# NHQ

# The New Hungarian Quarterly




VOL. XXX ■ No. 113 ■ SPRING 1989 ■ $4.00

113

# The New Hungarian Quarterly





Editorial offices:

17 Rákóczi út, H-1088 Budapest, Hungary. Telephone: (1) 383-152; (1) 384-214
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 *HELIR*
Lehel út 10/a, H-1900 Budapest

Published by Idegennyelvű Folyóiratkiadó Leányvállalat, Budapest
General manager: FERENC GRIGA

Printed in Hungary by Kossuth Printing House, Budapest





**HU ISSN 0028-5390** Index: 26843

# INDEX

**VOLUME XXX. 1989**

ARTICLES, ESSAYS, PROSE, INTERVIEWS

POEMS



BOOKS AND AUTHORS

ARTS AND ARCHITECTURE

PERIODICALS

THE NEW HUNGARIAN QUARTERLY

P.O. Box 3
H—1426 Budapest
HUNGARY

# The New Hungarian Quarterly

VOL. XXX * No. 113

SPRING 1989

*This issue went to press on 22 th November 1988*
*Last proofs read on 20th February, 1989*

# TAKING LEAVE OF IVÁN BOLDIZSÁR

This has for thirty years been the place of an article signed by Iván Boldizsár. This is the first time readers will not find one of his always witty and thought-provoking essays at the front of this journal, though he still edited this issue. His obituary replaces it. By the time these lines will appear in print, most readers will be aware that the founder and editor of *NHQ*, Iván Boldizsár, passed away on 22 December 1988. He was born in Budapest in 1912 and died, after a short illness, in a Budapest hospital, in the seventy-seventh year of his life.

Iván Boldizsár's life and career were so full, extending in so many directions that a single article cannot give all the details: this writing stands only for a word of parting. In future issues friends and colleagues will review his literary work, his activity as the ambassador at large of Hungarian culture, the public career of a man—an unforgettable participant of Hungarian intellectual life—who made a name for himself over the past half-century.

He was a journalist and editor in the first place. Writing for, and editing dailies, weeklies, monthlies, quarterlies, was the main stream of his life. The strange logic of history causes breaks in every one's life in this part of the world, in Central and Eastern Europe: but not even the war and the vicissitudes of politics could knock the pen out of Iván Boldizsár's hand for any length of time. As a student he started with a paper for students *Névtelen Jegyző*, the Nameless Notary recalling the Hungarian chronicler of the age of the Árpád's who figures as Anonymus. He continued in the thirties on the staff of the daily *Nemzeti Újság* and then of the German-language Budapest daily *Pester Lloyd*. No sooner had the war come to an end in a country rising from the ruins he already "invented" a weekly representing a new type in the Hungarian press at the time. His *Új Magyarország* was designed, to make the Hungarian reader acquainted with the intellectual and political movements of the "one world" in an effort to counteract the consequences of

the tendentious policy of misinformation of previous decades. Later, when the world looked like going cold and the Hungarian press carried the heavy burden of the Rákosi-type version of Stalinism, Iván Boldizsár accepted a serious and thankless task: he became the editor of the daily *Magyar Nemzet*. Earlier, in the late thirties, this newspaper was born in token of opposition to the official Axis policy line, in support of Anglophil attitudes. Iván Boldizsár tried to preserve something of this tradition even under the system of Stalinist *Gleichschaltung* in the 1950s. The result was not worth the immense amount of work done and risks taken day after day. It is probably that period which Iván Boldizsár referred in an interview published in *NHQ* 75, which he gave to Vilmos Faragó, Deputy Editor of the weekly *Élet és Irodalom*. Faragó's questions cut to the bone. Thus he asked Boldizsár whether he had always written the truth. Iván Boldizsár answered in the affirmative. But towards the end of the interview he reverted to the question. "I answered yes with a clear conscience," he said, "but I want to refine that a little. A volume of Montaigne, Gide's selection, a pretty old book, is always on my desk. Montaigne said when he was about as old as I am now: 'I always wanted to write the truth, but I did not always dare to. Now that I am older, I am more daring.' I don't think that the courage to speak the truth depends on one's age, more on the age in which we live. That is why I feel that I dare more, and am more daring now, that I can better express the truth, and more of it."

This was really so. That difficult period was not a time when the truth was, or could be, spoken. But, if we look back from our days, it is no exaggeration to say that it is nevertheless the free domestic atmosphere of any editorial office headed by Iván Boldizsár, the spirit of debate that prevailed there, that salvaged for today something of the true spirit and traditions of Hungarian journalism. Of the young journalists whom Iván Boldizsár's typical grumbling remarks and subtle irony had inspired with the idea of a better future world many have become editors of the regenerated Hungarian press, newspapermen who no longer need much daring to write the truth. A good number of Boldizsár's sometime famuli have made a name for themselves as journalists or in the academic world in most diverse parts of the world, from Vienna to Paris and from London to New York.

I think it is not mere prejudice that makes me say that Iván Boldizsár's life as a journalist and editor culminated in the period which began with the conception of *The New Hungarian Quarterly*, in the summer of 1959. In the round three decades which have passed since then, he not only edited this quarterly: rain or shine, he wrote his famous "Five Hundred Words on the Hungarians" for the *Daily News*, he wrote articles on cultural matters for

*Élet és Irodalom*, sketches for *Képes Hét*, commentaries for *Népszabadság;* hardly a week passed without his expressing his opinion on timely issues on the Hungarian radio, and his snowy mane and walrus moustache, growing whiter as the years passed frequently appeared on the television screen. He also founded and edited a theatre monthly which—as he was wont to say with Boldizsáresque self-irony—was published "but not available to the public." In reality his *Színház* has become an important working tool for a narrow but very significant group of people. The theatrical world and artists thought highly of it, also because Iván Boldizsár included a new Hungarian play as a supplement to each issue.

When finally, after much meditation and debate, the idea of the *NHQ* had taken shape, Iván Boldizsár, in the leading article of the first issue published in the autumn of 1960, underlined the difficulty and boldness of the undertaking "for Hungarians to edit and publish in Budapest an English-language periodical intended to be read in the English-speaking world." He referred in this connection to a word borrowed from Latin but used in a different sense in Hungarian: *virtus*, which is a distant relation of the English *virtue*. The Hungarian term *virtus* refers to an undertaking which "at first surpasses the strength of a person or of a group, but in itself or in its aim is too significant and attractive for its challenge to be resisted." I feel that Iván Boldizsár, when he wrote these words, had in mind not only the circumstances of the launching of *NHQ* but, more or less, also the *leitmotif* of his whole working life. From early youth when he and a few like-minded friends explored the villages of Hungary founding a literary rural sociology movement to study and reveal to the Hungarian public the unknown dark abyss of the lives of the village poor, to the end of his life when, in the press and in various public forums, he raised his voice in support of the Transylvanian Hungarians in their tragic plight, Iván Boldizsár was a man who shouldered the most difficult duties. Of course, he did not always succeed. He probably met the greatest disappointment of his life when, after the Second World War, as a member of the Hungarian delegation to the Paris Peace Conference, which pleaded in vain for more equitable peace terms for Hungary. He suffered another blow when incipient Hungarian democracy was nipped in the bud by the cold spell of Stalinism. Later, in an autobiographic essay he wrote without pity for his self how it had felt to be Undersecretary in László Rajk's Foreign Ministry when his minister was tried on trumped up charges, condemned and put to death under Mátyás Rákosi. He met with his third tragic disappointment in 1956: at the time he was editor of Imre Nagy's newspaper—in consequence of the tragic and bloody turn of events—for a few days only.

The period in which *NHQ* was first published was one of social reconciliation, a process called socialist consolidation which did not in the least mean that it was free from problems. As Iván Boldizsár wrote in *NHQ* 25, the first jubilee issue of the periodical, he had not felt sure that the first issue would be followed by a second and third, not to mention a twenty-fifth or one hundredth. Whoever did not live through those years in Hungary can hardly appreciate the art of editing which could ensure even in the face of the commitments of the time, that the magazine reflected a more or less real or complete picture of the past and present of Hungary. Indeed, it took *virtus*—and Iván Boldizsár's editorial skill. To which was added also that he was able to assemble in the editorial board a team of mostly old companions-in-arms and other friends, a veritable galaxy of Hungarian intellectual life, which was from the very start the chief support and pillar of *NHQ*. And also, on the other hand, that he formulated an editorial policy which placed at the centre the transmission of Hungarian culture to the Anglo-American world. His starting point was the fact that there was so much in the way of prose and poetry, music, the arts and the sciences, that Hungary had to offer to the world but barriers had to be torn down first principally those of linguistic isolation. Later the international interest shown in the reform process, in "the reform of Hungarian economic management," persuaded him to publish many articles on economic questions. And still later, quite recently, emphasis shifted to the debates and efforts aimed at the transformation of the political institutions, and the creation of a democratic socialism.

A few words are in order about Iván Boldizsár's style of editing in order to give an idea of how our periodical tried to keep track of the changes in Hungarian reality. Boldizsár was not an autocrat—unlike many other great editors —but a lover of informal, even rambling, conversation. An editorial conference at the *NHQ* was usually opened by Iván Boldizsár telling jokes. It is generally believed that a considerable proportion of the jokes that spread from mouth to mouth in Budapest had for a long time originated with Iván Boldizsár, His wit became legendary so much so that jokes invented by others were also attributed to him by people. With the relaxation of the atmosphere there followed a sort of brainstorming in which everyone had an equal right to speak all the way from the apprentice journalist to the literary editor and from the editorial secretary to those in charge of various sections of the paper. When the company was in great form—after a couple of hours of self-exploitation and a few cups of coffee—something of a general outline of the next issue took shape: a few subjects, both of timely interest and of lasting value (since close to six months elapse between going to press and the date of publication), which must certainly be included. The last word was

—in keeping with the democratic consensus—spoken most often by Iván Boldizsár, for it was he who had his finger on the pulse of events, he reacted with great sensitivity to changes in the political atmosphere. Lately he grew tired more and more frequently in the course of one or another of our sessions. At such times he broke off the conference rather than slacken its intensity. He got up clumsily from his armchair, walked up and down—he could seldom stay glued to a seat for any length of time—opened the window for the umpteenth time (even when it was twenty below freezing point outside), "just to let in some oxygen"..., finally he took out his tiny notebook containing names and dates written in microscopic letters. "When shall we be together again?" he muttered turning the pages. It appeared that at almost every hour for days to come he would be busy: the National Assembly; the Hungarian Pen of which he was President, meeting a foreign notability who definitely wanted to hear I. B.'s opinion; lecture at a cultural centre in the country (he always accepted such tiring invitations); talk to a publisher who was issuing his new book. "I can't say as yet," he stated with resignation in most cases. But the day after, or on the third day, at the most unexpected point of time, he was with us again. "Well then, boys and girls, what will the next issue look like after all?" he asked while shooting a hopeful glance at the door to see whether the much desired coffee would arrive by some magic. The work of editing continued: the outlines of the next issue took shape bit by bit.

In public life, just as in his work as an editor, Iván Boldizsár's aim was to seek reconciliation and create consensus. The vicissitudes, sorrows and disappointments he had experienced persuaded him that progress was to be achieved through reforms carried out step by step, with perseverance, with the help of mutual concessions and peaceful compromises. These alone and not confrontation could produce results acceptable to all. He supported the reform policy which was initiated in Hungary in the middle of the sixties, first confined only to the reform of the economic mechanism, which was interrupted by setbacks then encompassing more and more fields under the changed circumstances of recent years. Iván Boldizsár was a supporter and also active participant of the process of political transformation now under way. It was his fondest desire to see the establishment in Hungary, without any major shock, of constitutionalism, a civil society, democratic socialism, which had been his ideal in his young days as a rural sociologist. This reform-partisanship, this desire to create consensus, prohibited retirement, a sort of *procul negotiis*, to which he would have been entitled owing to his advanced age and his unruly heart. Since he was coopted a member of Parliament a few years ago, he flung himself with youthful ardour into the

work of the National Assembly: his briefcase was often filled with documents he was taking home in order to do his homework before meetings of the Foreign Affairs Committee, of which he was a pillar, thanks to his long experience of international affairs. He rose to speak at every debate dealing with a subject of national interest on which he felt it his duty to express his opinion. At such times he probably had Montaigne's above-mentioned *aperçu* in mind since lately he was guided in what he was to say only by his deeply held convictions. Since the debates of the National Assembly have been regularly televised the whole country witnessed that, when the business of the Bős—Nagymaros hydroelectric project on the Danube was put to the vote, Iván Boldizsár was one of the nineteen M. P.s who voted against the government-supported continuation of construction. Still greater stir was created nationwide—and internationally—by his address to Parliament supporting the cause of the Hungarian minority in Transylvania. World public opinion is slowly becoming aware that the largest minority in Europe are the Hungarians of Rumania. More than two million live deprived of civil rights under conditions of utter defencelessness in Transylvania, and thousands of refugees driven to despair leave their native land where their ancestors have lived for more than a thousand years. The situation of the Hungarian minority in Transylvania was for a long time unknown to the outside world. Even in Hungary, to which many Transylvanian Hungarians are linked by ties of kinship, they could be mentioned only sub rosa, and no news of them could be published.

Iván Boldizsár was the first to pierce the walls of official silence. It was in the Foreign Affairs Committee of the National Assembly that he spoke in support of the Hungarians of Transylvania. Afterwards the Hungarian, and then the world press, took up the matter, and Hungarian public opinion as a whole raised its voice in protest. Since then *NHQ* has written in every issue about the fate of Transylvanian Hungarians. Boldizsár's "In a Good Cause" appeared in *NHQ 111*. It is based on a parliamentary address delivered by him on July 1st, 1988. He himself changed it a little for publication in *NHQ*, adding to it, with the usual care, some fresh thoughts written, as usual, in his minuscule but legible hand in green. Unfortunately, it was his last piece of writing published by his paper in his lifetime.

In future issues we shall try to offer a picture of Iván Boldizsár's lifework by publishing some of his writings. But this will barely suffice to call up the image of our departed friend as we were privileged to know him, we who have spent half of our working life-time alongside him. I am convinced that I can say not only in my own name but on behalf of all of my colleagues that Iván Boldizsár, over and above what I have just said about him, was

warm-hearted, ready to help, understanding and tolerant—in short, a good man. His secretary, faithful Bori Liszka, can testify that most of the letters to him asked for help or advice, and Boldizsár not only replied to every one of them but helped whenever he could. Unknown visitors arriving from all parts of the country, called on Iván Boldizsár as an unappointed ombudsman —in many cases he was able to help. In earlier, more difficult times his help was sought by many a fellow journalist who would now be described as "alternative". He obtained a job, scholarship or passport for him—whatever the man wanted—if he possibly could. He was not always thanked for his unselfish help, but he always repaid ingratitude, or even insult, with a noble gesture. It was his practice to publish any writing, regardless of authorship; the only and unalterable editorial criterion was quality.

In the autumn of 1987 a work of Iván Boldizsár's youth, *Tiborc*, was republished on the occassion of his 75th birthday. The great novelist Zsigmond Móricz wrote a preface to this portrait of the rural poor. Móricz argued that revealing the real Hungary, unknown to the metropolitan reading public, which a handful of young writers had made their duty, was something truly important. Now that I am writing these lines I have before me the January 1989 issue of the monthly *Kortárs*, with an article by Iván Boldizsár, posthumous on publication date, remembering Sándor Sík, a sometime teacher of his. With the proper affection and respect of a disciple, he calls the ideas which inspired his entire lifework, which he owed to the Piarist priest-poet, the *manuductor* of the start of his career, a true spiritual father. "Spiritual elevation has its own social, economic and material requisites," wrote Sándor Sík in the early 1930s. "The most perfect assertion possible of justice and equity in the distribution of goods is therefore the most elementary demand of the idea of democracy. But even this most elementary requirement has a requisite. We first have to become acquainted with the people to be elevated, with the surrounding and human destinies, in order to be able to do something for them. Without that, democracy remains an empty phrase."

This idea and the sense of responsibility and duty derived therefrom accompanied Iván Boldizsár's life—as he himself wrote—from the writer's and rural sociologist's first steps to participation in public life in the autumn of his days. True, during friendly talks—but sometimes also in articles or interviews—he said more than once with some self-irony that his unquenchable thirst for knowledge, his passion for perpetual study, for the exploration of facts and their interconnections, was merely curiosity. That he was always there when something happened, whether the event be a great boon or disaster but certainly decisive as regards Eastern Central Europe,

he simply called journalist's luck. In reality, however, his curiosity was his passion to help. He had studied medicine for four years, he knew that a detailed anamnesis and a correct diagnosis are the prerequisite of successful treatment. And as regards luck, I would quote Pasteur, who said that chance favours only those who attend events with their mind at the ready. Iván Boldizsár's mind was at the ready when he felt the pulse of history, right to the end of his life. During the last evening at his bedside in hospital we talked about our next issue. He spoke of a writing that would be about the ideas of the new constitution; then of another article which would deal with the situation of the Hungarians of Transylvania; of a novella which would take readers into the dark abysses of Hungarian society. "I should like to be editor of the *Quarterly* for another two or three years," he said quietly at the end of our conversation. "Let the boys and girls in the editorial office know that we shall again be together next week, or I hope so." Was he optimistic to the last moment? Or didn't he want to sadden us even more? I don't know.

ZOLTÁN HALÁSZ

IVÁN BOLDIZSÁR
1912–1988

# PRIORITIES OF HUNGARIAN FOREIGN POLICY

## THE RIGHTS OF NATIONAL MINORITIES AS HUMAN RIGHTS

by

PÉTER VÁRKONYI

I believe that this session of the United Nations has good chances of success. The atmosphere and work of the 42nd session were favourably influenced by the positive change in East–West relations and the increasing momentum of the Soviet–American dialogue. The past year has seen the strengthening of this favourable process and the addition of new elements. Another Soviet–U.S. summit has been held and the dialogue has extended to lower levels as well, with concrete results achieved in the accords reached. Those accords were concrete reflections of the efforts undertaken to curb the arms race and to eliminate centres of tension, and may give a stimulus to further steps in this direction, both in the relationship between the two great powers and on a wider scale. The dynamic development of Soviet–American and East–West relations has become a determining factor in the strengthening of international security.

Other favourable events in international politics, including a large number of high-level meetings and initiatives by different groups of countries to strengthen international cooperation and to achieve a peaceful settlement of international problems, have also made their effects felt during the past year.

There has been an intensification of efforts to resolve regional problems, including the elimination of dangerous crisis centres which, because of their destabilising effects, impede international cooperation. Tangible and pioneering accords have been reached and encouraging negotiations are under way.

No doubt, world politics is still characterised by a great number of grave and pressing problems, but, on the whole, we have witnessed and have acted to achieve a psychological breakthrough during the past year.

Address by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Hungary to the 43rd session of the General Assembly of the United Nations, 4 October 1988.

Practical experience has proved that even the most complicated issues in world politics can be solved and that, given the political will of States, concrete results can be achieved which have a favourable influence on the international atmosphere and the development of the international situation, while giving impetus to the quest for solutions of other problems. In this context, too, we attach decisive importance to the Soviet–U.S. agreement on the elimination of medium and short-range nuclear missiles and to the Geneva accords on Afghanistan. The intensification of diplomatic activities to eliminate various hotbeds of crisis and the initial encouraging results allow us to entertain hopes of viewing these favourable developments as a prelude to a longer-term process rather than as momentary phenomena. The United Nations has given practical proof that its involvement in such efforts can be successful and a contribution to an improvement of its international image, and that its continuing active participation can promote the renewal of the world organization.

In this activity a leading role is played by the Secretary-General, Mr Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, to whom I wish to express my deep appreciation for his untiring efforts.

My Government is convinced that these favourable changes have resulted from the widening and the practical prevalence of the awareness that the mutual dependence or interdependence of States and nations is a fact, a reality of our age. Consequently, it considers the strengthening of mutually advantageous international cooperation and of confidence among States and the peaceful settlement of emerging conflicts to be the only possible path of international coexistence. The Hungarian Government shapes the direction of its foreign policy and participates in international relations in this spirit, rejecting the use of or the threat of force; it regards security as a complex notion with closely interrelated military, political, economic, human rights, and humanitarian aspects; it maintains that no single State is able to establish its own security solely by military or technical means or to the detriment of other States, and that security can only be built by political means, taking into account the interests of all States, and by joint action resulting from a dialogue.

A pioneering role in advocating, disseminating, and asserting this approach is played by the Soviet Union, which has found partners in the leadership of the United States and other countries. At the same time it is equally noteworthy that the entire community of nations has also played a role in preparing and enhancing these changes: great powers, medium-sized and small countries, members of the systems of alliance, neutral and non-aligned nations alike. Hungary, one of the small European countries, long ago rec-

ognised the opportunities at hand for a small country and has been using them actively and continuously.

### *Creating a common European home*

The favourable processes of world politics, the gaining ground of the ideals of international understanding and cooperation, and the emergence of an atmosphere of confidence among States are fully in line with Hungary's national interests and foreign policy. My Government is therefore making great efforts to help develop international cooperation. It is trying to make use of all opportunities, both bilateral and multilateral, to expound its sincere efforts and to strengthen confidence among States. It identifies itself fully with the new concept of international security and cooperation, and is convinced that this new approach is bound to prevail in world politics before long.

This approach is represented by the foreign policy statements and practical steps made by Hungary, among other forums, at the Vienna follow-up meeting on European security and cooperation. We deem it highly important that the Vienna follow-up meeting conclude its work as early as possible by the adoption of a substantive and balanced concluding document and, while giving a new impulse to European cooperation, make a favourable contribution to creating a common European home and improve the international situation as a whole. Present-day Europe is bound by many ties to the other continents. Given the specific conditions of Europe, a special model of cooperation is evolving now. An indispensable framework and instrument for the realization of a common European home is the CSCE process, now going on for 13 years, which embraces the major components of an all-European home, that is, a programme for the reduction of the risk of military confrontation and for the building of political, economic, and humanitarian cooperation.

For this reason, the successful conclusion of the Vienna follow-up meeting by the adoption of a substantive concluding document would mean a genuine step forward, comparable with the obligations undertaken in the Final Act of Helsinki and the Concluding Document of Madrid. Its most important result would be the integration of conventional disarmament into the process of European security and cooperation. After the conclusion of the follow-up meeting, it would then be possible to commence negotiations between the Warsaw Pact and the NATO Member States on questions of conventional disarmament. These negotiations would be far-reaching in terms of scope, goals, and potential effect alike. Parallel to them, the confidence-building

talks, started in Stockholm, could be continued with the participation of all 35 States.

The concluding document of the follow-up meeting should place greater emphasis on questions of economic cooperation in Europe. It is gratifying to note that progress can be expected in questions of industrial, environmental, and scientific and technical cooperation, but it is no less important to make headway in the human rights and humanitarian fields.

In our view, it is one of the real demands of our time to set up a mechanism for consultations on human rights and humanitarian issues, one that would keep under review the status of implementation of the recommendations formulated in respect to the human dimension, one that would envisage compliance with agreements, respect for international expectations, a clearer definition of obligations already undertaken and creation of guarantees for their fulfilment. The meetings of specialists, forums and other conferences, the convening of which can be expected to be mandated by the Vienna follow-up meeting, will serve a useful purpose in promoting substantial and balanced progress in the CSCE process and in contributing to international security.

### *Questions of disarmament*

In promoting the favourable international political development of the past period, a significant part has been played by the recognition that the establishment of international security is a task of enormous complexity affecting every sphere of life. Each particular aspect of security is closely related to and bears upon all the others. The initiative concerning comprehensive international security, which is included in the agenda of the General Assembly, is based on this recognition. We earnestly hope that the appeal to Member States for the continuation of the dialogue, the joint elaboration of the elements needed for comprehensive security, and the determination of concrete practical measures deriving therefrom will meet the understanding and support of Member States. We all share the goal of ensuring that the gap often in evidence between the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter and the realities of the present-day international situation will be bridged as soon as possible.

A basic aspect of security, directly affecting the security of life itself, is that of disarmament or limitation of arms build-up. The first genuine disarmament accord between the Soviet Union and the United States on the elimination of medium and shorter-range missiles is one of historical sig-

nificance, even though it affects only a small part of the total stockpiles of weapons. The INF Treaty has opened a new chapter in disarmament history by introducing a system of verification with a once inconceivable set of strict and widely regulated conditions for the inspection of compliance. So far the checks on compliance has given proof in practice as well that the quest for security through disarmament is indeed possible.

The representatives of the Soviet Union and the United States are working on an agreement on 50 p.c. cuts in strategic offensive weapons. We remain convinced that if the parties continue to summon the necessary political will and remain open to compromise, the political and technical obstacles to a treaty can be removed and another disarmament accord will be signed in the not too distant future, paving the way for the building of a world free from nuclear weapons.

An outstanding event of multilateral disarmament diplomacy last summer was the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. Unfortunately, the psychological breakthrough I have mentioned did not take place in the field of multilateral disarmament. It remains a pressing task to ensure that multilateral disarmament increase in viability and produce results in the form of concrete accords similar to those in bilateral disarmament. Although the participants in the special session on disarmament could not arrive at a consensus for the drawing up of a final document based on consensus, the Hungarian People's Republic, along with many other countries, does not consider the session to have been a failure.

In the view of my Government, the significance of the special session lies mainly in the fact that the need for a multilateral approach to disarmament issues has been reconfirmed by the international community. Furthermore, the participating States agreed that in future the United Nations should be assigned a greater role in dealing with questions of disarmament. It is of particular importance that the outstanding role to be played by the United Nations in checking on the fulfilment of disarmament accords received wide attention during the special session. We believe that such a substantive role could, in the long run, be fulfilled by an international verification agency to be set up under the auspices of the United Nations. In this connection we attach great importance also to the efforts of the Delhi Six in this direction.

During the special session, a great number of concrete and important proposals were made, which may be debated and negotiated at the disarmament forums or provide a basis for measures to be adopted by consensus. If we want to move forward in the field of multilateral disarmament, those proposals should be considered on their merits at our present session as well.

Increased interest in the Geneva conference on disarmament was likewise felt during the special session. The renewed emphasis on that irreplaceable disarmament forum was reflected in the high-level visits this year and in the major policy statements made on those occasions.

Among the items on the conference on disarmament's agenda, special mention may be made of the intensification of the work of the *ad hoc* Committee on the elaboration of a Convention prohibiting chemical weapons. At the same time we deplore the fact that the Conference was unable to come any closer to finalising a Convention on the complete prohibition and destruction of chemical weapons.

To start substantial work on the complete prohibition of nuclear testing remains a priority duty for the conference on disarmament. The setting up of an appropriate machinery brooks no further delay. We believe that in order to overcome the present stalemate, it would require the Conference on Disarmament Member States to accept the need for multilateral talks on this issue and to adhere to the principle of progressivity.

In recent years, the Conference on Disarmament has discussed the situation with regard to the prevention of the arms race in space and has identified the relevant problems. The present task is to elaborate concrete measures aimed at preventing, even if by stages, the extension of the arms race to space. In order to ensure progress, it would also be advisable to agree on some partial moves of practical relevance, which by their importance would permit the obtaining of the ultimate goal. One such aspect is the establishment of a mechanism for international verification.

It is similarly desirable to speed up work on the prohibition of radiological weapons. Closely related to it is the complete prohibition of attacks against nuclear facilities, which should continue to be treated as a matter of urgency.

Also, in our days there is a growing international recognition that limitation and reduction of armed forces and conventional armaments at both global and regional levels are major factors in nuclear disarmament as well. The emphasis on conventional disarmament is logically consequential on the fact that the accumulation of conventional armaments is assuming increasingly threatening dimensions and that a significant part of the destructive capacity of some such armaments is growing closer and closer to that of weapons of mass destruction and that conventional disarmament is marking time in comparison to the growing momentum in nuclear disarmament. The first promising efforts exerted in Europe to promote conventional disarmament will hopefully be followed in other regions of the world as well.

After the consultations of the 23, held in conjunction with the Vienna follow-up meeting, work is practically on the verge of being concluded on the

mandate for disarmament talks covering the area from the Urals to the Atlantic. My Government deems it important that the negotiations on the reduction of armed forces and conventional armaments should get under way as soon as possible after the conclusion of the Vienna follow-up meeting. The measures likely to be adopted will affect the forward-based forces of the two great powers as well as the forces of the small and medium-sized countries in the region, and will call for the increased activity and involvement of the latter States too. Hungary is interested in an arrangement under which the forces in its territory will also be affected by the first stage of reductions. We expect the talks to result in a notable improvement in Europe's feeling of security in the foreseeable future and to create, by eliminating elements of threat causing concern to the parties, a stable situation characterised by a balance of mutual offensive incapability of the opposing forces.

### *Peaceful solution of regional conflicts*

Elimination of the regional hotbeds of crisis, which pose a threat to international peace and security, is an important element of establishing international security.

Collective efforts and, in particular, the emerging understanding of the parties directly concerned have, in several regional issues included in the agenda of the General Assembly, placed increased emphasis on the effective involvement of the United Nations in the practical solution of such problems as well as in the creation of the frameworks and technical conditions for settlement. The extent to which the world organization will be able to perform its mission in maintaining peace, securing and supervising cease-fires will perhaps be the touchstone for the United Nations capacity for renewal.

The Geneva accords relating to Afghanistan can be regarded as a highly significant precedent. The progress in the withdrawal of Soviet troops is a clear evidence of the goodwill of the Soviet Union. We hope that the agreement will be fully observed by all the parties and that the advance of the process of national reconciliation will bring peace in Afghanistan. We deem it necessary that the present session of the General Assembly consider this problem in this spirit, under this approach.

The efforts of the United Nations or, more specifically, the Security Council and the Secretary-General personally have played an important part in achieving, after so many abortive attempts, a cease-fire in the Iraqi–Irani war which has lasted nearly ten years and which has claimed an enormous

toll in human lives and property. Encouraging work is going on with the involvement of the United Nations to bring about peace. In the prevailing situation, particular importance is attached to the self-restraint of the parties concerned and their willingness to cooperate in the implementation of the relevant resolution of the Security Council. Our modest contribution to achieving lasting peace is the participation of 15 Hungarians in the United Nations observer group monitoring the cease-fire. My Government is hopeful that the cease-fire will soon be followed by the conclusion of peace putting an end to the hostilities and devastation.

Of course, the United Nations efforts will in themselves be insufficient to secure success, because the political will and determination of the governments of the countries involved is equally indispensable for the liquidation of a crisis flash-point. The recent past has seen a promising sign of this in the search for a settlement of the Cyprus question as well.

After long years, an opportunity seems to be opening for progress in the settlement of the situation in Southern Africa. We lend our support to the efforts for a negotiated soulution, and hope that the ongoing talks will soon lead to the implementation of Security Council resolution 435, the granting of independence to Namibia, and international guarantees for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Angola.

The positive turn in the quest for peaceful solution of regional conflicts strengthens our conviction that intensification of United Nations activity would increase the chances for a just settlement in the Middle East too. The recognition is gaining ground that the road to a solution of the conflict satisfactory to all the parties concerned leads through an international conference under the auspices of the United Nations. The events taking place in the occupied territories similarly underline the pressing need for an early solution to the crisis.

The entire international atmosphere would be favourably influenced by an early settlement of the conflict in Central America, a serious destabilising factor, with the participation of all the countries concerned and on the basis of respect for the generally accepted norms of international law.

My Government is in agreement with, and follows with confidence, the efforts being made to solve the question of Kampuchea by peaceful means within national frameworks. It is highly appreciative of the soberness and sense of reality displayed by the countries and the political forces working for a settlement of this problem.

Hungary welcomes the proposals aimed at reducing and eliminating tension on the Korean Peninsula in an effort to find ways and means of creating the conditions for solving the problem of Korea, bearing in mind the strength-

ening of peace and security in the Asian region and the interests of the Korean people.

*Economic cooperation rather than isolation*

Questions of the world economy and international economic relations occupy an increasingly important place in the United Nations. We find this only natural since international cooperation and the external environment of economic development have become of vital importance to all Member States. However, the economic, financial, commercial, scientific, and environmental activities of the United Nations and its specialised agencies still fail to reflect fully the actual conditions and priorities created by the realities of the present-day world, even though the 1970s have seen radical changes in the world economy.

On the threshold of the last decade of our century, governments should seek to ensure that the United Nations and its specialised agencies are not only passive followers of world economic developments, but also act to meet economic challenges, thereby contributing, on the basis of the common will deriving from consensus and approximate to national and regional interests, to the creation of conditions that ensure, to the fullest extent possible, the sustainable growth of national economies and the steady expansion of international economic relations.

We have no doubt that this process will not be free of conflicts. Efforts should therefore be concentrated on enhancing the role of the United Nations and its organizations in forecasting developments of and balances in the world economy as well as enhancing their ability to manage and solve economic, trade, financial, environmental, and other conflicts. We are convinced that harmonisation of interests and the development of conflict management abilities may create conditions for international organizations to exert most fruitful effects both on the development of national economies and on different areas of regional and global cooperation.

My Government proceeds from the assumption that national, regional, and global objectives can be harmonised on the basis of openness and mutual respect for interests. However, a common will or, if you like, a common policy arrived at in international organizations cannot be truly effective except if account is taken of international realities and economic laws as well. The efforts at regional integration is such a law at the present stage of development of the world economy. The organizations of regional integration play an increasing role in the world economy and will act, for a long time to come, as stimulants to economic growth. At the same time, certain trends

of isolationism may also prevail in the stage of growing economic cooperation within integrations. We think that such trends, even though serving the interests of members of an integration in the short run, work to impede a sustainable development of the entire world economy in the long run. Therefore we welcome the elevation of CMEA–EEC relations to an official level along with the already concluded bilateral agreement between Hungary and the EEC as well as other bilateral agreements to come between EEC and CMEA Member States. This development fits well into the European process of cooperation and confidence-building and serves to promote its fuller development.

Work is to start soon on drawing up the programme for development and cooperation for the last decade of this century. We believe that in formulating this programme for the 4th development decade, governments should start from present-day realities in order to set the base for the future. I can assure you that my Government will take an active and constructive part in this highly important work.

### *The rights of national minorities as human rights*

The international efforts to protect and respect human rights should serve the same goals as do the solutions to world economic and financials problems through mutual compromise and joint action, namely to promote the welfare of society and the individual, to create conditions of life fit even for the next century, and to achieve the full enjoyment of human freedom. A cornerstone of the Hungarian Government's foreign policy is that of encouraging and strengthening international cooperation in the human rights and humanitarian fields and to make as full use as possible of the channels provided by the United Nations for that purpose.

Respect for and promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms and development of international cooperation with this end in view are important factors in the increasing confidence among States. There is a growing recognition that the enjoyment of human rights and the maintenance of international security are directly and closely interrelated. On the one hand, this linkage is manifest in that grave and systematic violations of human rights and disregard of internationally recognised norms have, as international experience shows, an adverse effect on interstate relations and the international political atmosphere and may jeopardise international security. On the other hand, the decades since the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights have offered a lesson that cannot be ignored,

that promotion of the exercise of human rights is possible only under conditions of détente and peaceful coexistence. May I recall that one of the first victims of the cold-war era was precisely the cause of human rights.

From this it follows that the proposition which declared the question of human rights to be exclusively an internal matter of States has become a thing of the past once and for all. By drawing up an international catalogue of human rights and establishing international organs and mechanisms to monitor and supervise compliance by States with their obligations in the human rights and humanitarian fields, the United Nations has given a new dimension to multilateral cooperation and has focused the attention of the international community and international public opinion on the question of human rights.

In this regard, as yet another sign of the Hungarian Government's readiness for cooperation coupled with the openness of our policy, the Hungarian People's Republic earlier last month has declared that it recognizes the competence of the Human Rights Committee under Article 41 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and at the same time it has acceded to the Optional Protocol of the Covenant.

By this, we wished to confirm that we are ready and willing to participate—as an equal partner—in the domain of human rights, too, ready and willing to engage in joint international efforts to implement related norms and to supervise compliance with them in a common, international activity.

The Government of the Hungarian People's Republic and public opinion in Hungary follow with particular attention the enjoyment by minority nationalities of their rights and are sensitive to violations of the individual and collective rights of the minorities. This is natural for the added reason that Hungarians living in our neighbouring countries constitute the largest of national minorities in Europe. Preservation of diverse cultural traditions and folklore of the national minorities, protection of historical relics, full enjoyment of the right to cultivate and use the mother tongue, including education in the mother tongue in schools at all levels, are advocated by us at every forum as basic demands. We are convinced that forced assimilation of national minorities, their cultural oppression, destruction of conditions for their independent intellectual and physical existence are unacceptable to the international community of our times.

Therefore we deem it important that, in the spirit of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, we should embark upon the road of codifying those rights which were not covered by the Declaration. In our view these are: the right of peoples to self-determination, to the preservation of national

culture, and to the effective protection of the individual and collective rights of national minorities.

It is a basic requirement of our age to eliminate discrimination of any kind, including those against nations and national minorities. In our belief, such an international, legally binding regulation of norms would contribute to the deepening of human contacts and thereby making these contacts more substantial.

We highly appreciate the efforts, which we think cannot be replaced by anything else, exerted under the auspices of the United Nations to put an end to grave mass violations of human rights. Humiliating practices and policies based on the grounds of race, nationality, religion, or any other basis, violations of the right to life, liberty, and security of person, torture and other cruel and inhuman punishment and treatment, physical coercion, forced resettlement, limitations on or denial of the fundamental economic, social, and cultural rights of people are all phenomena whose elimination calls for effective and resolute action by the international community and the United Nations as its institution.

*

Solving the problems of our age and extending international cooperation in keeping with the interest of all States and peoples presuppose the intensification of multilateral diplomacy. Forums for the multilateral accommodation of interests, the search for and adoption of arrangements acceptable to all parties concerned are provided by regional and multilateral organizations and conferences.

The improvement of the international situation during the past year and the more favourable conditions prevailing at present will certainly increase the role of the United Nations in, and its concrete opportunities for, performing the tasks laid down in the Charter.

It is of importance to international cooperation and the settlement of outstanding pressing problems that the world organization and first of all we, representatives of Member States, make the most of the favourable conditions to renew the work of the United Nations, enhance its prestige and effectiveness, increase its capacity for practical action, and ensure the smooth operation of the world organization in accordance with the requirements of our time.

The Government of the Hungarian People's Republic wishes to contribute to these efforts by pursuing a foreign policy fully in line with the purposes and principles of the United Nations and by the active and constructive participation of its delegation in the work of the 43rd session.

# THE PRESENT AND FUTURE OF RESTRUCTURING

by

REZSŐ NYERS

Although I want to write about the present and about future prospects, I have to start with the past. I am the only one of the members of the Political Committee of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party who was originally part of the leadership of the Social Democratic Party of Hungary. So I should point out that I identify myself with the revolutionary wing of the Social Democratic Party that set itself the final goal of socialism. If I have to define it through names, this includes the early period in the life of the German Social Democrat Karl Kautsky. But I do not share the views of the Kautsky of the 1920s and 1930s. I do accept the Austro-Marxists, for instance Otto Bauer and Max Adler. Of the Hungarian social democratic exiles, Zsigmond Kunfi, and certainly Vilmos Böhm, and of the Social Democrats who stayed at home I may mention two names, that of Illés Mónus and of Árpád Szakasits. Of the communist movement, I deeply feel as my own from the distant past the line which can be defined through the names of Jenő Landler and György Lukács, and to a certain extent József Révai, a line which then spread and became intensified and, at the Seventh Congress of the Comintern, became the new concept of a popular front policy. Unfortunately, this was unable to turn the policy of defence against fascism into a genuine popular front domestic policy in the later stage, although an outline of it appeared in the formulation of the people's democratic way between 1945 and 1947 in the policies of the Communist Party, though it did not unfold nor become entirely clear. In other words, that the socialist transformation should be approached through a democratic phase, adjusting to East-Central European features, and that we should not copy the Soviet way which—we only felt that then—cannot be directly transplanted to Central Europe. But we were then still not able to judge the extent to which the Soviet Union, too, had great problems linked to its own evolution and the mistakes which flanked its road.

The past that I choose then is the road of the social democracy of revolutionary spirit and of the communism of the reform spirit, which—I always felt—must progress towards a revolutionary synthesis, which today I may term reform communism.

But if you ask what I choose of the past, I have also to answer the question of what I reject. I reject the ideology of the policies of the Third International in the thirties, I condemn the policies of the Cominform in the 1940s and 1950s, which revived the erroneous interpretation of class warfare, and in essence rejected the popular front policy; it rejected democracy within the party, the idea of a national adaptation of the revolution, it rejected the democratic path. Consequently, these fifties must also be rejected. In other words, I am not saying that socialism was being built in those years too and that consequently I should accept them. I do not accept them! Because if I accept the fifties, I would also have to accept that it carried the country towards bankruptcy.

There are some who say that only faulty policy and practice must be denied and that the great efforts of the fifties should be considered as what is positive in the past. This is mere sophistry to my mind. I fully agree with György Lukács, though I did not accept his views for a long time—and when I have to choose a past, I am thinking in Lukács's spirit. I do not accept this Stalinist past, and I do not excuse it through the good intentions of the communist masses, since it was not the masses who decided democratically.

For this was a political and ideological break which has no excuse. Because if the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party does not do this consistently, and if it is not done on a worldwide level by communist parties, then they are unable to change the situation as they should.

### *Neither Communists nor Social Democrats justified by history*

History has confirmed Marx; in my opinion, it cannot be said of the communist and social democratic schools of Marxists that history would unequivocally have justified any of them as opposed to the other. I believe that in this context there were truths and errors on both sides. I always interpreted the Leninist break of the communists with the social democratic movement as a genuine revolutionary socialist attitude. The historic question then was whether the socialist revolution could be fought and whether it would be fought by the people who lived then, or the resistance within bourgeois society should be strengthened further while waiting for more favourable circumstances.

I agree with the Leninist break, namely that the further maturing of circumstances should not be waited for but the chain of capitalism should be broken. I believe that as an effort it has been confirmed. But what was attached to it—let us think of the beginning of the Leninist trend, that the path of modernization and socialist construction should lead through a system of producer and consumer communes—has not been confirmed. Very early in the initial translation into practice of the communist idea it was seen that it had a part which could not be implemented. This was not Marx's mistake, but the error of Lenin and his associates in their judgement of possibilities. And Lenin and the Leninist vanguard were able to recognize this in their time and to seek a new path.

This, I consider, of course, to be Lenin's NEP. It was not a simple necessity, it was a break with the direct transition to communist institutions. Later, in Stalin's interpretation, it was represented, as a simple "tactical" break. From the latest writings of Lenin, however, it can definitely be concluded that this was not a tactical break, but that Lenin understood what we understand today: that in transitory society, in the historic stage of socialism, it is not possible to introduce economic management of a communistic type. And now, in the 1980s, it has been proven to us that there was an error. This was no longer the error of the Leninist but of the Stalinist period, when they did not consider the state a detached organization but the community of the total population. To all this was linked an underestimation of the role of the market and an overestimation of the central directability of society; to this was connected the fact that the necessity for different opinions and for debates within the party was denied, and through this democracy, too, was liquidated. What has been confirmed in social democracy is democracy within the party and recognition of political democracy as a social value. At the same time, the only achievement of social democracy historically was that where it came to power it improved the situation of the masses, but it was unable to approach the idea, and even less the practice, of a new social formation.

### *Crisis and renewal*

Various crisis symptoms appeared in the socialist countries over the last decades. At the same time, in some socialist countries—in Hungary, in China, in the Soviet Union—the deep ideological and practical rethinking of socialism has been going on. Complete rethinking and rejuvenation are always fed by a crisis, the two are inseparable from each other. When a coun-

try sets out on a reform, crisis necessarily dominates, a change in social evolution can begin only amidst certain disturbances. Almost every reform first gives the impression of disorder versus order. This is why it disturbs many people, because there are people who think in the terms of social responsibility who side with order when contrasting the disorder of the beginning of the reform to the order of the *status quo ante*. And if this disorder goes beyond a certain limit, increasingly large sections of people demand order. It is a major test of reform policy to what extent it is able to limit this disorder to a short period and then carry it over into an organized and settled reform process, starting progress along a new trail. This disorder occurs in the economy, in the world of consciousness, and also in the world of values. We do not have to be afraid of the crisis itself, as it only becomes dangerous if the forces and recognitions of change do not become organized. Crisis is, in fact, a condition for the social recognitions that it is necessary to act in another way.

### *The middle class in a socialist society*

I believe a new middle class is developing. For instance, among the Hungarian intellectuals a professional stratum has come about which is educated, worldly-wise, earns well, has a socialist consciousness, and approaches the way of life of the Western lower middle class. As the continuation of previous urbanization, a new entrepreneurial stratum is expanding spectacularly. I believe that this small entrepreneurial stratum is a very mixed formation. It includes many types, from workers to petit bourgeois and peasants, and here there has been a convulsion. But out of this convulsion, in which new enterprises and bankruptcies intermix, in the end a surviving middle stratum develops, which also approaches the way of life of the West European lower middle class, its standard of income and, to a certain extent, also its way of thinking. This stratum—in contrast to the intellectual formation about which I spoke earlier, and which has a rather high consciousness of community and feeling of responsibility—has much less community substance and thinks much more practically. In addition, the ranks of the middle strata have been entered by the highly qualified worker, peasant, and employee strata too, which both in the level of their income and way of thinking represent a perceptibly higher standard than the average of wage and salary earners. This is what I would term the formation of a new kind of middle class stratum. This whole together means in the last resort that the process of urbanization which had been interrupted earlier, and which continues with

and in the framework of socialist ownership relations and socialist state policies, a particular middle class in socialism is forming which differs basically from the earlier middle class, which had been pervaded by feudal leftovers.

### *The condition of the working class*

There are voices raised in criticism which claim that the situation of the middle strata is improving, that their role in shaping social consciousness is becoming dynamic while a part of the working class is becoming impoverished, is becoming *déclassé*. These voices claim that the reformers are not paying enough attention to that. I myself do not think that not enough attention is being paid but that for the time being this is a problem we are unable to solve. These are two different things. In my observation—and it is well known that I move among reformers—those who urge the reform do see that some worker strata are being driven to the margin, but they simply do not know what to do with this stratum, which we call commuters, who live in unsettled family conditions, and are often doing heavy physical work, or sometimes little physical work and live at a low standard without the level and quantity of culture which the modern times expects. This is usually the stratum of low skills. But there are some who rise out of this stratum, too, because often they earn well, but in general the problem exists. The working class cannot be considered uniform in the old sense either, or judged merely from the aspect of their relationship to the means of production. The relationship to the means of production is the same of the commuting unskilled worker and of the skilled worker who earns well, and has a car and possibly a holiday cottage. But it is not only in respect of this worker stratum, but in regard to the other strata of society being driven to the margin that for the time being we have no feasible answer to their problems.

### *A way out, or new restrictions*

There is an inherent connection between the social and economic problems of the country. We are now going through a phase of restrictions and the siphoning off of incomes, and the various other limitations are having a negative impact on the conditions of life of the population. I hope, nonetheless, that we will come out of this situation through our efforts and sacrifices. Whether we will succeed depends on whether we shall be able to radically limit the loss-making sources, freeze them, and consistently assert in the

economy market prices and its price mechanism. To free resources and the management of money without free prices is very dangerous, and can lead to an inflation or to general shortages.

My view is that the idea of selective restrictions which was formulated in the programme for stabilization and progress at the September 1987 session of Parliament was not wrong when it declared the aim that there should not be any restrictions on successful companies but there should be for the bad. But it has to be said that this has not come about. Analyses show that those who claim that the restrictions are selective in a reversed way, affecting good companies, were right. I believe that this reversed selectivity has to revert the original and positive selection by the restrictions.

Are we making a real break with short-term thinking from which we have been suffering in several ways? For instance, for fifteen years we have talked almost daily about restructuring the economy. We are in the process but it is less clear what we wish to replace by what. We speak of provisional unemployment, but we do not yet have a social protective net which would make such unemployment bearable without graver social complications. We speak of technological restructuring, of a new product pattern, of modernization, and we have done so for a long time, but we do not yet have the universal and vocational education which would meet this need and demand. Such things also contribute to the circumstance that in the process of transformation matters proceed very slowly, are drawn out and comprise half-way solutions.

I would certainly admit that the problem exists. I also acknowledge that there is no adequate long-term preparation in the development of the social infrastructure which could help this process. I believe that there is a connection between the processes on the state and the social scale and in the microprocesses. I feel that, economically, in the absence of a long-term strategy among an important part of the companies it is not possible to develop such a long-term strategy on the societal scale and an infrastructure adequate to it. At present, we have not been able to bring about in the basic institutions of society, in the companies, in the cities, in the municipalities, in the schools, and in the social institutions that form of long-term thinking which would take shape in programmes too. It is true that for this our economic mechanism does not provide really good support to the local authorities. This is one of the key questions of the further development of the reform, of the economic mechanism.

I believe, on the other hand, that stabilisation will not come to a conclusion and that the take-off will not begin simultaneously in the entire Hungarian economy. This depends mainly on the opportunities for investment

and on budgetary policy, whether we shall be able to plug the sources of low-efficiency activities. I believe that there will be companies and factories, manufacturing sectors, for which already 1990 will show possibilities for progress and take-off. This will spread in waves, and in this regard social sentiment will calm down or be improved considerably when the movement of these waves has reached a size where an improving situation can be sensed in a significant part of the economy, public education, and culture. When will this occur? I hope that in a certain sector of manufacturing industry we shall already be able to create opportunities for initiatives within a year or two. There will be islands that will be growing amid a sea of restrictions, islands which can manage freely. It is possible that we shall be able to notice such islands by 1989.

# REVISION OF THE CONSTITUTION

by

KÁLMÁN KULCSÁR

Hungary's history over the past twenty years has displayed vigorous efforts for reform, especially in the economy. Important economic reforms were introduced as early as 1968. They aimed to abolish central control (by ministries) of the economy by plan directives, replacing this by management by indirect means (prices, wages, credit and monetary policies, etc.) and by giving scope to market influences.

It is urgent now to discover why the reform failed in some respects to overcome difficulties in the economic sphere, which to a considerable degree are due to a rigid, étatist, obsolete economic policy.

There were inconsistent changes of policy that interrupted the progress of the reform more than once which, even at the time, challenged the feasibility of the reform. It is the generally accepted view today that the primary cause of failure of the reform was political and not economic.

Post-Second World War Hungary inherited an obsolete economic and social structure. The difficulties of post-war reconstruction in a country that suffered much war damage were largely aggravated by a fundamentally erroneous economic policy, including irrationally forced industrialisation, concentration on heavy industry, compulsory collectivisation of agriculture, neglect of the service sector, and an unreasonable desire for autarky accompanied by underestimating the importance of international trade. A gradual correction of errors started only after the crisis of October 1956. The economic reform of 1968 was part of this process.

It has been argued for some years, especially in scholarly circles, that a successful reform of the economy cannot be carried beyond a certain point without being coupled with vigorous changes covering the whole of Hungarian society, including a reform of State and political institutions. This only became government policy as 1987 turned into 1988.

Other reasons too justify a reform of the political system. The political system in Hungary is the fruit of the international conditions created by the Second World War, and thus showed the influence of the Soviet political system of the 1930s. This system was a product of specific social, economic and power relations and did not fit the Hungarian conditions even when first introduced: Hungary's historic development differs in several crucial respects from the explicitly East European or Russian process. Developments over the past thirty years produced further malfunctions. The system was transformed in various ways but still has considerable disfunctional consequences.

### *Why revision?*

Hungary's present Constitution has been in force since 1949. Its nature has not been fundamentally changed by minor amendments over the past close to 40 years. It is generally agreed that today the Constitution no longer expresses Hungary's socio-economic order, failing, as it does, to reflect the considerable changes in the function and role of the State. The radical changes that have been continuous after 1968, regarding the economic managing and controlling functions of the State, were not reflected in the constitution at all, and paragraphs defining the various forms of property and ownership had to be given greater precision. A new Company Act became effective in October 1988. The present Constitution established a hierarchy of forms of ownership, which is completely obsolete.

It is also widely held in Hungary that the structure of society, reflected in the 1949 Constitution, has become considerably differentiated over recent years and there is a natural demand to give greater scope to spontaneous organizations, movements, and interest-representing bodies. This should be reflected in the Constitution, defining the role of organizations in the preparation and taking of State decisions, and in establishing the forms of institutional, autonomous, democratic life in the community.

The recognition that there is a need to revise and modernise the Constitution is not recent, although this demand has exhibited some shifts of emphasis over time. At first it was formulated by social scientists of various disciplines, today it is also made at the actual centres of political power. The direction that constitutional amendments will probably take is therefore established. Comments are thus in order although it is impossible to tell precisely, at the present moment, what specifically will be decided by the constitutional reform committee convened in Summer 1988.

*What has to be revised*

The first major item needing revision in connection with the reform concerns the fundamental principles of the social and political system. Efforts must be made to reflect in the Constitution the pluralism which is actually present in Hungary. To be sure, Hungary has a one-party system, but this party (the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party) takes the line that the one-party system in Hungary emerged as a consequence of post-Second World War events and is not an inherent part of the political philosophy of Marxism. Therefore, the possibility of several parties operating on the Hungarian political scene cannot be excluded from the start, or in the not too distant future, provided the circumstances allow such a development. However, in my opinion the positions and functions of the State and various organizations in the political system have to be defined, even given the current conditions of a one-party system. I think it is practicable to define, in terms of constitutional provisions as well, the role of the ruling party in this structure.

The second major subject is a detailed definition in the Constitution of how power is shared among those who exercise it. In the past forty years, the division of power between the legislature, the executive and the courts was rejected in Hungary. There is now a general inclination to base the State and Constitution on the principle of the division of powers. This principle is now expressed as follows: power has four centres—legislation (the function of Parliament), executive power (the function of the government), judicial power (execised by the courts) and the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party.

There is of course a demand for the constitutional position of the party to be clarified by the Constitution in an unequivocal manner that differs from past practice. The roles of Parliament and the courts should be similarly defined.

The roles attributed by the Constitution to Parliament (the supreme representative body of the people) and to local bodies of popular representation—councils—today fail to reflect both reality and future needs. In recent years, the functions of Parliament (and, hence, its standing) have grown, but the Constitution contains no adequate guarantees or safeguards for decisions to be taken there, concerning the vital affairs of the country. The fact alone that the Hungarian Parliament holds four sessions a year (each lasting only two to three days) suggests the highly formal activity of that body. For intersession periods the 21-member Presidential Council, elected by Parliament from its own members, which at the same time performs the functions of a collective head of State, is licensed by Parliament to exercise its functions.

It has become clear that the Presidential Council has to be abolished by the constitutional reform. The post of Head of State has to be created and legislative power has to be exercised by a Parliament in the possession of genuine powers. For this purpose it has to be re-organized and function continuously in a manner similar to that usual in Western democracies.

Judicial power has to be strengthened and fundamentally expanded. A new Constitutional Court should be created with the primary function (in addition to several other important ones) of supervising the constitutionality of legislation. On the other hand, administrative jurisdiction has to be introduced which controls the State administration essentially ensuring that any decision made by administrative bodies should be open to challenge in the courts. Furthermore, greater emphasis must be placed on safeguarding the independence of judges also by Parliament electing for life the members of the Supreme Court and of the Constitutional Court, and by organizing a body including highly respected judges, lawyers and the Minister of Justice, at the time concerned, entrusted with the administration of the courts (appointments, transfers, assignment of cases at the courts, transfers, and disciplinary action).

The third major subject of the constitutional reform is the re-regulation of human rights. Many people think the basic approach of the 1949 Constitution with regard to the regulation of human rights is obsolete, because —although the Hungarian Constitution also contains most of the catalogue of human rights as universally accepted—the Constitution is, as a rule, restricted to merely declaring these rights and no provisions for implementing them are contained in it or in a separate Act.

Although it is agreed that considerable progress has recently been made in the practice of human rights in Hungary, and this practice has also met with a favourable reception abroad (as expressed by leading Americans during the Prime Minister's visit to the United States in July 1988), it is felt that the provisions on human rights in the Hungarian Constitution need considerable improvement to ensure the modernisation of Hungarian society and the State. The method is open to debate. It is still undecided whether the entire subject of rights should be regulated or only the major features of human rights, leaving details of the methods of exercising these rights to a special Act.

Institutions have to be created which befit the Rule of Law. A legal system has to be created which provides adequate standards for the people and organizations operating at various levels, allowing them to predict the long-term consequences of their behaviour.

I am convinced—and this view is shared by other people—that the constitutional reform is already overdue. It might have been better to start work at

least a year or two earlier. This is also underlined by the fact that the regulation of some constitutional matters has been made so urgent by developments that no further delay is tolerable. This primarily concerns the rights of assembly and association: the appropriate bills were presented to Parliament before the end of 1988. Crucial details for the implementation of such rights are not in the Constitution or indeed legislated for, but citizens justifiedly demand urgent action. Similarly, the regulation of other issues will become urgent, issues which by their very nature require constitutional provisions, such as amendments of the Electoral Act and the preparation of a new bill on referendums.

In general, in legislation, it is inadmissible that constitutional details should be settled prior to the constitutional reform. This might threaten the conceptual integrity of the constitutional reform. Nevertheless, an anticipatory decision on the rights of assembly and association appears to be inevitable. This, however, is why a decision was recently taken to complete the draft of a new or considerably amended Constitution Bill (following a constitutional reform) before the end of 1989, and to submit it for discussion and adoption by Parliament early in 1990.

ISTVÁN VAS

# POEMS

*Translated by Kenneth McRobbie*

## AN EVENING AT 'THE FOUR GREYS'

We were having dinner at 'The Four Greys',
remember? Summer of '42. And you, so incensed always!
A time when we could never feel at ease.
Aimless walking. Just sitting in restaurants.
Talking a lot. Including about what
was going on between us.
Our minds worked overtime, rationalising as to
why a couple like us simply couldn't love.
In the glimmering twilight, heavy with anticipation
of what may, and awareness of what will, come,
the summer night quivered with electricity and fear,
and in our discreet, inscrutable hearts, wild throbbings.
So, we were sitting in a walled garden alcove.

Suddenly, an explosion not too far off.
All the lights went out, and in the total darkness
—Budapest was yet to know the terror of bombing—
the wall trembled, plaster rained down on us.
Then all at once, dead silence.

That first air raid came to an end,
though planes droned overhead all night.
To belated girlish screaming,
scared murmurings, rattle
of cutlery, the scraping of chairs,
the blackness came to life.

Just as our fears were evaporating,
a wine-slurred hiccupping roar:
"I'm taking command!
Discipline's what we need!
I'll shoot the first one
who dares make a move!"

Absolute silence. Probably some
had already ducked under the tables.
No one stirred in the restaurant courtyard.
Then again a voice, another's
rose in a screech: "What the hell,
who's giving the orders here?
It's a captain speaking!"
To which the first, in maudlin tones:
"In that case, captain,
I respectfully hand over command."
This personage then delivered
a harangue; he, too, impressed on us
that discipline comes before all else.
We paid our bill by candlelight
because the power was off all that night,
then stumbled out into the pitch dark
and back across the Margaret Bridge on foot
still speaking of our love's hopelessness.

Since then, how many bombs have fallen,
how many drunken captains
staggered, and commands rapped out,
how often have the lights been extinguished—
and where is 'The Four Greys' now?
True it is, the pair of us have been dragged
along after, rather than guided by fate.
Yet we are still alive, our innermost being
radiant amid the horrors.
We've even solved a few
of the insoluble's secrets.
Having lived not as we wished,
only as was possible.

## NECESSITY

*At San Zeno, Verona*

They shoved me aside at the green-bronze doorway;
I stood helpless as they streamed past.
Yes, they really shouldn't have been so pushy
but it has become a habit of theirs—Danube,
Don, Adige, are all one to them,
always in pursuit of some lofty goal
combining conquest and zealousness.
Here too a rationale is being trumpeted,
art-historical now, about this
representing this, and that being that,
with this and that being Germanic motifs,
Celtic Christ and Carolingian knight
— and why not, why not everything?

They shoved me aside at the green-bronze doorway.
Of course, it's not the first time a horde of them
crossed the Alps, pouring down in a torrent
hereabouts before marching on further south.
Their precious Baedeker hasn't so much as a word
about the red stone bridge of the Scaligeri
and the one built by the Romans, as to
who it was demolished them—not so long ago
actually—after they marched across.

Not so long ago. . . But who remembers now?
Today they're bringing money, and devotion
—if that's what they were showing a moment ago.
As that Venetian doctor put it, only
yesterday: once again, they are 'necessary.'
These days, who remembers anything? After all,
we too have reached a higher stage of forgetting.
And I myself am no longer a European.

## THEY ARE WHO WE ARE

No matter how you search among company here
for a person, just one
who hasn't done time in one prison or another
during the twenties, thirties, forties
or fifties, for one reason or another
—you'll search in vain, be it at table
in some country pub around
a bottle of wine, or at some
unscheduled business meeting,
or with friends at a house-warming.
There'll never be any such occasion
without someone present who'll speak out
(or maybe hold his tongue) about what it was like
being behind bars, behind barbed wire;
it makes no difference when or why,
who had whom locked up doesn't matter now—they're all
haloed by that homogenizing prison-radiance
which transfigures even the swindler.
So if a newcomer approaches your table, or
there's an occasion for raising glasses high,
don't be a wet blanket by going all out to guess
who he is and where he comes from, he who might
(if opportunity offered) pounce on you.
  Just move your chair
over, and make room for him.
They are who we are. Let's drink to that.

## IN CROSS-SECTIONS OF TIME

It's close to midnight. Summer. The window's open.
Moths cluster on the room's fluorescent light.
I stand at the window. Loneliness a chronic condition.
This room of mine takes in those older ones
from here and there. Their projections
in time and space intersect one with another.
As do the persons who dwelled there. Like me
they remain in cross-sections of time,
and I speak to them in different temporalities.
Alone. And to the saturating night.

# A NEW STAGE IN THE ECONOMIC REFORM PROCESS

by

BÉLA KÁDÁR

Reform processes are induced in any country through changes in the external and internal conditions of development, the appearance of functional disturbances, or by the compulsion to keep pace with general progress. Hungary, which is poor in natural resources, has a narrow domestic market and is sensitive to the external economy, found that the postwar adoption of the autarchic Stalinist model employing central plans caused a decline in social growth that was larger and that occurred much sooner than in the other CMEA countries, as the 'fifties indicated. In Hungary the first efforts to eliminate the extremes and the control methods of the Stalinist model appeared as early as 1954 and took shape in the reform of economic guidance in 1968. This reform abolished the system of mandatory plan indices, created more elbow-room for market influences and motivation linked to profitability, in fact, concentrated essentially on the instruments of economic control. Yet it did not affect the targets of development strategy, the organizational forms of economic management, personnel policy, or the social-political environment of economic management.

In the agricultural sector the forerunners of market-oriented reform appeared as early as the 'sixties. In agriculture and in some branches of the service sector, adjustment to a market orientation developed much faster and more widely than in industry. The interests and the vigorous political and even social influence of the traditional large companies of heavy industry, which account for an over-large amount of industrial production, undoubtedly contributed to the slower and inadequate progress of the reform processes in industry and to its special treatment, to the survival of "reform-free" islands.

Chequered with halts and rearrangements, the reform process has accompanied Hungary's history over the past twenty years. Of the important steps, mention should be made of the post-1978 economic policy which

jected forced growth, the decentralisation of compayn organization and the new forms of company control, the appearance of small enterprises at the beginning of the 'eighties, the Bankruptcy Act of 1986, the creation of the network of commercial banks in 1987, and the tax reform which came into force in 1988.

The lessons to be drawn from the reform process, which moved forward in small steps, a considerable distance from each other and with occasional interruptions, are not unequivocal even after two decades. It is undeniable that the growth of the Hungarian economy was unfavourable by international comparison in the course of the last 10 to 15 years. After the rapid annual growth (6 per cent) of the three postwar decades, the average annual growth for the last ten years of Hungarian GDP was under 2 per cent, considerably behind the world average. We have not succeeded in transforming the production and export structure, which are not in harmony with the growth potential of the country and with the long-term development trends of the world economy, and are material and energy intensive and require less skilled labour. Consequently, the income-producing capacity of the economy has diminished, and export income could not be increased despite a large growth in export volume. Today it is already undeniable that for a major part of the Hungarian production structure no dynamism, no income-producing capacity, nor even social-economic stabilising capacity remains to be used.

The increasing structural obsolescence has strongly contributed to the decline of competitiveness and exporting ability, to the increasing import requirements, to the loss of world market position observable in the past two decades, and to the dangers of being marginalised in external economic relations. Hungary's share in world exports fell between 1968 and 1986 from 0.7 per cent to 0.4 per cent, and the price per export unit of Hungarian products are falling further behind the unit prices typical for industrially developed and, more recently, even the medium-developed countries. As a result of technical and structural backwardness, the modern technologies, products, and components required in the domestic market, or for exporting, are already being bought preponderantly from import sources. Thus the deteriorating export capacity and the increasing demand for imports have played a major role in the process of debt accumulation, which casts a shadow on the progress of the country over a longer term. Slowing down and halting the longer-term deterioration in performance and the creation of the preconditions for a turn-up in performance are the basic requirement, the categoric imperative for Hungarian social and economic progress.

Besides the structural and balance of trade problems which are taking on an increasingly critical magnitude, a deterioration of the general social envi-

ronment of economic management can also be observed. The low birth rate, the beginning of a fall in population, the fall in the life expectation of the male population, alcoholism, the high rate of divorce, the decline of discipline and value in work, and in general, the general weakening of self-sustaining abilities all represent an increasingly unfavourable environment for improving economic performance, strengthening competitiveness while also indicating sources of tension reaching beyond the economic sphere.

From the aspect of the future of the Hungarian reform process, a correct evaluation of these negative features is of key importance. There are some views, hardly being kept secret, which explain the deterioration in performance through the departure from the earlier path, through the consequences of the post-1968 reform process, increased market-orientation, and the openness to the world economy. This interpretation of the situation also automatically offers the medicine. It would, however, be a grave mistake to forget that the new technology-intensive path of growth in the world economy, unfolding in the 'seventies and 'eighties, the rapid structural obsolescence of the traditional production activities, and the greater importance of capital, technology, skill, and entrepreneurial activity, along with the slowdown of growth in East and West European countries have greatly reduced the external conditions under which Hungary can develop an economy sensitive to the outside and has already resulted in a loss of income which approaches the GDP of a single year.

Economists familiar with the questions of external economics do not deny that, without the adjustment stimulated by the reform process, the extent of these losses would have been much larger. Consequently, the deterioration in performance and in the social environment is not due to the reform process begun in 1968, but to the narrowness of its scope, its lack of strategy, its slow and inconsistent implementation as well as to numerous errors of judgement and decision in economic policy, independent of the reform process.

### *The image of the reform*

Although the necessity for a change in performance is hardly argued today, there is much argument on the nature of the reform needed to bring about the change. The generation which worked on the formulation of the economic reform of 1968 wanted to improve the functional ability of the then model of the socialist economy. In the reform ideology of the 'seventies the attempts at self-management inspired by the Yugoslav and the West European Social Democratic search for new ways had an important influence and

to a certain extent this was expressed in the new forms of company control of 1984. Approaches directed at the blending of socialism and the "management revolution," the bringing about of a "managerial socialism," can be sensed more strongly in the 'eighties.

These three endeavours, whose directions are frequently awry to one other, can be traced in changing proportions within the present reform ideas, which are especially tinged by a strengthening element of opportunism. In this view the clarification and implementation of the socialism-conforming reforms, which should be in harmony with the current and further developed variants of socialism, is relatively time-consuming, which influences at the most the longer trends in evolution. It is partly the wearing down of the inspirational force of the now twenty-year-old reform ideology, the clear reform-weariness of a considerable part of the population and it is partly the constraining need to solve the accumulated problems quickly and efficiently that demand immediate measures which can bring about a change in performance, but which do not require large institutional changes (e.g. regrouping income to aid improvement in performance, savings, talent, the formation of intellectual capital, the "dethronement" of the lack of talent in personnel policy). These steps are specific to Hungary and arise out of the present room for manœuvre of the country, out of its interests and constraints, and do not arise necessarily out of some ideal or typical model of socialism. Consequently, they can provide, of course, only lessons of limited validity for the evolution of other CMEA countries.

However, this emphasis on the specific features of Hungarian economic evolution, the reform process and development strategy are explained not only by the nature of the measures now necessary but also by the objective determinants of longer-term growth. In the postwar period, the political and economic control system, ownership relations and the fundamental political priorities were very largely identical with those of the other CMEA countries up until 1968; since then they have only been modified relatively slowly. It is obvious that in countries which are at different stages of development, have a different development history and different endowments for growth, the application of identical "social control techniques" and political priorities leads to different results; approaching the problem from another side, guiding the social-economic development requires different priorities and control techniques in countries which have a different historic past and endowments for growth, even if they have similar political principles and ideological values.

From the aspect of longer-term Hungarian social-economic evolution and development strategy, or from the aspect of the national reform process, the

basic observation has to be made that the Hungarian economy is both structurally very open even by international comparison and is more oriented to external trade than those of the other CMEA countries. The ratio of exports to the GDP is 6 per cent in the Soviet Union, between 20 and 30 per cent in the smaller CMEA countries; in Hungary it has been for a long time above 40 per cent and even Hungarian exports to the non-socialist countries are above 20 per cent of the Hungarian GDP. In such circumstances, to disregard the social and economic consequences of the objective structural openness is untenable in the longer term; this is also the source of heavy losses. Because of this, Hungary is faced with the requirement to adjust to the world economy much more widely and vigorously than the other CMEA countries are and cannot carry the responsibility for the maintenance of the image of socialism established in earlier decades and which is now being questioned in the other CMEA countries as well.

### *A pluralistic orientation*

It is perhaps not superfluous to mention that erroneous decisions are not necessarily system-specific. Employing a faulty image of the world or exercising false judgement, industrially developed and developing countries have also made erroneous decisions on development strategy and whose social costs are to be paid in the present and in the future. From the purposes of a successful Hungarian result, correctly surveying the foci of activity and orientation are of key importance today. Recently and understandably, there have been stronger efforts which see the dénouement lying in the reappraisal and dynamisation of the domestic market, which sets a lower standard of requirements and is closely related to the phenomena of a shortage economy. These views disregard, unfortunately, the historic experience that in countries with a narrow domestic market, reliance on the domestic market involves very high social losses, especially in an era when the international division of labour is becoming more and more global.

A more concrete barrier than the international experience lies in the circumstance that the repayment of the accumulated debt, the reduction of budget expenditure, the liquidation of unviable companies and activities demand that income be extracted from the economy. Consequently, any worthwhile growth of income available domestically, a significant growth of the domestic market cannot be expected in the medium term. As a consequence, the chances of progress are primarily linked to strengthening export capacity and exploiting the benefits of the international division of

labour. The basic principle of decisions concerning development strategy is an adjustment to the demands laid by cooperation within the international economy, the optimum exploitation of the current and potential benefits of specialisation by Hungary.

The gravest problems in development strategy are caused by the requirements of "pluralist adjustment." The economy supplies its customers domestically, in the CMEA, in the developing and in the developed countries through different product structures, at different levels of modernity and quality. The differing standards and product patterns do not make possible any regrouping of trade among the different markets. This causes both additional costs and obstacles to flexibility along with structural rigidity; it dissipates the adjustment energy of a small country. Constraints of length do not make it possible here to analyse the factors that affect the external economic relations of the country.

From the aspect of the connections between the reform and market orientation, the crucial fact is that in the medium term neither growth of the domestic market nor, in all probability, an expansion of CMEA cooperation can be expected owing to the limits on delivery on the part of the CMEA countries and to their changed external economic interests. This is a very important change from the preceding four decades. In those four decades the requirements of CMEA cooperation determined the foci of the activities of the Hungarian economy, its operational mechanisms, organizational framework, motivations. In the years to come the vitality, structure, and modernization of Hungarian economic development all depend primarily on cooperation with the industrially developed and the dynamically developing countries. As a consequence, the substantial elements in the new reform period consist not simply of the continual adjustment to the operability of the old social-economic model, but reintegration into the international division of labour on a macroeconomic and microeconomic level, as well as a strategy of comprehensive social-economic adjustment. The tasks of the external economic reform, organizational modernisation, the regrouping of resources and income, the modernization of the organizational and institutional system, and the development of the human environment can be deduced from this objective.

### *Rearranging targets in policy*

The broad deterioration of the external conditions for growth did undoubtedly play a role in the decline of growth in the economy. However, the ate of adjustment to changes in external conditions reflects the shortcomings

of the economic system and of development strategy. Such errors and shortcomings included:

— Disregarding of the size of the country, its potentials for growth and its structural openness, which is very high by international comparison.

— Maintaining operational barriers to the market mechanisms (through artificial prices, low sensitivity to costs and income, a monopoly-creating organizational system, economic control relying on administrative instruments).

— The high proportion of faulty decisions in development policy, which over a longer period ignored the country's endowments and the requirements of the world economic environment, mainly through large investment projects observing a very high share of the limited development resources and created a material and energy-intensive economic structure.

— The constant inability of the system of decision-making to solve the problems of growth, protection of living standards, structural modernization, improvement of efficiency, and the lack of the harmonization of these goals and of setting proper priorities.

