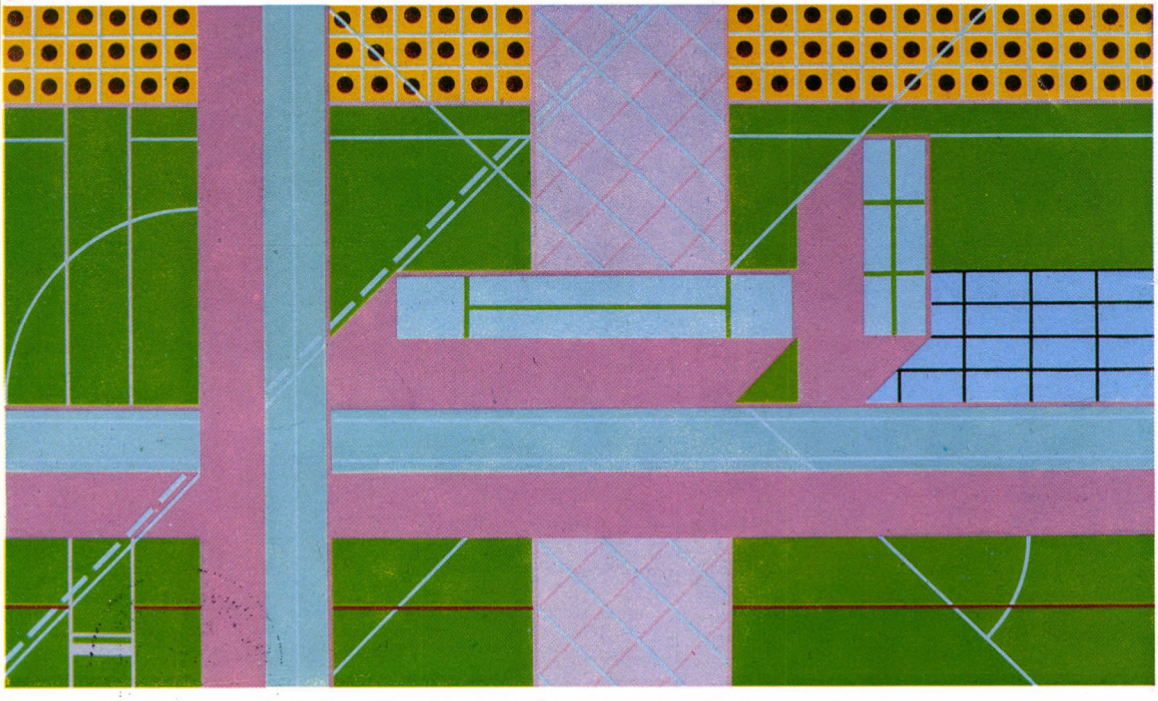
The *aristos* among book-buyers hunt for frayed first editions while the humbler *proles* read their favourite poets over and over again in dog-eared paperbacks in danger of falling apart. I myself believe that books that are truly loved are seldom in a perfect state.