The shape of this new reform period is influenced fundamentally by the recognition that in the present situation correcting some of the mistakes of the past is no longer sufficient. The future of Hungary depends on radical transformation, on a turn in economic performance. But this kind of turn or change cannot be expected if the reform process does not extend to the other spheres of society. According to historic experience, the handling of a difficult social-economic situation always requires a forceful government and leadership which is capable of action. It is this which leads to the rationalization of the decision-making system, the development of a rational division of work between pure politics and the methods of control. The political sphere can concentrate its forces on the future of the country, on the bringing about of a social consensus of a new type, if it rids itself of the mass of specialized administrative tasks which have been heaped on it in the present over-politicized and centralized decision-making system, which because of this overload on the political sphere is neither quick in decision nor specific in competence. The government too can accept a more forceful role if it rationalizes its own organization, and reduces the risk of error by having decisions checked by parliament, by the public forums. The bringing about of the new social consensus and rejuvenation demands more openness, more self-organization, oppotunities to assert special interests, and to a considerable extent—in orer to win over a reform-weary population—nwe political slaog, personalities, and styles.

The new course of world economic growth has unequivocally and swiftly put a higher value on the human factor. From the aspect of the economy, this has to be reflected not only in politics, but also in the improvement of the educational, cultural, health protection and leisure spheres which are of key importance for the improvement of human performance. Competitiveness in the world market in the new type of activities, which do not require materials but are intensive in skills and enterprise, cannot be expected in a human environment in which much of the population is unable to offer an acceptable performance due to lack of skill or education, uncertain values, and a low condition of health.

The objectively necessary rearrangement of the targets of development strategy affects fundamentally the priorities and control of specific economic policies. All over the world, economic policy prefers to operate with measures which have an effect in the shorter term and restrictions which are technically easier to handle than to concern itself with tasks of restructuring which bear fruit in the longer term, are technically more complex and demand bigger sacrifices. In the past decade Hungarian economic policy was primarily centred on the restriction of demand. It goes without saying that in the present situation of debt and budgetary deficit, the structural modernization to be external economy-oriented and no longer postponable, does not mean the removal of the barriers which are needed for balance. The most difficult challenge to Hungarian economic policy is exactly that and thus differing from countries which in the past carried out a successful programme of liberalization or accelerated restructuring; it cannot rely to any great extent on the inclusion of additional external resources. Consequently, the basic resources for the present accelerated restructuring programme can only be the radical regrouping of the resources available at present.

Regrouping of resources means regrouping productive activities towards the viable, profitable, and competitive areas, the withdrawal of financial, labour, import, and technological resources from unviable areas. It means rearranging incomes from the state budget to the companies and the population, as well as within companies and within various groups among the population; finally it means a certain regrouping of markets too towards those countries which are most dynamic and capable of cooperating in the modernization of the Hungarian economy.

The instruments for the externally-oriented restructuring and for implementation of a strategy of regrouping resources reflect the specifics of the present situation. The limits to imports and the risk of upsetting the balance do not allow full liberalization. On the other hand, vigorous regrouping expressly demands relative deregulation, the relaxation of the earlier

isolation of the Hungarian economy from the world economy, of the barriers to import management, of the flow of capital, of enterprise, and of economic management in general. Deregulation does not mean the immediate and complete elimination of regulations, but their selective elimination, general simplification, and a change in their earlier character of being administrative and differentiated in detail, by clearer, more stable norms which are regulated by acts of parliament. In the method of economic direction a change can be brought about by transforming the earlier allocational type of planning, frequently tactical, into a strategic focus which is suitable for shaping structural modernization and for reintegration into the world economy and for synthesizing the various social-economic interests, setting out from the national interest. The gaining of ground of monetary control over budgetary control has begun, but the initial Hungarian as well as international experience draws attention to the circumstance that monetary control is primarily suitable for fine-tuning amid a relative equilibrium, and is a technique which requires rather stable power relations. The present Hungarian economy and society are still hard-mouthed horses who, when ridden gently, can only be made to change course within a narrow range. This situation also provides a particular tinge to the future role of strategic planning. Due to the difficulties accumulated and to the existing limits on rational action, the externally oriented strategy based on the regrouping of resources cannot rely on "pure" solutions and a uniform range of methods. Reintegration into the world economy necessitates the further rearrangement and rationalization of the division of responsibilities between the central guidance and the market mechanisms; this has to be clearly accompanied by broadening the range of the market mechanisms, though certainly not only through them. In the given situation, a change for the better in guidance can be represented by a shift of focus towards fastening the conditions for reintegration into the world economy and a supply promoting general modernization, with due consideration always to be paid to the limits set by the domestic and external economic balance and the constraints of macroeconomic control which are caused by these considerations. Development choice is centred on the creation of adequate conditions of motivation and opportunities for action, as well as the easing of access to the financial, import, technological, and labour resources which are necessary for the extension of competition.

Motivating the present and potentially competitive areas can be strengthened by an exchange rate policy adjusted to the values of the world economy, with a realistic tax policy, a price policy better reflecting the conditions of supply and demand, and by new forms of ownership. The relaxation of the restrictions on imports, selectively and in stages, is needed to facilitate and

accelerate access to imports. In the labour market, which is in practice liberalized today, regrouping and retraining the manpower released from contracting or redundant areas (because of the fall in budgetary subsidies) can improve the conditions of supply. The stimulation of entrepreneurial activity, of small companies and various private activities is an organic element in the strategy of encouraging supply. From the aspect of restraining inflationary forces are to be expected from both the expansion of the financial range of movement and price, exchange rate and wages policy; in order to restrain these inflationary forces, encouraging savings by positive interest rates is of key importance. (Real interest rates have been negative in recent years.)

The implementation of the above strategy for regrouping resources clearly modifies fundamentally the vital conditions for some companies, areas, and groups of the population, and consequently involves considerable social-political tensions, resistance, and risks. The extent of these tensions and risks is closely linked to the intensity of the regrouping. Owing to missed opportunities and erroneous decisions and to the deterioration of objective conditions, a slower, less intensive though less risky regrouping would no longer stop and reverse the negative processes. On the other hand, bringing about the political conditions of a more radical regrouping demands the very careful harmonization of economic and political movements and the development of the political environment of the economically open model. It is perhaps not more verbosity to note that in the history of the past thirty years there are many examples of modernization and liberalization of national economies which had earlier been isolated from and behind the world economy, and subsequently their political decentralisation. However, condensed and simultaneous modernization and opening of the economy and politics in external conditions as unfavourable as those of Hungary, has to date been a singular and consequently difficult enterprise.

After this survey of the principal interconnections of development strategy, it would perhaps be of interest to sketch the duties and changes in some important areas of the new stage in the reform process.

### *Development policy*

The main thrusts of development strategy in the structural modernization are directed by priority to areas of activity which are capable of exploiting the benefits of specialization, which rely on the achievements of technical-scientific development and on the skill of the Hungarian labour force versus

material, energy, and investment intensive products which can be produced by unskilled labour. Recognizing the main principle of modernization sets the following directions for the regrouping of resources:

(a) instead of over-reliance on material and energy production, towards areas with products that can be sold on the convertible currency markets,

— development of the supply industries which improve the competitiveness of the immediate export sphere,

— infrastructural development strengthening the general ability to export,

— development relying on a systematic approach and furthering the general operational and income-producing capacity of the economy, its technical-structural transformation, and the formation of strategic foci (food industry, telecommunication, medical industries, tourism).

(b) Less ambiguous market information for the formulation of directions of specialization is offered by products which might be sold in larger quantities in present market conditions but are not being exported owing to insufficient volume (e.g. hand-tools, mass-produced hardware, refrigerators, kitchen ranges, aluminium foil, leather-goods, branded porcelain, etc.). These products do not make up a large volume, the order of magnitude of trade in them is more modest, but the creation of more favourable terms for development and the elimination of the shortage of them can stimulate convertible currency exports. An expansion of exports is also promised by products the available quantity of which is not the limit at present but which require a more vigorous and complex production policy and marketing (software, vehicle and farm machinery components, electrical fittings, furniture, footwear, lamps, rubber products).

(c) From the aspect of the future of exports the role of some sectors or companies which are leaders and are potentially capable of exporting in a larger volume is of crucial importance (vehicles, aluminium, chemicals). On account of their weight in the Hungarian economy, the oligopolistic nature of their international markets, their capital and technology intensity, their exceptional participation in the international integration of companies, these product groups need unimpeded imports of capital and technology on a bigger scale. It depends on the creation of these conditions whether they play a vigorously growing or an essentially unchanged role in the development of export orientation.

(d) From the external economic aspect, the development of the comprehensive qualitative and quantitative development of tourism, financial services, export of commercial and transport services (and indirectly export infrastructure, warehousing, access to the seas) are urgent tasks.

(e) The creation of development priorities must inevitably be accompanied

by the indication of non-preferences. The continuation of lastingly loss-making activities which also have structurally unfavourable endowments (even with reference to the responsibility of supply or to export interests) is the cause of grave cumulative losses in growth. All economic activities which do not reach, even if offered export preferences, the minimum requirements of income-production should be streamlined within the framework of a comprehensive and well-ordered retrenchment strategy step by step (beef cattle, standard quality wines, ferrous metallurgy, mass-produced heavy chemicals, textiles of a low value, production equipment, etc.).

*Ownership reform—company law*

The technology-intensive path of growth in the world economy, and the higher level of real capital have put a higher value on the management of assets and the importance of the capital market and of the responsibility of ownership. This is added to by the previously extremely high concentration of Hungarian industry in large socialist companies, the above-average capital intensity of industrial production, and the shortage and inadequancy of internal financial resources for the financing of structural modernization. The improvement of the efficiency of assets management, the acceleration of domestic capital accumulation and flow, and the stimulation of investment by foreigners are inseparable from the modification of the earlier interpretation of ownership and the transformation of the functional forms of industrial companies. This perception is, of course, far from being novel, but not even the reform economists are united in the interpretation of the direction and substance of the transformation. Earlier those who advocated self-managing companies and then those who demanded the establishment of centres of a "holding" type were the most numerous. Only most recently did it become accepted, in the wake of international and domestic experience, that the joint stock company offers the acceptable solution for the synthesization of the national and the individual interests in industrial development.

The scope of industrial development is not, of course, expanded by the simple declaration that a state-owned company will be called in future a joint stock company owned by the treasury. According to the Company Act which is likely to enter into force on January 1, 1989, the joint stock companies will assume diversification of ownership. The owners of the shares can include state companies, banks, cooperatives, and citizens, and it can be assumed that this versatile ownership structure will control the operation of

assets with greater responsibility, due to the individual interest involved. The trade in shares and the expansion of the capital market would speed up the regrouping of resources tied down in unviable companies and sectors towards these areas which promise the production of higher income, would stimulate savings throughout society, would put a brake on wasteful consumption and on inflationary driving forces, would strengthen the assertion of interests and the extent to which responsibility is felt for the more distant future. As may be seen, the new order of asset management improves the chances for industrial development from several sides. For this a political stand is necessary which accepts the multi-sector ownership nature of the Hungarian economy, the lasting and peaceful coexistence of the various forms of ownership, and provides legal guarantees for the continued existence of the various forms of ownership, including the security of the private sector.

### *Wages management*

The decline of growth performances proves today unequivocally that Hungarian industry cannot develop further on a material-intensive path of growth. The present and potential benefits of specialization are clearly attached to a more efficient exploitation of Hungarian manpower, especially in the areas requiring higher professional skills. Although wages policy has fluctuated in Hungary too strongly over the past four decades, the characteristics that have lasted are the central income regulation of an administrative nature, the bringing about of wage ratios which have increasingly devalued higher skill and intellectual work, the divorce of wages and income from performance, from company results and activities. Both Hungarian and broader international experience shows that such a practice leads directly to the withholding of performance, the wasting of resources, the slowdown of the formation of intellectual capital, the weakening of competitiveness, and last but not least, to the fall in the level of real wages. This situation is not independent of the concept of socialism which was developed decades ago. This concept considered housing, mass transport, education, health care, recreation, etc., as free social services, and the wages as the cover for food, clothing and other current consumption.

It is one thing that the deterioration in the growth of the Hungarian economy and the narrowing of the radius of the budget has for some time not made it possible for Hungary to assert this earlier concept and to sustain the earlier range of social services. Consequently, the present standard of

wages offers little chance for the satisfaction of the demand of industrial employees for education, health care, the acquisition of housing, etc. It is another thing that worldwide changes, the coming about of economies which rely on the preponderance of tertiary services, invalidate the wisdom or reality of a policy which sets out from the "quasi-free availability" of services. A company which is oriented to the external economy and lives necessarily in a climate of competition cannot ignore the order of values in the world economy and bring about price and wage ratios which differ radically from those existing in the world economy.

Agreement is relatively wider in the recognition of the distortions of the wages policies of the past than in the substance of the desired wages reform. The approaches which set out from welfare policy see in the strengthening of the orientation towards efficiency a danger for the social safety of livelihood and consider it a basic requirement that the social services should be protected and a wages policy should be pursued which guarantees work, supply, and housing, and relies on collective bargaining. The ethical and political components of these approaches can hardly be argued with. However, it cannot be ignored that in the past twenty years, the policy avoiding conflicts, striving for the introduction of social services which had been established in the welfare society of the developed countries, and giving priority to ideas of equality have also had their role in the deterioration of industrial performances. With the given capacity of the economy, the costs of minimizing conflicts and of welfare services were increasingly being financed by the fall in real wages. In the income of industrial employees the ratio of indirect allowance independent of performance were nearly doubled in the past two decades and is now up to one-third. At the same time, the level of real wages is lower by 13 per cent in 1988 than in 1968. The fall in real wages has been higher than average in the case of employees of higher skill and those in a managerial job. It is no wonder that wages policy has made it less and less possible for the industrial leadership to motivate the workers and employees and to improve their performance.

The limits to the welfare policy scope of wages policy do not, of course, mean the justification of immediate liberalization. In such cases, the increase of inflation and unemployment would endanger the scope of action of economic policy and even of general politics. It is also clear that the present low income-producing capacity of industry is for the time being insufficient for the raising of real wages in merit. In the short run, wages policy has also got to apply "mixed solutions." The wages reform can improve the operational ability of industry primarily by improving the wage ratios, by "streamlining" central wage regulation, by introducing a mechanism relying on a closer

reconciliation of employer and employee interest, and by the treatment of wages as production costs.

### *Budgetary reform*

The technology-intensive world economic growth and the strengthening of competition in the world market clearly indicate that the strong controlling role of a budget which is inflexible and sensitive to political influences delays adjustment of a nation state to the world economic challenges. This interconnection is reflected in the relative reduction of the role of the budget in the control of the economy, and in its conceptual modification.

After the 1968 reform of the system of economic control in Hungary, the controlling role of the Ministry of Finance and of the budget rose. On average, in recent years the Hungarian budget centralized and redistributed 62 per cent of the GDP. Thus the movements of the overwhelming part of the Hungarian national income were formulated by mechanisms which were independent of immediate management. In Hungarian practice—in accordance with international experience—the forceful income centralising and redistributive role of the budget amounted to siphoning off the income of the economically viable companies and sectors (90 per cent on the average in industry) and the subsidizing of weak companies from the budget. Nearly one-fifth of the Hungarian GDP, nearly one-third of budget expenditure financed shortages in performance, and in essence conserved the increasingly obsolescent economic structure.

It is no secret to economists who set out from the realities of the world economy and the domestic economy that such vigorous budgetary control and subsidizing are irreconcilable with the modernization of the industrial structure, the improvement of competitiveness, the broadening of the action radius of the companies and the strengthening of market orientation.

Consequently, the reform of the budget must mean primarily the reinterpretation of the role of the budget, the moderation of its role in the control of the economy, and the reduction of the ratio of the GDP centralized in the budget to under 50 per cent. Accordingly, and according to the ideas current, the various subsidies would be reduced by a further 35–40 per cent by the end of this decade, the taxes imposed on the companies would be reduced and simplified, the role of the budget would become narrower but at the same time more rational in the financing of the various social services. This creates also larger scope for the expansion of income derived from work as opposed to social allowances. In other words, for industry the budget reform means that it will not be subsidies that will play a fundamental role in the financing of

investments and restructuring but the credit sphere, the capital market, and the companies' own resources. In the short term, all this helps the viable and dynamic companies to make better use of their resources, and consequently their growth becomes accelerated and their performance can improve.

### *Reform strategy*

The experience of attempts at reform in Hungary in the past two decades has clearly drawn attention to the fact that the results of small reform steps introduced in detail and isolated from each other are dissipated and frittered away within a short time and, usually, the original state of affairs begins to reappear. The rejuvenation of the economy and the improvement of its performance demand a modernizing reform strategy which is harmonized and simultaneous in the most important spheres of economic management and even outside the economy (budget, prices, wages, exchange rates and distribution, economic guidance, planning, education, health services). The elaboration and implementation of this presents, of course, a much more complex task for economists, and demands much more courage, determination of the politicians as well as the willingness of the population to accept sacrifices. It can, however, hardly be denied that the reply of the reform strategy to the accumulated problems will determine the future of industry and of the country.

# CHANGES IN OWNERSHIP AND IN OWNERSHIP THEORY

by

LAJOS VÉKÁS

After the Second World War Hungary followed, as in so many other things, the Soviet example concerning of property relations; privately owned means of production were gradually expropriated, and exclusive state ownership was to be introduced. This process began as early as 1945, when the coal mines and electric power stations attached to them were taken under state management. The nationalisation of the coal mines was enacted in May 1946, but in fact was in force on January 1, 1946. Through this act of nationalization alone, more than 10 per cent of the Hungarian workforce became employed by state plants. What had happened to the coal mines also happened to companies and large banks: they were first taken under state management and their nationalization was declared afterwards. Thus in 1946 the privately owned heavy industrial companies and large banks with their subsidiaries were taken into state ownership. The nationalisation of bauxite mining and of aluminium production occurred in a similar way in 1948, and in the same year all industrial enterprises employing more than one hundred workers were nationalized. Foreign-owned plants were nationalized at the end of 1949 (the Hungarian–American Oil Industrial Company Limited had been taken under state management a year earlier). It was also in 1949 that all plants and workshops employing more than ten persons were nationalized. Through these measures the workers in the manufacturing industries became almost without exception employees of state-owned companies. In one respect Hungary did not follow the Soviet example in ownership: while in the Soviet Union the entire territory of the country came into state ownership in 1917, in Hungary privately owned land has never been fully nationalized. This difference in principle did not necessarily result in different practice, since by the beginning of the 1960s two-thirds of the arable land of the country

was farmed by cooperatives, and the control of cooperatives hardly differed until the economic reform of 1968 (and in many respects even after it) from the central control of state companies. Thus, despite the absence of direct nationalisation, for the exploitation of farm land, in essence, the same principles were asserted as in nationalized industry and commerce.

Nevertheless, there lingered for a long time in the judgement of the state companies and cooperatives a difference of principle: state ownership represented a "higher form of social ownership" than cooperative ownership, which was also described as "social ownership," but had its inferiority continuously emphasized in political and legal documents.[1] In addition, this kind of discrimination towards cooperative ownership had practical consequences too: for instance, for a long time cooperatives could not own farm equipment but had to lease it from the state farms. The untenability of this resulted in critical arguments and these achieved a declaration of the equality in principle of state and cooperative ownership. This was done through the Cooperative Act of 1967. (It may be noted as a matter of interest that the similar step was taken in the Soviet Union in 1988, when the equality of state and cooperative ownership was declared.) However, the declaration in principle of the abolition of discrimination did not mean any fundamental change in the state control of cooperative property and did not result in the complete elimination of concrete discrimination against cooperative ownership.

### *The control of state property up to 1968*

For the control of state property, which had become hegemonic, there was until 1968 a strictly centralized procedure; this again represented a mechanical adoption of the Soviet solution, the "plan precepts" control system. In this mechanism, state-owned companies were simply directed through administrative instruments: the companies were obliged to meet plan targets set by the central control. These plan targets determined production (quantity, quality, etc.), the source for the materials needed in production, and where the finished products were to be sold. Although the state companies made contracts ("plan contracts") with each other in implementing these administrative directives laid down in the targets, these contracts were but the shape the plan commands took.

In this strictly centralised organization of the planned economy, the state companies were not owners in any sense, they had only administrative rights over the assets entrusted to them. The "operative administrative right"

meant in essence the handling of assets; it involved for the state companies the obligation to use the assets handled by them for the purpose of fulfilling their plan. The state was the exclusive owner also in recpect of the assets handled by the state companies.[2] This situation was expressed by the thesis which declared the united and indivisible ownership by the state, which was also laid down in law. The state, as owner, not only controlled and supervised the management of state-owned companies, but also had the right to regroup or redistribute the assets available to the various organs of state.

Nevertheless, the assets acquired by the state companies formed an independent unit in the sense that these assets could not be used by another organ of state or as a cover for the debts of the state. The state companies were legal entities. It was difficult to resolve—both theoretically and practically—the contradiction between being a legal entity and the absence of ownership. Here were various, more or less convincing, views. All these views attempted to explain why the state company was a legal entity, why it was responsible independently and exclusively for its obligations, if the owner was not the company but the state.

In sum, it may be said that in the strictly centralized system of economic control which existed in Hungary until the 1968 beginning of reform in economic control and which continued in other East European countries, the state companies did not manage themselves in the economic sense, and were even less subjects of economic enterprise; they functioned as executive units of the state administration of economic control.

The question may be raised here as to the extent it was necessary or perhaps coincidental that the social ownership of the fundamental means of production took place in Eastern Europe crucially through nationalization.[3] There were intensive theoretical arguments in the Soviet Union in the 1920s as to what organizations could be considered for the social control of production or the implementation of social appropriation. One argument put forward was that a trade union body should be the subject of social ownership, while other views recommended a council of producers for this role. Eventually, the state was chosen, and in the given historic circumstances, the choice cannot be considered as coincidence. The state, carrying popular power, was an organ enclosing all of entire society; it had an existing apparatus which could be adjusted to carry out economic tasks without any huge reorganization. Consequently, in the given historic circumstances, the state became the owner of the expropriated means of production because—as popular power—it had an organization adequate for the practice of ownership rights. That in principle something other than the state can also be the vehicle of socialised ownership, and that the operation of socialised assets can

be realised in a way other than through methods of centralized state administration, is shown by the variant Yugoslavia from the beginning attempted to practice. Even in those countries in which the expropriation of the basic means of production took place by taking them into state ownership, as in Hungary—group ownership played a not negligible role from the beginning—mainly in the form of cooperative ownership. As may be seen, the principal form the East European attempts at the socialization of ownership took has been state ownership, but other methods and forms have also been developed.

### *The form of state ownership*

By the end of the mid-1960s, at the latest, it became obvious in the majority of East European countries that the state form of the socialization of ownership and, even more so, the centralized operation of state property, and the methods of state administration were inadequate for the intensive development of the economy. Following this recognition, most of the countries involved carried out an economic reform, but the reforms differed in nature and were carried out by different methods.

In Hungary an essential part of the reform was that from 1968 the central guidance of state companies in detail (by plan precepts) was abolished. As a result of this reform, the legal and economic independence of state companies significantly increased. The state companies can decide themselves what they are to produce, their production pattern, the quantitative and qualitative indices of their production, and so forth. In this system, economic guidance by the state is not exercised by direct methods of instruction but by indirect means: through economic levers and the impulses of a purposefully influenced market. In other words, in this type of economic control the state companies do not form the last link in the chain of control and implementation but carry out managerial and entrepreneurial activity on the basis of a relative economic and legal independence.

This change in the economic and legal standing of the state companies again raised the question who the subject of state ownership was: whether it was exclusively the state, the state and its company together, or perhaps exclusively the company itself. Although the thesis of united and indivisible state ownership has survived in Hungary to this day, a broad argument has unfolded which aims at an approach to a definition of the subject of state ownership which was nearer to the reality. The debate centred on the question what were the ownership rights excercised by the administrative organs embodying the popular power of the state (ministries, etc.) and what rights

devolved onto the economic entities, i.e. the state companies.[4] In my opinion, the view which most closely reflects the reality is that according to which the popular power organs of the state (the ministries and other directing organs) have not exercised the traditional rights of the owners of goods in respect of state property in the system of economic control which has applied in Hungary since 1968 and that these rights belong to the state companies which manage state property: thus the owners of goods are not the directing organs but the state companies managing them. It should be noted that this view is not yet entirely reflected in the legislation, but only partial legal norms indicate that the ownership rights of the state companies are gradually becoming fuller, and in fact today already amount to the entitlements of the owners of goods: the possession of assets, their use and utilization, as well as the right to dispose of them.[5]

### *Ownership motivation*

The reform measures introduced in 1984 further extended the independence of state companies, including their ownership rights. The changes which were gradually introduced in the control of state companies up to 1988 have been basically directed at clearly separating the activities of state administration and the economic activity of the companies. To this end, the control of more than half of the companies was handed over to "company councils," and approximately 10 per cent of companies are controlled by an "elected management." Over these self-managing companies the economic state administration exercised only the control of company foundation and legal supervision but, taken all in all, the experiment did not prove as successful as was hoped. True, the possibility of intervention into company management has not ended: the right of operative intervention was transferred to a new institution, the "central market supervisory authority."

As has been mentioned, this amended regulation has expanded the ownership rights, of the state companies. This has found expression primarily in the circumstance that the new regulation has narrowed further the openings for operative intervention by state administrative organs into company management. Although the state organ concerned with the establishment of companies defines the initial range of activities of the company, modifying this range is an exclusive right of the company itself. The assets of companies controlled by a company council or by an elected management may not be withdrawn by the founding organ. In other words, the founding organ is not allowed to attach the plant of the company to some other company, or to

regroup means of production among the state companies. The founding authority does not have the right to wind up the company either; separation or merger is exclusively at the will of the affected companies.

Two comments have to be made on these developments. First, it must be emphasized that one-third of state companies are in Hungary still under the traditional, state administrative control. This means that for a considerable number of state companies—even if the openings for concrete intervention by the guiding organs have been reduced—concrete state control, representing a detraction from ownership rights, still exists. Secondly, it should also be noted that the "self-managing" of state companies has not lived up to the hopes which had been attached to it: the experience of the past few years is that neither the companies controlled by a company council nor those working under an elected management have really been able to act as owners in respect of the assets entrusted to them. The reason for this is that the company self-managements are primarily interested in increasing their income and not in increasing the assets of the company.

This has led us to one of the most fundamental (if not the most fundamental) problems of state ownership: the absence of ownership motivation. Several experiments were carried out in Hungary in the past forty years in the operation of state ownership. All attempts so far have proved to be inadequate in so far as achieving the result that the company and its management are interested in increasing the assets of the company. Although in the course of repeated reforms it has been possible to relax the rigidities of the state administrative control of companies and to extend the ownership rights of the companies, bringing about a genuine mentality of ownership is still to be achieved.

The lasting crisis phenomena in the Hungarian economy have drawn attention drastically to the absence of ownership motivation. By the mid-1980s sociologists, economists, and lawyers had come to the conclusion that without a new and efficient operation of state ownership, there is no hope of getting out of the crisis of efficiency in the economy.

Among the proposals, the emphasis on the form of joint stock companies deserves first mention. All the same, those who advocate the larger use of this form point out that the joint stock company is no panacea, especially not if the shares remain in the hands of the state treasury. Instead, the shares of the companies must get into the hands of legal entities and individuals who engage in the capital market. In addition to the citizen, it is mainly the banks that appear to be suitable for such a role. Furthermore, the state companies themselves could also be owners of shares, by investing their own assets in the shares of other companies. The appearance of various groups of

shareholders can represent the beginning of a thorough change in the handling of state ownership; not only towards a fuller regulated market but also from the aspect of the rejuvenation of the entire economy.[6]

The urging of the use of the joint stock company form indicates forcefully the demand for the introduction of forms of ownership which compete with each other and also the demand that the exclusivity of state ownership should be abolished. The recognition of the ownership of citizens in the means of production is closely attached to this recognition.

### *Private ownership and personal ownership*

In the past two decades Hungary has gone a noteworthy distance along the path of the recognition of the ownership of the means of production by citizens. The complete denial of the recognition of individual ownership of the means of production is a thing of the far-off past. But in order to be able to proceed further along this road—at the same time developing healthy proportions—guaranteeing individual ownership is indispensable. What is most needed in the guarantees is that the already operating private entrepreneurs or those who wish to become private entrepreneurs should receive safeguards from the state against the possible risk of a new nationalization. The memory of total nationalization forty years ago is still far too strong in the memory for the possibility of obtaining the long-term trust of individual entrepreneurs without political and constitutional guarantees. It has further to be guaranteed to what extent the ownership of the means of production by the citizens is accepted as being socially useful, and accordingly, under what conditions of taxation is this to be recognized in the longer term.

Some questions of principle are also open concerning the recognition of the ownership of means of production by citizens.[7] Where the taking of the bulk of the means of production into state or cooperative ownership is concerned, ideology and even the law made a rigid distinction between the rights of citizens concerning consumer goods and their right of ownership concerning the means of production. This distinction has been imposed for decades, although this distinction between the two kinds of ownership of the citizen has come up against serious difficulties from the beginning, which have increased in the course of the social developments of the past twenty years. Today it is already almost incomprehensible how it is possible to distinguish between the property of citizens according to whether it is personal property serving the satisfaction of immediate consumer needs or private property of a commodity-producing nature as regards the means of

production. The reason behind the distinction is of an ideological-political nature; primarily it is the consequence of the utopian illusion that social production can be realized through the elimination of individual ownership of the means of production. With such an idea current, not only capitalist private ownership but every kind of private ownership counted as an institution only to be tolerated on account of certain constraints and temporarily. This was why individual ownership of consumer goods had to be distinguished from the private ownership of the means of production—under the category of personal ownership.

However, in practice, such a separation of personal ownership has never been possible. The distinction between private property and personal property became especially untenable from 1980 when the gates were opened to numerous individual and group entrepreneurial forms for small-scale production. It had to be admitted that the distinction between the two kinds of individual ownership made no sense. On the contrary, the property of citizens had to be treated in a uniform way both in terminology and in detailed regulation. Such a change in attitudes and norms can be the starting-point for those legal guarantees whose absence was pointed out above, and without which the attraction of the individual capital, entrepreneurial spirit, and the innovative power of the citizens into social production on a noteworthy scale is unimaginable.

This sketch of ownership relations in Hungary clearly indicates two circumstances.

The total expropriation of the individual ownership of the means of production leads sooner or later to fundamental economic difficulties. Despite the reforms and experiments, even if they have had some results, it has not yet been possible to find those forms and methods adequate for the successful and efficient functioning of state ownership. In addition, it has become clear that in the initial euphoria of nationalization activities and economic organizations were also being nationalized which were unable to function efficiently within the framework of state ownership.

Consequently, it is necessary to provide for more favourable forms for the efficient utilization of state property by extending the independence and ownership rights of the state companies and the further relaxation of strict company control. The new company act can be considered a step in this direction, since it opens the door wide to the traditional commercial companies (joint stock company, limited liability company, etc.) in order to further the more efficient utilization of state property.

Extending the limits of private ownership also appears necessary. Although in Hungary, especially in the past ten years, individual ownership by

citizens has already been playing an economically noteworthy role, the political and legal obstacles to individual ownership are still stronger than would be desirable from the economic aspect. Without further considerable relaxation of unjustified obstacles and without political and legal guarantees for individual ownership, the inclusion of the capital of individual citizens in social production and the social utilization of individual capital continue to remain naïve hopes.

## NOTES

[1] Seres, I.: *A mezőgazdasági termelőszövetkezeti tulajdonjog* (The right of ownership in farm cooperatives) Budapest, 1968, 426 p.

[2] Eörsi, Gy.: *Fundamental Problems of Socialist Civil Law* (in English). Budapest, 1970, 135 p.

[3] Sárándi, I.: "Das genossenschaftliche sozialistische Eigentumsrecht" (The law of ownership in cooperatives). In: *Acta Juridica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* XXVI. (1984) pp. 53–78.

[4] Sárközy, T.: *Die Theorie des gesellschaftlichen Eigentumsrechts im Verlauf der sozialistischen Wirtschaftsreform* (The theory of social ownership rights in the course of the socialist economic reform). Budapest, 1980, 343 p.

[5] Eörsi, Gy.: See note 2 above; *Sárközy, T.*: "Staatliches Eigentumsrecht und Unternehmenseigentumsrecht in Ungarn" (State ownership and company ownership in Hungary). In: *Acta Juridica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* XXVI. (1984) pp. 35–52.

[6] *Ibid.*

[7] Vékás, L.: "Über die grundsätzlichen Fragen des staatsbürgerlichen Eigentums" (On the fundamental questions of ownership by citizens). In: *Acta Juridica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* XXVI. (1984) pp. 129–143.

# COMPANY LAW IN HUNGARY: THE NEW LEGAL APPROACH

by

TAMÁS SÁNDOR

*"A man alone is nothing, only associations are of long life and true weight."*

Count István Széchenyi

The Hungarian national assembly adopted during its October 1988 session Act no. VI. of 1988, a Company Act. Hereby, at least as far as the legal and institutional framework is concerned, it initiated a new stage in the Hungarian economy. The Act which enters into force on January 1, 1989, regulates this very important area comprehensively and, at many points, through making essential changes to earlier regulations.

Looking at the antecedents to the Act, economic policy and, strongly linked to it, considerations of legal policy can be clearly seen. One of the biggest problems of the Hungarian economy is, even more than before, a chronic shortage of capital. To state it simply, additional capital can be obtained by an economy either from loans or by the use of equity capital. In recent years, Hungary obtained large foreign loans, but their application did not lead to the desirable results. The inflow of equity capital requires legal and institutional conditions which until now have not existed in Hungary.

The legal regulation in force has been unsatisfactory from several aspects. First of all, as far as the classic forms of association are concerned (unlimited partnership, limited partnership, private company with limited liability and joint stock company), the norms under which they were regulated have become entirely obsolete. (Thus, for example, the regulations in force concerning joint stock companies which originate from 1875 and those relating to limited liability companies, which derive from 1930.) In some instances, there is no valid statute applicable at all, as the case for both unlimited and limited partnerships. In addition, after 1945 the use of the joint stock com-

pany and limited liability company has remained very narrow, practically only for joint ventures. In addition, mainly for traditional reasons, some fully Hungarian-owned large and medium-size companies have been functioning in the form of a joint stock company but without making any genuine use whatever of the form itself. True, the rigid administrative barriers have been somewhat relaxed recently: from 1987, it became possible for domestic economic entities to form themselves into joint stock or limited liability companies, and commercial banks have also been established in this form. Nevertheless, owing to the obsolete nature of regulations, which became obvious precisely because of the economy's new requirements, it has become clear that a new comprehensive regulation cannot be put off any further.

While the traditional forms of association quietly vegetated, tolerated as necessary evil since the end of the 1960s, attempts were made to produce a "socialist" company law. These experiments did undeniably introduce some basic elements of company law into both the economy and the law. (The new Act has taken over two forms, the alliance and the joint enterprise, with amended rules.) These avoided in the terminology any link with earlier forms and thus two areas were developed in company law which were divided by a line and existed beside each other, but were not interconnected at all. This was only underlined by the fact that a low-level ministry decree applied to the joint ventures on questions of substance, a fact which could not have really been reassuring to foreigners.

In addition to the doubling of the scope of company law mentioned, there has also been since the beginning of the eighties greater concern with a third area, the enterprises owned by private individuals. The legal regulation on small enterprises, which dealt mainly with those enterprises that were not legal entities (and their reception by society) has led to a contradictory situation. Despite the fact that the needs of the economy—breaking through petrified ideological dogma—encouraged the development of a system of norms which created not always successfully the organizational framework for these private enterprises, a basic question remained unresolved, namely how private enterprises and state enterprises are linked. This is still true despite the circumstance that with the creation of a somewhat rudimentary bond market, steps in this direction were taken, and despite the fact that from 1988 it became possible to establish limited liability companies in which individuals and economic entities can participate jointly. Incidentally, it is experience with bonds that has confirmed that there exists in Hungary private capital, until now unproductive and to a considerable degree in wasteful consumption, the investment of which into the productive sphere is possible and desirable.

*The structure and scope of the Act*

As far as its structure is concerned, the Act contains in its first and third parts general rules applicable to all firms, while the second part sets the detailed regulations for the various forms of association. The Act recognises six forms of association: unlimited partnership, limited partnership, alliance, joint enterprises and joint stock company. With the exception of the section dealing with joint stock companies, the nature of the regulation is dispositive, as the parties can freely formulate their association, and can diverge from the Act, except where this is expressedly prohibited by the Act itself. In other words, here the principle of "everything is permitted which is not prohibited" is asserted. As regards joint stock companies, for reasons of security of trade and the protection of the interests of creditors and minority shareholders (similar to most West European legal systems) the situation is reversed, and divergence from the Act is permitted only where this is expressedly allowed by the statute.

A further characteristic of the regulation is something new in Hungarian legislation, namely that the Act does not, and will not, have implementation decrees or, in other words, the Act does not constitute a legal framework only. This explains partly the length of the Act (339 articles and nearly 400 pages of explanations), as all questions which had earlier been arranged by executive (governmental or ministerial) decrees, regulations which are in the legislative hierarchy below Acts of Parliament, had now to be included within the Act. This provides guarantees of stability since only the national assembly can amend the rules. In point of fact, quite frequently in the past, legal regulations of a lower order issued in the course of implementation departed from the acts of parliament (or, at least, contained an interpretation which was not in keeping with the intentions of the legislators).

The current Act sets out from the enforcement of a set form, which means that no association for business purposes can be established in a form which the Act does not recognize. There were arguments about this question in the course of drafting. A proposal was made and rejected which would have authorized the government to give exemptions from this rule in individual cases. The Act relies on the idea that, at the present state, in the development of company law overcomplicated solutions are to be avoided and the forms which are best known in legal systems abroad and earlier already adopted in Hungarian law should be revived and, of course, updated. The aim was not the introduction of radically new forms, but the development of existing forms which would, however, offer an adequate "assortment" of forms. Nevertheless, the introduction of mixed forms which are not expressedly regulated in the Act

is not excluded, provided that the relevant rules concerning the given associations are adhered to.

The Act applies to both citizens of Hungary and to aliens. This principle, which is an element of decisive importance is the new regulation, has the following consequences:

— In contrast to the past when in the state enterprise or cooperative sector a new economic association could only be established in a secondary way, namely only existing state enterprises or cooperatives could establish such associations, in future a state-owned company—or, within certain limits a cooperative—itself can also function as an association. It will be possible for the state to establish companies falling under the Company Act, but also that economic entities already functioning to be transformed into some form of association. (I shall return to the question of transformation; here it is sufficient to note that the state-owned company can transform itself even today, and some have already done so, but it is a slow and complicated process.)

— It becomes possible for private persons to establish and operate companies either a hundred per cent privately owned, or jointly with state-owned companies and cooperatives, or other companies falling under the Company Act.

— There will be no obstacle for "further association" either, when companies form further companies.

— It follows from the principle of the unity of regulation that the Act does not distinguish between private individuals and economic entities, or between aliens and Hungarian citizens; this is a fundamental change compared to the earlier situation. Some restrictions built into the Act in this context (thus only a domestic or foreign legal entity can be member of an alliance or a common subsidiary or for foreign participation—with the exception of the joint stock company—the Act provides that the alien should have a registered company) follow either from the essence of the given association or is intended for the protection of creditors; they certainly do not affect the general validity of the principle.

### *The six forms of association*

As far as the individual forms of association are concerned, four of them rely on the traditional forms of Hungarian commercial law, with significant and, in certain cases, conceptual changes. Since the development of Hungarian civil and commercial law at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century was influenced most by German law and to a smaller extent

by Swiss law, during the drafting of the Act special attention was paid to the present stipulations of these two legal systems; comparisons were also made with French, English, and American company law, as well as with solutions made use of in some socialist countries.

Among the six forms of association, the ordinary or unlimited partnership and the limited partnership are not legal entities; the reasons are mainly traditional but some practical aspects were also taken into consideration, because the establishment of these two simple forms of partnership, mainly for the activity of private persons, obviously does not require such depth of regulation as a limited liability company or a joint stock company. At the same time, there was a clear attempt to relax the rigid distinction between "legal entity versus non-legal entity", which earlier characterised Hungarian law; this is shown, *inter alia*, by the circumstance that all associations, including those that are not legal entities, have a registered name, can make contracts under the name of this identity, can enter into obligations and acquire property. The condition for the valid establishment of associations is, without exception, that in every case they should be registered in the register of companies kept by the court of registration.

The various forms of association extend from the simpler to the more complicated, from the personal and unlimited liability of the members to the limitation of liability to the amount of the shares, to the joint stock company providing for anonymity, and thus provide a chain of links. The first, simplest, and organizationally loosest form is the unlimited or ordinary partnership, in which every member is obliged to participate personally and is liable jointly and severally for the debts of the partnership, including through his own private assets. There are changes in respect of two essential points from the earlier Hungarian and the present German, Swiss, Austrian, and other provisions (incidentally, this applies also to limited partnership); assets acquired by the partnership do not come under the ownership of the community of members but by the partnership, and the liability of members for the debts of the partnership is not direct but secondary and can only be asserted if the assets of the partnership are no longer sufficient to cover the debts.

The economic working team is mentioned by name as a sub-form of limited partnership. In recent years, a large number of private enterprises were established under this name, which in substance and essence correspond to the earlier limited partnerships. Consequently, it would now have been possible to dismiss the name economic working team, but this terminology has been accepted by society as a whole to such an extent that in order to avoid unnecessary misunderstanding, the Act has maintained the name and

use it for those ordinary partnerships whose members are exclusively private persons.

The necessity for the limited partnership was contested for rather a long time. Finally, the view prevailed which in, my view, correctly considered it necessary in the chain of the forms of association. Under present Hungarian conditions, the limited partnership, whose working members are liable for the debts of the partnership in a way similar to that of the members of ordinary partnership, and whose non-working members are responsible to the extent of their investment, are suitable as the legal replacement for silent partnerships which are difficult or impossible to control.

The alliance and the common subsidiary was taken over by the Act from the decree in force with a not very radical modification of their rules. The particular feature of the alliance is that it does not strive for any profit of its own, but is directed primarily at the coordination of the activities of the members and at supporting them; in this way it also fulfils a function of protecting their trade interests. This last is a new element, just as the elimination of restrictions on the economic activity of alliances, which have outlived their usefulness. A further important feature of this form is that the members are jointly and severally liable for its debts.

During the drafting stage the need for the joint enterprise was much contested on the grounds that, after adequate modernization, the rules applying to limited liability companies and joint stock companies would probably replace the common subsidiary. In essence, the common subsidiary differs from the limited liabilily company inasmuch as that there is a joint and several secondary liability of the members. Nevertheless, in present conditions when numerous common subsidiaries are functioning, it did not appear advisable to abolish the form by a stroke of the pen. Of course, after January 1st, 1989 existing joint companies can transform themselves without any restriction into any other form of association they consider satisfactory.

In every country, company law is focussed on private limited liability companies and joint stock companies. The Hungarian Act also recognises their outstanding economic importance in that more than half of its provisions apply to these two forms.

For these two kinds of companies limited by shares, there is special emphasis on safeguarding the traditional legal solutions in a modernized form. Although there are obsolete legal statutes concerned which are more than one hundred or nearly sixty years old, it is incontestable that in their time both laws were excellent, and consequently the new Act took over from the old provisions whatever was possible, if only in the interests of the limited liability and joint stock companies functioning at present. The question arose,

for instance, whether the "supervisory council" of German origin should not be replaced by the board system known in English and Swiss law. The decision again was made in consideration of tradition, maintaining a solution which had been transplanted from German to Hungarian law.

On the other hand, it was obvious that in a number of matters entirely new solutions, unknown to Hungarian law, had to be employed. For instance, the chapter on public companies contains for the time being a regulation on conglomerates, namely it provides for the situation when one public company acquires a significant or a majority share in another public company, or when mutual participation is brought about between two public companies. The regulation of employee participation is also new; it is based on the circumstance that the Act does not deal with the rights of trade unions, to which earlier legal statues are to be applied, and on the circumstance that it was considered necessary that above a certain number of employees (200 persons) in those public and private companies and joint enterprises where there is a supervisory council, one third of the members of the council should be elected by direct ballot among the employees of the company. Incidentally, the supervisory council is basically not a management but a supervising organ; however, its entitlement to supervision is rather broad, and thus the views of the representatives of the employees can find appropriate expression.

The institution of employee participation is complemented by assuming interest in assets. For the state-owned companies it has already been possible to introduce asset shares, and now, for public companies depending on the provisions of the company statutes, it will be possible to issue employee shares free or for a privileged price.

### *Foreign participation*

It follows from the economic objetives of the Act that the restrictions through which earlier legal statutes made difficult the participation of aliens in Hungarian associations had to be abolished. The Act has set out from the view that restriction of foreign participation is not desirable, and the same rights should be provided for aliens as for Hungarian citizens. The condition of the Act is that the alien should have a registered firm in his own country. But since the one-man firm is accepted, or to be more exact, not excluded, in fact this does not actually represent any restriction. Registration was considered necessary so that it should be possible to obtain adequate information on the foreign party. This rule does not apply to foreign shareholders, in other words private persons are also entitled to buy shares. The

protection of the Hungarian interests in respect of public companies is ensured by the provision that aliens can only acquire inscribed shares.

The process of authorisation up to now has been involved and clumsy; this has been simplified considerably and made much more flexible; in the case of minority participation no permission for foreign participation will have to be sought at all. This does not apply to the founding only, but also to the free exchange at the official rate of the profit due to the member and its free removal from the country without any permission from the foreign exchange authority. If the foreign member should have a majority or a one hundred per cent share, a single permission is needed which is issued jointly by the Minister for Trade and the Minister for Finance, which is at the same time also an exchange authority permission; thus, the profit in this case can also be transferred freely without any special permission. A further guarantee is contained in the provision which states that silence from the authorizing organ, i.e., in the absence of a contrary decision within 90 days, is to be interpreted as a tacit agreement to and authorization of majority participation.

This Act is expected to be followed shortly by an Act on the protection of foreign investors, the drafting of which is under way. This latter Act will be called upon to sum up all stipulations which are important for foreign investors and which set the framework for their activity in Hungary. The Act on the protection of investments will follow the Company Act and remain within its stipulations. To ensure this, the Company Act itself contains the most important rules providing for security of investment; thus, it declares the principle that the share of aliens in economic associations enjoys full protection and safety.

Concerning participation in an association of private Hungarian citizens, what was said earlier has to be complemented in one respect. The question was raised whether it was necessary at all to set some limit to fully private enterprises. The decision did not restrict (correctly, I believe), the amount of capital that can be invested, but restricted the number of employees; although the change is very important at this point compared to the earlier situation, the upper limit is so high that in the present Hungarian economic conditions it can indeed not even be considered a restriction. The Act sets a uniform regulation for all forms of association when it declares that for companies fully owned by private persons, the number of employees must not exceed 500 persons.

There is the problem of one-man firms. For non-lawyers the existence of one-person companies may appear a conceptual absurdity. It is, however, a fact that in the legal systems of several West European countries, and

even in the regulation of company law by the European Economic Community, one-person companies play an important role. The Hungarian Act took a step forward in this area too when, building in appropriate rules for the protection of creditors it made possible the establishment of one-person private or public companies. One-person limited liability (private) companies can be established not only by economic entities but by private persons as well. This provision has two aims. On the one hand, the obsolete regulation on subsidiaries could be abolished, since it is possible that in future companies could establish a subsidiary in the form of a one-man private firm. On the other hand, the problem concerning private enterpreneurs that Hungarian law did not know until now has been solved with the institution of a one-man firm with limited liability; in small-scale industry and in the retail trade the risk enterpreneurs were open to had been too big. In respect of the one-person public company another consideration played a role: to facilitate the transformation of state-owned companies, since, in the prevalent view, this could be one of the methods if state budgetary organs or financial institutions were single founders and exclusive shareholders.

Questions of transformation are not regulated by the Company Act; this will be carried out presumably in early 1989 by a separate Act. Separate legal regulation is necessary because in the Company Act only question of changing from one form of association to another could be handled. For state-owned companies, transformation would require the amendment of the Act on state-owned companies and for cooperatives, the amendment of the Co-operative Act. It seems therefore simpler, and especially more manageable, if in a separate Act of Parliament a uniform regulation is introduced for all problems of transformation. An advantage of this solution is that the uniform Act on transformation would make it possible to consider also legal aspects of competition (the control of mergers).

The transformation of state-owned companies into companies under the Company Act is only a possibility and is not a task for a campaign or especially to be done by command. It cannot be anticipated that radical changes will occur in the existing organizational forms of the Hungarian economy, and this is not the purpose either. Yet it is desirable that any decision concerning transformation into companies under the Company Act should be based exclusively on economic considerations; this implies, of course, that where this is justified, the transformation should indeed occur. The number of such transformations is still difficult to estimate but it can be assumed that the following areas will be affected:

Firms which have already been functioning as limited companies, but where this form was only nominal and without any substance, will in

future, without any kind of transformation but due to the thorough changes which have occurred in the legal statutes, be compelled to operate as public companies in merit, in accordance with the new rules. Transformations can be reckoned with also among those large companies which are under state administrative control, and which (precisely because of their size and more complex organization) have remained under the traditional system of control and have not changed over to control by a company council and whose activities are in the competitive sphere; for them state administrative control is not justified. Indeed, for them, including their subsidiaries too (see trusts and companies belonging to trusts) the private and public company forms are especially suitable. The possibility of transformation arises further in the case of companies to be reorganized, where the process of reorganization to put the company on its feet again instead of liquidation necessarily needs the infusion of additional capital. Finally, a wider transformation can be reckoned with in respect of the foreign trading companies, as well as in the banking and in the insurance sphere. (The majority of the last mentioned organizations already function as companies.)

Supervision and control and openness to the public are two key questions where the undisturbed functioning of the act is concerned. In this respect, the Act provides that supervision and control over the functioning of the companies must be excercised by the Court of Registration; thereby the earlier state administrative supervision ceases to exist. Since all companies must be registered in the public register of firms (the companies are established through entry into the register from the date of the application), and important changes in their functioning must also be registered (the Act specifies the data which must be registered), it is thus obvious that supervision should be excercised by the Court of Registration. At the same time, this is already the first step towards the future goal that the Court of Registration should excercise supervision over all economic entities.

The substance of supervision is that when reviewing the application for registration and throughout the existence of the company, the Court of Registration is only entitled to examine whether the other documents concerning the functioning of the company (articles of association) are in accordance with the law, and whether resolutions taken by the company do not violate the legal statutes concerning the organization and functioning of companies, or the articles of association. But the Court of Registration is not entitled to check the usefulness of the activity and registration cannot be denied for this reason; this can be considered an especially important change from earlier regulations.

The decisions taken by the Court of Registration concerning the various companies and other forms of association must be published, for the purpose of the security of trade. For this, a separate Court of Registration Gazette appears to be the most suitable instrument; in this, all resolution and communiqués are published, with the exception of those excluded by this Act or the legal statute on the registration of companies. (By way of example: names of silent partners in a limited company, entered into the registry, and the amount of their investment can be published only with the approval of the members concerned.)

### *What next?*

However important the innovations contained in the Company Act are, it is not nor cannot be a panacea. It would be illusory to believe that all the problems of the Hungarian economy can be solved through a single statute. This has to be said because, presumably due to the publicity the Act has rightly enjoyed even in the course of its drafting, exaggerated expectations could be seen in the general public. Nevertheless, from the legal side, the Act does provide an organizational framework within which the invigoration of the economy does indeed become possible. But the question is what the economic environment will be like, in which the companies will have to function. Consequently, the coming into being of the Acts is not an end to the walk and here I am not thinking only of the legal statutes which I have mentioned, the acts on transformation and on the protection of investments. For instance, the introduction of a uniform enterpreneurial profit tax is extremely important, whose rate can be argued, but it can hardly be contested that without it the Company Act is not worth much. The uniform enterpreneurial profit tax must be stipulated by an Act of Parliament, so that the tax burdens of those active in the economy should be uniform irrespective of whether state-owned companies, associations or private persons are concerned. In a company of mixed ownership, it is difficult to envisage the state-owned company partner paying tax differently from the private person participatory. This is why we claim that the true provison for equality of chances in fact as well as words is the task of this Act.

Another problem, becoming urgent, is the creation of the foundations of a stock exchange law. The regulation of public companies contributes considerably to the livening of trade in securities but also assumes its existence. This concerns an area of legal regulation which of course did not have to be done by the Company Act is missing at present: it will be needed shortly.

In addition, there are a number of other areas where the updating of the existing regulations is indispensable, for example in the law on competition or in respect of the process of liquidation. Work of codification is going on in both areas.

The question how the Company Act will assert itself in practice cannot yet be answered. What is certain is that if the Hungarian economy can avail itself of the opportunities provided by the Act, then the Act will have made a significant contribution to economic progress.

# PLURALISM IN SOCIALISM

by

JÓZSEF BAYER

Pluralism, an expression regarded for a long time as part of the paraphernalia of bourgeois ideology, has in present times become naturalized in the Hungarian political dictionary. This is a break with a defensive ideological stand not even ready for terminological concessions in the polemic carried on with ideological opponents. It is, however, a more fruitful course also as regards pluralism, to judge its contents, separating the rational core of pluralism from the ideological wrappings in which it by necessity occurs. Although the ideological cannot be avoided in any politically important matter, it is not identical with the contentual problems expressed by them, and these can be subject to scholarly analysis.

The earlier rejection of pluralism took place in the spirit of an ideology; even its current, rapid adaptation does not lack that, insofar as the concept, formerly regarded as alien, is given the adjective socialist, through being rapidly ideologically domesticated. Since theory and practice will only shape the concrete contents and criterium of this, I should rather prefer to talk about pluralism in socialism here than—hastily—of socialist pluralism.

The concept of pluralism covers a variety of senses, it is used in philosophical, religious, ideological, cultural, ethnic, as well as in the political connection. As an abstract value, pluralism expresses a conviction that the diversity of human manifestations of life, experience, views and interests enriches society, explores alternative courses for development, while its opposite, monism, renders society uniform and poor. In reality, the dialectics of unity and diversity are much more complicated than that, since every unification can also lay the basis for a new differentiation and thus lead to a higher level of plurality. In the history of politics—even without using the term—every endeavour emphasising a balance of power produced by the diversity of society, the division of power and the autonomy of certain social groups, can be classified under pluralist traditions.

In the modern sense, political pluralism means first of all that the division of interests in bourgeois society (as the basis of the forming of groups) may also assume political expression; that groups of various interests can, as interest-groups assert influence, pressure on public power (and on one another) in order to expedite decisions favourable to them, or brush aside others contrary to their interests. The various pluralist tendencies also differ from the aspect of what, and to what extent, they regard as the criteria for pluralism; these range from elements of federalism through division of the functions of executive power, parliamentary parties, free organization and operation of interest organizations and social associations to the recognition of autonomies (cultural, national minority, ethnic, local) of various levels, which are consummated by the institution of social publicness.

Historically pluralism arose as an autonomous political theory only around the turn of the century, emphasising the role of social groups, "organized interest" in the political process. This idea was not at all alien to Marxism, indeed, the classics had seen the promise of the political success of the working class precisely in the establishment of their organized power from the trades unions to the autonomous workers' parties. What distinguishes bourgeois theories of pluralism from Marxism is their different apprehension of the political role of social groups, particularly of the classes.

The Marxists—acknowledging the political significance of other group interests—placed the division by class in the centre, while some pluralists denied the decisive role of class conflicts in the political process and others considered that at most as a factor in retreat.

Although social democrats consider the contradiction of capital and labour as a pivotal question, they endeavour to treat and alleviate the conflicts in a political system expressing diverse interests, and not to work towards the revolutionary elimination of their social foundations. That system fragments social interests and tries to prevent their dangerous polarization through the dispersion of interests. The Eurocommunist parties of the recent past have come close to this view. In order to preserve what progress has achieved, they shun a policy of confrontation leading to the sharpening of the situation. Nevertheless, they did not abandon the long-term object of revolutionary transformation of production relations even if they did not consider it achievable in the traditional way.

Without any doubt, the keen debate on pluralism is due to the fact that the political system the socialist countries built up to then—and in many respects operated unchanged right up to now—as well as their corresponding ideology, were and still are sharply anti-pluralist. Demand for unity intensified to uniformity, monism in ideology and monolithism in policy were partic-

ularly characteristic of the early phase of development. Thanks to all this, bourgeois ideology had an opportunity to monopolize pluralism as a political philosophy and as the basic principle of the democratic political system, and had the opportunity to use that for its own legitimity, sharply contrasting pluralist democracy with the socialist political systems and ideology one-sidedly characterized as totalitarian.

The fact that this exclusive contrast is simply a myth, has been proven also by the arguments now going on about pluralism and totalitarianism in bourgeois political science. However, it is beyond doubt that the pattern of controlled social transformation, of modernization of the East European type, established by Soviet development has given little room for plural moves. The efforts to eliminate economic backwardness and to defend the new conditions at home and abroad have led to a strongly centralized, monolithic political arrangement. This practice has refused to admit the principle of pluralism just as strongly as the economic system based on planning directives and the dogmatic ideology of the era did.

### *The requirements of modernization*

Extensive industrialization and the system of political and administrative control it required have exhausted the reserves of development; in the meantime, conditions also have become ripe for a change of attitude. One of the fundamental recognitions of the repeatedly recurring efforts to reform is that even controlled socialist modernization comes up against strong limitations and crises, when dogmatically interpreted general interest hinders the spontaneous expressions of differentiated individual and group interests, oppressing them instead of building upon them.

In reality, the transmission of interests has never been as single-directional as the theories of totalitarianism assumed—it should suffice to refer to the negotiations that take place before planning and the wide-spread practice of corporative interest adjustments, interest considerations (behind closed doors). These, however, have become insufficient in our present period, which requires the continuation of economic reforms and the political reforms that they in turn need. The socialist market economy needs autonomous economic entities, individual and group initiatives, enterprises; the many-sidedness demands more liberal expression and assertion of interests, more flexible handling of conflicting interests and, for all of that, more democratic social publicity.

What are the opportunities for, and limitations to, pluralization in the Hungarian social and political system and what kind of institutional arrangement and political philosophy is implied here by the catchword of socialist political pluralism?

The one-party system (or the leading role of the communist party in socialist countries with existing multi-party systems), which is regarded as the principal bar to political pluralism, also acts as the foremost guarantor of ownership relations and as the foundation of social and political stability; it is unlikely to undergo fundamental changes is the near future. Party pluralism is not a question of principle but one of political practice. Although the building of socialism can be imagined in principle within the framework of a system of a number of competing parties, there has been no precedent for it until now in countries which set out on the road of socialist progress to eliminate the backwardness they experienced under the previously dominant capitalist environment. The reasons for that and their future development prospects would deserve separate examination.

The toleration of political opposition organized in parties and integrating them within the framework of parliamentary democracy supposes a fundamental consensus concerning the foundations of the social system and the functioning of the political system. No party must fear that another one, once in power, would endeavour to annihilate it. That is why the requirement of monistic unity in order to fend off retrograde development, the danger of restoration, is natural in the era of radical revolutionary transformation.

Nevertheless, in the course of the "normal" functioning of the consolidated new arrangements, pluralism appears to be the most suitable means of thwarting the new radical endeavours, of preventing the development of a united opposition. Bourgeois multi-party systems have built a whole series of guarantees against the irreversibly radical changes affecting the foundations of the system. This is the very reason why its radical critics consider the bourgeois multi-party system merely a covert, pluralistic form of the single-party system.

Apart from a deep social crisis, in which everything becomes open—and whose serious consequences can be assessed by any sober man—the development of party pluralism could, in the long run, develop optimally in Hungary out of the various factions of the ruling party, amongst which the fundamental consensus assumed does exist, in spite of disputes. But even the single-party system does not exclude the possibility that the alternatives of socialist socio-political development should be expressed and decided in free discussion, just as it does not exclude the transmission of the real interest-division within society either. That, however, demands a change in

the politics and in the historically developed organization of the party, in the way the party views its own role. It requires a reassessment of the leading role of the party, a clearer division of the functions between parliament, the trustee of the people's sovereignity, the government responsible to parliament, and the other government and social bodies. It necessitates an increased assertion of democracy whithin the party which would also include the freedom of platforms, the openness of the party's politics and a style of discussing politics that corresponds to these requirements. The only democratic alternative to the multi-party system under Hungarian conditions is to guarantee the freedom of platforms within the party. All of these conditions must be established in order to render an increased plurality of interests and the more open political expression of that, manageable and suitable for integration on the principles of balanced fundamental social interests and the priority of the general interest.

In defining the public interest, however, the other elements and institutions of the political system must also play their part with increased weight, strengthening the compromise character of the decisions made, thus their legitimity and the power that makes their implementation obligatory. The reason why there is an absolute need for a more open expression and clashing of interests is precisely because in the country's present conflict-ridden, precarious situation it offers the only chance of securing the commitment and participation based on social consensus necessary for the implementation of decisions.

The political reforms discussed and recommended by the party and other, political and academic circles, are all directed at the more definite expression of a pluralism of interests and their integration into the political system.

### *Two alternatives*

A number of possible directions for the more forceful assertion of pluralism can be imagined dependent on the radicalism of the economic and political reforms. The reason why it is necessary to refer to the economic reform here is that the progressive development and depth of the pluralism of the socialist market economy and the forms of ownership fundamentally determine the demands and possibilities of the assertion of autonomous interests. For instance, the successful growth of enterprises and ventures owned by municipalities (that is, town and city councils) can have a powerful influence on financial viability of local self-government. But the actual autonomy and free movement of economic entities will also redraw the map of

interest organizations, even though not every association of interests is linked to economic entities.

Otherwise, the radicalism of the political reforms depends to a considerable extent on the development of the role of the party; this in turn can be strongly influenced by the expected conflicts within the programme of stabilization and progressive development, as well as by the requirements of political stability. Therefore I should like to distinguish between two possible variations on political pluralism.

In the first one, emphasis is put on the vigorous reform of the system of interest representation, while the party—in contrast to this pluralism of interest representations and association—representing the common and long-term interests, would preserve its authority and, as representative of all working people, would enjoy formal and power legitimacy. In a way essentially similarly to that it has until now.

In the second, more developed version of plurality, however, the interest division of society gains assertion in the party itself (which is itself also a part of society), and alternatives for development and decision-taking can become subject to an open discussion in the party in the form of platform debates. In that instance, alternative political initiatives and movements outside the party are not excluded, provided that the more dynamic policy of the party is capable of integrating them and of embracing the most important questions in the debate within the party movement. This solution would give rise to more anxiety and, of course, also more risk; however, its political advantages are undeniable.

I myself would cast my vote in favour of this latter version, and I am convinced that such a party policy—and only a policy of that kind—will make the party attractive again for young people interested in politics. I am also convinced that a party engaging in such a practice would, in the longer term, become capable of the political integration—without merely relying on administrative means—of social pluralism.

I cannot become involved here in the contentual details of political reform, I should only like to indicate the tendencies that point in the direction of pluralism. These unquestionably include the endeavours directed at constitutional reform, the increase of the role of parliament, the increased independence of the government; all in all, they point in the direction of dividing the functions of power.

All possible pioneering versions count in the reform of the system of interest representation. Disregarding now the justified promotion of local autonomy, there is an obvious need for the spontaneous organization—initiated at the grass-roots level—of interest-transmitting associations, federa-

tions and movements, besides the organization of interest representations initiated at the top level and expressing and integrating the interests of large groups. The development of competing, non-monopolistic organizations of a self-governing character and federative structure with voluntary membership are also needed, if for nothing else but to stimulate the renewal of the activity of interest-representation. In addition, these could also add to the elements of social solidarity; the negotiations conducted among themselves and with the administrative bodies may improve a tolerance for conflicts and a readiness for compromise, while the open airing of contrary interests may lead to the lowering of extreme and unrealistic demands. They could broaden the practice of social consultations before important decisions, which is bound to bear fruit in the increased social legitimity of the decisions. Establishment of a consultatory council of organizations representing the major interest groups of society and functioning alongside the administrative bodies can also come into consideration. The forums of the Patriotic People's Front can give legality to social movements representing even the most diverse efforts—whether their objectives and tendencies are well-matured or not—thus making them centres in the federal partnership. All of this cannot be imagined and, anyhow, would not work without the reform of social publicity.

In concluding, I should like to make two brief remarks about the spreading euphoria of pluralism. Firstly, pluralism is no panacea that will immediately solve every conflict. It only can bring to the surface what is hidden in a society as potential.

Secondly, pluralism in itself is not yet synonymous with democracy, while at most a certain degree of pluralism is the minimal condition for democracy. The sobriety of the bourgeois critics of pluralism may come in useful in this respect. Pluralism—writes one of them—is tied to the functioning of the market not because it is democratic but precisely because it is not. It is most likely that Hungarian society will not be able either to avoid such organic ailments of plurality as, for instance, the accumulation of inequalities in access to resources; the resistance, boycotting established interests against newcomers, a lasting neglect of fundamental social interests because of the impossibility of representing them in the manner interest-groups do; the lack of ability of the socially weak to have their interests asserted. If the preponderance of interests of capitalist private ownership is the main limitation to bourgeois pluralism, then the public ownership interests should fill that role here. Pluralism is an efficient remedy against monopoly situations, just as it unquestionably is capable of promoting tolerance and the bearing of conflicts, and a readiness for compromises based on rational negotiations.

GYÖRGY SPIRÓ

# INTRODUCTION TO HAMVAS'S CARNIVAL

Is it true that the frenzy of the individual broke out in the nineteenth century to become a frenzy that overwhelmed the world of the twentieth century? From the point of view of historical philosophy, this is a statement that is as substantial as it is empty. If, however, it is the basic assumption of a novel, accepting it depends on the aesthetic values of the work. Béla Hamvas's *Karnevál* (Carnival) reveals that the statement is true.

The novel describes the development and the spreading of madness in a completely original way. A traditional element of the novel is its insistence on a distinct chronological order: the twentieth century comes after the nineteenth, after the Great War comes a chaotic peace, followed by the Second World War, then the period called 'the years of the personality cult.' Because of the novel's traditional structure, the story is one of an intimate character, a few subordinated persons are tossed about in the world, and the protagonist encounters a great number of minor characters. 'Story' has to be understood in quotation marks because the chapters are unusual in themselves and differ in atmosphere from one another; they are separated by meditations in dialogue, as if, in the intermission between acts, two masters of ceremonies were making comments on the events in the next chapter: these "curtain lectures," as Hamvas calls them, constitute an ironical comment and parody of the main text, which can by no means be assumed to be the usual description of "reality." The author's dialectic mode of thinking appears both in the interpreting and circumspect commentaries on the form of the novel, and in the main text itself. The novel in fact is the author's monologue generated from the text in a manner having some similarities to the methods of Gombrowicz or Joyce.

Hamvas displays an abundant sense of fun from first to last in the novel; for decades, he strove to master all the important European and Asian languages, in order to master European and Asian philosophy and art. The novel was born as a gesture of rejection of omniscience, and hence it is an occasionally stinging satire on the human consciousness and soul, occasionally a parody of all possible (past and future) theories, including all rational and irrational philosophies, religions, aesthetics, and theories of everyday existence.

The father of the hero and, later, the hero himself experience many adventures and after the hero's death the story continues; it is a picaresque journey to many places in Hungary, Europe, Africa, and Asia over the last two centuries. All this admittedly is a game, a conditionality; Hamvas does use all kinds of history-making, common and more refined alike, he caricatures them from the outset; he jests with us to the very end of the novel. One such jest is that the hero is born from parents who are not his real parents at all; he splits his protagonist in one of the chapters into two different men; the same hero wanders through Africa and Asia at the same time, to accidentally come across himself as one of the twins out of a single ovum. Hamvas makes the best of the possibility of the twin motif in addition to describing the Asian mind-set, leaving no doubt that he takes pleasure in playing with us readers and amuses himself in wondering how many things can occur to him, the author. He describes fascism, the siege of Budapest in the Second World War, describes communism and all this with an extraordinary power of language and sense of humour, with an immense erudition; since he immediately twists and parodies and rejects them, the reader needs no special historical or philosophical knowledge to be able to understand the text.

Hamvas is not simply a caricaturist with wide intellectual horizons, because caricature is limited by the subject it distorts. He makes a parody of the whole of human existence and we have the feeling that he is most probably the freest of Hungarian writers. But he is not so free, however, as not to be a Hungarian writer because his work was made in this language, in an original and varied language abundant in the possibilities of linguistic innovation, and he is not concerned for one moment by the spasmodic efforts often found in Eastern Europe to achieve European culture from an undeveloped marginal land. On the contrary, he has no inferiority complex, because he sits in a watch-tower from which East and West can be equally surveyed, that East and that West which are not able to understand each other. As he inspects this confluence, he can see his own Hungary as well from a bird's-eye view. He criticizes culture on the metaphysical level, as a sort of atheist theologian; for this reason the reader does not have to know anything of the Magyars.

The basis of his freedom is his culture, which makes playfulness dominate to the very end in the novel. But his playfulness is not arbitrary. The title derives from Hamvas's description of man as a creature wearing masks who unmasks himself, to reveal yet another mask underneath. The ball of masks, or carnival, takes place in an unredeemed world, which makes it subject to parody because it is ridiculous in itself; what masks may feel, think and even imagine can never be genuine; Hamvas involves himself in this circle, his dazzling, self-ironic dialectics thoroughly connects him, the author, to his characters. Because even the author can only be a mask in an unredeemed world.

There is something here which is truly rare: the writer invites the reader as another masked being to join as a third party in this great game both in the main body of the text and in the meditations between the chapters. This separates Hamvas's concept of the novel from all other avant-garde novels in a definitive way. Due to this strange and original triad, the text is tense and disturbing to the very end, the author engages in the writing and the reading of it; there is a certain element of competition between writer and reader as to who can outwit the other, as to who has the trickier and more agile mind; from time to time, Hamvas produces a permissive smile as if the reader were the smarter, then some pages later the reader has to recognize that in this game the cards have been shuffled by a much more cunning magician.

A lot of blood can be shed in the novel without any importance because what is at stake is not a matter of life and death. However, it is a matter of culture with a Voltairean rational sense of humour and with a Rabelaisean Renaissance realism. I should here qualify my description of Hamvas as an atheist theologian. He attacks all religious dogmas, Christian or other; but he confesses in the text, and the whole idea of the novel suggests, that he is a religious writer for whom one axiom exists: Christ. This is the fixed point from where the world can be brought into motion and this makes Hamvas's view of man and cultural criticism so keen and cruel. Naturally, he does not portray Christ, he cannot do this; for Hamvas, Christ is the only authentic man, the one who is not a mask. But this involves more deeply the infernal chasms of the ever less redeemed world; although Hamvas never loses his sense of humour, for this reason we feel in the last chapters a parody of the coming of fascism, the war and the period following it, that the possibility of an authentic existence has been further removed from us. Hamvas's approach is not far from that of the existentialists or the providentialists, but the optimism of the followers of Vico in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries is alien to him. The construction of his novel is open, any element can be placed in or left out at any time, the writer's autocracy can work freely, without causing any aesthetic problem; it is an open novel, too, in the sense that it has no ending. Nor can it have one. When he finished it in 1951, it was obvious that the new era had placed the end of the tunnel even further away.

Hamvas rejects European culture because he considers it to be a mask; likewise, he rejects Asian culture as well, a frequent sanctuary for the European spirit, for him that too is a mask. This he could do out of his deep knowledge of Asian culture. He is militantly against all organized religions and dogmas but he is a believer, that is to say, he is within that which he attacks. The question is whether the ironical and indifferent description of the tragic events, irresolvable psychological conflicts, the flat refusal of tragedy is adequate enough to produce a moving human aesthetic quality. That man is only a mask with another mask underneath, can act as the basic assumption of the ingenious work, but is it really shocking? Are we not facing the inhuman mathematics of an enormously expanded rationality which is without parallel? I think we are not. The linguistic, formal, philosophical, psychological fullness which emanates from the pages of this carnival, is in fact divine because it is an anthology of the metamorphoses of a Creator who conceals his essential nature. It is not right to call Hamvas a mystical writer, for even though he knows European mysticism well, he also caricatures it; on the other hand, his attitude is related to Christian and Jewish mysticism insofar as, according to him, the Creator vacated the human world, leaving emptiness behind. But this void is Creation itself, in which the carnival turbulently moves on for ever. Hamvas is naturally silent about this creative gesture because the richness of the vocabulary of the novel does not exceed the limits determined by Wittgenstein. Precisely for this reason, the sentences of the novel struggle sharply, answering and denying each other that in attacking Christian dogma one can still remain a believer; not even the masks are faithless in one respect because they are conceptionally divine creatures, if only in the negative. Yet Hamvas's firm belief is that without the religions and ideologies denied by him, no existence is possible: "You do not go anywhere without grease," he says; man is not able to live without final aims, however false they might be, and this is human substance itself. Because the reader is involved in this struggle as a mask, he becomes active and a part of the struggle. This is true art and true humanism. I should add that, although rather alien to me, I was fascinated by the novel to the very end; it absorbed me, it turned me into a mask and I did not feel humiliated by this but, rather, a kind of cathartic pride: if I am not able to be a genuine man, I can be a mask and this is still something.