IMRE BAK: HOMMAGE À GIORGIO DE CHIRICO, 1986. ACRYLIC/CANVAS, 200×150 CM

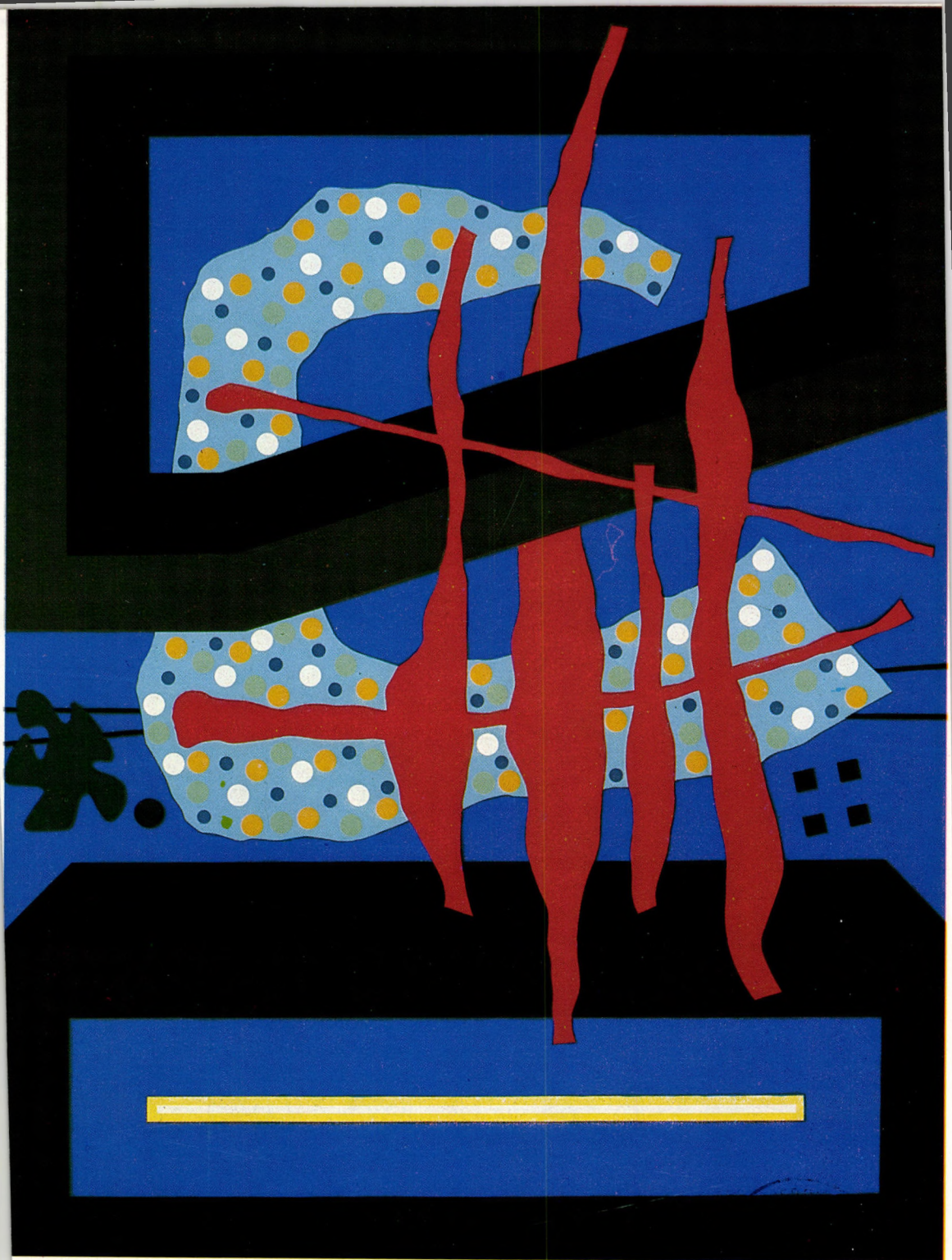
István Somfai



Imre Bak: Well-known Story II. 1984. Acrylic, canvas. 150×220 cm

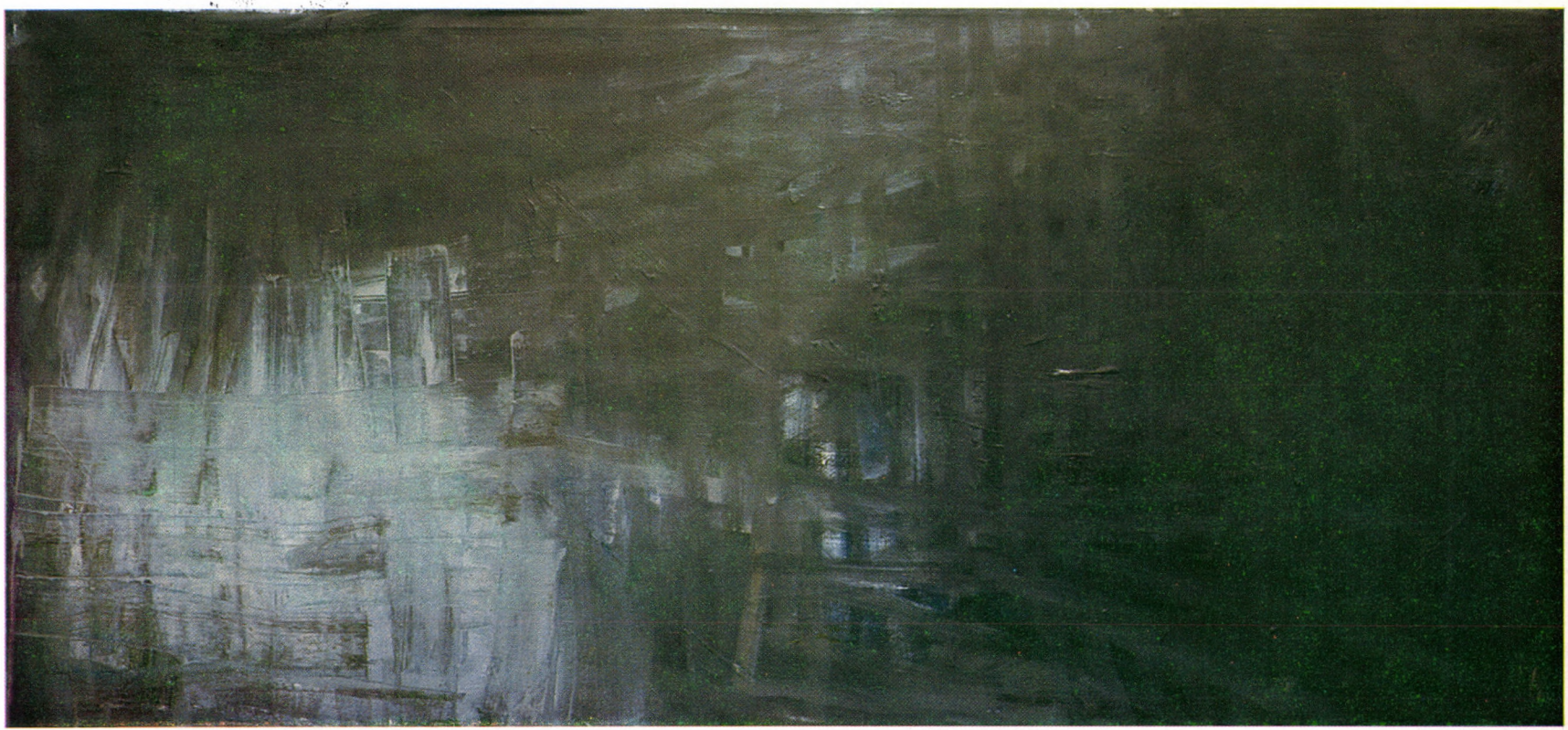


Imre Bak: Our Traps, 1983. Acrylic, canvas, 120×200 cm



IMRE BAK: HOMMAGE À LOSSONCZY, 1985. ACRYLIC, CANVAS. 200 × 150 CM

István Somfai

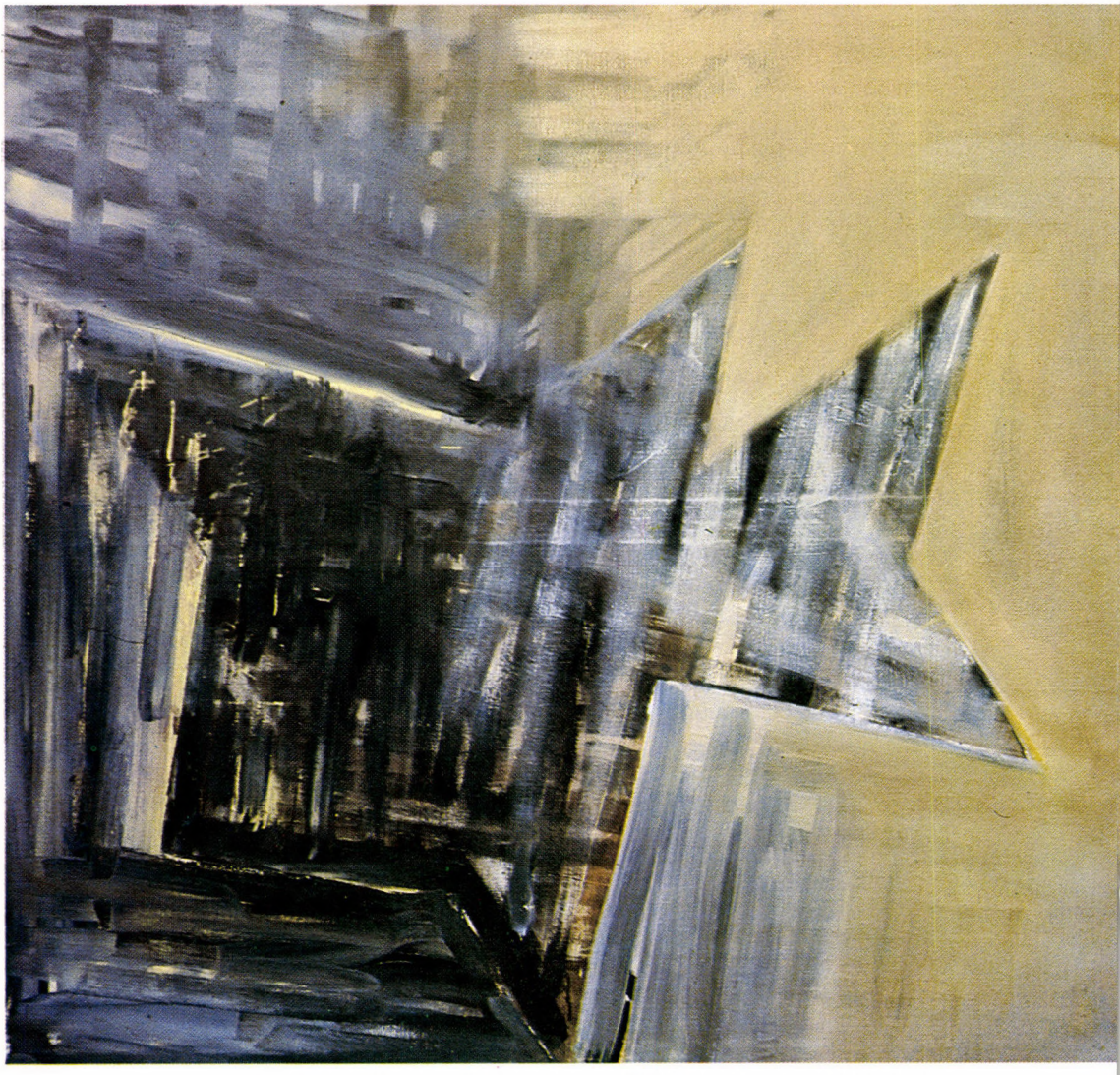


Zsigmond Károlyi: No Title, 1986. Oil, canvas, 94×200 cm

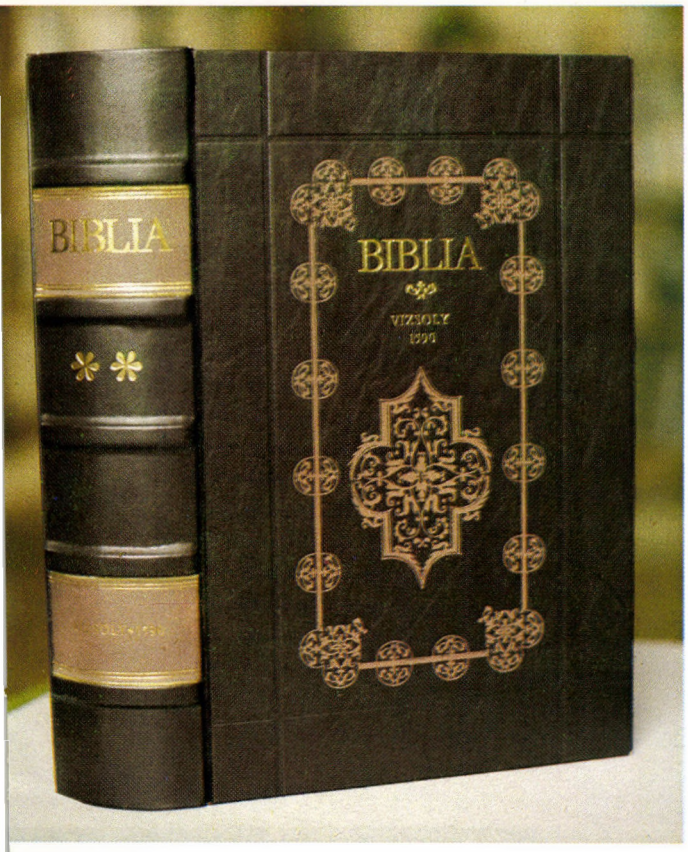
Imre Jubász

Zsigmond Károlyi: Perspective, 1985. Oil, canvas, 100×165 cm

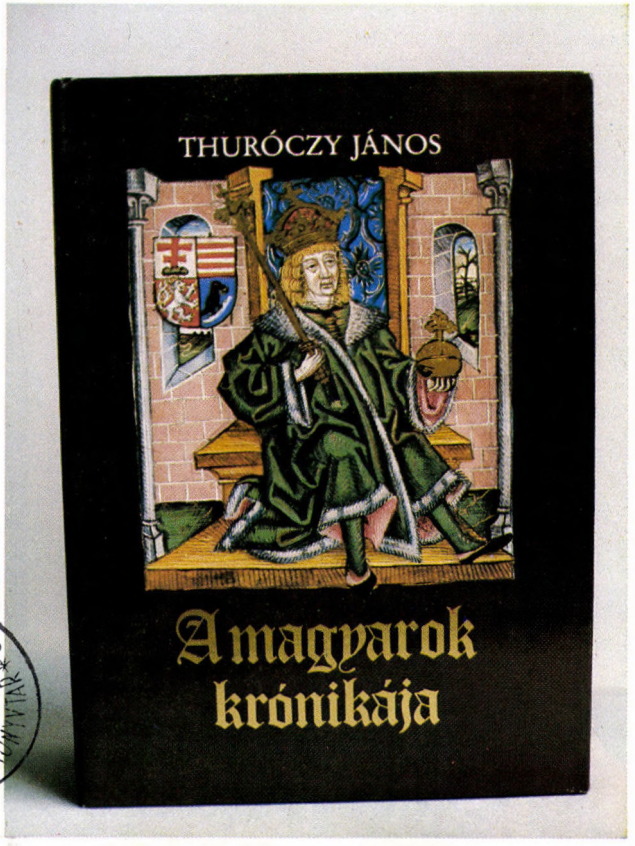
Imre Jubász



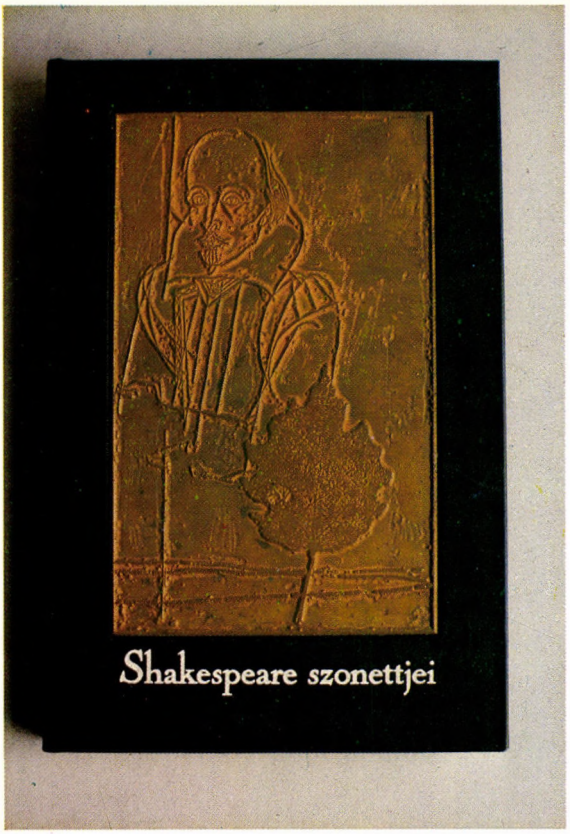
Zsigmond Károlyi: Tangram vi. 1986. Oil, canvas, 140×140 cm



Binding of the Vizsoly Bible
facsimile designed
by Tibor Szántó



Cover of the Thuróczy Chronicle
facsimile designed by Tibor Szántó



Cover design
for Shakespeare's sonnets by Tibor Szántó

Cover design
by Tibor Szántó for Sergei Esenin's poems

But these are extremes. Between the rare and the threadbare volume stands the category of fine books, such as Tibor Szántó makes. I have chosen the word make deliberately instead of writing design because—as demonstrated by the exhibition in honour of his 75th birthday—these books are, indeed, well-made. They are the results of a carefully judged method of working which is performed with professional consistency, in which the literary material, the format, the quality of the execution, the graphic elements, the type of paper used, as wellas the selection of the illustrations, printing technique, the number of copies and the price are treated as factors of equal rank. In addition. the complex subordination required to allow all these different viewpoints to stand results in a most natural coordination. What emerges is an object irreproachable from every point of view, a fine book capable of being approached from any angle—whose majesty enforces a deserved respect and which, probably, has also been calculated in advance.

This inevitably recurring effect is the point where we must turn back to the profession, designing, which Tibor Szántó practises in a much broader sense than merely planning and typographic appearance. Over many decades he has developed this to perfection as shown by the Certificate of Mastership at the exhibition, the tableau in which his partners, Gyula Illyés, Vasarely, János Kass, Piroska Szántó, István Vas, Károly Reich, Endre Szász and Sándor Weöres document their satisfaction with a fruitful cooperation and thank Szántó for shaping their books. The culmination of this appreciation is probably a letter from Lajos Kassák, who was notoriously severe and far from polite: he sends his sincere "thanks for the cover".

The question is what such a cover really offers. This is not unimportant, even if we know that a book with a beautiful exterior is certainly not a better book than the same work in an ugly edition. Not better but somehow different. Szántó produces this difference through elegance, the conventional symbolism of colours and materials, weight, thickness and well-judged proportions of bright and dull colours.

Szántó has written a book on 500 years of Hungarian printing and published a lexicon of typography. He is one of the founding fathers of the publishing house which has produced the greatest number of original fine books. He is art director of the Helikon Publishing House. It would be almost impossible to list all his designs and reconstructions of works of historical significance. In foreign languages those available include *Bibliotheca Corviniana*, *Cronica Hungarorum*, and *Turkish Miniatures*. There is also the outstanding Hungarian relic, the *Jordánszky-Codex*, for which his work was primarily that of restorer. He reconstructed also one of the most beautiful ancient Hungarian books, the *Anjou Legendary*, which King Caroberto had made for his small son, Andrew, in the early 14th century.

The revival of books of great value is only a small part of an exhibition which bespeaks a very rich and far from complete working career. Beside the historical relics clad in all their royal pomp, there stand row upon row on shelves designed by himself. Their covers and pages reveal a man of refined, restrained tastes. Colours are rare, the spines are usually black or white. There are very few illustrations on the cover, the titles themselves always dominate. This exhibition in the summer of 1987 in Budapest proved again that although the fine book is by no means better than the same work in a less spectacular edition, it has a magic of its own. The difference between content and form separated so often, even forcibly, and yet so difficult to interpret without each other, can and are brought into conjunction.

JUDIT ACSAY

THEATRE AND FILM

HISTORICAL CONNECTIONS

Zsigmond Móricz: *Fortunatus;* Gyula Háy: *Mohács;* András Sütő: *Dream Commando* (Álomkommandó)

History, by its very nature, offers examples to posterity. From Shakespeare to Dürrenmatt dramatists have turned time and again to the past with the barely hidden intention of casting light on the present. Historical analogy has always been a delicate point here. We can probably agree with Gyula Háy, the author of many historical plays, when he says that any play, on the past or the present, will only last if it is able to grasp the chosen event as a moment of history. At the same time he warned against the danger of analogy: "Historical themes certainly do not occur to writers only because history is generally instructive, but also because some of the past relates directly to the present, exerts a direct effect on the writer's emotions and may produce similar emotions in the public. But it is precisely this that adds to the author's responsibility when using analogies and historical allusions. One or another apparently similar feature may surely elicit a reaction but this easily provoked reaction may do more harm than good to the work and the effect it produces".

Among recent productions, those of three Hungarian plays are directly related to this problem of approach and, albeit accidentally, at certain points to each other.

Zsigmond Móricz, who died 46 years ago, wrote over 80 plays if we also count his youthful experiments, fragments and one-act plays, even though he is considered primarily a novelist. Of his *Fortunatus* he said that had the National Theatre accepted it at the time, he probably would have given up the novel to concentrate exclusively on plays. In 1912, when *Fortunatus* was completed, Móricz was 33 years old; it was first published in the literary review *Nyugat*, then six years later in a newspaper's Christmas supplement and, finally, ten years later, in a book with the following comment from the author: "In these work-destroying times, I publish this youthful work of mine which has been gathering dust for many years in my drawer in its original awkward form, as a child would offer an old toy in the hope that some other child could play with it as it is." But no other child appeared and *Fortunatus* remained unperformed for another sixty years until the Hevesi Sándor Theatre of Zalaegerszeg took it on.

The eponymous hero is not a fictional character. Imre Fortunatus (Szerencsés), of Jewish birth, was a major figure during the reign of King Louis II in the early sixteenth century. His Hebrew name had been Shnéor, Salman, later Hungarianized to Salamon. (His father Ephraim was a wealthy mer-

chant.) The year of his birth in unknown; between 1505 and 1510 he converted to Catholicism, reputedly because of a relationship with a Christian woman. The Palatine stood as his god-father. He was appointed Deputy-Keeper of the Treasury in 1519. The nobility attacked him constantly, accusing him of misuse of monies and debasement of the currency; as he enjoyed the grace of the court, he was always able to evade being brought to legal account. In June 1525, an incited mob attacked and plundered his house on the Castle Hill of Buda. (This now houses the Fortuna restaurant.) After the catastrophe of the battle of Mohács in 1526, which resulted in a third of the country coming under Turkish occupation, he disappeared from public life. Rumour has it that he died in that same year.

In Móricz's play, Fortunatus is a real renaissance figure. As a converted Jew, he carries the hopes of his former coreligionists; as chief official and a national figure, he is one of the most influential Hungarian noblemen. He is a slave to women and money: an unscrupulous philanderer and gallant knight who ravishes virgins even before the altar and at yet protects women's honour discreetly at the risk of his life. Hedonist and gambler, boorish libertine and refined amoroso.

Three women are in love with Fortunatus, later a fourth. The first is a Messianistic Jewish girl, the second a foolish virgin, the third is her sister-in-law, a frustrated noblewoman, married to a magnate and the mistress of Fortunatus for five years. The fourth? She is the latter's mother-in-law, a matron who wants to revenge her deceived son and burn the seducer at the stake; yet lying under her hatred looms the curiosity of a life spent without love.

Móricz seems to have used Elizabethan drama in creating hero and his play. The linking of manoeuvres of love and power recall Shakespeare. Imre Fortunatus is seized upon the orders of a jealous husband and released by those same noblemen who have signed his death sentence. They need him. The primate himself, the Archbishop of Esztergom, fetches him from prison, promising his jailer the appointment of Lord Chief Justice, and carries the former prisoner before the assembled nobility to nominate him Chief Treasurer. For Fortunatus is the man who can retrieve the one-million gold florins stolen by the Fuggers. The nation is bankrupt. On the throne sits "a prematurely born and prematurely crowned brat," "the country's body is covered with sores," and the lords care only for their own fortunes. Meanwhile, the Turkish threat is looming closer, for this is the year 1525, just twelve months before the decisive defeat at Mohács.

Móricz has seized the dramatic moment when a country, morally bankrupt of values, runs inevitably toward the catastrophe. Unfortunately *Fortunatus*, despite its rare virtue of perceiving a historical situation, has remained only a possibility, a monumental torso rather than a finished piece. Too many conflicts have been crammed into a plot for a material of Shakespearean dimensions to be arranged according to the rules of a non-Shakespearean construction. Móricz was not an expert in the labyrinth of dramatic construction; he inserts long monologues in places where the plot should move forward, sometimes he moves his figures without reason; yet there is still enough to excite in the play, especially the raw power of the language to make it worth rescuing for the theatre.

It is all the more worthy in that there is no room for any doubt that Móricz had a message for his own age. Péter Nagy, a literary critic, wrote that the play looks back "from the crises of contemporary Hungary on the conditions of pre-Mohács Hungary, and with his placing of the figure of Imre Szerencsés (Fortunatus in Latin) in the centre Móricz could focus on the problem of Jew or non-Jew which had become increasingly grave in contemporary Hungarian society, and the problem of feudalism-capitalism which he both compared and identified poetically." We can join to this the comment

of the playwright Miklós Hubay, to the effect that *Fortunatus* in the 1910s "should also mean a criticism of Hungarian feudal-capitalism. At the end of the play the agreement between the Archbishop of Esztergom, the banker and the robber baron meant 'roll my log and I'll roll yours;' where is that Mohács that we may lose the country? This hint would have been clear on the eve of the world war, when Móricz wrote it."

A present-day performance can still summarize and recall the bitter historical lesson. That this only partially succeeded in Zalaegerszeg, was due to the weaknesses in the play's construction and some extent to the casting. The director, Péter Tömöry, counterpointed the play's vehement passions with some irony which, in individual cases, counterbalanced the miscasting but it also washed out the play's emotions and changed a fresco drawn with broad brushstrokes into miniature portraits. In other words, the result was to simplify the romantic intensity of the play, which itself was probably, if unintentionally, a means of stylization. The hero, played by László Gálffi, was more an eccentric than a lecher. He was more a stiltedly interesting, sensitive and forcedly savage, ingratiating seducer than a gently triumphant full-blooded, virile male. The concluding scene was, however, memorable. Before the forced, victorious Fortunatus starts for the national assembly, he is rejected—probably for the first time in his life—by a peasant girl. Behind the "fortunate" hero sensing the tragedy of aging, appears a well-known historical painting from the last century—Bertalan Székely's romantic picture which shows the discovery of the body of King Louis II, fallen at Mohács.

Mohács can be seen from another angle in Gyula Háy's play of that name. The setting in the year 1526 brings us nearer to the disaster. The play begins with the news that the 300,000-strong Turkish force has set out. The scene is the royal castle in Buda and the hero is the then 20-year-old Louis II, who is not "that prematurely born and prematurely crowned brat" of Móricz's play, but a young hero suddenly matured by his responsibility for the fate of a country which waits for his voluntary sacrifice.

Mohács is a drama of historical necessity. It deals with the reasons which have led necessarily to the tragic defeat. Háy weighs all political factors with scholarly thoroughness, including those who have not been interested in establishing an efficient Hungarian army and why. The West did provide moral support for the "Eastern shield of Europe," and sent a token force but the emperors, princes and even the pope were more interested in the battle for power among themselves than in the struggle against the crescent. Safeguarding their own political interests was much more important to these cynical rulers than the idea of Christianity or the existence of Hungary—the fate of nations or even the world was of secondary importance. The Holy Roman Emperor, Charles V, says in the play: "You should know that most questions of history remain for ever unsolved ... The great problems of humankind do not disappear because they are solved but because they become obsolete, overripe, they go out of fashion... Cross and Crescent? Yes, this will remain a bloody puzzle for a little while still but then..."

The historical causes for the catastrophe of Mohács should be sought in the social conditions, in the quarrels between the nobility and, especially, in the circumstance that despite the papal proclamation of a crusade, twelve years after the crushing of György Dózsa's bloody peasant revolt, they are afraid of putting arms into the hands of the peasants because they rightly fear that these arms may again be turned against them. So they decide to attack the Turks before reading out the papal letter in the churches. They prefer certain defeat to the risk of losing their power. "Every battle ends in some way," says a nobleman, "somebody will become ruler over these lords and then they, in turn, will remain rulers over the peasants."

The king's personal drama lurks in the shadow of the bombastic national suicide. Louis, so filled with his love for his young wife, has to recognize that he remains alone in his efforts to save the country and that everybody is counting on his death. With his marriage childless, the uncertainty of the succession only worsens the divisions. So, on the eve of the battle, in deciding not to flee but to lead his troops in battle, the king acknowledges the total hopelessness of his fate through this self-chosen death.

Háy's play is clever, dialectically well-reflected although somewhat archaic for today's readers, dominated as it is by noble pathos, by sentiment. The objective, restrained representation of the political background shows a rare self-discipline considering that he wrote *Mohács* in the late 1950s, during the years he spent in prison for his part in 1956. There can be no doubt that Háy considered his interpretation of the historical drama valid also for himself. One perceives in *Mohács* how cautiously he treats analogies, how he avoids utilizing them as direct historical parallels. In the foreword of his volume of historical plays, he writes: "The criminal and distorted idea of a national suicide, as the result of the fear of the ruling classes of any change, has marked Hungarian history in the case of Mohács and on other occasions so strongly that many people consider it almost a permanent national characteristic. Hence I do not consider it fortuitous that I have come to the decision: if I have the power and the means to write the tragedy of Mohács, I shall make everybody understand that our way into the future, on which we are marching in this particular chapter of our history, does not lead us into a past burdened with Mohács, but as far away as possible from it."