It is paradoxical that this novel about the unredeemed world is more cheerful and liberating than, for example, the works of Kafka which take place in the redeemed and therefore outlawed world in the sense of Sabbatai Zvi's followers. But this would lead too far, *Karnevál* is a better aired, not in the least oppressive piece of art; it is a wonderful game and, as such, it is a naïve work of art in Schiller's sense, and the reader can rejoice in it in the manner of a child.

# CARNIVAL

*An excerpt from the novel*

by

BÉLA HAMVAS

(The prettiest girl in town. No hang-ups. Lady Macbeth. I'm not even really unhappy. Just not the loving kind. At least, I never fell in love with her.)

Is something the matter, I ask.

She looks at me, but does not reply. She's crying.

(You're not the girl I fell in love with; I'm sorry.)

Has something happened? All the excitement perhaps—

Angela just sits there sobbing. Leave me alone, she says.

I sit down beside her and stroke her hair.

(Indifference. Needs a good hiding. She'd be grateful. She-devil. Amazongela.)

My pills, she says. In my bag.

I stand up and take down her bag. Don't bother, she says. Don't want one. If it makes you miserable, I'd rather go without. If it's really so much to ask, then don't —

I take down her bag and open it. (I must save her.) I'm only too pleased to help, I say. The whole thing... all the excitement... I understand... and then all that fuss about the album—

*(Translator's Note)* In the following extract —taken from Part III of *Karnevál*—Mihály Bormester, the novel's main narrator, describes his honeymoon with Angela Kanavász. Bormester has married Angela primarily to save her from her bizarre family who are terrorized by Lala, a prudish aunt with an obsession about cleanliness. Throughout the extract, Hamvas alludes to the history and sayings of the family in parentheses. Allusions to Kanavász refer to Angela's father. He divorced Angela's real mother because he found her intolerably clumsy (she would drop everything that came into her hands) and incapable of expressing genuine love. He only puts up with the petty moral terrorism of Aunt Lala for the sake of his second wife—Lala's sister, Gitta—who suffers from acute attacks of migraine. Fanny is the idiot sister of Lala and Gitta. Allusions throughout the text to an "album" refer to Lala's wedding gift to Angela, which the latter "ungratefully" forgets to take with her on her honeymoon.

You don't have to, if you don't want to. She sobs. You're so inconsiderate—

Me? I ask, staring at her.

(One in two marriages is based on vanity. One in a hundred on raging passion.)

I hold her hand.

So inconsiderate, she says with a sigh. Won't even let me have a pill. And I've got such a headache.

You find your pills, I don't know where they are.

Water, she says.

I stand up. I'll bring some from the buffet-car right away.

Don't bother, she says quietly. Don't go out of your way. Not just for me—

I set off.

Don't bother, she cries after me.

What has happened, I ask dismayed.

Angela weeps.

I stand in the doorway. What am I to do? Buffet-car. On the double. Mineral water. Coming up.

(Oh, my poor head. The prettiest girl. I have no hang-ups. Amazon. They took her virginity so she'll take her revenge. Don't want one. What do you want? A good hiding. The outside world is defenceless against my thoughts. Mental assault. Angela defends herself against my thoughts.)

She swallows the tablet. I clear her a space to lie down on the seat and tuck her in. Rest a while, I say.

(Must save her. Even if I have to sacrifice myself. She left the album on the cabinet. Out of ingratitude. Fanny's heart is pure. Kanavász? Kanavász is just a man.)

She shuts her eyes, but the tears run down her cheeks. I sit beside her for some time, and when she finally nods off to sleep, I tiptoe out into the corridor. I light a cigarette and gaze out of the window. Thinking of nothing. Noon. The waiter calls us to lunch. Angela is asleep. We are just crossing the border —

I've got toothache —

I stand there, not knowing what to do.

(You're not the girl I fell in love with; I'm sorry. Honeymoon among the rubbish tips. Dogs. My mother doesn't go out to work. She hasn't the heart. At least, I never fell in love with her. Marriage and migraine.)

I hurry over to the head-waiter. Anything for toothache? He gives me four large tablets. One every two hours, he says. What are they? I ask. The waiter

gives a deep bow. I make them myself, he says bowing again. Mostly just bicarbonate of soda, alum and flour. And you really think. . . ? I ask. The waiter nods. Never fail with women. I've been using them for sixteen years.

By the afternoon Angela's toothache has abated. Coming swimming? I ask. We go over to the window. The sea, I say, just look at it; come on, let's take a dip —

She packs up the bathing suits and down we go. On the way, she remembers that she's left her paddling shoes inside. (Album. Drops it. Don't want it.) I head back, but she's already coming after me. And my bathing cap! (Don't want it. What do you want?) We're on our way again. The cream, she says. You'll find it in the black bag, wrapped in a towel. But be careful, there's a bottle in there too. (Can't take that; Aunty Lala won't let you. Don't want it.) I go. I fetch. Is that everything? She glares at me. What's that supposed to mean? That I'm absent-minded? No, I answer innocently. She turns away. (You gave yourself away to soon. Shock. Sinful child of the subquiltious ego. Automobile. Danny's heart is pure.)

I undress eagerly, then plunge deep into the sea. The tepid water sparkles on my skin. The sea, the sea. Tiny fish splashing and darting all around me. Angela, I call out, the water's lovely, full of little fish.

Angela sits on the steps staring at the water. Fish? she cries. Can't stand fish.

(We insist on tidiness at home; you won't find fish in our bathtub.)

Come on, I call back, dive straight in. Head first, the water's deep.

Angela doesn't move. It's dirty, she says.

(Beetles. Spits at them.)

It's the sea, I say.

I dive down and swim towards her underwater.

Dirty, she says.

Look, I tell her, it's four metres deep over here and you can still see the pebbles.

And the fish, she says with a shudder.

I laugh. Of course there are fish: it's the sea! I splash her lightly. She screams and leaps to her feet. What are you doing? That filthy water! Now I'll have to go and wash. Angela, I cry. She bustles off to the cabin and gets changed.

They bring us lobster for dinner. (Can't stand beetles. I've got a terrible headache. Toothache.) My eyes light up and I dig in, sipping red wine as I eat. Excellent, I tell the waiter. We're famous for our lobster, he replies. Angela doesn't eat. It's lobster, I say, one of the finest delicacies in the world. Beautifully prepared. The mixed salad is first-rate. Don't want any, she says.

(Beetles. Spit at them? In the morning he rinses out the pail.) Is there something the matter with your stomach? I ask. My stomach's fine, she replies, but I'm not touching that filthy food. (At home we keep a little black book. Child of sin.) Try some salad, I say. Don't want any, she replies. The oil smells horrible. It's olive oil, I tell her. Or would you rather order something else? A steak perhaps? Don't want one. (Veal casserole? Beef goulash? Vegetable stew with rice? Don't want any. What do you want?) She pushes away her plate. And my shoulders are stiff too. I must have caught a chill. There was an awful draught on the train. And our room's not much better. You can feel the wind blowing in. But we do have a view of the sea, I say. Or should we try somewhere else?

The following day we moved into a room with a view of the mountains, but Angela didn't like that either. Shall we find another hotel? Somewhere in town? Alright then. I just thought it was nicer here. With the park and the sea-view.

We moved into town, but there between the narrow streets the air hung motionless. The third hotel was some way from the beach. The fourth was next to the railway station. The rattle of trains. The fifth hotel. I've lost my nightdress, she says. Perhaps we left it at the railway inn; I'll go and see. I spent the whole afternoon looking for the nightdress in all the hotels we had visited. In the end I simply bought a new one. (I'll have four corsets. I left the album on the cabinet. Bathing suit. Cream. Simply dropped him and he died. Don't want it. What do you want? I'll have six nightdresses.)

What are you doing? she asks. A nice new nightdress, I say, to replace the old one. The old one was nicer, she says. Are you sure you left it behind? They stole it. (Dropped it. Don't want it.) That chambermaid at the railway inn. And all that moving about. Somewhere different every day. Amazing we didn't lose anything else. Maybe we did. . . I'll go and see —

After dinner she spreads out all her clothes and checks them scrupulously. Why don't you sort our your things too? she asks. Me? Yes, you, she says. What if you've had something stolen too. You're so careless. Oh come on, I protest, a couple of handkerchiefs —

Why do you say that with such a sneer? I suppose you sneer at me for keeping my things tidy. I won't have you sneering at me like that.

(She can't defend herself against my thoughts.)

Actually, I say, I really admire you for being so tidy.

What did you say? she asks, snapping back her head.

(I can't defend myself against her thoughts.)

I go over to her with open arms.

Don't touch me, she screams. What are you laughing at? From one hotel to the next. They've pinched half my things —

I know, I know —

Are you mocking me? Nightdress! I didn't know you could be like that. The way you torment me! And I've got such a headache.

(My poor tooth, my poor head, my poor hair, my poor eyes.)

Shall I get you a pill?

Don't want one.

(Don't want one. What do you want?)

The contents of our suitcases scattered far and wide. Angela lying on the sofa holding a cold compress to her brow.

(All the things she longed to do at home. She does them now.)

My stomach, she moans. All that oil. I can't take it.

(My poor stomach, my poor head, my poor Braquilleux-nerve. I can't take much more of this.)

Can't take it. (What can you take?) Proper food. This stuff's impossible to swallow. Always fish. From one hotel to the next. Sea-water. Full of beetles and shell-fish. Filthy water. Can't take it. Leave me alone, I'm ill. I've turned everything upside down: half my things are missing —

What's missing?

Don't know yet, but half my things. Go for a walk or something. Go and swim in the sea. But wash before you come back, because I can't stand that smell. Filthy water —

Shall I get you a pill?

Don't want one. I'll get one myself if I do. You're always so obliging. Can't stand it —

Angela —

Go, she says.

Where?

Just go —

But it's late. Half past ten.

Angela is crying. My head, my head —

(She is more than one person. Her mother, Lala, Gitta, Fanny. Maybe even more. We are made of rags. Where's Angela? My poor head, my poor hands. She always envied Gitta for her migraines. Then Lala, then Fanny, then her mother. My poor stomach. I won't eat anything. Can't take it. Won't go. Don't want to. What do you want? By the window. Eleven. The port quiet. They've pinched half my things. I never knew you could be like that. You gave yourself away too soon. The sea is dark. In the distance the twinkling lights of fishing boats. Lobster. Is Angela asleep? Oil. Sea-

water. Don't want it, can't take it, don't bother. My poor head. Alum, flour, bicarbonate of soda. Never fails. Paddling shoes, cream, album. Drops it. I've caught a chill. Night. Hotel. People talking in the next room. I stand in silence. Angela sleeps. I stand. First a man talking, then a woman. I don't understand. A foreign language? The man speaking feverishly, the woman calmly. Silence. The sea is full of fish and beetles. Leave me alone, I'm ill. A little alum and bicarbonate of soda. Can't take it. Am I in the other room? Or maybe? Yes. What was that? No nightdress, no fish, no oil? On the sofa not Angela, but someone else. Who? The woman from the next room. Whoever she is. The prettiest girl in town. No hang-ups. At least, never with her. You're not the girl I fell in love with; I'm sorry. Voice from the other room. Angela there, and the other woman here. Or me there, and the other man here. Changing places. There's been some misunderstanding. A terrible mistake. Shall I go over? Excuse me, sir, we seem to have swapped places. The woman looks at me. Yes, of course. It was all a misunderstanding. The man comes over here. Is that you, Angela? Yes. It was all a big mistake. But now everyone's back in place. A bad joke. That's it, that's it. Good thing we noticed in time. Lucky we're staying at the same hotel, next-door-neighbours, good thing we noticed. Someone must have been having us on. Voices from the next room. A man and a woman. Just like us. The port quiet and the sea dark. My poor head, my poor tooth. You're not the girl I fell in love with; I'm sorry. Half past eleven. Can't take it. The prettiest girl in town.)

* * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * *

(Why does it have to be like this? I don't understand. Voices from the next room. A man and a woman. Changing places. Angela is his wife and his wife mine. Abizelengela. Pinched half my things. What's missing? Don't know yet, but half my things. Fish in the sea. Fell down somewhere and died. Does what she saw them do at home. Gitta, Lala, Fanny, her mother. The only explanation is... Insane? I'm not to blame for that. Only. I'm cold. Is it possible not to be cold? Headache, toothache. Every morning wakes up feeling ill. But then again. Without love. Incapable of loving? Without love we're driven raving mad. Is she drunk? Crazy? A good hiding. Obliging. I am. Calm. I am. Polite, peaceful, patient. Did I marry a lunatic? Patience. Doesn't she love me? Why do we live together? Don't I love her? Gelanabizonahail. Filthy water. Full of beetles. What's missing? Don't know, but half my things.)

I arrive home at noon. The window wide open, the flat unheated, the bed stripped, the curtains taken down, the kitchen cold. She's just started cleaning. I'll give you a hand, I cry.

Don't bother, she shouts back. Go out somewhere. Whatever brought you home so early ?

It's half plast two —

Oh no, it's not. It's only just twelve. Why did you have to hurry home? Nowhere to go? Did you bring the tea?

You didn't say —

I told you in the morning. Twice. You forget everything. I haven't cooked today. We're only having tea —

Alright, I'll go back, I say, already on my way.

Where are you going? You're always going somewhere.

To get the tea —

Don't need your tea. I'll get it myself. You forget everything. (She's crying.)

(The only explanation is that she's insane. She does as she has seen them do at home. I'm not to blame for that. Can't I love her? Insane. Patience. I am. I am. Fell down somewhere and died. Misunderstanding. Changing places.)

I prepare to heat the flat. All the same, I say, you could hire someone for the winter months. To do the dirtier jobs. After all, no reason why you should—

She stands in the middle of the room. What do you want? she shouts. Can't you even light a fire? Just this once?

Gladly, I reply, but if you've got such a sore throat—

I haven't got a sore throat. And if I had, I wouldn't let that bother me. Suddenly you're so—

(I am. Polite. Patient. Easy to be patient when you're not in love. Without love. Benevolence is no substitute. Without love I'll be driven raving mad. Misunderstanding. Full of beetles. My poor head.)

Wood for the stove. Set it alight, shake out the carpets, lay them down, make the bed, then start to dust the flat. Half past three. Angela banging about in the kitchen. Drops something. It breaks. (Don't want it. What do you want?) Screams. Can't stand it, she yells.

I go out to the kitchen. What's happened?

Two plates—

Never mind—

(Patience. Obliging, appeasing. I am. Easy to be patient when you're not in love. The only explanation is that I'm insane. Without love driven raving mad.)

I bend down and pick up the pieces of porcelain, sweeping up the splinters with a dustpan and brush. Angela just stands there watching.

Suddenly she steps over and kicks me in the ribs. (Spits in every stream. Why does it have to be like this?)

I stand up and look at her, speechless.

(Patience. Peace. I am.)

She screams. Do you really believe I can go on like this?

What's happened?

I'm unhappy—

Dustpan and brush in my hands. Me too, I say.

(Raving mad without love. The only explanation is that she's crazy. She does what she has seen them do at home. A good hiding. I'm not to blame for that. Fell out somewhere and died.)

She runs in to her room, throws herself down on the bed and sobs. I light the kitchen stove and put the kettle on. Scrambled eggs, bread and butter and a jar of stewed fruit. I take it all in on a tray and lay the table.

Come on. Come and have something to eat.

She comes to the table with red eyes. You have it. I don't want anything. Always eating—

(Poisonpoisonpoisonpoison. The only explanation is poison. I'll go raving mad. Not to blame. Polite. I am. Good. I am.)

I haven't had anything since first thing in the morning, and now it's half past four—

I know, terrible isn't it, negligent wife, doesn't have lunch ready for her husband. That's what you wanted to say, isn't it. Go on, say it—

(I don't understand why it has to be like this. Where do I go wrong? Is she insane? Fell somewhere. Dirty water. What's missing? Misunderstanding.)

I help myself to the scrambled eggs, cut a slice of bread and pour out the tea, for her as well as for myself.

At least have a cup of tea. Angela takes the cup and dashes it to the ground. She gets up and storms off to her room, slamming the door behind her.

I remain seated at the table. Perhaps the pregnancy. She does what she's seen them do at home. November. Maybe the doctor. I'm unhappy. Me too. My poor head, my poor throat, my poor stomach. Other men are more considerate. And other women? You always go away. Some companion you are! My poor head, my poor feet. The fourth month. December, January, February, March, April. A boy? Cold scrambled eggs. Stewed fruit. Tea. I light a cigarette. Dark. November. Switch on the lamp. Pick up a book. A son born at the end of April. My poor throat, my poor eyes. Every day, I say, for ten years. Any other man. In any other house. I put down my

book. Unhappy. Me too. The one and only moment of happiness. One and only. I go over to the stove. Any other man. My poor feet. Raving mad without love. Me too. The only explanation. Crazy. What she sees them do at home. A good hiding. Voices from the next room. Peace. Unhappy. Me too. Has there been one single moment of happiness? One? Moment? No.

*Translated by Richard Aczél*

## FROM OUR NEXT ISSUES

JENŐ BARCSAY: A LIFE OF PAINTING
*Lajos Németh*

HUNGARIAN PATRONS OF ARTS:
FERENC AND KÁROLY PULSZKY
*Zoltán Halász*

NEW FIGURATIVITY
*János Frank*

PHOTOBIENNALE IN ESZTERGOM
*András Bán*

JÁNOS MEGYIK AT THE MŰCSARNOK
*Éva Forgács*

A NEW WORK BY KURTÁG IN BERLIN
*András Wilheim*

AN OPERA BASED ON
"MARIO AND THE MAGICIAN"
*Paul Griffiths*

HUNGARIAN MUSIC EDUCATION AFTER KODÁLY
*Erzsébet Tusa*

# TRANSYLVANIA

## A DECLARATION OF THE ECUMENICAL COUNCIL OF CHURCHES IN HUNGARY

Recently the world has taken note of the situation facing the national minorities in Rumania. The members of the Christian Churches united in the Ecumenical Council of Churches in Hungary, the Reformed Church, the Lutheran Church, the Baptist Church, the Methodist Church, the Council of Free Churches and the Orthodox Churches, have on several occassions expressed their anxiety about the dangers threatening these minorities.

We now turn to the European forum as the respected international institution working for the peace and cooperation of the various nations of our continent. Our concerns centre on the national minorities whose already bleak existence is endangered by the present Rumanian government's policy on nationalities.

At the centre of this policy is the idea called homogeneisation by which they seek to Romanise, by crude means of assimilation, the nationalities living in that country; these include about two million Hungarians, 300,000 German speaking Saxons and smaller numbers of Serbians. In practice alarming and unacceptable facts lie behind the policy of so-called homogeneisation. In order to realise its intentions the Rumanian government has called on method which are contrary European culture and ways of thinking as well as operative international treaties. All these factors give rise to fear and dread amongst the national minorities, they result in a defencelessness in which today and tomorrow, the present and the future become completely uncertain for these minorities; this, we can justifiably say, is in the final analysis close to the idea of genocide.

Geographically speaking the majority of the minorities live in the northern half of the country called Transylvania which borders with Hungary, in the north western sweep of the Carpathians. This is explained by the fact that this area, as is widely known, for around a thousand years, since the founda-

tion of the state, was a part of Hungary. On the basis of the decisions made resulting in the Treaty of Trianon after the first world war those living in this area, then more than two million Hungarians together with about half a million Saxons found themselves in Rumania. In this area over the course of history the various nationalities lived together with an exemplary forbearance and tolerance for each other. We in Hungary recognise the borders which were established by the Treaty of Trianon and after the Second World War and we do not seek to have them changed.

The intolerant Rumanian policy on nationalities over recent decades has caused this unstable political balance to be completely overturned in this area. One after the other, laws have progressively increased the restrictions on the life of the national minorities living there; these laws have set limits on the opportunity for education in the mother language at both primary and secondary levels, on the day to day use of the mother language, on the opportunities to keep up contact with relatives and friends living in the mother country, and restrictions on tourism which include the opportunities for travel and accommodation of those Hungarians arriving here from abroad; pressure is put on the members of national minorities when declaring which national grouping they belong to to deny their Hungarian, German or other descent in the interest of producing more favourable statistics. When jobs and places of work are sought, disadvantageous differentiations are employed and members of national minorities are induced to seek work in a part of the country which is far from their natural environment.

It would be possible to give a long list of the facts which both signify and prove that lying behind the policy on nationalities called homogeneisation are disadvantageous differentiations on the grounds of the nationality to which a person belongs. This most basic infringement of human rights is an intolerance which gives rise to political violence and fear amongst the national minorities which is entirely contrary to the policies of the final document of Helsinki, which was also signed by Rumania.

The latest development of this policy is what is called the land organization law, the officially declared purpose of which is the establishment of newer areas of land in the interest of increasing the country's agricultural output. In connection with this several thousand villages have been designated for destruction by a central plan amongst them those which are said to have small populations and to be incapable of sustaining life. The plan is that the inhabitants of these villages will be directed to various central settlements where they will be crammed tightly together on housing estates which are being newly built.

It is, however, clear that this plan is going to further increase the tension

that has hitherto existed and drive to ultimate despair and suicide those who until now have, despite their desperate situation, have not abandoned the land of their ancestors, their houses or their churches together with the cultural treasures of the centuries. Destruction threatens all of them. What will happen to these people if they are forcibly evicted from the land of their birth, if their homes are destroyed by the bulldozers and if their churches are crushed to the ground, if the graves of their ancestors are ploughed up, if their communities are scattered and they are placed in completely alien surroundings over night? Fear, a sense of having been cheated and torment is reflected in the eyes of those who having escaped from this situation, often with half their family left behind, arrive as refugees in our country and ask us and the churches for help.

We, the followers of Jesus Christ, in the spirit of his gospel of love turn to everyone to seek an end to and settlement of this cursed situation. Therefore, we most strongly implore the European Parliament to give its undivided attention to this painful situation which is foreign to European thought and basic human ethics and which poisons the political atmosphere of the whole of our continent and embitters the lives of millions of people. We ask you to condemn the danger of genocide, which in itself carries a policy to nullify human rights and the international agreements related to them, and to condemn the intolerant practice arising out of it. Finally, we ask you to do everything you possibly can to prevent all this.

On behalf of the Ecumenical Council of Churches in Hungary,

Bishop *Dr Károly Tóth*
Chairman of the Ecumenical Council
of Churches in Hungary

# A HUNGARIAN POET IN RUMANIA

*Sándor Kányádi interviewed by György Mary*
*(Hungarian Radio, 2 October 1988)*

*Q:* To leave or not to leave Transylvania —how do you approach this question?

*A:* Well, I do not think the question is like 'to be or not to be,' because it is not up to us to decide. I am not certain that leaving means as much as to be to anyone. Neither does remaining at home mean so either. I cannot give advice to anyone on the question. I am extremely sorry to see people leaving Transylvania. But I am unable to say anything that might be of comfort to them. How am I to comfort someone who—always true to his or her mother tongue—has become a teacher of Hungarian, or a teacher of Hungarian and English, Hungarian and French, or even of Hungarian and Rumanian, someone who entered on a miserable career? And then he has to live his life somewhere in Oltenia, in Old Rumania, or Muntenia—or I don't know where, but it may as well be in Transylvania, say, in purely Rumanian surroundings—and must teach through Rumanian there. What kind of future am I supposed to tell him of? There is much trouble here, not to speak of what would have happened if, let's say, Hungary had not made the generous gesture—allowing those who came over to stay in Hungary—as it had not yet done a year ago. Thus I have met a good many Hungarians in Western Europe, foreigners by this time, who would have chosen to remain in Hungary but were compelled to move on last year. And I was frightened, because this exodus to foreign countries might have continued and then it may happen—very easily—that the fate of those remaining at home in Transylvania will turn out still worse. They will be the Palestinians or avenging Armenians of the next century, whose grandchildren or children will be induced by their confused identity to take revenge for the wrong that is being done to us there at home now; they will see that explosives are easier to come by in the West than under socialism, so nothing will deter them—this is bad.

Not that the world fails to see that all of this ought to be prevented. This would be so simple: national and human rights, the declaration of human rights, which says that all human beings are born free, that everyone has the right to be a member of some community, of the linguistic community, he choses even if he was not born into it. And if he accepts that, it is a human right he may exercise anywhere on this Earth. But if such people—hundreds of thousands or, let's say, two million of them—live somewhere in a large mass, in communities, that they should not . . .

The United Nations has at least fifty member states with populations numbering fewer inhabitants than we are Hungarians in Rumania. The biggest problem for us—and I have to say this consciously—is this sort of desintellectualising policy.

I have just now heard that in the academic year 1988/89 no Hungarian has been admitted to any faculty of law or to courses on historical studies. Under the provisions of a law still in force, confirmed in 1978, every student who passes his secondary school-leaving examination in his native language is entitled to matriculation in the university in the same language. This law has not been observed for the last four years. I even lodged a protest with the public prosecutor. To this day I am still waiting for his answer. I was invoking the law, the constitution. I had a lawyer formulate the protest letter, just to make it sound right. All that has happened so far is that I was summoned to the Kolozsvár county court, but I didn't go there, since I believe that

what I had written about was not a county matter but a national affair. This I expressed in a letter to the public prosecutor and stressed that it was not in a county matter but in an affair of national concern that I had petitioned for redress. With all the *bona fides* needed and in support of our laws. Matriculations in the university have since taken place in violation of the law. We now live in hope for the future. Actually, this hope is growing slimmer and slimmer. There had been no other reply. I properly also allowed the state security authorities to see my petition. It was better if they came to know of it from me. They all said—those Party men responsible for us, for our souls—that it was very good that I had written it alone; and when I asked why, I was told that it could not then be considered a conspiracy, which was an indictable offence.

Well, I then replied that, in support of our laws I would even be capable of conspiracy. So I stuck to this deft adage. I am a fairly persistent petitioner, but I slowly begin to see what a nonsense it all is, nevertheless I am not giving up, because I am prompted in particular by something indicative of, say, a sort of justice that still may possibly come. Yet we have to face things honestly so that they cannot say to us: why didn't you tell? Now then, I say, we have told you. When the petitions are smiled at, I usually say that such appeals may one day be worth as much as, if not more than, certain publications.

*Q:* In your place of birth, the village of Nagygalambfalva, have the bulldozers arrived yet?

*A:* Bah! I can't imagine those machines showing up in our neighbourhood. There, for example, we have a house which is out of the way and allegedly in the demolition zone, and which I built for my father after he had joined the farmers' cooperative. I am a civiliser; make no mistake, I'm well disposed towards urbanisation. I should like everybody, every tiller of the soil, to own a home with a bathroom. Not in a tenement block, but in his own house. I have long wanted this kind of urbanisation. I have always been looking for what might be taken over from all that I have seen when going about the world.

We are highlanders ... the Saxon villages, those built centuries ago, almost look like some small towns. That is to say, they might have been urbanised simply by water, the water supply has already been assured in most of them, if only in the form of public wells supplied by springs from the mountains. Thus, only one step ought to have been taken forward, a natural step, to preserve a characteristic of what is also part of the Rumanian national identity—for Lucian Blaga has built a whole metaphysical system upon it, *spațiul mioritic*. Well, this is now in jeopardy. Here, in the course of carrying out such a plan, intellectual riches may be swept away in the debris of history. So God forbid that, say, this urbanisation should be what might be called the most advanced method. This will lead to a catastrophe, causing a break, a psychological collapse. What true socialism provides is not an absurd way of construction but exactly this sort of assistance with public funds that creates for people conditions more becoming to man. But when the implication is that it divests them of their human character and their traditions, I am bound to think, say, about our house being wrecked and the graveyard there at the end of the garden. In Székely land it has been a tradition for people to be buried in their garden: my great-grandfather, my grandfather and my father are buried there, and it's there I also should have liked to be laid to rest. But now I have not much chance of being laid there under the plum-trees. Those dead have done and do no harm to anyone, but if the garden also belongs to the state, then the state evidently does to it what it wants, and when something belongs to the state, when everything belongs to it, then our own thoughts do not belong any more to us either, they are likewise controlled by others. If we are simply

only wage-earning pariahs, we may not have such desires rooted in tradition, we may lose even our instincts and just try, as prison camp inmates do, to survive somehow or other. We shall reach a point where—as one of the best lines or sentences in Sándor Márai's post-war Diary has it—we find that while the idea of the 18th century was freedom, that of the 20th century is retirement on pension. This is not a human goal. This can be called neither urbanisation nor humanisation in particular. But that school at Nagygalambfalva... it will survive, as the old school has endured a good two hundred years. It was built to. To raze such a well-made building in a village for the sake of a plan, this, I think, is barbarity.

*Q:* You are a poet but you are not any longer a member of the Union of Writers in Rumania. Would you mind telling me the reason for your withdrawal?

*A:* It is quite simple really. It began with an invitation I received last year to an international meeting of poets at Rotterdam which I attended this year. Getting authorization is a long process and I went through the usual ordeal last year, after repeated promises and procrastinations, the Union of Writers, of which I was a member, refused to give me—as is needed in Rumania—a paper stating its approval of my travelling to that international gathering of poets. Since without this piece of paper I could not obtain my passport, I was burning with humiliation. The Dutch hosts had phoned to invite me some 28 or 30 times and interceded with the Union of Writers on my behalf. At the time, I was informed, the Dutch Embassy also concerned itself with my case and granted me visa exemption, they even promised to send a taxi from Budapest so that I might get there on time. So after all this I realized that this Union of Rumanian Writers did not want me, did not need me; that if I was not accepted after being a member for more than thirty years and a member of the board for more than twenty, why should I remain a member? I announced my resignation, and I resigned. And I'll stick to it, I insist that the Union is a good-for-nothing clique which does not protect me; if it will not stand up for me, why should I be a member? That's the simple explanation of my case. And, if once I decided to take this step, then I could give more serious reasons, too, for this was not the only one for my resignation from the Union of Writers. It was the last straw. For they had already failed once before to act on an invitation I received to a meeting of authors when, in 1985, I ought to have presented a volume of Arghezi, an eminent Rumanian poet, a great poet, to children in Budapest. The book, that I had translated, was brought out by Móra Publishers, in Budapest, and I was invited by Miklós Hubay, president of the Hungarian Writers' Association, but Bucharest did not deign to reply to my request. In 1983, I had not particularly wanted to go, but last year I had made up my mind to accept that Dutch invitation, and I pushed my request, because I did not regard my being snubbed as a refusal but thought that they only did not want me to go. At that time I did not want to go either. But once I take the field, I never accept defeat. I think I'm an honest citizen, and as such—even if a passport is not issued as a right of citizenship in Rumania—I am also entitled to one if others can obtain it, because I have not betrayed this country, I have neither stolen nor cheated nor killed, why can't I get one? They should tell me. I want to get to the bottom of things. If they don't like something, they should put me on trial, make me stand against the wall and shoot me, but they should not make a fool of me. Furthermore, the Union of Writers was, by the way, a democratic body, it was indeed, its board had been elected democratically. Out of two hundred candidates so many had to be struck off that only ninety remained. And increasingly discordant voices began to make themselves heard in that Union of Writers. Another Union member—a famous Rumanian author and member of the Nation-

al Assembly, who has excellent Hungarian—labelled Sándor Petőfi a nationalist for having written "we swear by the God of Hungarians" in 1848. And there is nothing to protect us against this, in vain do we have newspapers, we cannot express our opinions, we cannot object. After that even Károly Kós was attacked, and he had once been a leader of the Association of Hungarian Writers of Rumania. The two organizations, the Rumanian Writers' Union and the Association of Hungarian Writers of Rumania, were merged into one to form the Union of Writers in Rumania, now called *Uniunea Scriitorilor din RSR*, which is a union of the writers living in Rumania, not a union of Rumanian writers—an indication that the national minorities also belonged to it, that it was born of a merger and Károly Kós had been a foundation member. And at the time of his centenary, it turned out that Károly Kós had in vain obtained three major state distinctions, he was not an honest man after all. As the only Hungarian member on the Union's sub-committee in charge of honouring the memory of authors, I deemed it my duty to appeal in writing to the Union president and asked him for the reasons. I received no answer and so I asked him in person. He said it was an instruction from higher up. But I could not agree. Things got to a point where I declared that I was not willing, in my capacity as a member of the Union, as dumb as an Indian from a neighbouring tribe tied to a post with his mouth gagged, to help flout our national minority rights, our human rights, proclaimed many times over by the constitution, by party documents, and make decisions which forced us to give up our identity.

*Q:* What can a poet do in this situation, what can the poet be expected to do?

*A:* The mission of the poet went out of fashion long ago. Look, I set out a very short piece of writing on this. Precisely about this. Hostat, Kolozsvár's garden suburb where the Hostat farmers—very hard-working people—produced vegetables for the city, has been bulldozed, now eight-to-ten-storied houses stand in the area. The people of Kolozsvár have been hard hit by the scheme, haven't they? And so have the people of Hostat themselves. It happened there—I was just noting down an example in reply to an inquiry on the opinion of poets—that a Hostat woman of over eighty ran at a bulldozer with a hoe. What can a poet have to say to this? This is a ballad story, indeed. But the truth is that the woman does not win here, for ballads always end tragically and here the bulldozer won. Dignity had to be spoken about, this is represented by poets, isn't it? Well, I said, there was nothing to do here, because, as Ferenc Deák said a century ago: "I think that a man whose hat has been blown off by the wind cannot run after it with dignity so as not to look foolish." Therefore, in the age of nuclear bombs, bulldozers and star wars, the poet's word is like a small bell tinkling on the Christmas tree. This, unfortunately, has today no chance of being heard where decisions are made at round-table conferences, at meetings, or simply by means of guns and tanks or some other dangerous caterpillar-vehicles. But there may be just one thing, mayn't there?... In the early decades of the last century in Siberia there existed a people who have since died out, the Kamasins. That the poet's word is still meaningful appears from the fact that the last Kamasin, who was alone, narrated a poem about those people. She was a woman, claiming to be the last of the Kamasins, and she was lamenting... This poem is the only thing that has been left behind. This much may be done by poetry, by the poet as chronicler. Or, in a temper, he may set down in writing what he feels, and this in a few people can still warm up something pointing forward, a bit of honesty. But I think the poet has no voice in the matter, he has nothing to say about these things.

SÁNDOR KÁNYÁDI

# POEMS

*Translated by Gerard Gorman*

## FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY WITH CLAUSES

To their theatres, while they still exist
—for the permitted works.
To their churches, which still stand
—regardless of creed.
To their funerals—while they still occur—
orderly, to the end of their days,
even without special permission,
they may go, they may go.

## THE LAST PRAYER OF AN OLD MAN

Grant me the courage to cast the rope around my neck,
And give me strength my Lord for this leap forward.
Amen!

## MASS GRAVE POEM

It turned out,
at the burial of the long vowels
executed by muffled guns,
that there weren't enough shovels.
An ingenious non-commissioned officer
sent for entrenching-tools,
and the long minutes of this awkward delay
served as a good opportunity for one or two
of their learned ones to offer condolences,
with silent handshakes and downcast eyes.
The relatives of the executed long vowels

thereafter could only hum the psalms to themselves.
God stood with his back turned,
for in his eyes a thousand years
is as the passing of yesterday
and the vigil of a short night.

## LITHOGRAPH

(Instead of a 60th birthday poem for Géza Domokos)

And wise was the Lord when he bade
that the laws be carved in stone.
Churches can be demolished,
cemeteries ploughed up,
but what should be done with the stones,
those already taken in hand,
those that have been worked,
the engraved stones.

Stones can be built with,
stones can be crushed,
ground to dust.
But stone still remains stone.
Stonedust settles in the windpipe,
weighs on the lungs.

Long ago Sisyphus toiled in vain with stone.
Thus I say, that wise was the Lord when he bade
that the laws be carved in stone.

Of course stones can be buried,
like any other dangerous waste.
But stones have no half-life,
thus the tempest, or, God forbid,
an earthquake, is enough.
Stones can surface at any time,
and then, I tell you:
not a stone will remain standing.

JEAN GUISCARD

# TRANSYLVANIA THROUGH FRENCH EYES

This article by the French journalist Jean Guiscard from the August 1988 issue of *Géo* was translated without omissions and is reprinted here by permission. *(Noces de cendres.) Géo* is a popular illustrated magazine of geography and social anthropology, with a circulation of more than 600,000. We chose to publish the article as an example of the growing international concern over the fate of the two million Hungarians in Rumania, the largest national minority in Europe.

A small number of minor factual errors in the piece should, however, be pointed out. The claim—presented as a fact by M. Guiscard—that the Rumanians are direct descendants of the Dacians at the Eastern border of the Roman Empire, who have continuously been living in Transylvania for thousands of years, has been seriously challenged by Hungarian and other historians, as no tangible archeological and other evidence to support it exists. The Székely—the ethnically purest Hungarians—live and have done so in Eastern Transylvania since the 9th century; those few mentioned by M. Guiscard, who now live in western Hungary, are some of the Csángó people, also Transylvanian Hungarians, who migrated into Moldavia in the Southern Carpathians escaping Habsburg terror in 1774, and left their villages during the Second World War.

A *History of Transylvania*, a 3 volume scholarly work, was published not under the aegis of the Ministry of Culture, as stated in the article, but under that of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, though its general editor, Béla Köpeczi, a historian, was Minister of Culture at the time.

Transylvania itself, up to then a part of the Kingdom of Hungary, became a semi-independent principality in mid-16th century, when the middle part of Hungary, including Buda, the royal capital, fell to the Turks and western Hungary came under Habsburg rule. Transylvania paid ransom to the Porte to remain free of Turkish occupation and was a haven where Hungarian literature and the arts flourished.

Place names in the French article were written in Rumanian and the Hungarian originals are here given, with the spelling occasionally corrected, where *Géo* also gave them.

We also reprint from *Géo* the pictures of traditional Transylvanian village life by the Hungarian photographer Péter Korniss. —*The Editor.*

*

In a refugee centre in Budapest, the capital of Hungary, a peasant from Transylvania had this to say to me: "I wanted to enter my six year old daughter into school at the beginning of the academic year last September. I was informed by the Rumanian authorities that there was not going to be a Hungarian primary school any more." He had just left Sic, a village near Cluj-Napoca. At the end of a rough dirt road, rarely taken by cars, Sic (called Szék by Hungarians) is an important place for Hungarian popular culture in Rumania. On weekdays, men and women still set out for work in the same peasant clothes that were worn during the 19th century. On Sundays, they come together to worship in the Hungarian language. The men are in their straw hats, dark blue jackets and high, polished boots; the women are in dresses and costumes whose bright colours evoke the splendours of the Renaissance. In Szék the sense of being Hungarian is stronger than in any village in Hungary proper. So, for the three thousand people who live there, a hundred of whom at most are Rumanian,

the closure of the Hungarian language school is a wound to the soul itself.

Around two million of the Magyar live in Transylvania, the heart of present-day Rumania. For a thousand years, in spite of war, invasion and frequent adjustments of frontiers, they have preserved their language and traditions. Descendants of the Dacians, the first people to occupy this region of the Carpathians, the Rumanians speak a Latin language and the religion they practice is Orthodox. The descendants of the peoples of the Urals who swept into the Western part of Europe in the 9th century, the Hungarians speak a language which is related only to Finnish and Estonian and claim to be the defenders of the Christian West. For these two peoples, these two cultures, existing side by side has never been easy. At times it has even been tragic.

In the aftermath of the Second World War, the emergence of 'fraternal states' around the Soviet Union might have led one to the belief that this unending question would come to an end. It has done no such thing. Deliberately ignoring those precepts of socialism which proclaim the equal status of all cultures, Nicolae Ceauşescu, the despot who rules in Bucharest, applies himself to bulldozing through the 'Rumanianisation' of his country. He has decided to be done with national minorities. It is not so much the presence of 300,000 ethnic Germans (also settled here in Transylvania for centuries) that disturbs him: the two German states are far away and it is not too difficult for the Rumanian *Conducător* to convert the departure of the most recalcitrant into cash. Ceauşescu is, above all else, taking on the Hungarians, who are numerically the largest of the ethnic minority groups in Rumania and, as a community, are so closely knit together that nothing can unravel them. Several months ago he decreed that Hungarian given names that have no equivalent in Rumanian were to be henceforth banned. The Hungarians of Transylvania saw this as a serious blow to their sense of identity.

*Hungarian placenames banned*

In fact, this prohibition is no more than the logical consequence of a whole series of government measures designed to wipe out the slightest trace of a Hungarian presence on Rumanian soil. Accordingly the Hungarian language press published in Rumania is no longer allowed to give the names of towns and villages in their Hungarian versions. (Cluj–Napoca is itself an example: to all Hungarians it is Kolozsvár.) A tourist will find it impossible to find in any bookshop in Hungary or Rumania a road map which gives Transylvanian placenames in both languages. Hungarians, when they want to refer to Oradea, Gheorghieni, Tirgu–Mureş, Miercurea Ciuc, Sfîntu Gheorghe or Hunedoara, continue to use the names Nagyvárad, Gyergyószentmiklós, Marosvásárhely, Csíkszereda, Sepsiszentgyörgy and Vajdahunyad; all these towns have large Hungarian populations. Some years ago, on a previous visit, I had to ask some friends in Budapest to make out a map for me with placenames in both Hungarian and Rumanian so that I could find my way about.

It is not just the Hungarian language of the Hungarian population that the Rumanian president is attempting to destroy. In May 1988, he announced that seven of the thirteen thousand villages of Rumania were to be razed to the ground to make way for agroindustrial centres, whose inhabitants are to be housed in four to six storey blocks. For the Transylvanian Hungarians, who have made their villages citadels of Magyar culture, this decision of the Conducător's means the physical destruction of an inheritance received from their forefathers. The parish churches with their pointed belfries, the Calvinist churches, the graveyards, the cottages with their blue walls, many dating back to the 19th and even 18th centuries, have been condemned. "We live in a schizophrenic state," says an inhabitant of Szék, "the administration has even decided that sermons delivered in Hun-

garian will have to be translated into Rumanian from now on." Hungarians are Protestant, some Catholics, while the Orthodox Rumanians have their own churches to worship in.

A dozen or so years ago, the Hungarian poet Gyula Illyés was the first to raise the alarm in his own country. True, at the time he was not able to directly implicate Rumania in the signed articles that *Magyar Nemzet*, one of the Budapest dailies, published. But when I was his guest some months later at his summer home at Tihany on the sun-drenched shores of Lake Balaton, he did not mince his words: "We will not allow Ceaușescu to practice cultural genocide in the name of socialism." Faced with the sudden arrival of thousands fleeing from Rumania, the Budapest authorities came under pressure from public opinion and decided to take action at the beginning of 1988. Nor could they have done otherwise: the sense of belonging to one people is deeply rooted in Hungarians. This is shown by the demonstrations this summer in which thousands took part. President Ceaușescu angrily responded by expelling Hungarian consular officials from Cluj-Napoca.

### *The Latinising of King Matthias*

In Cluj-Napoca, Rumania's second city, an equestrian statue of King Matthias I (1440–1490) stands imposingly in front of the Gothic cathedral. "He and Saint Stephen were the two greatest kings of our country," explain the Hungarians, "He was born here." Pointing at the inscription on the plinth, 'Mathias Rex', those who live in Cluj-Napoca add: "They removed the inscription in Hungarian and replaced it with the one in Latin." You have to travel all through Transylvania, with its wooded mountains and valleys romantically wreathed in morning mists, to understand how deep the Hungarian penetration is. Five-hundred kilometres inside Rumania, Hungarian towns are extended in an arc around the Carpathian basin. It is enough to stroll along the streets, walk into the shops and cafés to distinguish at first glance between strapping Hungarians, blond-haired and blue-eyed, and voluble Rumanians, playful and Mediterrenean in features. In the upper reaches of the Olt Valley, between Gheorghieni and Brașov, only a few villages are Rumanian. Even across the border of Transylvania in Moldavia stand forty-seven villages inhabited by the Csángó. Once the frontier sentinels of the kings of Hungary, they still speak an archaic mediaeval form of Hungarian. Just imagine if, in certain regions of France, it were still possible to use the language of François Villon!

The Székely, too, were entrusted with the defence of the frontiers of the kingdom, in the East as well as in the West. Several thousand of them are still to be found near the modern frontier with Austria. The Hungarian nation was able formerly to extend its territory, notably in the 15th and 18th centuries, brushing the shores of the Adriatic around Fiume. The Székely today make up an important community on the eastern fringe of Transylvania. They descend from former enfranchised soldiers who enjoyed the same rights as the Hungarian nobility in return for providing armed protection for the nation; they are considered by all Hungarians as brothers in blood. During the 1950s, when socialist Rumania was still attempting to create a multiracial state, the area they inhabit gave birth to an autonomous region whose capital was Tîrgu-Mureș.

Rumanians and Hungarians have two different versions of history. In the eyes of the former, the Hungarians, coming out of the East, occupied the Danube Plain and Transylvania, clashing with the Dacians who had solidly settled in a region previously occupied by the Romans. The Hungarians maintain that the land was unpopulated; it thus belonged to them from the time they established themselves there. This is the thesis defended by *A History of Transylvania*,

published in 1986 under the aegis of the Hungarian Ministry of Culture.* Completed ten years ago, it is rumoured, the work caused a sensation when it came out. For the first time since the war, official Hungary was tackling the minority problem and challenging the policies of another socialist state. The book, in three volumes, enraged Bucharest. The Union of Writers of the Socialist Republic of Rumania in turn published a series of articles in the periodical *Romania Literara*, attacking the "tendentious, crude and historically revisionist" interpretation produced by the Hungarian authorities. These articles, translated into French, were reprinted in a tome of 350 pages in Bucharest during 1987. Unperturbed, the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, publishers of *A History of Transylvania*, have replied recently by deciding to bring the work out in English, French and German translations. The row is thus going to resound beyond the borders of the two states.

### *King Ubu still reigns in history*

The history of the Balkans is a particularly complex one, but in the case of Transylvania it can occasionally be bizarre. Take the example of the father of Mathias I, King of Hungary. Was he Hungarian or Rumanian? Of Transylvanian birth, which language did he use when he conversed with Erzsébet Szilágyi, his Hungarian wife? On this crucial point, answers differ on the two sides of the frontier. To the Hungarians, János Hunyadi, hero of the wars with the Turks, is Hungarian: indeed, they have built a reconstruction of his family seat in a Budapest park. To the Rumanians, Iancu de Hunedoara (the very same great warrior) is quite clearly a Rumanian, and a Rumanian nobleman at that. Where (his son) Mathias I is concerned, history is clearer: he established himself in the ancient castle of Buda on the Danube and extended his sway to Transylvania itself, his birthplace. A cultured man, a law-giver, deeply attached to the Christian West, he opened, long before other monarchs, the doors of his country to the Renaissance. To this the folk costumes of Transylvania still bear witness today. In his youth he was imprisoned in a castle in Prague, in the course of a struggle over the succession. A message from his Hungarian mother was brought to him by a raven. After taking the crown, he came down to posterity as Mathias Corvinus—from the Latin name for the bird. The raven is now the logo of the Postal Services of Hungary.

At the end of 1987, ten thousand parcels were sent from all over Europe to the Hungarians of Transylvania: two were delivered. As a Budapest newspaper put it: "The only messages that now get across the Rumanian border are those of the birds." For years now Rumanian frontier-guards have been seizing from Hungarians everything published in Budapest, including copies of *Népszabadság*, the official Hungarian party daily. The curious situation that the two million of the Magyar in Transylvania find themselves in is that the only contact they have with their mother tongue comes from what is published in Rumania: the Rumanian party dailies, translations of the classics of world literature and the works of the Conducător and his family. At all levels of the organs of state and of the party, the Magyar in theory should be represented in proportion to their demographic weight, officially put at 7.8 per cent of the population. In reality, the ratio differs according to the region. Thus, the town of Odorheiu-Secuiesc (Székelyudvarhely to the Hungarians) has a population of forty-five thousand, of whom forty-three thousand are Magyar.

### *Some get the meat, the others the bones*

A twenty-three year old worker from the town explains why he chose the path of exile and fled to Budapest with only the clothes

* See *NHQ* 105, 109

he was dressed in: "The two-thousand Rumanians in the place were either bosses or cops. In my factory canteen, they were given napkins and served meat. Us Hungarians got the bones." The Bucharest authorities have put it about that the Transylvanian Hungarians have "more rights than any other minority in Europe." What are they complaining about? They have six theatre companies, three puppet theatres, ten publishing houses, hundreds of folk music and dance ensembles, seven daily papers and twenty other periodicals, hundreds of schools and courses. This is true in theory. But what is the reality? The last Hungarian theatres can only put on the classics, and Transylvanian authors are banned. In the National Theatre in Budapest, *Advent a Hargitán*, a play by András Sütő whose manuscript had to be smuggled across the frontier, had a resounding success.* The sixty-one year old author was not given permission to leave his home to attend the 100th performance of his play in Budapest. Pál Bodor, formerly director of Hungarian and German language broadcasting for Rumanian Radio and Television, now a leader-writer in Budapest, comments: "Until 1987, there were published, year in year out, in Rumania about 200 books in Hungarian, mostly the classics of our language or translations of Rumanian works. With the forced speeding-up of the Romanisation of the country, no one can predict how many will be published in the future."

Less than ten years ago, Rumanian television devoted 120 minutes a week to Hungarian-language broadcasting. Today, not a minute. On the radio, there were seven hours daily in Hungarian until 1971. After that, barely an hour a day. True, this policy has been applied to the German ethnic minority as well as to the Hungarian. Indeed, as an artistic director told me, Ceaușescu is not using a pistol but a machine-gun and, essentially, it is aimed at all the cultures of the country, including the Rumanian. More serious still than the policies directed against the theatre, books and broadcasting, is the attack on teaching in the Hungarian language. In the long run, the very existence of the Hungarian community is under threat. Within a few short years, Ceaușescu has had the last of the Hungarian universities closed down, the most famous being that of Cluj-Napoca. Transylvanian Hungarians who wish to obtain a university degree in their own language in 1988 can only take an arts degree. The faculties of medicine, law, architecture and engineering—which enjoyed high reputation—have disappeared. Secondary school teaching? Over ten years it too has practically ceased to exist. There remained the Hungarian primary schools. The authorities first decided that 36 Hungarian children in a village or district were required in order to have a Hungarian primary school. "Two Rumanian children are enough", is the bitter Magyar comment, "to open a Rumanian primary school." Several months ago, another barrier was broken: there will be no more Hungarian primary schools. "They want to destroy our childhood, our past and our history," said the peasant from Szék that I met at the Budapest refugee centre. In May 1988, a few days before giving up his post to Károly Grósz, János Kádár was interviewed by an American television journalist. The main Hungarian channel broadcast extracts from the interview. In reply to a question on the problems facing the Hungarian ethnic minority in Transylvania, János Kádár did not disguise the truth. "I last met," he said, "President Ceaușescu in 1977. On that occasion we signed some bilateral accords to improve the situation..." All his viewers understood the point he was making, namely that he saw no reason to meet the Rumanian leader again while these accords were not being implemented. A few weeks after this, a leading official of the Central Committee declared on the radio that the Party and the government could not

* See *NHQ* 102

remain insensitive to the drama of Hungarians living outside the country having "their sense of national identity injured." Without using the word refugee, he nevertheless stated that the "mother nation" was ready to welcome all those who wished to settle "provisionally" in Hungary.

"As soon as I heard that," confided a teacher from Oradea who had succeeded in getting out of Rumania with two of her children, "I realized that we would be in no danger of being turned away. I showed my passport to the Hungarian frontier-guards and declared that I wanted to stay. They simply bid me welcome. I took my children into my arms and we started to dance around like madmen." This young Transylvanian woman was lucky: like all Rumanian citizens, in principle, she was allowed to go for a month once every two years to any of the socialist countries. But her happiness was not complete: since not all members of a family are allowed to travel abroad together, she had had to leave behind her husband, since disappeared, and her two year old daughter.

Other Transylvanians, without either the patience to wait or the money to bribe a party or police official with, prefer to slip across the border. The young, especially, have found the nerve to do so. Three whom I met at the main centre for refugees in Debrecen, 30 kilometres from the frontier, told me: "Since Rumania and Hungary are fraternal socialist states, the border strip is not mined, like the one between the two Germanies is." Taking advantage of a football match that had the Rumanian guards glued to their television sets, they walked several kilometres through the night. When I asked them why they had left their native town, they replied that "The police over there are always in the right." The youngest of them added: "The other day I had forgotten to have my identity card on me so a cop started hitting me about like an animal—just because I'm Hungarian."

It is difficult to say exactly how many Transylvanian Hungarians have taken refuge in Hungary since the beginning of 1988: five, ten and twenty thousand are some of the figures going around. Many still do not dare to make themselves known to the police. Nevertheless, the Budapest government, in cooperation with the Hungarian Red Cross, the Catholic Church and the Protestant churches (who are the most active) is now lending its support to all those who have fled. Into the reception centres daily flow quantities of clothing, shoes, childrens' clothes as gifts from all over Hungary. In recent months, Parliament has assigned funds to provide housing and food until such time as the refugees can find employment—which generally does not take long. The most serious problem, according to the Calvinist Church, is the reunification of families. Since last May, the Hungarian Red Cross has been sending official notification to its Rumanian counterpart in the hope that families will be able to rejoin each other. Will the Conducător and his régime continue to remain deaf to this appeal?

### *A heritage that needs international protection*

In times gone by, the Hungarians did not always behave well towards the Rumanians, on whom they imposed their own laws and customs—especially at the end of the last and the beginning of this century. For their mistakes they have paid a price and have also been the victims of an injustice when the Treaty of Trianon in 1920 deprived Hungary of two thirds of her territory. Almost three million Hungarians were forcibly separated from their country and now live in the states that surround Hungary. Above all in Rumania. But there are also 500,000 of them in Slovakia and in the Sub-Carpathian Ukraine. In Yugoslavia, the government's minority policy has given them the autonomous region of the Voivodina, in which 400,000 Hungarians live. There, they are being gradually integrated into their new country.

In Transylvania, the problem will not go away. The Magyar culture is so deeply rooted in the peasant families that the survival of this population is more than a political problem. What is involved is a human problem and a unique heritage which the international community should take in hand. Indeed, it is astonishing that these men and women, bound fast to their fields and meadows, firmly attached to the centres of their religious life, have been able to preserve their traditions with such fervour over the centuries. Each baptism, each marriage, each festival brings to life before the visitor's eyes the splendours of a past that Europe has forgotten. In Transylvania it is the peasants who, at the dawning of the twenty-first century, continue to keep alive the embroideries, the painted furniture, the costume and dances of the Magyar nobility of olden times. Elected Princes, the Magyar Princes who governed Transylvania, were able to lay the foundations of a truly popular culture.

---

LÁSZLÓ MAKKAI

# THE ANCIENT AND MEDIEVAL HISTORY OF TRANSYLVANIA

"The History of Transylvania" written at the Hungarian Academy of Sciences' Institute of History and was edited by Béla Köpeczi appeared at the end of 1986. The work, published on 2,000 pages, was the sensation of the year, had a second edition in 1987 and is being reprinted at the moment.*

Who was the three-volume History of Transylvania written for and why? The last comprehensive history of Transylvania, written by a Hungarian historian, the present writer, was published forty years ago, since then Transylvania has been on the periphery of scholarly literature. Only Transylvania's role in maintaining the Hungarian nation has been emphasized, both in scholarship and education. Therefore, this work is aimed primarily at readers in Hungary who wish to have a complete picture of Hungarian history. But it would also be desirable, if the Hungarian minority living in present-day Rumania could get to know their own history, which these three volumes, were they available there, could help them to do. The authors also found it important to clarify the point at which Hungarian historiography stands with regard to the Transylvanian question, in relation to the historians and public opinion of the other two nations living in Transylvania: the Rumanians and the Germans. Hungarian historians condemn claims to where Transylvania belongs on the grounds of so-called "historic rights," whichever side they come from, but they firmly believe that every nation and every Transylvanian people has a right to its own history, for the knowledge of its own history is the basis of its national identity. The authors of the book hope that this will be understood and say in the preface: "We would also welcome an opportunity to write the history of Transylvania jointly with Rumanian and Saxon historians and say together what is common and what is different in the history and development of our nations and in the way we see it all."

* See also *NHQ* 109

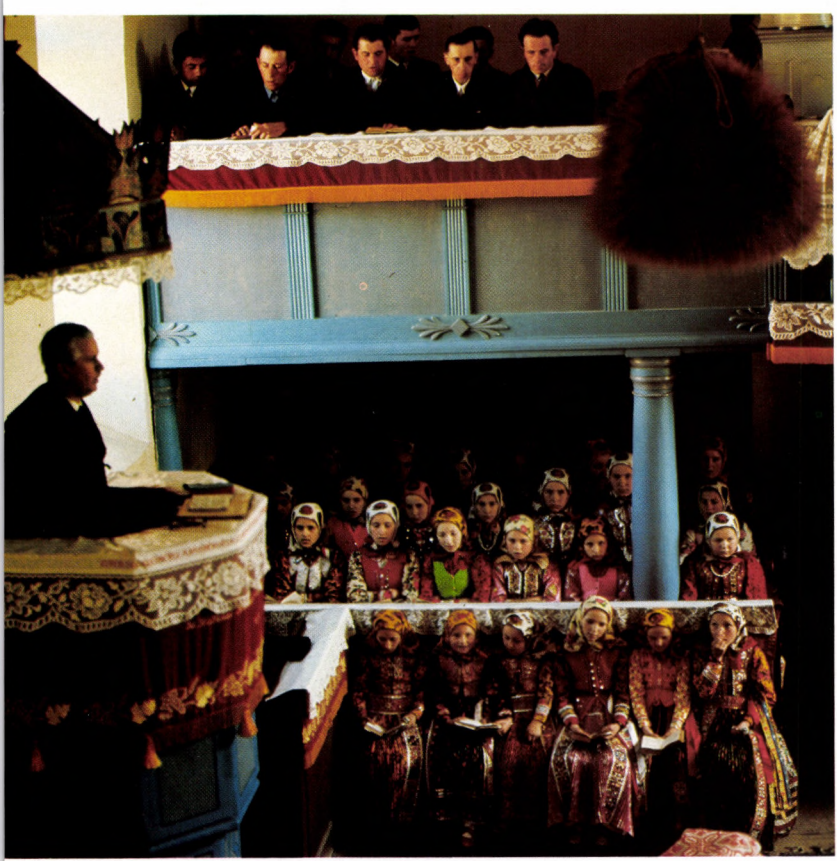

A wedding procession in the village of Szék passes a board in the main street bearing the slogan, in Rumanian, "Ceauşescu–Heroism—Rumania–Communism."

A refugee family in Hungary, in emergency accommodation. All their possessions are in the bags. The father was not able to come with them. *Photographs by Péter Korniss*

An old shepherd famous in his community for the folk tales he tells and the yarns he spins.

On winter nights the young in the village of Szék still spend their time in the spinning room by the light of kerosene lamps.

Saturday night: young people in the village of Szék meet at a Dance House.



The congregation in the village of Mera in Kalotaszeg still seat themselves on Sundays according to sex and age.

Refugees from Transylvania in the Calvinist Church at Rákosszentmihály, a Budapest suburb. The congregation there was the first to support the refugees, helping them with clothes and food, and with their housing and employment problems.

The home of the Csángó of Gyimes is on the slopes of the Carpathians. Sunday mass in one of their timber churches is still a central part of their lives.

The first period of Transylvanian history through many thousand years is not the ancient history of the peoples inhabiting the Eastern Carpathians now, who have lived there for barely a thousand years.

1. In *prehistoric times* several unnamed tribes arrived from the South, West and East, succeeding one another in the area. Greek historians first mentioned the gold-mining Agathyrses who appeared 3,500 years ago. About 3,200 years ago the northern tribe of the Thracians, the Dacians, settled down in Transylvania and in the Balkans. In the first century B.C. the Dacian kingdom, under Buerebista, spread in the north as far as Bohemia, in the south to present-day Macedonia, and its centre was in Transylvania. However, after the king had fallen victim to the chieftains' rebellion, the Dacians kingdom shrank to the south-western part of Transylvania. Here king Decebal first succeeded in resisting the Roman invasion, but in 106 A.D. the Emperor Traian conquered inner Transylvania, and adding the area between the Danube and the Carpathians to it, he formed a province called Dacia. The Dacian ruling class, which was fairly small anyway, either perished in the war or was enslaved and carried away. Traian brought in settlers and soldiers from all parts of the empire, particularly from Greek-speaking colonies, to the ten Roman cities of Dacia (of which six were in Transylvania). The Dacian or Celtic inhabitants of the country, who had a primitive material culture, were little affected by Roman culture. Thus, when Dacia became militarily untenable because of the continuous attacks of barbarian peoples, the Emperor Aurelian withdrew the legions and the civilian population in 271 A.D. No Romanised population could have been left in the area invaded by the Goths.

2. There is no archaeological evidence to support the concept of the Daco–Roman continuity, i.e. the survival of a Romanised Dacian population in Transylvania up to the present day. Even Constantin Daicoviciu, the author of a history of Rumania published in French in 1960, specifically accepts this when he says: "From the second half of the sixth century all the settlements known to have had a Dacian population became deserted... In fact, the Daco-Romans withdrew to the mountains, here they led a nomadic life. After the 8th century they returned to areas occupied by the Slavs, and took over the geographical names given by the aliens, the Slavs, the Hungarians, etc." The three-volume "History of Transylvania" represents a similar view: the presence of Rumanian shepherds in the Southern Carpathians is likely, if not proved at about 800 A.D. However, since the Rumanians did not take the ancient names of the great rivers (Olt, Maros, Szamos, Körös, Temes) directly from the Latin form, but through Slavonic or Hungarian mediation, they could have settled along these rivers only after the Slavs who had moved in at the end of the sixth century, or only after the Hungarians who conquered the country in 895. But wherefrom? All the Rumanian dialects reflect Albanian linguistic influence and contain Latin Christian vocabulary. The Albanians have always lived in the Balkans, and the Christian Church using Latin was established there too. In Transylvania, after the Christian Goths had left and the succeeding Gepids were absorbed by the pagan Slavs, the Christian Church was refounded only by the Hungarian conquerors, who at first accepted the Byzantine Greek, after 1000 the Latin rite. There is no trace of Germanic Christianity in the Rumanian language, although Christian Germanic peoples, Goths and Gepids, lived in Transylvania for more than 500 years. The Slavonic ecclesiastical vocabulary got into the Rumanian language from the Bulgarian, only after the Bulgarians were baptized in 860.

3. According to our present knowledge, the conquering Hungarians first moved into Transylvania from the east, led by Prince Álmos, although some of them entered the Carpathian Basin from the north, through

the Verecke Pass, led by Álmos's son, Árpád. The archaeological evidence of the early Hungarian inhabitants of Transylvania is the presence of their pagan cemeteries in the Szamos and Maros valleys. The one in Kolozsvár is considered to be the earliest with objects dating back to the times before the conquest. The unnamed thirteenth-century chronicler, Anonymus, reflecting the ethnic conditions of his times says that the Hungarians conquered Transylvania from Slavonic and Blak, i.e. Rumanian, inhabitants.

According to concordant archaeological and toponymical evidence, however, the Hungarians found two kinds of Slavonic populations in Transylvania: one in the Szamos valley where Germanic Gepids had lived formerly, who were then subjugated by the Avars and later Slavonised together with the Avars. This area was occupied by eastern Slavs. Another Slavonic population had lived in the area south of the Maros, which was first taken over by the Avars, then, after 800, by the invading Bulgarians. The Slavonic population in the northern part of Transylvania was soon assimilated with the Hungarians, whereas those in the south of Transylvania had maintained their ethnic identity throughout the Tartar invasion (1241–42) until the Rumanians moved into the area, and had then became Rumanised.

The Hungarians may ever have found an Avar population along the Küküllő rivers, and taken from them the name of the river, which had Turkish origins. The Hungarian occupation of Northern Transylvania took place before that of the southern parts which had been under Bulgarian rule. However, by the middle of the tenth century, the whole of Transylvania and even today's "Bánát" was governed by the *gyula,* the second highest dignitary of the Hungarian tribal confederation. In the life-and-death struggle between Byzantium and the Bulgarians, the Prince of Hungary from the Árpád dynasty took the side of the Bulgarians, while the *gyula* supported the Byzantines. This resulted in two different religious orientations: the Árpád dynasty joined western Christianity, the *gyulas,* eastern Christianity. However, Saint Stephen, the first Hungarian king, occupied Transylvania in 1003 and abolished Transylvania's political and religious independence. From that time on, the social and political conditions in Transylvania developed along the same lines as the general Hungarian development, although showing some local characteristics.

4. Transylvania had a particular autonomy within the Hungarian kingdom. In the Szamos valley, Saint Stephen received two-thirds of the estates which had belonged to the conquering Hungarian tribes and built in defence of the most important four salt mines four castles: Torda, Kolozs, Doboka, and Dés. Counties were established around the first three, while Dés castle, along the salt transport route following the river Szamos, was attached to Szolnok county which reached as far as the Tisza river. South of the Maros, in the area which had been occupied from the Bulgarians, the northern Hungarian tribes obtained no part, here everything had belonged to the conquering *gyula* and after his fall everything passed into the possession of the Hungarian king, who turned the area into one single county with today's Gyulafehérvár as its centre, and put a senior official, the "vajda" in charge. He settled the Székely, a Hungarianised Turkish tribe, between the two Küküllő and the Olt rivers, and had earthworks built on the northern bank of the Olt. (Perhaps this is why the Saxon Germans who moved into the area later, called Transylvania Siebenbürgen, i.e. Seven Castles.) The word *vajda* and also Gyulafehérvár's earliest known name, Bălgrad, have Slavonic origins, which leads to the conclusion that the Hungarian king's chief official in Transylvania inherited the name and the post of the Bulgarian Tzar's Transylvanian viceroy. The *vajda* did not have the prerogatives of royalty. During the entire Middle Ages the Hungarian king appointed the *vajdas* from among

non-Transylvanian aristocrats and often changed them. They did not have the right to grant nobility or land, they did not handle the king's Transylvanian income, and it was possible to appeal against their judgement to the king's court. Moreover, until 1200 the *vajda* governed only the southern part of Transylvania, and the chief officers of the northern counties (Kolozs and Doboka) ranked equal to him in the hierarchy, they were not subordinated to the *vajda* until later. Szolnok county was drawn under the *vajda*'s administration only after 1263, and the office of the *vajda* and of the count of the Székely was united only in the mid-fifteenth century.

Therefore, there is no reason to assume that the *vajda* was the successor of the *blak* chief, Gelou, invented by the chronicler Anonymus around the turn of the twelfth century. One cannot talk about three Rumanian voivodeships as if Transylvania, Wallachia and Moldavia were equal Rumanian states. The two Rumanian voivodeships were created in the fourteenth century when the Hungarian king's officers placed there became independent, whereas Transylvania was not separated from the Hungarian kingdom until 1920: by the Trianon Treaty. Even the Habsburgs, although they treated Transylvania as a separate principality, nevertheless possessed it as one of the lands of the Hungarian crown.

# FROM THE MEDIA

## 1956—REVOLUTION OR COUNTER-REVOLUTION?

*The interview with Professor Tamás Nagy, which is somewhat abridged, was broadcast by Hungarian Radio in its weekly political programme "168 hours", on 8 October 1988. The introduction was written by György Nej, the questions were put by Eszter Ráday.*

Public debate continues, livelier than ever, amongst scientists and artists, in trade unions, in Parliament and in the streets. Whoever keeps up with this activity, this intellectual excitement, will become aware that comparisons are often made, in the interpretation of one or another concrete situation, between current events and 1956, and what preceded it, many times simplifying barely known or undisclosed details of the past. The same subject was on the agenda of the latest meeting of the Central Committee of the HSWP; it was said that, according to some, a counter-revolutionary situation exists, and others refer to the new alternative movements as some new kind of Petőfi Circle. The dangers in making such comparisons are the subject of Eszter Ráday's conversation with Professor Tamás Nagy. He rarely figures in the media, I wish to mention therefore that he has translated Karl Marx's *Das Kapital* into Hungarian and that he is one of the founders of the Karl Marx University of Economics. According to his own words, he had for long been a totally loyal follower of the party line, endorsing it unconditionally, right up to the proclamation, in 1950, of the slogan that Hungary should become 'the country of iron and steel.' Starting with 1953, he has supported a multisectoral type of socialism. With Rezső Nyers, he belongs to the drafters of the 1968 economic reform. So much so that in the middle sixties he was secretary of the reform committee. In October 1956 he joined the Revolutionary Committee of Intellectuals. Many of his fellow members have since become recognised and respected public figures. He again joined the party in 1964. These days he figures as a founding member of the New March Front. Tamás Nagy's course of life demonstrates that he knows something about the natural history of political analogies.

Q: *What is, in your opinion, the reason why these days a comparison is so often made with 1956, with the Petőfi Circle? This has happened at least on two occasions lately at a Central Committee meeting. As I remember, it was in connection with the Hungarian Democratic Forum once, and another time with the Publicity Club.*

*A:* To start with, who is it who makes the comparison with 1956? Furthermore, our judgement of 1956 matters. If it is true, as it is, isn't it, that in 1956 the Stalinist system in Hungary collapsed, then—of course—all those who even today are unable or unwilling to escape the vestiges of the Stalinist thinking, either out of conviction or because they fear for their power, and there

may be many other reasons, the moment uncertainty appears or dissenting voices are heard as a consequence of the process of democratisation, they think at once, that we are back in 1956.

Q: *Ultimately, there is no need for arguments here. Saying it out loud, and there is a label on the affair right away.*

*A:* Of course, they describe any sort of symptom as a threat of a new 1956, and they need not continue reasoning.

Q: *You are a founder member of the New March Front. Quote from its declaration: "We should like to resume attempts to renew socialism in Hungary, which began with the new phase of 1953. They went on with initiatives to create democratic socialism in 1956, but the tragic outcome prevented their confrontation with the test of practical realisation."*

*A:* I think this is a precise formulation, because really democratic initiatives occurred in 1956. There was more than initiatives, the declaration practises understatement. It is common knowledge that the party opinion on 1956 was, and still is today, that a counter-revolution took place then. I cannot agree. In 1956, following a popular uprising, the Stalinist system collapsed in Hungary. Later on, that popular uprising exhibited counter-revolutionary features as well. Some people had strongly anticommunist feelings and expressed them, there were even anti-Semitic manifestations. But I think the basic tendency of that popular uprising was not of a counter-revolutionary nature. It did not aim to give back factories to capitalists, or land to the owners of large estates, but the aim was democracy and the independence of the country. I think that this basic tendency even gained strength in the end. But this is a mere personal opinion.

Q: *In other words, you never really agreed with the party as regards the causes.*

*A:* No. If my memory serves me right, the party first declared its position in December 1956. At that time it pointed in the first place—very correctly, in my view—to the crimes of the Rákosi régime, to the general popular discontent created by the crimes of the Rákosi régime, and only in second place did it refer to outside factors. Later, however, the priorities were reversed. But if I look back, for example, to the Petőfi Circle, the party—its dogmatic, conservative wing—mentioned the Petőfi Circle, didn't it, as the vanguard of the counter-revolution. But what prevailed in the meetings of the Petőfi Circle—I attended many of them—were not antisocialist voices, but intentions to create a democratic kind of socialism, one with an effective economic system. People argued in support of this cause. And that job still remains to be done.

Q: *True, only those at the time, because we were still children at the time or were not even born or because our memory is not all that good, have no way of checking this. The minutes of the Petőfi Circle have not been published.*

*A:* As far as I know, they have not, but to my knowledge the new leadership of the party that emerged in May 1988 has decided that the 1956 events must again be subjected to an objective and thorough historical examination, and I know that this work has already started. I hope it will proceed and then it will be known what precisely happened in 1956. It is very important to interpret the past properly. One can get rid of Stalinism only if the entire past of socialist Hungary will at last be judged correctly, and this will take much effort and a long time. Its entire past, I emphasise, because 1956 cannot be singled out in this respect. In effect, critical judgement should start with 1948, when the vaguely interpreted notion of a 'people's democracy' began to be replaced by the building of socialism. What has happened since then, what mistakes have been made, what movements have taken place in these more than forty years which have passed and which caused us to be in a situation from which it is extremely difficult to extricate oneself. Sooner or later the past must be clarified honestly. That process has started

in the Soviet Union. And I think that, once a one-party system is a fact of life, and under this one-party rule the country finds itself in a critical situation, if this party is to survive, if it wants to play some sort of correctly interpreted leading role, it must seek a solution to this extremely serious problem of the country. I as well as many others think this solution can only be a radical economic reform coupled with a thoroughgoing reform of the system of political institutions. They have to realise this. If they do not want another explosion in this country, this is the course that must be set.

Q: *Don't you see in this a danger that the repeated appearance of analogies meant to be denunciations may suggest the same explanation you just mentioned when passing judgement on 1956? That we may replace the real causes by something else?*

*A:* As I see things, the basic problem here is that, on the one hand, past experience has shown clearly that a radical economic reform cannot be carried out without a reform of the political institutions, to put it plainly, without carrying through the process of democratisation; on the other hand, however, the inevitable transformation of the economic structure of the country will, in the immediate future, impose further sacrifices on the people. This will create tensions and conflicts. Tackling such conflicts in a democratic way is not easy. This is the fundamental problem. To cope with it, the renewed party leadership will need extraordinary determination and efficiency. This in fact means balancing on a razor's edge. I hope it will succeed, and I hope many people will support this effort. Of course, there is no guarantee of success. But socialism is capable of functioning only if it can create an efficient economic system of the socialist type and establish political democracy. If this does not happen, history will pass it by.