These lines and the play were published in 1964; but *Mohács* could not be performed in Hungary during its author's lifetime. After a German production in Switzerland (where Háy lived after his release until his death), and a Hungarian performance in Yugoslavia, the Madách Theatre of Budapest gave it a production under Tamás Szirtes. The dramatic idea itself and the clear-cut homogeneity of the play's form fit the style of the company, as do the heightened tone and the picture-book historical colouring. The performance is as correct as the play itself, without trying to add any of the more acerbic philosophy of history developed during the thirty-odd years since it was written. The last scene is a case in point: Tamás Tóth, in the role of the abandoned king, pours out his tormented soul with the lyrical pathos of self-sacrifice in saying farewell to life. A more intimate, stronger and bitterer dénouement can be imagined, especially if the audience had a king who acknowledged the trap of history with disillusioned defiance—but then we would have nothing to be moved about.

András Sütő, the Transylvaniaa writer, conveys the message of his new play through a historical analogy drawn from our century. Place and time are indicated in the playbill: "Set in Auschwitz and anywhere where it can happen." This conceals a complex plot whose essential feature is that it happens on two levels. The setting of the basic plot is the theatre of an imaginary, unnamed country with a dictatorial regime, in which they rehearse a play about Auschwitz. This theatre within the theatre carries the second plot. At certain points the two plots are related through two characters. One of them is the actor Julius Hoffmann, the author of the play within the play, in which he also plays a part: he is Manó, a prisoner in Auschwitz and the servant of Doctor M.—"Mors," standing for death—the camp's pathologist. This Doctor M. is the other important character: in "civilian" life, within the framing plot, he is the manager of the theatre.

The main point of the play within the play is the revolt of the twelfth *Sonderkommando* of Auschwitz, the brigade charged with clearing away the corpses. The servant of the pathologist, Manó, is also a member

of this brigade; he assists him indirectly in his experiments on prisoners. Manó's twin children, a boy and a girl, are also in Auschwitz and he tries to save them by offering their dreams to Doctor M., as "extraordinarily interesting material of the spiritual relationship of identical twins," but he cannot protect their lives. When the *Sonderkommando* revolts and he faces Doctor M. with a pistol in his hand, Manó is incapable of pulling the trigger.

This skeleton story is in a certain sense an analogy of the plot of the play within the play. The son of Julius Hoffmann, the author-actor playing Manó, must go to prison for a childish prank offending the dictatorship. As father and son have no other means to achieving a pardon, they decide to present their petition publicly, during the performance of the Auschwitz-play, to the General sitting in the presidential box. The theatre manager, Aurél Frank, learning of this, informs the security service in his fear of the consequences; the boy is in fact carried off the stage during the performance. The desperate and confused Hoffmann does to the manager what Manó could not do to Doctor M., and shoots him. In the corresponding scene of the Auschwitz-play Manó (Hoffmann) pulls a real gun and Doctor M. (the manager) falls down dead. The play has one more tragic point—the General was not even present in the theatre.

The *Dream Commando* is clearly a play on two levels and if one penetrates into its depths it reveals more and more levels of meaning. It is not only the parallel between the Jewish prisoners in Auschwitz and minorities deprived of all their basic human rights, but the theme is also the change in responses to deprivation and oppression. Sütő asks, up to what point can one entrust the hope of survival to the sale of dreams and when must one take to a gun. When, under the pretext of the General's brief visit to the theatre, the authorities demand the cutting of certain passages from the play, Hoffmann's reaction has a dual meaning: "We shorten the dreams and lengthen the revolt." We must interpret his figure in this symbolical duality: the intellectual, who so far had only "lulling and reassuring words" and wrote "invented dreams," now—in the costume of Manó—uses a gun.

In the *Dream Commando* the writer's universal intention pushes forward and bursts through a few conceptual and structural difficulties. Although Sütő is right when he says that fascism did not start with gas chambers but with the deprivation of rights, hence its revival in different forms must be identified in its very germs but—let us refer once more to Gyula Háy's warning—he creates a too direct analogy between Auschwitz and today's forms of neo-fascism. The fictitious dictatorship in the framing story condenses too many different features of too many political systems to make the plot credible—even if the intention is to create a general validity. In an otherwise generous and effective performance by the Vígszínház under Ferenc Sík, it emerges that the play's poetic-metaphorical level, its direct political allusions and human-situative authenticity in the everyday sense do not form an organic unit; the lack of the unity of these three levels, less apparent in reading the play, leads to some difficulties in representing the figures and making them and their deeds acceptable. If, however, we regard the performance as a spiritual gesture—and we have every reason to do so—these reservations seem certainly secondary and the importance of the production of *Dream Commando* cannot be minimized.

TAMÁS KOLTAI

HUNGARIAN RADIO DRAMA

Past and Present

Blind chance has commissioned this article at a time of bitter controversy among radio people about the place and function of the medium.

Listening figures have had a threatening drop for Radio Kossuth which broadcasts (on AM/FM) the most important and wide-ranging news and commentaries, radio plays, operettas, music from accepted classics to mild pop, cabaret, talks on various subjects—for "the general public." Radio Bartók (FM only), formerly the Third Programme (classical music, more sophisticated radio plays, talks, interviews, with sometimes an hour of jazz or the latest pop) has a chronically small segment—a mere 1.5–2 per cent—of the audience. Only Radio Petőfi (AM/FM) can be said to have a distinguishable profile (magazines, phone-ins, light entertainment) and good listening figures.

The structure of the three national stations with weeks ranked as A-B-C-D (only the time of the most important news is fixed, otherwise—say on a Monday at 19.15—you may find cabaret, a radio play, a political discussion or music and this same type of programme is repeated every fourth week)—is a humourless puzzle for even those who make the programmes. The structure of the institution itself is badly balanced; there is a separate Youth Department with its sub-departments, a radio within the Radio, a well-organized feature and documentary department is lacking and the three small workshops struggle for life, administrative personnel outnumbering programme-makers.

A radio-drama man, like myself, when speaking about his workshop or the genre, must not cherish illusions about the power of art, the influence of theatre and so on. One should know his place: radio drama is as necessary for any state as a feather in the cap. Political broadcasts are the life reason of radio; technicians and maintenance are indispensable for political broadcasts; the gaps between news and commentaries must be filled with something, preferably music. On the other hand, a feather in one's cap is not such a bad thing.

History

After the proverbial furniture van, and the room with a piano and mike in it, radio drama—before the Second World War—meant either high art (classics read out by a row of actors waiting for their cues) or light entertainment (generally idiotic). Poetry and essays, often of high seriousness, were also read. When conditions became grimmer after 1938, literary programmes were a means of keeping Jewish contributors alive (through ghost work). March 1944—the occupation of the country by German forces— sent practically all honourable radio-literature people underground.

The feverish euphoria of liberation —rebuilding, reimplementing, reorganizing cultural institutions, the founding of periodicals and publishing houses, the launching of projects, including valuable radio plays—was followed by the setting of the concrete of Stalinism in the autumn and winter of 1948.

It is from this period that the first lines in the Radio-Play Book kept at the Drama Department date. (The Book has one long line for each play: title, author(s), date of recording, broadcast, repeats; duration; catalogue number.) These lines tell us of Hungarian and Russian classics (adapted novels included), Hungarian and Soviet agit-prop plays—and the first English play, *Widowers' Houses* (September 1953). But they do not tell about the majority sentenced to merciful oblivion: the agitkas (Korea, Yugoslavia, USA-plays; kulak, miner, founder, etc., plays,

the most prestigious of which—one on "Stalin City"—was printed in *Csillag*, 1953)—and the operettas (drama was designated as "the biggest operetta factory" by high authorities). Their inanity is beyond imagination and could only be supplied with relatively large sums of money.

The thaw first showed in the appearance of formerly banned Hungarian authors and with the first World Theatre series (1954–57)—24 tactfully cut classics, among them *As You Like It*, *Macbeth* (1954) and *A School for Scandal* (1956).

The policy of the years after 1956 follows in the same steps, cautiously expanding the circle of authors with W. S. Maugham, (1956), Brecht *(Terror and Misery in the Third Reich*, 1958) and Drzic (Yugoslav classic, 1958) among others. The only worrisome sign was the predominance of comedies and operettas.

Operetta then disappeared from Drama —Music has managed it since, logically—and the list of authors has radically changed. Real talent has taken over among Hungarians. The publishing house Európa and the monthly *Nagyvilág* did their best to appease readers' hunger for contemporary Western writing and radio was often the first to present drama straight off the press (examples: O'Neill's *Mourning Becomes Electra*, 1960, John Osborne's *Luther*, 1962, John Mortimer's *Lunch Hour*, 1963). Contacts with Western drama workshops were established, with the first exchange of scripts (Böll, 1963, Camus, 1965). Hungarian Radio started to participate in the Italia Prize.

There the process of growing up finished: our obligation being to keep pace with development.

The circle of Hungarian radio authors has widened with the arrival of new recruits. Stereo and quadrophonic experiments of the end of the sixties were channelled into programme-making by the Experimental Studio (which lasted until 1976). The discovery of the short radio play (1972) has been followed by the systematic rediscovery of classic Hungarian drama—still going on, the amount of debts due amazing everybody. Social conflicts found expression in a new form in the radio-documentary of the early seventies, bringing home two Italia Prizes (Péter Borenich, 1974, László Maráz, 1975). The range of foreign authors extended as far as hope can reach and I will just mention some from the English-speaking world. (Giles Cooper: *The Object*, 1967, and this year his cycle of 6 radio plays: *Under the Loofah Tree; Mathry Beacon; Unman, Wittering, and Zigo; The Object; Pig in the Middle; The Disagreeable Oyster;* Beckett's *All That Fall*, 1967, was a historic removal from the ban list; Tom Stoppard's *Albert's Bridge*, 1969, was produced by Charles Lefeaux, BBC; Harold Pinter was represented by *Black and White, Last to Go*, 1974. The History of the Radio Play series, which relaunched once rejected plays, contained John Arden's *The Bagman* in 1977, after seven years. Don Haworth's *It's No Use Arguing the Toss* was broadcast in 1979; John Rudkin's *Cries from Casement as His Bones Were Taken to Dublin*, 1983, did not have an easy ride either. The new World Theatre series (1976–84) contained 133 practically full-length plays from Aeschylus to 1918, among them *Everyman*, 1976, (which one critic even then branded as clerical propaganda).

The place of radio drama

The three programming stations of Hungarian Radio broadcast 66 hours a day. Of this output "artistic prose" is about 14 per cent, radio plays produced by the Drama Department 1.7–1.8 per cent.

Drama is only one of the workshops where dialogue-based text programmes are made with producer and actors in the studio. The Youth Superdepartment Literature Section make adaptations and radio plays for children and the young; plays for the latter do not differ in any essentials from radio plays for "grown ups." Adaptations (in radio

play form) of novels and short stories—a territory strictly off-limits to Drama—come from the Entertainment Department of the Sports and Entertainment Superdepartment, from the Hungarian Literature, the World Literature, and the Adaptations Sections of the Literature Department. (Adaptations also provide the weekly soap.) The contrast with some other workshops is thus striking, and not to our advantage.

The Drama Department (proper) has 360 broadcasts a year, of which about 300 are repeats and theatre transmissions and about 60 are first broadcasts of original radio plays and stage adaptations. (Short radio plays make up roughly 10 per cent of these.) Drama broadcasts are all in stereo. Their presence on Petőfi ("light") is slight, on Bartók ("third") more marked, on Kossuth ("national") important. However, the structure of Kossuth is at the centre of a raging controversy and this presence may be subject to change.

Theatre transmissions—recorded in the presence of an audience (exceptionally in a studio), then edited only technically and provided with a running commentary which informs the listener that Hamlet is lifting the skull, etc.—have been very popular with older and country audiences for about forty years. In the sixties Drama still did up to 50 a year. Some of these have turned out to be pure gold for the (still dreamed-of) national theatre archives.

From idea to broadcast

The progress of a Drama radio play from first idea to broadcast is nearly as simple (or tortuous) as anywhere else in the world.

The author offers an idea (in the form of a synopsis, a short story, a stage play, etc.); he or she gets a contract and an advance payment of 25 per cent; work often follows until the script editor—considering the text ripe enough—gets a colleague to second him at the weekly script meeting (this may mean a rewrite, too). Two Yeas on a script automatically mean the script is accepted and the author receives the full fee; the text then is rehearsed and recorded, listened to by the Department, placed on one of the Drama spots and broadcast.

The above notions should be broken down into more detail.

Authors: A radio play, which is rarely printed, receives little critical attention and has relatively low prestige in Hungary; yet the form has remained popular with a number of authors, well after the nation-wide spread of TV in the early seventies. The Drama Department has had periods of gaining authors (1947, the sixties), and losing them (especially young ones, in the seventies); this has nearly always depended on the talent and enthusiasm of script editors; for about three years now a number of young writers have joined the club.

Contract: A well-known author will get a contract the moment he or she has an idea. A beginner or an outsider will generally have to produce a full manuscript to raise even the faintest prospect of money. The Drama Department occasionally acquires the right and the means to declare a special commission (competition). "Declare" is, of course, an overstatement: public competitions proved disastrous long ago, being responsible only for cartloads of pretentious dilettante manuscripts. A competition means inviting twenty to forty authors on some pretext. Thematic competitions (e.g., the one on Workers in the early seventies) are still nightmarish memories. Competitions declared in order to recruit new authors (e.g., the latest, in 1986, connected with the aim of pumping fresh blood into the ailing short radio play) have often proved successful. A special commission means increased fees; a competition means prizes in addition.

Fee: Since last year the maximum has been 21,000 forints for a full length (longer than 30 minutes) radio play. (It was 14,000 in 1980.) Though it is impossible to translate sums, I can try to give a notion by pointing out that 21,000 forints represent four

months' salary for someone at the beginning of a professional job; it pays—at the time of writing, summer 1987—for one square meter of a flat in a non-elegant part of the city, still, this is more than what a publishing house pays for an equivalent amount of writing, but less than film, TV or theatre royalties. The Department has usually been cautious in paying the maximum, although recently it has plucked up the courage to pay near it. Beginners and outsiders, of course, will get more modest sums. But a fee makes no sense without...

Repeats: Any considerably well-done Hungarian radio play is guaranteed a repeat (50 per cent of the fee) within a week of the first broadcast. Any well-done Hungarian radio play will get a second repeat within some months. Really well-done and popular radio plays may have as many as ten repeats in the course of a few years.

Accepting a play: This was a real ordeal until about fifteen years ago. Each manuscript was discussed by the Dramaturgic Council (Head of Literature Superdepartment, Head of Drama, Assistant Head of Drama, Head Producer, Assistant Head Producer), often with disastrous results; this explains the later projects to relaunch rejected scripts. For about fifteen years script editors had to "sell" their manuscripts to the Head, or Assistant Head of Drama, each responsible for certain categories of plays (see below) and the results became much less disastrous. The two Yeas method was introduced in February 1987. This, of course, raises the problem of ...

Control: If a script editor cannot get a colleague to second him (the colleague he has asked disagrees), then the script meeting asks Assistant Head of Drama to read the text. If his decision is not wholeheartedly accepted, the Head of Drama can be asked to sit in judgement. Each recorded play is listened to by the Department, logically, for timing, placing, advance publicity, etc. If the production is felt to be problematic, the Vice Controller of Radio will be invited to the listening session. (This happens about once every two years; on the last occasion some five sentences were cut after lengthy discussions.) Each department has to submit their yearly programme plan to a meeting chaired by the Controller of Radio, and attended by officials from the Ministry of Culture and Education and by the Party Centre people responsible for radio. The plan from Drama lists authors, titles, provides a synopsis for each play and information as the stage it has reached (idea—script—recording). The Drama plan has not met critical opposition for at least ten years.

Recording: Due to budget cuts (especially where foreign currency is concerned) equipment and studios are gradually becoming worn down. Hungarian Radio has never had a sufficient quantity of, or quality in, special radio play recording studios; having them built and equipped requires, again, money. Thus haste and flat routine often prevail when recording a play. Radio is gradually losing many of its really valuable staff producers; for the time being commissioning directors from the theatre for the more important plays seems to be some sort of solution. Since 1956 Radio has not had its own repertory company. The present regulations governing payments to actors have grown absurd: some are overpaid, some underpaid for work on the same production. Though there are really fine actors and producers in the provinces, the present underdevelopment of studios in the country towns stifles all hope of founding small but independent radio drama workshops there. Only very rarely can a radio play be recorded with a provincial company, "on location," which means in the corridors, rooms, rehearsal stages, etc., of the local theatre.

Proportions

The progress described of a Hungarian radio drama from first idea to broadcast is nearly identical with that of any other radio

play or stage adaptation. The foreign author of a play will be paid through the Hungarian Copyright Office; Drama will commission, and judge the work of, the translator and/or adapter.

The sixty-odd yearly first broadcasts regularly divide into certain proportions.

Hungarian radio plays and stage adaptations make up about 50 per cent of the total output of Drama. That stands to reason.

Adaptations of classics (as a working term this means all drama written before 1945) cannot have more than 10 per cent—any drama department has the ambition to be a living workshop, not a museum. Not even the most exacting cycles of World Theatre demanded to exceed that limit.

The remaining 40 per cent is to be divided between present-day OIRT (International Radio and Television Organization: socialist countries mostly) and EBU (European Broadcasting Union: capitalist countries mostly) radio plays. Which is the almost eternal source of conflict: ideological, aesthetic, linguistic, organizational, financial.

The ideological conflict simmers between those of more conservative minds and those who prefer to judge a text according to whether it is good or bad. More conservative minds have one simple argument: "Socialist is Beautiful." Those whose categories for a text are "good versus bad," have no real ideological argument, except that they, too, may consider themselves socialists.

There is no aesthetic conflict between OIRT and EBU radio playtexts. I will not demean myself by naming talented OIRT or untalented EBU authors. The only fact to be taken into account is that some radio drama workshops (like the BBC) have recruited (by tradition, policy, personal relations, money, who knows) a greater number of talented authors than others. Those workshops deserve to be represented by a greater number of radio plays a year than others.

Language presents a paradox rather than a conflict. EBU radio drama is written in languages popular with Hungarian intellectuals; a script editor thus has a choice among a number of readers and translators for an English or a French text. (German —quite popular in Hungary—is irrelevant here, since it is both an OIRT and an EBU language.) Of the EBU countries, only the Scandinavians share the fate of "small" languages, in which the majority of OIRT radio plays are written. For Russian, naturally, the same happy choice of readers and translators is available. But there are not more than two or three really useable readers/translators for Czech or Slovak or Bulgarian. (Only Polish finds itself in a somewhat better situation.) And what if those two or three hate each other? Or each other's friends abroad? What if one of the two (three) falls ill, grows old? (I should point out here that I think translating via an intermediary language is a far from ideal solution; literature should be translated from the original.)

Organization, again, is more of a paradox than a conflict. OIRT—though overburdened with protocol—presents a whole range of opportunities for drama people to meet, discuss plays, exchange manuscripts, listen to productions, distribute prizes. Ties between the two organizations are meagre; the OIRT presence at EBU sessions or conferences or whatever is very slight. That means OIRT drama people are mostly reduced to selecting from the huge EBU drama output on the strength of written information (nil, or some synopses of five lines) or private letters which are slow, and by nature, cold.

Financial conflicts are the sorest, as the hardest to solve. OIRT authors are paid in money worth about as much as their own. EBU authors are paid in convertible currency. OIRT copyright offices are extremely liberal compared to the profit-making, hard-line agencies in EBU countries. But even the maximum OIRT fee is ridiculous when exchanged into, say, marks or pounds. And each OIRT country has introduced a combination of moves to save convertible cur-

rency, which—for drama departments—means simple but drastic cuts. Thus do old and new hard-liners from East and West cooperate.

In spite of these facts the international relations of Drama can almost be called flourishing. We exchange programmes and texts with forty radios, which broadcast about forty Hungarian radio plays a year. Besides being present in the competitions and juries of the Italia Prize, Drama joined the Futura Prize in 1979.

The world outside

The prestige of the Hungarian radio play at home is about what can reasonably be expected—that is, nothing to boast of. Some of the best known authors regularly, though not too frequently, have their radio plays published. One representative anthology of Hungarian radio plays has been printed so far.

Radio criticism is considered a weekly duty of the big dailies in the capital and some of the provincial towns; occasionally one can also read an article about radio in some of the weeklies. Radio critics, whose status is the lowest in their profession, naturally have to cover all the important programmes of the week, thus, the monthly cabaret is an absolute must and a more substantial interview or a discussion of greater public interest may often oust the ten to twenty lines that is the normal allocation to a radio play.

The audience is the *raison d'être* for all art; listeners are that of radio drama. According to statistics, a radio play can draw the attention of 1.5 to 20 per cent of the listeners. (Here it is essential to know that TV usually shuts down on Monday; in radio's four-week structure Drama has every fourth Monday on Kossuth, from 19.15 on.) Listening figures depend on the type of programme, the time of day, advance publicity (the weekly Radio and TV News sells more than one million copies; a new radio play will get ten to fifty lines). But even 1.5 per cent of the radio audience means about 75,000 people, which is seventy-five performances in a large theatre.

Much of the bitter controversy mentioned at the beginning springs from the disillusioned fury of many radio people at the loss of hundreds of thousands of listeners to TV (and to overwork). However, everybody making programmes for radio must be aware of the fact that the golden age, when radio was the only mass entertainment available, has passed. (Whether we direct our thanks towards heaven or the other place is a moot point.) To demand today that radio be listened to by millions of Hungarians is to demand the lowest common denominator on three programmes round the clock. Radio must proudly declare itself to exist and work for minorities. For anglers, stamp collectors, health food growers, for lovers of classical music and, yes, for lovers of radio drama.

MÁRTON MESTERHÁZI

OUT OF THE MOUTHS OF BABES

Péter Gárdos: Whooping Cough

This, the second feature made by the young Péter Gárdos has taken a prize in Frankfurt, the FIPRESCI film critics' prize in Montreal, and even the Grand Prix in Chicago, ahead of Abuladze's *Repentance*. This success abroad is reflected in the reviews of my foreign colleagues, much more enthusiastic and unambiguous than the Hungarian reviewers. What is the reason and who is right? I do not find a Hungarian colleague's answer sufficient when he said that "Foreigners have at best read or seen something about 1956 but we have experienced it. So we can compare the film to our experience and therefore we are more matter-of-fact and more severe." There are two reasons for rejecting this. One is the film itself in that it represents those dramatic and historic days through the experiences and eyes of children and not through the eyes of adults—as we experienced them. The other reason is the more universal one, best stated in pointing out that we were not alive at the time, but we can still see *War and Peace* as a great and authentic novel, even if we live in another century and in another country.

I see the difference between the two receptions to the film as a reaction to the irreverence of its childish viewpoint, its healthy bluntness and occasional impertinence. This has obviously disturbed Hungarian audiences and critics who had participated as adults in those days and, according to their individual commitments, have idealized them in memory one way or another, together with the positions they took then. The basic experience of a child who primarily sees disorder and confusion and fear in the behaviour of adults, who also notices the conforming and jockeying for positions offends those who, according to their engagement, ideology and their later development, would like to celebrate in themselves the hero, the man of moral courage or the martyr. What I am saying is that my colleague may be right in saying that we in Hungary are more matter-of-fact in judging Gárdos's film but this does not mean that we are also more objective.

Marx's saying has it that we experience history twice: the first time as a tragedy, the second as comedy. Perhaps the difference is that those who were ten years old in 1956 (as Gárdos was) have reached the stage when they experience history grotesquely, and those who were more than twenty have not yet achieved this. For the former it is the past, for the latter only the imperfect, and they are not yet able to take leave of it with a laugh; at best they can produce a smile.

Perhaps it can be seen that, although I do not quite reject the views of those Hungarian critics who say that the film's way of looking at things is not consistent enough and that it occasionally becomes eclectic in its attempt to express the child's viewpoint. I essentially agree with those foreign critics who believe that the film, despite a few minor shortcomings, is of outstanding quality. Although the film begins in October 1956, it does not take as a theme the meaning of this date for those who are in their fifties or older. History is off-screen and the attitudes of adults of the time are not explored; the plot is not driven by any claim to social pragmatism. This is a film of memories, the memories of a ten-year-old boy; there is no attempt at explanation, analysis, self-justification or interpretation. And this is what gives it its originality and the evidence of an unbiased child which, for audiences and critics outside Hungary with no personal experience of the events, is more authentic in a certain sense than the memoirs of adults. This evidence is not consciously related to the conflicts between adults; hence, from

what is seen and experienced, there is not filtered out whatever does not fit in with some preconception.

The memories of Tommy, the boy of the film, are mostly confined within four walls, mixed with the excitement of unexpected school holidays, limited within the relatively narrow circle of the other tenants of the house also enjoying a holiday because of the fighting. The things that happen outside this narrow circle, in the city and in the country, reach this child's consciousness only through the behaviour of the adults—sometimes comic, sometimes pathetically hesitant and helpless, but always shockingly different from the everyday. There is shooting in the streets, the radio is broadcasting unusual and sometimes mysterious news, the father first hides the reserves of food behind rows of books—a complete edition of Stalin's works—then later burns these very books. Everything gets out of the well-established rut, family life is destroyed, everybody drops their old role whether voluntary or enforced and, resolutely or hesitantly, sincerely or feignedly, tries to find a new one; everybody shows or learns new patterns of behaviour, unmasking the shamming that had come out of fear and the new, undeveloped attitude—also out of fear.

In Gárdos's film there is a distinct division between adults and children. The adults are infantile, the children are naturally childish. However, while the children, sensing the loosening of frameworks and constraints, show their own selves freely and loosely, the adults behave as if acting and trying on different masks. The two children, Tommy and his small sister, gape at the unexpected behaviour and never before seen aspects of their parents and their grandmother. Towards the end of the film they argue with each other because the little girl says that their father is lying while her brother maintains that he is not—which means that he has been lying in the past.

So, what in fact does the head of this Budapest family do in the stormy days of October 1956? This father, who had been a manager somewhere, slaps someone's face at work and now swings wildly between euphoria and terror, eventually deciding to become a tap-dancer somewhere, anywhere, in the world. Their mother tries to calm down the offended maid; a little tipsy, she shows her breasts from the window to a lorry load of insurgents; later still she wants to leave the country with an old lover—a plan that fails simply because of the handle of her suitcase coming off. The grandmother, who on May Days used to watch over the air-raid siren on the roof of their house, diligently reads Nexö's *Pelle the Conqueror*, and grumbles at her son-in-law. The tenants of the house practise how to escape in case of an armed attack. A casual late-night guest selects a destination by opening an atlas at random and placing a finger on it with eyes closed. (His first effort results in Tirana, Albania.) Little Mary-Ann terrorizes the house by chanting a slogan about "our comrade and pal Mátyás Rákosi" from the attic shy-light; she senses that this is the real joke now, until an appalled adult boxes her ears. Tommy's main concern is the size of his maleness and whether the bigger boys in the house will play table-tennis with him.

The family successively moves in, with an uncle, into the cellar with all the other tenants, then back home again because they have taken offence; the grandmother reads *Winnie the Pooh* to her grandchildren, Mary-Ann bed-wets, mother takes a lift on a motorbike into the country with an old flame, taking Tommy along; the boy naturally reveals their secret. Tommy and his playmates find a rail-trolley, ride down the line on it, get caught in a crossfire in which one of them is killed. The film makes no attempt to explain or interpret for the audience the reason why things happen as they do. Why, for example, grandmother is in charge of the siren, what kind of establishments the father has managed, why they have to go to the cellar or who shot at the children. All the film does is register what

happens, on the level of the awareness of a ten-year-old.

So, in the film, history is rather a bizarre, swarming ant-heap behind which lie no reasons or truths and it is precisely this why it shows something from a different angle —and the film manages to make a deep and general comment on the helplessness, intimidation and uncertainty of man—and that is more than an "adult" vision of history could give. This naive reception of things and this visualization give a philosophical depth to the grotesqueness all around. Most grotesque, and most telling, is the scene where the family tries to explain to a sister telephoning from America, by oblique references to the children not going out in the storm, and to an "epidemic" until Mary-Ann brings the whole farce to an end by shouting out a choice piece of graffiti into the phone.

The script, by Péter Gárdos and András Osvát, contains several such deft touches. The film may sometimes be overcrowded, sometimes comes to a standstill; some ideas are discordant with the psychology whose context they should fit. However, I feel that *Whooping Cough* deserved its success in Hungary and abroad because the originality of its point of view more than compensates for its few infelicities. The directing, photography (Tibor Máthé), the music (János Novák) and, last but not least, the acting, are excellent. This applies especially to Dezső Garas in the role of the father, and Mari Törőcsik as the grandmother; the two children, Marcel Tóth and Eszter Kárász, are splendid. Indeed, it is a mark of the overall quality of the acting that Judit Hernádi in her somewhat shapeless role as the mother and the rest of the cast more than hold their own with the principal.

ERVIN GYERTYÁN

PÁL GÁBOR

An Obituary

His last public statement was not as a film director but in print, driven to take up pen by sorrow. In a poignantly moving obituary he bade farewell in the Budapest weekly *Élet és Irodalom* to Endre Vészi, his fatherly friend and author of his most important films (among them *The Training of Vera*, based on a novella by Vészi) and with whom his name is as inextricably linked as Marcel Carné's with Jaques Prévert's. Some weeks later came the shocking news that, on the 23rd October 1987 the writer of the obituary, Pál Gábor, had died unexpectedly in Rome one day after his arrival for a film conference. At the age of 55, he was at the height of his creative powers.

His friends knew for many years that he had heart trouble, that he needed a life-saving operation, and a pace-maker, and probably a way of life less abrasive than his vocation and passion, the film, could offer. He himself had been aware of this since a near journey to where now he has finally gone. Indeed, as he said once in an interview, as a small child, he had been for weeks between life and death and in the year of Hungary's liberation, at the age of twelve, he had suffered serious frostbite in a leg. He could not renounce film-making—the meaning of his life—not even to save his life. He burnt the candle at both ends: he remained feverishly active until his last day.

He studied arts and then went on to Félix Máriássy's famous class at the College of Theatre and Film, whose graduates included István Szabó, István Gaál, and Judit Elek. His career is marked by seven feature films, four television films, many shorts and television documentaries, a professorship at the College; thirteen international festival prizes, including the International Film Critics' Prize at Cannes, Grand Prix in Chicago and in San Sebastian, and countless Hungarian awards.

The heroes of his films and television plays were always average people. Through their fate, attitude and will he examined the possibility of retaining a moral integrity in everyday life in the strained historical situations of this part of Europe. He presented gestures and examples of humanity and decency or the tragedies in abandoning or losing them. In his first feature film, *Tiltott terület* (Forbidden Ground), made from a short story of Endre Vészi (this was the starting point of their life-long collaboration), Gábor surveyed a landscape until then unknown in Hungarian films. Rather than idealised representations of the working class, he showed the microcosmos of a factory with the chaotic interests, disorganization and bureaucracy in which human relationships became mechanical and where a human being could die unnoticed in an accidental fire.

His next work, *Horizont* (Horizon) was also a clear diagnosis, a lyrical document in which the lives of workers, social tensions and the contradictions between theory and practice were shown through the trials and adventures of a sensitive adolescent boy. His masterwork is, however, *Angi Vera* (The Training of Vera), made in 1978, which brought him world success. This was the first Hungarian film to finally manage to break out of the ghetto of art houses abroad and attract a wider public. In the US it headed the list for a long time. It is indeed an outstanding work of the Hungarian cinema and examines the obsession which has marked the director's now completed lifework: the time is the Rákosi-era in Hungary, and the question is what the individual can do within his own narrow sphere, how his circumstances form and deform him, how and mainly why, he surrenders himself. Endre Vészi wrote the original novella, itself a major piece of writing*; Pál Gábor's film preserved all its psychological nuances in its idiom of film.

This is one of the most exciting paradoxes in Gábor's career. Although his films came from works by established Hungarian authors—chiefly Vészi, although for television he also adapted works by Miklós Hubay, István Császár, Lajos Maróti, Gyula Marosi—his films are par excellence those of an *auteur*. His inclination to analyse his heroes in an ethical and psychological context and weigh them on the scale of conscience, without incriminating pathos or demagogy, relying on the power and accuracy of authenticity for judgement, created his own original and unmistakeable cinema. His films are his, yet remain true to their writers because he perhaps chose his subjects solely on the basis of his personal likes.

Pál Gábor's demise is a loss to the Hungarian cinema, and indeed, a loss to the European cinema. His death interrupted his career at its height: what makes it so painful is that he had still so much to say.

E. Gy.

* See Endre Vészi's short story in *NHQ* 89.

MUSICAL LIFE

THREE DAYS WITH SÁNDOR VERESS, THE COMPOSER

PART II

As I said, when I ran out of cylinders, I took leave of everybody, rented a cart and went down to Bákó. There I boarded the express train to Bucharest. At the time the Rumanian 'rapid' was a train of true international class, complete with a dining car. The first thing I did was to take myself off to the dining car and have a splendid lunch. By the time I arrived in Bucharest, I had to suffer the consequences: after my long period of deprivation, the substantial lunch took its tool on my impoverished constitution. In Bucharest I had to submit myself to several days of nursing by the Pranger family, old friends of my father's.

Slowly I got over this too; I got on the Transylvanian train and the fast train to Budapest and arrived home without any mishap. I reported to Bartók, who had not known about my collecting tour, just as nobody in Pest had known about it. He received me with great interest and asked me about my tour. I also went to report to Kodály—my stock suddenly increased. Both Kodály and Bartók treated me like some infant prodigy who had managed to make this collection. Naturally, they were keenly interested in the details—that was the first outline I gave of my collecting in Moldavia. In the winter of that year I gave an account to the Academy of Sciences, where I played back on the phonograph the main melodic types I had found. My first published report appeared in the bulletin of the Ethnographical Museum and was later followed by another one on Csángó ballads.