---

# THE ESSENCE OF HUNGARIAN–RUMANIAN CONFLICT

## *The autonomy of national minorities*

The first question stated that there is doubtless a change from the earlier position that Hungary has said loud and clear that a conflict situation exists. Unfortunately, this has not ceased, and its termination can certainly be imagined only following a longer process. Can the essence of the Hungarian–Rumanian conflict be formulated?

The deputy foreign minister considered that the main source of conflict is undoubtedly the national minorities problem, the fact that we Hungarians, look on this problem as an important aspect of relations between the two countries. In political terms, because Hungarians care how the two million Hungarians in Rumania live, how they feel, whether they enjoy human rights, whether they can develop their culture, make it in life and maintain contacts with Hungary and freely use their native tongue.

No less important are the norms of international behaviour, the rules of intercourse between states, the question whether earlier and recent expectations laid down in international instruments are observed or not. In Hungary we take these norms very seriously, as binding upon us, but this applies to both sides. We are only able and willing to cooperate with other countries on the basis of these rules.

From an interview with István Őszi, Deputy Foreign Minister, published in the daily *Magyar Hírlap* following the meeting, in Arad, between Károly Grósz and Nicolae Ceauşescu.

The journalist asked what has made it possible for the Arad summit to take place?

Besides the fact that Károly Grósz the Secretary-General of the HSWP and Prime Minister of Hungary, has repeatedly stressed in public that he was interested in holding meetings in order to improve bilateral relations, we know of two such elements which have influenced the willingness of the Rumanian leadership as well. One of these is the mass exodus to Hungary of members of the Hungarian minority in Rumania—and of a smaller number of members of the German minority and ethnic Rumanians, in other words, the problem of refugees. The dimensions have attracted international attention and have imposed on the Hungarian government certain duties the carrying out of which has required a broad social consensus and necessitated the mobilisation of considerable financial resources.

The other new element is the start made on the implementation of the so-called Rumanian Plan of Regional Development. Implementation was speeded up in March last. A speech by Nicolae Ceaușescu expounded the purposes of the programme in detail, and other sources made it known that the number of villages in Rumania would be reduced from 13,000 to 6,000. Hungary promptly reacted officially. It is not generally known that the government acted even before the public already in early April. It was my duty as a Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, to ask the Rumanian Ambassador in Budapest for an official explanation and for information about the consequences these measures would entail for the Rumanian population in general but also or the national minorities in particular, as regards maintaining their identity and their material culture. The Rumanians have not yet answered. Not even at the summit. There a proposal was made for a Hungarian fact-finding delegation to travel to Rumania in this connection. One could take that as a sort of answer. I think it was right to accept the proposal. In this way, we can form a clearer picture of what is involved and, what is even more important, in this way we hoped to clarify the circumstances with a view to dispelling our fears. What we hoped for was assurances, I emphasize: assurances, which provide guarantees for the maintenance of the cultural values of the national minorities. In connection with the delegation I think it very important that in it all sections of Hungarian society interested in what happens to the Hungarians of Rumania and in the effects of the Regional Territorial Development Plan should be represented. It is also important that this delegation should do its homework, as required by the seriousness of the situation, and be able to make concrete inquiries since this is a condition for it to be given concrete replies. A visit by journalists has also long been on the agenda, but our proposals were rejected last spring; now at the meeting it was said that the Rumanians would be ready to receive them. I presume an invitation will arrive soon.*

To the question how emphatically is the national minorities problem stressed in the Hungarian government programme which is being drafted, the answer was: most emphatically. We look on this issue as central to interstate relations. In the present situation it means two things. On the one hand, as I have already pointed out, we should like to hear Rumania offer guarantees concerning the national minorities. This was discussed in vaguer terms in the past, perhaps because of the extraordinary delicacy of the question. Thus I should like to speak in greater detail now about what we have in mind when we talk about national minorities, since we are aware of the official Rumanian position arguing that this problem has been solved.

I see that the central element is autonomy. This means regional autonomy as well, but primarily cultural autonomy, the assurance

* Neither the Hungarian fact-finding commission nor the journalists have so far been invited. (The Editor.)

of the possibility of autonomous development, guaranteed autonomy in the organization of education, that is the determination of its substance, the autonomy of national minority churches and, in a certain sense, the right to autonomous participation in international relations. I wish to add that there is nothing new in this for Rumania either, since such ideas and such measures were present in the history of Rumania. I do not wish to enter into details, suffice it to mention the period hall-marked by the name of Prime Minister Petru Groza. But such notions are effective, for example, also in Yugoslavia. And this principle prevails in the same manner in the Soviet Union, where the recognition of the rights of national minorities on the basis of autonomy has been upheld all the time, even amidst the various distortions encountered in the past seventy years, and its interpretation is acquiring progressive traits in our days.

To the question if the international environment can create more favourable relations between the two countries the answer was positive. The Hungarian government has already several times over expressed the view that different international forces expect us to try, by direct negotiations, to relax the tension between the two countries. Our friends abroad have appreciated the promptness and readiness with which Hungary has responded to the concrete Rumanian offer to negotiate of which only short notice was given. International opinion is also powerfully influenced by the conviction that what is at issue here is not only, and not in the first place, a conflict between the two countries but, in broader terms, also the interpretation and implementation of human rights, or the interpretation, recognition and acceptance of what one might call rules of international conduct.

What then are the general prospects of the normalisation of Hungaro-Rumanian relations, of an honest and lasting solution of the controversial questions concerning the situation of Hungarians in Rumania?

The broadest possible foundations must be created for this question to be settled. No one can doubt that the national minority question in general, and in Eastern Europe in particular, could not for a long time past be regarded as a frontier problem. Those territories have populations of such mixed national composition that the solution cannot be the shifting of a frontier here or there. Everyone must also be aware that, considering current realities and the requirements of international stability, any political leadership thinking realistically today cannot propose or imagine the revision of frontiers. How hopeless and tragic any such undertaking can be is well illustrated by the Iraq–Iran hostilities where one of the concrete causes of the war was precisely a frontier dispute. Such a solution is today, to say the least, anachronistic. I think it is much more important that the main tendencies of international progress have also transcended national frontiers. Whether we look at economic cooperation or at often mentioned political rapprochement, we see generally accepted rules of conduct independent of social systems, rules which have a common basis, a common denominator: internationalisation. Thinking of the prospects of a solution, one can only hope that in cooperation among socialist countries as well we will reach a stage where frontiers become symbolical not only for people but also for the economies. In Hungaro-Rumanian relations, however, this appears remote. But this possibility is true for other parts of the world and no utopia. I am convinced that if we get into this situation, then questions which today appear as national minority problems, and put a strain on relations between the two countries, will be eclipsed. Frontiers become symbolical and will indicate only administrative boundaries, but will not obstruct communication, will not impede the flow of ideas, the interchange of commodities, but will be factors of cooperation.

PÁL BOKOR

# IN FOCUS

## DECLINING LIFE EXPECTANCY

Since the mid-1960s the mortality rate has been a cause for anxiety in Hungary. Average life expectancy at birth reached 66.7 years for males in 1965 and has been declining since then to 65.3 years in 1986. For females the growth in life expectancy first slowed down and then stopped, reaching 73.2 years in 1986. Life expectancy at birth in Hungary is among the lowest in the developed countries. The situation is even more unfavourable if we examine the mortality rate of adults. There the deterioriation is larger for males; and for females the deterioriation also appears to be unequivocal since the mid-1960s. Average life expectancy at birth shows a relatively more favourable picture, because the improvement in neo-natal and infant mortality rates compensates to some extent for the substantial growth in adult mortality. The worst deterioration took place for the 40–59 age group.

In order to explore the causes of the deterioration and to help reverse this unfavourable trend, detailed examinations are being conducted in the Central Office of Statistics on the causes of mortality, including regional and occupational differences. Research relies primarily on the 1980 census and the mortality figures of 1980. The statistical forms of those who died that year were matched with the census questionnaires of the same persons. In this way precise and detailed data were obtained.

This paper discusses the differences in the mortality rates of the different socio-occupational groups. In addition to the 1980 data mentioned, it makes use of less detailed data for earlier decades, as well as 1984–1985 data based on the 1984 microcensus.

In Hungary, research into the social differences concerning mortality is nothing new. József Kőrösy, director of the Statistical Office of Budapest, examined the mortality figures of Budapest in 1874–75 and found that the average age of the deceased was 39 years for the wealthy, 24 years in the middle class, 14 years for the poor, and 10 years for the destitute. The very big social differences were caused primarily by the huge differences in infant mortality.

For the 1900–1980 period data can be calculated for three social categories: white-collar workers, non-agricultural manual workers (mainly industrial workers), and farm workers (peasant and agricultural workers). The ratio of deceased per one thousand persons belonging to the corresponding social class is, of course, strongly influenced by the different age composition of these social categories. For this reason, the study discusses, in addition to the crude ratios, also standardised ratios. It turns out that the social differences in mortality have changed. At the beginning of the century, the mortal-

ity of agricultural manual workers was highest and that of white-collar workers lowest, by 1984–1985, however, the mortality rate of agricultural manual workers and of non-agricultural manual workers has become similar both for males and females but the advantage of white-collar workers remained substantial. It is conspicuous that in the 1960s differences in the mortality of the social classes were much smaller than at present, since the deterioration has occurred primarily amongst manual workers and peasants.

If we compare the mortality rates of social-occupation groups in a more detailed break-down, the differences appear to be even greater. Within manual workers the mortality rate of unskilled workers is much higher than that of skilled workers, and there are even substantial differences between groups of skilled workers. Thus the mortality rate of precision engineers and motor mechanics is much more favourable than that of the miners, foundrymen, or bricklayers. There are similarly big differences between various white-collar groups, the mortality rate of the professionals being generally lower than that of office workers.

Social differences in the causes of death, and their changes in recent decades, have also been demonstrated. The two most frequent causes of death are: 1. cardiovascular complaints, and 2. malignant tumors. In the 1930s, mortality due to cardiovascular complaints was still the highest among white-collar males and among manual worker females, but today, in the case of both sexes, the mortality rate of the agricultural manual workers is highest, and that of the white-collar workers is lowest. A clear social hierarchy has taken shape in recent decades. Amongst those living in more favourable conditions the mortality rate is lower, and it is highest in the lowest income groups who endure the poorest housing conditions and whose working conditions are worst. Mortality due to malignant tumors does not show such an unequivocal social differentiation. Among males the mortality rate of manual workers and among females that of white-collar workers is the highest. Although only a couple of per cent of all deaths are due to suicide, nevertheless—since the suicide rate in Hungary is the highest in the world according to the figures (this has to be added since suicide statistics are not published in every country)—in the case of males the suicide rate of peasants and manual workers is nearly equal and much higher than among white-collar workers, while among women the suicide rate of white-collar workers is somewhat higher than that of manual workers, be they industrial or agricultural. Since alcoholism is also common in Hungary, the social difference of deaths due to cirrhosis of the liver are also interesting. Manual workers rank first, both for men and women.

The concluding part of the article discusses replies given to some questions concerning health and ways of life in the 1984 microcensus (in the course of which 2 per cent of the population were interviewed). The subjective opinions of the interviewed largely agree with the objective image provided by the mortality indices. A much higher proportion of agricultural manual and non-agricultural manual workers described their health as bad than was true for white-collar workers. The proportion of regular drinkers is highest amongst agricultural manual workers and lowest amongst white-collar workers. Smoking shows a different distribution according to gender. Among men the proportion of smokers is higher among peasants and manual workers than among white-collar workers, but in the case of females the proportion of smokers is highest among white-collar workers.

Klinger, András: "A halandóság társadalmi-foglalkozási különbségei Magyarországon" (Socio-occupational mortality differentials in Hungary). *Demográfia*, 1987. Vol. 30. Nos. 2–3, pp. 240–272.

R. A.

## PARTY, INFLUENCE AND ADMINISTRATION

In recent years the Communist Party has increasingly become a subject for research in Hungary. An article by Tamás M. Horváth, which examines the role of this key institution in the political situation in small towns, fits in with the examination of the organization of the party and its role in economic and social processes.

Local politics have two principal arenas: the municipal council and the party committee. On the town level their characteristics, their relationship to each other, and the network of their social contacts can be clearly sensed. The council puts into a legal form decisions which are important for municipal politics and the party committee is the scene of political decisions. If there is a normal relationship between them, the council and the party agencies strive for cooperation, and there is even a certain automatic compulsion in this direction. The potential of the council is enhanced by party committee support. The other way round, it is easier for the party agencies to assert their will if they can avail themselves of the legitimate instruments provided by the council.

According to the author, the party is at the centre of municipal politics.

One of the most important sources of party power, or of party control, is that the party committee and the town executive committee can discuss any question and establish a position. The effect of the resolutions extends to all state and non-state agencies, offering them guidance and, more than once, defining their duties.

The other important instrument of party control is influence exercised through the party members holding council offices. This can be realized not only thanks to those in key positions but also through the party members working in the various agencies. The considerable weight of party members, which increases in proportion with the size of the town or village and the power of the council body, is shown by Table 1. According to the figures in Table 2, the proportion of party members is high also amongst officials. Council chairmen and paid deputy chairmen are party members almost without exception.

An even more important instrument of party control than ensuring the majority of party members is the presence at the meetings of the executive committee. The first secretary of the party committee (possibly one of the secretaries) is generally a member of the executive committee of the council, and if not, he takes part in the meetings, being permanently invited. Thus he is able to influence the meeting directly. The other essential safeguard is that the Council Chairman is an *ex officio* member of the town party executive committee. The two agencies are in regular daily contact, the secretary of the party committee and the Chairman of the Council regularly meet every week, and even more frequently if necessary. The council officials are also in direct contact with the corresponding officials of the party committee.

An important instrument of influencing is the selection of staff. Here the assertion of the will of the party agencies is served by the list of competency. The list of competency includes those state jobs in the filling of which the agency which formally has the right to fill it can make a decision only with the preliminary agreement of the competent party agency. The most important matters involving personnel and requiring agreement are: appointment or nomination for election, dismissal, qualifications, initiation of disciplinary procedure, and the granting of decorations. It depends on the resolution of the given party committee which leading posts are included in the competency list. At present, usually the right of agreement concerning the following offices belongs to the competency of the municipal party committee: chairman of the municipal council, town secretary of the Communist Youth Federation, party secretaries of the more important local

firms, local chief constable, local commander of the workers' militia, head of the municipal court and the prosecutor's office, chairman of the Popular Control Commission, local secretary of the Patriotic People's Front.

An important form of party control is, finally, operative intervention in extraordinary situations. This includes the direct management of those situations where there is a danger of political tension. In addition, the party committee directly controls some special processes, as e.g., elections, or situations demanding serious intervention by the military or by civil defence.

All these instruments show the outstanding local importance of the party committee and ensure that the political will be spread from the higher level through the interposition of the local agencies and that it is asserted in the network of local agencies.

*The proportion of party members in 1985 (in per cent)*

Table 1

| | Councils | Executive committees | Officials |
|---|---|---|---|
| Budapest and county councils | 72.2 | 86.2 | 99.0 |
| Town* councils | 59.0 | 74.2 | 95.8 |
| Councils of large villages | 48.9 | 64.2 | 90.9 |
| Village councils | 52.1 | 59.7 | 79.3 |

* Including large villages enjoying urban rights.
Source: Data of Council Members and Officials, 1985. Municipal Affairs Office of the Council of Ministers, Budapest, 1986, p. 6.

*The proportion of party members among council officials in 1985*

Table 2

| | Paid Council chairmen | Paid Deputy Council chairmen | Executive committee secretaries |
|---|---|---|---|
| Budapest and county councils | 100.0 | 100.0 | 95.0 |
| Town* councils | 100.0* | 97.5 | 89.9* |
| Councils of large villages | 97.0 | — | 82.6 |
| Village councils | 91.5 | — | 67,1 |

* Including large villages enjoying urban rights.
Source: ibid. pp. 6, 93, 99.

Horváth M., Tamás: "Kisvárosok politikai viszonyai" (Political conditions in small towns). *Valóság*, 1988. No. 7, pp. 89–98.

M. L.

## HUMAN RIGHTS

Human rights are not *a priori* but follow from the nature of human relations. The law only recognises their existence as the consequence of the order of human coexistence. Human rights represent a value respect for which has become an obligation for legislation and the courts.

How can the abstract and beautifully sounding declarations of human rights be realised here and now, in the East Central European region? According to Kálmán Kulcsár, the Minister for Justice, if ideas are only considerations of principles, then their assertion is problematic.

The safeguards for their presence differ from country to country. In Britain, it is the characteristics of the courts, the independence and irremovability of the judges that make possible the protection of human and civil rights against the government. The protection of rights is not the subject of declarations, but of the administration of justice.

The fact that in the East Central European region the position of human rights is problematic, cannot be explained merely by the 'personality cult' or by a political system the slogan of which was: "We do not recognise any particular interests" (Lenin). No civil society has evolved in the region, and politics has invaded every area of life. The state was not compelled to exercise restraint. After the socialist revolution, since class struggle ceased, there was no brake on the self-overproduction of bureaucratic power and the unlimited power of the official apparatus. It became possible to interpret civil rights formulated in the socialist constitutions in such a way that these rights could only be practised as controlled and organized by the ruling political organizations.

The way out is offered by social processes demanding the self-limitation of the state. But self-limitation—and thereby the more actual and effective recognition of human rights—again depends on political forces. At present the separation of powers would mean progress in this respect. This, of course, raises the question of the relationship between the powers and the Party, or the political system.

But the division of powers itself can mean many things in the guarantee of human rights. Kulcsár refers to the circumstance that, according to international experience, constitutional courts have limited efficiency, are not entirely independent politically, and are sometimes expensive. Nevertheless, with regard to the characteristics of the Hungarian political system, it is especially important to treat the courts, including the constitutional court, as having at least the same weight as legislation and the executive.

In Hungary, the courts have never had sufficient strength to adequately defend the rights of citizens against any authoritarianism. Within the framework of a new constitution, however, suitable and independent courts can be established. This necessitates guarantees of procedural law as well as the improvement of staffing and finances.

Kulcsár, Kálmán: "Emberi jogok: deklarációk és valóság" (Human rights: declarations and reality). *Valóság*, 1988. No. 5, pp. 1–12.

A. S.

## SELF-GOVERNMENT OR COUNCILS

In the seventies vigorous centralization took place in the Hungarian administration. The affairs of distant villages are attended by a single common council, and the county decides on local schools and roads. Although lately it was made possible for people to pay a settlement development contribution for local development, in many places the inhabitants rejected such a local tax. According to Éva Orosz, the failure of the local referenda is that fundamental structural changes are needed.

The idea was that the Council Act of 1971 should strengthen the nature of self-government and local autonomy in the spirit of the Economic Reform of 1968, but legislation concerning council planning and management, especially the siphoning off of local incomes and their central redistribution, had a contrary effect.

In the present system the state administration works from the top down. The state dominates in the work of the municipal council, i.e., the latter carries out secondary authority functions. It fines and deals with potholes, but the direction the road takes is decided elsewhere. From the aspect of the legislation, this is surprising since the council is supposedly the agent of popular representa-

tion and self-government. A system working from the bottom up is needed, in which the two poles of power are formed by the state and local self-government. It is therefore necessary to establish which state administrative activities should be looked after by local offices of the state authorities.

Not a new council act but a self-government act is what is needed. Today, local administration often implements only instructions from the county, instead of serving the local community and its requirements. Legislation on self-government should rely on the principle that the council can look after all activities which are not designed by act of parliament to be the special right of some other authority.

The basic condition of self-government is an end to the present "dual subordination." The executive committee elected by the municipal council amongst its members should be subordinate only to the council which elected it. To achieve this, a satisfactory electoral law and the regular accountability of the council, to those who elect it, is needed.

In the present situation, the county councils have considerable power over local councils. According to one view, no council is needed on the county level, the county administration being controlled by a county office with appointed officials. Their role would be the reconciliation of interests and coordination between self-government and the state. Any argument between the county and local self-government would be decided either by the government or—in defined cases—by an independent body.

Local autonomy cannot be imagined without local municipal ownership and local taxation. The present county institutions (e.g., county hospitals) would be jointly owned by the local councils. A school serving several towns or villages would be e.g., the school of the local government areas from which it attracted pupils. Local taxes do not mean the introduction of some new kind of tax, but leaving part of the present personal income tax where it is collected.

Self-government legislation must also provide for the autonomy of some local institutions, e.g., in the educational, health or welfare sphere in relation to the council apparatus.

Finally, concerning the relationship between the state and local government, self-government cannot be imagined with the complete exclusion of state intervention. This would result in a further deterioration of backward economic regions. But preferential distribution and assistance should be determined by the National Assembly.

Orosz, Éva: "Önkormányzati törvényt vagy új tanácstörvényt?" (Self-government Act or new Council legislation?). *Állam és igazgatás.* 1988 June. pp. 521–525.

A. S.

## GERMAN ECONOMIC DOMINATION IN MEDIEVAL HUNGARY

Sometimes the general reader finds it peculiar how deep the roots of some historic truths are. The message is blurred and their timeliness which determined the formulation has been lost or ignored. But these truths live on like some old tree somewhere in the Great Plain.

The convictions attached to the "world historic importance of Hungarian gold" have also proved to be a fiction. The thesis is briefly the following: at the beginning of the 15th century, 420–450,000 florins were minted annually in Hungary out of one and a half tons of gold, and put into circulation. In addition to other ores and live animals, gold should have covered the country's imports of cloth. Before the flooding of Europe by American gold, the Hungarian florin was thus one of the pillars of European trade.

Elemér Mályusz reached the conclusion that the gold produced in the region of the Garam river, in Transylvania and at Nagybá-

nya can be estimated at much less, at only 100–200,000 florins, and what is even more noteworthy, the commercial importance of Hungarian gold had another, less appealing, interpretation. Although the author does not undertake the latter, he provides some interesting nuggets.

He noticed that in Central and Southern Europe in the 14–15th centuries the appearance of the Hungarian florins was far from even. Hardly any were found in Dalmatia or in nearby Upper Austria, while in Bavaria Hungarian gold played an even more important role than the imperial Rhenish florin. Much has been written about the role of South German capital in Hungary, but this fact attracted Mályusz's interest. Making use of the data in his voluminous documentation of the age of Sigismund, he reached the conclusion that the occurrences of the Hungarian florins in Bavaria somehow indicated the directions of trade. He set out from the assumption that the main export goods of Hungary were certainly live animals, while the amounts figuring in German sources were customs duties which were due to the Bavarian princes. It is characteristic that in Munich the customs house stood next to the shambles, which indicates that cattle were a major item. There was a link between the collection of duties and the importing of cattle from Hungary also in 14th–15th century Augsburg. The fact of Hungarian cattle exports is well-known and supported by numerous data. Mályusz's discovery was that the big deal at the time was in fact importing Hungarian horses. Not only on account of the high value of horses but also because, in Bavaria, the demands of customers of high rank drove up prices. They paid as much as 350 florins for a horse in 1373. On the other hand, in Hungary there was no qualitative differentiation at the time, and in addition, expressed in florins, the prices of horses were only a tenth. The price of a good horse fluctuated between 10 and 18 florins.

Consequently, the clever German horse coper could count on a profit already on account of this huge difference. But he could speculate further, because in Hungary the price of silver fluctuated and made the driving down of prices possible, not least it made possible the selling of silver at a very favourable rate. As Mályusz pointed out, everybody could get hold of gold florins against silver pounds, obeying a single condition, i.e., that the transaction had to be carried out with the money-changers.

A country was given which was short of the silver money needed for greater trade. Anybody who had an ample supply of the hard silver currency could count on doing good business, since the gold, horses and cattle of the Hungarians were cheap. Bavaria, on the other hand, was one of the centres, where town life flourished, there was luxury and a wide range of goods was available. Much silver money was about. The customs houses the end of the chain, owned by the Wittelsbach dynasty, stood at every bridge, ford, or other passage. The gold acquired cheap, at an exchange rate which was favourable for the payers of the duty, went into the coffers of the prince, and since he had much of it he was not stingy if he found a horse beautiful.

Historic analogies always have some flaw. There is nevertheless an impression that something that appears today rather obvious to us, could have existed already then in its peculiar way.

Mályusz, Elemér: "Bajorországi állatkivitelünk a XIV–XV. században" (Cattle exports to Bavaria in the 14th–15th centuries). *Agrártörténeti Szemle*. Vol. 28. 1988. pp. 1–34.

Gy. G.

## WOODROW WILSON AND THE PARIS PEACE TALKS

The historian Magda Ádám, who spent several months at the Wilson Center in Washington, D. C., studying the Wilson papers, examined the correspondence be-

tween President Wilson and Secretary of State Robert Lansing. She was able to form a clearer picture of their political ideas concerning the Danubian countries, and of the actual effect of their policies on the fate of these countries.

She writes that "the literature dealing with the life and political activity of Woodrow Wilson, the 28th President of the United States, could fill libraries. However, we know little about his views, plans and actions which made a direct impact on Hungarian history, and on the history of the Danube Valley as a whole."

"Two diametrically opposed views of Wilson's achievement have become established. The first greatly exaggerated his role in shaping the successor states; the other belittles his contribution. During the interwar period, the first approach was the one adopted by historians and the general public in the successor states and the defeated states. However among the victors Wilson became idealized as a great liberator, whereas in the defeated countries the American president's rather exaggerated role was seen in a wholly negative light. The victors attributed their liberation and successful unification to President Wilson. The latter blamed him for their defeat, for the dismemberment of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and for the establishment of borders that failed to follow ethnic principles."

The author emphasizes that neither of these views correspond to reality. The successor states ignored that until May 1918 Wilson declined to support their national programmes and movements and had refused to receive their representatives. Not even Tomaš Garrigue Masaryk was received at the White House before June 1918.

All the defeated nations cared for when judging Wilson's role was the outcome of the Paris Peace Conference. Magda Ádám states that as a result they failed to take a number of facts into account. President Wilson's policy was friendly to the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Even after the United States had entered the war, he did not immediately declare war on Austria-Hungary. He wished to preserve the political and economic unity of the Empire and intended to federalise it within its existing borders. Even Slovakia would have stayed part of the Hungarian state which was part of this federation. She asserts that Wilson left for home before Austrian and Hungarian affairs were discussed at the Paris Peace talks. The American delegation opposed the exaggerated territorial demands of the successor states.

However, she admits that President Wilson was an academic with little knowledge of European affairs. He seldom got his way in negotiations and did not always receive the assistance he expected from members of the American peace delegation. At the Paris Peace Conference he was in an extremely difficult position. He did not enjoy firm political support in the United States. In Paris he found himself up against both Clemenceau and Lloyd George, each with a powerful constituency in their respective countries. As a result, he could not realise his good intentions, which—as Magda Ádám emphasises—were both reasonable and realistic.

Magda, Ádám: "Woodrow Wilson and the Successor States". Danubian Historical Studies. Vol. 1. No. 4. 1987, pp. 19–32 and 50–56.

GY. L.

## 1968 ONCE AGAIN

In the "Diary and critique" section of the monthly *Valóság*, the historian Tibor Hajdú publishes an interesting flashback to the changes which occurred in 1968 and their interconnections. That year a start was made on the implementation of the reform of economic control and management in Hungary. It was at first supported by the Prague spring but interrupted the same year by its end, by the armed intervention of August 21st, ending up as the curtain raiser of years of stagnation.

Hajdú evokes the dramatic events of twenty years ago in order to show what cannot be discovered at all from the press of the day. There were argument at the time, mainly within the HSWP and the KISZ (Communist Youth League) and there were Communists who raised their voice in admonition, mainly in two age groups—among veteran party members and young communist intellectuals.

"The three well-known men who expressed their doubts concerning the invasion were able to speak in the name of many party members of long standing, Hajdú writes. What two of these said, a letter by György Lukács and the position taken in the Central Committee by the former Prime Minister András Hegedűs, was pretty generally known by people, although they had never been published. But few knew of a letter which the then Hungarian ambassador to Berlin, the Spanish Civil War veteran and intelligence officer in Latin America, András Tömpe, addressed to the Central Committee of the party.

Already shortly after his return from Latin America, at the beginning of the sixties, Tömpe clashed with the Stalinist forces at home because he took his then task too seriously. This was dealing with the consequences of the earlier frame-ups. He was one of those who wanted to continue the process of renewal and democratisation of socialism, which had begun at the 20th Congress (in Hungary as early as 1953, and also after the storms of 1956).

"We can only speak of socialism," he wrote in the abovementioned letter, "if the broad masses have a say in the conduct of the affairs of the Party, the state and the economy. [...] Without the continuous growth of democracy that mobilisation of society cannot be achieved which would make possible economic progress and the overtaking of the developed capitalist countries. Without democracy society becomes unmotivated. [...] This was what the leadership of the Czechoslovak Communist Party recognized when it freed itself of the shackles of dogmatic leadership."

Tömpe laid down his opinion: "The danger of counter-revolution did not become acute in Czechoslovakia, although the reactionary elements were objectively helped, beyond Western support, by the hostile attitude of some leaders of the socialist countries. In this the leaders of the GDR played the most extreme role right from the start." [...] "Hungary now had the historic opportunity to liquidate for good the unfortunate past of Hungarian–Czechoslovak relations and, by accepting the difficulties, together lay down a firm foundation of a socialist future." Finally, he considered the decision unacceptable also from the aspect of relations to the Soviet Union: "Loyalty to the Soviet Union does not mean that we must take decisions which harm the socialist working class movement. Nobody could have forgotten the 20th Congress that fast".

At the end of his letter dated August 24, 1968, Tömpe stated that he could not accept these decisions. A few days later he returned home and resigned his post, not making any concessions to those who wanted to dissuade him. He was appointed head of the Association of Book Publishers and Booksellers, a relative demotion. "He did this job with the learning, wisdom and devotion which characterised him", his friend Sándor Feri, who also kept the letter, remembers, "but those responsible for the earlier frame-ups in whose removal from the judicial system, the Ministry of the Interior and the disciplinary authorities of the party he had a role, of course remembered him with ire and anger." Finally András Tömpe, tiring of the attacks to which he was subjected, turned a gun on himself and pulled the trigger on December 15, 1971.

Hajdú, Tibor: "Húsz év után. Napló és kritika" (After twenty years. Diary and critique). *Valóság*, 1988. No. 9, pp. 109–114.

GY. L.

## ANGLOSPEAK

In the Hungarian youth idiom a certain merging and standardisation occurred in recent years. A sort of uniform youth language has appeared. Students, young members of the labouring class, urban and rural youngsters speak just about the same idiom. The stimulant and initiator of this standardisation was primarily the Budapest metropolis. The rapidity of the changes can be explained by the increased role of the media, the mushrooming weeklies and monthlies of young people, and the radio and television broadcasts addressed to the young. The linguistic policy which the media apply is that they give space to elements of a jargon nature, to expressions which reflect a cool attitude, to acronyms and, what is most conspicuous, the linguist author of the reviewed article writes, to Anglospeak. This is backed by the interest of the young in pop culture, in modern technology, and especially in microelectronics and computers. English dominates these.

For over a year, György Győry monitored the subject in four youth magazines and other periodicals as well as in radio broadcasts for the young. He collected approximately 25,000 facts and figures. This number cannot be compared to anything, but it indicates the width of the effect and the thoroughness of the survey. The collection includes simple words of English origin, abbreviations, acronyms, idiomatic expressions, stock phrases, translations and metaphrases, English words transformed to sound Hungarian, etc. Mistranslations are not absent either. In his article Győry writes of plays on words.

Győry finds that these days Hungarian publicists like to employ such devises. These can be expressive stylistic instruments to establish a cheerful, a cool or a camp tone, but sometimes they are empty and mannered. This applies also to puns which mix the elements of Hungarian and English, in order to set in motion a complicated system of associations of the two languages. (The mere presence of these puns shows that the press and radio reckon that many a young people have at least a minimal knowledge of the English language.) The most frequent method is the exploitation of homonymes. For instance, a sporting event connected with skating was advertised as: *show-hajtás* (*hajtás* means "drive"). Here the word "show" is meant to indicate that a spectacle was involved, and the word *hajtás* that a competition was involved, but pronounced together, the words *show-hajtás* means "sigh" in Hungarian. According to the author, this creation of a new word is not very successful, because read together it conjures up rather a melancholic, romantic mood than a meeting where one can have fun.

In another paper a poem was published with the title "if you költők". Pronounced in the Hungarian way, "if you" sounds *ifjú*, meaning young. (*Költők* means poets.) Paying attention to the various strata of the meaning (which the author discusses carefully), the play on words expresses indirectly a questioning of the role of the poet.

In some puns the funny effect relies on an incorrect semi-English, semi-Hungarian pronuncation of the English words. In other cases it relies on differences in meaning. Out of his rich material, the author distinguishes nine kinds of plays on words, each of which includes several sub-variants. To mention but a few: homonyms, the contraction of various strata of the meaning, condensation, the occasional transformation of phraseological units, contractions, contrived literal translations, exploitation of the musical character of the words, etc.

The author then classifies and analyses the plays on words. His collected examples are in themselves a collection of jokes for Hungarians. He states that a fashion is involved, and by pointing out the often observable contrived nature and mannerism, he indicates that he disapproves of some manifestation of this fashion. He, however, does not express a judgemental position as a Hungarian purist.

Győry, György: "Magyar és angol szójátékok a hazai ifjúsági sajtóban" (Hungarian and English plays on words in the Hungarian youth press). *Magyar Nyelvőr*. 1988. No. 112, pp. 21–34.

T. H.

## AVANT-GARDE TRADITION

In November 1986, the Art History Department of Budapest University and the Art History Research Group of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences held a conference at Visegrád, one of the main subjects of which was avant-garde art with emphasis on the examination of the Hungarian national tradition. The title of László Beke's address indicated that today avant-garde art itself has become a convention. But has the art of the 1980s anything at all to do with the avant-garde?

In the eighties such determinant personalities of Hungarian avant-garde art have died as Tibor Hajas and Miklós Erdély, and art and art life have changed radically. The innovative, oppositional, socially critical avant-garde was replaced in Hungary too by the fashion-oriented, ideologically neutral, decorative-eclectic post-avant-garde. This process was assisted also by growing international contacts and a more liberal cultural policy. All this made it possible that the artists should in early youth already get into the swim of international trends and should at the same time also be successful. The cultural authorities chose representatives of new and fashionable trends as representatives at major international exhibitions and Hungarian Weeks abroad. These decorative fashions also more adequately satisfy the requirements of representation than the critical spare avant-garde. However, János Szirtes and Imre Bak are examples that the spirit of the new trends can give rise not only to appealing and somewhat superficial decorativity, but also to a new ornamentation pregnant with symbols. It is at this point that the Hungarian post-avant-garde can link up with a national tradition of folk art. This link, however, is not unequivocal today.

Although the representatives of the new trends obtain state support (scholarships, purchases, etc.), and can maintain contacts with galleries abroad, they are unable to make a living. In Hungary there are still numerous obstacles in the way of the art trade.

It is also characteristic of the new situation that the artists take a much greater interest in mass culture—rock music, design, fashion shows, literary-musical-show programmes, etc.—than they did earlier. This often leads to the mass taste overcoming the artist and not the artist developing the new style.

All this is natural and took a similar course elsewhere in the world. If it is nevertheless considered as something negative and undesirable in Hungary, it must not be forgotten that the art historians and critics are also responsible. Some critics who have done their theoretic homework and have expressed judgements founded in aesthetics, who could have transmitted avant-garde ways as a radical attitude, let them down. But art historians are also at fault in that they did not recognise the potential of post-modernism. There was in the beginning an outspoken and affectedly intellectual new wave, but art took the direction of least resistance. In the 1980s it opted for the tactics of Achille Bonito Oliva, instead of Lyotard's strategy of thinking. Simultaneously, art life turned ambiguous. Openings ceased to be social acts and became society occasions, meetings of friends, and the exhibition itself a pleasant panorama which does not affect the viewer in depth. We must learn from the avant-garde that professionalism is at the most an instrument, and the artist can find the fullness of expression if intuition is supported also by powerful thinking.

Beke, László: "Avant-garde hagyomány." (Avant-garde tradition). *Ars Hungarica*. 1988. No. 1. pp. 65–69.

I. N.

RUDOLF ANDORKA is Professor of Sociology at the Karl Marx University of Economics in Budapest... GYÖRGY GRANASZTÓI is Assistant Professor at the Department of Medieval and Early Modern History of the University of Budapest... TAMÁS HOFER is Deputy Director of the Ethnography Team 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... ILDIKÓ NAGY is an art historian on the staff of the National Gallery... ANDRÁS SAJÓ is Professor of Law at the Karl Marx University of Economics of Budapest.

*Demográfia* — a quarterly of the Committee for Demography of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences

*Valóság* — a monthly of the social sciences

*Állam és Igazgatás* — journal of the Councils Office of the Council of Ministers

*Agrártörténeti Szemle* — published twice yearly by the Hungarian Academy of Sciences and the Ministry of Agriculture

*Danubian Historical Studies* — a journal of the Institute of Historical Sciences of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences

*Magyar Nyelvőr* — a language periodical published by the Hungarian Academy of Sciences

*Ars Hungarica* — published twice a year by the Art History Research Group of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences

# SURVEYS

ÉVA HARASZTI-TAYLOR

## WHY WAS ADMIRAL HORTHY NOT CONSIDERED A WAR CRIMINAL?

In the House of Commons on the 28th of January 1946, Major Wilkes asked the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs on what grounds Admiral Horthy "was recently released from custody in Germany." The answer of Philip Noel-Baker* followed: "I have no official information about the release of Admiral Horthy, but I am making inquiries and I'll write to my Hon. Friend when a report has been received."

"*Major Wilkes:* Will the Right Hon. Gentleman bear in mind when he considers the information which he receives that under Admiral Horthy's rule, the country joined the Axis in 1939 and undertook the persecution of anti-Axis politicians and also of racial minorities in the country?

*Mr Noel-Baker:* Yes, I will bear all that in mind; I am aware of it."

Soon thereafter there was a draft reply submitted by the Foreign Office which stated on the 2nd of February, 1946:

"The War Office have now ascertained from Nuremberg that Admiral Horthy has *not* been released. He has simply been removed from Nuremberg because he is not now required there as a witness.

He is understood to be in the custody of the United States 3rd Army and is presumably in their zone of occupation in Germany. He has, as far as is known, at no time been in British custody and is not on the British list of war criminals."

Following this parliamentary question and answer, many interesting reports reached the Foreign Office—presumably in answer to inquiries—from the British Political Mission in Hungary, from the British Legation to the Holy See, from the Adv. HQ. Control Commission for Germany (British Element) and from the British Embassy in Moscow. These reflected British, Yugoslav, American, Soviet and Horthyite attitudes towards Admiral Horthy and expressed views whether he would or could be considered a war criminal (See PRO.FO. 371.59016). Amongst these many minutes and items there were some which referred to the possibility of Admiral Horthy's extradition to Yugoslavia for trial as a war criminal.

What the Foreign Office found out through its ambassadors and advisers to the Foreign Research Department regarding Horthy has purely informative value. Having been preserved amongst other Foreign Office files, the minutes and reports on the Admiral add interesting details to the evaluation of

* Philip Noel-Baker, Minister of State, Foreign Office

the twenty-five years of the Horthy regime and relevant British opinion.

An unsigned minute [25th of February 1946, presumably written by C. A. MacCartney (Research Department, F. O.) who later referred to this] following Major Wilkes' parliamentary question discussed the case made by the Yugoslavs and their supporters for listing of Horthy as a war criminal. The minute had two parts:

"1) His responsibility for the invasion of Yugoslavia on 10th April 1941.

2) His responsibility, as Head of State, for various atrocities and illegal acts committed by the Hungarian authorities after the occupation.

On point 1) there is undoubtedly a case against the Regent, although the question is very complex and there are certainly many extenuating circumstances. All the history is not yet completely cleared up, but many details came out during the recent trial of Bárdossy (who has since been executed); and I have some further private information from various sources.

Briefly the story is this:

On March 28th or 29th Sztójay, then Hungarian Minister in Berlin, arrived by plane bearing a letter from Hitler to Horthy. In this letter Hitler announced his intention of attacking Yugoslavia and asked for Hungary's participation. According to evidence in my possession (an autographed letter from Teleki to Baron Apor in Rome), Hitler promised Horthy Hungary's old frontiers, an outlet to the sea, and 'practically anything else he wanted'. If Hungary did not consent, there was a threat intimated, but not in the letter, that Germany would take all the Yugoslav Voivodina, with parts of Transylvania and also parts of Hungary itself, and form it into a German state.

Horthy was at first in favour of acceptance, but Teleki and Bárdossy talked him round and 'eliminated the dangerous parts from his reply'. There then ensued a great number of consultations, Crown Councils, etc., in all seven in number. The two main currents of opinion were represented on the one hand by Werth and Bartha, the Minister of War, who wanted full and immediate participation; and on the other, by Teleki and to some extent Bárdossy, for the maximum resistance. Finally agreement was reached as follows:

Hungary would not move at all against Yugoslavia so long as Yugoslavia existed as a state; but if Yugoslavia dissolved into its component elements, then Hungary would advance and reoccupy up to the 1918 frontier, with Croatia and Serbia, but not beyond.

Alternatively, if a 'vacuum' were created in the Voivodina, Hungary would occupy that area rather than let it be occupied by Germany. Only a limited number of troops to be employed in any case, but these to be under Hungarian command, since if small units were used under German command, they would certainly be carried forward into Croatia.

No mobilisation was ordered and the Germans were informed that they could not use Hungarian communications or airfields.

It is almost certain that in spite of these orders, Werth made arrangements with the Germans to let their troops through Hungary. There is no evidence or presumption that Horthy knew of this.

Meanwhile Barcza, in London, was asked to place the Hungarian case before Mr Eden.

On 2nd April, it appears that Barcza telegraphed to Teleki that Mr Eden had said that if Hungary joined in the attack on Yugoslavia, H.M.G. would declare war on her; if she connived at the German attack, diplomatic relations would be broken off.

Nevertheless, on the night of 2nd/3rd April, news reached Teleki that German troops had crossed the Hungarian frontier. On hearing this, Teleki shot himself.

Horthy is known to have been deeply upset by this. He called for Werth and

commanded the cancellation of any mobilisation orders which might have been issued. On the other hand, it is true that he did not order mobilisation against the Germans. He did, however, write a letter of bitter protest to Hitler, saying that the Germans were becoming 'despoilers of corpses'.

The German operations against Yugoslavia, conducted via Hungary, then proceeded, Hungary looking on. Horthy, on representations from Werth, allowed mobilisation up to the limits agreed at the previous councils, but declared that Hungary would not move unless and until the previous conditions were fulfilled, i.e. the disintegration of Yugoslavia. He also said that in spite of atrocity reports, which—true or not—were pouring in, he would not allow retaliation so long as Yugoslavia existed.

In fact, Yugoslav aeroplanes bombed Hungarian territory several times (of course, their objectives were German troops) but the Hungarians confined themselves to protests. On the evening of 10th April, however, Kvaternik proclaimed an 'independent Croatia'. The news was telephoned to Budapest and Bárdossy at once went to Horthy; represented to him that the conditions were fulfilled; and got him to sign a proclamation to the effect that Yugoslavia had ceased to exist, and that Hungary was consequently reoccupying her old frontiers. An Order of the Day, signed by Horthy, ordered the troops to advance.

Horthy is certainly responsible, as Head of State, for these two Orders. His own attitude, when I saw him, was one of complete innocence. He genuinely believed it was clear that the conditions under which the Treaty of Eternal Friendship had been signed had ceased to operate. Yugoslavia no longer existed. He had, out of chivalry and decency, gone to the limit in refusing to join any action, in spite of the bad conditions to which the Magyars of the Voivodina were subjected and in spite of the bombing of Hungarian territory, so long as any doubt remained on the point—although he personally felt that the contract had really lapsed with the Yugoslav *coup d'état*. A point which other Hungarians raised, although he did not, was that the Treaty had contained a second clause providing for mutual consultation, and that the Yugoslavs had reversed their entire policy from one of friendship to the Axis to the reverse, without any sort of consultation.

Horthy admitted to me that he had not ordered any resistance to the Germans, partly because the conditions under which the Treaty was signed no longer, in his eyes, operated; partly because Hungary was unarmed and her forces would simply have been mown down.

On the diplomatic count it would seem that Werth was really guilty of making preparations to help the German attack. Horthy was not. He tried throughout to do his best according to his lights; although it is clear that his limited intellect and also his intellectual background were such that the light which he saw was not that which everyone would have followed. But his position was very difficult: he was subjected to promises, threats and *faits accomplis* from the Germans and from his own Chief of Staff. He is not a very wise man, and when it is said that he ought to have resisted, or at least to have disavowed the whole action and himself abdicated, it must be replied that the reasons for which he did not do either of these things were perhaps mistaken, but not altogether discreditable. They included a desire not to sacrifice Hungarian blood in vain against overwhelming German forces and also the feeling that the captain of the ship must remain on the bridge under all circumstances.

2. As to the later atrocities and illegal actions: the Yugoslav memorandum contains some exaggerations and also, of course, much truth. The legal enactments alleged as being contrary to international law follow from the reannexation, which Horthy covered, as Head of State. Of the atrocities, notably the Novi Sad massacre, he was certainly

quite guiltless. He had certainly no foreknowledge, and when he heard of them he ordered an enquiry to be held and the offenders to be punished. It is true that in his naiveté he was satisfied by a whitewashing report from the military authorities who were themselves the guilty parties; but he also agreed to having the question reopened when a later Premier, Kállay, asked for this."

This minute was submitted as comment when the British Legation to the Holy See transmitted a copy of a note from the Vatican on 15 February 1946 to the Foreign Secretary, Ernest Bevin, stating that an appeal has been received for the intervention of Pope Pius XII with His Majesty King George VI on behalf of Admiral Horthy, former Regent of Hungary, who was said to be in danger of extradition to Yugoslavia for trial as a war criminal. (See PRO. FO. 371. 59116. R/3306/569/21.) As this appeal was forwarded for consideration, many minutes were prepared on the subject about the latest position. R. A. Beaumont—one of the civil servants in the Foreign Office German Department (War Crimes Section)—stated in his minute on the 11th March, 1946, that "the position is that Admiral Horthy was listed as a war criminal by the United Nations War Criminal Commission for his responsibility for the atrocities committed by Hungarian troops in Yugoslavia. The result of Admiral Horthy's name being on one of the U.N.W.C.C. lists is that the Americans, in whose custody, I believe, he is, will have to decide whether or not they still hand him over to the Yugoslavs. So far as I am aware, they have so far made no effort to do so. "F. A. Warner, another Clerk (Southern Department, Superintending Under Secretary) commented on Beaumont's minute the following day (12/3, 1946):

"As stated in Beaumont's minute of 11/3, the Admiral is now due to be tried by the Government of Yugoslavia for atrocities committed in that country by his troops. We have several reasons to regret that we acceded to this arrangement. 1. The evidence available in London suggests that the Admiral cannot fairly be convicted for these activities, in the form in which they are presented. 2. A trial conducted by the Yugoslavs is likely to be grossly unjust and bear no relation at all to the standards and purposes of the Allied War Crimes Commission. 3. The trial will arouse great hostility and bitterness in Hungary and will greatly strengthen the feud between the two countries. But although the present position is unsatisfactory ... if agreement could be reached with the Americans, it might be possible to hold the Admiral indefinitely, pending decision by the UNWCC as to their requirements with regard to his trial as a Major War Criminal. The question of his trial for crimes against peace is still open. If then it was agreed to try him at Nuremberg, his criminality could be dealt with as a whole and the Yugoslav prosecution ironed out and pronounced on by competent judges.

With ref. to the attached letter we clearly cannot intervene directly and I suggest replying that the matter must remain open pending decision by the UNWCC as regards his trial by the Allies."

M. S. Williams, a third official (Southern Department, Assistant), who commented on the case at length, thought that "subject to the War Crimes Section's views, the reply should be that Admiral Horthy was listed as a war criminal by the UNWCC after full consideration of the facts; that the Commission have still to decide whether to list him as worthy of trial against peace; that HMG are satisfied with the working of the UNWCC and that they regret they would not be willing to attempt to interfere with the execution of its agreed decisions.

Am I right in understanding from Mr Beaumont's minute above that the Americans could if they wished hand over Horthy at once to the Yugoslavs without waiting for the further consideration of the case by the

UNWCC?" (On the margin of the page "yes" was added by a different hand.)

A fourth F.O. official added his minute on the 15th of March:

"I would prefer not to say that H. had been listed by the UNWCC since the Commission's lists are supposed to be secret and I would rather not commit us to saying that HMG are satisfied with the workings of the Commission. It is hardly the truth!".

After this it was decided to send the reply to the British Minister to the Holy See (Sir Francis d'Arcy G. Osborne) on the 22nd of March.

"Sir, I have received your despatch No. 49. containing the request of H.H. Pope Pius XII for our intervention on behalf of Admiral Horthy. I shall be glad if you will reply that the case of Admiral Horthy has been raised before the UNWCC and that, as this is an international body, HMG regret that they are not able to interfere in its workings and must respect its decisions. You may also inform the Secretariat of State of His Holiness that Admiral Horthy is not in British Custody and that HMG are not therefore directly responsible for his disposal." (PRO. FO. 371. 59016. R. 3306/ /569/21. Outfile. H.E. HBM Minister to the Holy See, No. 44.)

Not long after this correspondence, Sir William Strang, the then Political Adviser to the Commander-in-Chief at Adv. HQ. Control Commission for Germany (British Element) Berlin—wrote a letter to Sir Orme Sargent, Permanent Undersecretary of State, dated the 14th of May, 1946: "I send you, in the original, a letter I have received from Mr Nicholas de Horthy, Jnr, together with its enclosures, namely a letter, in original, from the ex-Regent to Mr Bevin; a personal memorandum about the younger Horthy; and a memorandum concerning Hungary's situation in the last 25 years. I have acknowledged Mr de Horthy's letter and have told him that I am forwarding it, together with its enclosures, to the Foreign Office." The letter was acknowledged and MacCartney's opinion was sought. He said, in a minute written on the 29th of May, that "the Regent seems to be somewhat out of touch with modern developments on suggesting the restoration of Historic Hungary... Horthy jun.'s account of his own behaviour and activities is, as far as I know, correct."

Horthy's letter to Bevin, written on the 14th of April 1946, tried to impress the British Foreign Secretary regarding Hungary's key position in South-East Europe, that it was the interest of the Anglo-Saxon powers not to keep Hungary as a mutilated country, to express his feeling of friendship towards Britain and to stress that the "ideas and methods of Bolshevism are just as strange to the Hungarian people as those of National Socialism have been." Horthy wrote all this because he still considered himself the Regent of Hungary and wanted to draw attention to many problems of Hungary during the time of the preparation of the Peace Treaties. His "Memorandum concerning Hungary's situation in the last 25 years" is hardly closely reasoned, nor is the English the best, however, it may be interesting to quote the last few pages:

"The Kállay Government followed a policy that in any conceivable way represented the interests of the Western Powers, sympathetic to both government and the public, and at the same time best served the basic interests of the country.

For if by open resistance the total occupation would have been hastened, the economic power and capacity of Hungary as well as its people fit for military service would have been drawn into serving the German interests many years earlier.

In this way, however, the Germans received much less help, the country retained its sovereignty (if only legally), and the hope remained for a possible opening up towards the Allies.

All this has ended by the total occupation of the country on 19 March 1944.

We must remember that at this time

active armed help could not have been expected from the Western Powers, and the example of the fate of Poland, Denmark, Norway, Holland, and Belgium showed that a determined resistance would have caused a complete loss of the country's independence, and its complete spoliation.

An agreement has been worked out between the Kállay Government and the Anglo-Saxon Allies that gave free passage rights to Allied aircraft over Hungarian territory, and gave security and Government support to pilots forced to land within the country (they received friendly welcome and very good care); on the other hand, the Allies agreed not to bomb Hungary, they lived up to this agreement until the time Germany occupied the country.

After years of struggle to retain the sovereignty of the country, our constant bickering had become too troublesome for the Germans, and on 15 March 1944 under the false pretext of wishing a conference on the subject of the withdrawal of Hungarian troops from the front, Hitler invited the Regent of Hungary to Germany. Previous to that, by way or his Chief of Staff as well as the Minister of Defence, he frequently demanded withdrawal of the Hungarian troops from the front but received empty promises only. During the Regent's stay in Germany, German troops marched into Hungary and actually occupied the country, and at the same time the Regent, who immediately broke off all further negotiations, and wanted to return to Hungary, was prevented from doing so by a removal of his train, and later by further delays."

The question now arises, and rightfully, why under such circumstances the Regent did not abdicate, or did not declare that finding himself in a position wherein he is incapable to exercise his constitutional rights for the duration of the existence of the present limitations he would refrain from any further activity. To fully understand this situation we must know that Hitler solemnly promised to the Regent Horthy that in case he would appoint for the formation of a new Cabinet—in place of Kállay, who was taken away—a prime minister whom he, Hitler, would trust, he would immediately withdraw the occupying forces from the country and restore its sovereignty.

As has been mentioned before, achievement of sovereignty for the country was the uppermost principle in the State's leadership, for which it has been deemed necessary to bring sacrifices. At the same time the Regent hoped that by effecting the withdrawal of German troops he would save much of the country's wealth, products, valuables, and lives, for Hungary's future to be rebuilt with the aid of the Allies.

And finally, the only possible solution seemed to be the retaining of the Regent's office, in order to maintain the sovereignty of the nation at a time when a victory of the Allies and the war's end appeared to be certain and not very far, then a nation that did not lose its sovereign status could save more for its future existence.

In order to view the situation in its entirety, and objectively, we must not forget that at the time of the German occupation of the country it was surrounded from all sides by hostile armed forces, and Hitler himself threatened that at the sign of any resistance the neighbouring Croatians, Slovaks and Rumanians would simultaneously launch a concentrated attack upon Hungary. (In this method Hitler followed the centuries old Habsburg policy, which for its own purposes caused rivals to fight each other.)

As has happened ever so often, Hitler did not fulfil his promise, and even after the appointment of the former Envoy to Berlin, a man who was in Hitler's confidence, to Prime Minister, the country stayed under German occupational rule. Thus the very thing happened against which the responsible Hungarian Government fought, with all possible means, from the beginning of the rise of National Socialism. 'To save what could be saved' was the principle now, as after the occupation our fate was evidently

the same as that of the other countries opposing Germany.

In the given situation the upholding of the connections with the Allies became critical. The country was full of SS and Gestapo agents, who had strictest control over all means of news exchanges. As it usually happened in such situations, the number of selfish traitors increased, and in all important offices, but even in the immediate surroundings of the Regent, there were some who carried on spying activities for the occupants.

The Regent found contact with the Allies through Switzerland and furthermore, he had talks with the British Lt. Col. Howie, who in 1943 escaped to Hungary from German captivity. In Hungary, Howie lived as a free man until the German occupation, and even then he succeeded in escaping. Even during the German occupation, Lt. Col. Howie was in contact with Poles who stayed in Hungary under the leadership of Prince Sapieha, and, aided by him, Howie established radio contact, through the London Polish military staff, with the British Government. In September 1944, on the Regent's invitation, Howie and the Poles spent several days in the Regent's living quarters, in the greatest secrecy, and from there, on a secret radio station, tried to contact London. It is not necessary to explain the greatness of the danger involved in this undertaking.

With the creation of the new Government of 19 March 1944 further conferences with the Allies created difficulties; but after a few months' struggle the Regent appointed General of the Army Géza Lakatos to form a new Cabinet. This new Cabinet consisted of a majority of soldiers rather than politicians, and in that fact the Regent saw a guarantee for freedom in carrying out measures in accordance with the wishes of the nation.

At the end of September 1944, Lt. Col. Howie and the Hungarian General Náday flew, from an airfield held by the Germans, to the Headquarters of the united Italian forces, to reestablish contact with the Allies. At the beginning of the next month the Regent sent the Hungarian General Faragho, accompanied by two politicians, to Russia for the preparation of armistice conferences.

The danger involved in these missions, which the Regent ordered on his own initiative, may be seen from the fact that as a result two men lost their lives, and Nicholas Horthy Junior had been arrested, held in solitary confinement at the Mauthausen concentration camp, and has been sentenced to death.

Lt. General Szilárd Bakay, Corps Commander of Budapest, who prepared and organized that city's defense against German attack, has been captured by the Gestapo on 7 October 1944, and also sent to a concentration camp.

On 13 October 1944, the Regent sent a representative to Szeged (the largest city in southern Hungary, then under Russian occupation) to commence official talks with General Malinovsky on the matter of the Hungarian troops laying down their arms.

On 15 October 1944, the Regent informed the German Envoy and Plenipotentiary, that he had asked for an armistice, and the Regent's proclamation has been broadcast at 12.30 noon by the Budapest radio, and has been repeated several times later on. The proclamation spoke sharply about the Germans' behaviour as well as about the shameful attitude of the German Administration and Army towards Hungary.

This proclamation caused great relief and satisfaction among the masses in the country. But much greater was the shock and excitement when in the course of the following hours and days the Hungarian Quisling, Ferenc Szálasi, seized control of the country's affairs, set into this position by the Germans. At the same time, the Regent and his family have been arrested, and taken to Germany, not as guests (as the press wanted it to be believed) but as prisoners, under

guard of 100 SS men and twelve Gestapo agents."

From the historians' point of view Horthy Junior's personal memorandum is more interesting than that of his father. After all, Horthy's Memoirs are well known, his version does not give more details about known facts or a more lucid account. As MacCartney put it, "He (Horthy) was always well-intentioned, always pro-British, but weak." Horthy Jun.'s account follows:

"*Personal Memorandum.*

I am Nicholas de Horthy Jr., son of Admiral Horthy, Regent of Hungary. I served as head of the Hungarian Legation to Brazil, in Rio de Janeiro, from July 1939 to May 1942. Against my will, and disregarding the many cablegrams I sent in protest, on German pressure the Hungarian Government severed diplomatic relations with Brazil, on 2 May 1942.

Even in my official position I was known to be anti-German and against National Socialism, and this fact could be proven by Mr Jefferson Caffery, U.S. Ambassador then to Brazil, and at present to France. Even a few days before Pearl Harbor he was my personal guest.

I was informed, at the time of the breach of relations between the two governments, that transportation by boat would be provided at a later date. At that time, I gave much consideration to the thought, that rather than returning home I would instead go to the United States, and there give voice to the anti-German sentiment of the Hungarian nation, which, under German oppression, it was unable to do.

The one factor that held me back from the realization of this plan was that I would have been working against my father, the Regent of Hungary. He—also an opponent of the Germans—did not abdicate even during the critical period that was to come, because at that time he still had Hitler's respect in a way, and therefore knew that he, possibly more than anyone else, would be capable of checking their excessive demands, in affairs of the State as well as in other aspects.

I would have felt reproachful towards myself, living in the comfortable position of safety at a time when I should have helped our struggle against Nazism at home.

Then, in August 1942, my brother lost his life on the Eastern front. From the four children who with my parents lived a very close family life, two daughters died as a result of sickness, and now my elder brother met early death; as the only remaining child I held it to be my duty to return home, to help my parents, and wherever I could to help my father in his difficult stand.

In connection with my deceased brother, may I yet mention that in the Spring of 1942, on account of my father's advanced age, Parliament elected him as Deputy to the Regent. The ulterior reason was, however, that knowing his Anglo-Saxon sympathies (he spent one year in Detroit, as an engineer at Fords, and visited Great Britain frequently), and his *aversion* towards National Socialist Germany, they hoped, that with his young fervor he would be able to stave off the increasing German influence, and to withdraw Hungary from further conflict as much as possible.

The Hungarian Nazi Party, small but strongly protected and supported by the Germans, started a whispering campaign shortly after his election, pointing out among other things the reason for his having been elected Deputy to the Regent to be the fact that as a result he would not have to go to the front, but could stay home in safety.

In order first to put an end to these rumors, and then, to better acquaint himself with the morale of the soldiers fighting at the front, he left for the Russian front as a pilot, and there took his share in the fighting as First Lieutenant, Air Corps Reserve, and as a pursuit pilot. He would have returned to the Capital on 20 August, to start his activities as Deputy to the Regent; however,

on the day of his departure, at dawn, he started out on one more flight, escorting reconnaissance planes. After he took off, his plane did not even reach an appreciable altitude, when it suddenly cantered, dived, and crashing into the ground, burned. Although there is no substantial evidence as yet or proof, many signs indicated that the catastrophe was the result of deliberate sabotage by the Germans.

The several sports accidents I went through in my younger years made me unfit for military service. On reaching home, however, I enlisted in the Army, hoping to be able, at some future time, to use my training when we would turn against the Germans. In the meanwhile, however, I held and took part in several political conferences, all of which served anti-German aims.

After occupation of the country by the Germans, in 1944 I seldom left the living quarters my parents shared with me; and later on I did not leave at all. On the one hand, I did not even want to see Germans, who stayed in Budapest in great number; and on the other hand, I had been informed that the Germans came to regard me as their greatest Hungarian opponent and they had plans to capture me. I made some exceptions to the above statement, when at nights I left stealthily, for talks with Lt. Col. Howie, with the Poles, or Yugoslavs.

Emissaries sent by Tito also arrived to have talks with. Knowing that my father had his armistice proclamation broadcast scheduled for the noon hour of 15 October 1944, that same morning I left my living quarters to meet the gentlemen sent by Tito, at the business office of one of my friends. It seems to me that previously the Gestapo had captured these emissaries and now used them, coercively, as tools in my capture. I did have three well-armed bodyguards with me, but they could do nothing to protect me against the several hundred members of the force organized by the SS and the Gestapo.

I was taken immediately to the Mauthausen concentration camp, put into solitary confinement on the floor above the gas-chamber and crematory building, and there, in hunger, I was awaiting hanging for six months. They held me I suppose, to be a politically valuable prisoner, whose execution was to be stayed until the end of the war. As the six months went by, at the time of the Soviet advance, I was transferred to Dachau, and thence later taken to Southern Tirol, through Innsbruck, with 150 other political prisoners, taken from different nationalities, among them Schuschnigg, Léon Blum, Pastor Niemöller and other important personalities. There we luckily got away from being shot to death, and were set free by the Fifth U.S. Army.

These are the more relevant facts of the past difficult years, but many more could be mentioned, all in connection with the basic idea that it was not the cooperation with Germany that was in my mind throughout the war years, but a fight against all their activities. As a result of which, in contrast to those who spent these years in the safety of distant countries, I, as well as my family, lost our entire possessions.

24th April 1946

Nicholas de Horthy jr.
Weilheim. Pollingerstr. 25."

(See; PRO. FO. 371. 59016. R/7683/569/ /21. All these sent by Sir William Strang. 14 May. (Berlin) to Sir Orme Sargent. F.O. Received 22 May, 1946.)

This happened in April. On the 20th of June Frank Roberts, the British Chargé d'Affaires in Moscow, wrote to W. G. Hayter at the F.O. about the Soviet attitude towards Horthy. I quote the whole letter:

British Embassy, Moscow.
20th June, 1946

33/7646

My dear William,

We had some exchanges some months ago about the Soviet attitude towards Admiral Horthy. We then took the line that on the limited evidence available to us the Soviet authorities did not seem particularly anxious that the Regent should be prosecuted as a war criminal.

2. A Secretary of the Hungarian Legation called on me today and confirmed that this was in fact the Soviet point of view. He told me that the question had been discussed between Stalin and the Hungarian Prime Minister during the latter's recent visit to Moscow. Stalin had then said that although Horthy had shown himself rather weak in the organisation of his *coup d'état*, which had ended in his being taken prisoner by the Germans, he had at least attempted to bring Hungary out of the war and he had signed a preliminary armistice with the Russians. Therefore, Stalin did not think that Horthy should be regarded as a war criminal or brought to trial. The Hungarian Secretary who gave me this information added, however, that he thought the Russians were in agreement with the Hungarian Government that it would be better for Horthy not to return to Hungary, if only because he might form a rallying point for the reactionary elements which still existed.

3. My Hungarian informant also told me that some progress had at last been made in regard to Hungarian prisoners of war in the Soviet Union, whom he estimated at about 200,000. After long negotiations a sort of *modus vivendi* had been reached with the Russians, under which these prisoners would be repatriated progressively in certain categories. I gather that the first to return would be the Jews removed to Germany for labour service. After them would go the invalids; next, persons rounded up in error by the Soviet army in Hungary, and so forth. My informant thought, however, that the officers would be the last to go, and he added that there always remained the great difficulty of finding transport.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Carse in Budapest.

Yours ever
Frank Roberts

(See; PRO. FO. 371. 59016. R.9446/569/ /71, No. 33176/46)

Shortly afterwards W. G. Hayter got a letter from the British Political Representative in Hungary. He said how much he was interested to read Frank Roberts' letter (No. 33/76/46) of the 20th of June, about the Soviet attitude towards Horthy. "On looking through the file here"—he went on—"I think you may like to have the following extract from a Minute which Redward (F.G.) apparently dictated on the 11th June, 1945, after he had a word with the Hungarian Minister for Foreign Affairs regarding War Criminals.

"I then enquired whether Admiral Horthy was considered a war criminal. Dr Gyöngyössi replied that this was a most delicate question, as although Horthy's regime during the last twenty years had committed many wrongs, the old man had done some good for the country and finally had endeavoured to get out of the war. He had been badly treated by the Germans and eventually kidnapped and interned with his family, and this had won him some sympathy amongst the population; an extenuating circumstance was his age (77). Dr Gyöngyössi said that he could not picture a 'living Horthy' in the Hungary of today, neither would it be advisable to have him tried, as a war criminal, condemned to death and executed and thus made a martyr of. He suggested the best course would be for him never to return to Hungary but to live abroad with his family."

He remarked at the end of his letter "that the similarity of wording between the

foregoing and a paragraph of Frank Roberts' letter is rather striking." He sent a copy of his letter to Frank Roberts to Moscow. (See: PRO. FO. 371. 59016. R.10531/569/21)

Nobody wanted to accuse Horthy of being a war criminal. The Americans had already sent more than 200 Hungarian war criminals back to Hungary. At the beginning of 1946 the Home Secretary, László Rajk, who was hanged after a show trial in 1949, declared that the leaders of the Hungarian Communist Party discussed the question of Horthy's extradition and agreed that they would not recommend it to the Hungarian Coalition Government. Their decision was based mainly and mostly on reasons of home politics. (See: Timár, I.: *Miért nem kértük Horthy kiadatását?* [Why did we not ask for extradition of Horthy?] *Élet és Irodalom*. 1981. október 31.)

The documents listed below are not available for inspection:

*Admiral Horthy*, Whereabouts R 6962/ /6962/21
Treatment C 3717/688/18
Letter to Eisenhower U 4224/16/73
Interview with prof. Mac Cartney R 12545/6962/2
Letters to the King and Churchill R 9663/1337/21

*Consultations with Horthy*, WR 2817, 2879, 3053, 3393, 3481, 3608, 3619/1138/ /48

WR 2623/1/48, WR 2691/WR/2823/ 1138/48 /R 18561/21.

---

# REMEMBERING SCOUTING IN HUNGARY

The boy scout movement started in England, with its beginning in 1908 when Baden-Powell's book was published; it was soon to spread all over the world. Before the Great War the first boy scout troops were organized in Hungary in cities, in secondary schools and in a student environment. However, its real popularity only started in the 1920s. Joining was voluntary. On those who made the ideas of the boy scout movement their own joined and those who refused to follow the rules were expelled. In this respect this was a selective movement but one selecting itself, just as life in the movement on the whole was managed and held in their hands by the young. Naturally, similar to any other social movement, the scouts too adjusted to the society of the age and its intellectual trends in Hungary and everywhere; it was not a political movement, it did not wish to propagate political ideas or support ideological concepts. It wished to educate people in the spirit of the twenties in harmony with the prevailing ideas.

Soon scout associations were established in different countries; in Hungary, the Hungarian Boy Scout Association came into being. The movement was both international and national. It was the first to set and realize the aim that members from different countries should meet from time to time, camp together, look upon each other as brothers and sisters, and further world peace by getting to know and respect each other. However, this international movement became national everywhere and the Hungarian scout movement became a Hungarian movement too. The uniform was identical internationally, the scout laws were the same too; the ten scout laws adjusted to Christian humanism and moral norms of Europe that had evolved in the course of centuries. All that was international, but in the spirit and mentality as well as in certain forms of

behaviour national features were manifested from the beginning. Everywhere it was primarily the urban young who joined the scouts, not only *gimnázium* students but the young industrial workers from the very beginning. One of the first scout troops in Hungary was that of the Csepel Works. Rural youth was included in the movement to a lesser degree, returning to nature was not such a great attraction for them since in several ways they were still living the old, more complete life.

Recalling my own youth, I know what it meant for us city children to go tramping in the hills and forests every week-end under the umbrella of the scout movement; in addition to nature, we got to know the reality of the country as well. We familiarised ourselves with it because without that it is impossible to find an orientation, to formulate a history or build the future. It was through the scouts that we had a chance to encounter the village, the peasants, the artisans living in small towns, the whole of Hungarian life, and I do not think that I am the only one on whose life this was the crucial influence.

For quite a long time, the movement, like the history of the period, was evaluated one-sidedly, from one single angle in Hungary. Just as the age was labelled as that of Hungarian fascism, the scout movement was looked upon as a fascist organization, considered as political and military training. Today we can say openly that this was not so. The Hungarian scout movement was living in its age and, naturally, it could not get shed its age, but it was neither a political nor an ideological movement. Its objective was to educate people and Hungarian people, and I believe that the aims and means of implementing its ideas were modern not only then but can be looked upon as modern in our own days. It is not frequently mentioned that it was the scouts that made the singing of folk-songs popular and it was again this movement that did a great deal to bring Hungarian peasant culture and Hungarian folk dancing into the sphere of everyday Hungarian culture. And when, under the influence of fascism, things were polarized in Hungary too and the government wanted to transform the scout movement into military training, in reply to this, the "Old Scouts" and the "Regös Scouts" (*regös*–bards or minstrels) consciously turned back to popular culture, as if protesting against the German political ideas and fascism. The scout movement was deeply embedded in folk movements. If we examine those who were active in post-war reconstruction, we are bound to encounter former scouts everywhere, who had been taught to hold their ground in difficult situations, fulfil their responsibilities and behave in a civilised manner; they had learnt to do everything within their reach to remain true to the ideals which they had learned to treasure in their youth.

In 1948 the scouts were abolished, absorbed by the pioneers and the communist youth organisation (DISZ, later KISZ). Both of the latter adopted a great deal from the boy scout movement but neither of them was able to capture the essence of it. They were unable to carry on its internal autonomy and to learn how to educate young people into responsible adults.

This is the first exhibition since the scout movement was abolished in Hungary. It has collected objects, documents, photographs and is a worthy recollection of the movement which brought up generations in Hungary. The Móra Ferenc Museum of Szeged deserves all praise for undertaking it. The material of the exhibition may convince everyone that there is no need to feel ashamed of the scout movement or to deny that we were once scouts and that we treasured its ideals.

I believe that the scout movement did have and does still have a message not only for the historian.

KÁLMÁN BENDA

# INTERDISCIPLINARITY OR INTERDILETTANTISM ?

*In the genetic programme ... is written the result of all past reproductions, the collection of successes, since all traces of failures have disappeared.*
*François Jacob, 1973*

Interdisciplinarity has become a fashionable slogan. It expresses the vague yet vigorous desire of intellectuals to find a common language, which would make possible the exchange of ideas and information between disciplines and cultures. Culture is understood here in the widest sense of the term, covering practically all sensible human activities. Much to the disappointment of the champions of interdisciplinarity, however, the present situation recalls more than anything the biblical myth of the Tower of Babel since approaches to the common objective are highly individual, and therefore highly diverse. A feasible explanation for this—let us hope temporary—failure of interdisciplinary aspirations is the simple fact that the evolution of human culture has not followed a predetermined plan.

The evolution of the different disciplines which constitute human culture was anything but synchronous. I would, nonetheless, warn of regarding it as contingent, since in a system as complex as this world (in its widest sense), the simultaneous presence of all conditions (including charismatic personalities) required for the occurrence of a given event is, as a rule, rare. The more specific the conditions are, and the smaller the chance for their optimal coincidence, the less probable is the issue, i.e. the event. The time must be ripe for the emergence of a (charismatic) personality or of a new idea, and still more ripe to present a fair chance for a break-through of the existing (traditional) conditions or paradigms. There is evidence that human culture evolved through a sequence of more or less obvious local booms in space and time, and booms were followed by a slow spread, a lag, or either a dramatic, or prolonged decline of the new tendencies. Progress utilized, passed and/or abolished the preceding periods of cultural evolution. Considering the vast time which had elapsed since the beginnings of human culture, and the tremendous efforts made by mankind, it is depressing to note the quantity of ruins, left behind by progress, and information lost transiently or forever in the course of human history. Several current problems of humanity could very likely be solved if we were in possession of at least some of the information, which has long been lost.

According to current knowledge, the history of the Universe, solar system and life on Earth characteristically exhibits the same basic features as the history of human culture. This is not at all surprising, if it is taken into consideration that this very world is the sole one of which mankind knows anything. The different events of the world, which are investigated by different disciplines, represent only different aspects of the same (in itself apparently infinite) Thing.

In Nature, all events seem to begin with the existence of a certain (not too low) number of simple quasi-identical units (from quanta to individuals of a species), which possess characteristic individual (local) energies in a global equilibrium. A local lesion of equilibrium precipitates a local fluctuation of energy which, if it is powerful enough, may spread within the given system and change its state. Weal fluctuations usually cause only a minor local perturbation, followed by a traceless dissipation of the excessive energy and return of the system to its previous state. The Big Bang is a good example for the first type of process. Once such a process has started, it will continue until the system reaches a new state of dynamic equilibrium by trapping part of the

initial energy in newly formed structures, and dissipating the excessive energy in the form of radiation or heat. The set of new and old structures, together with the ruins and debris of destroyed structures and the energy released in such events, present the scenery for the forthcoming events, which may again give rise to new more complex transient structures and, necessarily, to new ruins and debris of previous structures, as well as to an increase in the amount of no longer accessible energy (entropy).

Thus, any process has essentially two issues. Firstly, it may cause a local increase in complexity (local diminishing in entropy) within some small compartment of the given system, in which a lower level of complexity had already been present, secondly it will inevitably cause dissipation of part of the available (free) energy (increase of entropy) in the total system. Changing complexity uses only a minor part of the preexisting complexity, yet relies necessarily (at least initially) on the full range of complexity presented by the entire system. Therefore any step of evolution must involve an at least partial and/or local destruction or disturbance of the preceding state.

These facts recall the analogy of the Tower of Babel. The trouble is that the specialists involved in the study and control of the amazing diversity and variety of processes simultaneously going on in the world use different languages, which are specifically adapted to the concepts prevailing in their chosen fields. The higher the degree of specialisation in a field, the more specific is the language it uses, and the less comprehensible to outsiders or laymen. All disciplines have developed their own jargon. The high degree of specialisation and the enormous quantity of detailed information it covers—that is disciplinary progress itself—seems to present the main obstacle to the exchange of information between disciplines. In this situation it appears hard, if not impossible to decide which minute detail of one discipline is important for another, and it is therefore extremely difficult to give a (scientifically founded, non-vulgarised) review of one field for the information of experts of other fields. The more one penetrates the details, the less are outsiders able to grasp or sometimes even to perceive the totality of relationships.

Galilei argued that the history of Nature was written in mathematical terms. This view still holds with the slight, but disappointing modification that in the meantime, mathematics has itself advanced, and has experienced an amazing differentiation into many branches.

At present the cybernetic approach proposed by Wiener seems to present a way out of the existing labyrinth of a practically unlimited choice of possible approaches to interdisciplinary communication. Norbert Wiener concentrated on the definition, regulation and control of systems (sets of actually selected variables and parameters) rather than on the details of their internal structures. This approach and the speedy development of high-performance computers led to the recognition that certain relatively simple mathematical principles are common to several at first sight essentially different disciplines. Processes and events of biology, physics, chemistry, ecology, economics, technology, industry, linguistics —to mention only a few—can be simulated by the same or a very similar cybernetic system. The flight of a bat and the landing of an aircraft by an automatic pilot are equally based on manoeuvres controlled by recording specific changes in reflected ultrasonic (bat) or radar (aircraft) waves. The bat and the aircraft equally emit a specific signal in a given direction, which is reflected (modified), if it hits on a reflecting object. The reflected (modified) signal is received by a control system, which processes it. It follows that in any natural or artificial system which is functioning by emission of information towards the periphery, the recording of the reflected (modified) information and initiation of action by the processed

(modified) signal can be simulated by the same cybernetic model, if the adequate variables and constants (parameters) are defined. Thus currently the language proposed by Norbert Wiener appears to furnish a potential tool for sensible interdisciplinary communication. Of course, the user has to be thoroughly familiar with this language, to avoid ministerpretation, misunderstanding or any other source of confusion. Confusion of the languages caused more than enough trouble as long as interdisciplinary communication was based mainly on a verbal (narrative) exchange of ideas. Inter-dilettantism has been an undesired side-effect of the narrative style of communication. Poorly understood and misinterpreted results of one discipline were ill-adapted to the principles of another, on the slippery ground of deceptive analogies.

It is a paradoxical situation that people with wide interests must *ab ovo* reconcile their ambitions with the circumstance that they have to remain dilettantes (dilettare, ital. = to enjoy something) in most disciplines outside their main field. Such dilettantes—in the best sense of the word—are numerous. They are as a rule brilliant talkers who betray a vast, although in some respects necessarily superficial, knowledge. Their sparkling wit may, nevertheless, often lead them to the discovery of subtle and unexpected connections and interrelationships between seemingly unrelated things and events. On the other hand, typical specialists of a given field are sooner or later confronted with the difficulty that they are unable to face the scores of new problems, which emerge as soon as they succeed in solving one. These scientists dig consistently deeper and deeper in their field, and the greater depths they have uncovered, the less they are able to communicate their results to others, and the more they tend to look on fellow-scientists as dilettantes. May I refer here to a story heard from my father. A late professor of crystallography, whom a student thoroughly failed to satisfy at the examination, exclaimed in despair:—For God's sake, man, if you have no knowledge of crystallography, what on earth do you talk about at parties?

Attempts at finding a reasonable approach to interdisciplinary collaboration between the above two extremes have called into being research teams, which unite dilettantes and experts of different disciplines and schools of thought. However, this kind of team-work also has its drawbacks, which usually stem from human weaknesses, such as pride, prejudice, intolerance, longing for power, authority or just money. Research teams equally excelling in ethics and efficiency are indeed rare events.

Recently, demand for interdisciplinary collaboration has been soaring in all fields also at the international level. International interdisciplinary collaboration seems to present the only solution for the current cultural crisis, or else human culture will become atomised and all its potential driving force will dissipate instead of integrating into a rich, colourful diapason.

The only real obstacle to true interdisciplinary thinking and action is interdilettantism. Mankind has acquired a fair amount of knowledge about the functioning of several natural and cultural systems, and would, over and again, claim to be wise enough to control, or even to improve the tendencies of evolution. The interdilettante approach to Nature and culture bears the responsibility for environmental pollution, extinction of plant and animal species, and for the miserable state of the mass media, status symbol idolisation and dubious products of "art" as well.

With the advent of high-technology communication and transport systems it has been realised that the planet Earth is but a small, solitary space-craft, with limited resources and facilities, which can be saved and reasonably utilised by an international interdisciplinary consensus and cooperation, but may be fatally endangered by cultural as well as political interdilettanism. Certain current trends of technical and industrial

development leave no doubt about the objective reality of this danger, and the hazards of naive, shortsighted interdilettante optimism. International interdisciplinarity is the only way to avoiding the tragic fate of the Tower of Babel. Although proud Homo Sapiens still knows very little about the Word and also about himself, he certainly knows enough to save life on Earth, including human life.

*

The foregoing and similar considerations have prompted the foundation in different parts of the world of several non-profit organizations, whose objective is to save Nature and/or culture from intedilettante human interference (e.g. International Society for Arts, Sciences and Technology, Berkeley, California, U.S.A.; International Society for Polyaesthetic Education, Salzburg, Austria, etc.). In Hungary, the INTART Society has recently ventured into the promotion of interdisciplinary understanding and development by uniting home and foreign specialists of highly diverse fields in the arts, science and technology to pursue subjects of common interest, and to face the intellectual, professional, educational and other problems which are threatened by the emergence of interdilettantism. The main objective of INTART is to provide a solid basis for mutual undestanding and tolerance, and to ensure an even share of different disciplinary approaches to certain basic problems of human knowledge, which have been at the centre of interest for centuries. The historical papers presented by invited speakers at recent meetings of INTART on the role of spirals in natural and artificial structures, on interactions between the elements of different systems, and on the interpretation of scale and measure have revealed a fascinating fluctuation of convergence and divergence in the disciplinary approaches which have, further to awakening rare sensations of unisonance, disclosed scores of new aspects.

SÁNDOR KOCH

# BOOKS AND AUTHORS

GEORGE SZIRTES

## BEING REMADE AS AN ENGLISH POET

*for Ágnes Nemes Nagy*

At the age of twenty-seven I felt "I needed to be remade as an English poet." It was of course a form of groping in the dark. What does it mean to be remade? If I ask myself this question now I am immediately led back into that odd twilight world in which the past becomes an unwitting liar, the clear conclusions that spring from it fade like mirages, and even the apparent certainties of what has come to be begin to lose their definition. Now I travel regularly to Hungary, have good friends there, read Hungarian poetry (still with some, though decreasing, difficulty), write about Hungary, and am less concerned about having to be remade as an Englishman. My language is naturally English—I have (I tell myself) written five books of English poems to prove it—and even though the last two books have, in curious ways, fed on Hungary, nobody has suggested that I have become something other than I was in earlier books. It is true that in one or two places I have been billed as a 'Hungarian poet' and that one of the terms in which I am sometimes praised is as an introducer of foreign flavours into English verse, but the first of these I have put down to ignorance or possibly an opportunistic eye for what might seem exotic. The second proposition, if true, would please me. I notice I have twice employed dietary metaphors above: feeding, flavours. The idea of ingestion is obviously important.

And it is the less intellectual senses—taste, smell, touch—that suit my theme here, which is the overlap between English and Hungarian experience in so far as I can comprehend it. They are the most fugitive senses, the most haunting. Of course we begin with vision and with words, or the music of words. Perhaps I could start by describing two landscapes.

First, my experience of England. We arrive at the seaside. It is cold but the sea is loud, and so is the wind. Somewhere overlooking the sea, in the

dark, is a hut where I am taken to join in the activities of the local cub scouts. A dog chases me, an English boy fires a waterpistol at me. Somewhere there is a boarding house with trees outside. This is only for a short time, then we are in London, in a north-west suburb. The railway runs close by. We can stumble down the embankment towards it. At night a bee flies into my ear and stings me. Just a little way away there is a big road with a 1940s cinema. My parents' Hungarian friends live close by. One is a photographer. His wife is buxom and dark and has two very pretty little daughters. Did she once pose half-naked for him? Was something said about this once, in another room? Another couple, much more bohemian. He is an artist, and his slim red-haired wife likes dancing to trad jazz. He wears leathers and rides a motorbike: she has an electric presence, deeply attractive (I am nine or ten at the time). Later they will separate, and he will stop being an artist, a fact which still strikes me as very sad.

Changes of address. Sitting in the front room of our small terraced house, listening to the Goon Show on radio. My parents are out and have not come back when they said they would. I begin to panic. At the end of the road (it is a cul-de-sac) lives my scoutmaster, Mr Larkin. We live at the summit of a steep hill. My mother can hardly get up it, because her heart is poor. On the other side of the hill are some odd, turreted semi-detached houses. In a flat at the top of one of these lives Mr Shane who plays the violin in Mantovani's orchestra. Sometimes we see him on the small grey television (our proud new possession), a small moustached courteous man, like a reverent waiter or undertaker. He teaches my brother the violin too. A little girl I am secretly in love with lives in one of the nearby smaller houses. There are two girls down our street too.

The next few years are clear enough. A new address once more. Grammar school. Operations on my mother. My father has an accident on a building site. This is a quiet area, but on Saturday evening the children of the wealthier neighbours roar off in their fathers' cars. I am more than indifferent to the place. I begin, quietly, to hate it.

Now Leeds—a blessed change. Love, marriage. The city is rough, broad, romantically decayed. The smell of rotting in a tiny house. Two schizophrenic women upstairs. In the Chapeltown district, blacks, Ukrainians, a few remnant Jews. Peter Sutcliffe, the Yorkshire Ripper, murderer of several prostitutes, as well as of normal women, is about my age. Later he will walk down these same streets with his hammer. An aged poet slumps drunk in his dark chaotic room full of books. Then, briefly, London again. My wife has a miscarriage, a cat gone crazy has to be put down.

Where I sit now I overlook the tops of low trees. We have a long walled

garden, beyond which lies a children's playground. I can also see the dull brown roofs of a recent estate with its cluster of television areals. A garage workshop is to my right, the car park of the local Crown Court to my left. Behind me, at the front of the house, a busy road and the white library and museum. I know that if I go out of my front door, turn left and left again down a small alley, within ten minutes I will be out in the fields. The fields slope down into a gentle valley, and a small river trundles silver grey beyond some further trees. In autumn the mist hangs above it. Dogs and their owners suddenly appear. I don't in fact walk out here very much. Of the town itself, I know its details well enough; its market, its church, its quaint roofs and windows. It has a mild open-faced handsomeness. I have lived here for fourteen years, but it is not my home. Hertfordshire—however long I continue to live here—will always seem like an interlude, even though it is where I have written almost all my published work.

Such sounds and sights add up to a flavour of some sort. Of course I know Oxford, Cambridge and other places too, but they don't register very much. They belong to other people, richer, more educated and more purely English than me. I suppose they still frighten me a little, though I know how to walk among them, and how to comport myself in their company. Their public schools are a mystery, their love lives imponderable. To say objectively, I like England, suddenly makes the whole country seem very small and clear, as though I were looking down on it from a low-flying aeroplane.

Now the second place. I am not quite sure why I have come to Budapest. I wander round in a dream. Later I rationalise: there is an architecture of the exterior and an architecture of the interior. I am now walking down the streets of the interior. This is a simplification. It is hopeless making simple statements about the past, the best we can do is to state facts as barely as possible. "She had a red skirt," for example. Or, "He died in that house." If you lie about these things they will fade away completely, and you will find even your interior architecture nothing but air and tantalising smells. The smells are there anyway, but suddenly they have a home. To look into a courtyard, walk through the gateway and suddenly recognise that warm wash of domestic sound, is not to know anything about history, but it is a form of communion with the lively dead. Every cherubic head, every caryatid, every florid bas-relief is the spirit of some unknown inhabitant. The buildings themselves are bodies in shabby clothes. The higher you go the warmer and brighter it gets. Looking down feels precipitous but familiar. You have forgotten the sensation of standing above these cobbled yards, but you know that this is a kind of food, and that somehow you have got to eat it if you want the strength to go further and explore individual rooms or

open cupboards. And this is a compulsive act: as in a dream you know that there is something you must do, even though you cannot remember too precisely what it is, or why you are doing it. If only I can twist my words round this room, or get them to scrape the façade off that building, I will have accomplished something. And who knows—ridiculous though these dreams may be—perhaps if I walk down enough streets and open enough cupboards the dead might wake up and all the buildings become a mass of brilliant faces. And I might be one of these faces too.

But the words are English: the air that clings to them is that of the first place; railway embankments, sea-spray, grey skies, Oxford, Cambridge, thick ploughed fields. Then again, the voice of Mr Shane, the schizophrenic women, the yells in the playground, something rotting in small rooms, the anaesthetic smell of hospitals. Perhaps if nothing else the worlds of here and there could infect each other. Eating, smell, infection: "Hearing music is like contracting a disease, / a beautiful infection." I put that speech into the mouth of a censor in a poem called 'Cultural Directives'. Let us eat each other a little (if only in a theological sense), and hope to catch each other's infections.

*

A poet has to reconcile personal experience with the literary tradition and practice of his tribe. He has to consume these things before he can serve up anything of his own. Having grown up with the English tribe I will try to give the Hungarian reader a rough description of the bill of fare.

Since first becoming actively conscious of poetry I have lived through almost three decades, which can, in effect, be divided into three characteristic periods. As a schoolboy of the sixties I was naturally attracted to the phenomena of the sixties. I bought the cheap Penguin books of poetry, English, European and American. I also listened with a brief intensity to the lyrics of popular songs. My first loves were heterogeneous: Donne, Prévert, Appolinaire, Ginsberg, the so-called Liverpool poets (very brief loves these!) and a dozen others. It was a period of discovery. I had no idea of tradition, or of craft, but I did have very strict standards of honesty and labour. I had to write a lot, and it had to be true. True in what sense, I would find it difficult to say. No one taught me, since I did not study English Literature in my senior years at school, but my friends passed on books that they liked, and we had something of a secret society. I don't suppose our critical judgment was particularly acute or even articulate. Perhaps poetry was just an alternative way of life that appealed to us. If, for me, it was more than that,

it was perhaps a fascination with the sheer oddity of words and a long suppressed desire to speak (even if only to myself) about what I felt. The poets I should have read then, had I been sophisticated, would have been the confessionals: Lowell, Berryman, Sexton, Plath on the American side, and Hughes, Walker and Wevill on the English. As it is, I found these later by which time, with the exception of Lowell, they seemed irrelevant to me. Hughes wrote about nature, and nature was, and probably remains, a closed book. I felt the imperious violence of his poems, but pigs, hawks, foxes and crows had no physical substance. Stones, pebbles, grass and cracks in the earth were all I knew of nature.

I should of course have also read Philip Larkin. *The Whitsun Weddings* came out in 1964, but I see from my copy of the book that I must have bought it after 1973. Larkin, along with other fine English poets of the time—the members of the Group or the Movement—probably did not seem glamorous enough. Librarians, college lecturers, schoolmasters. What could come of these? asked the eighteen-year-old boy. These were just the people one had to get away from. The end of the sixties for me, as for many others, meant escape. But escape also meant Keats, Rilke and Rimbaud (particularly Rimbaud). They were our stolen fruits and stolen minutes.

This reading is necessarily indiscriminate. Not surprisingly it favours the romantic, the dramatic gesture over the calm utterance, the realm of frustrated action over the realm of ironic contemplation. There was nevertheless a strong speculative, philosophical streak in my own writing, and I think it even had a still centre somewhere. When I went to art college the horizons widened. I brought with me a new enthusiasm for the French surrealist poets, and found at Leeds a real poet to share it with me. This was Martin Bell.

After twenty years, and ten years after his death, his newly extended Collected Poems arrived through the post today. Bell was a maverick. Leeds to him was a kind of spiritual exile from the literary world of London. He was probably the most erudite, most mischievously ironic yet romantic poet since Eliot. Eliot was indeed his master, and behind Eliot, Laforgue. He revered Pope and Rochester, adored Baudelaire and Wallace Stevens. He introduced me to his heroes, and to others too: to Yeats, to Norman Cameron, to John Crowe Ransom, to William Empson. In short he showed me the power of irony. His own use of it was flamboyant, paranoid and deeply moving. In his kind, helpless, alcoholic omniscience he was as lovable and dangerous (chiefly to himself) as any man I have met. He ran a poetry group where those few of us who were interested in writing could gather on the third floor of the hideously brutal college building which overlooked an uncompleted

motorway (and some ravishing sunsets), and discuss each other's work under his leadership. My new enthusiasms were Blake and the King James Bible. He gently directed me to Herbert and to Marvell too.

I still had no clear idea of what Eliot called tradition, but I was becoming more interested. The Great Tradition of Leavis completely passed me by. I read D. H. Lawrence and while realising his power found him unsympathetic. Conrad was marvellous of course, and Jane Austen admirable. I was bored by George Eliot. The idea of reducing one's reading to what an ascetic university teacher thought was essential to life was, in so far as it permeated to me at all, quite ridiculous. Nevertheless, after Leeds I began, consciously, to learn my craft. What my contemporaries—the other poets of my own generation—were reading I don't know, but the early seventies were a period of reaction to the sixties. It was the period of the "steely trimmers." Their poems were short, taciturn, cut to size. The so-called "minipoet" took over from the voluminous, visionary or joky bard of the expansionist sixties. Form was returning: the universities were fighting back. Tight, compressed, intelligent poems appeared in the pages of *The New Review*, in *The New Statesman* and in *The Listener*. This was not the ebullient irony of Martin Bell but the intelligentsia's brief civilised *Schadenfreude*.

My own personal contact among contemporary poets was Peter Porter to whom I was introduced by letter by Martin Bell, and to whom I sent poems. He need not have replied to my poems, but he did so patiently, and at length. His advice was to have as clear an eye for material detail as for visionary distortion. His own poetry was rather daunting to me at the time: it seemed to cover the length and breadth of classical culture—music, art and literature—a kind of educated dialogue with God. It was when his wife died and he wrote those simple monumental elegies in her memory in *The Cost of Seriousness* that I first began to see the poems as fully human, and recognise the dialogue to be emotional as well as intellectual. But that was in 1978, two years after I had begun to cope with my own first family death.

By this time I had read my way thoroughly into the English tradition, and I could hear in people like Isaac Watts, John Clare, Edward Thomas and Thomas Hardy, a voice so indigenous that I could only admire it from the outside. Its most recent manifestation was Philip Larkin. His was a kind of melancholy and marred pastoral, without the adumbration of myth. Human life was short, resonant but final; impoverished, it held remnants of richness. Larkin's unfussy diction and refusal to inflate into rhetoric was astringent but enormously moving. In America he might have been a kind of Robert Frost, but Larkin professed never to look beyond England. To accept the world of Larkin though (an impossible feat for me) would have meant sur-

rendering whole areas of one's experience to a murderous scepticism. When Larkin died it was as if a deep-toned bell that would not let you sleep had fallen from its tower.

*

I have written before about the change wrought in my verse by my mother's death. The event focussed and chilled the poems. The warmth had to come from within the structure. I began to write formally about the subjects physically closest to me. My first formal attempts were disastrous, as if I had treated life for the sake of some sort of elegance, which anyway seemed to lie beyond me. But little by little the discipline began to yield results. I had started to make cages in which to catch more fugitive, more disorientating experiences.

It would be wrong to leave the impression that I acted in a vacuum. A sort of baroque elegance was returning to English poetry. It was there in Porter of course, but it assumed a donnish-dandyish air in John Fuller, a surrealist and political dimension in James Fenton and an eighteenth-century cabinet-of-curiosities exoticism in a new friend of mine, Peter Scupham.

I met him in Hitchin, where we both still live, and starting from entirely different points our subsequent careers have occasionally moved in parallel directions. I coveted the richness and *sprezzatura* of the intellectual formalists because it left room for surprise, brilliance, myth, hauntings and *pietas*, elements banished by Larkinism, yet its structures were solid and unindulgent. I had thought of Scupham primarily as a representative of the group based round the magazine *Poetry Nation*. I thought—and still do think—of the group as rather dry, but Scupham's inventiveness and grace are quickened with human fears and affections. His influence on my work would be hard to pinpoint, since by the time we met I was just starting on my more assured work, and was soon to publish my first book. If I had to state a debt to him it would be for that element of verbal music or grace that, with his example in mind, and his advice in my ears, I have slowly managed to accumulate in my rougher verse.

The late seventies and early eighties were anyway offering opportunities for more baroque development. Tony Harrison's clanging couplets, Craig Raine and Christopher Reid's visual fantasies, Douglas Dunn's newly formal didactic and elegiac verses, and Paul Muldoon's intellectual arabesques broadened the scope of poetry. Three slightly older masters further amplified the themes and textures available to modern diction: Seamus Heaney. Derek Mahon and Geoffrey Hill. Of the three, Mahon is probably closest to the

kind of poetry I feel I want to write. But eloquent American voices also promised wealth beyond the Larkinesque shires. Richard Wilbur, Anthony Hecht (of the marvellous *Venetian Vespers*), and someone I had missed earlier, Randall Jarrell. Derek Walcott, the West Indian poet who treats of romance, myth and history with a classical poise and Joseph Brodsky, the brilliant model of alienation, lent their formal weight to this new humanism. All of them, to a greater or lesser extent, spring out of the rib of Auden.

I haven't yet mentioned Auden, but now, since I have reached the present day, I must. The whole question of the alternative to Modernism is answered in his terms, rather than in Larkin's. Not that Modernism was an issue for any of us: we read and admired (perhaps even venerated) Joyce, were dazzled by early and middle period Eliot, surveyed the glass mountain of Ezra Pound and turned away from the Black Mountain of Olson. Modernism had become absorbed, its shock value diminished. It was part of history, part of the furniture. To make a Futurist gesture one would need a Bugatti and such a faith in machines as we had long lost. When we were told that the iambic measure was suitable to the age of the horse (clip-clop, clip-clop) but unfit for the age of the jet aeroplane, we remembered we still had feet that walked or skipped, and that when all the aeroplanes were shot down there remained the ultimate form of escape—running. All this is implicit in Auden: he can be abstruse and proverbial at the same time; his diction can be arcanely modern or arcanely archaic. He is playful yet deadly serious. The political ghosts of the age haunt his buildings and streets. If he cannot give us ecstasy or passionate love, his wisdom offers the possibilities of these. He is a world citizen in the English language, while Pound, in some way, will always be the ambitious boy from Idaho. Of course one can experiment, but one does not claim to change the world by so doing. One can be as eclectic as one likes: the imperatives are those of responsibility for the preservation of the world, rather than the creation of a new one out of the old one's ruins. We have seen too many ruins. We have lived under the permanent shadow of permanent ruin. History has become precious. Human lives and human courtesies are more valuable than dogma.

*

Auden then has been the pointer—and occasionally the danger—for me in recent years. Poised precariously as I am between two formative experiences, the Audenesque tone, veering inclusively from the colloquial to the distant, has tempted me like it has others. If I look at the above list of the poets I admire, I notice that Hecht has a Lithuanian background,

Walcott an English classical education, and that Brodsky is a political exile —and that, of course, Auden himself straddled two cultures. Perhaps in this situation a poet has to take certain things on trust: international form (rhyme, metre, etc. as agreed on the European model), and the common store of European imagery from history through to art and myth. This, to some extent, is his currency. He has to spend this as he thinks most appropriate in order to accommodate his personal demons, since there is no given house for him, there are only hotels and rooms to let.

For me, returning to Hungary was more important initially for the establishment of a sense of native landscape (a very urban one in my case), than for directly literary reasons. My Hungarian was practically non-existent in 1984, and is just about serviceable now. To make literary judgments would be an act of presumption: I can only hazard guesses tempered by personal taste. However, though it will be some time before I can pretend to a clear historical view of Hungarian poetry, it may perhaps be interesting for a Hungarian reader to see what kind of an early impression his literature makes. I think that in the long run it will be important for me too.

The first most commonly expressed sentiment one hears is that, but for the difficulties of language, Hungarian poetry would be seen to be of the first importance in world literature. On this, as yet, I can pass no judgment. I read Petőfi and Arany as a child in Budapest, and probably others. I remember the copy of Madách at home, with the Zichy drawings. I cannot really think back beyond the nineteenth century and I have not read enough even of that for my views to have any genuine validity. The fervency and folksiness of Petőfi's lyrics I naturally compare to Burns, and relate broadly to the Romantic movement, though in England Romanticism never took such a nationalistic form. Why should it? There was rarely any danger of national annihilation, and during the early part of the Napoleonic Wars there was much sympathy for Napoleon among English poets. English patriotism is a very different creature from the continental kind. The natural defence of the sea has bred a more eccentric, defiant, imperial sense of identity. To be sure there were reactions against imported literary models, and a Wordsworthian commitment to the voices of the national landscape, but in serious literature there was never that desperate struggle against foreign assimilation so familiar to Hungarian readers. Neither do we find the subversive irony and myth-making that is characteristic of the oppressed. Where there is irony, it is the irony of the superior against the inferior. But I don't believe that the Hungarian claim to literary eminence rests primarily on the achievements of the nineteenth century. Madách is clearly a provincial writer—of enormous historical and local importance for a variety of

reasons, and understandably loved and quoted—perhaps he is even a great writer, but his greatness is of a provincial kind. *The Tragedy of Man* seems to me a remarkable and vigorous pioneering work.

The wider claims of Hungarian poetry must be based on the poets of our own century; on Ady, József, Kosztolányi, Babits, Kassák, Tóth and Dsida; on Radnóti, Illyés, Jékely and Pilinszky; and on others still living. It is a remarkable constellation, comparable in stature to a British one comprising, say, Hardy, Graves, Edward Thomas, Wilfred Owen, David Jones, Edwin Muir, Auden, MacNeice, Keith Douglas and Dylan Thomas (to mention again only the dead). Many of these Hungarian and British poets are masters in a major or minor sense. Some of them will probably remain untranslateable (Graves and Edward Thomas on the British side perhaps) but I am not directly concerned here with the problems of translation. The Hungarian list is certainly not provincial: the pan-European nature of fate has ensured that. It also has a clubby, cosmopolitan air largely missing from the British one. This is partly a difference of temperament: the British poets are happier addressing only one You at a time, while, paradoxically, being less happy with assertions of personal emotion. The slightly more sentimental approach of the Hungarian poets is balanced for an English reader by the personal and direct nature of their suffering. The English distrust stylised grief or easy camaraderie. Kosztolányi's blend of passion and whimsy in *Hajnali részegség* sounds coy; his avowals in *Marcus Aurelius* register as attitudinising; but the brief factual vignettes of *Szeptemberi áhítat* are immediately acceptable. I suppose the truth is that Kosztolányi, as well as Ady, and sometimes even József, often sound French and lack that shield of irony without which passion can rarely be given poetic form in English. English is a language of substantives: it is touchable, solid, empirical, and symbolism often has an air of feyness and insubstantiality. Unless, that is, it is firmly anchored in observation, and the world of the material. To repeat this is not a discussion of the possibility of translation: it is a rootless cosmopolitan English poet's view of Hungarian poetry, as read in Hungarian.

The interesting thing is that as we move closer to our own day this poetry takes a more English turn. Radnóti may briefly be seen as a tragic MacNeice; Pilinszky as a more mature, sharper, more urban equivalent of late R. S. Thomas, Ágnes Nemes Nagy as a much more muscular Kathleen Raine. But these are games: the only interesting part of it being that we can play them at all, and could indeed continue to play them with a greater and greater conviction. Among the younger Hungarian poets we could enlist Szabolcs Várady, Győző Ferencz, Zsuzsa Rakovszky, Ádám Nádasdy, and on a slightly different wavelength, Péter Kántor too. Among the previous

generation Ottó Orbán could join in. I think he could play a round of chess with Peter Porter, among others. Perhaps even Petri and Csoóri could be found partners. This remains a game. But I do sense some temperamental convergence. Perhaps the sea is not what it used to be.

It strikes me that there is a much wider range of poetry published in Hungary than in England, but not all of this range appears relevant. Battles of modernism are still being acted out on restaurant tables with salt cellars and pepper pots, with sound poetry and language poetry, with concrete poetry, with lower-case sentences and loss of punctuation. In this context post-modernism means a conscious strategy. In other words, these are political matters as much as aesthetic ones. Personally I am not interested in the world of manifestos. Perhaps one has to be a permanent citizen of somewhere to develop such an interest. I am not certain enough of myself.

*

But of course, this too is a manifesto of sorts, and I am quite certain of something, though I would hardly describe it as an idea or a method. Iron filings are perhaps certain of where the north and south poles of the magnet are when they are flung out in a pattern according to the lines of force. I think of bodies flung out, in a pattern dictated by the magnet of history. Are they vaguely aware of their position in the pattern, can they feel the pattern running through their own bodies? Perhaps their one certainty is that since there is a necessity there must be a pattern.

I am aware that this is a passive manifesto. But not wholly so. Each iron filing becomes in turn a magnet: perhaps in some sort of iron dream it is even possible to drift a little above the pattern and see it fan out as far as the eye can see. I don't want to become mystical about all this. It may be enough to have a slight taste of iron in one's mouth.

And so we return to taste, touch, smell. The taste of rooms in childhood, the touch of the sea air, the smell of bricks and stones, and the constant movement of people in and out of the light. Do these things hide a secret? I don't know. They are certainly lines of force.

# BORDERLINE CASES OF FICTION

Tibor Cseres: *Vízaknai csaták* (The Battles of Vízakna), 2 vols. 438 pp. and 420 pp.; Miklós Szentkuthy: *Frivolitások és hitvallások* (Frivolities and Confessions), Magvető, 1988., 681 pp.

The seventy-three year old president of the Hungarian Writers' Association, Tibor Cseres, elected two years ago, has always presented the past one and a half centuries of Hungarian history in a thought-provoking and effective manner. His new, lengthy historical novel (nine-hundred pages), *The Battles of Vízakna*, was one of the sensations of the 1988 Book Week. Clearly the book's success owed something to the current tensions in Hungarian–Rumanian relations, specifically the threat to the Hungarian minority in Transylvania: the subject of Cseres's novel is the fate that befell Transylvania between 1849 to 1940, "a historical whole of almost a century, filled with movement and animosity among the peoples of Transylvania, constant hoping and eternal hopelessness in the storms of history."

This historical whole is presented through the life of a man who has lived ninety years. György Moldován is halfway between being Hungarian and Rumanian. His mother is Hungarian and so is his natural father, although this is something György Moldován is not aware for a long time, since he believes his Rumanian step-father to be his real father and his stepbrother, Carol, also originally half-Rumanian in blood, to be his real brother. Apart from the confusion and uncertainties of origin and kinship, the setting from which the title derives also refers to Transylvania's double bondage. In the last century, Vízakna was a village with a mixed population, near an area with a Rumanian majority and burgeoning Transylvanian Rumanian nationalism, scarcely ten kilometres from the town of Nagyszeben, which has a German majority but is the seat of the Rumanian Metropolitan, a place of strategic and communication importance. Vízakna was once famous for its salt mines and for the salt lakes formed in the abandoned mines with the passing of time; the lakes were considered curative for a diversity of diseases and thus Vízakna slowly became a small medicinal spa. Vízakna is also celebrated for the first two lines of Petőfi's well known poem: "Four days were the cannons roaring / Between Vízakna and Déva", which conjure up the glorious days of the War of Independence of 1848–1849 for the Hungarian reader.

It is to this national tradition that Cseres returns at the beginning of his novel: the time is of a later battle of Vízakna in 1916, when the invading Royal Rumanian Army was here faced by Austro-Hungarian scratch forces. A buried part of the salt mine is hit by a shell and the resulting salty stream brings to the surface the corpses of Hungarian soldiers who had died in 1849 and had been thrown into the shaft. The high salt content of the water had saved the bodies from corruption and thus György Moldován recognises one of them as the corpse of György Hozsváth, his father, through the physical resemblence and through the rumours going round the family. In the days of the battles immortalised by Petőfi, the hussar György Hozsváth had seduced, between battles, Ágota Szaplonczay, a burgher's daughter, whom her mother had intended to marry off to a respected local widower, the Rumanian Ion Moldovan. After the girl's impregnation and the disappearance of the hussar, the mother just succeeded in arranging a marriage so that the husband looked upon the child born seven months later as his own: this child, György, is the central figure of the novel.

There is a fairy-tale quality, a mythically symbolic moment in this opening picture of the Hungarian hussar's body, surfacing

momentarily only to vanish for ever, whose preserved facial features and corpse triggers off an epically scaled novel, just as there is in the romantic flame whose traces influence the events of a whole century. This beginning insinuates that all that happened over a century in and around Transylvania, the tragic deterioration in Hungarian–Rumanian relations, the final disruption of the historical status of Transylvania, had its beginnings in 1848/49 with the seeds being sown by the events of those years.

For all his limitations and diplomatic manoeuvring, György Moldován tries to hold up and push in the right direction this process, the blind storm of history. He is a constant though ever more crestfallen representative of the idea of an autonomous Transylvania of three languages, an Eastern Switzerland, in this capacity he himself slowly grows into an almost mythical-symbolic figure. This is produced by the presentation as well as its one-sidedness to a certain degree, and deficiencies. On the one hand, Moldován is somewhat like the hero of a naive epic: an immortal, full of strength, vigour, fertility, potential, a kind of clan chief, a patriarch, who lives to the age of ninety, begets six children (three "of his own," three on the other side of the blanket). On the other hand, apart from these biblical features the reader is only given Moldován's political activities and thus the man remains a romantically one-sided, abstract hero. But this is no regular novel; as we shall see, the requirements are different from those of a traditional historical novel. Thus Cseres's intentions are perhaps best met by a protagonist and an environment of this type. Moldován is a lawyer, for many years legal adviser to the Rumanian archbishop. As a result of his education in the Rumanian spirit, he supports the cause of the Transylvanian Rumanians, while along with his master, a loyal subject of the Hungarian establishment and pro-Hungarian when compared to the Rumanian nationalists. This is indicated by his situation as a go-between in which he sees it his duty to reconcile the conflicts between the Hungarian government and public administration and the Rumanians of Transylvania and the Old Kingdom. In fact, he agrees with neither side; although he recognises the justice of the demands for emancipation on the part of the Rumanians in Transylvania, at the same time he opposes pan-Rumanianism, that is the integration of Transylvania into the kingdom of Rumania. (This in fact is what actually happened as a result of the Paris Peace Treaty from 1920.) From the point of view of Transylvanian Rumanians, he considers it more fortunate if Transylvania had remained a part of a Central-European confederation, a possible successor to the Habsburg Empire (it is emphasized in the book that the oppressed Transylvanian Rumanians had more rights than the subjects of royal and feudal Rumania): it was a utopian vision of an independent, autonomous Transylvania that floats before his eyes. Finally, and vainly, he negotiates with István Tisza, the Hungarian prime minister and the representatives of the Rumanian National Party; in vain did he prompt, mediate, in vain does he embody the interdependence of the Hungarians and Rumanians, in vain does he "bear a double torture on his body" and carry "up to his death the offer and possibility of healing in his head, in his mind, on his palm," he is pushed aside by nationalist passions, "the stormy winds of blind history."

Whether György Moldován and all the political and military figures of the book are actually real persons or, perhaps, men of similar fate and roles under different names, is something the reader may not know nor discover from the book. At the end of the book, among a list of historical persons and historians "who deserve gratitude for their information and writings," there figures the name of a certain Grigore Moldovan (and also Ioan) in addition to a number of other names, all of persons who might actually be

looked upon as the co-authors of Cseres's novel. The *Battles of Vízakna* is only in part the adventure-filled history of György Moldován and his family; to at least the same extent, if not more, it is also a montage of historical documents and memoirs taken from the sources acknowledged by the list mentioned. Cseres's method is similar to that he has used earlier, hovering on the borderline of fiction and documentation (thus his *I, Lajos Kossuth*, or *The Foksány Pass*); historical documents are woven into a pattern with objective and fictional elements, which together make up a life. While in his Kossuth novel these documents and the narrative line refer to relatively familiar events, his two later books, both centering on Transylvania (where Cseres comes from), resort to material which is relatively inaccessible—indeed, the material almost qualifies as a discovery. Cseres presents the lives of György Moldován and of his large family so that the stories, partly inter-connected and partly separate, cover all the important moments of a hundred years of Transylvanian history. "The writer cannot deny," says the blurb, "that of the life divided into two or three currents he primarily focuses on Hungarian heartbeats and cries; but he also grants the possibilities of debating with, and opening towards, the antagonist, holding up behind Transylvanian Rumanian thinking passion the similar yet different ideas, awakening, conflicts of Old Rumania".

The greater part of the book takes place in a Rumanian milieu and, as much as the circumstances permit, portrays it with the greatest objectivity; the latter in itself, in view of the recent political situation, is almost a piquant gesture. A comparable Rumanian novel on the Transylvania and Hungary of the turn of the century is absolutely impossible to imagine under the circumstances of today. It is precisely the representation of the Rumanian world from inside, the recourse to authentic Rumanian sources, which makes especially painful the novel's message, one we have largely been aware of, though not in so bright a light: the fate of Transylvania was not settled by the inhabitants of Transylvania but primarily by Rumanian feudalism and its allies of the Entente. The allies sold Transylvania to the former and the price was integration into Rumania: then her fate was settled by Hungarian revanchism and the Horthy government, and by Hitler through the Vienna Award of 1940—which threw a scrap to the purchaser instead of the expected dues and at a hideous price.

Those who look for a carefully composed novel in *The Battles of Vízakna* will probably be disappointed and wearily get lost in the details. Cseres's novel is both more and less than the usual historical novel. It is less because its structure is poor and the presentation of its protagonists is slap-dash. In several cases the individual members of the family are merely pretexts for the reader to be led to new scenes, new eras, events. Here, the figure used to make a loose connection with the structure of the novel is pushed into the background and the story drifts on the endless sea of history. But it is also more because the cause it represents is above and beyond the restrictions. As one of Cseres's critics rightly pointed out, the novel is a funeral oration. An inscription on a tomb, an epitaph, a mausoleum. "A memorial from all the facts which may be collected. A flashback on the ruins, where some kind of personal life may be found even today, though it might better be described as limping on." The Transylvania we have referred to so far, so important a part of Hungarian history and culture, was lost in the battles of Vízakna, and what is taking its place is no longer the Transylvania of old. Cseres has raised a nine-hundred page memorial to this old Transylvania.

*

Miklós Szentkuthy was eighty when he died in 1988. Considering his intellectual

freshness and ambitious plans, this was a shamefully early age. The state of his mind and the innovative spirit are testified to in the book he published last year, autobiographical confessions entitled *Frivolities and Confessions*. It contains the transcripts of twenty-seven interviews recorded on tape-recorder. The reporter was an archivist historian; the writer's wife—and amanuensis—also participated in the talks: their remarks and questions are of secondary importance only, not even setting the direction of the conversation. Here Szentkuthy holds forth, he dictates the tempo, he runs a Szentkuthy seminar on and for himself. He creates the genre—that emerges before the reader's eyes—; it can be called a memoir, an autobiography, or a confession only in the lack of any better description. It contains melodrama, essay, clownery, satire, psychoanalysis, buffoonery. Miklós Szentkuthy appears before his audience, and amidst all the puffery and the fireworks, furnished by himself for himself, he both canonizes himself and treads himself into the mud. He produces ruthlessly rude truths about himself and others; at the same time, he dissembles, mystifies, boasts, jokes, bluffs. He compromises himself and then pulls himself back again. He sees and presents the persons and events in his life at a metaphysical and apocalyptic distance. On the one hand, everything is the glorious, beautiful miracle of the holy universe, impossible to know; on the other hand, all is only grotesque caricature, insignificant transitoriness. Relatives, parents, lovers, friends, father-confessors, teaching colleagues become panopticon figures riding the merry-go-round of life, apocalyptic figures straight from the paintings of Hieronymus Bosch.

Although the book is, right to its end, primarily a confession of belief (thus a narcissistic and even exhibitionistic dissection of the author's self), it also provides in huge quantities the "frivolities;" these are the facts of the history of the age presented in a Szentkuthyan manner, memories of private and public life irreverently characterized. Here appear the writer's doctor and actor forebears of German origin, a painfully sincere picture of sad and taciturn parents suffering under the yoke of middle class prejudices, and the distorted figures of the history of Hungary in our century: double-dealing priests and stupid, narrow-minded teachers; ostentatious, empty-headed officers and surly, blockhead officials; dishonest adventurers and cowardly denouncers. Yet we also encounter the leading creative spirits of the twenties and thirties, his understanding and stimulating fellows: Antal Szerb, Gábor Halász, László Németh, and the women referred to under strange and mythologically sounding pseudonyms who allegedly loomed large in a life worthy of Casanova, one in which the author showed a compulsive interest in eroticism and even pornography.

Szentkuthy devotes even more room to the crucial experiences in his education than he does to the figures and events of his life. In the books around him, his life is permanently present. He recalls precisely which one he read when and how many times, the marginal notes in the books support his memory; during the talks a number of books are presented: someone takes a book from the shelf and Szentkuthy describes what is important in it (including the bibliographical data) as well as the traces the book left in him. He is connected to his books by an almost sensuous link; he talks about them as living beings, his companions, but he refers to them not with the fetishist passion of a bibliophile collector but primarily for what is contained in them and how they changed his life. Although Szentkuthy was a teacher of English, a writer and translator of literary works, literature occupied a relatively smaller role in his encyclopaedic range of interests. He states that in his elderly years he no longer reads novels. Hungarian literature, his memoirs tell us, was not part of his interests. He played no role

in contemporary Hungarian literary life nor did he belong to any group. Interestingly enough, little is said in the book about the 20th-century literary avantgarde, the great masters of the modern novel, despite the fact that at the beginning of the thirties Szentkuthy laid the foundations of his fame with a novel, *Prae*, that put the innovations of Joyce and Proust to good use, and later, in the seventies, he produced the second, and masterly, translation of *Ulysses*.

In addition to Joyce, he mentions Thomas Mann among his great contemporaries; otherwise he does not seem to have a great opinion of modern literature, music or fine arts. It is post-renaissance English and Spanish literature, along with the ancient and medieval writers, that are closest to him, works in which the cultivation of literature merges with philosophy, theology, mythology. He reads with an unquenchable interest the philosophers and theologists themselves, not to mention the works which present the old great interpretations of the world. The experiences which inspired him include albums of fine arts and archeology, works on religious and educational history, lexicons, encyclopaedias and dictionaries.

"My aim," he says, "my adolescent aim is (and it still is) the *Catalogus Rerum*, the cataloguing of the phenomena of the world... What do I aim to summarize?... all the accessible phenomena of nature, all the heavens and hells of love, the whole world of history and, finally, the cosmic show of mythologies." "I would actually like to write a book," he says somewhere else, a writer getting on for eighty, with several thousand published pages behind him, similar to *Arabian Nights*. So I write in order to show what kind of books I would like to read. So all my works—if these publications may be called so—represent in fact an offer, a demonstration to an imaginary, highly talented writer: look, this is the kind of book I would like to read, write it!"

The highly talented writer, whom this recommendation is directed at, is naturally himself; in spite of all the limitations, imposed by its form, *Frivolities and Confessions* wants to be such a book: the summary of phenomena, at least the most complete possible survey of the Szentkuthy microcosmos. Listening to Szentkuthy, one inevitably thinks of Goethe, to whom the former refers to (and wrote a biographical novel on him too): Goethe too was driving at totality, and totality for him also meant the unity of contrasts. (Szentkuthy wrote biographical novels on Mozart and Haydn too, in those days when he could not come up with themes for novels of his own for they were not published.) In the 20th century, the contrasts are even more those of extremes; for Szentkuthy they are primarily between everyday life and eternity, society and nature, eroticism and Christian faith. In his case the attempt at reconciling them is only feasible at the cost of rejecting the Goetheian integrity of the personality and of constant role-playing. Although he claims that the ultimate secret of his life and personality is contained in his giant diary (so far unpublished), it is quite probable that this diary is incessant role-playing, an all-embracing overview of the serious and the ironic—just like *Arabian Nights* or this autobiographical confession.

*Frivolities and Confessions* has a side which it keeps silent on amid all the ostentateous and boastful sincerity and spectacular detours: that the recorded conversations only furnished a basis for the published text which is, all indications are, the result of subsequent stylizing and supplementing. Szentkuthy appears as the hero of a novel, an intellectual Gargantua, which he himself wished to see and to present himself as. Obviously, he managed to present himself in this way not only because he was like this but also because, as an outsider and an actor, he knew how to give a perfect portrayal of himself. But he could not know that death was stalking him. This in retrospect adds something to his writer's manoeuvering, but this time not of his own free will.

MIKLÓS GYÖRFFY

# THOMAS MANN AND GYÖRGY LUKÁCS

## *Reflections on a relationship*

> "Nicht das Richtige oder Falsche an Ideen ist es, was uns hier in erster Linie interessiert, sondern das Charakteristische daran."
>
> *Thomas Mann*

> "...I was expected to feel myself inferior and an alien because I was a Jew. [Thus] I was made familiar with the fate of being in the Opposition... The foundations were thus laid for a certain degree of independence of judgment."
>
> *Sigmund Freud*

> "The stranger is...being discussed here... as the person who comes today and stays tomorrow...to be a stranger is naturally a very positive relation: it is a specific form of interaction."
>
> *Georg Simmel*

In 1925, Walter Benjamin informed his friend Gershom Scholem that he had just finished reading two books both of which were extraordinary and made for exciting reading.[1] The two books, singled out as the best products of the time, were Thomas Mann's novel *The Magic Mountain*, and György Lukács's *History and Class Consciousness*. To the best of my knowledge this was the first time that a perceptive reader established a connection of sorts between the works of two towering figures of twentieth century European cultural life. It was not to be the last. For a number of reasons, however, among which figure prominently the political and social upheavals on the continent that eventually landed Mann in sunny California and Lukács in Stalin's Moscow, it took almost four decades to have anybody take a second and closer look at the possibility of a certain connection between the two men and their work. In the meantime, there has grown up an immense literature around Mann and Lukács who died in 1955 and 1971, respectively. Even though a number of critics and scholars have begun to pay attention to the relation between the two men, they seldom went beyond the "fact" that Lukács's physique and/or revolutionary career inspired Thomas Mann's portrait of Leo Naphta, the Jewish–Jesuit–Communist protagonist of *The Magic Mountain*.[2] (To which Lukács responded with his good-humoured "So what if I lent him my nose? He gave so much to me—I am happy I could do that little for him in return!") This is not to imply that the focus on that one aspect would need justification: even if it only could be proven that Lukács served as the model for one of the most interesting, strangest, and most complex figures in Mann's œuvre, this alone would be worth a separate study. I for one felt the fascinating ambivalence emanating from this fictional character; moreover, my previous acquaintance with Lukács's work (and person) made me weary of accepting *in toto* the (mainly Marxist) interpretation of those—among them, Hans Mayer and Lukács himself—who saw in the character the prototype of the fascist intellectual.[3]

Be it as it may, there was in the past wide scepticism even among literary scholars that Thomas Mann and György Lukács may have had anything in common, that a case could be made for interaction, influence and congruence, for a relationship. The fact that the focus on some selected problematic area of such a relationship has a lot to do with both sociology of literature and the exploration of interaction of two men who are

representative polar opposites in a common time provides sufficient rationale to explore this specific relationship in the first place. The linkage could be proven in more ways than one—as I found out in the course of my investigation.

Here and now, I wish to limit myself to the summary discussion of one aspect of this relationship: Mann's perception of Lukács in juxtaposition with his narrative method, the *Anlehnung* (borrowing), and Mann's conception of the modern novel as "that stage of 'criticism' that immediately follows the 'poetic' one,"[4] or, as Harry Levin put it, "an act of evocation, peculiarly saturated with reminiscences."[5] Even within the limitations of this short article, some important points will be highlighted because we are dealing here with the constellation of two eminent cultural representatives of twentieth century Europe, a constellation which has come to be recognized by now as one of the most remarkable critic-author relationships in recent times.[6] For one, both the literary and ideological issues involved here go a long way to words explaining some central characteristics of the modern novel; secondly, the analysis of this constellation is bound to illuminate part of the inner history of an epoch.

### *The artist and the philosopher-critic*

The definition of a correct stratagem for the sociological approach to literature was at one time offered by Harry Levin; it was addressed to Lucien Goldmann and was intended as a corrective for Goldmann's interpretation of André Malraux's work in 1963.

Levin wrote:

> Rigor must be achieved empirically, through a substantive acquaintance with the relevant texts... and with the exact relations between imaginative fiction and the socio-cultural facts—not by the imposition of vague absolutes from on high or the importation of categorical sanctions from the east.[7]

By substituting an imaginative recreation of perception, feelings, attitudes and thoughts for imaginative fiction, the stratagem recommends itself for an investigation of the relationship between the great twentieth-century German novelist, and the Marxist philosopher and literary critic from Hungary. (The irony of the matter is that Lukács was made responsible by scholars for most of the import of categorical sanctions that had come from the east.) However, a substantial degree of incompatibility has to be assumed between these two men, one a thoroughly bourgeois man and artist, and the other just as thoroughly a communist philosopher, whose representativeness as polar opposites is recognized by all. Common sense would suggest sharp distinctions that are biographically grounded and should summarily be outlined, is also considered to have been the most representative of German writers and as such, in the words of Lukács, symbolized "all that is best in the German bourgeoisie."[8] Through his work, Mann succeeded in giving a complete picture of the *bürgerlich* life and its predicament in a certain stage of development. Although the emerging picture was of a critical nature, he treated the spiritual and moral problems of the *Bürger* as his own, stressing the significance of his social and cultural inheritance. His philosophical roots were in Nietzsche, Schopenhauer, and Wagner, as was true of a large segment of the German intelligentsia of his time. This is not the sole reason for his being called a thoroughly German writer and a very conservative one. It is not even for the reason that he passionately pleaded for the justness of Wilhelmine Germany's going to war in 1914 (especially in his *Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen*) for imperialistic and expansionist purposes. After all, many liberal Germans, Max Weber and Georg Simmel among them, were equally enthusiastic, if only for a time.[9] Nor was it the young Mann's slightly anti-Semitic in-

clinations, clearly traceable in his early writings and private utterances. It is partly because, among the German writers of his generation, few have been as conscious of tradition and have stressed so insistently their relations to tradition. "I am a man of the nineteenth century," Mann said on many occasions, thinking more likely of Goethe and of the Romantic School (especially of Novalis) than of the then undergoing industrialization. But then again: there was too in Mann an almost Faustian urge to experiment, to explore; as Henry Hatfield put it, "The cautious bourgeois is an explorer, as bourgeois often are."[10] Mann also possessed the conscious thoroughness of the bourgeois (he did "research" for his artistic task at hand in the strict meaning of the word), a trait attributed to the Germans in general. For him, only the thorough was truly interesting, as he remarked in the introduction to *The Magic Mountain*.[11]

Finally, and more importantly, a consistency runs through Mann's literary career. Students of Mann's artistry often emphasize the break in his œuvre; it is pointed out time and again that although he confined himself almost exclusively to ingenious variations on the theme of the artist in his early writings, there was later a move away to novels of ideas on a grand scale. An argument for such a case can be made if we put on the scale works like the novelette *Tonio Kröger*, or *Death in Venice*, the story *Tristan*—or even the novel *Buddenbrooks*, in which the solid bourgeois degenerates into an artistic one—and then weigh them against the series of grand novels of ideas starting with *The Magic Mountain*. However, a continuity appears to the discerning eye: these variations on the artistic theme are played out against the socio-political, cultural or intellectual background of their times. Whether we think again of *Buddenbrooks*, written at the turn of the century, of the novella, *Mario and the Magician*, placed in Mussolini's Italy, or of *Doctor Faustus*, written in the 1940s and depicting Germany's slide into Nazism, the need for much full-blooded reality was always there, supplied in part by concrete observation.[12] On the other hand, the artistic variation is played out as late as the *Joseph* tetralogy, *Doctor Faustus*, and *Felix Krull*, the *Confidence Man*, as the other aspect of that consistency. Last but not least, there was that element itself of the German *bürgerlich* artistry, the transferring of the "ethical characteristics of the burgherly way of life: order, sequence, rest, 'diligence' . . . in the sense . . . of faithful workmanship —to the exercise of art," in Mann's apt summation.[13] This "primacy of ethics over aesthetics," says Mann, was the principal characteristic first recognized by Lukács.[14]

At the opposite pole is György Lukács (1885–1971), born in Budapest as György Bernát Lőwinger into an assimilated, wealthy Jewish family. His father was a self-made millionaire banker who changed his name to Lukács in 1891 and became ennobled in 1901; after this, the "von" was attached to the German version of the name. Lukács received his education, including his two doctoral degrees, in Hungary; thus he seems to be situated in an entirely different social, cultural and intellectual context from that of Mann. But again, Lukács not only grew up bi-lingual (his Viennese mother, Adele Wertheimer, never quite mastered the Hungarian language), he also received a cosmopolitan education. At the age of eighty-six, Lukács still fondly recalled his *gimnázium* graduation present from his father: a trip to Norway to visit the ailing Ibsen, the admired writer of his childhood.

Lukács chose German at an early age as a medium for his public discourse and often for his private one. He pursued his post-doctoral studies in Germany in the same Wilhelmite era that was the background for Mann's early works, including *The Magic Mountain*. He came under the influence first of Wilhelm Dilthey and Georg Simmel and then, more important, of the neo-Kantian Emil Lask and of Max Weber, both in Heidelberg. This meant a change in general

orientation from pure aesthetics to philosophy and social science, followed by a change in philosophy from Kant to Hegel and, finally, to Marx. But the definitive change in Lukács's life and intellectual career with his change in political orientation, his embracing of Marxism and Communism, moving, as George Steiner put it, "into the Marxist promise of social justice or, rather, into the Marxist promise of method."[15] Thus, Lukács became less and less compatible with everything that Thomas Mann stood for; he is thought of today as the most original and important Marxist thinker of the twentieth century, and as one of the most controversial figures in its cultural history. These twists and turns in Lukács's career gave rise to the notion of the "enigmatic Lukács"[16] and the search for the real one which seems to go on unabated. (A 1975 article tried to sum up the real Lukács with the somewhat sensational title, "Orthodox Heretic, Stalinist Romantic".)[17]

It is true that many of Lukács's studies on realism, his pursuit of dogmatic Marxist doctrine of the social relevance of art, not to mention his treatment of the development of modern philosophy in his book *Destruction of Reason* (1954), provoked derision (cf. T.W. Adorno, George Lichtheim, Susan Sontag, et al.). It is equally true that the influence of his first major Marxist treatise, *History and Class Consciousness* (1923), stretches from the Frankfurt theorists to Sartre and the New Left. The interest in the young Lukács, that is, in his pre-Marxist writings, is of more recent vintage; since the late 1960s, the notion has been widely held that the "real" Lukács would not emerge until his early phase was explored. My first attempt to explore the Lukács–Naphta linkage dates back to 1968; it was based on the conviction that despite the apparent discontinuity —meaning a turning from bourgeois aestheticism to Bolshevism in 1918—Lukács's life-work shows a certain unity and continuity. As Lukács himself said: "Each and every thought and action of my life grew out of one another; they are organically related."[18] This notion of organic development and the interrelatedness of everything that follows is, by the way, a central one for Thomas Mann and can be a good starting point in the pursuit of a possible linkage of the two men. Just as Thomas Mann's solid anchorage in German cultural tradition and high bourgeois values is stressed, so is Lukács's "homelessness," the fact that "exile was his natural habitat" in several respects. This is not so clearcut an issue though. George Steiner, one of the most insightful critics of Lukács, perceives certain factors which went unnoticed by others or are dismissed as irrelevant.

Yet, in another sense, Lukács was deep-rooted. He was curtly dismissive in reference to his own Jewishness, but a Jew to his fingertips. Rootless, nomadic, he is one of the tragic constellation (Ernst Bloch, Walter Benjamin, Adorno, Herbert Marcuse) of Jewish abstractionists, possessed by a messianic rage for logic, for systematic order in the social condition of man. Lukács's Marxism, is, in essence, a refusal of the world's incoherence... Like the other Jewish self-exiles whose radicalism out of Central Europe has so incisively marked the century, Lukács is an heir in immanence to the transcendent absolute of Spinoza.[19] This statement contains some truth and can be considered important in the sense that, as will be shown, Thomas Mann's perception of Lukács partly corresponds to the description offered by Steiner.

### *Personal and literary interaction*

When I visited Lukács on May 7, 1971, four weeks before his death, I carried with me my findings from the *Thomas Mann Archiv* at Zurich, including some transcribed notes of Mann to his work. My research had uncovered the existence of an extensive cross-fertilization of ideas, and even the use of the same language and certain terms in the

early work of both Mann and Lukács.[20] That both of them spoke of the problem of the artist and art in a quasi-religious tone, evoking Ibsen's dictum that "to write means to pass the last judgement upon oneself," might have meant only that both of them reacted on their heightened awareness of the crisis of culture, and that there was a dominant ethical element in their lives and work. But there was the additional evidence of *direct influence* in that Thomas Mann verbally transposed some of Lukács's reflections in his youthful essay collection, *Die Seele und die Formen* (1911) and incorporated them structurally, thematically and even verbally into his story-in-the-making, *Death in Venice*. I venture to say that without Lukács's special sensibility in his essays of that time, Mann's story would be a vastly different work. Gustav von Aschenbach's problematic in transcending his love for a beautiful boy into art at the end of the novella, in particular, and the problematic of the modern artist, in general, were based on Lukács's musings on Socratic love, namely, that "it will always be denied to men and poets to soar as high as (Socrates). ...Their soaring is always tragic, and in tragedy hero and destiny must become form... In life, longing must remain love: that is its happiness and its tragedy."[21] Lukács accepted these revelations as a "great gift," and stated that his relationship to Thomas Mann remains the one mystery in his life to which he truly desires an explanation before his death. What are the reasons, he wanted to know, for Thomas Mann's lifelong distance, his refusal to even answer Lukács's letters and his personal aloofness in spite of the intellectual compatibility at one time which amounted to a "*geistige Symbiose*" (spiritual affinity)? Even today, only a tentative answer can be offered. I could convey to Lukács only my (at that time vague) notion that it was *not* the Marxist Lukács specifically and primarily but the "young Lukács" endowed with specific personal and intellectual characteristics that was the cause of Mann's aloofness—and rubbed off on the fictional character of Leo Naphta in *The Magic Mountain*.

This last aspect was the first one to which scholars and critics had begun to pay attention when contemplating the possibility of real-life models for the fictional figure of Leo Naphta, the Jewish—Communist—Jesuit of *The Magic Mountain*. Most of them commented on the "fact" that Lukács's physique and/or revolutionary career inspired Mann's portrayal of this "enigmatic" fictional character. Pierre-Paul Sagave, the French critic was among the first who "established" the identity by comparing photos of Lukács from what he thought were from the 1920s. To complicate matters, two Marxist critics of Mann, Hans Mayer and Lukács himself, chose to emphasise the Fascist —not the Communist—prototype in Naphta. The view also surfaced that the "great patrician author" and the "social revolutionary were life-long friends."[22] It was time to take a second look at these literary rumours, and either prove or disprove them. It is fairly obvious to the discerning eye that there are traces of the Marxist Lukács in Naphta, that is, in the fictional character's argumentation and in his "intellectual duels": Lukács's Hegelianism, his damnation of the capitalist system, the concept of totality, and, of course, the belief in the redemptive role of the dictatorship of the proletariat. But there are other equally important characteristic traits to consider that set them apart: the rejection of Enlightenment, of faith in humanity and of progress, and adherence to romanticism and irrationalism. Further exploration was therefore called for, which could be done only by a Lukácsian analysis, if you will, meaning the category of totality, exploring all faces of the question in their socio-historical anchorage.

Leo Naphta, as a Jewish–Jesuit–Communist combination is certainly one of the most intriguing, complex and strangest figures in Mann's oeuvre. The following two points have to be made, somewhat forestal-

ling the conclusion: first, Lukács is *not* Naphta, but he contributed to Mann's portrayal of Naphta to a large extent; second, as stated by the author himself unequivocally, Mann had "not read anything by Lukács of a political nature, not in the 1920s or ever, just his literary criticism," and consequently, "*Geschichte und Klassenbewusstsein* was and remained unfamiliar" to him.[23] Thus, his assessment of Lukács is based on Lukács's early writings, that is, his pre-Marxist period, and on a meeting that lasted about two hours.

Mann's *The Magic Mountain* marks the end of his early period: he started writing it in 1915, abandoned the project until after World War One and had it published in 1924. Mann spoke of the genesis and nature of his novel at a Princeton lecture in 1939 and characterized it as a "document of the European state of mind and spiritual problematic in the first quarter of the twentieth century." Its setting in the enclosed and self-sufficient world of illness does not detract from its validity and potency. On the contrary! The tuberculosis sanatorium of Davos itself is conceived as a symbol for certain social institutions of that time, which "represented a typical phenomenon of the pre-war era that are conceivable only in the case of a still-intact capitalistic economic formation." Indeed, as Mann said, *The Magic Mountain* "has become the swan-song of that existence."[24] It neither could have been written at any other time nor would it have found as a receptive audience as it did. It is not only a *Zeitroman*, though. It is also a *Bildungsroman*, in which all elements, action, character and environment act primarily to form the hero's character. Any such novel also records its author's growth in understanding life; it tells of his personal history linked with its time. As Mann stated: "A man lives not only his personal life as an individual, but also, consciously or unconsciously, the life of his epoch and his contemporaries."[25] (This is one of the reasons why Mann's novels lend themselves so well to a sociological approach.) Space does not permit to elaborate here on the epoch that forms the background and it is a familiar one to students of European history and culture. A good way to summarize it is to mention the works that came out of it, such as Oswald Spengler's *Decline of the West*, Ernst Bloch's *Geist der Utopie*, Lukács's *History and Class Consciousness*, Karl Mannheim's *Ideology and Utopia* —and I might add Julien Benda's *La Trahison des Clercs*, and José Ortega y Gasset's *Revolt of the Masses*.

As to what would explain the strangeness and complexity of the Naphta combination, the only clue Mann gives us was his favourite remark: *Es lag einfach in der Luft* (it simply was all in the air), meaning that he was alert to the undercurrents, ideas and events around him and captured them; while he was doing so, he, of course, transformed and transcended them. Beside the textual analysis, it is thus prudent to investigate in Mann's case what *lag in der Luft* and also how his method made use of it. Apart from his imaginative and combinatory skills, Mann was also a thorough researcher of the facts he needed for a solid foundation. He studied and used physical environment, customs and manners carefully and never denied his reliance on real-life models. He emphasized that the writer "never creates *ex nihilio*." In complete accord with an important tendency in aesthetics around 1910, Mann then already mentions the term "construction," which was the key-word in painting and music. He praised those who found the "constructive element" in his *Königliche Hoheit* which "comprises the new aspiration of the novel."[26] Mann used the realistic details in a special way that partly explains the Naphta combination. He himself stated that although he might have the idea of a figure and its setting in composition, he needed "to see, to hear and to understand" such a real person before the fictional character could be born. He spoke of his "daemonic urge to observe, to notice small

details that in a literary sense were *typical*, characteristic and showed perspectives and/or significant *racial*, social and psychological traits."[27] Since his figure often stood for certain spiritual, intellectual spheres, princips and *Weltanschauung*, all the elements that made up a (fictional) character had to complement each other: the biography, the physique, and intellectual personality had to typify what it represented. Equally important is the organic nature of Mann's creative process, the relatedness of everything to everything else that follows, just as in Lukács's case. It means that motives, concepts, characters, et al., do not just appear and disappear in Mann's life-work; they may surface in other variations, may be refined or changed in certain respects, indicating an abundance of "*Möglichkeiten*" (possibilities) as he called it. Nothing gets lost in the process, everything is used prudently, redefined or expanded. Thus, to say that Naphta came out of nowhere, was an entirely new fictional character on the basis of acquaintance with Lukács, is not to understand the nature of Mann's creative process. In this connection, mention should be made of an important trait of Mann that Hans Mayer first noted as he spoke of the "idealtypical" manifestations of currents and movements through the fictional characters. Mann, of course, was unaware of Max Weber's conception of the "ideal type." He did, however, come close to Weber's formulations when he spoke of his own literary approach (as in the case of Lukács, there are similarities in the use of terms even). In the essay, *Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen*, Mann stated that his *Königliche Hoheit* is a book thoroughly formed, guided by an idea, an intellectual formel, that comes alive by a one-sided accentuation of details the synthesis of which resembles but is not the real. It is only "the illusion" of it. (Weber calls it "utopia".) Here one has to think of Mann's boasting about having done a better job than some sociologists when portraying the bourgeois man in *Buddenbrooks*, well before Werner Sombart wrote his book entitled *The Bourgeois*.

Leo Naphta can be considered as the ideal-typical presentation of one way out of the historical malaise. He also stands in for the concept and role of the "stranger" (Simmel) who is a potential wanderer, whose position "within a spatial group" is determined "by the fact that he has not belonged to it from the beginning, that he imports qualities into it, which do not and cannot stem from the group itself," and consequently, he acquires an objectivity but any relation to whom has to be of "an abstract nature."[28] Thus, all the details of Naphta's make-up, such as his biography, physique and personality, should add up to a conceptual construct (Gedankenbild)—and it does. Naphta appears late in the novel, at that point when Settembrini has exhausted his repertoire of ideas and the novel's hero, Hans Castorp, felt that he can learn nothing more from him. What strikes one first in the introduction of the character (in the sub-chapter "*Noch Jemand*") is that "Everything about him was sharp." The sharpness of the physical appearance presages the story of his life and culminates in the sharpness of his intellectual make-up, his mind and argumentation and then, finally, the extreme nature of solutions he offers both for the redemption of the world and for his own fate. At the same time, in each of Naphta's aspects, I first eliminated those elements that could not have come from Lukács and/or were recurring traits or attributes in a redefined form.

As to the life-story of Leo Naphta, two facts stand out. First, both Lukács and Naphta are "aus dem Osten"—the Eastern European sphere; second, they are both of Jewish origin. Otherwise, as Sagave noted, there is not much similarity between the son of a banker in Budapest and a Galician kosher butcher's son, whose father became the victim of a pogrom and who first was the student of a rabbi and later a respected novice at a Jesuit institute. The main idea

about Naphta is that his biographical data have to match Mann's concept of what kind of life *an outsider* must have. Mann's fictional prototype of the "exceptional case of life" *(Sonderfall)* was one of the most persistent and varied in his œuvre. These *Sonderfälle des Lebens* have to have had a certain fate assigned to them: illness, deformation, artistic or intellectual exceptionality and so on. Those traits were present in order to separate them from the "ordinary burgher." Whether it is exceptionality in a positive or negative sense was always of secondary importance. Thus, Naphta has his forerunners, that is, the kind of life Naphta had to have. For example, as early as in the novel *Königliche Hoheit*, we have the life-story of a Dr Raoul Überbein: no father, origins unknown, starving, but determined to overcome such tremendous handicaps, self-educated intellectual; in most cases they belong to a certain racial group: Jewish. I cannot go into here in what way I developed and illustrated the necessary ingredients in the biography of an outsider in Mann's life-work. Suffice it to say that this prototype does not disappear with Naphta either: it reappears in the figure, for example, of Dr. Chaim Breisacher in *Doctor Faustus*. As far as I could ascertain, Ernst Bloch's work, *Thomas Münzer als der Theologe der Revolution*, contributed a few direct biographical snippets to Naphta's life-story. Thus, the conclusion can be reached that without having met Lukács, Mann could have set up Naphta the same way. There is a point at which Mann may have smuggled in Lukács's father as Elia, Naphta's father and the relationship between father and son including respect and understanding; similarly, the description of the relationship between mother and son has some resemblance to the stituation in the Lukács household: Mann knew the parents of Lukács as he had been several times a house-guest of the banker, Joseph von Lukács, and must have been attuned to the family dynamics. It is now well-publicized that Lukács once remarked that if there could be a psychological explanation for his rejection of the old world order, it would be in his relationship to his mother; it was that of unmitigated contempt. Lukács himself related the following story: when he wrote a friendly letter to his mother, she concluded that she must be gravely ill —which she was—otherwise her son would not have been persuaded to be so attentive and nice to her.[29]

Concerning the physical appearance and attributes of Leo Naphta, Sagave made the most of the "nose" issue, further the sharpness of features, even that of the eyeglasses. To be sure, both Naphta and Lukács could be called small and frail-looking; the young Lukács certainly was not "extremely ugly", as Naphta was. Moreover, the outsider—and the Jewish outsider to boot—was there in some form or another in Mann's early works, starting with the Hagenström children in the *Buddenbrooks* (e.g., the "nose," small body, ugly, reddish blond hair, and so on). If Lukács's personal appearance in Mann's life contributed to Naphta's physiognomy, it was only in that sense that the image Mann had was finally "seen, heard, and comprehended"; it was also in tune with Mann's ideas on the intellectual personality of that specific type. Interestingly, Thomas Mann did not write to anybody about his meeting with Lukács and his impressions during those two hours in the Viennese hotel in January 1922. He reported to Ernst Bertram in June 1922 that "Leo Naphta is found; as a half-Jewish pupil of the Jesuits, he has an ongoing sharp debate with Settembrini."[30] The discovery of the symbolic physique was first mentioned by Arthur Eloesser, first authorised biographer of Thomas Mann. Eloesser made the remark in 1923 that Naphta was supplied by the "geniality of real life" in the form of a "little ugly Jew, who was a rabiat theoretician with a steely logic, defending during a discussion all forms of absolutism and anti-individualism, from counter-reformation and

Jesuitism up to the Communist revolution and Leninism."[31]

And thus, we have arrived at the most significant aspect of Naphta in relation to Lukács, his intellectual personality. I cannot go into a discussion of Mann's preoccupation and fascination with the problem of personality-formation here and now. One only has to go to his essays on "personalities at the end of a cultural era," ranging from Dante to Dostoevsky and Karl Kraus. Mann was very much in tune with the currents of his time: he was an avid reader of Nietzsche, Kretschmer, Lombroso, Klages and so on. Physical attributes are everywhere a clue to personality. And thus, when Hans Castorp and Joachim first meet Naphta, they immediately notice him being a stranger. Joachim does not go further than noticing the figure and nose; he is distrustful. Hans Castorp sees the perspectives this stranger can reveal for him by becoming his next teacher: Naphta, after all, comes from a sphere that Castorp never explored and can offer him new insights. Admittedly, it is impossible to describe Naphta's personality in a few words, but a most concise summary can be provided here. First of all, he has a sharp mind, and he is logical to the point of becoming inhuman in his argumentation; he is fanatic when it comes to ideas and ideologies; he has the intellectual courage to go to the bottom of problems and then suffer the consequences; he is highly apodictic and thoroughly ascetic. In short, Naphta represents the *radical repudiation of the whole liberal tradition*. There is some irony involved here in that Thomas Mann took many of his reflections from the pages of his *Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen* meaning that he incorporated his own earlier views into Naphta's position. Much is made of Naphta's instincts that were both "revolutionary and aristocratic at the same time, as is the case with many Jewish intellectuals";[32] equally emphasized are Naphta's elitist inclinations and his achievement-oriented characteristics. And again, we find traces in the concept of the compatibility of the religious and the ideological in one person, which partly may have been suggested by Bloch's *Münzer* book. In addition, we have the Jesuits with many of the above traits. There is ample evidence that Mann studied biographies and interpretations of Loyola and of Jesuitism. Jesuit–Jew as a combination was not as uniquely his own as Mann liked to believe: Harry Graf Kessler's diaries, for example, describe Hugo Haase, famed politician of the Weimar Republic, as "a small man, a somewhat Jesuitic Jew."[33] It was one of those things in the air.