It was around that time that I studied piano under Bartók. Both before and meanwhile I continued my work at the Ethnographical Museum and I transcribed my Moldavian collection. When Bartók came to work at the Academy of Sciences, I became an assistant under him. Actually it was my Csángó collection which paved the way for a closer personal relationship with Bartók. When I returned from Moldavia, I also spoke with Bartók of my intention to attend his teacher training classes at the Academy of Music. By that time I had passed my examination as a pianist at the fourth grade of the Academy, for which I had prepared all by myself. This was because I had completely fallen out by then with my previous piano teacher, Emánuel Hegyi, with whom I had come into contact accidentally at the piano faculty and under whom, after one year of private study, I completed the two last terms of the preparatory course and three classes of the Academy.

Hegyi had his students play countless scales and technical études with the metronome, at a gradually accelerating tempo. This was not bad for a start, as it provided a certain technical basis. But later it turned out to be an absolutely one-sided technical training, with one kind of hand position, which later was no longer sufficient for larger tasks. And so by the end of my third year at the Academy, I was into a crisis: the technical foundation that I had been given was not adequate for the performance of those works that were most

important to me, above all of Bach. I really wanted to play Bach fugues, while Hegyi wanted to talk me out of this anyway. A certain number of the preludes and fugues from *The Well-tempered Clavier* were a part of the contemporary curriculum, these he conceded, but he did not want me to take on for Bach's musich beyond this. I wanted to learn the whole of *The Well-tempered Clavier* by heart, all the 48 preludes and fugues—but he would not hear of it. Whenever I took along these pieces to his lesson, his contemptuous smile dampened my ardour to play them by heart. And if my memory failed me now and then, Hegyi was triumphant. This kind of teacher-student relationship did not satisfy me, and to reassure myself, I started to learn these works by heart without the piano, using Sándor Kovács's method. By this method, the technical problems do not necessarily have to be solved on the keys of the piano but through internal concentration. By visualizing inwardly the motion formulae and activizing them in one's nervous system, one can learn a work by heart. I was able to manage this after extremely great effort. I could elaborate a fugue, which I had never before played on the piano, with such an intensity, conceiving it inwardly, that when at last I sat down to the piano, I was able to perform it by heart and technically faultlessly too. This is a very interesting method, but it has its drawbacks. To learn a piece, and particularly a Bach fugue like this, greatly tells on one's nerves and this can have some by-effects. It involves exaggerated and disproportionately nerve-racking concentration, and, if one does it too often, one may go a little crazy. Finally, I did in fact feel that the taxing of my nervous system had reached the limit which should not be passed. Sándor Kovács, who worked out this method and himself used it, committed suicide. I see a causal relationship in this.

These difficult months then led to a state of affairs in which my position with Hegyi became increasingly aggravated. We understood each other less and less, and this finally led to me breaking off relations with Hegyi and preparing for my last examination by myself. I passed that examination with certain difficulties but still with credit and earned my final certificate.

That summer of 1930, after the exam, I went to collect among the Csángós, and when, having returned from Moldavia, I presented myself to Bartók, I told him I had finished my studies with Hegyi and would like to continue the two years of teachers' training under him. Bartók received me with marked kindness and put down my name for his class immediately. By then he obviously recognized that I was active in other musical fields as well. He particularly liked my Csángó collection. This is how I came to study with Bartók.

I must say that I could not get out of my technical crisis with Bartók either. Even Bartók was not the type of music teacher who could have helped in such a matter. He did not deal with technical problems. His piano teaching was focussed on interpretation. I don't think he could have even dealt with it as he himself had never had any technical problems and the whole thing was simply beyond the sphere of his experience and interest. I had many technical problems while I was working with Bartók and he provided me with no solution for these. But he amply compensated for this with everything I could learn from him about music and the art of performing. At the classes he played every piece for the students to concert standards. This was a marvellous experience.

This is how the two years of the teachers' training course passed under Bartók. Finally, I took my examination and received my teacher's diploma and embarked on a period in my life in which I became a free-lance musician. This was the usual way of life for musicians of my age living in the Hungary of the 'thirties.

But let me still say something of my last year at the Academy, when at the chamber-music faculty I met Leó Weiner. I attended his chamber-music class for one year; this was compulsory, but beyond this, it brought an oasis in my life. Weiner was not an accomplished

pianist and yet he provided the pianists with the kind of complementary attainments which they could have never acquired anywhere else. When Weiner showed something on the piano, even if a mere two or three bars, it opened up completely new perspectives on piano technique and piano tone. His teaching provided such promptings not only to the students themselves, who prepared the performance of a certain composition. All of us were sitting there and listening to the others, we were listening to his directions and his own solutions on the piano—and this was an artistic bonus never to be forgotten, one that has affected our whole lives.

I had no other relations with Weiner. He always treated me in a warm and friendly way; but I always had the jitters when going to his classes. Due to the technical problems I have already mentioned, I could never perform what he wanted in a properly relaxed manner. Nonetheless I think I learned a great deal from him. Later he followed my work at the Academy and my free-lance activity from afar.

After Bartók's death, in September 1945, the official bodies organized a memorial concert at the Academy of Music. Three of us were commissioned to write music in homage of Bartók: Kodály, Pál Kadosa and myself. We had altogether two weeks to do this. In two weeks we had to write something—and something that was worthy of the occasion. I set to it immediately. I had a lament in mind which would actually project the form of the Hungarian folk laments onto a full orchestra. The piece was later given the title *Threnos*, the Greek name for a lament.

I think it happens to every composer—to me it has very often happened—that at first a new composition is going very well, with the initial invention engrossing and vividly inspiring. And then there comes a moment—for instance the moment of the introduction of a new subject—when there appears a caesura and the process stops: it should be continued organically but with some other material, and this other material does not always emerge immediately. It needs time. In this case, however, there was no time. The work in question was in sonata form and so what was needed was the emergence of a second subject. But this second subject did not wish to emerge. I suffered for days, but nothing of what came to mind was suitable. It ought to have been a continuation, which still was something different, to carry on the same atmosphere but in a different way. In short, I suffered for days. And suddenly —this was a very strange experience—the new subject of the continuation arrived in a dream, so intensely that I remembered it clearly when I woke up. I sat down and noted it down at once. Thus I bridged the caesura—the continuation gathered momentum and from then on the piece was in fact ready. I completed it without any break, and I think it is one of my best compositions. It has been performed several times both in Pest and here in Switzerland. It has had several performances in Germany too.

This work deserves mention in connection with Weiner because its first performance crowned my relationship with him. After the performance at the Academy of Music he stepped up to me in the green room and embraced me without a word or any other ado. His spontaneous gesture showed how much he liked the work and that he was acknowledging me as his equal as a composer. For Weiner was not the kind of man to produce such spontaneous displays of emotions. The fact that he did what he did is to me one of the highest recognitions I have ever received for any of my works.

The time I spent in Pest was a golden age, even if gold was what we did not have. Our pockets were empty when, having graduated from the Academy, I joined the society of free-lance composers MOMAMU, short for *Modern Magyar Muzsikusok* (Modern Hungarian Musicians). There were not many of us and the quality was all the higher for this. We came together as young composers and when we received no support from any source, we tried to

join forces organizing composers' evenings ourselves. These evenings, where we presented our new compositions, were usually held in the small auditorium of the Academy of Music. Who were in this company? Pál Kadosa, István Szelényi, Ferenc Szabó, Ferenc Farkas—and myself. Our haunt was the Edison Café, where we met every Saturday. We were also joined by a few performers: György Hannover the violinist, Pál Hermann the eminent cellist and Vilmos Palotai, another excellent cellist. Of the violinists there was Ödön Pártos too. In short, a noted number of performers joined our ranks. We discussed problems concerning new music, the works that were appearing abroad and the works we ourselves had been doing. If one of us had composed something, he brought it along and submitted it to the criticism of the others. My compositions were always discussed there. So these were the get together of a very lively group, maintaining close links with international musical trends, under most fruitful conditions.

The external circumstances were determined not only by the musical weight of the participants but by several other factors as well. For instance by the orders given to Sándor the waiter. He soon knew everything, and when some of us came in and joined our usual table, Sándor, without waiting for orders, brought each his favourite dish. I, for instance, always asked for two eggs in a cup, unlike my friend, Vilmos Palotai. We were very good friends and had been together at the Ferenc József grammar school. His mother was a fine violinist, who had studied under Joachim, while he was one of the finest cellists I had ever known. He was a big fellow; perhaps he played so well just because he was able to overpower the cello! Because that is how it should be: the instrument must be surmounted, it must be ravished to make it sound well. He was a corpulent man and he always ordered a mixed grill, and after he had finished it off, after some meditation he ordered a plateful of gnocchi with eggs.

Such was the mood of these evenings, where we also celebrated the birth of many a new compositions. My early works too were first performed at the MOMAMU concerts, most of which I still fully acknowledge. Particularly my "sonatina period", which was a most seminal and fortunate time for me. These sonatinas were written under the influence of the Neo-classical trend that was prominent at the time, but they still differed from the contemporary interpretation of Neo-classicism. They included a piano sonatina, a piece for violin and piano, and a sonata for violin solo, which was first performed by Ödön Pártos. My sonatinas for cello and piano were performed by Vili Palotai and myself. I also wrote a little sonatina for woodwind trio. Actually it was not that little—all these were mature, three-movement compositions. I worked on them with great pleasure and they were completed very fast. They marked something completely new in my own development, as this was my first attempt to get away from the folksong. They originated entirely from my own *melos* and were constructed using my own technique. Lately a growing number of performers have been playing these pieces; young people here in Berne have also taken to them. The piano sonatina and the woodwind sonatina are being played everywhere. This seems to approve that the sonatinas are successfully made pieces.

During the sonatina period I tried my hand in vocal music. In the *Transylvanian* Cantata I used Transylvanian folksongs and some old-style Csángó folksongs which I myself had collected. I did not want merely to harmonize the folksong, nor even to use it with a note for note accuracy. My models were the English madrigalists of the sixteenth century and the Italians of the sixteenth and seventeenth. I tried to treat folksong as these old masters had done. English instrumental music produced novel folk-music arrangements as early as the sixteenth century. The *Fitzwilliam Virginal Book* already makes it clear that they did use the material of folksongs and that they also had the courage to break up the formal unity and

make use of the themes thus obtained as a stock of material. This is what I myself tried to do in my folksong arrangements at the time. I think the *Transylvanian* Cantata is a successful example of this attempt. From then on I have tried to assert this principle in my minor instrumental or vocal folksong arrangements—I do not think that this effort has been in vain.

The ripples of the sonatina period can be recognized in many of my other works, shorter and longer compositions alike. The freer technique which I developed through the sonatinas had a considerable role in my major works as well, such as the String Quartet No. 1, one of my earliest works in which I experimented with larger forms. At the 1935 ISCM festival in Prague, where the work was performed by the Végh Quartet, it won my first international acclaim. Two years later, at the Paris international festival, my String Quartet No. 2 was again premièred by the Végh Quartet in its first combination (Sándor Végh, Péter Szervánszky, Dénes Koromzay and Vilmos Palotai). They gave exquisite renditions of both works although in the case of the Second Quartet, they were rehearsing it in Paris at the time, the postman brought them the last section of the last movement: the fugue, scored on separate sheets. They concluded their preparations for the performance at the last moment, yet it turned out to be a great success. They later performed the work on several occasions. The technical development one can observe in the string quartets, was also apparent in the larger-scale works that followed them. The first movement of my First Symphony grew out of my sonatina period and it extended the technique of that period to the orchestra.

My life saw other kinds of turns as well. In Budapest I met with my wife-to-be, who in 1937 came to Budapest from London as a noted just-graduated pianist, to continue her studies under Kodály. Our acquaintanceship came about—and I am very proud of this—not on a personal but a musical basis. At one of the MOMAMU concerts the Végh Quartet gave the first performance in Pest of my First String Quartet. She came to the concert and after the performance asked Kadosa, whom she already knew, to introduce her to the composer, since she liked the quartet best in the whole programme. Well, this is how it began.

I was not able to ensure my financial existence in Budapest very well. I had no real employment. Of course I held my assistantship alongside Bartók in great honour, but you could not make ends meet with that. It was what was called an ÁDOB job (short for *Állástalan Diplomások Országos Bizottsága*, National Committee for Jobless Graduates). This committee had launched an initiative to help the large number of jobless graduates and found them minor jobs with a minimum monthly grant. This was not even sufficient for one person and to support a family on such a financial base would have been utterly impossible. I was in a rather bitter mood around the time, my fiancée not less. She wanted to go back to London to continue there. Towards the end of 1938 we agreed to go, both of us, to London. She left in the autumn and I followed at the end of the year to try and find a living in London. One might say I succeeded. Boosey and Hawkes fairly soon took an interest in me. I established close, almost friendly relations with Ralph Hawkes,[3] the director of the publishers. Finally, Boosey and Hawkes signed a general contract with me to publish all my work. This in part I owed to Bartók, who entered into a contract with Boosey and Hawkes about the same time and asked for me to take part as a reader in the correction of his new works. So my plans to make a living looked fair to succeed.

During my stay in Britain my Violin Concerto had its first performance in Amsterdam. It was premièred at an ISCM concert, with a piano instead of an orchestra. It was performed by Sándor Végh, very beautifully, with me at the piano. At the time the work only consisted of two movements, one slow and the other fast.

The first movement of my Sonata for Violin and Piano No. 2 also dates from this time. I received very many new impulses in London and I was carried away by the swirling musical

life there. I was able to encounter all Europe and hear scores of works. Those pre-war years were the golden age of the Royal Ballet, and I enjoyed splendid ballet performances which enriched me beyond words.

The war brought an end to all this. After the German invasion of Poland on September 3, 1939 Britain declared war on Hitler. The new situation raised new question marks for us too. We had to decide whether or not to stay in London. I knew it was to be a long war, and my family, my friends and my intellectual background all linked me to Budapest. My future wife at the time was still my fiancée, because we could not risk her losing British citizenship through her marriage. Naturally, she wanted to stay but I came to the conclusion that I had to return to Pest at any cost. So I told her, if she wanted to stay on, I would go by myself. This she categorically refused to do and we decided to set out together.

Since the war was already on, she could only leave Britain with a special exit document. But even that was not enough, I too was summoned before a high-ranking official in the Home Office. I had to promise I would guarantee her safety in Hungary to the utmost of my power. That I willingly promised and so she was issued the exit permit and, as a foreign citizen, I too was given one. One evening late in November we finally embarked at Folkstone. One could still then travel through France. We went through Italy and Yugoslavia and entered Hungary from the south and thus arrived in Pest.

We spent all the four years that Hungary was at war in Pest, but I did not regret it. When I left for London, I had wished to better myself through everything that the city—a cultural centre of Europe at the time—could offer. I yearned for new impressions, for the contact with new composing techniques. But I also felt that I could not break with Hungary, because I had not yet absorbed all that the Hungarian soil, Hungarian intellectual life could give me in music to an extent that would have enabled me to dispense with it in the future. So I still needed Hungary for the development of my art. This had prompted my decision, which many people in London and Pest could not understand—how it was possible for me to return from London into the war.

Before our departure a large farewell party was thrown for us in London. It was attended by Ralph Hawkes, Erwin Stein with his wife and daughter, Mátyás Seiber, with whom we maintained friendly relations and many more London friends, old and new ones. It was a most touching, pleasant evening which I will never forget.

Upon returning to Hungary, I immediately went to Bartók, with whom I had been in correspondence during my stay in London. It was to London he wrote me the letter which later became famous. In it he openly raised the question whether or not to leave, whether or not to abandon Hungary in the growing Nazi danger. Naturally, I was tormented by the same problems. There we were in the jaws of Hitler, and one could not know when this situation would take on the proportions of tragedy. For three years, until the German occupation of Hungary on March 19, 1944, we managed to hold out somehow or other, but what ensued led to a dreadful tragedy. Yet these four and a half years in Hungary meant for me the same kind of enrichment as had the time spent in Britain previously. I again wrote new works and it was then that I succeeded in striking such deep roots in the Hungarian musical humus that I knew I could never lose this and could take it anywhere with me.

There were many things that developed in my musical style during this period that I was later able to use successfully. What were the works I wrote then? I completed my second sonata for violin and piano, the first movement of which I had written in London—the second movement I composed in Pest in December 1939.