That Lukács represented the stranger for Thomas Mann is a fact; many ideas presented by Naphta can be found in the conclusions of some of Lukács's early writings, mainly in the essays of *Die Seele und die Formen*. Just as important is another little-known work by Lukács, published in German in 1912 in the journal *Neue Blätter:* the work, *Von der Armut am Geiste* (On the Poverty of Spirit), was both confessional and autobiographical. One can perceive the line of argumentation that is woven into Naphta's discourses already in such Lukács essays as the Kierkegaard essay with its partiality for dogmatism; the Theodor Storm essay for the statement on manifestations of asceticism when work—even artistic one—is called "forced labor" against which our instincts might rebel and have to be restrained by the cruelest means possible. The Lukácsian dialogue, *Von der Armut* . . ., contains the following statements which I developed in my book in relation to Naphta: first, the cement that binds the work is "fashioned out of human blood"; second, "I believe in the quality of remaining pure (meaning ethical purity) through sin, deception and horror" (a statement that echoes in the 1918 writing "Bolshevism as a Moral Problem"); and finally, Christ said after all: "He who comes to me . . . and hates not his father, . . . cannot be my disciple." This represents only a sample. The work also contains a defence of the Middle Ages and

as the final act, the hero's suicide: just as Naphta in *The Magic Mountain*, the hero of Lukács's dialogue shoots himself in the head. Thomas Mann was acquainted with this Lukácsian work as he was with the collection of essays. *Die Seele und die Formen*. Several of the passages mentioned were underlined and noted in Mann's own copies that are to be found in the Thomas-Mann-Archiv.

So far we have discussed asceticism and the achievement through violent means, along with the necessity of inhumanity in certain cases. We may also find examples of those "things that do not rhyme" as Naphta is wont to say. It is interesting to note in this connection that Lukács wrote an essay in 1913 entitled, "Aesthetic Culture," in which he explicity brings together "things that do not rhyme": he writes, for example, that "form is a judgement that forces salvation on everything by a holy terror."[34] This essay, written in Hungarian, has never been translated into any other language and the creator of Leo Naphta was unaware of such combinations on the part of the young Lukács. Yet, Thomas Mann uncannily perceived the radicalism of Lukács's standpoint in ethical and aesthetic questions that not only pointed to Lukács's later decision to embrace the cause of revolution in which ends justify all means, but also adapted very well to the strange and often contradictory ideological disputations of the stranger in the novel, Leo Naphta. That Lukács, the quintessential Jewish intellectual in Thomas Mann's eyes, makes his argumentation through citing Christ, Meister Eckhart or Saint Francis of Assisi, and finally depicts Abraham's willingness to do the ultimate sacrifice, rounds out the picture.

### *Conclusion*

Just as the fictional figure, Leo Naphta, is the prototype of the *irregular*, the *other*, because he is irregular as a Jew, as a Jesuit, and as a Communist, so was Lukács perceived by Mann as irregular on account of his bourgeois aestheticism which permitted the use of terms such a "violence and dogma" and "holy terror", and on account of his religiosity and concept of terror. The tendencies presumably perceived in Lukács such as the one for "extreme", for being "absolute", as well as "fanaticism" and "asceticism", not only helped to shape the totalitarian personality of Naphta but also deterred the establishment of a meaningful personal relationship between Thomas Mann and Lukács. Not only did Lukács possess characteristics that Mann disliked, despised or simply was afraid of, but first and foremost, he came from the non-German sphere, that of a Dostoevsky, of the Jewish literati—in sum, from the East. The Eastern sphere had the well-documented fascination for the type of artist Thomas Mann was but with which he could never be on intimate terms. Thus, the *Distanz* could not be bridged.

JUDITH MARCUS

## NOTES

[1] See Theodor W. Adorno and Gershom Scholem, Eds. *Walter Benjamin. Briefe*. Volume 2 (Frankfurt-am-Main: Suhrkamp Verlag), 1966.

[2] For one of the best and/or most extensive treatments of the Lukács-Naphta problem see, Ehrhard Bahr, *Georg Lukács* (Berlin: Colloquium Verlag Otto H. Hess, 1970): Pierre-Paul Sagave, *Réalité sociale et idéologie religieuse dans les romans de Thomas Mann*. Publications de la Faculté des Lettres de l'Université de Strasbourg. Fasc. 124. (Paris, 1954).

[3] See Hans Mayer, *Thomas Mann. Werk und Entwicklung* (Berlin: Verlag Volk und Welt, 1950).

[4] Mann's reflections on the state and nature of the modern novel appear in his unfinished —and unpublished—notes for a planned essay with the title "Geist und Kunst" (Intellect and Art). See chapter one in my book, *Georg Lukács and Thomas Mann. A Study in the Sociology of Literature* (Amherst, Mass.: University of Massachusetts Press, 1987).

[5] Harry Levin, "Toward a Sociology of the Novel," in *Refractions. Essays in Comparative*

*Literature* (London–Oxford–New York: Oxford University Press, 1966), p. 248.

[6] See Hans Vaget, "Georg Lukács und Thomas Mann," in *Die Neue Rundschau*. Vol. 88, 4 (1977), pp. 656–663.

[7] Levin, *Refractions*, Ibid.

[8] Georg Lukács, "In Search of Bourgeois Man," in *Essays on Thomas Mann* (London: Merlin Press, 1964), p. 45.

[9] For an account of differing views concerning this "great and wonderful war" as Max Weber put it, see Zoltán Tar and Judith Marcus, "The Weber-Lukács Encounter," in R. M. Glassman and V. Murvar, *Max Weber's Political Sociology: A Pessimistic Vision of a Rationalized World*. (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1984), pp. 125–126. See also Marianne Weber, *Max Weber. A Biography*. Ed. and transl. by Harry Zohn. (New York: Wiley Interscience, 1975). Both the Webers and Georg Simmel discussed Lukács's "inability" to understand the "just cause." In response, Lukács had started to write and essay on "The German Intellectuals and the War," which was never completed.

[10] Henry Hatfield, *Thomas Mann*. Revised Edition. (New York: A New Direction Paperback, 1962).

[11] Thomas Mann, "Foreword," in *The Magic Mountain*. Transl. by H. T. Lowe-Porter (New York: Modern Library, 1955) p. x.

[12] Thomas Mann, *The Story of a Novel. The Genesis of Doctor Faustus*. Transl. by Richard and Clara Winston (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1961), p. 25.

[13] Mann's remarks follow his reflections on the critical sensibilities of the young Lukács. In *Reflections of a Nonpolitical Man*. Transl. by W. D. Morris (New York: Frederick Ungar, 1983), p. 73.

[14] Ibid.

[15] See George Steiner's review of Lukács's *Gelebtes Denken*, "Making a Homeland for the Mind," in *Times Literary Supplement* (January 22, 1982), p. 67.

[16] The definition used by several Lukács critics and reviewers.

[17] See Henry Pachter, "Lukács Revisited: Orthodox Heretic, Stalinist Romantic," in *Dissent* (Spring 1975), pp. 177ff.

[18] See Georg Lukács, *Record of a Life. An Autobiographical Sketch*. Ed. by István Eörsi. Transl. by Rodney Livingstone (London: Verso Editions, 1983), p. 81.

[19] See George Steiner, "Homeland . . . ," p. 81.

[20] For the report on the visit with Lukács, see Judith Tar, "Georg Lukács, Thomas Mann und 'Der Tod in Venedig'," in *Die Weltwoche* (July 2, 1971), p. 31.

[21] The passage is from Lukács's essay, "Longing and Form. Charles Louis Philippe," in *Soul and Form*. Transl. by Anna Bostock (Cambridge, Mass.: The M.I.T. Press, 1974), p. 94. For a discussion and transcription of Mann's original note see Judith Marcus, *Georg Lukács and Thomas Mann*, Chapter One.

[22] The statement appears on the jacket of Ehrhard Bahr's book, *Georg Lukács*.

[23] Unpublished letter to Pierre-Paul Sagave of February 18, 1952, in the Thomas Mann Archive, Zurich. My translation.

[24] See Thomas Mann, *The Magic Mountain*, pp. 328–29.

[25] Ibid.

[26] Mann's letter to Hugo von Hofmannsthal, in *Thomas Mann. Briefe 1889–1936*. Ed. by Erika Mann (Frankfurt-am-Main: S. Fischer, 1962), p. 76. My translation.

[27] Thomas Mann, "Goethe and Tolstoy," *Three Essays*. Transl. by H. T. Lowe-Porter (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1929), p. 90.

[28] See the essay by Georg Simmel, "The Stranger," in *The Sociology of Georg Simmel*. Ed. by Kurt H. Wolff (New York: The Free Press, 1950), pp. 402ff.

[29] Georg Lukács's own recollections in *Record of a Life*, p. 35.

[30] See *Thomas Mann and Ernst Bertram. Briefe aus den Jahren 1910–1955*. Ed. by Inge Jens (Pfullingen: Verlag Günther Neske, 1960), p. 109.

[31] See Arthur Eloesser, *Thomas Mann: Sein Leben und seine Werke* (Berlin: S. Fischer Verlag, 1925), p. 193.

[32] See the chapter "Operationes Spirituales," in *The Magic Mountain*, p. 443.

[33] See Harry Count Kessler, *In the Twenties, The Diaries of Harry Kessler*. Transl. by Charles Kessler (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1971), p. 36.

[34] See György Lukács, *Esztétikai kultúra, Tanulmányok*. (Aesthetic Culture. Studies) (Budapest: Athenaeum, 1913), p. 27.

# ARTS AND ARCHITECTURE

## THE DRAMATIC ART OF PRESENCE

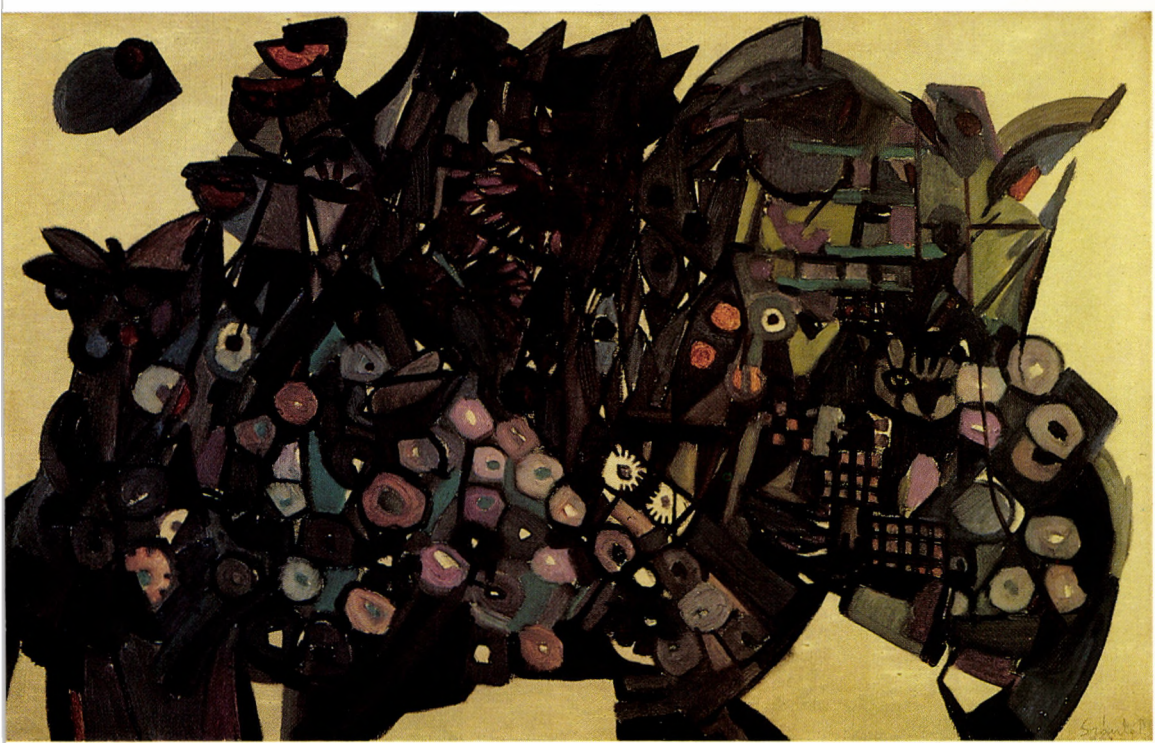
### Piroska Szántó retrospective

Piroska Szántó provides problems for the art critic because he cannot put any of his labels onto her works. This means trouble not only in East Central Europe (where it is customary to consider someone suspicious unless their work can be neatly labelled), but everywhere. On any continent a great frenzy of name-giving can be seen with ever new -isms cropping up in the restless art of the "post-avantgarde"; sometimes the christening ceremony seems to be more important than the baby itself. The painter, who was born in 1913 and, during her long career, has never been unreceptive to fresh trends, building into her œuvre whatever took her fancy; she has been described by turn as a realist and a surrealist and also found herself given the adjectives "expressionist," "simultaneous," and "decorativist"—the latter with some pejorative overtones. It is often said of her that she uses graphic techniques (which, if meant as an accusation, makes no sense), and allows herself undue licenses, criss-crossing between various genres. This all seems to ignore that adopting methods most adequate to one's inclinations are not precisely the mark of a genuine spiritual independence.

In spite of several attempts, Piroska Szántó's art has defied classification. This is why her œuvre, spirit, her whole being, have still not won due acclaim among certain circles of art critics.

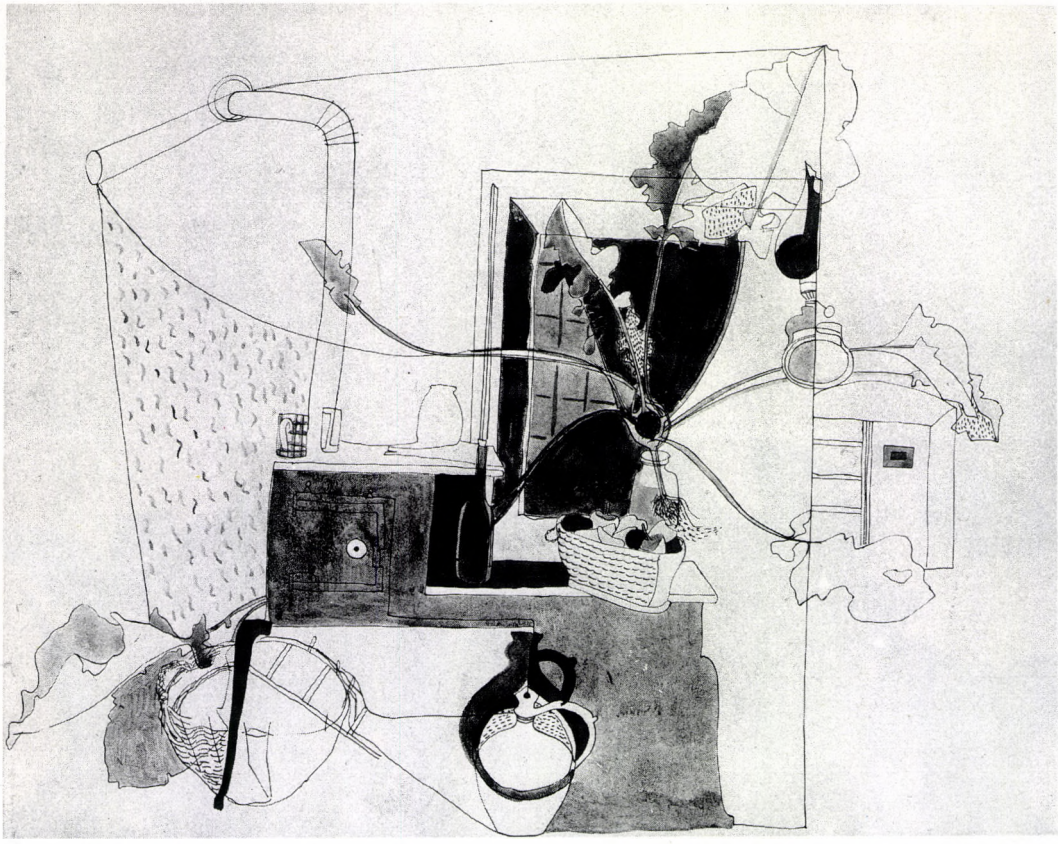
Now in the new gallery of Szombathely, a small town near the Austrian border, there is enough room to show the work of her entire career, and the material will remain there in its entirety. There is, then, an opportunity to survey at last, soberly and with the aid of ample documentation, the artistic career, stages of which have often been described and evaluated under preconceptions, and which has now reached maturity and is bound to offer new surprises yet. The visitor who walks through the rooms, returning to some especially pleasing or interesting picture, is able to attempt a summary in which serenity will no doubt occupy a prominent place, even through through its vapour the sombre issues of the human condition, of death especially, loom (oddly enough, quite naturally). True, opposition is not unusual and may be found in all genuine works of art. In Piroska Szántó's interpretation, however, this peculiar way of seeing the world appears in a wide range of tones, from the playful to the tragic, from challenge to resignation, from the revolting to the peaceful—something increasingly lacking from twentieth-century art.

Her works reveal the poetry of a soul living with and in nature, who discerns the many miracles of the visible world, so often ignored by our hurried age. Through the gracefulness, sincerity, and humour of her expressivity, there is outlined the self-



*Ferenc Kovács*

PIROSKA SZÁNTÓ: LOTS OF THEM, 1962. OIL ON CANVAS, 60 × 100 CM



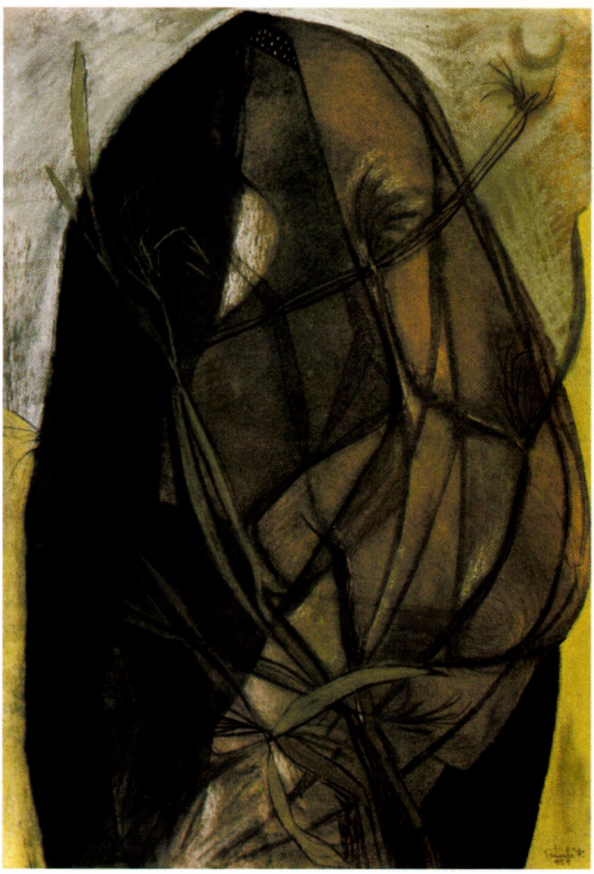
Ferenc Kovács

PIROSKA SZÁNTÓ: STILL LIFE WITH KOHLRABI. 1941. WATER COLOUR AND INK. 20×30 CM

PIROSKA SZÁNTÓ: STILL LIFE WITH KITTEN AND SUNFLOWER. 1944. INDIAN INK ON PAPER, 20×20 CM

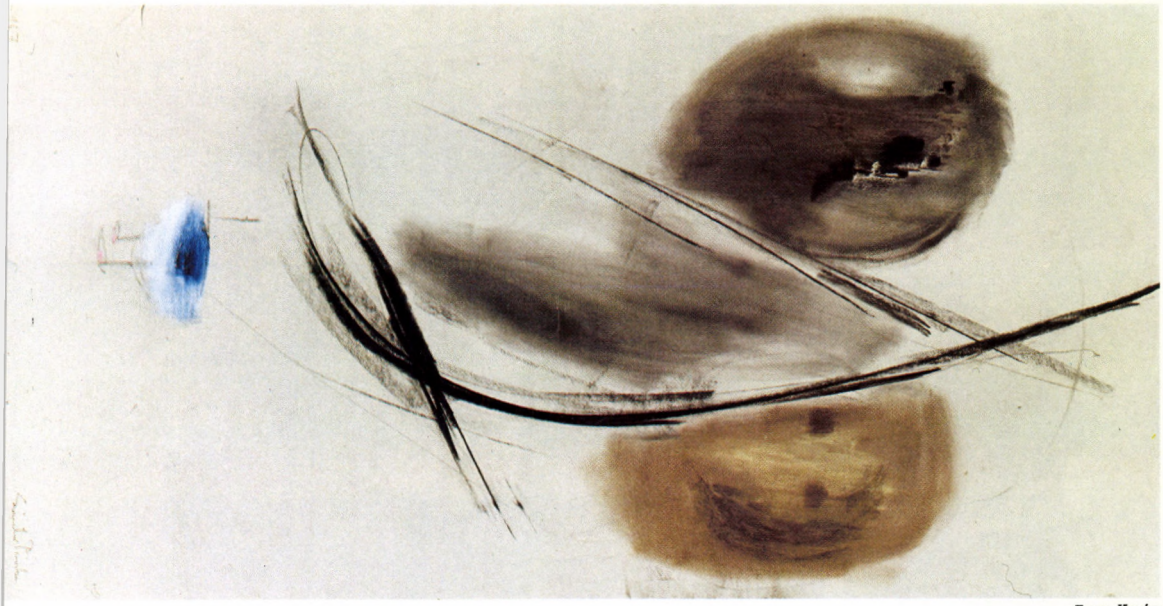
Piroska Szántó: An evening in Bajót.
1977. Oil on canvas, 100×58 cm

*Ferenc Kovács*



Piroska Szántó: Mourning and rain, 1954.
Oil and pastel on canvas, 100×70 cm

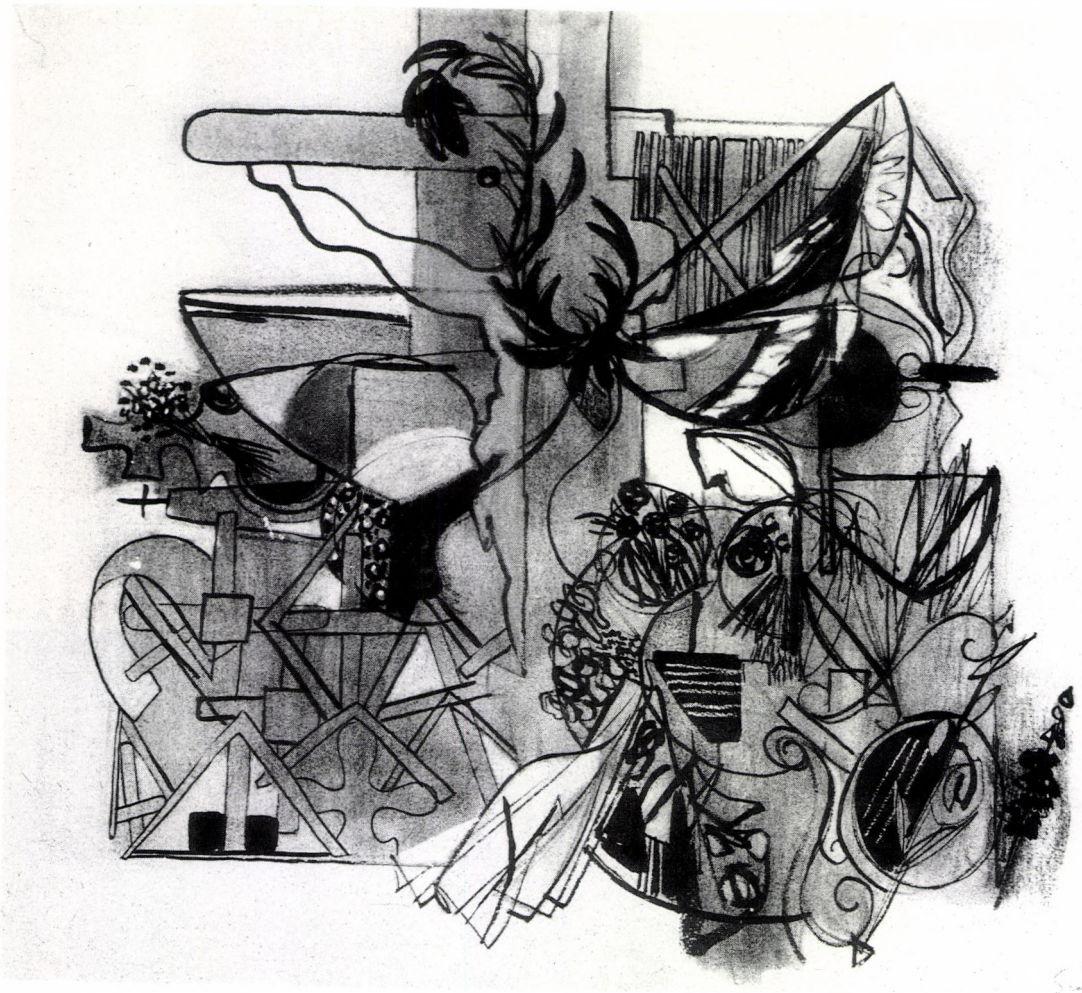
PIROSKA SZÁNTÓ: BRIC-A-BRAC, 1978. OIL ON CANVAS, 100 × 100 CM



*Ferenc Kovács*

PIROSKA SZÁNTÓ:
WATCHING THE SEAGULL, 1967.
PASTEL ON PAPER,
100×55 CM

PIROSKA SZÁNTÓ:
EPENTHE. 1976. PASTEL ON PAPER,
100×60 CM



Piroska Szántó:
Hommage à Vajda the painter. /1962.
Pastel on paper, 50×70 cm

Piroska Szántó:
The little nut tree. 1946/47.
Indian ink, 50×40 cm

Ferenc Kovács

PIROSKA SZÁNTÓ: DONKEY AND ROSETTE, 1985. OIL ON CANVAS, 100×100 CM

PIROSKA SZÁNTÓ: THE ENTRY, 1985. OIL ON CANVAS, 110×120 CM

Erzsébet Benkő: Self-portrait, 1931.
Oil on canvas, 50×40 cm.

Erzsébet Benkő: Gyula Derkovits, 1933.
Egg Tempera, 60×50 cm.

portrait of an artist who stares and marvels not only at what the world presents to her sight (W. H. Davies holds that staring at the world is the secret of happiness), but also at death, thus becoming part of the eternal cycle of life.

In her paintings and drawings, at last comfortably unfolding before us in the spacious gallery in Szombathely, we encounter what could be called, if indeed we would not be afraid to use the word, philosophy. Among Piroska Szántó's motifs we find horse radish leaves, elder trees, sunflowers, corn, tulips, poppies, onions, iris, pines, orchids, apple trees, and cats, horses, fish, oxen, butterflies, and donkeys. Hardly any landscapes. This is the democracy of St Francis of Assisi, in which no distinction is made between what is thought to be useless and ugly and what is admirable; the Moon is our sister, the wolf our friend. We sense the joy of equality, a belief in the unity of the world, and the lack of utilitarian considerations.

This is the dramatic art of presence. There is in it the modest recognition that reality is a singular, never-to-be-repeated adventure. The eyes of the horses sometimes speak of pain and humiliation, the dry poppyheads of the passing of time, the orgy of colour of butterflies of the sweetness of decay. They are animated, but this animation is never followed by the usual deformation, nor is it in her depictions of human figures either. The motifs take on an additional symbolic value, even though they appear in touchingly concrete representation, as is seen in the pictures depicting old roadside crosses with iron-plate corpus, or in the canvases evoking family photographs from the beginning of the century. A *chef-d'œuvre* among these pictures of multi-layered symbolic meaning is *Triptych* (1975), with the Palm Sunday Donkey (that also figures in Chesterton's famous poem) in the first section, Death in the second, and the Son of Man in the third. There is in it a moving simultaneity of defeat and triumph, grief and hope, a child's smile and a wise adulthood.

Such an attitude may provide explanation to the seemingly capricious route Piroska Szántó's art follows, showing that, together with its detours, it covers the same single area. In it the same field is surveyed again and again, with variants now softly painted, almost sensual, now objective; gravity is at times observed, at others not; and the planes, angles, techniques, and idioms are always picked to match what she wants to elaborate on and why, be it the triumphant universality of embracing skeletons found in some excavation or the subtle eroticism of flowers. The approximations are reasonably chosen, and the hand that creates is always the same. Therefore, the *ductus* can never be missed, whether in the contours of harvesting peasant women resting and nodding away among flowering apple trees, or more recently in the Bible illustrations published in book format. The style becomes the essence, inimitably and surpassing the attributes of various schools, carrying her personality.

The present writer, who published a small monograph on the artist in 1985 and could thus claim to have some insight into the unity manifest in the variability of this art, had the occasion to recognize in the rooms of Szombathely Gallery that chronology does not really help in understanding its kaleidoscopic nature. The œuvre certainly has a history to it, but one is left in the dark with the usual theorizing on "development" and similar ideologies. Though the chronological sequence offers some points of reference, especially in the knowledge of biographical data, but luckily enough this art is more conceptual for it to be directly connected with some social chronology. This is true in spite of the fact that the artist has never avoided humane commitments. From a difficult childhood onwards (her mother who raised her on her own committed suicide), she was led by the morality of decency, through an experience of leftist movements, for which she faced trial during the Horthy

régime, through hiding in a village where she could avoid the mortal threat of fascism, to the re-blooming artistic life of the liberated country, soon to be withered in the Stalinist era, when she was also denied the chance of exhibiting her works.*

There is a reason why the title of one of her paintings from 1962 was borrowed for this account. *The Power of Flowers*, the message of which is now more clearly understood than at the time it was made, is placed alongside the 1946 *Still-life with Kohlrabi* with its profane piety, the 1974 *Lovers* and (to a more recent example) the 1985 *Donkey and Rosette*, born out of memories of Toledo. Many other examples with the same characteristics could be cited. This unparalleled manifestation of artistic sovereignty spans through decades of Central European turning-points and trials.

GYÖRGY SZABÓ

* *NHQ* 91

---

# MEMORIES OF AN ART SCHOOL IN THE THIRTIES

In the early thirties I studied art at István Szőnyi's* school, today considered to be worthy of a separate chapter in the history of Hungarian painting. Those were the years of the great depression. Nobody bought pictures. Hoping for the depression to end within the foreseeable future appeared to be just as unrealistic as thinking that one could ever make a living from painting. The masters themselves lived in poverty.

What provided an economic base for the school was the fact that many sons and daughters of well-to-do families along with a few aristocratic wives, who spent the winter in Budapest, were keen on learning to paint. Some of the down-and-out unemployed also studied at the school to do something until they could—perhaps—get a job. They, of course, could not pay the fees.

Art then had no practical purpose, but art life was still lively, very lively and character-forming. There was plenty of time to become absorbed, for arriving at one's attitudes, skills and talents. That was what the masters did—perhaps still in the hope of a brighter future in spite of everything—and that was also what the students tried to do. István Szőnyi and Vilmos Aba Novák,* both in their forties at the time, were as splendid draughtsmen and masters of technique as perhaps the great masters of old times. I have a superb little painting done by Aba Novák in about 3–4 minutes one day, when he just took the brushes and palette of Éva Törzs, one of the students, to demonstrate to her how to bring out the form with colours. We were all smitten with the result.

Numerous lasting friendships developed in this atmosphere. I painted and went rambling with Éva Törzs, Ernő Berda, and Pál Berger for years.

One of the aristocrats at the school, Count József Révay, was a bit older than we were. The other counts considered him a bit eccentric. When he was not present, they

* See *NHQ* 8 and 97

went through his pictures and sniggered over them. Earlier he had studied with János Vaszary. In our school he painted more maturely and developed his own ideas. He reduced what he saw to simple elements, concentrated on structure, and built the relationship of colours on the depth of tones. Although Braque was his ideal, his own disciplined and suggestive manner of painting was closest to that of Béla Czóbel.*

We painted heads and nudes. A model sitting dressed used to get one pengő (then about $ 0.20) per hour. It was rather good money compared with the some 30 fillér rate that unskilled workers earned in an hour, but sitting or standing in the same position from 8 a.m. or 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. with only short rests was hard and tiring work. Viki, the wife of Gyula Derkovits, the painter, often sat for us. I still have several of my drawings of her. On one occasion Derkovits himself was the model. I think that was in 1933, not long before he died. We all knew then that he was perhaps the most outstanding Hungarian artist of the age. During one of the breaks he contemplated my work rather attentively. It was very exciting. That tempera picture is still in my possession after more than forty years. We did not think it was demoralizing to see Derkovits, the famous painter, as our model for we were confronted with equally odd situations all the time. We were not even amazed, for life was like that.

One day István Szőnyi told us to take pictures to the Spring Salon of the Szinyei Társaság. That was where young artists used to make their début. Szőnyi helped us to select our works. Before the exhibition, while correcting one of my pictures, he told me that the jury liked my pictures very much. I almost fainted with happiness. I knew that the jury consisted of members of the *Szinyei Társaság*,** splendid and important artists to a man. Even now, after so many years, I still think that was the greatest success my artistic ambitions have met with. At the exhibition Imre Ámos*** took the most important prize. He was a bit older than we, about 23 or 24 at the time, and had already developed his world of painting. It was a somewhat mysterious dream world of very sincere emotions. Ámos had an air of wonderfully gentle clarity.

Once Aba Novák invited me and Révay to his workshop on the Margit körút. He showed us his pictures and persuaded us to use tempera, his favourite material. His pictures were full of movement with many figures and hard colours to give them ardour. Szőnyi was more lyrical, sometimes he toned down his colours almost to white to allow them to approach each another as softly as possible. Be that as it may, the painting of Révay and Éva Törzs had a more profound influence on me than Szőnyi or Aba Novák. They were the ones from whom I learnt how to get rid of the superfluous, how to discipline myself in expression.

I was later invited to take part in the sketching sessions of the Group of Socialist Artists and at the Hűvösvölgy exhibition of the Group in honour of builders. I did take part at the latter, but by then I had already stopped painting. The concentration painting demanded was too heavy a burden on me physically as well as on my nerves. The eventual compromise came about 1938, when I studied weaving at the evening course of the School of Industrial Design. The woven picture takes a long time to make and is not so exhausting.****

Four decades have since passed. Most of my old friends have died. Many of them became victims of cruel, brute force. I remember them with respect and a heavy heart.

*

* See *NHQ* 53

** Szinyei Association named after the painter Pál Szinyei-Merse

*** See *NHQ* 108

**** For the tapestries of Erzsébet Benkő see *NHQ* 103.

Some of the pictures and drawings I made at the time—shown here in reproduction—complement my memories of Szőnyi's school. They are of Gyula Derkovits, the painter, Viki, his wife, and Ernő Berda, the painter. Viki was a professional model, we often painted her and she also was a regular model at the Academy.

Ernő Berda's (1914–1961) father was an Újpest iron-worker, a revolutionary in 1919, while his uncle was József Berda, the poet. He brought the idea of revolution and the love of art from home and regarded art as a means of the struggle for revolution. Later, in the forties, he made anti-war etchings. We liked painting him, I had a number of pictures of him, unfortunately only two have remained in my possession. One shows him full-face, the other in profile. The latter was shown in September 1987, on the occasion of the World Art Week, in the Museum of the Hungarian Workers' Movement in Buda Castle as the "Art Work of the Month." The Museum published small folders to call the attention of visitors to works highlighted in a particular month. Katalin Balajthy, the art historian, described my painting:

"Portrait of Ernő Berda, tempera 59 × 43.5 cm, together with its pair, a painting representing Derkovits, is one of the best works of Erzsébet Benkő. The painter's interpretation of the portrait genre is traditional: her aim is not the solution of abstract problems of form but the portrayal of the personality with great force and with fine observation. Even in spite of its realism, this Berda portrait is especially suggestive since the artist forsook every pictorial motif that could break the homogeneous effect of the work. She barely coloured the picture; grey and a thick brown are dominant among her dim colours. There is no excitement in her composition either. She represents her model in the traditional setting: left-side semi-profile, with his hand resting on the chair; the lustreless patch of the large, almost oversized hand establishes balance with the light mass of the head against the grey background. Erzsébet Benkő does not show the momentary, the incidental, but the innermost features of her model: her picture, monumental in spite of its relatively small size, shows us a man, who has lived through many ordeals in spite of his youthfulness, a man who calmly faces the world."

The paintings, drawings and the amateur photograph date from between 1930 and 1934. The only exception is the portrait of Berda's fiancée, which I painted in 1937, the year we met. I no longer attended the art school after 1934, but for two more years I continued painting with Éva Törzs, Berda and Pál B. Juhász.

The photograph reproduced here shows a group of friends from the art school. We often went walking together, it was taken on one of those occasions.

ERZSÉBET BENKŐ

# LIVING TEXTILE
## 1968–1978–1988

In the early autumn of 1986, when working in the Budapest Ernst Museum, I was preparing an exhibition of the works of an elderly, conservative sculptor in the galleries fronting the street. I was alone. After a little while I heard voices and saw some textile-designer-artist-craftsmen friends gathering, to prepare their own works for the exhibition "Textile Wall-painting '68" in the interior, glass-roofed section of the gallery. I went over to greet them as a curious acquaintance and friend. Even in the first minute I felt (and was informed by the pile of drapery lying unarranged on the ground) that I was witness to an event of great importance in the history of art. The artists did not want to believe my enthusiastic compliments. No doubt, viewed from the present vantage, with the exception of some evergreen pieces, these first wall-hanging compositions would seem uninteresting and provincial. Textile designers were tired of what they had been doing, they were weary of themselves and of the never-ending stagnation of sister arts, Hungarian painting and sculpture being an awful warning to them. Their accumulated emotion gave them the strength to bring in their artistic revolution. They felt opportunity in the time too, for the then cultural policy considered the industrial arts, as opposed to the fine arts, to be inferior and paid little heed to it. Textile artists took notice of the vacuum, saw the wide open door and walked through it. This exhibition was successful, not only according to the visitors' book but to the press it received too. It was unprecedented for a form to revive as if by a magic touch. At the time, fortunately, there were many talented textile designers, well trained, open, who were following avidly what was happening in the fine arts throughout the world.* Perhaps a sort of selection of the unfittest also played a part in their development, for they had gained admission to the (as compared to the Art School) less illustrious Applied Art School.

After the '68 exhibition, textile artists found a permanent forum in the Savaria Museum in the Western Hungarian town of Szombathely. The Wall and Space-textile Biennial commenced in 1970, choosing the three-dimensional textile work for its subject; since then a further ten have been organized. They are often thematic such as Gobelin, Utopia, or Textile Without Textile. Besides the Szombathely Biennial there have been the Hommage previews of the prize-winner in the neighbouring Kőszeg Zwinger and, since 1975, the Miniature Textiles** of Szombathely has been expanded into an international exhibition. Textile artists have also organized innumerable collective and individual exhibitions in Budapest and abroad. These exhibitions are listed in the specialist literature on telephone-directory-size pages, in 15 columns.

The exhibition "Living Textile 1968–1978–1988" in the Budapest Műcsarnok is a selection of Hungarian textiles over the past twenty years. It is an anthology. Some visitors and critics miss the latest in Hungarian textile art. But it is a historical, retrospective exhibition, although some artists did hand in some 1988 pieces. As far as I am concerned, I felt honoured that the organizers asked for the title of my 1980 book "The Living Textile" without the definite article.

What does Living Textile mean? It is an active, mobile art which puts a question to the viewer and expects an answer as well, expects participation in the reception of the creation of the work of art; it is in no way an

* *NHQ* 56.

** *NHQ* 63.

attractive ornament of passive beauty. The living—in lower case—textile has not been steady, sometimes we have felt a kind of shortness of breath, indeed, pessimistically, I once predicted the end of the movement. There I was mistaken. The textile has survived, its *Sturm and Drang* period seems to be continuous. We do not experience in this exhibition that the textile had become academic. Textile designers have directly followed changes in style and intellectual fashions over twenty years from beginning to end. This exhibition is astonishing. The glory of the first 1968 generation of textile artists has not faded and those who have come after them have inherited and have been holding their artistic position with the same dignity.

*

On entering the first room I said to myself, "This is an exhibition of fine arts, a collection of objects, textile-statues and wall-paintings." This was in keeping with my theories and the general trend of textile artists. The key figure in their revolution, Zsuzsa Szenes,* exhibited a regular red-and-white striped rail *Barrier* (1984) made of textile, symbolizing all kinds of traffic, social and sexual prohibitions. Szenes outdid herself: with striking idea she covered one of the columns (1.3 metres in diameter) in the arcade of this nineteenth-century building in similar red-and-white striped linen, giving the exhibition its emblem, practically placing her barrier in a vertical position.

The series by Lujza Gecser,** who belonged to the younger generation and died young, was placed on the main wall; in front, on a black stage were set the amorphous objects *Icicles and Castings* (1978) made of semi-transparent, white epoxy-polyester material which looked similar to human bones. In these objects there was no trace of textile and this also indicated the equal status of fine arts and applied art I have mentioned. The prime mover and organizer of the twenty-year-old textile movement, Gábor Attalai, cut a monumental (360 centimetres high) hanging picture from stripes of red felt and sewed a cube in red felt with a similar cube of metal placed beside it in contrast. Margit Szilvitzky uses yellow linen in *Open Process—I–III.* (1988) to show the viewer how it is done. The linen is prepared three times, first as a flattened rectangle, secondly as a bellows extension, which when looked into, reveals another wall-picture of Szilvitzky's—a parody of the old box camera, the third is pressed into the form of a screw nut.

Irén Balázs created a second-class railway carriage with wooden benches. There are four benches, made of sewn, embroidered jute—with the help of six horizontal bars—with embroidered passengers sitting on them, old and young countryfolk. Aranka Hübner exhibited reliefs, even solid figures, made of ecru, pleated spun-silk.

Marianne Szabó sewed a superb series *Dual Process of Decomposition* (1978) of colourful, figured mosaics of ladies' wear. This is the mental and physical debilitation of a woman. The first work presents a decorative, strongly made-up face; the technique is the unusual one, sewn-on, stuffed, textile relief; for the second one, the pieces of the textile-collage are detached, and the pieces of cloth are crumpled, sewn-back ironed down in diffuse unity. Anikó Bajkó also contributes a series, *Fixed Fire* (1978), in which she puts together burnt linen, rayon, and polyvinyl to emphasize the tragedy of burning. Similarly philosophical is the *Station I–IV* (1984) by Ilona Lovas. This consists of four pieces, solid, thick paper, laid on gauze made by herself, a black sheet, another sheet covered in black signs, with a cross and finally with a double-column text of hieroglyphics resembling upper-case letters.

The artistic form, *Laufer*, took its bow in

* *NHQ* 81.
** *NHQ* 70.

1987 with an exhibition. Laufer is a kind of discovered scrap material in the process of manufacturing textiles; from it can be extended a good-quality material to paint on (rather like newsprint was used in the avant-garde). We can make out even a figure from the red, light-blue, gold, pointillist composition by Szilamér Nánay. Two Laufer compositions were contributed by Csaba Polgár each of them one metre square, burning red, white, black on a dark base and exhibiting painterly values.

Not only painting but photographs also appear on textile. Kati Gulyás (*Movement*, 1979) multiplies her self-portrait in black pull-over and black trousers on the photo-screen. Eight times. The figures line up behind each other like film-frames as the artist turns her face from full-face to profile. She also uses high and low contrast dissolves. A perfect example of concept is given by her ruined, broken glass front of *Windows I–IV* (1982), based on a colour picture. Judit Gink has created an unusual method for her photo-textiles; she takes a press photograph and instead of fading the tone-blockpoints, she emphasizes it through enlargement. She is thus able to show the most various content, and in a manner different from that of the age of Pop Art. These are ideas and actions in textile-picture.

This piece cannot sufficiently stress the conceptual attitude of Hungarian textile artists, their irony. The alpha and omega of textile is, naturally, weaving, an ancient but living and surviving method; writing about this exhibition, weaving has to be understood figuratively, an abstraction of a technique and even beyond. Therefore, weaving is the frame, the weaver's frame for the rest of this piece, the excuse for it even. For me Judit Nagy's carefully and regularly woven gobelin was the defining work. On it is a page of an excercise-book with a text in girlish writing: "Weaving = way of living." This first appeared at the 1980 Textile Biennial and is the concise formulation that many articles took as a title. A married couple from the last century appear on the traditional gobelin by Zsuzsa Péreli* evidently after a daguerrotype. The fibres on the reverse side of the gobelin are usually cut off and squared, but here there are two sides and the couple is on both of them. Unsquared threads of cotton cover the man's face on one side and the woman's on the other, like seaweed and like a beard. The title of the work is *Amnesia* (1980). To return to another gobelin by Judit Nagy: she has always been interested in insects; the three-part splendidly coloured series *My Butterfly Flew in My Window Like This* (1980) illustrates a real circumstance. An open window by water, a bright-coloured woven wool-work by Gabriella Hajnal has material interwoven and bulging in layers, and bears the title *Prospect to the South* (1977).

Not only weaving but also machine knitting had become artistic medium by the 'eighties. Judit Droppa stretches her knitted materials on metal frames, creating wavy lines and points of junction in them. She takes advantage of the transparency of this knitted material, whether colourful or black, whether two or more nets are placed one behind the other. In a Gothic chapel, even stained glass can be substituted, replaced by stretching on metal frame. Droppa's *Lausanne Textile* (1981), which was exhibited in the Triennial of that place, is a conjoining of metallic, space-demanding weavings; they open like pages of a book, monumentally, in a definite rhythm. *A Blanket from '45* (1980) is a fringed rug with the Hungarian national colours and a burnt-edged bullet-hole on it: this is a laconic reminder by Rózsa Polgár. Gizella Solti's *Half of a Striped Coat* (1980) is another war memento, this time of a concentration camp.

Kati Székely, in *Lying Frequency* (1983), presses her gauze compositions between a double glass-plate, which is no less than the interferences of longitudinal and transversal

* *NHQ* 108.

waves: they might as well be illustrations for a textbook on natural science. Lujza Gecser filled an entire wall in the first hall; she has created film-weaving in the category of "textile without textile." There are regular vertical chain-threads on wooden frames, but the weft is used, damaged, or blank film strip, which provides different variations. This is complemented by her powerful, abstract-expressionist series *Alterations of a Drawing* (1979–80) of similar format, produced by the most different technique. There is no textile in the series by György Kemény, he is not a textile designer but a graphic artist. He took a page found in a school-textbook on weaving and placed beside, using longitudinal and cross fibres, dominoes, tubes, plasters, measuring tapes, colourful snakes, the words, man and woman, and so on. His irony extends to humour and play and he was, of course, welcomed with pleasure at the exhibition.

I should also mention a sculpture composition by Csilla Kelecsényi, *White* (1982), among the most important objects in this exhibition, whose weaving of frame–chain-thread–weft succeeds in this work in her own way. This is a faceless, female nude—a sitter, cast in plaster—crosswise flaringly arched, strengthened with plaster. This fine piece is suggestive, creating anxiety and alienation. The formal construction of *White* reminded me of the *Throne of Ludovis*, a Roman 460 B.C. relief which represents the birth of Venus. This work, together with its unfortunately damaged sister-piece, *Black*, was present at the 1982 exhibition *K–18 Textile Stoffwechsel*, organized by the Kassel Art School simultaneously with the 7. *Kassel Documenta*. In this West German exhibition, textile designers and sculptors both took part proclaiming the unity of fine arts and textile art, something which the artists in this exhibition stress and which I obstinately keep repeating in this paper too.

The young textile designer Judit Kelle formulated weaving as such and its extension *ad absurdum* in an action some years ago in the Club of Young Artists in Budapest. The "chain-thread" was her own naked body, onto which she wove the weft-threads.

I happened to criticize Tamás Soós's diploma work for the Budapest School of Applied Arts. Analysing his splendid post-modern gobelin, I said that probably this would be the last gobelin of his life. My prophecy came true. Soós made a name for himself as painter very soon. This time he exhibited a 15 square metres hand-painted textile as background with a television set placed in front of it. His video-film *Hommage à Szombathely* can be seen. This is a conversation on the beginning of Hungarian textile, of Living Textile and on its twenty years of history. Participants are the artist himself and art critics.

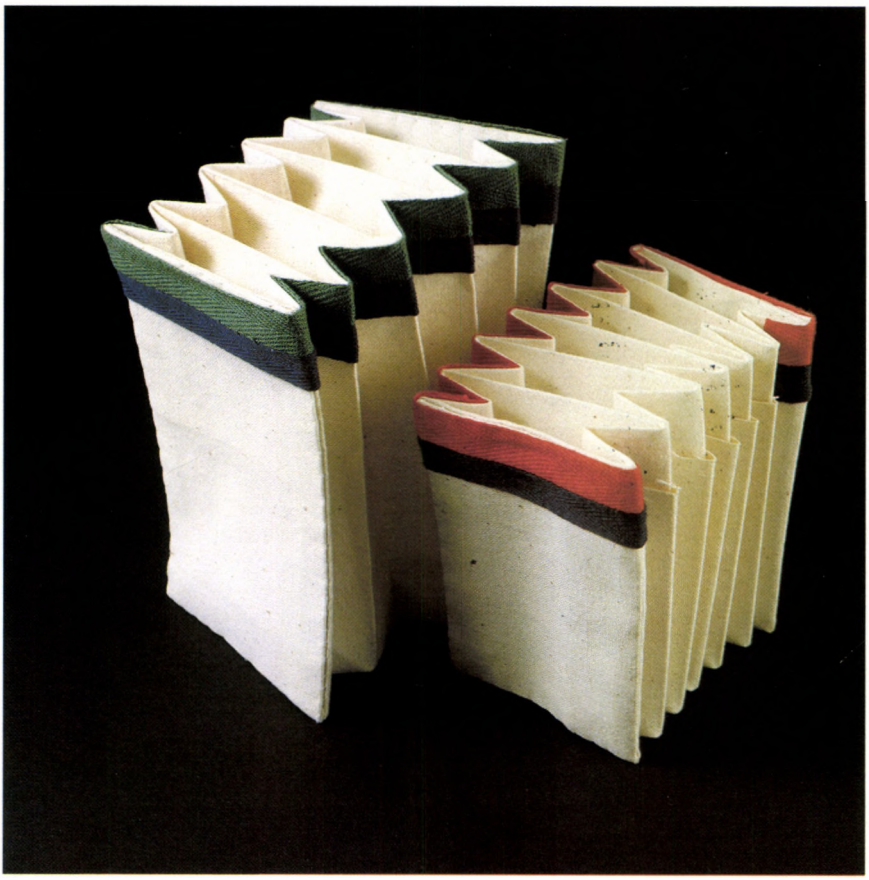
Art historian Ibolya Maróti organized the nine-hall exhibition on Living Textile. Her arrangement by styles and similarities bespeak her skills as an editor as well as an artist. Someone who helps the authors to unfold everything they want to say.

JÁNOS FRANK

Imre Jubász

Zsuzsa Szenes:
Barrier at the entrance
to the Műcsarnok, 1988

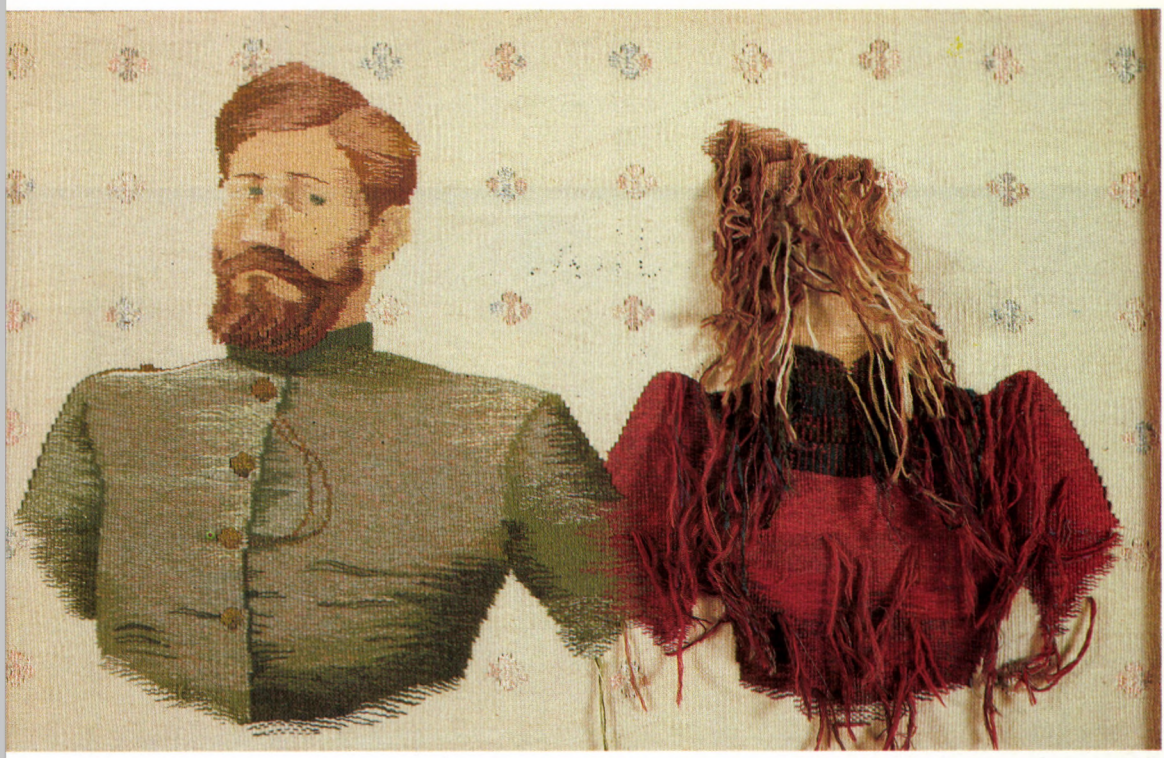
Judit Gink: Binding points,
1980, Serigraph,
inen, serigraph, ready made,
170 × 160 cm



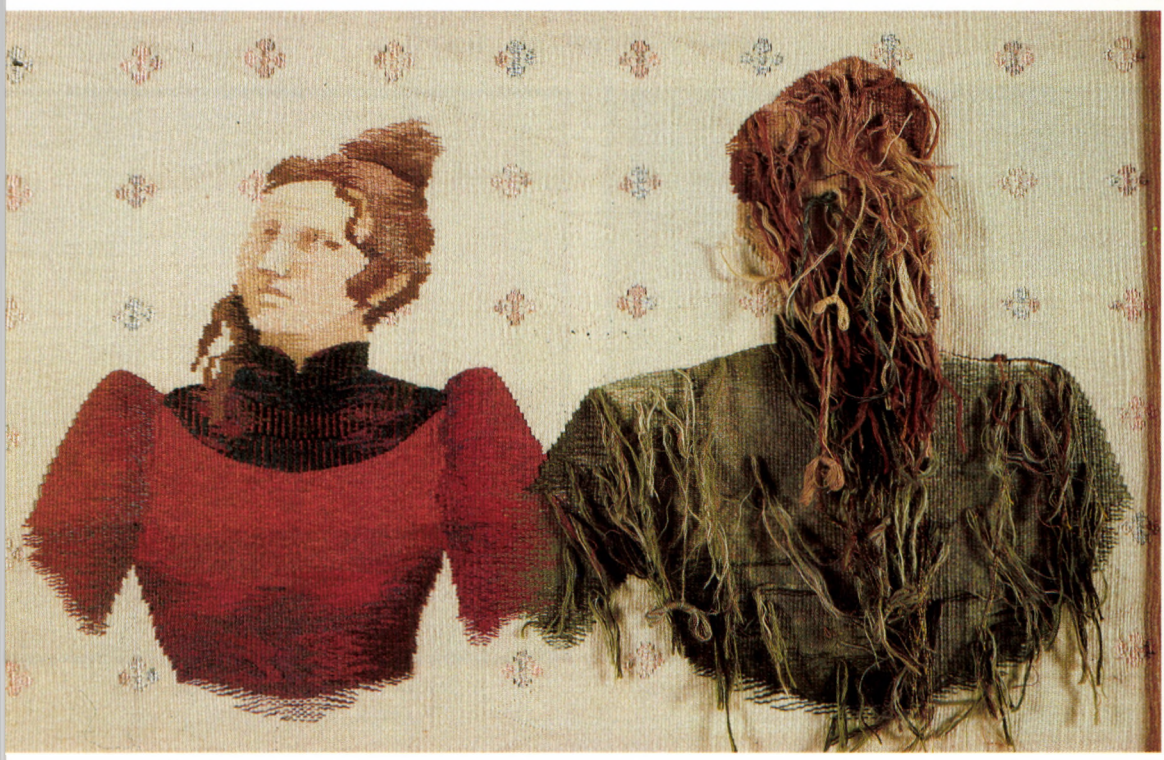
Imre Jubász

Margit Szilvitzky:
Intérieur, 1978,
linen, 20×20×20 cm

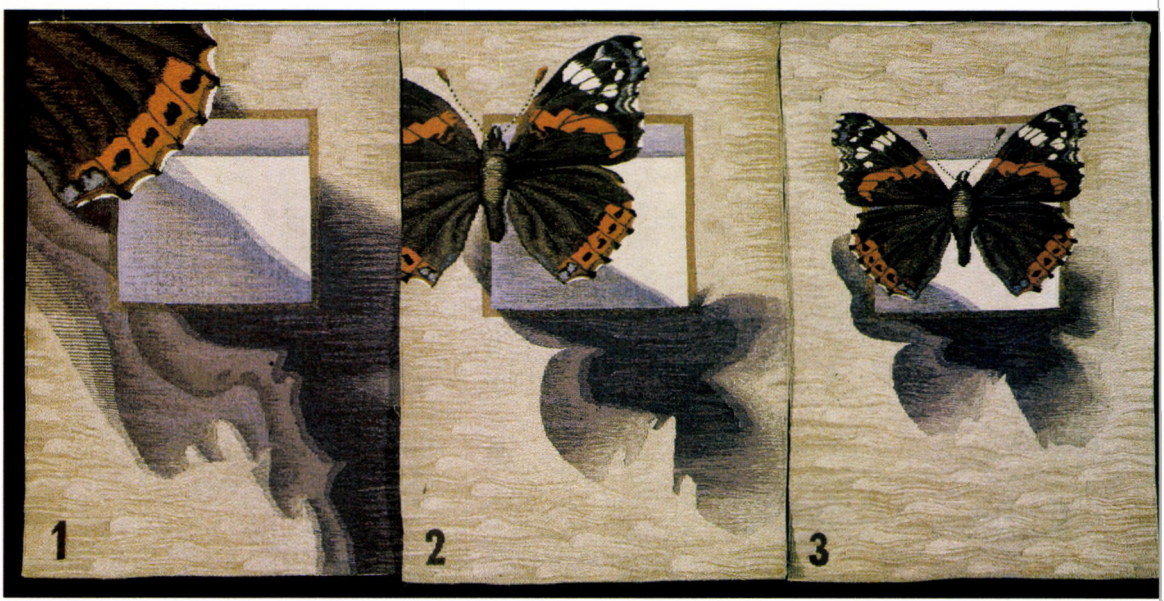
Lujza Gecser:
Icicles and white mouldings,
1978. Epoxy, polyester



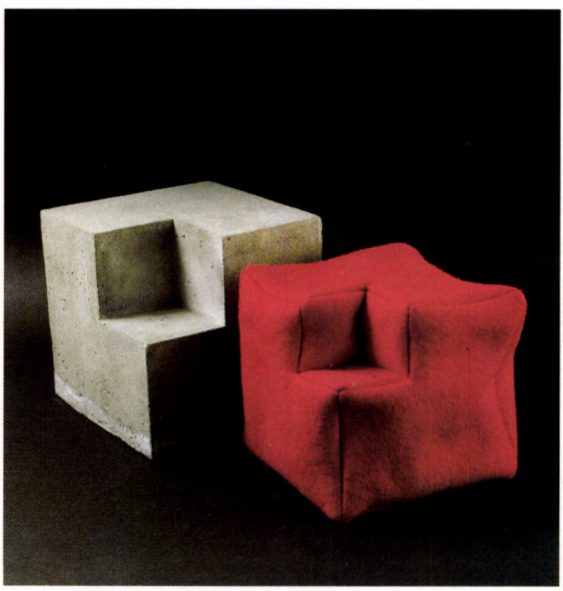
*Imre Jubász*



Zsuzsa Pérely: Amnesia, 1980. Double-sided tapestry, wool, silk, cotton, nylon, chenille, 63×95 cm




JUDIT NAGY: HOW MY BUTTERFLY FLEW THROUGH THE WINDOW, I–III, 1980, TAPESTRY, WOOL, COTTON, PURE SILK, 94 × 114 CM



GÁBOR ATTALAI: OPPOSING CORNERS, I–II, 1972, FELT ON BASALT, 20 × 20 × 20 CM

CSILLA KELECSÉNYI: WHITE, 1983. PLASTER, WOOL, 150 × 150 CM

# RENAISSANCE AND MANIERISM

## *Exhibition in the Museum of Arts and Crafts, Budapest*

The year 1988 brought a pleasant surprise. In the huge first-floor gallery of the Budapest Museum of Arts and Crafts some objects from an important period of European arts and crafts were on exhibition. Although the show consists exclusively of objects owned by Hungarian museums, the arts and crafts of the period indicated in the title are represented by splendid and, in some cases, major pieces. The majority of the exhibits are from one century only; the oldest are from the end of the fifteenth century and the most recent from the end of the sixteenth century, with the exception of some majolica pieces from Firenze or Faenza whose conservative style blends well with the rest of the exhibits. Because of the way arts and crafts developed in Hungary, the country being under pressure both from Austria and Turkey, the Baroque arrived quite late; there are some Hungarian objects represented in this exhibition originating from the second part of the seventeenth century. Hungarian artisans account for more than one-third of the exhibits; the majority are from Italy, where the style was developed, and Germany, where the most typical Northern specimens were produced. As a consequence of King Matthias Corvinus's patronage, Hungary was the second country after Italy where the Renaissance developed. Many of the Hungarian pieces of the period found their way abroad, and some are on loan; these works are not represented at all. The exhibition presents valuable pieces of the period made by true masters for their wealthy clients. Everyday utensils (kitchen-ware, artisan's tools) are not exhibited, nor are fragments. Naturally, some of the ceramics are chipped, furniture worn, or textiles frayed; however, if an object had been strongly damaged, it was not included in the exhibition, even if its artistic value is high. Everything has been restored beautifully, providing both information and aesthetic pleasure. In the selection of the 563 objects presenting all the various arts of the time was an important consideration. All these objects increased the comfort of everyday life in the period, whether the pieces were used in noble households or enhanced church services. Unfortunately, there are no weapons, although the highly decorated weapons of the period were real masterpieces and played an important part in the dress of any gentleman.

In contrast to modern arts and crafts, it was the rich decorations that constituted the most important element of these pieces functional though they may have been. Furniture, however, is the exception: it could hardly been really comfortable.

The first part of the exhibition represents—through Italian furniture—the spirit of Italian Renaissance. A particular feature of the period was that the most celebrated artists were also active as artisans; some of the pieces were made by Andrea del Verrocchio, Andrea della Robbia, Jacopo Sansovino, Andrea Riccio, or at least by their workshops. A more lively aspect of the art of the period is represented by ceramics from Faenza, Deruta, and Urbino among other places. The excited, animated works of Mannerism are present too, including an example of the still practised *tour de force* of Italian artisans, the production of decorative surfaces by assembling coloured stones, in this case a beautiful home altar, inlaid with semi-precious stones. The generally large wall-hangings intended for the halls of castles act as a sort of transition between Italy and Flanders. Some, like the series of hangings by famous students of Raphael for Pope Leo X, and indicating his family by the use of the Medici coat of arms (called

*Playing Children*), was woven in Flanders. There is also a beautiful *Birth of Christ* for which the cartoon was prepared by a native of Flanders, too. Spanish art, which occasionally preferred the bizarre, is also represented; these must have fallen in with the taste of the Hungarian nobility of the sixteenth century because their long, sometimes peaceful, sometimes warlike contacts with the Turks had made them sensitive to this style; later these objects found their way into Hungarian museums. German art is represented by interesting table-clocks, which are able to show complicated astronomic movements and by fantastically formed, mother-of-pearl-coated sea snails, which, in a gold or silver setting. The most important of the Hungarian objects closing the exhibition are the embroideries of the period which reflect a decidedly Turkish style—several of these were used to decorate Calvinist churches (this was the period of the spread of Calvinism) and pottery by the Habans, given refuge by an Esterházy and then expelled by Prince Pál from his own estates and all of Royal Hungary. These vessels were valued for their white glaze.

Almost all objects presented are the property of the museum.

Most of these objects have been Hungarian property for centuries, the history of several being well-known. This is primarily true of the objects coming from the treasury of the Esterházy family, celebrated and respected patrons of the arts. Others arrived in the Museum of Arts and Crafts as a result of collecting in the nineteenth century. The museum became a major buyer towards the end of the last century. Unfortunately, this was the last period when the museum could afford to buy new objects on a large scale. Some important object were acquired later on, when money was scarce but collecting had been well planned.

The organizers of the exhibition took great care to preserve the purity of style and genre of the smaller units within the exhibition; thus a single case contains metal objects or ceramics, or textiles or bookbindings; of the textile exhibits, woven pieces are separated from embroideries, of the metal objects, jewels from bronze reliefs, cutlery, or watches. Furniture pieces are placed on platforms; wood carvings, gold and silversmith objects, figurines are grouped decoratively in show-cases; the textiles are presented in cases or under glass; only the largest objects, wall-hangings, some of them as big as ten feet in length, are not protected in any way. There are a few playful arrangements; small children's clothes are placed in a cradle, some textiles are presented in a chest, designed for just this purpose, the lid naturally being open to show the beautiful interior. Since the furniture determines the scope of the whole exhibition, and things such as hangings, painting, doors which would naturally be placed on a wall, are in fact fastened there, the impression the exhibition gives is one of the friendliness, and warmth of home, not at all like a sterile museum environment. The paintings depict figures wearing the sort of jewels shown in the cases or rooms and thus provide good complementary information on the everyday use of the objects placed in the showcases.

A worthy catalogue accompanies the exhibition. All the items are described carefully, there is a bibliography, too (it is a pity that several titles bear the remark "unpublished"), and there is a photograph of every object. Although it is hardly a glossy publication (in the quality of the reproductions definitely not), but the price is at least reasonable. Its scholarship surpasses that of most museum catalogues, some as yet unpublished research results on some objects are included along with cross-references to analogous pieces or pairs in other collections. Interested readers of the *NHQ* will perhaps be pleased that all this information is not only available for the Hungarian speaking few: the catalogue also includes an extended English version.

JÁNOS VÉGH

# BAROQUE STATUES IN THE FESTETICH CHATEAU OF KESZTHELY

The Art Collection of the Diocese of Veszprém received the religious material of the Bakony Museum in 1983 and first presented its main works in an exhibition in the castle of Veszprém in the spring of 1985, in the former Franciscan convent. They provided a survey to visitors in the summer galery of the Tihany Museum in an exhibition entitled "Baroque Statues of Transdanubia". The 74 items, selected and exhibited by Katalin Dávid, virtually summarize the 18th-century ecclesiastical art of Transdanubia: they concentrate on wood sculptures and the goldsmith's craft and their iconographic, liturgic, and cultural presentation.

After the Turkish period in 17th-century Transdanubia the reviving bishoprics deployed the whole arsenal of the arts in support of the Catholic restoration. While in those parts of the country spared by the Turks there is a relatively continuous succession of styles in the fine arts, in the heart of Transdanubia the late Baroque coming from Italy via Austria follows the early 16th-century's spread of the Renaissance during King Matthias' age.

In the middle of the 18th century all restored medieval or newly built churches received their Baroque furnishings, altars with pictures and statues, and frequently frescos as well. At the end of the 19th century, during cleansing and gothic renovations, such as that of Veszprém cathedral, most of the Baroque objects fell into disuse. This material has been collected and saved, since 1957 permanently, by the diocese of Veszprém.

The selection in Keszthely provides a survey with the exception of some works from the 18th century, of the wood sculpture of the region, mostly of modest artistic level. The statue of the kneeling martyr St. Stephen seems to be the oldest: his block-like figure and the parallel folds of his garment with the marks of gilding preserve traces of the 17th century. The large pairs of St. Roch and St Sebastian and the much damaged St Florian are perhaps from the first third of the 18th century since their style suggests the sculpture of Transdanubian primarily Franciscan, houses and their churches; this is rough and indirectly linked with the alpine wood-carving tradition. One of the rarer unpainted carvings is a similarly old, static statue of St John of Nepomuk: the arms of the statue are missing and it is rich in details fashioned with the accuracy of fine worksmanship. As such it recalls the functional activity of Paulite wood-carver workshops: their most excellent representative in the region was János Hingeller (1712–1767) the master of Tüskevár. There is an intact, finely restored statue of the Immaculate Virgin from the first part of the 18th century. The Bishop of Veszprém, Márton Padányi Bíró attached great importance to veneration of the Holy Trinity and considered it to be one of the weapons in the renewed counter-reformation battles of the middle of the 18th century. He composed hymns to the Trinity and ordained extra processions in his diocese; for this latter purpose, he made the acquisition of portable sculptural groups compulsory for each parish. In 1755 he commissioned these from József Ferenc Schmidt, a native of Pest who had become a master in Székesfehérvár and who had worked on the stone statues of the Trinity Column in Veszprém. We know of his processional statues for the parish churches of Zalaegerszeg, Nova, Lenti, Császár for each of which he received three gold pieces; we also know of a wood-carving of his of higher artistic ambitions for the cathedral. The latter is probably identical with the copy on show in the Veszprém exhibition of the Diocesan Collection; the

smaller-sized Holy Trinity statue in Keszthely is of inferior quality and can thus can be considered to be a shop work like the Resurrected Christ which had the same purpose.

The painting of the Sümeg parish-church by Franz Anton Maulbertsch in 1757 is due to the patronage of Márton Padányi Bíró. His predecessor, Imre Esterházy, invited Antonio Galli Bibiena of Bologna to paint the frescoes of the cathedral in 1726, his successor Ignác Koller gave work to the Viennese painters Johann Ignaz Cimbal and Franz Anton Palko in the years around 1770. There is no name of similar artistic repute which can be directly linked with the sculpture. Hungarian Baroque sculpture was influenced primarily by the work of the Austrian Baroque sculptor Georg Raphael Donner (1693–1741): the main altars with columns and statues which became typical of the country, bear the marks of what he was producing in Pozsony (Bratislava). An example is that of the Franciscans in Sümeg and the modest adoring angels, kneeling on volute—some of them also in this exhibition.

Also typical of Transdanubia is the presence of rococo sculpture of South-German origin, a result of the work of the Straub family. Among the nephews of the Munich court-sculptor Johann Baptist Straub, who were also his pupils, the outstanding is Philip Jakob Straub (1706–1774) who moved to Graz in the middle of the century after studying at the Viennese Academy. From here he delivered statues to Hungary on commission from the Széchenyi and Szapáry families. The Hungarian National Gallery now contains statues from the Egervár parish-church of St. Sebastian and St Roch which are of extraordinary sensibility; the altars of Ercsi and Szécsisziget also came from his workshop.

His brother Joseph Straub (1712–1756) lived in Slovenia and worked in Nagykanizsa for the Franciscans of the town. Other works can be attributed to his style and workshop (Lövő, Tét-Szentkút); one of them is the figure of St. John the Baptist of the Diocese of Veszprém which can now be seen in Keszthely. The finely modelled body, made with a sure knowledge of anatomy, is lively yet sophisticated, the affected countenance, the realistically meticulous hair and beard and the naturalistic colouring, as with other works by Joseph Straub, represent one of the possible culminations of Baroque sculpture and also the abundance of means in sacred art. The anonymous master, who probably came from Straub's circle, sculptured the near life-size figures of the apostles St. Peter and St. Paul and a vividly coloured St. Anne with the same comprehension, with more exaggeratedly extended proportions, with twisted bodies and expanded draperies.

The charming, baby-faced Virgin from the middle of the century, treading on globe and snake, stands out among the small statues for its quality and condition; there is a later, neo-classic work, a Pietà group, placed on a pedestal. A small independent show of goldsmiths' ecclesiastic works, covering a century and a half, completes the exhibition.

This display sits well both in the series of attractive exhibitions and in the finely restored Festetich Chateau.