The war automatically cancelled my general contract with Boosey and Hawkes, and I signed a contract with the Italian firm of Suvini Zerboni. So the work appeared under the

title of *Seconda sonata per violino e pianoforte*. And why the second? Where was the first? There was no first. The story behind this is that I had written a piece for violin and piano during my sonatina period. Vili Palotai, a highly critical spirit and a most meticulous person, once said, "Why do you call this piece a sonatina? This is a much broader work than a sonatina." He was right: the slow movement was the precursor of the slow movement in my Violin Concerto, each being an Aria. According to Palotai the term sonatina had a belittling sense even as regards the significance of the work. "Your piece is not a sonatina; call it a sonata." Very well, I said, if this is a sonata, then my second such piece is a second sonata. And this is how it was later published too, as the Sonata No. 2, with the consideration in mind that I would call the sonatina the Sonata No. 1, when it would be published. Meanwhile, however, I changed my mind and retained the title sonatina, a term that marks a whole compositional period of mine and I did not want to tear the piece for violin and piano out of its unity. And so I have a Second Sonata and a Sonatina, both for violin and piano. And I leave it up to the musicologists to rack their brains about where the first sonata may be. If I live to do so, I may still write a first violin-piano sonata. Then again musicologists will puzzle over the first sonata displaying stylistic marks from much later in time than the second one. To this I again say that that's their worry.

In Budapest I wrote many choral pieces. And of course many other things too. It was then I composed my Symphony No. 1, also known as the *Japanese* Symphony. The other major work I wrote is *St Augustine's Psalm against the Heretics*. I also wrote many articles; this was a most prolific time for me. After the Nazi occupation, of course, one had to stop everything. Composition was out of the question, one was otherwise engaged. But this is known to all who went through it. Those were hard times.

At long last there came the liberation, the war came to an end. We felt this was not only an outside liberation, but an inner one too. We were all eagerness when we set about the reconstruction of a country which lay in ruins—to build up at last a democratic Hungary, which up till then had been impossible. And in this everybody participated.

The new period began with a sad event—Bartók's death. It took us by utter surprise, since during the war we had known nothing of Bartók, how he was living and what he was doing. The news item on the radio telling us that Bartók died on September 26, 1945, came like a bolt upon the euphoria of the time. It deeply afflicted everyone, as we were hoping that at last Bartók would return home and we could see and hear him again. My first major composition in that new period was the lament I wrote in memory of him, the *Threnos* which I have already spoken of.

Reconstruction was going on, in both the physical and intellectual sense, the latter with the same sweep and enthusiasm as the material. Everybody who lived through these years knows this.

I wrote a few new works and rewrote several old ones. Before *Threnos*, in the summer of 1945, I wrote two song cycles in the Franciscan monastery in the Pasarét. As our house in the Castle District was destroyed during the war, we found refuge in a little house in Herman Ottó út, but there it was not quiet enough. It could not have been as the house did not even have windows. We were closely acquainted with father Dénes Szedő—an extraordinary phenomenon, as if he had just stepped out of a Giotto painting. He was a fine, sensitive musician and he set up in the monastery a musical nursery-school based on the Kodály method. Father Szedő placed a cell at my disposal—a very fine little room where I could compose to my heart's content. There I wrote my cycle of *Attila József* Songs, and also the *Seven Cheremissian* Folksongs. This Cheremissian cycle continued the new technical ideas which I began to put into practice even during my sonatina period. This was a solution for folksong

arrangement different from the one initiated by our two great masters, Kodály and Bartók. I aimed to construct the whole composition out of the material of the folksong. The Cheremissian arrangements, for instance, include one that weaves a three-part invention out of the folksong's material.

The origin of *Fingerlarks* also belongs to the compositional chronicle of these years. I had long planned something like it, but it became particularly topical at that time when we did much for the renewal of Hungarian musical education, and there emerged the need in instrumental music for a cycle like this for children, one with an artistic object. The forerunner to *Fingerlarks*, Fifteen Little Piano Pieces dated from the pre-war years and had been written for the daughter of Gyula Kertész, director of the *Magyar Kórus* music publishing firm, who was my piano student. While teaching the little girl, I felt the need of some music similar to that which Kodály and Bartók had written for choirs, that is to say a series of short piano pieces based on folksongs, something perhaps even simpler than Bartók's cycle *For Children*—in short, music for beginners. This led to the Fifteen Little Piano Pieces. It is a notable work if only because its publication came out very nicely. The beautiful title page was drawn by Gyula László and it was reproduced in seven colours. Each piece is introduced by a small symbol which expresses pictorially the content of the text. All in all, it turned out a splendid publication. I am very fond of the pieces in it too. Out of the ideas budding in them developed the 77 pieces in *Fingerlarks* (the new edition contains 88 pieces). In this cycle I have tried to give compositional solutions, at the given level, to various musical and technical problems.

I also had a deeply personal motive in writing *Fingerlarks*—the memory of my friend Jenő Deutsch, who in the hard times had disappeared during his forced labour service. As far as I know he perished during the break-through at Voronhez, but nobody knows anything certain about him. Jenő Deutsch was an eminent, versatile musician. I met him through Bartók, who he studied with. An exquisite pianist, he even studied the organ and graduated from the organ department under Aladár Zalánfy. He was an extremely serious musician, who always got to the root of things. He was a great Bach interpreter both at the piano and the organ. Bartók liked him very much and entrusted him with the important task of making fair copies of his choral works and some of his folksong transcriptions. The first edition of Bartók's choruses for equal voices was published from Jenő Deutsch's traced copies which had a calligraphic beauty. Deutsch also devoted great attention to Bartók's proofs. Bartók had a high opinion of him both as a student and collaborator. After the war, when he was no longer among us, I dedicated *Fingerlarks* to his memory.

These years passed in ardent reconstruction and I too also had an active role in this. Meanwhile there also occurred opportunities for tours abroad. In 1947 I was invited by the British Council for a tour of Britain, which included London. When I set out in February, Budapest airport was covered with a carpet of snow. Only British and American military aircraft were in service, providing transport to Vienna and the West. I was put on a DC 3 twin-engined British military aircraft and we set out for Vienna.

In Vienna we were received by a blizzard and the plane circled for more than half an hour before it could land. A British bus took us into Vienna, and from then on I was under British authority. I do not remember the hotel where I was put up but, anyway, I had to stay there, as the blizzard prevented the aircraft taking off the next day.

While still back in Pest, I had injured the thumb on my right hand lighting the stove—it was a great thing I had something to heat the iron stove with at all. I did not give much thought to it, but in the Vienna hotel the wound became septic, it was swollen and it ached. As a guest of the British Council, I went to their Vienna office, from where I was immediately

sent on to the head surgeon of the British military hospital near Vienna. He examined the wound and said it called for an operation right away. He did not even let me go back to Vienna and I had to ask my Hungarian friends living there to bring the most necessary things after me to the hospital. Around six in the afternoon I was taken to the operating theatre and anaesthetized, and by the time I came to, my thumb had been beautifully operated on. Previously I told the head surgeon that I was a pianist and was going to London as such, at the invitation of the British Council, so he should take great care of my thumb, because without one you can no longer play the piano. In Bach's time this would have still been possible, as then the thumbs were generally not used on the keyboard, which was only played by the four fingers of each hand. It was in fact Bach who introduced the use of the thumbs. Fortunately, the surgeon understood his business and he cut through no tendons or nerves. But I had to stay in the hospital as I was given penicillin, which at the time was still considered as an absolutely new treatment that could only be given in hospital and I had to stay on for the treatment of the wound as well. I was put into a twelve-bed ward which was completely empty. By that time there were scarcely any English wounded in Vienna. My only companion in the ward was an Englishman of the old school, who lived in Vienna but had been bombed out during the war and was being given a temporary home in the hospital. Never in my life did I live through so many humorous incidents as with this old-world Briton, listening to his stories and marvelling at his ways. We became friends and time passed most pleasantly. When I got to the point of being allowed to go into Vienna to collect my things or to visit friends, I always had to report to the sergeant when I left and on my return to prove that I arrived back by the given time. In short, I was living under British military regulations in this hospital. But I did recover and the good surgeon saved me from losing my thumb. And one fine day, clear o fblizzards, I finally was airborne, again on a military aircraft, on my way to London.

At the airport I was greeted by a secretary from the British Council, who took me in an official car to the city. An emaciated Central European who had lived through the siege and nearly forgotten civilization, I was living in the two-room luxury apartment like a prince. The official car with the secretary was waiting for me each morning, and we set out on the day's programme. Then the British Council sent me on a tour of Britain, the first episode of which was a blizzard at Newcastle in which the train could not go on. So I had to spend a night there too as the guest of the British Council and only the next day could we go on to Edinburgh. The programme prepared for me there was intended to introduce me to all the major musical personalities and institutions there. In Edinburgh I met Scottish bagpipers and saw how bagpipes were made.

From Edinburgh they took me down to Wales and put me in contact with Gwynn Williams, the founder of the Llangollen Choral Festival, which has since become so famous, and the spiritus rector of the competition. I spent three days there, this was the start of nearly thirty years of adjudicating at Llangollen continuously except for the time I spent in America and Australia. Since 1985 I no longer go to Llangollen, it would exhaust me, and travelling has lately also become wearisome. But for three decades I attended the jury sessions at Llangollen each July, and I always went there with pleasure and returned enriched with great experiences, having listened to the best choirs from all parts of the world. And the basis of these regular trips was my visit of 1947.

(To be continued)

FERENC BÓNIS

CONTEMPORARY MUSIC AT THE BUDAPEST MUSIC WEEKS 1987

The annual festival of contemporary music in Budapest manifestly has two roles to fulfil: on the one hand it must serve as a platform for Hungarian composers, and on the other it has the responsibility of bringing news from abroad. How effective it is in the former function, cannot be decided by an outsider—though it was odd to find oneself listening almost exclusively to composers from a very narrow age-band, the limits set by Zoltán Jeney (b. 1943) and György Kurtág (b. 1926): surely there must be more younger composers, and some older, who could be given exposure. But if this feeling has to be hesitant, a visitor can be more certain that the choice of western music in 1987 was unenterprising: Stockhausen, Boulez and Lutoslawski would have been pretty routine selections a quarter-century ago, and to judge from the 1974–86 repertory printed in the programme book, the festival has still to give adequate representation to American music outside the work of John Cage.

Quite possibly these two objections are linked, and the festival is dominated by figures of the 1960s avant-garde because it is dominated by composers who came of age musically during that period. Certainly the impression conveyed by the five new Hungarian orchestral works was of a dated modernism, of once adventurous gestures gone stiff. None of the five seemed to have any purpose more urgent than that of occupying fifteen or twenty minutes pleasantly. Zsolt Durkó's *Ornamenti no.* 2 (1985) was a faintly Mahlerian slow movement, rhapsodic and often beautifully detailed, but displaying that depressingly common tendency among 1960s modernists for a return to the manner of the symphonic poem. András Szőllősy's *Canto d'autunno* (1986), despite its title, was not evocative in the same way: its lack rather was of some purpose to its concatenation of incidents, however beautiful some of them were, with rich string textures and an aerial trumpet melody much to the fore. László Kalmár's *Ballet des amphores* (1985–6), which was played with the Durkó and the Szőllősy in a concert on October 3rd by the Hungarian State Orchestra under János Kulka, made a bewildering leap back through three quarters of a century to something like the style of Bartók at his most Debussian (in the outer sections of *The Wooden Prince*, for instance).

The other two recent orchestral pieces were played by the Symphony Orchestra of Hungarian Radio and Television under András Ligeti at the opening concert on October 1st. Miklós Kocsár's *Formazioni* (1986) was a somewhat rudimentary sequence of motivically developed panels; László Tihanyi, the exceptional young composer to be included in these programmes, showed promise in his *Enodiosz* (1987), even if the fizz of the perpetual motion went flat before the end. This concert was to have included Steve Reich's latest orchestral work, Three Movements, but apparently that had to be withdrawn because permission to give the European première could not be obtained, and so instead there was Dallapiccola's fine *Three Questions with Two Answers* and Lutoslawski's *Chain* 2, effectively a violin concerto, warmly presented by György Pauk.

As if to demonstrate the difference between competence and searing necessity, the evening after the Durkó–Kalmár–Szőllősy concert was devoted to the first Hungarian performance of György Kurtág's *Kafka-Fragmente** (1985–7), setting extracts, sometimes only brief phrases, from the Prague writer's letters and diaries to make a seventy-minute unbroken cycle for soprano and violin. The nearest comparable work would

* *NHQ* 107

perhaps be Janáček's *From the House of the Dead:* there is the same exact pinpointing of expressionist gesture, the same curious ability to elate and drain the listener at the same time. The essential difference in tone is that Kurtág's work, so closely following Kafka in this, blends bleak self-disclosure and ironic self-mockery into a tight unity. A few of the thirty-nine numbers might appear to have a single expressive character—comic, erotic, furious, nostalgic—but generally the effect is not at all so easy to define, while at the same time the music, like so much of Kurtág's work, always sounds precisely and even violently right, as if the notes have to be this way and no other.

To convey such an impression, of course, required long and intense rehearsals involving the composer and his chosen performers. Adrienne Csengery, for whom most of his recent music has been written, gave a performance of quite unquestionable authority, throwing her voice with apparent ease around a space of almost three octaves, insinuating a wide variety of tone colour into her singing, making everything spring from the uttering of the text. The work is so much hers that it would almost have to be rewritten for another singer. Inevitably the violin part is less personal, but András Keller's brilliance, fineness and highly-strung energy were valuable in exposing music that shadows, supports, illustrates and sometimes takes over the expressive force driven into the soprano line.

The work is, indeed, a real duo and not a set of songs with accompaniment, just as it is a real cycle and not merely a sequence. Many of the numbers are of Webernian brevity (though Webern was never so weird or so funny); others are much longer, including the adagio that is a monitory "hommage-message" addressed to Pierre Boulez on the difficulties of "the true path", or the teasing anecdote about the dancer Eduardowa and her two violinists riding the tram. All the songs, though, have their identities intensified by their placing in the whole. This is Kurtág's longest work so far, and its ability to establish and sustain such a rich and individual world of lyrical despair leaves one waiting with a daring hope for his promised theatre work on Hölderlin.

Some of Kurtág's sources were usefully unpicked by Rosemary Hardy, accompanied by Jean Koerner, in a recital of technical brilliance, spontaneity and charm given on October 2nd: Webern was represented by songs from his early (the posthumously published Three Poems of 1899–1903), middle (the Four Songs op. 12) and late years (the Three Songs op. 25), Bartók by his Ady cycle. It was also good to hear the fascinatingly odd little triptych of Sándor Weöres settings by Kurtág's leading Hungarian contemporary, György Ligeti. Hardy's pronunciation of the Hungarian poems was much commended, but she fell victim to the language divide when she turned to Ives, especially in two comic songs that can only make their effect when the audience is following every word.

On October 5th the entire concert was given over to the works of Zoltán Jeney, who has something of Ligeti's penchant for the bizarre, if considerably less willingness to pursue it in terms of imaginative creation: for the most part this was music that demanded desperately little of its performers or hearers (or indeed of its composer), other than patience. Jeney himself played two piano pieces of extreme simplicity, *Valse triste* (1979) and *Mr. Marlowe tracks down Yvar's lost tango* (1984), and accompanied Ibolya Verebics in a naive and quirky set of eight Dezső Tandori songs (1984–87), most of which were being performed for the first time. Also brand new was a Nelly Sachs chorus with sextet accompaniment, *Wie leicht wird Erde sein* (1987), which had a certain grace and was for me the most tolerable piece on the programme—certainly more tolerable than the pianissimo dribblings for piano, harp and harpsichord of Jeney's classic *Round* (1972). But the work that seems to have excited most general interest was the

selection of five movements from *Funeral Rites* (1979–87), scored for a larger chorus and slightly larger ensemble. There were indeed beautiful things here, including a soprano solo and some solemn pronouncements from basset horn and bass clarinet. However, the work owes too much of its effect to the plain-chant and atmosphere of the Catholic mass for the dead, which it uses without the modification that might persuade one the borrowing is aesthetically legitimate. László Dobszay efficiently conducted the Schola Hungarica and the Ensemble of the New Music Studio; the soprano solo, again featuring Verebics, had to be repeated.

The concert of the next evening, given by the Chamber Music Studio of the Hungarian Youth Organisation, was once more dominated by Kurtág, even though the piece by him, the Four Capriccios op. 9 (1970), was the shortest of the four on the programme. Apparently he had some reservations about the revival of this work, but Adrienne Csengery, again, showed it to be fully characteristic in its imaginative boldness, humour, expressive acuteness and sheer oddity. Mesias Maiguashca's *Monodies and Interludes* (1983–4) was an excessively long and excessively shrill piece for flutes, clarinets, percussion and double bass; Barnabás Dukay's *To Dusk*, replacing a promised work by Klarenz Barlow, was a mildly pleasant string nonet. In the second half of the programme the excellent clarinettist János Maczák played Boulez's *Domaines*, but the version with six ensembles, which Boulez has long said he will revise, continues to sound tedious in concert performance, if only because each of the ensembles is only playing for a twelfth of the work's duration. Stockhausen would never be guilty of such a failure of dramatic cogency; and his trumpeter son Markus would seem to have inherited his father's flair and showmanship. Appearing the next day in the strange, but not altogether unsuitable, multi-coloured, vaguely Egyptian flamboyance of the Pest Vigadó (all the other concerts were at the Music Academy), Markus Stockhausen played an uninterrupted sequence of solo pieces interleaved with purely electronic works (*Studie II* and *Gesang der Jünglinge*). Unfortunately the sound system was not up to showing off these latter compositions at their best, but Markus was commanding and virtuoso in his performances of the *Aries* section from *Sirius*, the *Oberlippentanz* from *Samstag* and extracts from *Donnerstag* (*Eingang und Formel* and *Abschied*).

The final concert, on October 10th, was something else. Playing under their highly impressive conductor László Kovács, the Miskolc Symphony Orchestra gave a programme of Soviet music veering from Gubaydulina's *Concordanze* (1971), a holy cartoon-strip in music, to Shnitke's uncorking of Romantic demons and monsters in his Piano Concerto (1979), where Mikhail Voskresensky was the soloist, and ending with the ultimate brutalist bathos of Eduard Lazarev's ballet *Idol*.

PAUL GRIFFITHS

DOHNÁNYI AND NOVÁK

A study in early twentieth-century Central European musical history

The national traditions of Central European music have provided a fruitful field of study for many scholars ever since Bartók and others first made the folk music of Central Europe an object of rigorous scientific research. However, an outsider cannot escape the impression that, no matter how much valuable work has been done in this area by scholars who have themselves grown up in a particular tradition, this study is all too often confined within narrow politico-geographical boundaries. Such a restricted approach is of course totally alien to the spirit in which Bartók conducted his own research, for he was always acutely aware of the extraordinary richness of the musical tradition arising out of the ethnic diversity of Central and Eastern Europe, and it came as a major blow to him when circumstances prevented him from continuing his reasearch outside the boundaries of present-day Hungary. From our own historical perspective, it seems obvious that to separate out all the strands making up the rich fabric of the Central European musical tradition, and to study a single development without any reference to its neighbours, must leave us with only a very unbalanced and limited view of the whole, whereas if we try to keep in mind the constant cross-fertilisation occurring between neighbouring musical cultures, we will surely arrive at a greater breadth and depth of understanding.

An obvious starting-point when making a comparative study of the parallel musical traditions of two countries such as Hungary and Czechoslovakia is to take the outstanding representatives of these two traditions. A few such studies have appeared—notably as papers presented to international musicological congresses assembled to discuss the place of a particular composer within his wider context: such congresses tend to be the only occasions on which musicologists address themselves to this sort of question.[1] However, one could argue that composers such as Bartók and Janácek are such outstandingly original figures that one cannot regard them as being entirely representative of their milieu—it is probably truer to say that, while both had deep roots in their respective traditions, the individual paths that they took led them in the long run to stand outside all tradition, and it is for their individual genius that we value them the most.

It is perhaps a more fruitful exercise to compare the work of composers who remained more indissolubly wedded to tradition, and who can therefore be identified more closely with the continuity of that tradition. This study attempts to explore both the geographical continuity of the Central European tradition (the musical transcending of political borders) and also its historical continuity (the transition from late nineteenth-century Romanticism to a twentieth-century mode of expression) in the work of two composers: Ernst von Dohnányi (1877–1960) and Vítězslav Novák (1870–1949).

In many ways these two occupied similar roles within the musical traditions of their respective countries. Their long lives spanned many conflicting developments, and throughout all the upheavals confusing the picture of early twentieth-century music they stood for stability and loyalty to unchanging musical values. Although each evolved his own individual and unmistakeable style,

[1] See for example: Z. Vancea: 'Janáček und die führenden Komponisten der südosteuropäischen Schulen: Bartók, Enesco, Kodály' (1958 Brno, Janáček Congress) and J. Racek: 'Leos Janáceks und Béla Bartóks Bedeutung in der Weltmusik (Vergleichende Studie)' (Proceedings of the second International Liszt–Bartók Conference, published in *Studia musicologica*, 1963)

neither can be classed among the great innovators of the musical language. Each came to be a dominant figure in the musical life of his country—Dohnányi through his activities as performer, conductor and administrator, Novák through his work at the Prague Conservatory—at the same time as their creative work suffered an eclipse. It is only in recent years, long after the work of their more innovatory contemporaries has been thoroughly assessed, that their music has begun to receive the attention it deserves.

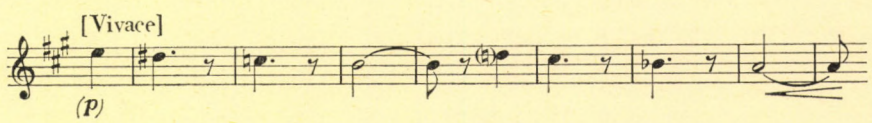
As is only natural when one considers their dates of birth and the international nature of musical life during the late nineteenth century, both were thoroughly steeped in the Romantic style of Brahms (in the case of Novák this style was refracted through the figure of Dvořák, his teacher). Although both were later exposed to the influence of other major European composers (Mahler, Strauss and Debussy are the main influences in common), the Brahmsian legacy of solid craftsmanship was one that always remained, the presence of which canbe felt in a series of finely constructed instrumental works.

Given the political climate of the time, it is also inevitable that both should have been acutely aware of their national identity as composers. Although Dohnányi's international career made him the most cosmopolitan figure on the Hungarian musical scene, he was the first Hungarian composer of note to have received his formal training within the country, and between foreign concert tours he devoted most of his energies to furthering Hungarian musical life. He was not an active collector of folk music like Bartók or Kodály, but much of his music has an unmistakeable Hungarian flavour (as will be demonstrated later), and in the *Ruralia Hungarica* (1923–24) he deliberately set out to capture the characteristic sounds of Hungarian folk music. Novák, on the other hand, only found his way as a composer after discovering for himself the folk music of Moravia and Slovakia—areas largely remote from the Germanised culture of Bohemia. (It is worth remembering that Bartók also valued particularly highly the folk music of such areas as Slovakia and Transylvania, which, by virtue of its remoteness from any large centres of civilisation, had managed to retain its individuality and primitive vigour.) Novák's collecting expeditions bore fruit in numerous volumes of folk-song arrangements, and his national feeling found its most overt expression in such works as the *Slovak* Suite (1903) and the *South Bohemian* Suite (1936–37).

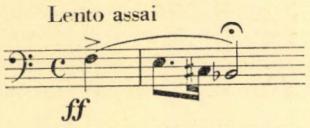
Even in works which do not make direct use of folk music material, there are often elements in the music of both composers which betray its regional origin—these elements may either impart an unmistakeable Czech or Hungarian character, or their impact may be less specific, and simply give a flavour which is recognisably Central European. A melodic element frequently associated with Hungarian romantic music is the augmented second of the 'gypsy' scale, and this gives a characteristic flavour to the last movement of Dohnányi's String Quartet No 1 in A minor (1899). The final appearance of the main theme in augmentation lends a lingering emphasis to this figure, which points its affinity to the opening ideas of Liszt's *Sunt lacrymae rerum* and Bartók's Rhapsody Op 1—both works distinguished by their intensely Hungarian character.

Ex. 1

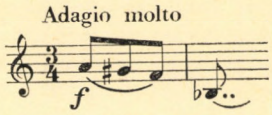
(*a*) Dohnányi



(*b*) Liszt



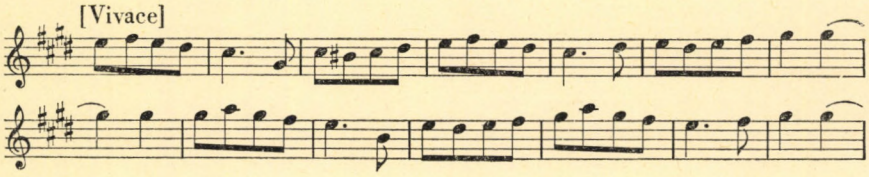
(*c*) Bartók



In the same Dohnányi movement, a sequential modulatory pattern occurs which is also typical of other works drawing on the *verbunkos* tradition:

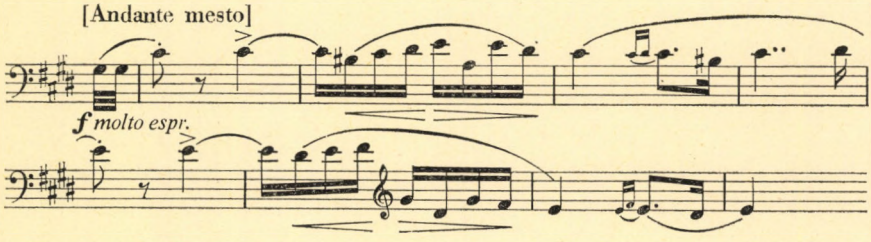
Ex. 2

(*a*) Dohnányi



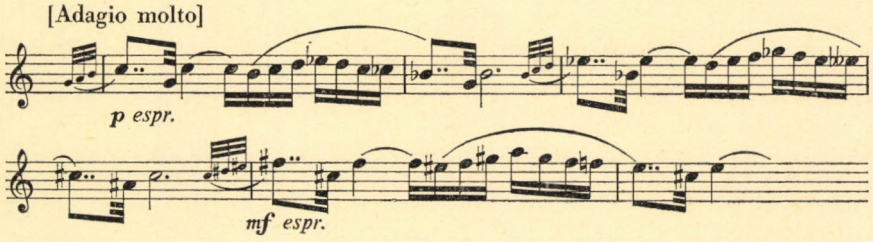
The same basic pattern can be heard in Liszt's *Hungarian* Rhapsody No 2:

(*b*) Liszt



and in Bartók's *Kossuth* Symphony:

(*c*) Bartók

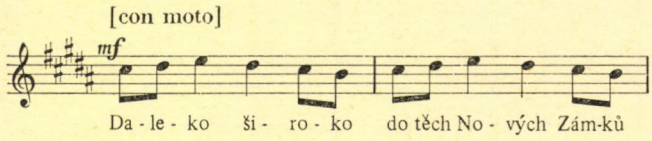


If we now examine Novák's music with a view to discovering the extent to which he also shared a common musical vocabulary with his fellow countrymen, we find in one of his earlier orchestral works, the symphonic poem *In the Tatras* (1902), an example of the harmonic progression known as the Moravian cadence—more than a decade before Janáček used the same progression with such memorable effect in the last movement of *Taras Bulba* (compare bars 44–59 of the Novák composition with bars 178ff of that of Janáček).

Novák's familiarity with Slovak folk music is revealed most noticeably in his rhythms, and we find numerous examples in his work of both mirror-rhythms and also of more energetically syncopated rhythmic patterns. One of the most familiar examples of a Slovak tune incorporating a mirror-rhythm is the 'Daleko, široko' song which Janáček included in his opera *Jenufa:*

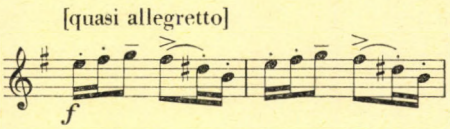
Ex. 3

(*a*) Janáček



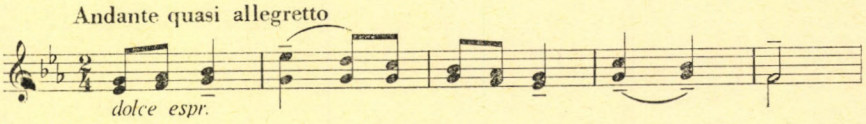
A very similar theme occurs in the first movement of Novák's *South Bohemian* Suite:

(*b*) Novák



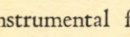
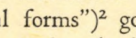
while Novák had already used the same rhythmic pattern, but in a less vigorous form, in the third movement of the *Slovak* Suite. 'The Lovers':

(*c*) Novák



Here, the generally emphatic squareness of the mirror-rhythm is further attenuated by the fact that this figure forms the beginning of a 5-bar phrase.

Another mirror-rhythm frequently occurring in the music of Central Europe is the choriamb pattern ♩. ♪ ♪ ♩. Among the many examples that one could point to in Czech music are the main theme of the first movement of Dvořák's *New World* Symphony, the second part of the opening theme of Novák's *In the Tatras*, and a scene from the last act of Janáček's *Kát'a Kabanová* which represents one of the emotional and

dramatic climaxes of the whole work (the farewell of Káta and Boris) and which is dominated by this rhythmic figure. The choriamb pattern is no less common in Hungarian music—in fact, László Somfai, in his article ("A characteristic culmination point in Bartók's instrumental forms")[2] goes so far as to call it 'the Hungarian choriamb'. Other rhythmic patterns which have always been regarded as typically Hungarian, for example  or  , also appear in Novák's music—the second, less agressive form provides the rhythmic basis for the second movement of the *Slovak* Suite, 'Among Children'. As the Czech and Hungarian languages have in common the accenting of the first syllable of every word, it is perhaps inevitable that music inspired directly by the folk traditions of these countries should also share certain characteristic rhythmic features.

Dohnányi's relative aloofness from the Hungarian folk music tradition is most apparent in the almost complete absence from his work of any of the rhythmic figures just discussed. His romantic cosmopolitanism and, at the same time, his conservatism can be seen most clearly in his rhythmic thinking—he made much use of Brahmsian hemiola patterns, but, unlike Bartók and Kodály, did not attempt to reproduce the rhythms of Hungarian speech in his music. It is significant that Bálint Vázsonyi, in his study of Dohnányi's musical style, devotes several pages each to a discussion of melody, harmony and orchestration—but sums up rhythmic style in one sentence: "his rhythm is strong, vital and characteristic—but never angular".[3]

However, Dohnányi certainly did not remain unaffected by the twentieth century's rediscovery of modality. With his compatriots the exploration of modality was prompted mainly by the modal nature of folk song, although the example of Debussy also provided a certain stimulus. Dohnányi was never tempted to abandon traditional concepts of tonality in favour of a chromatically expanded modality such as Bartók advocated, but from quite early on in his career he made extremely effective use of modal harmonies —for example in the Serenade for String Trio Op 10 (1902). Whole-tone harmonies occur occasionally in his work, for example in the third movement of the E flat Piano Quintet (3 bars before fig. 34) and in the last movement of the orchestral *Ruralia hungarica* (fig. 7 to the end), but these are never allowed to call into question the fundamental tonal orientation of the music.

Novák's harmonies invariably have a strong modal flavour, although the modality can produce quite contrasted atmospheres in different works. *In the Tatras*, for example, has a grandly austere atmosphere which at times reminds one of Sibelius, whereas in *About the Eternal Longing* (1903–05) the modal harmonies contributed to the impressionistically lush texture. In this work whole-tone harmonies are used to create an atmosphere of undefined yearning, whilst in the overture to *Maryša* (1898) they have a sinister quality which underlines the tragic events of the play.

In their works most directly inspired by folk music, both Dohnányi and Novák rely on the device of using harmonies based on fourths and fifths to evoke a colourful picture of rustic merry-making—the 'Musicians' movement from Novák's *Slovak* Suite should here be compared with the second movement from Dohnányi's orchestral suite *Ruralia Hungarica*.

One shared characteristic which owes nothing to geographical origin is the impeccable craftsmanship both inherited from the late nineteenth-century Brahmsian tradition. Both composers possessed considerable contrapuntal skill, and this, combined with a sure feeling for musical line, meant that both produced some masterworks of chamber music. It is instructive to compare Dohnányi's

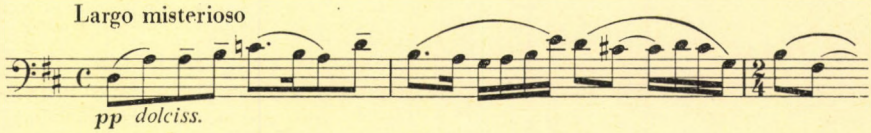
[2] 1971 International Bartók Conference, published by *Editio Musica*, Budapest

[3] *Dohnányi Ernő* (Budapest 1971), p. 217

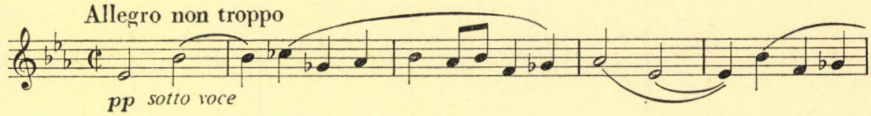
E flat Piano Quintet (1914) with Novák's String Quartet in D (1905): both works make extensive use of fugal or quasi-fugal textures, and in both it takes more than one movement to explore all the possibilities of the basic thematic material. A comparison of the opening themes of these works also reveals some fundamental differences between the two composers:

Ex. 4

(*a*) Novák



(*b*) Dohnányi



In spite of a few superficial similarities in the presentation of the themes (both aim to create a subdued, mysterious atmosphere), the effect is in fact quite different: the Novák is quietly contemplative, whereas the Dohnányi theme is charged with tension and thus heralds the musical drama to come. This comparison highlights the main difference in the characters of the two composers: Novák was essentially subjective in his approach, always responsive to the twin stimuli of nature and human emotions, whereas Dohnányi's outlook was always more objective. His attitude to music was essentially an intellectual one, and extra-musical impulses play a less important role in his works than they do in Novák's. Even his sense of humour (as revealed in works such as the *Variations on a Nursery Tune*) can be appreciated only by reference to the music itself—it has no relation to any external circumstances.