ANNA JÁVOR

# BAROQUE FAMILY TREES AND GENEALOGIES

Ornamental family trees and illustrated genealogies made their appearance in Hungarian aristocratic and court circles in the first half of the seventeenth century. As a type of painting, it was one manifestation of the cult of ancestry that grew in the late sixteenth century and in the seventeenth all over Europe, including Hungary, and accompanied the struggle between royalty and the estates. The nobility aimed at making themselves independent of regal power by displaying their glorious ancestry and emphasizing the role they had once played, thinking of themselves as the embodiment of the country. In the conflict between absolutism and the estates, they presented themselves as the defenders of Hungarian statehood. They also had reformist ideas concerning absolutism in Hungary. This cult of ancestry on their part was included in the idea of the estates' independence; to express themselves in this matter they also made use of fine art. The most spectacular pictorial expression of ancestry cult was beyond doubt the ancestors' gallery, while the family tree and the ornamental genealogy made all this visible in a single composition. This explains why family trees were popular. The essence of genealogies is that the sequence of generations within a family is made easy to survey, and no special technique is needed to produce them in their simpler forms. Aristocratic archives still preserve dozens of family trees from the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in which the names, written one under the other or closed in a simple circle, are connected by lines indicating the degree of kinship, and they lack any artistic endeavour. Anyone could make such family trees and these constitute the majority found in the archives of aristocratic families.

Hungarian family trees are of two basic types. One shows the order of descent in a family by starting with a distant ancestor, be it someone from the twelfth or thirteenth century or Adam, reaching from the top of the family tree to the time it was made. In the other type, a high-ranking contemporary is the starting-point, alone or with a spouse, with the genealogical line leading into the past, the most distant ancestors appearing at the top. The documentary element in both the ornamental family trees and simple genealogical tables is similar and is done using the same method. The genealogy of a family could be set up over some generations with greater or lesser accuracy, based on deeds concerning property, titles, and privileges carefully preserved in the family archives and from personal family records. However, the data for the more distant past was scanty, if it existed at all. In such cases medieval chronicles and even the Bible served as a source, or glorious ancestors were simply invented, together with the memorable deeds they had done.

In the practice of the time, drawing up a family tree was considered to be a scholarly job. However, if given due payment or reward, the "scholarly" author traced back the family line through nine or even more generations, to Attila the Hun or Adam, in compliance with his commissioner's request, even though there is documentary evidence that before writing became general, memory could rarely reach back through more than a few generations. The genealogy of the Bethlen family is an example of the "methodology" employed; its author gives his sources as being, from Adam to Noah, the Gospel according to St Luke, and from Noah to Attila the Thuróczi Chronicle and Antonio Bonfini's History. It was a common practice in Europe that the family tree commissioned by a noble family was sent to the royal chancellery for approval. The data so "attested" was then recorded in an ornamental royal chart, authenticated already by the ruler's document. Sándor Károlyi's family tree, which starts in 1212, was drawn up for the purpose of such an approval by the chancellery, and the text of certification can be seen on its left side.

The Palatine Pál Esterházy's family tree, which he may have compiled himself, was authenticated by Leopold, King of Hungary, when the genealogy of the newly emerged Esterházys, traced back to the period of the Magyar Conquest, was put down in an especially ornamented royal diploma and presented to the Palatine. It is preserved, among other family records, in the National Archives.

It is artistic quality alone that places some genealogies above the average. This common expression of aristocratic consciousness could fulfil its representative role when relying on the iconography of the fine arts. Rarely does the representative function of fine arts and pictorial idiom in the aristocratic culture of the Baroque period emerge so clearly and conspicuously than in these ornamental genealogies. Though the pictorial system of family trees is limited to a few basic types, the individual variants still make for variety in the genre. The simplest type is that in which the living and organic character of the family tree is indicated by different stylized forms of flora. The lines showing the order of descent become tendrils, with leaves and new shoots sprouting from them and amongst which a circle or a scroll bear the name of an ancestor. The botanical depiction of family trees ranges from stylized foliate scrolls to naturalistically painted, wide-spreading trees with elements added to make the meaning of genealogies more precise and which may eventually produce a new type of picture as well. This happens in those cases where the forefather of the family is depicted in the pictorial genealogy with the family tree sprouting to great height from his groin.

This pictorial solution, which appears in Hungary after the mid-seventeenth century, follows a centuries-old iconographic model, the family tree of Jesus known as Jesse's Tree. It became widely known in Christian art from the mid-twelfth century onwards, and shows the sleeping Jesse, King David's father, with Christ's family tree growing out of his groin, and between the branches appear half-length figures of kings of Israel of Solomon's family and some prophets. This type found its way into secular representations in the fifteenth century, when the family trees of European ruling dynasties were made in a similar way. The same type was also used in the seventeenth century to give expression to the cult of ancestry of the Hungarian aristocracy. The original iconographic type of Jesse's Tree also continued to appear in the Catholic tradition. An example is seen in the main altar in the church of Gyöngyöspata, carved in the 1650s. The fact that the medieval tradition of depicting Jesse's Tree in ecclesiastical art was so alive in Hungary in the middle of the seventeenth century indicates that, in some way or other, its sacred meaning may have been extended to the secular aristocratic family trees using the same pictorial composition.

The ornamental aristocratic family trees of the Baroque period have not been systematically collected in Hungary. We do not know to what extent genealogies following the model of Jesse's Tree had spread in aristocratic culture. The present exhibition is a first attempt at taking stock of painted family trees and one has the impression that this model was popular. Such a family tree in oils is preserved, for instance, in the Esterházy castle at Fraknó, of which several etchings have also been made. Other examples are the Nádasdy oil-painted family tree in the castle of Sárvár, the Erdődy in the castle of Vöröskő, and the Károlyi family trees displayed at the exhibition. From the late eighteenth century, the Hungarian lesser nobility also adopted this model, and several examples have come down even from the beginning of the nineteenth century, mainly from what was Upper Hungary, now Slovakia. Exceptions, however, are also found, which show a different approach to depicting the "forefather"; in the Bánffy genealogy, for instance, shown in the exhibition, the family tree sprouts from the chest of the standing figure of Childe the warrior Hahold, while in the Rédey genealogy, the oval portraits of Aba

Sámuel and his wife Sarolta are painted at the stem of the family tree.

An additional, new element in painted genealogies, which helped interpret their meaning, was the depiction of fruit, mostly ripe red apples, to symbolize the offspring of the family. The Károlyi family trees are examples for this, the names of the family members being written in apples. The trunk of the tree bears the apt Hungarian proverb, the closest English equivalent of which would be "As the tree is, such is the fruit," and which is literally translated as "An apple never falls far from its tree." However, apples are also painted in family trees in which the proverb itself does not appear.

Among other additional elements in the family tree are the coats of arms painted on the edge of the composition, symbols of connections with various families, as well as texts of the royal deeds concerning the estates held by the family written under the tree, as in the family trees of the Károlyis, Esterházys, and Bánffys. Both are, however, merely visual signs that have no artistic value.

There is one example, however, where additional elements achieved artistic function. In the first large family tree of the Esterházys, an etching by Tobias Sadler in 1670–1671, the intention of Pál Esterházy, who commissioned it, was to achieve a total effect. He had the family tree started with Adam, and when reaching his own time, instead of names written in circles, he had portraits of himself, his wife, parents, brothers and their spouses included in the composition. Similarly, instead of the text of the royal deed for the family estate, he had views of the 48 Esterházy castles and mansions placed in the picture.

Such family trees did more than just keep aristocratic consciousness alive or offer a representative pictorial expression of the ancestral tradition of the family. They also functioned as a basis for or conclusive evidence in acquiring new estates, starting legal actions for possession, assuming hereditary offices; similarly, they acted as documents for kinship, so important where the inheritance of entailed property was concerned. Genealogies of close to one hundred noble families are preserved in the Esterházy family archives, and there are genealogical tables aimed at documenting rightful claims to certain estates through genealogical arguments.

The cult of ancestry, of which the family tree was just one manifestation, contained several elements which would now be considered in the category of false consciousness. It contributed to establishing a socially normative system in which the ancestral origin of a family, which might otherwise have been difficult to prove, could enjoy high social prestige. The crucial importance accorded to proper lineage is especially evident in those cases when a freshly emerged family could not produce one, leading to the gaps in the family tree being filled in by fictitious persons. However, around the middle of the seventeenth century, when family trees appeared in Hungarian aristocratic culture, the role of the cult of ancestry went beyond the maintenance and strengthening of social prestige—it became a support in the struggle against the Turks and provided an example for the aristocracy engaged in the defence of their country. Together with old portraits in the gallery of ancestors, this is evident in works related to the cult in which a member of a family who showed especial virtues in fighting the Turks was held up as an example to follow. This is what Miklós Zrínyi does with the figure of his great-grandfather in his epic poem "The Siege of Sziget," Ferenc Nádasdy with his grandfather, the "Black Bey," in the ceiling murals of Sárvár Castle, or the Esterházys and the Forgáchs with their ancestors in the etched sheets produced at the University of Nagyszombat. In these, the artistic manifestations of the cult of ancestry carried a clearly progressive social content. Such works of art grew out of the same soil as the seventeenth-century aristocratic family trees.

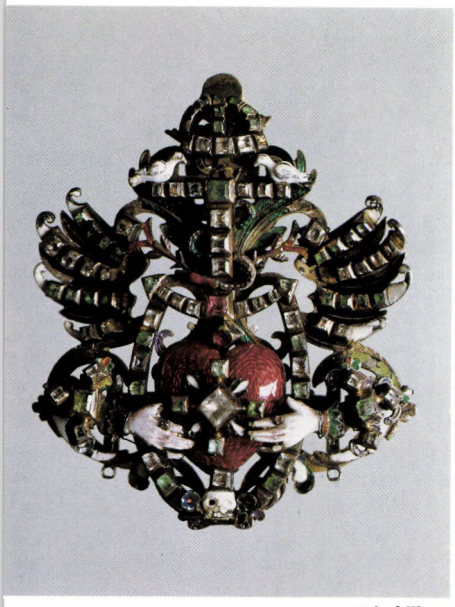
GÉZA GALAVICS

# THE ART POOL ARCHIVES

## *The Story of a Hungarian Art Collection*

Several years ago, the fact that the Paul Getty Museum had bought the Jean Brown Collection caused a stir among Hungarian collectors and museologists. The interest in the purchase derived from the fact that the collection contained, alongside Dadaist and Surrealist works by then classics of modern art, documents of the FLUXUS movement which was less well represented in museums, as well as a huge body of works produced by the alternative art trends of the 'seventies and 'eighties. Till then, this collection of the various intermedia art forms, such as the postmark, art book, mail art, and audio works, could be established and brought to the public only behind the back of the


*Art Pool Graphic, 1983*



Richard Wagner

Bethlen pendant.
Transylvania, 1626.
Gilded silver,
inlaid and enamel
with precious stones

Domestic altar.
End of the 16th
century. Florence.
Marble
and precious stones,
gilded bronze

Ágnes Kolozs

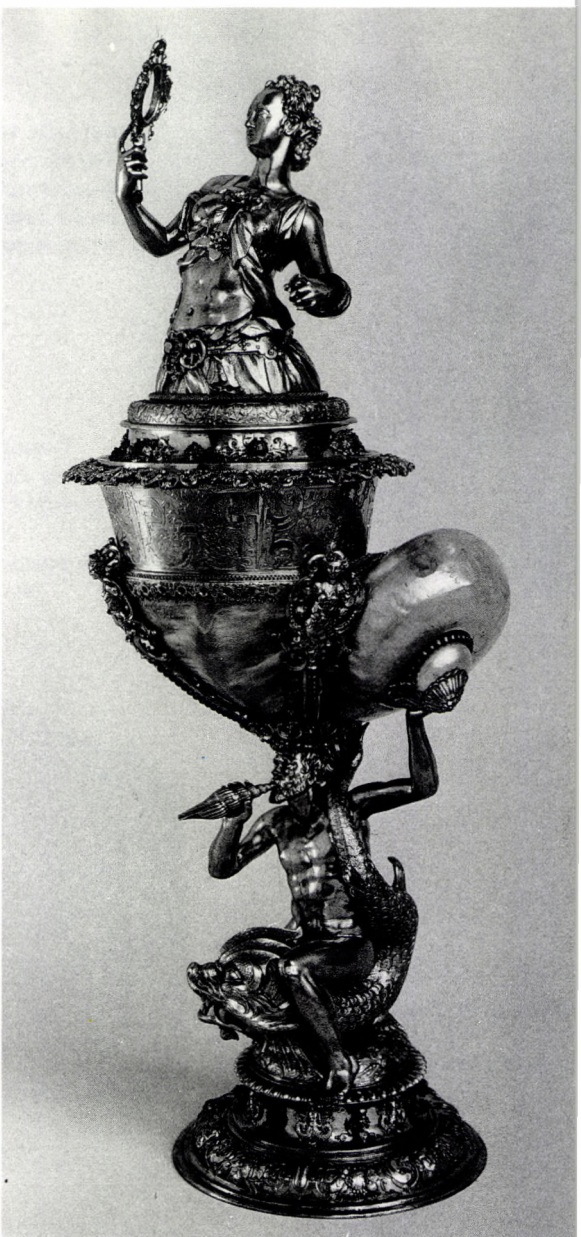
Horse rug.
Middle of the 16th century,
Spain. Velvet,
gold thread, jewels, enamel
and silver, 62 × 104 cm

Ágnes Kolozs

Ágnes Kolozs

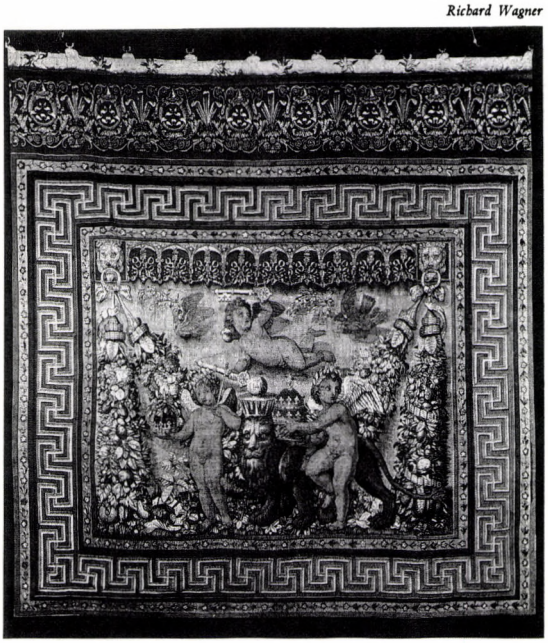
Hope chest,
cca 1480, Umbria. Poplar,
painted, gilded

*Ágnes Kolozs*



CHALICE WITH COVER, CCA 1580, BY HANS PETZOLT, NUREMBERG, GILDED SILVER

*Richard Wagner*



TAPESTRY: CHILDREN'S TOYS. WITH LION, MIDDLE OF THE 18TH CENTURY, BRUSSELS. WOOL, SILK AFTER ORIGINAL DESIGN BY RAFFAELLO WOVEN BY TOMMASO VINCIDOR AND GIOVANNI DA UDINE, ORIGINALLY IN 1521

Hungarian Master: Madonna with scapular, end of the 18th century

*András Nagygyörgy*

Hungarian Master:
Maria Immaculata, 18th century

*András Nagygyörgy*

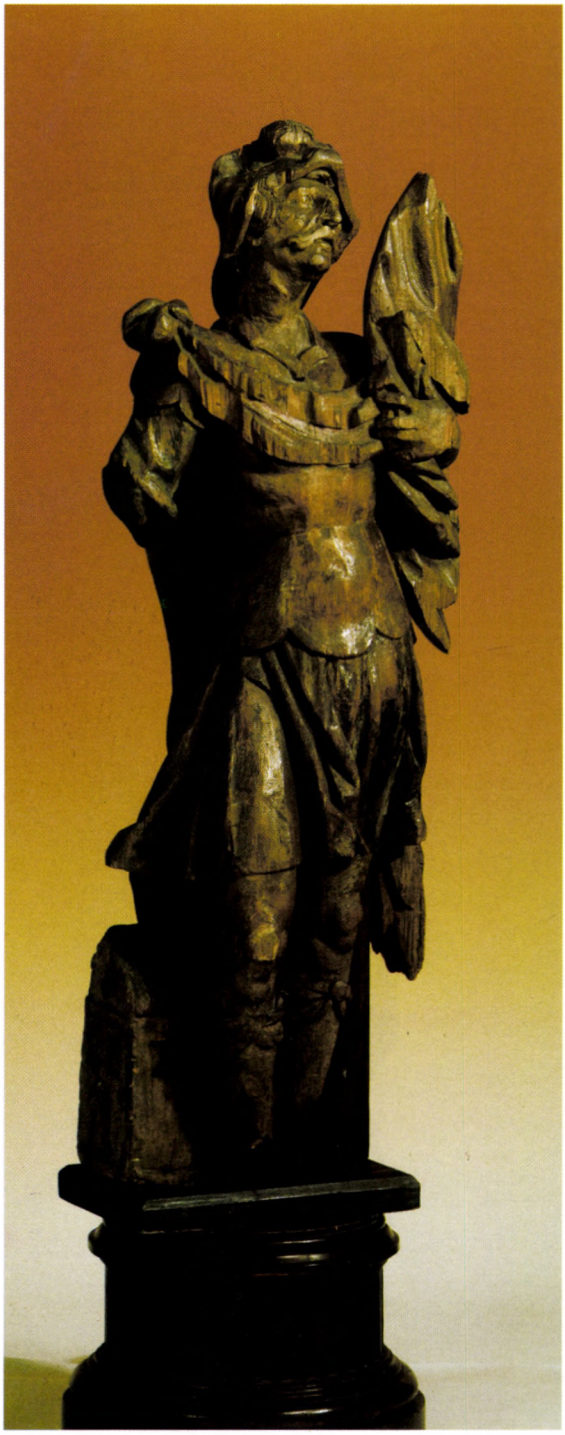
HUNGARIAN MASTER:
SAINT ANNE, 18TH CENTURY

AUSTRIAN MASTER:
PIETÀ, 18TH CENTURY

Hungarian Master:
John the baptist, 18th century

*András Nagygörgy*

Hungarian Master:
Saint John of Nepomuk,
18th century



HUNGARIAN MASTER: SAINT FLORIAN, 18TH CENTURY

*András Nagygyörgy*

HUNGARIAN MASTER: SAINT SEBASTIAN, 18TH CENTUR

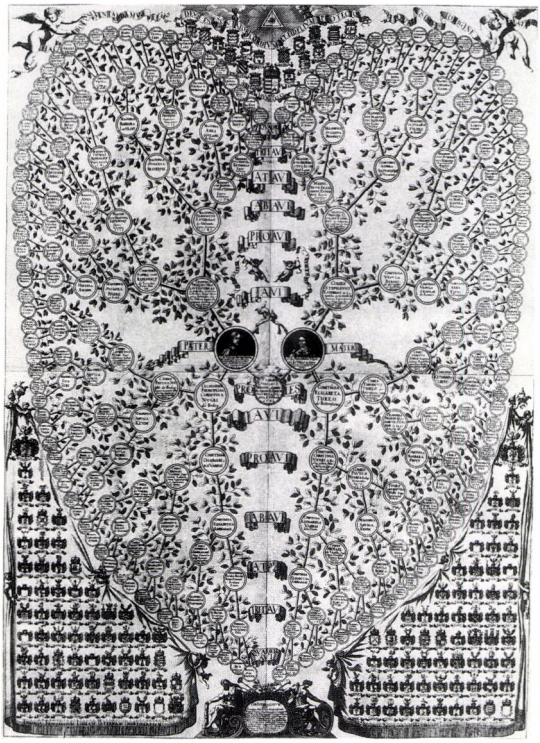

*From the Jankovich collections*

UNKNOWN MASTER: COUNT MIKLÓS ESTERHÁZY.
1645. OIL ON CANVAS, 215 × 129 CM.

*From the Esterházy chateau in Pápa.*

UNKNOWN MASTER: KATA, COUNTESS ESTERHÁZY,
1692. OIL ON CANVAS, 190 × 119,3 CM.

Unknown master: Prince Pál Antal Esterházy and family. 1830–33. Oil oncanvas, 88 × 109 cm



Tobias Sadler: The Esterházy family tree. 1670. Etching on paper, 103 × 73 cm

official art institutions. The purchase made by the Getty Museum proved to be a turning-point. Since then, other archives of the alternative arts have found their way into public collections, such as the art book, periodical and mail art collection of the prestigious Californian paper *Umbrella*.

Sooner or later, the great museums in Europe too will turn their attention to this so far neglected area of works. However, if they are to make any purchases, they have to find the private collections which, keeping in step with daily events, have acquired, practically free, and preserved, the products and the documents of the latest art trends. So far, in Central Europe, only one single archive of this type has become known internationally, and this is the Budapest *Art Pool Collection*. This collection came into being and started to grow almost automatically, when its owners, the graphic artist and sculptor György Galántai and his wife Júlia Klaniczay joined the international mail art movement in the late 'seventies.

During the ten years that have since passed, this collecting, first received with doubts and suspicion, has proved to be very useful. It concentrated not only on the products of the alternative forms in the international art scene at the right time, but also on ephemeral documents of the most varied range of Hungarian artistic trends, with the result that they are now contained in a homogeneous collection and accessible to the public. The Art Pool Archives eventually aroused not only the attention of the professionals, but also gained financial and technical support from the Soros Foundation. The archives now contain, under about 3,000 entries of names and addresses, some ten thousand sheets, letters, postcards, stamps, books, posters, periodicals, and audio-casettes. Once a hobby, the collection has now come of age, become institutionalised, and soon its proper maintenance and handling in private hands will not be possible.

*

A short history of how this collection was born gives an insight not only into the history of the archives but also into the history of the emergence and dynamic growth of new artistic trends in the last twenty years.

György Galántai first made a name for himself in the Hungarian art world as an organizer of exhibitions. He rented a small abandoned chapel by Lake Balaton and displayed in it the products of the new avant-garde art during the summer months. Very soon, in 1972, the demand arose that the works exhibited there be documented in some way. A tour he made abroad gave him further incentives. When in Cologne, he accidentally came upon the archives of the art group "Depot," consisting of a mere set of shelves, some boxes and a small collection of books, but accessible to the public. Galántai first made a public documentation from the transparencies he made of the material displayed in the chapel, then started collecting the graphic sheets and other prints of a documentary character in a large portfolio.

Two other archives abroad also served as models. In the course of a trip made to Western Europe, Galántai visited in Paris the collection *Vitrine pour l'Art Actuel*, furnished on the groundfloor of the Galerie Quincampoix as a cafeteria, library, and lounge. Galántai was quick to see in this 'inter-media' outlet the kind of establishment he had longed for. He was similarly impressed by Ulises Carrion's alternative bookshop in Amsterdam, *Other Books and so*... which has since become famous. One could not only buy there small press publications, hand-made books, and brochures made by artists but have a coffee and, while sipping, leaf through the alternative art publications and mail art documents of three continents. The archives of the Appel Foundation in Amsterdam also served as an example of how to institutionalise a collection of "underground" art works and how to cultivate it on a professional level.

Further events, occasionally accidental,

were needed for the Art Pool Collection to be born. One such accidental idea came when Galántai asked the noted neo-Dada artist Anna Banana, visiting Budapest just then, to open his exhibition. To the documentary brochure made of the opening and of the exhibition Galántai then added a rubber stamped text: "Please send me information about your activity." This casual text stamped in red ink worked miracles. The brochure was sent to more than a hundred renowned artists abroad, and almost all of them replied. Documents or prints were received from Arnulf Rainer, Milan Knižak, Christo, Klaus Staeck, the famous Italian critic Umbro Apollonio, and others. The list of addresses of the Politi Press and from the Art Diary turned out to be a goldmine.

The majority of fresh connections were made with those engaged in the inter-media arts typical of the 'seventies: concept art, happening and performance art as well as the neo-Dada and the FLUXUS movements. Alongside well-known artists were others who had made their name through one particular publication. Such were the periodical *Vile* of Anna Banana, Michael Gibbs' *Kontexts*, and Dieter Roth's books of varied content and form. Some of these publications contained further names and addresses which seemed to maintain close contacts and made a network of some sort. The network led to more unknown names, who in turn knew one another well and replaced what once exhibitions and galleries did through a constant exchange of information by mail. This was how Mail Art, the new, mobile, and non-official form of artistic expression and connection came to be born.

*

Júlia Klaniczay gave a name to the emerging archives; this expressed her intention of channelling the products of the newly discovered mail art and gathering them into a receptacle. By naming it Art Pool, the artist couple meant their intention of establishing an active, living archive with a high turnover and wide connections, one that creates and contributes to an international art life. They planned to maintain it not only in the form of items stored in boxes and catalogues but also through exhibitions, competitions, and publications.

The first form of this living archive was what was called the "Art Pool's periodical space," a place where contact and exchange of information between artists could take place, be it a club, a gallery, or any other place. Oddly enough, the first "periodical space" was a poster which Galántai printed on commission from the noted French FLUXUS artist Robert Filiou and which held the inscription: "Fond remembrance / warm wishes / handshakes." At the same time, in 1979 the one-page newsletter of the archive, *Pool Window*, was launched. This was a real mail-art product, with invitations for forthcoming mail-art exhibitions or publications and lists of contacts. In two or three years, a large group of mail-art contributors appeared in Hungary as well, and the newsletter came to an end only when the artists began acquiring data directly through their international contacts.

Mail-art activities culminated around 1980, when the first, and actually the only, real mail-art exhibition was held in the Young Artists' Club in Budapest. The ensuing exhibition with the participation of the well-known neo-Dada and mail artist Cavellini was arranged in several sections and offered a chance to survey the Hungarian mail-art scene of the time, through the artists' reflections on Cavellini's art.

The 1982 exhibition of World Art Post in Fészek Club, Budapest, the organization of which started in the previous year, with 550 participants became an international forum of stamp-designing artists and to this day the most important event of its kind. In the majority of cases, such exhibitions are held with support from some foundation or institution. György Galántai and his wife could not yet hope for such support at the

time. They themselves covered the printing costs of the richly illustrated catalogue—which amounted to roughly six-month family income. But they reaped moral success, one of the consequences being that Galántai could make a 40-minute film of the art stamps at the Balázs Béla Film Studio in Budapest. The musical accompaniment of the film was selected from the audio material held in the Art Pool Archives.

While the preparations for the exhibitions were being made, there were some other events taking place as well. In 1980 the first Hungarian "assembling" was edited. This form is a product of mail art, a peculiar kind of magazine, each page of which is contributed by the artists separately in the required number of copies, and the pages are then assembled by the editor. The "assembling" edited by Art Pool was entitled *Textile without Textile,* and appeared in 300 copies. The title reflects the fact that Hungarian textile artists, then at the peak of their successes, contributed and also that the non-textile drawings, prints, and applications employed the techniques of poetry, as the word *text* is contained in the word *textile.*

In two further undertakings, artistic work as action gained especial emphasis. At the 1982 seal exhibition only the rubber seals were actually "on display," hanging from the ceiling, and the audience was expected to produce the exhibits by stamping sheets which were then hung up on the walls. The "Concert through the Telephone" organized in 1983 was a Hungarian version of a typical inter-media genre called "Sound Poetry" The artists established telephone connections between Budapest, Vienna, and Berlin, and "broadcast" sound plays, musical compositions, and texts using them. The participants were, along with Art Pool Studio, the Blix group and the Österreichische Kultur Service in Vienna and the Auf- und Abbau Galerie in Berlin. There was a book published in Austria about the event, and the compositions made in the course of the multiple connections were circulated in audio cassettes.

"Art trips" made by György Galántai and Júlia Klaniczay, after careful preparations, have also served to enrich the material of the archives. They visited archives and artists of international repute. In 1979 in Italy they saw Romano Peli's collection in Parma and contacted with Adriano Spatola, poet and publisher, who had initiated the "assembling" type of publications in Europe. They also met Ugo Carrega, an eminent figure in visual poetry. In 1982 they made a trip through several countries in Europe, in the course of which they visited Documenta in Kassel, and Holland, Belgium, and Italy. They saw Guy Schraenen's Small Press and Communication Archives in Antwerp, met Julien Blaine, Ben Vautier, and Vittore Baroni, and made exchanges with the Rabascal Galerie in Paris and the Politi Press in Milan. Acquisitions made during the trip filled eight boxes, the transport of which to Hungary caused no small trouble for the artist couple.

The publication of *Commonpress 51,* in 1984, indicated the widening of the international contacts of Art Pool. This is a periodical, each issue of which is edited by a different artist; its contributors and material are selected from the international mail-art movement. The 51st issue edited by Art Pool dealt with Hungary. Meanwhile, word of the archives spread among academic circles as well. The Hans Sohm Archives in Germany, now attached to the Staatsgalerie in Stuttgart, donated rare art stamps to the Galántais. Jean Brown, patron and avid collector of the post-FLUXUS alternative movements, became a regular pen-friend whose encouraging and appreciative lines were of great service. Art Pool regularly appeared in various publications and periodicals the world over. Personal contacts made their contribution here, such as Judith Hoffberg, publisher of *Umbrella,* an important periodical of the movement in the United States, when they met in Venice.

1984 brought some change to the Galántais' collecting. In 1983, the year of

communication, they launched their monthly *Art Letter*, which marked a departure from the one-sided, mail-art-centred orientation of their activity. This publication has become a general art review which carried news of exhibitions in Hungary and abroad, art events, interviews, essays, and reports, with a summary in English. Consequently, *Art Letter* was well received not only in the alternative movements but also became an organic part of the Hungarian art scene. The Galántais recognized that they have to alter the structure of the archives as well. The golden age of collecting international material had come to an end, and the tide of mail art perceivably ebbed. The main purpose now was to collect Hungarian material, in a general sense too: topical items, ephemeral publications, theatrical, architectural, art, music, film, and video material which more or less fell outside the interest of official institutions. Cooperation with large museums also became easier, as was evident in organizing a 1987 international art stamp exhibition together with the Budapest Museum of Fine Arts. The catalogue of this exhibition is now regarded as the first independent scholarly publication of its kind in international terms as well.

Visiting Art Pool today, one has the impression that it is not a flat, but a strange, colourful, and intriguing mixture of library and storeroom, workshop, and office. The Galántais live amongst shelves reaching up to the ceiling, filled with archival boxes, portfolios, and glass cases marked according to various systems. Like the scenery of a short story by Borges waiting to be discovered, this resembles a Babylonian library, with an amazing variety of languages and forms of artistic expression, the poetic cipher of information recorded on audio cassette, or reduced to a single gesture. Stored here are letters, coloured cards, anagrams, mysterious patterns, and objects, grouped according to countries of origin, genres, names and the impersonal logic of the alphabet. One portfolio bears the inscription "Kaldron," referring not to a physical or chemical term but a large-format magazine specializing in anagrams. On another one can see "Mohamed," but to think of the prophet would be a mistake. He is an artist living in Genova who regards oral and written communication as the up-to-date form of art.

The adjective "prophetic" is due only to that passion and dedication which is necessary to create and maintain an archive of this sort. Work started with accidental discoveries and surprises, continued with the joy and beauty of a growing collection and soon reached the stage when the work itself, the archive, took control and dictated and handed out the tasks to be done, the services to be rendered. The outsider may see a mere hobby, an eccentric and curious activity. It is not easy to recognize that a new institution is being born, that a cultural establishment serving the public good is waiting for society to discover and take possession of it.

GÉZA PERNECZKY

# ORGANIC ARCHITECTURE BY THE PÉCS GROUP

The prize named after Miklós Ybl, the Hungarian architect of some 150 important buildings in the second half of the nineteenth century, is awarded for the most successful architectural works of the preceding period, and occasionally to an outstanding body of work. In the most recent years a new trend is also becoming noticeable; to award this recognition, the highest in the profession, to young architects, and to experiments that open new vistas in architecture. The Ybl Prize awarded to two Pécs architects, Sándor Dévényi and István Kistelegdi, in 1988, the first official, even if cautious, acknowledgement of the work of the Pécs Group since the beginning of the 'seventies, is a new proof of this. Their approach reflects that of organic architecture, whose best-known Hungarian representative is Imre Makovecz.*

Their works, designs, and architectural ideas were recently shown at the Budapest Gallery. The name Pécs Group emerged after their cooperation, which established their common approach, was ended. Jonathan Glancey chose this description as the title of his detailed report in the 1981 No. 12 issue of the London journal *The Architectural Review*. In his opinion: "Group Pécs are engaged in a daunting task, that of re-introducing historical imagery and content into contemporary architecture without recourse to decadent frills and conceits of Post-Modern whimsy. Curiously, though, the recent and current work seems to be pointing towards some sort of internationalism—or pan-Europeanism—by drawing out elements of a Celtic decorative tradition which once stretched from eastern and central Europe across to the west coast of Ireland. The result is very possibly an architectural language which might be just as comprehensible to a Gaelic-speaking shepherd in Connemara as to the Budapest academic."

* *NHQ* 100.

Tibor Jankovics and some of his classmates began to work in 1968 for *Baranyaterv* of Pécs, one of the state-owned architectural studios of that town, which also invited György Csete, who was Rector of the University when they studied there. The approach of the group and their partly common world of form and working method developed in the course of discussions, publications, and exhibitions in which they engaged in addition to their routine work. As architects they had to face from the start the task of designing mass-produced, prefabricated concrete residential housing estates. Even there they experimented with solutions on a human scale and with linkage to the surroundings. These experiments provoked a professional and political debate in 1975, which eventually led not only to the banning of experiments but also to the dissolution of the group in 1978.

When the former members of the group settled in various towns under varying circumstances, they and their friends began cooperating again in 1980. From 1981 onwards a number of exhibitions and publications abroad treated their works, particularly in Finland. The Budapest exhibition places particular emphasis on the most important element of the group's architectural credo, their relationship to the past. The first panel gives the etymological source-material, which defies simple translation. The Hungarian word *hajlék* chosen as the title of the exhibition denotes not only a shelter, a home, a building, but also refers to the technology of building, *hajlít*, to bend. The group's hypothesis is that the relationship of the two words is proof of the ancient practice whereby boughs driven into the earth were *bent* together and then joined, thus forming an arched framework. This method of building was practised for simple and temporary buildings not only in Hungary but also along the route the Magyars followed in their wanderings that brought them to the

present Hungary. The concept of "bending" —according to the etymology suggested by the hypothesis—establishes relationship between the technological, constructional, and psychological advantages of the arched forms. The same arched forms make the buildings designed by Group Pécs familiar, genuine homes.

The second stratum of sources—in historical order—is the wealth of motifs of Hungarian art at the time of the Conquest (A.D. 896). This is what appears as Celtic ornamentation to Jonathan Glancey, although in fact it is not. Yet this error is a good indication of the substantial identity that exists in the structure and symbolism of the two worlds of motifs. The use of the arched structures of the *hajlék* reaches its heights in the homes and workshop designed by György Csete. The princely treasures dating from the time of the Hungarian conquest found at Nagyszentmiklós and sabretache plates dating from around the same time come to new life in the sketches and furniture designed by Gyöngyvér Blazsek. Her drawings call attention to the analogies and survival of ornamental motifs found in other cultures and her contemporary furniture designs also fit into this chain.

Living folk art demonstrates the continuity of art since the conquest and even earlier ages. "Folk art provides continuity during eras of changing styles," says György Csete in an interview published in the catalogue of the exhibition. "Similar to the Hungarian folk tradition, those of the Japanese and the Finns also preserve important motifs referring to the symbolic role and cult, that architecture had in ancient times. Group Pécs subjected some of these emphatically cultic, sacral folk-objects to thorough structural and functional analysis in order to utilize their findings in designs. The carved wooden headboards of Hungarian Calvinist cemeteries—these tombmarkers carrying information in the language of formal motifs—provided the geometric basis for model experiments in space."


*Grave-posts in Kalotaszeg, Transylvania*

Cupolas are a feature of all the design work of the Group, from István Kistelegdi's mortuary at Siklós built in 1972, to the modelling experiments in space György Csete carried out with students of architecture in Innsbruck. Homes, yurtas, at the time of the Hungarian conquest and the half-globe shaped forms designs by member of the Group bespeak a homogeneous approach.

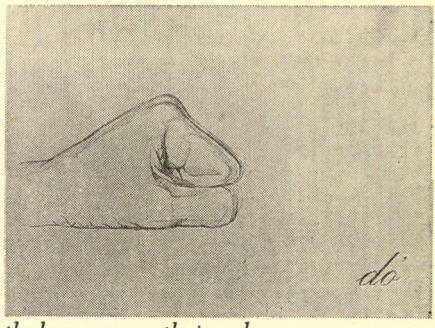
The question of tradition was raised by the turn of the century. This is one of the reasons why the Pécs architects consider the ideas of secessionist architecture as one of their sources.

As well as Ödön Lechner and Károly Sós, other architects of the turn of the century, such as István Medgyaszay, Dezső Zrumeczky and Ede Toroczkai Wigand, are also much referred to examples. They all wished to answer the how now? by preserving realizable values of folk architecture, of the national culture, in modern works. Members of the Group personally met Károly Kós, the

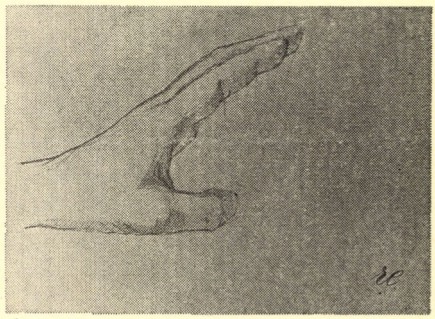
'grand old man' from Transylvania several times, recorded their discussions, and these meetings were crucial for the direction of their works.

The "tulips dispute" exploded in connection with a housing settlement designed by the Pécs architects. The commission was to provide fifteen hundred homes in prefabricated standard buildings. "We wanted to give adequate design not only to the mass of the buildings, but also to the interior space, indeed even to the interior function. Our archtype, in terms of which we are thinking ever since, was extremely simple, the division of traditional Hungarian homes into three parts. The heart, the actual centre of the home in our design just as in the archtype is the family table, the 'hearth'. This is where people sit down to eat, talk, discuss things, even to receive their guests. Well, it was this heart that prefabricated concrete architecture had scrimped out of homes before the tulip buildings of Paks and it is what we put back in," says György Csete.

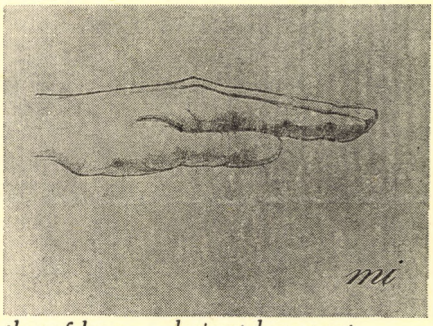
The formal and functional transformation was intended to be achieved in several phases—to suit prefabricated concrete technology—and reached the first stage only when on the pretext of enlarged details of tulips, the characteristic regional folk-art motif displayed on façades and on balcony balustrades, an attack was launched against the whole spirit of the experiment claiming that folk motifs could not be reconciled with the ideas of prefabricated construction. The programme, as planned, ultimately fell through, the planners of the other buildings followed earlier practice, even ignoring the original ideas on how to site them. Subsequently, the group itself was disbanded. József Nyári and István Kistelegdi, who stayed at Pécs, together with Sándor Dévényi, who picked up the heritage of the Group and who also showed a number of his works at the exhibition, set out to create elements of a new kind of urban environment with the revival of some of the architectural traditions of Pécs—first of all the



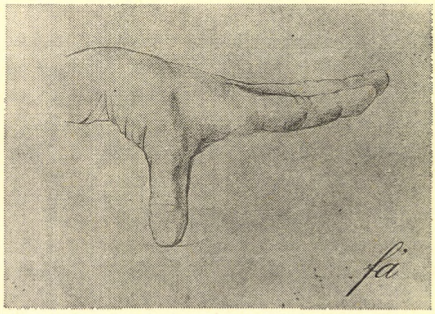

*the house, — synthesis, calme*



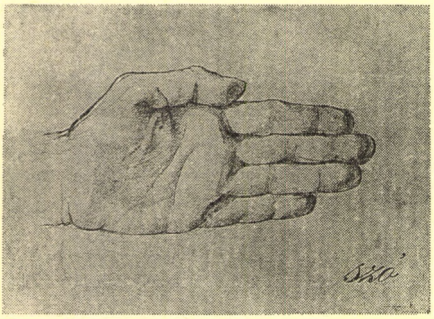

*the gate, — start*



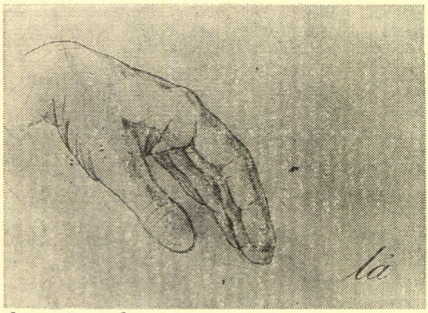

*the roof beam, — horizontal movement*



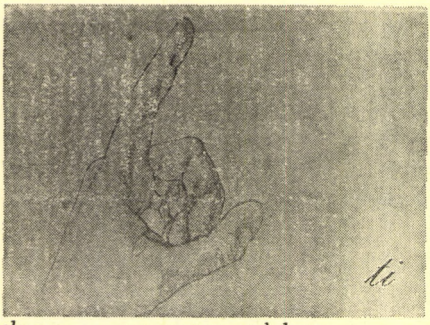

*the column, — balancing on the single point*



*the wall, — perpendicular movement*



*the roof, — leaning on a surface*



*the step, — movement up and down*

use of colourful Zsolnay ceramics—as well as through individual forms. Their buildings in ideas and details, fitting into the small-town environment, are works which are already essential to the town-scape of Pécs. Of the works of Tibor Jankovics and his associates in the Keszthely district, architectural experiments carried out since 1984, deserve particular attention. Adobe buildings, once popular all over the world, also have Hungarian traditions. Tibor Jankovics built the first of his family homes in adobe in 1985, and that appeared to be the first step towards an environmentally-minded architecture which has a bright future in Hungary too.

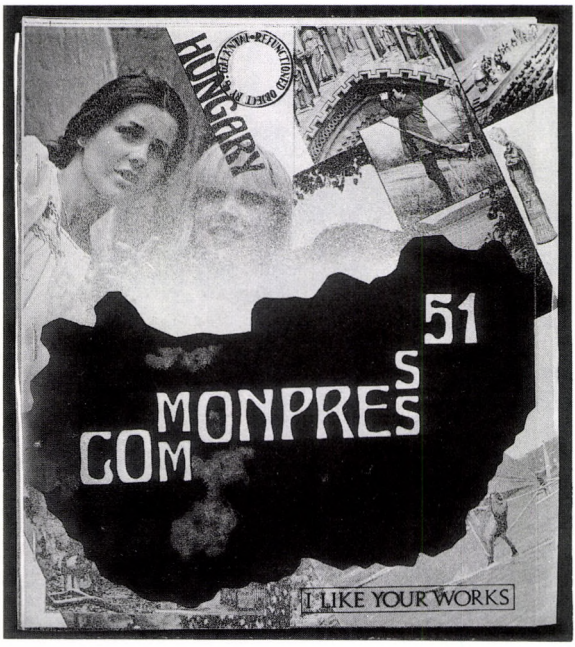
The latest works of György Csete express the ideal of symbolism together with that of living close to the environment. His designs show his approach, that the building should become part of the environment not only in form but also in respect to its internal functions. The building fits into the balance of the forces of nature and reaches its own balance through this—and not through opposing them. Péter Olti is attempting a variation of this approach using more traditional forms in his family houses.

Finally, one of the most interesting trains of thought demonstrated at the exhibition must be mentioned. Drawings by László Deák, who went to Szolnok from Pécs, depict the hand signals used in Zoltán Kodály's solmization system. These signals corresponding to the various notes of the octatonic scale can also be regarded as symbols of basic situations in space—according to the analogy made by Gyöngyvér Blazsek. The drawings prove in an interesting way that the elements of the scale can be paralleled —through the intervention of hand signals— with elements of a sequence consisting of variations of space structure. This seems to throw light on yet another phenomenon that, beyond the apparently accidental nature, appears familiar and normal to all of us.

JÁNOS GERLE

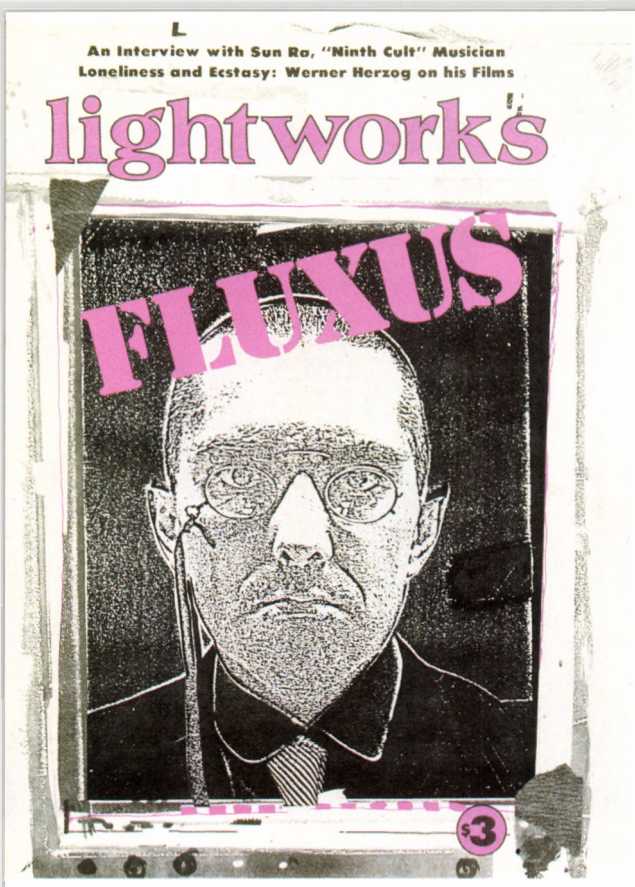

MATTHIAS GREISCHER: THE COMBINED FAMILY TREE OF PÁL ESTERHÁZY AND ORSOLYA ESTERHÁZY.
1681–82. ETCHING, PAPER, 108,2 × 80, 2 CM

Art Pool work room

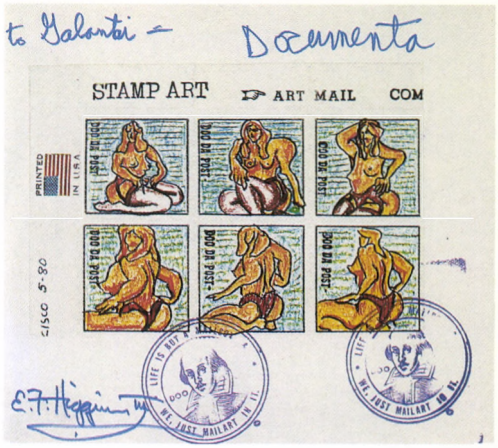



Cover of commonpress magazine


Xerox poster for artpool's 8th exhibition




COVER OF LIGHTWORKS MAGAZINE, NO. 11/12. FALL 1979. ED. CHARLTON BURCH, MASSACHUSETTS, USA

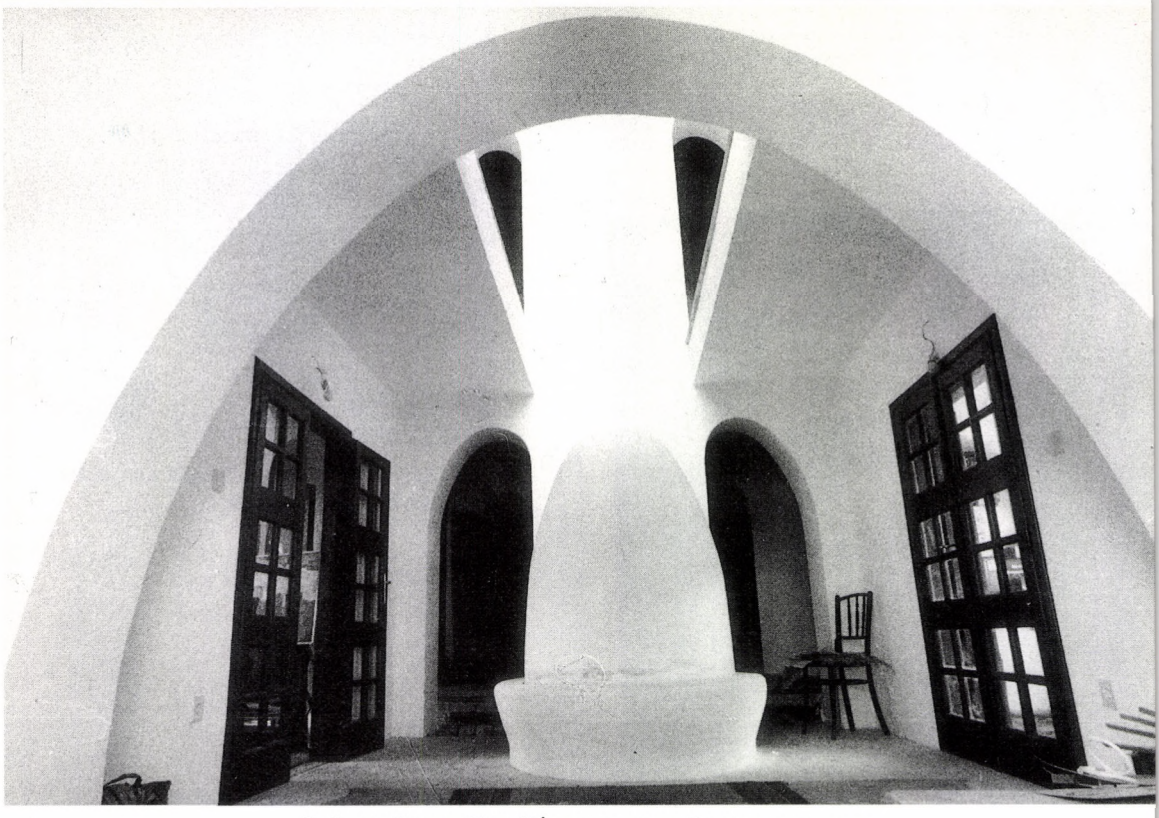



ONE PAGE FROM ARTPOOL'S 1982 ART TOUR DIARY BY E. F. HIGGINS III.

*László Lugosi*

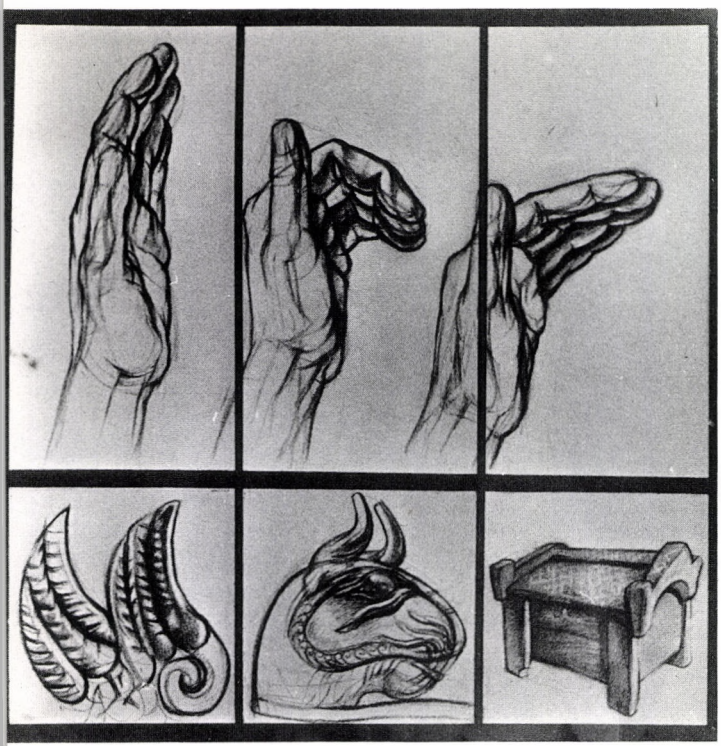
HAIRY BOOK BY WULLE KONSUMKUNST, GERMANY, 1980


. F. HIGGINS III. FLAT COLOUR PAINT TEST, pt. 23/87.



György Csete: The Kátai house in Szentendre, 1979

György Csete: The Cyprus inn at Szarvas, 1980



*Mátyás Tímár*

GYÖNGYVÉR BLAZSEK: FURNITURE DESIGNS, AFTER THE SOLMIZATION HAND SIGNS

*János Gerle*

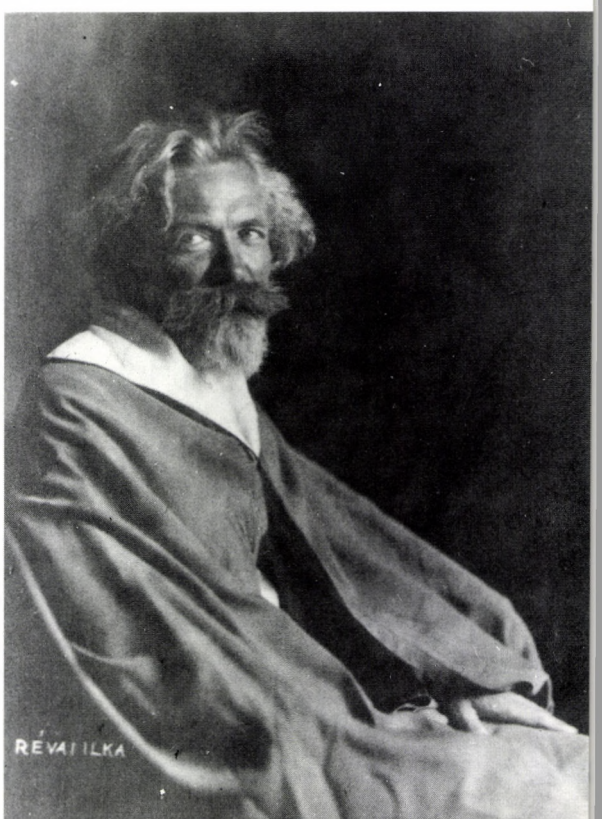

SÁNDOR DÉVÉNYI:
ENTRANCE OF THE HOTEL AMOR IN PÉCS

GYÖNGYVÉR BLAZSEK:
ORNAMENTAL ANALYSES, DESIGN

Miklós Barabás: The painter and photographer with his family, cca 1860


Strelisky: An operetta scene about 1885 with Lujza Blaha and Imre Szirmai

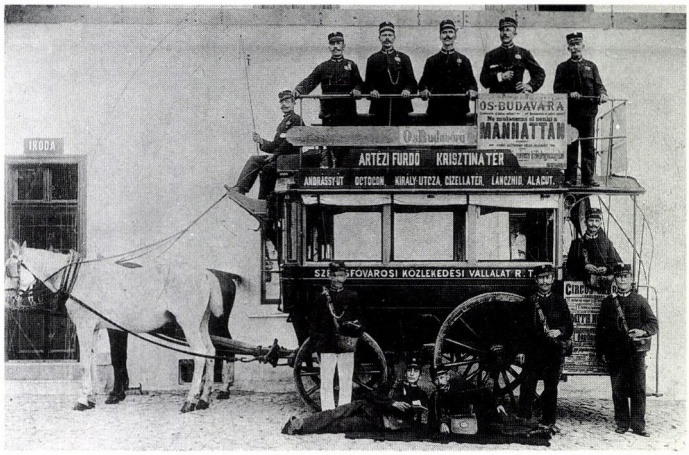

Ödön Uher: Romola Pulszky, wife of Nijinsky, about 1910




Ilka Révai: The painter Aladár Kőrösfői Kriesch, cca 1915

UNKNOWN PHOTOGRAPHER:
ANTAL KUGLER,
THE CONFECTIONER, WITH
HIS FAMILY. CCA 1860

UNKNOWN PHOTOGRAPHER:
OMNIBUS OF THE CITY TRANSPORT COMPANY,
BUDAPEST, 1896.

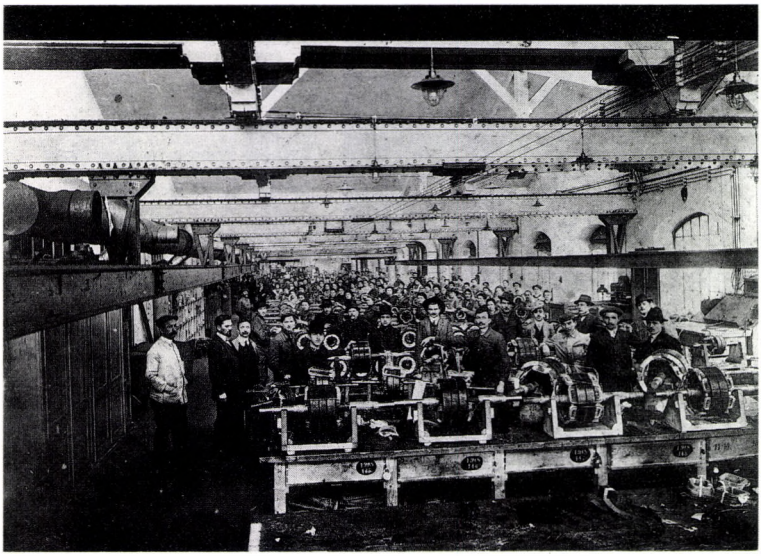




UNKNOWN PHOTOGRAPHER:
DELICATESSEN IN THE PEST
INNER CITY. CCA 1900


Unknown photographer:
Flood in 1875. Fő utca
under water

István Szigeti:
Physical education class
in the Székesfehérvár
Catholic Main
Gimnázium. cca 1900

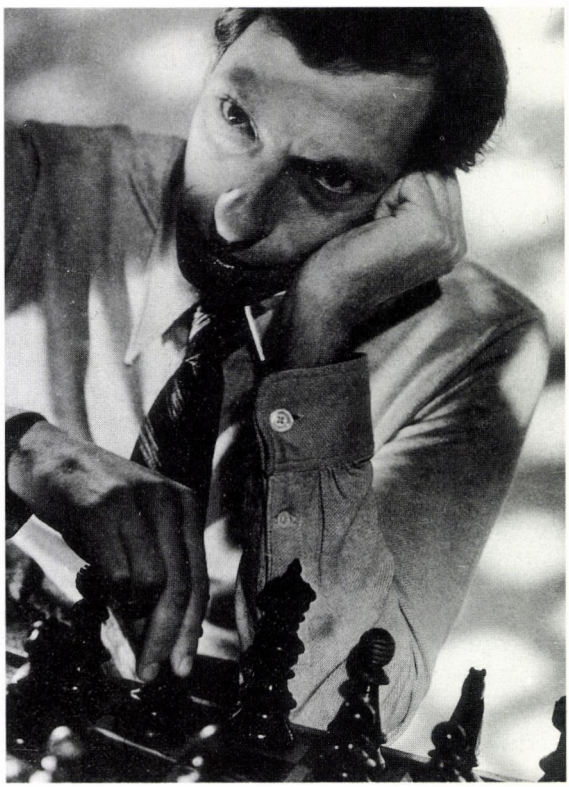


Unknown photographer:
The Ganz Electric Works,
Budapest, about 1920

LADÁR SZÉKELY: MIKSA FENYŐ, EDITOR OF *NYUGAT*, 1920

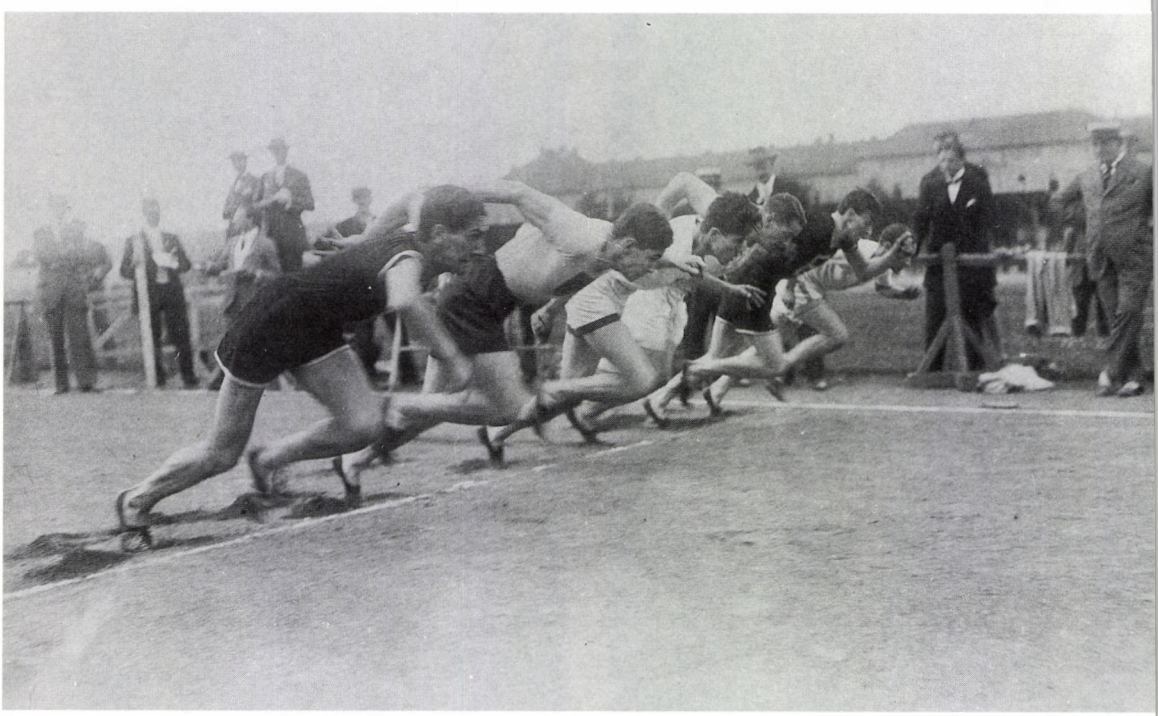
ALADÁR SZÉKELY: LAJOS HATVANY, WRITER, 1930


ALADÁR SZÉKELY: FERENC LEHÁR, COMPOSER

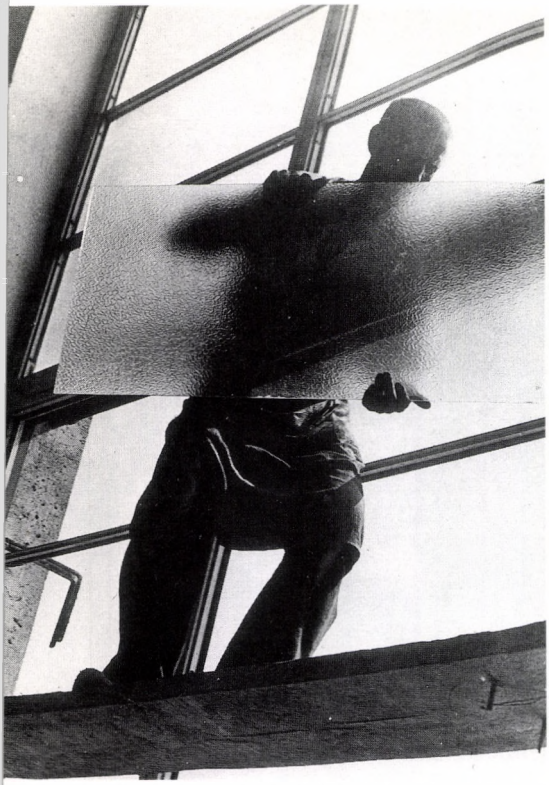


JÓZSEF PÉCSI: SELF-PORTRAIT, 1930

Ferenc Xavér Kemény: Picnic at Újbánya, 1892

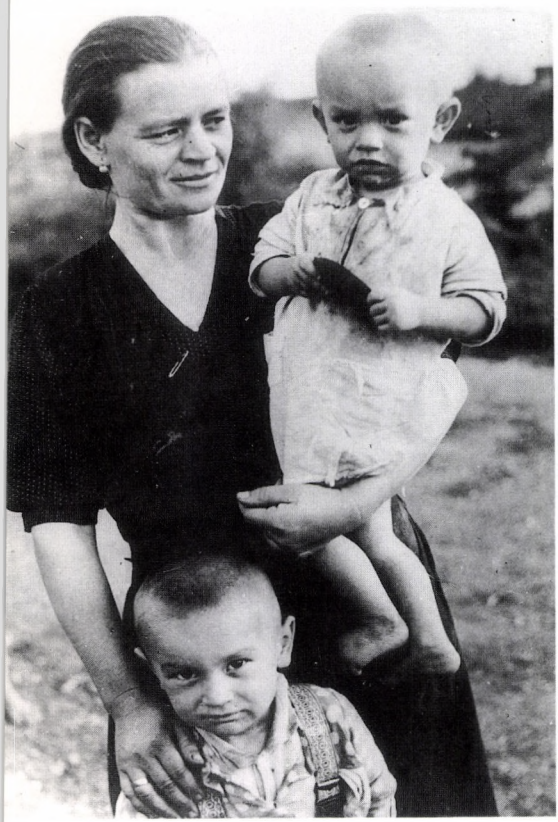


Gyula Jelfy: Start of race on Margaret Island, 1910



Sándor Gönci Frühof: Glazier, 1930


Márton Munkácsi: Count István Bethlen,
the prime minister,
arriving at the Parliament Building, June 1925



Klára Langer:
Miner's wife in Zagyvapálfalva, 1937


Károly Escher: Newsvendor, Budapest, 1930

GYÖRGY KLÖSZ: CSIKGYIMES (TRANSYLVANIA) LANDSCAPE, CCA 1900

ERNŐ VADAS: STRIPPING FLAX, 1939

# A HUNDRED YEARS OF HUNGARIAN PHOTOGRAPHY (1839–1939)

A 19th century photographer, Ferenc Veress, edited *Fényképes Lapok* (Photographic Gazette), a technical journal of photography in which he raised the need to establish a museum of photographs as early as in the 1880s. "The craft in question is 40 years old," he wrote, "its products have flooded the country but old specimens, such as the daguerrotypes, are decreasing in number; indeed, the masters are gradually forgetting the old techniques." His suggestion is still topical: the relics of the heroic age, of the beginning, should be collected before everything obsolete is made to disappear by the technical development of our age.

This museum was not established in Hungary a hundred years ago nor have we one today. However, there do exist a few important public collections such as the photo-technical museum in Vác, the archives of the Federation of Photographic Artists (mainly concerned with artistic photography) as well as some local history collections and a number of private collections. However, no single one of them could be called a museum of photography since no single one offers a survey of the history of photography in Hungary.

One of the finest collections is in Buda Castle. Originally, it was a department within the Institute of the Labour Movement; today its exhibitions are organised under the name "The Hungarian Historical Photograph Collection", signalling the gradual emergence of a proper museum. Their large exhibition is entitled 'A Hundred Years of Photography in Hungary, 1839–1939'.

The exhibition presents the museum's treasures: well-known portraits of Ferenc Liszt, Béla Bartók and other outstanding individuals, turning points in history, forceful examples of socio-photography, as well as pictures shown in public for the first time, curiosities, scoops in photo-history. The exhibition offers also a survey of the assimilation and spread of photographic techniques in Hungary.

Hungarian photography has given the world excellent artists from László Moholy-Nagy to Brassai and from Pál Almási to André Kertész. The exhibition presents only those whose work and career developed and unfolded in Hungary. Photographers such as Ferenc Veress, Aladár Székely or József Pécsi are represented by only one or two works in this exhibition which emphasizes the historical aspect. Veress developed out of the Transylvanian period determined by the spirit of Miklós Zeyk, the legendary innovator: the works of Veress were characterized by a similar spiritual and technical freshness. He was well ahead of his age in his technical experiments even though he could not market them. He had several original and amazing ideas on how to make use of new techniques, from the photographic documentation of the monuments of Hungary to taking photographs of human skin.

Aladár Székely was one of several hundred photographers who made a living out of portrait-photography. (A recent study on the first seventy years of photography in Hungary accounted for about 1900 studios and photographers working in Hungary at that time.) The distinguishing feature of Székely was that, apart from meeting the wishes of his customers, he approached his models, the writers and artists whom he photographed, with his own strongly personal view. Endre Ady the poet wrote in 1914 a preface to Székely's pictures: "I am glad that this album is appearing and I am glad that it is the album of Aladár Székely who through our incidental and vain poses, tells us who we are."

József Pécsi had a studio in Budapest between the two world wars; it was both

a portrait studio and a school. Pécsi experimented with teaching photography back in the 1910s, in the School of Industrial Drawing. Finally, his own studio became a school from where the great professional masters of portrait and applied photography started, and where several progressive-minded sociophotographers learned their craft.

There was a solid background to this top level: there were numerous studios in towns and villages, the technical and commercial infrastructure was present. This is, in fact, the main lesson of this exhibition in Buda Castle: in the last hundred years Hungarian photography has played the same part and fulfilled the role as photography in other countries.

Photography is the child of the age of industrial mass production that it grew up with; hence its history, at least its first hundred years, followed a compulsive course. For it to spread, the sponsorship of simple craftsmen, goldsmiths and painters who had gone down in the world was required. Photography had to accept tasks for which there was extensive social demand and a public which could pay. So it was inevitable that portrait photography became its major function at a time when poor technical possibilities, lengthy exposure times meant that it was not yet ready for this task. The pressure of the market was so great that photography did not remain a pastime but developed into a prosperous industry.

However, the craftsman had wondered right from the start to what ends photography could be used besides and how it could be put to serve the dissemination of information and pictorial reproduction. Photographs of outstanding politicians (Lajos Kossuth, Ferenc Deák, József Eötvös) were made for the public and exhibited in, among other places, the shop-windows of the photographers. It was an even more frequent practice to make lithographs or copperplates of portraits and illustrations required by the press using photographs. Stereo pictures, and later townscapes and photographs of exotic landscapes meant that photography was one of the media of entertainment. A few years later this use became as private as family portraits: architectural and landscape photographs became souvenirs, picture postcards which could be bought by everybody.

At the end of the 1890s some 350 photographers were working in Hungary. With the introduction of the many new technologies, photography became easily accessible, and the number of those involved as amateurs, scholars, reporters or in studios increased. At the same time, the technology for reproducing photographs in newspapers was introduced and through this photography became as familiar a tool for the press as it already was in astronomy or in police work.

In the beginning, press photographers showed the scenes of events and the protagonists. But, by the 1930s, shooting the event itself—if possible a sensational one—became general: scores of photographers stood with their cameras waiting for major moments: coronations, demonstrations, attempts at flying records, operas, goals.

The easy handling of cameras enabled Lajos Kassák, the apostle of progressive art, to put them into the hands of young workers and intellectuals, members of the *Munka* group, and ask them to create a "picture diary" of their everyday life.

The rich and colourful material shown at the Hungarian historical photo exhibition offers a cross-section of everything that photographs recorded over the past hundred years. An exhibition like this over and again proves that photography has become an important historical source.

ANDRÁS BÁN

# THEATRE AND FILM

## PLOTS, PEASANTS AND PATRIOTIC ROCK

Ferenc Csepreghy: *A piros bugyelláris* (The Red Purse);
Szörényi–Bródy: *Fehér Anna;*
Géza Páskándi: *A költő visszatér* (The Poet Returns).

The fate of a people, the changes in its political situation, its life are of recurrent concern in the arts and culture of Eastern Europe. This obsession can be observed in the drama and it is expressed in different ways at different times. Three productions, appearing almost at the same time, offer three different approaches, all three performed in the open air and all three with music.

There is a 19th century Hungarian dramatic genre consisting of plays about peasants and involving music. This is not identical with the German *Volksstück* although the Hungarian word *népszínmű* is its literal translation. This type of play flourished in the middle of last century and one of its main features is that its action arises from the life of the common people. The characters are country people—outlaws on the Hungarian steppe, horse-herds,—however, the authors of these plays were mainly townspeople whose ideas on the life of their models came from clichés and they accordingly distorted it. For the literary historians, the play on peasants is a typical product of a society developing a middle-class mentality: townspeople yearned to return to a simpler idyllic life. For this reason in these plays both character and situation are frequently simplified and naive complications and banal changes are often combined.

Another feature of the genre is the presence of music. The characters sing from time to time but these songs do not derive from the action: they are merely inserted as an occasion for the performance of not particularly valuable popular-songs (not folk-songs) that were on everbody's lips at the time.

At the end of the 19th century and at the beginning of the 20th, these plays on village life lost even the vitality that remained to them. Historians of the drama usually confine themselves to the comment that this genre with its sentimental, distorted depiction of country life was no longer enjoyable.

Nevertheless, the public did like these plays about peasants. Gypsy orchestras accompanied the musical segments of the plays. Success could be explained away by the bad taste of the audience. In the fifties and sixties, these plays were denounced as purveyors of bad taste and false art. Theatres did not even dream of putting them on—nor could they have done so. From time to time, attempts were made to revive them but the first revival that evoked a response was in

Kaposvár in 1977, where Ferenc Csepreghy's play *The Red Purse* was mounted. This same piece was produced in the summer of 1988 in the open-air summer theatre of Szentendre.

Written in 1878, the play takes place in the village of Tölgyes, in the house of the village mayor Mihály Török. His beautiful wife, Zsófi is the chief character. All the men in the village are almost blinded by the splendour of her charms. Zsófi, who is not yet twenty, had been the sweetheart and betrothed of Pali Csillag until the young man was called up for a six-year stint of military service. During those lonely years in which Zsófi was waiting for her fiancé to return, the middle-aged Mihály Török started to visit their house and, since it was believed that Pali Csillag had died, the mayor began to court her gracefully, and, as he was well-to-do, she married him. Throughout she remained faithful to him, ignoring the ardent advance of other men.