Towards the end of their lives, the fates of Dohnányi and Novák diverged quite markedly. In his later works, Novák adopted a more defiantly patriotic tone, and although interest in his music had declined after about 1910, during the Second World War and later it enjoyed renewed popularity, as it was once more seen to be closely in sympathy with the spirit of the times. In the immediate post-war era he symbolised the triumph of the Czech people over adversity, and was honoured accordingly. Dohnányi, on the other hand, had the misfortune to fall victim to the politicking of the post-war years, and, as a consequence of finding himself in the wrong place at the wrong time, was forced the spend his final years in exile. From a late twentieth-century perspective, we can finally judge both composers purely on the merits of their work, and we do them the greatest service not by assigning each to a conveniently pre-determined place in the musical history of their respective countries, but by recognising that both are of more than merely local interest.

PAULA KENNEDY

OUR CONTRIBUTORS

ACSAY, Judit (b. 1950) Art critic, art editor of the weekly *Új Tükör*. Read English and art history at Budapest University. Her field is 20th century modern art.

BARABÁS, Judit (b. 1959). Literary historian. Read Hungarian and Russian at the University of Budapest. Now on the staff of the Faculty of Humanities of the same university. Her field is twentieth-century Hungarian literature. See her review on Lóránt Czigány's *An Oxford History of Hungarian Literature* in *NHQ* 106.

BITSKEY, István (b. 1941). Literary historian, a graduate of the University of Debrecen, now Associate Professor and Head of the Department of Literature at the same university. Between 1984–1986 he was Guest Professor at the University of Vienna. Specialises in Hungarian Baroque Literature, in the cultural history of the age of Reformation and Counter Reformation. His most recent book, a biography of Péter Pázmány appeared in 1986.

BOGNÁR, József (b. 1917). Economist, MP, heads the Institute for the World Economy of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. Member of the Editorial Board of, as well as frequent contributor to *NHQ*. His most recent contributions are "Hungary's Economic Prospects," *NHQ* 100, "A Man and the Environment (Aurelio Peccei)" 101, and "Opportunities for Growth," 106.

BÓNIS, Ferenc (b. 1932). Professor of Musicology at the Liszt Ferenc Academy of Music in Budapest. Heads the Music for the Young Department at Hungarian Radio. His main field is the history of Hungarian music. Books on Bartók and Kodály include *Béla Bartók, His Life in Pictures and Documents* (in English). See "The Magnum Opus of Bence Szabolcsi," *NHQ* 53, "Fritz Reiner—an early Bartók Conductor," 63, and the first part of "Three Days with Sándor Veress, the Composer," 108.

CZEIZEL, Endre (b. 1935). M. D., geneticist, heads the Human Genetics Laboratory in the National Institute for Public Health. Has done research into the genetic parameters of the Hungarian population as well as the genetic background of congenital defects. Reorganized the National Register of Congenital Defects in 1970 and established a Register of Identical Twins in Budapest the same year. Has worked on the seven-nation WHO-sponsored International Congenital Defects Monitor network and other international projects. See "Genetic Counseling in Hungary," *NHQ* 79.

CSIKÓS-NAGY, Béla (b. 1915). Economist. Formerly Head of the National Materials and Prices Office (1957–1984). Has published and lectured on price policy and other economic questions in Hungary and abroad. See "Socialist Economic Theory and the New Mechanism," *NHQ* 28, "The Monetary Framework of the Socialist Economy," 33, "Anti-Inflationary Policies," 59, "Ten Years of the Hungarian Economic Reform," 70, "The Hungarian Price Reform," 75, "New Features of Hungarian Economic Policy," 77, "The Competitiveness of the Hungarian Economy," 81, "Nine Questions on Financial Incentives," 85 "Development Problems of the Hungarian Economy," 88, and "Liquidity Problems and Economic Consolidation," 94.

FERENCZ, Győző (b. 1954). Poet, translator, a graduate in English and Hungarian literature of the University of Budapest. Now on the staff of *Európa*, the major publishing house for translated poetry and fiction. His first volume of poems *Ha nem lenne semmi nyom* (If there were no trace) ap-

peared in 1981. A selection of John Donne's poems translated by him was published in 1986. Hungarian titles of poems in this issue: *Vigyázat, omlásveszély!; Tudom, hogy létedet nem lehet tagadnom; Profán ének: ráismerés.*

FRANK, János (b. 1925). Art critic, one of our regular art reviewers.

GERŐ, András (b. 1952). Historian. A graduate in sociology and history of the University of Budapest, where he now teaches at the Department of Cultural History. His publications include *A monarchia Magyarországának népképviselete* (Popular representation in Hungary in the age of the Dual Monarchy) published by *Gondolat*, 1988 and a book on the Budapest Millenary Monument, now in the press.

GRIFFITHS, Paul (b. 1947). Music critic of *The Times* of London. Has written books on Bartók, Boulez, Cage, Maxwell Davies, Ligeti, Messiaen and the string quartet.

GYERTYÁN, Ervin (b. 1924). Our regular film critic.

GYÖRFFY, Miklós (b. 1942). Our regular reviewer of prose fiction.

HARCSA, István (b. 1948). Sociologist. Since 1972 on the staff of the Central Bureau of Statistics, now Section Head at the Department of Social Statistics. Main fields of interest include social mobility, the system of social indices, social structure, ways of life and living conditions, and the stratification of youth. See "The Changing Social Structure of Agricultural Cooperatives," *NHQ* 87, "Changes in Village Society during the last Ten Years," 92.

HÁMORI, József (b. 1932). Biologist, a graduate of the University of Budapest. Between 1955–1963 on the staff of the Institute of Anatomy in Pécs, since 1963 head of the Neurobiological Research Unit of the Semmelweis School of Medicine. Has on several occasions been a visiting professor at U.C.L.A., Mount-Sinai, San Diego, and other universities. Author of the introductory chapter of *Neurobiological Basis of Memory*, New York 1980, John Wiley and Sons, as well as of many other scientific publications and two popular science books, in Hungarian.

JÁRAI, Zsigmond (b. 1951). Economist, a graduate of the Karl Marx University in Budapest. In 1976 he joined the staff of the State Development Bank, between 1983–87 head of one of its departments. Since 1987 Managing Director of the Budapest Bank. His publications include a book on the banking system, published in 1987.

KENNEDY, Paula (b. 1957). Musicologist, a graduate of Durham University. On the staff of the Ulster Orchestra, the Music Department of the BBC and the Arts Council in Northern Ireland. At present she is sleeve-note editor for the Decca Recording Company. Her field is early 20th century Central European music.

KISS, Gy. Csaba (b. 1945). Literary critic. Read Hungarian and German at the University of Budapest. Since the early seventies has published frequently on Polish and Slovak literature, and on Central European cultural history. Editor of the volume *Keleti Golf-áram* (Eastern Gulf-Stream), 1976, an anthology of travel books on countries neighbouring Hungary—and author of an essay on the cultural relations between Poland and Hungary. Since 1986 a member of the Hungarian Studies Team at the National Széchényi Library. See *"Ubi Leones,"* *NHQ* 108.

KOLTAI, Tamás (b. 1942). Our regular theatre critic.

KOMORÓCZY, Géza (b. 1937). Teaches Cuneiform Studies at the University of Bu-

dapest. Studied in Budapest and Prague and travelled extensively in Iraq, Iran, the Lebanon, and Soviet Armenia to further his studies. Has lectured abroad as well, and published numerous works. See his "Flat-Earth Sumerology," *NHQ* 68 and "Karl Polányi's Historic Utopia," 108.

LENGYEL, Balázs (b. 1918). Essayist and critic, our regular poetry reviewer.

LÓSKA, Lajos (b. 1951). Art critic. Read Hungarian literature and art history at the University of Budapest. From 1975 on the staff of *Művészet*, an art periodical. His main field is contemporary graphic art, with special emphasis on the sixties and seventies. See "The Classical Scribbles of Árpád Szabados," *NHQ* 103, "The Painting of Béla Veszelszky," 104, "Hungarian Graphic Art 1986," 106 and "After the Trans-avantgarde," 107.

MÁNDY, Iván (b. 1918). Writer, author of novels, many volumes of short stories, plays for the stage and radio, and children's books. Some of his books have been published in German and French. See the stories "Morning at the Cinema," *NHQ* 4, "Private Lives," 26, "Girl from the Swimming Pool," 35, "The Kitchen Wall," 51, "The Furniture," 74, "Night of the Sweat-soaked Shirt," 84, and "Cemeteries" 103.

MESTERHÁZI, Márton (b. 1941). Studied English–French–Hungarian at Budapest University graduating in 1964. Has worked with the Drama Department of the Hungarian Radio as script editor responsible for plays and radio plays written in English, French, Greek, Latin, the South Slav languages, and for some Hungarian authors. Translated A. J. Toynbee, Ian McEwan, John Arden, Christopher Hampton, Arthur Kopit, and others. Author of the books, both in Hungarian on the BBC Drama Workshop (1978), and on Sean O'Casey (1983). Critical essays on Samuel Beckett, Harold Pinter, Edward Albee, John Arden, J. M. Synge and others.

NEMESKÜRTY, István (b. 1925). Historian, literary critic, film expert. A graduate in Hungarian and Italian of the University of Budapest. Was a teacher, an editor at a literary publishing house, a dramaturgist, and from 1972 to 1984 Manager of the Budapest Film Studios. Author of many books on history, films, and literature. Has published books on, among others, Fellini. See "Hungarian Inventor of the Sound Film," *NHQ* 79, "History Answered a Man," 81 and his review of János Kádár's *Selected Speeches and Interviews*, published by Pergamon Press, Oxford, 1985.

PATAKI, Gábor (b. 1955). Art critic. Read Art History, Aesthetics and History at the University of Budapest. On the staff of the Art History Research Group of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. His main field of research is the Hungarian art of the thirties and forties, with special emphasis on the "European School." See "101 Objectes in the Óbuda Gallery," *NHQ* 100, "Two Artists Rediscovered," 101, written with Péter György, and "Resigned Emancipation," 107.

RAKOVSZKY, Zsuzsa (b. 1950). Poet. Studied Hungarian and English at the University of Budapest. Now on the staff of *Helikon*, a Budapest publishing house. Her latest book of verse *Távolabb egy házzal* (A house further on) appeared in 1987 and was reviewed in *NHQ* 108. See her poems in *NHQ* 83. Original title of poems in this issue: *Tovább egy házzal; Dél; Allegória; Részlet egy lehetséges verses regényből.*

RIDEG, Gábor (b. 1940). Art critic, editor of *Művészet*, an illustrated art monthly. A graduate in art history and Hungarian of the University of Budapest. His main field is contemporary Hungarian art as well as the ethics of art.

SCHREUDER, Arjen (b 1961). Arts editor and critic at *NRC Handelsblad*, a daily published in Rotterdam. Recently wrote a series of three articles on Hungarian arts for *NRC Handelsblad*. Studied at the Academy of Journalism in Tilburg, The Netherlands.

SŐTÉR, István (b. 1913). Writer, literary historian, a member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. Was Professor of Hungarian Literature at the University of Budapest, and Rector of the University. 1956 Deputy Minister of Education; since 1957 heads the Institute for Literature of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. 1978–70 President of the *Association Internationale de Littérature Comparée*. See "New Belgian Poetry," *NHQ* 35, "Sándor Petőfi: Folk Poet and Revolutionary," 49, "Baroque Culture in Hungary," 84 and "Europe, our Common Home," 102.

SZIRTES, George (b. 1948). English poet and painter. Born in Budapest. Teaches art and runs The Starwheel Press in Hitchin. His latest volume of poems, *The Photographer in Winter*, was published by Secker and Warburg in 1986. During recent visits to Budapest, he has begun to rediscover his native language and culture; his autobiographical essay, written for *NHQ* 99, as well as a number of poems and translations, are the first results of this experience. See also translations of the poems of Dezső Kosztolányi, *NHQ* 98, "A Dual Heritage," 99 "Örkény in English", 103 and a review of Miklós Radnóti's autobiography in English, in 105.

SZŰRÖS, Mátyás (b. 1933). Secretary to the Central Committee of the HSWP with special responsibility for International Relations, Chairman of the Parliamentary Standing Committee for Foreign Affairs. A diplomatist and economist by training. Held various posts before becoming Ambassador to the GDR (1975–78), and later to the Soviet Union (1978–82). Has published widely on foreign affairs. See "National Cause—Common Cause," *NHQ* 90, "Interaction of the National and the International in Hungarian Policy," 93 and "National and International in Hungarian Foreign Policy," 105.

TARDOS, Márton (b. 1928). Economist. Studied at the Institute of Planning in Leningrad. Until 1956 on the staff of the National Planning Institute. 1956–81 Head of Department of the Market Research Institute. Since 1981 Head of the Department for the New Economic Mechanism of the Institute of Economics and also Director of the Finance Research Institute, which was reorganised as a shareholding company in 1988.

VÁRKONYI, Péter (b. 1931). Minister for Foreign Affairs. A member of the Central Committee of the HSWP since 1975. A graduate of the Academy of Foreign Affairs; 1958–62, headed the Press Section of the Foreign Ministry; 1961–65, on the staff of the Central Committee of the HSWP; 1969–80, President of the Office of Information of the Council of Ministers; 1980–82, Editor in Chief of *Népszabadság*, the central daily of the HSWP; 1982–83, Secretary to the Central Committee of the HSWP. See "Security Cooperation," 92, "Hungary's International Relations," 97, "Helsinki—Antecedents and Consequences," 100, and "A Joint Search for Security", 105.

Articles appearing in this journal are indexed in HISTORICAL ABSTRACTS, AMERICA, HISTORY AND LIFE; ARTS AND HUMANITIES CITATIONS INDEX

THE NEW HUNGARIAN QUARTERLY

may be obtained from the following distributors:

AUSTRALIA: J. and E. Forbat, 108 Chapel St., Windsor, Vic. 3181 Australia
Globe Book and Record Shop, 702 George St. Sydney NSW 2000

AUSTRIA: LIBRO-DISCO Ungarische Bücher und Schallplatten aus Wien, Domgasse 8. A-1010 Wien

BELGIUM: Du Monde Entier S. A. Rue du Midi 162, B-1000 Bruxelles
András Süle 83, rue des Arbres, B-1180 Bruxelles

BRASIL: Livraria D. Landy Ltda. Rua 7 de Abril 252, 01000 São Paulo

CANADA: Délibáb Film and Record Studio, 19 Prince Arthur Street, West Montreal P. Q. H2X IS4
Pannonia Books, P.O. Box 1017 Postal Station "B", Toronto, Ont. M5T 2T8
Hungarian Ikka and Travel Service, 1234 Granville Street, Vancouver 2, B.C. V6Z IM4

DENMARK: Munksgaard's Boghandel, Norregade 6. DK-1165 Kobenhavn K.

FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY: Ujváry—Griff, Titurelstr. 2. 8000 München 81.
Kubon und Sagner, Postfach 68. 8000 München 34.
Musica Hungarica, Rümannstr. 4. 8000 München 40.

FINLAND: Akateeminen Kirjakauppa, Keskuskatu 2. SF 00100 Helsinki 10.

FRANCE: Société Balaton, 12, rue de la Grange-Batelière, 75009 Paris
Association France-Hongrie, 8, rue Montyon, 75009 Paris

GREAT BRITAIN: Collets Holdings Ltd., Denington Estate, Wellingborough, Northants, NN8 2QT.
Hungarian Book Agency, 87 Sewardstone Road, London E2 9HN

HOLLAND: Club Qualiton, Herengracht 82, 1015 BS Amsterdam

NORWAY: A/S Narvesens Litteratur Tjeneste, P.O. Box 6140, Etterstad Oslo 6

SWEDEN: Esselte Tidskriftcentralen, P.O. Box 62, S-101, 20 Stockholm

SWITZERLAND: Magda Szerday, Teichweg 16, CH-4142 Münchenstein

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA: Center of Hungarian Literature, 4418 16th Avenue, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11204
Püski-Corvin 251 E82 Street, New York, N.Y. 10028
Imported Publications, Inc., 320 West Ohio Street, Chicago Ill. 60610

VENEZUELA: Louis Tarcsay, Calle Iglesia Ed Villoria Apt. 21 105. C. 24. Caracas

YUGOSLAVIA: Forum. Vojvode Misica bro; 1. 21000 Novi Sad

KULTURA HUNGARIAN TRADING COMPANY FOR BOOKS AND NEWSPAPERS, H-1389 Budapest P.O.B. 149