Hussars arrive at the village and among them is Pali. He is about to receive his discharge and he is, of course, billeted in the mayor's house. He is also the troop's paymaster and has, of course, lost the unit's pay the day before—the money in the 'red purse'. If the money is not found, he will be condemned to prison. Unaware that Mihály Török has married Zsófi, Pali relates all the details of his dilemma to the mayor. The mayor has a good reason to lend money to Pali to replace that in the missing red purse because he can thus appear honest and place his young rival under a strong obligation. But Pali, as soon as he learns the truth, refuses to play the game. When the ex-lovers meet, they naturally fall to reproaching each other. The mayor, to show his trust in his wife, leaves them on their own. As soon as he leaves, her would-be suitors appear to be slyly outwitted by Zsófi and to shame. The crowd of gossiping villagers around the house grows and one of them steals the money left in a drawer by the mayor. Zsófi manages to get the money back after a series of tricks; when the mayor returns and soldiers arrive to jail Pali, she produces this money as the lost payroll. There is a further complication in that the lost money and that of the mayor were in notes of different denomination. However, this is soon resolved by the production of the skeleton the mayor has in the cupboard: an adult daughter living in another village with her mother, a former mistress of the mayor's. Finally and ironically, everybody turns out to have their own skeleton in the cupboard, apart from the faithful and resourceful Zsófi, considered inconstant by the villagers. She makes peace with her husband and brings Pali together with his other former lover, the daughter of the mayor who brought back the purse and saved him from prison.

This description would perhaps give the impression that the play is close to a French musical comedy. If the play were transferred to a middle-class milieu (indeed *The Red Purse* could have been written by Eugène Labiche), nobody would question the accuracy of its depiction of middle-class drawing-rooms. We would acknowledge that the intrigue is not brought into play by reality but by the playwright's craft in constructing a play. In such a case we would not say that the characters of the comedy are "artificial city-people". Yet Csepreghy is accused of presenting his characters as "artificial peasants."

This 19th century genre play would come off badly if we contrasted it with actual Hungarian life. Indeed, this is a contrast that can be made. The Kaposvár production presented the intrigues and futile attempts to win the beautiful woman as symptoms of a grim and hopeless village life. The drinking-bouts were thus exuberant substitutes for action, compensation for the suppressed feelings of futility.

The Szentendre Teátrum which works in the small, enclosed main square of the town, produced *The Red Purse* not in this interpretation but as a Hungarian version of French comedy. The director, József Ruszt, did not

take the play seriously but produced a facile, cheerful performance, in which, when necessary the characters "step over the imaginary fourth wall", dealing with the futility of their situations ironically. Nor in this production is Zsófi a full-blooded village wife. She could even be a Sophie: her frivolity is charm in the French style, her challenge is that of an ingénue, her quick-wittedness is middle-class artfulness. The play about peasants was an acquittal from the charge of lowering the level of the audience's taste.

*

The rock-opera, with music by Levente Szörényi and book by János Bródy, *Kőműves Kelemen* (Stonemason Kelemen) came to the Budapest stage some years ago and has been running ever since in the Pesti Theatre. They have now written a sequel to it. The National Theatre company first presented this in the open-air court of its studio theatre the Várszínház, part of a former Carmelite monastery. After the summer season, the play was put into the repertory of the Várszínház.

First of all, the background should be recounted. *Stonemason Kelemen* extended a well-known popular ballad which in the recent past had become a symbol and a political metaphor. The original ballad is highly expressive in itself and would require no music. "Twelve stonemasons decide to build the castle of Déva." But "what they had built by noon, collapsed by morning". The second verse of the ballad recounts how the twelve stonemeasons agree that whichever of their wives that arrives first, will be killed and her blood will be mixed with lime and used to build Déva castle with. Anna, the wife of Kelemen arrives first and the stonemasons do as they had agreed.

It is not difficult to discover the allegory that great deeds require human sacrifice. The ballad consist only of some stanzas. This masterpiece of folk-poetry also contains the desire for justice: the last stanza curses the castle built with blood.

The ballad needed no additions and the one and a half hour long rock opera suggests the moral that no noble aim or idea can be accomplished through ignoble means, since those make a mockery of the end. Hard rock music and powerful choreography put the message over without any commentary. The success demanded a continuation. The two authors cooperated with the National Theatre which had attracted attention with their rock-opera *Stephen the King*, written later than *Stonemason Kelemen*. They chose to base the new work on the popular ballad *Fehér Anna*. This can be summarized as the story of László Fehér who stole a horse, was arrested and sentenced to death by the village judge; his sister Anna goes to the mayor to plead for his life; the judge is willing to grant the pardon if the girl becomes his lover; Anna Fehér sacrifices her innocence but the mayor has the sentence carried out nonetheless. The basic situation is familiar from many sources: Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure* has much the same story. The ballad *Fehér Anna* is not as expressive as *Stonemason Kelemen* and thus cannot act as a metaphor. For this reason, the authors completed and, in a sense, manipulated it. They started out with the notion that *Fehér Anna* is the sequel to *Stonemason Kelemen* by making Márton the father of Anna Fehér and László one of those twelve stonemasons. The village judge Máté Horváth was another of the stonemasons as well. After building the castle with that sacrifice of blood, they had gone their separate ways, Márton Fehér remained poor and honest, Máté Horváth became rich and a representative of authority. In this way, the story expresses the idea that the castle would necessarily create false authority and antagonism between social classes. To make the symbol clearer, it turns out that Máté had been wifeless when the castle was built and he had taken no risk in the "heroic times". Another element added to the story is the son Gergő, born to the judge who is now in love with Anna Fehér. At first, Gergő is not

aware of the despotic nature of his father; later when he recognizes it, he turns against him. On the other hand, László being a horse-thief or even an outlaw does not fit the new political interpretation of the ballad: a conscious rebel has to be made of him. This means that he is only *accused* of stealing a horse, a false charge is laid against him. The end of the play is the same as in the original version; in vain does Anna Fehér give herself to the judge, who cruelly punishes the rebellion against him. Anna Fehér goes mad and dies: the accursed castle of Déva has demanded victims from an innocent generation.

Clearly, the second ballad does not function in such a clearcut way as the first. *Stonemason Kelemen* is a perfect allegory without any authorical intervention. Not as a real story but as an artistic stylization. In the case of the ballad *Fehér Anna*, action and characters had to be created. It was thus transformed into a "realistic" drama—or at least this was what the authors tried to do. But without success: the metaphor has became contrived and didactic. A further mistake was breaking with the original's unity of style, its concision. The book is full of political allusions to the fifties and Stalinism. The combination of popular style and ideological rhetoric fails to form an organic style. The pathos, the irony and the jokes occasionally recalling cheap farce, create the impression of confused improvisation instead of the set of symbols aimed at.

The almost legendary ability of director Imre Kerényi was not able to do anything with all this disorganization in the material. The production brings much to mind: sometimes it recalls sequences from the films of Jancsó, sometimes the death of Gavroche in *Les Misérables*. It can be said in excuse that this time not even the authors are at the height of their form. The tunes, following the folk-songs and folk-motifs, with rock elements added, are fine, but a little bit monotonous over the play as a whole. Since the whole is a musically composed theatrical work, yet it is the dramatic structure that we feel as lacking. Thus the choreography becomes a series of isolated gestures and the production itself a dramatized collection of ornaments, a doodle at the end of a piece of home-work. What is missing, is the home-work itself.

*

In our days, it seems to be difficult to work up a patriotic subject without rock music. Thus *The Poet Returns* by Géza Páskándi, poet and playwright, and the rockband Kormorán is on the 1848/49 rising and its poet, Sándor Petőfi. The production at the Margitsziget open-air theatre in Budapest is in their memory.

Only ten to fifteen years ago, the debunking of heroes was in fashion. Views have now changed and, instead of gazing on the past critically, national identity and patriotic pathos have become popular themes. The rock-opera *The Poet Returns* thus resorts to spectacular tableaux, when it turns to the historical past. The leaders of the revolution appear on stage wreathed in light and billows of smoke. Lajos Kossuth is seen addressing a speech to the people. Among the so-called young men of March (the Pest revolution broke out on the 15th of March) are to be found writers, poets and young aristocrats. And of course Petőfi, who sings his own poems to a rock accompaniment and finally dies in action.

Whether this pathetic view of the past is modern or not gives food for thought. Those who saw the Moscow Taganka Theatre version of John Reed's *Ten Days that Shook the World*, directed by Lubimov, can compare its grotesquery and irony on the "Proletcult" with this Hungarian production. In Paris, Ariane Mnouchkine's 1789 put new life into the French revolution in a wild and energetic way. Most probably only nations whose history is one of victory and greatness can show their revolution this way: small nations need a distance from which only the whole picture, without little detail, can be seen.

The Margitsziget open-air theatre, set in a natural environment holding thousands is a challenge to a large-scale presentation; however, this is no excuse for the author to present the story superficially. Páskándi gives only the main features: Count Grüne, trusted man of the Austrian emperor and Hungarian king Ferdinand V, searches for his nephew, after the collapse and defeat of the Hungarian rising. This young man had fought with the revolutionaries. The count visits a prison where some strolling players are in custody. They used to know the young man who, under the name Vilmos Csitári (his Austrian mother was married to a Hungarian) had been one of their member. An admirer of Petőfi, he had joined the holy cause under the influence of the revolution. His vocation forces him to hand on the poet's message after the defeat and after the death of Petőfi.

The story itself should develop following the dramatic structure of a play within the play, since the emprisoned actors are ordered to play for us by Count Grüne. Unfortunately, only the pattern works, the play has no shape, there are no characters, no situations, no changes, all we have are the banalities that link the musical parts. Nor is the ending convincing: a declaration by the actor-hero that he is no enemy searching for the body of the poet on the battlefield. Through this gesture, he seeks to demonstrate the immortality of the poet. (Since Petőfi was buried in a common grave, his remains were never found and many people "saw" him later.)

Director Gábor Koltay has given evidence several times of his fondness for the historical tableau for spectacle and living pictures when dramatic action or dramatic structure is missing. But if a work is called opera, certain consequences are necessarily involved. *The Poet Returns* is a series of living pictures in costume, a mixture of oratorio and folklore with occasional rock music inserts. There is an intended similarity with the type of the big productions associated in the first third of this century with Nikolai Ohlopkov in Russia and director Firmin Gémier in France or, in our own days, with Robert Hossein. For these productions certain material and technical resources are essential, which the Hungarian theatre does not have. For the present, demand can be satisfied by much-enlarged historical figures who can be seen well from each seat of a large open-air theatre.

TAMÁS KOLTAI

---

# FILMS ABOUT MAN'S DEFENCELESSNESS

## Sándor Sára: *The Road is Weeping Before Me;* Ferenc Téglásy: *Never, Nowhere, to Nobody*

"The road is weeping before me, the path is grieving"—is the opening line of a Székely folksong from the Bukovina, and it is taken over by Sándor Sára as title for his four-part documentary epic (I. *Homeless;* II. *On the Road of Armies;* III. *At Crossroads;* IV. *Finding Home*). Documentary epic: I might have called it a Greek tragedy of fate, a search for historical sources, a saga tracing the fate of generations. There are interviews with around a hundred Székely Hungarians who, as participants, witnesses, survivors, cherishing the memory of their grandparents and great-grandparents recount the lot that fell to the Székelys of the Bukovina, a Hungarian ethnic minority who settled in 1764 outside the Eastern Carpathians. Their story began with a tragedy and continued through a series of tragedies.

People speak for hours. Can this be of interest, can it be watched through to the

end at all? Defying all predictions and aesthetic prejudices, Sára's film holds the audience in harrowed fascination throughout, and offers them a cathartic experience as well as a moral. For the fate of this group of Székelys is more or less typical within the ethnic chaos of Eastern Central Europe. The antecedents are stated by a historian, followed by cuts from contemporary newsreels and then by the confessions, the painful memories expressed by faces, eyes and voices. Sára uses classic documentary techniques in his film, yet it is unique insofar as it brings the past into the present, and records for the future this past living in the present, to serve as an all too topical lesson. For while it seems that after all the adversity, suffering and mourning, the fate of the Bukovinian Székelys has been resolved, their struggle for survival has been renewed in an intense manner because of the trials submitted to by those who have remained in Transylvania.

A few words on the historical background. In 1764 Baron Siskowitz, a lieutenant-general of the Empress Maria Theresa, gave orders to open fire on a crowd at Madéfalva, Transylvania, where Székelys were protesting against their obligation to serve as frontier guards. The number of victims of the massacre ran to several hundreds, and thousands of Székelys fled to Moldavia. In 1775, András Hadik, chairman of the Military Council, settled the migrant Székelys in the Bukovina. In 1776, they built their first villages, whose very names (*Istensegíts* = "God help us"; *Fogadjisten* = "May God accept)" speak all the adversities their inhabitants had gone through. For a time it looked as though God had helped them. As the film tells us, people of various origins—Russians, Rumanians, Ukrainians, Jews, Germans, and Székelys, i.e., the national minorities—lived in peace under Austrian rule in this region. In the schools, with the exception of two "German days," they were able to receive their education in their own native language and the different communities did not interfere with each other.

In 1919, the Bukovina, like Transylvania, came under Rumanian rule, and the Bukovinian Székelys found themselves face to face with the voracious nationalism of the new power that began by looking upon their ethnicity as a thorn in its flesh and then overtly challenged it. The noted novelist Tibor Cseres, writing on Sára's film, cited the following passage from a speech given by the Rumanian chief inspector of schools at the beginning of the school-year in 1937: "The Rumanian public education authorities have created this cultural zone in order that the process of Romanisation, even at the cost of sacrifices, be furthered more forcefully. The body of state teachers is facing an enormous task. They have to instil in the soul of Székely children, already in kindergarten, the historical fact the 'you are not what you think you are'; that they are the alienated children of another people who had for long suffered under an alien yoke. Anyone who is charged with this honourable task but cannot fulfil it, even if Rumanian, should leave his post immediately." And later: "It is a fixed idea of Székelys and Hungarians that there are more than two million of them living in our country. This is a wilful falsification. The Hungarians number one million, and as for the Székelys, they do not exist... The Rumanian state will not allow the Székelys to be alienated from itself... we will not cease our unflagging efforts to bring about the assimilation of the Székelys, their return to the bosom of the Rumanian mother nation." Incidentally, the Székelys are to this day ethnically the most homogeneous of all Hungarians living together anywhere.

What those "unflagging efforts" entailed, the humiliation, lawlessness and persecution they implied, is revealed in the astounding statements made in the film. These also help explain the great expectations attached to the 1941 resolution of the Hungarian government—following the reannexation of northern Transylvania under the Second Vienna Award—to resettle the Székelys in Hungary.

But they were to meet with bitter disappointment. The solemnity in their reception was directed at the Hungarian population, the coldness at those who had returned. For almost a year the resettlement committee kept thousands of Bukovinian Székelys moving around in uncertainty, in wartime conditions. Only after the collapse of Yugoslavia, and the reannexation of the Bácska region to Hungary, were they settled in place of the relocated Serbians, the so-called Dobrovoliatzi. However, these latter were not accepted by what remained of the Serbian state. After being chased from their homes and forced to take shelter in nearby farmsteads, for three years the Dobrovoliatzi kept the Székelys who had settled in their homes in terror. The Székelys had nowhere to go and had no armed force to defend them against the vengeance and hate that ran wild, as was only to be expected in such a situation. Then, in the autumn of 1944, they had to move on again. The Yugoslav partisans reconquered the Bácska and gave back the Dobrovoliatzi their homes. The Székelys found themselves homeless again and had 42 of their menfolk dragged off, never to return. (The fact that Sára has the women recount this incident—for the first time since it happened—is in all probability the reason for the belated release of his film.)

The refugees were to face new trials in wartime Hungary. Some tried to help them, others did not even allow them to unhitch their horses, let alone give them a plate of hot soup. When, eventually, at the end of the war, they had a roof over their heads, they once again were settling in the homes of displaced people, this time the Swabians (Germans) of Volksbund (Hitlerite)—and also non-Volksbund—sentiment.

Fortunately enough, these Swabians found their home in West Germany, so the Székelys did not have to fear another turn of fate. Over the years the Swabians were able to take root in their ancient yet new homeland. In a climate of reconciliation, they have been able to establish friendly, even family, connections with both those who chased them away and those who became—involuntarily, obeying the pressure of life—the sad beneficiaries and occupants of their homes. From 1950 onwards, the lot of the Bukovinian Székelys, though hardened by the difficulties of making a fresh start, has been more or less the same as that of native Hungarian peasants.

The film unfolds history itself to its audience, through the multitude of individual variations on memories, the sufferings, the mourning. This is what makes the series of tragedies so fascinating. Most staggering is, beyond the senseless deaths, the humanity the agonists show when enduring the pains imposed on them, and the empathy they show when they are forced to cause pain to others in order to survive. Hate and vengeance have died out from these sorely tried and much suffering people. Their losses, their pains, their memories resound from some universal sense of justice and humanism. They criticize and condemn methods, attitudes and conceptions, rather than persons or peoples. This is what makes these eight hours of film cathartic; the tears, the cries of pain and the screams may speak of the agony of a particular group, yet they cry out to the whole of mankind.

*

The genre of memoirs, of autobiography, is both document and work of art, whether written or filmed. The exceptional success of Ferenc Téglásy's first film, *Never, Nowhere, to Nobody*, met with at the documentary film festival in Mannheim, is justified: it would have been equally justified if it had aroused the attention of the international cinema world at a feature film festival such as Cannes or Venice, Berlin or Moscow. For that matter, it would be desirable if Hungary devoted at least as much attention towards a well-earned film prize as it does to achievements by her sportsmen. All the more so

because what for a foreigner is a fine, moving film and a testament on a foreign country, is, for us Hungarians a part of our fate, our life, our history, written in blood and sweat, suffused with fear and anguish, doubt and desperation, mental and physical mortification, moral and physical trials.

Ferenc Téglásy's film shows us through the eye of an eight year old boy the life of a family of three children who, in 1951, were forced to leave their home in the capital and resettle in a remote farmstead on the Hungarian puszta. In its purity and innocence this view through a child's eye makes the film a "Diary of Anna Frank" of the Stalinist era. Common to both are the directness and incomprehensibility of the experience. The child is baffled, knowing nothing of the nature of Stalinism, and the adults themselves do not know much more. Common too is the fact that both are victims of a collective judicial murder and exposed to a merciless and brutal police authority. From their point of view, it is all the same whether this mercilessness incites and justifies itself through false and absurd claims on the struggle between races or, as is in the film, between classes. These children feel outlawed and defenceless, feel the humiliation and misery of their parents, the hatred they receive; they cannot try to seek the causes for man's alienation from man nor see the social and psychological nature of the crimes committed against them.

True, comparisons are odious. Despite the fact that differences between an eight year old boy and a fourteen year old girl, Anna Frank, are somewhat balanced by the eight year old being revived through the memories of the forty year old director and the mature fourteen year old through her writer's gifts, there are historical peculiarities that give a different colouring to their stories. The most important difference is that the death of Stalin in 1953 brought an end to the boy's calvary in the film, while the other story led to the final and proclaimed destruction. Yet it is also true that similar forms of crippling life, of humiliating man, reveal a similar essence: a tyranny and despotism that disregards human rights, that has nothing whatsoever to do with the solution of real class struggle. Claiming to have adopted popular, proletarian and peasant interests, they sail under a pirate flag, continuing the fascist practice of collective judgment and resettlement.

This is not the first film on forced resettlement. The subject has been treated in the form of film comedy, of documentary (an excellent, shocking and authentic documentary at that), and of memoirs. But this is the first feature film based on concrete experiences; it does not so much relate as reconstruct the events that happened, its authenticity cannot be doubted, precisely because it is based on the memories of an eight year old child. The very fact that resettlement affected children and infants, punishing them for the real or alleged —mostly alleged—"crimes" their parents may have committed (often in thought only) and never properly investigated in court, retroactively at that, or simply for their family background, makes this film a severe indictment of the Rákosi era and Rákosist-Stalinist methods.

In both the story and the scenario, Téglásy provides a piercing description of that spirit and cult of brutality and mercilessness that exiles this family, because of the father's past as an army officer, to the back of beyond, on the Hungarian puszta (they barely escape being quartered in a hen-house). The basic conditions for civilized life are missing: there is no running water, no electricity, no doctor or medicines, and no way to earn a living. Precisely because this is shown objectively and with a child's truthfulness, he can make us feel how the cult of mercilessness (raised to a social norm) elicits the worst in man, a sadistic aggressive animal. This happens not only to individual policemen, raised to become janissaries in their own land, but also to morally weaker, spineless civilians.

We are shown parallel, uplifting and saddening, examples of moral integrity and conformity, and their stirring, unsolvable conflicts. The constant argument between father and mother about the extent to which the former can identify himself with his unlawfully sentenced fellow beings, if it involves risking the security and the living of his own family, is an example of this. The father may appease his conscience by openly taking sides but it is doubtful whether he reaches his goal.

The film has many shocking, unforgettable episodes: the policeman assisting in the requisitioning of grain with tears in his eyes, the dramatic confrontation between the resettled Jew and the former Horthy gendarme, the revolt of the boy, the sole breadwinner in the family, against his father and the world, the locking up of the father who wanted to act on his own sense of truth and the one that deserves a place in film history: the boy, in the absence of the father, helps his mother give birth, alone in the natural terror a child feels. At times, the sombre note softens, when the intimacy and beauty of family life (later to be destroyed by the trials of captivity) and the charmingly naive reflections of the children are shown.

Téglásy's film is devoid of clichés; his figures are neither heroes nor anti-heroes: they are flesh and blood in their shortcomings and faults and virtues, perhaps magnified by extraordinary difficulties. The story is told in a film through mature and expressive visual means and through fascinating acting. In his first feature film, Téglásy proves his abilities both as script writer and director. And in art and humanity. Mention should also he made here of the cameraman Ferenc Pap (whose sequences convey the barenness of landscape and the human soul, the sad magic of the locations and the idylls of misery) and of a large and excellent cast, at least the names of the three protagonists: András Kozák as the father, the Polish actress Jolanta Grusznic (dubbed by Ágnes T. Katona) as the mother, and Tibor Antal as their son. Rather than play, they live their roles. And the audience lives with them: suffers, revolts, makes compromises—and becomes nobler for it all.

ERVIN GYERTYÁN

# MUSICAL LIFE

## ON INTERPRETING MOZART

*Interview with Malcolm Bilson*

Malcolm Bilson, one of the leading exponents of the 18th-century fortepiano, has just finished his series of recordings of all the Mozart piano concertos with John Eliot Gardiner and the English Baroque Soloists for Deutsche Grammophon *Archiv*. After the complete recording of the Mozart symphonies by the Academy of Ancient Music under Jaap Schroeder and Christopher Hogwood for Decca in the late 1970s, this represents the second *Gesamtaufnahme* of a central Mozart genre available on historic instruments. At present Mr. Bilson is in the middle of another major Mozart project, the recording of all the solo sonatas for Hungaroton. The second session of the project in September 1988, highlighted by a concert in Budapest, gave rise to the occasion for the following interview. The main topic of the conversation was: after almost twenty years of specializing in this field, and with the ever increasing activity of historically informed performance, what were Mr. Bilson's views on Mozart interpretation?

*How did the Mozart concerto project come about, and what are your further plans with John Eliot Gardiner?*

I can only tell you what I have learned, and what I have been through. It was certainly the most wonderful bit of luck that I met John Eliot Gardiner. Nicholas Kenyon (now editor of *Early Music* magazine in London, but at that time critic for the *New Yorker* magazine in New York) had played Gardiner some of my recordings when Gardiner was in New York, back in 1981. Gardiner seemed intrigued, and invited me to play concertos with him in Vancouver, Canada, where he was conducting the CBC orchestra at that time. We seemed to work well together, and immediately liked each other personally as well, so he invited me, the following summer, to play with the English Baroque Soloists in Aix-en-Provence, at the summer festival there. We decided this was really an important project, and one that after the success of the Mozart symphonies might be "marketable," so we looked for a recording company and got what I think was in many ways the best possible one for us: Deutsche Grammophon. Andreas Holschneider, the head of Deutsche Grammophon, took this project on personally and (among other things) the fact that he gave us six years to do it in was an enormous blessing to all of us, and to me in particular, giving me time to really "imbibe" these works one by one.

There are other projects in the offing—we will certainly do the five Beethoven concertos; for the moment we project starting them in 1992; at that point, Gardiner will be embarking on the Beethoven symphonies and this will fit right in. We feel there is no hurry with the Beethovens, as three complete recordings on original instruments

are out or under way and again—I want to feel that I have sufficient time to prepare for this very important new repertoire. Actually, even before the Beethovens, perhaps as early as 1990, we will do a Schumann record, with the A minor Concerto and possibly one of the bigger solo series, such as the *Kreisleriana*. I recently saw an absolutely perfect 1839 Johann Baptist Streicher piano in Holland; this would be the ideal instrument for that repertory. And at home, at Cornell University in upstate New York, where I teach, we will soon have a restored 1841 Bösendorfer, so I will have a proper instrument to practice on.

*You will record the Schumann concerto with the same orchestra; will that be suitable?*

Well, we will just have to learn to make it suitable! After all, the Mozart concerto series was also a learning project. The orchestra (and I, too) learned so much in the six years we took to traverse the Mozart concertos. I think that if you listen to the first records and the last one, you can hear quite a difference in the level of the orchestra. And not just in how they play the instruments; the whole style has advanced enormously.

*Tell me about some of the things that you have learned from this Mozart concerto cycle.*

One of the most interesting things I have learned about Mozart concertos over the six years is the relationship of the instruments to one another. It is well known that Mozart wrote very enthusiastically to his father about Johann Andreas Stein's pianos; if one reads his letters, one can only conclude that he thought them ideal. But with all their virtues, the tone was not very loud, and yet he was writing concertos, to be played with an orchestra that could easily drown it out in forte passages. Now it would seem clear to anyone that if a composer, say nowadays, is asked to write a concerto for a flute or for a trumpet, the music will necessarily be different, in large part due to the fact that the one instrument is soft, and the other loud. Mozart concertos have the so-called (perhaps wrongly so) "double exposition;" that is to say first everybody plays (with the pianist of course playing *continuo*), then the solo piano enters. In Mozart's first original concerto (that is, not one of the arrangements of Christian Bach or others) the orchestra begins *forte*. When the solo piano enters, that same material is presented, again *forte*, and it doesn't seem to work very well, for the piano simply sounds weak in relation to what the orchestra has done (curiously enough, it even sounds weak when a modern piano is used, because although the modern piano is quite loud, the "action" is all in the Alberti bass in the left hand, which on a modern piano is all but impossible to bring out). Mozart never repeated this procedure again. If the opening *tutti* begins with a *piano* theme, the solo entrance invariably repeats that theme (K. 414, 456, 459, 488 etc.); but in the really big concertos, such as K. 503 (perhaps the most majestic of the lot), the piano comes "on tip-toe," as it were.

*In K. 467 as well.*

Yes, there too. But there is another strategy—namely that the piano is given an entirely new theme (always *piano*), such as in the two great minor-key concertos in D minor and C minor. These new themes do not attempt to "compete" with the volume of the orchestra and indeed, in those two examples, they present a kind of troubled brooding in their own way just as dramatic as the orchestral counterpart. In the first movement of the D minor concerto, for example, the piano eventually works up a great storm of virtuosity, and then it sounds very loud indeed. The psychology of this is worked out with the greatest mastery and exactitude by Mozart: first the orchestra dies down from its "big sound," then the piano enters and builds up again, so that it sounds forceful.

*What about finale themes in this regard; many of them begin with the solo instrument?*

In those finales based on a *piano* motive, there is obviously no problem of balance. But those built on forceful themes,

such as the "Jeunehomme" concerto or, even the D minor of which we were just speaking, the piano enters boldly, full force (this would be obvious to anyone playing on a period piano; it's just in the nature of the thing), followed by an even louder statement by the orchestra of that same material. Very exciting! Now the recent concept by players on modern instruments is that one uses a so-called "chamber orchestra," that is to say, 25 or 30 players, much as we do. This, combined with a modern piano, is simply absurd, I think, yet virtually everyone is doing it—Perahia, Brendel, Barenboim, even Géza Anda used such a small band. Imagine using the same sized orchestra Mozart used, and combining it with a solo instrument some ten times louder; what will that do to the balance, so carefully worked out by Mozart for the instruments he knew?

Two years ago there was a BBC programme reviewing 18 versions of the D minor concerto (all on modern piano; ours was not out yet). The most exciting beginning of the third movement, according to the reviewer, was the one by Artur Rubinstein with the Los Angeles Philharmonic (the orchestra really came in much bigger than the piano. "But", the reviewer said, "such an orchestra is far bigger than we think proper nowadays, so we must disqualify this performance." And yet it should seem obvious that to use a modern piano one must match it up with an appropriate-sized band. It's like a recipe; you portion out everything just right, then change one ingredient drastically; what happens to your recipe? The psychology of the *size* of the sound is really very important in all these pieces.

What we did in our recordings (actually more in the late concertos than in the early ones) was that during the solo piano passages we reduced the number of strings playing. Christoph Wolff believes that this should be done even when using modern instruments. He believes that in the late concertos (for example in the development of the first movement of K. 503), there is the great symphonic sound of the big band when the piano enters a kind of chamber music arrangement: piano, winds and strings; and these can operate in any direction. For example, the winds might be accompanying, the strings playing melody and the piano playing arpeggios. Or the piano might play melody, the winds background harmony and the strings counterpoint, etc. By reducing the strings one gets a more soloistic, chamber-like texture, in decided contrast to the big symphonic sound of the *tuttis*.

*I probably should know this but I don't—how much evidence of this can be found in the autographs?*

There are a few examples of this in the autographs; in the autograph of K. 537 there are clear indications of *solo* & *tutti* in Mozart's own hand. Additionally, in the Salzburg score of K. 415 (presumably used by Mozart's sister Nannerl), Mozart has written *solo* & *tutti* in; again it is clearly his handwriting.

*So this whole idea is not merely conjecture?*

No, it is not. There are separate string parts for K. 453 in the Melk monastery in Upper Austria; one set for the tutti players and one set for the solo players. There exist double sets of parts for K. 595 as well.

*Did you apply this principle in all the concertos?*

We did in some cases, but not in all. But then, you know, a problem arose which I would never have suspected—several members of the orchestra said they didn't want to participate in these concertos; they said it was no fun to come to play just a few notes, then sit around for a half an hour! Who would have thought that such a problem could be a scholarly question, which it most certainly is!

*As the years went on, did you feel the recordings improved? That might not be as self-evident, as the* Jeunehomme *concerto, the very first one, was already so fantastic.*

Of course they improved; the quality of the playing has gone up tremendously.

I think it was very wise of Deutsche Grammophon to do this project slowly, and more or less in chronological order. I remember, in one of our first sessions, doing a Bb Major cadence some thirty or forty times, to try to get the oboes in tune (they are more or less in tune on that record, and of course I won't say which one. . .). There is none of that any more; when we get together, we work solely on the music; the level of the players in London is very high. Most of them work full time on the old instruments. A Baroque oboist I know told me he loves to play modern oboe, but has not done it for several years, for he is hired every day as a Baroque oboist; that hardly exists elsewhere in the world. Naturally, certain players are most faithful to Gardiner or Hogwood or Roger Norrington, but by and large one hears at least some of them in all of these groups.

*We know that in Mozart's time there was no conductor in the modern sense of the word; that is to say, no independent person standing in front of the group with a stick in his hand. And yet you used one; is it quite "authentic" to play with a conductor.*

This is a question I could go on about for hours. First of all, I think the word "authentic" is one that should be banished from all conversations on this topic. An "authentic" performance of a Mozart concerto would be the reincarnation of Mozart and his players, on the exact instruments they used, etc. I would never say that what I or we are doing is more "authentic" than what Rudolf Serkin does. An expression that has come into general usage and has been accepted by most of us is the term "historically informed." I think that is a better distinction than authentic or—(heaven forfend)!—"inauthentic?"

As to the conductor question, it has been my feeling from the beginning, reinforced through the sessions, that the "conductor" is the central figure in all this. That is to say, these are basically grand symphonic pieces with, of course, an important protagonist in the keyboard player. Mozart would have filled both of these functions. But Mozart would have had an advantage over us; all the players in the band would have been totally versed in the style, and in only that style, for they played virtually only contemporary music at that period; they probably played little J. S. Bach if at all, not to speak of Palestrina or Gesualdo. It's somewhat like jazz players today; they are so well versed in the one particular style, that players who have never met before can get together and "jam" with great freedom and spontaneity. One has to understand that in the case of these orchestral players using the old instruments, the situation could hardly be more different. These are musicians trained first on modern instruments, with many varied repertories, who came to the old instruments probably only a few years ago and who, in addition, at the time we started this project, had mostly been playing only Baroque music, in itself quite different in style from the music of Mozart. One could certainly hold together a group of this size perfectly well without a conductor, but at best the result would be a kind of collection of old music formulae, applied more or less willy-nilly to whatever passage might be at hand. One has heard enough performances of old music in this manner. The Mozart piano concertos are not "old music"; they are among the most sophisticated masterpieces of western music altogether. Gardiner was always right there, with every subtle nuance at his fingertips, alive and vibrant. It may sound like a kind of false modesty on my part, but it is really true that Gardiner was central to these interpretations.

*After this wonderful project you are now recording the solo sonatas. How would you perceive the differences? Is it mostly psychological, playing alone?*

First of all, let me say that although I am in the process of recording the solo sonatas now, it does not mean that I learned them after the concertos; they are not a "further" step. It must also be said that the solo sonatas are not as great a corpus of music

as the concertos. I suppose it is generally acknowledged that the piano concertos and the operas are Mozart's two greatest genres, and John Eliot Gardiner is to begin recording the seven great Mozart operas in 1991. But although the solo sonatas are not as great a group of works as the concertos, each of them is a true gem in its own way.

*Do you think that the traversal of all the concertos has changed your interpretations of the sonatas?*

I'm sure it did, but I am not so sure how. I suppose if you ask any pianist whether his interpretation of the Beethoven sonatas has changed over the last ten years, he will also say that he is sure it has, but he is not exactly sure in what way.

*To view historical performance from a broader perspective, I think the basic point of departure in any approach should be a fresh eye for the score, and a fresh ear for the sounds.*

I would certainly hope so.

*For example, I recently had a wonderful experience, hearing Harnoncourt's* Magic Flute *at the Vienna State Opera, with the Vienna Philharmonic, on modern instruments. It was absolutely obvious from the very first note that Harnoncourt was looking at the score from a quite fresh point of view; the production was not shockingly different from "traditional" ones, but this freshness made all the difference in the world.*

I must say that I find traditional, or what some would call modern performances increasingly difficult to listen to. You know it was Harnoncourt who objected to the term modern, when talking about conventional performances. He points out, and quite rightly, that most modern performances are based on late-19th and early-20th century models; there's hardly anything modern about them. I find that I hardly listen to records of the works I am playing these days. It's not at all that I wouldn't be interested in what other pianists are doing, and it's certainly not because I don't want to hear Mozart or Beethoven on a modern piano. It's just that I spend a lot of time looking at the score to try and understand what all those expressive marks (the slurs in Mozart, for example) mean, and then I try to learn to make these expressively important. When I listen to the records of most pianists, what I hear is that they simply run through all these very explicit expressive markings with the famous long, legato line approach; it is very hard on me, really.

*In your opinion, is there a genuine hierarchy of the components involved—instrument, sources, autograph, etc.?*

Alfred Brendel, whom I admire very much, has written an article called "A Mozart-player admonishes himself." It has been reprinted in various newspapers, and is included in the complete boxed set of his Mozart Piano concertos. It is a wonderful, insightful article, dealing with virtually everything important about these works; playing style, cadenzas, ornamentations, etc. But right at the beginning, he states that he does not think one gets anywhere by way of the "limitations of the old instruments." Now I'm not sure I can tell you just how important I think the instrument is. I am often asked what I do when I am teaching a Mozart or Beethoven sonata to one of my regular piano students on a normal modern piano. My answer is: I do nothing special; I just teach him the piece. The kind of things I am interested in especially in these works only become important at a very high level. Brendel is interested in almost everything about Beethoven; everything, that is to say, but one thing: the instrument for which the music was originally conceived. At this level, then, I think the instrument takes on an enormous importance! There is, I think, nobody more talented or musical than Alfred Brendel, but by paying so much attention to everything except one component, which is somewhat important, and by leaving that out completely, he will doubtless come to some very wrong conclusions about a lot of things. For the average piano student this is not so important; he doesn't have to go after autographs, trying to interpret the fly specks on the paper; he just wants to make nice music—

Mozart, Debussy, Bartók; why should I pester him?

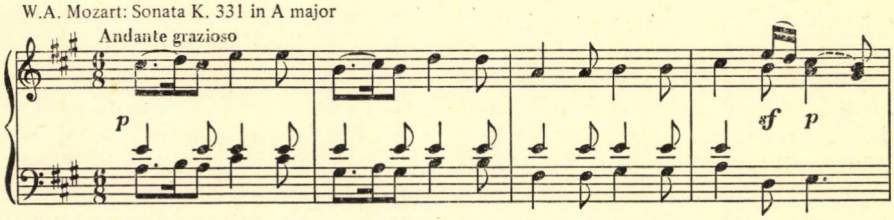
*I assume, therefore, that if you played these concertos on a modern piano, it would be almost as exciting and special as it is on the 18th-century instrument?*

I don't think I could do it any more. It is impossible for me to separate the instrument from the conception as a whole; there is no hierarchy of the components as you say. It is somewhat like preparing some wonderful dish: you ask me how I would do it if one main ingredient were taken away and replaced by something else; I could do it, but it wouldn't be the real thing anymore. From the same point of view, Mr Brendel would probably not do very well with a fortepiano, for he has evolved his interpretations in *his* way, very sensitively. This is something difficult to explain to people.

*What is just as important as the instrument?*

The most important thing of all is the language. Among the general public, there is a prevailing notion that a certain old music is like a foreign language (Baroque music, for example). But the idea still persists (perhaps it has begun to change a little of late) that Mozart, Beethoven and Brahms belong to our common language: we know it and we know how to play it. It is, however, quite clear that the aesthetics of each of those composers were quite different. Especially important as regards 18th-century aesthetics is the idea that music is like speech; that is to say, like speech it must be inflected properly (I know of no language that doesn't inflect with strong and weak syllables). Once one really studies the sources and the manuscripts, one is forced to realize that the kind of long, legato line must of us were taught by our teachers is very far removed from what *all* the sources in the 19th century ask for. I remember, when I first started all this, trying to learn to play the opening of the Mozart A Major Sonata, K. 331, with the little slurs just as written—the little slur at the beginning detaches the third note from the second; to do this without soundling like a hiccup was totally foreign to everything I had ever tried to do or been taught.

W.A. Mozart: Sonata K. 331 in A major




First you have to learn to imitate the new language, then you have to absorb it and make it your own language. And who knows if we will ever really be able to realize that?? One parallel I like to give in this regard is the group of ough-ending words in English: bough, cough, tough, through. They are all spelled the same, but pronounced quite differently. When English is a dead language, and people are trying to reconstruct it, someone may be smart enough to know that this discrepancy exists. But the chance that he will get them all right is, I would say, almost nil. The case is similar with music as an old language.

*So you think the Mozart-language is a dead one?*

In some ways I am quite sure it is. And we have to relearn the inflections. I and many others have been spending a great deal of time trying to accomplish this, but I am not really sure...

*Let us talk about old and new Mozart style at the present time. A well-known argument nowadays is, regarding interpretation, that there should be no reason to suppose that a historical*

*approach will bring forth better results than, say, a high-level performance in 1920.*

Actually, it's curious that you suggest 1920. I don't think it is better than it was in 1920, but I do think it is better than it was in 1960. In 1920, most performers still seemed to understand that music was more than something written on paper.

*Performances were less uniform at that time?*

Absolutely!

*Has uniformity come about as a result of recordings?*

Yes, and I think also because of the *Urtext* editions; they are very much to blame, although they are of course wonderful to have. In the late 1950's, I studied in Vienna with Grete Hinterhofer, a woman who was raised in a tradition where not only were there no *Urtexts*, but one played, for example, a *Rosenkavalier* paraphrase in the second half of the concert. Somehow, across this century, we became more and more interested in "exactly what Beethoven wrote," and that meant that concerts became more serious and tried to be more authoritative. After the second world war good editions started to appear, and Hinterhofer was very happy, because now we could play the music "correctly." To "play it correctly" is pretty much of a post-war idea, and seems to have prevailed right to the present time.

*You consider this negative as well as positive?*

I certainly do. It gives one the impression that if one is very careful and follows the notation exactly, one can achieve good results. I believe this to be basically untrue. We have recordings going back to the very last years of the 19th century, and of course all across the present century—Bartók, Debussy, Elgar, even Brahms (I haven't heard those computer-enhanced restorations yet, unfortunately), not to mention all the jazz and popular music players. I know of no rendition by any composer who plays his music exactly as written. If one looks at the score of a Viennese waltz, for example, one sees three equal-looking beats in a bar, yet we know very well that these beats are anything but equal. I am personally convinced that the same kind of principle must apply to the music of the Classical period as well, and we must endeavour to find out what it is. Again, the "ough" question, if you will. But every source in the 18th century says that the four beats in a bar are unequal in strength and length, and every teacher I had taught me to play them as evenly as possible. When one is studying the piano as a child, one is taught to practice an even scale. Nowadays the last thing I would like is an even scale; scales have to flow and breathe and have rhythmic life to them, and this implies anything but evenness.

*When do you think all this started, this "correct" approach to playing?*

In part it probably started around 1800. One interesting phenomenon is that before 1800 the tutors say very little about technique. Türk's *Klavierschule* of 1789, for example, a very substantial book, includes just a few paragraphs about how to sit and how to hold the hand, bend the fingers, etc.; that is all. The bulk of the book is about what we would call today musicianship. If you look at Himmel's *Klavierschule* of 1830, on the other hand, it is nothing but scales and exercises, and the end a single page on interpretation! There is no question that Czerny was interested in music; he was doubtless a fine musician, a pupil of Beethoven, who has much to say about the interpretation of Beethoven's music, yet the bulk of his work is volumes and volumes of exercise to make the figures (hence the playing) even. The Viennese critic Hanslick complains about mechanical playing in as early as 1850.

*Lately I have been reading a lot about the Baroque* Figuren, *mainly in Peter Williams, and I find the pragmatic side of that extremely important: namely, that one never plays anything even, but rather one plays "figures." A great deal of that principle must still apply in Mozart, don't you agree?*

Absolutely; that is exactly the sense I am speaking about.

*To return to our original question of older*

*and more recent Mozart style; how are the freedom of 1920 and your kind of freedom today related?*

I think the main difference is that in 1920 nobody went after an autograph, or worried about details the way we do nowadays (the way I do, at least).

*So you really think that interpretation was more arbitrary at that time?*

I would rather use the word intuitive. The results were sometimes good, sometimes bad, but certainly not as uniform as those we mostly hear today.

*So in your opinion today's intuition is paired with a kind of Urtext autograph consciousness?*

Well, I never thought of it in quite that way, but that might be true, actually. You see, most performers seem afraid to do something that's not quite kosher.

Maybe the only performers who are not afraid are people like us, because we do something crazy anyway! If a regular pianist comes to hear what we are doing, he expects us to do something "funny." Nobody expects Dezső Ránki to do anything funny...

*What do you think about Mozartean humour and playfulness? It seems a much less discussed topic than Haydn's or Beethoven's humour, which are of course quite different.*

Well, you know one special Mozartean quality I enjoy especially is that which I would call impudence. For example, there is so much in the keyboard part of the *Jeunehomme* concerto that shows a fresh, smart-aleck young guy out to show the world what he can do! I find that an essential ingredient, and missing in so many performances.

*You have probably read Hildesheimer's book on Mozart, and I know that you have seen* Amadeus. *These seem to have influenced the Mozart-image to a considerable extent. What do you think?*

I will tell you, but I must admit that idea does not stem from me. I heard Christopher Hogwood give a lecture recently, in which he talked about a curious phenomenon. In earlier times, he said, a composer's life was as it was, known more or less by everybody, but the performance of his music changed from generation to generation. Now everybody thinks, through "authentic performance practice" (whatever that may mean to various people) that some absolutely immutable and "correct" interpretation will be found; the music will no longer move—then they take the life of the man, and do any damned fool thing they like with it! So the music is fixed, and the picture of the man changes constantly—very bizarre, actually!

*What do you think of* Amadeus, *particularly?*

Well, I think it does little harm if people have the idea that Mozart, or any other great genius, was a real person, even though a good bit of what is purported in *Amadeus* is pure fabrication. Mozart was raised among the nobility: he knew very well how to behave before them. On the other hand, remember how people used to think about these composers; one had a great bust of Beethoven that glowered down from the mantelpiece... everybody trembled! Recently I heard the Beethoven C Major Concerto played by Melvyn Tan and Roger Norrington in London, a marvellous performance; everybody was having such a good time. There was tremendous, very enthusiastic applause, and a woman sitting next to me said angrily "But Beethoven is not supposed to be fun!" Fortunately, there are musicians who understand that Beethoven can be a lot of fun.

*Let me bring up a concept that seems crucial nowadays: the word authority. There is, as you are well aware, a good deal of charlatanism in this new wave and there are so few who can judge and recognize a true authority (maybe there are even fewer than the authorities themselves)... it is not very easy to define the word, however.*

I don't think it is all that difficult. An authority is, it seems to me, someone who has studied a particular subject long and hard, and who has come to some conclusions. These conclusions may, of course, be quite erroneous, and that is why one should approach all authorities with caution. What you should expect from an authority is that he gives you something you have not had before, and that

the end result makes consistent sense. In our field, I think that Paul Badura-Skoda is an authority: he has thought about virtually all the important issues dealing with this music, and when you ask him a question you get an answer. I always find it stimulating and worth while to talk with him.

*Well, that's fine, but I still find it difficult to define that special "this-is-it" feeling one gets (rarely!) at a particular performance?*

But there is no "it"! When you have a criminal case of law, and you bring in two authorities, one might say X, the other Y. Yet both these men have devoted their whole lives to the law, and both are authorities in their field. This happens all the time in the courts.

*But in the arts, intuition has to play such an important part. I was so pleased to see that a musicologist of the rank of Joseph Kerman dedicated so much space and attention to this in his recent book* Musicology. *There is a separate chapter devoted to historical performance, and features you as one of the main protagonists. Kerman disapproves that many musicologists don't take intuition more seriously: they consider it something that cannot be proved or documented and thus are wary of it. And yet his point is that there is no such authoritative, convincing musical analysis of a work as a good interpretation. I think this is so true. From a real Beethoven interpretation one can learn infinitely more than from theory books: this is really the ultimate analysis of a work.*

He calls it "criticism," an even better word.

*Two more questions: the first concerns the audience. One of the many wonderful qualities of your playing is that it is so incredibly communicative. There are, however, excellent performers who are rather introverted, and much less direct. You seem to play very much* to *the audience.*

I see it as a sharing of the music I love: otherwise, why do it? You are a performer: you know what a great deal of work it takes to prepare something well enough to present to others: for one's self five minutes might be enough to get the sense of the music...

*You are a Professor at Cornell University, and you have several good students from all over the world—my last question concerns teaching. How much of all this—or how much of anything, for that matter—is teachable?*

A great amount is teachable, I think. There are many very talented players, but that talent has to be directed to something specific, to some actual concept. I often like to compare musicians to actors: one can have a very gifted actor, but if he doesn't understand the character he is playing, of what use is that gift in the long run? It is the concept of the part he is playing that can really bring his talent into play in a meaningful way. And I feel it is just the same with musicians: that's why all these things we have been discussing are so important. Few listeners understand this. What is now needed in this movement (and it is rapidly beginning to appear) are young pianists, more talented than I, who will really "take the ball and run with it," and to that end I try to devote my teaching.

*But do you think the young people can learn and understand your teaching?*

Well, perhaps guide is a better word than teach. One can guide talented people doing things differently.

*But that presupposes great potential in the student.*

That goes without saying: without musical talent not much is really teachable except mechanics.

*Some people don't really believe in pedagogy, but I assume you would not teach at all if you didn't believe in it to some extent?*

I probably don't really believe in it much either. I guess I really only believe one can show the path: the student must go that way himself.

KATALIN KOMLÓS

# NEW RECORDS FROM HUNGAROTON

There are obvious reasons why Bartók's *Bluebeard's Castle* should be one of the most frequently recorded works of the century: its length makes it ideal for a single LP or CD, and its nature makes it perfect for the gramophone's theatre of the mind. It is not just that almost nothing happens: what is equally important is that the two characters spend most of their time looking; both of them are observers rather than agents, and what they observe is the necessary unfolding of the plot, which is the necessary unfolding of the orchestral score.

This aspect of the work is very decisively projected in the new Hungaroton recording (SLPD 12930), whose main distinction is a rich, generous and detailed exposition of the "accompaniment" (which one might rather call the principal role) by the Hungarian State Orchestra under Ádám Fischer. The tempos are generally slow, but the extra space is used profitably to let the music bloom, and to reveal its textural intricacy, which is in effect to point up its authorship. With so much happening in the orchestral music, it seems entirely appropriate that the Bluebeard of Samuel Ramey should be passive, and evenly lyrical in tone, though perhaps his restraint is conditioned partly by unfamiliarity with the Hungarian text and occasionally by the awkward tessitura. Éva Marton as Judith, of course, has no linguistic problems, though the prominent vibrato in her singing keeps her too at a distance from the character; nor do innocence and spontaneity come easily to her.

*Bluebeard's Castle*, like *Fidelio*, *Boris*, *Pelléas* and *Wozzeck*, stands unique, without a successor in its own or any other composer's output. Subsequent Hungarian opera composers have had to look elsewhere, and none has done so more successfully than Sándor Szokolay, whose *Blood Wedding* (1963) and *Hamlet* (1968) established an international reputation. Afterwards came *Samson* (1973), and, after a long interval, *Ecce Homo*, whose first production at the Hungarian State Opera is the source of the present recording (Hungaroton SLPX 13967–69).

Szokolay has apparently described this work as embodying "the most beautiful operatic subject" of his life, and perhaps his enthusiasm is enough to explain why he should have chosen a novel, Kazantzakis's *Christ Recrucified*, which had already been effectively digested by Martinu in his last opera, *The Greek Passion*. That enthusiasm, however, is difficult to find at work in the score. Embedded in the musical substance is a strand of modality that seems to come from Orthodox chant, and that relates the score at times to Moussorgsky and to the Moussorgskian side of Stravinsky. Bu the dominant language is that of international atonal expressionism, which is in Szokolay rather as it is in Penderecki and countless other composers. It is a conspicuously monochrome vehicle for musical drama, and when there are so many short scenes—and so many characters—its deficiencies as a foundation for narrative become all too apparent.

The best things in *Ecce Homo* are perhaps the more fully developed crowd scenes, which begin to justify Szokolay's description of the work as a "Passion Opera." The handling of individuals is less happy, and few of the cast appear to feel fired to give their best. Most crucially, Manolios, the Christ of this recrucifixion, is portrayed in a tenor line of obnoxiously smug, weak-willed saintliness: András Molnár in this role cannot but become rapidly tiresome. István Gáti as the honest Jannakos and Magda Kalmár as Katerina, the Magdalen figure, are among the more likeable performers, though both characters are clichés. The singing of the children's choir is surprising, given Hungary's reputation in this field; there is also a constant undercurrent of stage noises, including prompts. The composer himself conducts.

The third and final opera among these new releases is Handel's *Il pastor fido*, in the

series of "authentic" recordings of big eighteenth-century works made by the Capella Savaria under Nicholas McGegan (Hungaroton SLPD 12912–14). This is not among the most dramatic and cogent of Handel's operas: the pastoral genre deals principally in charm, and the two amorous plots are only very loosely linked. Nevertheless, this performance of the last, 1734 version offers a sequence of beautiful arias gratifyingly laid out to view, like statues along an avenue in some park of the period. The principal role of Mirtillo is sung by Paul Esswood, whose style is more polished than that of anyone else in the cast, though the vital freshness of Katalin Farkas as Amerilli is also enjoyable and apt. The difference in approach only begins to disturb when finally they join in duet, united after the attempts to part them made by the characterful Eurilla of Mária Flohr; and since Mirtillo has the most flamboyant music in the opera (this was originally a castrato part), Esswood's cultivated and astonishing virtuosity, his essential differentness from the others, is in keeping with the work. In the secondary plot, Gábor Kállay gives a lively impersonation of the huntsman Silvio, and Márta Lukin is a pretty Dorinda who eventually gets her man to pay attention to her. József Gregor enters imposingly at the end to set both couples to rights. There is fine playing throughout.

*

The Monteverdi anthology from the same source (Hungaroton SLPD 12952) has the same immediacy. The main work is *Il combattimento di Tancredi e Clorinda*, coupled with madrigals from the later collections in both grand and lighter manners. An excellent quartet of singers is led by Guy de Mey, whose green pliancy and youthfulness have made an outstanding Orfeo: he again brings out the new expressive freedom of Monteverdi's vocal writing in his performances of the narrarion in *Il combattimento* and of several solo madrigals *(Tempro la cetra, Eri già tutta mia, Ohimè ch'io cado)* Martin Klietmann ably matches him for flexible virtuosity and fine lingering on discord in their duets *(Zefiro torna, Ardo e scopsir, Interrotte speranze)* and as Tancredi. The Clorinda is Mária Zádori, whose ability to be expressively dark and vocally brilliant at the same time is also very much to the point in the *Lamento della nimfa* and in her solo items *(Si dolce e'l tormento, Con che soavita)*. József Gregor is again the bass, and the unaffected playing of the Capella Savaria completes pleasure in an entirely enjoyable release.

*

More evidence of the eager, path-breaking musical life of Szombathely comes in a recording of two versions of Stravinsky's *Les noces* conducted by Péter Eötvös (Hungaroton SLPD 12989). Stravinsky's eventual solution for the instrumentation of this work—his clangorous ensemble of pianos and percussion—seems in retrospect so inevitable, so necessary for the music's intimations of bells and its mechanical movement, that one has to keep reminding himself it took him nearly a decade to find. Now this new recording provides a permanent reminder. On the "A" side Eötvös conducts the 1923 score, with Adrienne Hauser, Zoltán Kocsis, Pi-hsien Chen and Imre Rohmann as the pianists and an enlarged Amadinda playing percussion. Then on the "B" side come the 1917 score for chamber orchestra as published in 1980, played by the Savaria Symphony Orchestra.

It is perhaps best to start with this, particularly if one is at all familiar with the piece. Given the constant liveliness of the playing, and the constant delight of finding known music suddenly rendered strange by cimbalom, harpsichord, strings and a vigorously colourful wind ensemble, one may start to wonder whether Stravinsky did not make a mistake in giving the music starker colours: there is much more in this 1917 version of the instrumental ferment of such works as *Pribaoutki* and also of the litanies of the Symphonies of Wind Instruments. But then one turns to the definitive score and finds the

composer entirely vindicated (the recording takes into account his own of 1934, which presumably accounts for a few changes of vocal disposition from those in the printed score). Both performances are intensely disciplined and intensely vivid: it says much for Eötvös's metronomic sense, so essential to this music, that the timings of the two versions correspond almost exactly. What also distinguishes this important release is the highly idiomatic singing of the Russian soloists and the Slovak Philharmonic Chorus.

PAUL GRIFFITHS

## FROM OUR NEXT ISSUES

### A NEW CONSTITUTIONAL BASIS FOR SOCIALIST DEMOCRACY

*Imre Pozsgay*

### APPREHENSIVE PATRIOTISM (SÁNDOR CSOÓRI)

*László Ablonczy*

### A RETURN TO MY WAY HOME

*J. B. Burns*

# OUR CONTRIBUTORS

BÁN, András (b. 1951). Art critic. Read mathematics and art history at the University of Budapest. Between 1974 and 1986 on the staff of *Élet és Irodalom*, a literary weekly, since 1986 on the staff of *Magyar Nemzet*, a national daily.

BAYER, József (b. 1946). Political scientist. Educated at the universities of Debrecen and Budapest. In the years 1972–79 taught philosophy, then did research at the Institute of Philosophy of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences 1979–85. Since 1985, has been at the Institute of Social Sciences of the Central Committee of the HSWP. He specialises in political theory and ideology in socialism.

BENDA, Kálmán (b. 1913). Historian. A graduate of the University of Budapest. 1942–48 on the staff of the Teleki Pál East Europe Institute. 1952–57 archivist of the Hungarian Calvinist Church. 1957–87, on the staff of the Institute of History of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, now retired. Since 1980 director of the Ráday Collection of the Hungarian Calvinist Church. His field of research is Hungarian history of the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries. See his "From the Anjous to the Twentieth Century", *NHQ* 71.

BENKŐ, Erzsébet (b. 1911). Painter. A graduate of the École des Beaux Arts (Paris). Has shown works in Budapest in 1959 and in 1969. In 1986, exhibited her tapestries and paintings at the Zichy Mansion of Buda.

BOKOR, Pál (b. 1942). Journalist. A graduate of the Budapest Marxist-Leninist University. 1960–86 worked for the Hungarian News Agency, then for *Magyar Hírlap*, a daily. His field is relations between the U. S. and the Soviet Union. He was correspondent in both countries. Has published books on the Soviet Union, on China and on the U. S.

FRANK, János (b. 1925). Art critic, one of our regular art reviewers.

GALAVICS, Géza (b. 1940). Art historian. A graduate of the University of Budapest. 1963–71 on the staff of the National Museum, then Head of the Department of the Old Hungarian Art of the Art History Research Team of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. Specializes in late Renaissance and Baroque art in Hungary. Publications include *Program és műalkotás a XVIII. század végén* (Programme and work of art in the end of the 18th century), 1971 and *Reneszánsz és barokk Magyarországon* (Renaissance and Baroque art in Hungary), 1975.

GERLE, János (b. 1947). Architect, a graduate of the Budapest University of Technology. His main field of interest is the history of architecture of the *fin de siècle*. See "The Architecture of Imre Makovecz," *NHQ* 100, "Ödön Lechner, Architect," 101, and "József Bábolnay—a Hungarian Architect in the USA," 105.

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. See his "Contemporary Music at the Budapest Music Weeks," *NHQ* 109, "New Records: From Unpredictable Cage to Predictable Telemann," 110, "Hungaroton Records: March 1988," 111, and "New Records and Scores," 112.

GYERTYÁN, Ervin (b. 1925). Our regular reviewer of films.

GYÖRFFY, Miklós (b. 1942). Our regular reviewer of prose fiction.

HAMVAS, Béla (1897–1968) the philosopher, essayist and novelist. After spending two years in the trenches in the Great

War, he read Hungarian and German at Budapest University, worked as a journalist, then became a librarian. In 1935 he founded, with Karl Kerényi, the *Sziget* circle, an influential intellectual group that tried to forge a cultural defence against the threat of Nazism. He published *Magyar Hyperion*, his first important work, in 1936. After a year in the army on the Russian front, he published a collection of philosophical essays entitled *A láthatatlan történet* (The Invisible Story) in 1943. During the siege of Budapest in 1945 a bomb destroyed his house and all his books and manuscripts perished. After the war, he published *Anthologia Humana*, a collection of texts culled from 5,000 years of philosophical thought. In 1948 he was fired from his library job and wrote *Karnevál* (1948–51), his monumental novel, while a gardener. Later, working as an unskilled factory hand and as a storeman, he wrote the essays of his 3-volume collection, *Patmosz* (1959–66), his chef d'œuvre. He retired in 1964 and died in 1968. Publication of his later work, including *Karnevál*, started recently and is still incomplete.

HARASZTI-TAYLOR, Éva (b. 1935). Historian. Formerly on the staff of the Institute of History of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. Has published in *NHQ* as well. On her marriage to A. J. P. Taylor, she moved to England in 1978. Has published books the Anglo-German naval agreement, on Palmerston, on Chartism, on the Rhineland crisis, on Neville Chamberlain, and "A Life with Alan. The Diary of A. J. P. Taylor's Wife Eva from 1978 to 1985," Hamish Hamilton, 1987.

HALÁSZ, Péter (b. 1963). Musicologist. A graduate in Musicology of the Liszt Ferenc Academy of Music of Budapest, now on the staff of the Institute of Musicology of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. His fields are: Central-European Gregorian chant, 18th-century church music and contemporary music.

JÁVOR, Anna (b. 1953). Art historian, a graduate of the University of Budapest. On the staff of the Hungarian National Gallery since 1976. Her field is Hungarian baroque art, with special emphasis on the painting and sculpture of the 18th century. Has published on the painter Johann Lukas Kracker of whose work she organized a memorial exhibition in 1979. An editor of *Művészettörténeti Értesítő*, an art history journal.

KÁDÁR, Béla (b. 1934). Economist, a graduate of Karl Marx University of Economics. Head of the Economic Planning Institute of the National Planning Office. Author of books and numerous articles on comparative economic policy. See "Preparing to Meet the Challenge," *NHQ* 88, "The Economic Conditions of East-West Relations and Hungarian Economic Growth," 97, "Structural Policy Dilemmas," 104, and "The External Conditons of Hungarian Industrial Growth," 108.

KÁNYÁDI, Sándor (b. 1929). Transylvanian–Hungarian poet. A graduate of the now defunct Bolyai University of Kolozsvár (Cluj-Napoca). Editor of *Napsugár*, a Hungarian periodical for children, published in Kolozsvár. Has published, since 1950, seven volumes of his poems, essays on writers, and an anthology, in Hungarian, of Transylvanian Saxon folk poetry.

KOCH, Sándor (b. 1925). M.D., pathologist. A graduate of the University of Szeged. 1950–55, Assistant Professor at the same university. 1955–70, worked for the Virology Department of the National Institute of Hygiene. From 1970 on the staff of the Department of Pathology of the Semmelweis Medical University of Budapest.

KOLTAI, Tamás (b. 1942). Our regular theatre critic.

KOMLÓS, Katalin (b. 1945). Musicologist, fortepiano player. A graduate of the Budapest Liszt Academy of Music, she has been on the staff of the same institution since 1973. 1980–83, did graduate work at Cornell University (USA), under James Webster and Malcolm Bilson; recieved her Ph.D. in musicology there in 1985 with a dissertation on the classical Viennese keyboard trio. Both her musicological and performing activities are centred on the keyboard music of the classical period.

KULCSÁR, Kálmán (b. 1928). Sociologist. Minister of Justice (since 1988), member of the Sociology of Law Committee of the International Sociological Association. Earlier Head of the Sociological Research Institute of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (1969–1983) and Deputy Secretary General of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (1983–1988). Has published much on the sociology of law, sociological thinking and the social environment. His recent publications include *A mai magyar társadalom* (Contemporary Hungarian Society), 1980, published by Corvina in English as well (1984), *A modernizáció és a magyar társadalom* (Modernisation and Hungarian Society), 1986 and *Modernisation and Law* (in English), 1987. See also his "Man at the Centre of Development," *NHQ* 75, "The Significance of Political Science, "77 and Modernisation and Reform," 110.

LÁNCZ, Sándor (b. 1919). Art historian and critic, a graduate of the University of Budapest, formerly research fellow (now retired) of the Art History Research Group of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. Specialises in modern and contemporary art with emphasis on post-war Hungarian art. Has published several books on Hungarian artists. See "The Visionary Art of Lajos Szalay," *NHQ* 81, "The Rediscovery of Hugo Scheiber," 105, "Endre Rátkay and his Triptychs," 110, and "Sugár út: the Making of a Budapest Avenue," 112.

MARCUS, Judith (b. 1934). Sociologist of literature, research associate at the Graduate Faculty of the New School for Social Research in New York. Has published: "Foundations of the Frankfurt School of Social Research;" "The Correspondence of the Young Lukács: Dialogue with Weber, Simmel, Mannheim, and Others, 1900–1920;" and "George Lukács and Thomas Mann. A Study in the Sociology of Literature," University of Massachusetts Press, 1987. In 1987, was visiting Fulbright Scholar in Hungary.

MAKKAI, László (b. 1914). Historian. Educated at the Universities of Kolozsvár, Budapest and Basle. Was appointed fellow of the Teleki Pál Institute in 1940 and of the Institute of History of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences in 1949 (Senior Fellow since 1961). Professor at the Debrecen Calvinist Theological College. Specialises in medieval economic and social history. Has published numerous books, articles, papers in Hungary and abroad. See his "Gábor Bethlen's European Policy," *NHQ* 82, and "The Medieval Settlement of Transylvania," 104.

NYERS, Rezső (b. 1923). Minister of State, with special responsibility for the reform of the econony. Politician, trained as a printer. Member of the Political Committee of the HSWP. 1945–48 one of the leaders of the Social Democratic Party, then member of the Central Committee of the Hungarian Workers' Party. 1960–62 Minister of Finance, 1962–74 Secretary to the Central Committee of the HSWP, 1966–75 member of the Political Committee as well. 1975–81 head of the Institute of Economics of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences and between 1981–87 its consultant.

ŐSZI, István (b. 1944). Economist, politician. A graduate of the University of Budapest. In 1967 entered the foreign service. He spent 1968–72 in Belgrade; since 1976 has

been concerned with relations and political cooperation between socialist countries. Appointed to the staff of the Central Committee of the HSWP in 1976 and in May 1988 became deputy minister with responsibility for relations with socialist countries.

PERNECZKY, Géza (b. 1936). Art historian, critic and painter who lives in Cologne. See "Meandering Rivers of Art," *NHQ* 37, "Sculptures in Glass," 41, "The Emergence of New Painting in Hungary," 96, and "Immortal Academicism? (Mihály Munkácsy)," 99.

RÁDAY, Eszter (b. 1946). Journalist. A graduate of the Karl Marx University of Economics in Budapest. Since 1971 on the staff of Hungarian Radio, working in the home affairs department. Her field of interest are self-management by workers and nationalisation in Hungary.

SÁNDOR, Tamás (b. 1946). Lawyer. A graduate of the University of Budapest. 1971–1973 worked in foreign trade. Since 1973 on the staff of the Institute of Law and Political Science of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. Specialises in the comparative study of the law of contracts and company law. Has taught his subject at the Karl Marx University of Economics of Budapest. His most recent book is *A konszernjog Nyugat-Európában* (The Law of Corporations in Western Europe), 1986.

SPIRÓ, György (b. 1946). Novelist, playwright, essayist. Studied Hungarian, Russian and Serbo-Croat at the University of Budapest, worked for Hungarian Radio, now playreader of the Kaposvár theatre. Wrote a thesis of Eastern European drama. Has published two novels, a volume of poems, another of short stories, a historical play in verse, a volume of plays, and an essay on Miroslav Krleža. See his stories "With my Father at the Game," *NHQ* 68, "The Ward," 73, "Utopia," 100, and "The X-es" (excerpts from the novel), 108.

SZABÓ, György (b. 1932). Writer, critic, a graduate of Budapest University. Has published a volume of plays in 1964. Has written books on the film director István Gall, the painter Piroska Szántó, Pirandello. Has also written a book on 20th-century Italian literature, and another on the contemporary Hungarian cinema. See his "Hungarian Art at the Crossroads," *NHQ* 21.

SZIRTES, George (b. 1948). Poet, born in Budapest. Has been living in Britain since 1956. Teaches art and runs the Starwheel Press in Hitchin, near London. His latest volume of poems, *Metro*, was published by Oxford University Press in 1988. 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 poems by Dezső Kosztolányi, *NHQ* 98, "A Dual Heritage," 99, "Örkény in English," 102, a review of Miklós Radnóti's autobiography in English, 105, "Moholy-Nagy," 109, and "The True Life of Verse Translations," 112.

VAS, István (b. 1910). Poet, essayist, critic, translator, member of the Editorial Board of this review. His publications include many volumes of verse, essays, criticism, translations from foreign poets, as well as translations of novels and plays, and a multivolume autobiography still in progress. See poems in *NHQ* 23, 29, 38, 46, 50, 56, 75, and 94, an autobiographical piece, "The Unknown God," 40, the essay "The Truth of Imagination," 65, "War and Love, 1938," 100, and "A Poet's Bible Reader," 104.

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 daily of the HSWP; 1982–83, Secretary to the Central Committee of the HSWP. See "Security Cooperation," *NHQ* 92, "Hungary's International Relations," 97, "Helsinki–Antecedents and Consequences," 100, "A Joint Search for Security," 105, and "The Common Future," 105.

VÉGH, János (b. 1936). Art historian, heads the Department of Art History at the College of Arts and Crafts in Budapest. Works include: "Sixteenth-Century German Paintings in Hungarian Museums" (1972), "Early Netherlands Paintings" (1977), both from Corvina Press, also in English. See among his recent publications "A Concise Art History of Hungary," *NHQ* 84, "The Breakthrough to Modern Art," 89, "Medieval Art from Transylvania," 91, "King Matthias and the Renaissance in Hungary," 92, "A Guide to Six Museums," 101, and "Portraits of Sigismund," 110.

VÉKÁS, Lajos (b. 1939). Lawyer. A graduate of the University of Budapest where he now teaches. Specialises in Hungarian civil law and international private law. His publications include *Landmarks in the Development of the Contractual System* (in English), 1986; *A nemzetközi magánjog elméleti alapjai* (Theoretical Bases of the International Private Law), 1968 and *The Law of Conflicts and Foreign Trade* (in English), 1987.

*Articles appearing in this journal are indexed in* HISTORICAL ABSTRACTS; AMERICA, HISTORY & LIFE; ARTS & HUMANITIES CITATIONS INDEX

## THE NEW HUNGARIAN QUARTERLY

*may be obtained from the following distributors:*

AUSTRALIA: Globe Book Co., 702, George St. Sydney NSW 2000
AUSTRIA: Globus Vertrieb Ausländischer Zeitschriften Höchstädtplatz 3. A-1206 Wien
Libro-Disco P.F. 572. A-1010 Wien
BELGIUM: "Du Monde Entier" S.A. Rue du Midi 162. B-1000 Bruxelles
BRASIL: Livraria D. Landy Ltda. Rue 7 de Abril 252. 01044 Sao Paolo
CANADA: Hungarian Ikka and Travel Service 1208 Granville Street, Vancouver B.C. V6Z 1M4
Pannonia Books, P.O. Box 1017 Postal Station "B" Toronto, Ont. M5T 2T8
Studio Délibáb, 3717 St. Urbain Street, Montreal, Que. H2X 2P5
DENMARK: Munksgaard 35 Nørre Søgade, DK-1370 Copenhagen K
FINLAND: Akateeminen Kirjakauppa, Keskuskatu 2. SF-00100 Helsinki 10.
FRANCE: Association France–Hongrie 8, rue de Montyon F-75009 Paris
Société Balaton, 12, rue de la Grange Batelière 12. F-75009 Paris
FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY: H. und S. Katko, Musica Hungarica Rümannstr. 4. D-8000 München 40.
Kubon und Sagner, Postfach 34 01 08 D-8000 München 34.
Kunst unt Wissen, Postfach 46. D-7000 Stuttgart 1.
Otto Harrassowitz, Postfach 2929 D-6200 Wiesbaden
Ujváry–Griff, Titurelstr. 2. D-8000 München 81.
Wissenschaftliche Versandbuchhandlung Harry Münchberg, Postfach 4204 D-3394 Langesheim 2.
Zeitschriften und Fachbuchvertrieb GmbH und Co. KG: P.O.B. 101610 D-5000 Köln 1.
GREAT BRITAIN: Collet's Holdings Ltd. Dennington Estate, Wellingborough Northants NN8 2QT
Hungarian Book Agency, 87 Sewardstone Road London E2 9HN
NETHERLANDS: Faxon Europe, P.O.B. 197, 1000 AD Amsterdam
ISRAEL: Sándor Gondos, P.O.B. 44515, 31333 Haifa
Hadash, P.O.B. 26116, 62160 Tel-Aviv
Lepac Ltd. 15. Rambar Str. Tel-Aviv
NORWAY: Narvensen Info Center, Box 6125 Etterstad, N-0602 Oslo 6.
SWEDEN: Esselte Tidskrifiscentralen, P.O.B. 638, S-101 28 Stocholm
SWITZERLAND: Magda Szerday, Teichweg 16. CH-4142 Münchenstein
Schweizer Buchzentrum, Postfach, CH-4601 Olten
U.S.A. Center of Hungarian Literature 4418 16th Avenue, Brooklyn N.Y. 11204
Ebsco Industries Inc. P.O.Box 1943, Birmingham Ala 35201
F. W. Faxon Company, 15 Southwest Park, Westwood, Mass. 02090
Framo Publishing, 561, West Diversey Parkway Room 19. Chicago, Ill. 60614
Otto's Import Store, 2320 W. Clark Ave., Burbank Ca. 91506
Püski–Corvin, 251 E. 82 Street, New York, N. Y. 10028
YUGOSLAVIA: Forum Vojvode Misica broj 1. 21000 Novi Sad

KULTURA HUNGARIAN TRADING COMPANY FOR BOOKS AND NEWSPAPERS, H-1389 Budapest P.O.B. 149